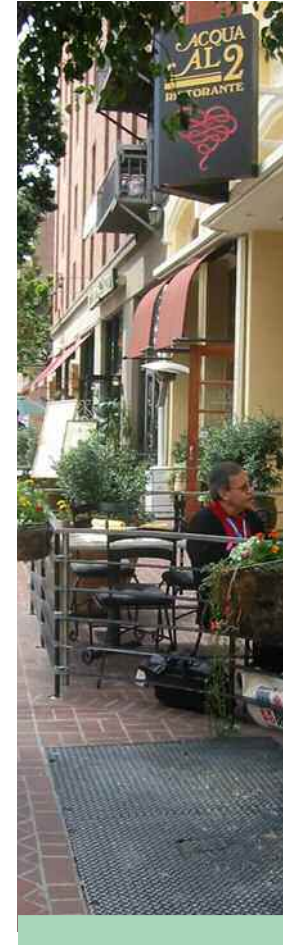


East Downtown

Strategic Plan • City of Visalia



Guiding Principles:
Aspirations
•••

Opportunity Sites:
Investments
•••

Preliminary Concept:
Places
•••

Development Program:
Results
•••

Preliminary Concept

1-18-05

The East Downtown Plan Strategic Plan Preliminary Concept Plan is intended to provide a basis for discussion about organizing ideas.

planning principles

The community participants at the July 13, 2004 community workshop identified their aspirations for the East Downtown area. These features were presented as principles to the Task Force and to the City Council and Planning Commission at a July 19, 2004 study session. The Task Force, City Council and Planning Commission identified various types of policy considerations under each principle.



ABOVE:
At the July 13, 2004 community workshop participants identified the key features they wanted included in the future of East Downtown. This input has become the basis for the Strategy's guiding principles.

P1. Mill Creek–Open Space Feature

Mill Creek should be used as an open space feature that connects downtown neighborhoods and becomes an amenity for commercial, residential and civic (public) development.

Mill Creek Policy Considerations:

- Great interest
- Acquire water
- Ground water recharge–verify location requirements
- Include ditch and Mill Creek
- Create business opportunities along Mill Creek
- Mixed-use land use approach to creek and open space
- Explore ways to open up or realign creek to the west of East Downtown
- Make it part of accessible and connected open space and pathway system
- Connect to civic center park on either sides of creek–frame views of Sierra

P2. East Main Street–Mixed-use

East Main Street should be developed as an urban mixed-use district with storefront retail connected to West Main Street and residential development above commercial uses and on adjacent infill sites.

Mixed-use Main Street Policy Considerations:

- Financial feasibility of stacking uses
- Renovation costs for existing buildings
- Ground floor retail tenants
- Verify market interest
- Reduce parking for housing and renovation
- Explore feasibility of live-work (Fresno Tower District)
- Had funding for converting second stories of existing buildings
- Make sure we use a realistic approach to housing and mixed-use development

planning principles

P3. Open Space–New Places

Open space should be part of a connected system of public and private places that are programmed and activated and that are the focus for new development.

Open Space Policy Considerations:

- Land acquisition
- Land use adjacency
- Streetscape and pathway connections
- Programming of open space
- Public safety in open spaces
- Keep park urban scale—emphasis on “eyes-on-the-park” planning

P4. Parking–Parking District Approach

The East Downtown Area should approach parking standards and implementation as an urban district where facilities are shared and hidden from view.

Parking Policy Considerations:

- District boundaries
- Land acquisition
- Interim surface parking lots
- Phased development of parking structures
- Examine parking requirements impact on development feasibility
- Treat parking as part of overall transportation strategy (park and ride example)
- Look towards a future (evolution) where parking is a paid for
- Better transit system/improve ridership

P5. Connections–Linking Downtown and Neighborhoods

The overall circulation system should emphasize linkage to downtown and surrounding neighborhoods where East Main Street, Burke Street, Santa Fe, Bridge Street, Ben Maddox and Mill Creek are featured as connectors.

Connections Policy Considerations:

- Mill Creek
- Oak Street connection
- Extension of grid (other streets)
- Design of street edges/streetscape
- Bikeways and walkways
- Plan for a public transit, trolley system, location of bus stops, future of railroad ROW, etc.

