

# LAND USE AND COMMUNITY CHARACTER

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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Small town character is a point of pride in Dixon. The community is ringed by agricultural and open space lands that are integral to its sense of place, and residents also value the charming “Main Street” character of Downtown Dixon, safe neighborhoods with desirable housing, and gathering places that bring families and neighbors together. These are the defining features of Dixon’s local character.

The General Plan seeks to preserve and enhance the small town character that residents value, while also providing for new growth that enhances quality of life. This includes new jobs in a variety of industry sectors that provide

employment for local residents, as well as a range of housing types that will be affordable to people of all ages so that children can grow up in Dixon and remain in the community to raise a family and grow older. Preserving and enhancing community character also involves a variety of initiatives addressed in Chapter 4, Economic Development, Chapter 5, Mobility, and Chapter 6, Public Facilities and Services. Where policies and actions in other chapters in the plan have co-benefits that will help achieve the goals of this chapter, connections with those chapters are highlighted and cross-referenced.

### 3.2 EXISTING LAND USE

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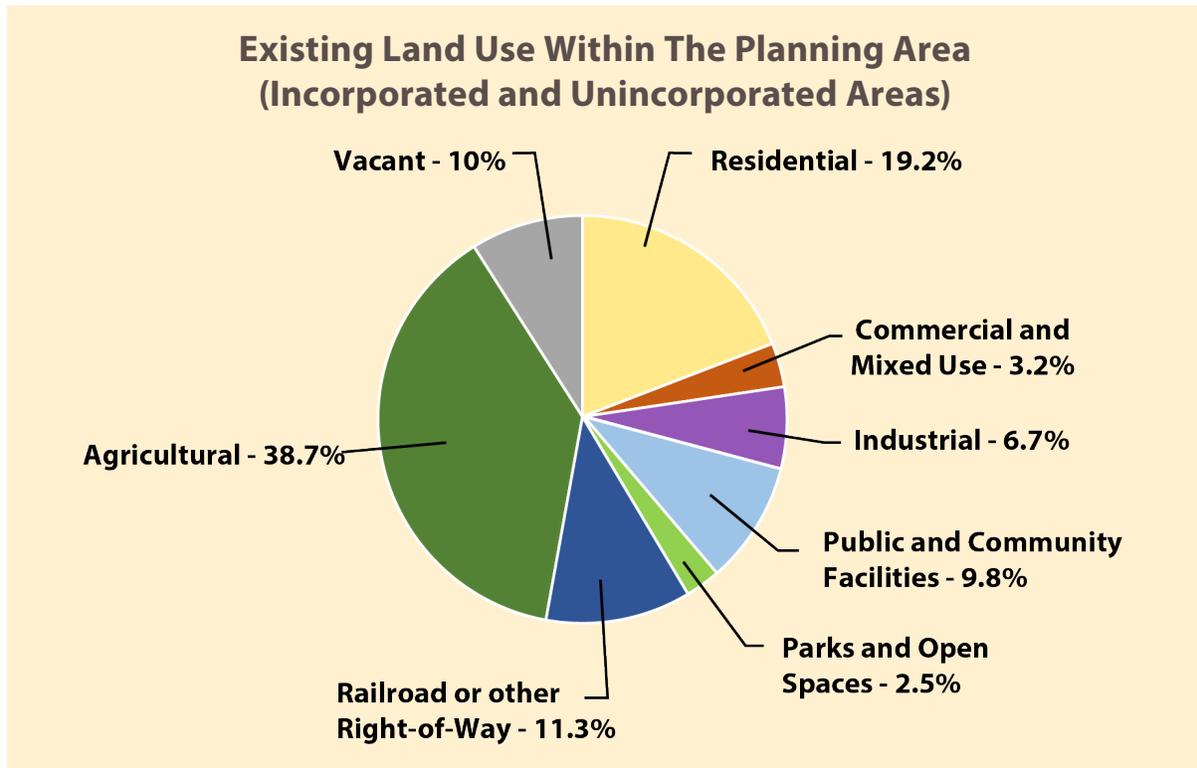
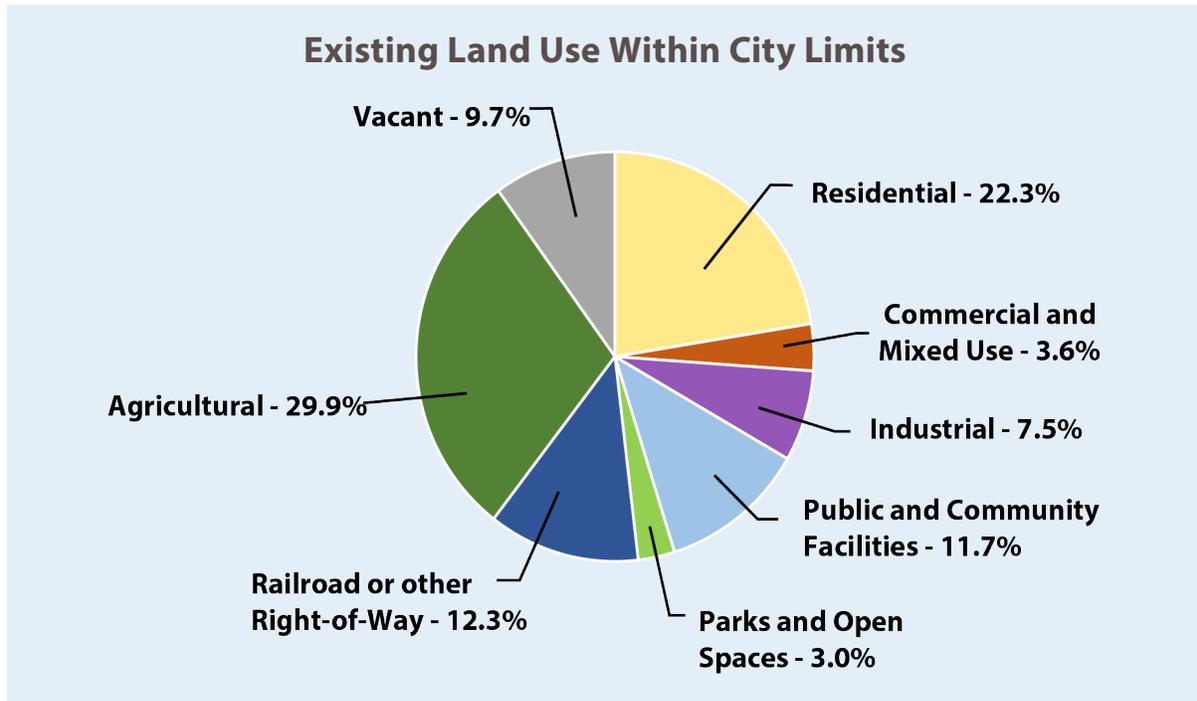
The structure of the city is defined by the existing commercial districts, neighborhoods, industrial areas, and public uses and the transportation infrastructure that links them. As shown in Figure LCC-1, existing development is concentrated in the central part of the community, with hubs of commercial businesses downtown and adjacent to the freeway interchanges. Industrial uses are concentrated on the east side of town, north of the downtown area, and there are large tracts of undeveloped land at the northern edges of Dixon within the city limits. Based on data from the Solano County Assessor, nearly 40 percent of the land in Dixon is undeveloped. This includes vacant land and agricultural land which has been designated for urban uses through prior specific plans for the Northeast Quadrant and Southwest Dixon. Residential uses, including single and multi-family homes occupy about 22 percent of land within the city, while public uses account for 12 percent,

industrial uses 7.5 percent and commercial uses 3.6 percent. This structure presents an opportunity for significant new development to provide new jobs and housing opportunities within the City limit while preserving the green belt of agricultural and open space lands around Dixon.

