

ULI

WATSONVILLE CALIFORNIA



WATSONVILLE, CALIFORNIA

An Evaluation of Development Potential and Downtown Redevelopment Strategies for the City of Watsonville

March 18–23, 1990
A Panel Advisory Service Report

ULI—the Urban Land Institute
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

ABOUT ULI— THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

ULI—the Urban Land Institute is a nonprofit education and research organization that fosters and encourages high standards of land use planning and development. To this end, the Institute sponsors a wide variety of education programs, conducts research, interprets current land use trends, and disseminates pertinent information.

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- Residential Development Councils
- Recreational Development Councils
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- National Policy Council
- Development Regulations Council
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This Panel Advisory Service report is intended to further the objectives of the Institute and to make authoritative information generally available to those seeking knowledge in the urban land use field.

David E. Stahl
Executive Vice President
ULI—the Urban Land Institute

ULI PROJECT STAFF

Jerry S. Church
Staff Vice President
Advisory Services

Michael A. Anikeeff
Project Director
Senior Associate

Michael L. Singer
Staff Vice President
Marketing and Public Affairs

Kimberley Todd
Panel Coordinator
Advisory Services

Nancy Stewart
Managing Editor

Ann Lenney
Copy Editor

Helene Y. Redmond
Manager, Computer-Assisted
Publishing

Lee Carlson
Artist

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PANEL MEMBERS AND STAFF

PANEL MEMBERS

Benjamin (Bud) T. Lake II
Panel Chairman
Vice President
Bedford Properties
Lafayette, California

John Buchanan
President
Buchanan Associates
Newport Beach, California

James C. DeVoy
Senior Vice President
The Shorenstein Company
San Francisco, California

Robert Gardner
Partner
Robert Charles Lesser &
Company
Beverly Hills, California

Peter Hassleman, FAIA
Architect and Urban Planner
Orinda, California

Linda Niebanck
Vice President
Lowe Associates, Inc.
Los Angeles, California

Paul O. Reimer
President
Reimer Associates
South San Francisco, California

Michael Stanton, AIA
President
Stanton Associates
San Francisco, California

ULI ON-SITE STAFF

Jerry S. Church
Staff Vice President
Advisory Services

Michael A. Anikeeff
Project Director
Senior Associate

Michael L. Singer
Staff Vice President
Marketing and Public Affairs

Kimberley Todd
Panel Coordinator
Advisory Services

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The panel particularly acknowledges the aid of Greg Rydquist, sponsor facilitator, for his untiring assistance before and during the assignment, and to his employer, Pacific Gas & Electric, for their extensive technical support.

Although it is difficult to acknowledge all of the individuals who have helped in this assignment, the panel would like to give special thanks to: John Radin, city manager; Maureen Owens, planning director; Charlene Shaffer, executive director of the chamber of commerce; and Fawn McLaughlin for her special assistance in preparing the comprehensive briefing book.

Special thanks also go to the panel's dinner hosts for their gracious hospitality.

Finally, the panel is grateful to the over 70 business leaders, community leaders, government officials, and citizens who provided a broad cross section of perspectives on the various issues and concerns of the community. Panel members hope that this report will be useful to the community as it develops and implements future plans.

The panel would like to acknowledge the following organizations and individuals who contributed their time, efforts, and resources, helping to make this study possible.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

City of Watsonville Earthquake Relief Fund
Granite Rock
Pajaro Dunes Rental Agency (Hare, Brewer & Kelley)
Pacific Gas & Electric Company
Wells Fargo Bank

BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS

Corrine's Bakery
Del Monte Cafe
Discovery Tours
Food and Nutrition Services
Great Western Bank
Maxx's Cafe
Michael's Bar (Michael Butier)
Michael's Catering (Tracy Gentry)
Miramar Restaurant
Pajaro Valley Bank
Sizzler Restaurant
Taylor's Office Supply
Watsonville Federal Savings and Loan
Watsonville Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Recovery Committee
Watsonville Blueprint
Zuniga's Restaurant

INDIVIDUALS

Jeanne Clark
Mike Flynn
Jane Hall
Hal Hyde
Marilyn Hyde
Jim Petroutsas
John and Clara Radin

*St. Patrick's Church after
the earthquake on Octo-
ber 17, 1989.*

FOREWORD



**WATSONVILLE'S LOCATION
IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA**

James Rouse, a leading developer and creator of the festival marketplace, has said, "The only legitimate purpose of the city is to provide for the life and growth of its people." Much earlier, Aristotle stated that "the purpose of the city is to make man happy and safe."

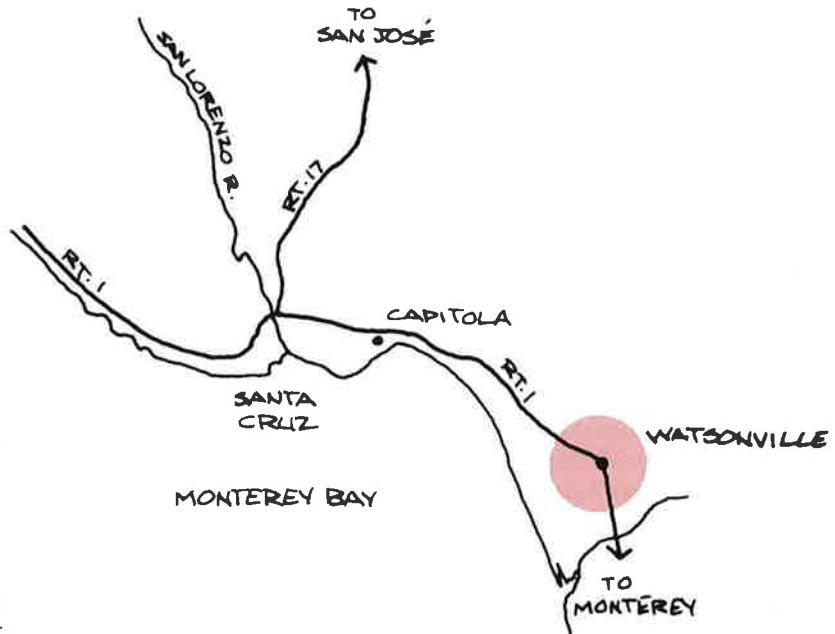
Watsonville is a rich agricultural community famous for its strawberries, apples, and cut flowers, and for its ethnic diversity. Over 60 percent of its population is Hispanic, with half of this Latino population concentrated in two census tracts in the downtown. Watsonville's downtown, like other downtowns in both large and small communities, has suffered a steady economic decline of retail sales. The October 17, 1989, earthquake aggravated this situation by requiring emergency disaster relief to sustain the basic fabric of the community. Only now is the community able to take action to rebuild.



The earthquake destroyed 850 dwelling units and 100 commercial and industrial buildings, required the demolition of 16 buildings, and caused over \$35 million in damage. More than 1,400 people were recorded as unemployed immediately following the earthquake. The total impact on downtown businesses and on surrounding lower-income housing stock, and the fiscal impact on the city through loss of sales tax and property tax revenues, have been severe. Pre-earthquake recognition of the need for economic development to revitalize the downtown took on a new importance following the quake. Recovery and rebuilding on the cleared sites are a critical current need.

The city of Watsonville, a community of over 30,000 people just 100 miles south of San Francisco, responded to the tragic event with a broad-based community effort. To ensure a rapid reconstruction and long-term revitalization of the downtown, the community created a public/private partnership to guide the rebuilding: the Downtown Recovery Committee. Members of the Downtown Recovery Committee were appointed by the city council and included the members of the economic development committee of the chamber of commerce, members of the city council and staff, downtown property owners, business owners, and representatives of other civic and nonprofit groups.

The Downtown Recovery Committee, whose commission was to guide the recovery effort, asked the Urban Land Institute to assemble an advisory panel to help plan the reconstruction and revitalization of the downtown study area. A seven-member panel composed of developers, planners, design professionals, and real estate economists, conducted an on-site analysis. The analysis included a comprehensive visual inspection of the downtown and the surrounding areas, plus interviews and discussions with over 70 community and business leaders and interested citizens.



WATSONVILLE IN RELATION TO OTHER SANTA CRUZ COUNTY LANDMARKS

After completing the analysis, the panel made a public presentation of its findings to the community and the media on Friday, March 23, 1990. The present document is the final report of the panel's findings and recommendations.

ULI and the panel members hope this report will provide Watsonville with a vision for its downtown and the guidance necessary to implement that vision. The success of this effort can only be achieved if the city establishes priorities, works together, and makes it happen!

THE PANEL'S ASSIGNMENT

The city of Watsonville, facing an unprecedented level of planning and redevelopment activity to recover from the earthquake, requested assistance from the Urban Land Institute. The Institute made a decision to take on the Watsonville assignment as a public service panel, hoping to create a body of knowledge about redevelopment issues and strategies that would come out of earthquake-damaged communities. The lessons learned could benefit all communities facing rebuilding after an earthquake or other natural disaster.

The Downtown Recovery Committee, speaking for the city, established some objectives to facilitate the planning process. The objectives adopted were the following:

- To sustain an economic viability for the downtown that will mean a healthy tax base.
- To encourage a speedy rebuilding process to replace the commercial space lost in the earthquake.
- To relocate in the downtown the anchor store that was demolished by the earthquake.
- To build safe, healthy, and affordable housing in the immediate downtown vicinity.

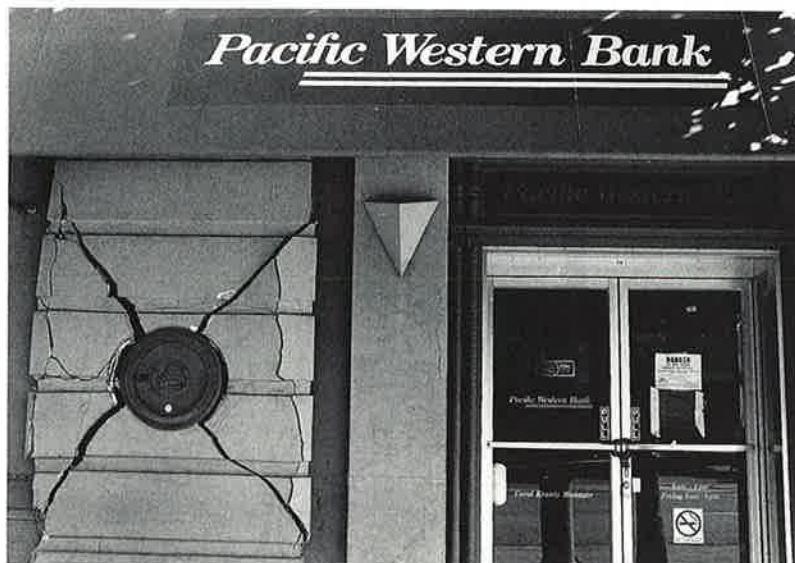
- To provide an aesthetically pleasing mix of land uses, reflecting the rich ethnic heritage and rural ambiance and appropriately meeting the community's needs to live, work, shop, and play in the downtown area.
- To create a downtown environment that promotes daytime and nighttime uses that meet the demands for commercial services, community meeting places, recreation, cultural activities, and housing.

The panel was given specific objectives for developing effective and aggressive strategies for the rebuilding and revitalization of the downtown study area, with particular emphasis on implementation. The questions involved were grouped to address issues in four general categories:

1) *Development Potential.*

Identify current and long-term development potential for the study area, listing the types of retail, office, cultural, housing, and civic activities that should be developed and the desired densities.

Lettunich Building on Main Street shows effects of earthquake.



Diane Varri

2) *Planning and Urban Design*. Examine existing and proposed land use planning and design concerns, suggesting a method or methods of integrating existing structures with new development, satisfying parking needs, mixing downtown uses appropriately, and identifying places for open spaces.

3) *Development and Marketing Strategies*. Identify marketing and development strategies, including financial plans and options.

4) *Implementation*. Indicate the changes that will be needed within the city, and the funding sources that could be used to accomplish the panel's recommendations.

In addressing the many issues under the four categories, the panel was asked to consider the opportunities and challenges the city is facing with these changes. For instance, suburban retail centers, such as the 41st Avenue Capitola Mall and the Crossroads Shopping Center on the north side of town, have been draining retail business from the downtown. Furthermore, the earthquake has placed a significant strain on city finances that requires an in-depth review of municipal financing approaches.



