

## Specific Plan versus Downtown Plan

### August 12, 2014

Issue	Specific Plan	Downtown Plan
Statutory Requirements	<p>State Planning and Zoning Law (Govt. Code Section 65450 <i>et seq.</i>) authorizes the adoption of specific plans, and establishes certain substantive and procedural requirements.</p> <p>A specific plan must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land use distribution, location, and open space for the plan area</li> <li>• Distribution and location of private and public transportation, sewer, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy and other facilities in the area and needed for the contemplated land uses</li> <li>• Standards and criteria for development</li> <li>• A program of implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out the Plan.</li> <li>• A statement of the relationship to the General Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>A Downtown Plan represents an exercise of the City's police powers, and would not have to include specific statutory elements. The Downtown Plan would be required to comply with all generally applicable Planning and Zoning Laws, such as those regarding zoning map and text amendments, and General Plan consistency.</p>
Relationship to Other Plans	<p>Allows for a comprehensive plan to address land use and zoning, urban design, circulation and parking, among other things. As a standalone document covering all aspects of the downtown area, it may make for easier administration and implementation.</p>	<p>After preparation of the Downtown Plan, existing design guidelines, parking master plan, streetscape plans, and zoning ordinances each would need to be updated and amended to implement the Downtown Plan.</p>
Visioning	<p>A visioning process to help define the goals of the planning effort can be integrated into a phased process. Doing so is a common</p>	<p>A visioning process to help define the goals of the planning effort can be integrated into the process.</p>

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	<p>first step to ascertain stakeholder input to assist in developing a downtown specific plan.</p>	
CEQA	<p>Adoption of a Specific Plan would be subject to CEQA. Although the level of CEQA review would be based on the magnitude of changes contemplated in the Specific Plan as compared to existing conditions, it is likely that an environmental impact report would be required.</p> <p>Many implementing actions likely could rely on the environmental analysis completed for the specific plan.</p>	<p>Adoption of a Downtown Plan would also be subject to CEQA, with the level of review determined based on the magnitude of changes contemplated. . With more discrete changes, the project might not trigger the need for an environment impact report, but instead might qualify for a mitigated negative declaration level of review.</p> <p>Implementing actions would likely be able to rely on the environmental analysis.</p>
Timing	<p>Preparation of a specific plan and completion of the necessary environmental review can take a significant period.</p>	<p>Visioning and preparation of a Downtown Plan with more narrow revisions to existing plans and programs, with environmental review, likely would not take as much time as preparing a specific plan</p>
Costs	<p>The cost of preparing a specific plan and related environmental review would exceed the currently budgeted amount of \$100,000. If the City desired, it could explore a cost recovery program as envisioned by Specific Plan statutes (Govt. Code Sec. 65456).</p> <p>It should be noted that preparation of an environmental impact report (if required) would account for a significant portion of the overall costs.</p>	<p>Visioning and preparation of a Downtown Plan with more narrow revisions to existing plans and programs, likely would be less expensive than preparation of a comprehensive specific plan.</p> <p>It should be noted that preparation of an environmental impact report (if required) would account for a significant portion of the overall costs.</p>
Other Considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Specific Plan allows for statements of broad policy, along with a specific set of specific and comprehensive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Downtown Plan would be a less comprehensive approach, but certain issues could be address</li> </ul>

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	<p>implementing regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Embarking on a specific plan process would not prevent the City from addressing discrete issues that might arise in the Downtown through zoning map or text changes or other interim measures.</li> </ul>	<p>in a shorter and less expensive manner.</p>

### Pros and Cons- Specific Plan and Downtown Plan

Specific Plan	
Pros	Cons
<p>Comprehensive planning approach that can cover a full range of issues (parking, land use, urban design; infrastructure),</p>	<p>The costs of compliance with the statutory requirements to specify “the proposed distribution, location, and extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located in the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan” may exceed the value of those parts of the specific plan to the City</p>
<p>Adoption of a single, integrated plan would obviate the need for multiple topic-specific planning documents, such as design guidelines and a parking master plans for the Downtown area</p>	<p>Revision of certain existing planning documents that apply to the Downtown Area would be needed to reflect the adoption of the Specific Plan. For plans covering areas beyond the Downtown area, the integration of the Specific Plan requirements may be cumbersome.</p>
<p>The flexibility inherent in a specific plan allows for inclusion larger policy issues such as economic goals and objectives, along with very specific development standards.</p>	<p>Assuming that an environmental impact report is required, the costs of this approach would likely exceed those associated with a more discrete Downtown Plan approach.</p>

<b>Downtown Plan</b>	
<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
A downtown plan, unlike a specific plan, is not a well defined planning document, and would not be as comprehensive an approach as would be a specific plan.	Adoption of a set of policies could require the need to update multiple topic-specific planning documents, such as design guidelines and a parking master plan for the Downtown area
If the scope is kept narrow, the costs could be below the costs of preparing a specific plan and related environmental documentation.	More difficult to explain the process and approach to planning as compared to a specific plan which is more common.