APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: HISTORIC RESOURCES PRESERVATION STRATEGY

A1.0. INTRODUCTION

Downtown Redwood City is one of the oldest communities in the Bay Area region, giving it a rich heritage and a substantial endowment of historic buildings. The history of Downtown Redwood City is fascinating and essential in gaining a true understanding of its historic resources.

However, the settlers did not own the land. The land was owned by Simon Mezes, who had received the land as payment for successfully defending the Arguello family’s title before the US Land Commission in 1853. Rather than fight the fact that a town had sprung up, Mezes ordered surveys and drew up a subdivision map for a formal town, and called it “Mezesville.” Mezes’ map determined the streets, blocks, and lots of Downtown Redwood City. Although Redwood City has far outgrown Mezes’ original tract, the streets in that central area are still about as he drew them.

Because of its large business base, Redwood City was selected to become the County Seat when San Mateo County was established in 1856. When San Mateo County needed land for a courthouse, Mr. Mezes offered to donate any block the county supervisors might select. The block chosen was on Broadway between Hamilton and Middlefield, where the Historic Courthouse is today. The first Courthouse was ready for occupation in 1858.

The coming of the railroad through Redwood City in 1863 also caused profound changes. Land values spiraled upward and the Peninsula’s first commuters, wealthy San Franciscans, came south to build large homes. Many town improvements were made, most importantly to roads, leading the citizens to petition for incorporation in 1867. The State of California approved the incorporation, and Redwood City became the first incorporated city in San Mateo County on March 27, 1868.

Redwood City exploded in population following World War II. The town expanded outward, annexing territory toward the Bay and inland toward the Santa Cruz Mountains. San Mateo County grew rapidly in population, and the county government built many large institutional buildings in the Downtown area. As regional shopping malls, freeways, and suburban sprawl siphoned energy away from Downtown, the area stagnated and declined. During this period, many historic buildings fell into disrepair or were lost altogether.

A new and expanded courthouse had just been completed when the infamous earthquake of 1906 struck. Damage was so extensive that only the dome and rotunda section could be salvaged. During reconstruction, members of the local Order of Oddfellows allowed the use of their hall on Main Street for county offices and a courtroom. The Courthouse reopened in 1910 and still occupies the block donated by Mezes. As development continued through the 1920s, the hub of commercial activity shifted west from Main Street to Broadway. Around this time, the port of Redwood City was moved out of Downtown, further out towards the Bay to its present location, due to silting problems.

A1.0.1. A SHORT HISTORY OF DOWNTOWN REDWOOD CITY

The land that eventually became Downtown Redwood City was once part of a vast Spanish rancho owned by the Arguello family, which was used for grazing cattle and horses and for providing missions in the area with supplies of food and animal hides.

When California became part of the United States, the redwoods in the Santa Cruz Mountains were logged for use in construction to the north in rapidly growing San Francisco. Initially, the logs, cut from the redwood forests along the peninsula skyline, were dragged overland by oxen teams. Soon, however, a deep-water channel off the bay was discovered in what is now Downtown Redwood City. A wharf or “embarcadero” was established at the point furthest inland which was still navigable for shipping lumber to San Francisco. The availability of water transport greatly increased the efficiency of the lumber trade. A small village consisting of the homes of laborers connected with the redwood trade and supporting business sprang up around the wharf.

The Port of Redwood City, near Main Street and Broadway, in 1892.

Downtown during the 1930s.

A team of oxen make their way toward Redwood City in the mid 1800s.
The City’s 1964 Downtown Development Plan, in an attempt to revitalize the area, called for the destruction of nearly every remaining historic structure, including the Bank of San Mateo County/Fitzpatrick Building/Young’s Drugs cluster at Broadway and Main (now part of the Main Street Historic District) which was slated to be replaced by a 10-story office tower. Even the County Courthouse was to be demolished to make way for a department store.

Fortunately, the funding did not exist to enact this plan. By the 1980s, the community had begun to gain a new appreciation for its built legacy and many efforts were made to preserve historic resources. Many civic improvements were made in Downtown, slowly reversing the economic decline and the deterioration of historic buildings that it engendered. A new main fire station was built on Marshall Street in 1987, and historical Fire Station No. 1 was restored and converted into the Main Library Branch in 1988. The 1990 General Plan included a very strong Historic Resources Element, and formal historic districts have been established to better preserve strong clusters of historic buildings. In 2006 the Historic Courthouse was restored (including a complete reconstruction of the columned portico) after being obscured and deformed for more than 60 years by an annex, and a new Courthouse Square was constructed on the site of the original town square. Today Downtown is the heart of the community, and its historic resources are one of its most important qualities.