Public presentation of findings and recommendations. Panel members from left: John Buchanan, James C. DeVoy, Paul O. Reimer, Linda Niebanck, Robert Gardner, and Benjamin (Bud) T. Lake II (chairman).

However, the crisis has offered an opportunity to create a more unified and cohesive downtown that will strengthen Watsonville's economic vitality and its rich ethnic heritage. The city, through the ULI study, has been provided with a possible unified vision for downtown uses and design. Larger downtown parcels are currently available to implement downtown redevelopment in the 100, 200, and 300 blocks. Finally, the city, in examining its strengths and directing its replanning efforts, will be able to recognize its strong agricultural base and close proximity to major recreational and tourist centers.

Overall, the opportunities far outweigh the challenges and will lend strength to the city as it faces a renewed downtown revitalization effort.

The Chinese symbol for "change" is made up of two other symbols: one representing "crisis" and one meaning "opportunity." The crisis of the October 17 earthquake has helped bring into sharp perspective the need for change, and has opened up some new prospects.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following sections summarize the panel's findings, conclusions, and recommendations:

DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

- Downtown Watsonville has evolved into a specialized commercial district more like a neighborhood shopping center. A strong appeal should be made to the buying power of the Latinos who constitute more than 60 percent of the local area population.
- Ford's Department Store, or a similar department store, should be encouraged to rebuild in the 400 block of Main Street to anchor downtown retailing.
- The Post Office and the South County Courthouse/Health Clinic should be encouraged to relocate in the 200 block of Main Street to create a new civic center. Together with a City Hall, this regional civic center could serve a larger Watsonville and the southern part of Santa Cruz county.
- Housing in the downtown area should be a critical element in rebuilding the downtown core.
- Encroachment on the commercial district should be avoided and residential density should be intensified on the edges of downtown.

The Plaza fountain in the historic center of downtown.



Diane Yarni



Panel chairman Bud Lake and Mayor Todd McFarren discuss panel's findings.

PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN

In the major section of the report the panel provides architectural and urban design guidelines for development that will create an inviting and safe downtown. The guidelines include these elements:

- Streetscapes to make it more inviting for pedestrians.
- Parking layouts to ease circulation and satisfy retail customer and employee demands.
- A marketplace and community center at the Park Plaza, the town center.

DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND MARKETING STRATEGIES

- October 17, 1991, should be targeted as the date to complete the first phases of this program.
- Buildings with an historical character should be renovated and returned to the market as soon as possible.
- Ford's Department Store should be rebuilt on its original site downsized to current market demand.
- A multipurpose community center should be established on the Odd Fellows building site across from the Plaza.
- A weekend marketplace should be created in the street surrounding the Plaza to serve the local Hispanic culture and provide a cornerstone for a possible future tourist attraction.
- The Antique Aircraft Fly-In should be reconsidered as a major Watsonville tourist attraction.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Tax increment financing using leverage, equity participation, and ground leasing should be aggressively pursued.
- Sales tax revenue should be recaptured and used as leverage for debt purposes.
- Grants and loans and assessment districts can provide other sources of financing.
- The authority of the Redevelopment Agency should focus on downtown approvals with an advisory board appointed to provide direction to the agency and serve as a community sounding board.

Panel chairman Bud Lake (with name tag) gives interview to local press.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Panel members Michael Stanton, Linda Niebanck, James C. DeVoy, chairman Bud Lake, and Robert Gardner prepare for briefing by local government and business leaders.



DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Development success in Watsonville's downtown is linked to the general growth of the economy and the emerging growth trends. An overview of local and regional socioeconomic trends reveals the near-term environment for economic development.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS

POPULATION

Population projections prepared by AMBAG (the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments) show that the Monterey and Santa Cruz County region is expected to see a slight decline in its growth rate during the 1990s. Within Santa Cruz County, the

1989 population of 228,000 persons is forecast to grow at an annual rate of 1.9 percent, rather than the 2.1 percent of the last decade, reaching 260,900 persons by the year 2000. In absolute terms, the county's annual rate of increase during the 1990s will be 4,400 persons, versus 4,800 in the 1980s.

Watsonville's 1989 population was 29,100. AMBAG's projections indicate that the city will reach a buildout population of 33,630 persons by 1995. These forecasts reflect the buildout of the remaining developable residential lands within the city limits by 1995. However, the area outside the city but within the city's current sphere is also expected to grow. For the planning area, the 1990 population is estimated at 44,600, growing to 52,400 by 1995 and to 56,200 by 2000. In short, the planning area added some 1,100 persons a year during the 1980s, and this annual rate of increase is expected to rise slightly, to 1,200 persons, during the 1990s.



LOCAL ECONOMY

Santa Cruz County has an economic base driven by agribusiness, education, and tourism. Much of the population growth in the county has been generated by the growth of adjoining Santa Clara County. Many residents, particularly those in the northern urban areas of the county, commute to the high-technology jobs located in and near San Jose.

Watsonville's economic base is more limited than that of the county. Agribusiness is clearly the dominant industry. However, this industry is changing as food processing and packaging operations are facing stiffer competition from lower-cost producers in Mexico and other Latin American countries. It appears that job levels in the agribusiness industry have peaked. Possibly, with further mechanization, job levels could even decline.

On the other hand, local economic growth will be favorably affected by the increasing number of commuters who will choose to buy a relatively affordable home in Watsonville and drive 45 to 60 minutes to their jobs in the San Jose area. As the outlying regions of the Bay Area continue to grow, formerly independent cities like Watsonville will fall within the metropolitan region's "job commute shed."

Over time, the impact of this change will be seen in the differing retailing and lifestyle demands these new households will bring. An additional by-product of this change should be an increase in the number of service-oriented jobs within the city.

Because of the agribusiness influence in Watsonville, average per capita incomes historically have been lower than comparable figures for the county. In 1989, per capita income was \$13,500, which is about three-fourths of the county average.

MARKET ANALYSIS

Downtown Watsonville has evolved into a specialized commercial district similar to other downtowns in both large and small cities across the United States. This pattern is clear. Older downtowns were once the focal points of their communities, providing and centralizing the entire range of commercial and public goods and services. However, with decentralization, stimulated by the automobile and the desire for single-family housing and cheaper land, suburban development has created its own mass and scale. This trend, in turn, has attracted both local and regional-serving retail and jobs to the suburbs, which now, in effect, compete with the older downtown functions.

Successful downtowns, realizing the suburban competitive influence, have become specialized within a regional context. Similarly, to succeed, Watsonville's downtown will have to understand its role, as well as the private and public sector niches it can occupy.



RETAIL

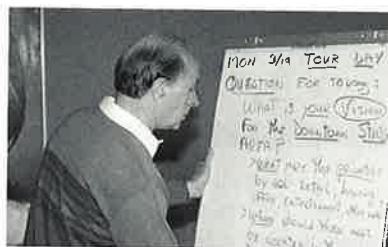
Before the earthquake, downtown Watsonville was already moving in a defined direction. Briefly, downtown retailing was increasingly oriented toward the growing Latino population, which represents 60 percent of the downtown population. The downtown retailing base has shifted to meet this group's demand for commercial goods and services.

Retailing in Watsonville encompasses both community- and local-serving retail activities. Regional retailing, in the form of regional shopping centers, is focused at the middle-income-oriented Capitola Mall. Among local retailers, K-Mart probably wields the strongest regional pull. Neighborhood shopping centers anchored by a supermarket and drugstore exist along Freedom Boulevard and Green Valley Road. These centers feature chain stores and offer abundant free parking.

Historically, the downtown has been the premier shopping location, but it has lost its retailing dominance in recent years. Factors contributing to this decline include the suburbanization of local-serving retail, the availability of free and convenient parking in the outlying areas, and the inability of downtown merchants to inventory and sell merchandise lines appealing to all of the city's market segments. The decline of downtown retailing is evidenced by the lower lease rates observed in this area, compared with those of the suburban centers. Downtown's monthly lease rates mostly vary from \$0.50 to \$0.60 per square foot, as opposed to the range of \$1.10 to \$1.30 in the suburban or outlying shopping centers. Except for a few stores like Ford's Department Store and restaurants like Jalisco's, the primary market for downtown retail goods and services is now the Latino population. Such segmentation of the downtown retailing role follows a general pattern seen throughout the country.

Mayor Todd McFarren briefs panel members.

Bud Lake makes assignments for tour day.



Chamber of Commerce president Tony Campos discusses implications of earthquake damage on downtown business.

This market segmentation should be perceived as providing a development opportunity. With Latinos composing over 60 percent of the local area population, Hispanic buying power needs to be understood and captured by retailers aggressively seeking this market. The downtown is in an excellent position to capture the growing Latino demand.

The need to appeal to the non-Latino market is essential to bringing this market segment to the downtown. A key factor in attracting non-Latinos will be the rebuilding of Ford's Department Store. Without Ford's commitment to downtown, this retail area will become further isolated.

An analysis of the retail market suggests that the trade area population for Watsonville's retail establishments is probably between 60,000 and 80,000. But a comparison with the level of taxable retail sales supported in the city shows a substantial retail sales leakage among this trade area population. The implications of this finding are twofold: 1) that an opportunity exists to capture more of this locally generated demand; and 2) that local buying power should further increase as a result of the projected population rises. In this context, the downtown stands to benefit from a growing Latino population and its spending power. The challenge will be to capture that portion of the non-Latino market that has deserted the downtown market because of inadequate depths of merchandise and concerns for parking and safety.

The earthquake effectively reduced the downtown retail base, estimated at roughly 400,000 square feet, by almost one-half. Of the 185,000 square feet of retail demolished, Ford's represented about 120,000 square feet, or two-thirds. The balance, about 65,000 square feet, comprised mostly restaurants and clothing stores. It should be pointed out that many of the small retail shops had store depths of 150 feet, a figure far in excess of contemporary merchandising requirements, which typically call for 60 to 80 feet.



In the short term, that is, in the next three to five years, retail demand in the downtown should prove adequate to justify at least 50,000 to 100,000 square feet of new space, in addition to a rebuilt Ford's. Store management indicates that a new Ford's would contain about 80,000 square feet. The primary market audience will be the Latino population, estimated at 30,000 persons within a 10- to 15-mile radius. The secondary market will be the non-Latino market, which will be attracted to the revitalized downtown by a rebuilt Ford's, the intriguing new shopping district to be created in the downtown, and the town center environment envisioned by the land use plan set forth in this report. The market orientation of the retail shops should reflect the convenience and basic comparison-goods needs of the primary market audience. These store types should include: food (small grocery and bakery); apparel (women's and children's); specialty (jewelry, music, books, and fabrics); and eating and drinking (fast food and a greater variety of restaurants).

Consideration should be given to developing parking that can be free for the first three hours, to compete with the suburban centers. This parking should be conveniently located and secure. Parking is critical to attracting non-Latinos to the downtown. Because of the costs of rebuilding the downtown retail base, monthly rents will likely climb, probably into the \$0.85-to-\$1.00-per-square-foot range.

CIVIC CENTER

Civic life in Watsonville is focused on City Hall, the Post Office, and the Public Library buildings clustered within one, two, or three blocks of the Plaza. Old and new residents alike perceive downtown Watsonville and these public and government facilities as the civic center of Watsonville. The tradition and history of the community are embodied in the functions of these buildings. One of the main reasons for coming downtown, particularly among non-Latinos, is to conduct business at these locations. A typical route may take a citizen from his or her place of employment to a bank in the financial and services district, to the Post Office, and to City Hall, before ending at a favorite restaurant or on the Plaza to meet friends and have a cup of coffee.



If one of the city's goals is to enhance the civic life of the Watsonville community for all its residents, then the cleared areas in the 200 block of Main Street offer an unparalleled opportunity to cluster the public buildings and services in the central area of town, within easy walking distance of the Plaza and retail activities. Key public uses that should be relocated to this block, to create a consolidated civic core for Watsonville, are the Post Office and the South County Court House and Health Clinic.

The first key to establishing this center has already been approved by the city of Watsonville: the relocation of the Post Office from its current site fronting on the Plaza to the 200 block of Main Street, facing City Hall. The second key is the relocation of the county court functions and health clinic from their present site on Freedom Boulevard to the 200 block of Main Street, next to the Post Office and across the street from City Hall.

Greg Rydquist, sponsor facilitator, and Maureen Owens, city planning director, on panel tour day.



Panel member Paul O. Reimer and John Radin, city manager, tour downtown area.