P6. Patterns–Balancing Development Locations

New investment should provide a viable transition of downtown uses connecting economic activities on south of East Main Street and west of Bridge Street, and act as a catalyst for areas north and northeast of East Downtown.

Patterns–Balance Policy Considerations:

- Land use transition from service commercial to other uses
- Redevelopment assistance—lack of financing capacity
- East Visalia Redevelopment Project General Fund loan paid over life of Project (2027)
- Location and type of catalyst project investment
- Redevelopment strategy revised in August
- Area ripe for redevelopment funding
- Outside the “box”—future of stockyards and walnut processing
- Plan for roads and addresses in the district, not treating roads as edges
- Give the area “depth” and internal focus along streets



ABOVE:
Mill Creek was identified as an important asset that is to be featured in the planning.

planning principles

P7. Transit Center–Investment Catalyst

The Transit Center area should be planned as the “Gateway to the Sequoia” and as a vibrant arrival area featuring residential, commercial and cultural uses that result in a pleasing image.

Transit Center as Catalyst Policy Considerations:

- Gateway to the Sequoia concept
- Deliberate planning of Transit Center area
- Ground floor uses
- Transit focus
- Parking district
- Create an exciting and pedestrian friendly arrival area
- Connect the Transit Center to Main Street with storefronts



ABOVE:
The existing Transit Center was viewed as an important catalyst for future investment along Santa Fe and on the eastern edge of downtown.

RIGHT:
The East Downtown is adjacent to the oldest downtown district between Stockton and LA.



opportunity sites

The Strategic Plan identifies future potential investment areas. It anticipates the locations that could be susceptible to new development over the next 20 years. The overall goal is to better coordinate the types of land uses, transportation strategies, infrastructure and design concepts that enhance the value of the district to property owners, tenants and the community.

Long Range Perspective

The Strategic Plan anticipates how East Downtown could change over the next 20 years. Site analysis and market analysis suggest there could be as much as 87 acres of urban land available for reinvestment. In addition to this land, there are many existing properties and structures that are likely to be renovated and provide opportunities for additional tenants to be located in East Downtown.

Near Term Opportunity Sites

An estimated 57 acres of land could be available in the near term (0-10 years). These sites include vacant land and structures, underutilized properties, and anticipated changes in ownership or tenancy. Investment in locations can act as a catalyst and for future development.

Areas that have the large available sites include the former UPRR property (approximately 40 acres), blocks around the new Transit Center (approximately six and one half acres), and infill sites along East Main Street (approximately five and one half acres).

Long Term Opportunity Sites

In the 20 year planning horizon (0-20 years), there is another 30 acres that could be redeveloped. These could lend themselves to projects that anticipate the higher value and prestige of a 2025 central Visalia address.

