

# SELMA DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC PLAN



DECEMBER 2024

# SELMA DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC PLAN



DECEMBER 2024

***PREPARED FOR THE CITY OF SELMA BY:***

**RAIMI + ASSOCIATES**

**ECONOMIC & PLANNING SYSTEMS**

**FEHR & PEERS**

**AMI CONCEPTS**



**FEHR & PEERS**



# Contents

---

<b>Downtown's Changing Role</b>	<b>5</b>
↳ The Evolution of Downtown	8
↳ Downtown Selma Today	11
↳ Strategic Plan Charrette	15

---

<b>Priority Projects</b>	<b>17</b>
↳ Downtown Core Streetscape Plan	19
↳ 2nd Street Gateway	25
↳ More Food and Beverage Options	27
↳ Safer Streets and Intersections	30
↳ Union Pacific Right-of-Way Activation	33
↳ Lincoln Park Playscape	36
↳ New Development	38

---

<b>Strategies and Actions</b>	<b>39</b>
↳ Strategy #1: Create a Strong Identity and Sense of Place	41
↳ Strategy #2: Activate the Downtown	44
↳ Strategy #3: Safe Streets and Connected Pathways	47
↳ Strategy #4: Leadership and Administration	49

---

<b>Implementation and Funding</b>	<b>53</b>
↳ Summary of Funding Sources	54
↳ Alignment of Funding Sources with Priority Projects	59
↳ Implementation	61



# DOWNTOWN'S CHANGING ROLE

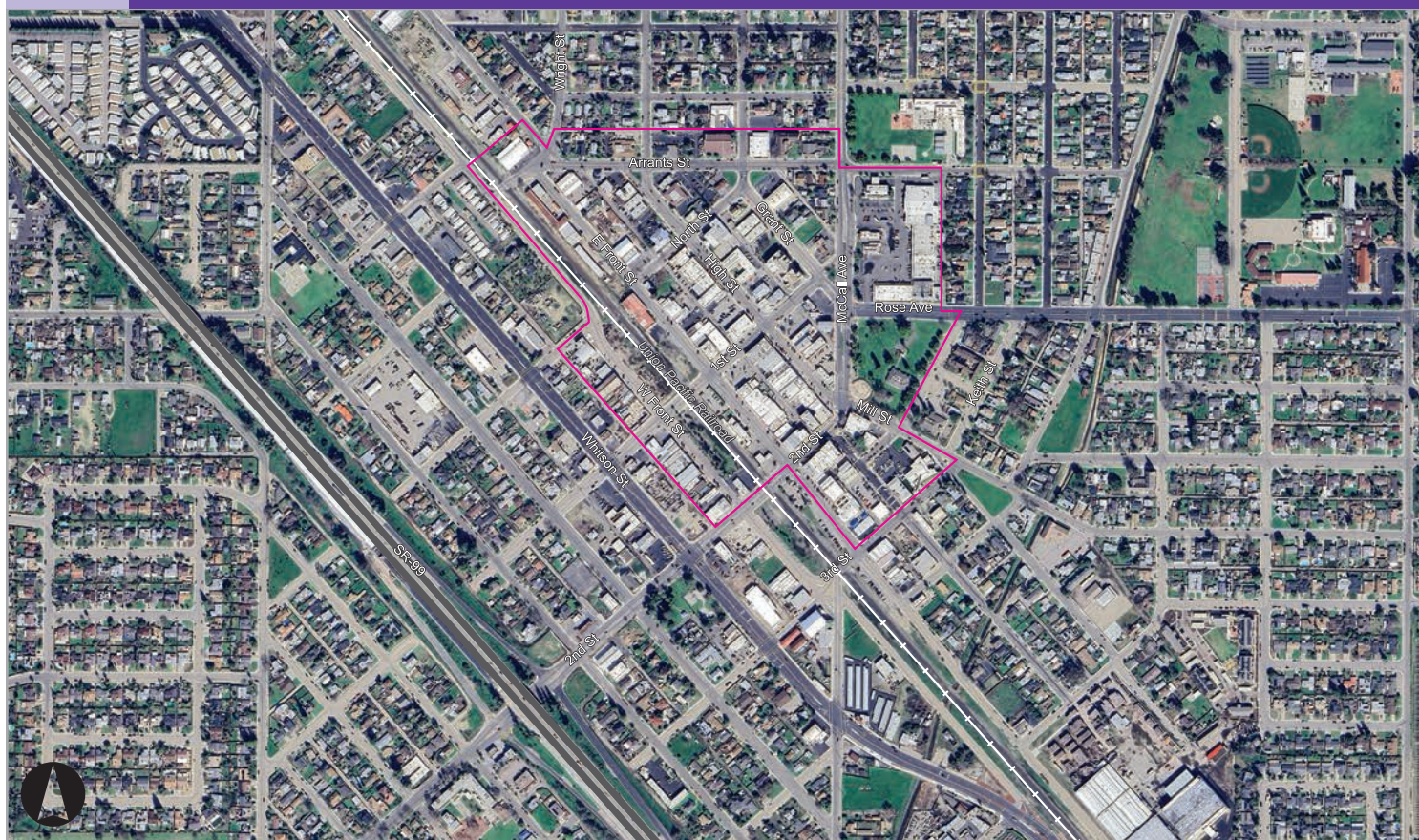




The City of Selma, located in Fresno County, is home to approximately 24,674 people.<sup>1</sup> The City's economy is anchored by its agricultural sector, a regional auto mall, and resident- and visitor-serving retail and services. As shown in Figure 1, California State Route 99 (SR-99) runs through the city to the west of Downtown.

Downtown Selma is a few blocks east of SR-99 and spans the Union Pacific railroad tracks. Downtown Selma is an approximately 65-acre area located in the center of the City of Selma. The Study Area is roughly bounded by 3rd Street, McCall Avenue, Arrants Street, and West Front Street.

**Figure 1** Local Context



Selma Downtown Area
 
 Union Pacific Railroad
 

 Freeway

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau. "QuickFacts Selma city, California." <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/selmacitycalifornia/INT100222>.



**Figure 2** Downtown Selma Study Area Map



Source: City of Selma (2024), ESRI (2024), Maxar, Earthstar Geographics



# The Evolution of Downtown

## EARLY BEGINNINGS

Selma was originally inhabited by the Yokut Native American tribe. The area later attracted European settlers in the mid-19th century, primarily due to its fertile soil. The creation of Mill Ditch in the late 1800s played a significant role in the history and development of Selma. The construction of this irrigation canal allowed settlers to cultivate crops in the region and facilitated the expansion of agriculture in Selma and the surrounding area. The availability of water attracted farmers and entrepreneurs to the area, leading to the establishment of businesses, schools, and other community institutions.

The town of Selma was founded in 1880, concurrent with the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Originally founded as a farming and railroad community, the town was situated around the Central Pacific Railroad line and the present-day Downtown area Figure 2.<sup>2,3</sup> The City's agricultural economy is rooted in the production of wheat, peaches, plums, grapes, and cotton. As the State highways were built, the city was further connected with other towns throughout the Central Valley, and its economic reach expanded. In the 1960s, about 90% of the U.S. raisin production occurred within eight miles of Selma, contributing to the city's adoption of the slogan "Raisin Capital of the World."



<sup>2</sup> "Downtown Selma." San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies. [https://sjvcogs.org/valleywide\\_activities/downtown-selma/](https://sjvcogs.org/valleywide_activities/downtown-selma/).

<sup>3</sup> Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Selma, Fresno County, California. Sanborn Map Company, Apr, 1891. Map. [https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00849\\_002/](https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00849_002/).

## A CENTER FOR COMMERCE AND SERVICES

Historically, Downtown Selma was the primary location for shopping and services that served the surrounding agricultural community. Many residents in the area lived on farms and would “come into town” for shopping, banking, sending or receiving packages, and buying groceries. Downtown played this role in the community from the founding of the City in 1893 through the early 1980s. During this time Downtown featured several banks, pharmacies, women’s and men’s clothing stores, a toy store, a fabric store, a movie theater, multiple churches, a mortuary, a JC Penny, multiple grocery stores, and a branch of the Fresno County library system. Restaurants included Fosters Freeze, Wilkins Drive-In, Cho’s Kitchen, Golden Dragon, and Herndon’s, a sit-down restaurant.

In the mid-1980s development expanded in the area around Floral Avenue, Whitson Boulevard, and the State 99 Freeway. Several auto-oriented shopping centers were opened, including big box retailers Walmart and Home Depot. The new development in this area increased overall economic activity in the City but drew a great deal of local retail and food shopping away from the Downtown. Over time the retail offerings on High Street and 2nd Street decreased. The core service-based role of Downtown continued, however, due to the presence of multiple banks, pharmacies, newspaper offices, and the post office. Nelson’s Hardware also continues to be a long-term business that both benefits from people visiting downtown for various errands and attracts people to the area.



As a response to the decrease in activity and economic activity in the area, a façade renovation and streetscape project was completed in 1989. The effort included improvement to the public right-of-way including tree planting throughout Downtown, installation of historic streetlights, adding brick inlay to the sidewalks, and adding crosswalks. These improvements breathed new life into the Downtown area and continue to provide value nearly forty years later. Over the years other improvements included adding string lights to the street trees, creating public parking lots, and sponsoring murals depicting the history of Selma related to the introduction of irrigation and the railway as economic drivers. Many of these improvements remain in place today, while others are in need of updates, repairs, or different improvements in keeping with the current desired character of the area.

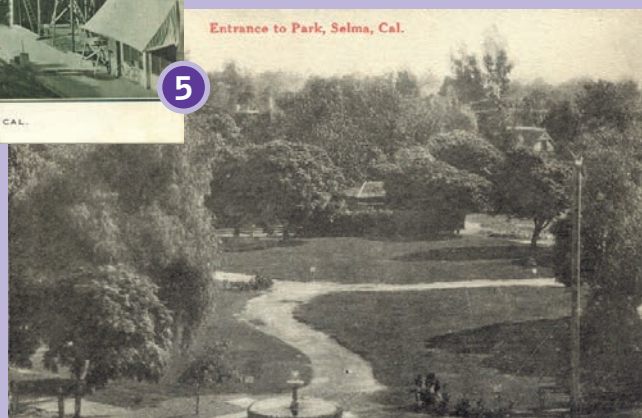




## A Snapshot into Downtown's Bustling Past



os Amigos Parlo No. 184. N. D. G. W.  
Belma Parlo No 107 N. D. G. W.  
First prize winners in  
our big Dry Day celebration  
Apr. 11. Our Parasols were all  
yellow & our wine was



- **1. Bustling Selma Depot and Exterior of Eastside Grammar School**
- **2. Dry Day Parade**
- **3. Blackman Windmill Factory**
- **4. Interior First National Bank in Downtown.**
- **5. Business Street and Lincoln Park**



# Downtown Selma Today

**Today, Downtown Selma continues to provide valuable services to the Selma community.** These include banking, insurance, and real estate agents and brokers, legal services, copying and duplication services, medical services, and pharmacies. Other businesses in the area include a grocery store, meat shop, bakery, beauty and barber shops, computer repair, home decoration shop, bead store, several restaurants, two dance schools, and a martial arts studio. While most buildings are occupied, the current level of economic activity is low, with Downtown contributing just 2% of the total annual sales tax revenue.

