



# Downtown Colusa

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN ~ PHASE 1.

URBAN DESIGN \_ ECONOMICS \_ OUTREACH

This Plan was funded by a  
Community Development  
Block Grant (CBDG)



District Revitalization  
Corridor Restructuring  
Community Visioning  
Streetscape Design  
Public Realm Design

specific plans  
form based codes  
web based codes  
streetscape design  
public realm design  
site masterplans  
revitalization strategies  
design guidelines  
design review  
sustainability planning  
two-day dialogues  
charrettes

September 17, 2012

To: Mr. Stice

From: Mr. Ian Ross

Re: Downtown Economic Plan ~ Phase 1 Administrative Draft

Dear Mr. Stice,

On behalf of City Design Collective, I am pleased to present to you the Administrative Draft of the Downtown Economic Plan ~ Phase 1. This plan contains an Introduction containing an overview of the public process and three chapters detailing key elements of the Urban Design, Economic, and Outreach strategies that were developed and refined throughout the planning process.

We look forward to discussing these strategies with you and members of the Planning Commission and City Council in the coming days, and request that Staff ultimately provide to us a single marked-up copy containing all City comments, so as to expedite production of the Final Draft.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Ross'.

Ian Ross  
Principal  
City Design Collective





# Downtown Colusa

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This Plan was produced by City Design Collective  
in collaboration with Economic & Planning Systems  
and was funded by a Community Development Block Grant (CBDG)

City  
Design  
Collective



Date of Publication  
2012





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# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

1.2 Public Process

1.3 Community Vision

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 Purpose

The Purpose of the Downtown Development Plan is to provide the framework for future policies and regulations that will attract and guide new investment in support of the community’s vision for a vibrant, active, and economically healthy Downtown.

Funding

This project has been funded through a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Planning and Technical Assistance grant intended to implement the first of two phases as follows: Phase 1 - Land Usages and Design Guidelines to create a walkable, bike-able, serviceable, vibrant downtown focused on making the best use of highway access and the Sacramento River. Key elements include capitalizing on the riverfront, state highway thoroughfare (Highways 20 and 45), and the Colusa State Recreation Area.

Background

Historically, Downtown Colusa was the community’s physical, social, cultural, and economic heart. Its proximity to the Sacramento River and connection to the region’s rail system allowed Downtown to thrive as economic development prospered along these corridors. Today, as new residential, commercial, and workplace investment continues to target the region’s primary automobile corridors, Downtown finds itself off the beaten economic path.

Over recent years, the City has been making great strides to plan for a vibrant Downtown community. The 2007 General Plan calls for restructuring the City’s current zoning in favor of both a “Main Street” and “Downtown Commercial” mixed-use district within the Plan Area. Each district is intended to provide for a “pedestrian-oriented live/work/play environment, where the business community, residents, and visitors mingle in a dynamic setting, walking from offices to restaurants to shops to home.” Both the Main Street and Downtown Mixed-Use districts fall into the “Riverfront District”, a special planning area in which all new development shall be designed in accordance with development standards and design guidelines customized to reinforce and complement the city’s rich architectural heritage.

General Plan  
Community Character and Design  
Vision Statements

1. Preserve Colusa’s Sense of Community and Small Town Character

2. Preserve and Strengthen the Downtown, Riverfront, and other Historic Places.

3. Preserve the Environmental Resources that Define Colusa

4. Ensure ease of mobility for all residents, visitors, and businesses.



## 1.1.2 Plan Area

The Plan Area includes both the Downtown Mixed-Use district and the Riverfront district and is comprised of all parcels bound by 13th Street to the west, Bridge Street to the east, the Sacramento River to the north, and Market Street to the south. The Plan Area also includes parcels located between 5th and 6th streets having frontage on Jay Street.





# INTRODUCTION

## 1.2 Public Process

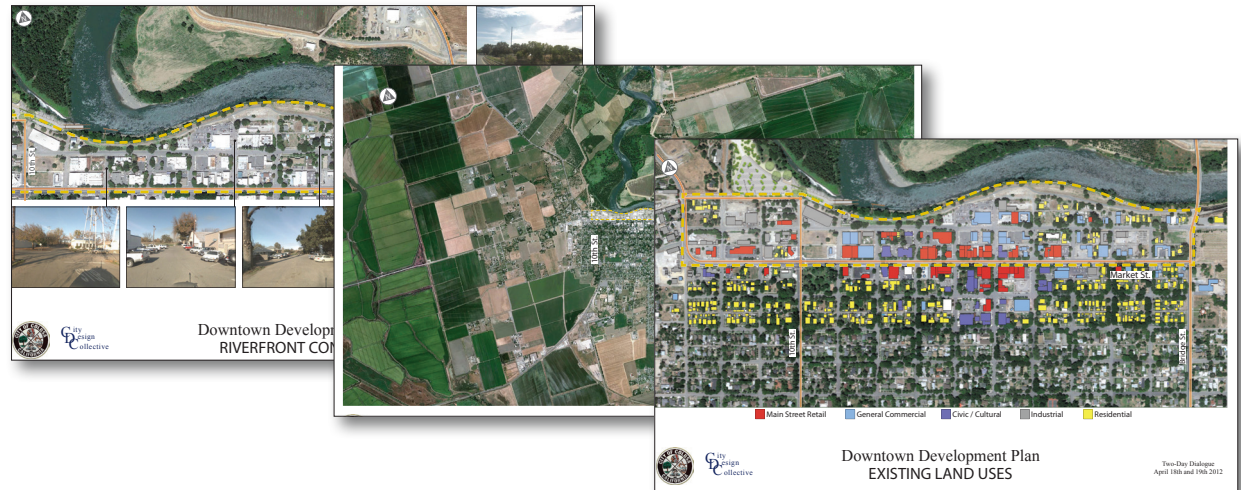
### 1.2.1 Overview

The planning process was structured to maximize opportunities for Colusa's residents, stakeholders, city staff, and key decision makers to shape the long-term vision for Downtown, and in doing so, to establish the framework for the Plan's Revitalization Strategies. The process began with the Two-Day Dialogue: two full days of meetings with staff, stakeholders, and the project team. Preliminary urban design and economic revitalization strategies were presented in a subsequent public workshop. Following the public workshop, the revitalization strategies were refined in accordance with direction received from workshop participants. The Draft Downtown Development Plan was presented to the Planning Commission and City Council in a Joint Study Session. The final Plan was presented to City Council on (tbd).

### 1.2.2 Two-Day Dialogue

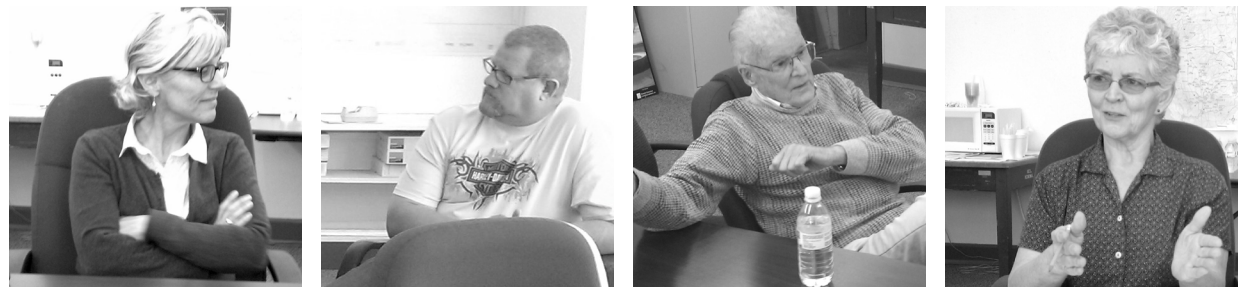
(April 18th and 19th, 2012)

The planning process began with two full days of meetings during which the planning and economics team met with elected officials, members of City boards and commissions, stakeholders, and residents to discuss their long-term vision for downtown as well as some of the opportunities and issues that will affect Downtown's success.



### Common Themes

1. River frontage is under-utilized
  - Main Street River frontage is under-utilized
  - River access is restricted
  - Levee blocks view of the river
2. Downtown lacks variety
  - Limited shops and services
  - Limited selection of restaurants and eateries
  - Large number of vacancies

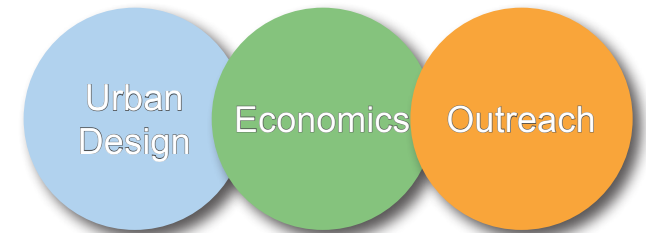




## 1.2.3 Public Workshop

(June 21st, 2012)

During the first public workshop, the consultant team presented a summary of the themes that emerged from the Two-Day Dialogue, and a brief urban design and economic analysis of Downtown's opportunities and constraints to form the foundation for subsequent Revitalization Strategies. Draft Revitalization Strategies were organized into three primary categories: Urban Design, Economics, and Outreach.



### Common Points of Discussion

1. River is crucial to revitalization.
2. Encourage new development along Main Street that offers views over the levee.
3. Create more housing in downtown.
4. Bring tourists to downtown on a regular basis.
5. Parking is crucial but should not detract from pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.
6. Support more restaurants by having more people live and work in downtown.
7. Occupy vacant storefronts with low-cost start up businesses and organizations.
8. Respect the local architectural character.
9. Change the zoning to allow more housing.
10. Leverage the boat launch to make downtown a destination. Attract boaters, fishermen, and families as part of their daily lives.

# INTRODUCTION

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## 1.3 The Community's Vision

### 1.3.1 The Role of Downtown

To be successful in the long run, downtown Colusa must offer a high value and unique experience that is different from other parts of the city or region. Namely, downtown Colusa must regain its role as an attractive, walkable, mixed-use neighborhood that offers desirable places to live and work, a highly attractive pedestrian-oriented 'main street' shopping experience, tourist attractions, cultural and historic relevance, public open spaces, a mix of shops, services, eating establishments, entertainment and lodging, a wide range of housing types to attract and retain residents, and access to local and regional transit services. These are the qualities that first attracted people to downtown Colusa. Current economic trends show that from the up-and-coming Millennial generation, to the soon-to-be retiring Baby Boomers, it is precisely these qualities of 'place' and 'community' that Californians will demand in the future.



THE VISION FOR DOWNTOWN  
City of Colusa



# INTRODUCTION

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## 1.3.2 The Role of the Riverfront

In support of the reenergized downtown, the City should emphasize development adjacent to the riverfront. To promote downtown merchants, hotels, and other businesses, the City must establish the new subdistrict as a unique destination for river access, dining, shopping and recreating along the Sacramento River. During public meetings, community members repeatedly voiced their support for new public places and attractive destinations down by the river.











