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ECONOMIC VITALITY

Concord is committed to maintaining a vibrant and healthy economy, providing land for planned development, ensuring the fiscal and financial health of the City, and working with the private sector to ensure an adequate supply of skilled workers and capital needed to attract and maintain business. The goals, principles, and policies in this Element support business growth and development, which will result in increased employment, expansion of office and research and development uses, and a growing mix of retail shopping opportunities. Business attraction and retention programs will reflect the importance of Concord as a regional office and shopping destination, and as a center of innovative businesses that require highly skilled labor. In sum, the Element is intended to:

- Enhance linkages between economic development, land use and zoning;
- Provide further support for Downtown development and retail businesses; and
- Affirm existing programs that have a bearing for economic development.

2.1 CONCORD'S ECONOMIC BASE

The Beginnings

Concord's economic growth was initially spurred by the post-World War II population growth, as schools and retail centers were built to serve the growing population. Following the start of BART service in 1973, Concord and other central Contra Costa County communities experienced substantial development of commercial, office, and industrial park space. Spurred by the formation of the redevelopment area in 1974, downtown Concord's skyline also changed, with completion of The Bank of America Technology Center, Salvio Pacheco Square, One Concord Center, and other projects. The City's central location, excellent transportation access, an educated and skilled labor force, an attractive and affordable residential community, educational and



training resources, Buchanan Field Airport and other regional assets have all helped stimulate business development and economic growth in Concord.

Today, Concord has a strong economic base, including:

- 4.3 million square feet of Class A office space;
- 5.8 million square feet of industrial space;
- 70,000 square feet of space for research and development (R&D) uses;
- More than 900 hotel/motel rooms; and
- 48,000 square feet of exhibit space for meeting and convention activities.



Concord has been a good location for business, and the City has benefited from business growth. Citywide population expansion has helped fuel the growth of businesses that includes retail and commercial service uses. By affirming this positive relationship in the General Plan through sound economic and physical planning and supporting infrastructure and services, the City will strengthen its ability to serve future residents and businesses.

Job Growth Since 1980 and 2005 Employment

The number of jobs in Concord increased in the 1980s and 1990s with completion of major office buildings and industrial parks, and the City has continued to capture a significant share of countywide employment increases. According to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Concord businesses employed approximately 33,912 people in 1980 (16.8 percent of Countywide employment), and the 2005 employment is estimated to be 66,560 (17.8 percent of countywide employment) – nearly doubling the job base.

Between 1980 and 1990 the City was able to increase its capture of County employment growth to 20 percent of the total, but over the 1990 to 2005 period, the City’s “capture rate” declined to 12.8 percent. This was due in part to the growth in retail and service employment elsewhere in the County.

The growth in employment by industry group between 2000 and 2005, shown in Table 2-1, reflects marginally greater strength in the City’s capture rate for retail trade, financial and professional services. The overall decline in jobs since 2000 reflects slower economic growth in the Bay Area and lingering effects of the past “dot-com” bubble.

Table 2-1: Number of Employees in Concord by Industry Group, 2000 and 2005

Industry	City of Concord		Contra Costa County		City's Share of County	
	2000	2005	2000	2005	2000	2005
Retail Trade	8,720	8,050	46,720	42,910	18.7%	18.8%
Financial & Professional Services	18,050	19,600	89,510	96,510	20.2%	20.3%
Health, Education & Recreation Services	18,150	19,360	115,930	123,240	15.7%	15.7%
Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade	10,650	8,990	56,110	47,680	19.0%	18.9%
Other ¹	10,610	10,560	63,040	62,660	16.8%	16.9%
Total	66,180	66,560	371,310	373,000	17.8%²	17.8%²

¹ Includes Agriculture & Mining.

² Totals represents the percent share for all total industries for 2000 and 2005, the columns are not intended to be summarized to equal 100 percent.

Source: ABAG 2005 Projections, 2005.

