

# Castroville City Council Meeting

**02/11/25**



simple**city**.design



## **Vision:**

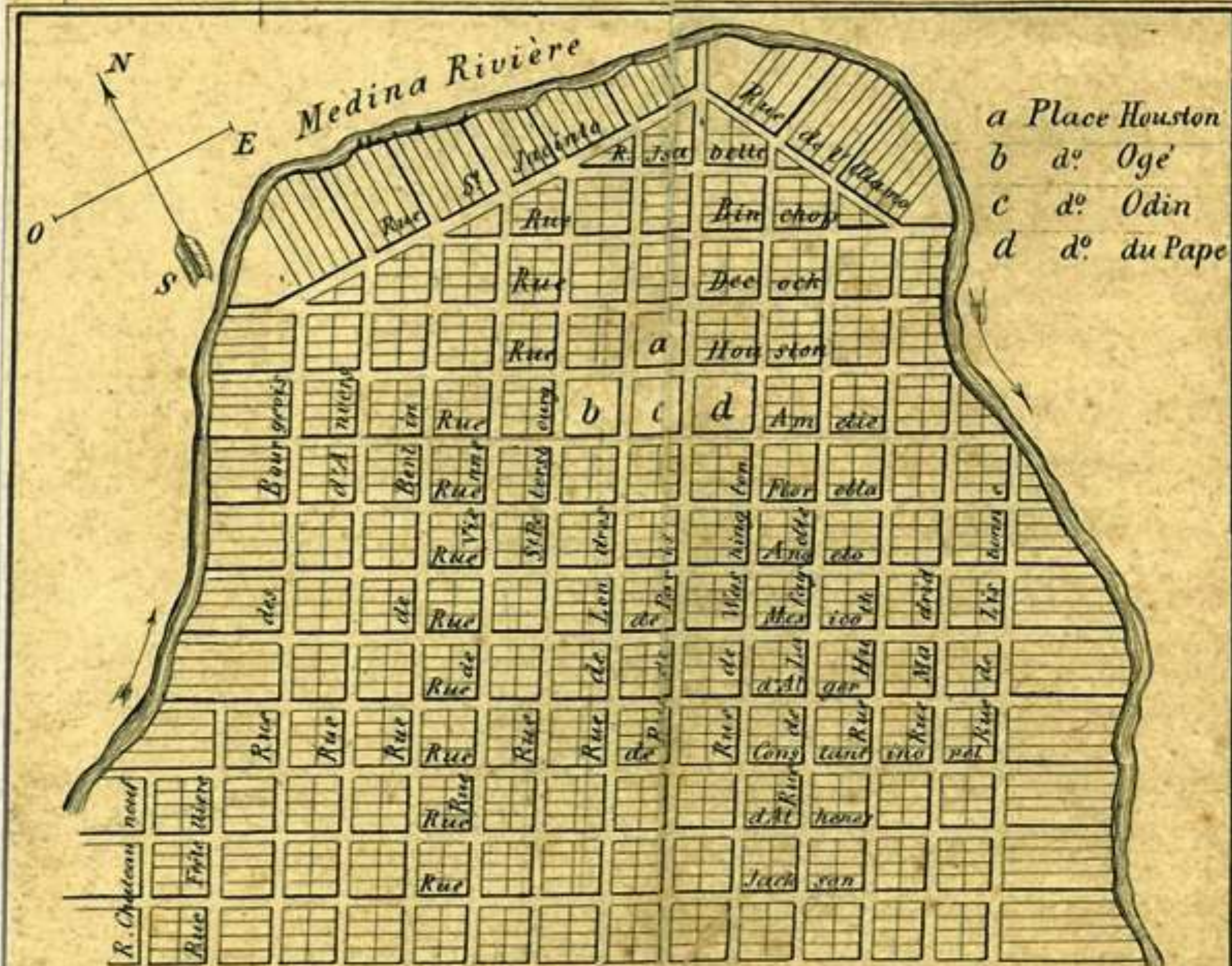
Castroville is a safe, friendly and historically unique community where strong traditions and identity thrive.

## **Mission:**

Our mission is to: Preserve Castroville's rich culture, historic architecture, local resources and natural environment through carefully guided growth, so friends and family, at all stages of life, can enjoy our community, steeped in a pioneering spirit and camaraderie.



PLAN von CASTROVILLE.





**CASTROVILLE**  
TEXAS

**Zoning Categories are Changing**

Continuing  
online  
through  
October!

