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city of

DUARTE

TOWN CENTER CONCEPT PLAN

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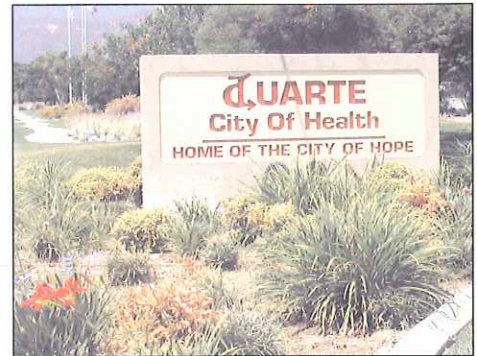
Chapter I

Introduction

Duarte is blessed with a beautiful setting and an array of assets and amenities. From its tree-lined streets and world-class hospitals to its rich historic past, Duarte is a unique community that evokes a sense of pride in its residents.

However, Duarte lacks a "sense of place." It has no historic town center or central gathering spot. It lacks a place where pedestrians can comfortably shop or stroll along storefronts, relax with friends in a plaza, or come together for community events.

The Duarte Town Center Concept Plan represents a key step in addressing this situation. The elements of this plan – and the process that created them – set the stage for creating a place that will become a true "center" for the community.



Well-maintained landscaping and signs reflect Duarte's sense of civic pride.

Setting

Duarte is situated at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains, about 20 miles northeast of Los Angeles. It borders Monrovia to the west, Bradbury to the north, Azusa to the east, and Irwindale to the south. Additionally, the San Gabriel River and Santa Fe Flood Control Basin abut Duarte to the east and south.

Major transportation corridors, including Interstate 210, Interstate 605 and Huntington Drive (Route 66), connect Duarte to these towns and the region beyond. Huntington Drive also links commercial and civic uses within town, while key north-south corridors such as Buena Vista Street and Highland Avenue connect retail services, medical-related uses, and business park areas to the city's residential neighborhoods.

Demographics

Duarte is small and ethnically diverse with a population of approximately 21,000 residents. The City's population has remained virtually unchanged in the last 10 years, showing a slight (six percent) increase. The community has many families, which translates to a relatively young population base, as 30 percent of residents are under the age of 18. Sixty percent of citizens are between 18 and 64 and 10 percent are 65 or older.



Duarte's Teen Center and athletic fields meet the needs of its youth population.

Economics and Land Use

Despite its relatively small size in the region, Duarte enjoys a comparatively strong economic and housing market. The median annual household income was \$45,092 in 2000, surpassing the income in neighboring Azusa and Monrovia. Duarte's workforce has an unemployment rate of five percent, compared with a six percent national average in 2002. Although the economic climate is favorable, Duarte averages \$410,000,000 in taxable retail sales per year, which may indicate that the market is not fully utilized.

Much of Duarte is comprised of residential housing, including single-family dwellings throughout the city and some apartment buildings and townhouses along major streets. Property value in Duarte is lower than in surrounding cities - the median home value in Duarte was \$175,500 in 2000 and was \$229,600 in Monrovia - which may make land acquisition for new development more likely.

Duarte also features a successful local-serving commercial base, including such uses as restaurants, dry cleaners, video stores, clothing shops, and professional services (such as dentist and doctors' offices). Large anchors include Big Lots, Wal-Mart and Ralph's grocery store, as well as regionally oriented automobile dealerships. The city also has several motels, particularly along the Huntington Drive corridor.



Detached single-family houses such as this are common throughout Duarte.



The Community Center is a valuable and attractive civic resource, but it is currently disconnected from other amenities in Duarte.

Civic-oriented uses include a Community Center, performing arts center, senior center, library, fitness center and public pool. In addition, Santa Teresita Hospital and the City of Hope are world-class medical facilities that have spurred nearby development of biomedical firms and other research oriented companies.

Furthermore, Duarte enjoys ample park and recreation space throughout the city and spectacular views of the mountains to the north. The nearby San Gabriel River also provides natural open space and recreation opportunities.

Despite these attributes, many amenities are disjointedly dispersed across the city, leaving Duarte without any central gathering place and creating a cityscape that is unfriendly to pedestrians.

Planning Process

In fall 2002 the City of Duarte embarked on a planning process to address these issues. The City Council charged a newly formed Duarte Downtown Task Force with three principal tasks:

- Evaluate issues and opportunities for creating a downtown;
- Identify and evaluate potential sites; and
- Make recommendations to City Council in early 2003.

The Task Force, in conjunction with urban planning consultants Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG), Inc., transportation consultants Wilbur Smith Associates, and economics consultants Keyser Marston Associates, conducted a six-month planning process to accomplish these tasks and develop recommendations for creating a Duarte Town Center Concept Plan.

The planning process included five Task Force meetings, two Community workshops and two walking tours (one in Duarte and one to the downtowns of Fullerton and Brea). Throughout the process, Task Force members, community participants and planning consultants worked together to develop (1) a shared vision for future development in Duarte, (2) an informed set of recommendations for program and design, and (3) action-oriented strategies to implement the plan.

These interactive sessions included exploration and analysis of land use issues and opportunities, economic costs and feasibility, roadway capacities, design considerations, and potential social impacts. The workshops provided an environment for open dialogue and debate while building consensus toward a Town Center plan.



The planning process involved a series of Task Force meetings, Community Workshops, and walking tours, resulting in the strategies and actions outlined in the Town Center Concept Plan.



The Task Force toured existing downtowns in the region to identify development patterns and land uses that could be successfully applied to Duarte.



Report Organization

The remainder of the Duarte Town Center Concept Plan is organized into the following sections:

Chapter II: Vision

The Vision describes common goals that the community has for future development in the area. This broad vision provides the foundation for the Town Center Concept Plan.

Chapter III: Analysis of Area Options

During the planning process, the Task Force developed and analyzed five alternative Town Center area options. The area options incorporated the tenets of the Vision while exploring alternative locations for a Town Center, examining different ways to organize uses within it, and analyzing land use mixes to ensure that it is economically feasible.

Chapter IV: Town Center Concept Plan

A single, refined Town Center Concept Plan emerged from the preliminary area options. The Town Center Concept Plan features a development approach that identifies key opportunity sites, outlines potential uses, incorporates future amenities, and creates pedestrian connections throughout the area. The Concept Plan also provides an overview of phasing strategies to construct the development over time and outlines the costs associated with creating a Town Center.

Chapter V: Implementation Action Plan

The final section of this document is an Implementation Action Plan that includes strategies that community organizations, business groups and the City can collaborate on to attract the recommended development in Duarte. Through public investment, citizen involvement, research, marketing and other development efforts, the ideas in the Concept Plan can be achieved and a Duarte Town Center can become a reality.

The Downtown Vision

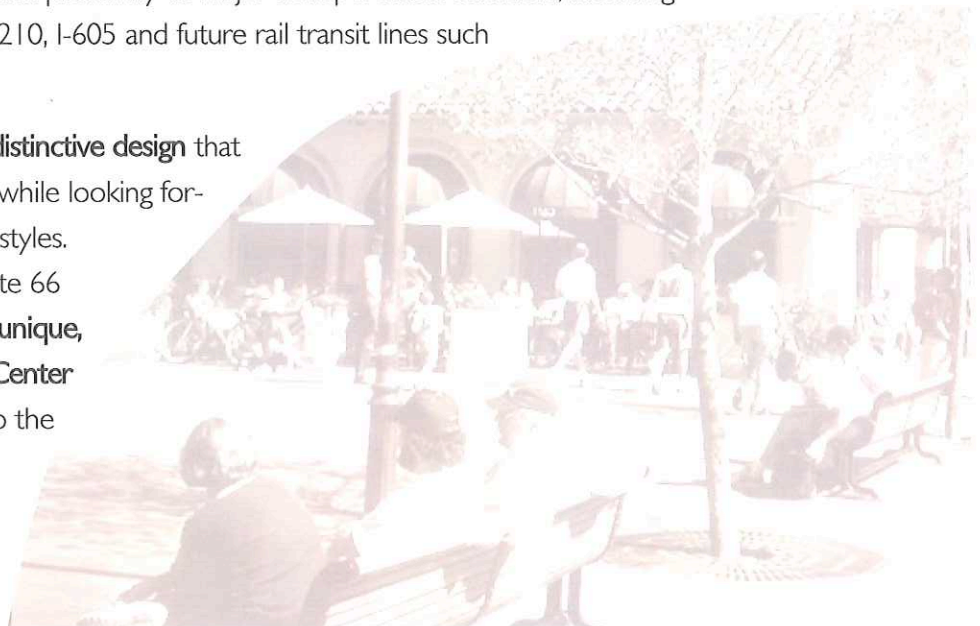
Participants in the Downtown Duarte Task Force planning process described a future in which . . .

Duarte's Town Center is an **attractive mixed-use activity center** that offers a "sense of place" or focal point for the community. The mix of uses includes retail stores, restaurants, housing, civic buildings and central public plazas with open space. These central spaces and the uses around them serve as Duarte's civic and cultural hub - an **active, dynamic social gathering space** for the entire City. The Town Center is one of the many districts that comprise the City, linking other activity areas throughout the community.

Duarte's Town Center is **family-oriented and pedestrian-friendly**, inviting people to stroll along storefronts, dine outdoors at a café, relax with friends on a lawn or bench, enjoy public art and come together for community events. This Town Center provides amenities for people of all ethnicities, ages, orientations and income levels, **reflecting and celebrating the diversity of our City's residents**.

Duarte's Town Center is **economically strong and diverse**. It preserves and enhances the City's existing locally owned businesses while attracting some larger, more regionally oriented anchor commercial uses. New stores and services in the Town Center improve the City's retail tax base while **complementing - rather than competing with - established businesses** in other parts of town and neighboring cities. Duarte's economic position is also bolstered by close proximity to major transportation corridors, including Huntington Drive/Route 66, I-210, I-605 and future rail transit lines such as the Gold Line extension.

Duarte's Town Center has a **distinctive design** that draws upon the City's history while looking forward to modern architectural styles. Influential themes such as Route 66 imagery help to create a **truly unique, innovative and vibrant Town Center** for residents to enjoy long into the future.



Chapter 3

Analysis of Area Options



The Task Force evaluated each Area Option with respect to several criteria, including economic impacts.

Evaluation Criteria

During the planning process Task Force participants wanted to ensure that the final Town Center recommendations reflected the different ideas outlined in the Vision. To explore the full range of options and ideas, the Task Force developed five alternative scenarios for creating a Town Center.

