

# Chapter 1: Introduction

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### 1.1 Plan Purpose

Why prepare a Specific Plan? Cities are dynamic and ever-changing places that experience many cycles of physical and economic growth and change over time. The City’s General Plan – updated every decade or so – provides policy guidance for this on-going evolution, while the day to day, neighborhood by neighborhood, lot by lot “steering mechanism” for change to the built environment is guided by the zoning code and other related municipal standards. Like virtually all American cities, Paso Robles’ zoning standards focus mostly on land use, and include relatively generic physical design standards that are common to many cities and towns. For managing routine changes in the use of existing buildings the existing zoning regulations work quite well, but when the goal is to shape new neighborhoods – or refurbish and reshape older neighborhoods – a Specific Plan is a much more useful tool.

The Specific Plan is a zoning tool allowed by State law that enables a community to define a clear and specific vision for the future evolution of a specified planning area. The Specific Plan is comprised of unique and customized standards that enable the City to shape or reshape its streets and public spaces, and property owners to develop or redevelop their properties according to the vision of the Specific Plan. For areas such as Uptown and the Town Centre – areas that have evolved and continue to evolve over time – the Specific Plan guides public and private reinvestment and construction in a highly coordinated and integrated way in order to yield specific types of urban places that are the result of discussion, debate and consensus by a majority of the community.

Accordingly, the primary purposes of this Specific Plan are to define:

1. A Vision for the future of this historic center of town that recognizes the importance of history and tradition, and that also recognizes the opportunities for continuing growth and beneficial change.
2. Goals and Policies that work in tandem with and refine those of the General Plan for this unique area of town.



Downtown Paso Robles 1880s



Historic view of 12th Street.



Historic Paso Robles street with Gallery frontage.

3. Transect-based zoning standards that will replace the current generic zoning standards with customized standards that are devised to calibrate and deliver development consistent with the history of Paso Robles and the community's vision for its future.
4. Comprehensive urban design standards for streets, parks and other public spaces throughout the planning area, along with implementation and financing recommendations. These provide property owners with a clear understanding of the future context within which they are reinvesting in their property.

This Specific Plan provides a road map for growth and change for the plan area for at least the next 25 years – until the year 2035 and beyond. The provisions of this Specific Plan are in conformance with the 2003 General Plan, although it is important to note that the 2003 General Plan applies only until the year 2025.

In addition, this Specific Plan proposes a wide range of policies, programs, and projects, some with very real, short-term horizons - within the next 10 years - that are anticipated to easily attract financing, while others are visionary in nature, may not be practical or may be too expensive to implement in the short term, and consequently may not be implemented for 20 years or longer. Please see Chapter 4 (Implementation) for more information.

*Illustrative/Guidelines vs. Mandatory Standards:* This Specific Plan is comprised of three principal sections, a vision (Chapter 2), an infrastructure and implementation strategy (Chapters 3 and 4), and a development code (Chapter 5).

- The vision illustrates the community's goals for what it would like Paso Robles' historic center to become over the next 25 years, showing one of countless ways of how the plan area can change – and not change – between now and the year 2035. These community goals, as expressed in the plan-wide and area-by-area recommendations described in Chapter 2, reflect the community input that was received at the May 2008 Charrette, the subsequent Planning Commission and City Council workshops and hearings, and extensive reviews by City staff, several Ad-Hoc Committees, and – most importantly – the general public. The plans and perspective views in Chapter 2 are intended to illustrate these goals, providing a guide for how change can occur that is consistent with the community's vision of a compact, multi-modal, pedestrian-oriented urbanism that is respectful of Paso Robles' history and culture, while connecting to the Salinas River.

Accordingly, none of the projects that are described in Chapter 2 are mandatory. The disposition and style of buildings and open spaces that are shown in the plans and perspective views are purely illustrative. A parcel that is shown to be developed with a craftsman style quadplex, could just as easily be developed with a Victorian style duplex. A property on the Illustrative Plan that is shown to be developed, does not have to develop – and may never develop – while a property that shows no development, may develop. Thus, the policies, programs, and projects that are illustrated and described in Chapter 2 should be viewed as guidelines.

- The implementation and infrastructure strategies provide the phasing and financing mechanisms for completing publicly-funded capital improvement projects identified by the vision. Certain projects identified in these chapters may move forward while others may not. Also, certain projects that are identified to move forward in the short term may, due to changing priorities or lack of financing, be delayed, while projects that are identified to occur in the long term may be implemented earlier. Ultimately it is up to the City – and the community – to decide which projects move forward and when. Thus, like the Vision, the implementation and infrastructure strategies should be viewed as guidelines.
- The Development Code ensures that private development occurs according to the community's vision of a compact, multi-modal, pedestrian-oriented urbanism that is respectful of Paso Robles' history and culture, while connecting to the Salinas River. The Development Code replaces the relevant portions of the previous

zoning code for all properties within the Specific Plan area boundary. Like the provisions of the previous zoning code, its provisions – with the exception of Section 5.5.3 (Architectural Styles) – are mandatory.

The Architectural Styles are intended as guidelines that provide potential applicants and the City with a basis for proposing and reviewing development applications.

## 1.2 - The Transect

The Transect is a geographical cross-section of a region used to identify the level and intensity of urban development (or lack of), a continuum that ranges from natural to rural to urban. In Transect-based planning, this range of urban character is the basis for organizing the components of the built environment: building, lot, land use, street, and all of the other physical elements of the built environment.

Building types, frontage types, and thoroughfare types are among the primary elements that define the character of each Transect zone.

*Building types:* The character of a place is substantially defined by the position of the private building on its site, the configuration of the building, and also its function. The building's position and configuration together determine type (for example, single family, house, rowhouse, etc.), which supports the intended uses and defines its degree of urbanity. Building typology is an essential element of urbanism.

*Frontage types:* A frontage is the privately held area between the facade of a building and the lot line. The variables of frontage are the dimensional depth of the front yard and various architectural elements (such as fences, stoops, porches, and colonnades) that define the transition from the public realm of the street and the private realm of the building. The combination of the private frontage, the public streetscape and the capacity of the thoroughfare defines the character of the public realm.