Dixon is located within the airport influence area of Travis Air Force Base (AFB), approximately 11 miles to the southwest of the city. To protect public safety and ensure the compatibility of new development with airport operations, the Travis AFB Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan establishes certain requirements for new development within the influence area. The majority of the city is located within Zone E, where review of projects proposing structures over 200 feet in height above ground level, wind turbines, commercial-scale solar facilities, or meteorological towers is required by the Solano County Airport Land Use

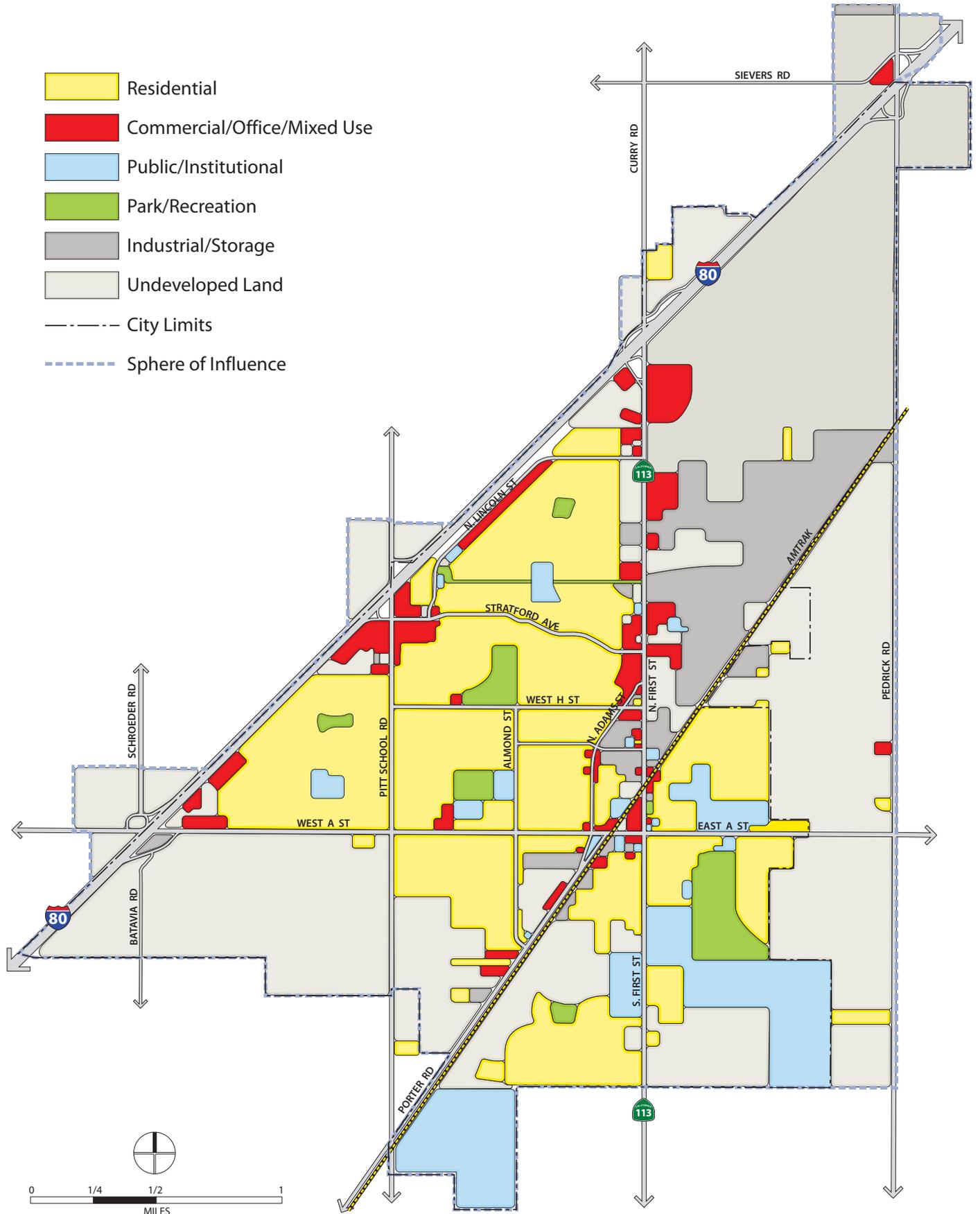
Commission (ALUC). The non-contiguous portion of the city where the wastewater treatment facility is located is within Zone C, where additional requirements apply in the event that new development is

proposed. The Dixon General Plan requires a consistency determination by ALUC, and the City will refer major land use actions to ALUC for review to enhance their compatibility with airport activity.



Source: City of Dixon, 2014; Solano County, 2014; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020.

**Figure LCC-1: City Structure**



### 3.3 HISTORICAL GROWTH PATTERN

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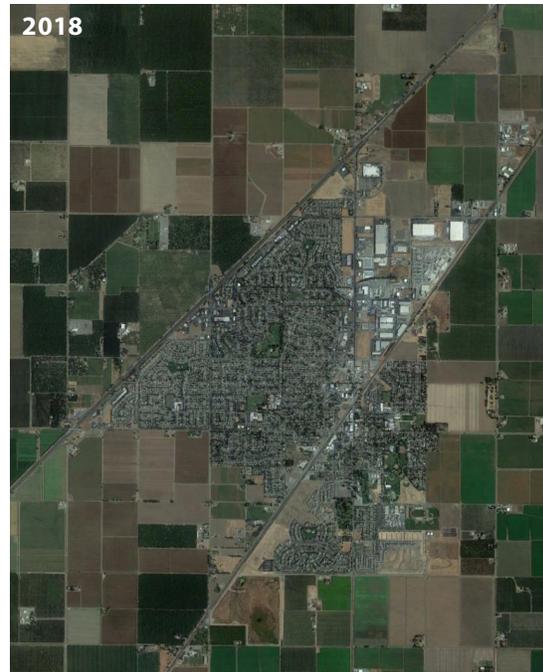
Ever since its 1871 move from Silveyville to the current location along the train tracks, Dixon has grown compactly. Dixon's origins are in farming and trade, and its growth has been tied to the regional transportation network throughout its history. City development began with the small town centered around the railroad station, and grew gradually out from the center. By the 1990s, the City of Dixon had grown towards I-80, now the main regional connection. The City remains anchored by the railroad tracks and I-80 today, with the bulk of the city between the two regional connectors. There have been periods of highly expansive growth and less growth within the city's history, but from a population of 1,200 in 1877, the City's population has grown an average of about two percent per year to a 2018 population of about 19,500 people.

Dixon voters have repeatedly shown that a strong preference for keeping Dixon a small town community surrounded

by agricultural and open space lands. In 1986, Dixon adopted Measure B, which limits residential growth to three percent per year. Under Measure B, the number of new housing units allowed is calculated in relation to the number of the City's total housing units the prior year, and residential construction is mandated as an approximate mix of 80 percent single family housing units (including single family attached duplex units) and about 20 percent multifamily dwelling units. Additionally, Solano County Measure A, adopted in 1984, requires almost all new growth in Solano County to occur within cities, and another vote on Measure T in 2008 extended the policy through 2028. The measures cemented Solano County's cornerstone policies of city-centered growth and farmland protection, and imposed strict limitations on the County Board of Supervisors' ability to allow new residential, commercial, or industrial development in agricultural and open-space areas.



Source: Google Earth.



Source: Google Earth.

The past few decades have also seen the growth of protected greenbelts as an agricultural conservation and growth-limiting strategy. Dixon’s greenbelts to the northeast and south west, the Davis-Dixon Greenbelt and the Vacaville-Dixon Greenbelt, encompass over 1,400 acres of lands that must be used for agricultural production in perpetuity. Dixon residents have recognized the importance of preserving surrounding fields and orchards to retain the City’s character and charm, as well as to capitalize on the significant environmental benefits of green spaces. (For more information on agricultural preservation and greenbelts, see Chapter 2: Natural Environment.)

In 1995, the City of Dixon adopted a Specific Plan for the Northeast Quadrant (see Figure LCC-2: Focus Areas for area boundaries). The specific plan called for a mix of non-residential land uses, including highway commercial, community commercial, planned light industrial, and professional and administrative office

uses. The specific plan sought to provide a variety of employment site opportunities and to provide a retail, and service center for the residents of Dixon, the employees in the area and the travelers on I-80, incorporating landscape frontage treatments, agricultural buffers, wetland mitigation areas, pedestrian ways and storm detention and drainage areas. The plan area, a prominent gateway to the City, was planned to establish an image of quality and coordinated planning through land use, landscaping and building design. An initial phase of construction in this area began in 2019-2020.

In 2005, another specific plan was completed for the Southwest Quadrant, designed for a mix of predominantly residential uses, plus highway-oriented community and highway commercial and employment center uses, parks, infrastructure, and a new fire station. Planning for new development and new construction for this area began in 2019-2020, as well.





