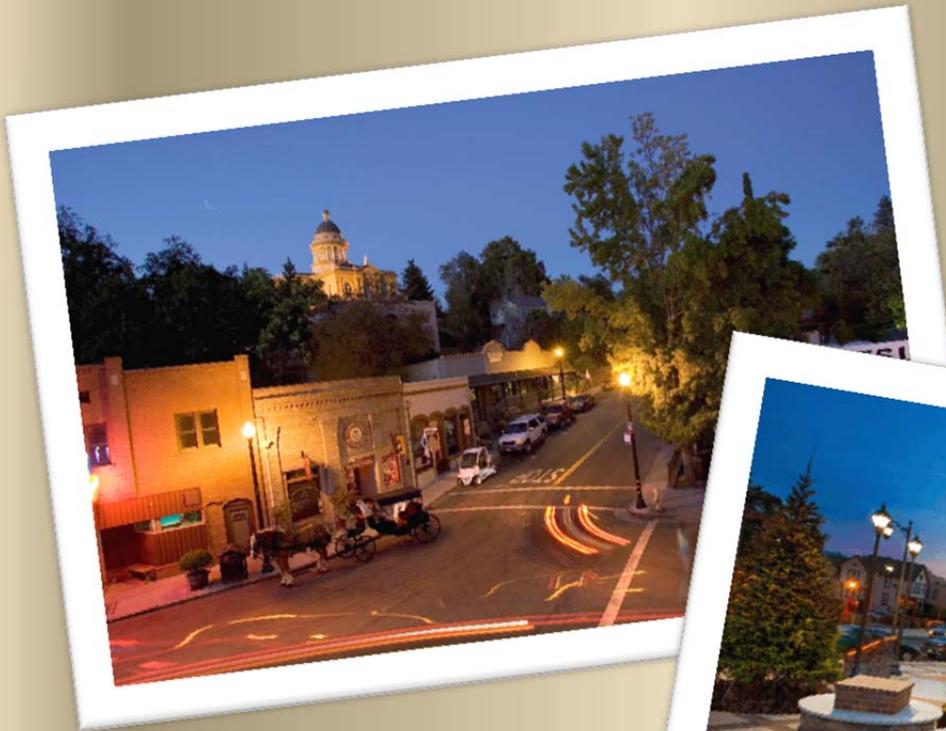


# City of Auburn's Economic Endurance Plan (EEP)



Issued by the Auburn Economic Development Commission May 8th, 2017.  
Pictures courtesy of Keith Sutter.

23 January 2017

## **Unveiling Our "Economic Endurance Plan"**

### **A message from Mayor Matt Spokely**

Auburn's roots can be traced back nearly 170 years, and throughout that time, our community has created a legacy of looking toward the future. And in that spirit, the Economic Development Commission (EDC) has—after a year of research and debate—completed its first-ever Economic Endurance Plan (EEP).

The EDC is comprised of two City Council members and nine volunteer citizens who serve as an advisory panel to the City Council. This diverse group has dedicated their individual expertise and countless hours to formulate both a strategy and a work plan to help create a roadmap for Auburn's economic future. The ultimate goal of the EEP is the promise of enhanced prosperity for everyone in our community, and this is the starting point; a living document, if you will, that will evolve over time in tune with shifts in our fiscal circumstances.

The audience for the EEP extends far beyond the key stakeholders of our residents and business owners. It is designed to be an invitation to anyone who seeks to start or expand a business here and to any family considering making their home here.

Thus, the EEP includes key components that illuminate details behind the Place and People of Auburn . . . what and who we are. Then, through discussions on Prosperity and Process, this document traces a route to broader economic vitality and outlines goals and actions through the Priorities section that City leaders can take to incubate and foster economic prosperity in our community.

Now comes the next step of sharing and vetting this document. We'll be talking with major business districts and holding public sessions to seek your feedback. As a member of both the Auburn and Placer County EDCs and as your new mayor, I'm looking forward to completing what I trust will be a clear vision of the economic endurance of our community.

Sincerely,

Matthew Spokely  
Mayor of Auburn

## FROM THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

When we started writing the EEP, we wanted to put in motion a strategy that would result in a vibrant, self-sustaining community, a model of economic vitality, while also keeping all the things we love about Auburn.

We discussed what we treasure about Auburn, what brought us here, why we stay here. We were all in agreement that it was Auburn's small town atmosphere, the wild beauty of the Sierra Foothills and American River Canyon, and the wonderful people, combined with dining and shopping options that we loved and wanted to keep.

We all however, were concerned about Auburn's empty store fronts, the impact of an aging population, and the fear of losing our city's identity and character. We wanted the EEP to support the people and businesses that are here as best we could. But we also wanted to encourage new businesses and people to locate here - retail and dining experiences that locals and visitors alike will enjoy, industrial businesses that pay more than minimum wage, and incubators that will foster growth and innovation. We believe the EEP will do this.

More details, such as developing the timelines and financing of our vision still must be completed. An Economic Development Coordinator, with extensive knowledge of local, state, and federal government programs; of public, private, non-profit groups that support business development; and of grants and private financing, is essential in executing the EEP.

Implementation starts with five initial priorities and the tasks required to reach the stated goals. We know there are more issues than the five prioritized in the plan. The EEP is meant to be a living document – a document that will be continually updated as required.

Share with us the issues that are important you, so that they may be addressed in future editions. Our meeting dates, agendas, and location are posted on the city's website. We encourage you to join us.

Sincerely,

The Auburn Economic Development Commission

Bill Wharton  
Margery Cook  
Randy Wagner  
Steven Galyardt

Andy Ruff  
Don Ales  
Gary Moffat  
Harriet White

Kathleen Shaffer  
Matt Spokely  
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Issued May 8th 2017  
By the  
Auburn Economic Development Commission

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# PURPOSE

*Defining the importance of economic development*

## A PATHWAY TO ECONOMIC ENDURANCE

Ours is a mature and compact community that is attractive to many people because of the surrounding region's natural beauty, the magic of small-town living and a diverse range of amenities that position Auburn as *The Gateway to the Good Life*. Yet, the flip side is what makes Auburn such a desirable place to live can also serve as an impediment to sustaining economic *vitality*.

Our challenge and our objective as a community is to find ways to encourage conditions that elevate opportunities for prosperity for every person who lives within our corporate limits, while, at the same time, retaining the essential fabric and texture that makes Auburn such a rarefied place.

***“Our objective as a community is to find ways to encourage conditions that elevate opportunities for prosperity.”***

And that is a daunting assignment, one that the Auburn City Council tasked the Economic Development Commission (EDC) to take on by creating an Economic Endurance Plan (EEP) that quantifies our basic community assets and leverages them in a strategy to help secure and advance Auburn's economic destiny.

The basic purpose of the EEP is to create strategies to simultaneously help nurture our existing businesses while also positioning Auburn as a desirable location for companies seeking to launch or relocate new businesses. This means proactively seeking out firms that are compatible and complementary to our existing base as well as breaking into new industry segments. And it means assisting homegrown ventures through community-sponsored incubators for start-ups in business and the arts.

## Defining Economic Endurance

Use of the term “economic endurance” instead of “economic development” or even “economic vitality” reflects two key tenets: First, economic endurance focuses on long-term conditions and outcomes, with a critical look at how current and anticipated issues and trends may affect the community’s future economic vitality. It identifies near- and long-term strategies and actions that can help ensure success over time.

Second, the application of a comprehensive “sustainability lens” acknowledges that efforts to ensure and enhance economic vitality must be approached and implemented in conjunction with the environmental, social and cultural qualities that are the foundation of Auburn’s long-term health and quality of life.

On a retail level, the EEP will create a plan to fill empty storefronts with merchants who offer products and services not currently available. Innovative entrepreneurs with viable business plans will be assisted through a program of mentoring and identifying options for sourcing capital.

Business intelligence tools will be made available to companies seeking to locate or expand here by providing instant access to information about commercial, office and retail space—available for lease or purchase—all at no charge. Equally important will be access to up-to-date demographic information about Auburn to illuminate essential information that will assist with decision making.

***“The EEP will formulate potential solutions and Priorities for building on Auburn's intrinsic strengths as a means of overcoming economic challenges that confront us.”***

The EEP will formulate potential solutions and **Priorities** for building on Auburn's intrinsic strengths as a means of overcoming economic challenges that confront us. Auburn's geographic footprint of just 7.5 square miles, for example, limits physical growth in an environment where the city is encircled by rapidly developing Placer County. The EEP will identify tactics to help squeeze the most out of what we have, such as repurposing underutilized buildings/property, cataloging vacant property, determining potential infill sites, and identifying work/live opportunities.

Among other challenges to surmount are the institutional barriers that need to be overcome by businesses—new entrants as well as established ventures seeking to expand—when they deal with City and County departments. So, the EEP will isolate ways to streamline and simplify the **Process** of interacting with local governments. It will suggest new approaches to create a culture of accountability within the departments responsible for community development.

A perennial issue with which Auburn has struggled is articulating a meaningful identity that accurately reflects our community as more than a "pit stop" on I-80. So at its core, the EEP will serve as a marketing tool that describes the essence of our community and its core assets: this **Place**, its business districts, neighborhoods, parks, schools, and most importantly, our **People**—the talented, well-educated citizens who will build our future. It will be a concise tell-all for those who are considering Auburn as a place to launch a business, to find a home or to simply visit for a weekend.

Critically, the EEP will outline a strategy to create a functional brand—based on community input—as well as an identity statement that will, in a few words, honor the essence of what we are. Auburn's "gold panner" logo treatment will also be updated and refined.

The EEP is more than a strategy; it's a roadmap. It is a living document designed to be a flexible tool with actions that are updated annually as community needs and priorities change. It will be

regularly evaluated through informal and formal feedback (surveys, focus groups, etc.) to ensure that actions are achieving desired results.

***“The EEP will isolate ways to streamline and simplify the Process of interacting with local governments.”***

Northern California, and especially Placer County, has no shortage of municipalities that seek to find a formula for growth and ways to attract new businesses. It is an intensely competitive region that presents many excellent choices. Thus, it can be argued that the key deliverable of this EEP is to present the strongest case possible for Auburn by convincingly differentiating it from all the rest. At the same time, the City and County need to work in harmony, with the goal of crafting cohesive and complementary economic endurance strategies.

# PLACE

*It's all about location, location, location*

## AUBURN HAS IT ALL!

Auburn is characterized by its rural environment, low-density, high-quality living and small-town atmosphere. Poised on the rim of the American River Canyon and serving as a prominent gateway to the Sierra Nevada mountains, the City of Auburn is undeniably at the crossroads of commerce and recreation in Northern California. With a legacy dating to the Gold Rush era and a civic eye locked on the future, Auburn has a confident sense of place that is being shaped for the new century.

Auburn's access to open spaces, fast-moving rivers and a network of rugged hiking and biking trails make it a haven for outdoor enthusiasts, from weekend novices to endurance athletes.

***“With a legacy dating to the Gold Rush era and a civic eye locked on the future, Auburn has a confident sense of place that is being shaped for the new century”.***

## BUSINESS DISTRICTS

Bisected by one of the nation's busiest cross-country highways—Interstate 80—Auburn enjoys a rich commercial heritage, with a burgeoning and bustling airport and industrial park at its core. There are four major commercial hubs: Downtown, Old Town, Airport Business Park, and the Highway 49 corridor. Each district has its own unique charms and features a diverse mix of uses, employment opportunities, amenities, and services. A common

## A Hub of Activity

The center of town is a hub of civic and governmental activity that strengthens the community's economic base. Local businesses include high-tech companies, professional offices, retail stores and specialty boutiques.

Everyone, from company executives to local farmers, can benefit from Auburn's location at the crossroads of Interstate 80, Hwy 49 and the transcontinental railroad.