*Thoroughfare types:* Thoroughfares are the principal structuring devices of urbanism. They are the matrix of mobility, accommodating both pedestrians and various forms of transportation. Thoroughfares are also a major part of the public realm, typically occupying between 20 and 40 percent of the urbanized land area. Perhaps most importantly of all, the street and road network permanently subdivides the land into blocks, fundamentally determining the urban structure of the town and the types of buildings that can be accommodated. For all these reasons, roads and streets have an enormous impact on community and their character is as important as their capacity to move vehicles.

Using the Transect, planners are able to specify different urban contexts with the functions and intensities appropriate to their locations within the Transect. For instance, a farmhouse would not contribute to the integrated quality of Downtown Paso Robles, whereas a three or four-story mixed use building would. Wide streets and curbs are more appropriate for urban areas, such as the area of this Specific Plan. Ideally, open country remains open, and compact neighborhoods remain compact. Based on local practices, most elements can be locally calibrated to contribute to the regional and vernacular character of the place.

The continuum of the Transect, when subdivided, lends itself to the creation of zoning categories. These Transect zones (T-zones) display generally universal identifiable characteristics, from the most rural and natural environment (T-1) to the most urban environment (T6). The six Transect zones are: T-1 Natural Zone, T2 Rural Zone, T3 Suburban, T4 General Urban, T5 Urban Center, and T6 Urban Core) zones, employs the entire zone range of the Transect: T-1 for the Salinas River, T3 for the neighborhoods along the west side of the Plan area, all the way up to T5 for Downtown and South of Downtown.



### 1.3 - Goals

#### 1.3.1 Near Term Goals (within 5 years):

**Goal 1: Envision Uptown and the Town Centre as pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighborhoods, districts, and corridors.**

This is achieved by introducing buildings of appropriate intensity, scale, use and character, introducing a variety of housing types, enhancing existing parks and introducing new ones, and creating a pedestrian-friendly street network.

**Goal 2: Continue to revitalize the historic Downtown.**

As the 101 freeway shifted highway traffic off of Spring Street, and as the nature and scale of retailing has shifted to larger and larger buildings, the traditional Downtown economy moved out. The City has made remarkable progress in re-envisioning a new and future Downtown economy to date, and this specific plan is intended to build on that success and take the physical design and economic vitality of the Downtown to a whole new level.

**Goal 3: Encourage infill development as a means of accommodating growth, while preserving significant historic resources, enhancing open space areas, reducing vehicle miles traveled and other negative environmental effects, and enhancing livability and quality of life.**

Within the entire planning area, there are many parcels that are vacant or significantly underutilized in terms of today's economic potential. As the City contemplates the need for continued growth, the need to preserve increasingly valuable agricultural land at the perimeter, and the increasing urgent need for urban environments in better harmony with nature, the importance of "recycling" and enhancing the historic center of town to accommodate a good share of the necessary growth should be a top municipal priority.

**Goal 4: Strive to maintain a balanced, pedestrian-oriented community, where the majority of residents can live, work, and shop.**

The most effective urban patterns for accomplishing a balanced distribution of commercial and residential land uses, and alternative modes of transportation are traditional, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods and urban districts of which central Paso Robles was originally made. Ways of maintaining and improving this balance include:

- Preserving Paso Robles' walkable, interconnected street network in order to disperse traffic by providing a variety of vehicular and pedestrian routes to any destination;
- Preserving existing public spaces and introducing a variety of new public spaces such as parks, plazas, greenways, and tree-lined streets;
- Establishing a discernible center within each neighborhood, such as a green surrounded by residences, a plaza lined with mixed-use buildings, or even a busy or memorable street corner;
- Providing a variety of dwelling types and sizes to accommodate the tastes and needs of a variety of income levels, ages, and lifestyles; and
- Reserving prominent sites, such as at the termination of street vistas or in a neighborhood center, for civic buildings that provide locations for community meetings, education facilities, and religious or cultural activities.

**Goal 5: Expand employment opportunities for residents in the plan area.**

Employment opportunities in the plan area are expected to occur in the hospitality industry, business services, and health care. With Paso Robles' continuing popularity as a visitor destination, the expansion of the hospitality industry will allow employers to access the plan area's workforce and to provide employment opportunities ranging from entry level jobs to experienced customer service positions. Employment is also projected to expand in companies offering business-to-business support services that provide functions helping local businesses to maintain their day-to-day operations. Growing areas of the health care sector that could potentially be attracted to the plan area include community care facilities for the elderly (including centers specializing in Alzheimer's disease), home health care services, and physical therapy and rehabilitation centers. Ways to expand employment opportunities for plan area residents include:

- Targeting and recruiting businesses in industries that have been identified for growth such as hospitality, business services, and health care.
- Supporting mixed-use development that has the potential to bring in commercial users that will provide employment opportunities to plan area residents.

**Goal 6: Expand retail opportunities in the plan area for both residents and visitors.**

An opportunity gap for retail stores in Paso Robles identified store types with un-met market demand. Retailers with growth potential in the Paso Robles market area, and that are appropriate for expansion in the Downtown, include: furniture; computer and software; hardware; specialty food; cosmetics/beauty supplies; optical goods; clothing and clothing accessories; jewelry; hobby/toys/games; books/periodicals/ music. Strategies for expanding Downtown retail offerings are shown below. These strategies are not mutually exclusive and, depending on cost, staffing requirements, and the community's priorities, the City may wish to pursue one or more of them simultaneously.

- Targeting and recruiting types of retailers that have been identified for growth such as furniture; computer and software; hardware; specialty food; cosmetics/beauty supplies; optical goods; clothing and clothing accessories; jewelry; hobby/toys/games; books/periodicals/ music;
- Targeting and recruiting chain retailers with store types that match un-met retail demand;
- Targeting existing independent retailers located within a 60- minute drive of the Downtown with store types that match un-met retail demand;
- Establishing a Downtown retail incubator to help foster local entrepreneurship.

