

CITY OF SANTA CLARITA
DOWNTOWN NEWHALL SPECIFIC PLAN



Prepared by:
Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists
Van Atta Associates
Economics Research Associates
Nelson / Nygaard Associates
Psomas
Crawford Multari & Clark Associates
for
City of Santa Clarita

CITY OF SANTA CLARITA	23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300 Santa Clarita, California 91355
CITY COUNCIL	Cameron Symth, Mayor Laurene Weste, Mayor Pro Tem and Redevelopment Subcommittee Member Frank Ferry, Council Member Bob Kellar, Council Member Marsha McLean, Council Member and Redevelopment Subcommittee Member
PLANNING COMMISSION	Diane Trautman, Chair Dennis Ostrom, Vice-Chair Michael Berger, Commissioner Timothy Burkhart, Commissioner Rick Winsman, Commissioner
CITY STAFF	Ken Pulskamp, City Manager Ken Striplin, Assistant City Manager Paul Brotsman, Community Development Director Lisa Hardy, Planning Manager Carrie Rogers, Economic Development Manager Andree Walper, Economic Development Assistant Erin Moore-Lay, Administrative Analyst Fred Follstad, Senior Planner Jason Smisko, Senior Planner Juan Enriquez Jr., Assistant Planner II Andrew Yi, City Traffic Engineer Ian Pari, Senior Traffic Engineer Caitlin Morais, GIS Coordinator Edgardo David, GIS Analyst Anthony Calderon, GIS Technician Robert Sartain, Arborist/Supervisor Wayne Smith, Oak Tree Specialist Emilio Blanco, Asst. Field Services Supervisor
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CONSULTANT TEAM	
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE	Moule & Polyzoides Architects and Urbanists 180 East California Boulevard Pasadena, California 91105 Stefanos Polyzoides <i>spolyzoides@mparchitects.com</i> Alan Loomis Anthony Perez Orlando Gonzalez Roberto Moreno Juan Gomez-Novy Xiao Jian He
LANDSCAPE	Van Atta Associates 235 Palm Avenue Santa Barbara, California 93101 Susan Van Atta <i>sva@va-la.com</i> Guillermo Gonzales Jack Kiesel Jarrett Garcia
ECONOMIC ANALYSIS	Economics Research Associates 10990 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1500 Los Angeles, California 90024 David Bergman <i>david.bergman@econres.com</i>
PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION	Nelson/Nygaard 785 Market Street, Suite 1300 San Francisco, California 94103 Patrick Siegman <i>psiegman@nelsonnygaard.com</i> Dave Parisi
CIVIL ENGINEERING	Psomas 28470 Avenue Stanford, Suite 300 Santa Clarita, California 91355 George Colvin <i>gcolvin@psomas.com</i> Rafi Talukder <i>rtalukder@psomas.com</i>
CODES / EIR	Crawford Multari & Clark Associates 641 Higuera Street, Suite 302 San Luis Obispo, California 93401 Paul Crawford <i>paul@cmcaplans.com</i> Nicole Carter

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C O N T E N T S
AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chapter 1 : Introduction pg 1:1 - 1:10
Plan Purpose and Context

Downtown Newhall possesses a combination of solid urban structure and prominent physical location. Its proximity to a mixture of regional uses, activities and amenities, particularly Metrolink rail transit, is unique in the Santa Clarita area. The Downtown's pattern of walkable blocks and streets provides the basic ingredients necessary for a true Urban Center surrounded by neighborhoods of varying intensities. The design principles for mixed-use districts, therefore, guide the Specific Plan's content. Overall, the Plan produces up to 1,092 new dwellings of various types for 1,402 total dwellings, and up to 1.017 million square feet of retail and/or office space for approximately 1.254 million total space. Some of this will occur in the form of new development and some as revitalized buildings.

Chapter 2 : Form and Character pg 2:1 - 2:32
Concepts and Programs

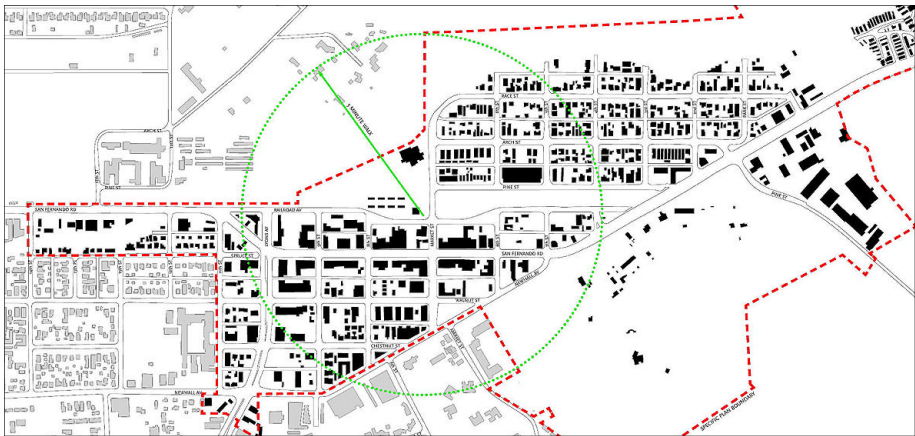
The presence of fixed rail transit into greater and Downtown Los Angeles combined with Downtown Newhall's regional visibility and its more local ability to truly serve adjacent and nearby neighborhoods, provide the basis for a program mix that begins with transit-oriented housing and focuses on local-serving retail, and limited regional retail.

Chapter 3 : Implementation pg 3:1 - 3:22
Standards for the Public Realm

The Specific Plan proposes a market-driven development strategy in four general phases. Phase One proposes the Main Street streetscape project and improvements to Railroad Avenue, a Park Once Garage to provide the pedestrian environment, plentiful on-street parking for convenience and shared parking to free land for more desirable development. Phase Two emphasizes additional street improvements, transit-oriented housing near or above main street businesses and on the current Metrolink parking lot. At any time, one or more civic institutions such as a new library at the new terminus of Lyons Avenue and Main Street could be realized. Additional phases propose housing opportunities that generate a resident population and a consumer base for Downtown.

Chapter 4 : The Code pg 4:1 - 4:44
Standards for Private Development

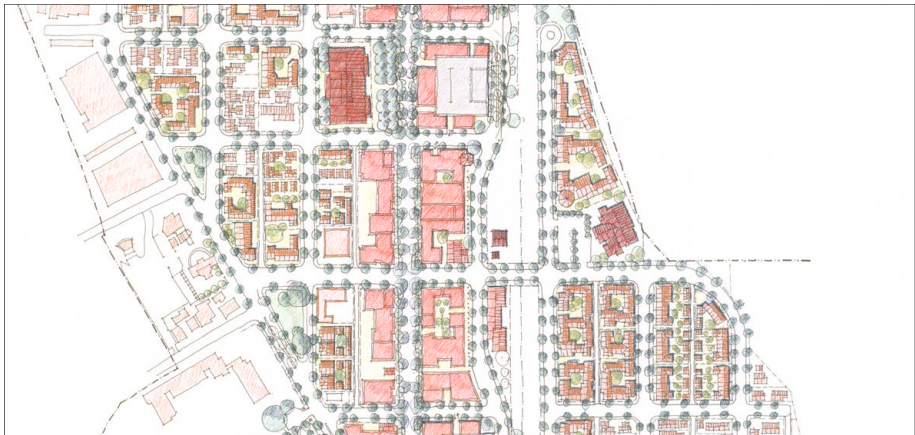
A "form-based" code regulates private development and over time, produces the desired outcomes identified by the community. In contrast to conventional zoning that divides land by uses, this code is organized by geography of place and development intensity. The Code provides regulations for five unique places: Urban Center, Urban General 1, Urban General 2, Corridor, Creative Industry District, with an emphasis on the design of individual buildings directed to form the public realm