## Community Roundup

**Monday, September 23rd**  
**3:30pm-7:30pm**

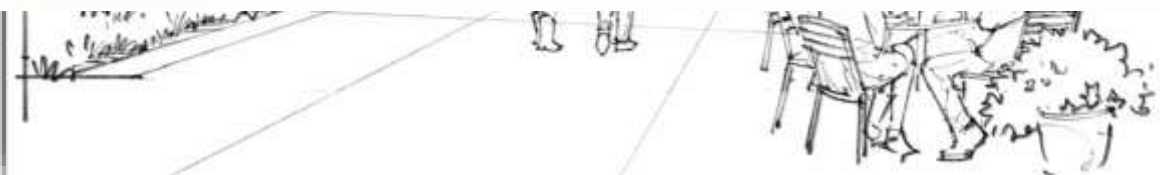
Landmark Inn @ 402 Florence St, Castroville

Come find your property on the new zoning map and discuss how the Unified Development Ordinance will preserve and enhance Castroville.

**castroville.mysocialpinpoint.com**



The Castroville Building Block Project ensures that development standards align with our community's vision for the future. Input from the whole community is necessary. Now is the time to calibrate the tools to build the community we desire!



**Castroville's Zoning and Development Standards Are Changing**

## Code Walkthrough

**Tuesday, December 10th, 3pm-8pm**

Landmark Inn, 402 Florence St

A come-and-go open house to review and discuss the Unified Development Ordinance.

**Wednesday, December 11th, 6:30-8pm**

Castroville City Hall

Policymaker review with City Council Members & Plan Commissioners, recorded for public viewing.



Review the Draft Unified Development Code, Comprehensive Plan, & Downtown Master Plan at  
**castroville.mysocialpinpoint.com**



