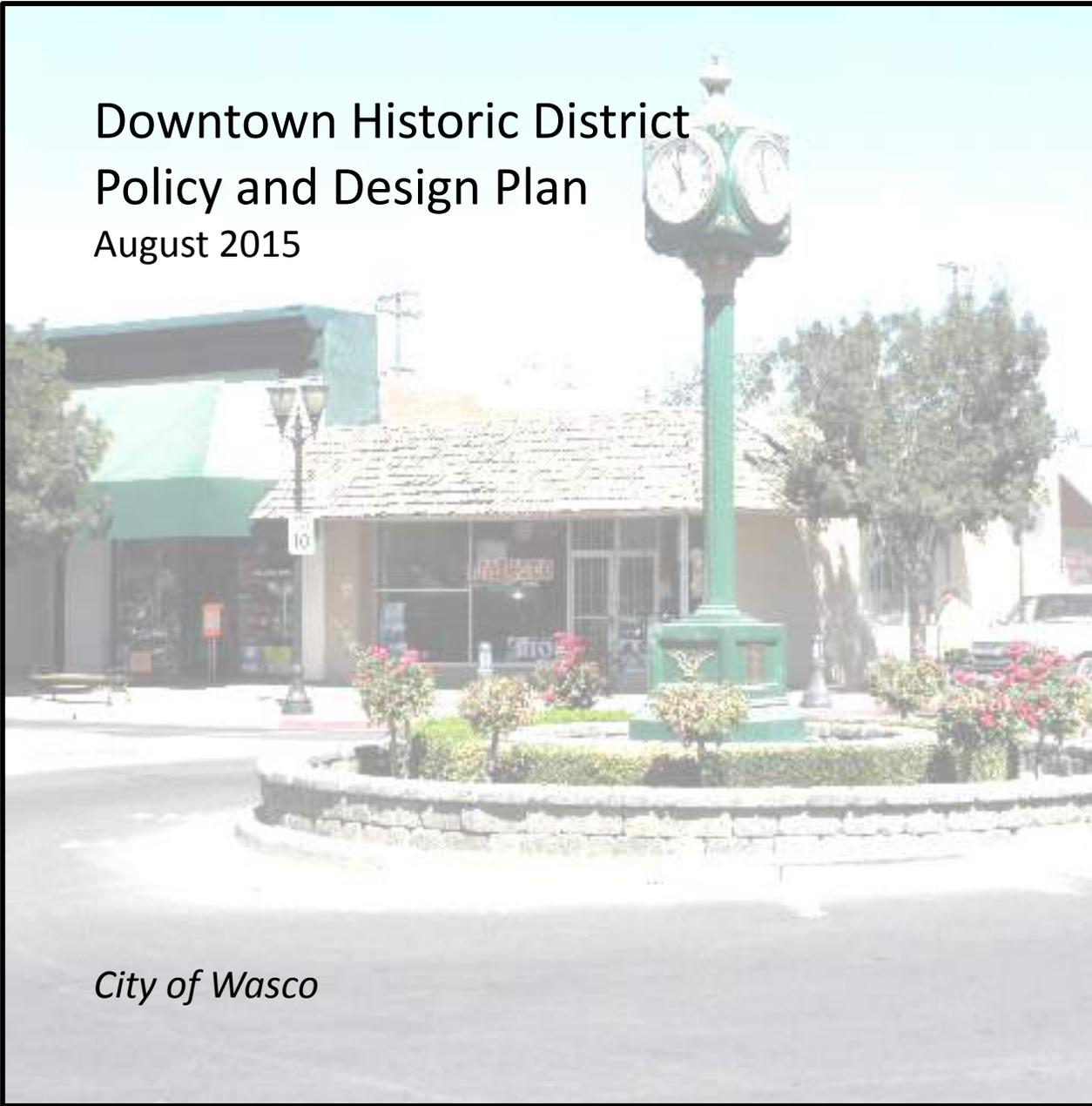
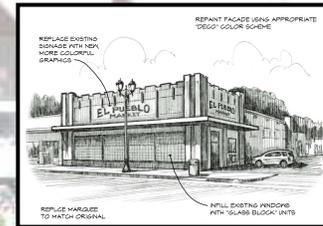


# Downtown Historic District Policy and Design Plan August 2015

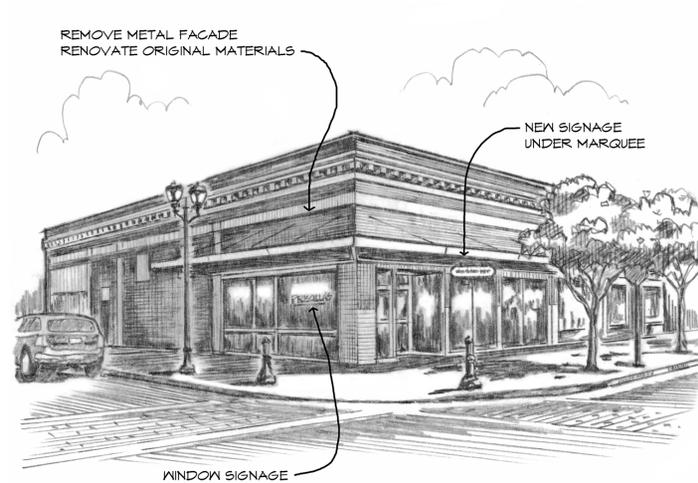


*City of Wasco*



# Downtown Historic District Policy and Design Plan

August 2015



*Prepared for*

City of Wasco

*Prepared by:*

**Collins & Schoettler**  
PLANNING CONSULTANTS

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# 1. Introduction

**Valley Downtowns** - For most cities in the Valley, the downtown was historically the only "place" in town. One ate, drank and shopped in the downtown, and if visitors came from out of town, there was always the downtown hotel or boarding house. Most downtowns had one or two theaters; a city hall, library and fire station; a collection of churches and banks, and often some type of unique land use such as a community pool, a memorial park or major industrial use.

The area surrounding valley downtowns were typically the early residential neighborhoods, schools and the proverbial railroad, which cut through many cities in the Valley. Along the railroad corridor were the city's first industrial parks containing industrial, service commercial and agricultural-support uses (cold storage, packing houses, dehydrators, stock yards, milling works). On the outskirts were small ranches, dairies and livestock operations. The local crop types were generally based on local soil types, climatic conditions and availability of water.

**Downtown Deterioration** - Malls, outlying commercial centers, highways, wastewater treatment plants, the automobile, and most recently the Internet, changed all downtowns in the Valley. The reason to go to the downtown ceased to exist. Malls, outlying commercial centers and neighborhood shopping centers offered everything that the early downtown did but it was bigger, newer and it offered free parking and air conditioning. Today, many of the goods that were originally purchased in the downtown are now purchased at the mall or over the Internet - Amazon or the on-line store of a major retailer.

In the late 70s and early 80s, cities began to realize that without a viable downtown they had no "heart", no place to connect with friends and relatives, and no place to hold community celebrations. Some Valley cities have been successful in turning their downtown into a vibrant place where everybody wants to go and be seen. Other downtowns in the Valley are a "work in progress."

**Downtown Wasco** - Downtown Wasco is a work in progress. Success will depend on a wide range of factors. First and foremost, a successful downtown requires a person or organization to champion the cause for



downtown revitalization. Secondly, it requires a unique land use that "sparks" people to come to the downtown. It may be a popular restaurant, an ice cream parlor, a store that has a unique line of clothing, hardware store or a public park that is popular because of its physical attributes - fountain, shade, dog-friendly, or outdoor seating.

Not unlike the game of football, a successful team requires good coaches (city manager, planners and public works department), supportive owners (city council and planning commission) and talented players (persons who operate businesses and other uses in the downtown). To be successful, the team needs a good playbook (downtown policy plan and design guidelines). Implementation of the playbook requires effective practices (processing and designing projects). As coach Vince Lombardi said:

***"Practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect".***

When all these people (coaches, owners and players) work as a cohesive unit, the team will have a successful season and the stadium (downtown) will experience sold out crowds.

*"The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual."*

*- Vince Lombardi*

**Improvements** - Downtown improvements can range widely. In large cities it may be a parking structure or a baseball stadium. For small cities it could be street trees, a public plaza or restriped parking stalls. Improvements can be public or private. Public improvements will be generally reserved for lands within the public right-of-way while private improvements occur on private property.

Improvements can have a major influence on how a downtown looks, feels and functions. Overly-wide streets without street trees make for a shopping environment that is not pedestrian-friendly. Conversely, a narrower street with bulbouts at the intersections and street trees, which provide shade and color, makes for an inviting shopping experience.

Some downtown improvements cannot be seen. Having a network of sewer, water and storm drainage lines that have the capacity to support future development is a necessity. In other words, nobody wants to visit a downtown that floods when it rains, or lacks water pressure to suppress a potential fire.

Continued improvements to the downtown are an imperative. In Wasco this could be a mural on a wall, diagonal parking on side streets, a downtown park or bulbouts (curb extensions) at the intersection of State Highway 43 and 7th Street.

Change in Downtown Wasco needs to be a public/private partnership - the public installs some improvements and the private sector builds a building or expands an existing use. When both investments are occurring concurrently, Wasco's downtown is on its way towards revitalization. However, the City needs to take the lead and "set the table".

Wasco may want to consider a niche use or group of niche uses. Here are some uses that might be considered by the community.

- dog park
- rose garden
- community garden
- interactive fountain for children
- outdoor dining area
- outdoor coffee kiosk
- permanent fruit and vegetable stand
- event plaza

**Planning Tools** - Planning tools come in many forms: design guidelines, sign ordinances, downtown overlay districts, development processing procedures and general plan policies. The planning department administers all of these tools. This department is responsible for shepherding projects through the development or building expansion process. Ultimately they are responsible for what the project looks like, how it fits into the downtown and how it functions in the larger context of the downtown. If it looks "ugly" or if it is causing problems for surrounding neighbors then the planning department needs to own that criticism.

## 2: Background

Collins & Schoettler has been retained by the City of Wasco to prepare a policy document for the revitalization of Downtown Wasco and adjacent environs. Supporting Collins & Schoettler on this task is the Urban Tree Foundation and John Slaven, architect. Urban Tree will provide:

- a recommended downtown street tree list;
- planting, irrigation and pruning procedures for plant material in the downtown; and
- recommendations for planting schemes for the various pedestrian alleys that intersect with 7th Street in the downtown.

John Slaven will provide architectural renderings of selected downtown buildings. These renderings will depict design opportunities for building owners to improve the aesthetic and street appeal of their building.

Two city documents currently guide the development and design of downtown Wasco - the Wasco General Plan and the Wasco Zoning Ordinance. The general plan is primarily a policy document that provides direction and recommendations for the treatment of the downtown, while the zoning ordinance details specific requirements and standards for the downtown such as setback and height standards; parking and sign requirements; and processing procedures for new development and expansion of existing uses in the downtown.

The General Plan's Land Use Element contains two policies that focus on Wasco's downtown. They are:

- *Maintain the core area (7th Street corridor) as the City's geographic center.*
- *Maintain the Central Business District (bounded by the BNSF Railroad to the east, 6th Street to the north, 8th Street to the south and Griffith Avenue to the west) and the 7th Street corridor as Wasco's traditional medical, professional, government and cultural center. New uses and services should be directed to the CBD and the*

*7th Street Corridor to the extent practicable. The CBD shall be expanded in proportion to the expansion of the community.*

The zoning ordinance contains the Central District (C-D) zone, which prescribes development standards for the downtown. The purpose of the CD zone is stated as follows:

- *The central business district designation provides the city with a mixed-use activity area in the downtown area, including retail, office, service, public and institutional and special residential uses. The C-D commercial zone shall be used in the downtown area in order to attract and accommodate commercial, financial, office, governmental and limited residential uses.*



This district lists the types of uses permitted in the Central District (C-D) and the development standards that must be complied with, including lot size, setbacks, height limitations, parking, signs and landscaping.

In addition to general plan policies and zoning ordinance regulations, Wasco has facilitated the preparation of other planning documents that were specifically focused on reviving the downtown. The city found that policies and zoning regulations were not sufficient to effectively revitalize the

downtown. Strategies involving urban design, public improvements, marketing, and citizen involvement were also required. These supplemental documents were:

1. Wasco: Commercial Revitalization Program, Astone & Associates, 1985.
2. Historic Downtown Wasco Overlay District (H), City of Wasco, 2000.
3. Downtown Revitalization Study and Downtown Business District Market Plan, Applied Development Economics, Magavero Notestine Associates, and The Placemaking Group, 2009

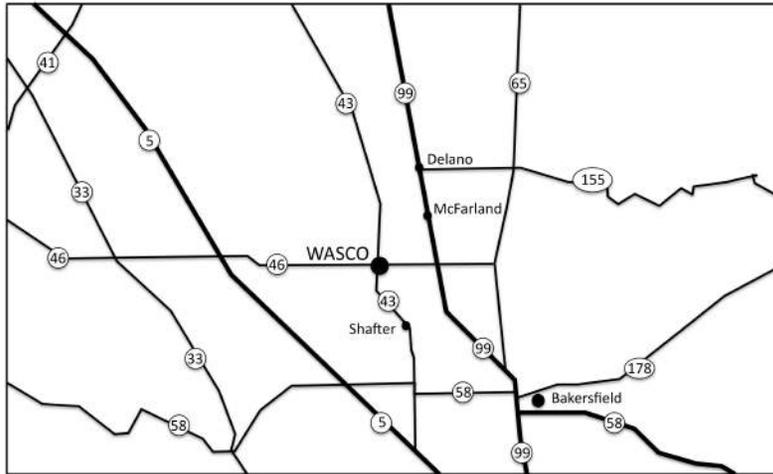
Each of these planning documents provided Wasco with innovative solutions and policy direction for revitalizing the downtown. Some of the documents focused on policies and objectives (Commercial Revitalization Program) while another focused on design guidelines {(Historic Downtown Wasco Overlay District (H))}. The most impressive document was the Downtown Revitalization Study and Downtown Business District Market Plan, which contained a wide range of recommendations from marketing to identifying sites in the downtown for new types of land uses (called opportunity sites), and from recommended streetscape improvements to strategies for developing underutilized parcels. It also had a strategy for assisting building and business owners in the downtown towards improving their building facades to make them more attractive and marketable.

