

7.0 Circulation & Parking

This chapter describes the circulation and parking improvements for the Downtown Burlingame Specific Plan area, including roadway and transit networks, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities. Downtown Burlingame is a thriving, pedestrian-oriented retail area, with people arriving downtown on foot, by bike, by car, and on buses and trains. Adequate circulation and parking are essential if Burlingame is to continue and expand as a successful retail center.

7.1 RECOMMENDED ROADWAY NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

The Downtown Specific Plan includes a series of roadway projects intended to either mitigate existing or anticipated traffic conditions, or otherwise satisfy urban design objectives for streetscapes, pedestrian and bicycle access and open space.

7.1.1 EXISTING ROADWAY NETWORK

Regional access to Downtown Burlingame is provided via Highway 101 freeway. The closest interchanges with the freeway are located at Peninsula Avenue (southern edge of the plan area) and at Broadway (north of the plan area). The Peninsula interchange provides access in the northbound direction only, while the Broadway interchange provides access for both northbound and southbound traffic. A system of major arterials accommodates the longer distance local trips and connects Burlingame with adjacent communities. These include El Camino Real (State Highway 82) and California Drive providing north-south access. Other major arterials include Peninsula Avenue and Oak Grove Avenue. These arterials carry the major volume of east-west trips and connect with State highways and freeways. The other elements of the street system are secondary arterials, such as Howard Avenue, that connect collector and local access streets to the major arterials. Collector streets feed traffic to the arterials and major centers of activity in Burlingame.



Based on existing travel patterns throughout the Proposed Project Area, the majority of project-traffic would occur along California Drive heading towards Burlingame Avenue and Howard Avenue from the north and south. Additional project-traffic would occur along Howard Avenue, Burlingame Avenue, and Peninsula Avenue, and Primrose Road.

Traffic bound for downtown on El Camino Real is expected to exit from El Camino Real at the first opportunity and utilize the east-west collector roadways. As such, traffic not bound for downtown will likely bypass and continue traveling along El Camino Real, while the majority of downtown-related traffic will likely enter via Park Road, Primrose Road, Bayswater Avenue, Howard Avenue, and Burlingame Avenue. In addition, on- and off-street parking facilities are primarily located along these local roadways, which would attract patrons to exit El Camino Real to access the parking.

Considering location and types of development projected in the plan, traffic generated by future downtown development is expected to primarily affect the following intersections:

- El Camino Real/Howard Avenue
- Burlingame Avenue/Park Road
- Primrose Road/Chapin Avenue
- Primrose Road/Bellevue Avenue
- Primrose Road/Douglas Avenue
- California Drive/Lorton Avenue
- El Camino Real/Peninsula Avenue/Park Road
- California Drive/Peninsula Avenue
- California Drive/Howard Avenue/Highland Avenue

Traffic mitigation measures, such as signalization and signal timing adjustments have been proposed in order to reduce potential impacts to these intersections. Traffic calming could also be implemented in surrounding neighborhoods if necessary to address cut-through traffic.

7.1.2 CALIFORNIA DRIVE/LORTON AVENUE INTERSECTION

The California Drive/Lorton intersection needs improvement, regardless of possible future development. The unconventional layout of the intersection is inefficient, and is confusing for both vehicles and pedestrians.

The Downtown Specific Plan includes two alternative reconfigurations for the California Drive/Lorton Avenue intersection. Both would be acceptable choices for improving vehicle and pedestrian circulation through the intersection, and both could accommodate traffic from anticipated future development as described in this specific plan.

Option 1: Signalized Intersection

Option 1 would refine the current configuration with a more straight-forward intersection design, and the addition of a traffic signal. With this improvement, the intersection will have an improved level of service and reduce vehicle delays significantly. The intersection could also be configured to create a small usable open space, as described in *Chapter 4: Streetscapes and Open Space*.