At its present site, the county services occupy five buildings, and while some expansion may be possible at that location, consolidation of the several functions within new buildings in the downtown would be more efficient. According to preliminary estimates from a recent evaluation of county facilities, a deficit of about 200 to 2,500 square feet exists at the present location. Through the next five years, a need will arise to develop a total of roughly 48,000 to 50,000 square feet, an increase of 7,000 to 9,000 over the current use (including off-site space). The site on Main Street would accommodate these uses in a three-story structure with on-site parking.

James DeVoy and John Buchanan interview local residents.

John Radin, city manager, on tour of downtown.



The panel believes that a new civic center built on two sides of the 200 block of Main Street would substantially reinforce downtown Watsonville's position as a regional civic hub serving the entire South County population, and would carry forward the traditions of local public service and government.

HOUSING

Approximately 1,800 dwelling units exist in downtown Watsonville. About 60 percent are single-family units and 40 percent multifamily units. Most of the housing is 50 years old or older, originally built as small one-story houses on small lots or large Victorian houses on large lots within walking distance from downtown. Many of these dwellings are now occupied by large or multiple-family households. Some have been converted into multiple or shared units.

The city of Watsonville has appointed a housing task force to consider housing needs and to recommend programs to provide affordable housing in general and housing for low-income households in particular. As of this writing, the task force expected to prepare a draft report by April 1, 1990. In its research to date, it has estimated total building potential for housing in the city at 2,585 units, including infill parcels currently zoned for residential use. The task force assumes that all needs for market-rate housing (serving households with 80 percent of the median income or greater) will be met through the usual development proposals. It identifies a shortfall in low-income housing of approximately 600 units to the year 1993, and indicates that as many as 2,600 low-income units may be required to achieve safe, sound housing conditions and to relieve overcrowding. Apparently, the demand for all housing, and especially for low-income housing, in Watsonville outstrips the capacity of available land, as well as the ability of the city to produce residential units. (Historically, the annual rate of production has ranged from 56 units in 1982 to 347 units in 1984.)



The panel believes that development of housing will be a meaningful factor in rebuilding downtown Watsonville. Downtown Watsonville offers special housing opportunities, and can provide a range of housing types and sizes for a cross section of the population. These opportunities include units over ground-floor retail or office uses, units on vacant infill parcels now zoned commercial, and units on residential parcels underused by current housing development patterns. Downtown housing can provide a variety of opportunities for working households and both single-person and small-family households.

Approximately 27 to 35 units could be developed over ground-floor or retail uses in the downtown business district. There are, historically and currently, a number of examples of this type of mixed use, namely, the Resetar Hotel, the Jefsen Building, and the Taylor office building. The panel believes that developing and managing single-room-occupancy units over retail space may prove the easiest course.

Several vacant, available infill sites between Riverside Drive and the Pajaro River could be developed with housing to establish a strong residential character for the entire downtown. Also, several sites just outside the downtown, in what is known as the industrial area, may become available for housing development. While these sites lie outside the purview of this study, if such parcels could be developed in housing and properly buffered from industry, they would help to create a solid edge for the residential area. As other infill sites become available in locations throughout the downtown, they too should be considered for housing. Within the downtown area, approximately 127 to 156 units could be developed on infill sites.

In addition to the mixed-use housing opportunities and the infill sites, the "edges" of the downtown, where the residential areas begin, should be protected from commercial encroachment and intensified. All foreseeable demand for retail and similar uses can be accommodated in the Main Street vicinity, but as long as commercial zoning extends into the fringes, conversions from residential to commercial use will be sought by property owners. The city should discourage and prevent this kind of conversion. New development standards can encourage higher density that is nonetheless compatible with single-story housing; allow for courtyard-type housing; modify parking standards to reduce covered parking requirements; and provide for flexible, indented supplemental parking on the streets. All these measures can facilitate housing to meet affordable housing needs. Reuse areas could provide some 204 to 296 (net) new units in the downtown.

CULTURAL DISTRICT

Today, as it has been since 1860, the Plaza is the focal point for community gatherings. Since so much of the downtown's history was destroyed with the old buildings in the earthquake, the Plaza and its surroundings have gained even greater importance. In conjunction with the Fox Theater, the old Post Office building, a new multipurpose community building, a renovated Plaza Theater, and a new weekend marketplace, the Plaza area in downtown Watsonville would become an important regional cultural center.

Through the last several years, the Fox Theater has been used for performances by the county symphony, dance groups, high school groups, and other performing arts groups, as well as operating as a Spanish-language movie house. Efforts have been made to acquire and/or use the Fox Theater as a permanent public facility. The approximately 39,000-square-foot theater was severely damaged in the quake; estimates to repair the building range up to \$500,000. The panel believes that this important cultural center should continue to serve multiple groups, both as a movie house and as a performance space. If the present owners and those interested in ensuring its future as a performance space can achieve a meeting of the minds and find adequate financing for repairs, the Fox could be operated by a nonprofit group, as it is now operated, and enhance its position as a cultural amenity for Watsonville and the region.



Linda Niebanck reviews last minute changes.

The old Post Office building contains roughly 10,000 square feet on the first floor and 2,000 square feet on the second floor. When the Post Office relocates to Main Street, the building will be available for sale or lease. Cabrillo College's South County program, currently located in the La Manzana complex in the 500 block of Main Street, will, through the next five years, need additional classroom and administrative space totaling 6,000 to 8,000 square feet. Already, at the current location, parking is cramped. Ideally, Cabrillo College could consider relocating to the old Post Office building, visible from the Plaza and served by easily available parking behind the building and nearby. Because the college would not occupy the entire building, space would be available for other, compatible uses—a bookstore, nonprofit organizations, and so on. Alternatives to Cabrillo College might include art galleries and other cultural uses.

Robert Gardner analyzing market data.

The Odd Fellows building, erected in 1893, was a distinctive two-story structure that stood on the northwest corner of Union Street and Beach Street, at the northeast corner of the Plaza. Although a historical treasure has been lost, an opportunity has been created to develop a multi-purpose community center, filling an array of community needs for assembly, entertainment, and recreational space. The panel proposes a two-story building designed to recapture some of the "feel" of the destroyed Odd Fellows building. The panel recognizes that this enterprise will require close cooperation among the current landowners and other interested parties, but it believes that sufficient need exists for meeting rooms, a recreation hall, display space, and banquet facilities. The panel envisages a two-story building of approximately 20,000 square feet, fronting on the Plaza, with a grand pedestrian walkway running through to the parking lot behind the Lettunich Building and the Mansion House. The pedestrian access should be designed as a public art and display space, perhaps with a permanent exhibition commemorating the 1989 earthquake and its place in Watsonville history.

The ULI team strongly recommends that a portion of the proposed community center, facing the rear of the building, be dedicated to youth activities, and that consideration be given to providing a basketball short court next to the parking lot for after-hours and weekend use. This area could be linked through its building graphics to the Pajaro Showplace Theater.

The Plaza Movie Theater should be extensively renovated and made inviting to young people and to moviegoers of all ages. Additional consideration should be given to converting the building next to the Pajaro Showplace Theater from its present use (a radiator repair shop) into a youth-oriented attraction.

OFFICES

Watsonville does not have a defined and organized commercial office market. The total supply of commercial office space is in the 100,000-to-150,000-square-foot range. The space, geographically dispersed throughout the city, is located in building increments of 10,000 to 20,000 square feet. The Lettunich Building, on Main Street in the downtown, is the largest building, with 38,000 square feet. While reliable statistics are unavailable, vacancy is estimated in the 30 to 50 percent range on a citywide basis. Monthly rental rates throughout the city fall between \$0.65 and \$0.85 per square foot. Office absorption in individual buildings is quite slow by urban standards. The Lettunich Building is reported to have taken approximately 10 years to absorb.



Given the city's office market outlook, office absorption in the downtown should not be expected to be a "driving" activity. Downtown's annual office absorption is expected to range from 1,000 to 5,000 square feet in the short term.

TOURISM

Watsonville is not an established tourist location, compared with other localities in the Monterey/Santa Cruz County region that have capitalized on their natural resources. Accordingly, if tourism is to become a visible industry in Watsonville, considerable energy, planning, and seed money will be needed to create an event with tourist appeal.

If successfully undertaken and staged in the downtown, these events could lead to the generation of demand for overnight lodgings. While this would be encouraging from the hotels' perspective, it is important to note that the success of a downtown hotel will depend on its year-round business base and not on a periodic festival.

SUMMARY OF
DEVELOPMENT
POTENTIAL

Several themes emerge from the preceding analysis of development potential. These themes primarily involve the following elements:

- Arrangement of downtown land uses into functional districts. These districts should include:
 - The community services district, centered around St. Patrick's Church at the northern entrance to the downtown and extending eastward to Union and Brennan Streets;
 - The financial and services district, along Main Street south from St. Patrick's to Lake Street;
 - The retail district, encompassing the 400 and 300 blocks of Main Street and extending into the parallel streets to the west and east;
 - The cultural district, focused on the Plaza and including the Fox Theater, the old Post Office, a proposed new multipurpose community center, the Public Library, and the Pajaro Showplace Theater;
 - The civic center, composed of City Hall, the new Post Office, and the proposed new South County Court House and Health Clinic; and
 - The residential district, centering on the 100 block of Main Street, containing infill housing and convenience shopping, extending to the Pajaro River, and surrounding the downtown on the east and west.
- Acknowledgment that, at this time, the primary market for downtown retailing is the Latino community in Watsonville and the surrounding region. The proposed retail development is designed to provide convenience retail, fundamental comparison goods, and restaurants for this clientele.
- Recognition that the complete success of downtown retailing will depend on the attraction of all community populations to the downtown. These groups will be attracted to the downtown, depending on: the reestablishment of Ford's, the generation of a visually exciting retail shopping district, the concentration of government services, and the creation of a cultural town center. If these uses can be established, a secure environment will result, a setting in which all residents of Watsonville will feel safe and welcome.



PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN

LAND USE PATTERN

The first output of the panel's design analysis in Watsonville was a graphic analysis of the observed land uses in and around the boundaries of the downtown study area, as designated by the sponsor. This drawing, developed early in the assignment, after driving and walking tours of the downtown, was constantly refined to reflect new information as the panel's understanding of Watsonville grew. It is a summation of land use, not by zoning designation but by purpose, and is included in this report as Figure 1. These districts include: the community services, financial, retail, cultural, civic center, and residential districts.

This graphic analysis provides a geographic framework into which land uses can be placed: past land use commitments, actual postearthquake uses, and, as discussed in the previous section, additional future allocations of specific land uses. Also depicted are the discerned anchors that currently hold the downtown together and the envisioned opportunities that could be explored and/or capitalized on to add future breadth to the plan.

The major conclusion from the land use analysis was that the chaotic pattern of building survival or destruction after the earthquake had in no way blurred potential definition of a comprehensive land use pattern for downtown Watsonville.