As a result of the State's fiscal woes, redevelopment was phased out, adversely impacting hundreds of California cities. Wasco had used this fiscal tool to finance public and private investments in the downtown but with redevelopment gone the city is left with few tools to assist businesses or finance additional improvements in the downtown. Therefore, a post-redevelopment era may require Wasco to devise a new method of financing improvements, public and private, in the downtown.

The purpose and intent of the *Historic Downtown District Overlay Plan Update* is to bring together all of the documents that focus on Wasco's Downtown into one comprehensive policy/design guideline document. This effort will capture the best of past works and combine them with up-to-date strategies and design guidelines that have been successful in other cities in California.

### 3: Observations

Wasco is a community of over 25,000 that is situated in northwestern Kern County, an equal distance from State Highway 99 and Interstate Route 5, and bisected by state routes 46 and 43. Neighboring cities include Delano, McFarland and Shafter. Wasco's economy is very dependent upon agriculture as are most small cities in Kern County.



Downtown Wasco is located on the east side of the city and backs up to the BNSF Railroad. The aerial photo to the right shows specific boundaries, which include the BNSF railroad on the east, a jogging boundary along 8<sup>th</sup> Street and paralleling alleys on the south, Broadway on the west, and a jogging boundary along 6<sup>th</sup> Street paralleling alleys on the north. This boundary encompasses about 22 blocks and straddles 7<sup>th</sup> Street for four blocks. State Highway 43, which cuts across the east side of the downtown, connects the downtown with State Highway 46 to the north and the community of Shafter about five miles to the south.

The downtown, like many downtowns in the Valley, is a mix of typical downtown commercial uses and is surrounded by older residential neighborhoods. Situated on the fringe of the downtown are service

commercial uses that line portions of State Highway 43 and the BNSF Railroad.

*Planning Area Map*



The appearance of the downtown is generally good. The City has invested significantly in street furniture (bollards, street lights and benches) as well as decorative crosswalks. Maintenance of the downtown is also generally good - lawns are mowed, trees are watered and parking stalls are painted. However, an analysis by the Urban Tree Foundation has concluded that many of the Raywood Ash that line 7<sup>th</sup> Street are diseased or have root problems. The analysis concluded that these trees should be replaced with a more appropriate tree species (see Tree and Landscaping Recommendations in Appendix B).

## Downtown Historic District Policy and Design Plan

### *Chapter 3: Observations*

The buildings that line 7th Street are in fair condition. Some are vacant while others are under utilized - uses that generate a low gross sales per square foot. Many of the building facades could be improved to make the uses inside more marketable or attractive from the public right-of-way. Some older buildings have had facades remodeled in a way that detracts from their historic character.



There is a good mix of uses in the Downtown - public uses (city hall, post office, library, Cormack Park), one bank, medical uses (medical clinic, dentist, chiropractor, and eye specialist), retail stores and commercial services (cleaning, beauty salons, barber shops, etc.); however, there seems to be a shortage of restaurants and other uses that would bring people into the downtown after working hours or during the weekend. Further, there does not seem to be a slate of organized public events that are staged in the downtown (e.g. farmer's market, parades, music events, sidewalk sales, etc).

Two planning documents prepared for Wasco - (1) *Wasco: Commercial Revitalization Program* and (2) *Downtown Revitalization Study and Downtown Business District Market Plan*, detailed numerous observations

about Wasco's downtown, some obvious and some not so obvious. Key observations from the *Commercial Revitalization Program* document were:

- Wasco is experiencing significant sales tax leakage to other cities.
- There are opportunities to diversify the city's economic base.
- Wasco's socio-economic composition leans towards the lower end categories: low- to moderate- income households.
- There is a need to attract professional and community-minded young people to the community.
- Detailed observations in the downtown were:
  - 1) lack of commercial activity on 7th Street between D Street and Broadway;
  - 2) the intersection of 7th Street and Griffith needs some type of signage that denotes that the traveler is entering downtown Wasco;
  - 3) and alleys need attention and vacant lots surrounded by chain-link fences depict a poor image.
- There is a large residential population living east of the BNSF Railroad that could access the downtown by means of a pedestrian bridge.
- Regular maintenance of the downtown is necessary to project a positive image. Maintenance includes street sweeping, removing and replacing uplifted sidewalks, removing litter from vacant lots and alleys; painting over graffiti, pruning and watering landscaping and keeping the storm drainage system free of debris.
- Four alleys in the downtown could serve as pedestrian ways to parking at the rear of the buildings that front onto 7th Street.

- Twenty-nine buildings in the downtown could use some type of facade renovation; twenty-three buildings in the downtown had rear facades that could benefit from some cosmetic improvements - paint, debris removal, pave dirt surfaces, addition of signage, and screening of garbage bins.
- Sixteen opportunity sites were identified in the downtown wherein a vacant lot or building could be developed, an underutilized use could be replaced with a use that could be conducive to downtown revitalization or a vacant parcel could be paved for a parking lot.
- Wasco needs to form an organization that will oversee the marketing, maintenance, and coordination of special events and construction of improvement in the downtown.

Key observations from the *Downtown Revitalization Study and Downtown Business District Market Plan* were:

- Extend street trees to the west along 7th Street,
- add street trees along D and E Streets one block north and south of 7th Street,



- add diagonal parking along D and E Streets,
- paint light standards green with gold accents, and
- add more bulb-outs along D, E and F Streets and provide a pedestrian crossing at 5th Street where it crosses the BNSF Railroad.
- There are a number of vacant and underutilized parcels in and around the downtown that could be developed or redeveloped.
- There are opportunities in the downtown to expand existing parks or construct new ones.

## 4: Public Involvement

Public involvement is an important component towards forging a successful policy plan and design guidelines. For a plan and a set of design guidelines to withstand the test of time and garner long-term financial and political support, the public must be supportive. The City has conducted business and property-owner surveys. The results of these surveys are as follows:

### Downtown Property Owners Survey - November, 2014

#### 1. How long have you owned property in Downtown Wasco?

\_\_\_\_ Less than 1 year    1 5 – 10 years  
\_\_\_\_ 1-5 years        7 10+ years

#### 2. Are you satisfied with the existing angled parking in the center of 7th Street.

7 Yes  
\_\_\_\_ No  
1 Somewhat

#### 3. Would you support relocating the center parking to the edges of the street directly in front of the businesses?

2 Yes  
6 No

#### 4. Are you interested in making improvements to beautify the outside of your building(s)?

4 Yes. I would be interested in knowing what kinds of improvements I can make.  
3 Yes, but I don't have the funding.  
2 No. I like my building just the way it is.

#### 5. Do you see the landscape treatment along 7th Street as a benefit to your property?

5 Yes. It makes it nicer for customers who are coming to my store.  
1 No. It doesn't make a difference for my customers  
1 Somewhat.

#### 6. Do you have a planned maintenance schedule for your building or do you perform maintenance only as needed?

1 Yes. I have a planned maintenance schedule.  
7 No. I perform maintenance only as needed.

#### 7. Would public art or wall murals be something you would be willing to consider on your property?

5 Yes, I think they would help draw more people to the downtown  
3 No, they would not make a difference in the downtown.  
\_\_\_\_ No opinion

**8. Would you consider a public gathering place, plaza or small open space area beneficial to your property?**

  3   Yes, such a space would be a good addition to downtown Wasco.

  5   No, it would not make a difference to my business.

       No opinion

**9. Please share with us any additional ideas, comments or concerns you have regarding Downtown Wasco.**

The following written responses were provided:

*“Make more improvements to beautify downtown.”*

*“I don't care for strong colors on the outside of buildings.”*

*“Parking in the middle of the street could be a safety issue.”*

*“Need buildings not open space.”*

*“The first change in parking cost enough. Why would you even consider changing back? Leave as is.”*

**Downtown Business Owners Survey - November, 2014**

**1. What type of business do you own or represent in Downtown Wasco?**

- 3 General Retail       Entertainment  
 Restaurant       Other  
 1 Service (banking, insurance, medical, beauty etc.)

**2. Do you own or lease your building?**

- 2 Own  
 1 Lease

**3. How long has your business been located in Downtown Wasco?**

- Less than 1 year       5 – 10 years  
 1-5 years       4 10+ years

**4. Are you satisfied with the existing angled parking in the center of 7th Street.**

- 2 Yes  
 1 No  
 1 Somewhat

**5. Would you support relocating the center parking to the edges of the street directly in front of the businesses?**

- 1 Yes  
 3 No

**6. Do customers complain about a lack of parking for your business?**

- 2 Yes  
 2 No

**7. Are you interested in making improvements to beautify the outside of your building?**

- Yes. I would be interested in knowing what kinds of improvements I can make.  
 2 Yes, but I don't have the funding.  
 1 No. I like my building just the way it is.

**8. Do you feel your current business signage is adequate?**

  3   Yes

  1   No

**9. How concerned are you about customers being able to find your business?**

       Very concerned. I feel like my business is invisible.

  4   Somewhat concerned, but once a customer finds me they won't have a problem finding me again.

       Not concerned. Smart phones make it easy for my customers to find me.

**10. Do you see the landscape treatment along 7th Street as a benefit to your business?**

  1   Yes. It makes it nicer for customers who are coming to my store.

  2   No. It doesn't make a difference for my customers

  1   Somewhat.

**11. Are there street improvements that you believe would be beneficial to your business (and downtown as a whole) such as benches, additional landscaping, lighting etc.? Please list below.**

*Responses included:*

- Additional sidewalk clean-up;
- More lighting on cross streets;
- Sidewalks are uneven and need to be fixed;
- Benches are only a place for panhandling.

**12. Are there any types of businesses you believe should not be on 7th Street? Please list below.**

Smoke shops (two responses)

**13. Do you believe periodic sidewalk sales such as those held on Valentine's Day and Mother's Day are beneficial to your business, or do they cause a problem for your business?**

  2   They are beneficial.

  2   No. They cause problems for my business.

**14. Would public art or wall murals be something you would like to see in the Downtown area?**

  2   Yes, I think they would help draw more people to the downtown

  1   No, they would not make a difference in the downtown.

  1   No opinion

**15. Would you consider a public gathering place, plaza or small open space area beneficial to your business?**

  1   Yes, such a space would be a good addition to downtown Wasco.

  2   No, it would not make a difference to my business.

  1   No opinion

**16. Do you support closing 7th Street for special events such as parades, rallies, farmer's markets etc.?**

  3   Yes. These events promote community pride and increase exposure for my business.

  1   No. These events hurt my business.

**17. Do you see a need for a Downtown Business Owners Association to help promote downtown Wasco and organize special events? If so would you be interested in participating?**

       Yes. I would be interested in participating.

  2   Yes, but I would not be interested in participating.

  2   No

**18. Please share with us any additional ideas, comments or concerns you have regarding Downtown Wasco.**

*“Parking in front of La Canasta is bad since the opening of the two adjacent stores.”*

*“Too many burglaries and panhandling downtown since the smoke shops opened.”*

*“Downtown businesses don't have a voice but a Downtown Business Owners Association wouldn't help.”*

*“A lot of additional parking is needed.”*

Although the number of respondents to the 2014 downtown survey was not significant, those who did respond provided some insight into the "mindset" of business owners in the downtown - don't change the center parking, they would be interested in improving the appearance of their buildings (if they had the money), and improvements in the downtown - public plaza, art and street trees could have a positive impact on their business.

Paralleling these surveys, the Consultants prepared a slide presentation on Wasco's downtown. This presentation illustrated the various physical features that make up a successful downtown including hardscape, landscape, open space features, building types and signage. This was presented to Wasco Planning Commission in November of 2015. Public comments made after the slide presentation generally mirrored the survey results provided above.

## 5: Goals, Policies and Action Plans



The Wasco General Plan contains land use and community design policies that provide direction for the development of Wasco's downtown. These policies provide the City with an overarching direction as it embarks on its continued revitalization of the downtown. This policy direction is summarized as follows:

*"Maintain a thriving historic downtown that is the symbolic and functional center of the City's business, professional, governmental and social activities"*

Although implementing actions are shown in the Plan, the principal implementing tool will be the Zoning Code and the newly added Chapter 17.55, Historic Downtown Combining District. The policy guidance and design guidelines within this Plan are to be used in conjunction with the requirements of Chapter 17.55.

### Goals

Goals for Wasco's downtown that are specific to this Plan are listed below. The strategy for implementing these goals follows this list.

1. *Reduce building vacancies in the downtown.*
2. *Promote investment in existing downtown buildings, and increase gross sales per square foot in these buildings.*
3. *Encourage new construction in the downtown, especially uses that would complement existing uses while also attracting more people into the downtown.*
4. *Attract people into the downtown after working hours as well as on the weekends.*
5. *Improve the appearance of the downtown with new building facades, decorated paseos, more landscaped bulbouts (see photo next page), and a greater variety of street trees.*
6. *Where feasible, increase the number of parking stalls in the downtown, both on street and in public and private parking lots.*
7. *Attract visitors into the downtown from surrounding cities.*
8. *Attract a wide range of age groups into the downtown - seniors to children.*
9. *Rebrand the downtown as the location where most civic gatherings occur - parades, special events, farmer's markets and contests.*

## Downtown Historic District Policy and Design Plan

### *Chapter 5: Goals, Policies and Action Plans*

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*“Bulbouts” or curb extensions are traffic-calming devices that slow traffic in pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods. They also reduce the distance pedestrians have to cross the street, and can also be used to introduce landscaping (and shade) into an area of extensive pavement.*

- 10. Bring art into the downtown in the form of murals, decorative hardscape, fountains, iron works and other types of art forms.*
- 11. Market the downtown to persons living in Wasco and surrounding cities. Marketing should include better signage and use of social media.*
- 13. Improve signage in the downtown as well as way-finding signage for persons looking for the downtown.*
- 14. Ensure that the infrastructure system is adequate in the downtown to support future development and redevelopment.*

- 15. Ensure that development is well designed and planned by adopting design guidelines for new and existing development in the downtown.*

This Plan will set forth a policy strategy that will implement the above goals. This strategy will be somewhat unique in that each policy will be linked to an implementation action. Associated with each action, the Plan will list 1) who will be responsible for implementation (e.g. planning or public works departments, etc.), 2) the source of funding (general fund or grant) that will finance implementation; and 3) a time frame when implementation should occur.