Option 2: Roundabout

City engineering staff has been actively studying the possibility of a roundabout design to mitigate existing and future traffic conditions. This would improve traffic safety and act as a traffic calming measure. In addition, the traffic circle at the center of the roundabout would have attractive landscaping and could have a prominent design element such as flowers or a monument, as described in *Chapter 4: Streetscapes & Open Space*. Traffic would enter the roundabout and circulate one-way around a center circular island, typically in a counterclockwise direction. On California Drive, travel lanes would be reduced from two lanes to one lane at the roundabout entrance in order to allow orderly traffic flow into the circle. Crosswalks would extend around the outer circle of the roundabout, with refuge islands at intermediate positions.

7.1.3 CIVIC CENTER CIRCLE

The intersection of Primrose Road, Bellevue Avenue and Douglas Avenue between the Library and City Hall currently is complex, inefficient, and confusing. The existing divided traffic islands could be replaced with a single traffic circle, with crosswalks connecting each corner of the streets leading to the circle. The circle could provide a small open space, as described in *Chapter 4: Streetscapes and Open Space*. This reconfiguration would improve the function of the intersection and provide an additional open space amenity.

7.1.4 HIGHLAND AVENUE

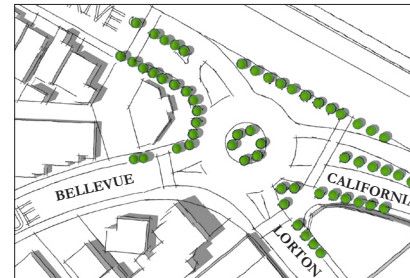
The last block of Highland Avenue between California Drive and Howard Avenue is a one-way street and primarily serves to provide access and parking to the businesses fronting the street, and also provides a short-cut for vehicles turning right from southbound California Drive onto Howard Avenue. Even with this short-cut function, however, there are minimal traffic volumes along this block during the peak hours.

Given the limited function of the street segment and its potential to complicate traffic patterns, there could be justification for narrowing or closing the street segment to improve the streetscape and increase the size of the adjoining open space. Depending on the mix of businesses alongside, closing the street and replacing it with open space frontage could either be an asset to the businesses or be detrimental. Uses such as restaurants may appreciate frontage on an open space, but retailers may value the proximity of parking and access more than open space. Since the majority of traffic would travel through on California Drive and would not turn onto Highland Avenue, the closure or narrowing of the roadway would not impact the traffic operations at the California Drive/Howard Avenue intersection.

Narrowing the segment and redesigning it to create a more unified composition with the adjoining open space could be a satisfactory option that would retain traffic circulation and parking, but be more oriented to the adjacent businesses rather than to traffic making a short-cut to Howard Avenue. The street could be redesigned with a “flexible zone” where the



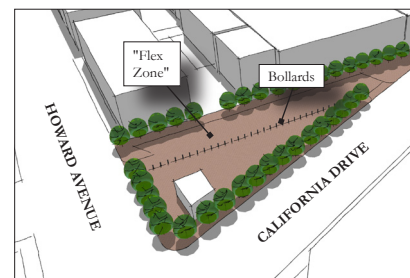
California Drive/Lorton Avenue
Option 1: Signalized Intersection



California Drive/Lorton Avenue
Option 2: Roundabout



Civic Center Circle



Highland Avenue Plaza



Currently California Drive has two traffic lanes in each direction, but due to the large number of turns in center lanes, the center lanes effectively do not function for through traffic.



Reconfigured California Drive with one travel lane in each direction, center median/turn lane, and bike lanes.

parking area and traffic lane would be shared by pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles. This concept would involve special paving and flush integrated curbs, a greater number of trees, street furniture, and bicycle parking. The intention would be to create a more seamless transition between the street area and the open space area.

7.1.5 CALIFORNIA DRIVE RECONFIGURATION

A concept that merits further study beyond the scope of the Downtown Specific Plan would be to reconfigure the California Drive traffic lanes to better serve traffic flow and accommodate bicycles. Currently California Drive has two traffic lanes in each direction, but due to the large number of turns in center lanes, the center lanes effectively do not function for through traffic. A reconfiguration could have one clear, through traffic lane in each direction, together with a center median/turn lane to accommodate turns. The traffic lanes would remain clear of obstructions so traffic flow would be steady (but calm), while turns would be accommodated separately from the through traffic. The redesign would provide enough room for generous bicycle lanes on each side, so California Drive would become a convenient and effective bicycle route through Burlingame and to Downtown. Existing on-street parking would also be accommodated.