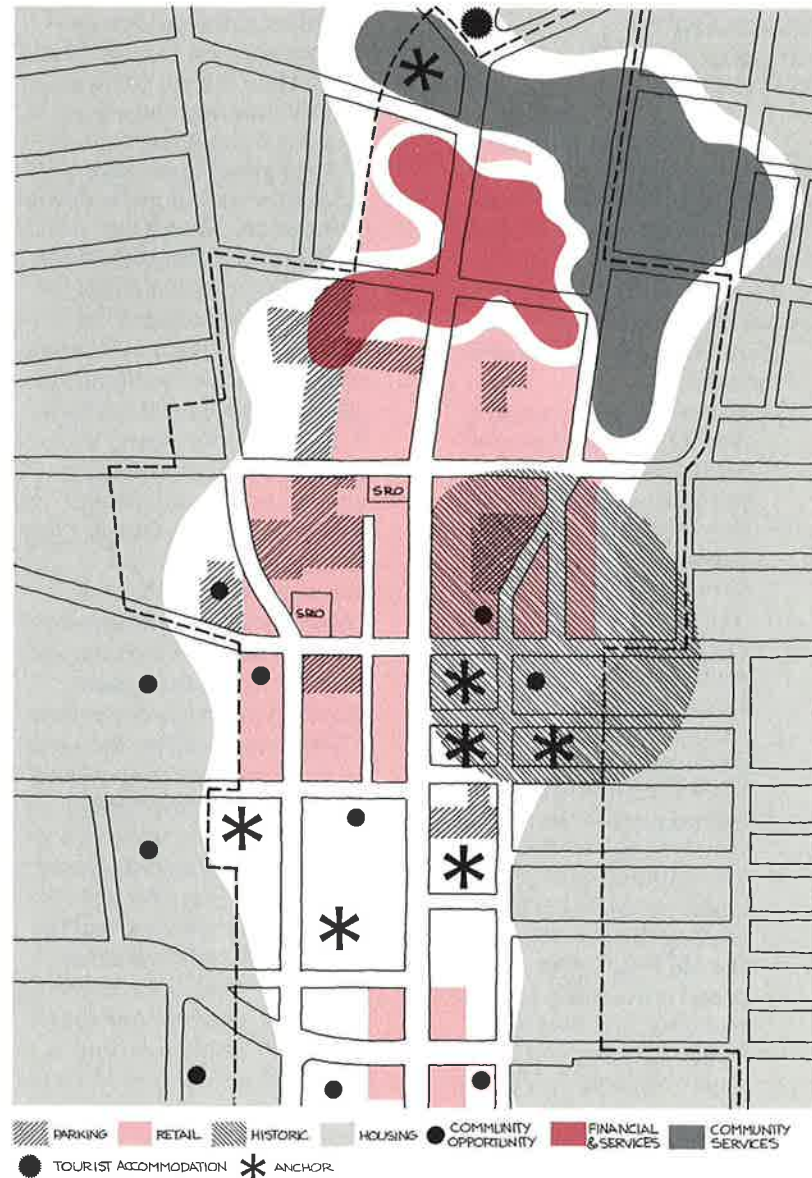


Figure 1. CONCEPTUAL PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN

INFRASTRUCTURE

Next, the panel focused its attention on the question of infrastructure's adequacy to serve the identified land use pattern in each area, in terms of current and possible future density. Panel members found assurance as to the adequacy and proper location of virtually all underground utilities—water, sewer, and gas—assuming, of course, completion of the planned rehabilitations to repair earthquake damage.

The one system that is not adequately in place is storm drainage. This deficiency is not earthquake-related; it is understood by city staff, and it can be sequentially solved.


Stormwater evacuation and reduction of flooding potential go hand-in-hand in any area. For downtown Watsonville, 30- to 100-year flood levels of the Pajaro River could bring about upstream overbanking and tributary flooding to the extent that flood waters ranging from negligible to three or four feet in depth would cover downtown surfaces generally south and east of Fifth Street. The solution to this problem will be the completion of the levee system and channel improvements along the Pajaro River and its immediate tributaries upstream of Watsonville to the 100-year level of protection. Until such physical improvements are in place, individual building pads in the flood-prone area must simply be raised to an elevation above the FEMA flood level. The cost of satisfying this requirement would not be prohibitive.

In addition, the immediate stormwater runoff toward the Pajaro River from rain falling on the city itself tends to concentrate at the foot of downtown. While pumped discharge of stormwater is now handled by city facilities at the foot of both Union and Rodriguez Streets, no such facility exists below Main Street. This deficiency will have to be addressed as the rebuilding of downtown proceeds. Clearly, such protection can and should be funded as part of the ongoing redevelopment program.

TRAFFIC CIRCULATION

Earthquakes disturb traffic patterns. Downtown Watsonville was immediately blighted, not only by the structural collapses of buildings, but also by the addition of Coastal Highway traffic that could no longer bypass the city. After five months, a return to something approaching traffic normalcy has occurred on Main Street. The effect is a return to yesteryear's traffic figures, which reflect a smaller downtown hub for Watsonville.

In the panel's view, spending valuable local energy on resolving the ultimate alignment of State Highways 152 and 129 is not now necessary. For now, it appears much more important to capitalize on the adage: "All roads lead to Watsonville." The trick is to accommodate the traffic once it is there.



That accommodation will lend itself to a straightforward physical improvement and traffic enforcement response. Main Street remains as State 152 to East Beach Street, while the one-way couplet of East Beach Street and East Lake Avenue remains as Highway 152 to the north. Highway 129 remains on its current Riverside Drive alignment through the study area. No connection of the two routes is made within Watsonville. The panel's position is driven by two realities: First, changing a state route will be expensive. In the panel's view, those dollars would better be spent on other earthquake-related rehabilitation programs. Second, a free-flowing, four-lane configuration on Main Street with two- and four-lane, north/south traffic on Union and Rodriguez Streets will best serve downtown for now and the immediate future. A downtown bypass for State Highway 152 via Airport Boulevard and Holohan Road makes sense in the future; a 110-foot-to-130-foot right-of-way should be preserved, but implementation could be delayed until the next decade.

Main Street's urban design parameters should provide generous left-turn pockets for all intersections from Front Street to Freedom Boulevard. The prototype intersection configuration is that at Main and Lake Streets. The partial loss of parallel parking at intersections on Main Street would be mitigated by the off-street parking proposal discussed in the following section. A part of this traffic improvement cost could be covered by CALTRANS because "throughput" enhancement is provided on an *existing* state route.

The truck traffic on Main Street should be curtailed. Enforcement of a four-ton maximum for trucks south of Beach Street needs only a prioritization with the city's police department. Such enforcement would contribute a virtually truck-free street environment for the 100, 200, and 300 blocks of Main Street, and diminish the impact on the 400 through 700 blocks by forcing a circuitous route on any trucker with a destination west of Rodriguez Street or south into Monterey County.

URBAN DESIGN PLAN

With land use, infrastructure, and circulation defined, subsequent steps can be taken toward a downtown design plan. Although there is concern that enforcement of urban design concepts may interfere with the immediate processing of rehabilitation plans, a modest set of design guidelines could immediately provide a significant advantage to both public and private interests. At a minimum, design guidelines are the best communication tool any city council possesses in letting all private developers know, uniformly and unequivocally, what the council is prepared to accept. (This across-the-board application will hold true only if those guidelines, once published, are not arbitrarily altered on a case-by-case basis by that same council.) Most important is the vision of a future downtown Watsonville that is better than it was in the past. The panel has borne appropriate recommendations in mind as guidelines.



Panel member Peter Hassleman's rendering of a revitalized Main Street.

GOALS

The goals of the panel's proposed Urban Design Plan are:

- to impart a sense of place, of a destination fulfilled, and of a pleasant experience enjoyed;
- to celebrate the city's ethnic diversity;
- to match form and function with the realizable downtown environment that can feasibly be sustained by internally generated revenue sources; and
- to create documents that are applicable, consistently interpreted, and beneficially applied.

ELEMENTS

The panel's recommendations for the future of downtown are embodied in the Urban Design Plan, shown in Figure 2. Realizing that features of the plan vary widely in the scale of improvements and in the difficulty of or time necessary for implementation, the panel does not present these recommendations on an all-or-nothing basis; instead, the suggestions are intended as rallying points. At the same time, the design plan offers overall goals, conceptual clarity, and execution discipline, all of which are essential to the visual attractiveness and functionality of a renewed downtown.

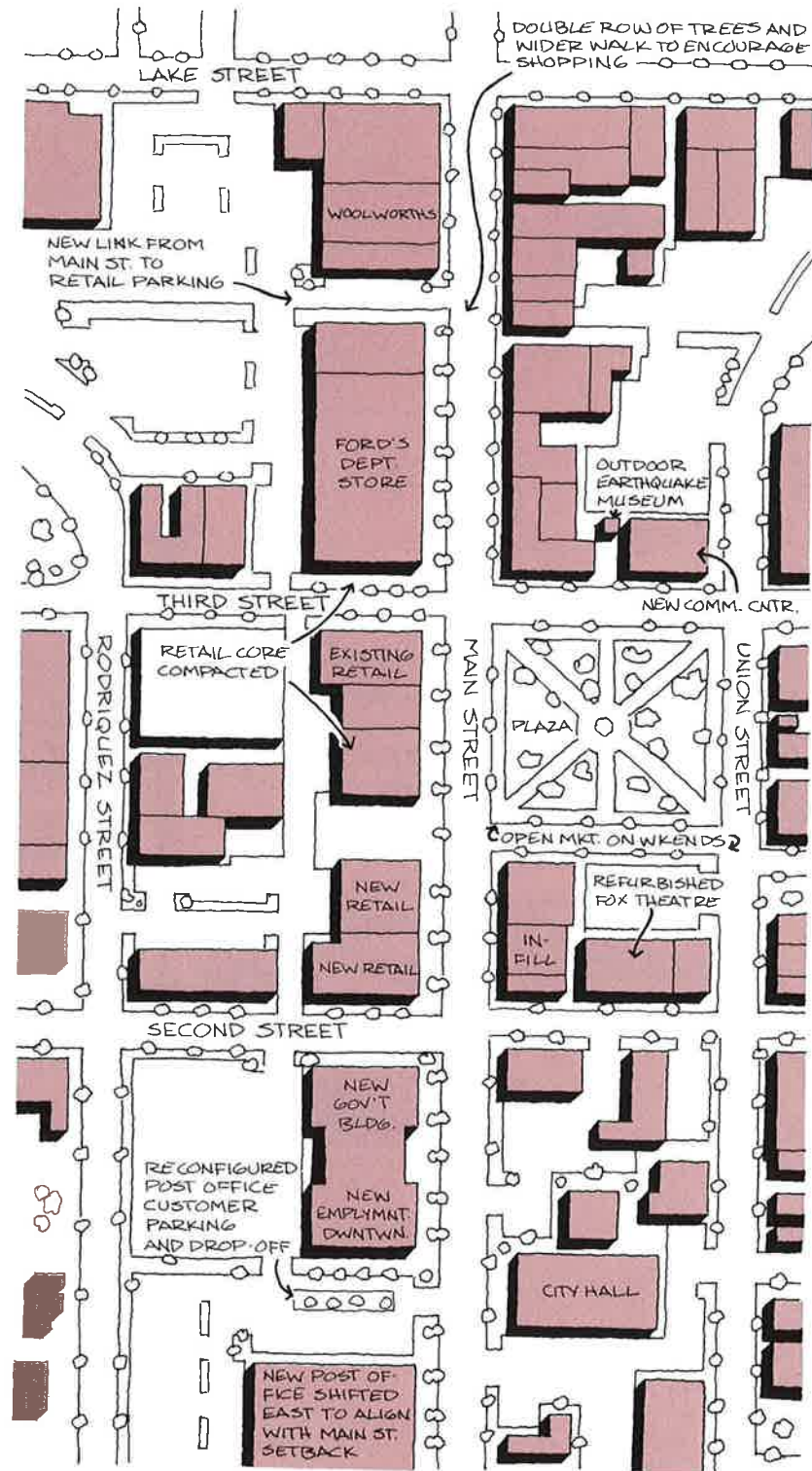


Figure 2. URBAN DESIGN PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DESIGN PLAN

Several other studies focusing on Watsonville's downtown have served the panel as important resources in its efforts. These studies have included the *Downtown Revitalization Program* (1974), the *Downtown Redevelopment Project* (1978 and 1982), and *Downtown Watsonville: Economic Potential* (1979). Clearly, the Urban Design Plan that the panel now brings to Watsonville embodies many ideas previously advanced.

The panel believes it must put forward five basic observations. First, the deteriorating downtown conditions were visible and appropriately studied long before October 17, 1989. Second, steps taken before the earthquake were not appropriate or sufficient to halt downtown decline. Third, economic, marketing, and merchandising trends reflecting growing Latino buying power were evident in the downtown throughout the 1980s. Fourth, the sudden, dramatic, and universally felt impact of the earthquake has brought immediate necessity and communitywide resolve to bear on repairing both visible damage and longer-term blight in downtown Watsonville. And fifth, it is vital that real progress toward downtown rehabilitation become increasingly evident in the short term.



Michael Stanton briefs panel on design concepts.

The actions that have already removed the danger of structural collapse, freeing the streets and sidewalks of downtown from obstruction, must be continued, toward the interior cleanup and interim civic use of unoccupied ground-floor spaces. The hastily placed plywood exteriors that cover damaged building fronts on Main Street should soon be replaced with closures of a higher aesthetic standard. These might well incorporate street art from local schools, as the schools' contribution to downtown rebuilding. Finally, the big and highly visible rebuilding projects—to save St. Patrick's Church, to come out of the ground with construction on the previously cleared 200 block, to reconstitute and rebuild the 300 block, to rebuild the Ford's Department Store anchor in the 400 block, and to resolve the problematic fate of such landmarks as the Porter Building, Fox Theater, and Jefsen Building—must all take immediate priority.