**Castroville**  
**Code Rodeo**

08/07/24



# Castroville Comprehensive Plan

*Back To Our Future*



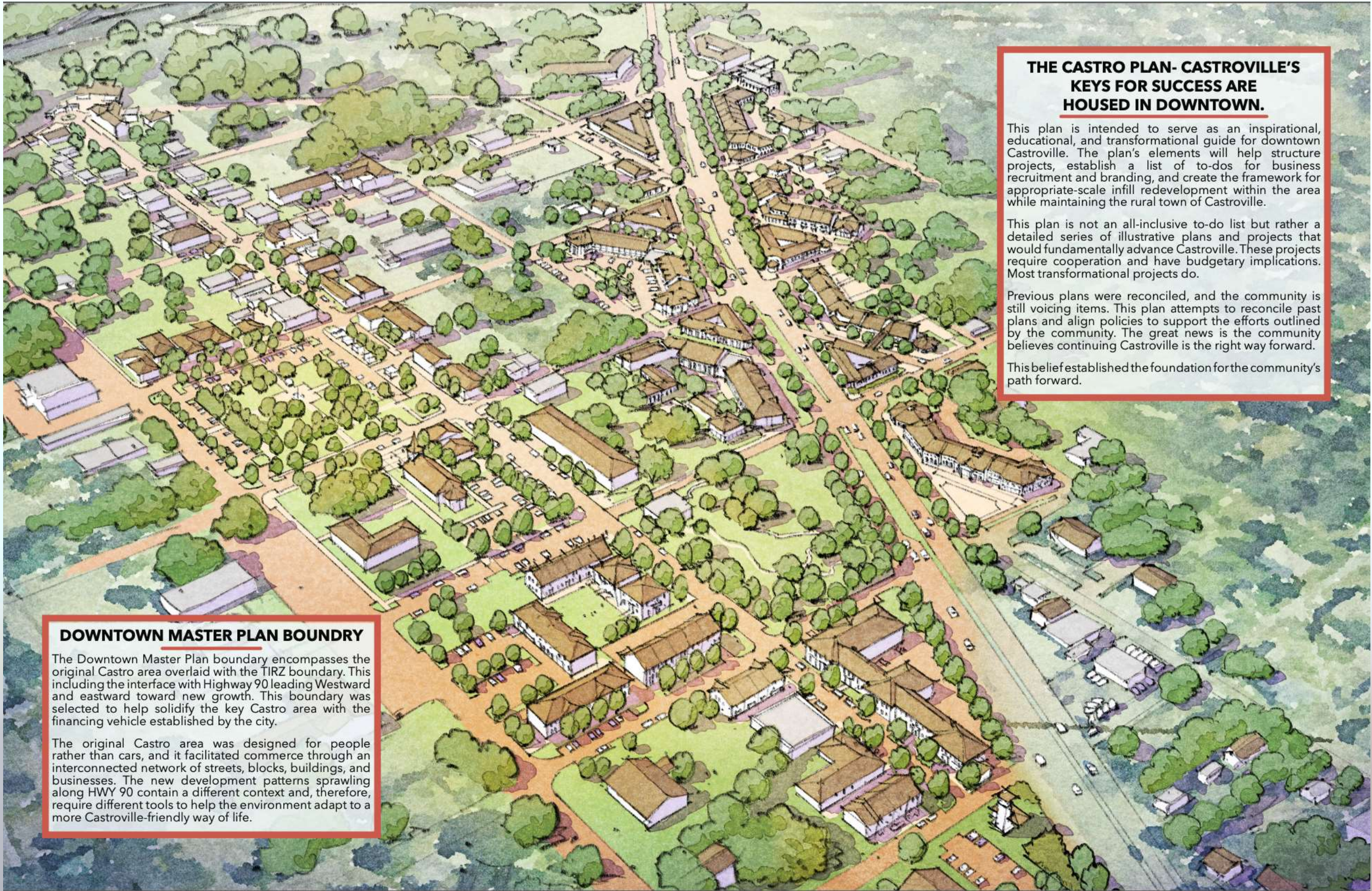
By: Simplicity Design

By: Simplicity Design

## Downtown Master Plan







### **THE CASTRO PLAN- CASTROVILLE'S KEYS FOR SUCCESS ARE HOUSED IN DOWNTOWN.**

This plan is intended to serve as an inspirational, educational, and transformational guide for downtown Castroville. The plan's elements will help structure projects, establish a list of to-dos for business recruitment and branding, and create the framework for appropriate-scale infill redevelopment within the area while maintaining the rural town of Castroville.

This plan is not an all-inclusive to-do list but rather a detailed series of illustrative plans and projects that would fundamentally advance Castroville. These projects require cooperation and have budgetary implications. Most transformational projects do.

Previous plans were reconciled, and the community is still voicing items. This plan attempts to reconcile past plans and align policies to support the efforts outlined by the community. The great news is the community believes continuing Castroville is the right way forward.

This belief established the foundation for the community's path forward.

### **DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN BOUNDRY**

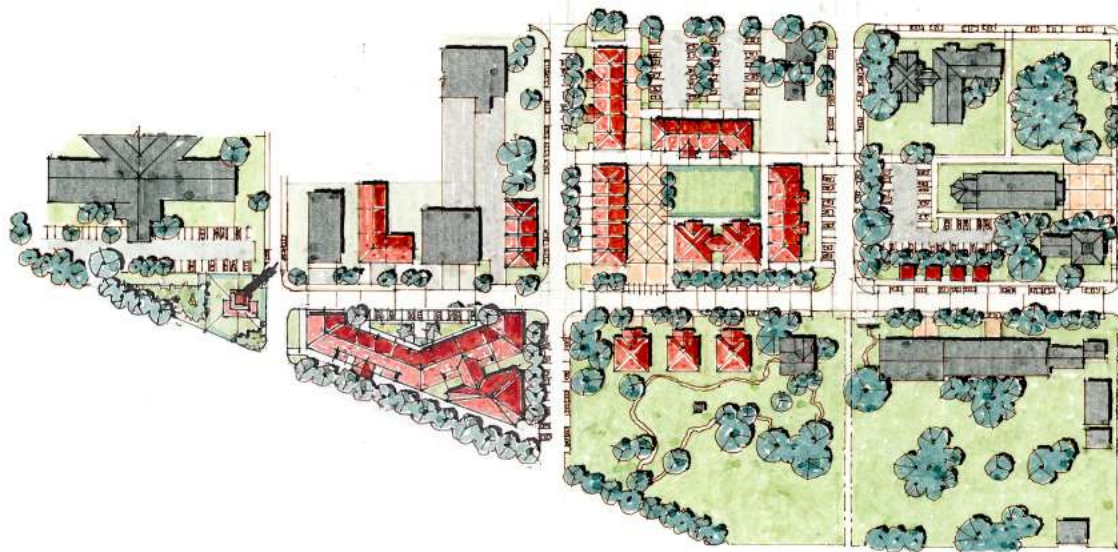
The Downtown Master Plan boundary encompasses the original Castro area overlaid with the TIRZ boundary. This including the interface with Highway 90 leading Westward and eastward toward new growth. This boundary was selected to help solidify the key Castro area with the financing vehicle established by the city.

The original Castro area was designed for people rather than cars, and it facilitated commerce through an interconnected network of streets, blocks, buildings, and businesses. The new development patterns sprawling along HWY 90 contain a different context and, therefore, require different tools to help the environment adapt to a more Castroville-friendly way of life.



# Downtown

The Downtown Master Plan focuses on key areas and projects that can quickly advance downtown to its fullest potential. Leveraging existing resources and opportunities, these projects have the greatest ability to be realized. The outcomes of this work can be implemented for transformational community results. These projects were identified through previous downtown plans and the community along this journey.