### 3.4 GROWTH MANAGEMENT

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New construction that is contiguous to existing neighborhoods and avoids “leap frog” development - development types that leave patches of vacant lands between urbanized areas – helps to preserve agricultural lands and avoid the fragmentation that undermines agricultural profitability. Resource-efficient growth is a logical extension of several key community priorities: preserving farmland and protecting Dixon’s small town character.

Contiguous development is also much more efficient in terms of infrastructure delivery: a sewer lateral that extends into a new development is twice as expensive to build if it has to be twice as long to reach the new homes. Water and sewer pipes, electrical lines, and even ambulance service and trash pick-up are much more efficient to deliver in a more compact city, so City dollars can go further. New neighborhoods that are far from existing shops, services, parks, and schools also make it harder for residents to walk or bike for daily errands, leading to more people driving further more often, increasing vehicle emissions. Making sure that new development makes efficient use of land and resources, and that developers of new areas provide sufficient funding for the infrastructure and public services necessary, will help to keep Dixon’s budget available for other necessary spending. Tools such as fiscal impact analyses, which evaluate public facility needs and costs, and Community Facility Districts, which can help the City finance and maintain public facilities, can help to plan for and fund important new City projects.

This General Plan also requires annexation of new areas to be a gradual process, approved only after the City accepts an area-wide plan that accounts for land use, efficient circulation, housing, infrastructure, and public facilities and services (exceptions to this policy include land that is already developed, areas of less than five acres, or housing developments for very-low and low-income households). And requiring that areas be annexed into Dixon or planned for future annexation before the City agrees to provide any services to unincorporated areas, like water, sewer, or trash pick-up, ensures good use of City resources.

Going forward, this General Plan calls for providing public services and facilities to be built as needed, not outpacing development, and for maintaining the City’s historic growth rate, ensured by Measure B’s three percent per year cap, to keep Dixon thriving while maintaining its small-town character. The housing balance of around 80 percent single-family to 20 percent multi-family housing provides a range of housing options, with housing types available for first-time homebuyers or elderly residents who want to downsize, for people of all income levels, and for single people and for large families, allowing people to live in Dixon their whole lives.

**GOAL LCC-1:** Focus future development so that it is contiguous to existing developed areas and supports efficient delivery of public services and infrastructure.

## **POLICIES**

- LCC-1.1** Recognize and maintain Dixon as a community surrounded by productive agricultural land and greenbelts.
- LCC-1.2** Maintain designated urban-agricultural buffers within City jurisdiction to minimize conflicts with adjoining agricultural uses.
- LCC-1.3** Promote a land and resource efficient development pattern and limit “leap frog” development in order to support efficient delivery of public services and infrastructure, conserve agricultural and open space lands, reduce vehicle trips, and improve air quality.
- LCC-1.4** Expand employment and other tax revenue generating opportunities locally and provide sufficient lands for commercial, industrial, residential and public uses while ensuring that a high quality of life is maintained in Dixon.
- LCC-1.5** Realize a steady, controlled rate of residential growth and a balanced mix of housing opportunities throughout Dixon that meets the needs of a range of income levels, ages and household sizes.
- LCC-1.6** Provide for the extension of public services in a logical and functional manner to support employment and housing growth.
- LCC-1.7** Ensure that private development provides sufficient funding for infrastructure and public services to support the development.
- LCC-1.8** Plan comprehensively for the annexation of any new areas and approve annexation only after City approval of an appropriate area-wide plan (e.g., master plan, specific plan) that addresses land use, circulation, housing, infrastructure, and public facilities and services. Exceptions to this requirement for area-wide plans include annexations of:
- Existing developed areas;
  - Areas of less than five acres; and
  - Housing developments for very-low and low-income households.





**LCC-1.9** Prior to the provision of City services to unincorporated areas, require those unincorporated properties to be annexed into the City, or require a conditional service agreement to be executed agreeing to annex when deemed appropriate by the City.

**LCC-1.10** Ensure that new development within Zones C and E of the Travis AFB Airport Influence Area is consistent with the applicable land use compatibility criteria defined in the most current Travis AFB Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. Continue to refer major land use actions for ALUC review.

### **ACTIONS**

**LCC-1.A** Maintain a greenbelt of open space and/or farmland around the city through the Vacaville-Dixon Greenbelt Authority and other agreements with the City of Davis and the University of California at Davis.

**LCC-1.B** Coordinate with Solano County to ensure that land use designations and development standards in unincorporated portions of the Planning Area are consistent with those set forth in the Dixon General Plan.

**LCC-1.C** Regularly update the City's Municipal Services Review to ensure that development does not outpace the provision of public facilities in the Planning Area.

**LCC-1.D** Annually update the five-year capital improvement program to outline the capital projects needed to meet the goals of the General Plan.

**LCC-1.E** Require fiscal impact analyses, as appropriate, for development proposals in order to evaluate public facility needs and costs, and the revenue likely to be generated by that development.

**LCC-1.F** Continue to use Community Facility Districts and other financing tools to fund and maintain public facility improvements.

**LCC-1.G** Revise the existing Dixon Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance and all other applicable ordinances to achieve consistency with the Dixon General Plan, as adopted.

**LCC-1.H** Map all planning actions, such as rezonings and variances, on a large display map, keyed to the year action was taken. Use this map to pinpoint areas which require special studies and possible amendment on the General Plan map.

### 3.5 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

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As Dixon grows, it can maintain the distinct structure of the community with safe residential areas, neighborhood centers, and thriving commercial corridors and gateways. As shown in Figure LCC-2: Focus Areas, this General Plan focuses on four key growth areas: downtown, the SR-113/1st Street corridor, the Northeast Quadrant, and the Southwest Quadrant. Outside of these focus areas, the City of Dixon is envisioned to stay very much the same, with existing neighborhoods protected and reinforced.

Downtown is envisioned to continue its traditional role as the heart of Dixon, with actions to revitalize and enhance the area. Existing vacant and underutilized land presents opportunities to fill in existing vacant land to provide new uses and amenities for downtown and create a more vibrant center that can better support current and future needs, local businesses, and a future passenger rail station. The Downtown Mixed Use land use designation allows for a wide range of residential and non-residential uses, intended to promote Downtown Dixon as an attractive destination for residents and visitors to the community. Theaters, live music, art galleries, bookshops, cafes and restaurants with open areas for dining and entertainment are envisioned here, as are specialty retail, grocery stores, and other community-oriented uses – all reinforcing downtown’s existing strengths and local businesses. The Downtown Mixed Use land use designation is intermixed with existing civic uses downtown, including the library and local agency offices. Downtown Dixon is and will continue to be an inviting hub of the community where people choose to live, shop, dine, do business, and have fun.

Along the SR-113 corridor, the Corridor Mixed Use land use designation is intended to foster a mix of retail, commercial, and residential uses. Large format retail, shopping centers, offices, and hotels to serve Dixon and the wider region, supported by new infill housing, are envisioned as a vibrant land use mix to fill in vacant gaps in the corridor and provide an identity as people enter Dixon.

The Northeast Quadrant is envisioned to grow as an important new mixed use employment area and gateway to Dixon. With a mix of Regional Commercial, Industrial, and Campus Mixed Use land use designations, the area is intended to foster new mixed-use employment districts with a range of job-generating and other tax revenue generating uses, housing, and easy access to the regional transportation network. The Campus Mixed Use designation would promote clusters of related light industrial, manufacturing, office, research & development, retail, service, and residential uses. Areas abutting I-80, designated as Regional Commercial, would allow for motels; food establishments; gas stations; and large-format chain retail establishments. And the Industrial areas, which allow for large and small scale industrial, manufacturing, distributing and heavy commercial uses such as food processing, fabricating, motor vehicle service and repair, truck yards and terminals, warehousing and storage uses, wholesale uses, construction supplies, building material facilities, offices, and other related uses, would provide space for these critical uses to grow within Dixon.

In the Southwest, growth is envisioned as primarily residential. Low and medium density residential land use designations cover most of the focus area, edged by Corridor Mixed Use and Campus Mixed Use adjacent to I-80. These non-residential areas are envisioned as important regional gateways into Dixon, with jobs, services and other revenue generating uses that can also serve surrounding neighbors.

