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Plan to Revitalize the Downtown

(DOWNTOWN, from Page 1)

the Planning Commission in September and, if approved, on to the City Council for final action.

The plan is not to create some museum piece of a downtown, but rather a business center where residents from throughout the City and region can go not only to shop or deal with City Hall but for entertainment.

The Downtown area would be the most urban of the City’s neighborhoods, attracting singles, couples, empty nesters and families who enjoy the convenience of having shops and services within walking distance of their home.

Rozenski says that the task force has been working nearly two years developing the Plan. It has held numerous workshops with Brentwood residents seeking their input.

“Residents and the Downtown merchants came together to plan the future of Downtown, to preserve the high-quality standard of living, to maintain its unique ‘small town’ character,” Rozenski says.

To that end, the Plan calls for:

- Encouraging a pedestrian friendly downtown retail shopping district adjacent to the City’s civic center and enhanced by cafés, restaurants, artists studios, galleries and an entertainment anchor — be it a multiplex cinema, live theater or more — to keep the downtown vibrant long after the sun sets and shops close.

- Maintaining the Civic Core, drawing residents to City Hall on municipal business during the day and to the community center, library and City Park days and evenings throughout the week with special events such as park concerts, art shows and seasonal festivities such as the annual Corn Fest.

- Providing a housing mix of lofts, condominiums, townhomes and apartments within and near the downtown

for singles, couples, the elderly and families looking for shops, services, schools and mass transit a few minutes’ walk from their front door.

- Establishing a conveniently located transit center that allows residents to walk their children to school, stop for a cup of coffee and read a newspaper before catching a bus or a train (eBART) to BART and on to work.

A copy of the Plan is available for review at the Community Development Department desk or it can be accessed online through the City’s website at www.ci.brentwood.ca.us. Click on the “Downtown Specific Plan” icon in the center of the page.

Rapid growth in the City’s outlying areas has made the health of the Downtown a vital issue.

For years, Highway 4, a portion of which runs through town as Brentwood Boulevard, brought visitors and shoppers into the heart of the downtown district.

Soon it will be relocated around the City. While that will move much annoying truck and commuter traffic out of the Downtown, it also threatens to pull away retail and commercial development, the Plan warns.

In the late 1890s, Brentwood was a thriving agricultural center, serving as the largest shipping port for wheat and barley between San Francisco and New Orleans. The Plan’s authors cite this while recommending capitalizing on the Downtown’s small-town ambiance, history and its assortment of residential, civic and retail structures.

“Because there are so many community facilities in Downtown, the library, parks, community center and City Hall, we are hoping to hold events such as the Corn Fest, concerts in the park and bring e-Bart into or near Downtown. This way it really would become the center for activities of all citizens,” Rozenski says.