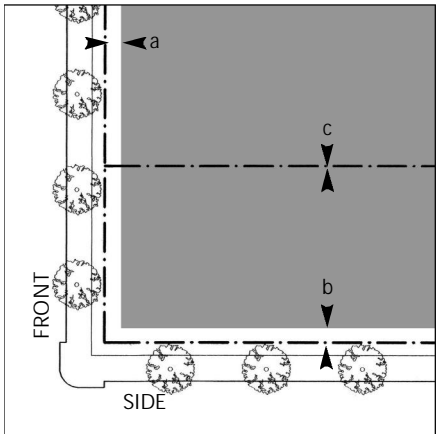
Chapter 1 : Introduction



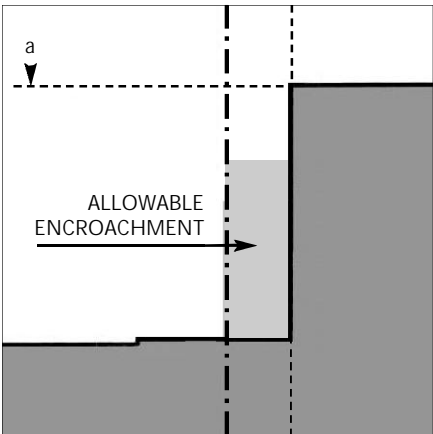
Chapter 2 : Form and Character

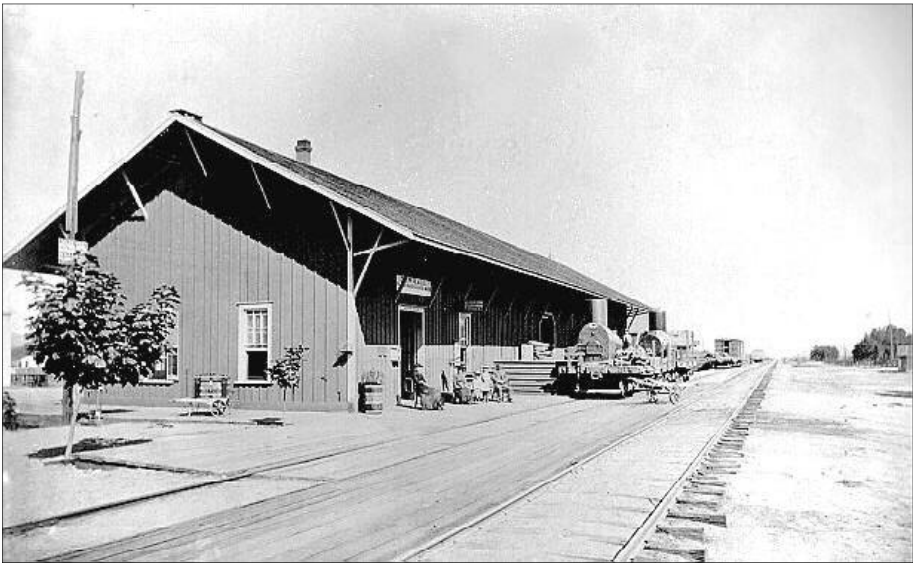


Chapter 3 : Implementation

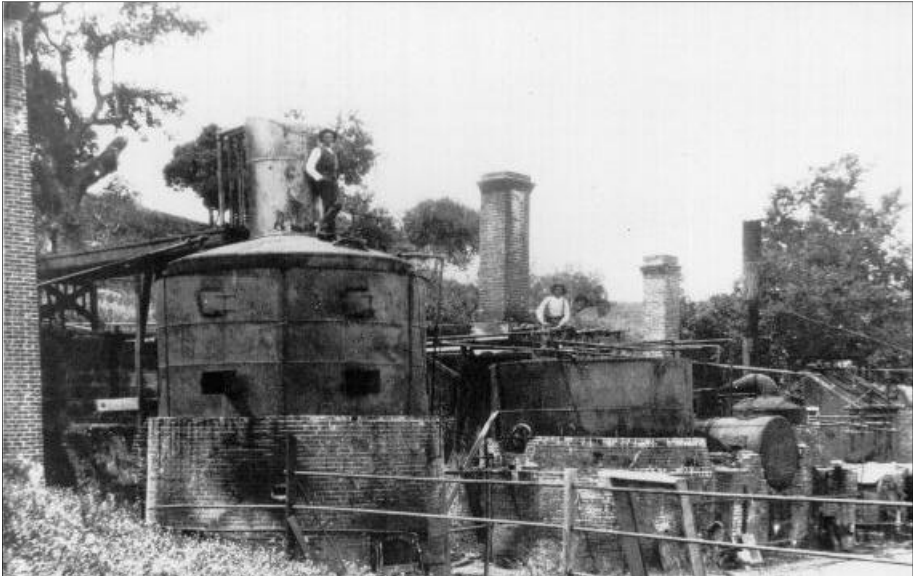


Chapter 4 : Development Code

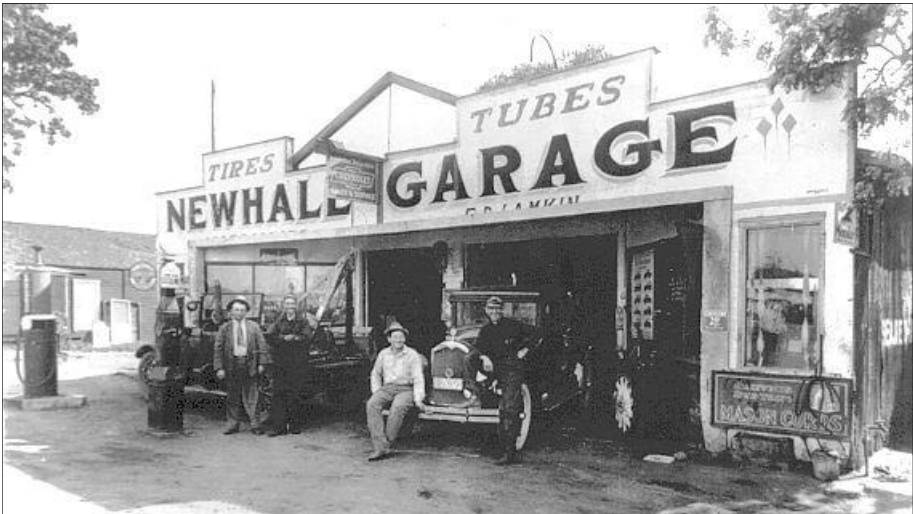




Newhall depot



Pioneer Oil Refinery



Newhall Garage



Railroad Avenue



Nick Riveria's



Oil Exchange Building

1.1 History and Context

Newhall is a community rich in history. Evolving from an Indian trading center to an important destination in the quest for gold and then oil, it soon became a rail-road flag stop of general stores, saloons, and churches. As the film industry grew, Newhall became the home of early western silent screen movies. These strong roots are still very important to the residents of Newhall. Newhall was also the residence of silent film star Williams S. Hart, whose 300-acre ranch, now a County park and museum, is visited annually by thousands. The passion for history, love of the old film stars such as William S. Hart, the Oak of the Golden Dream (Jose Francisco de Garcia Lopez reached down after a nap and found gold), the distinction of Vasquez Canyon Rocks and the Saint Francis Dam break that marked the second largest natural disaster in California's history, help to identify the essence of Newhall.