The five area options explored alternative locations, sizes and development patterns for Duarte's potential Town Center. To qualitatively and quantitatively evaluate the options and work toward a preferred alternative, the Task Force considered several criteria, including: potential economic impacts, relocation requirements, community design elements, circulation patterns and other factors for each alternative. This in-depth evaluation process allowed Task Force members and public participants to confirm that the final plan would accurately reflect the needs of the community.

Economic Impacts

One of the most important factors the community considered was the potential economic impact of each area option. The City's budget for public projects is limited. In addition, analysis by economic consultants Keyser Marston Associates showed that the market for private development in Duarte is similarly constrained.

To ensure that the final Town Center Concept is feasible, it is essential that the taxes, rents, and property sale generated from proposed development exceeds the public and private improvement costs associated with the plan. The Task Force evaluated

each of the area options according to the following economic indicators:

- Public costs for the project
- Amount of net tax revenue increase
 - ◆ *Retail sales tax*
 - ◆ *Property tax*
- Jobs increased
 - ◆ *Net number of new jobs created*
 - ◆ *Types of jobs created*
- Market potential (how strong of a market for the proposed improvements)



The evaluation process analyzed whether or not existing housing would be relocated.

Relocation Requirements

Ideally, development in Duarte could occur without negatively impacting existing residential or retail buildings. However, with scarce developable land in the City, one option for development is to relocate certain structures. Relocating buildings, houses, and the people in them is usually expensive and disruptive; these economic and social costs must be balanced with the benefits of new development initiatives. The area options explore a range of responses to the issue of relocation.

Community Design Elements (Creating Place)

Even though there is not a quantifiable indicator (such as rent generated or buildings relocated) associated with community design elements, the concept of creating a sense of place is an essential feature of the Town Center plan.

Development efforts - particularly those in downtown environments - will not succeed unless they improve the quality of life of the people who live and work in the area. This can be accomplished through a variety of techniques, such as creating a central gathering place, providing public amenities, creating pedestrian-oriented connections, and strengthening the area's appearance and design.



Pedestrian and bicycle connections are one of several factors in evaluating different development options.

Other Factors

Several other evaluation criteria factored into analysis of the scenarios.

Transportation and circulation issues are important because new development would likely attract people throughout Duarte and from outside the city, leading to increased traffic levels. To ensure that the additional automobiles would not adversely affect the quality of life in Duarte, each area option was examined in terms of level-of-service traffic capacity impacts on major streets (Note: the transportation analysis of the area options was general in nature. A comprehensive transportation and parking study should be conducted for the final Town Center Concept Plan during implementation phases).

In addition, each area option explored pedestrian, bicycle and transit connections from the Town Center to adjacent neighborhoods and community amenities.

Environmental impacts, such as habitat loss and air and water quality, were also considered, although none of the alternatives had a significant impact on these factors.

Finally, levels of community support for each area option also played a vital role in the Task Force's evaluations and in the selection of a preferred alternative. **It is crucial that Duarte residents support the final plan from political, economic and community perspectives.** If they do not support the plan, it will not be implemented and the Vision for a Town Center will not become a reality.

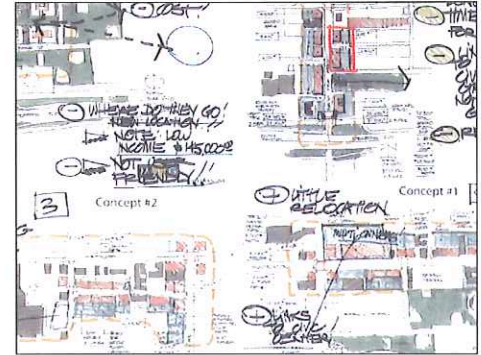
Area Options

The five area options developed by the Task Force encompass an array of physical locations and methods for developing a downtown, ranging from infill and redevelopment efforts to the creation of a brand new Town Center.

The Task Force considered potential locations throughout the city. However, the group determined that because of its strategic location the intersection of Huntington Drive and Buena Vista Street is vital for inclusion in any chosen alternative. Therefore, it is a common focal point and link among all of the planning scenarios.

The scenarios incorporate various amounts of residential, commercial and office uses, as well as parking, streetscape improvements, pedestrian connections, and open space considerations. They also include amenities such as plazas, fountains, and particular stores or uses. However, the area options were intended to be general alternatives for evaluation; land use and amenity details are more specifically defined in the final concept plan.

The options are detailed on the following pages. While each alternative has strong components for consideration, the Task Force determined - through extensive internal discussion, community input and economic analysis - that a hybrid of concepts #1 and #3 would comprise a "preferred" scenario. This hybrid, further refined by the Task Force and community members during the planning process, evolved into the Town Center Concept Plan outlined in Chapter IV.



An examination of different area options helped the Task Force refine a development concept.

AREA OPTION #1

Infill Development and Redevelopment along Huntington Drive

Area Option #1 consists of a linear corridor of development along Huntington Drive between Buena Vista Street and Highland Avenue. The proposed development focuses mostly on infill of vacant sites, concentrating new construction in the gaps between existing homes and businesses. This strategy allows phasing to occur over time as vacant parcels become available. It also minimizes relocation costs.

The infill of mixed-use buildings (with ground-floor commercial uses and upper-floor offices and residential units) helps to activate the corridor by providing retail stores, services and office uses that attract people to the area throughout the day. In addition, proposed mixed-use housing units along Huntington Drive provide a built-in market for the new retail uses while helping to keep the street active after businesses close in the evening.

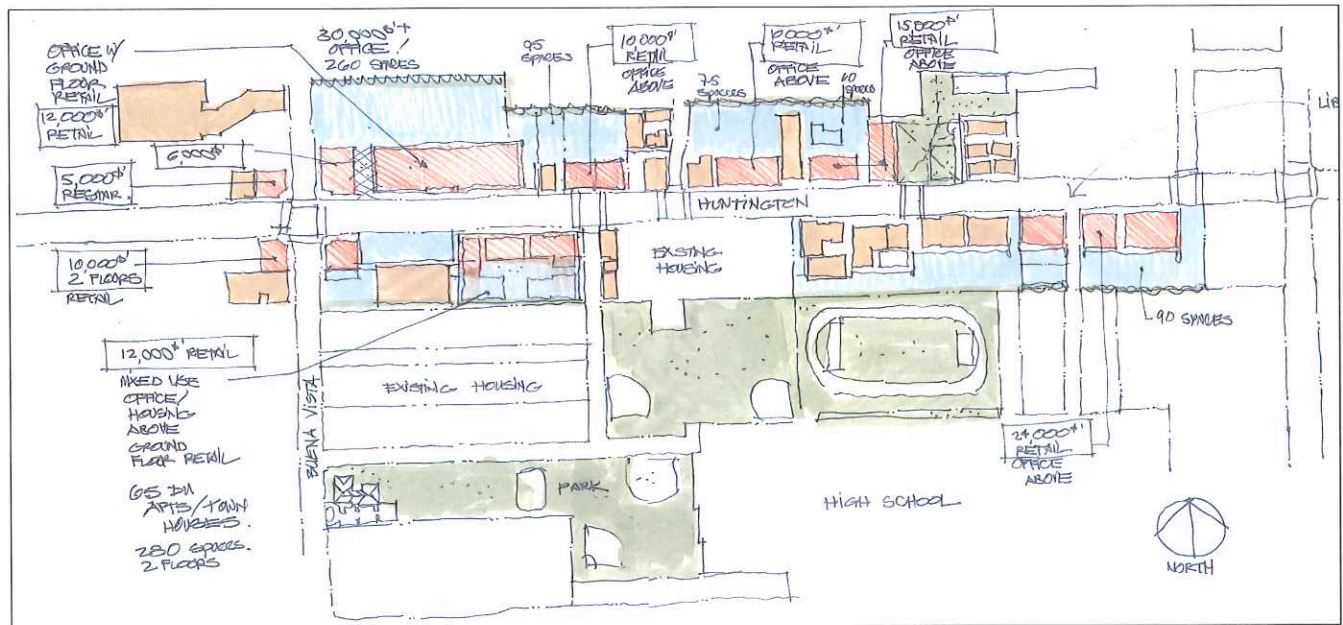
The key retail component to this alternative is a lively, active "100 percent corner" at the intersection of Huntington Drive and Buena Vista Street. From this anchor point, retail, office and residential development flows east towards Highland Avenue.

This option also proposes a public plaza adjacent to a mixed-use building across from the Community Center and City Hall. The building could have a restaurant or café on the ground floor with outdoor dining along the plaza, creating a gathering spot for the community across the street from an existing amenity. To further enhance the area around City Hall, the alternative also proposes relocating the existing library to a site just east of the Community Center. Centralizing these services will draw people to the Town Center while helping to make it more "walkable."

One issue associated with Option #1 is the dispersal of development along the busy Huntington Drive corridor. This would require pedestrians to cross the street along the entire span of the proposed Town Center. The width of Huntington Drive can be intimidating - rather than inviting - to pedestrians. Wide streets such as Huntington can also contribute to speeding problems, which would make the area less suitable for pedestrians.

Program Assumptions Area Option # 1	
Retail	100,000 sq.ft
Office	85,000 sq.ft
Housing	65 units
Parking	860 spaces

In addition, the length of the corridor may make phasing challenging. Area Option #1 calls for a large number of parcels to be developed separately, but developers must first wait for each piece of land to become available. Therefore, this concept would likely take several years or even decades to fully implement.



Area Option #1

AREA OPTION #2

Brand New Town Center Development South of Huntington Drive and West of Buena Vista Street

Area Option #2 proposes a dense development project southwest of the intersection of Huntington Drive and Buena Vista Street and east of Mountain Vista Plaza.

Rather than focusing on infill development, this alternative replaces a large tract of existing houses with new mixed-use buildings, parking structures and an east-west access road. The development would be highly concentrated along the new road, creating an opportunity to develop an exciting "Main Street"-like streetscape for the Town Center. Development along this narrow road fosters a pedestrian-friendly environment, with opportunities for small retail shops, cafés and aesthetic streetscape design. The narrow street also provides the community with a place to hold street fairs or similar activities in the proposed Town Center.