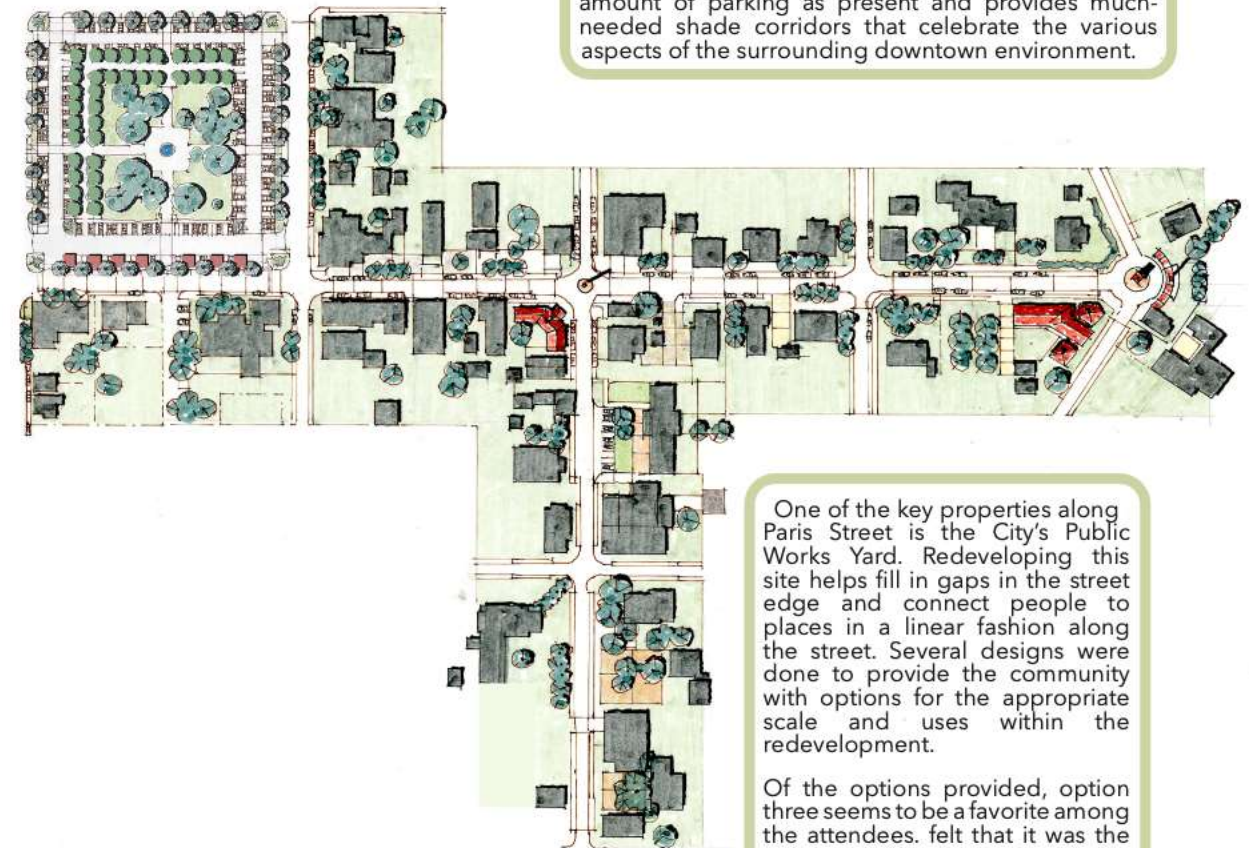
During this planning process and in previous downtown plans, Paris Street was identified as the main Street for threading the fabric of the community together. A detailed analysis was conducted to map opportunity areas and threats along this corridor to ensure the street edge and private lot interfaced at the appropriate scale.

This illustrative plan demonstrates key areas where redevelopment and community connections can occur. It also provides a framework for small-scale improvement to dramatically enhance Paris Street into the desired main street.

# Reimagined

Houston Square is the central point of the community. It was established in the original Castro plan and has facilitated the community's gatherings since the founders' arrival.

The design team made several attempts at designing Houston Square, using plaza and park designs utilized worldwide. Several renderings were presented to the community at this time. The community felt landscaping and preserving the existing environment took precedence over a more developed plaza-style square. The design will define the street edges, creating a more walkable environment. It allows for the same amount of parking as present and provides much-needed shade corridors that celebrate the various aspects of the surrounding downtown environment.



One of the key properties along Paris Street is the City's Public Works Yard. Redeveloping this site helps fill in gaps in the street edge and connect people to places in a linear fashion along the street. Several designs were done to provide the community with options for the appropriate scale and uses within the redevelopment.

Of the options provided, option three seems to be a favorite among the attendees. felt that it was the appropriate scale and style to support the existing character of Castroville without overwhelming or underutilizing the site.



## Focus Areas

# Making It Happen

To implement a locally-focused programming vision, Castroville can leverage local resources and partnerships to reinvigorate downtown assets and streamline operations for downtown events.

