

VISION, GOALS & CONCEPT 3

As we discussed in Chapter One, a thorough community visioning and design process was undertaken to inform the development of this Specific Plan. The result of the public process is captured in the Vision, Goals and Framework contained in this chapter. The vision is expressed in the Downtown Vision Statement on the next page. The following section sets out seven clear goals for achieving the vision. It also provides sound strategies to accomplish those goals in a way that is appropriate for and beneficial to Ceres. Applying this vision and these goals to the actual streets, parcels and buildings in Downtown led to the creation of a Framework for guiding physical improvements and new development in Downtown.

The driving principle behind this effort is that the Downtown must be designed in a visionary, yet realistic, way that reflects the desires of the community. This chapter describes the end result that the Specific Plan intends to achieve, but the development and public improvements will be strategically phased during implementation. For a more detailed discussion of phasing, see Chapter Ten, Implementation.

A. Downtown Vision Statement

This vision statement, crafted with the collaboration of the community and stakeholders, describes the physical, economic and cultural qualities that Downtown will exhibit after this Specific Plan is implemented.

Downtown will once again become the vibrant heart of the City of Ceres, as this area was during Ceres' beginnings. It will be a key shopping and entertainment destination, an employment center, and a government center for Ceres residents and out-of-town visitors alike. Downtown will be an established and unique neighborhood as evidenced by its quality architecture, the preservation and celebration of historic landmarks and structures, and attractive public spaces and plazas. Downtown will be the go-to location for local residents wishing to take in a movie, entertain visitors, host an event or socialize with their neighbors. Downtown will be a safe and active environment that celebrates Ceres' historic past and diverse culture, and provides community spaces and streetscapes unlike any others in the city.

Downtown will be a primary option for existing and prospective residents looking for housing in Ceres. A wide variety of rental and ownership housing opportunities of different types and sizes will be available. Housing will be affordable to Ceres residents of all income levels, providing options for all ages, from young singles to senior citizens. Families will consider Downtown an ideal place to make their homes and raise their children.

Downtown will be a local and regional model for sustainability. Infill development will reduce the need to develop on greenfield sites elsewhere. Downtown will provide for alternatives to driving by prioritizing pedestrians in design and by achieving densities that will support transit. It will include green building technologies in new development and green stormwater mechanisms in new infrastructure. It will provide a livable neighborhood for members of all income groups. Downtown will be economically sustainable as well, providing jobs for local residents and desirable locations for businesses and merchants. Downtown will be vital to Ceres' economy.

B. Downtown Goals

This section outlines seven realistic goals, which will result in achievement of the vision for Downtown. Within the goals, key strategies to accomplish the goals in Downtown Ceres are described. The strategies clarify how the goals are unique to Ceres and how they can feasibly be accomplished Downtown. The goals in this section evolved from

the collaborative community planning process undertaken for the Specific Plan, including input from community members, City staff and the project consultant.

Goal 1: A Sustainable Downtown

Making Ceres more sustainable was a desire expressed by participants during the planning process. For Downtown, sustainability means a future development pattern that minimizes impact on the natural environment, spares land at the periphery of the city, champions conservation of water and other resources, and supports walking, bicycling and transit. Compact mixed use development in Downtown supports the goal of sustainability by preserving undeveloped land at the outskirts of the City. Higher-density development also supports walking, biking and transit. By making sustainable transportation alternatives viable, Ceres will begin addressing long-term regional air quality and global climate change concerns.

With implementation of this Specific Plan, infrastructure will be rebuilt to function efficiently and support a new, compact Downtown in Ceres. Alternative stormwater infrastructure technologies will assist in achieving sustainability goals by reducing stress on the existing system and preventing some stormwater runoff from entering regional watersheds. Future Downtown development will also contribute by including water conservation measures. By incorporating smart infrastructure systems, Downtown will serve as a model for other parts of the City, region and state.

Economic sustainability will also be a cornerstone of Downtown Ceres in the future. The Specific Plan will lead to new business investments in the Downtown, which will result in an influx of jobs for local residents. A range of housing in Downtown can also provide opportunities for young families and those looking for homeownership opportunities in Ceres, and will also assist Ceres in addressing its fair share of regional affordable housing needs.

Goal 2: An Economically Viable Downtown

It is critical that economic conditions be improved in Downtown, where the City and its commerce originally began and where there is strong interest in its preservation and expansion. The primary strategy for achieving an economically viable Downtown Ceres is ensuring a rich mix of uses that collectively support one another. In Ceres, the general use mix is already present, but can be enhanced and expanded. New and diverse building types in Downtown can accommodate a wide variety of tenants, which will help ensure Downtown Ceres will remain a key center for commerce and will remain that way in the long-term.



Whitmore Park.



Fourth Street storefront.

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Existing businesses will be retained and expanded, and new complementary businesses will be established. New high density housing, a movie theater, new office development and expanded civic uses will all contribute to the growth of the Downtown economy by providing spending power and spill-over shopping, particularly from large employment or entertainment centers. An improved Downtown environment will encourage developers interested in Ceres to look to the Downtown to invest. With implementation of this Downtown Specific Plan, Downtown will emerge as a regional destination, with an increase in visitors and new businesses.