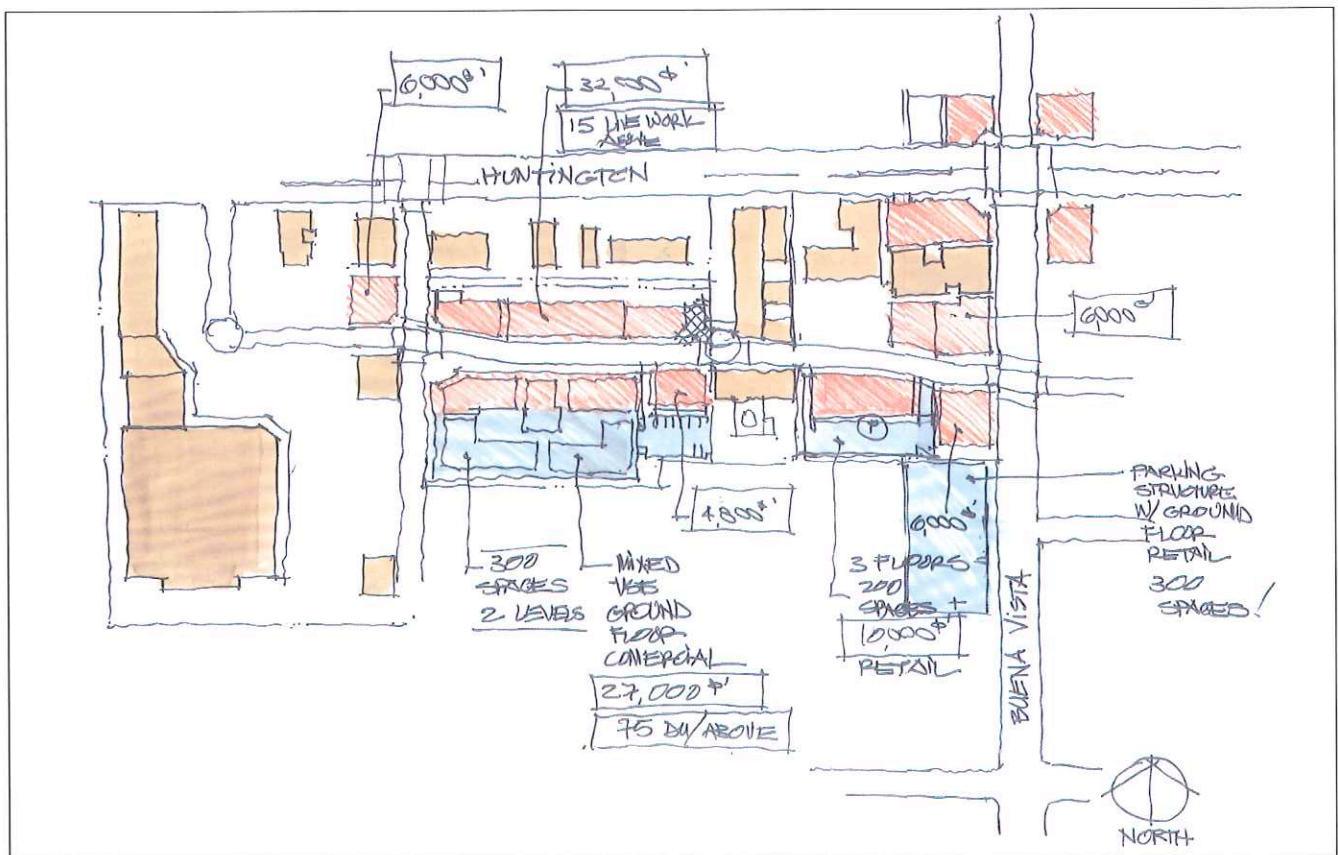
This alternative features a "100 percent corner" at Huntington Drive and Buena Vista Street that serves as a retail anchor, similar to the concept proposed by Area Option #1. Unlike the first alternative, however, Area Option #2's core development area is along the new east-west road.

The tandem of the new street and proposed structures would link existing development east of Buena Vista Street and north of Huntington Drive to Mountain Vista Plaza, which lends peripheral support to the new Town Center. Implementing this alternative would require removing residential structures, though new development would feature many mixed-use housing options along the new street.

Even though Option #2 provides a prime location and an exciting design opportunity for Duarte's Town Center, the social and fiscal costs would be very high. A large-scale demolition of buildings and

relocation of families would be highly disruptive, and Task Force and community members expressed that this would be undesirable. Even if affected residents would willingly relocate, paying for the relocation and demolition of these buildings could cost more than \$180 million. In addition, since the alternative proposes a large-scale development in a relatively compact area, parking structures (which are expensive to build and maintain) would be required to meet the demand for parking spaces in the Town Center. These two major economic factors likely render this scenario cost-prohibitive.

Program Assumptions Area Option # 2	
Retail	71,400 sq.ft
Office	28,600 sq.ft
Housing	90 units
Parking	800 spaces



Area Option #2

AREA OPTION #3

Infill Development and Redevelopment along Buena Vista Street

Area Option #3 is comprised of a north-south corridor of development along Buena Vista Street, between Huntington Drive and Interstate 210. Development focuses mostly on infill of vacant sites, with some redevelopment opportunities on sites with existing businesses. As with Area Option #1, the infill strategy allows phasing to occur over time as vacant parcels become available. It also minimizes relocation costs.

The infill of mixed-use buildings (with ground-floor commercial uses and upper-floor offices and residential units) helps to activate the corridor by providing retail stores, services and office uses that attract people to the area throughout the day. In addition, proposed mixed-use housing units along Buena Vista Street provide a built-in market for the new retail uses while helping to keep the street active after businesses close in the evening.

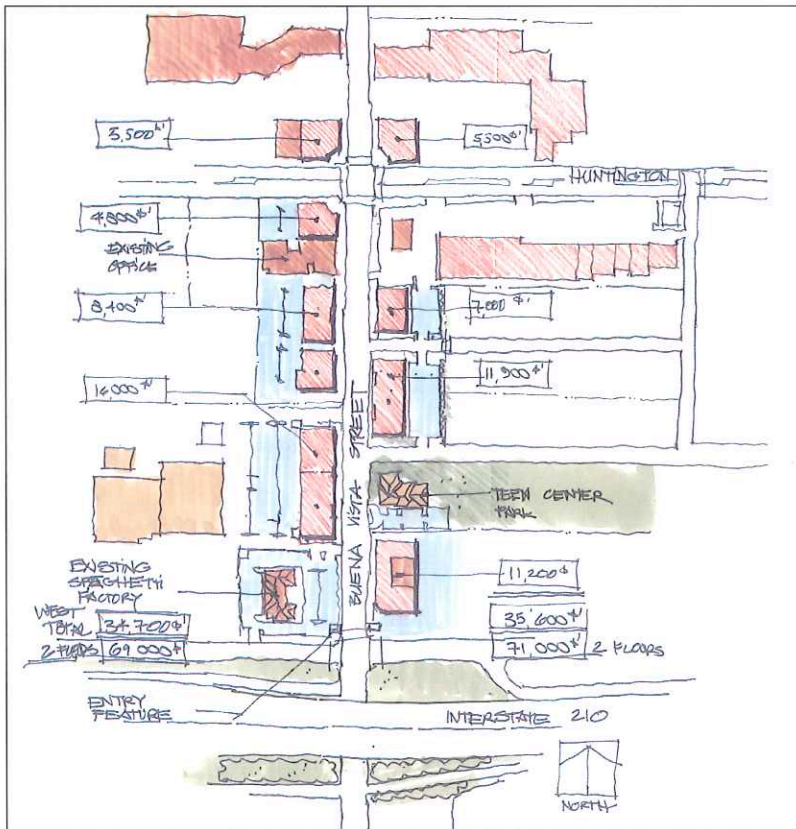
Developing the Town Center along Buena Vista Street, which is a narrower corridor than Huntington Drive, allows for the creation of a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Buena Vista Street is narrow enough to create a more inviting, walkable streetscape, and it is easier than Huntington Drive for pedestrians to cross.

Passing motorists can access the Town Center in Area Option #3 directly from the freeway, giving this alternative a more regional focus than the others. New residential and retail development complements the existing Teen Center and Old Spaghetti Factory by providing pedestrian connections between these amenities and proposed development. These uses connect northward to the "100 percent corner" concept at the intersection of Huntington Drive and Buena Vista Street.

Despite its easy freeway access, Area Option #3 is more isolated from the rest of Duarte than the other scenarios. There is a lack of connection to the Civic Center, Mountain Vista Plaza or other areas of the city. As with other concepts, Area Option #3 calls for a large number of parcels to be developed separately, but developers must first wait for each piece of land to become available. Therefore, this concept would likely take several years or even decades to fully implement.

Program Assumptions Area Option # 3	
Retail	93,400 sq.ft
Office	46,600 sq.ft
Housing	0 units
Parking	1,120 spaces

Additionally, this scenario includes the relocation of homes, particularly in later phases. Although not as extensive as the relocations proposed in Area Option #2, this option would require the relocation of homes along the east side of Buena Vista Street, which would potentially be expensive and undesirable for the community.



Area Option #3

AREA OPTION #4

Brand New Town Center Development South of Huntington Drive and East of Buena Vista Street

Area Option #4 consists of a new Town Center development located in a small area east of Buena Vista Street, south of Huntington Drive and north of Bloomdale Road.