This approach, sometimes referred to as a "road diet," has been demonstrated to be very effective elsewhere in the Bay Area on streets with comparable traffic volumes and characteristics to California Drive. Further study would need to consider impacts along the length of California Drive to ensure that traffic does not spill into adjacent neighborhoods. However, with the functional and aesthetic improvements, the expectation would be that California Drive would become a preferred access route into Downtown, as well as between Downtown and the Broadway commercial district.

7.1.6 EL CAMINO REAL/PENINSULA AVENUE/PARK ROAD SIGNALIZATION

Traffic analysis has projected that the El Camino Real/Peninsula Avenue/Park Road intersection could experience a potentially significant reduction in level of service depending on amount of downtown development in the future. However, even with a relatively high level of development in the future, these impacts could be reduced with changes to the traffic signal timing. By increasing the signal green time by ten seconds in the Peninsula Avenue westbound approach and Park Road southwest approach, and removing ten seconds of green signal time in the northbound and southbound El Camino Real approaches, the potential impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

7.1.7 CALIFORNIA DRIVE/HOWARD AVENUE SIGNALIZATION

Traffic analysis has projected that the California Drive/Howard Avenue intersection could experience a potentially significant reduction in level of service depending on amount of downtown development in the future. However, even with a relatively high level of development in the future, these impacts could be reduced with changes to the traffic signal timing. By increasing the signal green time by five seconds in the California Drive northbound and southbound directions and removing five seconds of green signal time in the Howard Avenue eastbound and westbound approaches, the potential impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels.

7.2 TRANSIT

The following discussion includes descriptions of each transit service provider that serves Downtown Burlingame. System-level ridership, performance measures, and planned transit improvements specific to transit stations and stops in Burlingame are further reviewed.

7.2.1 CALTRAIN

Caltrain provides local and commuter train service between San Francisco and San Jose, with weekday commute-hour service to Gilroy. The main objectives of the *Caltrain Short Range Transportation Plan* (2008) include addressing station needs, coordinating service with connecting transit operators throughout the Bay Area, improving station access for all passengers, and enhancing system performance. Over the long-term, Caltrain patronage has risen and is anticipated to con-



The Downtown Specific Plan encourages more intensive development in many of the blocks close to the Caltrain station, which should allow more people to take advantage of the train for some of their transportation needs.



The Burlingame Downtown Shuttle provides access to Downtown Burlingame from the City's bayfront hotel area east of the Bayshore Freeway.



Key SamTrans improvements relative to Downtown Burlingame include prioritization of service improvements in areas where high density and mixed-use developments are provided.

tinue to do so. Station improvements have been implemented at the current Burlingame station to allow trains traveling in opposing directions to serve the same station simultaneously without incurring delay. Appropriate fencing has also been installed at the station.

Compared to other Caltrain stations, passenger boardings and capacity utilization rates at the Burlingame Station are relatively moderate-to-low. However, the land use plan for the Downtown Specific Plan encourages more intensive development in many of the blocks within close proximity to the train station, which should allow more people to take advantage of the train for some of their transportation needs. The plan encourages more frequent stops at the Burlingame Avenue station to encourage ridership and capitalize on more intensive development downtown near the train station.

7.2.2 BURLINGAME DOWNTOWN SHUTTLE

This local service provides access to Downtown Burlingame from the City's bayfront hotel area east of the Bayshore Freeway. There is a scheduled stop downtown at the Burlingame Caltrain Station. If there is further development in the bayfront area in the future, there may be potential to expand the patronage and extent of service of the shuttle. This could be a benefit to downtown businesses with additional customers, as well as downtown residents who could use the shuttle to access bayfront recreational facilities

7.2.3 SAMTRANS

Samtrans provides bus service throughout San Mateo County as well as to San Francisco and Palo Alto. There are several major transit routes which have stops in the Downtown area, on El Camino Real and California Drive, with connections to Caltrain and to the Millbrae BART station. Based on SamTrans Short Range Transportation Plan (SRTP), there are several planned improvements to enhance system performance, increase ridership, and improve accessibility. Key improvements relative to Downtown Burlingame include prioritization of service improvements in areas where high density and mixed-use developments are provided.