## 2. URBAN DESIGN

- 2.1 Overview
- 2.2 Land Use Categories
- 2.3 Building Typologies
- 2.4 Downtown Districts



## 2.1 Overview

### Objectives

This Plan recommends restructuring the existing Downtown in favor of complementary subdistricts to support the following objectives:

1. Attract a wide range of complementary new investment.
2. Maximize downtown's assets including proximity to the Sacramento River and frontage located along Highways 20 and 45.
3. Reinforce Downtown as the community's most active and walkable district.
4. Ensure that new buildings complement the city's rich architectural heritage.
5. Maximize downtown's ability to attract residents, employers, and visitors.
6. Provide increased flexibility to stakeholders to attract downtown investment in accordance with contemporary consumer and investor preferences.

### Contents

1. Land Use Categories provide an exemplary list of complementary land uses that are recommended in support of a given subdistrict.
2. Building Typologies and associated Design Guidelines are provided to ensure that new investment supports a predictable physical outcome in accordance with the community's vision for craft and character.



At the time of this Plan's drafting, the majority of the Plan Area was zoned as C-G general commercial district in accordance with the 1999 Zoning Map.



## 2.2 Land Use Categories



The recommended subdistricts are intended to maximize geographic and economic assets.



## 2.2.1 Overview

Land uses in the downtown subdistricts shall support the community's vision for a walkable, pedestrian-friendly district that attracts residents and visitors as part of their daily lives. All uses shall be compatible with, and cater to the needs of the community and the region. This plan organizes land uses into the following seven Use Categories: Main Street Retail, General Commercial, Workplace, Live/Work, Residential, Lodging, Civic & Cultural.

For each Land Use Category, a statement of intent and list of exemplary uses is provided. The lists do not identify all of the possible uses that may be appropriate.

## 2.2.2 Categories

### Main Street Retail

Intent: Main Street uses offer goods and services that attract and sustain pedestrian activity in support of a vibrant, walkable, and diverse environment for shopping, strolling, dining and entertainment.

#### Permitted Uses

- Eating establishments including and similar to: bistros, cafes, delicatessens, restaurants. Outdoor dining is encouraged.
- Personal and Business Services that generate significant foot traffic including and similar to: hair and nail salons, clothing alterations, copy shops, dance studios, fitness and health clubs, internet cafes, martial arts, massage and physical therapy, shoe and luggage repair, yoga studios etc.
- Performing arts theaters and art galleries.
- Specialty food sales including and similar to: bakeries, cheese shops, delicatessens, ice cream parlors, gourmet and health foods, wine shops etc.
- Food markets.
- Retail sales including and similar to: antiques, apparel, accessories, art supplies, bicycles, books, flowers, boutique furniture, housewares, music and musical instruments, pharmacy, photographic equipment, sporting goods, toys, video rental etc
- Tourism-related services

#### Prohibited Uses

- Uses that detract from the pedestrian-oriented character and synergy.

### General Commercial

Intent: General Commercial uses include sales and services that do not necessarily create significant pedestrian activity and generally serve customers arriving by automobile. Uses should not directly compete with Main Street Retail uses for tenants and/or customers.

#### Permitted Uses

- Business services including and similar to banks and financial institutions, catering services, print services, real-estate agencies, travel agencies etc.
- Eating establishments over 3,000 square feet.
- Educational services including and similar to: colleges, adult schools, music schools etc.
- Entertainment uses including and similar to: live entertainment, amusement centers, indoor entertainment.
- Food stores including and similar to grocery stores, markets, and packaged goods.
- Personal services including and similar to: adult care, child care, dance and gymnastics training centers, health spas, exercise clubs, martial arts.
- Retail sales including and similar to: apparel, auto sales, computer supply, decorator arts and design center, home furnishings, household appliances and electronics, lamps/lighting, office supply, pharmacies, sporting goods, etc.
- Auto-parts sales. All merchandise must be displayed within the primary building.
- Auto and Boat Sales
- Bars, nightclubs, and similar uses serving alcoholic beverages not clearly ancillary to food sales.
- Boat rental, and river-related services.

## Workplace

Intent: Workplace uses include professional office and business services. Uses shall be compatible with residences in the riverfront neighborhood.

### Permitted Uses

- Administrative, business and professional uses including and similar to accounting and financial, telecommunications, design related, real estate, research and development etc.
- Educational and Instructional Facilities.
- Professional offices & services including and similar to medical and dental offices.

## Live/Work

Intent: Live/work uses combine residences with compatible work-related activities to support pedestrian activity and appeal to a wide-range of community members.

### Permitted Uses

- Live-work: An integrated dwelling and workplace. Work activity shall be registered as a business and may include residually-compatible practices such as arts, crafts, graphic design, photography, jewelry-making, and similar activities, personal services and business services including and similar to art-therapy, financial planning, physical therapy, marriage and family therapy etc.

### Prohibited Uses

- Activities that require hazardous material, generate significant noise, or are otherwise not compatible with residential uses are not permitted.

## Residential

Intent: The Residential Use Category includes a range of permitted residential development types that support the community's vision for safe, active, and pedestrian-oriented downtown subdistricts. Residential development should provide a wide range of housing options to allow Colusa residents to live in the city's most walkable and most vibrant district.

### Permitted Types

- Multiple Family Dwellings including apartments, flats, town-houses and/or lofts, located in a multistory residential or mixed-use building.
- Single-Family Attached dwellings including row-houses and duplexes.
- Single-Family Detached dwelling including free standing houses and carriage houses.
- Family Day Care as licensed by the State of California.

## Lodging

Intent: The Lodging Land Use Category defines lodging types permissible in the Plan Area.

### Permitted Uses

- Lodging uses including and similar to hotels and motels, inns and bed & breakfast establishments.

## Civic & Cultural

Intent: Civic and Cultural uses permit a range of public and quasi-public uses intended to attract a variety of residents and visitors.

### Permitted Uses

- Civic and Cultural uses including and similar to government center or office, library, police substation, museum etc.
- Quasi-public uses including and similar to conference centers, teen and senior centers etc.
- Non-profit services, fraternal organizations, clubs, union halls, and similar organizations.
- Public parks and open spaces.
- Public parking facilities.

Note: Public parking facilities should not be located in the Riverfront subdistrict



## 2.3 Building Typologies and Design Guidelines

### Commercial and Mixed-Use Building Typologies

#### Commercial Block

A building designed with ground-floor storefronts for “Main Street” retail uses. Upper stories are designed for residential, workplace, commercial, civic, cultural and/or lodging uses.



#### Workplace Commercial

A building designed for offices, retail sales, and/or services, and/or professional uses on the ground floor, with upper floors configured for commercial, residential, and/or additional workplace uses. This building type is also applicable to service commercial uses and can work well for large-scale retail uses.



## Commercial and Mixed-Use Design Guidelines

### Articulation

#### Height

1. Ground floor storefronts should be used along Market Street in the Downtown Core.
2. Ground floor commercial spaces should be a minimum of 14 feet clear interior height.
3. Buildings should have a clearly defined ground floor delineated by a cornice, band, or other horizontal course. The ground floor should be a minimum of 60% of the height of two-story buildings.
4. Horizontal courses such as watertables or bellybands or a change in facade materials are encouraged to help delineate upper stories where appropriate to overall style.
5. Roof treatment may include a cornice, parapet, eave or other distinctive treatment.



#### Length

1. Building length should be well articulated using facade elements in accordance with architectural style.
2. Building bays can be offset and roof lines varied to create a rhythm of building increments that provide visual interest and support pedestrian activity.
3. Where upper floors contain lofts, townhouses, flats or other residential units, length articulation should articulate and emphasize individual dwelling units.



#### Corner Treatment

1. Corner volumes may be accented by a change in materials, height, and/or use of a domed or pyramidal roof form.
2. Special windows and doors, terraces, and architectural materials are recommended methods for articulating corners.

### Building Elements

1. Window glass should be recessed a minimum of 2 inches from the exterior wall.
2. All windows with the exception of small accent windows and storefront windows should be divided into a minimum of two panes.
3. Window glass should be clear. Reflective glass windows should not be permitted.
4. Alcoves, balconies and terraces are encouraged at upper stories to provide outdoor spaces.
5. Ornamental wall-mounted outdoor lighting is encouraged to accent entries, columns or pilasters.
6. Decorative elements such as tile mosaics, artwork, decorative reliefs, and ornamental lighting are encouraged to add vibrancy to building walls.
7. Blade signs and wall-mounted signs are encouraged to enhance pedestrian scale and character.



Significant architectural volume at corner creates a visual landmark along a major automobile corridor.

### Entries, Access, & Parking

#### Pedestrian

1. Residential entry doors facing the public realm should have a minimum 10% glazing.
2. Commercial entry doors should have a minimum of 50% door area glazing.
3. Upper story uses should be primarily accessed via formal entries. A lobby may provide access to an interior stairwell and/or elevator.
4. Recessed building entries may include special paving, soffit treatment, and decorative lighting.
5. Building entries should be accentuated with pedestrian-scale elements such as canopies, overhangs, and awnings.



Formal entry at corner location.



## Residential Building Typologies

### Stacked Flats

A multi-story building comprising flats, lofts, townhouses, or a mix of residential types arranged side-by-side and on multiple floors.



### Live-work

A building with integrated residences and workspaces. Buildings may be organized as rowhouses or may have multiple units in a single structure.



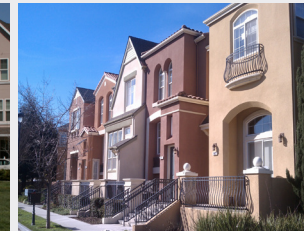
### Multiplex

Designed to appear as a large scale house, this building type contains two, three, four, or more units which may be stacked or side-by-side. Common types include duplex, triplex, and quads and villas.



### Rowhouse

A multi-story building comprising flats, lofts, townhouses, or a mix of residential types arranged side-by-side.





## Residential Building Typologies



Contemporary stacked flats with articulated building masses.



Individual roof forms articulate this two-story residences.



Row houses utilize stoops to enhance pedestrian activity.

### Massing and Composition

1. Building massing should illustrate residential volumes through offsetting bays, and use of individual roof forms and building elements in accordance with overall style.
2. Building facades should be oriented to the primary street and to interior courts and paseos. Buildings shall not front onto parking areas.
3. Private outdoor spaces such as courtyards, plazas, and gardens are encouraged.
4. Ground floor residential units shall be elevated a minimum of 18 inches above finished grade.

### Articulation

#### Height

1. Common roof treatment for stacked flats includes a cornice, parapet, cap or change in materials; for multiplex and rowhouses, roofs may be pitched, include dormers, or a distinctive cap to provide visual interest in accordance with overall style. Modern buildings may include a combination of roof types to illustrate individual units.
2. Additional belt courses are encouraged to help delineate upper stories.

### Length

1. Building masses should articulate individual units. Projecting and inseting of building volumes, delineation of bays, and varying roof lines should be employed to add visual interest.
2. Individual façade composition should not be excessively replicated. A variety of unit plans or façade designs should be employed over the length of a block face.
3. Corner treatment using unique roofs or volumes is encouraged to add visual interest to stacked flats.

### Building Elements

1. For multifamily buildings, formal entrances may be identified with porticoes, vestibules, and prominent doorways. For rowhouses, stoops are recommended along street frontages.
2. Terraces, balconies, window bays, porches, and roof gardens should be used where appropriate to create outdoor rooms.
3. Hierarchy of window sizes should reflect the living spaces within.
4. Green roofs should be considered to enhance energy efficiency, reduce stormwater run-off, and provide visual interest.
5. Shading devices such as overhangs, latticework and trellises should be incorporated where appropriate, especially at south-facing facades.