While not the major generator of sales tax revenue, Downtown Selma is the historic heart of the City and includes public agencies and assets including

City Hall, Police Station, and the County Library. It is important to Selma residents that the Downtown has a strong identity and includes services, amenities, and activities that draw people to the area.

Before the charrette, the consultant team prepared a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the Downtown area. The SWOT analysis was developed through discussions with the Business Improvement District (BID) Board and members at their January meeting, input from community members at an open house held at the Arts Center in January, and conversations with City staff. A summary of the SWOT was included in the opening presentation to establish the foundation for the charrette activities and analysis.



# SWOT Analysis

## S STRENGTHS

- Businesses in Downtown offer a **wide range of service** businesses, including a grocery store.
- The **Selma Arts Center generates activity** all year round and attracts people from the region.
- The **2nd Street exit** from the Golden State Highway **leads directly into Downtown**.
- Downtown has **historic buildings, murals** showcasing City history, and a **small-town character**.
- **Most of the buildings are occupied**, both ground floor and upper floors.
- The majority of Downtown **businesses and properties are owned by residents of Selma**.
- The **street network is walkable** and there are **bicyclist connections to nearby neighborhoods**.
- There is an **abundance of on-street parking stalls and off-street parking** lots.
- **Lincoln Park hosts events** that attract people to Downtown Selma.



## W WEAKNESSES

- Downtown **does not have a cohesive identity**.
- The **removal of the street trees** reduces shade and deters people from spending time.
- **Lighting was reduced** when the trees were removed.
- Only a **few businesses consistently draw people to the area**.
- Need **more places that are social hubs for the community**.
- **Lack of local entertainment and dining uses**.
- **Limited evening and nighttime dining options**.
- **Railroad tracks** and Union Pacific-owned property **create a divide** between the Downtown core and the businesses to the south on Front Street.
- **No Downtown sites are identified in the current Housing Element**.
- Concerns about **safety**.
- **Code issues** can make it difficult to encourage **new investment in existing buildings** or change from commercial to residential or mixed use.
- The **Auto Center** is Selma's largest regional attractor and a missed opportunity to attract that customer base to Downtown based on physical and psychological barriers, and inadequate pedestrian infrastructure and wayfinding signage.



## O OPPORTUNITIES

- Create a **cohesive character and identity**.
- Embrace and **celebrate the community's diversity**.
- Create an **attractive gateway** into the city on 2nd Street.
- Replace the **street trees and add shade structures**.
- **Consistent color scheme** and branding.
- **Increase activity in Lincoln Park**.
- Create **more short-term events with food vendors** on High Street between 1st or North Streets.
- **Landscape** or provide **community uses** on the **Union Pacific-owned** property.
- Locations exist for mixed-use residential development.
- **Tight supply of retail and office space** indicates demand for the area by local businesses.
- **Low housing vacancy rate** creates opportunities for new housing and/or mixed-use development.
- **Young residents and high labor force utilization** can support Downtown activity.
- **Repurpose retail spaces** with dining, entertainment, and other uses that generate foot traffic.
- **Direct people visiting the Auto Mall** to the Downtown stores and restaurants



## T THREATS

- Continued **shift** of retail **to online shopping** can **result in vacant retail spaces**.
- Increased **high temperatures** and duration of heat waves.
- The **regional shopping cluster around Floral Avenue and SR-99** pulls business away from the **Downtown**.
- **Loss of the banks that support foot traffic** and add to the diversity of reasons why people go to Downtown could have an ancillary effect on other businesses.
- **Deferred maintenance** and need for upgrades to the building façade.
- **Security concerns** related to the homeless population.
- **Retail activity is concentrated outside of Downtown**.
- **Subregional competition** for discretionary income with Kingsburg, Reedley, Fowler, and other nearby communities.
- Nearby communities pursuing **new development that reduces economic activity** currently occurring in Selma.





## ECONOMIC & MARKET CONDITIONS

The City of Selma has a population of around 24,400 residents. Over 5,200 live in the Census Tract (71.02) that includes the Downtown area. About 84% of the population in Selma identifies as Hispanic or Latino, with a slightly higher percentage in the Downtown area (90%). Selma has a comparatively young population, and the Downtown area population is even younger, with a median age of 28.

The Downtown area has a comparatively low unemployment rate (6.4% compared to 8.6% in Fresno County), and its residents have a very high labor force participation rate, approximately 71% compared to 61% in Fresno County overall. This younger, employed demographic can potentially support and be a catalyst for new Downtown activity, particularly increased food, beverage, and entertainment establishments and events. Two recently opened establishments, Antonio's Mexican restaurant and the Maiden Voyage coffee house are evidence of the potential for increased economic activity around food and beverage.

Downtown Selma has a tight supply of existing office and retail space. Over 75% of Downtown buildings and floor areas are for retail uses, but most businesses are office and service-oriented and occupy retail spaces. According to data from CoStar, the average vacancy rates for office and retail space in Downtown are very low, approximately 0.3% in Downtown and 1.4% in the city. With no growth in the Downtown office and retail inventory in the past ten years and such a low vacancy rate, there is a potential market and demand for additional office and retail space in Downtown Selma.

The multifamily housing market is also tight citywide, with a 1.7% vacancy rate. There are few multifamily housing units in Downtown Selma, representing another potential option for new development Downtown. New residential development would boost Downtown by increasing foot traffic, supporting local businesses, and fostering economic growth through an increased customer base.

Selma has very high taxable sales per capita compared to surrounding communities, such as Reedley, Kingsburg, and Fowler; and state and county averages. The automobile dealerships in Selma drive the comparatively high per capita taxable sales and represent a considerable advantage for Selma's fiscal revenues. Over half of Selma's taxable sales come from auto retailers located outside of the Downtown. Over 60% of Selma's taxable retail sales and 52% of its overall taxable sales come from automobile sales. Currently there is not much spillover from the auto sales and Downtown retail activity. However, even without auto sales, Selma's overall taxable retail sales per capita are higher than the surrounding communities.

Due to the service-oriented business base, Downtown Selma generates less than 2% of the citywide taxable sales. The buildings in Downtown Selma are consistently occupied, but not with uses that generate revenue or attract high levels of pedestrian activity. Downtown also contains the City's public administration jobs, except those employed by the Selma Unified School District.

Overall, household income levels in Downtown Selma are lower than in the rest of the city. Selma residents have comparatively low average housing costs, while downtown area residents have lower costs. As seen in the rest of Fresno County and the state, housing vacancies have declined over the past decade.

The average asking lease rate for rental housing in Selma is around \$1,100 per month, which would be considered affordable for a household making the median income. The average single-family home in Selma costs around \$378,000 (as of April 2024), which would require a qualifying income (\$110,000) well above the median household income (\$58,600) to purchase in Selma. Low vacancies and declining household size can create potential opportunities for constructing additional housing and/or mixed-use development in the Downtown.



# Strategic Plan Charrette



**The recommendations in this plan were developed through a two-day charrette process conducted in May 2024. The purpose of the charrette was to generate a series of strategies to shape the future of downtown Selma, building on existing strengths and opportunities, while recognizing current challenges and weaknesses. The charrette addressed economic, physical, funding, and collaboration opportunities related to Downtown Selma, to identify 5-7 strategies to focus on over the next five years.**

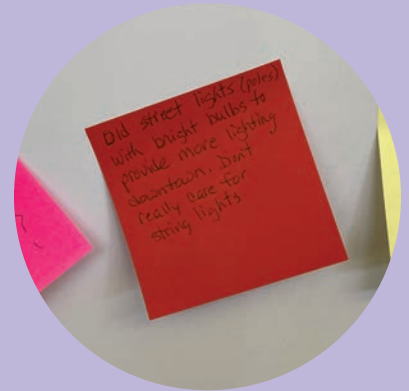
Held on May 16-18 at the Selma Branch Library, the charrette started with a welcome from Mayor Scott Robertson. The consultant team, consisting of Raimi + Associates, Economic Planning Systems, Ami Concepts, and Fehr and Peers, provided a presentation on the background conditions, economic factors, and a summary of Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis. City staff guided and members of the Downtown Selma Business Improvement District (BID) led a walking tour of Downtown. This was followed by a team working session through the

afternoon. The second day started with a review of work completed to date and the team sharing initial ideas for improvements to the Downtown area. This was followed by work time for the City and consultant team and preparation for the public presentation on Saturday afternoon.

Time was allocated on both Friday and Saturday for the public to observe and participate in the process. Community members were encouraged to view, provide comments, and show their preference for trees, lighting, activities, signage, and other potential improvements during two Open Studio times. The charrette was scheduled to provide community members with multiple opportunities to participate, whether it was during the workday or the weekend. Over the course of the two days, participation included all of the City Council, members of the Downtown Selma Business Improvement District, and multiple community members.



## The Community's Voice fills the Charrette





# PRIORITY PROJECTS



# Priority Projects

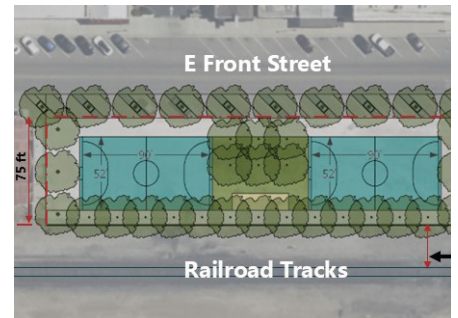
PRIORITY PROJECT  
**1**

**Downtown Core  
Streetscape Plan**



PRIORITY PROJECT  
**5**

**Union Pacific  
(UP) Right-of-Way  
Activation**



PRIORITY PROJECT  
**2**

**2nd Street  
Gateway**



PRIORITY PROJECT  
**6**

**Lincoln Park  
Playscape**



PRIORITY PROJECT  
**3**

**More Food and  
Beverage Options**



PRIORITY PROJECT  
**7**

**New Development**



PRIORITY PROJECT  
**4**

**Safer Streets and  
Intersections**





# Downtown Core Streetscape Plan

PRIORITY PROJECT  
**1**

**The Downtown streetscape incorporates several of the features that were requested by residents, including new street trees, upgrades to lighting, and the creation of a unified aesthetic and character.**

**The steps needed to complete the streetscape are:**

- Issue RFP to engage a consultant team to develop a schematic level streetscape plan (trees, lighting, furniture/material palette)
- Identify implementation costs (construction drawings, construction, maintenance)
- Secure funding
- Develop streetscape plan with tree species, planting schedule, and maintenance plan and associated costs
- Secure funding through existing and potentially new funding sources for capital and maintenance costs; determine if there are any willing private partners
- Engage the community to foster resident and business involvement and ownership

Several key initial design ideas for the streetscape plan are outlined below. The concepts should be elaborated on and direction confirmed, following the hiring of a consultant team.