Future Employment

Employment growth in Concord will allow the City's economic base to expand in tandem with its population. Growth accommodated under this General Plan will consist of an employment mix that continues growth in the Central Area, the Monument and Clayton Road corridors and North Concord. This growth is expected to accommodate jobs-serving regional businesses and population-serving jobs (in retail, services, and other economic sectors) in existing and planned shopping areas, and mixed use areas. Table 2-2 presents Year 2005 and future employment levels, with ABAG figures organized by industry group.

The City's population growth—Concord is expected to have 142,210 residents by 2030 under the Concord 2030 Urban Area General Plan—will help fuel expected employment growth by creating demand for local serving employment growth. Employment growth will also be stimulated by growth in the regional economy. This later growth will occur because of Concord's ability to capture its share of regional growth. This is influenced by the degree to which Concord's assets, including its central location, good transportation, affordable housing, and a skilled labor force, attract business. These twin demands also will generate growth of retail, service (business, professional, medical, and other), and public-sector uses. Diversity in employment will expand job opportunities for local residents and help to further stabilize the local economy.

Table 2-2: Number of Employees in Concord, Existing and Future

Industry	Number of Employees		Increase, 2005 - 2030	
	2005 (ABAG)	2030 (ABAG) ¹	Number	Percentage
Retail Trade	8,050	10,910	+2,860	+35.5
Financial & Professional Services	19,600	29,470	+9,870	+50.4
Health, Education & Recreation Services	19,360	29,170	+9,810	+50.7
Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade	8,990	9,430	+440	+4.9
Other ²	10,570	15,390	+4,820	+45.6
Total³	66,570	94,370	+27,800	+41.8%³

¹ The Urban Area General Plan can accommodate this increased employment at buildout, see Table 1-3.

² Includes Agriculture & Mining

³ The percentage total represents the percent increase for employees for all industries, the total is not intended to be summarized to equal 100 percent.

Source: ABAG 2005 Projections, 2005.

Future Non-residential Land Needs

The land use program of the Concord 2030 Urban Area General Plan reflects Concord’s historic economic evolution. It adjusts the City’s historic economic mix to take into account the types of new jobs the region as a whole attracts, and the type of jobs that gravitate to Concord based on Concord’s capture of regional economic growth. It provides for space to accommodate the kinds of employment economically suited to Concord. During the time horizon of the General Plan—assuming continuing strong regional growth—it is reasonable to expect strong absorption of non-residential development. The General Plan allows for significant commercial growth in Concord as follows:

- Office space, up to 6.1 million square feet;
- Retail space, up to 4.5 million square feet;
- Industrial and “flex” space, up to 2.2 million square feet; and
- Wholesale and distribution, up to 300,000 square feet.

These increases in built space for employment uses would take place on lands not currently in urban use as well as on lands previously developed, but on which (through redevelopment, infill development and development in a new mixed use land use designation) the existing level of urban activity could be increased.



2.2 CITY'S ROLE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of Concord has an important role in encouraging economic development and providing support for businesses. For example, by “streamlining” its design review, permitting, and licensing processes, the City makes the approval process less complicated, costly, and time-consuming for businesses. In addition, through its General Plan, the City determines the amount of space available for new business growth and sets guidelines for land use and development intensity. The City is also responsible for maintaining streets and other infrastructure, and overseeing workforce housing programs and housing development incentives. City actions in these areas can help to create an environment that is attractive for business investment.

One of the most important contributions Concord will make to ensure future economic development is simply to allocate land for employment development, as described in greater detail in the chapter on land use. Beyond that basic commitment, the City’s support for economic development can take a variety of forms, which are described generally in the following section on Goals, Principles, and Policies. The General Plan also includes measures to address potential future growth constraints, and emphasizes and reinforces features of the Concord setting that contribute to the City’s image, preserving the characteristics that make Concord a desirable business location.