### Access & Parking

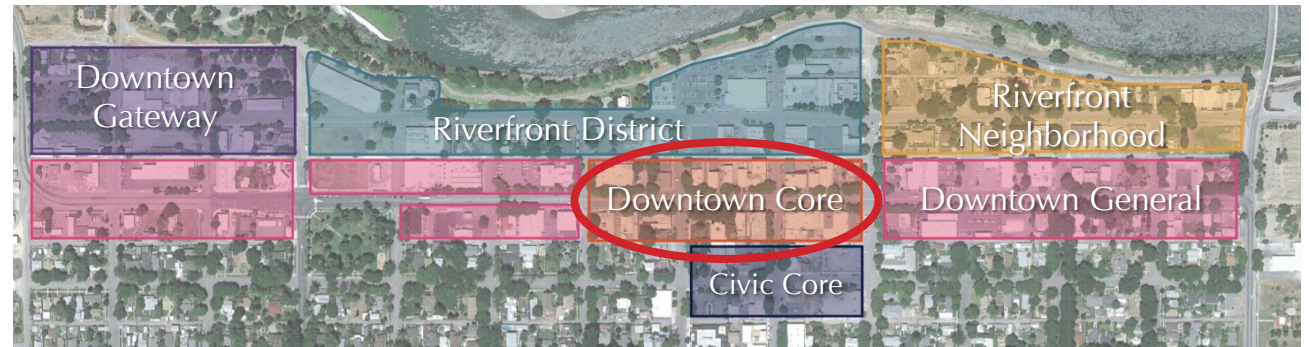
1. Primary pedestrian access to residential buildings shall be from the fronting street, paseos, and courtyards where possible. Entrances should be residential in character, prominent, and easy to identify.
2. Upper story units should be accessed from a central lobby, or interior stairwell contained within the main building volume.
3. Garages, structures and car ports shall be designed in harmony with the primary building's architectural style, colors, and building materials.
4. Internal "tuck-under" garages may be accessed from rear alleys.
5. For live-work buildings, ground floor commercial spaces should be accessed directly from the primary street, court, or paseo where possible.

## 2.4 Land Use Districts

### 2.4.1 The Downtown Core

#### Description

Located along Market Street between 4th and 7th streets, the Downtown Core is the most urban, walkable, and retail-driven subdistrict. Land Use and Building Type strategies are customized to support a pedestrian-oriented 'main street' shopping environment where residents and visitors can park once, and experience the district on-foot.



#### Land Use Categories

##### Ground Floor

Main Street Retail

##### Upper Floors

General Commercial

Workplace

Live/Work

Residential

Lodging

Civic & Cultural

*Prohibited:* Uses that detract from a pedestrian-oriented experience

#### Building Typologies

Commercial Block





## Revitalization Strategies

1. Establish the Downtown Core as the city's most vibrant, active, and walkable district.
2. Recruit and guide new complementary 'Main Street' investment types.
3. Consider streetscape improvements to enhance the pedestrian environment while preserving parking and accommodating commercial vehicle needs.
4. Grow the commercial base. Promote new development of specialty retail shops and personal services.
5. Reduce off-street parking requirements to incentivize new investment.
6. Establish a 'park-once' strategy to allow Core businesses to share off-street parking facilities. Encourage shared parking agreements among business owners.
7. Consider short term tactical solutions such as parklets to provide additional outdoors seating and create opportunities for the display of goods.
8. Activate vacant storefronts. Provide funding for short term leases to create incubator space for new businesses to locate in vacant storefronts.

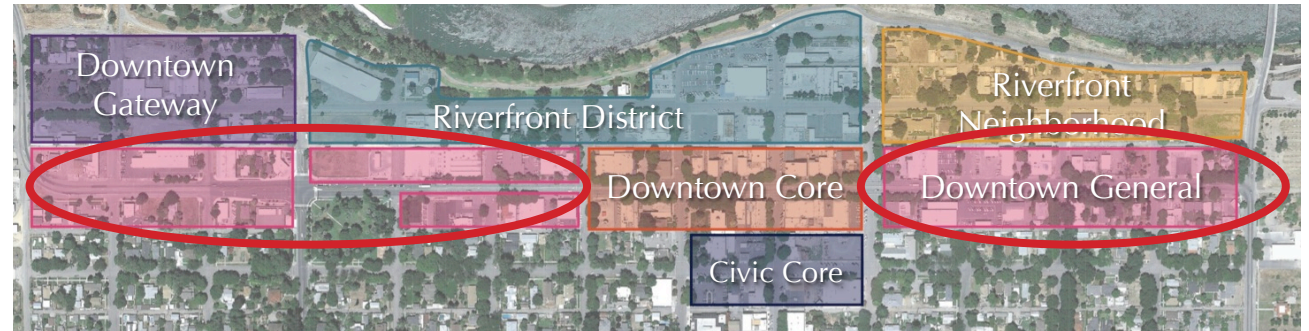




## 2.4.2 The Downtown General

### Description

Located along Market Street between Bridge and 4th Streets, and between 7th and 13th Streets, the Downtown General maximizes Highway 20 and 45 exposure by locating a mix of commercial, workplace, and residential uses where they are on-display along one of the region's primary thoroughfares.



### Land Use Categories

#### Ground Floor

Main Street Retail  
General Commercial  
Workplace  
Live/Work  
Lodging  
Civic/Cultural

#### Upper Floors

Workplace  
Residential  
Lodging  
Civic & Cultural

### Building Typologies

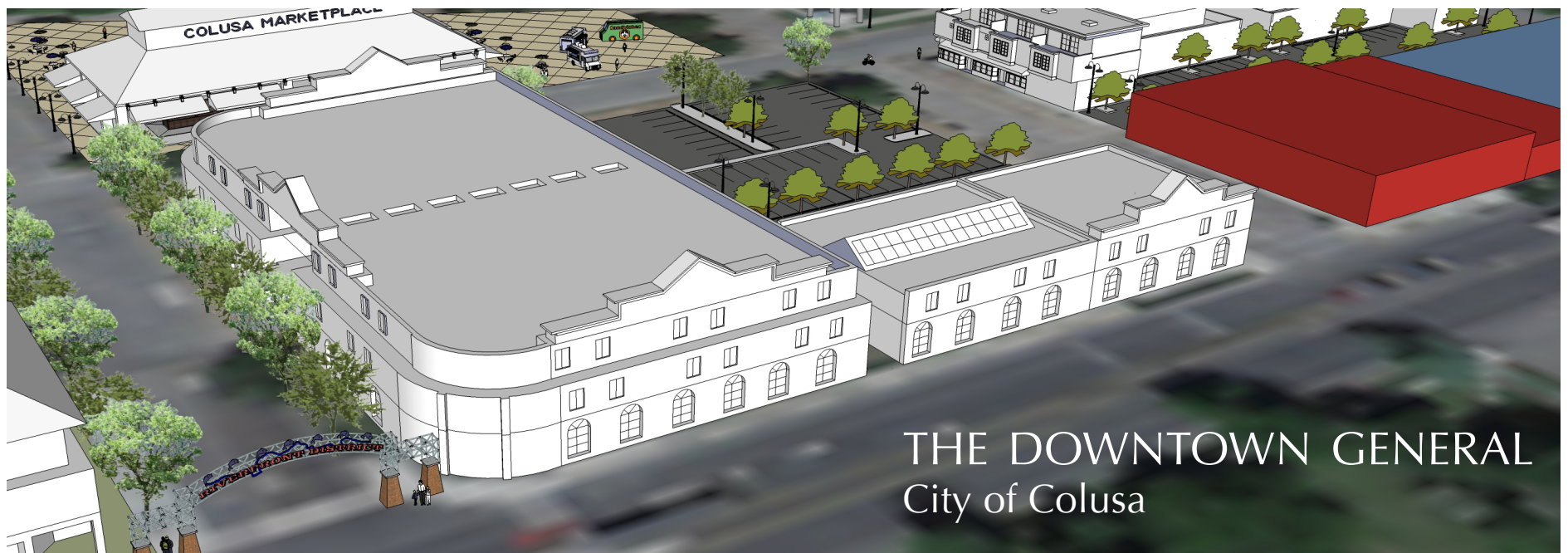
Commercial Block  
Workplace Commercial  
Stacked Flats  
Live/Work





## Revitalization Strategies

1. Grow the city's commercial base by leveraging the district's location along primary auto routes and traffic traveling to the casino.
2. Target a hotel or similar investment for the corner of 10th and Market Street.
3. Reduce off-street parking requirements to incentivize new investment.
4. Promote shared parking agreements to align parking supply with demand and to use the district's land with greater efficiency.
5. Invest in capital improvements including streetscape design and signage to enhance district character. Construct prominent gateway feature to emphasize the district's entryway.

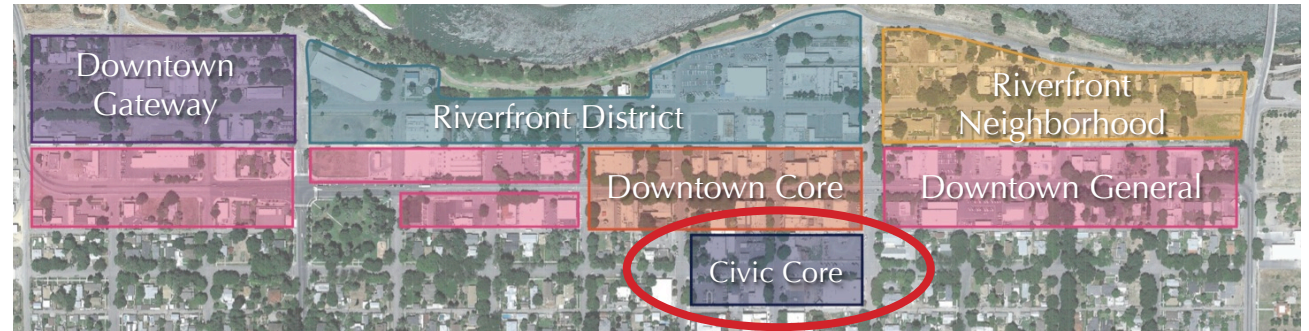




## 2.4.3 The Civic Core

### Description

Home to the historic County Superior Courthouse, the Civic Core includes parcels fronting onto Jay Street between 4th and 6th Streets. Investment may include additional complementary land uses as well as shared public parking facilities to serve the greater downtown.