An economically viable Downtown will lead to new jobs for Ceres residents, and it will boost the local economy by bringing in outside spending from increased regional visits to Downtown. Furthermore, new development that supports a rich Downtown economy will result in increased tax revenue for the City that can be re-invested in the Downtown and other citywide priorities.

Goal 3: An Historic Downtown

Downtown marks the starting point of Ceres. Even prior to incorporation in 1918, Ceres was already a village in its own right, and everything in Ceres was located where Downtown is today. Ceres served as a small residential and commercial community and in those days was bounded roughly by North Street, Sixth Street, Park Street and what has become State Route 99. This Specific Plan seeks to restore the notion of Downtown as Ceres' true center and enhance the role of landmarks and historic structures by integrating them with public improvements.

Downtown historic resources, such as the Whitmore Home and Whitmore Mansion, will not only remain integral components of the Downtown but also serve as centerpieces for its future. Historic resources can be more appropriately celebrated and also serve as catalysts for future development. The resulting Downtown will be an attractive mix of development that shows Ceres' dedication to its history. New development will respect and accentuate these landmarks, resulting in a Downtown environment that has a special mix of old and new. The principle of preservation must remain at the forefront of redevelopment as new development and improvements are interwoven into the existing urban fabric.

Goal 4: A Diverse and Unique Downtown

Downtown must build on existing attributes to enhance Downtown's character, in a way that is appropriate for Ceres. Downtown's character will become evident through the integration of existing elements, such as the Whitmore Mansion and the Ceres



Historic Ceres Water Tower.

Water Tower, with new design and development. Downtown character will also develop through the design and provision of unique streets, public gathering spaces, parks, and through public events that are held there. With implementation of this Specific Plan, the diverse and unique qualities of Downtown will also become evident to passers-by on State Route 99, drawing them in for a closer look.

Goal 5: A Celebrated and Vibrant Downtown

People are critical to creating a successful Downtown, and they contribute strongly to their character. The presence of people and the activity they create must be accommodated as Downtown redevelops. Downtown will build on the existing tradition of special events like the street faire and concerts in Whitmore Park, becoming a location for additional events.



Residential development.



Ceres Community Center.



Pedestrians activate spaces.

Downtown will become a 24-hour neighborhood with housing mixed with daytime businesses, such as offices, civic employment centers and commercial services. Nighttime uses will also contribute to Downtown vibrancy with new housing, restaurants, a cinema and nighttime events. To further support the creation of an active environment, there will be a system of public gathering spaces, including new plazas, enhanced park space, pedestrian paseos and new pedestrian-oriented streets. These new elements will support special events, and they will create a higher quality of life for new residents and employees, visitors, students, families and seniors. Downtown will become a place to “hang out,” not a single-stop destination.

Goal 6: A Multi-modal Downtown

Providing for transportation choice is a priority for Downtown. Ceres must prioritize pedestrians, bicycles and transit “modes” in Downtown. However, many residents and visitors will continue to drive, so Downtown should develop a circulation system that accommodates traffic and parking, but does so in coordination with the other modes. A system of parking can provide drivers with a clear understanding of where

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Transit stop.

they can find parking when visiting Downtown businesses. On-street parking should be preserved to allow for short turnover trips. As Downtown redevelops and on-street parking becomes less readily available, additional public and private surface parking opportunities will be critical in managing parking.

Parts of Downtown already exhibit walkable qualities, including the southern blocks of Fourth Street, which have provided a pedestrian-friendly environment for decades in Ceres. These elements can be expanded and enhanced to redefine the entire Downtown as a walkable neighborhood. By investing in pedestrian-oriented streetscape improvements in coordination with private development, Downtown will become a neighborhood that not only supports walking, but makes it comfortable and enjoyable.

Bicycle facilities are a critical component of multi-modal downtowns. Ceres has already begun establishing this component by signing and designating Magnolia Street in Downtown as a bike route. Bike facilities will be expanded during implementation of the Specific Plan to ensure that biking is an attractive and feasible option for Downtown residents. Private development will complement Ceres' investments by providing bicycle parking.

In the long term transit will become a more viable option for Downtown Ceres. Currently, the low-density character of Ceres results in infrequent transit opportunities, particularly for regional travel. As higher-density development occurs in Downtown, transit opportunities will expand.



Downtown theater in Alameda.

Goal 7: A Safe Downtown

Public safety must be maintained during the growth and expansion of Downtown. Families should feel comfortable raising their families in Downtown. Students from Downtown and nearby schools should be able to safely visit Downtown, meet with friends and hang out in its public spaces. Downtown should be a safe place during the day and at night.

New compact mixed use development will contribute to accomplishing this goal by providing "eyes on the street." The activity and presence of people in mixed use and downtown settings during the day and night can often be a deterrent to crime. Ceres can also address safety in Downtown by providing adequate lighting and by ensuring that new private developments incorporate "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design" (CPTED) principles. A safe Downtown and a perception of safety will benefit Ceres by inviting potential residents and other prospective investors.