Economic Vitality Strategy

The City of Concord’s Economic Vitality Strategy is a tool for guiding policy considerations that will inform Concord’s future growth. The ability of the City to grow, develop, and provide goods and services to its residents depends, in large measure, on the strength of the local economy. Economic development programs support business growth and development, which will result in increased employment, expansion of office and research and development uses, and a growing mix of retail shopping and dining opportunities. Economic development programs are focused in the areas of business retention, expansion, and attraction. The purpose of the City’s Economic Vitality Strategy is to continue the City’s proactive role in attracting and retaining businesses, reflecting the importance of Central Concord as a regional office center and shopping destination, and as an emerging center for technology enterprise.

The strategy focuses on the provision of effective and efficient local government services, in tandem with efforts to support the local economy’s adaptation to changing conditions. Concord’s ability to thrive will be measured by the improved prosperity of its residents, businesses, and employees.



Concord's Economic Vitality program has produced both new development and employment growth. The program has also received public recognition for the following accomplishments:

- The facilitation of job development (2,612 new jobs in Concord between 1999-2005) through business expansion, attraction, and retention. Examples include BEI Systron Donner, Cerus Corporation, Seatel Inc., Biznet, El Tegra, Old Navy, IT Corporation, Fry's Electronics, Mimi's, and BMW.
- Redevelopment efforts, such as Bank of America Technology Center, One Concord Center, Legacy Apartments, two downtown parking structures, Fry's Electronics and Home Depot, Brenden Theatre in Downtown Concord, and Downtown and BART streetscape improvement projects.
- Received recognition and a first place award by the Contra Costa Economic Partnership for having the best permit center in Contra Costa County.

Redevelopment Strategy

The Concord Redevelopment Agency has produced plans that aim to achieve strategic urban development goals. The guiding strategies of the Concord Redevelopment Plan focus on strengthening the City by using the City's redevelopment powers to redevelop underutilized uses at highly visible and strategic locations, attracting and retaining businesses, supporting Concord's strong retail base, continuing to take advantage of development activities as they arise in the Redevelopment Area, and playing a lead role in the provision of alternatives to automobile dependence.

The City of Concord's Redevelopment Agency includes Central Concord, portions of Monument Boulevard and Willow Pass Road Corridor, and portions of North Concord. The Monument Boulevard, Willow Pass Road, and North Concord areas were added to the Redevelopment Plan in October 2006, as illustrated in Figure 2-1. The overall redevelopment objective in the entire redevelopment area is to alleviate blight and improve adverse conditions and to implement the principals and policies of the City's General Plan.

Redevelopment in Central Concord has been guided by the Concord Redevelopment Strategy and Implementation Action Plan (Strategic Plan). This Strategy sets forth a vision, with goals and objectives for downtown development. A revision to the Strategic Plan, incorporating a vision, goals and objectives for redevelopment in the remainder of the



Redevelopment Area will be initiated, upon completion of this General Plan Update. The Strategic Plan draws a clear link between past accomplishments, present conditions, desired future redevelopment decisions, and its focus of activity. The implementation component of the Plan is to provide a strategic guide for realizing these approaches, identifying catalyst projects, specifications, and timing for carrying out the strategy recommendations.

