

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City and the Grass Valley Downtown Association recognized the need to craft a policy document that would guide the future of the downtown. Such a document would seek to preserve and enhance the downtown district as the City's cultural, historical, retail and business center. In January 2002, the City applied for and received a Planning/Technical Assistance (P/TA) Grant from the State Department of Housing and Community Development to prepare a "Downtown Strategic Plan". The intent of the Plan was to analyze market conditions, examine expansion/in-fill opportunities for new or expanding business, and create an implementation plan to guide future development and improvements within the downtown area.

In May 2002, the consulting firm of Mogavero Notestine Associates (MNA) was selected to prepare the plan with the assistance of a subcommittee consisting of city staff, Councilmember Linda Stevens, Planning Commissioner Lisa Swarthout, Downtown Association member Howard Levine and business owner Dolores Jones.

On September 16, 2002, the City, the subcommittee and the Grass Valley Downtown Association held the first of two public workshops at the Center for the Arts in downtown Grass Valley. Approximately 60 people attended the all day workshop, which included a walking tour throughout the downtown facilitated by local architects and planners. The tour focused on 7 specific subareas within the Planning Area boundary and group discussions on downtown-wide issues. Topics included development opportunities, streetscape improvements and business attraction and retention.

Under the guidance of the subcommittee and comments from the public workshop, MNA with the assistance of Hausrath Economics Group (for market analysis) drafted the Downtown Strategic Plan document. The Plan was further refined to include a series of policies and programs that, if implemented, would enhance existing parking, streetscape, circulation and market conditions of the downtown district.

A second public workshop was held on June 9, 2003 at the Center for the Arts for the purpose of unveiling the draft Plan to the public and obtaining any additional comments. Approximately 45 people attended the workshop, which included a presentation highlighting various components of the Plan particularly the Implementation Matrix and its Recommendations. In addition, a question and answer period allowed the public to offer additional suggestions and comment on the draft Plan.

The final version of the Plan includes such key elements as:

- The Vision
- Methodology of how the Plan was prepared
- Market Assessment of the downtown and potential for future retail growth
- Downtown-Wide Issues relating to the downtown and in need of resolution
- Area Specific Issues relating to the community and downtown district
- Implementation Matrix listing policies/programs for downtown district

The recommendations contained within the Plan will be used by the City, community groups, businesses and the public as an approach to strengthen the economic vitality of the Downtown. The timing of when these physical improvements or marketing approaches are put in place would be prioritized by the City Council based on available funding and resources.

The Downtown Strategic Plan is a policy document filled with strategies aimed at improving the economic vitality of this area as a “business district”, while still preserving its historical ambiance. It is certain that this document will need continual refinement and input from the community as it is implemented over time. The priorities listed within this document will change or need to be updated due to market conditions or issues not known at this time. Once adopted, the City and Downtown Association will incorporate the recommendations of this Plan into their future goals and work programs for the downtown district.