Special events such as the Auburn Light Parade, quarterly Art Walks, free summer movies under the stars and the Auburn Wine & Food Festival, are town favorites drawing eager tourists year-round.

thread is that the vast majority of enterprises in Auburn are independently owned, with the exception of grocery stores and hospitality businesses located at I-80 access points.

## **Old Town Auburn**

The Old Town historic district, anchored by the domed 1898 Courthouse, iconic Firehouse and the 1860s-era "Station A" post office, is the real West preserved. Pre-Civil War structures, which survived numerous devastating fires, crowd every street in the enclave, which has morphed into one of the region's premiere "farm-to-fork" dining destinations. Culinary options span a craft brewery and pub, fine dining, ethnic specialties and superlative breakfast and lunch restaurants. Shoppers can choose from a wide array of genuine antique shops, boutiques, specialty/gift stores, and basic services.

Special events are plentiful, starting with the every-Saturday-morning Foothill Farmer's Market, featuring PlacerGROWN produce. Spring and fall antique street fairs, an art and wine fair, and Country Christmas evenings fill out the calendar.

## **Downtown Auburn**

Home to numerous historic buildings and more than 400 businesses, Downtown Auburn includes restaurants, a broad range of retailers, numerous banks, insurance companies, professional services, and the meticulously restored 1930s Art Deco State Theatre.

The centerpiece of this commercial district is Central Square, a transformative redevelopment project that features six restaurants with outdoor dining, a fire pit, public art and event/performance spaces serving as a magnet for residents and visitors alike. Located nearby are the Chamber of Commerce, the California Welcome Center and the newly completed Art Park and public restroom facility.

Auburnites appreciate the many opportunities to interact with friends during Downtown events such as Cruise Night, the annual Fourth of July Parade and the Festival of Lights Parade, a Christmas season tradition and family favorite.

## **Highway 49 Corridor**

Highway 49 is named after the 49ers of the California Gold Rush. Businesses along the five-mile-long corridor reflect classical linear development of retail, restaurants, and services that

help create a regional shopping experience. Over 50,000 commuters daily drive this busy highway.

With explosive box-store construction just over the Auburn line in Placer County, this commercial expanse is one of the fastest-growing in Northern California. The corridor provides daily access to the Auburn Airport; the Dewitt Center, home to many Placer County facilities; a state-of-the-art, award-winning hospital; and new- and used-car dealerships.

### **Auburn Airport Business Park**

With a vibrant and expanding complex for private aviation, the Auburn Airport Business Park is geared to light industrial and manufacturing as well as aeronautical services. It boasts low overhead costs, high-speed Internet and a free-trade zone.

Home to two energy giants—corporate headquarters for billion-dollar Flyers Energy LLC and a major regional service center for PG&E—the airport embraces diverse uses, including craft breweries and a gin distillery.

***“Auburn is characterized by its rural environment, low-density, high-quality living and small town atmosphere.”***

Geographically, Auburn sits above valley fog and below mountain snow, allowing the airport to remain open and functional year-round so that visitors can fly in for a game of golf at the Robert Trent Jones-designed golf course, The Ridge. The business park, easily accessible from both I-80 and Highway 49, is just five miles from the center of Auburn.

### **UNINCORPORATED NORTH AUBURN**

The northern reaches of the city of Auburn are surrounded by an unincorporated area known as "North Auburn," with land mass about the same size as incorporated Auburn. Growth along Highway 49

## **Community Strengths**

As we make progress, the EDC will expand this plan to continue to leverage our strengths which are many, and include but are not limited to the following:

- Agriculture
- Airport Business Park
- Art
- Business Associations
- Highway 49 / Interstate 80
- Non-profits
- Old-Town & Downtown
- Outdoor Recreation & District
- Parks
- Public Schools
- Quality of Life
- Service Clubs & Volunteers
- County seat
- Endurance Capital
- Fairgrounds
- Gold Country History

above the city has, over the last decade, exploded with construction of numerous box stores, shopping centers and car dealerships. Upscale housing developments with acre-plus lots populate North Auburn, which also includes classic rural properties.

## **RECREATION AREAS**

Residents and visitors alike enjoy the bountiful offerings afforded by Auburn's unique location, history, and climate. A sampling of activities includes hiking, biking, running, wine tasting, disc golf, fishing, gold panning, and horseback riding. Golfers have tough choices when considering a round: The Ridge, Auburn Valley, Black Oak, Dark Horse, and Winchester Country Club. All these activities are set in the most breathtaking corner of California's Gold Country.

***“Residents and visitors alike enjoy the bountiful offerings afforded by Auburn's unique location, history, and climate.”***

### **Auburn Area Recreation and Park District (ARD)**

The ARD offers a variety of recreational and educational activities for all age groups. ARD's beautiful facilities include Recreation Park, Regional Park, Overlook Park, Railhead Park and Skate Park. Popular area attractions include Sierra Pool, the Ashley Memorial Dog Park and dozens of acres of ball fields. These parks play host to a number of events and activities such as Party in the Park and the Auburn Community Festival. ARD also oversees the city's Pocket Parks, Bicentennial Park, Herschel Young Park, and Downtown Auburn's new Art Park.

### **Auburn State Recreation Area (Auburn SRA)**

Auburn SRA runs along 40 miles of the North and Middle Forks of the American River, adjacent to Auburn on the border of Placer and El Dorado Counties in the heart of historic Gold Country. Once teeming with gold mining activity, the area now offers a wide variety of outdoor recreational opportunities including trail running, hiking, swimming, boating, fishing, camping, mountain biking, gold panning, horseback riding, road bicycling, kayaking, and off-highway motorcycle riding. World renowned whitewater rafting is also very popular on both forks of the river with Class II, III and IV runs. Auburn SRA is also noted for endurance races that are hosted throughout the year.

### **Hidden Falls Regional Park**

The 1,200-acre Hidden Falls Regional Park was purchased by Placer County through the Placer Legacy Open Space and Agricultural Conservation Program for nature conservation and recreation. It offers 30 miles of multiple-use trails, two observation decks providing close-up views of 30-foot waterfalls, picnic areas, and fishing access. Special assets include sweeping views from the Sacramento Valley to the Sutter Buttes and beyond.

Visitors to Hidden Falls may encounter sheep or goats grazing throughout the park because such livestock is being employed as a vegetation management tool. Results have been impressive in maintaining and improving habitat conditions for native plants and animals as well as helping to prevent or minimize the impact of wildfires.

# PEOPLE

*The human factor that results in “community”*

## OUR MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE

Auburn's quality of life and a collaborative and supportive business climate have attracted people with world-class talents and skills for many decades. The 2010 United States Census reported that Auburn had a population of 13,330. The labor pool includes both transplanted workers drawn to Auburn as well as residents who grew up and remained in Auburn who have found work and careers in the city and surrounding areas.

***“An educated, creative and productive workforce is vital to Auburn’s economic prosperity.”***

An educated, creative and productive workforce is vital to Auburn’s economic prosperity, and will be even more so in the future as other communities cultivate the education, creativity and productivity of their workforces. Training and high-quality education needs to be a focus, especially in the science, technology, engineering and math fields. The city should work with employers, educators, and partners to develop and support programs designed to attract workers with highly specialized skills and experience, and provide workforce-training opportunities.

### Our Competitive Edge

Auburn boasts an educated and creative workforce that enjoys our work-life balance. However, this segment is aging and we need to attract a younger, highly skilled demographic to Auburn.

## Auburn at a Glance

- Population: 13,330
- Married Population: 51.1%
- Median Age: 45.3
- Racial Distribution:
  - 11,863 (89.0%) White
  - 1,331 (10.0%) Hispanic or Latino
  - 133 (1.0%) Other
- Unemployment\*: 4.9% (U.S. 4.6%; State is 5.3%).
- Average Commute Time: 24 minutes.
- Household Size: 2.29
- Median Home Price: \$327,300.
- Public schools spend \$9,358 per student.
- There are about 22.1 students per teacher.
- County seat of Placer County.
- Elevation: 1,227 feet

\*November 2016 CA  
EDD Market Review

The city is home to many innovative entrepreneurs with world-renowned businesses that have attracted a highly skilled and educated workforce.

Changing work patterns and technology have resulted in more individuals operating small businesses and startups from their homes, with occasional visitors or part-time employees. Current city regulations do not always reflect certain home-based businesses that frequently are compatible with residential uses.

***“Training and high-quality education needs to be a focus...”***

While most of the people who work in Auburn are residents of Placer County, a majority of Auburn employees live outside the city limits. Conversely, the city has a high concentration of residents who commute to the larger metropolitan areas for work and education. This dynamic creates ongoing transportation challenges including traffic congestion and the need for public transit improvements.

As technology accelerates there is increased demand for a workforce with specialized skills. Current K-12 and post K-12 higher-education options—including non-university training, professional and technical schools, and community colleges—may need to be expanded and customized to meet the needs of employers, workers and residents.

Auburn employees who wish to live in the city can be hampered by a limited inventory of moderately priced housing. The City should expand opportunities for workers to live within the city through moderately priced, market-rate housing.

## **Education is a Top Priority**

Auburn has always focused on providing world-class academic opportunities for the children of this community. While Auburn schools are administered by Placer County Office of Education, within the city limits there are three elementary schools (including a charter school) and Placer High School, which has a long tradition of institutional excellence in the classroom and in athletics.

Opportunities for younger people in higher education abound, with more than a dozen colleges and universities with 50 miles of Auburn. These include Sierra College, American River College, Folsom Lake College, William Jessup University, California State University Sacramento, and the University of California Davis.

# PROSPERITY

*Quality-of-life factors that make a difference*

## INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

The aim of producing this Economic Endurance Plan (EEP) is to help Auburn achieve a higher level of prosperity. And while that may be a universal objective for communities large and small, defining "prosperity" can be elusive, though the lack of it is something easily discernable.

From the EDC's perspective, "prosperity" encompasses much more than monetary wealth; it is a combination of myriad factors—educational opportunities, affordable medical care, a responsive and effective government, and access to housing for everyone. A prosperous community is a healthy one with sources of nutritious food, recreational facilities and homegrown cultural amenities.

Our vision of prosperity in Auburn is one where a rising economic tide lifts the boat of every resident, especially the less fortunate and those who are retired or living on fixed incomes. This isn't about creating a trickle-down effect, but it does anticipate that the impact of communitywide initiatives will be felt at every social stratum.

***“Our vision for prosperity in Auburn is one where a rising economic tide lifts the boat of every resident”***

Auburn is populated with numerous people who have worked hard to achieve financial success. As a result, we have many enclaves of wealth—neighborhoods where large, expensive homes are a standard reward for productive careers.

At the same time, Auburn is dotted with pockets of poverty: side streets that are home to the less fortunate, new immigrants and

## Factors of Prosperity

Prosperity development focuses on people, place, and opportunity. With the convergence of Social, Environmental, and Economic Health, the goal is that all residents be healthy, safe, with access to affordable housing and access to education, quality jobs, and mainstream products and services with effective government systems.

However, our community's prosperity should be measured in more than economic terms. It is also the joy of everyday life (happiness and health) and the prospect of being able to build an even better life in the future.

the disadvantaged who are dependent on public assistance. Add to this mix the growing number of homeless people who live among us on the very fringe of society. For whatever reason, they are unable or unwilling to live independently, subsisting on the street and in the rough.

At the risk of sounding Pollyannaish, this EEP is one that incorporates the basic essentials of prosperity: a roof overhead for all; a job that pays a living wage; a sense of well-being for our citizens who believe they have what they need; genuine safety and security provided by Auburn's finest; and a culture of optimism and inclusion, where our residents can feel socially connected and have the knowledge that they can make a difference and that their ideas and opinions matter.