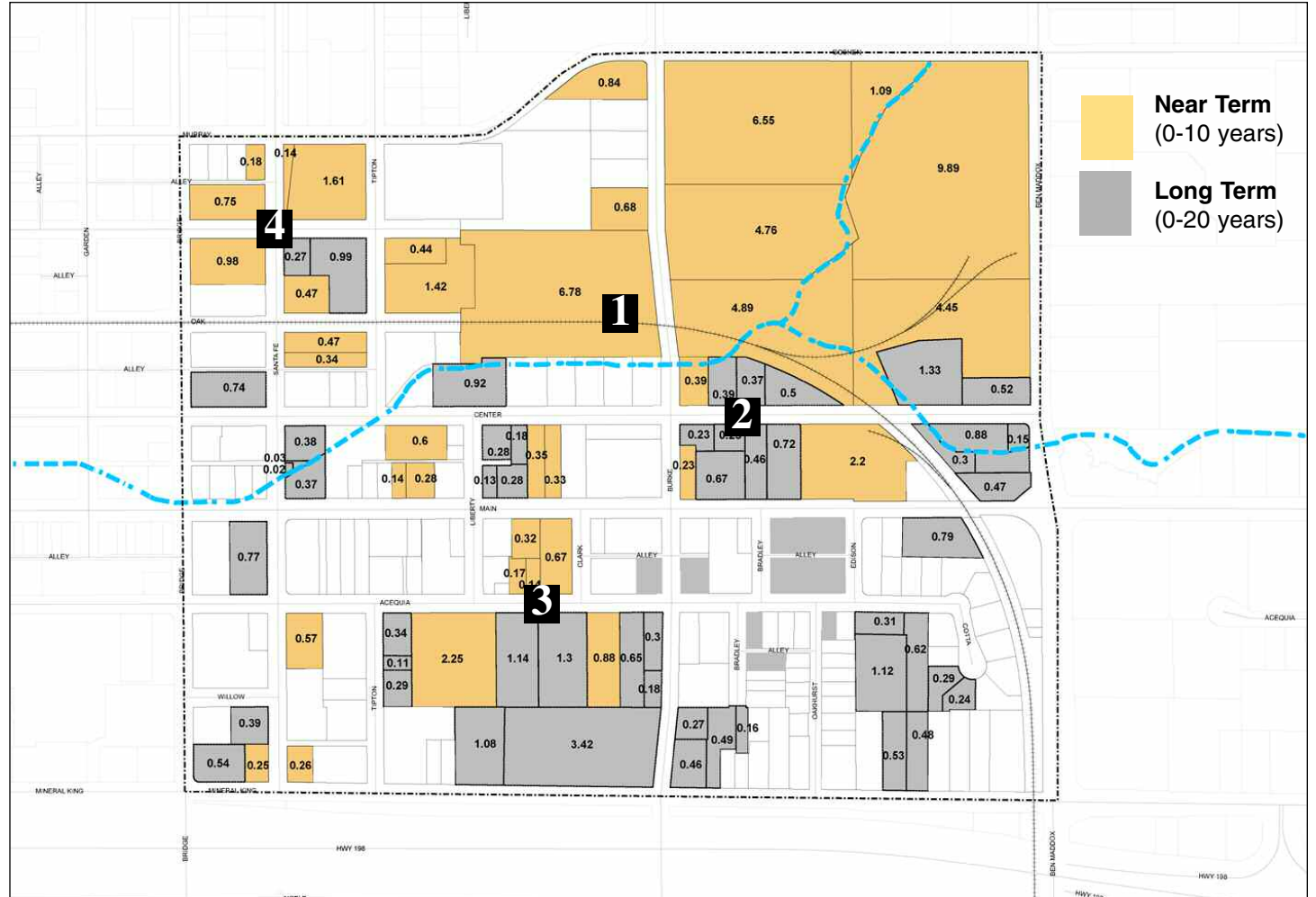
Sites that could be available towards the end of the planning period include additional sites along East Main Street (approximately seven acres), properties between Acequia and Mineral King (approximately 14 acres), and others scattered sites along Center Street.

Opportunity Sites		
	Parcels	Approx. Acres
Near Term Available	36	57
Long Term Available	58	30
Other Land	129	50
TOTAL	223	137



ABOVE:
East Main Street has a number of vacant and underutilized properties that can be redeveloped with residential and commercial development.

opportunity sites



ABOVE: This diagram indicates the location and acreage of near and long-term development opportunity sites. This map is conceptual and does not commit property owners or the City of Visalia to redevelop "opportunity sites".

preliminary concept

The preliminary concept is to be used to facilitate community discussion regarding key features that are desirable to include in the East Downtown Strategy. It identifies an overall framework of land use and connections. Within the framework, there are opportunities to create new parks and plazas, employment areas, and neighborhoods.

Overall Strategies

There are three “big ideas” found in preliminary concept. The first is to expand the traditional downtown two blocks to the east integrating employment and higher density residential uses around the Transit Center and Santa Fe. The second is to differentiate East Downtown from the traditional commercial downtown by emphasizing the development of infill housing and mixed-use development. The third is to enhance east-west connections by building a linear park along Mill Creek and extending the pedestrian-scaled downtown block pattern into East Downtown.

Creating New Places

The preliminary concept provides opportunities to create new places where public streets and open space become the focus for social and economic activities.