Newhall was the earliest permanent settlement in the Santa Clarita Valley, established in 1876 in conjunction with the construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad. This area was a western town founded on oil, mining and railroad workers. The community was a stop on the historic Butterfield-Overland Stage route through what is now the Newhall Pass. Newhall is also the site of the original ridge route, portions of which remain north of the City in the community of Castaic.

Regional and Community Context - Downtown Newhall is located within the 50-square mile City of Santa Clarita in north Los Angeles County. The City was incorporated in 1987 and comprises four individual communities previously under the jurisdiction of Los Angeles County. The City is within 3 miles of various regional destinations and transportation links, such as the I-5 and SR-14 freeways. Direct regional access to Newhall is provided by San Fernando Road, Lyons Avenue and Metrolink's Antelope Valley line of commuter rail. This rail links the 256-square mile Santa Clarita Valley and its four communities with Downtown Los Angeles. Downtown Newhall is approximately 3 miles from Valencia Town Center, a pedestrian-oriented regional mall and Magic Mountain theme park.

Neighborhood Context - Downtown Newhall consists of 271 acres and is comprised of several parts: two flanking neighborhoods which are separated from one another by the railroad and Downtown; a 15-block Downtown and 3 existing commercial arterial corridors that each connects back to greater Santa Clarita. Within 1 mile of Downtown, there is the The Masters' College and historic William S. Hart Park. Newhall was originally platted in 1889 into approximately 50 blocks with much of that pattern intact.

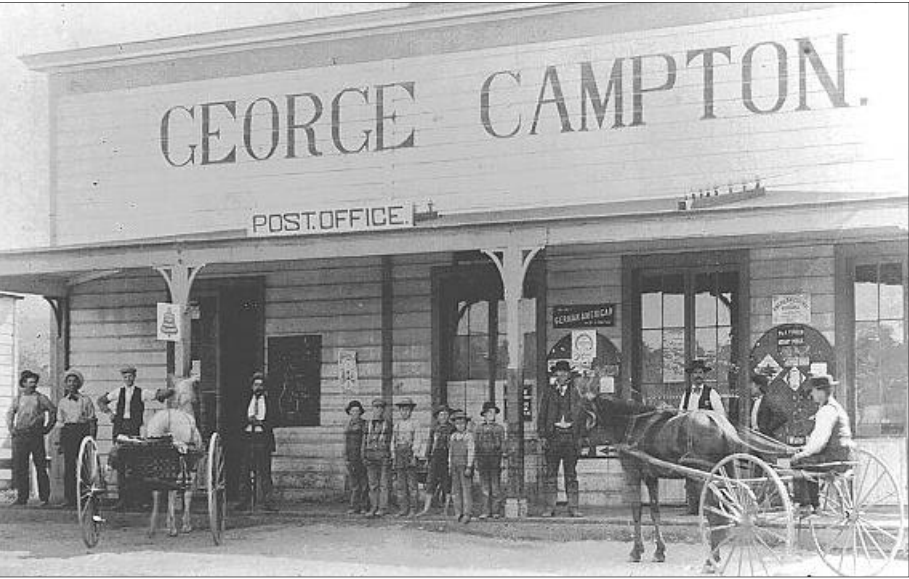
Circulation Network - Downtown Newhall is accessed and defined by three commercial arterial corridors: a)San Fernando Road (north of Lyons), b)Lyons Avenue and, c)San Fernando Road (south of 3rd St). Within the Downtown is a traditional, orthogonal street grid of interconnected blocks.

Open Space Network - Downtown Newhall is bounded by the 265-acre William S. Hart Park on the west and Newhall Creek on the east. Such natural features immediately adjacent to a Downtown make the contrast between city and nature all the more interesting: each of the two environments offering rich possibilities for family life. Secondly, Veterans Historical Plaza is part of this network and offers a wonderful, urban type of open space which is lacking in Downtown. Each of these features is described in detail in Chapter 2.

Streetscapes - There is a rich variety of thoroughfare types and corresponding streetscapes, ranging from San Fernando Road - the least planted and poorly shaded in the Downtown - to the relatively lush turf parkways and mature canopy trees of flanking streets, such as Walnut Street.



Downtown Newhall, platting map, circa 1889 ('Spruce Street' is currently known as San Fernando Road)



George Campton's General Store



American Theater



Chaix Grocery



Railroad Avenue

Buildings - Newhall's building stock is characterized by 1-3 story buildings with most being in the 2-story range. There is a serious number of historic buildings that should be preserved and adaptively re-used over time.

Many residents were first attracted to Newhall because of its rural environment and open space. Early rural/ranch style homes built on large lots, located south of Lyons Avenue, reflect the community's sporadic and intermittent growth. The architecture of Newhall homes reflects a diversity of architectural styles. The newer homes on smaller lots are designed in popular design styles from the 1950s to the present.

Much of the early commercial development in Downtown Newhall occupies single-story older buildings and serves neighborhoods along San Fernando Road. Commercial development along Lyons Avenue, with some exceptions, follows the commercial styles of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s and includes numerous small and mid-sized wood and stucco strip centers. There have been attempts made recently to improve the aesthetics of the commercial area by building offices and shopping centers that incorporate historic elements of the area.

Along the southern end of San Fernando Road are several small, one-story, older neighborhood commercial uses. Further to the north, along San Fernando Road adjoining the railroad tracks, are older industrial developments. Many of the industrial and commercial land uses along this section of San Fernando Road are surrounded by vacant lots.

Commercial land uses are concentrated mainly in Downtown Newhall, on the south side of Lyons Avenue and along San Fernando Road. Downtown Newhall is comprised of higher density residential, with a mix of both single-family and multiple-family residential uses. The area south of Lyons Avenue is characterized by lower density residential uses. Large stands of oak trees are scattered throughout the community. Prior to the completion of the interstate system, San Fernando Road was a principal link in the historic circulation system between the San Joaquin Valley and the Los Angeles Basin. The roadway still serves as one of the few arterial roads within the City.