The fundamental element of prosperity is a community with abundant jobs, one where "unemployment" is not replaced by "underemployment." There needs to be a path from low-wage employment to meaningful careers in such powerful sectors as technology, renewable energy and health care. We need to foster an environment where our residents can truly strive for a better life, where they have realistic chances to grow.

***“This EEP will be a catalyst and rallying point to ignite action and cooperation among all of Auburn's key stakeholders. “***

In the final analysis, the true manifestation of prosperity is a community that provides opportunities where residents can pursue happiness and a true sense of personal identity. And that's a very tall order.

What will make a higher degree of prosperity possible is the fact that Auburn is a giving community, populated with talented citizens and organizations that know how or can learn to work together: our churches, social organizations and especially our City and County governments, as well as the Auburn Recreation District and the Gold Country Fairgrounds.

The EDC's hope is this EEP will be a catalyst and rallying point to ignite action and cooperation among all of Auburn's key stakeholders. It starts with communication and the knowledge that if we hope to achieve true prosperity, we must overcome our differences and work harmoniously.

# PROCESS

*Best practices always prevail*

## THOUGHTS ON TAMING BUREAUCRACY

Perhaps the most potent barrier to implementing this EEP is "us". To quote the revered philosopher, Pogo, "We have met the enemy and he is us." The bottom line is this: Auburn's embedded bureaucracy responsible for community development must be laser-focused on customer service and committed to problem solving; otherwise, efforts to implement this EEP could be jeopardized.

Auburn, like many small municipalities, has high productivity expectations from its compact departments tasked with managing the community's growth through a rigid set of municipal rules and regulations. By following procedures faithfully—without deviation—the potential for mistakes is minimized.

***“Auburn is competing with a host of municipalities with aggressive economic development goals.”***

This is laudable to a point. When the bureaucracy becomes an obstacle, when it becomes an impediment to progress and the ease of doing business with and in Auburn, the system must be made more adaptable and accountable. New projects, permit requests, and plan reviews must be handled with the highest sense of urgency and purpose. The objective must be to advance requests quickly and empower staff to use their talents to be creative and think outside the box to better support business.

## Eliminating Institutional Barriers

Perhaps the least costly and most productive route is for Auburn to reduce regulations and unnecessary costs as a means of promoting economic expansion and job creation that will help make our community more prosperous.

Our local governments need to create a new mindset of working with their constituents to quickly and responsibly advance projects, and to reduce barriers by proactively solving problems.

Attacking this issue first will jump-start new interest and investment in Auburn as well as serve as a solid base for moving forward with the remaining economic development initiatives outlined in the plan.

Located in a prosperous county with a penchant for growth, Auburn is competing with a host of municipalities with aggressive economic development goals. Just about every community in Placer County is courting new businesses through a welcoming approach to expansion. And the basic attribute for success is streamlining the administrative requirements for getting started and for limiting delays.

The reasons for this are simple: For any business or developer, delays in getting off the ground result in lost revenue, which could contribute to a failure of the enterprise itself. 'Time=money' is a hard reality, so Auburn staff needs to creatively maintain solid planning procedures that are compatible with limiting opportunity costs. Otherwise, potential new entrants to Auburn will gravitate to more receptive communities.

While Auburn's reputation is that of being easier to deal with than surrounding jurisdictions, the planning process still needs to be improved and streamlined, and the urgency of improving processes should come from the top down. The mantra of staff should be: "How can I make this happen and happen quickly?" This kind of attitude needs to be pervasive among the entire staff.

***“The urgency of improving processes should come from the top down”***

First step in institutionalizing this kind of thinking is to determine the city's staff's core competencies and to understand its weaknesses, then leverage the strengths and overcome the deficiencies. Some level of customer service training would likely be helpful, as would creation of a program to measure results, particularly customer satisfaction. Perhaps an Internet-based consumer feedback page would be useful in determining citizen's attitudes regarding services provided by the City of Auburn.

At the end of the day, community development in Auburn should be laser-focused on customer service. All of these suggestions and other best practices outlined in the previous sidebar will help make it easier for new businesses to enter the Auburn marketplace, which will lead to more and better jobs, more local tax revenue, and a more vibrant community.

# PLAN

*Defining the situations, strategies, and tactics*

## PLAN OF ACTION

Our challenge and objective as a commission was to find ways to encourage conditions that elevate opportunities for Prosperity for every person who lives within our corporate limits, while at the same time, retaining the essential fabric and texture that makes Auburn the community it is today.

We realize need to safeguard our businesses by supporting their growth and expansion, we need to attract new businesses, and we need to encourage start-ups. We need to encourage public, private, non-profit partnerships to help accomplish this. Healthy businesses result in Increases in employment and tax revenues for the city that could be spent on infrastructure improvements and help stabilize the City's General Fund (so that is not dependent on one or two main employer/businesses).

***“This plan...will evolve and change as we accomplish the stated goals through the listed objectives, strategies, key tactics to reach the desired outcomes.”***

The Commission's analysis of Auburn was the basis used to identify and prioritize strategies on which to focus a comprehensive plan of action outlined on the following pages

Here are the top priority projects that will be spearheaded by the Commission and will be put into action immediately and completed the first year.

## Geographical Restraints

Because of geographical restraints, this economic growth cannot rely on the population of Auburn increasing or undeveloped areas being commercially developed. The Sacramento metropolitan area had a 2010 population of 2,414,783. Auburn is not capturing this market. Creating and using a brand for Auburn is imperative to drive spending from the communities around us to Auburn. The increased revenue would attract new shops and restaurants to fill our empty storefronts. Investments would be made in façades and interiors to attract these new customers into businesses. Empty stores would be filled. And increased demand for products and services requires the support of additional staff resulting in increased employment.

## **Develop a Brand and Logo that can be used by all Auburn groups in their marketing efforts.**

- The brand would be used as a foundation on which the pillars of family, fun, recreation, culinary, arts & culture can be built and that can be easily integrated by all Auburn businesses, groups, associations.
- This brand should attract tourist to Auburn. Surveys of non-residents have responded that the only thing they know about Auburn is limited (usually only one thing is known, such as Ikeda's, Old Town, or Auburn Ale House is identified.). So a brand around the idea of finding "Hidden Gems" (or Hidden Nuggets" to tie into our gold rush history) that would entice not only first time visits, but repeat visits, need to be developed. The slogan could be "Find Auburn's Hidden Treasures" or Discover Auburn's Hidden Gems".
- The brand should encourage residents to use all of Auburn's many assets, to shop local, play local, etc.
- Using the brand and logo example above, develop a marketing campaigns could be all about discovering something new at each visit to Auburn. Our farmer's market, art walk, art galleries, artist studios, Orchestra, fair grounds, parades, car show, restaurants, breweries, wineries, shops, down town, old town, Highway 49, Airport museums, canyon, nature, river, hiking trails, etc. Campaigns could appeal to locals and/or tourist. Campaigns can be developed by an individual business, a group, an event promoter, but all should use the brand and logo.
- It is important that all groups work their marketing around the new brand and use the new logo for this to work. We want Auburn to be recognized as often as possible by this brand/logo.
- The brand should drive spending from the communities around us to Auburn. If successful, the increased revenue would attract new shops, restaurants and unique or upscale overnight accommodations to fill our empty storefronts.
- The brand should assist innkeepers in filling rooms to attract additional overnight experiences.
- The brand should encourage residents to use all of Auburn's many assets, to shop local, play local, stay local.
- Once a brand and associated issues are completed we will begin content development and message distribution. That will be an ongoing and diverse process. We will probably hire several different types of art/design and social media professionals for specific projects over the course of the year.
- Collaborate with retail to create "Experience Base Auburn." Revitalize retail in Auburn by giving people something to do – touch, feel, listen, read, play – to provide a highly unique and/or experiential experience. Example for experience based would be mixing your own scents, customized clothing, mix and press your own coffee/tea, build a bear, cooking classes, social gatherings, test driving merchandise, wine blending, hikes, rafting, biking, organized trips/tours, etc.
- Discover ways to make our events experience rich (Cruise Night, Rodeo, Art Walk, Western States, Symphony, BBQ, Oktoberfest, Christmas and Fourth of July parades, Wine and Chocolate, Art Studio tour, etc.)

## Attract New Business

- Work with local real estate brokers to populate ZoomProspector, an internet portal used by business to find their new location. With Zoom Prospector, they can research our community, properties, climate, population, labor force, education levels, types of business, income and spending, among other things - for free. Business owners/managers input their particular needs - from commute time to the supply of college-educated workers - and get matched to places with the right resources. It also list available commercial properties, so someone looking online at Auburn would also see which properties are available.
- Staff is already working on the “bones” of the new *City of Auburn Business Portal* web application. Once they have the basics together Bob Richardson will bring it to the EDC for review, editing, and feedback, then we will hire a web designer to pull it together and get it on the City’s web site. Expected completion date is June 2017.
- Convene a Commercial Brokers group to meet regularly to promote Auburn, sign up these brokers to list their properties on ZoomProspector and connect targeted business with unique foothill properties, selling our quality of life.
- Target manufacturers in growth industries, with a national or international reach, that are direct sellers of their product. Possible industries, diagnostic devices, software devolvement, tech engineering, media development, materials development, optical manufacturing, etc.
- Work with new QOL relocation developers to connect businesses to suitable Auburn properties.
- Rezone for new business types.
- Initiate personal recruitment.

## Improve Public Administration

- Cross-train, educate, and empower the city’s staff to identify and solve issues with the goal of becoming the regional standard for efficient permitting and ease of doing business.
- Create a customer advocacy mentality, where the needs of citizens launching or growing a business are paramount, with the goal of tearing down roadblocks while adhering to codes.
- Develop online tools, such as online permitting, whenever possible, for example, accelerate the filing of project plans through forms that can be completed online. Currently, a number of checklists and forms are posted on the City's website, but forms must be printed out and delivered to the Planning Department.
  - Develop lists specific to different types of projects, with a goal of reducing the number of trips to city hall for this information.
  - Other projects such as the Business Assistance web pages, Engagement with Tech Recruiter, Catalog of business types, and commercial broker interaction - these can all happen as the group wants to take them on.
  -

- As a general proposition, more relevant and timely information should be posted on the Planning page of the City's website, with the aim of keeping it up to date.
- Methods to fast-track simple/common projects should be developed.
- Planning staff should be a resource when possible and applicable for information about incentives, rebates, grants, microloans and Community Development Block Grants.
- For larger projects, a program that would assist with the coordination of multiple agencies should be considered. There should be a one-stop process that covers all the bases: business license, building permits, health requirements (through Placer County), fire department rules, handicap-access issues, encroachment permits and satisfying the requirements of any other agencies. The idea is to create a comprehensive package to assist a new business with getting a quick start.

The following items are also high priority projects important to create economic growth and development of our business community. They should be put in place as soon as possible and will continue indefinitely.

### **Development of a Loyalty Program App Program**

- Develop a Loyalty app to encourage repeat visits and spending in Auburn by locals and tourist alike.
- App should be able to capture user information and use it to entice repeat visits to Auburn to discover and/or experience something new'. For instance, if someone is in town for the Mandarin Festival, information on area restaurants could be sent.
- Encourage merchant's participation. Merchants could offer discounts, coupons, cash back, gift cards, points or freebies personalized to a group of customers (tourist, locals, people who have bought a specific product) or to an individual customer (birthday gift or reward for reaching a certain level). Merchants can also offer rewards to new customers through listings and geo-targeting, or create campaigns focused on generating new customers, retaining existing customers and winning back lapsed customers with loyalty programs you can use in-store, online or on mobile devices. The app could also be used to communicate new stock.

### **Business Match-up**

- We recommend that the largest businesses be matched with city staff and that regular informal meetings be scheduled to assess business needs before a problem arises. Identifying a business in trouble before they move from the Auburn area or go bankrupt and, if possible, finding a solution. For instance, a company who has outgrown its current property can be directed to financing programs to expand a current property or build a new one.