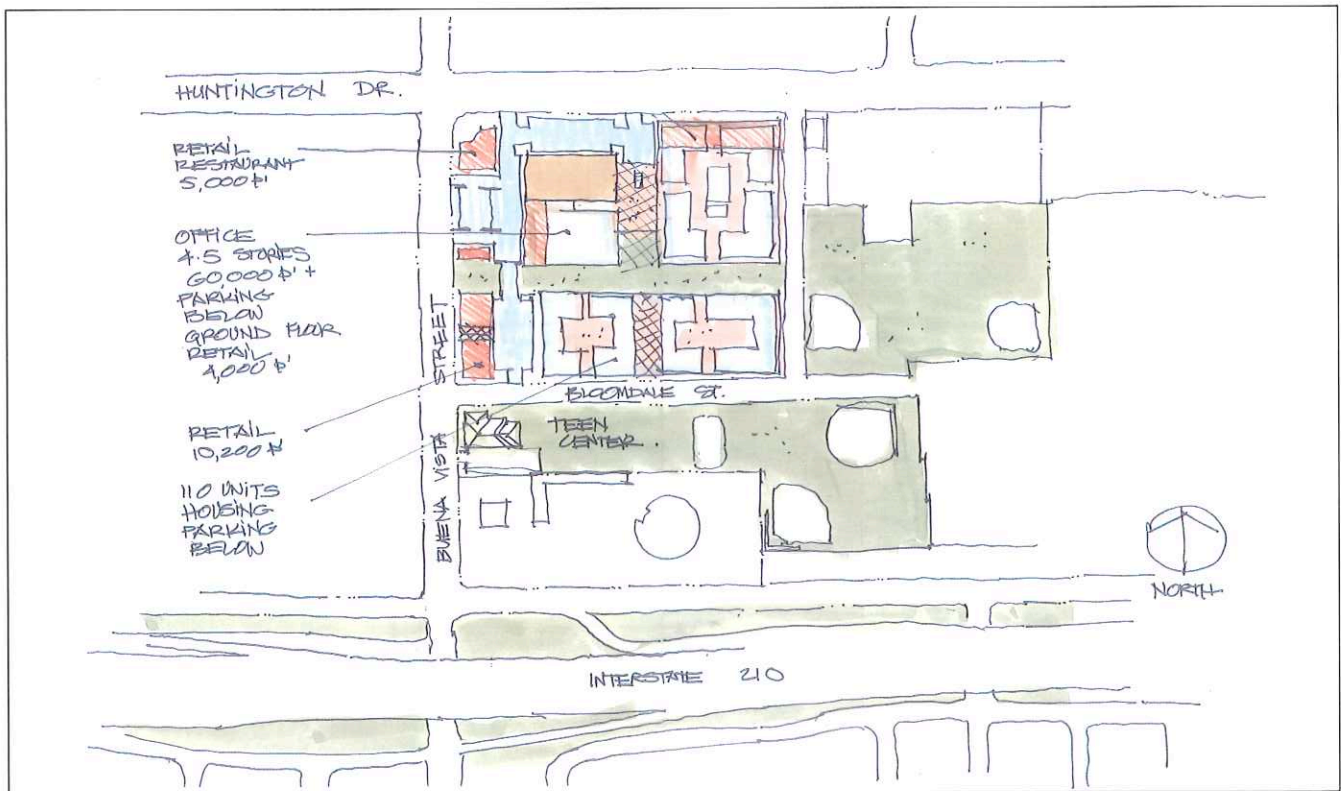
Like Area Option #2, this alternative calls for mixed-use development that replaces existing buildings. Housing and commercial establishments, including the Mike's Center at the southeast corner of Huntington Drive and Buena Vista Street, are replaced with retail stores, offices and high-density housing in the new Town Center. A common green space bisects this development, and a public plaza adds additional open space to the project. Parking needs are accommodated by surface lots and parking structures distributed in and around the Town Center.

Developed as a cohesive whole, the project creates a visible, identifiable and distinct Town Center. The scale and centrality of the site would likely attract private investment. In addition, the central plaza - located at the southeast corner of Huntington Drive and Buena Vista Street and activated by the surrounding housing and retail uses - is a pedestrian-friendly community gathering place with a café, fountain, benches and other amenities.

Furthermore, the Town Center's central location creates a strong link to existing parks and other amenities throughout the City.

As with Option #2, this scenario would incur high social and fiscal costs. Relocation of buildings and homeowners would be expensive and highly disruptive. In addition, since the alternative proposes a large-scale development in a relatively compact area, parking structures (which are expensive to build and maintain) would be required to meet the demand for spaces in the Town Center. These two major economic factors likely render this scenario cost-prohibitive.

Program Assumptions Area Option # 4	
Retail	29,200 sq.ft
Office	60,000 sq.ft
Housing	110 units
Parking	782 spaces



Area Option #4

Program Assumptions Area Option # 5	
Retail	47,000 sq.ft
Office	12,000 sq.ft
Housing	20 units
Parking	306 spaces

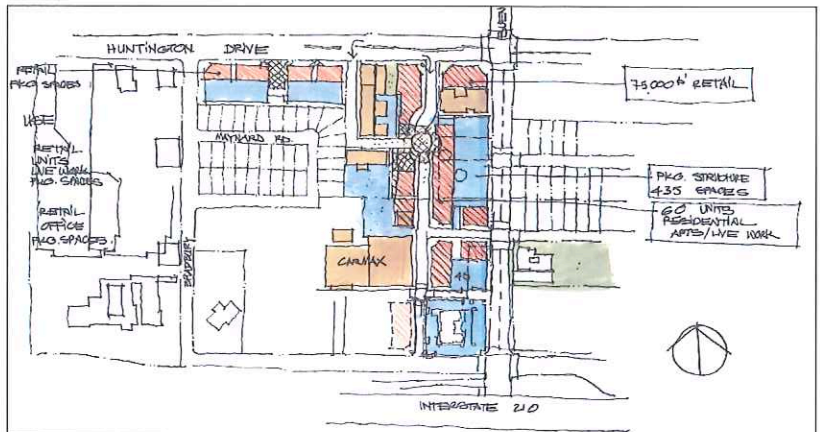
AREA OPTION #5

Redevelopment East and West of Buena Vista and South of Huntington (Concentrating Pedestrian Activity Along a Parallel Street or Alley)

Area Option #5 proposes redevelopment of existing properties south of Huntington Drive and west of Buena Vista Street. Additional development would occur along a new access street or alley running parallel to (and west of) Buena Vista Street between Huntington Drive and I-210. A large plaza spans the access road near the northeast section of the proposed development, and several small walkways allow pedestrian access to the development while providing breezeways through the new buildings.

The concept retains as many existing retail structures as possible, which lowers development costs and maintains Duarte's existing character. Option #5 includes few home relocation requirements, minimizing economic and social impacts. Furthermore, it incorporates community open space, including a plaza and multiple pedestrian-oriented arcaded walkways.

To accommodate the parking requirements of this scenario, parking structures would likely be required. The Task Force expressed that the costs may be prohibitive, likely making this alternative infeasible. The group also expressed that other area options provide better physical location opportunities for a new Town Center.



Area Option #5

Town Center Concept Plan

The final recommended Town Center Concept Plan (illustrated in the foldout map following page 36) integrates the Vision with elements of the five area options to create a community-oriented, walkable, mixed-use activity center in the heart of Duarte. It is an economically feasible concept – a realistic vision for Duarte's future – that can be developed over time as opportunities arise.

Town Center Concept

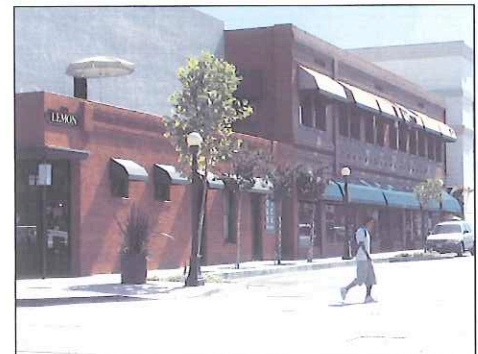
The Duarte Town Center announces its presence on I-210 with signs that call attention to the district, leading motorists into the City and advertising the area as a regional attraction.

The Town Center development begins on Buena Vista Street, just north of the freeway interchange. A distinctive gateway feature marks the entry to Duarte's Town Center and creates a unique image for the area. The gateway might consist of sculpted signs, pylons, flags and banners, landscaping elements, gate and arches, or a combination of these elements.

From the gateway, infill development and redevelopment occurs along Buena Vista Street north to Huntington Drive. Mixed-use buildings line the street, serving as local destinations and attracting people to the Town Center. These buildings combine retail and housing, office and housing, or office and retail uses where feasible and appropriate. New buildings are developed between existing structures like the Teen Center and the Old Spaghetti Factory, preserving existing uses and businesses while closing the gaps between them with new stores, offices and services.



A distinctive gateway feature, like this archway in San Diego's Gaslamp Quarter, marks the entry to Duarte's Town Center along Buena Vista Street. A local competition could be held to design Duarte's gateway to kick-off the implementation process and foster community involvement.



Infill development enhances the Town Center environment by bridging the gaps between existing buildings.



Even uses such as gas stations can be designed to fit the character of a Town Center, blending service needs with aesthetics.

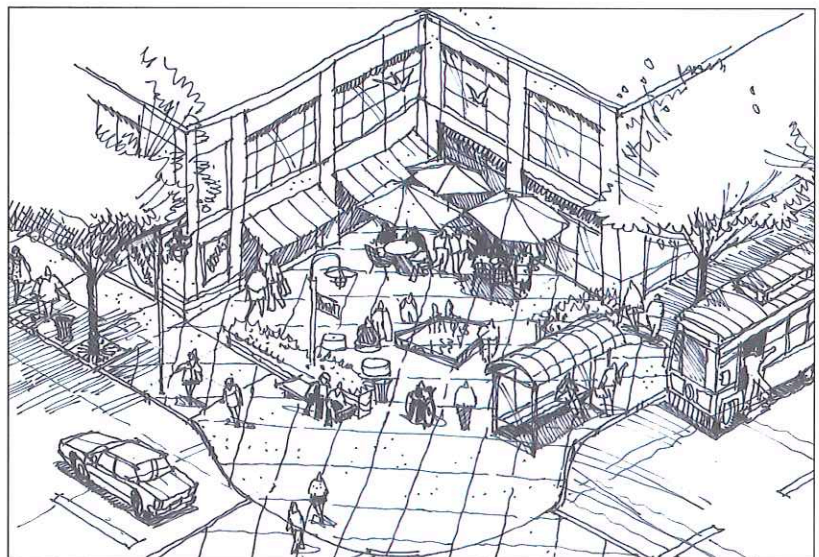
Along this stretch of Buena Vista Street, as well as throughout the Town Center area, existing retail is enhanced by economic development incentives that help strengthen the area's retail base. To complement these existing establishments, new retail uses meet the needs of Duarte's residents, mixing higher-end retail with local-serving and family-oriented businesses.

Buena Vista Street is lined with trees and has wide sidewalks, street furniture, pavement textures and banners, creating an attractive streetscape for pedestrians. Shops have appealing façades, awnings, large windows, prominent entryways, and storefront displays that enhance the walking environment.

The buildings have small setbacks, bringing structures close to the street to create a comfortable pedestrian setting. Stores and services along Buena Vista Street are accessed via curbside parking in the front and parking lots and service alleys in the rear. West of Buena Vista Street features live/work units, and the entire area is connected via trails and crosswalks to the existing housing development east of Buena Vista Street.