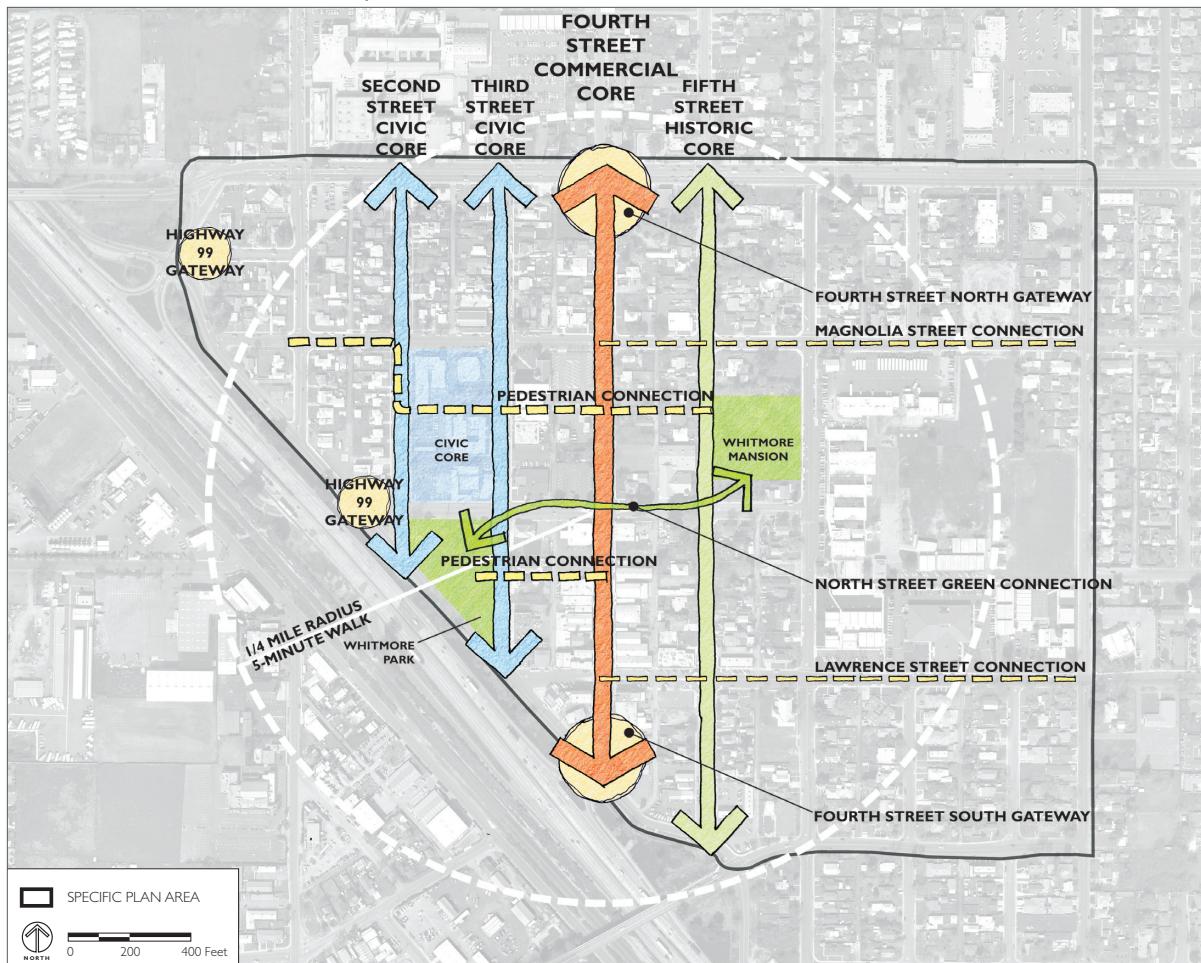
C. Urban Design Framework

This section shows how the vision and goals can be physically realized in Downtown Ceres. Figure 3-1 is a Framework diagram that will inform future improvements and new development. Following the Framework discussion is an Illustrative Plan providing a detailed look at how the concepts in the Framework may be achieved.

Distinctive North-South Streets

A strong and identifiable character will be developed for several of the north-south streets in Downtown. For these streets, a unique character is already in place but needs to be strengthened. The character envisioned for these streets is described below.

FIGURE 3-1 Downtown Conceptual Framework



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Fourth Street Commercial Core

Fourth Street should serve as Ceres' "main street," functioning as a major activity center and the commercial heart of Downtown.

Second/Third Street Civic Core

Second and Third Street currently contain most of the civic functions of Downtown. The emerging character along these streets should be reinforced by promoting this area as Downtown's government and office core.

Fifth Street Historic

Fifth Street is home to the Whitmore Home, Ceres Museum and the Whitmore Mansion, and the historic Ceres Water Tower is nearby on Sixth Street. Fifth Street should serve as an historic corridor for Ceres, spanning from the existing traffic circle at Lawrence Street to Whitmore Avenue at the north.