**1.3.2 Longer-Term Goals (years 6 and beyond):**

**Goal 7: Capitalize on one of the few remaining passenger rail stations between Los Angeles and San Francisco.**

The continued growth of the Southern California region has transformed the way we use railroads. From corridors that have recently been used primarily to carry freight and deliver raw materials to manufacturers, the region's railroads now constitute a vital component of the commuter and regional transportation network. Paso Robles' Train Station, and the land



surrounding it, is uniquely positioned to become a regional hub for transportation and transit-oriented development. This brings with it the potential for substantial public investment in new infrastructure and the related economic vitality that such investment stimulates.

**Goal 8: Transform the City's core into a Mid-State Downtown.**

With convenient freeway access and growing rail service in the heart of the Central Coast wine country, a location at a major crossroads leading to the Great Valley and the Coast, a well-preserved town core with great restaurants, strong employment base, numerous strong and growing visitor-serving and cultural institutions, and an underutilized but promising frontage on the Salinas River, Paso Robles is poised to take its place as the Central Coast's crossroads. The Specific Plan seeks to capitalize upon and expand Paso Robles' position as a leading regional destination.

## 1.4 - Plan Authority

This Specific Plan is enacted pursuant to Government Code Section 65450 et seq. by resolution, and Chapter 5 by ordinance, to apply to all property within the Plan boundaries. This Plan and its contents work in concert with the *El Paso de Robles Municipal Code* and supersede it when items appear in both documents.

## 1.5 - Relationship of this Specific Plan to Other Plans and Documents

- A. Relationship to General Plan.** The City of El Paso de Robles General Plan is the primary policy planning document that provides the framework for management and utilization of the City's physical, economic, and human resources. The General Plan consists of the following elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation, Noise, and Safety.

Each element contains goals, policies and implementation measures to guide development within the City. The *Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan* is designed to meet the goals established in the City's General Plan by providing a framework for future development within the planning area. The Specific Plan provides a direct linkage between the City's General Plan and detailed plans for development, and will direct the character and arrangement of future development and land uses within the Specific Plan Area, including:

- Location and sizing of infrastructure;
- Phasing of development/thresholds of development;
- Financing methods for public improvements; and
- Establishing design guidelines and standards of development.

The *Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan* Development Code (Chapter 5) is a part of the City's Zoning Code and the El Paso de Robles Municipal Code. As is the case with other provisions of the Zoning Code, all other provisions of the Municipal Code continue to apply within the Specific Plan area except as expressly provided to the contrary in The *Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan* Development Code. Please refer to Chapter 21.16b (Specific Plans) of the Zoning Code. (Hereafter referred to as "Zoning Code Requirements").

A specific plan must be consistent with the City's General Plan (California Code 65450 et. seq.). By establishing policies and standards for the plan area, The *Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan* is a valuable tool for implementing the General Plan at a site-specific level, as well as providing for orderly

development within the planning area. First and foremost, as discussed further below, The *Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan* is consistent with the General Plan's overall goal of enhancing Paso Robles' small town character and high quality of life and to maintain a balanced community where the great majority of the population can live, work, and shop. In addition, the plan is consistent with the General Plan's goals of strengthening the City's economic base through business retention and recruitment, establishing Paso Robles as the north County commercial retail center by way of providing neighborhood and service commercial in proportion to population growth, downtown commercial revitalization, and regional commercial development.

The Plan will also carry out the City's clear guidance towards pedestrian friendly neighborhoods. The following Plan Proposal examines the project's consistency with selected key General Plan policies and action items. This section describes the most important aspects of the relationship between this Specific Plan and the City of El Paso de Robles General Plan.

The *Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan* implements a variety of goals and policies in the Paso Robles General Plan by providing a renewed vision, and standards for the continuing enhancement of the project area. Of course, no specific plan can implement every policy in a General Plan because General Plan policies cover many aspects of community life and its future that a specific plan would not appropriately address. Therefore, the key General Plan policies that are implemented by this Specific Plan are in the Land Use, Circulation, and Housing Elements of the General Plan.

**B. 2006 Paso Robles Economic Strategy.** The goals, policies, and regulations of The *Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan* are not only in full conformance with the vision and strategies of the 2006 Economic Strategy, but will be an integral and central component of achieving the goals of the Economic Strategy. The Specific Plan will guide private development and recommend catalytic projects to stimulate investment, attract industry, commerce, tourism, employment, and wealth, reduce impacts on existing infrastructure in a manner that capitalizes on Paso Robles' distinctive sense of place. The Plan will achieve this by promoting and guiding:

- The creation of compact, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use neighborhoods that accommodate all income levels and lifestyles;
- The formation of a beautiful, distinctive, and safe public realm of pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, pathways, and public spaces that will bolster Paso Robles' distinctive and memorable qualities;
- The enhancement and expansion of Downtown as a mixed-use dining, entertainment, culture, art, information and education, and shopping destination;
- The development and restoration of the Salinas River as a signature landscape and attraction; and
- The adaptive reuse of historic buildings.

## 1.6 - Project Location and Boundaries

The City of El Paso de Robles (Paso Robles) is located in northern San Luis Obispo County, California, approximately 200 miles south of San Francisco and 200 miles north of Los Angeles. The City is situated in the southern part of the Salinas River Valley, near the headwaters of the Salinas River Watershed. Regional access to Paso Robles is provided via U.S. Highway 101 from the north and south. Access to Paso Robles from the Central Valley to the east is provided via Highway 46. Additionally, Highway 46 connects Paso Robles to the Central Coast and U.S. Highway 1, which traverses the coastline of California between Los Angeles to the south and San Francisco to the north.



Site and its vicinity

The Specific Plan Area consists of two distinct areas within the City of Paso Robles located within the most northwestern portion of the City: Uptown Paso Robles and the Town Centre area of Paso Robles. The geographic boundaries of Uptown generally include Highway 101 and the Salinas River to the east; the existing city limits to the north; 24th Street to the south; and Vine Street and the City Limits to the west. The geographic boundaries of the Town Centre, or Downtown area of Paso Robles, are Vine Street to the west, the Salinas River to the east, 1st Street to the south, and 24th Street to the north. Generally, these two areas within the City of Paso Robles comprise most of the city west of Highway 101 and the Salinas River.