The policy section will be divided into a number of categories (e.g. maintenance, landscaping, organization, facade treatment, etc.). Each category will focus on a different aspect of downtown revitalization.

## POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

### A. Overarching Sense of Place

The historic downtown area of Wasco is situated along 7th Street between Broadway on the west and the BNSF railroad which anchors the east end of the historic district. This area represents the original focal point of the community and the early center of commercial activity. It also contains a number of historic buildings which portray the architectural style and building materials of the early years of construction within the historic center of the community. Still functioning today as an important center of community activity, the unique siting of buildings, use of brick exterior building materials, and pedestrian orientation of activity make the preservation of this historic district and its unique character an important objective of this Plan.

1. **Policy.** *Adopt a historic downtown overlay district which establishes an informal historic theme for 7th Street and promotes architectural interest and character.*

- a. **Action:** *Create historic downtown design guidelines that recognize the historic qualities of brick in downtown structures and which emphasize the preservation and use of brick as a street façade building material.*
- b. **Action:** *Amend the Zoning Code to establish a strong set of development regulations within the historic downtown district to complement the Historic Downtown Design Guidelines.*

2. **Policy.** *Create a strong sense of place within the historic downtown district.*



- a. **Action:** *Develop a streetscape design plan emphasizing coordinated landscape and hardscape treatments which set a design theme and are pedestrian oriented.*
- b. **Action:** *Create gateway signage to define the east and west entries to the historic district and implement a wayfinding sign program to provide direction to the historic district and to public parking within the district.*
- c. **Action:** *Paint existing themed street lights and lighted bollards the same colors as the clock tower and use these theme colors in gateway and wayfinding signage.*

**B. Maintenance**

The first step in creating (or maintaining) a successful downtown is to ensure that it is "clean and safe." If litter and graffiti are visible or people feel uncomfortable with visiting the downtown when it is dark, maintaining a successful downtown will be an uphill challenge.

1. **Policy.** *Maintain the downtown so that it is free of graffiti, litter, unkempt landscaping, and substandard buildings.*

- a. **Action:** *The streets in the downtown shall be swept once a week.*
- b. **Action:** *Attractive trash receptacles shall be located on each block in the downtown. These containers shall be emptied on as needed basis.*



- c. **Action:** *Graffiti shall be removed (painted over) within 24 hours of observation.*
- d. **Action:** *Sidewalks shall be power washed twice a year.*

e. **Action:** *Substandard buildings in the downtown shall be monitored by the building department to ensure that they do not pose a threat to public health, safety or welfare. Where the building department finds that a building represents a threat (as per the California Building Code and 1997 Uniform Building Code for the Abatement of Dangerous Buildings) the building owner shall be notified of said infraction.*

2. **Policy.** *Maintain the downtown so that it is properly illuminated especially in public parking lots, paseos and alleys.*

- a. **Action:** *Street lights in the downtown shall be inspected once a year to ensure that bulbs that are burnt out are replaced.*
- b. **Action:** *Where lacking, new street lights shall be installed in public parking lots and paseos.*
- c. **Action:** *Add additional street lights and increase wattage of existing lights where appropriate.*

3. **Policy.** *Downtown shall be patrolled by the local law enforcement during evening hours to ensure pedestrian safety.*

- a. **Action:** *Local law enforcement shall patrol the alleys during the late night hours as well as the streets in the downtown.*

**C. Circulation**

Circulation features afford a pathway by which auto, truck, rail, bike and pedestrian traffic can move in, out and around the downtown. If not properly designed, these circulation routes can be disruptive and hazardous for persons living, working or visiting the downtown. For downtown Wasco is it essential that the circulation system is pedestrian-friendly, and promotes slow moving traffic and crosswalk improvements that are well lit and easily recognizable by the motorist.

**1. Policy. Intersections in the downtown should be made more pedestrian friendly.**

- a. Action:** The City should design pedestrian-friendly crosswalks on all corners that intersect with 7th Street in the downtown.
- b. Action:** The City should design pedestrian-friendly crosswalks on all four corners of the intersection of 7th and F Street in the downtown. Caltrans must be contacted for design standards prior to commencing with design work.

**2. Policy. Paseos in the downtown should be made more pedestrian friendly by providing lighting and effectively tying them into the alleys that parallel 7th Street to the north and south.**

- a. Action:** The City should retain design services of a landscape architect to prepare designs for the four paseos in the downtown. The architect should involve the public in this design process.



**D. Parking**

Ample off-street and on-street parking is imperative for a successful downtown. Fortunately, between city-owned parking lots and diagonal parking in the center of and sides of 7th Street, downtown Wasco is blessed with an abundance of parking; however, behind the buildings that front onto 7th Street there is an additional opportunity to convert vacant dirt lots into private or public parking lots.

- b. **Action:** *The City shall re-stripe E and F Streets one block north and south of 7th Street to convert perpendicular parking to diagonal parking.*



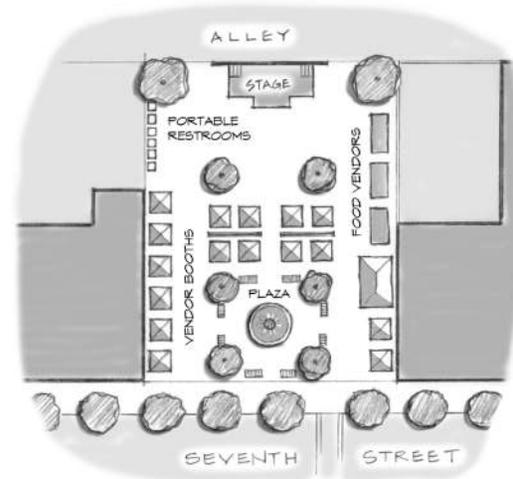
1. **Policy.** *Additional public/private parking should be encouraged in the downtown.*

- a. **Action:** *When a building in the downtown is remodeled, expanded or significantly altered, a condition of approval shall be the conversion of any dirt parking lots into a public or private parking lot that meets city standards for paving.*

**E. Public Open Space**

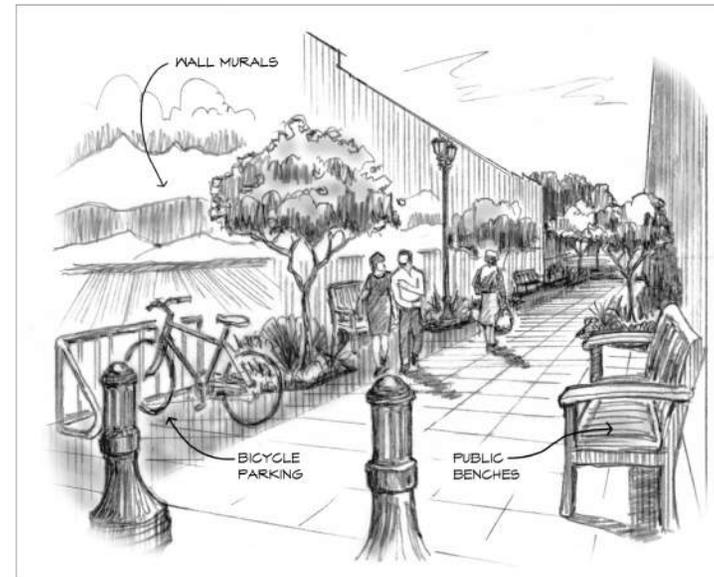
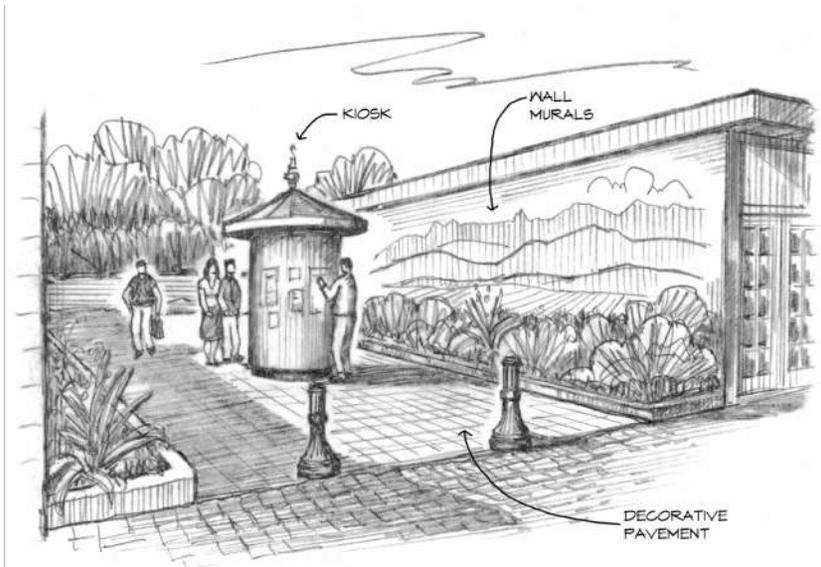
Parks and open space come in many forms including plazas, gardens, village greens, squares and paseos. They provide a break in the built environment by introducing an open area in the downtown that is free of buildings, parking lots, streets and rail lines. The patterns of streets and buildings are often interrupted in a downtown by a park, landscaped area or water feature. These interruptions can mark a place in the downtown where one can rest, enjoy viewing nature, avoid the elements, or experience solitude.

1. **Policy.** Create a public space in the downtown where a variety of events and gatherings can be staged. An ideal parcel would be the vacant lot on the north side of 7th Street between E and F Streets, which has recently become vacant as a result of a structural fire.
  - a. **Action:** The city of Wasco should purchase the vacant parcel located on the north side of 7th Street between E and F Streets for the purpose of constructing a public open space feature.
2. **Policy.** Expand the park at 7th and F Streets to add additional amenities that will attract people to the downtown including uses such as a rose garden, dog park, tot lot or splash pad.
  - a. **Action:** The city of Wasco should utilize park impact fees to purchase land adjacent to the park at 7th and F Streets. Numerous uses could be incorporated into this larger park. A reconstruction of the intersection of F Street and State Highway 43 will make the park more accessible to public walking from the west side of downtown.



3. **Policy.** *Improve the four paseos that are located on both sides of 7th Street in the downtown by introducing lighting, landscaping, benches and where appropriate art, iron works, water features and hardscape that could include rock, colored concrete, brick or some other type of hardscape material.*

- a. **Action:** *The city of Wasco should utilize park impact fees or state or federal grants to design and construct Wasco's downtown paseos.*



*Artist's conception of improved pedestrian paseo, featuring landscaping, lighting, furniture and mural on building wall.*

**F. Signage**

Signs serve to advertise goods and services, direct pedestrian and vehicle traffic, warn people of dangers and sometimes, serve as art. Too many signs or signs that are composed of material that are incompatible with the building to which they are fixed can be detracting and aesthetically unappealing.

*1. Policy. Signs in the downtown should be aesthetically appealing and afford the motorist or pedestrian clear directions as to where certain uses are located, including public parking.*

*a. **Action:** The City shall provide signage at appropriate locations in the downtown that direct motorists to public parking lots.*

*b. **Action:** The design guidelines in Chapter 6 of this Plan should be adopted to guide the design, placement and size of signs that will be installed in the downtown.*



2. **Policy.** *The public works and planning departments should fashion a way-finding sign program that installs well designed signs within the public right-of-way (bulbouts) that informs the location of businesses in the downtown that are not located on 7th Street.*
- a. **Action:** *The City should have a sign design developed for signage at appropriate locations in the downtown that direct motorists to businesses located on side streets. Said signage shall be funded by businesses that will be placed on the sign.*
- a. **Action:** *The City shall establish “wayfinding” signage in and around the downtown that directs visitors to locations of interest.*



*Attractively designed “way-finding” signs help visitors find locations of interest*

