
**BURLINGAME DOWNTOWN
SPECIFIC PLAN**

**Workshop #1
Kickoff Open House & Downtown Vision Workshop
October 10, 2007**

Break-Out Group Discussion Summaries

Land Use Table – Facilitator Lisa Whitman

1. Move the post office elsewhere and use the building as a community center, theater, etc., with lawn space used for park and playground
2. We want a mixed-use downtown that has more pedestrian opportunities (parks, promenades, etc.)
3. Downtown needs more residential opportunities, including senior living centers (residential density was not discussed)
4. Consolidate multiple downtown parking lots (like San Mateo has) that take up lots of space into more centrally-located, concentrated, “multi-dimensional” (multilevel) parking.
5. “Seal” downtown parking structures with storefronts. The parking garage could have shop fronts around the perimeter at street level to better integrate it with the neighborhood. Parking could also be pushed underground, with a central plaza/park at ground level.
6. Make the walk from parking to shops more attractive.
7. Close a section of downtown Burlingame streets to traffic, creating a pedestrian promenade. This could be implemented slowly, by “testing” it one weekend day per week. Sections discussed for closure included Burlingame Avenue between Park and Lorton, and Lorton between Burlingame and Howard (the latter area was suggested because there are already cafes with sidewalk seating, and it is adjacent to the post office (suggested community center)).

8. Daylight the downtown creek and add a promenade along it, leading to park at post office (suggested community center).
9. Implement form-based zoning as opposed to use-based. In general, update zoning in the area.
10. Chapin: Too wide. Put greenbelt median through the center, or narrow the street and widen and add more greenery along the sidewalks. Chapin needs more commercial use and less office use.
11. North of Chapin: There should be more mixed use on the north side of Chapin; it's a good transition to residential area of Bellevue.
12. Myrtle and Howard Area: Make it a "pocket" area. Link it to downtown area (Howard) with pocket retail, prevent expansion and dominance of auto-related activities.
13. Howard: Widen the sidewalks on Howard.
14. Bayswater/Park/Lorton/Highland area: Should not be retail or office, but rather live/work lofts, two-to-three stories.

Open Space Table – Facilitator Whitney McNair

1. Daylight the creek that runs parallel to Burlingame Ave. and create a pedestrian walkway. Connect this walkway both north/south and east/west throughout the downtown to as much open space areas as possible. Convert the alleyways behind Burlingame Ave. into a landscaped pedestrian path. Link the path over to the park on the other side of the train tracks.
2. Add either landscaped medians or widen the sidewalks along Chapin Avenue and Howard Street.
3. Install a tot lot within another parking lot, or open space area. Community members are very supportive of the one that exists.
4. Improve the landscaped area along California/Bellevue (across from Stacks) for a tot lot.
5. Improve the original depot site for a landscaped area. Consider landscaping features into the redesign of the new depot.
6. Improve the landscaping along the Caltrain parking lot that borders California Drive. Also, improve the pathway that runs along the back of the parking lot.
7. Modify the roadway at East Lane/North Lane intersection and recapture the land for open space.

8. Use landscaped roundabouts (similar to those near city hall) where possible, especially in the area south of Howard Street.
9. Improve the street trees along Burlingame Ave and Howard Street and the area south of Howard Street.
10. Create a landscaped entry at El Camino Real/Burlingame Ave.
11. Consider improvements to the sidewalks and trees along El Camino Real (most people felt that the eucalyptus trees would have to stay and that no one would suggest their removal).
12. Consider a park or plaza above one of the City owned parking lots, or build one above a parking lot.
13. Consider a landscaped area behind the buildings at the corner of Burlingame Ave and Lorton Ave, where there are some misc. parking spaces.
14. Provide places to sit along Burlingame Ave that include some landscaping.
15. Consider working with the post office to install some improvements at the front of the post office building.
16. Consider closing some streets, either: 1) Park Road at Burlingame Ave (this is the only street that doesn't go through Burlingame Ave) and landscape the area; 2) Burlingame Ave. between Lorton and Park; 3) length of Burlingame Ave. 2 and 3 can be done first on a Friday and Saturday night, and then expanded permanently.