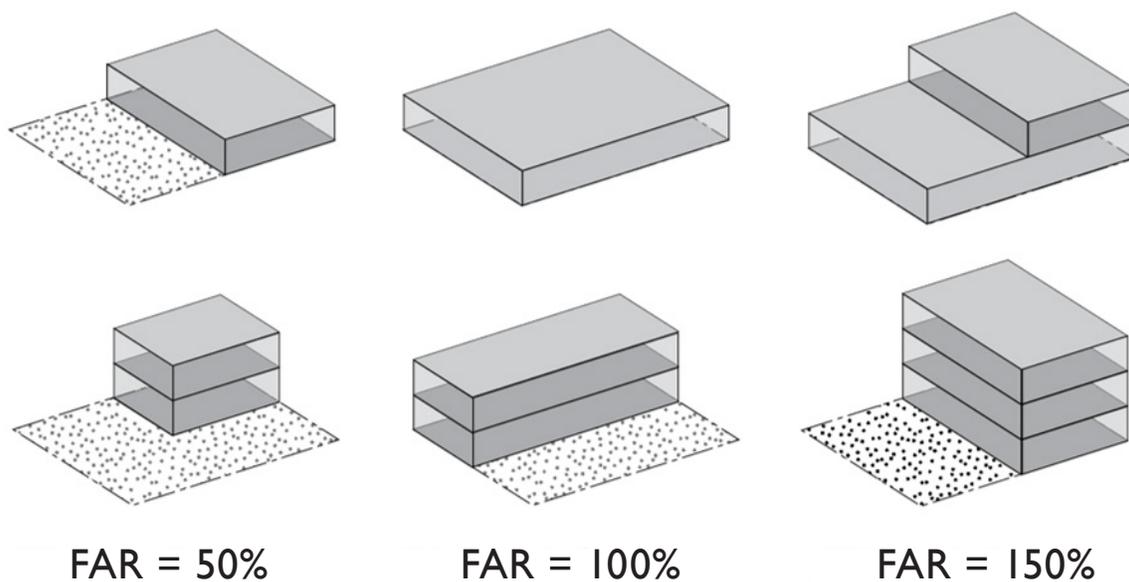
**LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

The General Plan Land Use Designations map (Figure LCC-4) illustrates the long-term vision for development and conservation in the planning area with land use designations that describe the character envisioned for each neighborhood and district. Each designation includes standards for density or intensity of use. Residential densities are expressed in terms of dwelling units per acre, with the number of persons per acre based on a 2019 average

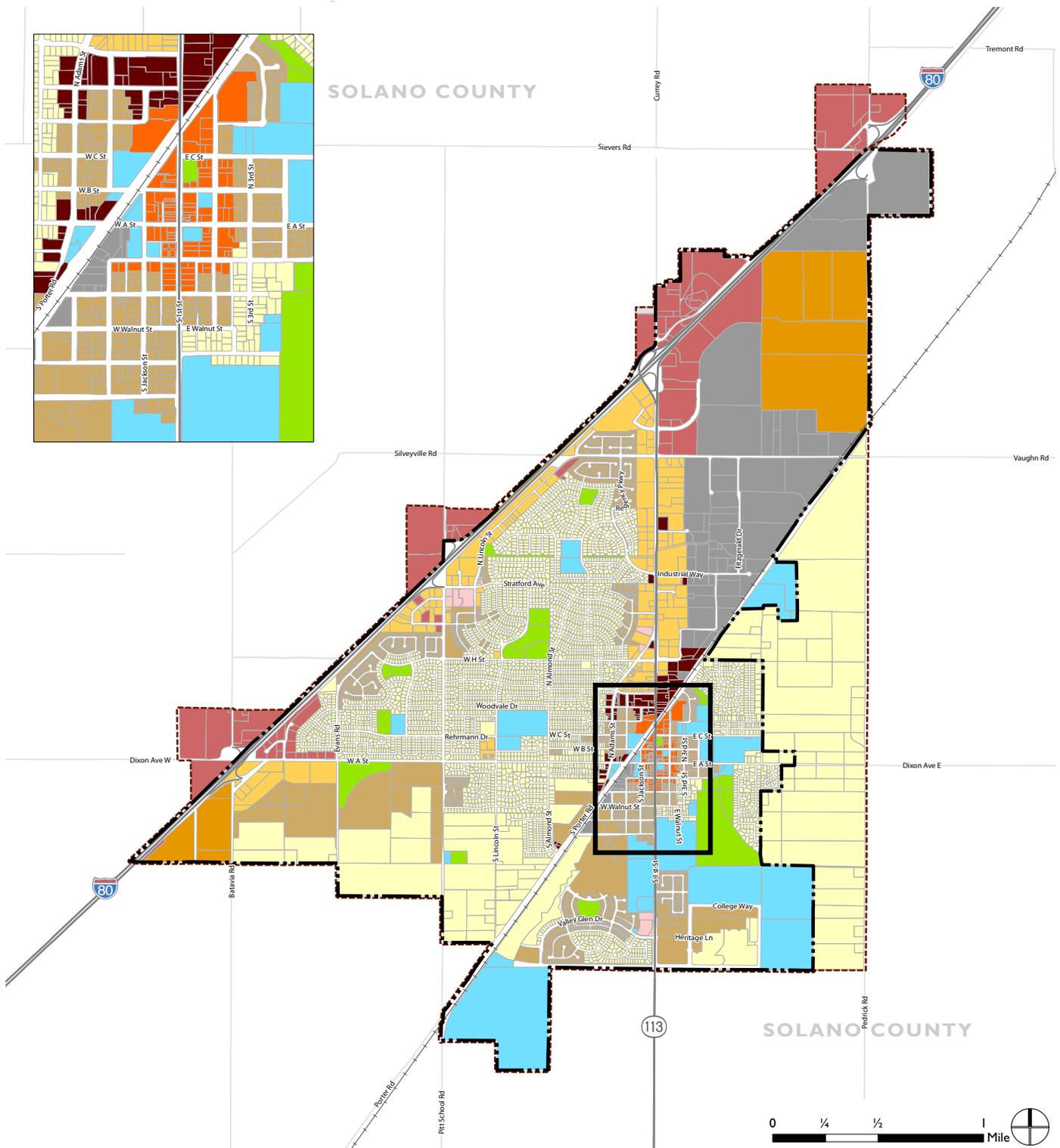
household size of 3.2 people. Standards for population density are provided as a guideline for planning and are not intended to establish an absolute limit.

Building intensities for non-residential uses are expressed in terms of floor area ratio (FAR), which is the ratio of gross building area (excluding surface parking areas) to net lot area, both expressed in square feet (see Figure LCC-3). FAR does not regulate building placement or form; it defines the total amount of development allowed on a given lot. In the designations below, FAR represents an expectation of the overall intensity of future development. The maximums assigned to the land use designations below do not constitute entitlements, nor are property owners or developers guaranteed that an individual project, when tested against the General Plan’s policies, will be able or permitted to achieve these maximums.

**Figure LCC-3: Measuring Floor Area Ratio (FAR)**



**Figure LCC-4: Land Use Designations**



Data Source: City of Dixon, 2019; Dyett & Bhatia, 2019

**Land Use Designations**

*Residential*

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential

*Mixed Use*

- Corridor Mixed Use
- Downtown Mixed Use
- Campus Mixed Use

*Commercial*

- Neighborhood Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Service Commercial

*Other*

- Industrial
- Public Facilities
- Parks

Railroad

- Dixon City Limit
- Sphere of Influence

## RESIDENTIAL

### Low Density Residential

The Low Density Residential (LDR) designation applies to residential neighborhoods characterized primarily by single-family homes, including single-family attached, semi-detached, and duet homes. This designation provides for a range of lot sizes and allows up to 9 dwelling units per acre, which is equivalent to a population of approximately 29 persons per acre. Permitted land uses include single-family residences and public facilities such as schools, religious institutions, parks, and other community facilities appropriate within a residential neighborhood.



### Medium Density Residential

The Medium Density Residential (MDR) designation provides for a mix of single-family homes and other more compact housing types, including townhomes, garden homes, zero lot line homes, apartments, and condominiums. The intent of this designation is to foster a traditional neighborhood environment with a range of housing types that are affordable to people at all ages and stages of life. This designation allows 10 to 22 dwelling units per acre, which is equivalent to a population of up to approximately 70 persons per acre. Permitted land uses include residential homes and public facilities such as schools, religious institutions, parks, and other community facilities appropriate within a residential neighborhood.