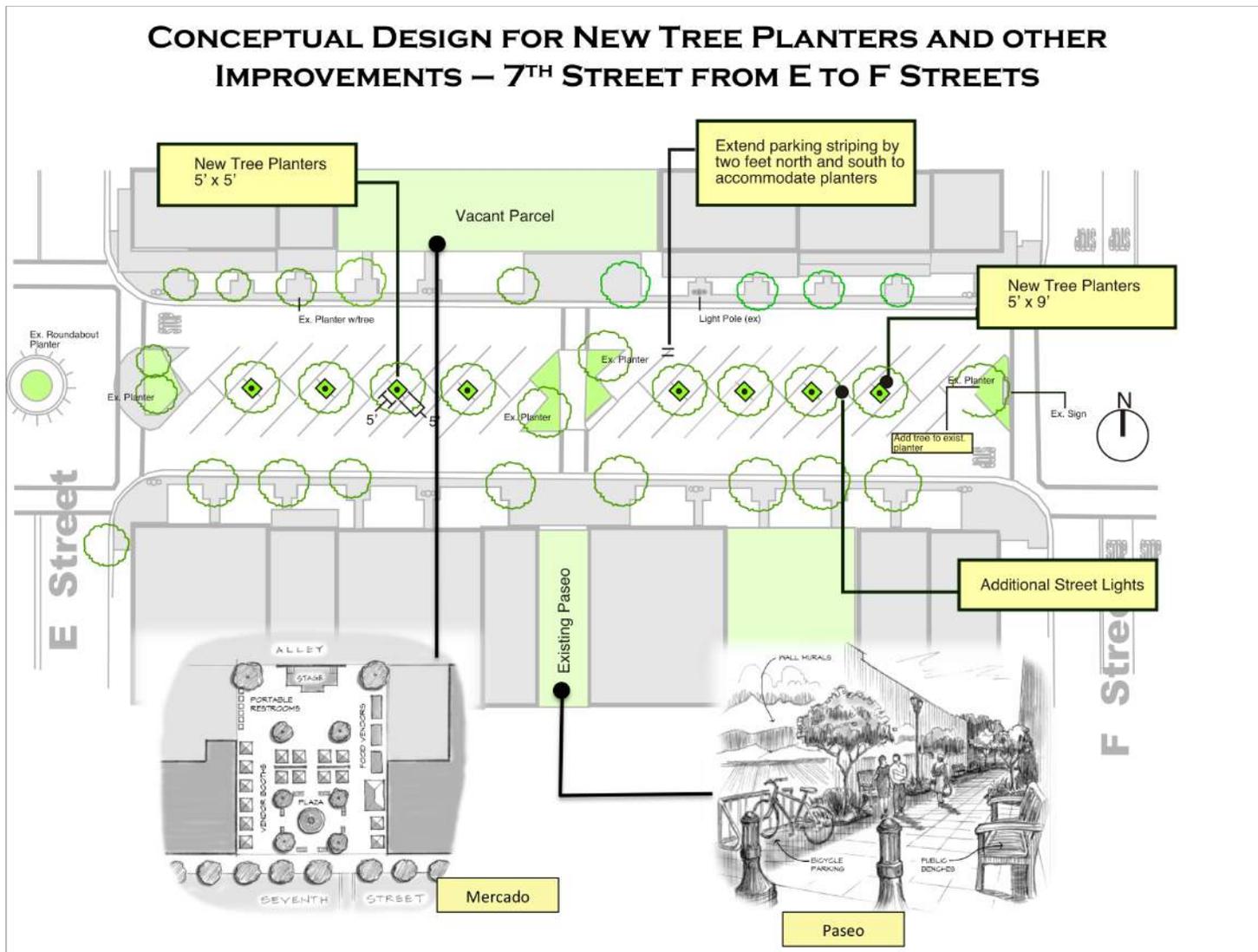
**G. Landscaping**

Landscaping in the downtown “softens” the urban environment by adding vegetation, including trees, shrubs, ground cover and turf. Vegetation cleans the air, adds color, shades pedestrians from the sun and rain, and can provide aromatic pleasantries.

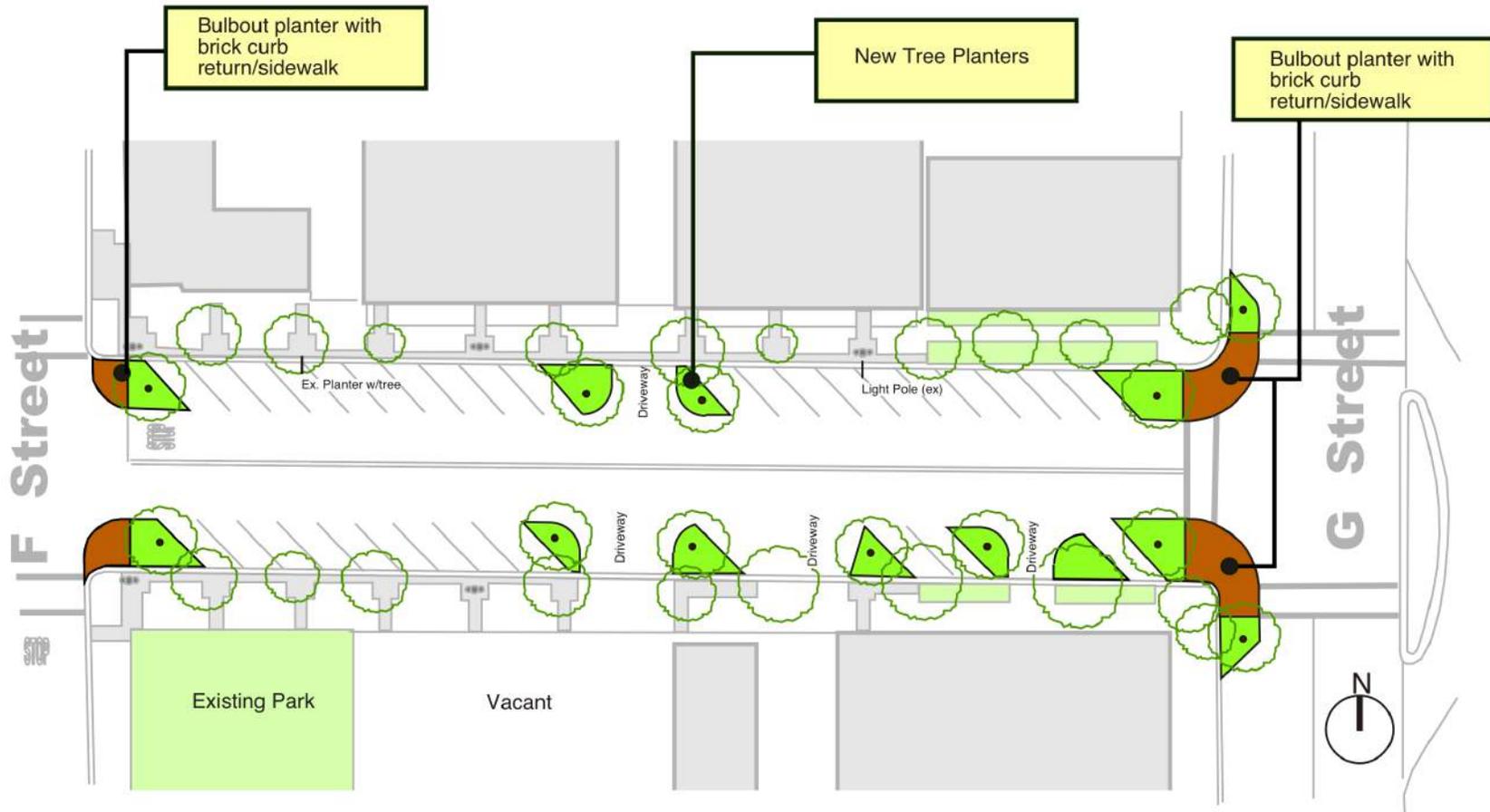
1. **Policy.** *Replace the street trees along 7th Street with a more appropriate tree that uses less water and does not pose long-term problems for adjacent sidewalks.*
  - a. **Action:** *The public works department working with the Urban Tree Foundation should begin the process of replacing the trees along 7th Street with a more appropriate tree type.*
2. **Policy.** *Plant street trees along all streets that intersect with 7th Street between G Street and Broadway.*
  - a. **Action:** *The public works department working with the Urban Tree Foundation should begin the process of planting trees along streets that run perpendicular to 7th Street in the downtown.*
3. **Policy.** *Add landscaped bulbouts along streets that intersect with 7th Street from G Street to Broadway.*
  - a. **Action:** *The public works department working with the Urban Tree Foundation should begin the process of designing and constructing bulbouts along streets that run perpendicular to 7th Street in the downtown.*



4. **Policy.** *Add landscape planters and bulbouts at appropriate locations along 7<sup>th</sup> Street.*
  - a. **Action:** *The public works department working with the Urban Tree Foundation should begin the process of designing and constructing planters and bulbouts in appropriate locations along 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Sample designs are shown on the following pages.*



## CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR NEW TREE PLANTERS AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS 7<sup>TH</sup> STREET FROM F TO G STREETS



## 6: Design Guidelines

The purpose of the Downtown Design Guidelines is to ensure that development and redevelopment occurring in the downtown fosters an environment that supports a positive shopping and working experience; encourages social interaction; and creates buildings and other improvements that are well-designed and visually pleasing.

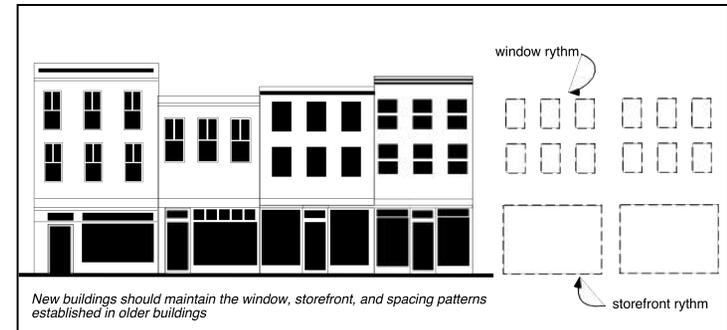
The Guidelines serve to implement the goals of the general plan, the objectives of the zoning ordinance and the policies and implementation actions of this document - Historic Downtown District Overlay Plan.

The Wasco City Council adopted an ordinance in 2000 that established the Historic Downtown Wasco Overlay District. One of the objectives of the District was to establish an informal historic theme for the downtown that encouraged the use of brick building materials, promoted a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, and advanced a streetscape that included a tree-lined street, historic lighting, benches and drinking fountains.

The design guidelines for the implementation of this district are detailed below. This document contains illustrations, diagrams and photos that can be used to guide new development in the Downtown. These guidelines should also be used in conjunction with Chapter 17.55 of the Zoning Ordinance.

### A. New Buildings and Renovation of Existing Buildings

1. Building scale should be compatible with adjoining buildings. The facades of adjacent structures and the informal historic theme of the district shall be considered in the design of new structures and substantial renovation of existing buildings in order to avoid clashes in architectural style, color or use of materials.



2. Proportions of building - the relationship between the width and height of a building - should be compatible with buildings in the immediate vicinity.
3. Relationships of materials, textures and color should be compatible with the surrounding buildings and its own architecture style.



*Relationships of materials, textures and colors should be compatible with surrounding buildings. Notice the placement of signs and the common color theme.*

## Downtown Historic Overlay District Policy and Design Plan

### Chapter 6: Design Guidelines

- Blank, solid end walls or sidewalls visible from the public right-of-way shall be avoided. If such walls are necessary, the wall shall receive some form of articulation such as awnings, cornice bands, wall trellises, faux windows or murals.
- New building design that is consistent with the informal, historical character of Wasco is encouraged.
- Preservation and restoration of existing historic building facades are encouraged. Existing building elements incompatible with the original facade design of the building shall be removed. Historic brick covered with metal sheathing or plaster is an example. Any new replacement facade shall be in character with the original architectural appearance of the building.



*Preservation and restoration of existing historic building facades is encouraged.*

- Buildings should be designed with well-defined front and back facades, entries and separation of private, semi-public and public spaces. Driveway access from 7th Street (e.g. auto repair, drive-thru banks and restaurants) is prohibited.
- Existing historic decoration, detail and embellishments on the exterior of all brick buildings which are compatible with the original architectural appearance of the structure shall be preserved whenever possible.
- New construction and substantial remodel projects shall be designed by repeating rhythms, cornice lines, window and door arrangement with other facades on the street.



*Design compatibility and interest can be achieved with the tasteful organization of building elements, colors, and materials*

- Encourage arcades that extend over the sidewalk in the front of buildings when appropriate to the architecture. These help to provide shade for pedestrians.

11. Divide large expanses of storefront windows with vertical framing elements. Within these framing elements glass may be large plates, divided lights or a combination of both. Replacement windows should fill the entire opening and duplicate the original patterns.
12. Construction of vehicle-oriented structures or other drive-up buildings are prohibited.
13. Residential development in the Historic District should be regulated by all of the design guidelines set forth in this document.

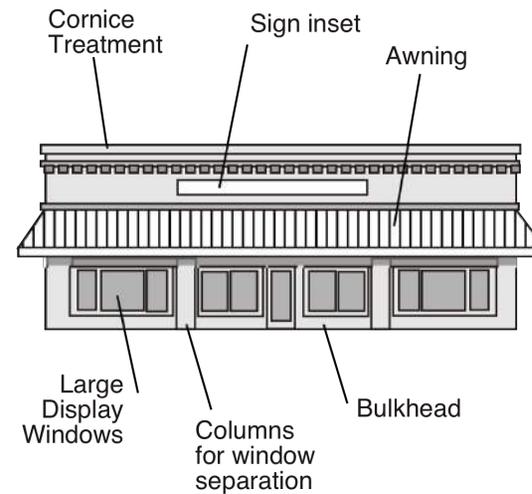
**B. Building Placement**

1. Along the 7<sup>th</sup> and F Street frontages, the first floor shall be built at the property line adjacent to all public rights-of-way (excluding alleys) or provide a hardscape or pedestrian feature.



*New buildings in the downtown must be situated forward on the lot (at the back of the sidewalk). This helps to reinforce the downtown's unique pedestrian atmosphere.*

2. New buildings constructed in the downtown or existing buildings that are to be remodeled shall incorporate architectural features on the ground floor that encourage pedestrian movement. These design amenities may include building cut-offs, walk-throughs, covered arcades, trellis structures and other elements that focus visual interest on the corner of a building.



**C. Appropriate Materials**

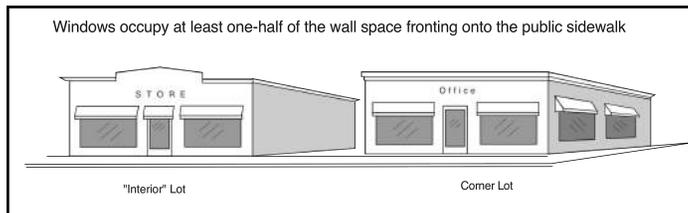
1. Use materials for the principal wall surface of the building front facade, which have a durable, high quality, finish and are compatible with Wasco's historic downtown.
2. Examples of inappropriate materials and finishes for wall surfaces include the following: imitation or processed materials, lava rock, permastone, exposed metal siding and grooved plywood.
3. Secondary or accent facade materials should be compatible with principal facade materials and with those traditionally used on downtown commercial buildings. If brick is not used as the primary material, it is recommended as a secondary or accent material.