- A new plaza on East Main provides a gateway connection to the Mill Creek pathway and provides a respite at the corner of Santa Fe. Storefront retail and restaurants would edge the plaza.
- Mill Creek becomes a linear park along Oak Street that provides a connection to the Civic Center and is an amenity for a new office development.
- Smaller court yards and plazas that are visually connected to streets would be included in mixed-use projects.

- East Main Street becomes a residential mixed-use neighborhood address with storefront retail. Burke and Santa Fe have a continuous walking edge of shops and uses that add to pedestrian comfort and interest.
- The Civic center is bracketed by two parks. Along Burke an urban park would act as a gateway to East Main Street. An informal park would become a feature and amenity for the community and an adjacent future commercial center.

Connections

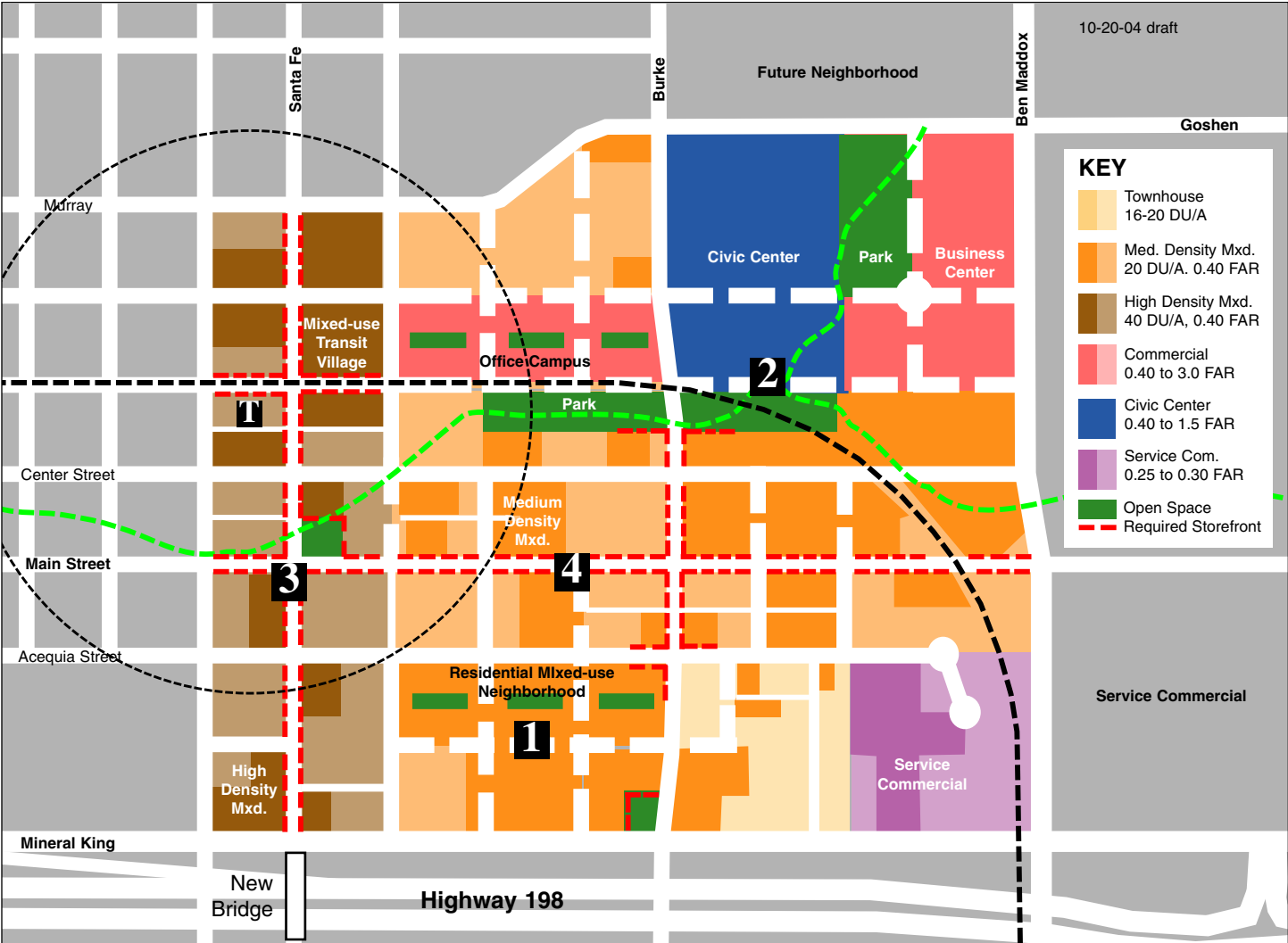
Connecting East Downtown to the rest of the community is the third “big idea”.