Pedestrian unfriendly streetscape and building facades



Jan Heidt Metrolink Station anchors Downtown Newhall



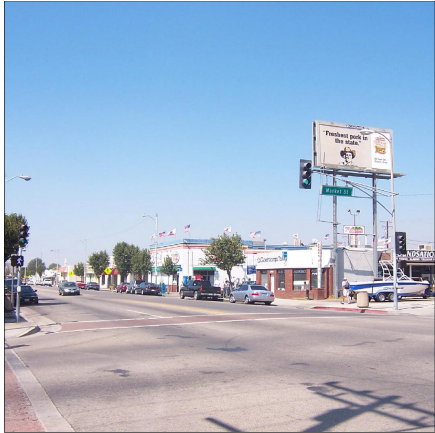
Impersonal housing



Parking lots fronting streetscape



324-Acre Hart Park part of Downtown



Strip retail in Downtown



Looking east on San Fernando Road toward Market Street



"The Center of Downtown" at Market Street and San Fernando Road

1.2 - Overview of Existing Conditions

Existing Economic Conditions - Downtown has been evaluated in 3 market areas: Primary (census tracts within and adjacent to Downtown), Secondary (City of Santa Clarita), Tertiary (15-mile radius from Market and Railroad).

Within the Primary Market area, there are 12,399 people or about 8% of the City's total population. This population is very young with a median age of 25.9 and a median household income of \$43,546 (September 2004).

In general, while there are some very low income households within the primary market, the overall picture is one of income levels that are approximately in line, and in fact, slightly greater than Los Angeles County as a whole. However, the discrepancy between primary market household incomes and the rest of the City is quite large, and this differential has increased the perception of the low-income nature of the immediate (primary) market area. There are several very high income areas that are near or adjacent to Downtown and are potentially available as targets for any future redevelopment of Downtown.

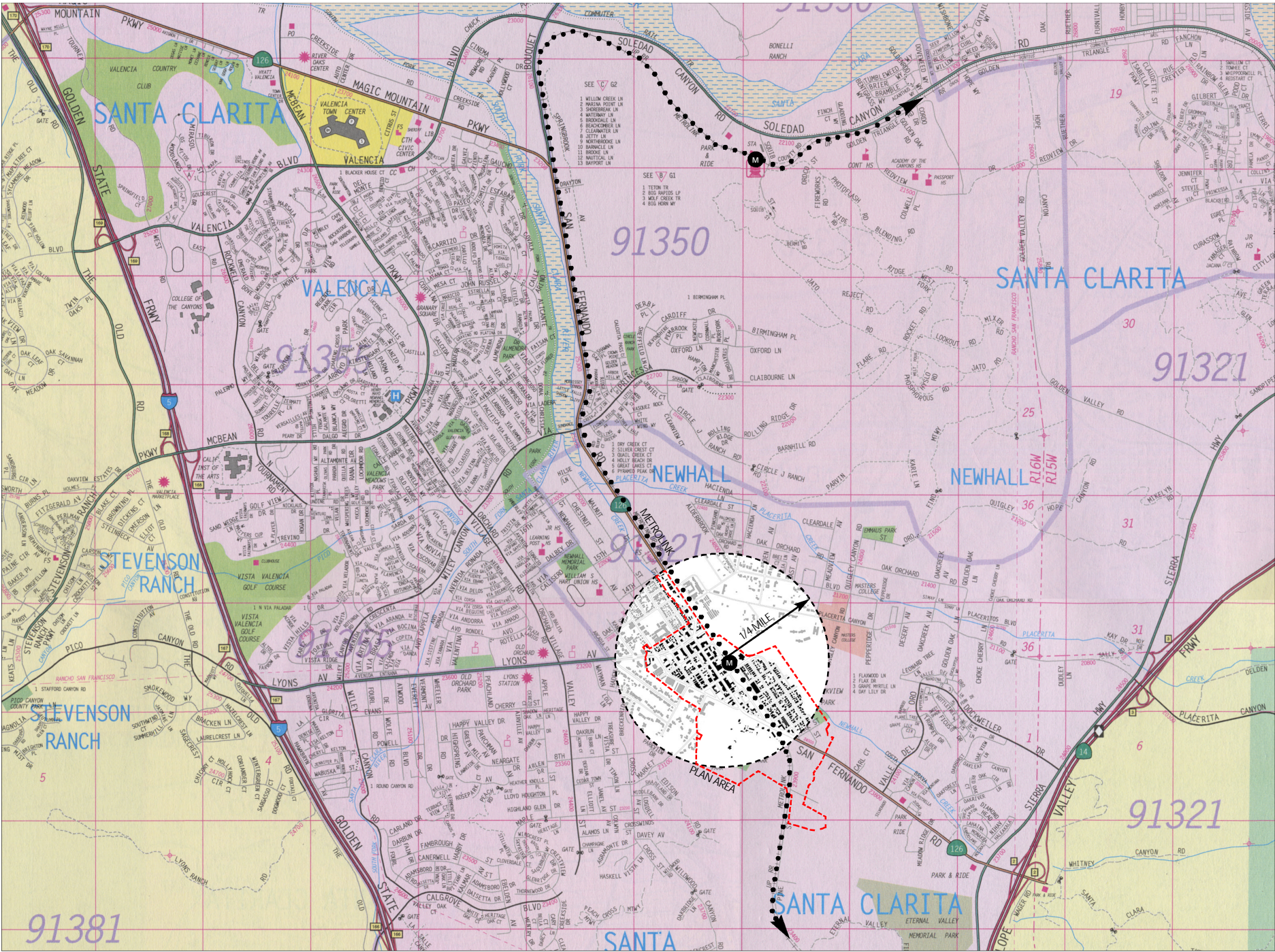
Retail Sales - The Specific Plan area is home to 158 active retail businesses that generated \$58.1 million in retail sales in 2003. Of these businesses, 32 are specifically automobile repair related types of businesses. This cluster of such uses represents a very strong presence within the Downtown and is in stark contrast to the types of businesses present in the communities studied during the preparation of this plan: Old Town La Verne, Old

Town Monrovia, Claremont Village, and the Mission District in South Pasadena. Specifically, Downtown Newhall has more businesses than 3 of the 4 communities that were studied but it has the highest, by far, collection of automotive-related businesses: over 20%. This is of concern because in terms of retail sales efficiency, automotive service uses yield relatively low levels of retail sales and also blight pedestrian-intensive environments.

As a result of the above, there is unmet retail market demand that is leaking out of Downtown as consumers who live both within the primary and secondary markets need to travel outside of Downtown to meet their retail needs. This being said, Downtown Newhall has the potential to capture over \$168.9 million in potential spending of which the \$110 million gap would support over 276,000 square feet of high quality retail space (assuming sales of \$400 per square foot).[1]

Housing - As with all of Southern California, Downtown is experiencing heavy demand for residential space. This is evidenced by low vacancy rates despite some substandard physical conditions and high median values for multi-family housing at \$253 per square foot (September 2004). Recently, multi-family housing has gained significantly on the same values for detached housing (\$261 per square foot). [2]

[1] Economics Research Associates (November 2004)
[2] Data Quick and Economics Research Associates (November 2004)



Plan Area within the City of Santa Clarita

1.3 - Relationship to Santa Clarita General Plan

This draft specific plan directly responds to and implements a variety of significant policies of the Santa Clarita General Plan, and also highlights the necessity for some refining amendments to the General Plan, to be adopted simultaneously with the specific plan. In its discussion of Downtown Newhall, the Land Use Element (page L-34) notes that "This center is distinct from the rest in both its age and manner of development. Special standards and revitalization efforts for this area may be appropriate to preserve and enhance the "old town" atmosphere, foster a pedestrian orientation with quality shopping opportunities and to capitalize on the tourist and recreational opportunities of William S. Hart Park." The fact that a primary purpose of this Specific Plan is to transform the present strip commercial character of Downtown Newhall into an attractive, mixed use, pedestrian oriented, economically vital center, is the realization of the vision expressed in the General Plan. Although the specific plan will implement many goals and policies throughout the General Plan, the following discussion highlights some key linkages between the specific plan and General Plan.