## STREET TREES

New street trees will be located away from the previous sidewalk tree wells and instead placed roughly eight feet from the edge of the sidewalk.

As seen in Figure 3, this placement provides more room for the trees to grow, avoids conflict with adjacent buildings, improves views to businesses, and increases the shading area of parking spaces.



Creating a continuous tree canopy is the most important element of the Downtown streetscape project. Trees contribute to the sense of place and create cool and shaded places to spend time. To ensure maximum tree canopy coverage, a tree spacing pattern of 1 tree per 30-35 linear feet on each side of the street is suggested. Tree planting should include silva cells and improved soil to ensure the health and full growth of the trees, along with irrigation. Electrical connections should be included at each tree well for café and seasonal lighting. Decorative paving such as bricks, interlocking pavers, or stamped and colored concrete can be installed adjacent to the trees.

Tree species should be selected to maximize canopy cover, minimize maintenance, and maximize longevity. Creating a sense of place through the trees is an important factor. One idea generated at the charrette is to plant purple-flowering jacaranda trees along High Street to create an iconic effect when the trees bloom each spring. Recommended trees include London Plane, Chinese Elm, or California Sycamore as the predominant tree species with jacaranda or other trees with a dramatic bloom used as accents at key locations like intersections or gateways.

**Figure 3** Downtown Core Streetscape Diagram



## PARKING RECONFIGURATION

To add large canopy street trees within the current roadway area, the diagonal street parking will need to be reconfigured. The recommended approach is to provide a street tree between every 2 diagonal parking spaces to achieve consistent canopy cover. This approach does result in a loss of parking spaces. For example, High Street between 1st Street and North Street currently has 58 spaces.

The recommended configuration with 2 parking spaces between each tree would result in a loss of approximately 11 spaces. The design analysis also looked at providing 3 parking spaces between trees. This alternative will result in the loss of approximately 8 parking spaces and result in a 20-25% reduction in tree canopy coverage. To compensate for the loss of parking additional spaces could be established along 1st Street, East Front Street, or Grant Street.

**Table 1** Street Tree Analysis

					30 ft Diameter		20 ft Diameter	
High Street btw 1st + North St	Total Street Area	Number of Trees	Average Tree Spacing	Parking Spaces	Canopy Cover	Cover %	Canopy Cover	Cover %
Existing Condition	38400 sf	0	0 ft	58 sp	0 sf	0%	0 sf	0%
Alt 1	38400 sf	20	47 ft	50 sp	14000 sf	36%	6300 sf	16%
Alt 2	38400 sf	25	33 ft	47 sp	17500 sf	46%	7875 sf	21%

Note : Tree Canopy Area - 20 ft Diameter = 315 sf | 30 ft Diameter = 700sf

## LIGHTING

The current streetlights throughout Downtown are a mix of historic pedestrian lighting and cobra-head street lighting. The historic pedestrian lighting provides a strong identity and reinforces the historic character of the Downtown. Continued use of these lights – with updated wiring and lighting technology is recommended. Cobra head lighting should be used only when needed to light intersections or provide a safety function and whenever possible should be replaced with pedestrian scale lighting with underground wire to allow for full growth of future tree canopy.



## Café Lighting Infrastructure:

Café lighting in the street trees was an important defining feature of Downtown. The new streetscape design should provide the infrastructure for café lights. Poles to suspend the lights can be integrated with the street tree wells to allow lighting to be strung between trees or over the street.



## UNIFIED VISUAL IDENTITY

Developing a cohesive visual identity for Downtown aids in creating a memorable experience and enforcing a sense of place for the area. The developed aesthetic should be unique to Selma and celebrate what's important to the community.

This can be incorporated throughout wayfinding structures such as directional signage and place markers as well as light pole banners and gateway signage. Figure 4 below contains several sample sketches of ideas for wayfinding signage.

**Figure 4** Theme & Signage Design Concepts

### RAISIN CAPITAL



#### COLORS



#### TYPOGRAPHY

##### Heading

*Downtown Selma*

##### Body

City Hall

### HISTORIC HERITAGE



#### COLORS



#### TYPOGRAPHY

##### Heading

**Downtown Selma**

##### Body

City Hall

### MODERN AGRICULTURE



#### COLORS



#### TYPOGRAPHY

##### Heading

Downtown Selma

##### Body

**CITY HALL**



## PRECEDENT PROJECT

### *4th Street, Ceres, CA*

R+A reviewed multiple examples of downtown streetscape improvements throughout the Central Valley. Ceres, CA has a very similar situation to Selma and a well-designed streetscape and gateway feature. The team spoke with the Ceres Public Works director to learn about the project, understand the costs, and hear any lessons learned. The key element of the project mentioned was ensuring that businesses could be open during construction, which required close collaboration with businesses and project phasing. The construction of the Ceres project was completed in approximately 6 months.

The project area included 750 linear feet of street plus an additional area on side streets for bulb-out plantings and ADA spaces. The project included adding street trees between diagonal parking stalls, silva cell tree wells, installing permeable paving within the diagonal parking area, stormwater collection at bulb-outs, and lighting infrastructure.



The project was funded through the redevelopment agency and included one year of maintenance. The overall construction costs (in 2017 dollars) were \$3,327,000, about \$4,400 per linear foot. The City hired Odel Engineering to design the project for \$137,000. The City approved a yearly maintenance cost in 2024 of \$21,000 (about \$28 per linear foot).



## PRIORITY STREET TREE PLANTING AREAS

Areas of downtown along High Street and 1st Street should be the highest priority as they represent the core of downtown. East Front Street and 2nd Street should follow since they will have a great visual

impact and help create a strong gateway and identity to downtown. Figure 5 below outlines a three-phase approach to implementation.

**Figure 5** Phased Street Tree Planting Areas





# 2nd Street Gateway

PRIORITY PROJECT  
**2**

Marking the entrance to Downtown is a part of placemaking and identity. The Clean California Local Grant Program (CCLGP) grant from Caltrans provides the City with funds to make several improvements to the transition from the CA-

99 Freeway to Downtown along 2nd Street. This includes modifying the width and number of lanes in the area between Whitson and East Front Street to slow traffic as cars enter the historic core.



Creating a gateway feature is also a way to demarcate the moment of entering and exiting Downtown. An existing gateway feature is located at Whitson, made of bricks and metal letters stating, “Welcome of Selma.” Due to the width of the street, the size of the gateway, and other visual clutter in the immediate area, this gateway is insufficient in announcing the entrance to Downtown. Examples of more impactful gateways include the 4th Street entry into downtown Ceres, California, and the Van Ness Avenue gateway

from the Golden State Highway into Fresno. These gateways are more literal in that they enclose the street. A gateway for Downtown Selma could use a similar approach of enclosing the street or creating strong vertical elements that clearly announce entry into Downtown. The gateway should use colors, lettering, lighting, and materials like brick that are consistent with the aesthetic treatment selected for the Downtown streetscape.

**The next steps are to:**

- Decide if the gateway should encompass 2nd Street as an element that people drive through or if an approach using strong vertical elements is preferred.
- Identify the location for the gateway, with the east side of Whitson recommended as the preferred location.
- Coordinate with the City Engineer about the restriping of 2nd Street in the transition from CA-99 to East Front Street.
- Retain an architect or landscape architect to develop a design for the gateway
- Engage the Public Works Department to determine how to provide power and water to the gateway location.
- Finalize the design and obtain needed permits.
- Complete construction of the gateway and lane restriping.





# More Food and Beverage Options



**One of the strongest themes from the charrette was that people would like more food and beverage options in Downtown. These could be restaurants, coffee shops/cafes, bars, breweries, beer gardens. These uses attract people to Downtown, give them a place to spend time and create activity. People are interested in being in places with other people and food is a strong attractor of people and a generator of activity**

Historically, Downtown Selma was not a location with a large number of restaurants. There are several Downtown, but the issue is that the restaurants are scattered and not clustered along High Street or 2nd Street in a way that generates a strong perception of street life.

A second issue is the lack of new spaces that are restaurant ready. Converting existing spaces into restaurant space is expensive and time-consuming because of the need to bring the existing spaces up to current City codes. New spaces are much more affordable but there are few spaces downtown for new construction.

The strategic plan identifies several City-owned parking lots as potential spaces for new food and beverage businesses. Losing parking spaces is rarely

a popular endeavor and should be weighed carefully. Our limited analysis of Downtown has identified ample parking spaces within a few blocks' radius of High Street and opportunities to add a few spaces along 1st Street, Grant Street, and East Front Street by adding diagonal spaces and limiting access points into certain properties. There is also the possibility of turning the police lot on East Front Street into public parking, adding another 26 spaces to the pool.

- High and 1st Street Lot: 31 spaces
- High Street Lot: 17 spaces
- East Front and 1st Street Lot: 38 spaces

The types of services in Downtown Selma are diverse and their use patterns span throughout the day. New food and beverage restaurants will typically have their peak usage time after most of the other business types close for the day, allowing for shared use of the parking supply.

The strategic plan suggests further study of converting the two parking lots on High Street between 1st and 2nd Streets into potential food and beverage options. This will also complete the block with active building frontage creating a more cohesive center to Downtown.

# NEW FOOD AND BEVERAGE STRATEGIES

## Street Closures

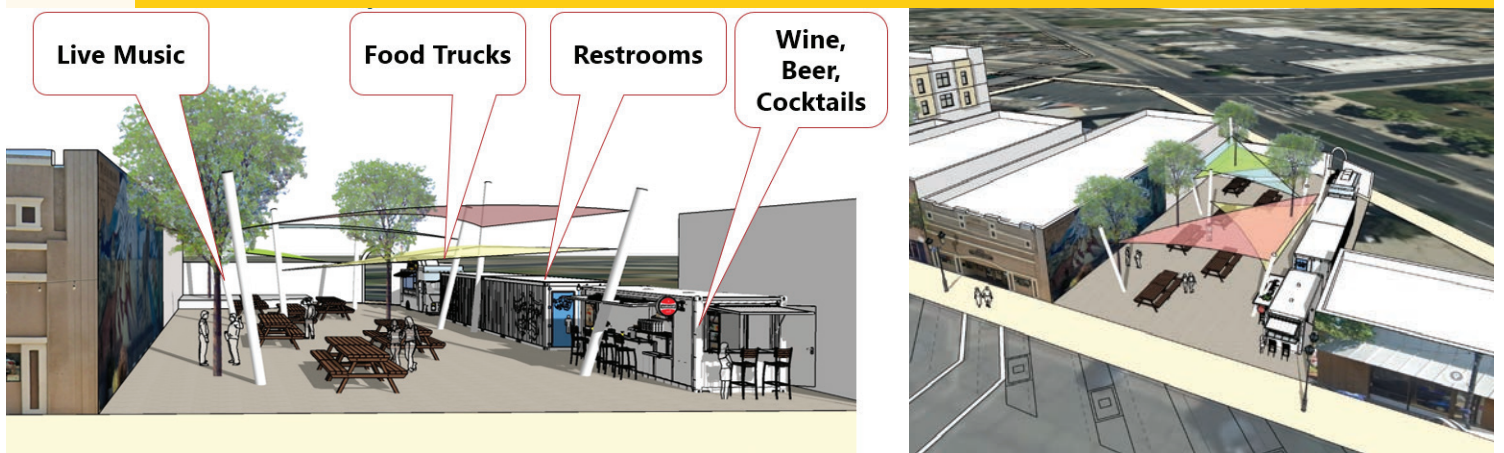
Temporary closing of High Street or one of the City-owned lots for food trucks and other pop-up events.