**A. Existing Land Uses.** The Specific Plan Area is comprised of approximately 1,100 acres. The Specific Plan Area consists of nine different land use classifications: Community Commercial (CC), Commercial Services (CS), Industrial (Ind), Office/Professional (OP), Public Facilities (PF), Parks and Open Space (POS), Residential Multiple Family (RMF), Residential Single Family (RSF), and Other/not Classified.

Land uses within the Uptown portion of the Specific Plan Area generally consist of Parks and Open Space along the Salinas River Corridor, Commercial Services along the northeastern portion of Uptown adjacent to Highway 101, Residential Multi-Family throughout the central portion of Uptown, as well as Public Facilities land at the locations of the public schools and the Event Center, as well as Industrial land adjacent to Commercial Services.

Land uses within the Town Centre portion of the Specific Plan Area generally consist of Commercial Services along the Union Pacific Railroad rail line, Community Commercial throughout the central Spring Street

Corridor of the Specific Plan Area, Residential Multi-Family uses along the east and west sides of the Spring Street Corridor, and Public Facilities land at the Middle School site and in the vicinity of City Hall.

- B. Surrounding Land Uses.** The *Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan Area* comprises the majority of the City of Paso Robles land in the northwestern portion of the City. Adjacent to the Specific Plan Area are the following land uses:

**North.** Highway 101 and the Salinas River, which serve as the northern boundary of the Specific Plan, continue north of the Specific Plan Area. Additionally, north of the Specific Plan Area is undeveloped agricultural land outside of the City limits.

**East.** The Salinas River generally serves as eastern boundary of the Specific Plan Area. East of the Salinas River is the remainder of the City of Paso Robles. Immediately east of the river are agricultural land to northeast; the Borkey Area Specific Plan which consists of residences south of the agricultural land and north of Highway 46; the Union/46 Area Specific Plan which consists of industrial uses and single-family residences south of Highway 46; and additional single- and multi-family residential uses continuing to the south end of the City limits.

**South.** The southern portion of the Specific Plan Area is bordered by Highway 101 and the Salinas River, as well as Parks and Open Space, Business Park and Industrial land uses. Highway 101, the Union Pacific Railroad line, and the Salinas River continue further south of the Specific Plan Area. Additional land uses to the south include business Park and Regional Commercial centers.

**West.** To the west of the Specific Plan Area are the eastern facing hills of the Santa Lucia Mountains. Within the hills are single-family residences with large lots, and all land is designated as Residential Suburban. Further west of the Specific Plan area are the Santa Lucia Mountains, the communities of San Simeon and Cambria, and the Pacific Ocean. The Pacific Coast is approximately 30 miles west of the Specific Plan Area.

## 1.7 - Local Physical Conditions

**Existing Street and Block Structure.** The plan area covers the majority of the historic street and block network that was originally platted in the 1880s. The blocks are rectilinear and measure approximately 300 x 300 and the street network is interconnected. South of 24th Street the interconnected network is virtually intact, except for where the railroad tracks cut through. There are a total of 7 railroad crossings all of which are located south of 24th Street. The freeway severs the planning area from the Salinas River as well as from development along Paso Robles Street. There are two freeway crossings connecting the planning area to Paso Robles' east side - at 13th Street and at 24th Street.

**Existing Open Space.** Within the planning area there are three parks (Robbins Field, City Park, and Pioneer Park), and three Elementary Schools (Bauer Speck Elementary School, Flamson Middle School, and Georgia brown Elementary School). Pioneer Park and Robbins Field are isolated from residential and retail uses and therefore are not used to their full potential. The Salinas River runs north/south along the eastern edge of the planning area.

**Existing Buildings.** The majority of existing buildings are one- and two-story with portions of Downtown that are as high as four-stories. Considerable portions of the plan area were built more than 50 years ago and are consequently subject to CEQA historical resource determination requirements. The majority of the plan area is well built-out.

In order to better understand the existing conditions, the consultant team divided the plan area into a total of six neighborhoods, districts, and corridors as follows:

- 1. Uptown neighborhood
- 2. Midtown neighborhood
- 3. Downtown District
- 4. Riverside Corridor
- 5. South of Downtown neighborhood
- 6. Salinas River Preserve

The existing conditions of each of these subareas is described in terms of buildings, open space, and streets and blocks in Chapter 2 along with a description of the vision and plan for each subarea.



*Aerial view of Uptown from the west*

### 1.8 - Existing Demographic and Market Conditions

#### A. Demographics.

- 1. **Population and Household Trends.** According to the U.S. Census bureau, between 1990 and 2008, Paso Robles' population increased from 18,583 to 28,926, an increase of 56 percent. San Luis Obispo County's population increased by 46,269 over the 18-year period and population gains in Paso Robles accounted for 22 percent of the County's growth. Currently, the population of Paso Robles makes up 11 percent of the total population of San Luis Obispo County. According to U.S. Census bureau statistics, the number of households with members less than 18 years of age is declining and is projected to continue to decline.

Households in the Specific Plan Area have a lower rate of home ownership than in Paso Robles overall. The total population (1,704) and households (4,768) in the Specific Plan area make up 16 percent of the population and households in Paso Robles. While 61 percent of Paso Robles households are owner-occupied, in the Specific Plan Area home ownership rates range from a low of 17 percent in Uptown, to 37 percent in Midtown.

The Specific Plan Area has a greater percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents than Paso Robles as a whole. While 32 percent of Paso Robles residents are Hispanic or Latino, the ratio in the Specific Plan Area is approximately 51 percent. The percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents ranges from 73 percent in Uptown, to 23 percent in the South of Downtown neighborhood. In total, an estimated 26 percent of Paso Robles' Hispanic or Latino population lives in the Specific Plan Area.

2. **Income Trends.** Median household income in Paso Robles is lower than that of San Luis Obispo County overall (sources: U.S. Census bureau, Claritas, Inc., and the California Department of Finance). In 2007, median income in San Luis Obispo County (\$51,978) was approximately 10 per cent higher than in Paso Robles (\$47,298). When adjusted for inflation, median income in both Paso Robles and the County has remained flat in real terms between 2000 and 2007, although the nominal growth rate was approximately 20 percent.