### Partnerships for Downtown Vitality

Several public and private agencies in Castroville already promote downtown vitality and programs, including Visit Castroville, the Castroville Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Castroville Conservation Society. The City can collaboratively partner with these and other organizations to facilitate stakeholders working in tandem and holistically making the most of limited funding resources.

The Castroville community also abounds in social organizations and special interest groups. Members of the community gather around philanthropic causes, youth sports and 4H events, and local heritage like quilting and Alsatian dance. Local stakeholders are heavily involved in and invested in their community. This level of civic pride and participation is increasingly rare in towns and neighborhoods, and is part of what makes Castroville so unique.

This strong spirit of community engagement can further enhance Castroville's downtown by catalyzing volunteerism, hands-on service learning, and friendly competition. To this end, the City will explore partnering with local schools, businesses, and community groups to support downtown programming initiatives shown to the right:



The proposed Steering Committee would not be limited to the initiatives above, but could foster additional community endeavors as desired. Formalizing and highlighting existing assets for the local community could take many forms. Opportunities for passive programming, like an updated Walking Tour in which individuals or groups can discover downtown in a self-directed way, should be encouraged.

The City could also support a Steering Committee in developing partnerships with organizations outside of Castroville (where appropriate) to take full advantage of publicly-available resources that align with community objectives like shade tree conservation and stormwater management. This could include a multitude of organizational partners; for instance, Texas universities often fund research units that provide technical assistance to communities. One such entity is the Texas A&M Forest Service, which supports designated foresters serving every region of Texas. The City of Castroville can request free resources and training from the San Antonio Region's Urban Forester and can access detailed technical tools like Tree Ordinance Tutorials should this be desired for downtown Castroville. Institutional partners, along with local involvement and volunteerism, can work together to spur an even stronger downtown Castroville.

## Downtown Programming Steering Committee

This type of group could ensure that downtown events continue to be well-coordinated among stakeholders and reflect the community aspirations outlined in this chapter. The committee could be citizen-led, composed of residents (including youth representatives) and business owners.

## Formalizing the Historic Walking Tour

Local civics classes or after-school library groups could compete to develop a branding and wayfinding strategy to increase awareness of this hidden gem within Castroville. The Walking Tour promotional materials and signage could be updated to include QR codes or hashtags for social media to help a new generation discover historic Castroville through this self-guided tour. Completing all tour stops with a punch-card or digital check-in could be promoted through local business discount rewards.

## Beautification and Placemaking

Similarly, community organizations could develop an "Adopt-a-Street" program in downtown and compete for the most well-maintained or beautified street and the best placemaking efforts. Community-led placemaking is often called "tactical urbanism" or D.I.Y. urbanism (although this can apply to towns of all sizes and does not specifically have to be urban in context). A placemaking competition could culminate in a block party to celebrate the winning street.

## Artistic Culture Alongside Agriculture

Local schools' art classes could design and create public murals, art installations, or colorful intersection and crosswalk designs (see Figure 1 below). Science students and Castroville's Garden Club could help nurture community gardens (and could even compete to grow the best produce!).

## Alsatian Window Box Competition

Downtown businesses could compete for "best window display" reflecting Alsatian heritage using drought-sensitive native plantings.

## Patrons of Downtown

Businesses, residents, and philanthropic organizations could sponsor downtown fixtures and enhancements like permeable pavers, distinctive light fixtures, recycling receptacles, benches, or shade structures built by local Scouts troops. Each fixture or element could have the sponsor's name engraved as a patron of downtown. Organizations could host fundraising events to support downtown in this way.

## Business Development Mentorship Program

Business development mentorship program. Local business owners could mentor aspiring entrepreneurs or train high-school or college-aged apprentices.