*Example of inappropriate materials being added onto a historic brick structure.*

4. Roofing materials and finishes should be appropriate to the type, form and style of the building.
  - a. Where roofs are visible, neutral colors should generally be used.
  - b. Metal roofing should be used only in areas that will not be visible.
5. Storefront and glazing (window) materials should be durable and have a scale and quality appropriate for commercial as opposed to residential applications. Appropriate storefront materials include the following:
  - a. Clear or lightly tinted glass in painted wood frames or factory-finished colored aluminum or vinyl frames.
  - b. Glaze ceramic tile, wood, cast iron, concrete or plaster, cut or carved stone, flat concrete or clay tiles, flagstone, stacked stone, fieldstone and brick or brick veneer.
  - c. Glass doors in frames to match storefront framing.
  - d. Milled door wood - with or without glazing.
6. Inappropriate storefront materials include the following:
  - a. Unfinished, anodized aluminum frames for doors or windows.
  - b. Wood shakes or shingles for storefront bases, on fixed awnings or roofs.
  - c. Imitation or processed material, barn wood, lava rock, permastone, exposed metal siding.

- d. Highly reflective glass
  - e. Corrugated fiberglass or metal
  - f. Brightly colored paint and/or tile
7. Colors and finishes shall be appropriate to the nature of the material, the historic character of the district, the style of the building and the climate in Wasco.
- a. With few exceptions wood should usually be painted. Brick facades shall not be covered with paint, metal, wood siding, or other materials.
  - b. Avoid an overwhelming contrast in color values between facade and trim colors and the existing colors on adjacent building. Garish or extremely bright (neon-type) colors or metallic paint finishes are generally inappropriate for any building element.
  - c. The applicant shall provide a color board showing all the colors that will be used on the building facade.
8. Storefront construction shall be a minimum 60 percent transparent (windows).



#### D. Awnings

1. Simple awning shapes and profiles that reflect the facade composition and geometry of the building should be used. Individual awning should be positioned between the vertical elements of the ground floor storefront such as piers, pilasters, shop divisions and second floor entries. Massive oversized awnings should be avoided.



*Use simple awning shapes and profiles that reflect the facade composition and geometry of the building.*

2. Architectural elements should not be obscured with careless placement of awnings. Use awnings on second floors only at individual window openings.

3. Awnings are encouraged and allowed to project into the pedestrian right-of-way. Awnings may project into the front right-of-way up to three feet from the face of curb.



*Awnings are encouraged to project into the pedestrian right-of-way*

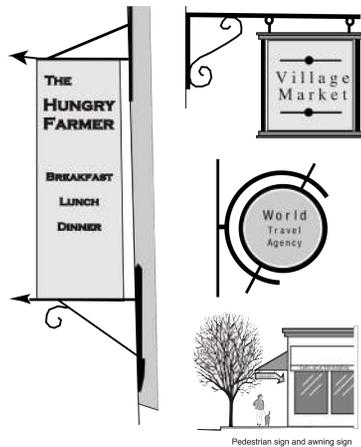


*Massive awning overpowers the face of the building*

4. Plastic, vinyl and metal awnings shall be prohibited.
5. Awnings are permitted in any color except fluorescent, shining or glowing colors. Awnings shall not be the same color as the body of the building.
6. Awnings shall be located below the cornice and rooflines of a structure.

**E. Signs**

1. All signage shall comply with the sign requirements of Chapter 17.61 of the Wasco Zoning Ordinance and any additional requirements detailed in this Chapter. The types of signs generally permitted in the downtown are illustrated in the graphic below.
2. Signs in the downtown should be pedestrian-oriented in scale and placement.



*Signs in the downtown shall be pedestrian-oriented in scale and placement.*

3. Use of a comprehensive sign plan shall be required for all new and restored buildings that contain two or more business establishments. Signs shall be unified in design.
4. Signs should be provided at the rear of all buildings along alleyways to provide for clear identification of businesses.

5. Appropriate sign materials may include the following: wood panels (routed, painted or sealed), wood or metal panels, individually mounted letters, vinyl letters or cast metal plaques. Materials must be compatible with the building design or architecture. Cabinet signs are prohibited.

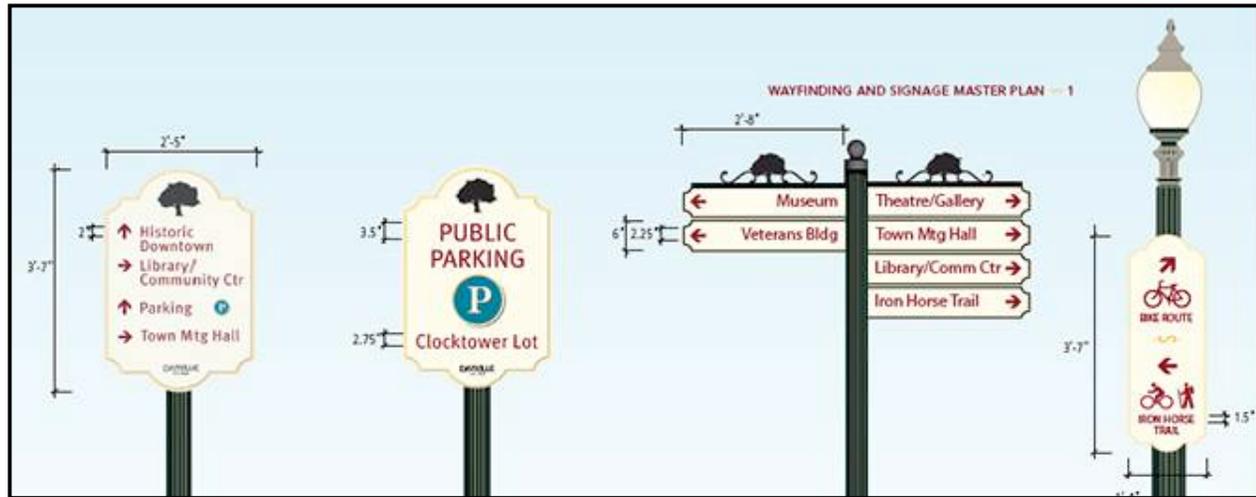


*Example of a wall sign with individual lettering*

6. Illumination may be by indirect means such as concealed or inconspicuous spotlights or backlighting. Internally illuminated signs are only permitted within individual channel cut letters. Signs should not flash, scintillate, move or produce glare.
7. Window signs shall not detract from the ability to see inside the building. For safety reasons, window signs shall not cover more than 25% of the window area and window displays shall not cover more than 50% of window area for transparency.
8. Freestanding signs may be monument type only and must meet the requirements of the existing Wasco Zoning Ordinance.
9. The following signs are considered vintage signs and are exempt from the sign regulations contained in this Plan.
  - a. Fiesta Latina Market freestanding sign, 1220 7<sup>th</sup> Street
  - b. Hoyett's Sandwich Shop roof sign, 727 6<sup>th</sup> Street
  - c. McCafferty's Cleaners roof sign, 1030 7<sup>th</sup> Street
  - d. Plaza Hotel projecting sign, 700 block E Street

e. Wasco Liquors roof sign, 8-1 7<sup>th</sup> Street

10. Gateway signs and wayfinding signs are allowed in the street right-of-way to provide direction to parking lots, City Hall, etc. The City should develop and install a wayfinding signage program.



*Example of typical downtown wayfinding signage*

**G. Historic Brick Theme**

1. Building facades composed of brick represent a historical theme in the downtown that should be preserved whenever possible when building remodels, additions, and/or façade changes are being considered.
2. Locate additions to brick façade buildings to the rear of the existing structure whenever possible in order to maintain visual integrity of the streetfacade.
3. Discourage upper floor additions to brick façade buildings. However, if allowed, they should be set back from the street and well behind the line of the original facade so that it maintains its visual integrity and original sense of scale.
4. Additions should employ the same or complementing materials, and similar opening proportions, facade rhythms and horizontal elements as the original. Use authentic materials whenever possible in restoration, renovation or repair work.
5. For substitute materials, the outward appearance, durability, texture and finish should be as close as possible to that of the original material on brick facade buildings.
6. Vinyl clad wood or factory finish (baked enamel) aluminum window frames are acceptable if the original design can be duplicated.
7. Sandblasting of brick/masonry surfaces to remove paint will damage the material. Other methods should be used only under the advice and guidance of an expert.
8. Covering over, sheathing or replacing original siding material with a different material such as stucco, wood or composition shingles, or metal sheathing should not be permitted.
9. Where the original materials have been covered over, applicants must use the gentlest means possible to remove them. Certain claddings, such as stucco may be difficult, if not impossible to remove without destroying the underlying material.
10. Original architectural elements- cornices, moldings and trim should not be removed. Replacements should be similar in character to the original. Any and all rehabilitation of the exterior or an existing brick facade shall be restored as part of a renovation design.



*Replacement materials on historic buildings should be similar in character to the original.*

11. The proportions of existing door and window openings and the pattern of existing window sashes in replacement work or additions shall be maintained.
12. New or replacement window sashes should match the original sash. Where the original has been completely removed, new windows should match the existing unless a complete replacement program for the facade is undertaken.

### I. Fences and Walls

1. Acceptable materials include but are not limited to concrete or plaster with smooth or textured finish, wrought iron, split-face block, new or used brick, cut or carved stone.
2. Unacceptable materials include chain line or cyclone, and metal fencing, smooth unfinished concrete block, rough-sawn wood or pre-fabricated masonry slide in panels.

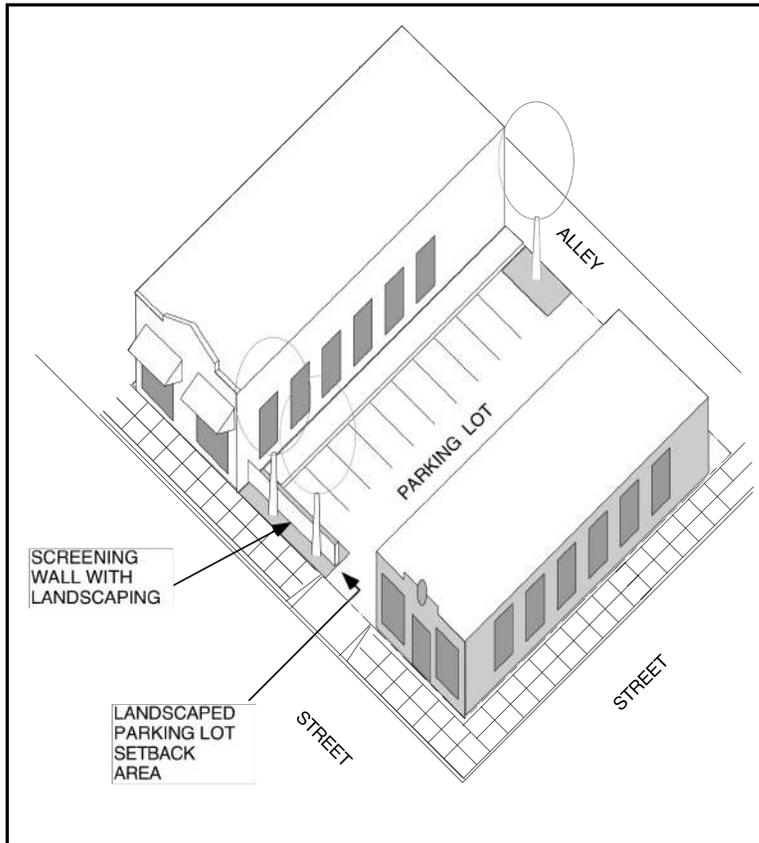
### J. Parking Lots

1. Parking lots shall be located as much as possible to the rear or side of a building.



*Parking lots shall be located as much as possible to the rear or side of a building.*

2. Locating new parking lots between the front property line and the primary building storefront is specifically prohibited.
3. Parking lots shall be screened from the public right-of-way by the use of low hedges or walls.



*Parking lots should be screened from the street.*

5. For substantial remodel projects on sites where an existing parking lot is between the front property line and the primary building storefront, the existing parking lot shall meet all City of Wasco standards and requirements of this Chapter including screening and landscaping, and be considered legal non-conforming, without requiring the structure to be built to the front property line.
6. Provision of employee parking at the rear (alley access only) of all new construction and substantial remodel projects should be provided wherever practicable.
7. New parking lots should not have direct vehicular ingress/egress to 7th Street unless considered temporary, or approved by a conditional use permit.

**K. Landscaping, Street Furniture and Miscellaneous Equipment**

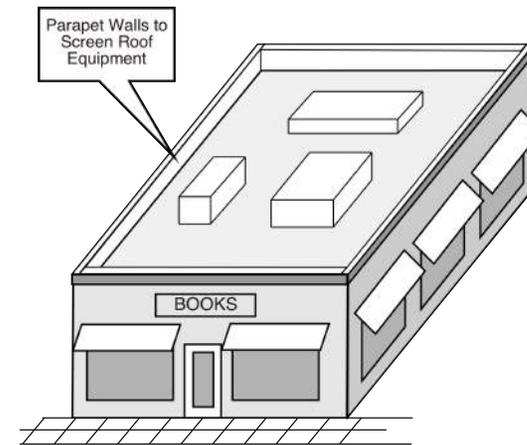
1. Planter boxes that project no more than 18 inches into the public right-of-way are desirable if well maintained, designed and finished with materials and colors compatible with the building.



*Well-designed window planter boxes are desirable.*

2. Placement of tables, chairs, fences and umbrellas on the public sidewalks for public use, directly in front of a given business is encouraged so long as an unencumbered pedestrian travel way is maintained in front of the building.

3. Tables, chairs, umbrellas, fences and trash containers shall each be compatible in design and color. Plastic tables and chairs are not permitted.
4. Furniture should be of sturdy, substantial design and materials that can withstand outdoor use and weather.
5. Mechanical equipment, satellite dishes or other utility hardware located on a roof, ground or building should be screened from public view with materials harmonious with the building, or they should be located as not to be visible from any public right-of-way.