To accomplish these goals, the Downtown Precise Plan employs a two-part strategy:

A) Reconnaissance Survey

An extensive reconnaissance survey of all known and potential historic resources in the DTPP area, as well as the immediately adjacent parcels (called the “Area of Influence”) was conducted. It is impossible to preserve historic resources if they have not been identified. In addition to identification, the reconnaissance survey rated the significance and integrity of the resources, which is useful in determining appropriate preservation methods.

B) Regulations

Many of the property development standards and design guidelines contained within the DTPP have been structured with the intention of mandating or incentivizing the preservation of historic resources and the compatibility of neighboring structures as much as is possible. Some of regulations aid in the adaptive reuse of historic resources, while others provide guidance as to what kinds of additions or modifications—if any—are acceptable on historic sites in order to be compliant with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. In areas with strong clusters of historic resources (whether part of a formal historic district or not) non-historic sites are also regulated to minimize visual impacts on historic buildings as much as possible and to preserve the historic urban feel of the area within a framework of new development.
A1.1. RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY

In order to best preserve historic resources and ensure compatibility of future development, a full reconnaissance survey of historic resources was undertaken. A series of tables showing every historic resource and potential resource identified during the reconnaissance survey process is located in section A.1.3.

Below, the varying methodologies used and the important findings obtained during the reconnaissance survey are discussed by geographic area.

A1.1.1. DTTP Area Methodology and Findings

To best preserve resources with a minimum of deferred judgment, every property in the DTTP Area was studied, all resources were identified, and all necessary documentation was completed. The significance, integrity, and context of the resources were all used to aid in the development of appropriate regulations.

A) Historic Resources to Be Preserved

In all, forty properties were found to have historic resources of very high significance and integrity. All of them have had full documentation, using the standard DPR (Department of Parks and Recreation) form process. Many of them are unique building types, or representative of once common building types which are now rare. Their condition is good, and the integrity of their character defining features is strong. For many of these the historic context is strong as well. Two particularly strong concentrations occur around Courthouse Square and along Main Street. Broadway also has a fair number of resources, particularly where it overlaps Main Street and Courthouse Square. Other resources were identified which are significant in their own right, but not as part of a cluster.

It is the strong preference of the local community that these forty resources be preserved. Therefore, they are shown on the Historic Resources Reconnaissance survey Map as “Resources to Be Preserved” and are colored red. Regulations have been created to maximize their potential for preservation, exempting them from certain use regulations, reducing parking requirements, and strictly directing their modification and expansion.

Impacts that result from changes to these properties which follow the DTTP regulations have been properly identified and mitigated in the EIR. Impacts which result from demolition or modifications not allowed in the DTTP are not the current policy of Redwood City and such impacts have not been properly identified—meaning projects on historic sites that do not comply with the DTTP would require a DTTP amendment and full environmental review.
B) Historic Resources Which May be Altered, Relocated, or Removed

The reconnaissance survey process also allowed for the acknowledgment of resources, if any, with such low significance, integrity, and historic context that the impacts of their potential removal (individually and cumulatively) should be assessed, and if the impacts are acceptable, their removal should be allowed in the DTPP.

Seven (7) such properties were identified. All of them have had full documentation, using the standard DPR form process. All are detached single-family homes found to be lacking integrity or not to be rare in their style or building typology. Most importantly, their historic context has been eradiated with the passage of time. Their neighborhoods disappeared as the residential uses of surrounding properties have gave way to the expansion of Downtown in the mid-20th Century. Many similar homes exist in much better context in other neighborhoods, such as nearby Mezesville and Stambaugh-Heller, and many of the homes in those neighborhoods are in better condition and have a higher degree of integrity.

These seven properties are shown on the Historic Resources Reconnaissance Survey Map as “Historic Resources Which May be Altered, Relocated, or Removed” and are colored brown. In all seven of these cases, it was considered most appropriate to publicly identify that the resources appeared to lack sufficient significance, integrity, and context to warrant aggressive preservation and to identify all impacts of their potential removal (individually and cumulatively) so that Redwood City’s policy makers may make an open and public decision based on the best available information.