Green Ceres

Green Ceres is a concept developed for Downtown that focuses on ensuring sustainability and environmentally sensitive development and public improvements. Green Ceres also calls for increased access to green spaces and trees in Downtown.

North Street Green Connection

A new green space complementing the existing Whitmore Park is proposed at the Whitmore Mansion on Fifth Street. North Street will become a "green connection" linking this new Whitmore Green to the existing Whitmore Park, as shown in the diagram below. The street will be lushly planted, provide generous setbacks where possible, and incorporate green stormwater management systems.



Green Infrastructure

The Green Ceres concept also calls for sustainable improvements to public spaces, such as street rights-of-way. Through careful design and engineering, measures can be incorporated into street rights-of-way to help manage stormwater from streets, thereby reducing strain on the traditional stormwater infrastructure and helping to prevent pollutants that would otherwise flow into watersheds.



Bioswale within sidewalk.

East-West Connections

To complement the North-South streets concept discussed above and reinforce the Green Ceres concept, new pedestrian and bicycle connections running east-west should link the streets together, connect important destinations and lead to Fourth Street.

Pedestrian Paseos

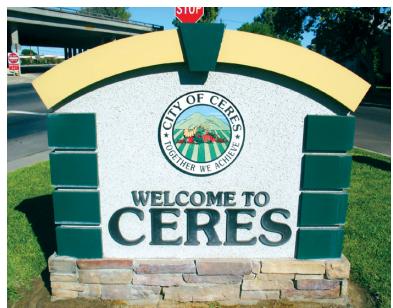
East-west connections should be established through a series of paseo networks. These are pedestrian-only walkways that will cross midway through the long blocks flanking Fourth Street downtown. These will connect the Civic Core across Fourth Street to the Whitmore Mansion, and Whitmore Park to some of Ceres' most historic resources, including the Whitmore Home and Ceres Water Tower.

Gateways and Wayfinding

Gateways and wayfinding signage will help define Downtown to the visitor, provide a “branding” opportunity and make it easier to get around. Gateways and symbols that help establish Downtown as a destination within Ceres and signify that it is undergoing change will be crucial to the success of its revitalization.

Gateway Opportunities

Opportunities for enhanced gateways into Downtown include northern and southern entries to Fourth Street, the intersection of Second and North Streets, and the new off-ramp leading northbound SR 99 travelers to Whitmore Avenue. Gateways at these locations should include signage and special landscaping treatments. The north and south entries to Downtown on Fourth Street shall be further enhanced by thoughtfully designed gateway buildings that provide architectural character at these important entries to Downtown. These north and south entries will be critical to the success of Fourth Street, which as the heart of Downtown will reverberate through the rest of the area.



Gateway signage.

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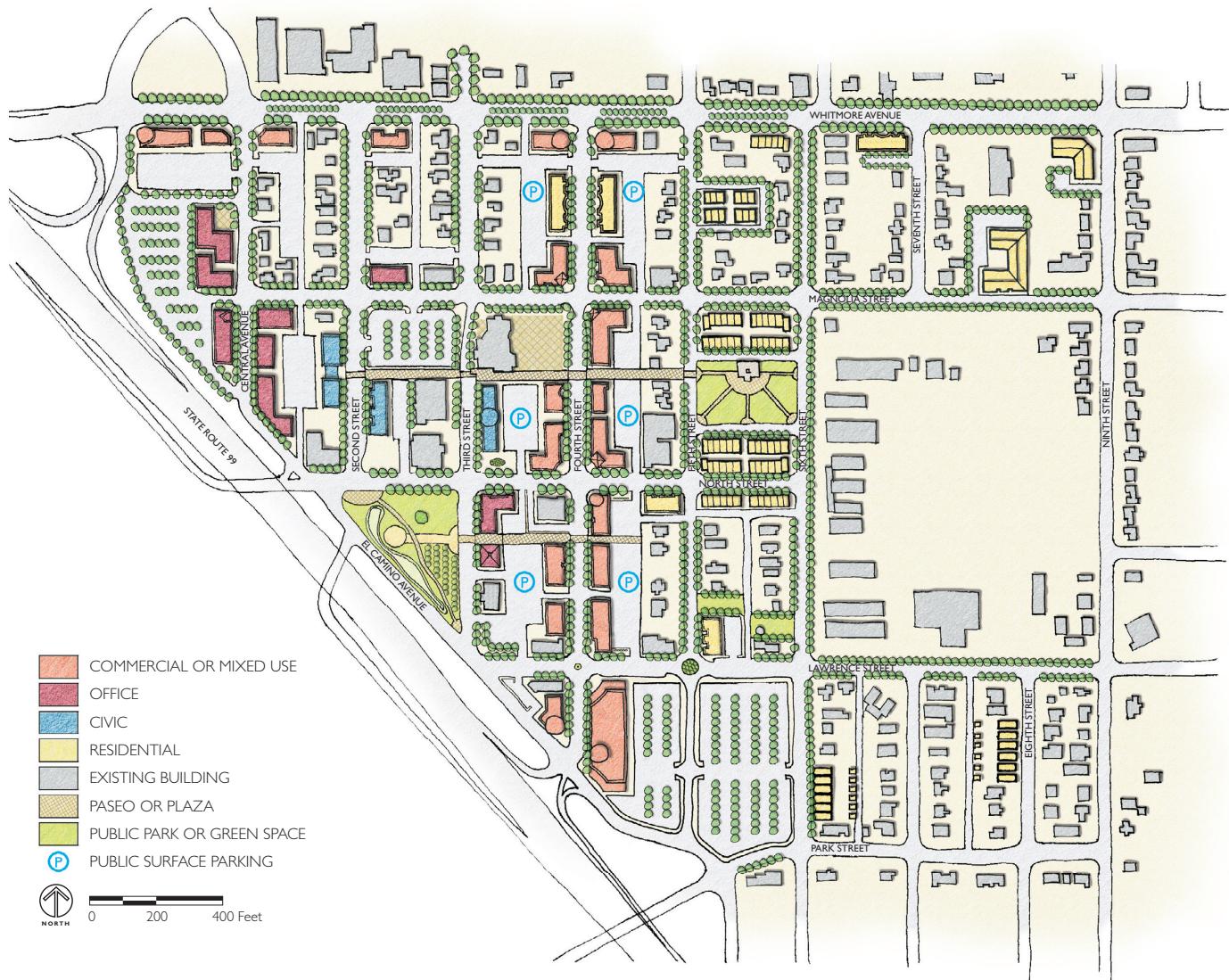
Wayfinding