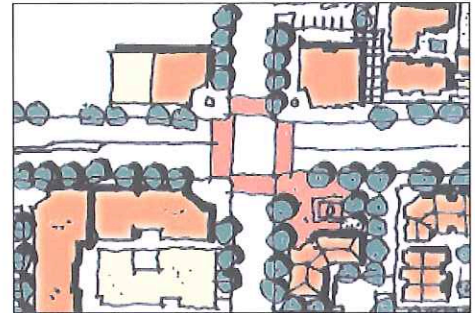


Duarte's Town Center features a strong pedestrian-oriented streetscape environment, like this example in downtown Brea. Streets and alleyways include elements such as small building setbacks, parking, banners, decorative lighting, street furniture, trees and attractive signage.



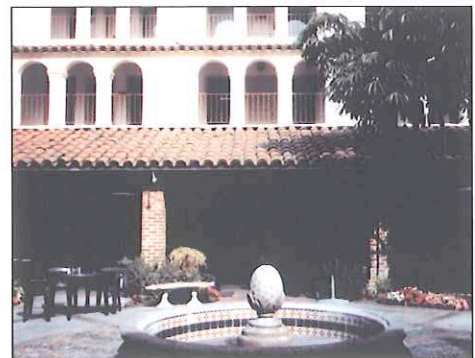
Amenities like outdoor dining areas, landscaping and a public plaza draw people into the Town Center where they enjoy a mix of uses. Pedestrians, bicycles, transit and automobiles share the space, making the Town Center comfortable and accessible for residents, workers and visitors.

A central core of newly developed retail uses at the intersection of Buena Vista Street and Huntington Drive - the "100 percent corner" - creates a distinctive sense of place at the crossroads of the community. All four corners of the intersection are developed with mixed-use retail and office buildings, restaurants or cafés, creating a destination for residents and visitors at the heart of the new Town Center.



The "100 percent corner" at Huntington Drive and Buena Vista Street is a social and commercial hub for the community.

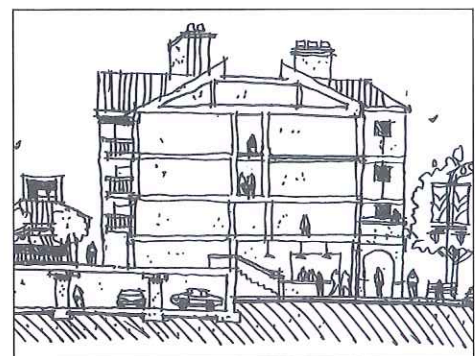
A public plaza with a beautiful fountain is located on the southeast corner of the intersection. Outdoor dining and retail shops surround the plaza to the east and south, activating this dynamic social gathering space for the entire community. The plaza also includes landscaping, sculptures and other decorative elements. In addition, the plaza is connected to the city's residential areas by pathways and trails that foster easy pedestrian and bicycle access to the square and other parts of the Town Center.



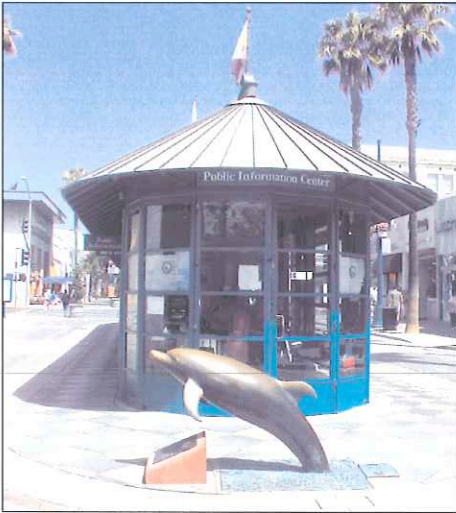
Fountain and plaza designs draw on Duarte's architectural history.

Infill of vacant lots and redevelopment of underutilized buildings continues east along Huntington Drive toward Highland Avenue. Several existing commercial buildings are redeveloped with mixed-use retail and office projects that bring the structures closer to the street. In addition, new housing, retail and office buildings are developed along the corridor on infill sites between existing uses. Job-producing uses along Huntington Drive - such as biomedical firms and high-tech companies - augment the existing office base while capitalizing on the proximity of the City's medical centers.

To accommodate the parking requirements of new residential projects, "podium-style" housing (residential units above parking structures) is built along the corridor. On the first floors of these buildings, retail, office and restaurant uses - not parking garages - face the street to negate the visual impact of traditional parking structures. Surface parking lots are minimized in size and located behind buildings, away from the street.



Podium-style housing above parking and retail is an attractive and efficient way to provide higher density housing while meeting parking requirements.



Public art enhances plazas and distinguishes unique places, especially when it reflects the character of an area.

A new Public Library is located east of the existing Community Center. Relocating the library centralizes many of Duarte's services and enhances the already attractive area around the Civic Center. To further improve the eastern anchor of the Town Center, a second public plaza is situated directly across the street from the Community Center. The plaza is surrounded by existing homes and is activated by a small café, and it includes a fountain, landscaping, sculptures and other decorative elements. This plaza is also a common gathering place for all Duarte residents, and its location across the street from civic amenities creates synergy and activity throughout the day. Alternately, if the site across from the Civic Center is unavailable, this plaza can be located in the vacant lot east of Burger King to take advantage of a mature grove of shade trees and its proximity to other Town Center activities.

The Town Center's two plazas are connected via wide sidewalks along Huntington Drive, which help to make this large road more pedestrian-friendly. Enhanced median landscaping and new decorative lighting, banners and lighted crosswalks alert motorists that they are entering a shared space with pedestrians, helping to slow down traffic through the Town Center. Additional pedestrian amenities include trails and pathways that connect the streets and sidewalks to existing parks and smaller roads in the area. These trails are ideal for jogging, bicycling and strolling through the Town Center without competing with more intense street activity.



Duarte's attractive sidewalk landscaping is extended throughout the Town Center.

Local businesses and residents from the community form a partnership with the City to maintain Town Center amenities. Buildings and public spaces are kept safe and clean through a combination of public investment and private initiatives. These range from the formation of a Business Improvement District to the utilization of state and federal grants for façade, transportation and infrastructure improvements.

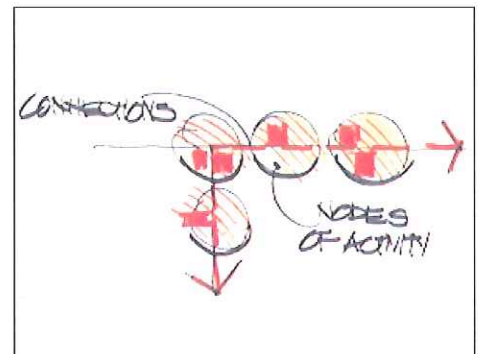
Duarte's Town Center truly reflects the needs and character of the community. In addition to land use development and streetscape improvements, enhancements such as public art by local artists add

flavor and color to the Duarte Town Center. Sculptures that reference the City's veterans, its diverse population, or other aspects of the community are located along the major streets and in other public places. Fairs, exhibits and community events attract people of all ages and interests to the downtown. New architectural designs draw from local architecture and Duarte's historic past (including acknowledgement of City namesake Andres Duarte and imagery of Route 66 and the City of Health). Specific land uses that are unique to the area, such as a children's interactive science and technology center or car museum, also help to make the Town Center a special and innovative place.

Finally, Duarte's Town Center is part of a larger concept that begins to permeate thinking and planning throughout the community. The Town Center is one district in a city of districts. Each district has its own character and identity while being a part of the larger whole of Duarte. Duarte's downtown is the central piece of this concept, and it physically and conceptually connects outward to the adjacent neighborhoods that comprise this city of districts.



Shared public space in the Town Center is used for a range of community activities, such as entertainment, shopping, recreation, or simply strolling with friends.

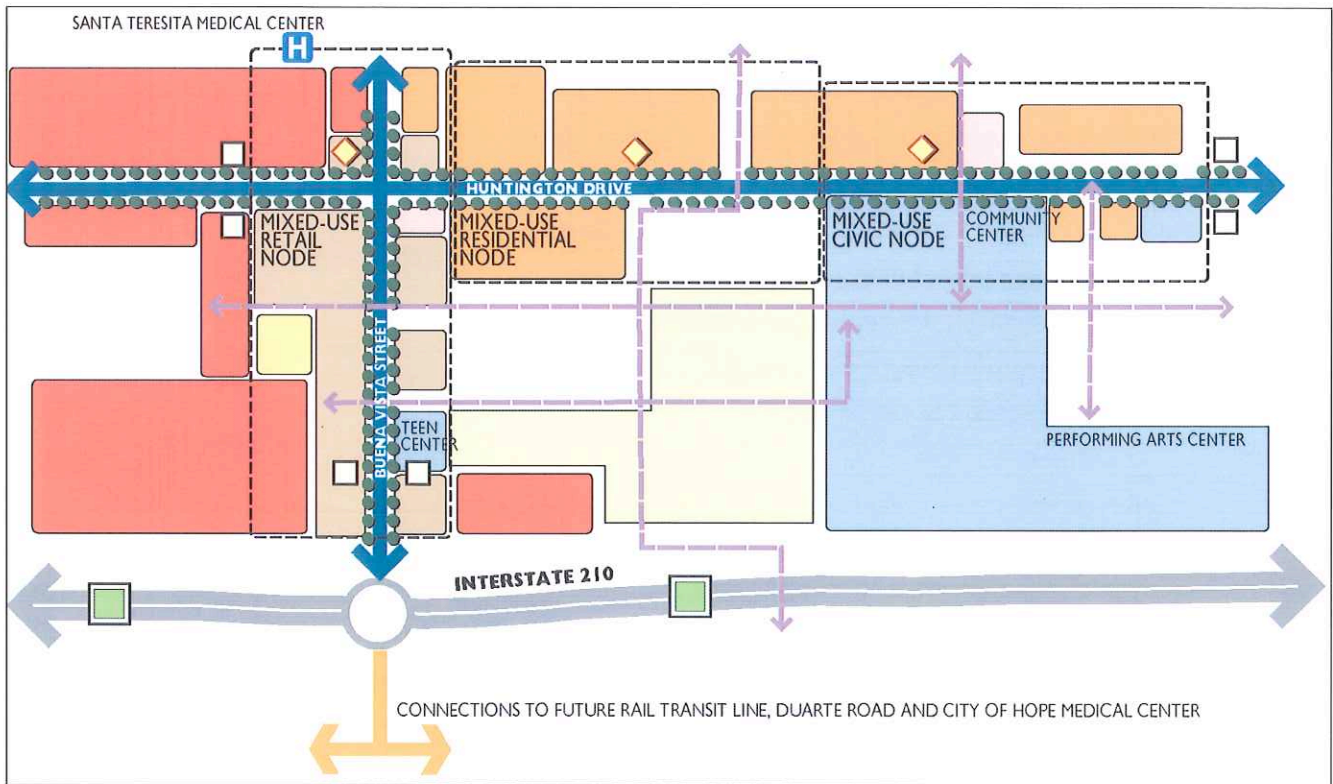


The Town Center is an activity node that reflects a general pattern of development. It functions as a central point and connection between other nodes in Duarte, linking districts and uses throughout the City. It also contains smaller nodes of activity within the area itself.