*Roof-mounted equipment shall be screened from view from the right-of-way.*

6. Themed street lights should be painted to match the clock tower colors.

7. Benches and trash containers within the sidewalk areas should be painted to match the clock tower colors.
8. Storage yards and exterior work areas should be screened from the view from public right-of-ways using materials in accordance with walls, fencing or landscaping.
9. The consolidating of waste dumpsters is encouraged, particularly along alleyways.

**J. Lighting**

1. Lighting should be designed to complement exterior architecture and landscaping. Gooseneck or period-style light fixtures are encouraged over contemporary/utilitarian style fixtures.



*Lighting should be designed to complement exterior architecture and landscaping.*

2. Pedestrian areas should have lighting at a height of 12 to 14 feet.



*Antique-style lamp posts in downtown Wasco.*

3. Coordinated lighting fixtures selected for the downtown area should be used wherever possible in private parking lots and appropriate walkway areas.
4. Exterior lighting shall be part of the architectural concept. Fixtures, standards and all exposed accessories shall be harmonious with building design.
5. Exterior building lighting on 7<sup>th</sup> Street should be incandescent or other similar warm lighting. Halogen, metal halide or other similar bright light sources are not permitted.

**L. Hardscape**

1. Construction of new or repair of existing public sidewalks shall conform to the Wasco Improvement Standards. Sidewalks shall not be treated with color dyes nor shall any materials (rock, stone, tile, etc.) be placed on top of the sidewalks unless the Public Works Director grants permission.



*Example of hardscape improvements in the public right of way.*

## 7: Policies and Implementation Actions

### A. Organization

There needs to be an organization that can serve as the "cheerleader" for the Downtown. This organization needs to have a long-term presence in the affairs of the downtown, from day-to-day maintenance to future public and private improvements. The organization needs structure - a board and members - and a means of financing itself. Without this organization progress and improvement in the downtown may languish and eventually become "just another part of town"- or worse, a "bad" part of town.

#### 1. Policy. The City of Wasco should assist in the formation of a Downtown Wasco organization.

- a. **Action:** The City should meet with merchants, business owners and property owners in 2016 to discuss the formation of a downtown organization. Topics to discuss would include organization structure, self-financing and meeting dates. Wasco should make contact with other cities with existing downtown organizations to learn from their experiences.
- b. **Action:** Downtown Wasco business and property owners should hold a series of meetings that will focus on goal setting, objectives and election of officers. General objectives and actions could include:
  - seek grants to finance downtown improvements;
  - attract a major employer to the downtown-either public or private;
  - assist businesses to expand in or move to the downtown;
  - support land use decisions that support the downtown or oppose decisions that could undermine the downtown;

- support capital improvement projects that would improve the downtown, including public works projects like roads, infrastructure, landscaping or hardscape improvements; and/or
- advocate for a special downtown fund that would provide financing for improvements or business support - such as facade renovations.



**B. Marketing**

Downtown Wasco needs to get the word out about what is happening in the downtown. Are the merchants having a sidewalk sale? What day is the farmers market? Are there shopping specials on a given weekend? Is there an upcoming parade in the downtown that residents are invited to?



Often times marketing is handled by the Chamber of Commerce or a downtown organization. Sometimes the city itself can assist with marketing the downtown but then it runs the risk of other commercial districts complaining about favoritism.

Any successful organization (or district in the case of downtowns) needs a marketing arm as well as a message (and image). *Is downtown safe? Are there a variety of restaurants that I can walk to? Will I see my friends in the downtown? Is there an upcoming event in the downtown that I can take my family to?*

Any message regarding the downtown needs to be consistent and long-term. The most likely candidate for this task would be a downtown organization whose sole purpose is to market the downtown.

1. **Policy.** *A downtown organization shall develop a message and image for the downtown.*
  - a. **Action:** *Once formed, a downtown organization should formulate a marketing plan for the downtown that details how the area will be marketed to the general public and the greater Kern County.*

C. Financing and Business Assistance

Financing of improvements, programs, marketing, organizations and city departments is crucial for the long-term success of a downtown. Financing comes from a myriad of sources - property and sales taxes, state and federal grants, dues, property tax assessments and transportation funds to name a few.



Probably one of the most important categories of financing involves specific financial support for the downtown. In other words, a source of funds that is dedicated to and controlled by a downtown organization. Funds can be generated through self-assessment - property tax or business license assessments.

A self-funding downtown organization is the most effective means of affecting positive change in the downtown. This organization, when properly funded, becomes the "voice" of the downtown. It can promote events; oversee downtown maintenance - graffiti removal,

litter pickup, watering and pruning of landscaping; lobby for public improvements like the construction of street bulbouts or landscaping of paseos; or it can organize new events such as farmers market, sidewalk sales, music events, festivals (e.g. Rose Festival) or running races.

1. *Policy. The City of Wasco should hold meetings with downtown business owners and property owners to discuss methods of financing a downtown organization.*
  - a. *Action: If a downtown organization adopts a self-financing program, it should formulate a financing plan that details how funds will be spent marketing the downtown. Newspaper ads, radio spots, Facebook and Twitter accounts are a few of the means of advertising the downtown.*
2. *Policy. The City of Wasco should annually apply for grants specific to the downtown that could finance various improvements such as street tree replacements, paseo upgrades and state highway intersection redesign and reconstruction.*
  - a. *Action: The Wasco planning department should annually seek grants that could finance improvements in the downtown.*
3. *Policy. Pursue creative funding schemes to finance the improvement of the downtown area, such as:*
  - *channeling business license fees toward downtown programs and improvements;*
  - *waiving business license fees for new businesses that locate in the downtown;*
  - *authorizing sales tax rebates for new businesses that locate in the downtown;*
  - *Reduce or eliminate permit fees for new construction or expansion of existing businesses and/or façade improvements in the downtown.*

- a. **Action:** The City Planning and Finance Departments should meet to strategize regarding creative funding ideas for the downtown, and present the results for consideration and implementation by the City Council.*
- 4. **Policy.** The City should promote business assistance resources and programs to assist new and existing businesses in the downtown area, such as resources from the Kern County Economic Development Corporation, US Small Business Administration and Cal GOLD, among others.*
- a. **Action.** The Planning and Finance Departments should make available information on business assistance through direct mailings, links on the City's website and brochures/flyers at City Hall.*

*CalGOLD is the State of California's portal for  
business permit assistance:*

<http://www.calgold.ca.gov>

# Appendix A: Building Simulations

This section includes simulations of improvements to several existing buildings and open spaces in the downtown area. The buildings were selected for their historic value and potential to be enhanced with fairly simple improvements. For each building a photo of the existing structure is provided, along with a drawing showing potential improvements to the building/site. The map below shows the locations of proposed improvements.

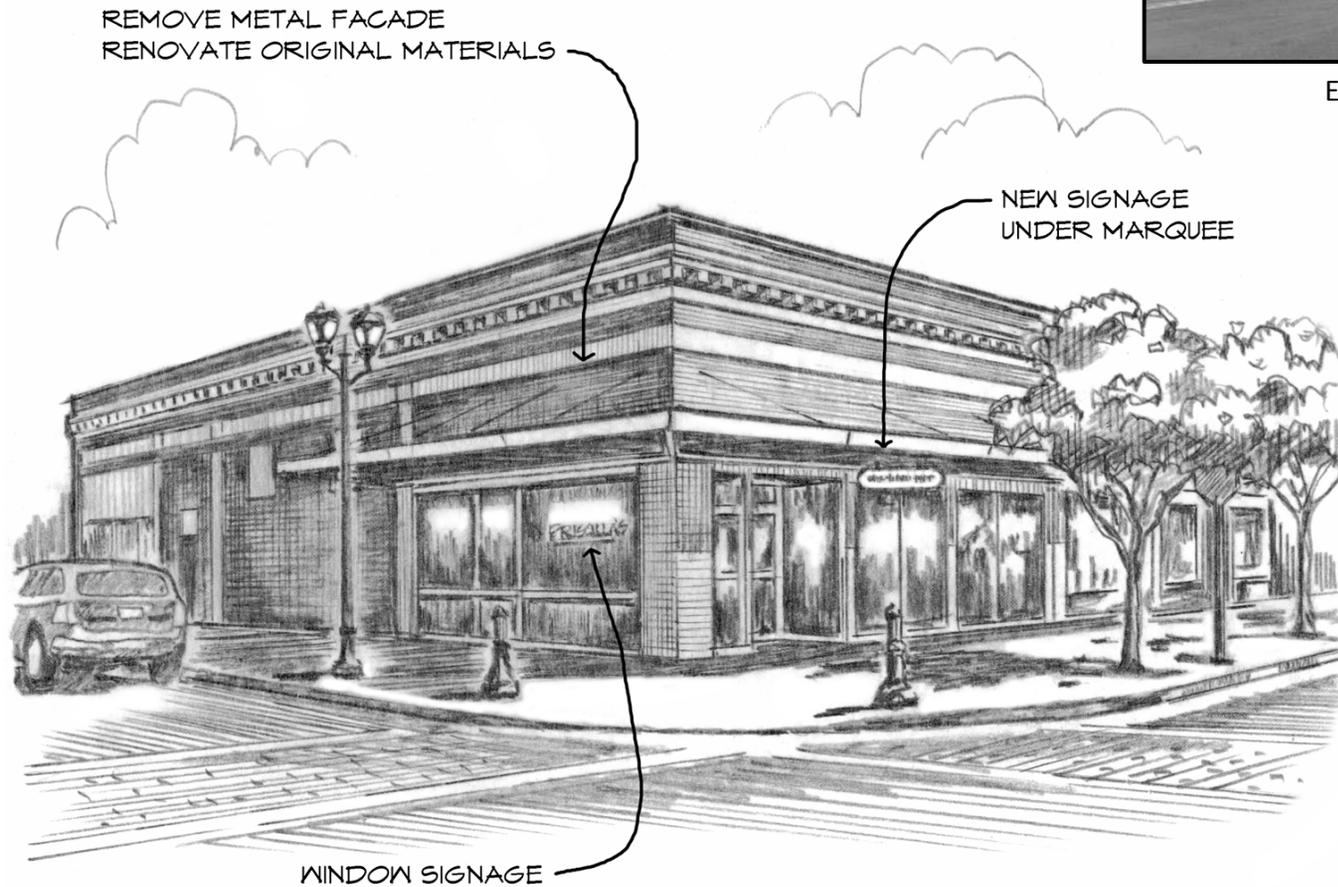


# 1. Northeast corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and E Street

This building features classic brick with an articulated cornice featuring dentils and raised bands, along with generous window coverage. At some point in the past a metal façade was attached to the front corner of the building. The main strategy would be to remove the metal facing and restore the building to its original appearance.



Existing Appearance



## 2. Southwest corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and E Street

Another classic brick building with an angled corner facing the intersection. Suggested improvements include awnings over the windows and new window frames, along with new signage. The window facing E Street is currently covered with plywood and should be restored.

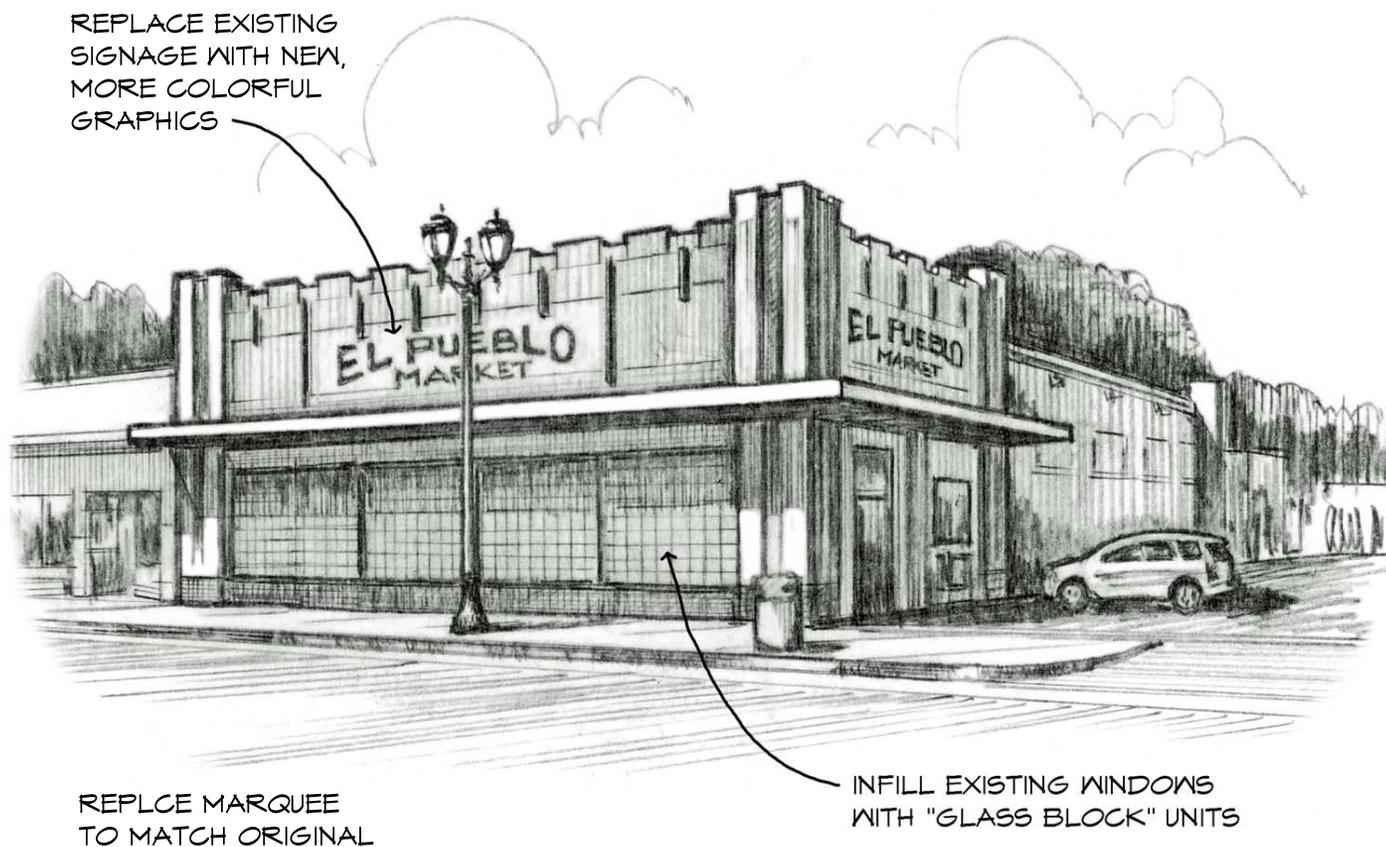


### 3. El Pueblo Market

The El Pueblo Market is located on the west side of E Street between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets. It is a rare example of the art deco style of design, with an emphasis on vertical linear elements on the exterior of the building. The building recently suffered a failure of the roof and is being restored. It is recommended the exterior be maintained and repainted using a historic color scheme. The front window should be restored with plate glass blocks (which will allow continued use of the interior space adjacent to the window). The marquee should be restored and signage repainted.