A wayfinding system will be established to provide vehicular traffic with increased awareness of Downtown and reinforce the character of the most important streets. Wayfinding signage will be established on Whitmore Avenue to identify the Civic Core, the Fourth Street Commercial Core and Fifth Street Historic District. Streetscape improvements along Whitmore Avenue in Downtown will also help improve the image of Downtown to travelers on this busy street.

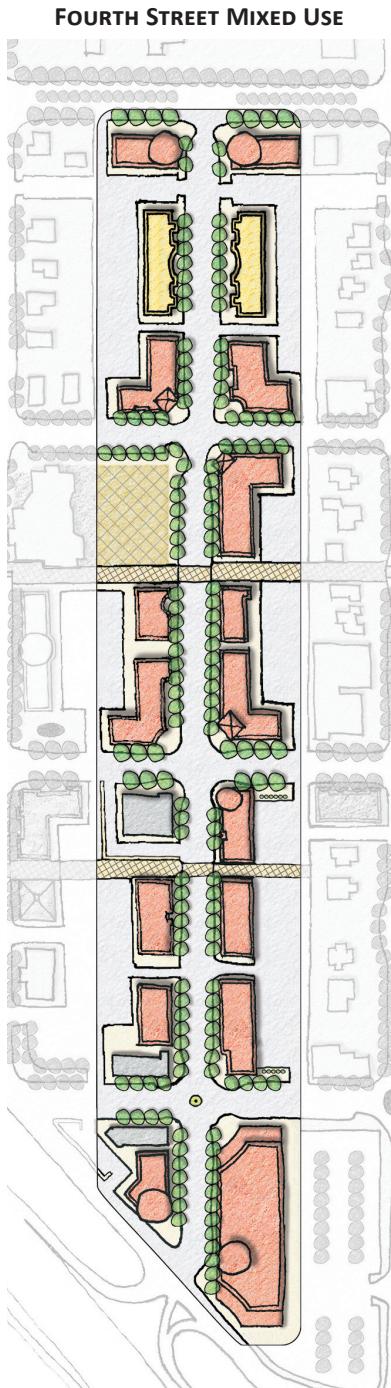
D. Conceptual Illustrative Plan

This section is intended to illustrate how the big-picture ideas in the Framework diagram could be achieved in Downtown. Figure 3-2 shows a Conceptual Illustrative Plan that illustrates the potential buildup of private development and public improvement opportunities recommended by this Specific Plan. The Illustrative Plan is designed to-scale to ensure feasibility, but it is strictly conceptual. The exact locations of new development and improvements will be determined during implementation of this Specific Plan, in more detailed design processes and during approval of specific development projects. The following development projects are encouraged to achieve the vision and accomplish the goals for Downtown.

FIGURE 3-2 Conceptual Illustrative



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Fourth Street Mixed Use Development

New mixed use development is the prominent use envisioned for buildings that front onto Fourth Street. This is particularly relevant at the north and south entries to Fourth Street, where buildings should both support the vision for mixed use in Downtown and serve an additional role of demarcating entry to the heart of Downtown. Buildings will be developed at a variety of scales, primarily with ground floor retail and upper floor residential. Some of the existing building stock is also expected to remain. Upper floor uses should be flexible. Recommended upper floor uses include townhomes, apartments and potentially office. Private development along Fourth Street may also create opportunities for outdoor seating, publicly accessible plazas, and additional landscape features, particularly in areas that are adjacent to pedestrian areas within the street right-of-way. To complement new Fourth Street development, a new civic plaza is proposed where the current Community Center parking area is located. This parking will be converted in later phases of implementation, as Ceres' civic areas are expanded and the northern blocks of Fourth Street are redeveloping. Chapter Four, Development Concepts, shows a more detailed conceptual proposal for new development along Fourth Street.

