



## Chapter 5 Implementation Actions

### Action Steps

Critical to the planning process is bridging the gap between planning and action. If the ideas, Vision and strategies outlined in the Town Center Concept Plan are not translated into real actions, the plan will fail. As a result, Duarte will continue to lack the downtown or a central "sense of place" that the community desires.

With the Town Center Concept Plan as the guiding framework, the Task Force identified a variety of tools and strategies for creating a Town Center in Duarte. The most important and immediate of those actions - the tools that are most likely to **catalyze development and jumpstart projects** during the first phase of implementation - include:

1. Form an On-Going Town Center Implementation Action Team
2. Initiate Changes to Zoning Codes to Allow for Mixed-Use Development
3. Create an Economic Development Strategy
4. Research and Promote City Sites for Mixed-Use Development
5. Invest in Public Improvements



The Implementation Action Team will act as the voice of the community while guiding Duarte's Town Center development.

## **I. FORM AN ON-GOING TOWN CENTER IMPLEMENTATION ACTION TEAM**

To capitalize on the current momentum and ensure successful implementation, key people must be "champions" for the Duarte Town Center Concept Plan. An on-going Implementation Action Team should be formed to advocate for strategies, programs and development efforts that support the Town Center Concept. To guide the rest of the action steps, the implementation team should form immediately. It is crucial that the action team begins their work at the beginning of the development process, since they will help set a timeframe for subsequent actions.

This team can be comprised of community members, civic officials, business people, neighborhood leaders and other individuals, including members of the Downtown Duarte Task Force. Working with the Town Center Concept Plan as a guide, the team should meet on a regular basis to spearhead completion of the Implementation Actions. It should address issues that arise and promote appropriate development and programs. The group should also meet with other organizations (Chamber of Commerce, neighborhood organizations, etc.) and be advocates at City Council meetings, town hall groups, and other community events to support the plan and its strategies. Action Team Members will also be responsible for regularly reviewing and updating the Concept Plan.

The Implementation Action Team will be an essential component of making the Duarte Town Center a reality, but the members should not have to work on their own. Team members should work with designated members of City staff from the Economic Development Office to promote city sites and build partnerships with developers. The Action Team should also consider working with planning consultants to help develop design guidelines, zoning regulations and economic strategies.

## 2. INITIATE CHANGES TO ZONING CODES TO ALLOW FOR MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

This strategy recommends altering Duarte's legal framework to make areas identified in the Town Center Concept Plan more attractive to private investment. While a comprehensive study should be conducted to determine current regulatory conditions, potential immediate changes include:

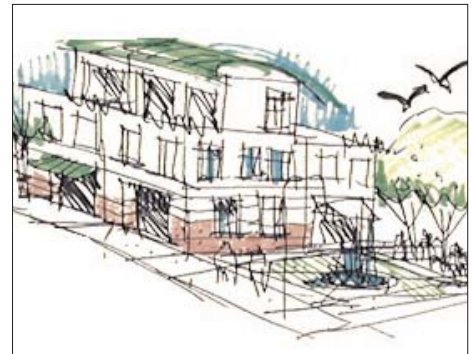
- Changes to codes to allow for higher density development
- Changes to codes to allow mixed-use development
- Create or designate a community development strategy that will actively seek out development of all types.

These modifications will help make higher-density, mixed-use development more profitable and feasible. This will foster the types of projects that will help create a vibrant and active environment in downtown.

Future regulatory changes for consideration include: development of a "program-level" Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the entire Town Center area, so that individual EIRs do not need to be completed for each new project (thus lowering development costs); expansion of redevelopment area tools, such as tax increment financing; and tax breaks and fee deferrals for developers.



Multi-story mixed-use buildings help create character and attract people to the Town Center, but the City has to have the proper zoning regulations in place before development can occur.



High density development can be aesthetically pleasing and attractive to developers if the regulatory environment is properly set.



An economic development strategy will help Duarte partner with developers and target specific sites for improvement.

### 3. CREATE AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

It is essential that the City, business organizations, and community groups fully understand the market dynamics for Duarte and the surrounding region. Creating an economic development strategy - based on a comprehensive economic analysis of the area - will help determine the types and amounts of investment that can be sustained in the Town Center.

An economic development strategy will establish an "envelope" of supportable development for Duarte's Town Center by:

- Identifying opportunities to expand and retain existing businesses;
- Developing new business opportunities (including potential anchor office and commercial tenants);
- Identifying marketing endeavors; and
- Outlining the conditions necessary to position and capitalize on specific opportunity sites.

This economic development strategy will directly complement existing businesses in the area and the physical framework and guiding strategies set forth by the Town Center Concept Plan.

#### 4. PROMOTE CITY SITES FOR MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

The City must identify and secure specific catalytic sites within the Town Center area for mixed-use development. The City already owns many such properties. These sites should include parcels that are relatively easy to obtain (particularly during early implementation phases) and provide the community with the opportunity to create a visibly successful project.

After identifying and securing such sites, the City should share economic data, site parameters, and other information with property owners and developers. The City should also release Requests for Proposals for development of key sites, and it should advertise and target specific opportunities to developers to attract projects. By actively seeking out developers, rather than waiting for someone to build on available land, the City can influence the design and timeline of the project. It can also make certain that the project promotes the overall tenets of the Town Center Concept Plan.



Unimproved property is the most affordable, making it a strategic place to begin development projects.



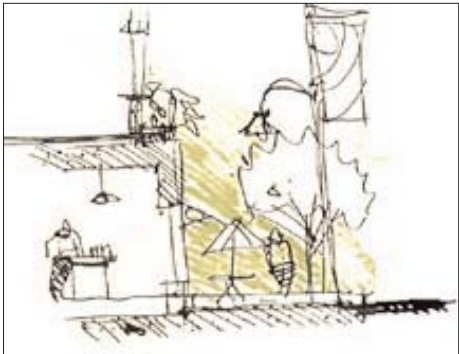
Decorative street furniture and lighting are elements that the City can invest in to draw developers to Duarte.

## 5. INVEST IN PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

If developers feel that Duarte is serious about creating a Town Center, they will be more likely to invest in the area. To stimulate private investment and set the stage for Town Center development, the City should invest immediately in the following public improvements:

- Façade, signage and entry feature improvements for existing businesses; and
- Street and sidewalk enhancements (including street trees, street furniture, trash receptacles, banners, pavement textures, and decorative lighting) in the Town Center area.

Additional key public improvements include construction of the new Public Library and development of public plazas or greens (perhaps implemented during a secondary phase), as identified in the plan.



Wide sidewalks and public plazas will enhance the street environment if the City invests in them.