General comments:

People felt that Chapin was a real opportunity for mixed uses. They liked widening the sidewalks to allow for more restaurant uses. Everyone felt the street was too wide.

Traffic, Circulation and Parking Table – Facilitator Maureen Brooks

1. Improvements needed at California/Lorton/Bellevue intersection, particularly for pedestrian safety, but also to improve traffic flow.
2. Also need a better, safer pedestrian crossing to the Caltrain/City parking lot across California Drive at this intersection.
3. Need better traffic control to allow pedestrians and bicyclists to cross intersections on Floribunda – this has become a speedway from Hillsborough (west of El Camino) to California Drive.
4. Chapin Avenue is too wide, could either add a landscaped median with trees or narrow the street to add pedestrian amenities.

5. Could use decked parking lots on the periphery of the area (behind Howard Avenue, on the shared Caltrain lot across California Drive.
6. Need better pedestrian crossings on California & El Camino, as well as the wider streets within the downtown area.
7. Howard Avenue is also wide could either narrow the street width or add a landscaped median.
8. Might consider closing Burlingame Avenue to cars, or have limited access for cars and eliminate the on-street parking, perhaps with one way access on Lorton and Primrose.
9. As an alternative, Park Road could be closed to cars, it does not provide through access.
10. Need street sweeping on Burlingame Avenue

Architectural Character Table – Facilitator Bill Meeker

1. Provide rewards to individual that preserve the character of their historic properties.
2. Preserve the character and variety of architectural styles in downtown.
 - a. Primrose Road (north of Burlingame Avenue) exhibits desirable characteristics.
3. The former American Trust building (now Straits) is an example of how historic structures can be re-used without significantly impacting the building's original character.
 - a. The main Library and Fire Station No. 38 (on California Drive) are also good examples of preserving the original characters of the properties (although the Fire Station is a new structure replicating the original structure).
4. Don't eliminate character-defining elements from properties.
5. Identify architectural styles that truly reflect Burlingame's past and create policies that ensure that future development reflects these historic styles.
6. Preservation policies should not unduly burden property owners wishing to make changes to their properties (balance property rights against preservation policies).
7. Look to other cities for examples of how they have successfully maintained the character of their downtowns, while still allowing change to occur.
 - a. Examples include: Mountain View, Los Gatos, Los Altos.
8. The streets that create the transition between Burlingame Avenue and Howard Avenue should include smaller scale businesses.
9. Develop a means of recording the history of important properties that have been effectively demolished, losing their historic character.

10. Promote adaptive re-use of historic buildings.
11. Property at Howard Avenue and California Drive is an opportunity site for a community space.
12. Provide landscaped median in the center of Howard Avenue, with trees within the sidewalk areas.
 - a. Consider installing “bulb-outs” along Howard Avenue to enhance the intimacy of the street.
13. Soften the appearance of Hatch Lane with landscaping.
14. Address the impacts of the Eucalyptus trees on the condition of El Camino Real.

Streetscape Table – Facilitator Erica Strohmeier

1. Lack of street trees on Howard, need street trees along Lorton.
2. Sidewalks and street trees along Donnelly and Bellevue need to be replaced.
3. Would like a plaza as an entrance to downtown.
4. Should have a gateway to downtown along Howard.
5. Howard is not pedestrian friendly.
6. Play up the train station as a focal point for downtown.
7. Use the open space in front of the post office along Lorton.
8. Follow street example of Castro Street in Mountain View and downtown Livermore – steps that allow the curb to be a seat, interested in using examples from other successful cities.
9. Separate materials between street and sidewalk, use a different paving material for Hatch Lane.
10. Could permeable pavement be used downtown?
11. Place lighting into the trees and/or around the trunk to provide a holiday feel (ex. Palo Alto).
12. Place hanging baskets that have irrigation on the light posts.
13. Need landscaping in city parking lots and potential parking structures.