### Land Use Categories

#### Ground Floor

Civic / Cultural  
General Commercial  
Workplace  
Live/Work

#### Upper Floors

General Commercial  
Workplace  
Live/Work  
Residential  
Lodging  
Civic & Cultural

### Building Typologies

Commercial Block  
Workplace Commercial  
Live/Work  
Parking Structure

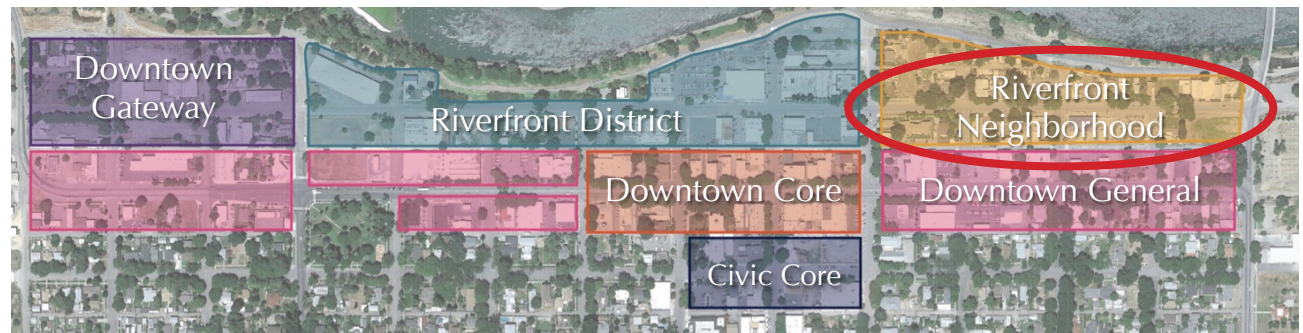




## 2.4.4 The Riverfront Neighborhood

### Description

Located between Bridge Street and 4th Street and between Main Street and the Levee, the Riverfront Neighborhood contains a mix of residential and commercial uses in a quaint setting along the Sacramento River. New development should protect and enhance the neighborhood. Buildings should be residential in character.



### Land Use Categories

Residential  
Lodging  
Workplace (residentially compatible)

### Building Typologies

Multiplex  
Rowhouse  
Live/Work  
Adaptive Reuse

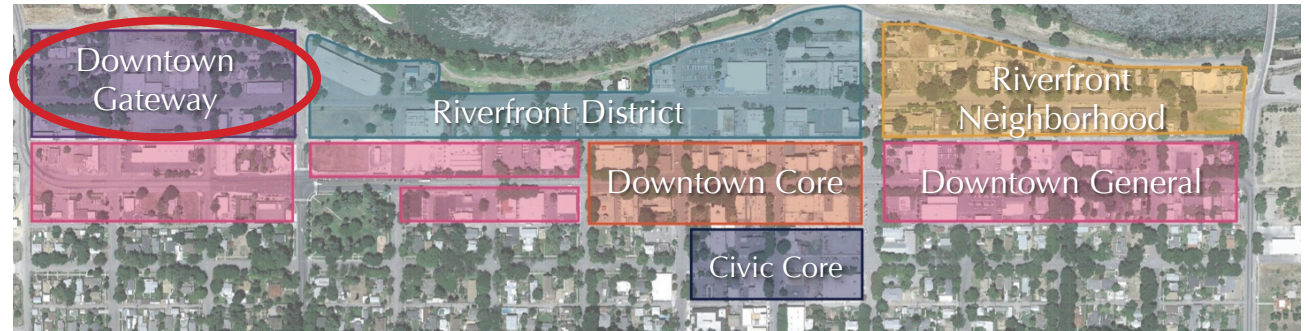




## 2.4.5 The Downtown Gateway

### Description

Between 10th and 13th Streets north of Market Street, the Downtown Gateway is home to many underutilized parcels, and presents an opportunity to attract significant new investment where it is enviably positioned near the river and at the city's northern gateway.

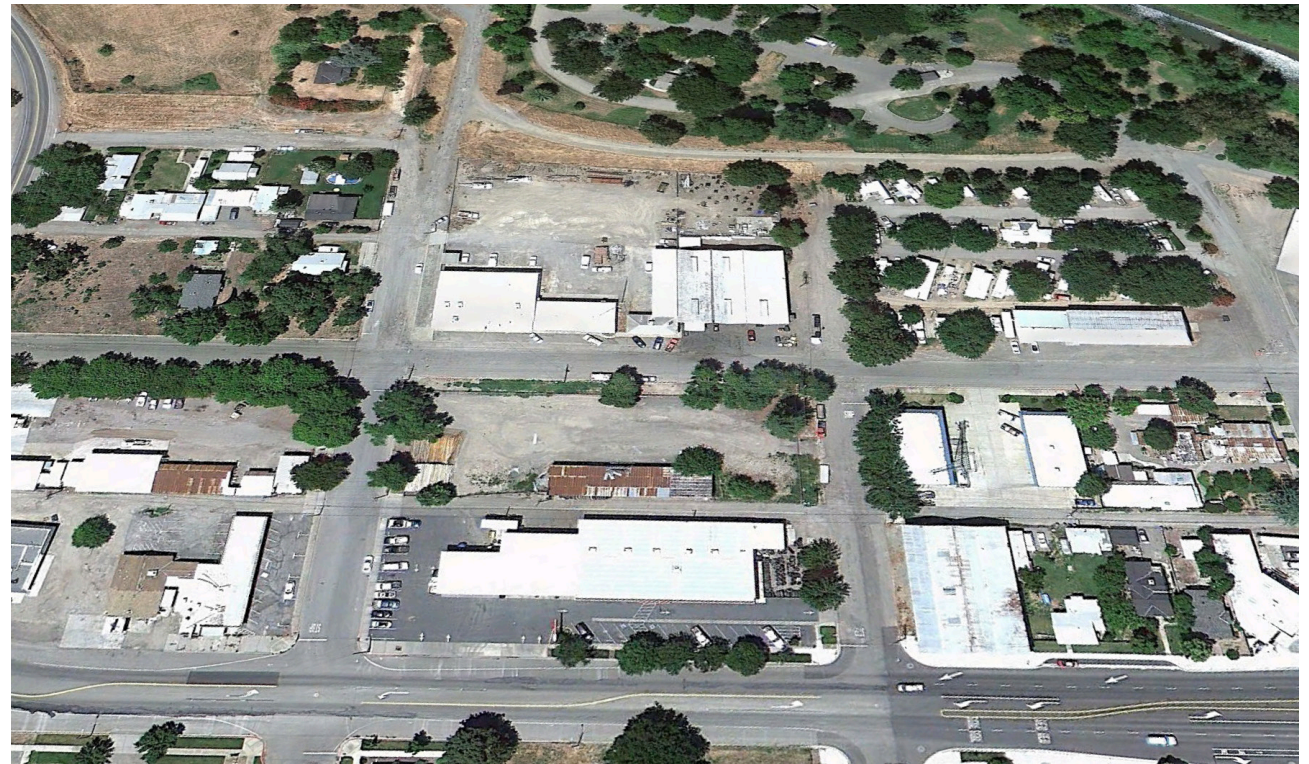


### Land Use Categories

- Residential
- General Commercial
- Workplace
- Lodging
- Live/Work
- Entertainment

### Building Typologies

- Commercial Block (Market Street frontage)
- Workplace Commercial
- Live/Work
- Stacked Flats
- Multiplex
- Rowhouse
- Parking Structure





## Revitalization Strategies

1. Locate multi-story mixed-use buildings along Market Street to enhance the frontage along Highway 20 and create a strong presence at the city's northern gateway.
2. Consider a range of residential and/or river-oriented commercial uses on interior parcels. Encourage multi-story buildings that provide river views.
3. Establish a shared parking agreement for the Downtown Gateway district to maximize development potential.



Multistory mixed-use buildings front onto Market Street. Residential buildings are located in close proximity to the boat launch, and Riverfront subdistrict.



## 2.4.6 The Riverfront District

### Description

Extending between 4th and 10th Streets, between Main Street and the Sacramento River, the Riverfront District is an ideal location to create a regional destination for residents and visitors alike. New residential and commercial investment should support a vibrant center for river-oriented entertainment and commerce.



### Land Use Categories

#### Ground Floor

General Commercial (with emphasis on dining and entertainment)  
Live / Work  
Lodging  
Main Street Retail

#### Upper Floors

General Commercial  
Workplace  
Residential  
Lodging  
Civic / Cultural

### Building Typologies

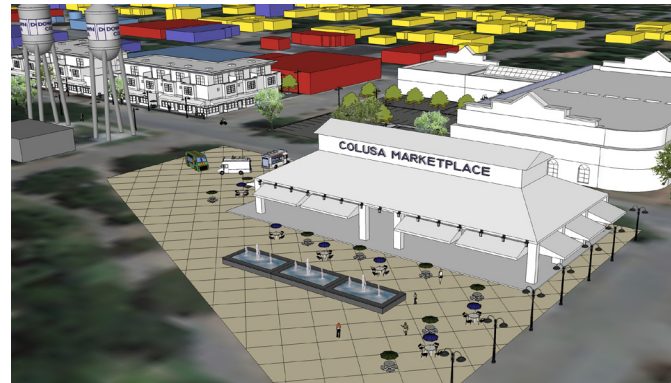
Commercial Block  
Workplace Commercial  
Live / Work





## Revitalization Strategies

1. Announce the Riverfront Subdistrict through way-finding, signage and enhanced streetscape connections to Market Street.
2. Locate a gateway arch to span 10th Street at Market announcing the Riverfront Subdistrict at the city's most heavily trafficked intersection.
3. Restructure entitlements to streamline the approval of new investment supportive of the community's goals.
4. Prohibit development types that detract from the overall intention of the district.
5. Activate the district with short term tactics including food-cart pods and public gatherings.
6. Promote redevelopment of underutilized parcels.
  - Consider relocation of the Ford Dealership to one of the county's primary auto corridors.
7. Reduce off-street parking requirement in the Riverfront sub-district. Create shared parking lots at gateway locations and throughout downtown to use the sub district's valuable land with greater efficiency.
8. Emphasize existing landmark icons (water towers) to bring greater recognition.
9. Create a community plaza and marketplace building to encourage riverside commerce and tourism.
10. Emphasize water connections (public mooring), and linkages to other riverfront venues.



Public marketplace at terminus of 10th Street.



Gateway arch at 10th and Market (looking north)



Mixed-use buildings with ground floor retail along Main Street between 9th and 10th Streets (looking north).





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## 3. ECONOMICS

- 3.1 Citywide Economic Issues
- 3.2 Citywide/Regional Initiatives
- 3.3 Downtown/Riverfront Initiatives



## 3.1 Citywide Economic Issues

### 3.1.1 Overview

The City of Colusa is positioned to expand and diversify its economy. The City has good proximity to major population centers, natural beauty, small town ambiance, and some promising tourism and other job sectors. Yet, without strategic direction, the town is unlikely to reverse current trends toward economic polarization and stagnation. As a part of the City Design Collective's evaluation of planning opportunities, Economic & Planning Systems (EPS) engaged in a two-day round of interviews and site observations to help identify opportunities to better the local economy and to suggest related implementation concepts intended for future consideration.

While the scope of analysis did not include independent data analysis, this concentrated period of interviews and physical study highlighted several areas of economic importance that should be targeted for future study and resolution. Economic observations are organized according to Citywide and Downtown Issues.

Implementation of concepts addressing major recommended initiatives will require substantial leadership not just from the core group of citizens engaged in the City's deliberations, but from other business leaders who exert control over how economic resources are deployed in the region.

### **Two Primary Issues affecting Economic Growth**

There are economic and demographic trends at work that seek to undermine the stability of the City. Chief among these is the advent of the disappearing middle class and the loss of the river as a central asset.