Median household income in the Specific Plan Area is lower than that of Paso Robles as a whole. Median household income levels in the Specific Plan Area vary by over \$10,000, depending on the neighborhood. In Uptown, the median household income is \$30,263 while Downtown's is \$40,625. By contrast, the 2008 median household income for Paso Robles as a whole is estimated at \$48,399.

3. **Employment Trends.** While the City accounts for 11 percent of San Luis Obispo County's population (per the U.S. Census bureau), 18 percent of the County's jobs are located in Paso Robles (sources: Claritas, Inc. and Strategic Economics). With 19,579 total jobs in 2007, the Paso Robles economy employed 18 percent of the County's 109,100 workers. The services, retail, and manufacturing sectors are the City's biggest sources of employment. Services, including personal services (e.g. dry cleaning, hair-cutting), business services (e.g. accounting, maintenance), lodging, legal services, and health, education, and social services, comprise 33 percent of Paso Robles' employment. Retail provides an additional 24 percent, and manufacturing provides another 13 percent. Paso Robles provides a particularly high share of the county's manufacturing, retail, wholesale trade, and finance jobs. Manufacturing jobs in Paso Robles make up 41 percent of the County's total manufacturing employment. Thirty-four percent of the County's retail jobs, 34 percent of its wholesale jobs, and 29 percent of its finance jobs are located in Paso Robles.

- B. **Residential Market.** Most of new household growth in San Luis Obispo County between 2010 and 2030 is expected to be driven by seniors (sources: Woods & Poole Economics and the 2007 American Community Survey). The number of San Luis Obispo County households headed by residents aged 65 years and older has the potential to increase by 25,849 between 2010 and 2030. High density development in the Specific Plan Area can be expected to appeal to a segment of this growing population, especially those who wish to maintain an active lifestyle in spite of the decreased mobility that often accompanies aging. Because the Specific Plan Area offers residents a network of walkable streets and proximity to services, retail, recreation and entertainment, it will provide greater independence to older residents compared to suburban housing that relies on auto transport. Professional singles and couples under the age of 25 are also a potential target market, however the number of County households headed by residents in this age cohort is expected to grow by only 1,164 by 2030. By contrast, the number of households headed by residents aged 25 to 44 will have a net gain of 6,380, and those with householders aged 45 to 64 will increase by 3,575 by 2030. Growth in San Luis Obispo County between 2010 and 2030 presents a potential target market of 37,000 additional households, indicating that the Specific Plan Area would need to capture 3 percent of this potential market in order to achieve build-out of 989 new units by 2030.

A variety of higher density residential product types are appropriate for the Specific Plan Area. Much of the Specific Plan Area contains residential neighborhoods with one- and two-story single-family homes. While this small-scale residential character should be preserved along Oak and Vine Streets, other parts of the planning area are appropriate for multiple dwelling structures (duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, rowhouses) that can be designed to appear as large single-family homes.

Mixed-use residential development is appropriate for the Specific Plan Area, especially in Downtown, the South of Downtown area, and on Spring Street. First-time home buyers, recent graduates of Cal Poly, and Latino households are a potential source of demand for high-density units in the Specific Plan Area. Implementation of mixed-use zoning should consider each project's potential impact on Downtown, placing priority on establishing more intense development in the Downtown.

New residential development in the Specific Plan Area should be encouraged to accommodate and appeal to both senior households and other market segments. Because such a large proportion of the potential target market (70 percent) is made up of householders aged 65 years and above, developers in the Specific Plan Area should be encouraged to build units that accommodate the requirements of residents in this age category, yet still remain appealing to buyers in other segments.

- C. **Retail Market.** The main shopping districts in the Specific Plan Area include Downtown as well as retail corridors along Spring Street, Riverside Avenue, Paso Robles Street and the 24th Street corridor near Highway 101. With several major shopping centers and national chains, Paso Robles serves as a retail magnet for City residents as well as approximately 30,000 additional residents in north San Luis Obispo County. This high level of competition from commercial centers with freeway visibility, convenient store hours and ample parking creates a challenge for retailers in the Specific Plan Area. Nevertheless, Downtown is considered a prime location that offers City residents, as well as the surrounding community, an enjoyable shopping environment with unique stores, restaurants and entertainment venues. The commercial corridors in the Specific Plan Area offer convenience shopping at strip centers as well as free-standing independent retailers. Retail businesses along the corridors range from those that serve the surrounding neighborhoods (Rite-Aid, Scolari's) to specialty stores such as the Boot Barn on Spring Street and the Farm Supply Company on Paso Robles Street. Based on projected spending from residents of Paso Robles and unincorporated north County, by 2030, the City should be able to support a total of 534,000 additional square feet of retail space (source: Strategic Economics).

While a significant portion of 2008-2030 net supportable retail space is already under construction or approved, mixed use development in the Specific Plan Area uses can be expected to attract retail uses, especially Downtown, South of Downtown and on the Spring Street corridor. Much of Downtown's pedestrian zone is centered on 11th and 12th Streets and City Park. Currently, there are few vacancies on Spring Street, rents are relatively low and, from a commercial perspective, its role is to provide a niche location for price-sensitive users.

In the South of Downtown Area, specialty retail, such as a public market or other agriculture- or wine-related retail, would be suitable for the Farmers Alliance building. However, development projects that are proposed for this area should be discouraged from introducing retail uses that compete with Downtown. Multi-story mixed use office buildings with ground floor retail would be a good development product for the South of Downtown area, especially along Pine Street between 11th Street and the train station.

- D. **Hotel Market.** As of 2008, Paso Robles accounts for 13 percent of lodging inventory in San Luis Obispo County. In addition, lodging properties in Paso Robles have higher occupancy rates than in the County as a whole. Of these, mid-level and premium hotel properties make up an estimated 52 percent of Paso Robles' room inventory. Holding current inventory constant and assuming that room demand expands at an annual rate of four percent, the Paso Robles market should be able to support an additional 960 rooms by 2030 (sources: City of El Paso de Robles and Strategic Economics).