## MIXED USE

### Downtown Mixed Use

The Downtown Mixed Use (DT) designation applies in Dixon's traditional downtown area and is intended to promote Downtown Dixon as an attractive destination for residents and visitors to the community. The area is envisioned as a walkable environment with direct pedestrian and bicycle connections to surrounding residential neighborhoods and to the downtown rail depot. The designation provides for a full range of retail, employment, residential, entertainment, cultural, civic, and personal service uses. Permitted non-residential uses include restaurants, apparel stores, specialty shops, theaters, bookstores, travel agencies, hotels/motels and other similar uses serving a community-wide market and a larger visitor population, as well as banks, financial institutions, medical and professional offices, and other general offices and community institutional uses. Outdoor dining, live music, and events are encouraged to support a lively atmosphere with activity throughout the day and the year. On larger sites, more than one use is required. On smaller sites, a single use may be permitted. Maximum allowable FAR is 300% (combined residential and non-residential uses) and maximum allowable residential density is 30 dwelling units per acre.

### Corridor Mixed Use

The Corridor Mixed Use (CMU) designation is intended to foster a mix of retail and commercial uses, supported by housing. Mixed use can be vertical and/or horizontal, and the allowable range of uses includes large format retail, shopping centers, offices, hotels and housing. On larger sites, more than one use is required.

On smaller sites, a single use may be permitted. Allowable FAR is 50% to 200% for single-use developments and 80% to 240% for mixed-use developments (combined residential and non-residential uses). Allowable residential density is 12 to 28 dwelling units per acre, with densities on the lower end of that range where proposed development abuts low density residential development. Corresponding zoning will be performance-based in order to promote flexibility and minimize non-conformance issues of existing uses.

### Campus Mixed Use

The Campus Mixed Use (CAMU) designation is intended to foster new mixed-use employment districts with a range of job-generating uses, housing, and easy access to the regional transportation network. The CAMU designation would promote clusters of related light industrial, manufacturing, office, research & development, retail, hotel, service, and residential uses on large parcels near or adjacent to I-80 and SR-113 at gateways to the city. The CAMU designation is primarily intended to support mixed-use development projects, however single-use projects may also be permitted. Mixed use can be vertical and/or horizontal. Allowable FAR is 30% to 60% (combined residential and non-residential uses) and maximum allowable residential density is 30 dwelling units per acre. Corresponding zoning will be performance-based in order to promote flexibility and minimize non-conformance issues of existing uses.



## COMMERCIAL

### **Neighborhood Commercial**

The Neighborhood Commercial (NC) designation provides for shopping centers with off-street parking or a cluster of street-front stores that serve the immediate neighborhood. Permitted uses include supermarkets, bakeries, drugstores, variety stores, barber shops, restaurants, medical offices with urgent care or outpatient uses, dry cleaners, and hardware stores. The maximum permitted FAR in the NC designation is 60%.

### **Service Commercial**

The Service Commercial (SC) designation provides for retail and service uses not typically located in shopping centers, including auto repair, storage facilities, equipment rental, wholesale businesses, nurseries, and contractors' facilities. Ancillary office spaces that support such

commercial uses are also permitted. Heavy industrial uses are not appropriate. Maximum permitted FAR in the SC designation is 40%.

### **Regional Commercial**

The Regional Commercial (RC) designation provides for a range of commercial uses that cater to traffic passing through Dixon on I-80 as well as to local residents. Permitted uses include motels; fast food and other restaurants; gas stations; and large-format chain retail establishments, including supermarkets and super-drugstores. This designation applies to land immediately adjacent to I-80 access ramps in areas that are easily accessible by car and highly visible from the roadway. Maximum permitted FAR in the RC designation is 80%.



## OTHER

### Parks

The Parks (P) designation applies to existing and planned public parks in Dixon, including community parks, neighborhood parks, and special park facilities such as the Women’s Improvement Club Park and the Linear Path extending from Regency Parkway to North Lincoln Street. Potential new park sites are shown with a symbol that indicates the generalized location of future parks in the areas they will be needed. Until such time that these properties are acquired by the City, development consistent with the underlying land use designation shown on the Figure LCC-4 is allowed. Permitted uses in this designation include parks, playgrounds, trails, recreational facilities and other similar uses. There is no maximum permitted FAR in this designation. *(Please see PSF Element for a discussion of park service ratios and to Mobility Element policies M-3.1, M-3.3, and M-3.4 regarding safe connections to parks and open space.)*

### Public Facilities

The Public Facilities (PF) designation encompasses facilities serving the good of the community, including fire and police stations; government buildings; libraries; schools; educational institutions; community centers; and other community-serving recreational facilities

such as the Dixon May Fair. Assisted living facilities and neighborhood-oriented retail are conditional uses in this designation requiring permits. Co-location of multiple public facilities on a single site is encouraged where it will increase access to community services while offering cost savings and other benefits to community service providers. The maximum permitted FAR in the PF designation is from 10% to 100%, determined on a case-by-case basis in consideration of the neighborhood context.

### Industrial

The Industrial (I) designation provides for large and small scale industrial, manufacturing, heavy commercial uses such as food processing, fabricating, motor vehicle service and repair, truck yards and terminals, warehousing, distribution and storage uses without a tax revenue generating component, wholesale uses, construction supplies, building material facilities, offices, contractors’ yards and the like. Establishments located in these areas characteristically require large parcels of land with good truck and/or rail access. Due to the nature of their operation, uses in this designation require a degree of separation from residential, retail, restaurant, hotel and other sensitive uses. Maximum permitted FAR in the I designation is 60%.

## SMALL TOWN CHARACTER

Dixon is a quiet, safe, family-friendly city. Small town character is one of Dixon's most cherished qualities, and is what draws people to the area and gets them to stay for generations. The type and scale of buildings are critical elements in defining the small town-feel. Downtown, buildings are between one and three stories tall with architectural details dating back to different eras, creating harmonized, eclectic blocks. Dixon's neighborhoods have a similarly eclectic collection of pedestrian-oriented homes and businesses, between one and two stories, built over the past century and a half.

Measured growth within Dixon will ensure that people can continue to live, work, and play in the community through all stages of their lives. There are a number of strategies that can ensure that new growth fits right into Dixon's existing urban fabric, builds local pride, and contributes to the strong sense of place. More offices, shops, homes, and cultural and recreational spaces will bring activity and vitality to the area, and if the new buildings are designed to be sensitive

to the historic and environmental context and have interesting and diverse architectural palettes, they will reinforce Dixon's existing character and be adapted to future needs and lifestyles. Maintaining a human scale with appropriate building heights, building massing and setbacks, and transitions between higher- and lower-density areas will ensure that new buildings blend in, and encouraging a mixture of interesting architectural styles in new construction will enrich the built environment and maintain Dixon's charm. An improved, streamlined Design Review Process can help to ensure that new development uses high-quality materials, adequate lighting, beautiful and climate-appropriate landscaping, and matches the scale and quality of Dixon's existing architecture. The General Plan also envisions the creation of citywide design guidelines to ensure that new residential, commercial, and mixed use development contribute to Dixon's small town character.

Good design can also help to increase safety in Dixon. When doors and windows are oriented to the street and streets are



well-lit and have good visibility, neighbors can keep an eye on the street and on each other's homes. "Eyes on the street" enhance public safety and deter crime, making Dixon's neighborhoods safer and more family-friendly. Good maintenance can also help to deter crime: good standards for property maintenance and quickly addressing any conditions where areas appear uncared for shows that neighbors care about their spaces and ensures good visibility.

## RESPECT FOR THE PAST

The first human settlements in and around Dixon likely occurred around 14,000 to 8,000 BCE. The Patwin Indians lived west of the Sacramento River; as hunter-gatherers with a vast trade network, they lived on fish, acorns, and other local plants and animals, and trading using clam shell disk beads as currency. The Patwins were nearly wiped out when the Spanish began establishing their missions along the California coast in the 18th century, bringing smallpox and measles with them. Growing European settlements and a huge influx of settlers during the Gold Rush further reduced the prevalence of indigenous people in the Sacramento Valley, but Patwin artifacts remain throughout the area. There are six recorded prehistoric archeological sites within Dixon, and further excavation could reveal more sites.