Fourth Street is the most appropriate street in Downtown on which to focus this development type, particularly since it was the original commercial activity center in Ceres and many of these qualities remain intact. The redevelopment of Fourth Street should also capitalize on excellent access to and from Downtown provided via State Route 99. This type of development will have a strong influence on the character of Fourth Street, but the energy they create will also spread to the surrounding areas of Downtown.

Fourth Street Cinema

A potential Downtown Cineplex is envisioned for the Plan Area. The Cineplex should relate to Fourth Street and enliven the Downtown. One potential location for this Cineplex is on the two blocks currently bounded by Fourth Street, El Camino Avenue, Park Street, Sixth Street and Lawrence Street.

A cinema is particularly suitable at this location due to the close proximity of State Route 99. The emissions from traffic on this highway make residential and mixed use development containing residential uses infeasible, making an indoor entertainment use highly appropriate.

A new cinema on Fourth Street will provide an economic anchor for Downtown, generate increased pedestrian activity at night, and provide a desired entertainment venue for residents. Downtown businesses will benefit from spillover spending from local moviegoers and those who come from nearby cities.



Fourth Street South Gateway

A triangular block at the southern foot of Fourth Street offers an important development opportunity. This block, along with the cinema, should contribute directly to the gateway established at this entrance to Fourth Street. These development opportunities are crucial to establishing the identity of Downtown and entry to its heart in Fourth Street. The current land use occupying the majority of this block is a gas station. The Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) Hall is also located on this block, at the southwest corner of the Fourth Street/Lawrence Street intersection. This building provides a strong corner presence and should contribute to the sense of entry into Downtown. Eventual redevelopment of the gas station and preservation of the existing Fourth Street development on this block is recommended.

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New development at this location should be designed to contribute strongly to this important gateway to Downtown. This is particularly important because of the proximity of this site to State Route 99. New high-quality development at this location will be clearly visible to people traveling on the highway, as evidence of Downtown's resurgence. New development at this site can also serve as a catalyst project for attracting new investment in Downtown.

Civic Center Expansion

In late phases and as part of comprehensive expansion of the Downtown Civic Center, a new city hall is proposed at the northeast corner of Third and North Streets. A new library facility is also proposed on Second Street, facing a pedestrian paseo leading to Fourth Street. The existing City Hall and library are proposed to be replaced by surface parking, or potentially a parking structure if necessary in the long term. This parking area could provide a shared parking resource for several critical Downtown destinations. A pedestrian paseo will connect this parking area with the rest of the Civic Core, continuing on to Fourth Street and the Whitmore Mansion. After development of shared parking at this location, a new public plaza is proposed on the current parking lot located east of the Community Center.

The proposed plaza will serve as a focal point for the Civic Center and provide a prominent public gathering space on Fourth Street, which will reinforce the street's identity as the primary activity zone in Downtown. This concept will also reinforce and build upon other recent investments in the Civic Center area. Finally, the development of a dedicated surface parking area at the current location can be phased over time, thereby increasing feasibility.



State Route 99 Gateway Commercial Development

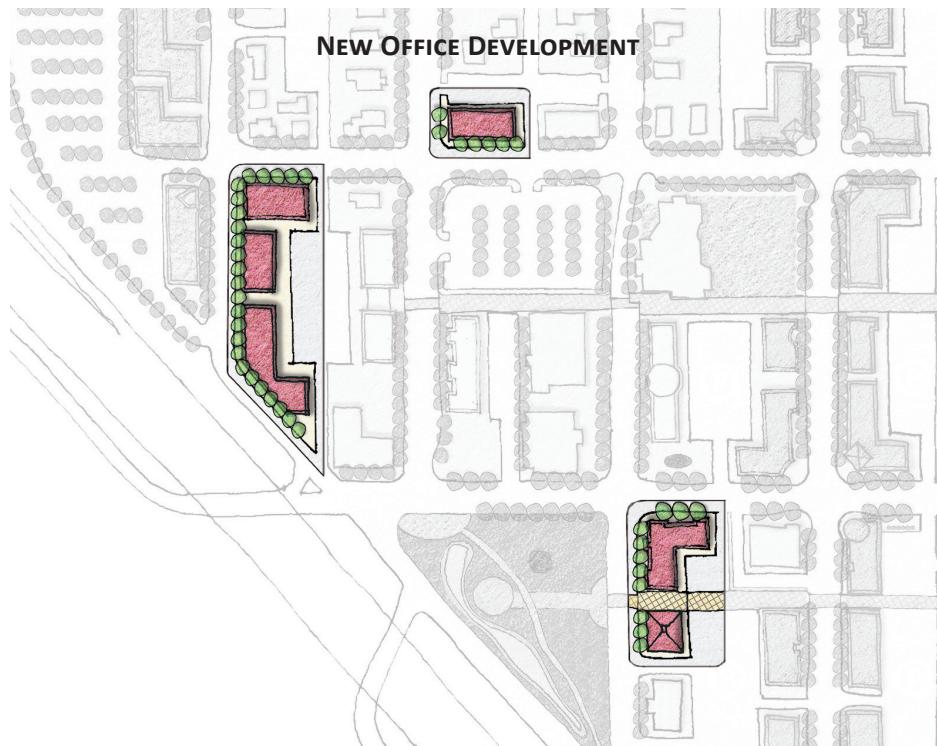
The blocks west of the Civic Center are proposed for new commercial development and other complementary uses. Development occurring in this area should take advantage of its visibility and accessibility from State Route 99 with a mix of office uses and supporting retail, or other commercial uses as appropriate. The stronger opportunity may be in finding a company attracted by highway visibility and convenience, as well as Ceres' strong neighborhoods, which would occupy such a project as a single user, rather than aiming for speculative multi-tenant development dependent upon the City's current, modest office market. Any retail in this area, aside from highway serving commercial similar to existing uses, should not directly compete with Fourth Street businesses. It is recommended that this area be developed as a single project, if possible. Class A office development at this location will bring increased daytime patronage to Downtown's commercial businesses. As in other locations, development at this area should include strong gateway elements that signify entry to Downtown and provide queues to the identity and character within its various districts.