The development of premium hotel properties is most appropriate for the Downtown because of its restaurants, retail, park and entertainment venues. Hotel development should be viewed as an essential ingredient in creating an 18-hour Downtown for Paso Robles and in generating pedestrian traffic for local businesses. Relatively small-scale, boutique hotel properties (less than 40 rooms) would be appropriate for many of the Downtown's smaller parcels as they are redeveloped. Mid-level hotel properties are likely to perform well on Riverside Avenue near the Paso Robles event Center. Because of its lower property values, Spring Street may attract hotel operators wishing to tap into Paso Robles' lucrative lodging market. However, adding supply along Spring Street is less optimal in terms of generating evening activity in the Downtown and should therefore be a lower priority for the foreseeable future. Conversely, there are several 1950s-era motel properties on Spring Street that are under-performing, but reflect the City's past as a major

destination on the route between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The City should work with property owners to renovate these facilities so that they retain their historical character and contribute to the appearance of Spring Street.

- E. Office Market.** The office market in the Specific Plan Area competes for tenants with Atascadero. Based on employment projections, it is estimated that demand for office space in the whole City will increase by 540,000 square feet by 2030 (sources: Claritas, Inc.; Woods & Poole Economics; Strategic Economics).

Mixed-use office development in the Specific Plan Area should emphasize historic renovations or new construction in appropriately-scaled buildings with divisible space that can accommodate demand from small office users. When implementing mixed use zoning in areas outside Downtown, the City should consider the development's impact on Downtown and encourage projects that complement, rather than compete with, efforts to promote Downtown development.

- F. Industrial Market.** Industrial space in Paso Robles is concentrated around the Paso Robles Municipal Airport, on the eastern edge of the City on Linne Road, on Riverside Avenue, and on Paso Robles Street. Riverside Avenue and Paso Robles Street have light industrial users including construction companies, machine shops, agricultural suppliers, auto repair and landscaping companies. Riverside Avenue and Spring Street contain a mix of old and newer buildings, most of which accommodate several small users. Based on employment projections for Paso Robles, it is estimated that demand for industrial space in the entire City will increase by 600,000 square feet by 2030 (sources: Claritas, Inc.; Woods & Poole Economics; Strategic Economics).

It is projected that over time, market forces will encourage large industrial users to relocate out of the Specific Plan Area as they take advantage of lower occupancy costs in other parts of Paso Robles or in other areas of the north County. However, most large industrial businesses in the Specific Plan Area seem to be well established in their current location and property turnover is expected to be quite slow for the foreseeable future. In the meantime, the City should encourage industrial users that require facilities with large footprints to locate in other parts of Paso Robles, such as the airport area, or on Highway 46.