The panel is well aware that these major projects, along with parking improvements, streetscape and parking area beautification and lighting, downtown street widening, and open space acquisition, are expensive. From both the public and private sides, the quest for funding must be intensified, and the processing time reduced through all appropriate political means. Watsonville, if the panel's energy and resolve can possibly prevail, will not share the fate of another damaged city in California, where a monument to disaster, rather than a vital and functioning downtown, still remains six years after the cataclysmic event. In that city, where more than 60 businesses once functioned, fewer than 10 survived the 1983 quake. And even today, "fewer than 10" remains the level of business vitality there. Watsonville does not have to look very far to find a striking example of why cooperation, joint action, and civil commitment are absolutely essential at this critical time.

St. Patrick's Church, before the earthquake, defines the northern entry into Watsonville.

ANCHORS

The preceding graphic land use analysis depicts many of the "anchors" that hold downtown together, but several new anchors should be added, according to the panel's Urban Design Plan:

1) At the northern end of downtown, where Main Street intersects with Freedom Boulevard, the panel supports the saving of St. Patrick's Church. The magnificent church to the right of the Main Street entry to downtown has provided symbolism for Watsonville for past generations.

Yet at this entry point for visitors, the first impression of downtown Watsonville is now a view of a drive-in fast-food stand. The panel fully appreciates the economics of fast food, and has nothing but respect for the entrepreneur who found such a visible site for his enterprise. It is time, however, to find a better public image for the front door to downtown. The panel recommends a public rose garden for the east side of Main Street, to balance the strength of St. Patrick's on the west. A rose garden would not only add an attractive design element, but also would showcase an important local industry.



Diane Varni

Public acquisition of the corner parcel at Main and Freedom Boulevard could be justified in part by a gain of turning-lane capacity on these heavily traveled streets. However, the most rewarding justification would be to create, on the drive-in site, a civic rose garden welcoming visitors to Watsonville, linking the city with the floral industry of Pajaro Valley, revealing Notre Dame School, and providing a point of interest and activity for Watsonville's senior citizens, many of whom are already attached to the community service activities in the northeastern quadrant of downtown.

The panel identifies this particular anchor to show how the image of Watsonville might be changed for the better. In addition, this site is one to which foundation, association, and/or preservation funds could be targeted, when available.

2) As discussed in other sections of this report, the panel accepts the new Post Office site (although not the completed Post Office plan) on the 200 block of Main Street. The city has already transferred title for the land in the 200 block to an autonomous federal agency.

Consequently, the panel's Urban Design Plan sees the new Post Office site as an anchor between Main and Rodriguez Streets in downtown. It can be an early sign of new construction, and the importance of that symbolism cannot be discounted. The panel would reinforce the civic center nature of the 200 block. The South County Court House and Health Clinic should be encouraged to relocate to the remainder of the 200 block. The increased number of downtown employers would create an added retail stimulant.

More can be gained from a 200 block that provides a permanent source of customers to patronize businesses all along Main Street than from retail space competing for a limited number of customers. There is a more-than-adequate supply of first-floor retail space, existing or planned for reconstruction, within the Urban Design Plan to meet any of the projected needs. The 200 block retail buildout is at best an unnecessary land use commitment, and at worst a new threat to business opportunity along the rest of Main Street.

View of East Broad Street nine days after the earthquake.



Peter Hassleman's rendering of the recommended new community center on East Broad Street. The center could replace the Odd Fellows building and other important buildings destroyed in October 1989.



3) An exciting new multipurpose building, along with an exterior Earthquake Memory Park, is suggested as a replacement anchor for the Odd Fellows building that once helped frame the downtown Plaza. Designed to fill a broad range of civic needs for meeting and recreation facilities, this new facility could do much to respond to youth and outreach programs sponsored by various groups. The dramatic rebuilding opportunity, with the replaced clock tower from the Odd Fellows building, is shown in the architectural sketch on this page.

In addition, a conversion of building use in the vicinity of the Pajaro Theater can add to the activity responses for youth at the existing entertainment node at Union Street and East Lake Avenue.

4) The future transit center, a promised but much-delayed anchor, is already sited on the west side of Rodriguez Street at West Lake Avenue. With property already acquired and construction imminent in the 200 block, the ad hoc transit center now operating on Rodriguez Street at the new Post Office site could soon be displaced. It is time for the city to make a formal request that funds for the transit center be included in the next transit district budget.

5) The weekend marketplace is a much-sought-after anchor activity and is initiated, accommodated, and expanded in the panel's Urban Design Plan. The weekend marketplace should be located on a closed-off Peck Street between Main and Union Streets, adjacent to the Plaza. Once established and successful, the activity should be extended into the 300 block through the panel's suggested pedestrian accessway directly across Main Street from existing Peck Street. The accompanying architectural sketch shows the fascinating possibilities. The potential for weekend street stalls can be accommodated initially without capital construction cost. In addition, maintenance costs would be low, and cleanup could occur via street sweeper on Monday mornings, before the street returns to its normal duties.



Watsonville marketplace rendering by Peter Hassleman shows how the panel envisions new anchor activity for the downtown.

6) Parking represents a vital provision in the Urban Design Plan because downtown retail activities must have parking to compete with suburban shopping centers. Although more-than-adequate parking exists for today's level of activity in downtown, planning is necessary now to ensure that future shoppers have an impression of numerous, easily accessible, well-located parking spaces. The panel's initial reaction to the existing parking situation in downtown was not that it revealed a shortage, but rather that it suffered from operational constraint and from an almost total absence of beautification in the environment. Thus, much of the parking improvement shown on the Urban Design Plan is directed toward linking existing parking lots and toward developing a consistent and well-signed ingress/egress pattern from east/west streets, as well as from Main Street.

The current depth of lot and the depths of surviving buildings are excessive by modern merchandising standards. This would allow for the implementation of a building setback program on the west side of Main Street, south of Woolworth's. Note, in the architectural sketch on this page, the mid-block entry point to the parking, which is called for as a consistent feature along Main Street, and the beautification opportunity offered by a double row of street trees along the west side of Main Street.

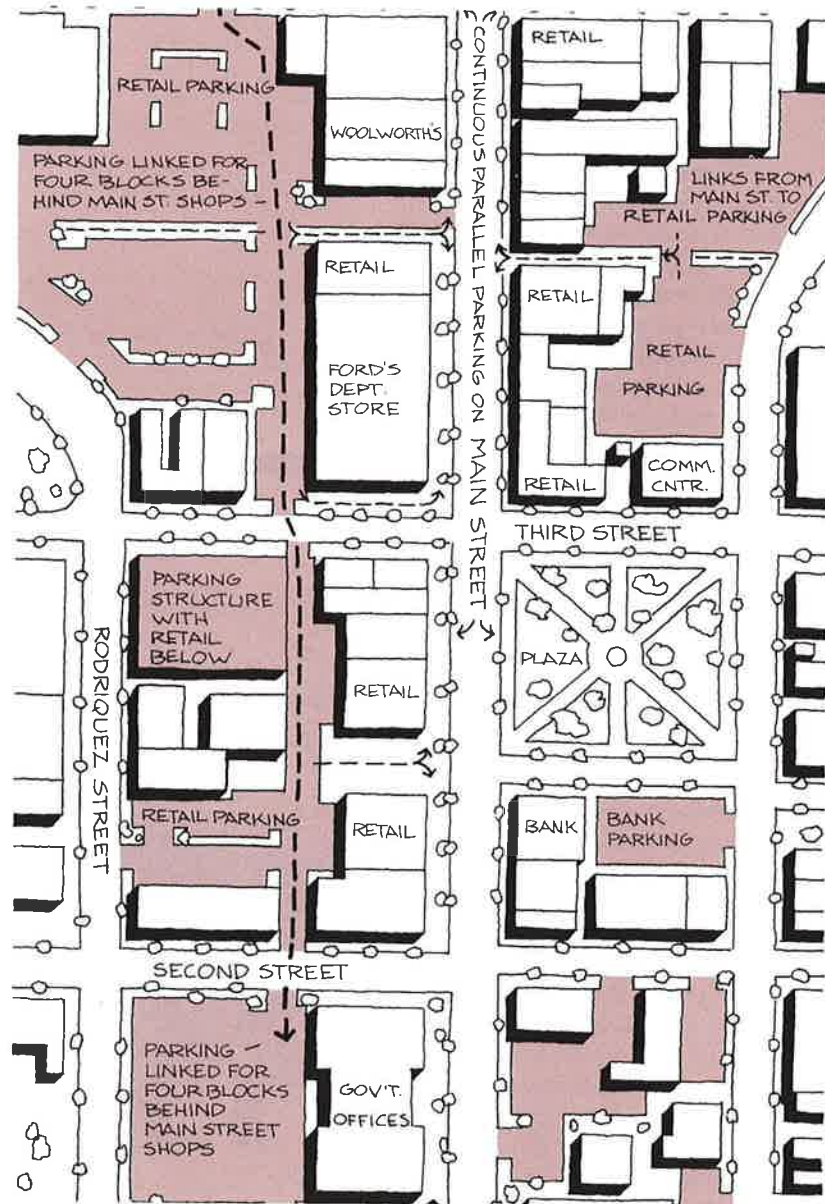


Figure 3. PARKING PLAN

The excessive lot depths, particularly as Rodriguez and Union Streets bend away from Main Street, also afford the chance to consolidate usable and well-located interior parking plazas into a coherent system served by a continuous-access spine. Much of the necessary parking area already exists as both publicly and privately owned lots. These parking areas are often fenced in or have grade breaks between them, and are not interconnected. Parking yield is not optimized.

Drivers seeking parking are forced to back out onto the street, disrupting traffic—even though they would prefer to move directly onto an adjacent lot.

The panel understands that the downtown parking district has acquired property behind the Radeuff School. When improved, this parcel could provide the linkage for a two-way, parking-access spine between Main and Rodriguez Streets, stretching from Fifth Street to Second

Street. Clearly, public/private co-operation will be essential in implementing the concerned parking program, which will improve downtown's competitive position versus outlying shopping centers. The existing parking district—now virtually debt-free—is the ideal entity to carry out a second stage of parking improvement for signage, interconnection, restriping, tree planting, and lighting that will bring Watsonville's parking environment from the stripes-on-asphalt standard to one of greenery, safety, and convenience.

As shown on the Urban Design Plan, the opportunity also exists to link the isolated parking lots between Main and Union/Brennan Streets in a similar manner. If one breakthrough parcel is acquired on Fifth Street, a parking-access spine could be created from Fifth to Union Street just north of the Plaza. The goal for the proposed operational and signage improvements is to create a downtown parking environment that welcomes and serves a prospective shopper. The system must be easily understood, with attractive and well-lit pedestrian linkages to the retail core. The consistency and continuity of such a "readable" parking system cannot be held hostage by a recalcitrant property owner. Thus, the active and progressive leadership of the downtown parking district is essential.

Finally, on the subject of downtown parking, the panel has discussed the pros and cons of structured parking. There is a clear consensus that operational improvements, signage, lighting, and beautification for existing surface lots should take first priority. Individual views vary on whether structured parking should be built at all. The majority of the panel recognizes that the success of the downtown in attracting daytime employees as well as shoppers could ultimately create the need for converting surface to decked parking. Clearly, such a need is not now apparent. However, the Rural Renaissance project, as described to the panel, could provide a full-scale model of how best to incorporate streetfront retail with structured parking. The panel's conclusion, then, is that the Rural Renaissance project is compatible with the Urban Design Plan for the 300 and 400 blocks. The city should not, however, allocate its scarce financial resources to fund it.

7) The panel heartily endorses the concept of increased housing opportunity within and around the downtown. Housing is an anchor for goods and service activities. However, only a limited housing response can be effectively integrated with commercial build-out in the form of housing over retail. Apparently, two-bedroom units attractive to families are the prime housing need; yet it is difficult to create a successful environment for children in housing over retail. Similarly, the success of Watsonville's single-room-occupancy (SRO) housing in the Resetar and Mall Street Hotels argues for a single-purpose response. For this reason, the Urban Design Plan tries to define several available footprints in the downtown where housing projects could be sited. It is important to recognize that the current FEMA flood designation makes two-story housing over parking an ideal building solution for properties in the 100 block.