As income bifurcation continues, it is critical to emphasize the objective of attracting export based economic activity – that is, businesses that build wealth for the local community by achieving sales to residents and businesses outside of Colusa. Examples of such industries include tourism and agriculture.

Like many Central Valley cities, Colusa has turned its back on the river, which has historically been a source of transportation, recreation, and backdrop for industrial development. This trajectory continues today. While industrial and other associated uses are positive job generators to be valued in this economic recovery, it is also critical to think long term about establishing a fundamental transformation which would restore the river to its rightful place as a focal point for the city's residents and visitors.



## 3.1.2 Issues and Opportunities

Before specific ideas for revitalization are discussed, it is necessary to evaluate the City in its regional economic context. Success in expanding and diversifying Colusa must start with defining viable approaches toward improving the City's recognition and expanding its role within the Northern California economy.

### Major assets include:

- Wildlife refuge viewing and hunting. About 35,000 visitors come to the Colusa Wildlife Refuge each year for wildlife viewing and 4,000 come to hunt waterfowl and pheasant, yet the proximity to and synergy with the City is not apparent (excepting a small sign marking its entrance from Highway 20).
- Agricultural interests. Rice is one of the major crops grown in the Sacramento Valley of California. These interests generate a substantial amount of economic activity within Colusa County. In addition, a movement appears to be underway to explore the region's sustainable farming potential, with Colusa potentially offering a central location for showcasing the region's offerings.
- Urban form and small town feel. Colusa boasts a pre-war urban form exemplified by mature trees and a variety of contrasting architectural styles. As a result of its location remote from I-5, the City has been spared the ravages of commuter-oriented production housing, as well as accompanying big box commercial uses. The town's character and attractiveness is a well-kept secret in the greater Sacramento region.
- Waterfront potential. If economic conditions can be improved, there is an excellent opportunity to capture increased tourism and visitor spending throughout Downtown and especially in the Riverfront subdistrict. However, river-related recreational options are potentially affected by declining maintenance of channels, and it is unclear as to the policy direction of the US Army Corps of Engineers relative to levee maintenance and long-term structural stability in lieu of major (and potentially disruptive) improvements in "encroaching" urban areas.
- Cultural history. The City contains an interesting variety of historic influences, including its classical courthouse, several important Chinese structures, an influx of Hispanic and potentially other ethnic households in the future, all superimposed on an historic grid structure typical among California's railroad settlements. This combination of cultural elements provides an interesting and promising backdrop for expanded tourism.
- Regional connections. The City has good proximity to Sacramento as well as the Yuba City/Marysville area, Chico, and both Lake County and the Northern Sierra Nevada. It has a long-standing riverine connection with Sacramento. These connections indicate the town's excellent regional position, well within the catchment area for business, housing, and tourism. However, its location a few miles distant from I-5 has protected its urban form and sustained the authenticity of the City, providing major opportunities for tourism and other forms of expanded economic opportunity.

### Major concerns include:

- Loss of middle class and increased poverty. The composition of Colusa's population has changed substantially during the past two or three decades. This has resulted in a loss of business enterprises, declining school performance, a trend of youth leaving the City due to lack of opportunity, and general economic stagnation.
- Lack of river access/influence. Like many towns on the Sacramento River, raised levees have shielded the river from the town. As a result, its influence has been minimal. Creative and assertive approaches are needed to redirect the public's attention to the river.
- Lack of regional awareness. Colusa has not attracted attention to itself over the years, to the extent that the lack of awareness regarding its offerings have contributed to economic stagnation, with a lack of entertainment/restaurant, general merchandise and food options for locals and visitors alike.



## 3.2 City-wide/Regional Initiatives

The following sections identified as areas of Citywide import, provide initial observations, and suggest approaches to subsequent study with the intent of providing actionable, tangible initiatives and projects to improve the City's economic performance.

### 3.2.1 Improve Local Capture of Regional Wealth

Colusa is fortunate to be located within a region of immense agricultural, scenic, and wildlife value within a reasonable distance of the Sacramento and Bay Area metropolitan economies. Yet, the City is not fully reaping the benefits of this unusual juxtaposition of assets. Can these industries stimulate and direct more investment into Colusa?

#### Strategies

- Identify “Regional Benefactors.” Look for synergy with broad base of investors to focus on marketing and near-term project concepts (e.g., County, private sector, non-profit foundations).
- Improve competitive position for tourism. Maximize regional economic multiplier by expanding tourism capture within Northern California and beyond.
- Fill retail gaps to the extent possible given shopping patterns. Target new and complementary uses that don't compete head-on with existing successful operations. Evaluate and improve local shopping for residents and tourists, avoiding “big box” formats more appropriate for I-5 corridor and neighboring cities.
- Expand “basic” (export-oriented) industrial and other uses to attract good jobs with livable wages, leverage agricultural strength/specialization, and maximize linkages among buyers and suppliers related to existing and prospective industries
- Improve “quality of life” as an economic development strategy. This may involve additional focus on improved school quality to attract more middle class families, including decision makers. Rally local citizens to become more active in civic life – adopt the riverfront and downtown as “their own”.
- Seek to improve the match between local jobs and affordable housing options. This will require an improved understanding of sources of new employment, existing needs, including a systematic approach to identifying specific housing needs to accommodate senior, ethnic, and multi-generational populations present in Colusa.



## 3.2.2 Conduct Citywide Real Estate Analysis

Colusa could benefit from a comprehensive evaluation of its real estate assets. A brief survey of the City's real estate conditions indicates the following initial observations:

- Certain uses in the downtown area, not predicated on pedestrian access and other typical downtown uses may be better suited in other parts of the City.
- Biomass energy concepts hold great potential for attracting a range of industrial uses to the City's periphery.
- Within the downtown, there is a marked lack of choice in grocery, apparel, and other sectors.
- Uses activating the riverfront are practically non-existent.
- New housing prototypes have great potential for infill development, potentially in horizontal and even vertical mixed use configurations.
- Investor perception of opportunity and risk needs to be better explored to understand how to encourage new development as the economy continues to recover.

A follow-up examination of economic development concepts, programs, and related development opportunities would be a logical next step. The following should be evaluated in this context:

1. Maximize local multiplier effects. Understand implications of potential new sources of employment, with an emphasis on concepts that capture value-added within the community (e.g., maximize re-circulation of spending locally). Locally owned businesses are an excellent way to achieve this objective.
2. Define industrial development opportunities. Evaluate opportunities for industrial park development both related and unrelated to energy production. The "cluster" of economic activities related to the potential biomass power concept should be fully understood and be a foundational element of further economic development strategies should the concept have merit and be feasible.
3. Strategic expansion of the City's housing stock. Additional housing could both stimulate near-term economic activity and meet under-served populations. Discussions have indicated that apartment rents are reasonably healthy and offer the prospect of attached product feasibility now or in the foreseeable future.
4. Evaluate infill development feasibility. Several pockets of land exist that lend themselves to concentrations of related uses in proximity to the river. Opportunities for mixed use concepts (including horizontal or side by side layouts instead of over-dependence on vertical development) throughout the Main Street district could help diversify risk. A rigorous evaluation of ownership interests and other due diligence could help define potential creation of larger development projects comprised of multiple parcels and ownership, or the ability for a master developer to assemble such parcels and bring financing to projects to create catalyst uses.
5. Build local economic development resources. Outside lenders not familiar with Colusa's potential are less likely to provide lending (construction and business). Local relationships with business leaders (especially banks) should be explored as a key element of a local economic development strategy.

## 3.2.3 Develop Implementation Strategy to Improve Retail and Visitor-Oriented Options

### Retail Strategic Plan

Demographic changes have brought about a more diverse population. This trend is likely to continue, as has been seen in other portions of the Valley. With these changes, opportunities to diversify local retail offerings are made possible. A retail development strategic plan could be a critical element of future economic analysis that seeks to identify how local needs can be met in a feasible way that resonates with local shoppers and also attracts spending from visitors. Local groceries and other obvious gaps would be a primary research goal. Other chief opportunities include:

- Sporting goods expansion part of outdoors cluster – seek expansion space for locally owned outdoor supply store.
- Local foods – organic/sustainable foods are appealing to an increasingly broad spectrum of the public, including younger generations, and could feature locally grown walnuts, almonds, rice, fresh fish, and other commodities.

### Visitation Strategy

The City is located on the Highway 20 axis, which is a regional east-west connection providing access to burgeoning Lake County wine industry. The presence of the casino located near the City brings busses of tourists to within two short blocks of the riverfront. The existing Steelhead Lodge operation to the south of Colusa attracts a large radius of users, many of whom originate from outside the region. A hotel has reportedly expressed interest in locating at the crossroads of Highways 20 and 45, and the Steelhead Lodge proprietors are evaluating an expansion concept including hotel, timeshare, and RV facilities. The State Park has ongoing potential as a privately run campground (by KOA). All of these are indicators of substantial tourism growth potential, and a more formal evaluation is necessary to better understand visitor travel patterns, length of stay, places of origin, and interests.

### Expand Local Entertainment Options

Evaluate options for creating a critical mass of restaurants and other entertainment options. The existing theater, while too small to compete effectively with regional multiplex options, may have adaptive reuse potential. Local families and tourists with kids should be surveyed to ascertain activities (e.g., recreational, educational, and shopping) they would engage in if given the opportunity.



## 3.2.4 Facilitate Development of Beneficial Projects

No economic initiative is worth undertaking unless a strategy is in place to “land” development. Specific considerations include:

### **Work with key businesses to seek expansion and correct location**

The long-term organization of development throughout the City should be considered, with an eye to strategic expansion of the sporting goods store, local restaurants, etc. Perhaps more germane to City short-term fiscal conditions, the expansion and relocation (if feasible) of downtown car dealerships and other major sales tax generators should be prioritized. However, it is critical that all such relocation efforts be made with full cooperation and support from affected businesses.

### **Review and Improve City Entitlement Process**

Interviews have indicated that approval processes related to proposed adaptive reuse and mixed use projects are cumbersome. It would be advisable to conduct an internal review of the process to evaluate and improve the entitlement process to streamline the approval of projects that support downtown’s revitalization as follows:

- Generate jobs matched well to skills and interests of locals
- Projects that contribute to an attractive urban form and architectural design
- Have catalytic qualities with the ability to leverage the creation of a bona fide Riverfront District
- Combine compatible uses to reduce traffic and parking demand and encourage walking and bicycling
- Utilize innovative and realistic approaches to offering visitors and locals sought-after experiences and goods.
- Reuse historic structures and reinforce historical themes

### **Explore and confirm levee-related regulatory parameters**

The Army Corps of Engineers has issued concerns regarding possible unwillingness to certify levees inflicted with encroachments. The notion of Main Street Colusa being one of these encroaching districts has surfaced in the past. Every effort must be made now to identify safeguards for protecting entitlements in this district, possibly involving a “top down” response from the federal level.

## 3.2.5 Establish Funding Plans for Capital Improvements and Long-Term Maintenance

Every effort should be made to improve waterfront moorage with the proposed dock improvements near the State Park. Other capital improvement priorities appear to include improvement of access, signage, and circulation at the junction of Highway 20 and the State Park extending to the river – an area that appears to have substantial development potential and has been identified as a potential catalyst area.