European settlement in present-day Dixon began in 1871, with the town's move from the first location in Silveyville to the current site along the railroad tracks. In 1883, a devastating fire started in the Centennial Hotel, where the Moose Lodge is located today, and destroyed most of the buildings downtown, including the town's saloons and six churches. After the fire, Dixon rebuilt with a new

Good visibility of surrounding agricultural lands is another critical element in maintaining Dixon's agricultural small-town character. These scenic vistas, including views from I-80 and to surrounding fields and orchards, keep Dixon rooted in its history and provide beauty and visual relief. For more details on protecting agricultural lands around Dixon, see Chapter 2: Natural Environment.

city ordinance in place mandating brick and tin building materials. Silveyville Lodge and Montezuma Lodge on South 1st Street both date back to 1884, the year after the fire. The first firehouse in Dixon was built in 1891 on Jackson Street, and the first jailhouse was built alongside it. While the original firehouse and jail have been replaced, many other buildings downtown date back to the turn of the century, including many of the surrounding homes. The Dixon Women's Improvement Club spearheaded funding for the public library, which opened in 1913. Many buildings and structures from Dixon's early years remain, almost all located in the downtown core. The California Historic Resources Information System identifies 105 historic buildings or structures, and California's Historic Property Directory lists 315 historic buildings or structures. Dixon has two buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Carnegie Library at 230 North 1st Street, and the Jackson Fay Brown House at 6751 Maine Prairie Road, located just outside of the City limits.

These historic and prehistoric resources enrich Dixon, enhancing the sense of place and of history. Many of the historic buildings have beautiful architectural

details and add richness and interest to the public realm. Prehistoric archeological sites add value to our knowledge of the past, for historians, Dixon residents, and for the Native American groups to whom artifacts may belong. Conserving these resources proactively helps to maintain Dixon's character and charm; keeping up-to-date maps and records of important sites, developing a Citywide historic preservation plan, and providing incentives for preservation or information about incentives available through other agencies will help the City guarantee good use of its valuable assets.

When new archeological sites are found, State law requires that work on project sites stops so that human remains or artifacts can be properly evaluated. If Native American remains or artifacts are found, State law requires that local Native American groups be notified. Dixon has committed to ensuring respectful treatment of archeological sites, and this General Plan requires the City to create maps of the general location of sensitive sites for use by City staff only and have potential projects within those locations first perform cultural resource assessments.



The City's past is well documented, but there are opportunities for Dixon residents to become more aware of the City's history and cultural resources. Working with the Dixon Historical Society, the Dixon Public Library, and other community groups, this General Plan calls for the City to work to develop walking tours and signage around historical attractions. Plaques identifying points of historical interest will raise awareness of the City's history among residents. There is also widespread community interest in a Dixon museum to document the City's history and make it publicly engaging and accessible; considering public funding or other sources to create such a museum could help to foster Dixon's sense of history.

**GOAL LCC-2:** Promote and enhance Dixon’s quiet, safe, family-friendly small-town character.

## **SMALL TOWN CHARACTER**

### **POLICIES**

- LCC-2.1** Maintain the “small town character” of Dixon while allowing for population growth and business as well as increased employment, shopping, cultural and recreational opportunities, and other tax revenue generating uses.
- LCC-2.2** Encourage compatible new development that respects and complements Dixon’s historic context and natural environment.
- LCC-2.3** Recognize that a diversity of architectural styles contributes to Dixon’s charm and promote a variety of building styles and types consistent with the community’s small-town feel.
- LCC-2.4** Require new development in mixed use areas and along corridors provide appropriate transitions in building height and massing so that it is sensitive to the physical and visual character of adjoining lower-density neighborhoods.
- LCC-2.5** Use the design review guidelines in the design review process to assess how built characteristics, including scale, materials, hardscape, lights, and landscaping, blend into the surrounding neighborhood.
- LCC-2.6** Encourage the design of projects that enhance public safety and discourage crime by orienting homes and buildings toward the street, providing adequate lighting and sight lines, and selectively installing fencing and landscaping. (Refer also to Policy LCC-4.4 regarding activation of ground floor uses downtown and encouraging opportunities for outdoor dining including areas to the side and rear of existing establishments.)
- LCC-2.7** Encourage high standards of property maintenance and rapid abatement of conditions contributing to blight.
- LCC-2.8** Protect and improve scenic vistas in Dixon, including views from Interstate 80 and views of surrounding agricultural and open space lands.

### **ACTIONS**

- LCC-2.A** Adopt citywide design guidelines for residential, commercial and mixed use development. The guidelines shall define and encourage elements and features that contribute to Dixon’s small-town character. Design guidelines will be considered as part of the design review process for new development.

**LCC-2.B** Review the Municipal Code and identify opportunities to improve and streamline the Design Review Process.

**GOAL LCC-3:** Protect, preserve, and enhance the significant cultural and historic features of Dixon, recognizing their importance to the character of the community.

## RESPECT FOR THE PAST

### POLICIES

- LCC-3.1** Foster the preservation, restoration, and compatible reuse of historically significant structures and sites.
- LCC-3.2** Maintain opportunities for dialogue with local Native American groups regarding cultural resources in Dixon.
- LCC-3.3** Require cultural resource assessments prior to the approval of development proposals on properties located in archaeologically sensitive areas. Assessments shall include a records search of the California Historical Resources Information System database at the Northwest Information Center and a pedestrian survey of the site to determine the potential for archaeological, paleontological, and historic resources as well as Native American remains.

### ACTIONS

- LCC-3.A** Maintain and periodically update an historic resources inventory.
- LCC-3.B** Develop an historic preservation plan, guidelines and supporting ordinances. The plan should consider incentives for the restoration and preservation of qualified historic buildings, such as granting tax abatements through a Mills Act Program or establishing an annual historic preservation award.
- LCC-3.C** Provide information on incentives for the restoration for designated historic properties, landmarks or districts to property owners and the public.
- LCC-3.D** Maintain a map sensitive archaeological sites in Dixon and use it to inform project applicants of the need for cultural resource assessments.
- LCC-3.E** Partner with the Dixon Historical Society, the Dixon Library and other community groups to develop a historic buildings walking tour, with signage identifying historical attractions. Explore opportunities to create a museum of Dixon history.

## 3.6 FOCUS AREAS

### DOWNTOWN

Centered at the prominent intersection of First and A Streets, Downtown Dixon is the physical and civic center of the city. The compact commercial district features a range of shops, restaurants, banks and businesses as well as notable cultural landmarks like the Dixon Public Library and St. Peter’s Catholic Church. Major public institutions, including the Police Department, the Dixon Unified School District and the US Post Office, also have a presence downtown, and there are charming residential neighborhoods within a few minute’s walking distance of the commercial core.

Reinforcing this mix of uses with new housing and professional offices will help support downtown vitality and strengthen its role as a hub of the community. There are a number of vacant and underutilized sites in the area that can support development, providing new patrons for local businesses and activity throughout the day and into the evenings. Downtown development will also help attract passenger rail service to the community. In 1994, the Dixon City Council chose a site at West B Street and North Jefferson Street as the location for a new rail depot, and the community has made significant investment in rail-related infrastructure, constructing a pedestrian undercrossing at B Street and a new station building. Amtrak’s Capitol Corridor line runs through Dixon, connecting Sacramento and the Bay Area, and while trains do not currently stop in Dixon, in 2016 the Solano Transit Authority (STA) selected Dixon as the top priority site for a new passenger rail station within

Solano County, citing the addition of new housing and jobs in the station area as a prerequisite.

Downtown Dixon’s compact, walkable form and its historic buildings are defining features and important assets. The brick and stone buildings in the commercial core provide a glimpse into local history, with some that date back to the founding of the city in the late Nineteenth Century. Streets are laid out in a grid pattern and lined with one and two-story commercial buildings in the core and small-scale shop fronts. Church spires are the tallest structures downtown, located at the edges of the core transitioning to surrounding single-family neighborhoods with homes constructed in a variety of architectural styles.