Housing potential is discussed at greater length in other sections of this report. In a planning sense, however, it is the panel's view that the area west of downtown and east of the food processing plants should be carefully studied for its housing potential.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

The panel recommends a set of basic design guidelines for downtown to help create a sense of place, a feeling of destination, and an enjoyable experience. The community has some concerns that design guidelines will interfere with the immediate revitalization of the downtown. The panel believes, however, that a set of modest guidelines will actually speed redevelopment by communicating clearly to the private sector what the city council will accept.

The following sketches and explanations by panel member Michael Stanton summarize the panel's suggestions for the urban design guidelines.

The first group of sketches, shown in Figure 4, illustrates the architectural elements that are needed to create a sense of place in the downtown area. These elements unify the downtown into a whole—yet allow different structures to have their own identities.

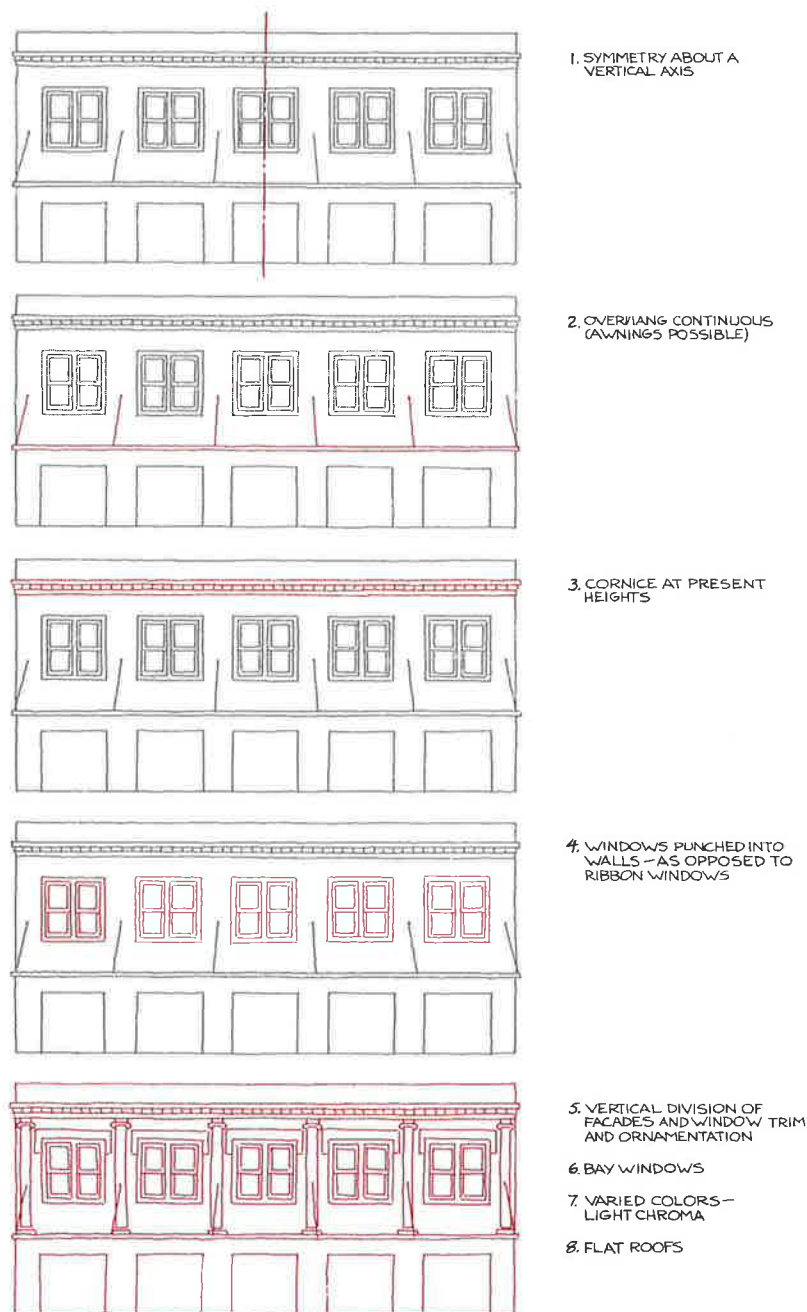


Figure 4. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN ELEMENTS



Figure 5. STREETSCAPE BASED ON DESIGN GUIDELINES

Figure 5 demonstrates the relationship of the building store-fronts to the sidewalk. This streetscape also shows that the different architectural elements mentioned above can be combined to individualize buildings, while standard design guidelines help the buildings work together to create a sense of place within the urban context.

Figure 6 provides a different perspective of the streetscape. Again it demonstrates how the architectural elements can be standardized. In this instance, the sidewalk has not been expanded to allow for a promenade.

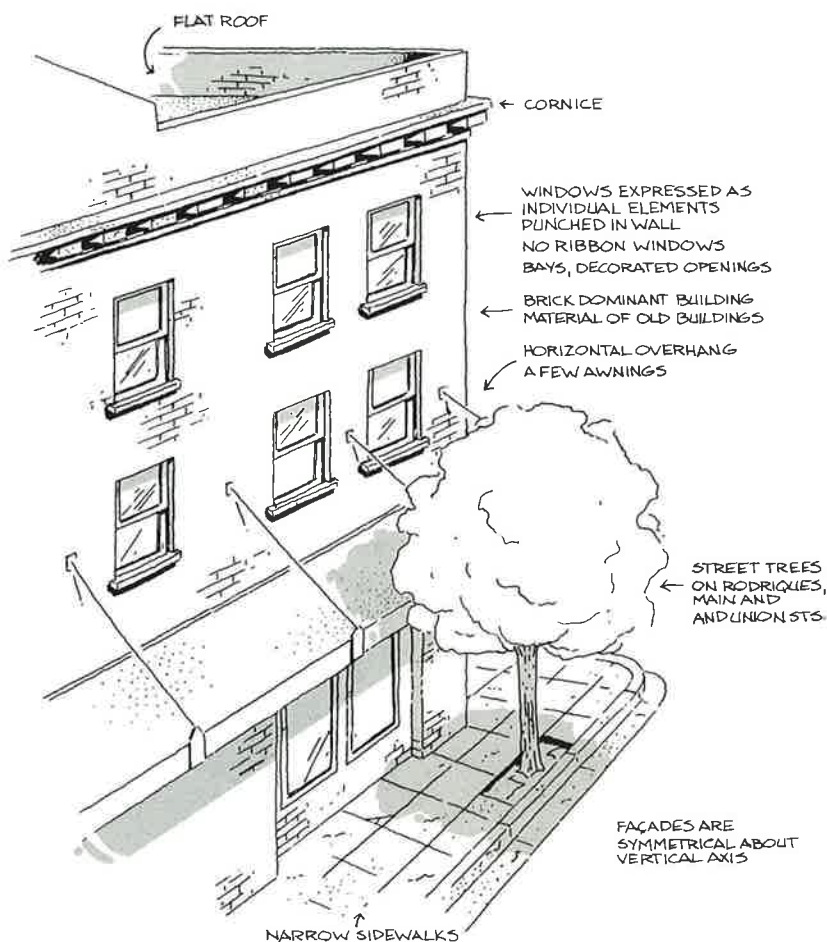


Figure 6. ARCHITECTURAL AND URBAN DESIGN ELEMENTS BASED ON DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Fox Theater on the 300 block of Main Street is a Watsonville landmark that should be restored.



Diane Varni

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The following development priorities should be pursued as soon as can be arranged:

1) Buildings that are integral to the historic or cultural heritage of downtown Watsonville should be renovated and returned to effective use as soon as feasible, and should not be demolished.

The three specific buildings that the panel identified as critical to this concept are: the Lettunich Building, the Fox Theater building, and the Jefsen Building.

The Lettunich Building is a fine example of early 1900s architecture, and just as importantly, it has provided office accommodations for over 60 small office-space users. In addition, it could provide over 12,500 square feet of retail space, and it is an integral part of the Plaza ambiance. It also could function as a reservoir of additional office space, a need for which may be generated by the later phases of the redevelopment and reconstruction efforts.

DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND MARKETING STRATEGIES

Although five months and six days had passed between the earthquake and the time of the ULI panel visit to Watsonville, few matters had stood still during that period. The digging-out stage was well past, and the immediate adjustment of mind and property to a new realism of place and circumstance had somehow been accomplished. Those efforts had been truly Herculean.

Those panel members who had seen this city in late October 1989 could only marvel at the order that had replaced chaos after but five short months. Nonetheless, downtown had only just stabilized, and the overt signs of rebuilding were yet to come.

To a great extent, the panel, like Watsonville's citizens, has sought to concentrate on what can and should be fixed within the next few months—say, using October 17, 1991, as the next horizon. None of the citizens with whom the panel talked was engaged in hand-wringing or crepe-hanging. There was, however, a constant undercurrent of concern that the steps of rebuilding must soon become visible and highly effective, so that the rest of the world would know that Watsonville lives.

To this end, then, the panel identified some specific goals and strategies for development and marketing.

As an important part of the downtown retail segment that was damaged in the quake, the original Ford's Department Store will be replaced.



Diane Varni

The Fox Theater is a major component, not only in Watsonville's architectural heritage, but also in the cultural complex of the Hispanic community. It offers both film attractions and live entertainment. The theater affords opportunities for recreation and a history that the city must preserve.

The Jefsen Building was designed in 1903 by the noted architect William Henry Weeks. It is one of the finest examples of Weeks's designs from that period.

The renovation and restoration of these structures is also of primary importance in reinforcing the clear facts that the damage of the earthquake is over and that now is the time to rebuild, improve, and grow. The panel recommends that the public and private support and assistance that might be needed to further these efforts be pursued.

2) Ford's Department Store should be rebuilt on its original site.

It is the panel's understanding that the management of Ford's has determined that it would be economically feasible to build a new two-story structure of approximately 78,000 square feet of rentable space (including concessions), and that the new store should be open for business within three years of the opening of its new location. The ULI team feels that Ford's actions are critical to restoring one of the prime retail centers of Watsonville; the proposed rebuilding would not only restore retail volume, but also constitute concrete evidence of the revitalization of the city itself. The panel hopes that Ford's management will continue to lease its present temporary location, so that through both stores, Ford's could replace its preearthquake store of about 110,000 square feet of rentable area in its entirety.



Diane Varni

The panel believes that the Lettunich Building at 408 Main Street is an important part of the downtown.

Ford's was the heart of downtown Watsonville, and the panel members believe that the "heart" will return, not only to set the tone for the recovery, but to act as the strong pillar upon which the significant retail space to be built in the 300 block can rest.

3) Although some individuals in the community have shown concern about the decision of the U.S. Postal Service to relocate its facility onto the southern portion of the 200 block, the panel urges that the relocation proceed on schedule, with some design changes to accommodate the proposed master design scheme. (See the Planning and Urban Design section of this report.)

The present facility is clearly inadequate, and expansion on the existing site would neither solve the needs of the postal service nor provide the additional parking facilities required.

The new location on the southern portion of the 200 block would serve as a strong southern anchor for the newly revitalized civic center. This location would better accommodate the integration of the new retail facilities to be built in the 300 block with the new civic and governmental complex the panel has recommended. In all probability, it would also help reduce vehicular traffic by rerouting the postal service trucks, delivery vehicles, and patrons from the immediate area of the Plaza.

In addition, the existing Post Office building is a superb example of Monterey-style architecture and could be made available for many uses. Its nearness to the Plaza would make it extremely attractive for cultural uses in direct coordination with the uses of the Plaza. This alternative would encourage Hispanic arts and crafts and could begin the process of assimilation of the

Latino population and its heritage and culture for the benefit of the city as a whole. This building could also serve as a cornerstone for a yet-to-be-developed tourist business in the downtown, particularly if the panel's suggestions for the creation of a weekend marketplace in the streets surrounding the Plaza are implemented.

The old Post Office could also be used effectively for the Cabrillo College extension courses. This use would bring more people into the district in the evenings and could assist in developing evening retail business in the area. This cultural center building—with the Plaza activities, the community center proposed for the Odd Fellows site, and the many restaurants to be reestablished in the 300 block—would create an exciting area of strong cultural activity that could definitely hold tourist possibilities if marketed properly.

4) In the panel's view, the county offices and the courts should be relocated to the downtown, specifically to the northern part of the 200 block. The move would greatly benefit both the county and the city of Watsonville. The facilities that could be built on this site would be efficient in both size and layout, and they would afford adequate parking and ease of access to the postal service and to the offices of Watsonville's city government. The new facilities would also provide adequate space to accommodate the county's anticipated expansion needs for the foreseeable future.