Capital improvements will need to be combined with private sector-initiated projects and funded on a pay-as-you-go basis, supplemented by grants/loans by various agencies that the City is well-qualified for. In addition, demographic and other criteria may be very supportive of the use of tax credits (affordable housing, new markets, and historic) that could improve project feasibility.

Pending legislation may bring new instruments to Colusa and other cities, possibly including replacements for redevelopment. Leading candidates at this stage appear to include legislation (Perez) supporting the formation of Infrastructure Financing Districts (IFDs); in addition, legislation sponsored by Steinberg appears to be targeted toward facilitating redevelopment tax increment and other redevelopment powers where compelling mixed use concepts consistent with the tenets of SB375 are in place, in addition to the CEQA processing advantages such projects enjoy under the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) developed for the region.

In addition, long term strategies toward maintenance of new capital improvements is important, and is a major issue given the reported 90 percent plus sales tax leakage that has undoubtedly undermined local municipal financial conditions. The concept of a Business Improvement District has been discussed in the past, though assessments and other land secured models must be sensitive to stakeholders' abilities to pay and effects on tenant viability.

It may be worthwhile to explore the creation of a Local Economic Development Corporation or similar entity that would be responsible for finding grants and developing public-private funding strategies, related to but outside the auspices of City government.



## 3.3 Downtown and Riverfront Initiatives

The Downtown can be positioned to help rectify the fiscal deterioration that is presently occurring with severe leakage of sales tax to other cities in the region, by creating a regional tourist draw that leverages Colusa's scenic beauty and small town charm in close proximity to Sacramento and the Bay Area.

### 3.3.1 Establish a Critical Mass of River-Oriented Facilities, Retail, and Services in the Riverfront and Downtown Gateway Subdistricts.

To realize significant new investment in Downtown, the city should leverage the considerable asset of the fully-realized new boat launch to catalyze new investment on underutilized parcels throughout the Riverfront and Downtown Gateway Subdistricts.

- Gain an improved understanding of demand for lodging including but not limited to hotels, motels, time-shares, and short-term accommodations that cater to birding, fishing, and hunting.
- Local docks are reportedly at capacity during striper season and other key junctures – continue to expand capacity as market conditions and economics warrant, likely in combination with specific water-oriented development concepts (e.g., additional restaurants and other demand generators)
- A cluster of related uses including visitor-serving rentals (boat, bike, etc.), expansion of sporting goods offerings, quick (but quality) foods reflecting local agricultural and aquacultural offerings (deli, fish tacos, other food options) and boat storage/service may be ideal uses for the Downtown Gateway subdistrict.
- Identify opportunity sites for new investment. Consider relocating the Ford Dealership to one of the region's primary automobile corridors to create opportunities for new pedestrian-oriented mixed-use investment that takes full advantage of its location adjacent to the river. Consider relocating the City Corps Yard, and other businesses that detract from pedestrian-oriented activity.
- Consider establishing an RFQ/RFP processes combined with land assembly and relocation for large areas of the Downtown Gateway. Consider establishing a local economic development corporation to assist with large scale projects.
- Evaluate property development strategy options (e.g., master developer vs. piecemeal development approach);
- Determine how public and private resources can be combined most effectively to incentivize and support new development.







## 4. OUTREACH

4.1 Overview

4.2 Leveraging Specific Assets

4.3 Implementation Strategies

## 4.1 Overview

### 4.1.1 Re-positioning Colusa as a Regional Hub

The City of Colusa has historically played a vital role in the Sacramento Valley region, as its central location gives it excellent access both by land and water to nearby destinations and a variety of outdoor activities. Adjacent to the Sacramento River and proximate to Interstate 5 and Highways 20 & 45, the City of Colusa has an opportunity to serve as both a destination and a jumping-off point for residents, visitors, and tourists alike.

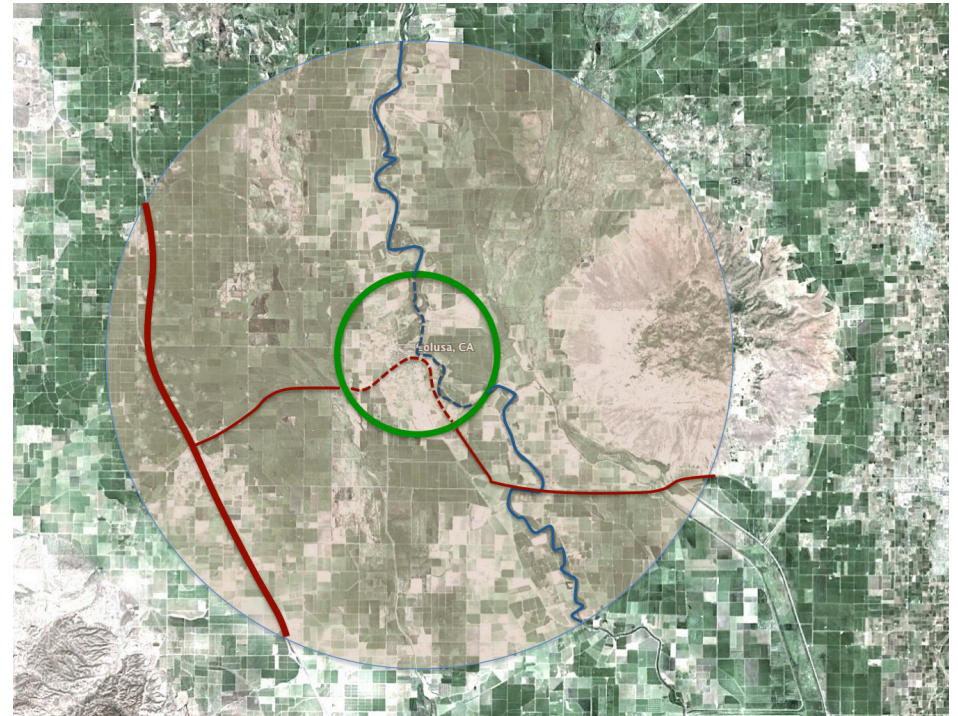
Over the course of several workshops, residents repeatedly emphasized the many natural and biological assets which surround Colusa. Community members expressed a desire to leverage these assets in a manner that would provide economic benefits for Colusa stakeholders and residents. By better positioning the City as a gateway or hub to the outdoors, Colusa can take full advantage of its prime position relative to nearby wildlife refuges, rivers, buttes, farms, trails, lodging, and more. The following strategies are suggested to maximize the city's capacity as a go-to location for regional outdoor entertainment:

#### Leveraging Specific Assets:

- Sacramento River
- Sutter Buttes
- Agriculture/Farming
- Fishing
- Duck Hunting
- Birding

#### General Implementation Strategies:

- Downtown as One-Stop Shop
- Website Information Portal
- Media and Branding
- Coordinated Lodging



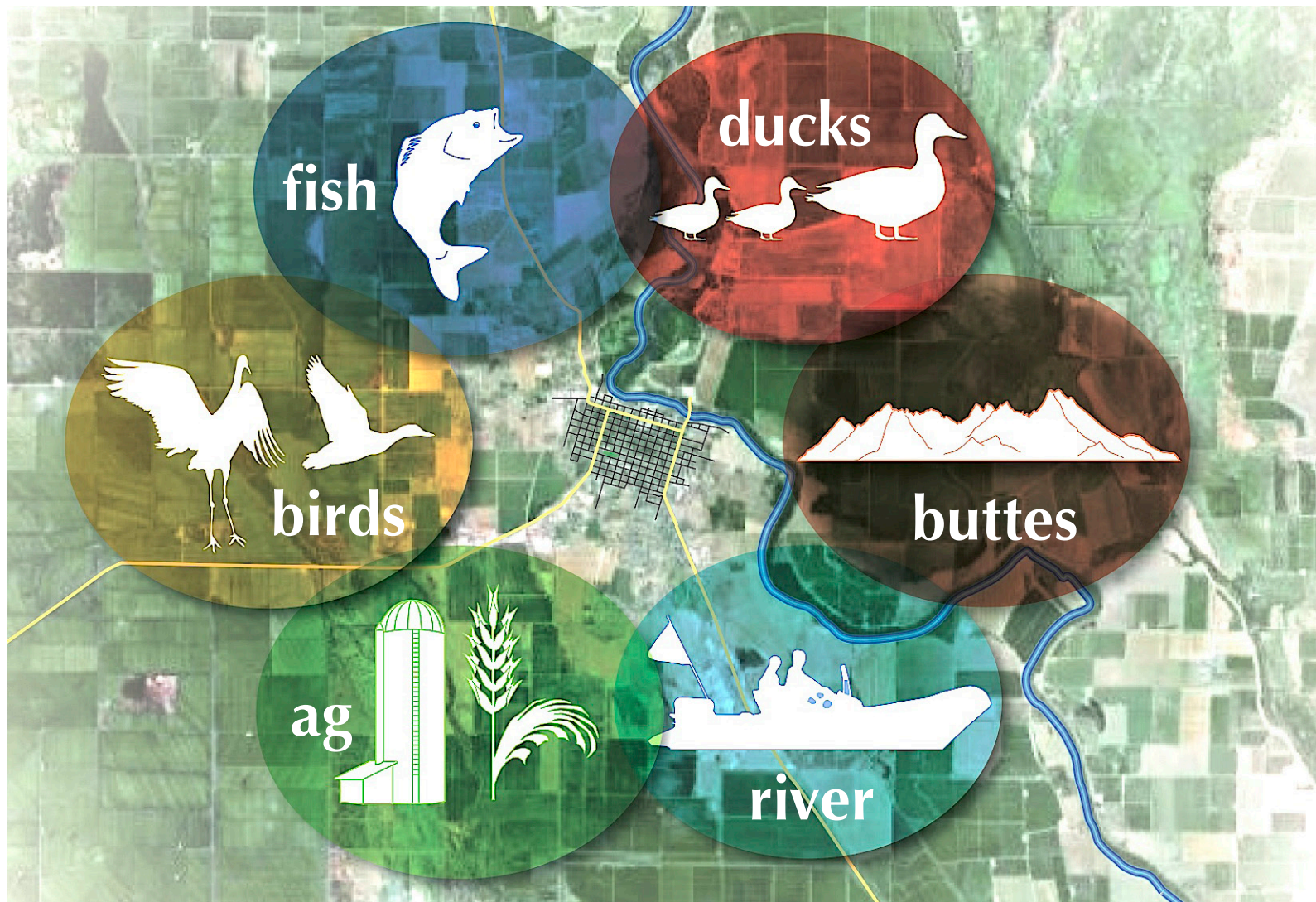
### 4.1.2 Multiplier Effect

While there are many separate outdoor activities in and around Colusa, the true economic power of Colusa's natural amenities can only be fully realized when visitors patronize multiple vendors or stores in one trip. Consider Napa Valley for a moment - tourists are initially attracted by the vineyards and wine tasting. However, once there, they are tempted by the myriad other activities available to them: bike riding, hot air balloon trips, bed and breakfasts, hot springs and spas, first rate dining establishments, and others. In order to reap the maximum benefits as a hub for outdoors activities, Colusa must make it easy and attractive for tourists to partake in several activities. Advertising, coordinated promotional efforts, and cooperation among store owners and outfitters is key to activating the economic multiplier effect.