The Specific Plan and its anticipated development will effectively implement Land Use Element goals and policies, including Policies 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.12, and 2.15, regarding encouraging a diversity of housing types, establishing commercial centers, providing for light industry, retaining open space, and avoiding strip commercial. The specific plan also addresses Land Use Element policies 3.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, and 4.13, regarding pedestrian oriented centers, the revitalization of San Fernando Road and Downtown Newhall, upgrading strip commercial, preventing unsightly and inefficient development, promoting architectural quality, and preserving cultural resources.

The specific plan will implement Community Design Element neighborhood identity and design quality Policies 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 2.8, 2.9, regarding consideration of design elements, residential uses in proximity to business and commercial centers, pedestrian orientation, and design standards; and commercial district Policies 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.7, regarding improving the appearance and function of commercial centers, providing a sense of place, encouraging mixed use centers, providing pedestrian orientation, and discouraging small shopping centers.

Along with the adoption of this specific plan, certain specific provisions of the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the General Plan will need to be amended. The current floor area ratio (FAR) limitation in the Land Use Element for the Commercial Town Center designation of "between 0.25 to 0.50 to 1" (Land Use Element, page L-47) should be changed for downtown Newhall to refer to the urban standards of this specific plan instead of establishing a FAR. And the Circulation Element should be changed to reflect the new role of San Fernando Road as the downtown Newhall Main Street.

Relationship to City Design Guidelines and Beautification Master Plan
Beyond the General Plan, these two documents apply to the Specific Plan area. To the extent that the Specific Plan does not propose to change direction or requirements from these two documents, the existing provisions still apply. However, with the adoption of this Specific Plan, where different, provisions of this Plan supercede those of the City Design Guidelines and Beautification Master Plan.

1.4 - Public Participation and Plan Preparation

This Plan is the result of an intense public process that involved the community of Newhall through a series of public meetings, a field trip to evaluate comparative places and two charrettes. The evolution of this plan was based on intelligence and confidence gained by the consultants and the community in cooperation as the process unfolded.

Previous Plans and Documents - Prior to the preparation of this Specific Plan, the City of Santa Clarita adopted the Downtown Newhall Improvement Program also known as the 'Freedman Plan' (1996). This plan promoted many of the same principles that form this Specific Plan but was focused more on public and streetscape types of projects and did not substantially address private property. Subsequent to the Freedman Plan, the City adopted the Newhall Special Standards District Design Guidelines. This document provided guidance to private property owners about using the features identified in the Freedman Plan. This document too, covered many of the appropriate subjects but not in a comprehensive manner that addressed the actual outcomes for the future of Downtown Newhall. Both of these documents, were used during and helped to inform the Charrettes for this Specific Plan.

July 28, 2004 - Consultant team tour of Specific Plan area with City Staff - The entire team of consultants assembled for this project gathered with City staff at the Jan Heidt Metrolink Station for a walking tour of the Specific Plan area. Led by City staff, the consultant team walked through Downtown, the two neighborhoods that flank Downtown and then through William S. Hart Park and up to the William S. Hart Mansion. The very last stop on the tour was an overlook just south of William S. Hart Mansion where the team was able to view the entire Downtown from above.

August 20, 2004 - Field trip to Monrovia, La Verne, Claremont and South Pasadena - The City Council Redevelopment Subcommittee and the consultant team visited these four downtowns that were selected for comparison and observation of best practices that could be applied to Downtown Newhall. Two primary reasons were used in selecting these downtowns: a) they are of a scale and intensity that seem appropriate for Newhall and, b) they are within the Southern California region and, like Newhall, they do not have such a unique economic situation or location. At each Downtown, local City representatives familiar with the particulars of each place and the 'lessons learned' gave a personal tour to the group. Photographs and notes were taken of the salient characteristics, strategies and/or tools used to make each of the Downtowns.

August 23, 2004 - Stakeholder Meeting - A meeting with downtown property owners, merchants, residents and all interested parties was held by the City and the consultant team to convey what had been learned so far about the Specific Plan area on subjects ranging from historic and cultural resources to traffic, circulation and parking. In addition, the consultant team conveyed what had been observed about the four 'comparison' Downtowns. This meeting saw the consultant team take the participants through all of the findings to date for review and comments.

September 7, 2004 - Joint Study Session of the Santa Clarita City Council and Planning Commission - Prior to the first of two Charrettes to be held on this project, the City held a Joint Study Session to review everything prepared, studied and communicated to date. At this meeting, City staff and the consultant team first presented the principles and practices that make Downtowns work and thrive over the long term. The team then presented its findings about the Specific Plan area, the Downtown comparisons, and the comments received at the Stakeholder meeting for review and direction. The City Council and Planning Commission provided direction to City staff and the consultant team with which to enter the first of two Charrettes.



Field Tour of Case Studies



Field Tour of Case Studies



Claremont Village 'Main Street'



Monrovia 'Main Street'



Claremont Village 'Main Street'



Monrovia 'Main Street'



Claremont Village 'Main Street'



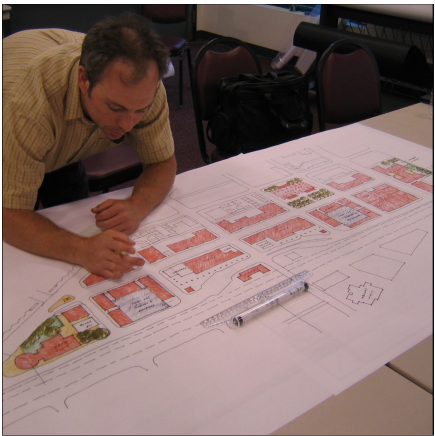
Monrovia 'Main Street'



Claremont Village
"Building-Positive" Plan



Monrovia '
'Building-Positive' Plan



Charrette 1 - Design Workshops



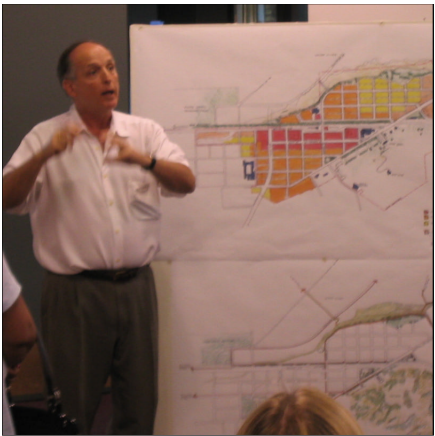
Charrette 1 - Public Comment



Charrette 2 - Final Presentation



Charrette 2 - Final Presentation



Charrette 1 - Final Presentation



Charrette 1 - Public Comment



Charrette 2 - Final Presentation



Charrette 2 - Public Comment

The Charrette Process - This style of public participation brings all interested parties together for a series of days (in this case a series of two, three-day Charrettes) where everyone with a stake or interest of any kind participates directly with the consultant team to develop and review ideas, from their beginning to finalization. This process contrasts starkly with the typical 'workshop' process where ideas are presented, comments are received and the consultant team leaves to further work on the plans to return another day and repeat the process with official public comment occurring in 'public hearings'.