Public spaces also contribute to downtown character. At the northern edge of the core, adjacent to the library Women’s Improvement Club Park provides green space and shade trees for the heat of summer, and the construction of a new public plaza on the Pardi Market site on the southeast corner of First and A Streets will provide a new community focal point. Sidewalks, streetscapes and open spaces to the side and rear of buildings not only provide connections but are an important part of the public realm. Big windows looking into shops and businesses engage pedestrians, and café seating or restaurant patios along the sidewalk or to

the side and rear of buildings can add life and interest to the street. The Plan seeks to promote this type of active streetscape and public open space, directing update to zoning regulations that govern the placement of doors and windows to promote comings and goings as well as the placement of buildings to greet the street with parking behind. The Plan also envisions streetscape improvements. In support of a lively downtown atmosphere, Policy LCC-4.4 discusses activation of ground floor uses downtown and encouraging opportunities for outdoor dining including areas to the side and rear of existing establishments.

## **GOAL LCC-4:** Reinforce the downtown area as the physical and cultural center of the city, recognizing its importance to the community’s sense of place.

### **DOWNTOWN DIXON**

#### **POLICIES**

- LCC-4.1** Establish a mix of daytime and evening uses downtown, including restaurants, professional offices, entertainment, and housing to encourage activity throughout the day.
- LCC-4.2** Make Downtown Dixon the city’s primary district for specialty retail, dining, entertainment, civic, social, and cultural uses.
- LCC-4.3** Encourage infill development, adaptive reuse of existing buildings, and the restoration of historic structures to revitalize Downtown Dixon as a center of community activity.
- LCC-4.4** Require active ground floor uses along First Street, East A Street and Jackson Street downtown and encourage outdoor dining and patio areas along street frontages and to the side and rear of buildings.
- LCC-4.5** Attract commercial and retail uses that provide for the everyday needs of nearby residents to complement specialty retail and restaurants.
- LCC-4.6** Foster transit-oriented development within one-half mile of the train station in anticipation of future passenger rail service.

*(See also Goal E-4 in the Economic Development Element for additional policies and actions related to Downtown Dixon, and Goal M-5 in the Mobility Element for policies and action related to passenger rail service and access to Downtown Dixon).*

## **ACTIONS**

- LCC-4.A** Update the Zoning Code with a pedestrian overlay applicable in the Downtown Commercial District to promote active, pedestrian-oriented street life by regulating building orientation, accessory parking facilities and the design of buildings and public spaces.
- LCC-4.B** Identify and actively promote development of key vacant or underutilized sites for residential mixed use development in and adjacent to the downtown area.
- LCC-4.C** Study the feasibility of providing incentives for development of second-story office and housing in the downtown area.
- LCC-4.D** Prioritize implementation of public realm and streetscape improvements downtown, including curb extensions and accent paving at pedestrian crossings; new street furniture, and directional signage to parking areas.
- LCC-4.E** Amend the Zoning Code to:
- Require parking for non-residential uses to locate at the rear or interior of the lot;
  - Reduce the required front yard setback for residential uses in downtown zones; and
  - Revise allowable uses, as needed, to reduce auto-oriented development.
- LCC-4.F** Prepare for passenger rail service in Dixon by developing a land value capture program to generate funding for streetscape improvements, affordable housing, or other public benefits in the downtown area. Consider value capture strategies such as special assessment districts, impact fees, land value tax, and tax-increment financing.

## **CORRIDORS AND GATEWAYS**

The Northeast Quadrant and the SR-113 corridor north of downtown both have extensive vacant lands that represent an important opportunity for job-generating development. This is also true of those areas adjacent to I-80 in the Southwest Dixon Specific Plan area. Given their location at prominent gateways into Dixon, thoughtful planning will be critical for success.

The First Street/SR-113 corridor between downtown and Vaughn Road is a commercial mixed use area with a number successful regional retail businesses, including auto dealerships and boat and agricultural equipment sales. The plan seeks to strengthen this corridor with additional regional commercial uses, supported by housing.

Recognizing the potential of the Northeast Quadrant, the City adopted a specific plan for this northern gateway in 1995, calling for a mix of commercial/office/mixed use, highway-oriented businesses, and warehouse/manufacturing/truck-servicing businesses. The intervening years have seen construction of the Walmart Super Center in the area and distribution facilities; however, major economic shifts have occurred and there is an opportunity to refresh the specific plan. Capitalizing on proximity to Davis and Sacramento, this General Plan envisions a campus mixed use district within the Northeast Quadrant, intended to foster a new mixed-use employment district with a range of job-generating uses, housing, and easy access to the regional transportation network, including regional bicycle facilities.

The Plan also supports industrial development in the Northeast Quadrant, including logistics, warehousing and advanced manufacturing activities within the portion of the Northeast Quadrant shown on Figure LCC-2 that has been designated a Priority Production Area. In 2017, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) initiated a new Priority Production Area (PPA) program intended to strengthen selected clusters of industrial development in the region and support the growth of middle-wage jobs in sectors involving production, distribution, and repair services, including logistics and advanced manufacturing. In September 2019, the City of Dixon nominated a 282-acre area within the Northeast Quadrant as a PPA, and the area was formally designated a PPA by MTC in January 2020.

The arrangement of buildings on the sites and the visual appearance of new development makes a statement about the community that will be visible from major regional thoroughfares - SR 113 and I-80. Quality design can attract more investment in the community so a coordinated approach to signage, landscaping, and architecture will pay dividends, while at the same time integrating new development with existing uses, providing buffers and transitions between residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

Similarly, in 2005, the City adopted the Southwest Dixon Specific Plan for the southern gateway, which contemplated a similar mix of commercial, office, and highway oriented businesses with residential uses. This general plan imagines the highway-adjacent areas of the Southwest Dixon Specific Plan area as a campus-mixed use district with a range of job-generating commercial, light-industrial, hotel, and residential uses that will capitalize on easy access to I-80 and proximity to Davis and Sacramento.



**GOAL LCC-5:** Focus new development that makes a positive contribution to the community along key corridors and at principal gateways into Dixon.

## **HIGH QUALITY CORRIDOR AND GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT TO STRENGTHEN DIXON'S IDENTITY**

### **POLICIES**

- LCC-5.1** Establish inviting gateways that signal entry into Dixon with high-quality development and similarly-themed design elements to build sense of place.
- LCC-5.2** Strengthen the role of First Street as a key commercial corridor north of the railway tracks by encouraging additional commercial uses, including businesses in the auto, farm equipment, and boat sales categories.
- LCC-5.3** Generally require a minimum floorplate of 15,000 square feet for regional commercial uses to ensure that these uses do not compete directly with specialty retail and entertainment uses desired in Downtown Dixon. Exceptions may be made for smaller supportive uses, such as coffee shops, banks, or food establishments.
- LCC-5.4** Grow the base of industrial and commercial employers in the Northeast Quadrant, and highway adjacent areas of the Southwest Dixon Specific Plan area, focusing uses that have common needs in this area to capitalize on synergies and minimize conflicts with other uses.
- LCC-5.5** Foster a mixed use employment district in the Northeast Quadrant, leveraging the availability of large parcels and the proximity to UC Davis.
- LCC-5.6** In the Campus Mixed Use land use designation shown on Figure LCC-4, permit warehouse and distribution uses subject to a development agreement establishing a financial mechanism to provide for ongoing revenue generation to the City from those uses and environmental review, which may include additional mitigation measures, to ensure there are no new or substantially more severe impacts than identified in the 2040 General Plan EIR.
- LCC-5.7** Require industrial and commercial development to incorporate buffering and context-responsive transitions to minimize impacts on adjacent less intensive uses, particularly residential uses.



- LCC-5.8** Require that non-residential buildings in commercial and industrial areas are designed as high-quality, long-term additions to the city’s urban fabric. Exterior design and buildings shall exhibit permanence and quality, minimize maintenance concerns, and extend the life of the building.
- LCC-5.9** Foster a mixed-use employment district in the highway adjacent areas of the Southwest Dixon Specific Plan area leveraging the availability of large parcels and easy access to I-80.