A1.1.2. AREA OF INFLUENCE METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

The Area of Influence (AOI) consists of all parcels outside of, but immediately adjacent to, the DTTP Area boundary. The AOI is not regulated by the DTTP and is not expected to ever be. Nevertheless, a reconnaissance survey was conducted to ensure that appropriate measures have been taken within the DTTP area to minimize impacts on the neighborhoods adjacent to the DTTP boundary. All structures fifty years of age or older were examined, and the structures with the highest significance and integrity were identified as historic resources and properly documented. Structures with unclear but possible significance and integrity were identified as potential resources so that the impact of development within the DTTP Area these properties could be considered.

A) Resources to Be Preserved

In all, fifteen properties were found to definitively have historic resources of high significance and integrity. Their condition is good, the integrity of their character defining features is strong, and one (Forester’s Hall) is an example of an unusual assembly hall building type. The historic context is good, as well. Four of the properties form a small concentration on Maple Street between Stambaugh and Hilton Streets, and eight along Brewster are part of the Mezesville Historic District.

Although these sites are not regulated by the DTTP, these fifteen properties are shown on the Historic Resources Reconnaissance survey Map as “Historic Resources to Be Preserved” and are colored red for reference. Future development on these sites, which will take place under the control of other zoning regulations and procedures (not the Downtown Precise Plan) should take appropriate measures fully document these resources and preserve them.

B) Potential Resources

The identification process also identified 33 properties with structures which are 50 years old or more, and may have sufficient significance and integrity to warrant classification as a historic resource. Because the AOI is not regulated by the DTTP, a full evaluation was not justified. Rather, future development applications on these sites will trigger a more thorough review process, which will determine their significance and integrity, and, if applicable, rules for their modification and expansion.

These properties are shown on the Historic Resources Reconnaissance survey Map as “Potential Resources” and are colored yellow. While in-depth analysis was not conducted on the potential resources, their identification did clearly show high concentrations of possible resources along the Maple, Brewster, and western boundaries of the DTTP, and demonstrated the need to ensure that future development on the DTTP sides of these boundaries should be sensitive to impacts it may have on the AOI properties. This helped identify appropriate setbacks, building heights, and architectural character for the DTTP properties adjacent to sensitive AOI areas.

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Rehabilitation

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.


A1.2. REGULATIONS

Land use regulations can have a dramatic impact—positive or negative—on the preservation of historic resources. Often communities inadvertently undermine their preservation goals with well-intentioned but poorly structured zoning. Redwood City has tried to be sensitive to this, and has developed several special regulations in the DTPP to promote the preservation of historic resources and to ensure that new development on non-historic sites is compatible with nearby historic resources.

A1.2.1. RESOURCE REGULATIONS

Two sets of regulations have been created to specifically promote the preservation of historic resources themselves and to guide future development on their parcels. One of these regulations give historic resources lenience on requirements that are often tough for them to meet, and the second regulation adds requirements to historic parcels in order to ensure preservation while allowing growth and expansion when appropriate.

A) Parking Reductions

The DTPP requires that all new development provide new parking. However, most of Downtown Redwood City's historic resources were constructed prior to widespread automobile use, and therefore tend to have less parking on-site than would typically be required of new development. In addition, small and narrow parcels—usually without alley access—make the addition of parking difficult. Therefore, to help preserve these historic resources, the DTPP reduces the minimum parking requirements on their sites by 50%, as long as the historic resource is preserved. These regulations are contained in Section 2.6.2(A)(1)(b) of the DTPP.

B) Additions or Modifications to Historic Resources (AMHR) Regulations

The United States Secretary of the Interior is responsible for safeguarding the country's historic resources. To do this, the office of the Secretary of the Interior has established standards (known as the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings, or SIS) which all local and state governments must comply with when restoring, reconstructing, or otherwise impacting historic resources (see inset on previous page). The SIS are flexible and open to interpretation, however, determinations of what type of protection are allowed in the AMHR regulations are not the current policy of Redwood City and subsequent impacts have not been properly identified—meaning projects on historic sites that do not comply with the DTPP would require a DTPP amendment and full environmental review.