In addition, the SRTP states that transit service along El Camino Real experiences significant demand and SamTrans has considered adding an express bus service along the corridor. However, the analysis concluded express service to be infeasible until land use density increases with additional housing and employment centers along El Camino Real. The land use plan for the Downtown Specific Plan encourages more intensive development in many of the blocks close to El Camino Real, which should help increase transit demand along the corridor.

In order to increase intercity transit use, and to accommodate the growing aging population, Samtrans plans to increase the use of community-based shuttles throughout the transit network.

7.2.4 CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAIL

The California High-Speed Rail (CHSR) is a rail line in the planning stages that will provide a high-speed link between San Francisco and Los Angeles, as well as a number of other key destinations. Construction for this project is anticipated to begin in 2012. Though the CHSR will not stop in Burlingame, the proposed corridor for the project runs north-south through the city along the existing Caltrain right-of-way.

Given that the CHSR alignment is proposed to pass through Burlingame and its downtown, there is concern over the potential for the rail line to create a physical barrier through the city if it involves bridging, elevated tracks, or the use of retaining walls. Like other peninsula cities, Burlingame has indicated a preference for having the rail line in an underground tunnel rather than at surface or above grade. Having the line underground would be more compatible with the continued economic vitality and quality of life of Burlingame and its downtown. It would also be more compatible with the preservation of valuable historic resources such as the eucalyptus grove and the Burlingame Avenue and Broadway train stations. If all rail lines are accommodated underground along the length of the peninsula alignment, it will enable dozens of surface crossings to be relieved of train

conflicts, thereby easing access at many scales and reducing congestion throughout the peninsula.

While the CHSR is beyond the scope of the Downtown Specific Plan, the project will have an important impact on Downtown Burlingame. It is essential that the CHSR planning process thoroughly investigate and mitigate impacts on Caltrain service, utilities, and effects that may concern schools, residents, and businesses.



Increasing pedestrian convenience and safety is an objective in Downtown Burlingame



Bicycles can be a viable choice for getting to and around downtown.

7.3 PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

Most of Downtown Burlingame is highly pedestrian-oriented and has a high amount of pedestrian traffic. Pedestrian activity is primarily the result of the amount of retail, office, and restaurant land uses in the heart of Downtown, as well as the proximity to surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Increasing pedestrian convenience and safety is an objective in Downtown Burlingame, and several actions are proposed to improve pedestrian conditions. These include implementing traffic-calming measures (mid-block crossings, traffic circles, paving variations), increasing sidewalk “linkages” to improve connectivity to and within downtown, and widening sidewalks. These measures are more thoroughly described in *Chapter 4: Streetscapes and Open Spaces*. Overall, these measures would improve pedestrian safety and encourage residents and visitors to patronize Downtown Burlingame.

7.4 BICYCLES

An objective of the Downtown Specific Plan is for bicycles to be a viable choice for getting to downtown. Safety, ease of access, and parking must all be carefully considered so that people are able to consider bicycling as an appealing and realistic means of transportation. If people are able to swap automobile trips for bicycle trips, not only would there be environmental advantages in terms of reduced greenhouse emissions, but there would be less of a need for the City to provide additional, costly parking facilities for autos over the long-term.

7.4.1 BICYCLE ROUTES

Bicycle routes in Downtown Burlingame include:

- **Primrose Road** – from Oak Grove Avenue (north) to Howard Avenue (south).
- **Highland Avenue** – from Howard Avenue (north) to Peninsula Avenue (south) and continues south of Peninsula Avenue.
- **California Drive** – from Burlingame City Limits (north) to

Howard Avenue (south). Within Downtown, this route intersects with Burlingame Avenue.

- **Howard Avenue** – from Humboldt Road (east) to Occidental Avenue (west). Within Downtown, this route intersects with El Camino Real, Primrose Road, Park Road, Lorton Avenue, and Highland Avenue. Howard Avenue also includes a bicycle lane.