REPAINT FACADE USING APPROPRIATE "DECO" COLOR SCHEME

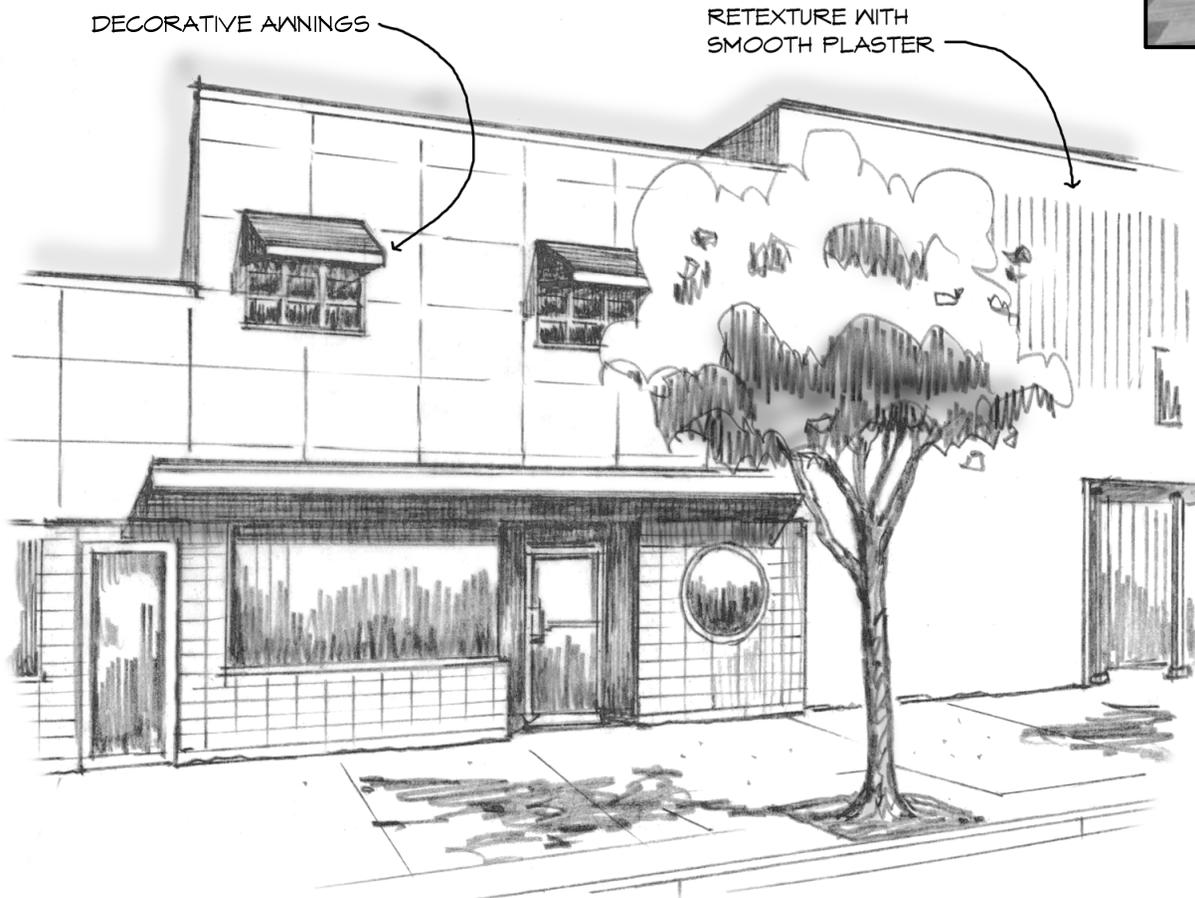


REPLCE MARQUEE TO MATCH ORIGINAL

INFILL EXISTING WINDOWS WITH "GLASS BLOCK" UNITS

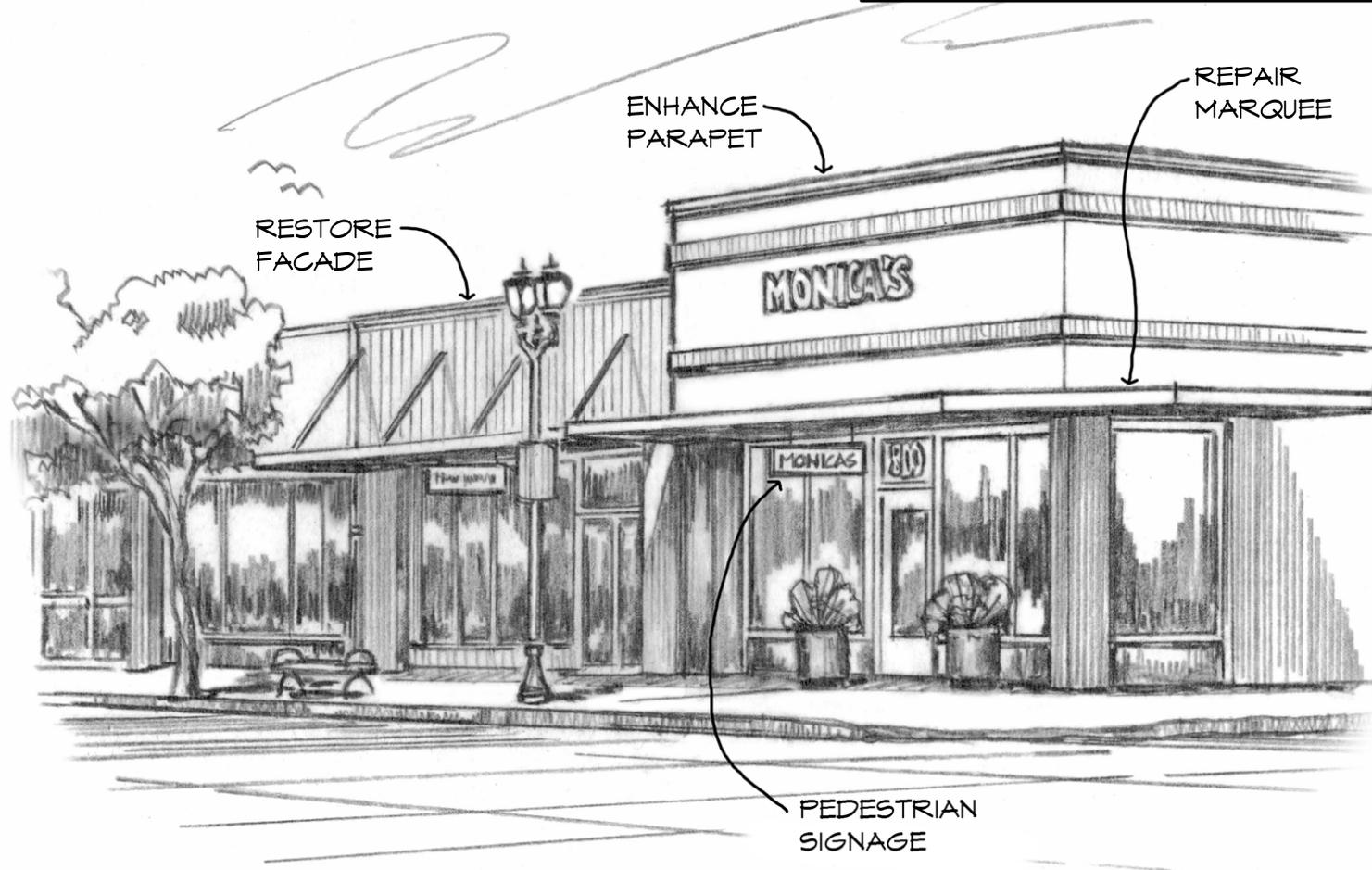
## 4. Northeast corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and D Streets

The building at the northeast corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and D houses several uses, including a church and Christian school. The building appears to have originally been a movie theater. Unfortunately façade work done in recent decades has covered over some of the original design. Key recommendations include removing recent stucco applications and accenting windows with canvas awnings.



## 5. Northwest corner of 7<sup>th</sup> and F Streets

Several storefronts on the northwest intersection of 7<sup>th</sup> and F Streets could benefit from façade improvements. Key recommendations include restoring the facades to their original materials, repairs to marquees, enhancement to parapet features and colors, among other suggestions.



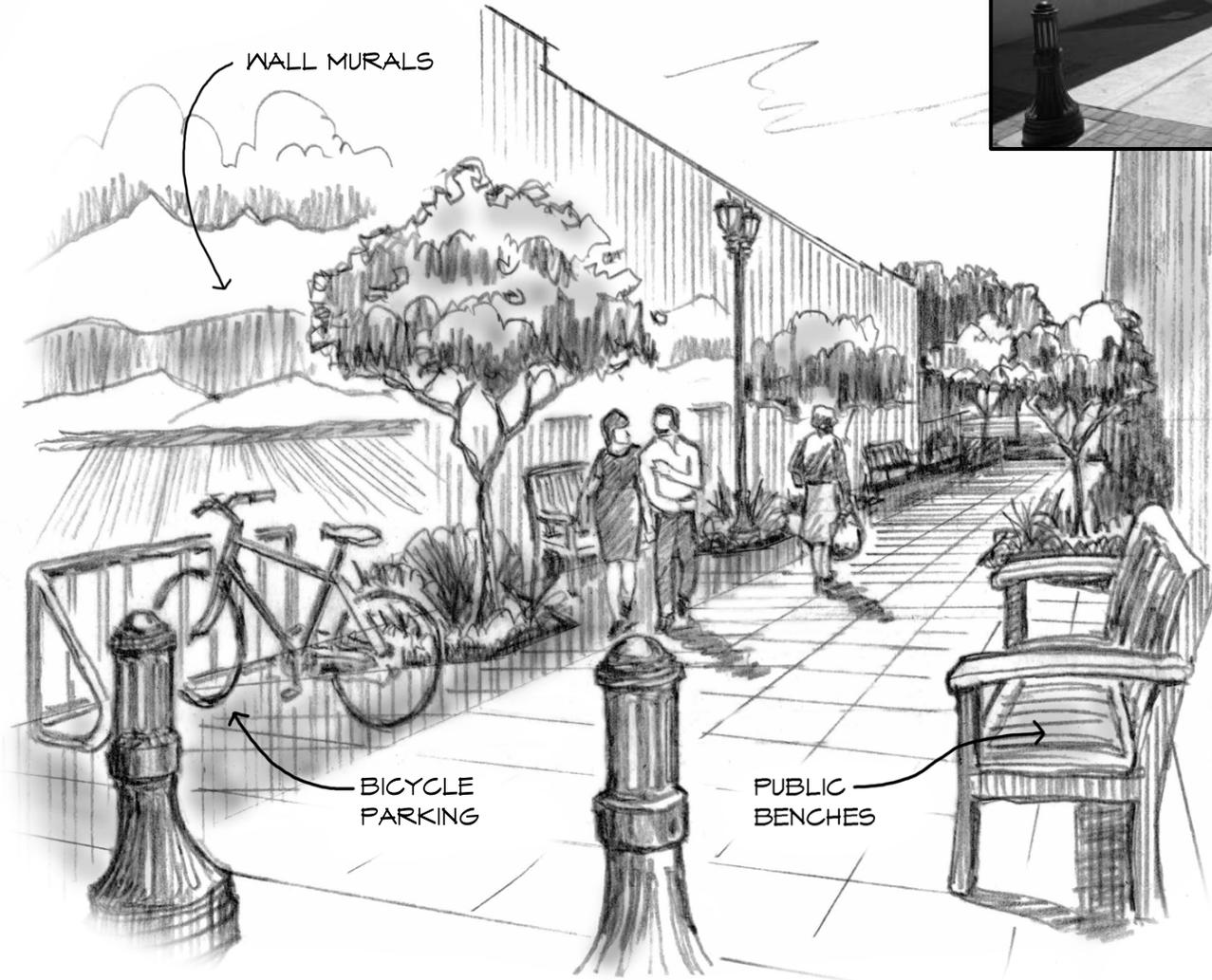
## 6. Dominos

The building housing the existing Dominos Pizza restaurant highlights examples of façade improvements that could be made to many buildings in the downtown. The marquee of the building was covered over and expanded in a style not befitting the original building. This marquee could be restored to its original appearance to enhance the façade. Other suggestions include window signage and potted plants at the entrance to the building.