While the AMHR standards and guidelines for each historic property are unique and are based on the particular nature of that resource, similar resources were approached in a similar manner. Below is an explanation of the five basic approaches taken. In the complete historic reconnaissance survey table at the end of this appendix, the approach used for each resource is shown in the column called “Type of Protection.”

Type A. Resources with which the Type A approach was used are large, detached civic building and unique single family homes. The Diller-Chamberlain Stone, due to its high sensitivity, was also approached this way. Significant façade modifications or attached additions are strongly discouraged. In addition, neighboring properties are required to keep building heights very low near these resources and utilize very similar architectural character. Type A resources are colored red on the Historic Resources Reconnaissance survey Map.

Type B. The Type B approach was used most often within the DTPP Area. Resources with which the Type B approach was used are on various national, state, and local historic registries, and have a high degree of significance, integrity, and context. Historic façades should be maintained and not be modified, but additions are allowed. However, the additions must be set back from historic façades in order to minimize their visual impact. Although not part of the AMHR regulations, it is useful to note that because Type B resources are strongly clustered, neighboring properties are required to keep building heights very low near these resources and utilize very similar architectural character. Type B resources are also colored red on the Historic Resources Reconnaissance survey Map.

Type C. Resources with which the Type C approach was used are on various national, state, and local historic registries, and have a high degree of significance and integrity. They are similar to Type B properties, except most of them have a very poor historic context and none are part of a significant cluster of historic resources. Historic façades should be maintained and not be modified, but additions are allowed. The additions must be set back from historic façades in order to minimize their visual impact, although setbacks aren't required to be as large as Type B, due to the lack of strong historic context. Type C resources are also colored red on the Historic Resources Reconnaissance survey Map.

Type D. The Type D approach was used very little. Properties with which the Type D approach was used are not on any national or state historic registries, but have been noted as being of local interest. Historic significance, integrity, and/or context are very low for all of them. Therefore, the structures may be altered, relocated, or removed. The impacts of their potential removal (individually and cumulatively) have been assessed in the EIR. However, their preservation is still encouraged in the AMHR regulations, and in the event of removal the City is developing a strategy to aid in their relocation by securing a new site for them. Type D properties are colored brown on the Historic Resources Reconnaissance survey Map.

C) Additional Impact Mitigation Measures for Historic Resources

For projects on sites containing historic resources, additional measures which could lessen the impacts of projects upon historic resources and better ensure compliance with the SIS were identified in the Environmental Impact report and were included in Section 2.1.4 of the DTPP. These measures include review by a qualified preservation professional, documentation of removed historic elements, etc.
While most of Downtown Redwood City’s parcels do not contain a historic resource, they are still affected by the historic resource preservation strategy. This is due to the importance of compatibility in historic preservation. Therefore, regulations have been built into the DTPP to ensure compatibility of new development with nearby historic resources. The effect of development near historic resources (including non-contributing properties within historic districts) is thoroughly studied in the Environmental Impact Report.

In particular, three additional regulatory tools were used to ensure that new development on non-historic sites is compatible with historic resources:

**A) Mandatory Front Setbacks**

For parcels near concentrations of historic single family homes with established front setbacks, the building disposition and landscaping regulations in the DTPP require new development along “Neighborhood Street” corridor types to have a minimum front setback of ten feet, in order to maintain compatibility with nearby historic resources. Areas where mandatory front setbacks were established in order to accomplish these goals are as follows:

**Brewster Street.** The Mezesville Historic District includes several historic single-family homes along Brewster Street. These homes all have well-established front setbacks which contribute to their character. In addition, later developments have been required by the City to respect this pattern. Therefore, to preserve this historic pattern as the area grows, front setbacks of no less than ten feet will be required of all parcels within the DTPP Area fronting on Brewster Street between Arguello Street and Veterans Boulevard.

**Maple Street.** The majority of properties along Maple Street within the Area of influence were found to have historic resources or potential historic resources. Most of these properties also have well-established front setbacks which contribute to their character. In addition, later developments have been required by the City to respect this pattern. Therefore, to preserve this historic pattern as the area grows, front setbacks of no less than ten feet will be required of all parcels within the DTPP Area fronting on Maple Street between Marshall and Main Streets.