# Castroville

## Comprehensive Plan

*Back To Our Future*



By: Simplecity Design



## PLAN von CASTROVILLE.



## Complete Communities

1-6

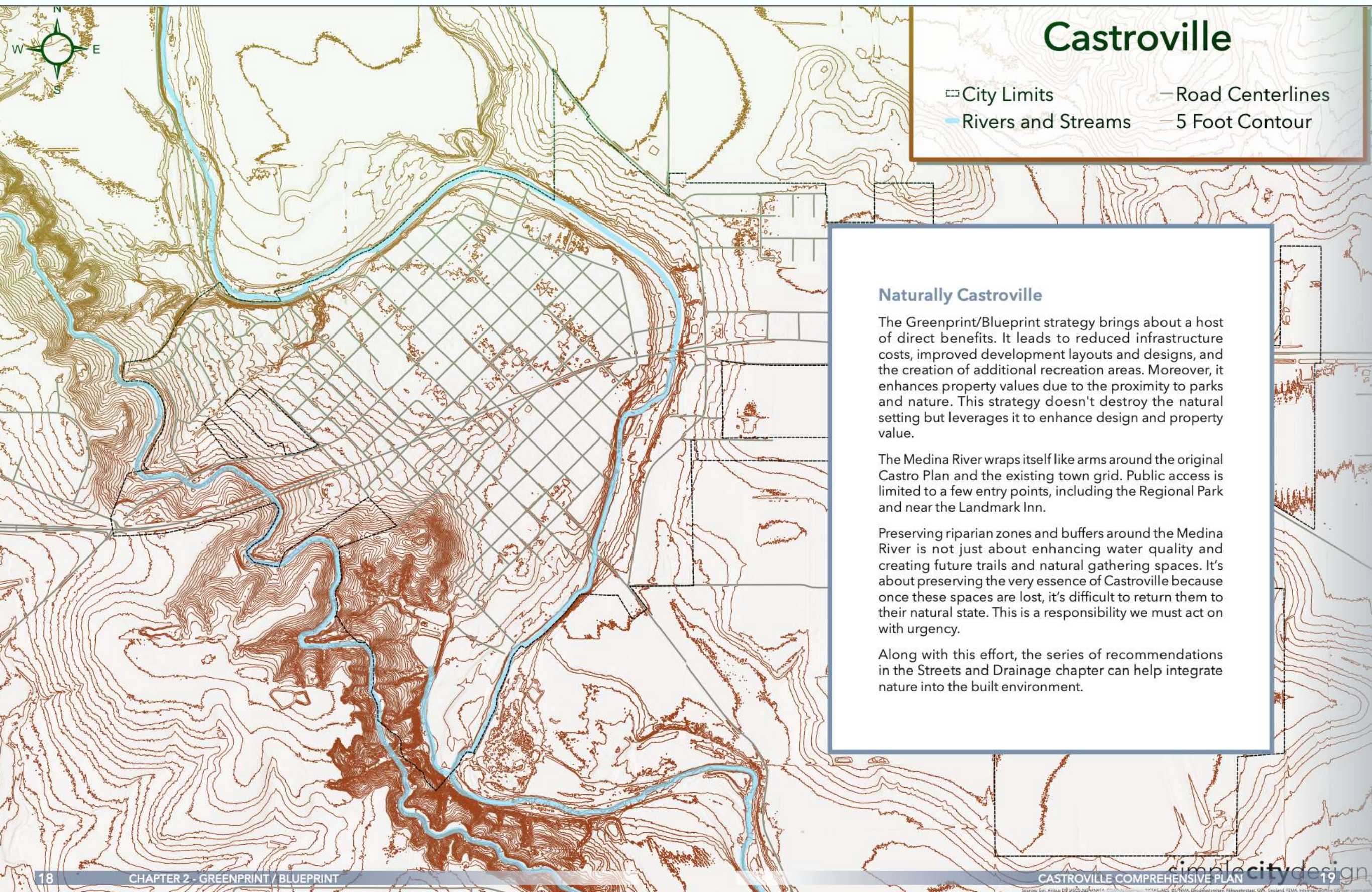
Downtown Castroville functions as a Complete Community by seamlessly integrating natural and urban environments, creating a harmonious blend that caters to diverse needs and lifestyles. The area is characterized by its Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) pattern, which ensures well-connected streets, walkable blocks, and a mix of residential, commercial, and civic spaces. Natural features such as parks, green spaces, and tree-lined streets are interwoven throughout the downtown, providing residents with accessible recreational areas and enhancing the overall aesthetic and environmental quality. This thoughtful design facilitates a gradual transition from the bustling urban core, with its shops, restaurants, and cultural amenities, to quieter residential neighborhoods and serene natural landscapes. The result is a vibrant, livable downtown that supports a high quality of life, fosters community engagement, and respects the area's ecological integrity.

Different people have different expectations of life and Castroville offers something for everyone. For people who want to reside in a rural environment, they've got that. For people who want to experience an urban environment. They have that too, from suburban to urban. Downtown Castroville offers a quality of life that is hard to beat, all within a very small geography. This is what the complete community is all about.

Thankfully, the city leaders understand and appreciate the gift provided from the past and have selected to use these tools to build its future. While this method will be met with resistance from conventional volume builders and big box stores, Castroville is willing to stand by its history, providing a pathway for the building community to follow. Back to our future is a way to respect the environment and ensure that the next generation can have as much pride in the city as today's population.







# Castroville

- City Limits
- Rivers and Streams
- Road Centerlines
- 5 Foot Contour

## Naturally Castroville

The Greenprint/Blueprint strategy brings about a host of direct benefits. It leads to reduced infrastructure costs, improved development layouts and designs, and the creation of additional recreation areas. Moreover, it enhances property values due to the proximity to parks and nature. This strategy doesn't destroy the natural setting but leverages it to enhance design and property value.