## Food/Beer Garden

One of the City parking lots could be converted into a food/beer garden. This could be done with City investment and then leased to a service provider or through a long-term lease where the lessee would provide the improvements. With minimal landscaping and infrastructure investments, one of the City parking lots could be converted into a food/beer garden. The structures may be temporary like converted freight containers. A beverage station and restroom could be provided and a space for a food truck to pull in and provide food service. Additional improvements could include trees, shade structures, misters, and a stage for live music.



**Figure 6** Outdoor Dining & Beer Garden Concept





## New Restaurant Ready Space

Another strategy is to increase food and beverage places to encourage new development downtown, as there are limited potential developable sites. The City-owned parking lots provide an opportunity for new development. These lots could be sold to a developer with the requirement to build ground-floor restaurant spaces.

The team analyzed the potential for redevelopment of the High and 1st Street lots as a mixed-use development. The ground floor could be one or two new restaurant spaces with the potential for outdoor dining along a pedestrian alley adjacent to the building. More information on the development analysis is available in the New Development Priority Project.



# Safer Streets and Intersections

PRIORITY PROJECT  
**4**

Downtown Selma has several odd intersections where the historic street grid that parallels the railroad meets the north/south-oriented grid. 2nd Street and McCall Avenue connect Downtown to Highway 99 and the northern parts of Selma, making it a key transportation corridor that some drivers tend to speed through. This road also intersects

with Rose Avenue, Grant Street, and 1st Street to create confusing and uncomfortable intersections for bikers and pedestrians. The lack of crosswalks and bike infrastructure can disincentivize people from walking or biking into Downtown from the neighborhoods on the northern side of Downtown.



## MCCALL AVENUE, ROSE AND GRANT STREETS ROUNDABOUT

A roundabout located at the intersection of McCall Avenue, Rose Avenue, and Grant Street would reduce driver confusion, slow the speed of traffic to a speed consistent with a downtown area, and create a unique visual feature that marks when someone is entering Downtown Selma from the northern side of the city. A traffic circle would reduce costs to the City related to maintaining a traffic signal and the cost of electricity to operate the signal.

As seen in Figure 7, the proposed roundabout configuration reduces the number of lanes in most directions from two lanes to one lane, but it keeps a right turn slip lane from McCall Avenue onto 1st Street and Grant Street. This configuration would add additional pedestrian crosswalks where there previously had been none: the northern crossing of McCall Avenue onto 1st Street, and from the triangle-shaped green space to the west side of McCall Avenue. The proposed median and center circle of the roundabout are opportunities to include public art or another gateway feature to mark this particular entrance to Downtown Selma.



**Figure 7** Potential Roundabout Configuration



**The steps needed to complete this roundabout are:**

- Hire an engineering firm to analyze traffic conditions
- Identify potential impacts on private property
- Prepare a schematic design of an appropriately sized roundabout
- Determine costs and available funding

## 2ND STREET RECONFIGURATION

2nd Street is the primary entrance to Selma and the Downtown. The road provides direct access to Downtown for residents living west of the freeway and for visitors coming to Selma from the highway. 2nd Street is also where the Gateway is proposed for a location between Whitson and West Front Street. Currently 2nd Street has two lanes in each direction as it enters into the Downtown, with a middle turning lane.

Selma's 2018 Active Transportation Plan provides a scale of Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress (PLTS) ranging from Level 1 - low to Level 4 - high. The entire 2nd Street corridor is currently rated as Level 3 PLTS. The Active Transportation Plan also recommends improvements at the SR 99 ramps at 2nd Street to increase pedestrian safety and lower the Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress from Level 3 to Level 2, and perhaps down to Level 1 at certain locations.

In 2023, the City received a Green California grant to modify 2nd Street so the transition from the freeway to the Downtown creates a safer experience for pedestrians and cyclists while emphasizing the transition into the slower speed character of the Downtown. A reconfiguration of 2nd Street starting at Whitson heading eastbound will address existing deficiencies in the active transportation system, improve safety, and increase ADA accessibility. New trees and vegetation on 2nd Street will create shade

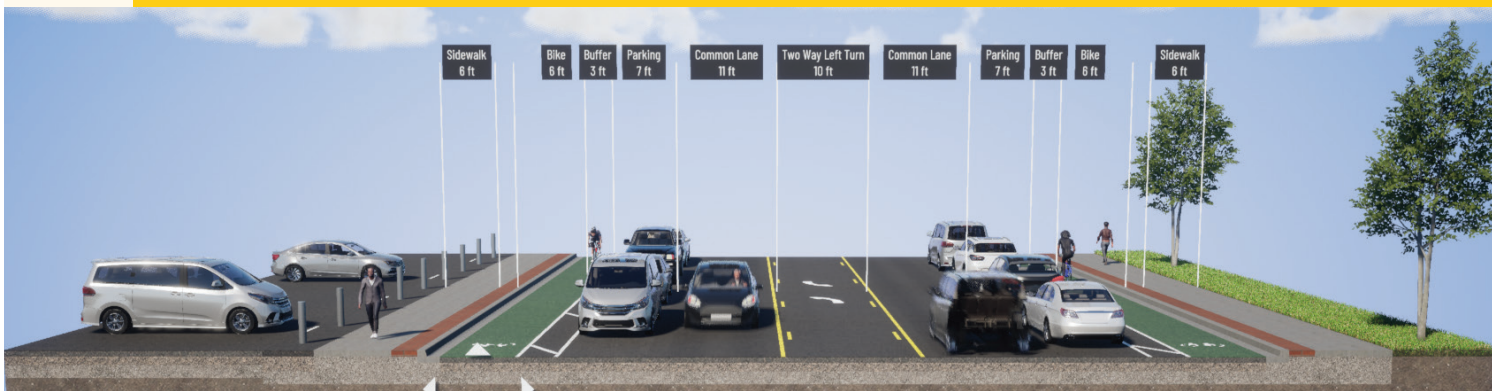
and a more pleasant and comfortable atmosphere for pedestrians and bicyclists. Increasing the visibility of pedestrian and bicyclist crosswalks will increase safety.

Currently, the transition from the four-lane configuration west of East Front Street to the two-lane configuration on the east side of the street is abrupt and is not effective at lowering the speed of traffic. There are also no bike lanes on 2nd Street due to the space allocated to vehicle lanes. Moving the transition westward to the intersection of 2nd Street and Whitson allows for a more gradual transition and the inclusion of a bike lane starting at Whitson heading eastbound. New trees, lighting, and crosswalks will work in concert with the proposed gateway to create an attractive and safe entry into the Downtown.

The next steps are to:

- Refine the design included in the grant application
- Develop final plans for the street reconfiguration
- Coordinate with Union Pacific if changes are proposed to the rail crossing to increase pedestrian access and safety
- Determine if the revised configuration can be accomplished with striping or if physical changes are needed
- Complete the reconfiguration in collaboration with the gateway development

**Figure 8** Potential Reconfiguration of 2nd Street east of Whitson





# Union Pacific (UP) Right-of-Way Activation

PRIORITY PROJECT  
**5**

The Union Pacific (UP) right-of-way creates a large dead space, roughly 215 feet in width, directly adjacent to Downtown. This space has great potential to create positive spaces in Selma and not be a detriment to Union Pacific's core business of providing necessary freight access to businesses in the Central Valley. At a minimum, the City should engage UP to find mutually beneficial solutions to the empty spaces downtown. The strategic plan identifies two potential priority actions that can

improve the city and provide more protection and safety to the railroad line. One is to locate an urban soccer park for short-sided futsal games. Another idea is to plant a Miyawaki microforest. Implementation of both of these ideas will involve meeting with Union Pacific to discuss partnering opportunities on their properties. Both of these strategies may want to be included in the Open Space Master plan as either near-term or long-term goals.



## URBAN SOCCER PARK

The strategic plan has identified the empty parcel at the northwest corner of East Front Street and 1st Street as a potential location for an urban soccer park. The goal of introducing an urban soccer park into Downtown Selma is to bring more people downtown, provide more activity around the clock, and provide a new recreational opportunity for the community. By building two short-sided fields for 5-on-5 games, the urban soccer park could bring up to 20-30 individuals per hour to downtown. The urban soccer park will

also beautify the land and create a buffer between businesses and the railroad tracks.

Figure 9 shows an area 300 feet in length with areas for tree and vegetation plantings on each end and a 65-foot open space between the courts. A gathering area for restroom facilities, waiting to play, gathering, and watching games should be included between the courts. Figure 9 specifies the recommended dimensions for this concept.