- Mill Creek becomes a linear open space with pedestrian and bike pathways.
- The preliminary concept extends pedestrian-scaled street and block patterns into the East Downtown.
- Santa Fe becomes a cross-town street.
- The RR right-of-way is maintained for potential future transit route.
- Important pedestrian connection streets include comprehensive streetscape and storefront treatment.



ABOVE:
The Strategy relies on residential development to activate the East Downtown area and support downtown's existing shopping district.

preliminary concept



ABOVE: This preliminary concept diagram indicates the pattern of land uses, blocks, open spaces, and connections for the East Downtown area.

development program

Over 80 acres could be made available for new development over the next 20 years. The type of land uses, market demand, infrastructure development, and other citywide policies can have an effect on the pace of investment. The development program summary for the preliminary concept is intended to provide an “order of magnitude” analysis for how East Downtown could accommodate various types of land uses.

Expanding Downtown

Santa Fe can become a renewed business and mixed-use address providing an opportunity to expand downtown’s edge to Tipton Street. This would provide a stronger relationship to the Transit Center and future mixed-use development along East Main and Santa Fe. These areas could provide an additional 510 units of housing and 65,000 SF of commercial uses directly adjacent to downtown.

Residential and Mixed-use Emphasis

One of the guiding principles recommended by the community was to pursue a mixed-use development along East Main Street including shopping, residential and employment uses. There are about 17 acres of land that could be redeveloped in the next 20 years. Assuming a medium density mix of residential and ground floor commercial uses, there might be an additional 350 units of housing and 60,000 SF of commercial uses. In addition, a mixed-use commercial and townhouse neighborhood to the south of Acequia would provide another 165 units.

Commercial at the Edges

Commercial uses that can take advantage of regional access and visibility are located along Ben Maddox and Mineral King. Facing Ben Maddox is a site that could support the development of at least 160,000 SF of commercial uses (more with structured parking). Mineral King frontage could include 50-60,000 SF of commercial as part of mixed-use areas.

Civic Center

The Civic center is indicated as an approximately 14 acre portion of the former railyards site. This land could support development of between 185,00 SF and 240,000 SF of public uses with surface parking. A parking structure could be added as a later phase as the community grows and more civic center space is needed. With a 500 car garage, the site could provide for as much as 350,000 SF of office and civic uses.



ABOVE
The development program assumes a variety of new residential development. This includes townhouses, apartments, condos, and lofts.

development program

Program Summary

1. Transit/Sequoia Gateway

Opp. Sites Approx. 7 acres
 Residential 360 DU's
 Storefront 45,000 SF

2. Downtown Expansion

Opp. Sites Approx. 3.6 acres
 Residential 150 DU's
 Commercial 20,000 SF

3. East Main Mixed-use

Opp. Sites Approx. 17.2 acres
 Residential 350 DU's
 Commercial 60,000 SF
 Open Space 2.75 acres