If California Drive is reconfigured as described in Section 7.1.5, it offers the potential to be a significant bicycle route into Downtown from neighborhoods to the north, south, and east. Cyclists can then access Howard Avenue to reach the side streets, and the side streets to reach the center of the downtown district. As streetscape improvements are implemented along Howard Avenue and the side streets, accommodations for bicycles should be a key design consideration. Lanes should provide adequate clearances, and intersections should be designed to minimize automobile and bicycle conflicts. Side streets can be designed and clearly signed as "sharrows" where it is clear that the roadway are to be shared by bicycles and automobiles, and to alert motorists of the presence of bicycles.

7.4.2 BICYCLE STRATEGIES AND GUIDELINES

The desirability and effectiveness of bicycles to serve Downtown can be improved with the following enhancements:

7.4.2.1 Short-Term Parking: Public Bike Racks

Individual bike racks are part of a two-tier bicycle parking strategy for Downtown. Generally, bike racks are useful for short-term parking (from a few minutes to a few hours), and should be provided throughout the redesigned streetscapes to be convenient to businesses and attractions. Figure 7-1 shows existing locations of bike racks throughout Downtown.

7.4.2.2 Long-Term Parking: Central Bike Parking Facility

A centrally-located, convenient, and highly visible facility should be established for longer visits downtown (from a few hours to a full day or work shift). As opposed to sidewalk bike racks, which are provided



"Sharrow" markings can alert motorists to the presence of bicycles where there is not sufficient space for a dedicated bike lane.



Bike racks interspersed along sidewalks throughout downtown are useful for convenient, short-term parking.