**Table 2** Urban Soccer Park Recommended Dimensions

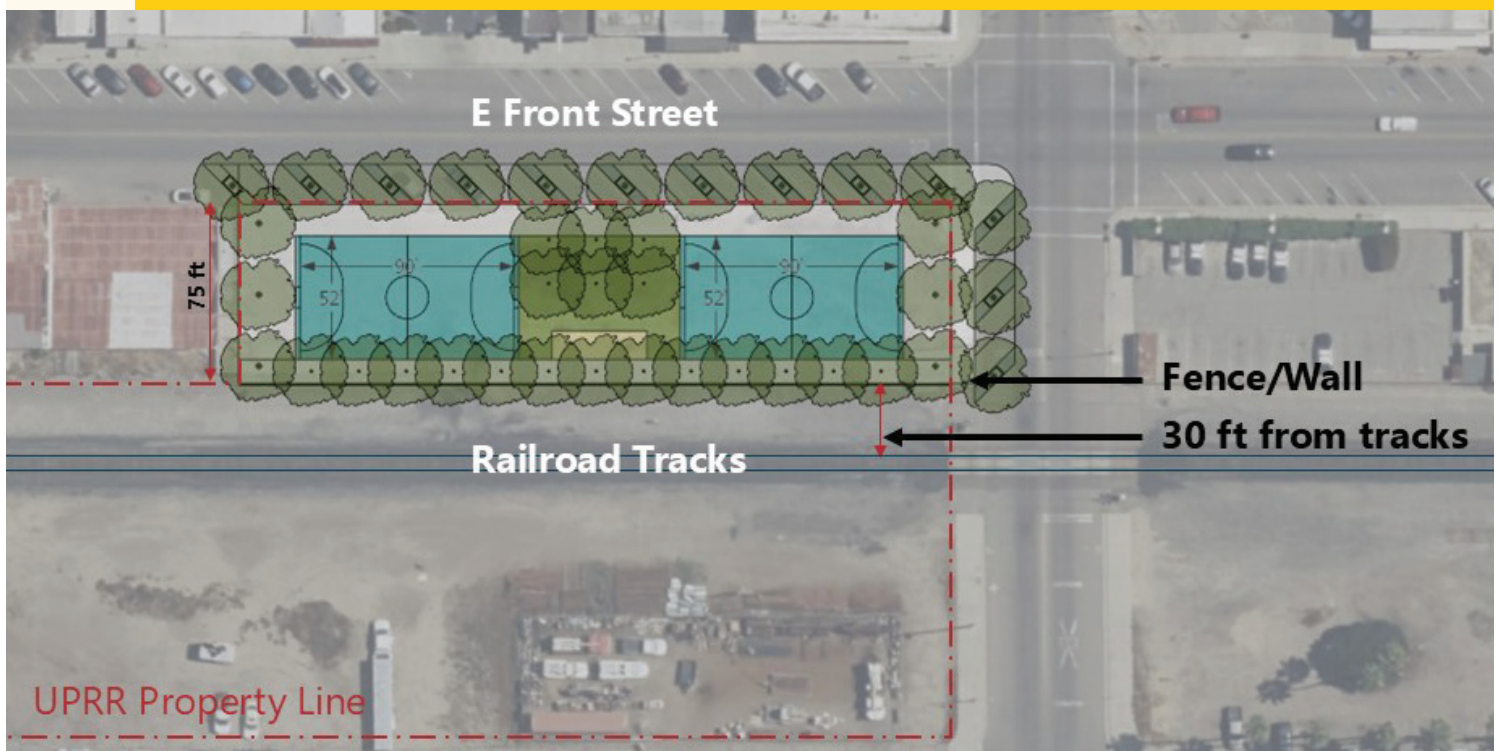
	Length	Width
<b>Minimum Sizing</b>	Each futsal court requires 90 feet of length, 180 feet for two courts.	65 feet from curb edge to wall
<b>Preferred Sizing</b>	75 feet from curb edge to wall (allows for planting along railroad side)	

## Optional Amenities

In addition to the basic requirements for establishing an urban soccer field, the following optional amenities would help increase the comfort and safety of the soccer park.

- **Lighting.** Lighting is an important factor in extending playing time into the evening hours when working people have time to meet, and this supports the goal of bringing more people downtown to support food and beverage businesses.
- **Shade Structure.** A shade structure over the futsal courts will extend playing time in the summer during daytime hours and provide a cool place for recreation. A shade structure complicates the project and will greatly increase the cost of the project but should be evaluated. Implementation

**Figure 9** Urban Soccer Park Concept





## Implementation

The urban soccer park could be implemented through purchasing or leasing the land from Union Pacific. The design and construction of this park can be done by full-service companies such as Urban Soccer Park (Urbansoccerpark.com), which has completed projects in California and has experience in cities like Temecula. Their services include design, construction, and lighting, though not restrooms and landscaping. An initial estimate to deliver a project like this is \$250,000 to \$500,000.

### The next steps are to:

- Contact Union Pacific about the ability to lease the land.
- Address issues of access, safety, or other concerns with UP.
- Contact an urban soccer field development company to get an initial cost and schedule estimate.
- Identify funding options including potential sponsorships

## MIYAWAKI MICRO FORESTS

Miyawaki forests are small urban forests that are planted with a dense and multi-layered collection of native bushes, shrubs, and trees. Pioneered by the botanist Akira Miyawaki, the Miyawaki planting method involves planting native plant species in close proximity to each other to spur rapid and dense growth to more quickly provide greenery and canopy cover and increase biodiversity and wildlife habitat.<sup>4</sup> Miyawaki forests become self-sustaining ecosystems that can restore biodiversity and provide multiple environmental and human health co-benefits, such as sequestering carbon, mitigating urban heat islands, and removing air pollution.

Multiple elementary and middle schools in Berkeley, CA have already implemented Miyawaki forests on their campuses to increase the urban tree canopy and to serve as an educational tool for students on the effects and solutions to climate change. Berkeley Unified School District staff and community members partnered to raise the funds for the saplings and organized community planting days, making these reforestation efforts a community event.

With climate change impacts becoming more severe and the State setting ambitious climate action and adaptation goals, State and federal funding to support urban forestry projects has become much more readily available in the past few years.

The State of California allocated millions of dollars to support urban forestry in 2022 and 2023 and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 allocated \$1 billion for grants to increase equitable access to trees and urban forests through the Urban and Community Forestry Program. Whether funded as a City pilot project, or in conjunction with regional, State, or private partners, the investment pays for itself in its environmental co-benefits and beautification of a site that was previously empty.

To implement Miyawaki forests along the UP Right-of-Way, coordination between the City and Union Pacific will be necessary to determine:

- Leasing of the land
- Funding sources
- Fencing along railroad tracks
- Initial watering and maintenance in the first 18 months to 3 years of forest planting



<sup>4</sup> "The Miyawaki Method for Creating Forests." SUGi Project. July 15, 2024. <https://www.sugiproject.com/blog/the-miyawaki-method-for-creating-forests>

# Lincoln Park Playscape

PRIORITY PROJECT  
**6**

Lincoln Park is an asset to Downtown Selma, as it provides an open green space and hosts many festivals throughout the year that attract people from all over Selma and nearby communities. Yet,

it currently does not provide recreational activities that can attract more families and residents to the park, and then, attract them to Downtown businesses.

**Figure 10** Lincoln Park Playscape Concept





Figure 10 shows a reconfiguration concept for Lincoln Park that proposes adding a playground to the park, possibly relocating the existing gazebo, and maintaining the grassy area of the park for recreation and special events. Lincoln Park already has a Senior Center, and the Selma Library Branch is across the street from the park, so adding a recreational use aimed at children can further emphasize the multigenerational use of this park. A new and inventive

playground at Lincoln Park can attract more families and people with children to the Downtown area from within Selma and other nearby towns to specifically visit the new playground. In addition to an interesting design, a new and attractive playground could include shading, a splash pad, and other features that create an inviting and pleasant experience for children and their parents and guardians.



# New Development

PRIORITY PROJECT  
**7**

Adding new buildings downtown should be a key long-term goal for the City. That may include new residential or mixed-use development on private parcels. The new development will bring more people downtown and provide vibrancy. The strategic plan

team analyzed two City-owned parking lots for potential development to inform discussion on the potential for infill development. Similar projects could be considered on privately-owned properties in the Downtown.

## Potential Development Capacity:

### 1st and High Street:

- 3-story mixed-use building, tuck-under surface parking
- 10-12 units
- 13 parking spaces
- 2,000 to 2,500 square feet of ground floor commercial along High Street
- Loss of 31 parking lot spaces, gain of 5 street spaces from the elimination of curb cuts

### 1st and East Front Street:

- 3-story mixed-use building, surface parking
- 12-15 units
- 15 parking spaces
- 3,000 to 4,000 square feet of ground floor commercial along 1st and E. Front Streets
- Loss of 38 parking lot spaces, gain of 5 street spaces from the elimination of curb cuts

**Figure 11** Mixed-Use Development Concept





# STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS





The charrette determined that Downtown Selma has multiple assets to work with in creating a stronger economic base and a more cohesive sense of place. Community members expressed the greatest interest in:

- Recreating a cohesive identity
- Replacing the street trees
- Adding lighting
- Creating more places to eat, drink, and spend time
- Increasing the range of activities in the park
- Developing the railroad right-of-way into an amenity
- Making the streets safer for cyclists and pedestrians
- Developing new housing on currently vacant parcels





# STRATEGY #1: Create a Strong Identity and Sense of Place

Downtown Selma has a good collection of historic buildings, a walkable street grid, long-term businesses, and a diverse range of services. Identity or a sense of place is created through a combination of factors that include buildings, street trees, urban design features, continuity of the pedestrian experience, level of building maintenance, storefronts, signage, and color scheme. Many of these components already exist but are outdated, incohesive, or in need of maintenance.

Assets include historic buildings and streetlights, murals, and cohesive downtown core, and existing sidewalk planters, decorative brick paving, and

plazas at the Art Center and near the intersection of 2nd and McCall. Several buildings have maintained the upgrades from an earlier façade improvement program.

Cleanliness and maintenance are critical as this conveys that the community cares about the Downtown. Replacing the trees, upgrading or adding lighting, creating a cohesive color palette and signage, beautifying alleyways, and improving the quality of building façades are all critical aspects of the physical environment that create a sense of pride in the community and encourage visitors.

## ACTIONS

### Plant New Street Trees

Street trees are a critical part of creating an appealing character in a downtown. Trees provide aesthetic variety, seasonal change, and shade that is of great value during hot summer months. The need to replace the street trees creates an opportunity to explore more contemporary ideas about street tree placement to maximize shade for both pedestrians and vehicles, increase the view of the businesses, provide more growing space for the trees, and avoid uplift of the sidewalk.



## Preserve and Increase Lighting

The existing historic streetlights are a valuable aesthetic asset and should be preserved and, if needed, rewired to accommodate LED bulbs. Additional decorative lighting should be installed along High Street from 2nd to North, along East Front Street from Grant to North, and along 2nd Street/McCall from East Front to Arrants. Charrette participants expressed a strong interest in café lights to both provide additional light on the sidewalks and to serve a decorative purpose. Infrastructure for café lights should be included in the streetscape design. Café lights can be placed in the trees or strung parallel to the sidewalk. Lights could be strung over High Street from Second to North to create a visual “ceiling” that reinforces High Street as the center of activity in the Downtown core. Other options for pedestrian-oriented or decorative lighting are lighted bollards at the intersections of:

- High Street and McCall Avenue
- High Street and First Street
- High Street and North Street
- 2nd Street and East Front Street



## Create a Sense of Arrival

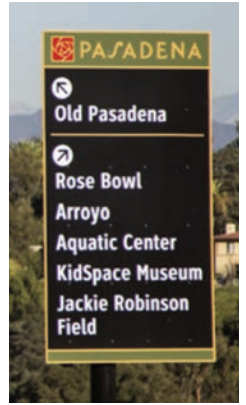
The existing gateway sign at Whitson and 2nd Street should be replaced with an entry design that is more visually prominent for drivers coming into the Downtown on 2nd Street. Options include a vertical element on both sides of 2nd Street, an archway, or a sign that spans the street. Ideally the gateway would be large enough to be seen by drivers exiting the freeway. The gateway design and installation should be combined with mobility and safety improvements that are planned for 2nd Street.





