

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The City of Citrus Heights is preparing a Specific Plan to guide the revitalization and enhancement of Auburn Boulevard between Sylvan Corners and I-80. This 1.5-mile stretch of Auburn Boulevard was once part of State Highway 40, which carried traffic between Sacramento and Lake Tahoe. While formerly on the periphery of the Sacramento Metropolitan Area, this stretch of Auburn Boulevard and Citrus Heights now occupies a central place in the expanding Sacramento Metropolitan Region. The City of Citrus Heights is using the Specific Plan process to redefine the role of Auburn Boulevard within the context of the city and the region.

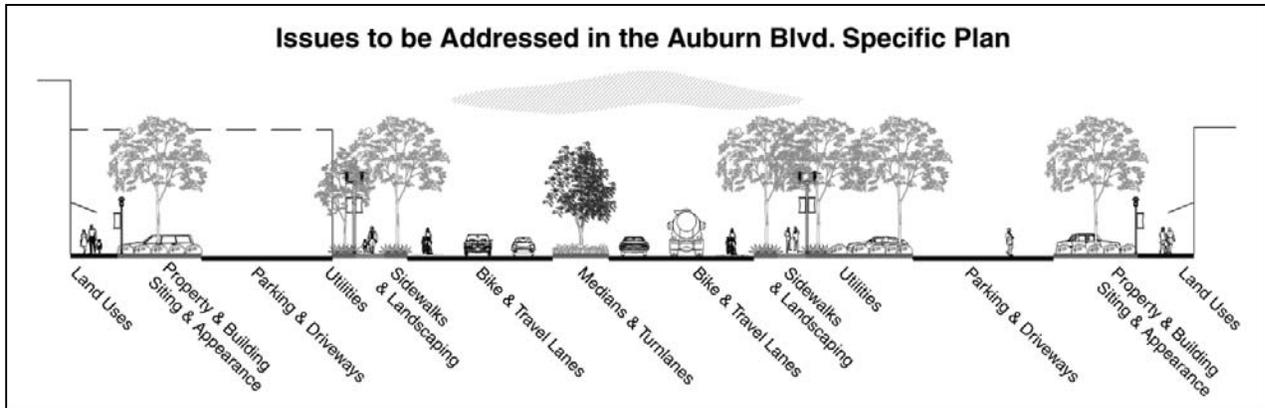
ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report is to define concepts and examine options to guide development of a Specific Plan for the future of Auburn Boulevard. The Specific Plan and this report address multiple aspects of the Auburn Boulevard corridor including the following:

- land uses/economic activities;
- property and building siting and appearance;
- parking arrangements and parking lot design;
- pedestrian patterns;
- sidewalk and landscaping;
- property access;
- utilities;
- travel lanes and bike lanes;
- medians and turn lanes; and
- intersections.

This report is organized into four chapters. The introduction reviews the planning process for the Auburn Boulevard Specific Plan, describes community input in the process up to this point, and summarizes key issues.





The second chapter describes the three options that have been developed to explore possible futures for Auburn Boulevard. These options are organized around three themes:

- Option 1: Commercial Services Emphasis
- Option 2: Housing and Mixed-Use Infill Emphasis
- Option 3: Regional Commercial Emphasis

The third chapter provides a comparative analysis of the three options based on evaluation criteria under five headings:

- Regional Position
- Transportation
- Community Image and Design
- Economic Development
- Economic Feasibility

The final chapter of the report describes existing conditions within the existing public right-of-way along Auburn Boulevard and the range of options for how the right-of-way might be developed to achieve community objectives.

USE OF THIS REPORT

The City Council and Planning Commission will use this report as a menu to select desired features for Auburn Boulevard corridor. Based on a review of the three options and input from the community and local stakeholders, the City Council and Planning Commission will identify the best features from the three options and develop a preferred option. The preferred option may contain all the features of a single option or some features from all three options.

PROCESS

The process of preparing the Auburn Boulevard Specific Plan is a collaborative effort of the City of Citrus Heights and its Consultants, business and property owners, neighboring home owners and renters, and the larger community. This process is organized under three major phases: Opportunities and Objectives, Options, and Concept and Action Plan.

Public Outreach

To solicit the views of the community and Auburn Boulevard stakeholders, the City convened a series of meetings leading up to this Concepts and Options Report. These meetings included three Community Workshops and three Stakeholders Workshops. The following paragraphs describe the objectives for each workshop.

Stakeholders Workshop #1

On October 25, 2002, over 20 people attended the first of five meetings with property owners, business owners, and representatives of adjacent residential properties. The objectives of the meeting were to review the planning process, discuss important issues and objectives for the Planning Area, and identify other people who should be included in the meetings.



Community Workshop #1

On November 12, 2002, over 30 people participated in the first of three community workshops to plan for the future of Auburn Boulevard. Workshop objectives included reviewing the overall planning process and discussing issues and objectives for the Boulevard. Participants worked as members of five planning teams to map issues and highlight their objectives.

Stakeholders Workshop #2

On November 22, 2002, approximately 20 people gathered for the second stakeholders meeting to discuss the results of the November 12 community workshop and initial planning analysis.