The Medina River wraps itself like arms around the original Castro Plan and the existing town grid. Public access is limited to a few entry points, including the Regional Park and near the Landmark Inn.

Preserving riparian zones and buffers around the Medina River is not just about enhancing water quality and creating future trails and natural gathering spaces. It's about preserving the very essence of Castroville because once these spaces are lost, it's difficult to return them to their natural state. This is a responsibility we must act on with urgency.

Along with this effort, the series of recommendations in the Streets and Drainage chapter can help integrate nature into the built environment.

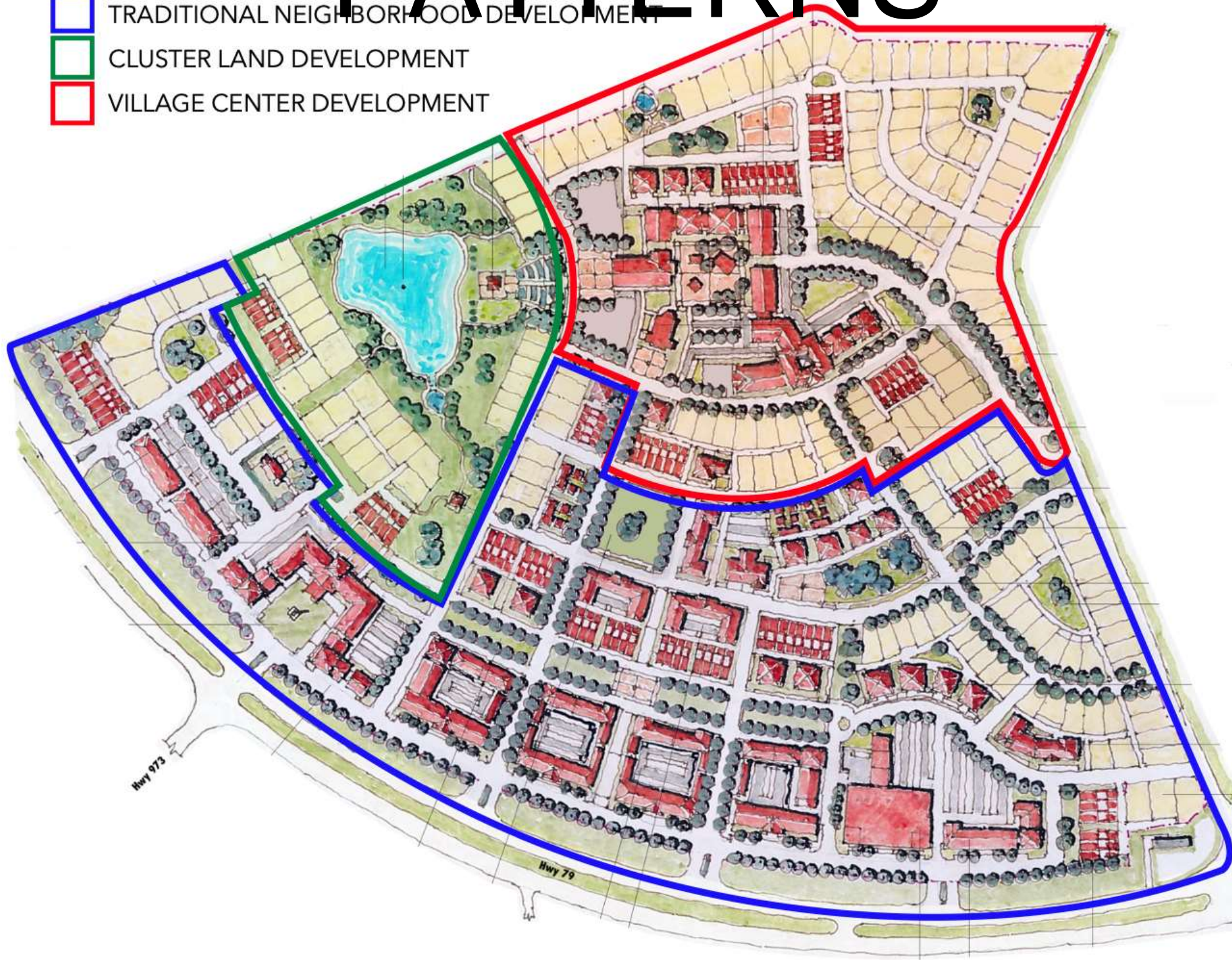






# DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

- TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT
- CLUSTER LAND DEVELOPMENT
- VILLAGE CENTER DEVELOPMENT





## Goals for Continuing Castroville

*The Castro Plan area was an intentionally planned area, it was not designed in an ad-hoc manner with various entities laying out the underlying structure. The intentionally designed patterns that exist within the Castro Plan have proven to be timeless, lovable, and fiscally productive. The richness and authenticity of the Castroville community was accomplished over time through the incremental development of the Castro Plan. Continuing Castroville is a list of recommendations and projects that are within the existing built environment to help maintain and preserve the Castroville everyone knows and loves.*