## 4.2 Leveraging Specific Assets

Workshop participants identified the following six elements as key to Colusa's regional strength. Other assets certainly exist but these six serve as excellent components of a "regional hub" outreach strategy. For each element, a brief description is provided, followed by a list of action-oriented tasks the City can employ to advance its role in the region.





## 4.2.5 Bird Watching

The Colusa National Wildlife Refuge draws over 35,000 visitors per year for wildlife viewing. Currently, very few of these birders end up visiting downtown as part of their birding excursions. Colusa should position itself to take full advantage of bird-related tourism.



Avid birders will travel far and wide to find the best sites.

### Link Downtown to the Wildlife Refuge



The City should aggressively promote birding tours sponsored California Department Fish & Game, which are open to the public. The City's website should have clear and upfront links to birding events and interpretive signage should lead visitors between the National Wildlife Refuge and downtown.

### Host Birding Groups



The City should explore partnering with birding groups to encourage them to stay Downtown. Groups could meet and socialize before being escorted to the Refuge and would return Downtown for dinner and accommodations.

### Establish Lodging for Bird Watchers



The City should encourage and attract new lodging which is specifically targeted at accommodating birdwatchers. For example, the Birder's Ranch in Portal, AZ, brands itself as a "unique lodging for natural enthusiasts." These complexes have cottages and apartments situated on beautiful grounds and are perfect for group retreats.



# OUTREACH



## 4.2.1 Fishing

Colusa is most well known for its excellent striped bass fishing. The Striped Bass (or “striper”) is a saltwater species that comes into freshwater to spawn. They have been known to occasionally reach up to 75 lbs.

### Present Conditions

Stripers are easily one of California’s most exciting game fish because they are such strong fighters, making the Sacramento River striper fishing very popular. Near Colusa, anglers have caught catfish, king salmon, steelhead, and even sturgeon, but Colusa is synonymous with being the top producer of striped bass the Sacramento Valley has to offer in the spring and early summer months.



Colusa’s celebrated striped bass.

### Build a Public Fish Market



The City should explore establishing a dedicated space for a fish market, as striped bass are caught in abundance near Colusa,. A market to buy and sell fresh fish would become a Downtown destination for socializing and shopping. Building a new open-air public market would create a popular public amenity near the waterfront, encouraging boaters, fishermen, and tourists to stop by and peruse the day’s catch.

### Hold Bassfishing Competitions



To draw more visitors, Colusa should consider holding a professional striped bass fishing competition in the stretch of river near the downtown. A tournament of this sort would attract a large number of overnight tourists. The City could build a small waterfront viewing area for spectators to watch the action.

### Encourage Fish Taco Trucks



Encouraging fish-related food trucks in the downtown would be an excellent strategy to take advantage of Colusa’s river proximity. There is a clear desire for Mexican-style food but existing brick-and-mortar restaurants have struggled. By reducing barriers to mobile food vending, food trucks could bring new vibrancy and street activity to downtown Colusa.

### Improve Local Fishing Facilities

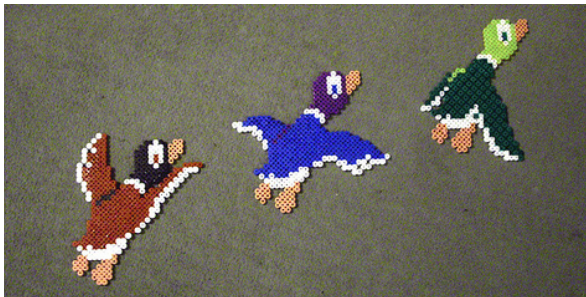


Building off the nearby Sacramento River State Recreation Area, the City should create a river-adjacent linear park system which would increase access for boaters and fishermen. Adding more campsites and top-notch day-use facilities (such as picnic tables, BBQ grills, bocce or volleyball courts) would bring residents to the waterfront district to fish and spend time with family and friends.



### 4.2.6 Duck Hunting

The Colusa National Wildlife Refuge is located about 25 miles northeast of the City. The 4,507-acre refuge consists primarily of intensively managed wetland impoundments, with some grassland and riparian habitat. The Sacramento Valley is one of the most important wintering areas for waterfowl in North America. Colusa Refuge typically supports wintering populations of more than 200,000 ducks and 50,000 geese. Roughly 4,000 visitors come every year to the Refuge to hunt waterfowl and pheasant. The City needs to ensure they are capturing the maximum economic value out of these seasonal visitors.



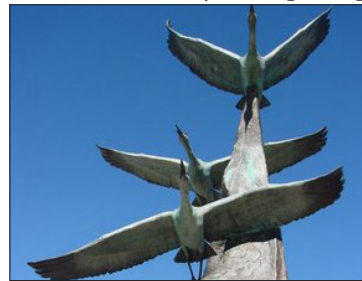
Duck hunting draws thousands of tourists annually.

## Start a new Duck Festival



Organize a seasonal festival which celebrates the arrival of duck hunting season. Nearby cities such as Lodi have similar themed events, with the extensive involvement of local eateries, hotels, and shops. A weekend of events organized around ducks will help to further establish Colusa as a destination for duck hunters.

## Create Duck Wayfinding & Signage



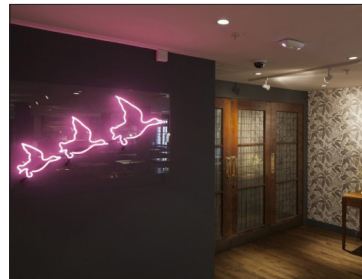
Create city signage, graphics, and public art to celebrate duck season. Similarly, the City could commission an iconic piece of public art to be located in Downtown. A large sculpture or mural featuring ducks would remind drivers that Colusa is the go-to place for duck-related activities.

## Promote the annual Duck Race



Currently, the City of Colusa and the Chamber of Commerce host an event known as a 'duck race' for the 4th of July. Local businesses and vendors sponsor a rubber duck for charity, and the 'ducks' are dropped in the river to see which one floats downstream the fastest. To fully leverage this event, Colusa should consider hosting this or a similar event on the first day of duck hunting season and advertise it widely.

## Establish a Duck Exhibit



As part of a new downtown visitor center, the City could establish a permanent or temporary exhibit focused on the local duck population, with a gift shop where duck-related items could be purchased (such as local maps and guides).



# OUTREACH



## 4.2.2 Sutter Buttes

The Sutter Buttes are often referred to as the world's "smallest mountain range." Just over 2,000 feet tall, the Buttes are a circular series of peaks, the eroded remains of an ancient lava dome volcano. Less than 20 miles from Colusa, their majestic silhouette can be seen from all directions.

### Present Conditions

The State of California owns a significant parcel of property within the Buttes, but due to a lack of appropriate public access roads, the park remains off limits to the public, with the exception of infrequent guided tours offered by the Middle Mountain Foundation. A Nike Missile Site is also located in the northern region of the Buttes, but it is now closed to tourists.



The Buttes can be seen clearly all the way from I-5.

### Improve Access to the Buttes



The Middle Mountain Foundation currently conducts guided hikes of the Buttes, since the public road to access the Buttes is primitive and narrow. The City of Colusa could partner with the California Parks Department to reconstruct the public access road from the northern entrance point to make it easier for residents and visitors to visit the newly acquired public park lands. The City could also organize day-use activities and trips that depart from Downtown.

### Create new Bicycle Trails



The slick rock terrain near Moab, Utah is renowned for being the most exciting and challenging mountain biking around. Bikers come (and stay) for days at a time to tackle the red rock. However, avid mountain bikers are always looking for new and interesting locations. The City of Colusa has a similarly unique terrain in the Buttes, and with some effort and collaboration with state park officials, could establish attractive trails through the publicly-owned Butte lands. A new off-road bike race could take advantage of any newly created bikeways.

### Produce a Bikeways Map



To facilitate the various suggested biking activities, the City of Colusa could produce a simple color-coded map to clearly indicate popular biking paths in and around Colusa, including connections to regional pathway. The map could be made available online and at the local bike store. Other city-sponsored events like Bike to Work Day can help encourage residents to start biking.

### Attract a Bicycle Shop



Recently, the only bicycle shop in Colusa went out of business. The City has an interest in promoting bicycling, since bike tourists frequently stay and shop where they ride. The City should consider supporting a downtown bicycle store as part of a coordinated outreach effort. A new store could offer maps of local trails, rentals and repair, and even a bicycle shuttle service to reach trails near the Buttes.



## 4.2.3 Sacramento River

The Sacramento River has historically played a significant role in Colusa's economic development. At 377 miles, the Sacramento River is California's longest river and drains nearly one third of the total annual runoff of all California streams.

Colusa was founded along the banks of the river and it always has been a source of recreation and economic development. As farmers and ranchers settled the Sacramento River Valley in the 1800s, the river served primarily as a corridor for transporting goods and provided a supply of fresh water for drinking and irrigation. The street which fronts the levee, Levee Street, was a busy street in the early 1900s. Ferries stopped by daily on the way from Red Bluff, unloading cargo and passengers, then steaming down south to Grimes and Sacramento.



The City of Colusa, as viewed from the river. The river is wide and fast-moving at this location.



The levee, approximately fourteen feet high, is a physical and visual barrier to river access for residents.

### Present Conditions

Levee Street is now largely abandoned, its buildings having turned their backs on the river, an indication of the river's dwindling role as a corridor for economic activity. Today, the primary role of the river is that it remains used as a resource for boating and fishing.

The California Legislature has declared that it is the policy of the state to increase opportunities for recreational boating on state waterways. To this end, the City of Colusa has commenced planning for the construction of a new boat launch, ramp, and public dock. The City hopes to enhance downtown river access by providing an easy, safe, and convenient place to park and unload watercraft into the swift waters of the Sacramento River. However, river access is still fairly limited overall and other practical issues still limit the recreational potential of the Sacramento River.

A serious issue for recreationalists is the presence of underwater debris, known as "snags." Dead trees and old pilings become snagged on the river bottom and lurk just out of sight, potentially creating a hazard for boats. The River has not been dredged from Redding to Colusa for quite some time, making it rather dangerous for powerboating enthusiasts. In the past, Colusa has seen a lot of use by water-skiers but the abundance of debris has all but put an end to this activity.

To control flooding and river erosion, the Army Corps of Engineers built a levee along the length of both riverbanks during the mid-1870's. While the levee has successfully performed its role in preventing catastrophic flooding, is an impediment for residents wishing to experience the river from the City. Bridging this barrier will be important to reunite residents with their river.



# OUTREACH

## Future Opportunities

### Attract a Watersports Outfitter



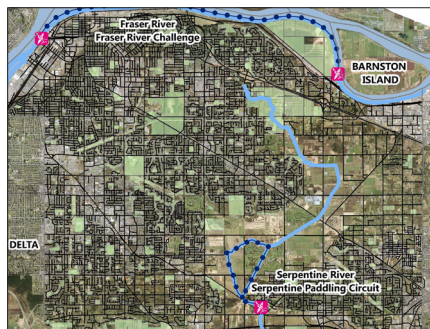
In an effort to draw river sports enthusiasts to Colusa, the City should attempt to attract a watersports outfitter. The outfitter could potentially complement Kittles by renting zodiaks, kayaks, tubes, canoes, and fishing equipment, and even run a bus to drop off customers up river.