### **Participate in the Main Street America program being headed by Placer County.**

- “Main Street programs on the local level have earned the reputation as one of the most powerful economic revitalization tools in the nation. It is a seal with the ultimate goal to position the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and the hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community’s unique characteristics. This can be done through highlighting cultural traditions, celebrating and preserving important architecture and history, encouraging local businesses to market cooperatively, offering coordinated specials and sales, and hosting special events aimed at changing perceptions of the district and communicating to residents, investors, businesses, and property-owners that this place is special.

**Advocate and support business education on the City’s Business Portal.**

- In the Business Portal, add links to both city and non-city websites, such as Sierra Business Council or the Chamber of Commerce that offer business expertise and education. Examples of subject matter:
  - E-commerce, what it is, how to use it.
  - Using the new logo and branding in your marketing
  - Customer loyalty programs, how to use it keep and attract customers
  - How to start a business in the city
  - Tenant Improvements – how to get permitting, how to finance, how to hire a contractor, etc.
  - Non-profits sites who help in placing disadvantaged and homeless people in entry-level jobs.
  - Business Ignitor classes similar to Sierra Commons offers in Nevada City.

**Parking**

- Identify possible areas where public parking can be added.
- Identify financing options
- Encourage Uber/Lyft/Taxi usage.
- Educate where available parking exist.

The following projects should be tackled through partnerships with non-profits, public, and private entities, such as Placer County, California Chamber of Commerce, Auburn Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Association, SCORE, etc.

**Facade Improvements.**

- Our city needs to look its best so that tourists and visitors not only want to return, they tell their friends about visiting here. However, many buildings and roads are aging and in need of structural improvements.
- Contributions of arts, culture and well-designed amenities to the quality of life in a community are key to attracting visitors and new businesses. The Auburn Arts

Commission seeks to lead this effort by focusing attention on the quality design and signage, monuments and portals, providing the public art and related cultural amenities that tangibly improve the quality of life.

- This type of attention to the environment also helps define a sense of place.

#### **Identify Possible Innovation Districts.**

- Innovation District would combine higher education, work force housing, and business incubation/early stage growth facilities. Innovation districts facilitate the creation and commercialization of new ideas and support economies by growing jobs in ways that leverage a city's distinct economic attributes. Efforts of building an innovation district could be around real estate needing revitalization. This district should be easily accessible via public transportation, wired for public Wi-Fi, support mixed-use development, and nurture collaboration/ knowledge-sharing.

#### **Identify Possible Incubator Properties with landlord(s) willing to rent to incubators.**

- Match willing landlords with incubator businesses. An incubator space, or co-work space, is more than just a place that offers cheap rent; it is a multi-purpose entity intended to do nothing less than birth new businesses. Many businesses that were assisted when in the "startup" stage went on to become successful companies, especially those who could work with mentors. The typical incubator user is a business in an early phase of growth in its business category, and therefore considered a higher credit risk to landlords. Incubator businesses normally prefer rental of space on a short-term or month-to-month lease to minimize the financial burden on their startup businesses.
- Recruit experienced people in the community to serve as mentors. (Mentors are people who are "islands of expertise" who can help illuminate the process for newbies.)

#### **Online Job Posting site for Auburn, for all public, private, and non-profit positions.**

- Develop a website to match residents with local businesses' work force needs.
- Encourage all public, private, and non-profit entities to post their open positions on the website.
- Publicize the website in local media and social networks and local online job posting sites.

This Work Plan is intended to be a "living" document which will evolve and change as we accomplish the stated goals through the listed objectives, strategies, and key tactics to reach the desired outcomes.

Concurrently the Commission has identified the following broad-based strategic initiatives that will need support from the City Council and community to be successful

## Strategic Overview

Priority Issue	Objective	Support	Planned Outcomes	Planned Outcomes
Economic development has not been a community or city priority	Fund and implement the Economic Endurance Plan (EEP)	Develop strong collaborative partnerships	Partner with the County, key businesses, Auburn Chamber, investors, infrastructure developers and non-profits	Community-wide consensus on a plan resulting in aggressive economic development
		Lead business development & support	Ensure key business retention, growth and expansion, the attraction of targeted new businesses, and incubation of others, through sustainable finance and investment	Target businesses, sources of finance and investment identified and secured for each tactic
Auburn lacks a clearly defined and memorable identity, and a cohesive marketing strategy	Establish a compelling cohesive brand which promotes Auburn's many unique traits and has broad community buy-in	Create sustainable overall branding and targeted marketing campaigns to address investors, tourism, business, residents and workforce	Develop a compelling brand, market/sell the brand locally to constituency, support the creation of marketing campaigns which support the brand, and develop the necessary sustainable marketing tools (e.g. traditional, digital, social media, Internet presence, Search Engine Optimization, Zoom Prospector, etc.)	Auburn's brand is accepted and used by the community in all marketing efforts

Priority Issue	Objective	Support	Planned Outcomes	Planned Outcomes
<p>Auburn's above average unemployment hinders community attraction and prosperity</p>	<p>Ensure Auburn's rate is always better than the County, other Placer Cities and Towns, the State and U.S.</p>	<p>Businesses, K-12 schools, junior colleges, universities, and Trade Associations to develop a comprehensive Auburn Workforce Plan, investment strategy, and redeployment assistance</p>	<p>Partner with the Airport Business Park Association businesses, the County, etc. to anticipate current and future workforce demands, skill gaps, hiring needs, salary potential and redeployment needs.</p>	<p>Below average unemployment, planned redeployment, above average salaries, defined career paths, and a diverse highly skilled residential workforce</p>
			<p>Facilitate development of Incubators (e.g. HackerLab, Maker-space, Creative-space for traditional and digital arts, etc.), Innovation Districts, and a higher education satellite.</p>	
			<p>Aggressively recruit targeted employers from outside the area.</p>	

Priority Issue	Objective	Support	Planned Outcomes	Planned Outcomes
Auburn's institutional barriers limit economic vitality	Auburn's reputation is widely known for having the most expeditious business development support	Offer unparalleled business support	Establish a strategic service and support institutional culture, business innovation, easy access to capital, Broadband Internet service and self-help tools	Be the regional standard for efficient permitting; reduced permit turn-around; developed an Incubator; developed broadband plans and investment; implemented Zoom Prospector; and partnered with a GIS target business service
		Lower the "cost of doing business"	Achieve and maintain a U.S. Free Trade Zone (FTZ) status for the entire Airport Business Park; simplify, reduce and eliminate building permit regulations, fees and process management costs; and provide an over-the-counter/online permitting	Measurable FTZ tax benefits; amended and eliminated policies and regulations; streamlined permitting process developed; and an online application system
		Verify the "Ease of doing business"	Offer business permitting personal planning assistance, a workforce planning partner and an Ombudsmen	Optimized staffing, online "check-lists", real-time help desk and annual business satisfaction report

Priority Issue	Objective	Support	Planned Outcomes	Planned Outcomes
Auburn is geographically constrained which limits business attraction, growth and expansion	Optimize the use of current property assets while exploring annexation	Assist with enhancing underutilized Auburn commercial properties	Develop a targeted underutilized property list for in-fill, adaptive re-use, rezoning and mixed use purposes.	Established and implemented cooperative redevelopment, adaptive development and finance and marketing agreements with underutilized property owners
		Develop a residential, commercial and underdeveloped property annexation plan	Facilitate public, private and/or non-profit financing of underutilized properties and site specific plans	Expedited parcel annexation process
		Offer website that commercial brokers can populate with their Auburn properties; website should also list area information.	Target contiguous and non-contiguous properties with optimum business, residential, city and county mutual benefits	Community supported planned annexation strategy, LAFCO approved updated County and City Master Plans, specific annexation timetables and referendum(s)

# PERFORMANCE

*Staffing, funding, and timelines*

## GETTING THE JOB DONE

Identifying the fundamental issues that deter economic growth in Auburn and then solidifying the objectives and strategies to solve the core problems that plague our community was the basis of creating this Economic Endurance Plan (EEP).

In executing the EEP, however, it will not be possible to engage every objective simultaneously because of the daunting magnitude of the work. So the next step is to determine the sequence for addressing the work plan elements by placing them in priority order.

*“Don’t try to do a thousand things ....*

*do a few things a thousand times better”*

Finally, a recommendation will be crafted to outline how each plan element will be attacked: Who will be assigned to work out tactics and actually conduct the work? How will each segment be financed? What timelines for completion will be assigned?

With priorities set by the City Council, the actual work can commence to:

### **#1: Create work teams**

Teams for each priority will be staffed from among two groups. The City Manager, the Economic Development Coordinator and City Council members assigned to the EDC will fill leadership roles. EDC members, select City staff, qualified volunteers from the community will conduct much of the hands-on activity to achieve individual objectives as prioritized by the City Council.

It is essential that volunteers with experience in executive management, real estate, finance, and business development are recruited to join the teams. We have many former corporate CEOs in our area who are key candidates to join the team.

## **#2: Fund the work**

With a substantial initial investment in supporting the cost of an Economic Development Coordinator, presumably additional funding will be precious. Therefore, it will be essential to take advantage of other public, private and nonprofit sources of capital, and as many pro bono, low-cost and volunteer services as possible. For this plan to be successful, however, a commitment must be made to allocate funds for outside services such as brand and logo development; brochure production; and advertising and promotion.

## **#3: Establish a manageable timeline**

A critical path incorporating each priority must be set with specific interim deadlines; this cannot be an open-ended proposition. Priority "managers" will be required to provide regular activity reports and update the City Council on compliance with timeline commitments.

***“Timelines need to be challenging, measureable and achievable.”***

Timelines need to be challenging, measureable and achievable. It is essential that work teams create their own milestones to achieve results.

## **#4: Hire an Economic Developer Coordinator.**

- This person will work within the EEP to identify the responsible party and partners for each project above, find financing when applicable, and ensure milestone and/or completion dates are set and met.
- General responsibilities of this position include implementing the EEP, coordinating and implementing projects and programs that support commercial, office and industrial development; business attraction; business retention; development of public facilities and infrastructure; small business development initiatives; and other economic development, redevelopment or capital improvement programs or projects.

***“With the completion of the Economic Endurance Plan, the real work must now begin”***

- This position would be a person familiar with public/private/non-profit partnerships, programs, and financing to help all of the above items come to fruition, They would aggressively recruit targeted employers from outside the area, direct businesses to the programs and financial aid available to them to grow, add employee or new products, expand, etc. They would help match up under-utilized properties for re-zoning or adaptive re-use; and unused properties with business looking to re-locate here.

## **Conclusion**

The preliminary EEP was presented to the city council, as well as business and civic groups around Auburn. where (See community schedule and feedback in exhibits) Our mantra during these presentation was “Don’t try to do a thousand things....do a few things a thousand times better” The overall feedback was both positive and supportive of the EEP’s intent. Continued feedback is encouraged and welcomed.

Auburn’s Economic Development Commission currently meets monthly at City Hall. The agenda and location is posted on the City’s website and all are welcome to attend.

We are asking the Auburn’s City Council to adopt the EEP so that the work to implement the plan and strategies can begin.

Respectfully Submitted

Auburn Economic Commission

May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017

## Exhibit 1 Community Feedback Notes

As members of the Economic Development Commission, our fundamental role is to make recommendations to the City Council about issues that will impact the future prosperity of Auburn. We take our work very seriously, as demonstrated by the effort we have invested in drafting our Economic Endurance Plan (EEP), coupled with rolling out the details to civic and community groups all over town.

The following is a compilation of the feedback we gathered during our many recent community outreach EEP presentations to the Chamber of Commerce, business associations and key service clubs.

Following this list are the advice received by individuals and the letters of recommendation received to date.