The Charrette process is completely interactive and sees each of the design components developed simultaneously in response to issues and needs posed by participants. City staff are involved throughout and help facilitate participation from a person or group that needs to provide input on a particular subject. In addition, focus sessions are held throughout the day with particular groups such as a Merchant's Association, Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce and sometimes private parties that have pending developments in the area that might be affected or benefit from the Plan. In this way, the 'feedback' loops are ongoing and immediate, keeping unproductive or inappropriate results from being developed. At the end of each 10-hour day, the consultant team summarizes what the consultant team, City staff and the participants studied, achieved and decided that day for the community's review and comment. Through this highly visual and interactive process, participants are completely aware of the direction and intent of the evolving Plan that is based on clear, physical and desired outcomes.

September 13-15, 2004 - Charrette 1 : Background, Vision and Design - This three-day Charrette focused on verifying the base information and conditions on subjects ranging from economics, transit, circulation, parking, building form, historic and cultural resources, infrastructure, landscape and prior efforts at revitalizing Downtown Newhall. With the background information as a sound foundation upon which to build, the team worked with participants to strategize the vision for Newhall. The vision-work did not focus on platitudes but on physical outcomes that are appropriate for Downtown Newhall in terms of its scale and role and economic performance within the greater community. The later portions of this Charrette focused on transforming the physical vision into preliminary designs for all participants to see and help form. The results of this Charrette were: a) a physically-based vision map of intensity and activity called a Neighborhood, District and Corridor plan, b) a Catalytic Project map identifying specific projects that would move the Downtown through the stages of initial action to full revitalization, c) a Traffic and Circulation plan identifying the strategy for defining a Main Street while accommodating community-wide traffic demands and, d) a Plan-wide strategy for the open space, landscape and streetscape components of Downtown.

October 26-28, 2004 - Charrette 2 : Design, Code and Implementation - This three-day Charrette focused on further developing the four, primary components described before. The early portions of this Charrette dealt with the issues surrounding the Street and Parking Network needed to support the envisioned Downtown, the conceptual streetscape plan for Main Street and finalization of the Catalytic Projects. From this, the team and participants worked further in detail on the Economic and Development Strategies, Traffic/Streets/Parking, the conversion of a portion of San Fernando Road to "Main Street", Open space and landscape, Architectural Typologies to be used throughout the Downtown and the two flanking neighborhoods and, an orientation and review session with City staff on the 60% Administrative Draft Specific Plan for review and comment. The next two days focused on verifying all of the Plan components and resolving them against each other so that a Form-Based Code could be finalized.

November 2004 through January 2005 - Specific Plan Preparation - Upon completing the two Charrettes, the consultant team used the resulting information and direction to prepare the Draft Specific Plan. This document will be the comprehensive tool to be used for the revitalization of Downtown Newhall. Working with City staff, the consultant team prepared this document for presentation to the City Council and Planning Commission in February 2005.

January 24, 2005 - Hispanic Outreach Meeting - The City held an outreach meeting with the community and particularly its hispanic members to provide another opportunity to become more familiar with the proposed Specific Plan and to receive their comments. This meeting was conducted in spanish by the consultant team and city staff along with english translation.

February 1, 2005 - Joint Study Session of the Santa Clarita City Council and Planning Commission - The City held a Joint Study Session to review everything prepared, studied and communicated to date. At this meeting, City staff and the consultant team presented the Draft Specific Plan for public review and comment so that the Plan can be revised accordingly and finalized.

May 4, 2005 - Progress-Update and Community Meeting - The City held a Community Meeting to review the progress on the Draft Specific Plan, the forthcoming Draft Environmental Impact Report and to discuss specific comments and questions from the community. At this meeting, City staff and the consultant team reviewed the objectives of the Specific Plan and revitalization effort and responded to various questions about details of the Plan. These and other comments received since the publication of the Draft Specific Plan on February 1, 2005 will be addressed for review by the Planning Commission and City Council.

In addition to the above formal public meetings, City staff and the project team have had numerous meetings with individual property owners and stakeholders since August 2004.

1.5 - Introduction to the Specific Plan

Conventional suburban development is the form of growth which has produced large-scale sprawl throughout Southern California over the last fifty years. Sprawl development is characterized by homogeneous single-use zones, with the housing tract, the shopping center and the business park as its basic elements. These segregated use areas are connected by a discontinuous system of wide thoroughfares designed for the rapid movement of cars.

Transit Oriented Districts is a method of planning that has emerged in the last decade as an alternative conventional suburban development. It stems from the realization that commuter lines and stations can be more than travel nodes, since proximity to transit reduces dependency on the automobile and enhances the value of surrounding buildings as a place to live, work and shop. The typical size of such a district is a quarter-mile radius from physical center to edge. This distance gathers the neighboring population within an average 5-minute walk at an easy pace of a commercial center. Thus the maximum size of a district is determined not by density but by a walkability shed.

The Specific Plan for Downtown Newhall is guided by the Design Principles for Transit Oriented Development (TODs) described on these pages.



Great neighborhood street



Great retail street

Make Great Streets - Street design dictates the form of blocks and buildings. Downtowns are structured on individual blocks and a network of skinny thoroughfares, which encourage pedestrian movement. This interconnecting pattern of thoroughfares provides multiple routes that diffuse traffic, and additionally increase the options emergency personnel have to reach a distressed location. Streets of varying types are detailed to provide equally for pedestrian comfort and for automobile movement. Street intersections have minimal curb radii to slow cars and minimize the crossing distance of pedestrians. Two-way streets also improve pedestrian crossing safety and minimize automotive speed. Where needed, streets have landscaped center medians, to reduce apparent street width. Finally, streets, where possible, have on-street parking in order to provide a buffer between the moving traffic and the pedestrian, thus diminishing perceived and actual danger.



Square



Public building



Plaza

Make Great Public Places - The locus of a downtown’s public life is its center. Its civic buildings enhance community identity and foster civic pride. Its shops and workplaces provide convenient access to goods and services without need for a car trip. A properly designed and developed transit district at Newhall will become a unique social and economic asset to City of Santa Clarita.



Apartments over Main Street stores



2-story commercial blocks with lofts



Transit oriented development

Live Above Stores - A downtown is a place defined by the same general qualities as a neighborhood, with one major exception: commercial activities predominate instead of residential. Yet, the quality and amount of housing in a downtown determine its particular character. Perhaps the most typical dwelling type in a downtown is the loft or house over retail. Such dwellings allow for a variety of families, typically without children to live near diverse services, while providing a constant 24/7 rhythm of use for the downtown.

Live Near Transit - Further enhancing such living in Downtown Newhall is the presence of the Jan Heidt Metrolink Station. The opportunity to live near transit is increasing in its appeal as certain people want the option of riding the train to work combined with the vitality that tends to surround such transit-oriented districts. (See, for example, “Hidden in Plain Sight: Capturing the Demand for Housing Near Transit” produced by the Center for Transit Oriented Development at www.reconnectingamerica.org.) This type of development is proposed and beneficial to the revitalization of Downtown Newhall.