The relocation would help to assure the success of the businesses locating in the new space being created in the 300 block, by providing a significant number of new customers. And, just as importantly, it would make the current county site in the Freedom Boulevard area available to the county housing authority at a reasonable cost, to build badly needed family housing in an area already equipped with the necessary infrastructure.

It is the panel's understanding that the redevelopment agency has entered into negotiations with, or has made a commitment with, a developer on the potential development of a portion of the 200 block. The panel's proposals are not necessarily inconsistent with the continuation of such discussions or commitments; however, such negotiations or agreements should be modified to take the ULI team's use and design recommendations into account.

5) The owners of the section of the 300 block that had to be demolished as a result of the earthquake have agreed to hire a single architect and are presenting a coordinated plan for redevelopment to the city authorities. They should be commended for this cooperative, intelligent, and public-spirited approach. With the changes in setback, depth, and overall design proposed in this report, the panel recommends that the owners' proposals be approved.

6) The panel finds a significant need for certain public services and facilities that cannot be obtained or accommodated through the current "pay-as-you-go" philosophy of the city administration.

Applicable law provides procedures for a reasonable quantity of public debt; the panel suggests that the appropriate authorities consider authorizing these procedures for the following purposes:

- adequate street lighting for both ambiance and safety;
- street improvements;
- drainage;
- landscaping (the notable lack of landscaping profoundly affects the quality of life and the image of the entire area);
- open space, including additional parks, plazas, fountain locations, and meeting spaces;
- community centers; and
- parking facilities, as well as any other opportunities that may arise.

7) Parking is a critical issue. Except for the existing Rural Renaissance garage, for which funding has been obtained, the panel is convinced that structural parking is unnecessary, given the current expectation of growth and the fact that the panel's plan not only provides ample parking facilities, but also spreads them over a larger area, thereby reducing the pressure on any particular location.

8) The panel has been asked to comment on whether financial incentives should be used to attract major new retail tenants from outside the area, and on whether such tenants could be attracted in any case. Panel members do not consider these questions to be of immediate practical concern because attracting any large retail tenant to downtown Watsonville before all, or substantially all, of the renovation and reconstruction has been done is highly unlikely.

The concentration of buying power and comparative store sales results will simply not be present until the new construction has matured and the demand for major new merchants has been created naturally.

However, anticipating that the program will have the desired result, the panel's proposed plan does incorporate an area that could accommodate an additional retail user with a need for about 30,000 square feet.

The offering of incentives to retailers will not be a motivating factor in site selection unless a store's management is strongly interested in the location and is close to a decision. Any concession to be offered to a new tenant might also have to be given to others already considering Watsonville; the cumulative cost would be prohibitive.

Finally, with regard to the development goals in general, the ULI team believes the entire revitalization process should be accomplished within a set time limit. A limit would convey the urgency of the problem and better assure the dedication of all concerned. The panel suggests a goal of October 17, 1991, two years after the date of the earthquake, for completion of this program. The city should also recognize that the various priorities in the revitalization program are not absolute, and that a degree of flexibility must be retained to take advantage of situations that may present themselves sooner than expected.



James DeVoy, Bud Lake, Jerry Church, and Michael Stanton (foreground) at night work session.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

The concepts set forth in this section may not be new; evidently, the great majority of them have already been recognized by the appropriate officers of the city government and the chamber of commerce. But the panel strongly believes that these concepts are well worth reconsidering, in that they are fully integral parts of a recovery plan and must receive joint support. Watsonville is not now well known beyond its own resident and working populations. An enhanced image and reputation for the city are critical to attracting new business, and of course, any tourist dollars that could be obtained would be welcome.

An integral part of the recovery process must be a publicity program to inform the immediate area (San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose to Monterey/Salinas) of what Watsonville has accomplished or will accomplish in this process. The recovery process must be a public one. The controlling agency must publicize each stage, maintaining at all times an upbeat, aggressively optimistic approach, keeping all interested persons fully apprised of the progress through press releases and conferences.

Panel members Paul Reimer, Michael Stanton, and Robert Gardner rest a moment during the interview session.



The chamber of commerce, for fiscal reasons, has withdrawn its support of the Memorial Day Antique Aircraft Fly-In. The panel understands the reasons for their actions but suggests that a joint chamber/city support group be formed, and that a very close liaison be forged immediately. The Antique Aircraft Fly-In is the only function that gives Watsonville any more than local publicity. The failure to maintain close contact could be interpreted as a loss of interest, and it might lead to a decision by the organizers to transfer the show to another airport; to a loss of local popular support for the Fly-In; and/or to a loss of coordination and knowledge of planned activities.

The panel has learned that a new airport master plan is currently in preparation. The continuation of the air show could, in coordination with that plan, provide for permanent displays of antique aircraft, more frequent flight demonstrations, and other events that could create a tourist attraction—a highly beneficial outcome.

Watsonville has several potential tourist attractions, but the chamber cannot be expected to promote these entirely with its own resources. The Tourism and Convention Bureau of Santa Cruz County is obligated by law to promote and support tourist-oriented activities in all of the county, and the panel is assured by appropriate county legislators that such requirements will be enforced. The members of the panel recommend that a combined chamber/city group both coordinate the efforts with the tourism and convention bureau, and conduct direct-promotional activities to benefit the few attractions and industries Watsonville already offers that may have tourist appeal.

Watsonville's current attractions include the various fairs for roses, flowers, strawberries, and other agricultural products. The panel understands that the chamber has decided to aggressively promote a major fair for these products because they do represent a broad cross section of the business conducted by its members; however, this promotion must not be at the expense of the

Fly-In. With city assistance, both programs could be accomplished. Ideally, these fairs should achieve the level of Gilroy's Garlic Festival, but this goal will take some time. As in Gilroy, reinforcement of the fairs should be achieved through signs and retail sales facilities with direct contact with tourists.

An organization should coordinate tours of available facilities with Bay Area tour companies that might be willing to run another attraction on their trips from the Bay Area to Monterey/Carmel. The attractions could include Martinelli's Apple Juice Plant, pick-your-own fruit and berry farms, rose production facilities, cut flower facilities, and high-tech farming. The panel recommends a Watsonville image program through signs, advertising campaigns, and so on, to promote the strong floral/agricultural image of the city. In particular, the ULI team recommends the establishment of an attractive rose and flower garden in the vicinity of Freedom Boulevard and Main Street, so that visitors entering the city from Highway 152 on the north would receive a favorable first impression.

In due course, with the full integration of Hispanic cultural activities, and with the completion of construction in the downtown civic center, the tourist activity might expand to include participation in the activities in the Plaza, the cultural center, the restaurants, and the weekend marketplace in the new civic center. This kind of tourist activity would be unique in the Bay Area. The positive economic effect of tourism and the possibility of increased Hispanic resident activity on weekends could become a central element in a strongly revitalized downtown.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Implementation strategies for the Watsonville downtown area should be seen as part of a focused economic development strategy for the city of Watsonville. The recommended strategies are based on the belief that additional revenue can be effectively generated from the redevelopment agency, with its tax increment financing techniques; from sales tax revenues; and from other sources of funding.

To efficiently manage this new revenue, the panel recommends the creation of a new economic development organization that will help private development respond to market demand. The new revenue and the organization will play an important part in the revitalization of the downtown. All of the strategies are designed to stimulate new investment and development. They are designed to enhance the image and economy of the city. The success of these strategies will depend on the public/private partnership that can be established among concerned citizens.

REVENUE SOURCES

The panel has identified several sources for additional revenue, including tax increment financing, sales taxes, grants, and loans. These and other funding tools and approaches are described below.

The redevelopment agency's primary source of revenue is tax increment financing, that is, the increase in the property tax base since the project area's adoption in 1973. The agency is generating roughly \$560,000 annually; approximately \$300,000 is unencumbered by debt obligations in the form of bonds. In the past, the majority of funds have been used to acquire property for development parcels and capital improvements.

In the downtown (central) project area, if the agency is to accelerate development, it will have to use more of its full leveraging capacity. A nonleveraged, "pay-as-you-go" approach will limit the pace of development.

In the Westside project area, the only expenditures during FY 88/89 were final payments for engineering work. The agency appears to be turning over revenue generated by this project area to the county. The annual increment generated should be well over \$1 million annually (\$100 million tax base), an amount that should, if leveraged, generate about another \$8.5 million. However, for the agency to become eligible to capture the tax increment being generated, it must a) incur debt within the project area, and/or b) incur debt to fund projects directly "benefiting" the project area, such as capital improvements. Apparently, the agency has chosen not to incur debt. Given the need for housing within the community, the agency should explore capturing the 20 percent set-aside for low/moderate-income housing. The expenditure of these funds may occur outside the project area in which they were generated.

The panel recommends that the agency pursue the capturing of increment to relieve pressure on the city's general fund for capital improvements within the downtown project area.

NEW DEVELOPMENT

New development will affect tax increment revenues. The buildout of the project area as proposed will generate increased assessed value, but the agency should be aware that development within the downtown by tax-exempt entities, such as the U.S. Post Office and the county, will not generate additional increment. It may in fact diminish the existing tax base, although this effect may be offset by the generation of sales tax through heavier customer traffic in the downtown. Therefore, the agency must have access to project-generated sales tax, as discussed below.

The redevelopment agency should further explore, with the county and other taxing entities, the potential of merging the downtown and Westside project areas. The panel recognizes the possible effects of the process of fiscal review; however, the potential for increasing increment for the downtown should not be overlooked. The agency's major asset is "land held for resale." As of June 1989, this land totaled approximately \$3.86 million. This asset is not currently generating income for the agency and will not do so until conveyance. Obviously, the agency should not rush into an unwanted development or transaction for the sake of attempting to capture all or a portion of the disposition proceeds. However, the agency should be cognizant that it is carrying the cost of the property until conveyance; it is not generating additional tax increment revenue. The panel recommends that the agency pursue the disposition of acquired properties within an urgent time frame.

If the agency has to dispose of property below fair market value as an incentive to attract anchor tenants, including county facilities, it should consider taking an equity position that would fully or partially recapture the initial subsidy in the event of refinancing or sale.

Furthermore, the agency should consider the possibility of entering into long-term leases with potential developers on agency-owned parcels. This approach would provide a potential developer with lower initial costs, while allowing the agency to receive an annual income stream.

SALES TAX REVENUES

Through an agreement with the city, the redevelopment agency can also use project-generated sales tax to fund redevelopment projects. This tool may be an important one to the agency, if tax increment financing proves to be an inadequate source of revenues. The agency, to date, has borrowed \$1.2 million from the city's sales tax fund, which is collected via general sales tax throughout the city. The agency has not been restricted to project-generated sales.

The agency may need to use this tool, in the form of a sales tax rebate to potential high-sales-tax generators needing an incentive to locate in the downtown. Sales tax captured by the agency may be leveraged for debt purposes in the same manner as tax increment funds. It may also be combined with tax increment to address debt service under a single debt issue.

GRANTS AND LOANS

Government Sources. The city and agency should actively pursue funding available through the Small Business Administration, the Economic Development Administration, FEMA, and other federal sources. The sponsor should also assist congressional representatives in seeking special legislation. Given the limited life of these programs, it is important that the city and the county show a united effort. The city and agency must recognize this is a long-term process; therefore, immediate funding will not be available. For "immediate" funding, the agency and city will be better served by pursuing existing state funding and by using local enabling legislation, such as redevelopment and assessment districts, to the fullest extent.

Foundations. Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) and other major corporations have recently entered into a limited partnership to benefit the city of Oakland through a nonprofit organization. The partnership will finance nonprofit affordable housing. The investor benefits from both state and federal low-income housing tax credits, and is allowed a competitive financial return as a result of the tax credits. PG&E's portion in the Oakland partnership, which provides construction and permanent financing, is \$2 million. The partnership is reimbursed via home sales.

On March 21, 1990, Wells Fargo Bank announced plans to double its funding for community development lending. The plans are to provide more than \$1 billion for low- and moderate-income housing in the next seven years, with the annual amount allocated to be around \$143 million.

The agency should consider seeking funding from unconventional sources like PG&E. Approaches to these sources should be made immediately, before memories of the earthquake fade away.

ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS

The feasibility of a business improvement district should be reviewed. The additional tax might crowd the financial viability of marginal businesses already slowly recuperating from the last two quarters; however, it might also be the quickest method of securing financing.