### 2/1/2017 GAEC (Gov't Affairs. Chambers, Eco Dev)

- Add additional priorities for the plan:
  - Education
  - E-commerce
    - Create a strategy for e-commerce and emerging business types
  - Housing for work force
  - Communication
- The plan should be coordinated with the county, which can create mutual benefit for both jurisdictions.
- Divide the plan, so that the Work Plan portion is separate from the Text portions, which are more marketing than plan.
- Language changes
  - The section addressing the inefficiency in the permitting department should have less critical language. (This language has been changed in the updated Work Plan)
  - Make language more positive: e.g. change "Auburn lacks..." to "Auburn can improve..." etc.
  - Auburn's small footprint is an asset (small town), not a limitation
- Auburn geographical limitations: How do we coordinate Auburn's and Placer county's economic interests?
- \$100,000 should be granted to enact the economic plan.
- Add a SWOT analysis for each of the associations
- Committee supports the priorities

### 2/15/2017 Chamber of Commerce

- The City needs to move on this plan, even if it is not viewed as perfect. At the very least, it covers the basics of an economic plan.
- Right now the city has no plan, and nothing is happening.
- Board supports the priorities and the GAEC recommendations and comments

### 2/15/2017 California Welcome Center (Mora Rowe)

- Center around marketing.
- Paint a vision of what Auburn wants to be moving forward, and how success will be measured
- Establishing clear success metrics.
- Attract new businesses for vacant properties and
- Repurpose the Downtown Wells Fargo site
- More effective usage of existing properties required
- Future property development.

## 2/15/2017 Auburn Airport Business Park Association

EEP Branding & Marketing Priority effort is their top priority/focus.

- Enhance Auburn Airport amenities and Master Planning
- Expand the Free Trade Zone boundaries.
- Make the Airport the top City business development priority based on its potential and contribution to City revenues.
- Improve business park's promotion/marketing
  - AABPA is currently trying to raise capital to erect signage at the Hwy 49 entrance.
  - Upgrade their website
- Provide additional "easy road access"
- Piggy-back on/collaborate with Barry Broome's initiative to attract business to the region

## 2/16/2017 Old Town Auburn Business Association

- Cultural Changes
  - City and Staff engagement
    - Improve permitting
      - Business Owners, "had they known ahead of time how difficult it would be to work with the City they would never have come to Auburn
    - Address ordinances, ordinance enforcement inconsistencies therein
      - Stop the "selective enforcement" of signage regulations in Old Town.
      - Existing rules prevent merchants from marketing their businesses at street level with banners and A-frame signs.
    - Improve street and building conditions,
      - There was general dissatisfaction with the impression that too many building owners in Old Town are not maintaining their structures, creating a negative impression in the historic district. Standards/rules need to be developed and enforced.
      - Mid-2016 Old Town presented the City with an outline of maintenance and esthetic issues that need to be addressed. Little to no progress is evident.
      - Address lack of property owner cooperation/incentives
- Business Development/Attraction
  - Help with filling store fronts
  - Help increase the limited foot traffic
  - Create a job posting site on Facebook for Auburn, an employment board online

- Create retail development
  - Create an aggressive communications plan for Auburn.
- Work with the Salvation Army's help in placing disadvantaged and homeless people in entry-level jobs.

#### 2/21/2017 Highway 49 Business Association

- Establish more affordable housing
- Remedy Old Town parking.
- Enhance Highway 49 appearance
- Upon review, in general, this looks like a solid, albeit somewhat vague, plan.
- In the section citing demographic data, it might be advisable to include average annual income.
- Additionally, while references were made to public/private partnerships, I would like to see some mention of the potential for public/private partnerships specifically to address the concern of lack of parking in the Old Town area.
- Parking will continue to be challenged in recruiting and maintaining viable businesses to the area without the development of more convenient and accessible parking.

#### 2/22/2017 Auburn Host Lions

- No feedback
- Unhappy with County City relations
- Feel the north auburn homeless condition is a problem with no solution in site
- Believe the EEP should address the "Greater Auburn Area"

#### 2/23/2017 Gold Country Rotary

- Pleasanton former EDC Commissioner and Housing Committee member said our plan was "spot-on", and tracked with what the Pleasanton/Livermore committees had enacted.

#### 2/27/2017 Jennifer Montgomery and Sheri Conway (Jim Holmes?)

Waiting for feedback notes. This meeting was postponed

#### 3/02/17 Auburn Arts Commission

- Improve the curb appeal/aesthetics - especially the area north of I-80 on Hwy 49 to the county line and the planting of trees on High St.
- They are working on their own "multi-stakeholder" plan, as they have their own "big ideas" plan but know they can't execute without forming partnerships, EDC included
- The city and the various commissions need to "shared vision" of what Auburn should be so that we are executing from a common purpose

#### 3/07/17 Auburn Rotary (12-2p Elks Club)

#### 3/09/2017 ARD (4-5pm Maidu Center) Bill & Matt

3/14/2017 City Manager presenting his overall priorities and framework to the EDC (5:30-7p City Hall Room 10)

3/21/2017 Downtown Business Association

- Big concern was general bldg maintenance and enforcement/encouragement for property owners to improve
- Permitting/regulation, one person (didn't get his name) talked about the difficulty in getting a permit to convert his duplex to a triplex
- Dave Naves said he created a e-commerce website for Auburn businesses called [auburnmarketplace.com](http://auburnmarketplace.com) that he will "give away" - he also did websites for downtown and old town
- Comment made about "experience" oriented stores to be in DT
- There was a mention of the proposed arches and the hope it will drive additional traffic
- The DBA president and attendees endorsed the EEP with their input

3/28/2017 Meddlers (7-8am City Hall Rose Room) Bill

03/13/2017 Jennifer Montgomery and her team

- Additional Lodging (the Elmwood and Tuttle Mansion could be addressed)
- Expand of the State Theater
- Addition of some of the negative of the districts to the EEP
- Create economic diversity
- Consider teaming with Greater Sacramento Economic Council (GSAC)

## RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT

### 14 MARCH 2017

1. Contract with a professional economic development person on a part-time results oriented compensation package. There may be an opportunity to share with the City of Colfax
2. Support moving forward with a Tourism Business Improvement District (T-BID) for the western slope of the Sierras from Colfax to Loomis. Funds created would be used to promote more tourism in this area.
3. Support the “sister county” initiative to establish a relationship between Placer County and a county in China. International air service to/from Sacramento is only a few years away.
4. Conduct a survey of vacant store fronts in Auburn. I counted 15 on a recent trip around the city.
5. Financially support the printing of the combined Old Town and Downtown historic walking brochures.
6. Meet with major commercial property owners to determine what types of tenants they see as promoting improved business.
7. Prepare a four page four color brochure highlighting the advantages of establishing a business in Auburn, including the Auburn airport. Include all amenities.

## Branding Analysis of Auburn, California Becoming a Premier Tourism Destination

### What is Branding?

A successful brand is what people feel about a company, product, service or place like Auburn. It's not just a stand-alone logo. A positive brand image is developed over time by consistently delivering on the brand promise to the customer. A brand ecosystem is developed, from brochures to a website, which creates a consistent visual image for Auburn that makes the right impression on the target market of people.

### Unique Selling Proposition

A successful brand is not a boring commodity (we're just like any other town) but something that conveys to potential visitors that the destination is unique in some way. The Unique Selling Proposition (USP) is a bold and truthful statement about the place. For example, the USP for the tourism effort by Oregon's Adventure Coast (Coos Bay, North Bend, Charleston) is *"The only Oregon coast destination where you can clam, crab and fish on the same time...the best winter storm watching spot on the coast...unsurpassed diversity of coastal attractions...the only bay-front community with a rich accessible Native American and maritime heritage with numerous museums for discovering...more lodging options, dining and city attractions than any other Oregon coast community."*

### Target Market

The Auburn brand should appeal to a target market of people who have a sufficient income and can be persuaded to stay in the Auburn area for a number of days. For example, the tourism effort by Oregon's Adventure Coast (Coos Bay, North Bend) targets visitors 45 and older because they have more travel income, all visitors that live within 350 miles of the Adventure Coast and local residents inviting friends and relatives to the area.

### Branding Challenge and Opportunity for Auburn

Tourists traveling in Northern California have an overwhelming array of choices of places to see and experience, including the world famous San Francisco, Napa Wine Country and Lake Tahoe. They also have a limited amount of time, so they must make choices regarding quick pit-stops and multi-day destinations. The challenge for the Auburn Tourism Team is how to communicate to people who will be traveling in the future along the I-80 and Highway 49 corridors and who will likely visit "must-see" California destinations in the Bay Area and Lake Tahoe to treat Auburn not as a mere pit-stop but as a "must-see," multi-day Gold Country destination. Fortunately, the Gold Rush is a world famous event and Auburn is the most accessible Gold Country town.

Auburn will become a premier tourism destination when the target audience sees and hears a consistent and repeated message and image of Auburn that is compelling, creates a strong emotional connection, and delivers a unique experience in the tourism marketplace.

### The Multiple Brands of Auburn

According to the report *Placer County Travel Industry Assessment and Detailed Economic Impact Estimates* (March 2009) by Dean Runyan Associates, the authors note in their Image/Brand Development analysis that there is great potential that the wide array of activities in Placer's Gold Country region that *"can attract visitors to and extend stays within Placer County."* The constraint is *"a diffused image/marketing messaging."*

*A single image or signature event is lacking. Many independent stakeholders not fully coordinated with a lead marketing organization to formulate an overall objective.”*

As seen in Table 1, some of the branding entities, such as Fodar’s Travel Guide, City of Auburn’s *Discover Auburn and the Gold Country* brochure, Placer County Visitors Bureau website and the Visit California website identify Auburn as a part of the Gold Country.

The OTBA and DBA websites are mainly focused on things to do within their geographic areas and sometimes outside their boundaries. Their taglines – *“Where History Captures Your Heart”* and *“The Heart of Auburn”* reflects this focus.

Other brand entities such as the city’s Endurance Capital of the World Committee, Placer County Visitors Bureau Visitors Guide and Visit California focus on the endurance themes with the taglines, *“All Trails Lead to Auburn”* and *“Explore an ideally situated Gold Country town with a sporty side.”* Several branding entities, the city’s *Discover Auburn and the Gold Country* brochure and Holiday Inn highlight adventure with the taglines *“Where True Adventure is Still Possible”* and *“Auburn Adventure Year-Round.”* Old Town and Fodar also highlight the fact that Auburn is very accessible to tourists.