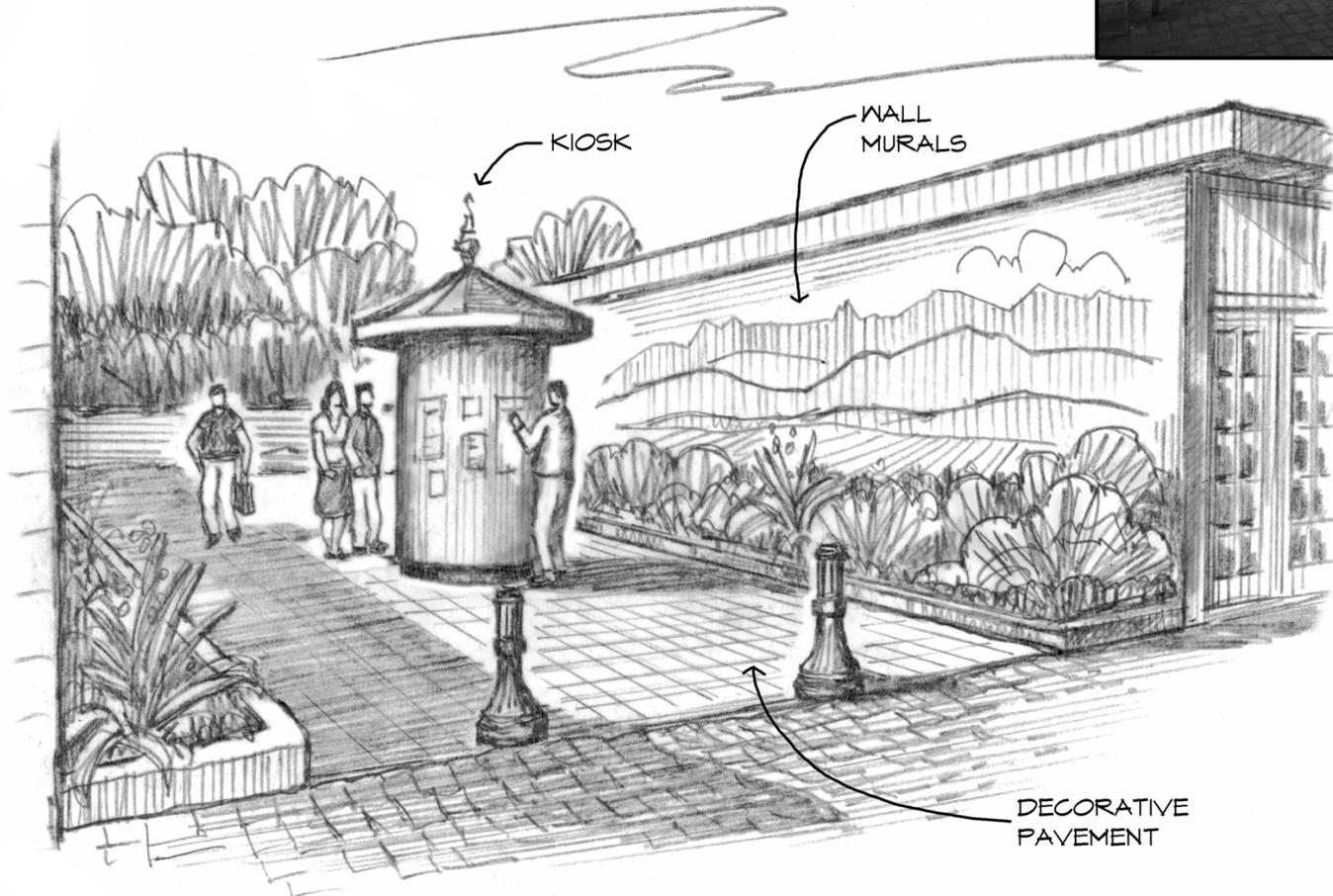
## 7. Paseo

There is an existing pedestrian paseo on the south side of 7<sup>th</sup> Street between F and E Streets that connects the sidewalk on 7<sup>th</sup> Street to parking behind the buildings. This paseo could be improved with several features including shade trees and flower beds, benches and bicycle parking racks, among others. Finally a well-executed mural on one or both walls would accent the paseo.



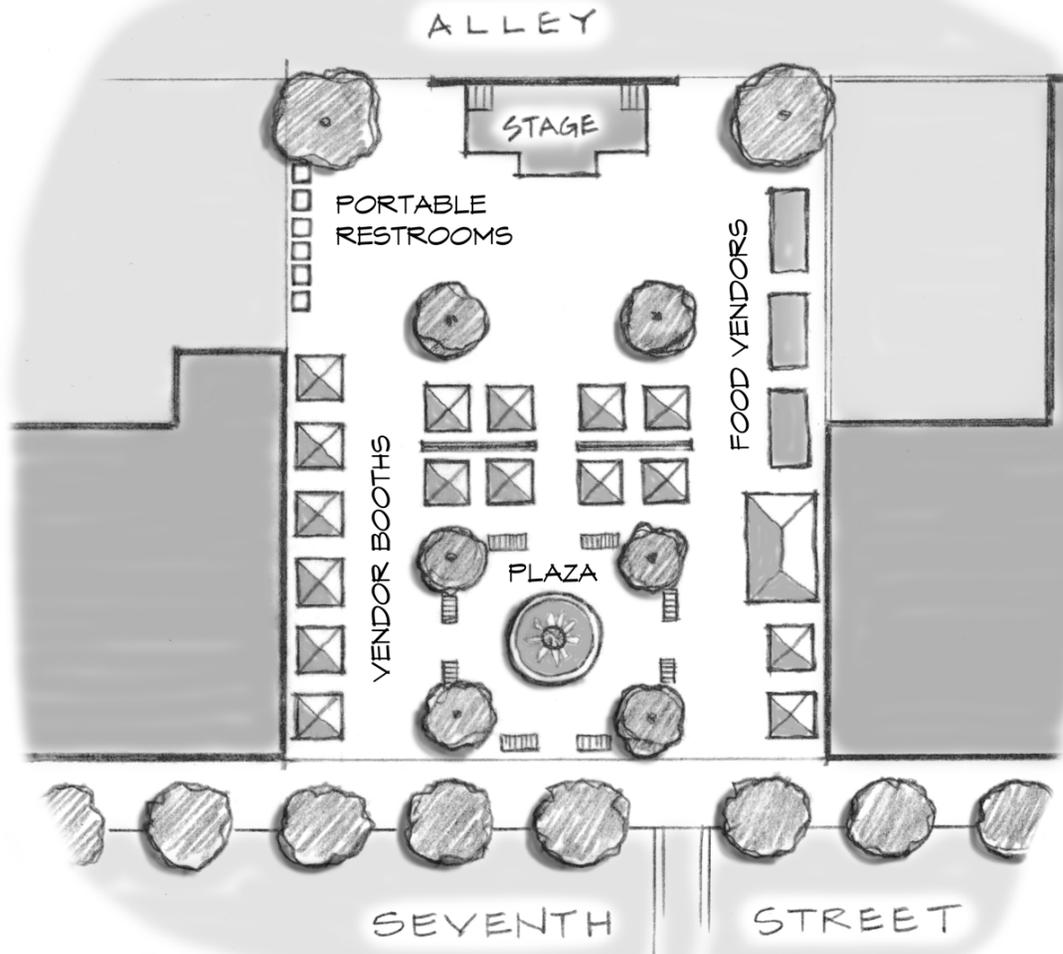
## 8. Abandoned Alley

An alley that is blocked off on the south side of 7<sup>th</sup> Street between D and E Streets represents an opportunity for a pedestrian amenity in the downtown area. Potential improvements could include landscaping, an informational kiosk, decorative paving and wall mural among others.



## 9. Plaza/Mercado

A building that burned down several years ago provides the opportunity for a public plaza, on the north side of 7<sup>th</sup> Street between E and F Streets. This site could anchor the downtown with a place for a variety of events and activities including farmers markets, concerts, art shows and other gatherings.



## Appendix B: Tree and Landscaping Recommendations

### Observations

The Urban Tree Foundation working with Collins and Schoettler Planning were hired to review the urban forest and streetscape along 7<sup>th</sup> street between G street and Griffith street. The corridor down 7<sup>th</sup> street has a series of street tree plantings along the sidewalk and in the center islands between D street and G street.

The street trees are a mix of *Sequoia sempervirens*, *Fraxinus oxycarpa* ‘Raywood’, and *Magnolia soulangeana*. Street tree lighting is found along the sidewalk and accent lighting is shown at the pedestrian crossing. Site amenities include benches and trash receptacles. The pavement treatment along the sidewalks is standard natural grey concrete with an average width of ten (10’). The pavement treatment at the pedestrian crossings are consistent of an antique brick laid out in a herringbone pattern.

The center of downtown is located on E street at the intersection of 7<sup>th</sup> street with a center planting island with a decorative clock tower and roses around the perimeter of the planter island.

### Findings

The environment downtown is a mixture of uses and it appears that the treatment types have varied over the years so the consistency of the streetscape is marginalized by multiple application types. The street trees although uniform in species are in varying states of decline due to disease pressure. *Botryosphaeria stevensii* or commonly known as Raywood Ash Dieback is a fungal disease primarily affecting Raywood ash. The leaves fade, turning yellow or brown, eventually wilting and the symptoms are often scattered throughout the crown. Unfortunately there is no known specific remedy for controlling the disease once a tree is infected. Due to the aggressive nature of the Raywood ash rootstock and tree well sizes, some pavement damage is occurring from encroaching roots underneath the pavement. In addition some electrical outlets at the tree wells have been damaged due to tree growth and root intrusion. The site amenities are inconsistently found through the project location with different manufacturer’s and model numbers at several locations. It is assumed this has more to do with varying designer preferences than inconsistent city standards. The pedestrian paving treatments and bollards at intersections are very well placed and shown consistently throughout 7<sup>th</sup> street and associated cross streets. The sidewalk from back of curb to buildings is large enough to allow for several opportunities such as additional vegetation, outdoor street markets, and additional amenities. The key will be to select such items that do not increase cost of maintenance to city staff and personnel. The center island with the clock tower and perimeter roses offers a glimpse at the potential the downtown area has complementing the city’s historic past

within the rose industry while architecturally complimenting the era at which the surrounding buildings were constructed.

### Urban Forestry Management Strategies

Managing the urban forest and streetscape is an ongoing program. Simply installing the components and walking away will lead to the eventual decline of the space. Initially a sound design philosophy and program should be laid out defining guidelines, standards, and specifications that can be followed over time. Such items are costly for municipalities to draft and implement. With that understanding, the Urban Tree Foundation developed standards and specifications for the California Department of Fire and Urban Forestry and the International Society of Arboriculture that could easily be revised and amended to suit the city's needs with minimal effort.

<http://www.isa-arbor.com/education/onlineresources/cadplanningspecifications.aspx>.

The next step would be to create a street tree master list that would define the appropriate tree species for the specific site location. This list would ensure design aesthetic consistency coupled with site specific selections. The same process should be taken with the downtown's site amenities and pavement treatments so the design theme is consistently woven through the downtown core as it grows and expands.

The final piece to the puzzle is having an active management program along with community and city support to have any chance at long term success. One successful

strategy implemented by other communities has been the creation of Property Owner's Associations (POA's). POA's are the local property owner's assessing themselves a fee to help manage the urban forestry through programs such as tree maintenance, replanting, and security. Anyone of the above mentioned items that is omitted or altered to significantly will result in the sites eventual decline. A successful urban forest and streetscape takes time, commitment, and money to maintain; without that any items put forward shall be considered a fruitless effort over the long term.

### Potential Funding Opportunities

Through the last several years municipal budgetary constraints have caused the decline of certain amenities throughout municipalities in California. As general fund dollars dry up city's are having to become more creative at coming up with funds to create usable outdoor community spaces. One area where other communities have been successful at such things has been through state grant funding programs. In recent years Proposition 40 and 84 have provided opportunities to fund street trees, low impact development (LID) projects, stormwater management projects, or planning projects. As those grant funds have dried up the next opportunity emerging over the horizon will come from Cap and Trade programs and the recently past water bond. It is likely that such grants will be administered through the Strategic Growth Council, California Department of Fire and Urban Forestry, Department of Water Resources, Parks and Recreation Department, State Water Resources Control Board, and the Active Transportation Program.

Tree and Shrub Palette

Below is a list of trees and shrubs for along the streets, at intersections, center islands, and bulb outs. This list represents a few options at each location. Final selection shall be determined by species availability and city preference. Selections were based on plant performance, water usage, and long maintenance costs.

The tree species proposed took into consideration the location in a downtown streetscape setting factoring in building and signage clearance, adaptability to the urban environment, and aesthetic benefit. Any tree selected will need to be trained over time as not to come into conflict with vehicular traffic, building overhangs, and visibility corridors.

Trees in the urban landscape can cause conflict with the surrounding paving. The larger a planting area a tree has to grow the less of a probability that it will cause any damage over the long term. In this case the larger a planting area the better for the long term health of the tree which is why it is recommended that the plantable tree area be no less than five feet wide by five feet long, larger is preferred. This should decrease any long term damage to the pavement while maintaining ADA accessibility along the sidewalks. In addition it is recommended that 18” deep linear root barriers be installed adjacent to the paving to assist with minimizing those conflicts.

**Trees**

1. Building frontages

- a. Pistacia chinensis ‘Keith Davey’



- b. Ginkgo biloba ‘Autumn Gold’



c. *Quercus shumardii*



d. *Zelkova serrata* ‘Village Green’



2. Vehicular intersections

a. *Lagerstroemia indica* spp.



b. *Pistacia chinensis*



c. *Koelreutaria paniculata*



d. *Quercus engelmannii*



3. Center island bulb outs

a. *Cercis canadensis* 'Oklahoma'



b. *Acer buergerianum*



c. *Olea europaea* 'Swan Hill'



## Shrubs

### 1. Bulbouts

a. *Arctostaphylos* 'John Dourley'



b. *Ceanothus* 'Valley Violet'



b. *Hesperaloe parviflora*



e. *Bulbine frutescens*



d. *Lavandula 'Otto Quast'*



g. *Rosa* spp.



h. Calamagrostis 'Karl Foester'



i. Zauschneria 'Wayne's Silver'



Kniphofia uvara spp



j. Teucrium 'Prostrata'