New Office Development

Office uses are recommended for property fronting onto Central Avenue from the east, as well as new development fronting onto Second and Third Street. Office uses may incorporate mixed use components by including residential uses on upper floors. Office condominiums, live/work units, stand-alone offices, and limited supporting retail uses and services are also appropriate uses.

New office development at this location will provide new spending capacity in Downtown. Offices at this location will also build off of the existing character of this area, which contains some small offices and other lower intensity uses. As with the cinema, office development is more appropriate than development containing residential uses in areas close to State Route 99, due to harmful vehicle emissions.



Whitmore Mansion Residential

It is proposed that the Whitmore Mansion grounds, which are currently an underutilized resource in the community, be developed into a publicly accessible green space with the Mansion as a centerpiece. Fencing and landscaping should be redesigned to ensure views from Fifth Street toward the Mansion and the Green. New pedestrian friendly residential development will be adjacent to and face the new green space at Whitmore Mansion.

Developing some portion of the Whitmore Mansion grounds with new housing is a key step in achieving the vision and goals, and implements a key concept in the Conceptual Framework. This improvement will benefit Downtown and Ceres in several ways. First, new development at Whitmore Mansion will add new residents to Downtown, which will provide increased support for Downtown businesses. Second, new development can add to the existing residential character in the eastern parts of Downtown by providing a high-quality residential project at a central location. New development can also be designed to help accentuate a key piece of Ceres' history, the Whitmore Mansion.



Additional Eastern Residential Development

The streets to the east of Fourth Street will potentially accommodate new Downtown residential housing, such as small-lot single-family, townhomes and multi-family apartment buildings. These medium-density housing types are family-friendly and will bring new residents and new life to Downtown.

New multi-family development is encouraged in many areas of Downtown, but particularly on key vacant sites in the eastern areas. Residential infill will help to develop a cohesive residential area within this part of Downtown, and also provide increased demand for Downtown businesses.

Streetscape Improvements

The existing configuration of Downtown streets offers flexibility and opportunities for innovation in streetscape design. Most Downtown streets have wide rights-of-way, which offer flexibility in design. By reducing the widths of existing travel lanes, additional space becomes available within the right-of-way to add sidewalks, modify existing sidewalks, reconfigure parking, and provide additional streetscape elements, landscaping, bicycle facilities and infrastructure. 10- to 11-foot lanes have been successfully implemented in many downtowns, particularly as trends have moved toward creating multi-modal, walkable environments that support broader goals for sustainability. These goals are consistent with the goals of this Specific Plan, so reduced lane widths are recommended. However, it should be noted that not all street segments in Downtown are suitable for lanes of 10 to 11 feet, particularly when public safety concerns and turning movements of emergency vehicles are an issue. As such, the Downtown Specific Plan does allow for wider lane widths where necessary. Deviations from recommended lane width reductions should be considered on a case-by-case basis and with coordination between the City's Development Services and Public Works Departments.



Bioswales, pavers and street lighting all contribute to streetscape character.



Angled parking, as is proposed to be extended north of North Street on Fourth Street.



Street improved with a median.

Downtown streetscape improvements should be strategically undertaken to achieve the vision and character proposed for Downtown. Streetscape improvements should seek to accommodate pedestrians and vehicles and, in some cases, should provide facilities for bicyclists. Streetscapes should be considered as a resource for the provision of public gathering space in Downtown and provide amenities for pedestrians, such as benches, newspaper racks and pedestrian-scale street lighting. Streetscapes also provide opportunities to manage stormwater by including bioswales at appropriate locations and by increasing the tree canopy in Downtown. Bioswales may not be appropriate in all locations, but are specifically recommended on North and Fifth Streets. Cost and maintenance issues related with bioswales should be evaluated prior to proceeding with construction. Large canopy street trees will also provide needed shade during hot summer months.