**West of El Camino.** Many of the properties west of El Camino Real in the Area of influence were found to have potential historic resources. Most of these properties also have well-established front setbacks which contribute to their character. In addition, later developments have been required by the City to respect this pattern. Therefore, to preserve this historic pattern as the area grows, front setbacks of no less than ten feet will be required of all parcels within the DTPP Area fronting on side streets west of El Camino Real between James Avenue and Lincoln Avenue.

**B) Height Reductions**

In some areas, height limits have been reduced below the typical 8 to 12 story maximum of this plan in order to preserve the “feet” of the experience along historic streets, to minimize aesthetic impacts of new development on historic resources (especially where resources are clustered), and to promote appropriate height transitions to low-rise historic neighborhoods adjacent to the Precise Plan area. Areas where heights were reduced in order to accomplish these goals are as follows:

**1. Courthouse Square Area.** The Courthouse Square area features a strong cluster of historic resources, including two of Redwood City’s most substantial: the Fox Theater and the Historic San Mateo County Courthouse. These two buildings provide half of the aesthetic “enclosure” of Courthouse Square and set a three-story tone for this space. Both buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and their entire interiors and all façades are to be preserved. In this area maximum permitted heights were significantly reduced in order to reduce the aesthetic impact on these resources. The first 60 feet of parcel depth along Hamilton Street and Middlefield Road from Marshall Street to 150 feet south of Broadway, will only be allowed three stories in height. Additionally, the front 150 feet of parcel depth along Broadway, from Hamilton to Middlefield, will also be restricted to three stories in height.

**2. Broadway Corridor.** Broadway has been Downtown Redwood City’s primary street for at least 70 years. Traditionally, heights were varied here, with three stories being the highest height. While most of its historic building stock has been destroyed, many resources remain and the low-rise character is still dominant, despite the long-standing 100’ height limit. Therefore, to preserve this historic scale as the area grows, the front 40 feet of all parcels facing on Broadway through the entire DTPP area (with the exception of Courthouse Square, as described above) will only be allowed three stories in height.

**3. Main Street Corridor.** In addition to being Redwood City’s first commercial core, Main Street has its highest concentration of historic resources, including a formally recognized historic district. As with Broadway, heights were traditionally varied here, with three stories being the highest height. While most of its historic building stock has been lost on the west side south of the Sequoia Hotel, much of it remains on the east side, and the low-rise character is still dominant throughout. Therefore, to preserve this historic scale as the area grows, the front 40 feet of all parcels facing on Main Street through the entire DTPP area will only be allowed three stories in height.

**4. Library Area.** While the Library is not part of a cluster, it is very near the Main Street cluster and is among Redwood City’s most treasured historic resources. In addition to being Redwood City’s long-time fire house and a successful adaptive reuse project, the
building was designed by acclaimed San Francisco architect Timothy Pflueger early in his career. Therefore, to provide appropriate prominence to this structure, the area abutting it and its plaza and connecting it to the Main Street corridor will only be allowed three stories in height for the first 40 feet of parcel depth, and the entire area behind the Library will be restricted to 3 stories.

5. Stambaugh-Heller Transition Area. Immediately southwest of the heart of Main Street is the historic Stambaugh-Heller neighborhood. Originally known as the Eastern Addition, it was the first expansion of Mezes’ original plat. While much insensitive and inappropriate infill development occurred in the mid-20th Century, causing the loss of many historic homes, many original homes remain. The area has one of Redwood City’s highest concentrations of Victorian residential architecture, as well as a formally recognized historic district. While the economic development and growth of Downtown is likely to benefit Stambaugh-Heller by stimulating reinvestment in the historic neighborhood, therefore, maximum heights in the area between Broadway, Main Street, and Maple Street have been reduced to 3 stories, and along Maple Street a 10 foot setback is required, and the next 20 feet of frontage may only rise to 3 stories.

6. Mezesville Transition Area. While the entirety of Mezes’ original plat was called Mezesville, today only the part between Brewester Street and Whipple Avenue goes by that name. While some insensitive infill development has occurred, many historic homes remain and the neighborhood contains a formally recognized historic district. Like Stambaugh-Heller, it is important to provide for a graceful transition from the larger scale of Downtown to the historic Mezesville neighborhood. Therefore, maximum heights in the area between Brewester, Arguello, Fuller, and the Hamilton alignment have been reduced to 3 stories, and along Brewester Street a 10 foot setback is required, and the next 20 feet of frontage may only rise to 3 stories.

