



Introduction and User's Guide

Section 1

Introduction

Located at the juncture of Highway 25 (San Benito Street) and former Highway 156 (Fourth Street), Downtown Hollister has long served as an important commercial, employment, and government center within San Benito County. However, for several decades Downtown businesses have struggled to compete with new commercial shopping centers developed within the City of Hollister, as well as larger regional shopping centers located within the cities of Salinas, Morgan Hill, and Gilroy. The struggling Downtown suffered further decline in 1989, after the Loma Prieta Earthquake and subsequent fires destroyed several businesses and buildings, including a theater and department store. After the earthquake, the City of Hollister prepared a plan and strategy to guide the revitalization of the Downtown. The Hollister Downtown Plan and Strategy was adopted in March 1991.

Since its adoption, several of the recommendations and strategies from the 1991 Hollister Downtown Plan and Strategy have been implemented. Today, Downtown Hollister is a relatively successful commercial business district. However, residents, business and property owners, and civic leaders generally believe that the Downtown has yet to reach its full potential and could still benefit from improvements. Economic conditions, the demographics of the community, and trends in urban planning and design have also changed since the Hollister Downtown Plan and Strategy was adopted in 1991. For these reasons, civic leaders have decided to create a new and updated plan and strategy to revitalize Downtown.

In August 2007, the Hollister Downtown Association hired RBF Consulting's Urban Design Studio to prepare a community-based vision and implementation strategy for the future of Downtown. The process involved a comprehensive public involvement program to create a community-based vision and plan for the future. A variety of workshops, walking tours, stakeholder interviews, and community events were held in October and November 2007, to develop, illustrate, and refine the vision. The Hollister Downtown Association, the City of Hollister, property and business owners, elected and appointed officials, and other stakeholders participated in the community-based process.



Images from the comprehensive community participation program to envision a vital Downtown Hollister.



This Downtown Plan is a summary of the community's vision and the recommended strategies to revitalize Downtown in accordance with the vision. A draft version was presented to business and property owners, community members, and other stakeholder in May 2008.

Downtown Boundaries

The boundaries for the Downtown Plan encompass the historic Downtown core (San Benito Street between Third Street and South Street) as well as surrounding residential, civic, and industrial properties. The boundaries are illustrated on Figure 1-1.

Figure 1-1: Downtown Boundaries





User's Guide

This Downtown Plan describes the community's vision for Downtown Hollister and outlines the various strategies and guidelines to implement the vision. The following steps will help users of this Downtown Plan:

- **Step 1:** Review Section 2 to gain an understanding of the community's vision for the future of Downtown Hollister.
- **Step 2:** Review Section 3 to gain an understanding to the redevelopment strategies that should be used by the City of Hollister, Hollister Downtown Association, and business and property owners to revitalize Downtown in accordance with the Downtown Vision.
- **Step 3:** Review Section 4 to gain an understanding to the economic development strategies that should be used by the City of Hollister, Hollister Downtown Association, and business and property owners to stimulate economic development and promote Downtown in accordance with the Downtown Vision.
- **Step 4:** Review Section 5 to gain an understanding of specific recommendations designed to manage and improve parking within Downtown.
- **Step 5:** Review Section 6 to gain an understanding of specific recommendations designed to improve the streetscapes and alleys within Downtown.
- **Step 6:** Review Section 7 to gain an understanding of the design guidelines that will be used to guide the development and redevelopment of properties within Downtown. Design guidelines are provided for several types of buildings, and address a wide range of topics. The design guidelines will be used during the development review process to judge the merits of Downtown projects.
- **Step 7:** Review Section 8 to gain an understanding of the implementation measures required to implement this Downtown Plan. This section includes an implementation matrix that identifies the implementation steps and strategies, target dates for completion, team leaders and partners, and potential funding resources.
- **Step 8:** Review the Appendices to gain an understanding of background information related to the City's demographics and economic potential.