### Provide Cohesive Visual Theme and Signage

Signage is a way to reinforce the special character of Downtown. New signage throughout the Downtown is needed to create greater aesthetic cohesion. The style or theme can be historic, contemporary or celebrate the agricultural heritage of the community. A consistent design, logo or icon, and designated font and color palette should be selected. Signed should be placed to direct people to High Street, the Art Center, Public Library, Lincoln Park, and West Front Street.



### Keep Downtown Cool

Summer temperatures in the Central Valley can surpass 100 degrees for multiple days. Providing shade is essential for people to be comfortable spending time outside from May through September. Street tree planting should maximize tree canopy over streets to reach 50% canopy cover. Other options include shade sails at public plazas or over parts of streets that have pedestrian traffic - High Street, 2nd Street, and Front Street. Canopies, awnings, and trellises are other options for reducing direct sun exposure. Canopies or awnings should be made of durable material, ideally metal, be mounted to project horizontally from building facades, and be large enough to provide shade for pedestrians through the afternoon and evening.



# STRATEGY #2:

## Activate the Downtown

Downtown activity is currently dominated by personal business and errands such as banking, post office, picking up prescriptions, and some shopping. There is steady activity during business hours during weekdays and Saturdays. Very little activity takes place in the evenings with restaurants closing at 8 PM, or on Sundays.

Increasing activity supports local businesses and restaurants, puts people downtown, and increases public safety. Some activities can be permanent and ongoing, while others can be temporary or seasonal.

The current downtown events should be continued and expanded to include additional food and recreation

options. The Selma Marching Band Festival draws people from throughout the region in the fall. The Raisin Festival in Lincoln Park includes carnival rides and competitions in baking, photography, and flower arranging. The Performing Arts Center organized a multi-cultural event in May that closed a portion of High Street in front of the Center

Street Eats is an event that has previously been hosted at Lincoln Park and, more recently, in the public parking lot at the corner of First and High Streets. Additional opportunities include a harvest-related festival, leveraging interest in the Blossom Trail, and encouraging more multi-cultural events to share the diversity of the community.

## ACTIONS

### ACTION

#### Create Places to Hang Out

Downtown does not currently have many cafés, diners, or other shared or “third places” where people can have coffee, meet friends, or take a break when running errands. These spaces create a welcoming environment and can enable interactions between community members and contribute to the identity.





### Increase Activity in the Park

Opportunities for increasing activity at Lincoln Park, the closest green space to Downtown Selma, include adding children's play equipment to Lincoln Park, creating a seasonal splash pad during the summer, and ice-skating rink in the winter at Lincoln Park. If not feasible at the park, an ice-skating rink could be located in a nearby City parking lot.



### Increase Food and Beverage Options

Downtown has a small number of restaurants. Community stakeholders expressed a strong interest in having more food and beverage options. Temporary food vending or food-related events are ways to increase dining options, ideally in a way that also supports the existing restaurants. Some food vending activity occurs in conjunction with the marching band competition, and the raisin festival, and events such as Street Eats could be expanded to further showcase the community's diversity. There are currently no vacant restaurant spaces in the Downtown and building out a new space requires a large initial capital investment, so using food trucks or other vendors is a lower-cost method of increasing the number and diversity of food options.



## Build a Residential Population

Residential neighborhoods are directly adjacent to the Downtown, but there are limited options for housing in the actual Downtown. Several upper stories of historic buildings on High Street and 2nd Street have been converted to loft-style apartments and there are additional locations where this could occur. Downtown also features multiple vacant lots or City-owned parking lots that could be candidates for housing development. Options for housing include townhouses and potentially three-story mixed-use buildings.



## Integrate and Activate the Union Pacific Railroad Right-of-Way

The railroad tracks and the land owned by Union Pacific separate the main core of Downtown from the stores and services to the west. There are several buildings and uses located on the railroad right-of-way: Wilkins Drive-In, a former passenger terminal/police station, and public parking, but the majority of the area is vacant. Possibilities for the area include adaptive reuse of former passenger terminal, additional public parking, tree planting, recreational uses like basketball courts or small soccer fields, or planting of a micro-forest.



Citizens Forests by Wango licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0.





# STRATEGY #3: Safe Streets and Connected Pathways

The street network of Downtown Selma is consistent but does not currently provide a comfortable walking or biking experience. With future safety enhancements that slow down the pace of traffic and protect people who walk and bike in and to Downtown, it can lay the foundation for creating more activities and events in Downtown Selma. McCall Avenue and 2nd Street is a key route for vehicles traveling from the north part of Selma to connect with State Route 99 and Golden State Boulevard. McCall Avenue

is currently designated as a truck route, which generates pass-through traffic that provides little benefit to Downtown. Redirecting trucks to other routes creates opportunities to implement measures to reduce traffic speeds in the Downtown and support development of a pedestrian-oriented character. Other opportunities include re-striping Rose Avenue to include a bike lane and to provide a safer transition to Lincoln Park.

## ACTIONS

### ACTION

#### Safer Intersections

Downtown Selma has several odd intersections where the historic street grid that parallels the railroad meets the north/south-oriented grid. A roundabout located at the intersection of McCall Ave, Rose Ave, and Grant Street would slow the speed of traffic and create a unique visual feature or landmark that marks the entry to the Downtown. Roundabouts have cumulative positive operations when used in series, so future roundabouts could be considered at other locations including:

- High Street / Mill Street / 2nd Street
- McCall Ave / Arrants Street
- Arrants Street / Lee Street
- Arrants Street / High Street / Logan Street
- Arrants Street / Wright Street / Chandler Street / E Front Street.

### ACTION

#### Make Space for Bikes

To increase the safety of people riding bikes Downtown from other parts of the city, the citywide bike network outlined in the Active Transportation Plan should be implemented whenever street resurfacing, restriping, or other upgrades are completed. The process of improving access to Downtown started with the City receiving a Clean California Grant to improve 2nd Street between Highway 99 and Downtown.

## Safer Streets

The three major roadways entering the downtown area are currently over-designed for the current level of traffic and create a barrier for residents of the surrounding neighborhoods to comfortably walk to Downtown. Quick build options for lane reductions, short-term or permanent, should be considered on 2nd Street, McCall Avenue, and Rose Avenue. Restriping 2nd Street to one lane in each direction in the area between Whitson Street and East Front Street would allow for the inclusion of bicycle lanes and pedestrian improvements at the railroad crossing.

Rose Avenue between McCall and Dockery Avenue could be restriped to one lane in each direction with a bike lane connecting to the ditch bike trail along Orange Avenue and Wilson Elementary. Rose Avenue would be less of a barrier between the shopping center, Lincoln Park, and the neighborhoods to the east. McCall Avenue is constrained to two lanes north of Arrants Street and south of Mill Street, where it becomes 2nd Street. Reducing a lane in each direction along McCall Avenue within this gap would increase safety for all, reduce unnecessary speeding, and provide the opportunity to shorten pedestrian crossings.

## Support Temporary Use of High Street

Currently, High Street is only temporarily closed for the marching band festival and other occasional temporary events that bring people to Downtown. This street is the ideal location for street closures as it runs through the heart of Downtown and there are parallel streets that can be used for parking and circulation. Continuing to support the temporary closures of High Street between McCall Avenue and North Street for special events is important to attracting more Selma locals and regional visitors to Downtown. Infrastructure such as access to power or retractable bollards would facilitate additional use of High Street as a public open space and location for frequent community events.

## Link Downtown to the Broader Community and Region

Considering Downtown Selma's proximity to regional connection routes, organized outdoor events such as 5K and 10K walks and runs, half marathons, and regional bike rides that start, finish, or go through Downtown can elevate Selma as a tourist destination and attract more visitors to Downtown businesses. For example, a bike ride event can be designed to include stops in Downtown, continue on the Golden State Corridor to make a 10 to 50-mile ride through Kingsburg, Dinuba, Reedley, and Fowler, and host event-related activities in the Downtown.

To host certain events, signage, and safety improvements may need to be implemented to better communicate established bike and pedestrian routes. A 6.5-mile (10k) running and biking loop that includes the Golden State Corridor's active transportation improvements near Downtown and portions of the historic Mill Ditch could be established with signage and some modest improvements for safety. With those improvements, all or portions of the loop can be used for exercise and recreation when not in use for an official event. Ideally, this type of loop would link to several parks including W.H. Shafer Park, Lincoln Park, and Ringo Park, and could feature exercise equipment.



# STRATEGY #4:

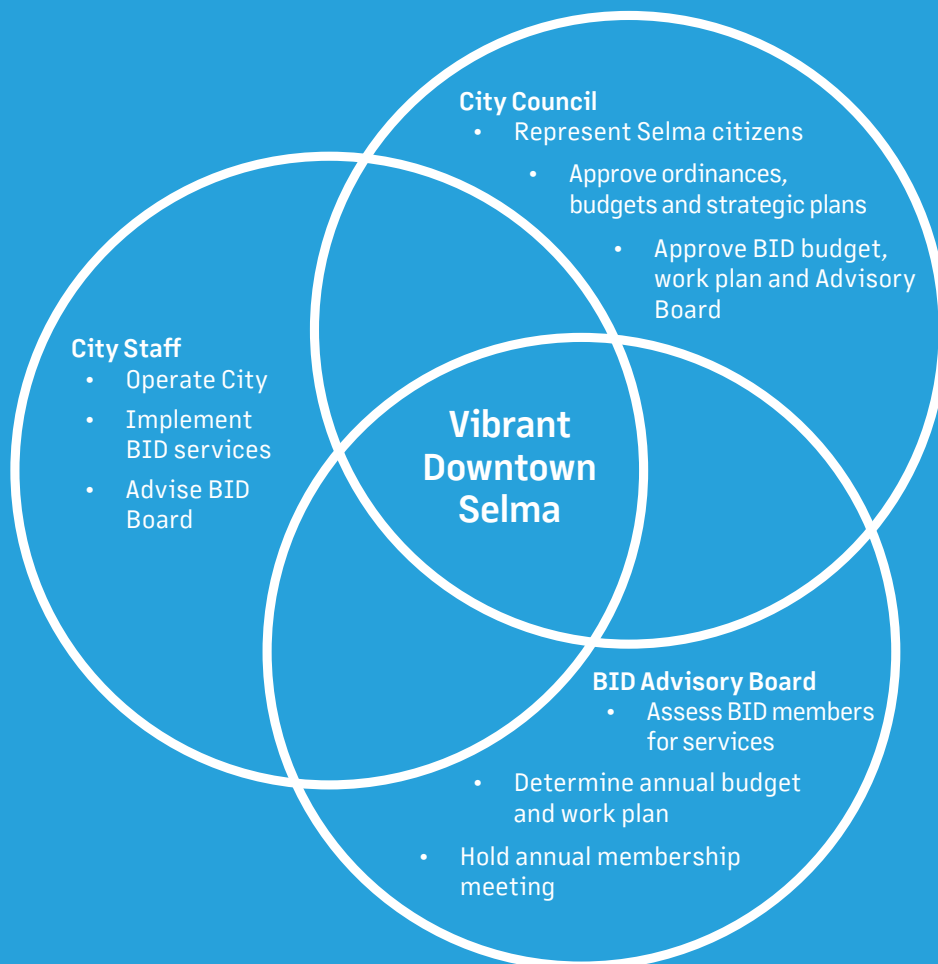
## Leadership and Administration

Three entities share in the effort to create a vibrant Downtown Selma – City Council, City staff, and the Downtown Selma Business Improvement District (DSBID). A collaborative working relationship and open communication are vital to uniting these three perspectives. The DSBID, City staff, and City Council must work together effectively to realize a shared vision for Downtown Selma that is a thriving, vibrant, economic, and cultural hub for the community

The Downtown Selma Strategic Plan outlines a series of strategies for creating economic vitality that is visible, tangible, engaging, and has a lasting impact.