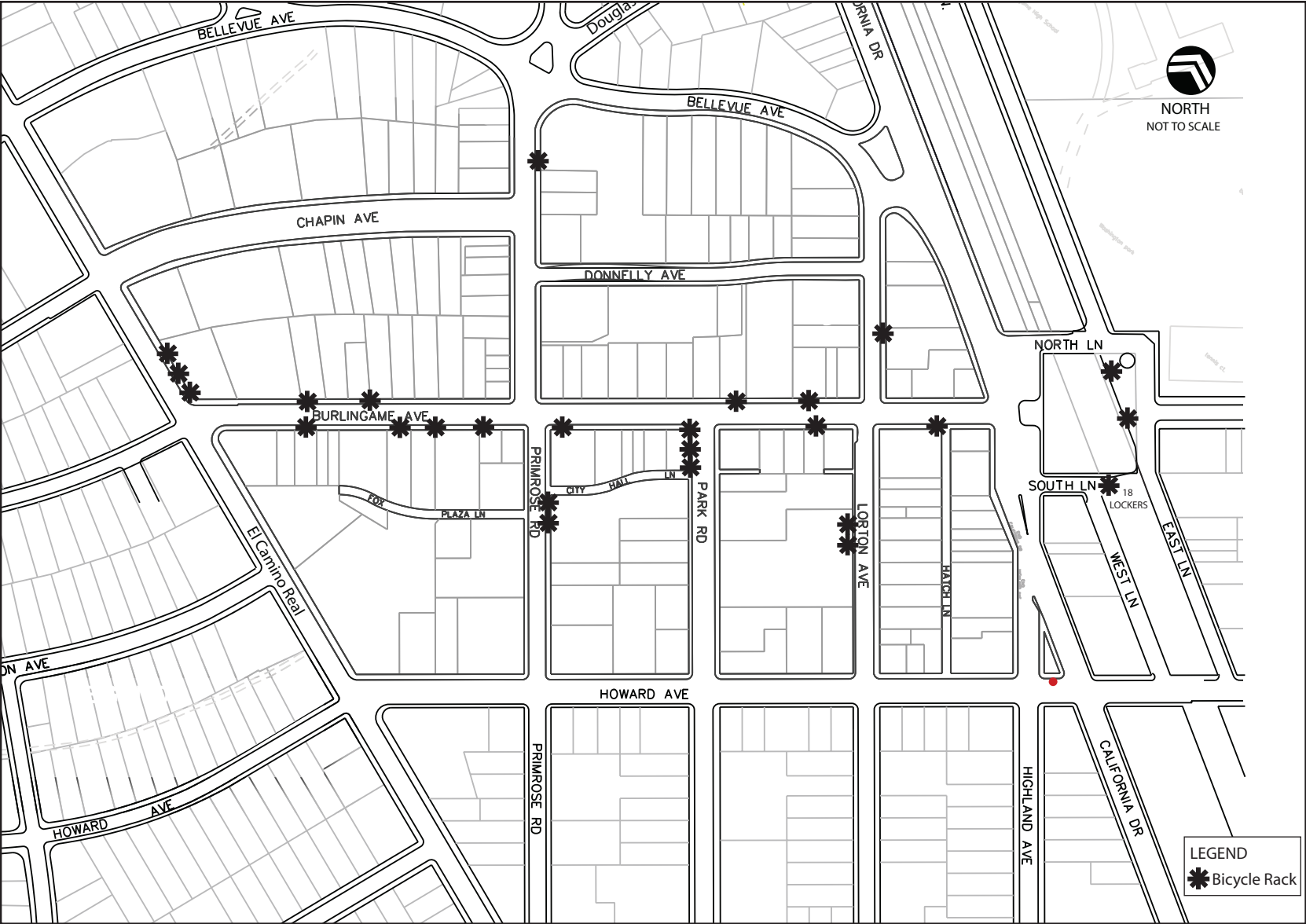


FIGURE 7-1: Existing Bicycle Rack Locations

for short-term convenience, the central facility would appeal to those wanting to store their bicycles for a longer period of time. The concept would be that someone cycling to Downtown could proceed directly to the central parking facility with knowledge that they would be able to find convenient and secure longer term parking. Ideally, the parking facility would offer some protection from weather, and could offer a choice of racks and electronic lockers. The facility should be located in a visible, central location so that it serves as a social hub and offers a measure of security. Initially the facility could be established in one of the central public parking lots, and over time could grow and be located in the Lot E signature open space, or in a nearby parking lot or structure.

7.4.2.3 Bicycle Accommodations in New Developments

New development should provide safe, secure facilities for bicycles. This can be accomplished in a number of ways, depending on the type of development. Where possible, secured, indoor parking space (i.e. lockable, caged space) for bikes should be provided in all new residential and commercial buildings. New projects should include bike stalls to allow users the opportunity to securely store their bicycles. These can include racks or hooks on walls in front of parking spaces in residential buildings, and designated and secure bicycle storage areas in commercial buildings.

Modest locker facilities in new, larger Commercial/Mixed Use projects should also be provided. Lockers should be sufficient to store helmets and other necessary equipment.



A centrally-located bicycle parking facility would be intended for protected long-term parking and also serve as a social hub.



FIGURE 7-2: Off-Street Parking Facilities

7.5 PARKING

This section outlines the parking supply plan for the Downtown Burlingame municipal facilities. It is expected that the parking supply for future development will be met by a combination of on-site parking and an enhancement of the existing public parking facilities in the Downtown area. Parking requirements for development are outlined in *Chapter 3: Land Use*. Generally, retail, restaurant and personal service uses on the ground floor are exempt from parking requirements within the Downtown Parking Sector. The boundaries of the parking sector are shown in Figure 3.3. For commercial uses that are required to provide parking (upper floors within the Parking Sector, and all floors outside the Parking Sector) requirements can either be met on-site or through payment of an in-lieu fee. In-lieu fees will be used to build structured parking at existing public parking lots in the Downtown areas.

7.5.1 SHARED PARKING CONCEPT

The vision for Downtown Burlingame is a mix of uses. A mix of uses, as opposed to a predominance of a single use, has positive implications on parking demand. For example, retail land uses tend to experience peak hour parking demand between 3:00 PM and 4:00 PM during the weekday and between 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM during the weekend. Office land uses experience 100 percent parking occupancy between 10:00 AM and 11:00 AM during the weekday, but very little demand on weekends. Hotel uses experience peak parking demand between 5:00 AM and 6:00 AM during the weekday and weekend. Residential uses experience peak hour parking demand between 5:00 AM and 6:00 AM during the weekday and weekend.