Town Center Concept Diagram

This concept diagram highlights key aspects of the Town Center Concept Plan, focusing on major activity nodes, supporting uses, and connectivity throughout downtown. For more detail, refer to the illustrative plan following page 36.

Town Center Concept



- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Civic Buildings | Town Center Activity Area |
| Housing | Neighborhood Connections |
| Live/Work Units | Pedestrian Links |
| Mixed-Use: Housing and Retail | Streetscape Improvements |
| Mixed-Use: Retail and Office | Town Center Signage |
| Open Space | Gateway Feature |
| Public Plaza | Key Opportunity Site |
| Development Node | |

Development Guidelines and Impacts

The Town Center Concept Plan is intended to provide a framework for future development. The actual build-out of various land uses, public improvements, and community amenities will depend upon future market factors, demographic changes, availability of property for development, City departmental budgets, public support and political will.

That said, the Town Center Concept Plan outlines specific details that have (1) garnered community support through the planning process and (2) been tested for economic feasibility. These details are a general guide for developing the Town Center, while allowing for future changes.

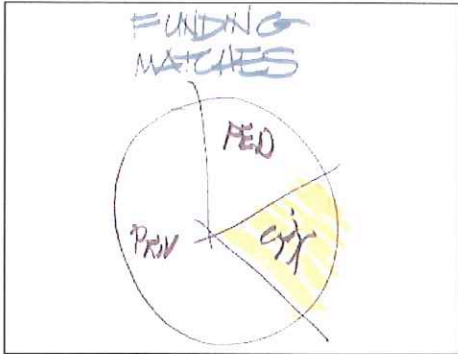
LAND USES AND COSTS

The Concept Plan proposes the following major land uses (much of it as mixed-use development, comprised of one or more of the categories):

- 114,000 square feet of retail;
- 50,000 square feet of office;
- 388 housing units; and
- 750 parking spaces.

Based on these uses, estimated costs associated with this development (based on construction costs and land acquisition in Duarte's current market) total \$38,972,500. The costs by use are:

- \$22,800,000 for retail;
- \$5,750,000 for office;
- \$7,760,000 for housing units; and
- \$2,662,500 for parking spaces and structures.



A combination of private investment and public funding from the Federal and City governments will help pay for Town Center development.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The development of Duarte's Town Center will require a combination of public and private investment to implement each of the various phases. For example, developers may require some public funds or improvements (such as sidewalk enhancements or infrastructure upgrades) as part of a development deal with the City.

Several financing mechanisms are available for the City, developers, and other community partners to finance the Town Center Concept Plan's projects and improvements. Potential strategies include State and Federal Grants, tax increment financing in redevelopment areas, and provision of City-owned land to developers at little or no cost.

The City has a number of internal financing tools that can be utilized to assist in developing the Duarte Town Center. The City's redevelopment agency likely has the greatest resources to help implement development. Redevelopment agency funds can be utilized to directly or indirectly assist development projects by financing land acquisition or public improvements. The redevelopment agency can also fund streetscape improvements or other public improvements that are part of the Duarte Town Center plan, provided such improvements were identified in the redevelopment plan for the area. Finally, the redevelopment agency can provide assistance to affordable housing projects. The level of assistance that the redevelopment agency can provide is limited by the amount of tax increment that the agency receives and other priority uses of those funds.

The City may be able to pursue funding for streetscape improvements from the MTA or the State through their highway beautification programs. These programs are competitive and the City would be responding to a "Call for Projects" issued by the MTA or the State.

The City's capital improvement program can also be examined and re-prioritized, if necessary, to provide for street and streetscape improvements.

Provided that the Duarte Town Center has substantial public support, the City can consider several financing mechanisms that will require a vote. The City might consider the implementation of either a business-based or property-based Business Improvement District (BID). The business-based district is renewable annually and can provide funding for marketing and advertising for the Town Center area. A property-based district has a renewable five-year life and can fund improvements as well as area maintenance and security. These districts would only include businesses or properties in the Town Center boundaries.

The City might consider assessment districts for landscape and lighting, street improvements or parking within or adjacent to the Town Center area. Implementation of such districts would require a vote of the property owners or the City Council depending on the type of district.

If the Town Center truly has community support, the City might consider the formation of a citywide community facilities district (CFD) to fund street or streetscape improvements and public improvements or facilities. For this type of a project, the CFD would cover the entire city. Implementation of the CFD and the levy of a special tax would require a two-thirds vote of the residents.

It might be possible for the City to consider a private capital campaign for a specific public building. Disney Hall in downtown Los Angeles is a recent example of a public building funded through a private capital campaign. Community theaters are another example of public facilities that can be funded through a capital campaign. In Duarte, the City of Hope is a major beneficiary of ongoing private

capital campaigns. Other than the new library, however, there may not be public facilities in the Town Center that would be good candidates for a capital campaign.

Finally, the City will be able to fund some improvements at specific locations through public/private agreements that are part of the entitlement and development process. Provided that the projects are feasible, individual developments may install streetscape improvements, street improvements or other public improvements that are related to the project.

TRAFFIC IMPACTS

There are three major transportation topics to consider in advancing the Town Center Concept Plan:

- vehicular traffic,
- parking, and
- pedestrian traffic.



In addition to surface parking lots, the Concept Plan proposes podium-style parking structures to meet the Town Center's demand for spaces.

Vehicular traffic consists of two components: traffic passing through the area and traffic originating and/or destined to the area. With the extensive development surrounding the area and the access to I-210 at Buena Vista Street, redevelopment is unlikely to affect through traffic to any great extent. Only if levels of congestion become intolerable will through traffic begin to avoid the area. Currently there is little if any congestion in the area and both Buena Vista Street and Huntington Drive have available capacity.

Redevelopment is likely to change the characteristics of traffic originating in and/or destined to the area. Traffic can be expected to increase to the extent that the area becomes more attractive than it is currently. However, traffic increases will be tempered by the ability of nearby residents to walk to shops and services in the area. Given the current lack of congestion in the area, it is reasonable to assume that a substantial component of the plan could be implemented before congestion appears.

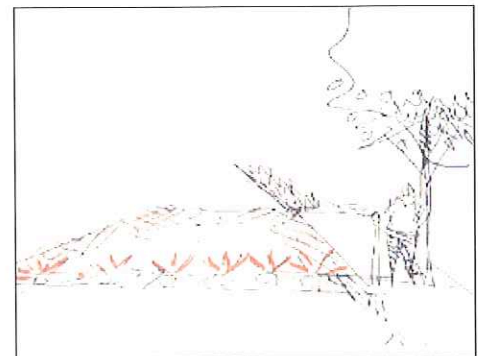
Directly related to changes in the characteristics of traffic originating in or destined to the area, is the need for parking. As traffic originating in and destined to the area increase, the need for parking will increase. As with traffic, demand for parking will be tempered by those who walk to the shops and services from nearby residences. The proposed Town Center Concept Plan shows substantial acreage devoted to parking, in addition to street parking and residential parking in residential buildings.

Transit services in the area are related to access to the area and can reduce the need for parking. The area is currently served by two MTA bus lines, five Foothill Transit lines, and Duarte's own transit system. Extension of the MTA's light rail transit system through the Duarte area is planned for the future. The attractiveness of transit amenities, as well as the attractiveness of the transit services themselves, can be used to increase patronage in the area. As the redevelopment proceeds, further investigation of the adequacy of transit services and amenities should be undertaken.

Pedestrian amenities are essential to the successful development of a Town Center. An extensive set of trails is included in the plan to provide circulation for pedestrians, cyclists, joggers, and others. These trails provide access to and crossing of Buena Vista Street and Huntington Drive.

Pedestrian amenities along these two streets are included in the plan. Among the amenities that will contribute to a pedestrian friendly environment are:

- Wide sidewalks
- Pavement treatments defining pedestrian spaces
- Medium height and tall vegetation
- Street furniture such as benches, trash receptacles, and lighting
- Minimum setbacks
- Retail and services in narrow stores
- Retail and services lining both sides of the streets



Street-calming features such as lighted crosswalks help pedestrians move safely through the Town Center without disrupting traffic patterns or impacting service or emergency access.

- Low building profiles
- Location of off-street parking behind businesses
- On-street parking
- Narrow travel lanes in the streets
- Short blocks with traffic signals for pedestrian crossing and for slowing traffic.