Contemporary architecture



Mix of architecture types and styles



Traditional architecture

Build a Variety of Buildings - The buildings, blocks and streets of a Downtown are interdependent. Each one contains in part the ingredients of all the others. Buildings of a particular quality can define the block that contains them and the street that surrounds them. Design is the matrix that helps either to create or destroy the quality and character of a place. Buildings are the smallest increment of growth. A variety of architectural types, including fabric buildings (those buildings which constitute the majority of our neighborhoods) and civic monuments, and their relationship to each other, determine the character of a downtown as they define the streets and open spaces they face.



Pedestrian friendly sidewalks



Local retailers



National retailers

Get the Retail Right - The retail industry has recently discovered that outdoor, Main Street type retail better fits the lifestyle of busy consumers, often yielding more regular trips and higher sales volumes than standard shopping centers. Retailers should, therefore, be concentrated to encourage and facilitate pedestrian storefront shopping. The retail core should be located around a pattern of streets accommodating cars and on-street parking. Long term parking should be located in shared Park Once lots or structures, convenient but compatible to the Main Street retail. The retail core should include at least one anchor tenant, and a mix of national and local vendors.

Create a Variety of Housing Choices - As a downtown matures, and its livability and economic value increases, a more diverse set of housing choices, attract an increasingly varied and prosperous resident population. It is not unusual to encounter lofts, live/work buildings, courtyard housing, row housing, even duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes in nearly completely developed downtowns. All of these dwelling types are also typically provided in rental or ownership configurations.



Parking as urban building



Attractive and clear signage



Granny flat on an alley



Townhouses



Parking as urban building



Courtyard Housing



Apartments over retail

Get the Parking Right - The typical suburban, sequential pattern of "shop and park" requires two movements and a parking space to be dedicated for each visit to a shop, office, or civic institution. For three tasks, this requires six movements and three parking spaces. By contrast, the compactness and mixed-use nature and walkability of a downtown lend themselves to moving twice, parking just once, and completing multiple daily tasks on foot. The transformation of drivers into walkers is the immediate generator of pedestrian life: crowds of people that animate public life in the streets and generate the patrons of street friendly retail businesses. It is this "scene" created by pedestrians in appropriate numbers that provides the energy and attraction to sustain a thriving Main Street environment.

1.6 - Revitalization Strategy

To revitalize Downtown Newhall it is necessary to provide both physical and policy initiatives. These set the tone for Newhall’s future in a manner that compels activity from the widest variety of perspectives and interests. Revitalization is accomplished by identifying the plan components that establish synergy and profoundly reposition Downtown for all to see as a serious destination to be visited often. The following two-part strategy informs the execution of this Plan:

Physical Initiatives - Catalytic Projects: East Newhall, Main Street Streetscape, Transit, Housing and Preservation. These projects are absolutely crucial to building momentum and enough critical mass that allows others to ‘fill in between’ over the long-term. Following these ‘initial’ projects, a series of projects that are intended as more regional in appeal and nature will follow.

Policy Initiatives - Equally important are administrative and policy efforts that are necessary for short- and long-term revitalization success. These efforts are focused on three subjects: a) Redevelopment authority and powers, b) Historic Preservation, and c) Adoption of a Form-Based Development Code. Without these interventions, the desired outcomes identified in the Specific Plan will not be fully enabled.

A Initial Catalytic Projects

The first set of projects is aimed at transforming the Downtown in physical as well as perceivable terms. They are meant to gain early and positive momentum. They are listed below in the order of execution to achieve maximum effect:

- 1. East Newhall** - Ownership opportunities are to be encouraged through focused use of the City’s programs and resources, along with cooperation from private banks and federal mortgage corporations. The pursuit of housing opportunities that actively engage both market rate and affordable housing will improve and remediate residential conditions of blight in this neighborhood. Code enforcement will be critical in affecting change as will the establishment of ongoing communication with the neighborhood.
- 2. Circulation Strategy** - Downtown Newhall is at the confluence of three corridors that provide community-wide access to the west, north and south. To enable the pedestrian-oriented downtown that is desired and envisioned by the community, it is first necessary to relieve the center portion of San Fernando Road through Downtown from being a supertruck route and 6-lane arterial as currently identified in the General Plan. This is accomplished by using the existing corridors in a manner that continues to provide community-wide access while enabling the Main Street with pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods on each side. Essentially, Lyons and Railroad Avenues will carry the majority of traffic while Newhall Avenue will carry somewhat lesser volumes and finally, Main Street will carry the lowest volume in Downtown’s overall system of major streets. This strategy encompasses the following:
 - a. Railroad Avenue** - To enable the pedestrian-oriented Main Street, Railroad Avenue should be extended to the segment of San Fernando Road from Lyons Avenue to Magic Mountain Parkway. In so far as this road will be reconfigured to be the principal Downtown by-pass street for commuter traffic, it should have the same name both into and through Downtown.
 - b. “Main Street” and Downtown Streetscape** - San Fernando Road from Pine Street to Lyons Avenue will be reclassified as a Commercial Main Street thoroughfare, which allows its transformation into a pedestrian-oriented environment. Traffic-calming and streetscape improvements and the enhancement of basic infrastructure will reestablish Downtown as a site for increased private investment and recapitalization. To further reinforce its status as a special and distinct place with a unique identity in the community, this segment of San Fernando Road is proposed to be renamed “Main Street.”
 - c. Newhall Avenue** - To further Downtown’s identity, the segment of San Fernando Road between 3rd Street and State Route 14 will be renamed Newhall Avenue. This will announce Newhall’s presence along this State Route, and is consistent with the City’s 2001 Beautification Master Plan.
- 3. Mixed-Use Development** - Along with Park Once garages, there are opportunities for appropriately-scaled retail development on these sites with second and third floor uses of residential and possibly some office uses fronting Main Street and/or Railroad Avenue.
- 4. Transit-Oriented Development (T.O.D.)** - TOD represents the range of development intensities and activities that complement, and are complemented by, the presence of a transit station. Presently used as surface parking for Metrolink, these sites represent a profound development opportunity. Development of these surface parking lots into TOD will serve to appropriately densify and activate the area. Downtown as a whole will benefit by moving parking from the Metrolink station into Park-Once garages to the west across Railroad Avenue. This will create pedestrian activity and the potential for development of a consumer base for the adjacent retail, as well as providing low, market rate residential opportunities within Downtown that will, in turn, support ongoing cycles of Downtown activity.