This shared vision can only be accomplished through cooperation with the City Council, staff, and BID leadership, with each entity recognizing its roles, responsibilities, and contributions. A lack of cohesion between the three partners can detract from the ability to achieve the vision of a strong, vibrant, and attractive Downtown.

The City Council is elected to represent the interests of Selma citizens. The City Council approves an annual budget, ratifies ordinances and resolutions, conducts strategic planning, and appoints citizens to City committees and commissions, including the BID.



The City Council approved the DSBID formation, and each year approves the BID budget, work plan, and advisory board members. The City of Selma staff implements the policies and decisions approved by the Council and manages the day-to-day operations of City functions like public safety and community services. Staff also provide the services approved through the BID and supports the Advisory Board.

The Business Improvement District is made up of business owners who voted to assess themselves to fund services beyond what is provided by the City. They are authorized under the California Streets and Highway code via the Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989 and subsequent minor updates. The DSBID establishes an Advisory Board to represent the interests of the BID and provide a unified voice for the Downtown Selma business community. A district-wide annual meeting is held to accept nominations for the BID Advisory Board and receive feedback from district businesses on the annual work plan. It is important to have both a broad range of business types and good geographic representation, although it is recommended that the Advisory Board maintain a reasonable size, preferably not more than seven members. Active business participation in BID operations is essential to properly represent all businesses. Business owners should be encouraged to attend monthly DSBID meetings, as well as the annual membership meeting where their votes will count.

The DSBID should establish basic operating principles and ground rules to be an effective partner in the revitalization of Downtown Selma. The DSBID Advisory Board should meet monthly to review services, address funding opportunities, and ensure that benefits are provided equally for all Downtown businesses.

City staff provide a monthly report on marketing and improvement services and assessments to the BID Advisory Board. On a semi-annual basis, market reports tracking similar downtowns with comparisons to Downtown Selma should be included with a report that shows business changes within the district

and specific efforts made to draw new business to Downtown. The BID contributes to the partnership by maintaining the vision and bringing business owners to the table through regular communication with all business members, and an annual meeting to share City reports and nominate a new Advisory Board to be recommended to City Council.

The BID Work Plan, initially approved as part of the Management District Plan, describes the activities of the BID. Objectives in developing these projects include:

- Deploy a program that will make a visible, tangible and lasting impact.
- Ensure that BID-funded services are supplemental to, and do not replace, existing City services.
- Provide flexibility in the modeling of the program so that the BID can make adjustments as market conditions change.

Marketing efforts, directed toward both locals and visitors, use a Downtown-focused website, email, and social media and printed materials. Physical enhancements improve aesthetics, walkability, safety, and comfort. In these efforts, focus on pedestrians, consider adding decorative interest and ensure that walkability underlies decision-making. Active marketing and physical improvements together make up 75% of the assessment budget.

Business attraction and periodic market reports for expansion of the retail/restaurant mix represent 20% of the budget, and 5% is reserved for contingency. Business recruitment efforts will seek to increase the mix of retail/restaurant businesses. In addition, compilation of periodic market reports will guide the direction of business development.

With each of the three parties having clarity about their role and responsibility - and being willing to contribute to a positive and collaborative effort - Selma has the potential to achieve the vision for Downtown as being a place of social gathering, economic opportunity, and community pride.



# ACTIONS

## ACTION

### Implement consistent operating principles

The DSBID should conduct the following:

- Keep the Advisory Board at capacity, but a manageable capacity (not more than seven)
- Use a consistent agenda format that aligns with the authority of the BID and is agreed upon by the BID board and City staff, assuring that each meeting includes monthly social media data, updates about ongoing projects, research or recommendations on considered projects, and public comment.
- Establish annual training to ensure that Advisory Board members understand the Management District Plan, the annual budget, and reporting responsibilities
- Hold a special annual meeting to nominate advisory board members, share progress with all businesses, establish the budget, and prepare for City Council approval.
- Develop an annual report format that includes marketing data analysis, completed projects, projects in the works and a summary budget from the previous year.

## ACTION

### Focus BID Initiatives

The BID should focus on a discrete set of initiatives that the BID can administer directly. These can be cleanliness, maintenance and improvement of public spaces, and marketing. Ideas to consider are:

- Showcase parking lots through signage
- Paint curbs with “customer parking here” and encourage business owners to leave store-front parking for customers
- Pressure wash sidewalks
- Add an extra trash pickup beyond what the City provides
- Post walking signs that mark steps from one place to another
- Hang banners highlighting seasonal events
- Paint crosswalks with bright stripes of color.

## ACTION

### Engage with the Community

Implementation of the plan should include checking back with stakeholders, including the Chamber, the Arts Center and service organizations, to identify opportunities for collaboration with Downtown businesses in existing community activities like the Raisin Festival, Arts Center events and the Marching Band Festival. Consider sponsorships of programs from large local entities like the Auto Mall and local big-box organizations. These could include promotional connections, or they could direct customers and audiences to shop and eat in Downtown Selma.

### Supplemental Funding

Manage supplemental funding separately from BID funding. The City Council allocations require accountability directly to the City Council, while BID funding decisions are accountable to all Downtown businesses and are intended to specifically benefit the BID district. They are different in both source and commitment.

Create a budget and work plan for supplementary funding provided by the City, separate from the BID budget and work plan. This budget does not have a stipulation to benefit all DSBID members equally, so it has the latitude of offering a broader range of opportunities. Projects can include those that are not included in the BID Management District Plan like the Storefront Improvement Grant or other activities that might provide direct benefit for individual businesses.

### Reporting, and Celebrating Accomplishments

Prepare an annual report that summarizes the BID activities and accomplishments. The report should be submitted to the City Council. To maintain momentum and positive associations about Downtown, individual successes should be recognized and celebrated in the report.

The supplementary fund should also have an annual report that identifies achievements and showcases accomplishments created by this additional funding provided by the City of Selma. These resources managed by the BID Advisory Board, together with the support and collaboration of the City Council and City staff, can build a vibrant Downtown Selma.



# IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING



## SUMMARY OF FUNDING SOURCES

Implementation of the strategic vision and priority projects will require a combination of existing and potential new sources of funding from both public and private entities, as well as time and support from City staff, the BID, and the broader community. Some funding sources are primarily used for ongoing operations and maintenance, while others fund new capital projects or upgrade existing infrastructure. The following table summarizes the sources of funding described in this plan.

Notably, implementation will likely primarily rely on existing sources of funding and the pursuit of new Federal, State, and local grant funding sources. Public-private partnerships may be advantageous to pursue as opportunities arise. The plan does not envision the introduction of a new area-specific fee, special tax, benefit assessment, or formation of a tax increment district. However, to the extent funding gaps remain, these additional funding and financing tools may be further studied and pursued, pending City and community support.

**Table 3** Funding Sources

Funding Option	Notes	Potential Uses
<b>Existing Sources</b>		
<b>City General Fund</b>	City Council policy decision	Business incentives and support, real estate development, façade improvements, economic development projects, public services
<b>City Capital Improvement Plan</b>	City Council policy decision	Capital facilities projects (streetscape, parks, open space, and other infrastructure)
<b>Downtown Business Improvement District</b>	Requires annual City Council authorization	Ongoing maintenance, marketing and promotion, event support
<b>New Sources</b>		
<b>Federal, State, and Local Grants</b>	Plentiful grant options; competitive and often require matching City funds	Depends on the specific parameters of the source; eligible costs include: capital facilities projects (streetscape, parks, open space, and other infrastructure); affordable housing; neighborhood revitalization and other economic development projects; historic preservation; environmental remediation; public art; ongoing maintenance
<b>Public-Private Partnerships</b>	Provides private capital, efficiencies, and shared risks, but can be complex and requires willing private partners and effective governance	
<b>Area-Specific Fee</b>	Not viable based on limited revenue generation	
<b>Tax or Assessment</b>	Requires political and community support/approval and adherence to stringent State laws	
<b>Tax Increment</b>	Not a new tax but redirects revenue from the City General Fund; funding capacity may be limited	



## EXISTING FUNDING SOURCES

This section provides an overview of existing funding sources that currently, and could continue to, support citywide economic development efforts downtown including the additional investments envisioned in this Strategic Plan. Existing sources of funding include the City's General Fund, the City's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and the Downtown BID. These funding sources can be used to fund a range of activities, including ongoing operations and maintenance, enhanced public services, economic development projects, and infrastructure improvements, including streetscape, parks and open space, and other capital improvements. However, these funding sources rely on annual authorization by the City Council and include a variety of funding streams that can vary on an annual basis.

### City General Fund

In recent years, the City has funded downtown economic development activities primarily through the Economic Development Department. The department assisted in forming the Downtown BID and has provided annual financial contributions in support of the BID's activities. Future activities identified in the City's most recent budget include strengthening the Downtown BID by organizing events, enhancing vitality, and fostering community; increasing marketing and usage of the Arts Center; coordinating downtown zoning to facilitate housing and mixed-use projects; facilitating development projects and funding; securing infrastructure resources for key projects; and coordinating with the Chamber of Commerce to enhance services for local businesses. These activities will require continued funding through General Fund revenues (i.e., property tax and sales tax revenue) and supplemental funding (i.e., grant revenue). However, there are always competing demands for General Fund revenues. Available revenues for economic development activities can fluctuate significantly

with changing City Council priorities, economic cycles, and the extent to which the City has been able to obtain supplemental grant funding.