### 1

#### STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

**DEVELOP ACTION PLAN FOR STORMWATER IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT CASTROVILLE. FIRST DEFINE FLOW LIMIT POLICY AND PLAN INFRASTRUCTURE FROM THAT POINT.**

Investing in this project is crucial for the community and should not be delayed. The approaches outlined in Chapter 5 use existing street networks and resources to create a chain of ponds and stormwater mitigation strategies. These tools can be applied to existing and new streets to protect the existing network's functionality. Additionally, they will ensure that new developments resemble historic Castroville.

### 2

#### STREET PLANNING

**DEVELOP NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF STREETS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT FOR SPEED MITIGATION, TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND, MOBILITY ENHANCEMENT. THEN SYNC ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS WITH STORMWATER IMPROVEMENTS.**

The overlap of needs positioned in Chapter 5 define the opportunity for combining budget dollars from multiple sources to handle such a critical public asset. In order to properly identify where these solutions could overlap a street analysis is needed. This analysis should highlight sections needed for repair, speeding or traffic hotspots, and general problem areas. From that analysis, compare the recommended stormwater improvement areas (pg.84) to clarify the overlap of needs and prioritize where investments should go.

### 3

#### DOWNTOWN PLANNING

**UTILIZE THE TIRZ TO FUND ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS, INCENTIVIZE PRIVATE INVESTMENT, AND SUPPORT REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS THAT ALIGN WITH THE COMMUNITY GOALS AND PLAN.**

Castroville's downtown is positioned to be a regional draw for visitors, families, an attractive site for businesses and fiscal generator for the city. By improving a number of key assets, organizing the district and spending effort in recruiting the city can make the most of such a celebrated part of the city. The Downtown Master Plan outlines in detail both the key elements to success and the steps of implementation.

### 4

#### HIGHWAY 90 DISTRICT

**CONTINUE ONGOING DIALOGUE WITH TXDOT AND INSIST ON DESIGN STUDY OF BOULEVARD APPROACH AS PART OF LARGER SOLUTION.**

The community has worked hard to mitigate the negative impacts of Highway 90, and these efforts must continue. This substantial project will require partnerships, significant funding, and a change in philosophy at the DOT level. Chapter 5 outlines a design leveraging innovative transportation tools and integrating the town's historic fabric. This design offers an opportunity for a transformative retrofit that will significantly benefit Castroville.



## Goals for New Castroville

*New Castroville can either be designed to support existing Castroville or done in isolation. The community believes it has a say in how the city grows and has selected to plan new Castroville using the key elements that make up the existing environment. Understanding how to grow Castroville in an orderly manner will help the community develop. Castroville is built a small block grid whereas the current patterns are using single point of access loaded off of arterial road systems which have proven to create problematic traffic.*

### 1

#### GROWTH GUIDANCE

##### **FOLLOW GROWTH GUIDANCE MAP AS A STRUCTURE FOR INCOMING DEVELOPMENT.**

The Growth Guidance Map and associated text should serve development agreement and charette conversations. Castroville's City Council and community alike have made their desire for better complete communities clear.

### 2

#### CROSS TOWN CONNECTIONS

##### **IDENTIFY PRIORITY CONNECTIONS AND BEGIN PLANNING**

The sooner safe connections across are defined, funded and built the sooner the town can grow around these connections. Identified on pg. 46 are possible connection points. Community members have made progress to improve connections between Landmark Inn and the Steinbach House. The city should work to complete these negotiations to serve as an example for other planned connections.

### 3

#### SECURE NATURAL FEATURES

##### **THE CITY MUST WORK TO SECURE ITS NATURAL FEATURES AROUND THE RIVER, AND IN THE PLAINS BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.**

To the north and south of the original Castro Plan Area are critical floodplains. A significant investment will be required to purchase upstream land for regional detention, which will manage large volumes of water in a controlled setting before it reaches town. This solution will have long-term benefits by preventing area flooding and managing future storms.

Furthermore securing land for recreation, trails and parks as part of incoming development agreements will ensure all citizens of Castroville enjoy the beloved natural features of the area.

### 4

#### CARRYING OVER CASTROVILLE

##### **TXDOT HAS STALLED CONVERSATIONS AROUND BOULEVARDING THE IN-TOWN SECTION OF HIGHWAY 90 UNTIL A BYPASS ACROSS CASTROVILLE IS SETTLED.**

This can either mean waiting or urging a change in philosophy. This portion of Highway 90 can provide immediate relief both for local and regional issues. Viewing this as a part of the solution rather than another is a critical difference that will impact the entire scope of solutions.