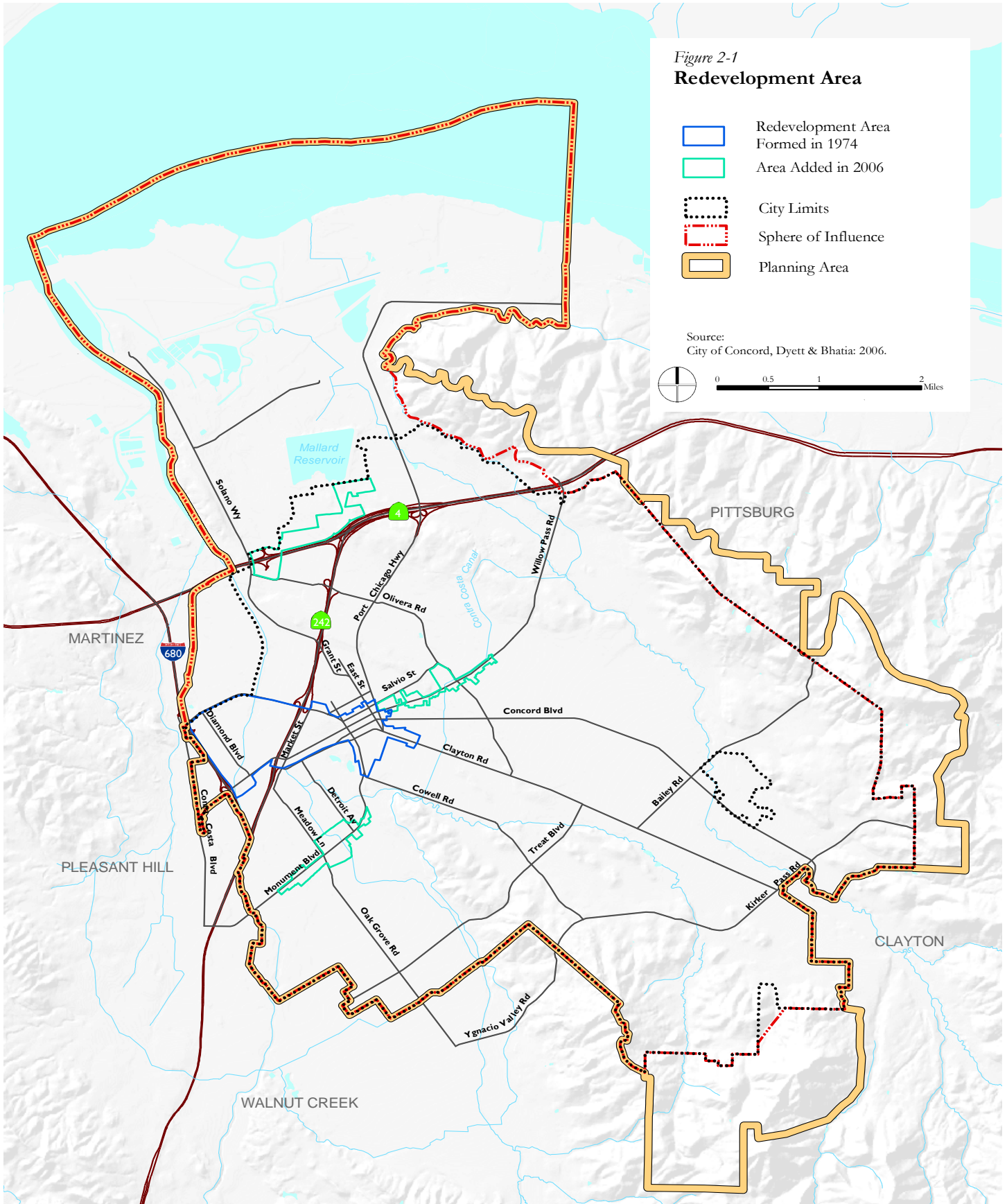
The preferred vision and guiding principles for the Concord Redevelopment Area value Concord's opportunity to be a "premier community to live, work, and do business." It also states that Concord could provide a setting for "in-town living and state-of-the-art business enterprise as well as services and activities for residents of all ages." The Plan includes a specific vision for different districts within the Redevelopment area based on the unique physical characteristics and special assets of each area.

The Goals, Principles, and Policies that follow build on these early initiatives, providing an overall coordinating framework for the General Plan for future implementation actions.

2.3 KEY INITIATIVES

Five key initiatives underlie the goals, principles, and policies of this element.

- Promote Concord's commitment to maintaining a vibrant and growing economy, providing land and infrastructure for planned development and services for residents and business, and ensuring the financial health of the City through sound fiscal management.
- Integrate economic development into land use and transportation planning. Sites for new employment centers are proposed in the General Plan Land Use Diagram; the Plan also envisions more mixed use development in Central Concord and around the City's downtown BART station. The City will continue to seek out businesses in growth industries, streamline permit processes, and expedite permit decisions in support of a "business-friendly" climate.
- Improve the quality and mix of uses in Downtown. By encouraging Downtown business growth, development, and investment, Concord can pursue a vision of in-town living in a pedestrian oriented environment and continue to support Downtown as the social, cultural, and entertainment center of the community.