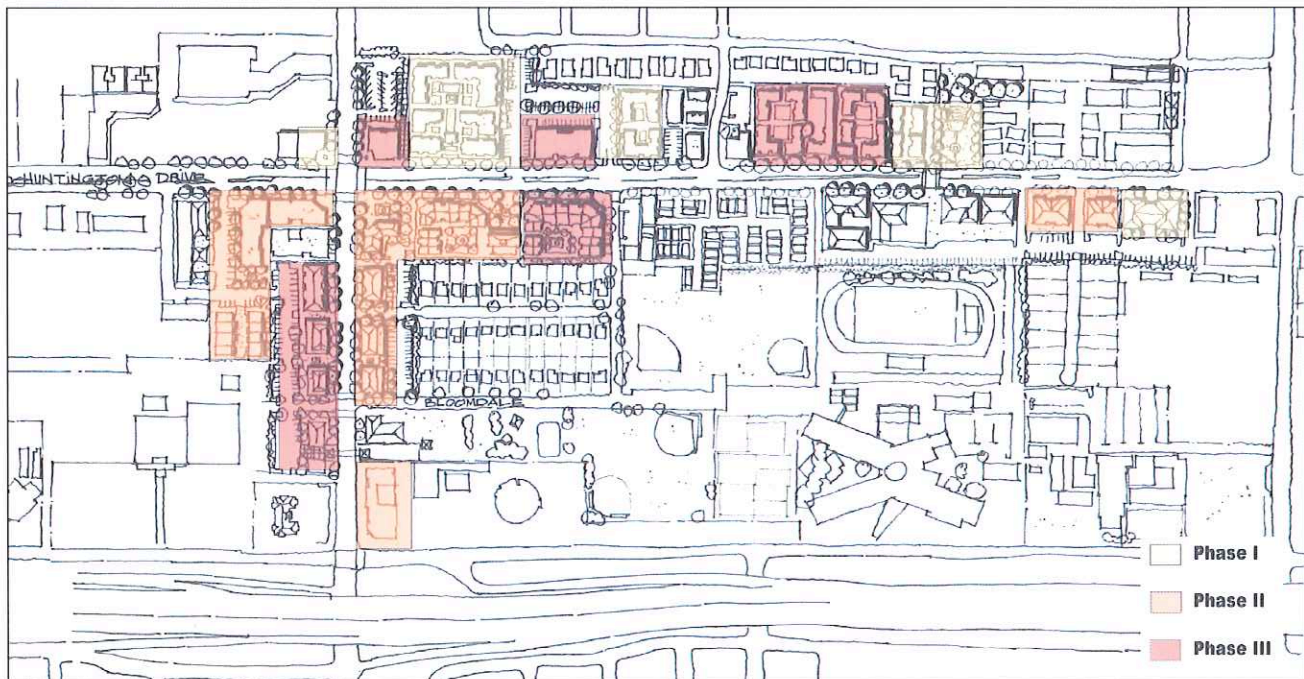
Achieving a pedestrian friendly environment necessitates active maintenance of a very delicate balance between pedestrian activity and vehicular activity. There is an inherent conflict between these activities, both of which are essential to a successful Town Center. Accommodating high speed, delay free, vehicular traffic will thwart the development of a pedestrian friendly environment. Equally, grid-locked traffic conditions and inadequate parking will result in the area losing attractiveness as a destination. A variety of design and management techniques are available to assist in achieving and maintaining the necessary balance between these conflicting activities.

The Town Center Concept Plan provides a framework in which both local and through traffic can be accommodated. It provides for access by both vehicular and other modes, such as walking and biking. The Concept Plan recognizes the need for parking adequate to the planned redevelopment. It provides the opportunity to develop a pedestrian friendly environment in which the demands of both vehicular and pedestrian traffic are balanced.

PHASING

To implement the Town Center Concept Plan, new development must be phased in over time as market conditions permit. Realistically, the basic components of the plan will take 10 years or more to fully implement. This section outlines a general phasing strategy for where development should be focused during the various stages of implementation. However, the City and its development partners should seize any opportunities to acquire and develop sites with projects that reflect the guiding parameters of the plan, regardless of phase. In addition, the Town Center Concept Plan should be revisited and updated regularly to ensure that it accurately reflects changes that occur as phasing efforts progress.

Town Center Phasing



The diagram above highlights the general focus areas for phasing of the Town Center Concept Plan.



Vacant property across from the Community Center is a key site for catalytic development.

Phase I - 1 to 3 Years

The Implementation Actions detailed in Chapter V will be essential aspects of the first phase of the Town Center Concept (the first three years of implementation). These include various strategies, marketing initiatives, and regulatory changes to establish momentum and make the Town Center an attractive place for development. Some Implementation Actions will also be ongoing throughout all phases of the plan.

From a land use perspective, the initial phase of development should focus on key opportunity sites that are (1) easily improved and (2) currently owned by the City and/or its potential development partners. These development initiatives, focusing mostly on mixed-use projects on existing vacant sites, will indicate to the development community that Duarte is serious about its intention to create a Town Center. The catalytic projects will provide high-profile, highly-visible manifestations of the Town Center Concept that can be built on during subsequent phases.

Key sites for development during this phase include:

- The vacant parcel at the northwest corner of Huntington Drive and Buena Vista Street (former Texaco Gas Station);
- The proposed library relocation site on Huntington Drive east of the Community Center; and
- The vacant parcel across from the Community Center, north of Huntington Drive.

The City should also install signs around the periphery of the future Town Center area to raise public awareness and generate excitement about the improvements.

It will also be important to address the Big Lots shopping center during the first phase of development. The site, at the northeast corner of Buena Vista Street and Huntington Drive, is located near the heart of the proposed Town Center and must be improved visually and economically. The site has been the subject of development proposals in the past, making it reasonable to assume that the interest exists to improve the site immediately.

Phase II - 3 to 5 Years

The second phase of development should occur approximately three to five years into implementation. Development during this phase should focus on infill and redevelopment projects around existing businesses, as well as the newer structures developed during Phase I.

As the Town Center becomes an increasingly viable environment for projects, Duarte will become more attractive to a wide range of development interests. Potential projects during this phase may include larger-scale housing development, office projects, and public improvements such as the plaza at the southeast corner of Huntington Drive and Buena Vista Street.

Key sites for development during this phase include:

- The southeast and southwest corners of Huntington Drive and Buena Vista Street;
- The east and west ends of Huntington Drive and the south tip of Buena Vista Street for Town Center Gateway features;
- Redevelopment parcels along Buena Vista Street (for mixed-use office and retail development); and
- Additional infill and redevelopment sites on Huntington Drive not developed during Phase I.

Phase III - 5 to 10 Years

Development during Phase III consists of long-range planning initiatives that build on the successes of Phase I and Phase II. This may include development of existing areas that are challenging or expensive to redevelop but are key sites for ensuring the ongoing vitality of the Town Center. It may also include parking structures, large residential, retail and office projects, and small-scale housing relocations as the Town Center takes shape and land values increase.

Continued attraction of private investment, coupled with public investment, community support and strong political will to implement the Town Center Concept Plan, will be essential during



Larger-scale mixed-use development, like projects along Santa Monica's Third Street Promenade, will be a medium- to long-term endeavor for the Town Center.

this phase. These efforts will help ensure that the Town Center not only develops into a viable downtown for the community, but also that it remains so for the years and decades to come.

Future Phases

Even after the Town Center Concept Plan has been implemented, development does not have to end. Following the first three successful phases of development, additional redevelopment can occur to create higher density areas, similar to Area Options Two and Four (described in Chapter Three). Development scenarios that once seemed infeasible may become desirable if the Town Center is successful, allowing the district to expand further. At this point in time, it may be necessary to consider relocating existing houses to accommodate additional development around the core of the Town Center.

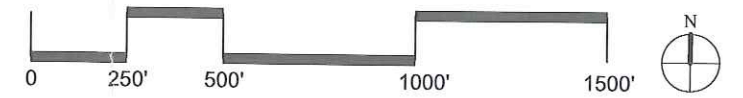
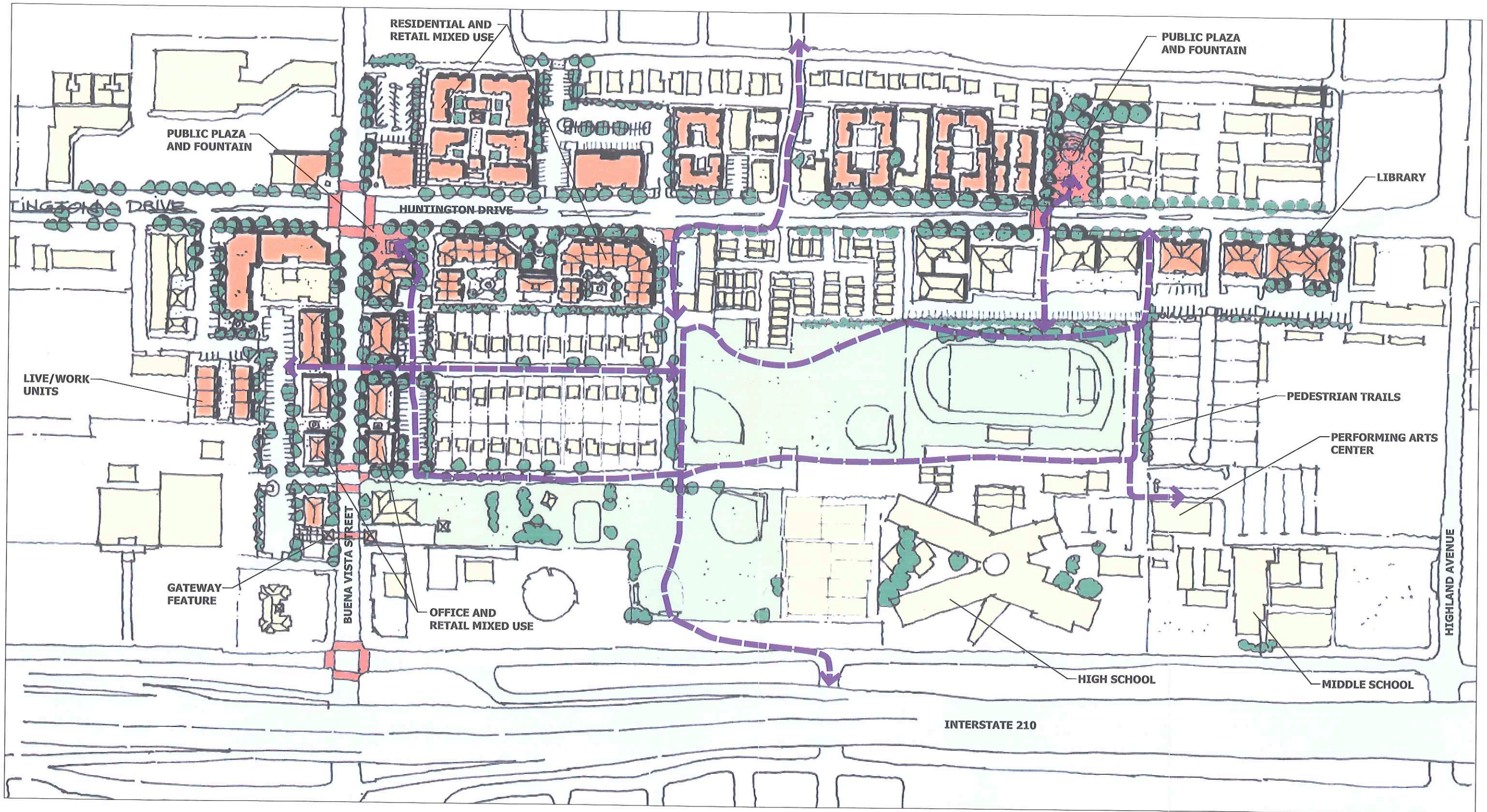
Action Steps

Critical to the planning process is bridging the gap between planning and action. If the ideas, Vision and strategies outlined in the Town Center Concept Plan are not translated into real actions, the plan will fail. As a result, Duarte will continue to lack the downtown or a central "sense of place" that the community desires.