### City Capital Improvement Plan

In March 2024, the Selma City Council approved a 10-year, \$150 million Capital Improvement Program (CIP) focused on capital projects related to public safety, parks and recreation, streets and infrastructure, public works, and maintenance and administration. The CIP will be funded by a diversity of sources, including Fresno County's Measure C (transportation improvements), Selma's Measure S (public safety improvements), City General Fund revenues, development impact fees, and State and Federal grants.<sup>5,6</sup> The CIP allows projects to be removed or added annually based on evolving city priorities and could include one or more of the capital facility projects prioritized in this plan pending City Council approval.

### Downtown Business Improvement District

Formed in 2022, the Downtown BID is an assessment district intended to create a vibrant and inviting downtown through marketing and visibility of businesses, community engagement, and beautification. To date, the BID has been funded through two sources: an annual assessment of businesses in the district, and an annual contribution from the City's General Fund. BID revenues could be used to assist in enhanced cleanliness and maintenance and other activities to activate downtown. Annual Council actions, including accepting the annual report, appointing the BID Advisory Board, approving the annual budget, and approving assessments, are required to maintain BID operations each year.

<sup>5</sup> In 1986, Fresno County voters passed Measure C, a half-cent sales tax to improve the overall quality of Fresno County's transportation system, including the County and all 15 cities within the County. In November 2006, Fresno County voters extended the measure for an additional 20 years (2007-2027). However, a renewal initiative on the ballot in 2022 was defeated.

<sup>6</sup> Measure "S" is the half-cent sales tax approved by voters to help fund safety (Police and Fire) services in the City.

## NEW FUNDING SOURCES

The City may also consider pursuing additional funding options beyond the sources previously discussed. This section describes new funding sources that could be considered to fund priority projects identified in this plan. New funding sources include grants, taxes and assessments, public-private partnerships, and other commonly used public funding and financing tools. These sources can be used to fund streetscape, parks and open space, other infrastructure improvements, affordable housing and housing rehabilitation, historic preservation, environmental cleanup, public art, and other economic development projects. There are differing levels of funding capacity and benefits and drawbacks for each source, which should be considered before pursuing a particular funding source.

### Federal, State, and Local Grants

The City has had previous success with receiving grants for economic development activities. These grants encompass Federal and State grants, including the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG); the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business Development grant; the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Local Early Action Planning (LEAP) and Senate Bill 2 (SB2) planning grants; California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Active Transportation Program grant; and the California Office of Emergency Services (OES) Community Power Resiliency Allocation Program grant.

The City could pursue additional funding from these or many other programs currently available. However, grant funding is highly competitive and requires significant staff time to conduct research and meticulously respond to grant applications. Winning competitive grants involves understanding the grant requirements and aligning projects with the funding agency's priorities. In addition, successfully pursuing grants requires crafting a clear and concise

proposal that articulates the problem or need with compelling supporting data, outlines a feasible plan with specific goals, and includes a detailed budget. Securing competitive grants often necessitates a local match – either in the form of a financial or in-kind contribution - which can signify a shared investment in the project's success and convey viability and impact to grantees. When ready to apply for funding, the City will need to identify grant programs that align with the funding needs of their priority projects, have current funding availability, and offer a strong likelihood of success.

### Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are collaborative agreements between government entities and private sector companies aimed at financing, designing, implementing, and operating projects that serve the public.

These partnerships leverage the strengths of both sectors to provide public services or infrastructure more efficiently and effectively. Benefits of PPPs include the mobilization of private sector investment, expertise, and innovation, which can lead to improved project management and delivery, reduced public sector risk, and enhanced service quality. Additionally, PPPs can help overcome budgetary constraints by tapping into private funding sources, enabling the completion of large-scale projects that might otherwise be unaffordable. The larger-scale projects envisioned in the plan may be suitable for pursuing a PPP as opportunities arise and leveraging private financing to fund the project. However, negotiating and structuring these partnerships can be complex and time-consuming, requiring careful attention to legal, financial, and operational details to ensure balanced risk-sharing and mutual benefits. Effective governance, a clear regulatory framework, and robust oversight mechanisms are crucial to address these challenges and ensure that PPPs deliver on their promises.



## Potential Grant Funding Sources

### Federal Funding Programs

- HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program
- Economic Development Administration (EDA) Public Works Grant Program
- Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) Grant Program
- Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Grant Program
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program
- US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Business Development Grant Program
- USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program

### State Funding Programs

- State Transportation Improvement Program and California Transportation Commission Local Programs
- California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Active Transportation Grant Program
- California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant Program
- California Cultural and Historical Endowment (CCHE) Grant Program
- State Infrastructure Bank
- California Climate Investments (CCI) Urban and Community Forestry and Urban Forestry Grant Programs
- Caltrans Clean California Grant Program
- California Urban Greening Grant Program
- Senate Bill 2 (SB2) Grant Program
- California Department of Parks and Recreation – Prop 68 Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program

### Non-Profit and Local Funding Programs

- California ReLeaf Treecovery Grant Program
- U.S. Soccer Foundation Grant
- Fresno Council of Governments
- Fresno Economic Development Corporation

Note: This list illustrates the numerous grant funding opportunities currently available and is not exhaustive of all options. Based on funding availability, grant sources listed may not be available in future years and new sources may become available.



## Other Public Funding and Financing Tools

Currently, the implementation of priority projects does not contemplate the introduction of a new area-specific fee, special tax, benefit assessment, or the formation of a tax increment district that devotes tax revenue to downtown infrastructure or operations. If other funding sources are unable to fully fund desired projects downtown, additional public funding and financing tools may be further studied and pursued, pending City and community support. Common public funding financing tools in California include:

### Area Development Impact Fees

Impact fees are ordinance-based, one-time charges on new development. Impact fees cover new development's "proportional share" of the total capital cost necessary for supporting public infrastructure and facilities (as codified in California Government Code Section 66000 - the Mitigation Fee Act). Development impact fees can be imposed through adopting a local enabling ordinance and may be charged for a particular improvement (e.g., transportation improvements) or include multiple infrastructure improvement categories. Because of anticipated limited new development in Downtown, adopting an area-specific fee is not a viable funding source because it will not generate sufficient revenue. Instead, the City should seek potential private investment through partnerships as described previously.

### Taxes and Assessments

Taxes and assessments are distinct revenue mechanisms for government entities in California. This category includes general taxes (e.g., sales tax, utility users' tax, business license tax); special taxes (e.g., parcel tax, Mello-Roos Community Facilities District special tax); and special benefit assessments (e.g., street lighting and landscape maintenance district, property and business improvement district). Taxes, including general and special taxes, fund broad governmental purposes or specific projects, respectively, and require voter approval (majority

approval for general taxes, two-thirds approval for special taxes). Assessments are charges on properties directly benefiting from specific improvements or services. Assessments must correlate with the benefit received and require property owner approval through a ballot process under Proposition 218. Both general and special taxes are governed by the requirements of state law.

### Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax increment financing (TIF) captures the increase in property tax revenue (the "increment") that results from the rise in property values within a designated district. The captured funds are then available to fund capital improvements with a useful life of at least 15 years (either directly or through debt repayment of bonds issued against the future TIF revenue stream), affordable housing, and ongoing operations and maintenance costs. TIF provides a mechanism for funding improvements, operations, and maintenance costs without increasing taxes or reallocating existing public funds. However, TIF would divert tax revenues from the City's General Fund (and any other affected taxing entity's revenue fund). This funding source offers bond issuance authority, funding flexibility, and local control, and represents a sustainable annual funding source. However, the City must evaluate and support this funding mechanism, which would decrease revenues available to fund municipal services citywide. In addition, the funding capacity would ramp up slowly as value increases are realized and may not generate sufficient revenue relative to the cost to form the district.



## ALIGNMENT OF FUNDING SOURCES WITH PRIORITY PROJECTS

The following table presents a potential set of existing and new public and private funding sources aligned with each priority project. This set of funding sources does not include sources such as a new fee, tax or assessment, or special financing district. To identify a funding strategy for each priority project, the City must first define the parameters and associated costs of each project. Aligning potential funding sources with these projects will involve making policy

decisions on how much, if any, to allocate from available citywide revenues. Additionally, the City will need to evaluate its competitive position and ability to pursue available grant funding or strategic partnerships with private entities. By prioritizing projects, and identifying a realistic funding strategy for each project, the City can optimize funding opportunities and ensure successful project implementation.

**Table 4** Aligning Funding Sources with Priority Projects

Priority Project	Potential Financing Sources
<b>Downtown Core Streetscape Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City General Fund</li> <li>• BRIC Program</li> <li>• USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program</li> <li>• HPF Grant Program</li> <li>• OHP CLG Grant Program</li> <li>• CCI Urban and Community Forestry and Urban Forestry Grant Programs</li> <li>• Caltrans Clean California Grant</li> <li>• California Urban Greening Grant</li> <li>• California ReLeaf Treecoverry Grant Program</li> <li>• Public-Private Partnership</li> </ul>
<b>2nd Street Gateway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City General Fund</li> <li>• CDBG Program</li> <li>• Caltrans Clean California Grant</li> </ul>
<b>More Food and Beverage Options</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City General Fund</li> <li>• USDA Rural Business Development Grant Program</li> <li>• Fresno Economic Development Corporation</li> </ul>
<b>Safer Streets and Intersections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Capital Improvement Plan</li> <li>• EDA Public Works Grant Program</li> <li>• SS4A Grant Program</li> <li>• Caltrans Active Transportation Grant Program</li> <li>• Fresno Council of Governments</li> </ul>

Priority Project	Potential Financing Sources
<b>UP Right-of-Way Activation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public-Private Partnership</li> <li>• Caltrans Clean California Grant</li> <li>• Prop 68 Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program</li> <li>• U.S. Soccer Foundation Grant</li> </ul>
<b>Lincoln Park Playscape</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Capital Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Prop 68 Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program</li> </ul>
<b>New Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public-Private Partnership</li> <li>• CDBG Program</li> <li>• SB2 Grant Program</li> <li>• Fresno Economic Development Corporation</li> </ul>



## IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the strategic plan's vision will require a comprehensive approach with contributions from City staff and resources and outside funding sources, and it may be implemented in different phases, with the highest priority actions being

completed in the short-term and lower priority actions to be completed in the medium- to long-term. The table below includes information on the approximate time frame and City leadership for implementing the Priority Projects.

**Table 5** Implementation Matrix

Priority Project	Primary Responsibility	Support	Timeline
Downtown Streetscape	Public Works	BID	1-3 years
2nd Street Gateway	City Manager	Public Works, BID	1-3 years
More Food and Beverage Options	BID	Planning, Public Works	3-5 years
Safer Streets and Intersections	Public Works	City Manager	3-5 years
UPRR Activation Sports Facilities, Micro Forest	City Manager	Public Works, Parks and Recreation	3-5 years
Lincoln Park Activation	Parks and Recreation	City Manager	3-5 years
New Development	Planning	City Manager	5+ years

# SELMA DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC PLAN



DECEMBER 2024