- Eliminate adverse physical and economic conditions throughout the Redevelopment Area. Adverse physical and economic conditions have prevented the proper utilization of buildings and land in the Redevelopment Area, including among others, deficient or deteriorated buildings, inadequate size or substandard design, incompatible uses, access, lots or building of inadequate size or substandard design, incompatible uses, and properties containing hazardous wastes.
- Foster investment in the retail sector by providing appropriately located areas for a broad range of retail businesses, ranging from neighborhood convenience stores on small sites to larger sites for comparison shopping and value-oriented retailing. By emphasizing pedestrian amenities and mixed use, the City can make the retail experience more lively than in the past. A vibrant retail sector will confer a strong sense of place and also strengthen Concord's community image.

The Goals, Principles, and Policies that follow build on these initiatives, providing an overall coordinating framework for the General Plan for future implementation actions.

2.4 GOALS, PRINCIPLES, AND POLICIES

GOAL E-1: A FISCALLY HEALTHY CITY

Principle E-1.1: Make Concord an Ideal, Fiscally Stable Place to Live and Work.

Policy E.1.1.1: Ensure that Concord has adequate fiscal resources to secure the highest quality environment for its residents and businesses.

The City's current practice of providing long range planning, budgeting and performance accountability enables Concord to manage its resources efficiently and provide cost-effective service. Development under this General Plan will provide additional tax revenues to support governmental operations and investments in infrastructure and community facilities and services.



GOAL E-2: A STRONG REGIONAL CENTER

Principle E-2.1: Establish Concord as the Major Regional Business and Employment Center of Contra Costa County.

Policy E-2.1.1: Establish land use priorities that foster entrepreneurship, growth, and innovative business development.

This will be done by promoting commercial development and establishing clear expectations for a streamlined development review process with minimal discretionary review.



Policy E-2.1.2: Retain and attract business and facilitate businesses' efforts to develop and expand.

Policy E-2.1.3: Strengthen the business climate to ensure the growth, development, and prosperity of Concord's business community.

Through implementation of the Economic Vitality Strategy and the City's redevelopment plans, as well as the Zoning Ordinance update, streamlined review procedures, and expedited permit decisions, Concord will continue to foster a "business-friendly" climate.



Policy E-2.1.4: Continue to improve the streamlined permit processes and expedited permit decisions.

Policy E-2.1.5: Attract businesses in growth industries that require highly skilled labor.



Policy E-2.1.6: Partner with the private sector to create and sustain markets that foster economic growth.

Policy E-2.1.7: Support the regional role of the John Muir Health, Concord Campus for attracting medical related business employment for Concord.

Policy E-2.1.8: Recognize Buchanan Field Airport and Concord's port facilities as regional economic assets.

The Buchanan Field Airport is a county-owned facility that contributes to the local economy. Similarly, the Concord Naval Weapons Station-



Tidal Area (Port Chicago) is designated as a “Port Priority Use” area in the San Francisco Seaport Plan, and non port-related uses generally would not be allowed in order to protect this asset.

Policy E-2.1.9: Continue to maintain Concord’s infrastructure to support economic development including high quality streets, transportation improvement, and landscape medians.



GOAL E-3: A VIBRANT CITY CENTER

Principle E-3.1: Ensure that Downtown is a Vibrant City Center.

Policy E-3.1.1: Continue to promote the Downtown as the social, cultural, and entertainment center of the community.

Policy E-3.1.2: Promote and support an urban, pedestrian-oriented environment that builds upon the proximity of Todos Santos Plaza, and high density residential and street retail uses.



New zoning standards will foster active ground-floor frontages with pedestrian amenities. Examples of pedestrian oriented standards include residential entries at grade with sidewalks, and commercial facades that are transparent and provide significant views into new retail space.

Policy E-3.1.3: Continue to improve the quality and mix of uses in Downtown to ensure patron, visitor, and resident satisfaction.