14. Build seating walls made of slate or brick instead of furniture.
15. Incorporate roundabouts along Howard.
16. Side Streets should have interesting site lines to create more pedestrian activity.
17. Include more public art.
18. Do something different with the City Hall/Library intersection.
19. Include cigarette disposal containers on garbage cans.
20. Build a center divider along Chapin, a vegetative median.
21. Follow the directional signage example of Walnut Creeks downtown, make it an integrated program. For example: how to get to City Hall.
22. Incorporate gateway signs along El Camino at Burlingame Avenue and other streets along El Camino that announce the entrances into the downtown.

Parking/Circulation:

23. Incorporate a valet parking program downtown.
24. Underground parking beneath all businesses fronting along the southern end of Howard with access through the public parking lots. Then buildings can be built to property line without driveway entrances along Howard.
25. Use different forms of angled parking, backing in to spaces.
26. Parallel parking on one side of Howard and then adding a median down the center of the street.
27. Create traffic calming devices like bulb outs at corners.
28. Add a bike lane along Howard next to the sidewalk rather than running behind cars; run a bike lane along Chapin to Bellevue.

Open Topic Table (any topic) – Facilitator Karen Kristiansson

1. Public Art
 - a. Should be a program for public art in the downtown
 - b. Murals like on side of Towles' are great—would be good on side of Unique Bride, for example
 - c. Could be themed—show what building or street looked like in 1915 or something

2. Chapin Ave is too wide
 - a. Median down middle would make more pedestrian-friendly
3. Howard Ave could also have a median
 - a. Median could be designed to be compatible with the water main, or the water main could be buried on one side or the other
4. Need to build on what is unique about Burlingame
 - a. General Plan should include a vision statement for the whole city
5. Design guidelines would be good for downtown to preserve and build on unique character of area
 - a. City's existing commercial design review process doesn't go far enough
6. Historic resources
 - a. Should do complete historic survey and combine preservation with stringent design guidelines
 - b. A lot has disappeared—don't want to lose more
 - c. Could do a public session on historic preservation, to discuss impacts, benefits and myths
7. Trend to combine stores to make larger spaces
 - a. Should preserve entrances and store-fronts to keep character of street
8. Hotels concentrated in Bayfront area
 - a. Would be good to have one downtown
 - b. Burlingame Hotel could convert to boutique hotel
 - i) How would they meet parking requirements? Maybe if build a parking structure, they could "purchase" some spaces there for guests
9. Downtown is missing any kind of entertainment
 - a. Used to be a theater (Fox Theater), and used to be a bowling alley on Howard
 - b. Now nothing to do other than shop and eat
 - c. Economic study says art theater would need subsidy: maybe need to be creative and do some type of public-private partnership
10. People-moving
 - a. Oil and gas won't get any cheaper; with that and global warming, should there be some type of people-moving system?
 - b. Should we be considering putting in tracks or a third rail or cables when we do upgrades to water mains?
11. Light poles should have solar component
 - a. Should also encourage solar more for buildings
12. Trees and sidewalks should get a long
 - a. Maybe we shouldn't try to fit the tree to the sidewalk, but the sidewalk to the tree
 - b. Is there a type of sidewalk that is more tree-friendly than the standard concrete?

13. Housing

- a. Two different points of view:
 - i) Should be from Howard south
 - ii) Could be throughout downtown as long as there are strict preservation and design requirements so it wouldn't lead to demolishing existing buildings to put residential on top—would have to figure out how to retrofit while keeping existing buildings

14. Car dealers

- a. Perhaps they could be encouraged to move to Rollins Road with the right incentive
- b. They have a lot invested in California Drive, so would be difficult

15. Backs of buildings are problems

- a. Issue of how to accommodate trash and still make it work for pedestrians
- b. Trash structures to hid dumpsters? But then people leave doors open, dumpsters out
- c. Put trash underground, like in SF? Or camouflage it?

16. Change names of parking lots

- a. Maybe sell names of parking lots—Apple could buy one and call it the “Apple lot” (or maybe the “i-lot”)