7. El Camino Real Transition Area. For more than two hundred years, El Camino Real has been a critical land connection between Peninsula settlements. In Redwood City, it is also serves as the boundary between the mixed-use Downtown area and the residential-oriented areas to the west. While El Camino itself does not have many historic structures immediately fronting it, it does have historic importance and does serve as an important transition point between major variations in the built environment. In addition, the area to the west have many potential historic resources and should be treated with sensitivity. Therefore, maximum heights for the first 20 feet of parcel area along the eastern side of El Camino has been reduced to 4 stories. All parcels on side streets west of El Camino (between James and Lincoln) shall have a 4 story height limit for the entire parcel, with the exception that the front 30 feet of depth for all street frontage will be limited to 3 stories, and a 10 foot deep front setback is required.

Non-Clustered Resources. While many of Downtown’s historic resources are clustered together as discussed above, some are not. Examples include Elgin’s Auto Supply at 55 Perry Street and the historic lumber worker housing at 620 Jefferson Avenue. Where historic resources were not strongly clustered, and their historic context was no longer sufficiently intact, no reductions were made to maximum permitted height of the neighboring properties.

C) Historic Parcelization

In order to maintain and enhance the unique, eclectic, small-scale storefront character of 800 and 900 blocks of Main Street and the 2600 block of Broadway, special requirements for Building Base Length Articulation have been created. The bases of new buildings on these blocks will be required to be articulated at the location of historic parcel boundaries, creating an irregular storefront rhythm similar to the early 20th Century, after Mezes’ original lots had been split, merged, and rearranged. Maps in the DTPP show the location of early 20th Century parcel boundaries, and required that future development incorporate ground floor “articulation” at these locations. This articulation will be expressed with columns, pilasters, awnings, and other architectural elements. This requirement will apply even if parcels are assembled, maintaining the historic eclectic and small-scaled character of these streets even in the presence of wider and newer buildings.

The dimensions used for these regulations are a representation of the parcelization in place during the early 20th Century. To determine the historic parcelization pattern for Broadway and Main Street, City staff utilized San Mateo County Parcel Maps, historic City of Redwood City Insurance Maps, and modern Redwood City GIS data. These sources were cross-referenced to create the most historically accurate yet practical regulations for preserving the historic development pattern. The list below highlights how each of these resources was used.

The Original “Mezesville” Plat. Simon Mezes’ original plat from 1854 determined the streets, blocks, and parcels of early Downtown Redwood City. Although Redwood City has far outgrown Mezes’ original tract, many of the streets in that central area are still about as he drew them, and some original parcels remain. This was the logical starting point.

San Mateo County Parcel Maps. A total of four County parcel maps were used. While these maps were created from 1971 to 1992, they displayed historic subdivisions and lot measurements dating back to the late 1800s.

Redwood City Insurance Maps. This insurance map book, still in the possession of the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Department, was created in 1919 and shows how early waves of development altered Mezes’ original parcel pattern. It also includes periodic updates as new development came into the Downtown from the 1920s to the 1960s.

Redwood City GIS. Redwood City’s Geographic Information System (GIS) was used to place the historic subdivision patterns onto the current Downtown parcel configuration. This was critical to understanding how the historic patterns relate to the current pattern. This final step also showed where it was appropriate to ignore the historic parcel configuration to avoid conflicts with historic buildings (for example, it would be inappropriate to alter the façade of the Sequoia Hotel in order to reflect Mezes’ three original parcels on that site).

The original “Mezesville” plat. A sample of Historic Parcelization on Main Street.

The original “Mezesville” plat.
D) Historic Architectural Character

All properties in the DTTP Area are subject to Architectural Character regulations. These regulations aim to create architectural character in new projects that is compatible with the established patterns in the various parts of Downtown, as well as with the expressed aesthetic preferences of the community as outlined within the Community Character workshop held during the creation of the DTTP.

In areas with high concentrations of historic resources and historic importance, the architectural character regulations require new development to use architectural treatments that are complimentary to the historic resources in the vicinity. Outside of areas with high concentrations of historic resources, buildings designed using contemporary styles are welcome so long as they positively contribute to the spatial and compositional characteristics that reinforce the pedestrian scale of streets and blocks, avoid creating visual monotony and “blank” façades as experienced from the pedestrian walking environment, and maintain well-structured transitions between public and private spaces. The details of the Architectural Character regulations can be found in Section 2.9 of the DTPP.