## **ACTIONS**

- LCC-5.A** Update City regulations and establish design guidelines, as needed, to ensure a high-quality visual character at the northern and southern gateways to Dixon and on the SR-113 and Lincoln commercial mixed use corridors.
- LCC-5.B** Work the the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to capitalize on the opportunities afforded by the PPA designation applicable in the Northeast Quadrant.
- LCC-5.C** Update and modernize the sign ordinance, introducing design standards.
- LCC-5.D** Update the Zoning Code to include performance measures applicable to industrial uses to ensure health and safety standards are maintained where industrial uses border sensitive uses such as housing.
- LCC-5.E** Support the formation of a merchants association for commercial corridors to provide a forum for promoting healthy local businesses.
- LCC-5.F** Consider exceptions to the minimum permitted FAR in the CMU designation on a case-by-case basis. Adopt clear economic findings that must be made prior to granting a use permit authorizing such exceptions.

## **3.7 RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS**

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### **ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS**

Dixon’s residential neighborhoods play a key role in the City’s charm and small-town feel. With their mature street trees, well-maintained sidewalks, and comfortable homes and apartments, these areas account for about a quarter of the city’s total land area. Most of Dixon’s neighborhoods are along local roads with low speeds, suitable for families to walk and bike along and for neighbors to meet.

The Plan seeks to preserve and reinforce the characteristics of these established neighborhoods.

Dixon’s homes usually face the street with plenty of windows and provide architectural interest; when homes are built with mostly garage doors facing the street, there is nothing interesting for people walking by to look at.

Porches, balconies, and windows create a pedestrian-friendly relationship with the street. And without windows looking out, there are no “eyes on the street.” Crime can flourish without the expectation that residents may be looking out their windows.

Dixon’s neighborhoods already have many links to neighborhood shops and services, local parks, and schools. Continuing to locate amenities within easy walking and biking distance reduces the need for car trips and fosters bonds between neighbors, creating opportunities for people to meet as they go about their daily lives. Home businesses within neighborhoods can also reduce car trips and provide important local services while lowering barriers to entry for entrepreneurs.

The outdoor spaces between homes are just as important to the character of neighborhoods as the homes themselves. Beautiful trees of a wide variety of species thrive in Dixon’s wet winters and hot, rainless summers, shading streets and cleaning the air. Dixon gardeners can grow almost anything in the fertile soil, and many have begun to incorporate planting designs that capture rainwater and native or drought-tolerant plants that provide food for local species without needing extra water. Future development should match and build upon Dixon’s existing streetscapes with healthy, climate-appropriate trees, pollinator-friendly planting, and

## **NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS**

Access to services and amenities to the community is an important part of neighborhood livability. Grocery stores, cafes, small retail or convenience stores, drugstores, and local restaurants located near or within neighborhoods provide

elegant designs to capture rainwater. Multifamily residential buildings should have welcoming common spaces with greenery and trees, accessible to all the residents. Additionally, preserving and strengthening the character of existing neighborhoods through good maintenance of sidewalks, trees, and private yards and homes helps to conserve resources and improve connections throughout the City.

Continuing the typical character of Dixon’s residential areas, future development should be well-connected to the rest of the city, with pedestrian paths, generous sidewalks, and bike lanes, and without walls and gated streets that divide the community and discourage active transportation. Low-speed streets with less traffic are safer and produce less pollution and noise, so reducing pass-through traffic can help to make all of Dixon’s neighborhoods more livable and family-friendly. And sometimes, cars don’t need to drive through at all – Dixon’s Block Party registration allows residents to submit a request to the Dixon Police Department to close streets to traffic to host neighborhood events. The details of how long streets can be closed for are determined by on an event-by-event basis. This allows neighborhood associations to gather for a few hours or hold a weekend event, empowers kids to draw in the streets with sidewalk chalk and play basketball, or enables residents to hold a cookout.

convenient services and destinations for local residents. They can reduce required vehicle trips, ease congestion, and provide important services for neighbors, including those who may be elderly, young, or disabled; ensuring that

residents' daily needs can be met close to home keeps communities inclusive to everyone. Additionally, allowing space for small-scale professional offices and businesses focused in neighborhood centers can help to support local entrepreneurship and make it easier for people to work close to home.

When local residents can walk or bike to neighborhood centers, they are likely to run into their neighbors along the way or at their destinations, strengthening the sense of community. If these centers have central common spaces with benches, trees, and restrooms, residents are likely to stay longer, interacting with other members of the community, patronizing the businesses, and forming strong community bonds. Public art can enhance the sense of place, and kiosks or message boards let neighbors exchange information about upcoming events, classes, or neighborhood issues. The common spaces can be sites for neighborhood events, festivals, and informal gatherings, providing opportunities for neighbors to mingle and socialize.

The Plan seeks to facilitate improvements to existing neighborhood centers to ensure they function as focal points for the community by allowing for a broader range of uses in neighborhood shopping centers and encouraging the addition of common spaces, amenities, improved walking and biking connections. With the rise of internet shopping, the need for bricks and mortar stores is declining nationwide. As such the Plan seeks to strengthen existing centers in select locations accessible to surrounding neighborhoods so that they become focal points in the daily life of the community. Located near the well-used Park and Ride facility, the retail centers at Pitt School Road serve already the surrounding region and provides some local amenities. As development occurs in the Southwest Quadrant, the existing neighborhood center at West A Street and Gateway Drive could evolve to serve as a vibrant gathering place for the neighborhood. Downtown Dixon could also serve as a neighborhood center for surrounding residential areas.

**GOAL LCC-6:** Foster residential neighborhoods with attractive design, safe streets, access to shopping and services, and gathering places for the community.

## ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS

### POLICIES

- LCC-6.1** Promote the development of compact, complete residential neighborhoods by encouraging the location of services and amenities within walking and biking distance of residences so as to foster opportunities for social interaction and reduce the need to travel by car.
- LCC-6.2** Encourage an integrated mix of housing types and sizes within residential neighborhoods to promote opportunities for people at all stages of life to live in Dixon.

- LCC-6.3** Provide and maintain livable residential neighborhoods by reducing noise and air pollution, discouraging pass-through traffic, minimizing traffic accidents, and promoting lower speeds.
- LCC-6.4** Preserve and strengthen the character of existing residential neighborhoods by maintaining sidewalks and encouraging property owners maintain their properties.
- LCC-6.5** Encourage new development to incorporate greenery, including climate appropriate trees and plants as well as rain gardens, and as new development occurs, acquire easements or development rights for open space, planting street trees, and landscaping adjacent to public rights-of-way.
- LCC-6.6** Ensure that multi-family residential developments include common open space and that buildings, entries and outdoor spaces are designed and arranged so that each development has a clear relationship to a public street.
- LCC-6.7** Support neighborhood watch initiatives and partner with community and neighborhood organizations to combat crime and promote public safety.
- LCC-6.8** Allow home-based businesses in residential neighborhoods.

**ACTIONS**

- LCC-6.A** Ensure that the residential design guidelines developed pursuant to Action LCC-3.A promote a pedestrian-friendly relationship to the street, encouraging elements such as porches, windows, bays and balconies along public ways, and landscaping and trees along the street.
- LCC-6.B** Continue to use the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program to identify the need for and guide implementation of neighborhood traffic calming techniques.
- LCC-6.C** Update the Municipal Code to streamline the approval process for home-based businesses in residential neighborhoods.



**GOAL LCC-7:** Foster neighborhood commercial centers throughout Dixon that provide services and amenities locally and contribute to a sense of community.

## VIBRANT NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

### POLICIES

- LCC-7.1** Facilitate improvements to existing neighborhood commercial centers to ensure they provide goods and services that cater to the daily needs of local residents as well as opportunities to gather and socialize.
- LCC-7.2** Recognize the role that Downtown Dixon plays as a neighborhood commercial center for the surrounding residential areas, in addition to its role as the physical and cultural heart of the community.
- LCC-7.3** Ensure all neighborhood commercial centers provide centrally located common spaces for regular events, festivals and informal gatherings that build a sense of community. Encourage public amenities such as benches, street trees, kiosks, restrooms and public art.
- LCC-7.4** Enhance links between the neighborhood centers and surrounding residential neighborhoods by providing walkable and bikeable connections that are separated from fast or heavy traffic where possible.

### ACTIONS

- LCC-7.A** Update the Zoning Code to permit office and start up space in neighborhood commercial centers, subject to a conditional use permit.
- LCC-7.B** Consult with property owners in the neighborhood commercial centers to identify barriers and incentives for the provision of amenities, such as landscaping, benches, tables, public art, and community events.