Table 1  
The Multiple Brands of Auburn

Branding Entity	Brand Image Portrayed
Fodar’s Travel Guide, Sacramento and the Gold Country	Auburn is the Gold Country town most accessible to travelers on Interstate 80. An important transportation center during the gold rush, downtown Auburn has a small Old Town district with narrow climbing streets, cobblestone lanes, wooden sidewalks, and many original buildings. Fresh produce, flowers, baked goods, and gifts are for sale at the farmers' market, held on Saturday morning year-round.
Historic Old Town Auburn Old Town Business Association (OTBA) Website	The OTBA’s website has the tagline: <i>“Where History Captures Your Heart.”</i> Uses a hub and spokes model of displaying things to do within Old Town and outward and exclusive lists within Old Town only. Places to stay include the greater Auburn area. Wine tasting list is broad and includes a write up of wineries along the Placer County Wine Trail. Outdoor recreation listing is broad and includes ski resorts. Broad list of fishing locations. Broad list of 100 Day Trip ideas. Events, shopping and museum lists are focused exclusively within Old Town. Emphases Old Town’s small town charm and that it is very accessible from I-80. Attractive pictorial images. Videos on visiting Auburn and about restaurants in Old Town.
Downtown Business Association Website	DBA’s website includes the tagline: <i>“The Heart of Auburn.”</i> Emphases the Top 10 Things to Do in Downtown Auburn. Attractive images of Downtown Auburn, Business Directory, Calendar, and Blog for events.
City of Auburn Website	Includes a “Visitors” button that directs to <a href="http://www.visitauburn.net">www.visitauburn.net</a> . This website provides further information on the Arts, Dining & Wineries, History, Outdoors and Shopping.
City of Auburn <i>Discover Auburn and the Gold Country</i> Brochure	Attractive maps of Old Town and Downtown, calendar. Tagline: <i>“Where True Adventure is Still Possible.”</i>

City's Endurance Capital of the World Committee	Tagline: <i>"All Trails Lead to Auburn."</i> Includes information about how Auburn became the Endurance Capital of the World, trail maps, calendar of endurance events.
Holiday Inn	Print advertisement with the tagline: <i>"Auburn Adventure Year-Around!"</i>
Gold Country Visitors Association	Tagline: <i>"Gold Country, California...priceless."</i> Sample itinerary of Placer includes only the river and Placer County Wine Trail.
Placer County Visitors Bureau's Website	Includes a "Gold Country Visitor's Guide to Placer." In 1849, word of Placer gold spread like wildfire, bringing hopeful young men and women to the Gold Country in search of fortune. Today, visitors strike it rich in the Gold Country, which is situated virtually in the center of an amazing range of outdoor recreational opportunities. Retrace history as you hike the old wagon trails of Tahoe Forest or the Auburn Recreation Area. Get off the beaten path and try your hand at gold panning, nature photography, or the thrill of river rafting. Drive along portions of the old Lincoln Highway, stopping to enjoy antique shopping, historic museums and gold mining towns. No matter the season, your sightseeing trip through the Gold Country will reward you with breathtaking vistas and color. We invite you to experience the richness of the Gold Country. Many of the streets and structures in the Gold Country towns look similar to when they were built 150 years ago. Interstate 80 traverses the entire county, while Highway 49 bisects the Gold Country in Auburn, making recreational, agricultural, and historic attractions easily accessible to visitors. A stroll through Auburn, the Placer County seat, reveals life as it was and as it is today in contemporary foothill communities.
Visit California	Within their website VisitCalifornia.com is a section called <i>"Discover Gold Country."</i> Auburn has the image of the Historic Courthouse with the tagline: <i>"Explore an ideally situated Gold Country Town with a sporty side."</i> Covers the historic attractions, recreation, "Gold Crush" of the wine trail, Mountain Mandarin Festival, Old Town.

### Gold Country Brand Recommendation

Embrace the Gold Country as the primary brand for Auburn. The Gold Country brand is identifiable throughout the world and the gold country experience includes the 5 experiences noted in the Runyon report – Outdoor Recreation, Leisure Recreation, Agri-Tourism, Heritage, Arts. Other organizations – Fodor's, Gold Country Visitors Association, Placer County Visitors Bureau, and Visit California – already identify Auburn as a Gold Country destination. The broad aspect of this brand can attract a large group of people – from young adventure enthusiasts to senior citizen travelers – to make Auburn a multi-day destination.

### Auburn's Unique Selling Proposition

There are many gold country towns up and down the Sierra Foothills. What makes Auburn unique? Auburn USP should emphasize accessibility from I-80 to a wide range of fun things to do and that can be enjoyed year-round.

*At the crossroads of Interstate 80 and Highway 49, Auburn is the most accessible Gold Country destination providing visitors the year-round opportunity to stroll, dine and shop in charming Historic Old Town and*

*Downtown, see Gold Rush history along the streets or at 6 Museums, wine taste along the award-winning Placer County Wine Trail or visit a wide choice of art galleries. Located at the beautiful Confluence of the North and Middle Forks of the American River and the Auburn Recreation area, Auburn, as the Endurance Capital of the World, is the only Gold Country destination that offers unsurpassed endurance races and an amazing range of outdoor recreational opportunities including river rafting, mountain bicycling, camping, hiking, boating, fishing, hunting, OHV trails, golf and so much more.*

#### Target Market Recommendation

The Auburn brand should be communicated to potential visitors with travel income of all ages who will be likely traveling along I-80 and Highway 49 and who are attracted to the 5 Gold Country experiences noted in the Runyon report – Outdoor Recreation, Leisure Recreation, Agri-Tourism, Heritage, Arts.

#### Tagline

I recommend that 2-3 Team members develop a tagline for Auburn consistent with the Gold Country brand. For example, *“Your Ultimate Gold Country and Adventure Destination.”*

#### Logo

Modify a logo among those currently available that is consistent with the Auburn brand.

Exhibit 4 Feedback from Gary Estes

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Gary Estes <[gary.estes@wdlikenoname.net](mailto:gary.estes@wdlikenoname.net)>  
Subject: Agenda idea for EDC meeting on March 28  
To: Bill Wharton <[bcwharton@gmail.com](mailto:bcwharton@gmail.com)>

Bill,

I found the Economic Development Commission meeting very educational. I appreciated the opportunity to share PARC's concerns with the Commissioners.

I would like to offer an idea for consideration at the next meeting on March 28. In the Economic Endurance Plan (EEP) under the "Plan" section are five priority issues and an objective for each. One of the objectives states: "Establish a compelling cohesive brand which promotes Auburn's many unique traits and has broad community buy-in."

As I mentioned at the meeting, I think creating a brand should be the first priority issue to complete. This has been a consistent need expressed over the years when attending Chamber of Commerce meetings. The question has always been about who is going to do it and who is going to pay for this work.

My suggestion is to hold a contest. Let's get as many creative minds thinking about creating a brand and logo as we can. We can leverage work done others for holding such a contest. Consider the attached flyer prepared for the branding and logo contest for Jersey City in 2014. Seems to me that they did all the work and we can modify it to meet our specific needs.

I will be on vacation from March 18-24 and back in town on March 25.

Please let me whether or not this will be on the agenda.

Thanks,  
Gary

Exhibit 5 EEP Communication Schedule

<b>EEP Communication Schedule and Key Dates</b>					
<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Host; Presenters</b>	<b>Status</b>
1/16/17	EOD	Informational agenda request for EEP presentation to City Council members			Completed
1/23/17	5:30 pm	City Council	City Hall	Bill; Randy, Andy, Keith	Completed
2/1/17	7:30 am	Chamber's Eco Dev/Gov't Affairs committee	Chamber building	Kathleen; Andy, Randy	Completed
2/3/17	3:00 pm	Auburn Journal	AJ Office DT	Bill, Andy	Completed
2/8/17	5:30 pm	EDC Meeting	KenMar	Bill	Completed
2/15/17	7:00 am	Chamber Of Commerce Board	Chamber building	Kathleen; Andy, Randy	Completed
2/15/17	3:00 pm	CA Welcome Ctr	1103 High Street	Bill; Randy, Andy	Completed
2/15/17	5:30	Auburn Airport Business Association	Auburn Airport Main	Margery; Randy, Andy	Completed
2/16/17	8:30 am	Old Town Auburn	Bistro 103 OT	Gary; Randy, Andy	Completed
2/21/17	5:30 pm	Highway 49 Business Association	Don Robinson Sand & Gravel upstairs meeting room	Harriett; Randy, Andy	Completed
2/22	Noon	Auburn Host Lions – Rich Johnson	Flint building (old PC museum) at the GC Fairgrounds	Kathleen; Randy, Andy	Completed
2/23	Noon	Gold Country Rotary	Awful Annie's	Keith; Randy, Andy	Completed
2/28	5:30 pm	Special EDC Session	City Hall – Room 10	Bill	Completed
3/2/17	5:00 pm	Auburn Arts Commission	City Hall Chamber Conference Room	Kathleen; Randy, Andy	Completed
3/7/17	11:45 am	Auburn Rotary	Placer and Pine St.	Kathleen; Randy, Andy	Completed
3/9/17	4:00 pm	ARD	Maidu Center	Matt; Randy, Andy	Completed
3/14/17	5:30 pm	EDC Meeting w/ Bob Richardson	City Hall Room 10	Bill	
3/21/17	5:30 pm	Downtown Business Association	TBD	Cheryl; Randy, Andy	Completed



P.O. Box 5782 Auburn, California 95604-5782

March 10, 2015

Auburn City Council  
1225 Lincoln Way  
Auburn, California 95603

Dear Council Members:

On behalf of the Hwy. 49 Business Association and its Board of Directors, I am writing to include our enthusiastic support for the proposed Auburn Economic Endurance Plan.

After an excellent presentation of the Plan at our February meeting by Randy Wagner and Andy Ruff, with Harriet White hosting, our members discussed it, and voted unanimously to support the Plan.

Sincerely,

/s/

Don Shields  
President

DS/ma



**Auburn Arts Commission**  
**Recommendation Regarding the Economic Development Commission's EEP**  
**March 20, 2017**

The Arts Commission's charge: The Art's Commission's primary charge is to foster and support visual and performing arts in Auburn while serving in an advisory capacity to the City Council in such matters. It is also the responsibility of the Arts Commission to review and propose methods and policies to strengthen, enhance and support local visual and performing artists and art organizations.

The EDC EEP: The Arts Commission supports the EDC's goal to develop the economic well-being of Auburn. We have noted the EDC's plan does not address the important contributions of arts, culture and well-designed amenities to the quality of life in a community which is the key to attracting visitors and new businesses. The Arts Commission wants to join the effort by providing the attention to the quality design of signage, monuments and portals that entice travelers to get off the highway and visit our town, and by providing the public art and related cultural amenities that tangibly improve the quality of life for our current residents, give visitors reasons to stay in town longer to enjoy the Auburn experience and patronize local businesses, and to attract new businesses, entrepreneurs and the work force needed for those enterprises.

Culture and Art and Economic Vitality: Attached is a short paper from the American Planning Association that addresses how arts and culture catalyzes economic vitality by improving a community's competitive edge, creating a foundation for defining a sense of place, attracting new and visiting populations, integrating the visions of community and business leaders and contributing to the development of a skilled work force.

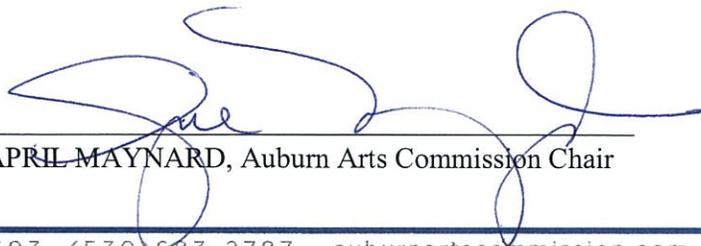
Also attached is a one-page summary of the Main Street Program's Four Point Approach and Eight Guiding Principles to commercial revitalization of neighborhood business districts. The Main Street approach advises that promotion involves marketing an enticing image to shoppers, investors and visitors, and design improvements of the highest possible standards result in a reinvestment of public and private dollars to neighborhood districts.