*Intermittent sidewalks on Spring Street*



*Oak Park Housing*



*Vine Street at Flamson Middle School*



*Robbins Field*



*Pioneer Park*



*Paso Robles Inn on Spring Street*



*Paso Robles Event Center main entrance*



*Paso Robles City Park*



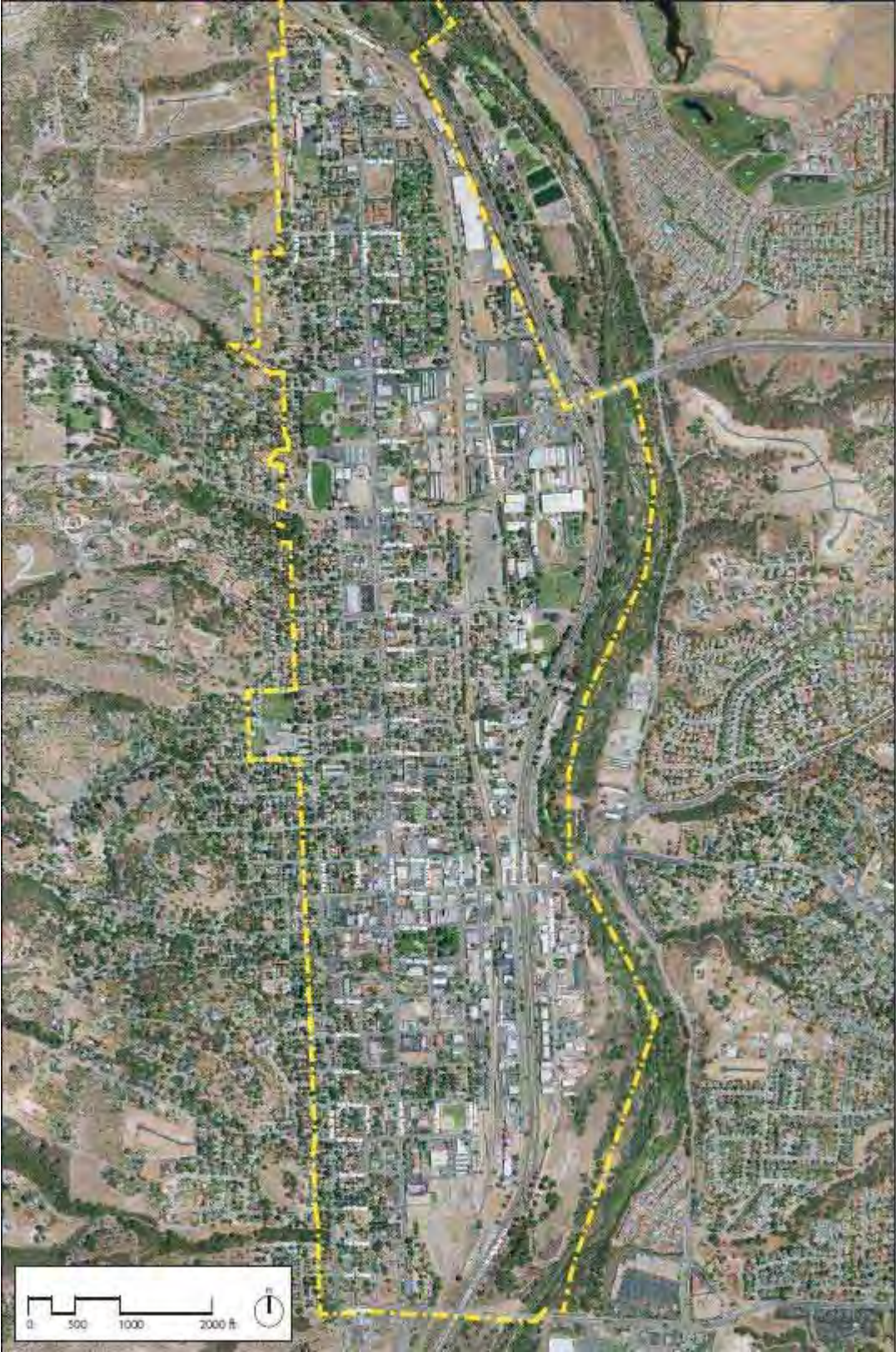
*Downtown shopping district*



*Oak tree*



*Residential neighborhood*



*Aerial Photograph of site and its vicinity*

## 1.9 - Public Participation and Plan Preparation

In conformance with General Plan Policy LU-2A, this Plan is the result of an intense public process that involved the community of Paso Robles in a series of public meetings and a 5-day charrette. The evolution of this plan was based on extensive community input throughout all phases of the planning process. The public process consisted of three phases: Pre-Charrette Outreach, the Charrette, and Post-Charrette Outreach.

**Pre-Charrette Outreach** consisted of conducting an extensive existing conditions analysis, interviewing interested stakeholders (municipal officials, developers, business owners, and community members), and engaging the public in three Discovery Workshops in which the consultant team presented their analysis and fielded comments and questions from the public. The Pre-Charrette Outreach phase was brought to a close during the Pre-Charrette Study Session, whereby the consultant team presented the discovery findings to the City Council and Planning Commission. The Pre-Charrette public meetings occurred as follows:

- April 10, 2008: Uptown Discovery Workshop
- April 11, 2008: Town Centre Discovery Workshop
- April 17, 2008: Combined Uptown and Town Centre Discovery Workshop
- May 6, 2008: Combined City Council and Planning Commission Study Session to discuss Discovery Workshop results

**Charrette.** Building upon the input and findings of the Pre-Charrette Outreach, the Charrette brought all interested parties together for 5 intensive days to participate in the Charrette. Everyone with a stake or interest of any kind participated directly with the consultant team to develop and review ideas - from their initial inception to their finalization as draft-level content for the Specific Plan.



*Community discussing the plan during the final Charrette presentation.*



*Charrette final presentation to the community.*

The Charrette was completely interactive with each of the design components (street and parking design, landscape and open space, form-based zoning code) being developed simultaneously in response to issues and needs posed by participants in the Pre-Charrette Outreach as well as public input during the Charrette. City staff was involved throughout the Charrette to facilitate meetings with individuals or groups as needed: downtown merchants groups, historic preservation groups, neighborhood representatives, and business/land owners. At the end of each day, the consultant team presented to the community what had been studied, achieved, and proposed. Through this highly visual process, participants became aware of both the large and small issues and helped direct the evolving plan. In this way, the "feedback" loops were ongoing and immediate. At the end of the Charrette, the principal content and direction for this Specific Plan had been largely determined. Below is a summary of the charrette schedule.

**Day 1: Monday, May 12, 2008**

Background and Vision, Strategies and Frameworks  
Noon Seminar: Economics and Finance

**Day 2: Tuesday, May 13, 2008**

Schematic Design, Circulation and block network, Parking, Transit  
Noon Seminar: Form based Codes / Urban Landscape and Historic Resources

**Day 3: Wednesday, May 14, 2008**

Details and Technical Refinement, Open Space, Development Potential  
Noon Seminar: Landscape, Sustainable Infrastructure, and Ecology

**Day 4: Thursday, May 15, 2008**

Details and Technical Refinement, Form-based Code, Economics and Finance  
Noon Seminar: Traffic and Parking

**Day 5: Friday, May 16, 2008**

Code and Implementation, Infrastructure, Finance Noon Seminar:  
Final Design and Production, Final Presentation, Review and Open House

**Post Charrette Outreach.** The post-Charrette Outreach consisted of a series of public meetings before the Planning Commission and City Council whereby the Specific Plan and its various components were presented for public comment. The process began with a study session in which the consultant presented the recommendations developed during the Charrette to a joint session of the City Council and Planning Commission. The comments from the study session were incorporated into a Public Draft Specific Plan, which was released for public review on July 6, 2009. This was followed by a joint session of the City Council and Planning Commission whereby the Specific Plan was presented for public comment.

The Plan was then studied by several ad-hoc committees, comprised of members of the City Council, the Planning Commission, and the general public. The ad hoc committee's detailed comments and recommendations were then incorporated into an Addendum that accompanied the Public Draft Specific Plan through subsequent public meetings. This part of the process was completed with a joint session of the City Council and Planning Commission.

In addition, the consultant team led a form-based code study session before the Planning Commission and City Council. At this study session the consultant team answered questions about the form-based code and demonstrated how the form-based code is used, sketching out how buildings could be potentially introduced on actual sites within the Plan Area. This was followed-up by a City-led form-based code demonstration session with interested members of the development community.

Continued opportunities for public comment occurred during the Adoption hearings in which the Planning Commission unanimously recommended adoption of the Specific Plan to the City Council and the City Council reviewed and adopted the Specific Plan.