The panel recommends that the city explore the possibility of a citywide parcel tax that would fund a revolving loan to rebuild the downtown. For example, a \$50 tax per parcel per year on 50,000 parcels would raise \$2.5 million. The surcharge should be terminated at the end of the fifth year after implementation.

ORGANIZING FOR ACTION

This community has shown a strong commitment to economic development, as evidenced in the panel's interviews and in the number of organizations involved within the community. However, the effort appears to be decentralized, and the organizations currently fulfilling many of the functions are understaffed or inadequately funded.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (CDC)

There is a need to consolidate all efforts toward economic development funding under one entity. Therefore, the panel is recommending that the city council appoint a community development commission composed of five individuals. The initial appointments of the CDC should come from the Downtown Recovery Committee (DRC) because of its established existence and organization. The CDC would be responsible for all redevelopment activities, including the downtown, Westside, and any future project areas, and for all city-funded economic development activities. CDC programs could include aiding small businesses investing in tourism and industry promotion.

SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The CDC should be responsible for monitoring those organizations or programs providing technical assistance, loans, and grants to small businesses.

Marketing and Promotion of Tourism. Traditionally, the role of the chamber of commerce in communities of similar size has been to market the assets of the community to the tourist market. In the panel's opinion, this function should remain with the chamber of commerce, with financial assistance and input from the city.

Marketing and Promotion of Industry. This responsibility should lie with the CDC. Industries seeking sites for expansion or relocation should have a one-stop entity to contact regarding their introduction into the community.

The CDC is to be advisory to the redevelopment agency and the city council. It is extremely important that the redevelopment agency confine itself to major public policy decisions; this board should serve as the community sounding board and provide direction to the agency. The CDC should be appointed by the council with the goal of becoming a strong entity.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORSHIP OF THE CDC AND THE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

This panel recommends that the city council appoint a full-time executive director. The duties of the director should not be shared with another function, such as city manager or assistant city manager, and should cover responsibility for daily operations.

The executive director would be appointed by the agency, with input from CDC, and would serve as staff to the redevelopment commission.

The person selected for this position should show the following characteristics: foresight, a willingness to provide information that will allow for sound public policy, and strong technical skills.

ABOUT THE PANEL

BENJAMIN (BUD) T. LAKE II
Panel Chairman
Lafayette, California

Lake is vice president of Bedford Properties, with responsibilities for governmental approvals, community relations, and assigned projects. He has 20 years of experience in real estate. Before joining Bedford Properties in early 1982, he was president of Morrison Homes, then of Olin-American, a national residential real estate company headquartered in Bedford's Pleasant Hill office building.

As a residential builder, Lake was responsible for acquiring land, securing development rights, marketing, and selling between 1,500 and 2,000 houses a year. Because Bedford Properties' larger suburban projects are being developed in a highly regulatory climate, he has overall responsibilities for securing government approvals and establishing community support to gain development rights for Bedford's new and existing properties. Lake has a BA in political science and an MBA in marketing from Stanford University.

JOHN BUCHANAN
Newport Beach, California

Buchanan is the principal of Buchanan Associates, a Newport Beach-based firm specializing in land use and real estate economics. The firm has been extensively involved in projects requiring private/public partnerships. Buchanan's most recent project is Anaheim Center, a joint venture of The Koll Company, Pacific Bell, and the Anaheim Redevelopment Agency. The project, at buildout, will include approximately 1.25 million square feet of product, ranging from office to retail. He was also responsible for representing the Anaheim Redevelopment Agency in negotiating Lincoln Village, a 400-unit infill project to be developed by Lincoln Property Company. The project will include four distinct residential products, including for-sale and rental units.

Buchanan has an MBA from the Claremont Graduate School, an MPA from the University of Nevada, and a BS from the University of Utah. He is a member of the Urban Land Institute and serves on both the ULI Development Regulations Council and the ULI Advisory Services Committee.

JAMES C. DEVROY
San Francisco, California

DeVoy is senior vice president of Milton Meyer & Company, San Francisco, and a member of the executive committee of The Shorenstein Company, the largest owner of high-rise office buildings in San Francisco. The Shorenstein Company is also an owner of high-rise office buildings in Los Angeles, Kansas City, and Houston, as well as office complexes in White Plains and Somers, New York. DeVoy's present duties involve broad responsibilities in the development of new high-rise buildings, the acquisition of new office buildings, and the leasing, management, and administration of existing office and retail properties.

Before joining Milton Meyer & Company and The Shorenstein Company in February 1982, DeVoy was vice president in charge of all real estate investments for Metropolitan Life in the 10 western states.

DeVoy serves on the Industrial and Office Park Council of the Urban Land Institute, and has lectured for the Real Property Section of the American Bar Association and the California Mortgage Bankers Association.

The holder of a JD degree from Fordham University, DeVoy is a member of the bar in the states of New York and California. He was a naval aviator and is retired as a commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve.

ROBERT GARDNER
Beverly Hills, California

Gardner is a partner with Robert Charles Lesser & Company, a nationally recognized real estate market research and management consulting firm. In this capacity, he oversees the consulting operations of the firm's Beverly Hills office. He serves as a project director on analyses dealing with market evaluation, economic base assessment, financial feasibility, development economics, and fiscal implications of major new developments. His focus within the firm is related to commercial and industrial market feasibility and to the financial feasibility of income-producing properties. Recently, he served as an instructor for the industrial development course offered nationally each year by the National Association of Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP).

Currently, Gardner holds the positions of board member and program chairman of the NAIOP Los Angeles County Chapter. He holds a master's degree in city planning from the University of California at Berkeley and a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of California at Los Angeles.

PETER HASSLEMAN, FAIA
Orinda, California

Hasselman is an architect and urban planner whose consulting practice serves clients in the San Francisco area and eastern United States. He has been a past team member for post-earthquake studies of Coalinga and Whittier, California, and of Soviet Armenia, as well as for numerous planning studies under the auspices of the American Institute of Architects. He also served on the ULI panel for Tucson, Arizona.

LINDA NIEBANCK
Los Angeles, California

Niebanck is a vice president of Lowe Associates, Inc., of Los Angeles. Currently, she manages and directs three master-planned communities for Lowe, two in the Seattle area and one in Santa Cruz County. Each project consists of several thousand housing units and has recreational and commercial components. The challenge in these developments is to meet market demand and respond to public and environmental concerns.

Before joining Lowe, Niebanck worked in the public and nonprofit sectors. She was chief of development processing for Santa Cruz County, senior planner for the city of Santa Cruz, and staff planner to neighborhood and community organizations in Philadelphia. Her areas of public expertise include systems management, capital programming, community development, and institutional relations. She has done extensive consulting in fiscal analysis, economic development, and housing in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area.

Niebanck's formal education is in political science (BA, Cornell University) and professional planning (MCP, University of Pennsylvania). She has taught in the extension program of the University of California at Santa Cruz.

PAUL O. REIMER

San Francisco, California

Reimer is president and founder of Reimer Associates, a West Coast firm specializing in civil engineering, site planning, and landscape architecture. He has been responsible for the planning and site development of projects on the new-community scale, such as 3,000-acre Rancho Murieta in Sacramento County, California, and 1,800-acre Learenos in Reno, Nevada. Recent activities of his firm include high-tech/business park design; mixed-use office/hotel/commercial project planning; waterfront development management; residential subdivision for projects ranging from large estate lots to retirement condominiums; and expert testimony on railroad mergers, acquisitions, or abandonments.

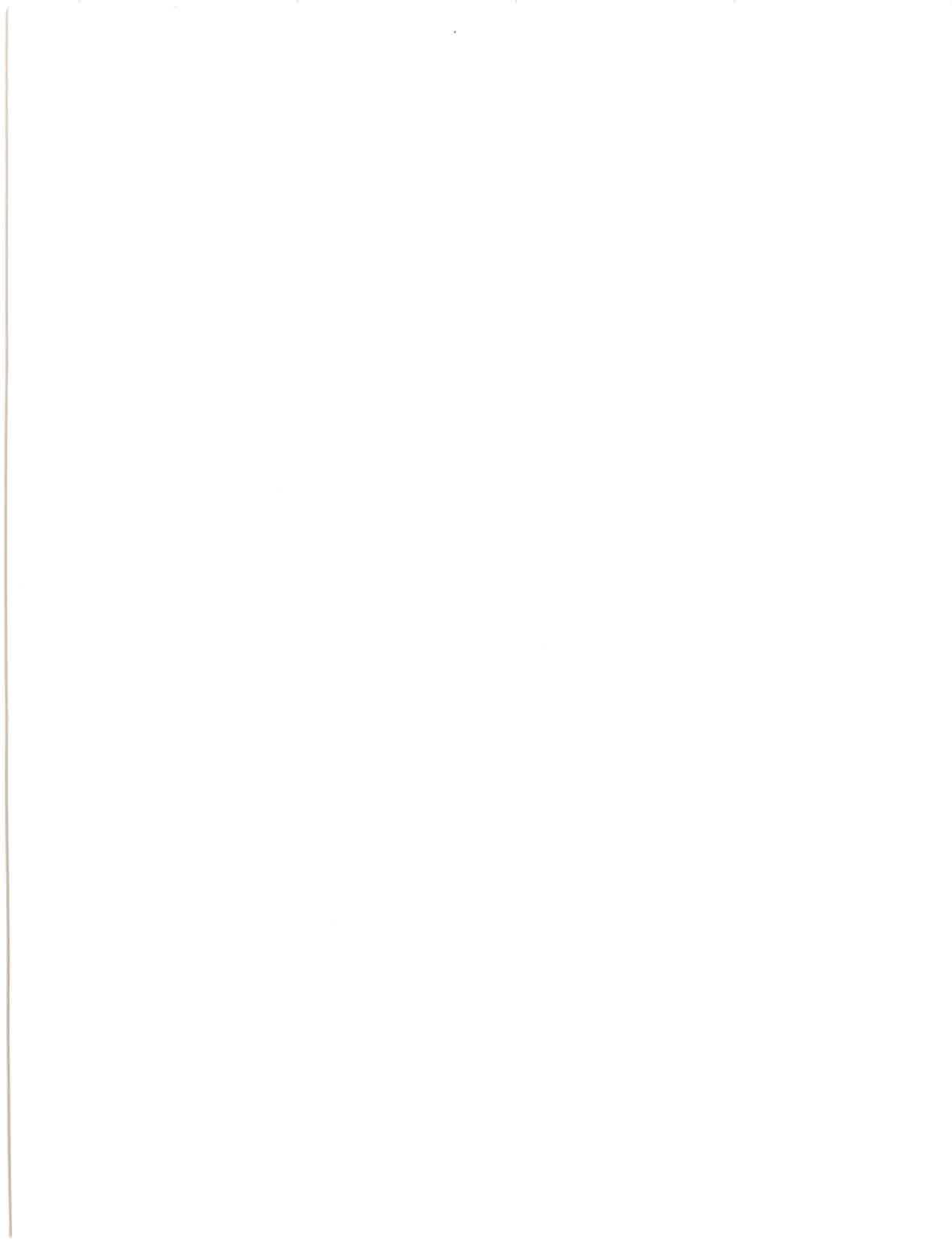
Reimer is vice president of the Bay Area Council and served on the task force of the Association of Bay Area Governments that drafted the Clean Air and Water Plans for the San Francisco Bay Area.

MICHAEL STANTON, AIA

San Francisco, California

Stanton is president of Stanton & Associates, Architects, a 16-person firm headquartered in San Francisco. Before founding the firm, Stanton was an associate at Bull Field Volkmann Stockwell; he has practiced architecture for seven years. Much of SAA's work involves urban design, master planning of mixed-use sites, feasibility studies, and architecture. Stanton's professional activities include his current position as president-elect of the California Council of the American Institute of Architects (CCAIA), the largest regional organization of the AIA. He has also served his community as the vice president for government relations of the CCAIA, past president of the 1,900-member San Francisco chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the editor of the *Bay Architects Review*, and a director of the Architectural Foundation of Northern California.

In the past four years, Stanton has received two awards for excellence in urban design from the national AIA: one for planning the new town of Spitak, Armenia, USSR (devastated in the December 1988 earthquake); and one for the ambitious and well-received Embarcadero Corridor Study in San Francisco. Stanton holds a BA in urban studies and an MArch from Yale University.



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ULI—the Urban Land Institute
625 Indiana Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004