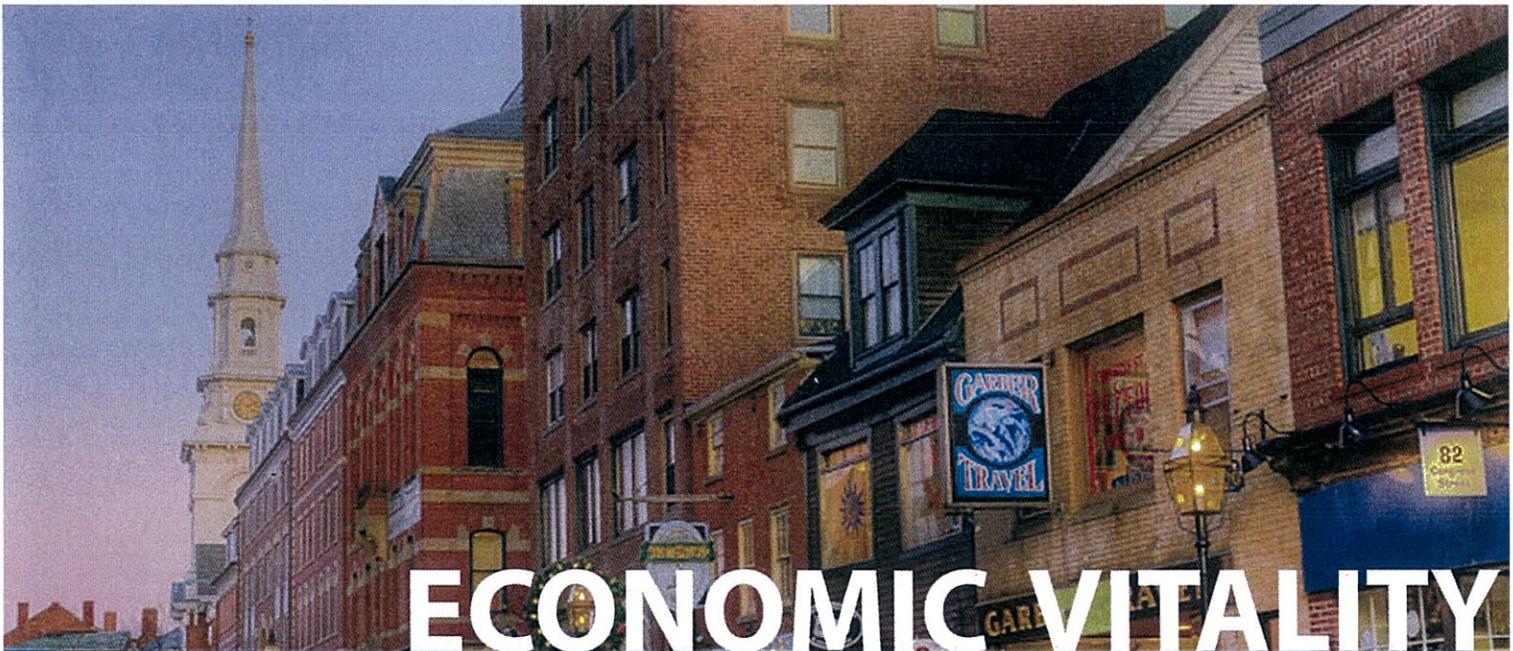
It is clear that healthy, bustling business districts are essential for Auburn's performing artists who must have audiences for their performances and for Auburn's visual artists who must have people see and purchase their art work.

It is also clear that attractive, exciting and stimulating arts and cultural offerings and well-designed surroundings are essential to the creation of vibrant, bustling business districts.

Prosperity for Auburn's businesses and Auburn's visual and performing arts and cultural offerings are intertwined and the ultimate goals of the EDC and the Arts Commission are mutually supportive. The Arts Commission is eager to join in the effort to take Auburn to the next level where the dynamic quality of life in Auburn is so apparent and compelling that it attracts current area residents and out-of-town visitors to our business districts and cultural events, along with attracting new businesses and their work force who want to share in the Auburn life we all love.

Dated: 3.20.17

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
APRIL MAYNARD, Auburn Arts Commission Chair



# ECONOMIC VITALITY

How the arts and culture sector catalyzes economic vitality

David J. Murray

ARTS AND CULTURE BRIEFING PAPERS 05

Terms such as “creative economy,” “creative class,” and “cultural economy” are becoming more common among urban planners, arts administrators, economic developers, and business and municipal leaders.<sup>1</sup> These terms reference a variety of types of jobs, people, and industries, including the sectors of visual, performing, and literary arts, as well as applied fields like architecture, graphic design, and marketing. Whatever label is used, this use of terminology linking culture and the economy indicates recognition of the connections among the fields of planning, economic development, and arts and culture.

The activities of the arts and culture sector and local economic vitality are connected in many ways. Arts, culture, and creativity can

- ◆ improve a community’s competitive edge
- ◆ create a foundation for defining a sense of place
- ◆ attract new and visiting populations
- ◆ integrate the visions of community and business leaders
- ◆ contribute to the development of a skilled workforce

To pursue economic development projects with a creative approach, there are four key points to consider:

## KEYPOINT #1:

*Economic development is enhanced by concentrating creativity through both physical density and human capital. By locating firms, artists, and cultural facilities together, a multiplier effect can result.*

## KEYPOINT #2:

*The recognition of a community’s arts and culture assets (and the marketing of them) is an important element of economic development. Creatively acknowledging and marketing community assets can attract a strong workforce and successful firms, as well as help sustain a positive quality of life.*

## KEYPOINT #3:

*Arts and cultural activities can draw crowds from within and around the community. Increasing the number of visitors as well as enhancing resident participation helps build economic and social capital.*

## KEYPOINT #4:

*Planners can make deliberate connections between the arts and culture sector and other sectors, such as tourism and manufacturing, to improve economic outcomes by capitalizing on local assets.*



American Planning Association  
Making Great Communities Happen

Prepared by the American Planning Association, as part of a collaborative project with the RMC Research Corporation and with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation

## KEYPOINTS

Competition, definition, attraction, integration, and continued development are all pivotal aims for economic development professionals. Traditional outcomes of economic development in planning include job creation, increased tax revenues, increased property values, increased retail activity, and more sustained economic vitality. These goals are often pursued through programs such as workforce development, recruitment, amenity packages for firms, local property investment, and policies that support business. When combined with creative approaches, these traditional programs can create a richer context for economic development.

Economic development approaches that integrate arts and culture are usually combinations of facility-centric, people-oriented, and program-based approaches. Development of an arena, cultural center, incubator

space, or creative district is an example of a facility-centric method, while a people-oriented approach could include facilitating arts professionals' development by approving live-work spaces, supporting arts centers, creating cooperative marketing opportunities, or commissioning artworks. Program-based approaches target a specific issue within a community, such as developing an arts program—whether gardening, mural making, or public art displaying—to address the issue of vacant property; promoting health education through a local arts festival, exhibitions, or performances or plays with health themes; or displaying artwork in vacant storefronts to attract passersby and enliven an area. Whether targeting economic improvement through facilities, people, programs, or all three, creative strategies can strengthen economic vitality (Table 1).

Each key point is explored in greater depth below, with examples and connections to the strategies in Table 1.

**Table 1. Creative Strategies for Improving Economic Vitality**

Strategy	Description
Promotion of Assets	Promoting cultural amenities for the purpose of attracting economic investment and skilled workers
Development	Promoting community development through artistic, cultural, or creative policies
Revitalization	Promoting community and neighborhood revitalization through artistic measures and strategies that emphasize creativity
Economic/Job Clusters	Creating economic or job clusters based on creative businesses, including linking those businesses with noncultural businesses
Education	Providing training, professional development, or other activities for arts, cultural, or creative entrepreneurs
Arts-Oriented Incubators	Creating arts-specific business incubators or dedicated low-cost space and services to support artistic, cultural, or creative professionals
Branding	Developing visual elements that communicate a community's character; using logo development and graphic design for advertising, marketing, and promoting a community
Districts	Creating arts, cultural, entertainment, historic, or heritage districts
Live-Work Projects	Providing economic or regulatory support for combined residential and commercial space for artists
Arts-Specific and General Public Venues	Providing public or private economic or regulatory support for marketplaces, bazaars, arcades, community centers, public places, parks, and educational facilities of various types
Events	Using celebrations or festivals to highlight a community's cultural amenities
Urban Design and Reuse	Implementing the reuse of existing sites or buildings for arts and culture purposes
Public Art	Supporting temporary and permanent public-art projects

## KEYPOINT #1:

*Economic development is enhanced by concentrating creativity through both physical density and human capital.*

Concentrations of cultural enterprises and creative workers in a geographic area provide a competitive edge, likely by elevating the quality of life, improving a community's ability to attract economic activity, and creating a climate in which innovation can flourish.

Concentration of culture-sector firms and highly skilled workers, along with related facilities and business, enables partnerships and cooperative projects to develop. Concentration also facilitates the marketing of skills and products. The physical density of creative and cultural firms promotes the sector's prosperity, which is in turn economically good for the local area as a whole.

Clusters of culturally oriented businesses and workers can breed innovation and new specializations. Places where innovation is prized are naturally attractive to innovators and conducive to creativity of all types, as the frequency of exchange promotes creative activity. Planners can develop projects that deliberately locate creative professionals in a facility or area. Density or concentration of creative facilities can occur on a range of scales, from a single building to a streetscape, neighborhood, or district.

The Crane Building in North Philadelphia is an example of a facility-centric redevelopment for creative businesses and artists. Originally built in 1905 as a plumbing warehouse, the building today houses Crane Arts ([www.cranearts.com](http://www.cranearts.com)), with four floors of artist studios and suites and a variety of project spaces available for community programs and cultural development. Facilities include an art-restoration studio, a ceramics studio, a multimedia studio, and a printmaking, painting, and sculpting studio. One of the office suites is a cultural coworking space opened by Peregrine Arts ([www.peregrinearts.org](http://www.peregrinearts.org)) for entrepreneurs, consultants, artists, writers, visionaries, and anyone working in design, media, history, the arts, and cultural heritage. The building has been successful enough that Crane Arts is considering opening another building. As an economic development tool, the building is beneficial not only to the creative occupants but to adjacent communities and the design profession as a whole. For example, during the recent economic recession, local architects with few or no incoming projects participated in a gallery exhibit at Crane Arts in an effort to "get back to the act of making things."<sup>2</sup> The exhibit was an effective tool for marketing and design.

In Tampa, Florida, a local developer designed and created the Sanctuary Lofts ([www.sanctuarylofts.com](http://www.sanctuarylofts.com)) as an urban revitalization project to concentrate creativity and attract residents back to the downtown. The project began with an early 20th-century Greek Revival church in the Tampa Heights historic district that was transformed into loft apartments with space for creative-studio rentals. Many of the existing materials were salvaged, including doors, windows, pews, and hymnal racks. Sanctuary Lofts now serves as workspace for painters, artists, photographers, designers, and architects. This unique living space can assist in facilitating communication between creative organizations and the public and can create a stronger sense of identity for community residents.

**KEYPOINT #2:**

*The recognition of a community's arts and culture assets is an important element of economic development.*

Recognizing and strengthening existing assets are vital parts of community development and can contribute to economic development.

Assets include those related to entertainment (e.g., theaters, performing groups), personal development (e.g., community centers,

bookstores), and education (e.g., schools, museums), as well as more directly to job creation and industry (e.g., translators, designers). Cultural and creative amenities are assets as well as excellent tools for identifying and promoting other community assets.

Creative-class theory suggests that a high-tech, highly educated workforce prefers a location with creative amenities.<sup>3</sup> A flourishing arts and culture sector can affect where workers in the information economy, especially younger ones, want to live and as such is important for workforce recruitment and retention strategies.<sup>4</sup> To promote local culture and creativity, communities can deem an area or part of town as an arts, cultural, or creative district. A district is technically a designation to name and centralize creative assets by locating and drawing attention to cultural assets throughout the community. There may be economic incentives to live or work in such a district.

For example, Taos, New Mexico, has a number of designations intended to promote it as an arts and culture magnet. The State of New Mexico has designated Taos an Arts and Cultural District.<sup>5</sup> The New Mexico Arts and Cultural District Resource Team reviews the state of the creative economy and emphasizes building upon current assets to develop economic well-being. At the federal level, Taos is designated as part of the Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area. Additionally, Taos is pursuing the New Mexico "Quality of Life" local option tax (a tax incentive to improve energy and water conservation, sustainable building, employment benefits such as job-training programs and employer-provided child care, and other quality of life factors) to support the continued formal existence of the Arts and Cultural District. It is also considering the construction of an arts-incubator space, to complement its affordable housing project, ArtSpace.<sup>6</sup> Taos's approach to economic development is based on asset recognition and directly connected to the arts and culture sector.