Streetscape improvements will assist in accomplishing goals for diversity and unique character, a pedestrian environment, economic viability and sustainability. This will be accomplished through a series of streetscape treatments that provide elegant spaces that are comfortable and enjoyable to pedestrians. Streetscape improvements can increase economic viability by helping to attract new investment to Downtown. Finally, streetscape improvements in certain locations can accommodate new stormwater management infrastructure. Specific streetscape concepts for Fourth Street, Whitmore Avenue, North Street, Fifth Street and Third Street are discussed in Chapter Four, Development Concepts.

Downtown Parking

Accomplishing goals for a multi-modal Downtown requires a comprehensive strategy for parking to ensure it is provided as efficiently as possible. On-street parking is important to businesses and should be preserved throughout Downtown. To complement on-street parking in Downtown, off-street surface parking will be necessary. As shown in the Conceptual Illustrative Plan, it is proposed that surface parking provided by Downtown businesses be located behind buildings. Consolidating parking in the middle of blocks and encouraging development to front directly onto streets will help support goals for a pedestrian-oriented Downtown by creating streetscapes with a sense of enclosure and character, and by facilitating inviting storefronts. Consolidated parking behind buildings can be accessed by existing alleys. Implementation of this concept will help establish a “parking system” for Downtown, particularly for Fourth Street businesses.

Shared parking opportunities also exist in the mid-block areas. Shared parking means that some of the parking spaces can be shared by more than one business or user type. Often parking demand varies between uses and by the time of day. Shared parking would help prevent inefficiencies associated with underutilization of parking. For example, a Fourth Street business that is open only during daytime hours may have empty parking areas at night, just as a nightclub would have empty parking areas in the early morning. Shared parking policies proposed in this Specific Plan would reduce the parking requirement for on-site space requirements if shared parking is provided. To complement these parking resources, it is also proposed that surface parking be provided by the City at strategic locations in the long term. One surface parking area can be provided where the current library and City Hall are located. This can be phased as a part of a comprehensive expansion of the Civic Center, as described earlier in this chapter. It is proposed that the City also develop and manage an additional parking area south of the Turlock Irrigation District (TID) building on Third Street.

These parking strategies are unique to Downtown and directly respond to goals for new development, a pedestrian-oriented Downtown and a multi-modal Downtown.

Circulation Improvements

A limited number of circulation and roadway configuration improvements are recommended in Downtown. Circulation improvements will be necessary to accommodate the buildup anticipated from the Specific Plan. Circulation improvements in Downtown focus on reducing traffic and intersection delays while also facilitating improvements to pedestrian and bicycle circulation. More detail about circulation improvements is contained in Chapter Eight, Circulation.

An integrated pedestrian circulation system is proposed for Downtown. The system will include complete sidewalks, pedestrian paseos and public plazas. The paseo network, in coordination with plazas, consolidated parking and other streetscape improvements, will be instrumental in the establishment of a walkable downtown in Ceres. Paseos will bisect blocks containing parcels under private ownership and will potentially require property acquisition by the City, dedication, public/private partnerships or other mechanisms. Illustrations and additional details about paseos are provided in Chapter Eight, Circulation. Several bicycle improvements are proposed to facilitate better bicycle circulation in Downtown, including new bike lanes and the dedication of additional Downtown streets as bicycle routes. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are critical for achieving goals for a sustainable Downtown.



Pedestrian circulation improvements are coordinated with small plazas.

Park Improvements

Existing and proposed parks are critical to achieving the vision for Downtown. A series of new parks and open spaces is proposed for Downtown. Potential projects include enhancement of existing park spaces, development of new hardscaped plaza spaces, public space provision through private development, and new community parks. Additional details about open space improvements are included in Chapter Nine, Public Facilities, Services and Infrastructure.

New parks and improvements to existing park can help provide new and diverse recreational spaces for Downtown residents, as well as for citywide residents and visitors.



Parks and open spaces create dynamic spaces for downtowns.

Infrastructure Improvements

Upgrades to existing utility infrastructure are needed in Downtown. Upgrades include improvements to storm drainage, wastewater and water infrastructure. Several above-ground utility wires exist in Downtown, and undergrounding of overhead wires visible from Fourth Street should be prioritized. Undergrounding overhead wires on additional Downtown streets should be explored and coordinated with redevelopment efforts. These efforts should focus on undergrounding poles and wires located along primary circulation routes. The existing overhead utilities in the alleys should remain and be accommodated by new development wherever possible.

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Infrastructure improvements will ensure that this Specific Plan can be implemented over the long term. Providing adequate infrastructure is key in supporting new development. Infrastructure improvements will also help to ensure that Downtown development can be accommodated in an adequate and efficient manner. Infrastructure improvements in Downtown will also help contribute to citywide systems. By encouraging green stormwater infrastructure at key locations, Downtown will serve as a local and regional model for sustainability.