Considering the historic resources reconnaissance survey and the desires of the residents of Redwood City as expressed in a large Community Character Workshop, Downtown has been broken down into six architectural “character zones,” which are described briefly, below:

**Historic Downtown Core.** This area has the greatest number of Downtown’s historic resources. It is the birthplace of Redwood City and contains its most important public spaces. For the Historic Downtown character zone, appropriate architectural character and styles were identified as those that built strongly on the context of historic architecture within the Downtown core. In new buildings, incorporation of traditional pedestrian-scaled elements, historically-inspired ornamentation, and a palette of natural materials such as brick, stone, and wood are encouraged.

**Stambaugh-Heller Transition.** A character zone has been identified where the Historic Downtown character zone abuts Maple Street. In addition to the character types appropriate for the Historic Downtown Core district, residential-oriented character types are also appropriate for this character zone in order to create a good transition between Downtown and the historic Stambaugh-Heller residential neighborhood.

**Courthouse Square.** The ensemble created by heavily-used and very formal public gathering space flanked by the city’s two largest historic buildings makes Courthouse Square a very special architectural component of Downtown. A small character zone, focused on Art Deco and Neoclassical Revival styles, has been created at the perimeter of Courthouse Square in order to enhance this important area.

**El Camino Corridor.** El Camino Real has a very long history and a varied role within Redwood City. As the “King’s Highway” during the Spanish colonial period, it provided access between the missions from San Francisco to San Diego. While El Camino itself does not have an abundance of historic structures, it does contain the 1920s Mediterranean-inspired campus of Sequoia High School. Therefore, in the El Camino Corridor character zone, an expression of Mediterranean and Classical styles is seen as representative of the history of the regional El Camino corridor and local context. Mediterranean and Classical styles will also express a strong announcement of the city to corridor traffic and contribute to a graceful transition from Downtown to the neighborhoods to the west.

**Mezesville Transition.** A character zone has been identified where the Historic Downtown character zone abuts Brewster Street. Traditional, residential-oriented character types are encouraged for this character zone in order to create a good transition between Downtown and the historic Mezesville residential neighborhood.

**North Marshall District.** The North of Marshall District character zone is an area that saw most of its development occur in the mid to late 20th Century. Architecturally, it is an area of transition in relation to the historic center, with architectural character and styles that incorporate materials and imagery of contemporary design. No particular style is dominant, and historic pre-World War II styles in particular have very little representation here. Greater flexibility is allowed here than in other places because compatibility isn’t as significant of an issue as it is elsewhere in the Downtown Precise Plan Area.

E) Additional Impact Mitigation Measures for Non-Historic Properties

For non-historic sites adjacent to a historic resource or within a historic district, additional measures which could lessen the impacts of projects upon historic resources and better ensure compliance with the SIS were identified in the Environmental Impact report and were included in Section 2.1.4 of the DTTP. These measures include review by a qualified preservation professional, documentation of removed historic elements, etc.
A1.2.3. Historic Project Review Process

To help in visualizing which of the preceding regulations may apply to the various types of projects that may be proposed in Downtown, a chart has been created which shows most (although not all) possible outcomes of the project review process.

How the Process Works

If there is a historic resource on the site, then staff will closely review the proposal to ensure that all Additions and Modifications to Historic Resources (AMHR) in Section 2.1 of the DTPP have been compiled with. If staff determines that the proposed project has complied with the applicable AMHR standards, and the Historic Resources Advisory Committee (HRAC) agrees, then the project may proceed through to the rest of the DTPP regulations and the standard project review process.

Projects on historic sites which do not conform to the AMHR standards will be subjected to additional review including findings that deviating from the standards is necessary, an evaluation for conformance the SIS by a qualified professional, and environmental review. Projects on historic sites which deviate from the guidelines will be evaluated by the HRAC and a qualified professional for conformance to the SIS. In such cases additional environmental review may be necessary.

For projects on sites which do not contain a historic resource, but which are adjacent to a historic resource or are located within a historic district, Section 2.1.4 requires that a qualified professional review the application for its potential impacts on the resource or district and identify modifications which would be necessary to avoid impacts.

Historic Project Review Process