### Form a Coalition for River De-Snagging



A coalition of local riverfront landowners, downtown businesses, and the Casino could contribute to de-snagging efforts for the one-mile river stretch fronting Colusa's downtown. Once cleared, watersports could flourish again and organized competitions/events could be held. The City could seek federal grant funding to create local jobs.

### Produce a Blueways Map



To facilitate recreation on the river, the City could produce a free, detailed "blueways" map which would highlight boat launches, suggested rafting/kayaking routes, endangered habitats, and connections to various local trails & bike paths. Wayfinding signage integrated to the map could be installed to help visitors find local destinations.

### Hold Waterfront Festivals



The City should explore the possibility of creating a public gathering space or waterfront stage which could be used for music and concert events, nighttime movie viewing, and more. An excellent example of this strategy is the Russian River Jazz and Blues Festival which occurs annually in Guerneville, CA on the river.

### Facilitate Airboat Tour Operator



The City could incentivize or subsidize a riverboat tourism outfit to operate out of the new downtown boat launch or the Steelhead Lodge. Guides could escort tourists up and down the river, providing one of a kind access, and point out local wildlife, landmarks, and other points of interest. Trips could end with a meal at a local restaurant.

### Sponsor Poker Runs



Emulating an activity held elsewhere on the Sacramento River, the City could partner up with the local Colusa Casino to sponsor and promote a "poker run" in which contestants travel the Delta in boats to collect hidden playing cards and win prizes. Proceeds could benefit river clean-up efforts.



## 4.2.4 Agriculture

During the 1850s, a large number of ranches were established to help supply the needs of the miners who passed through Colusa County in a steady stream on their way to and from the northern mines. Barley, oats and hay were in great demand for the horses. Cattle, sheep, hogs, and chickens were needed for the tables of the hotels at the stage stops. Thus, Colusa County led in the production of agricultural products early in the settlement of the Sacramento Valley.

In the 1930s, major advances in irrigation allowed for the introduction of rice farming, which quickly replaced barley and wheat to become the dominant agricultural crop in Colusa County.



Looking towards the Buttes: fields of rice as far as the eye can see.

### Present Conditions

Today Colusa, Glenn and Yolo Counties produce close to 50% of the California rice output. Colusa's economy is still largely based on agriculture and agricultural-related businesses and includes a variety of crops including almonds, beans, corn, pistachios, rice, tomatoes, walnuts, and wheat. The City of Colusa holds a yearly Agricultural Festival, which provides a venue for farmers to interact with suppliers and vendors, and a yearly County Fair which celebrates Colusa's farming past and features a cook-off with rice and nuts as primary ingredients. Increasing tourism focused on this agricultural heritage is a unique opportunity for Colusa.



# OUTREACH

## Future Opportunities

### Organize Farm Trails Association



A popular strategy for promoting agricultural tourism is to form an association which coordinates activities and events amongst artisanal producers and family farms. The Chamber of Commerce could organize a similar effort for Colusa. “Farm Trails” can also be a literal network of biking/hiking paths which connect the member farms.

### Relocate Farmer’s Market



The City could relocate the Organic Farmer’s market from Colusa Business/ Visitor Center Parking Lot to a more visible downtown location, such as the boat launch parking lot (when finished). In a larger, more prominent location, there would be more demand for a weekend Market date, such as Sunday morning.

### Support Colusa County Grown



An effort has begun to re-brand local farm products as “Colusa County Grown,” a strategy to raise the visibility of the County. This effort should be aggressively promoted by the City, and other farms should be encouraged to join the California Agricultural Tourism Directory to raise their profile and attract visitors interested in nut and rice growing.

### Permit Farmstays & Yurts



Yurts (pictured) are low-impact structures which can comfortably house a family with modern conveniences, yet leave little to no imprint on the surface. Essentially canvas wrapped frames, they rest on stilts and can be built quickly and cheaply.

### Kickstart Rice Beer Production



The City could consider attracting a brewery to make beer from a rice base, given Colusa’s ample rice production. Large brewers such as Budweiser, Hitachino, Kirin, Sapporo and Asahi make lager and ale beers with rice.

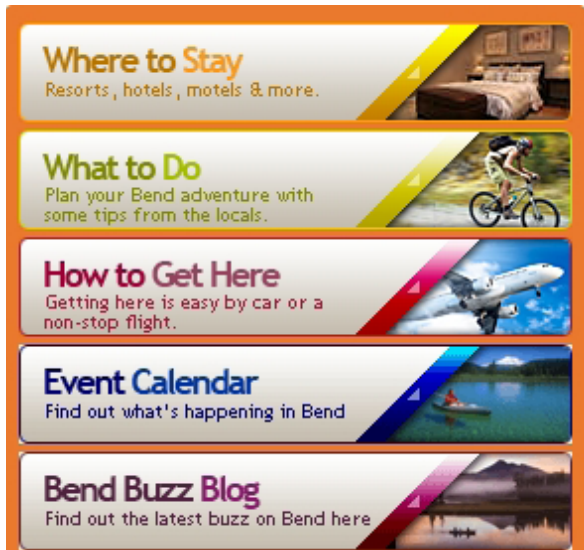
### Encourage “WOOFing”



The City could promote Colusa as a WOOFing destination (Worldwide of Organization of Organic Farms), an arrangement whereby young adults work on a farm in exchange for room and board. These workers would contribute to the local economy and have access to a wide range of outdoors activities in their free time.

## 4.3 General Implementation Strategies

The following strategies are provided to assist the City to kick start the outreach process. A combination of some or all of these actions will help Colusa successfully re-position itself as a popular destination for outdoor enthusiasts, spreading the word online and via word of mouth.

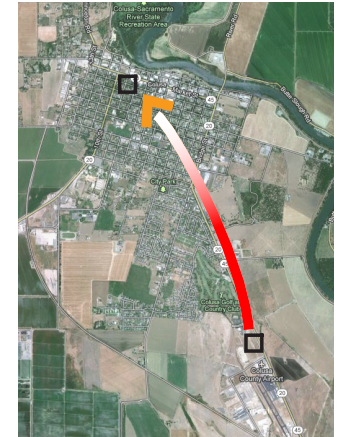


### 4.3.1 Locate the Visitors Center Downtown

Currently, Colusa's "Visitor's Center" is located in the Colusa Industrial Park, five miles south of the downtown. Locating the center in the downtown will help to draw visitors to downtown on a regular basis. In addition to its current services, the Visitor Center could be expanded to serve as a one-stop-shop for the range of outdoor activities that take place in and around Colusa, links to tour companies, interpretive displays, and information about local fairs and events.

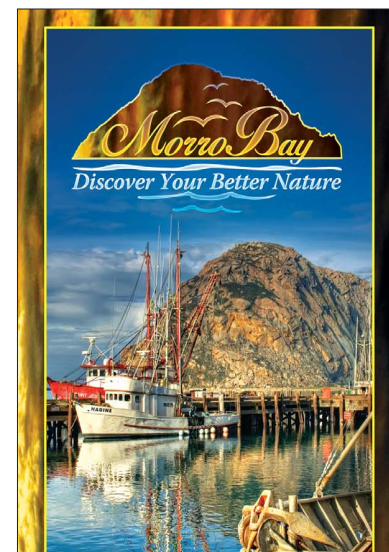
### 4.3.2 Adopt a 'Downtown First' Strategy

As new investment occurs throughout the City, city staff should consider whether the proposed development would be a good fit for the downtown district, and should make efforts to create a critical mass of pedestrian activity-generating uses that attract residents and visitors as part of their daily lives.



Relocate the Colusa Visitor's Center into the heart of Downtown.





Visitor guide brochures from several cities who have successfully branded themselves as outdoor destinations. The brochures are all available free online and contain details on a variety of activities, shopping, and lodging.

## 4.3.3 Visitor Guide and Map

Produce a simple attractive Visitor's Guide to help tourists identify major attractions, points of interest, lodging, local eateries, and a range of other destinations.

The Guide should be made available at the Visitor's Center, throughout Downtown business, at City Hall, and should be available for free download from the city's website.

## 4.3.4 Website Portal

Establish a coordinated web presence to promote the city's role as a hub for regional activities. Having a sleek and attractive "Visitor Web Portal" would help draw visitors and provide a marketing conduit for many of the vendors and assets Colusa has to offer.

## 4.3.5 Online Outreach

To fully leverage a new online Visitor's Guide and Web Portal, Colusa should expand its presence on the web through civic and social media sites.

- Advertise Colusa's lodging choices on discount websites such as "Groupon" and "Living Social".
- Promote package deals (which could include lodging/food/adventure tours) via banner ads, TripAdvisor, and City Web Portal.
- Establish a city blog or Twitter account to help spread the word.



Holding more festivals at the Colusa County Fairgrounds will attract visitors.

## 4.3.6 Coordinated Lodging Strategy

As Colusa aims to enhance the outdoors-related opportunities available to residents and visitors, the City and the proprietors of local lodging should work in unison to develop a strategy which ensures that visitors will stay overnight in downtown or nearby lodging. Workshop participants specifically mentioned the power of cross-promotion, as a local Bed & Breakfast owner has been receiving many referrals from other businesses who share marketing materials and pass on recommendations for other local vendors.

### Local Festivals

Currently, the County Fairgrounds is used for 3-4 festivals per year. As Colusa grows its reputation as a desirable outdoors destination, the City could promote additional festivals which relate to food production and agriculture past and present, such as a Textiles/Weaving Festival or a Rice Beer Festival. Fairground visitors will tend to have a multiplier effect, especially if they come from afar.



Example of lodging which caters to birders.

### Lodging for Birders and Hunters

Establish a seasonal lodging and hospitality program coordinated with the hunting, fishing, and birding seasons. Explore tactics such as discount group rates, themed meeting rooms, and guided trips to natural attractions. Consider partnerships with local lodges to coordinate seasonal outreach and entertainment.



#### Information

- Home
- Arts, Galleries & Fun
- Hiking
- Lodging
- Services
- Birding
- Real Estate
- Nearby Rodeo

#### Portal is one of my favorite places.

Not only for the lovely scenery, but the special people that always make you feel at home.

Right now all **557 and 558 prefixes** are having phone problems. If you try a number and get a message that it's been disconnected, try again. Or try from your cell phone. Valley Telephone Co-op says it's something happening in one of the feeder systems, not in theirs. If you have any problems, tell your carrier.

It's the spot for thousands of birders, hoping to find the Elegant Trogon and other wonderful birds that live in the area.

Website which clearly targets birders.

### Supportive Policies

#### Web Presence

Tailor online presence to attract birders, hunters, and fishermen. Providing specific links, information, and contact numbers for local establishments to establish Colusa as a go-to destination for their personal outdoors interest.

#### City Policies and Regulations

Modify city regulations to encourage agri-tourism. Permit the construction of guest cottages, lodges, and time-shares to support the tourism industry.