Another way to recognize assets and capitalize on them economically is to find ways to publicize and display the community's existing artistic talent and related amenities, such as ethnic foods, costumes, and visual arts and crafts. For example, in New Orleans the cultural heritage of Louisiana is celebrated through the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. This festival increases tourism through a showcase of music of every kind—"jazz, gospel, Cajun, zydeco, blues, R&B, rock, funk, African, Latin, Caribbean, and folk to name a few."<sup>7</sup>

**KEYPOINT #3:**

*Arts and cultural activities in an area can draw crowds from within and around the community.*

Arts and cultural activity can increase attention and foot traffic to an area, including attracting visitors and increasing the length of time and money they spend, thereby contributing to continued development. Similarly, the presence of public art

and related streetscape amenities such as artist-designed lighting, signs, and benches is a way to attract pedestrians.

Arts and cultural activity often attracts attention, whether for casual perusal or artistic investment. Such activity can include events at culturally specific facilities such as theaters, museums, music clubs, and galleries, as well as cultural activity in venues such as arenas, public parks, community centers, and schools. Communities can also develop creative ways to make artistic activity happen in vacant or underutilized spaces. Several communities have embraced the practice of promoting creative activity in vacant retail windows and storefronts as a revitalization tool.

An economic redevelopment process can often last several years. In an attempt to temporarily transform a street scheduled for redevelopment in Brooklyn, New York, by the local BID, the local arts group Ad Hoc Art (<http://adhocart.org/site>) transformed a row of vacant stores into a street art gallery. Known as Willoughby Windows, the block of Willoughby Street between Bridge and Duffield was turned into a temporary art exhibit, which included a photography-themed screenprint where a camera store used to be, woven paper maps, and a large cash register (representative of the perceived financial mistakes of Wall Street).<sup>8</sup> This temporary, creative art exhibit transformed an otherwise vacant eyesore into an interesting space for pedestrians.

Boston Art Windows is a collaboration between the city and local artists aiming to fill vacant storefronts in the Downtown Crossing area with exhibits that draw pedestrians.<sup>9</sup> The space is a streetside art gallery incorporating interactive video, lighting, and sound to encourage passersby to pause and enjoy the spectacle. One artist's camera records the movements of pedestrians and plays them back in time-delayed video loops that eventually cover a screen. The redevelopment authority involves curators with the storefront show, seeing the exhibit as an opportunity to facilitate changes to Downtown Crossing as economic development continues.

In Grand Rapids, Michigan, local artists, business owners, and the public engage in an annual creative event called Art Prize ([www.artprize.org/home](http://www.artprize.org/home)). Art Prize is an open contest in which any artist, established or emerging, can show work and any visitor can vote on it. In essence, Art Prize is the creation of a context for the city to become a temporary art gallery. During this informal creative event, public participation, interaction, and economic development are strengthened as more than 100 venues open for it (including local retail and business spaces). More than 1,000 people volunteer. The resulting relationships extend beyond the boundaries of the competition to strengthen interaction among retail shops, business owners, and the art world. Economic benefits of the contest include increased traffic and improved business.

**KEYPOINT #4:**

***Planners can make deliberate connections between the arts and culture sector and other sectors.***

Establishing opportunities for partnerships among various economic sectors and creative professionals is a way to promote economic development. The talents of artists (especially related to design and communication) can enhance the

value of local products and services and increase their dissemination.

Partnerships often begin with economic clusters that are closely related to or dependent on the design field; examples include marketing, tourism, high-end manufacturing, and filmmaking. These economic clusters are groups of organizations with related producers, suppliers, distributors, and intermediaries. Proximate organizations can take advantage of shared interests, relationships, and economies.<sup>10</sup>

Deliberate team building by planners can help artists, designers, and people in related economic clusters to their shared advantage. Connecticut, for example, has recently instituted Cultural and Tourism Partnership Grants that encourage interdisciplinary collaborations among tourism, historical, film, and arts organizations.<sup>11</sup> The goal is to help localities develop relationships and strategies to improve tourism, an important goal in economic development.<sup>12</sup> The grants support projects such as film and arts festivals, development of garden and museum trails, seasonal crafts and events, and theater packages. Lead applicants must be nonprofit organizations, but they can partner to seek funding for both profit and nonprofit ventures.

Brooklyn, New York, is experiencing an economic transformation as a result of food. A growing gastronomic entrepreneurial energy is transforming once industrial, underutilized pockets of Brooklyn into culinary oases. Entrepreneurs in their 20s and 30s, who often have a strong sense of community and creativity, are opening restaurants, bars, pubs, specialty shops, butcheries, coffee shops, and other food production and processing facilities throughout the borough. These businesses are not only meeting the growing local and regional demand for locally produced and wholesome foods but also creating an incubator for culinary quality, craftsmanship, and artistry. For example, the outputs of Cut Brooklyn, a knife-making business, become the inputs for Brooklyn Kitchen, a specialty store; cacao nibs, a product of Mast Brothers Chocolate, and Ethiopian coffee beans from Gorilla Coffee are added to beer at Sixpoint Craft Ales; and root vegetables purchased from a nearby farmers market are combined with wort from Sixpoint to make relish at Wheelhouse Pickles.

This new collaboration between business owners is resulting in increased economic vitality and sense of community between merchants as well as residents.<sup>13</sup> In February 2010, recognition of the economic, environmental, health, and social impacts of food production, processing, access, consumption, and waste disposal prompted residents of New York City and the Manhattan borough president to develop "FoodNYC: A Blueprint for a Sustainable Food System," a report that establishes goals and provides recommendations for improving and balancing the health, economic, and environmental needs of the city. This report recognizes the untapped economic potential of the region's food system, as well as the health, equity, and environmental challenges of this economic sector.

## CONCLUSION

The economic development field has changed in the last decade from one that primarily emphasized location and firm-based approaches to one that more overtly acknowledges the development of human capital. Human capital refers to the sets of skills, knowledge, and value contributed by a population and has become a recognized asset as firms choose where to locate (and cities choose what to advertise and develop and whom to recruit) and entrepreneurs develop economic activity.

Members of some sectors of today's workforce seek certain characteristics in the places they choose to live. Places with entertainment options, public interaction, lively streets, and recreational and educational amenities are preferred, along with arts and culture activities and amenities. Leaders in the field of planning and economic development are developing noteworthy, creative approaches to making places of any scale more satisfying to this workforce, while increasing economic viability and competitiveness.

*This briefing paper was written by M. Christine Dwyer (senior vice president, RMC Research Corporation) and Kelly Ann Beavers (PhD candidate, Virginia Tech, and American Planning Association arts and culture intern), and edited by Kimberley Hodgson, AICP (manager, Planning and Community Health Research Center, American Planning Association).*

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## Endnotes

1. Landry 2000; Florida 2002.
2. Inga Saffron, "Changing Skyline: Phila. Architects Offer Some Homegrown Ideas," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 9, 2009.
3. Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (New York: Basic Books, 2003).
4. Richard Florida, *Who's Your City?: How the Creative Economy Is Making Where to Live the Most Important Decision of Your Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2009).
5. Rick Romancito, "Taos Arts and Cultural District a First for New Mexico," *Taos News*, October 24, 2009; available at: [www.taosnews.com/articles/2009/10/28/entertainment/doc4ae31f6a1733e086547611.txt](http://www.taosnews.com/articles/2009/10/28/entertainment/doc4ae31f6a1733e086547611.txt). See also [www.taosgov.com](http://www.taosgov.com).
6. APA Arts, Culture and Creativity survey, 2009.
7. "Testimony by NGA Center for Best Practices Director John Thomasian before the House Education and Labor Committee on the Economic and Employment Impact of the Arts and Music Industry," March 26, 2009; available at [www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.0f8c660ba7cf98d18a278110501010a0/?vgnextoid=db4bd36852440210vgnvCM1000005e00100aRCRD](http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.0f8c660ba7cf98d18a278110501010a0/?vgnextoid=db4bd36852440210vgnvCM1000005e00100aRCRD).
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10. Testimony by NGA Center for Best Practices Director John Thomasian.
11. See [www.cultureandtourism.org/cct/cwp/view.asp?a=2211&q=293780](http://www.cultureandtourism.org/cct/cwp/view.asp?a=2211&q=293780).
12. Testimony by NGA Center for Best Practices Director John Thomasian.
13. See Oliver Schwaner-Albright, "Brooklyn's New Culinary Movement," *New York Times*, February 24, 2009, available at [www.nytimes.com/2009/02/25/dining/25brooklyn.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/25/dining/25brooklyn.html); "More Voices from Brooklyn," *New York Times*, February 26, 2009, available at <http://dinersjournal.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/02/26/more-voices-from-brooklyn>; and Kim Severson, "Young Idols with Cleavers Rule the Stage," *New York Times*, available at [www.nytimes.com/2009/07/08/dining/08butch.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/08/dining/08butch.html).

## Arts and Culture Briefing Papers

This is one in a series of briefing papers on how planners can work with partners in the arts and culture sector and use creative strategies to achieve economic, social, environmental, and community goals.

Please visit our website at [www.planning.org/research/arts](http://www.planning.org/research/arts) to learn more about this series.

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[www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)

## Four Point Approach®

The Main Street Four Point Approach® is a philosophy, a program, and a proven comprehensive approach to commercial revitalization of neighborhood business districts. This approach has been implemented in more than 2,000 cities and towns across the nation with the help of statewide neighborhood business district revitalization programs and the National Main Street Center at the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The success of the Main Street approach is based on its comprehensive nature. By carefully integrating four points into a practical neighborhood business district management strategy, stakeholders in a local Main Street program will produce fundamental changes in a community's economic base.

**Organization** involves building a Main Street framework that is well represented by business and property owners, bankers, citizens, public officials, chambers of commerce, and other local economic development organizations. Everyone must work together to enhance a neighborhood business district. A strong organization provides the stability to build and sustain a long-term effort.

**Promotion** creates excitement in commercial districts. Street festivals, parades, retail events, and image development campaigns are some of the ways Main Street encourages customer traffic. Promotion involves marketing an enticing image to shoppers, investors, and visitors.

**Design** enhances the attractiveness of the business district, including the perception that it is a clean and safe place. Historic building rehabilitation, street and alley clean-up, colorful banners, landscaping, and lighting all improve the physical image of the neighborhood business district as a quality place to shop, work, walk, invest in, and live. Design improvements of the highest possible standards result in a reinvestment of public and private dollars to neighborhood business districts.

**Economic Restructuring** involves analyzing current market forces to develop long-term solutions. Sharpening the competitiveness of Main Street's traditional merchants, recruiting new businesses, and creatively converting unused space for new uses, are examples of economic restructuring activities.

## Eight Guiding Principles

These are the eight guiding principles of the Main Street Approach ®

1. **Comprehensive** A single project cannot revitalize a neighborhood business district. An ongoing series of initiatives is vital to build community support and create lasting progress.
2. **Incremental** Small projects make a big difference. They demonstrate that "things are happening" on Main Street and hone the skills and confidence the program's stakeholders will need to tackle more complex projects.
3. **Self-Help** The District can provide valuable direction and technical assistance, but only local leadership can breed long-term success by fostering and demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort.
4. **Public/Private Partnership** Every local Main Street program needs the support and expertise of both the public and private sectors. For an effective partnership, each must recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the other.
5. **Identifying and Capitalizing on Existing Assets** Unique offerings and local assets provide the solid foundation for a successful Main Street initiative.
6. **Quality** From storefront design to promotional campaigns to special events, quality must be instilled in the organization.
7. **Change** Changing community attitudes and habits are essential to bring about a commercial district renaissance. A carefully planned Main Street program will help shift public perceptions and practices to support and sustain the revitalization process.
8. **Action Oriented** Frequent visible changes in the look and activities of the commercial district will reinforce the perception of positive change. Small, but dramatic improvements early in the process will remind the community that the revitalization effort is underway.