As a result of the different times of peak parking demand by these complementary uses, demand is overlapping rather than additive. Thus less parking is required. The ability for different uses to share the common parking areas at different times of day reduces the overall parking demand. However, as Downtown grows, there will be near-term and longer-term parking needs to accommodate.

The Downtown Specific Plan recognizes the opportunities for shared parking. For projects with off-street parking included on site, different uses with different peak demands can utilize the same parking spaces at different times of day, allowing fewer parking spaces than if each use were fully parked. The parking standards outlined in *Chapter 3: Land Use* include provisions to reduce on-site parking when the mix of uses is complementary and can share parking spaces.

The municipal lots also benefit from the shared nature of parking, on a larger scale. The ratios for off-site parking (whether exempt or provided through an in-lieu arrangement) account for the different peak demands for different uses, as well as the ability for patrons to visit more than one use without re-parking. Over the long term, the overlapping demands of different uses and the ability to share the same spaces in the municipal facilities will require fewer new public parking facilities than if each use had its own designated parking.

7.5.2 MAKE BETTER USE OF EXISTING PARKING FACILITIES

Downtown Burlingame consists of 20 City-owned off-street parking facilities as well as metered on-street parking located on most local roadways (as shown in Figure 7-2). While parking can be tight in some areas of Downtown (particularly near active shopping and dining areas), as a whole there is available parking supply that can be better utilized to serve near-term needs.

In order to make best use of existing facilities to serve current and near-term demand, strategies can include adjusting parking pricing and time restrictions, implementing valet/attended parking operations, modifying parking enforcement strategies, implementing parking permits for residents/employees, introducing a carshare arrangement, and improving wayfinding and signage for parking facilities. Many of these measures have been implemented in the past with success, and could continue to be adjusted for further optimization of existing resources.

7.5.3 EXPAND PARKING FACILITIES

As Downtown grows, there may be upper limits to how much optimization can be gained from the existing parking facilities. In order to accommodate some of the demand from new development (since some will be met on-site), as well as to be able to provide amenities such as the signature open space proposed for Lot E, one or more parking structures may be necessary.

Several studies have been completed to determine which city-owned parking lots could most efficiently accommodate parking structures, and there are several options available. A couple of choices are discussed below, although the final decisions should be made when funding is available based on development patterns and projections at that time.

Lot J

Because it is one of the larger lots, Lot J has been recommended for structured parking by the city's parking consultants. This location makes sense because it is centrally located, and because a structure on Lot J could most easily provide the parking that will be needed to compensate for the loss of Lot E, when it is converted to community open space. In fact, constructing a parking structure on Lot J and creating a new open space on Lot E should be thought of as one project with two phases, the first being the construction of the parking structure. While Lot J is closed during construction, downtown Burlingame would lose 69 parking spaces. However, there is sufficient capacity in Lots L, W and C to temporarily make up for this loss.

Lots A and A-3

Another potential site for a parking structure is to combine Lots A and A-3 along Donnelly Avenue, and add an additional story on to the combined structure. At least half of Lot A should be usable during construction, and the other spaces lost during construction can be accommodated through existing capacity in Lots C, O, V, M, J, and L.

7.5.4 HOWARD AVENUE FOCUS AREA

The Downtown Specific Plan provides incentives to encourage new mixed use development along the Howard Avenue. Similar to the parking requirements that have been in place along Burlingame Avenue, the Specific Plan would exempt ground floor retail, personal service and restaurant uses on Howard Avenue from on-site parking requirements, and would allow parking for upper floor commercial uses to be provided off-site through an in-lieu fee arrangement.

Howard Avenue has on-street parking along its length, and there are four off-street parking facilities in the vicinity. Lots F and N have traditionally experienced high parking demand during the weekday peak, whereas Lots G and W have experienced more moderate demand during the weekday peak and could absorb the additional parking demand associated with new development. During the weekend peak, all four lots have traditionally been underutilized, so the additional parking demand associated with new development could be accommodated. If all residential parking is provided on-site, anticipated parking demand along Howard Avenue can be fully accommodated within existing parking lots.

7.5.5 ONGOING MONITORING AND ADJUSTMENTS

As development occurs in the downtown area, parking and circulation should be regularly monitored so that adjustments can be made to city regulations and/or facilities as necessary.