The Post-Charrette public meetings occurred as follows:

- May 27, 2008: Joint study session with the City Council and Planning Commission
- September 3, 2009: Joint session of the City Council and Planning Commission.
- May 26, 2010: Joint session of the City Council and Planning Commission.
- September 9, 2010: Form-Based Code Workshop with Planning Commission and City Council.
- December 8, 2010: Form-Based Code Workshop with Development Community.
- January 11, 2011: Planning Commission Adoption Hearing
- January 25, 2011: Planning Commission Adoption Hearing - continuation

- March 1, 2011: City Council Adoption Hearing
- May 3, 2011: City Council Adoption Hearing - continuation and adoption of Plan

**Previous Plans and Documents.** In addition to the above process, the following information was used and referenced throughout this process and the preparation of the Specific Plan:

- Municipal Code
- City of El Paso de Robles General Plan 2003
- 2006 Paso Robles Economic Strategy
- Parking Management Plan
- Paso Robles Downtown Guidelines
- Oak Park Conceptual Redevelopment Plan

### 1.10 – Plan-Wide Policies

The *Uptown/Town Centre Specific Plan* uses the principle of traditional neighborhood development to ensure that future development within the Plan area occurs in the same spirit used to build great and memorable American small towns such as Paso Robles.

These traditional small towns center around a mixed-use downtown, which in turn is surrounded by a ring of residential neighborhoods. On the outskirts of town are farms and ranches, and beyond the farms, undisturbed nature. All aspects of small towns - from their overall size, to the size of their blocks, to the design of their sidewalks and street trees, to the scale of their buildings - are designed with the pedestrian in mind. In these towns, the public realm of beautiful streets and verdant parks was just as important as the buildings which defined the public realm. These are the principles that direct this plan.

This direction, embodied in the vision, objectives, and regulations of this plan, is summarized by the seven policies identified on these two pages.



*Community life on display*



*Connections to and through parks*



*Paseos providing additional business opportunities while appropriately activating the public realm*

- 1. Make Great Public Places** - The highlight of a place's public life is its various centers - centers such as Downtown and the various neighborhood centers proposed throughout the plan area. These public places are the visual punctuations along the greater public realm of streets that give access and identity to the various neighborhoods and districts in the plan. Their civic buildings enhance community identity and foster civic pride. Their shops and workplaces provide convenient access to goods and services without need for a car trip. In this way, a set of great public places contributes to Paso Robles' unique and genuine character, distinguishing Paso Robles' plan area from other regional centers.

**2. Make Great Streets** - Great streets are designed for both the automobile and the pedestrian and bicyclist. Of varying widths and configurations, these tree-lined streets are designed to provide comfortable environments for pedestrians while slowing automobile traffic down. Conceived as places and not just conduits, they are memorable, easily distinguishable from one another, and great places to walk, bicycle, and drive. Great streets have on-street parking in order to provide convenient parking for residents, shoppers, and guests alike, as well as to provide a buffer between moving traffic and pedestrians. Street intersections have minimal curb radii to further slow cars and minimize the crossing distance for pedestrians.



*Great mixed use street; well defined, on-street parking, shade, wide sidewalks, pedestrian comfort and calmed yet efficient traffic flow*



*Great neighborhood street; varied, engaging the public realm, interconnected*



*Great retail street; stores are emphasized with landscape and on-street parking*

**3. Live Above Stores** - The quality and quantity of housing determines the particular character of each district or neighborhood. In the case of mixed-use environments, one of the most appealing characteristics is the opportunity for people to live above stores, providing such residents the ability to take advantage of the proximity of uses provided in such an environment, while reducing their reliance on a car. Whether in a town- house, a loft or a flat, such dwellings allow for a variety of households to live near diverse services, while providing a constant 24/7 rhythm of use.



*Apartments over stores and offices*



*Lofts over stores*



*Flats and Lofts over commercial*

**4. Build a Variety of Buildings** - The buildings, blocks and streets of a neighborhood or district are the elements that generate the overall pattern and identity of a place. Each element contains in part the ingredients of all the others. Buildings, the smallest increment of growth, define the block that contains them as well as the street that surrounds them. A variety of building types, including fabric buildings (housing, offices, mixed-use buildings) and civic monuments (museums, libraries, movie theaters, City Hall), their relationship to each other, and how they define the streets and open spaces they face largely determines the character of a place. Building design can either create or destroy the quality and character of a place.



*Contemporary architecture in historic context*



*Contemporary architecture*



*Traditional architecture*

**5. Create a Variety of Housing Choices.** As a place matures and its livability and economic value increases, a diverse set of housing choices should be introduced in order to meet the demands of an increasingly varied and prosperous resident population. A range of types, including single family houses, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, rowhouses, live/ work units, courtyard housing, and lofts, should be provided in order to accommodate residents of varying income, age, and lifestyle. Rental and ownership options should also be provided. Such variety is necessary for long-term vitality.



*Live/Work or Flat over retail*



*Single-family housing*



*Courtyard Housing (flats, townhouses and lofts)*



*Lofts and flats over commercial*



**6. Get the Retail Right** - The retail industry is increasingly enjoying success with outdoor, "Main Street-type" retail as it better fits the lifestyle of busy consumers. Such environments typically attract more visitors, resulting in higher sales volumes, than standard shopping centers or malls. These retail environments are located around a walkable block pattern with streets accommodating cars and on-street parking. Off-street parking is located in a combination of nearby, shared park-once lots and structures that are compatible to the scale of a Main Street retail district. The retail core typically includes a mix of local and national vendors - a mix that broadens the retail core's appeal while capturing vehicle trips that would otherwise generate more vehicle miles and possible sales tax leakage. Neighborhood centers, which provide everyday necessities within walking distance of surrounding residential neighborhoods, function in the same way, albeit at a smaller scale.



*Simple - pedestrian friendly sidewalks with shade and clear visibility of shop-fronts*



*Regionally-oriented businesses*



*Locally-oriented businesses*



*Evening retail, restaurants and service*

**7. Get the Parking Right** - The compactness, mixed-use nature and walk- ability of the various areas in the plan area lend to parking once in order to complete multiple daily tasks on foot. Particularly for Downtown, 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 environment. The park once strategy also reduces the quantity of costly off-site parking spaces required to accommodate the patrons, visitors, and residents of these mixed-use centers. In the case of smaller scale neighborhood centers (such as in Uptown), their proximity to residential neighborhoods reduces the number of off-site parking spaces, since many of the surrounding residents can walk, rather than drive, to these centers to purchase everyday necessities, eat out, or get a cup of coffee.



*Attractive and clear parking information*



*Liner building activating the sidewalk*



*Parking lined by active, urban building*