4. Commercial Office

Opp. Sites Approx. 6.8 acres
 Office 156,000 SF

5. Acequia Neighborhood

Opp. Sites Approx. 16.4 acres
 Residential 165 DU's
 Commercial 52,000 SF

6. Civic Center

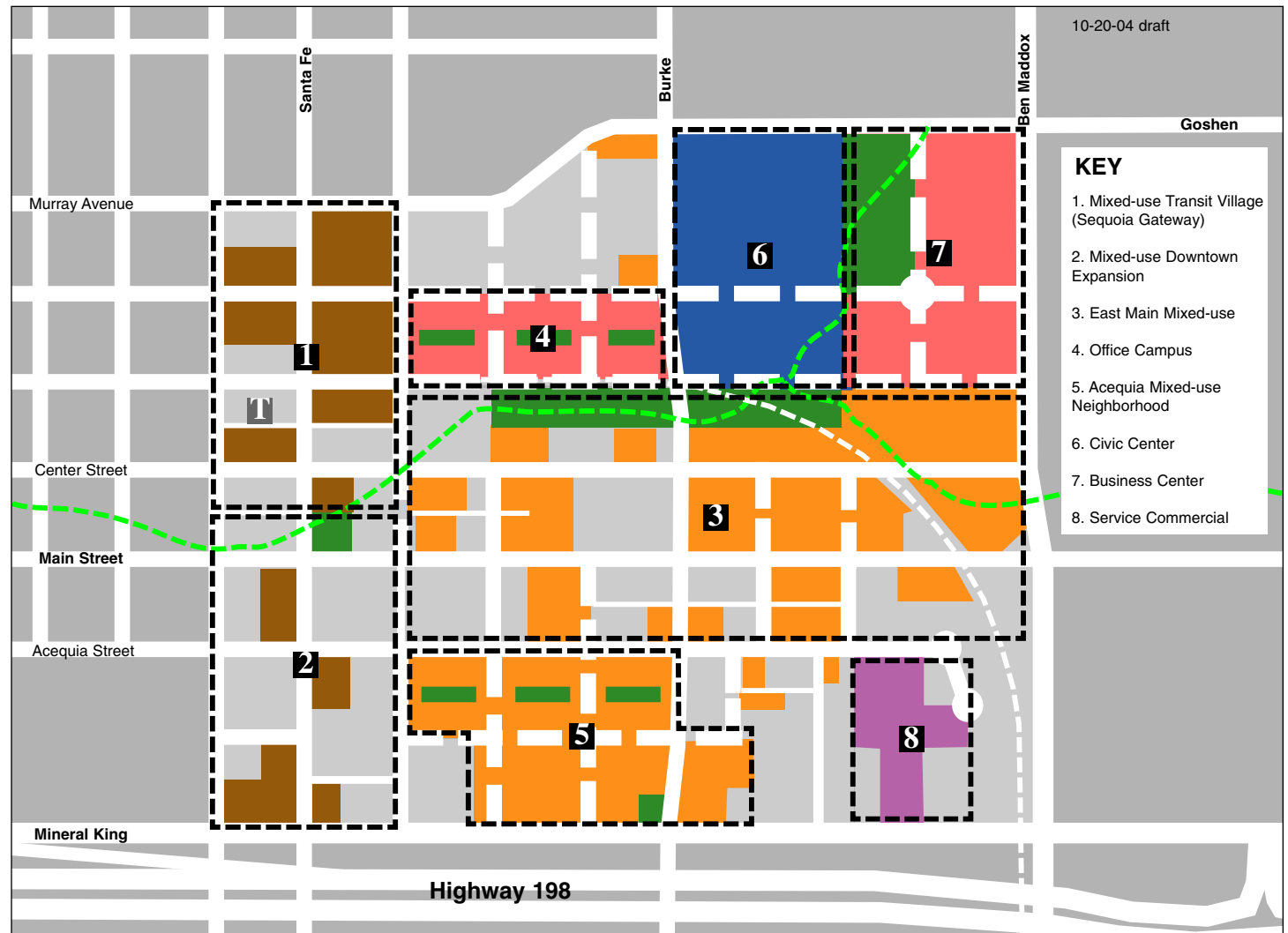
Opp. Sites Approx. 14.2 acres
 Office/Civic 185-250,000 SF

7. Business Center

Opp. Sites Approx. 15.3 acres
 Office 160,000 SF
 Open Space 2.75 acres

8. Service Commercial

Opp. Sites Approx. 3.6 acres
 Commercial 60,000 SF



ABOVE: This diagram indicates clusters of opportunity sites that form subdistricts within the East Downtown. There is a capacity to provide an estimated 803,000 SF of employment and shopping and 1,025 units of housing.