With the Town Center Concept Plan as the guiding framework, the Task Force identified a variety of tools and strategies for creating a Town Center in Duarte. The most important and immediate of those actions - the tools that are most likely to **catalyze development and jumpstart projects** during the first phase of implementation - include:

1. Form an On-Going Town Center Implementation Action Team
2. Initiate Changes to Zoning Codes to Allow for Mixed-Use Development
3. Create an Economic Development Strategy
4. Research and Promote City Sites for Mixed-Use Development
5. Invest in Public Improvements

DUARTE TOWN CENTER ILLUSTRATIVE DIAGRAM





The Implementation Action Team will act as the voice of the community while guiding Duarte's Town Center development.

I. FORM AN ON-GOING TOWN CENTER IMPLEMENTATION ACTION TEAM

To capitalize on the current momentum and ensure successful implementation, key people must be "champions" for the Duarte Town Center Concept Plan. An on-going Implementation Action Team should be formed to advocate for strategies, programs and development efforts that support the Town Center Concept. To guide the rest of the action steps, the implementation team should form immediately. It is crucial that the action team begins their work at the beginning of the development process, since they will help set a timeframe for subsequent actions.

This team can be comprised of community members, civic officials, business people, neighborhood leaders and other individuals, including members of the Downtown Duarte Task Force. Working with the Town Center Concept Plan as a guide, the team should meet on a regular basis to spearhead completion of the Implementation Actions. It should address issues that arise and promote appropriate development and programs. The group should also meet with other organizations (Chamber of Commerce, neighborhood organizations, etc.) and be advocates at City Council meetings, town hall groups, and other community events to support the plan and its strategies. Action Team Members will also be responsible for regularly reviewing and updating the Concept Plan.

The Implementation Action Team will be an essential component of making the Duarte Town Center a reality, but the members should not have to work on their own. Team members should work with designated members of City staff from the Economic Development Office to promote city sites and build partnerships with developers. The Action Team should also consider working with planning consultants to help develop design guidelines, zoning regulations and economic strategies.

2. INITIATE CHANGES TO ZONING CODES TO ALLOW FOR MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

This strategy recommends altering Duarte's legal framework to make areas identified in the Town Center Concept Plan more attractive to private investment. While a comprehensive study should be conducted to determine current regulatory conditions, potential immediate changes include:

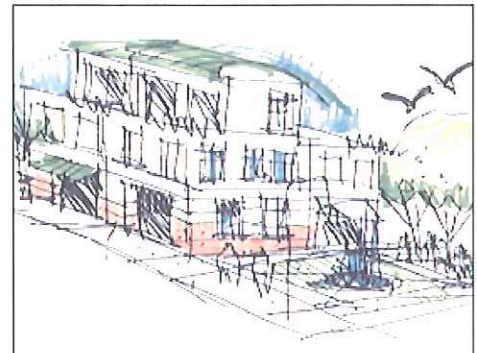
- Changes to codes to allow for higher density development
- Changes to codes to allow mixed-use development
- Create or designate a community development strategy that will actively seek out development of all types.

These modifications will help make higher-density, mixed-use development more profitable and feasible. This will foster the types of projects that will help create a vibrant and active environment in downtown.

Future regulatory changes for consideration include: development of a "program-level" Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the entire Town Center area, so that individual EIRs do not need to be completed for each new project (thus lowering development costs); expansion of redevelopment area tools, such as tax increment financing; and tax breaks and fee deferrals for developers.



Multi-story mixed-use buildings help create character and attract people to the Town Center, but the City has to have the proper zoning regulations in place before development can occur.



High density development can be aesthetically pleasing and attractive to developers if the regulatory environment is properly set.



An economic development strategy will help Duarte partner with developers and target specific sites for improvement.

3. CREATE AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

It is essential that the City, business organizations, and community groups fully understand the market dynamics for Duarte and the surrounding region. Creating an economic development strategy - based on a comprehensive economic analysis of the area - will help determine the types and amounts of investment that can be sustained in the Town Center.

An economic development strategy will establish an "envelope" of supportable development for Duarte's Town Center by:

- Identifying opportunities to expand and retain existing businesses;
- Developing new business opportunities (including potential anchor office and commercial tenants);
- Identifying marketing endeavors; and
- Outlining the conditions necessary to position and capitalize on specific opportunity sites.

This economic development strategy will directly complement existing businesses in the area and the physical framework and guiding strategies set forth by the Town Center Concept Plan.

4. PROMOTE CITY SITES FOR MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

The City must identify and secure specific catalytic sites within the Town Center area for mixed-use development. The City already owns many such properties. These sites should include parcels that are relatively easy to obtain (particularly during early implementation phases) and provide the community with the opportunity to create a visibly successful project.

After identifying and securing such sites, the City should share economic data, site parameters, and other information with property owners and developers. The City should also release Requests for Proposals for development of key sites, and it should advertise and target specific opportunities to developers to attract projects. By actively seeking out developers, rather than waiting for someone to build on available land, the City can influence the design and timeline of the project. It can also make certain that the project promotes the overall tenets of the Town Center Concept Plan.



Unimproved property is the most affordable, making it a strategic place to begin development projects.



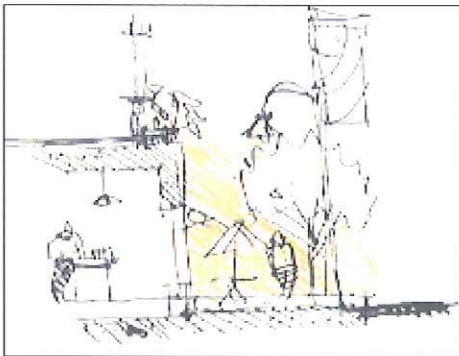
Decorative street furniture and lighting are elements that the City can invest in to draw developers to Duarte.

5. INVEST IN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

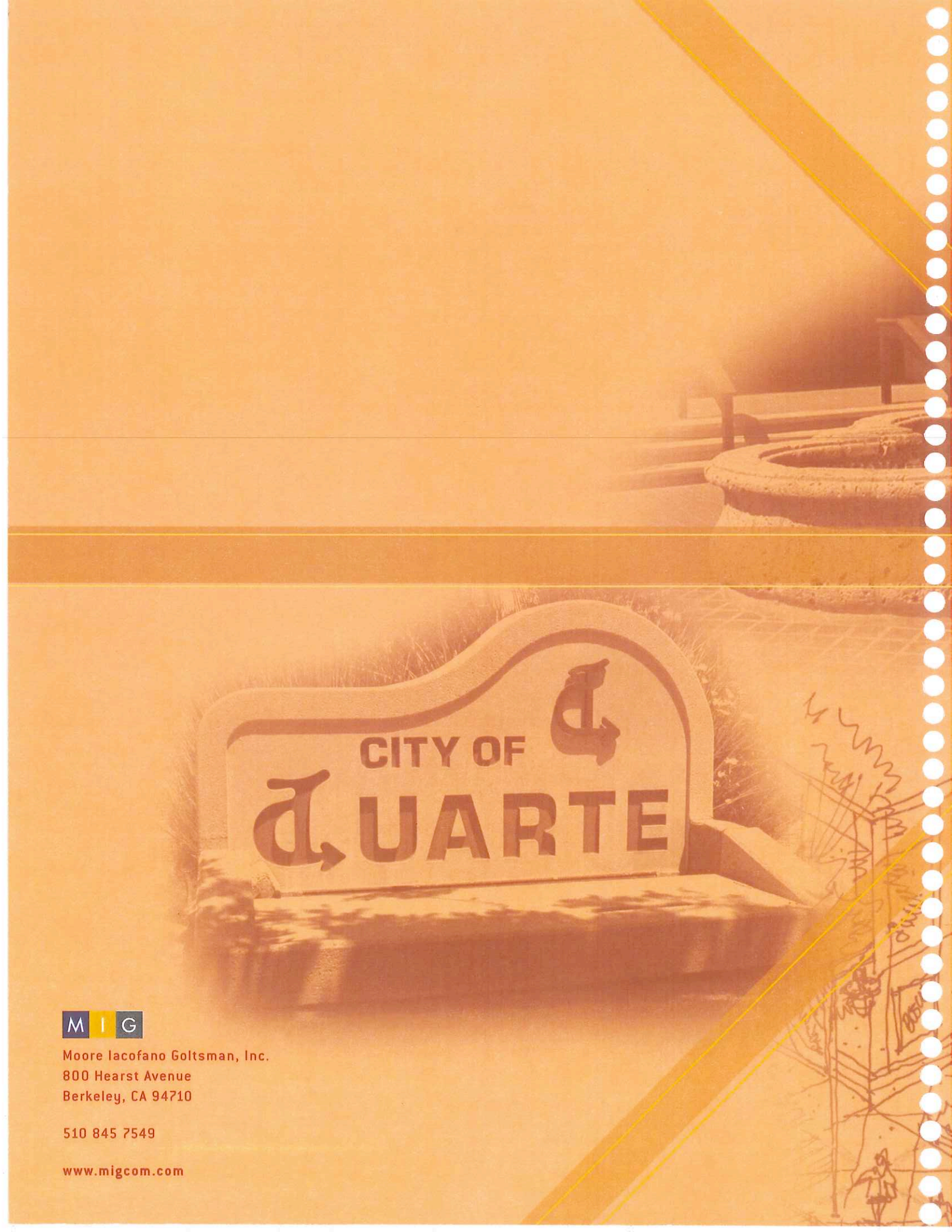
If developers feel that Duarte is serious about creating a Town Center, they will be more likely to invest in the area. To stimulate private investment and set the stage for Town Center development, the City should invest immediately in the following public improvements:

- Façade, signage and entry feature improvements for existing businesses; and
- Street and sidewalk enhancements (including street trees, street furniture, trash receptacles, banners, pavement textures, and decorative lighting) in the Town Center area.

Additional key public improvements include construction of the new Public Library and development of public plazas or greens (perhaps implemented during a secondary phase), as identified in the plan.



Wide sidewalks and public plazas will enhance the street environment if the City invests in them.



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