B Projects of Community-Wide Significance

In addition to the above projects, several initiatives that will enhance Downtown Newhall, as it relates to the greater community of Santa Clarita are proposed:

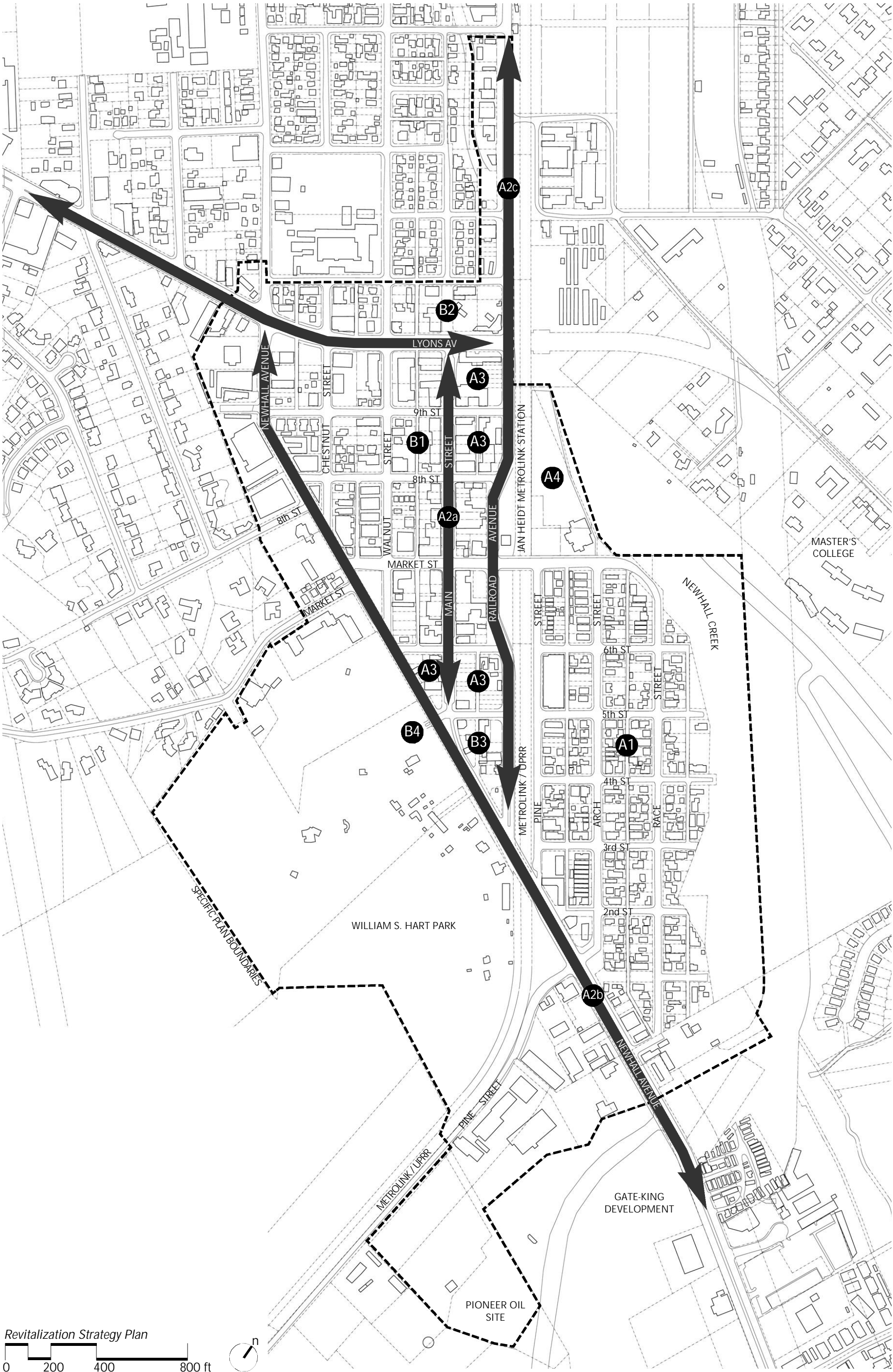
- 1. Mercado and Plaza** - This proposed commercial building and civic space will appeal to the community at large in that no such feature exists elsewhere in the City. This building and civic space represent the collection of numerous merchants offering products such as fresh produce and specialty items ranging from food and produce to clothing and cafes. This combined with the flexible and public plaza provides a true ‘center’ to Downtown. The unique nature of this initiative provides additional visitors and patrons to Downtown Newhall. This project is expected to enhance the neighborhood to the west and stimulate further revitalization along Main Street.
- 2. Library and/or Civic/Institutional Building** - The library will draw from beyond Newhall and strengthen the greater community’s presence and awareness of Downtown. In addition to the local population attracted to such a feature, student-visitors and senior citizens from the entire valley will be added to the area, enriching Downtown Newhall with a wide range of age groups.
- 3. Museum** - This component of civic infrastructure is probably the most exciting and the most challenging to realize because it is regional in scope. However, this museum will serve to broaden the appeal of Downtown Newhall among the greater community of Santa Clarita. Possible types include a Children’s or Science-oriented Museum.
- 4. Hart Park Gateway and Entrance** - The physical relationship between Downtown and Hart Park is weak and proposed for enhancement by the Plan. This project will visually and mentally extend each place into the other. This is expected to have an overall positive effect on Downtown while enhancing Hart Park and the properties along Newhall Avenue. Specifically, Hart Park will realize an improvement in parking capacity while improving pedestrian and vehicular access and visibility into the Park. Properties along Newhall Avenue will be able to better physically relate to the street than they do today.

C Plan-Area Policies

Finally, in addition to fixed capital investments, there are several public policy initiatives that can also be undertaken in support of meeting Specific Plan objectives:

- 1. Expansion of the Redevelopment Agency’s Authority Related to Housing** - It is critical for the Redevelopment Agency to be an active and engaged partner in the revitalization of East Newhall. The full array of tools and approaches allowable under California Redevelopment Law may be used to engage the remediation of blighted residential conditions. In addition, the Redevelopment Agency’s Housing Trust Fund will be deployed to assist in improving conditions in East Newhall and provide affordable housing to the community.
- 2. Historic Preservation** - The issue of preserving and reinforcing the historic and pedestrian nature of Downtown is fundamental to the success of the revitalization effort. To accomplish this, it will be useful for the City to act on the results of the Historic Resoruces Survey prepared for this Plan to appropriately inform decisions and actions about future public and private development.
- 3. Adoption of a Form-Based Development Code** - The desired outcomes expressed in this Specific Plan are largely meaningless without the appropriate implementation tool to accompany it over the short- and long-term: a Form-Based Code. Such a Code needs to replace the existing conventional ‘use-based’ zoning code that currently regulates the land within the Specific Plan boundaries. The Form-Based Code differs from the current Zoning Code as follows:

A Form-Based Code focuses on the desired outcomes from several perspectives not only land use, such as the design and manner in which streets, streetscapes, lots, buildings and land use intensities act in a coordinated way according to their location in the particular place. Such a Code is explicit about what it is trying to achieve and, therefore, is clear to understand and execute. This, in and of itself, is an incentive to pursuing ‘desired outcomes’ as identified by the community instead of imposing solutions that are not ‘desired’. Such a Code actually has more flexibility than current codes because it identifies ranges for the various subjects covered instead of harsh, non-negotiable limits.
- 4. Transportation Improvement District** - As shown in the peer reviews of great places such as Boulder, Colorado and Downtown Pasadena, the direct relationship between the management of parking and the maintenance of such places is a critical strategy in their success. To this end, a T.I.D. is proposed to produce similar results for Downtown Newhall. With the attitude toward creating a market for parking and not simply dismissing land as available for parking at the expense of making a great place, a T.I.D. represents profound opportunity for Downtown Newhall.



Revitalization Strategy Plan

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