Incentives for pedestrian-oriented mixed use will be included in the zoning ordinance.

Policy E-3.1.4: Encourage Downtown business growth, development, and investment.

New zoning for Downtown coupled with continued investments in streetscape improvements and assistance for redevelopment projects will support Downtown development.



Policy E-3.1.5: Promote transit-oriented development and activities that take advantage of nearby transit services, such as BART, bus services, and Buchanan Field Airport.

Recent amendments to State law will enable the City to offer incentives for pedestrian-oriented development, including exemptions for traffic level of service standards.



Policy E-3.1.6: Ensure an attractive, pleasant, safe, clean, and accessible Downtown.

Community-oriented policing will help implement this policy.

Policy E-3.1.7: Provide relocation assistance to businesses and residences displaced by Redevelopment Agency activities.

While it is expected that properties in the City's redevelopment area will experience change, the City is committed to assisting existing users find desirable locations to the maximum extent possible.



Policy E-3.1.8: Work with new development to minimize temporary construction impacts so that patronage of nearby existing businesses is not negatively impacted.

The City recognizes that new development construction can have unanticipated negative impacts on nearby existing businesses, such as a temporary reduction in available parking or reduced retail visibility. The City will work with all vested interests to ensure retail "business as usual" conditions are maintained during construction periods.

Policy E 3.1.9: Promote the vision of Downtown by actively engaging land owners, developers, and the Chamber of Commerce in discussions regarding opportunities for change and revitalization.



GOAL E-4: RETAIL STRENGTH

Principle E-4.1: Maintain Retail Vitality.

Policy E-4.1.1: Attract catalyst retail businesses that stimulate economic development and raise the standard of retail enterprise.

The City's Economic Development Strategy has incentives in place to implement this policy.



Policy E-4.1.2: Partner with the business community to strengthen the City's retail economy by facilitating revitalization and expansion of the City's shopping areas.

The Park and Shop Center is one example of a regional shopping center that is in need of revitalization and rehabilitation. However, its multiple property ownership pattern is an obstacle to future redevelopment. A possible avenue for Park and Shop's renewal would be the development of a specific plan for the whole center, which could set forth objectives for land use, circulation and design, and provide a financing program for its future implementation. The success of a specific plan would depend on the willingness of the property owners to partner with the City, commit resources, and actively participate in a process that would involve a full community of stakeholders.



Policy E-4.1.3: Promote business-to-business transactions.

One of the most efficient economic development tools is to build on the City's existing businesses and promote "going wholesale" with business-to-business relationships.

Policy E-4.1.4: Promote sales transactions between businesses and customers in Concord.

Policy E-4.1.5: Encourage a mix of retail that draws local customers as well as patrons from the greater Bay Area.

Specialized businesses can attract customers who would not normally shop in Concord. Diversity in the City's retail base also will help fuel growth and maintain the City's position as a regional center.



GOAL E-5: A REVITALIZED MONUMENT COMMUNITY

Principle E-5.1: Improve the Economy in the Monument Community.

Policy E-5.1.1: Partner with the Monument Community Partnership and other key stakeholders in the Monument Community to plan and implement economic development programs.

Policy E-5.1.2: Support economic development programs that invest in the Monument community and in the residents who live there.

Policy E-5.1.3: Promote the development and expansion of, and investment in, small business in the Monument Corridor.

GOAL E-6: THRIVING NEIGHBORHOOD CORRIDOR CENTERS AND A HIGH QUALITY RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR THE CLAYTON ROAD

Principle E-6.1: Create Economic Development Opportunities Along Clayton Road.

Policy E-6.1.1: Work with shopping center owners and other key stakeholders along Clayton Road to plan and implement an action plan for economic development.

The action plan will be designed to facilitate revitalization of older centers and help create transit-oriented nodes that are compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.

Policy E-6.1.2: Support economic development programs that invest in local businesses and workforce housing and needed support facilities and services.

Policy E-6.1.3: Enable mixed use development at appropriate locations along Clayton Road with new zoning and streamlined review procedures.