Community Workshop #2

On January 30, 2003, over 20 people participated in the second of three community workshops to review the three planning options for the development of Auburn Boulevard. The participants were divided into three planning teams and were asked to identify the strengths and features in each option they liked and wanted to include in a preferred concept plan. Criteria for evaluation included objectives established at the first community workshop. These objectives included:

- Beautification of Auburn Boulevard
- Improved interface with existing neighborhoods
- Improved pedestrian and vehicular safety

A summary of their comments can be found on the following pages under “Key Issues.” The comments included their favorite features and how the options best met the planning objectives identified by the community at the first workshop.

Stakeholders Workshop #3

On February 14, 2003, 14 stakeholders attended the third of five meetings with community and local stakeholders. The meeting focused on implementation issues concerning roadway improvements and public and private financing options.



KEY ISSUES

In the first phase of the Specific Plan process, local stakeholders, the community, City Staff, and the Specific Plan Consultants identified key issues along Auburn Boulevard that define policy choices for the Auburn Boulevard Specific Plan. This list of issues derives from two sources: the Existing Conditions Report, which provides an overview of the current land use, transportation, environmental, economic, and design conditions along the 1.5-mile segment of Auburn Boulevard; and public input from Community and Stakeholder Workshops described above.

Existing Conditions Report Findings

Land Use

- Citrus Heights and Auburn Boulevard now lie at the center of the growing Sacramento Region. They are now surrounded by major employment centers, such as Folsom and Roseville, and major shopping areas, such as Sunrise Boulevard, Greenback Lane, Roseville Galleria, and Madison Avenue.
- The stretch of I-80 at its intersection with Auburn Boulevard is one of the most heavily-traveled commuter corridors in the region.
- About 38 percent of the Auburn Boulevard Planning Area (excluding single family residential) is made up of retail, service, auto, and professional uses. About 17 percent is made up of medium density residential.
- The largest land holdings within the Planning Area are under public ownership. Nearly 96 acres of land or 20 percent of the total land area is owned by public agencies.
- The Planning Area has a fairly dispersed pattern of private ownership, with very few landowners owning more than one parcel or a significant amount of acreage.
- All commercial parcels fall within Redevelopment Project Area boundaries.

Community Design

- The landscaping along Auburn Boulevard is fragmented. Only the large expanses of landscaped areas along the west side of the Boulevard at Rusch Park and Sylvan Cemetery create a strong, positive visual impression. Otherwise, most of the streetscape is devoid of trees and greenery.

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Much of Auburn Boulevard lacks trees and greenery.



However, portions of the Boulevard with newer development have desirable sidewalks and canopy trees.

- Overhead transmission lines, light poles, and other utilities along the Boulevard, especially on the east side of the street, limit the possibility of adding trees and landscaping.
- Signage along the Boulevard fragments the visual and spatial experience.
- There is a rough interface between commercial and abutting residential uses in terms of land use and activity patterns. Parking lots, service areas and outdoor storage areas, trash containers, and utilitarian buildings back up to residential areas. Residential neighbors are also affected by the noise from commercial uses such as nighttime shipping and receiving activities.
- The sidewalk system is incomplete and narrow, has many vertical obstructions, is interrupted by numerous curb cuts, and provides little separation from speeding traffic. In some cases, there are no sidewalks.

Circulation

- Average daily traffic volume on Auburn Boulevard ranges from 32,000 to 34,300 vehicles. The segment currently operates at LOS F, which is below the City's desired LOS of "D."
- This stretch of Auburn Boulevard has 120 driveways. The driveway density (average of approximately 32 driveways per mile) is among the highest rates for comparable arterial streets in the Sacramento Region.
- The accident rate on Auburn Boulevard is higher than the statewide average accident rate for similar facilities. The majority of accidents involve rear-end and broadside collisions.
- There are currently no bike lanes along Auburn Boulevard.

Market and Financial Resources

- The city enjoys an overall surplus in retail sales. However, the Auburn Boulevard market area loses about one-half of its potential sales to stores outside the area.
- The Auburn Boulevard Planning Area has market potential for lumber and building materials stores, nurseries and garden supply stores, and sporting goods/bicycle stores.



Sales tax revenue have dropped in recent years due in part to competition from surrounding cities.

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- The Auburn Boulevard Planning Area has moderate market potential for grocery stores, furniture and home furnishing stores, eating places, and drug stores.
- There doesn't appear to be a strong market demand for new office development.

Fiscal Conditions

- Sales tax generation in the Auburn Boulevard Specific Plan area has decreased in the last two fiscal years. After showing strong growth in fiscal years 1998-99 and 1999-00, sales tax revenue has decreased by over 3.9 percent from the high reached in 1999-00 and 4.5 percent in 2001-02. While the sluggish economy plays a major role in the decrease, competition from new local and regional retail development in surrounding cities is a major contributor as well.



The K-mart site, located in subarea 5, has opportunities for mixed-use development.

Key Issues from Community and Stakeholder Workshops

Based on the five community and stakeholder workshops, the following issues were identified as the community's top concerns along Auburn Boulevard, including:

- Ingress and egress (too many driveways);
- Beautification;
- Cut-through traffic;
- Littering/trash;
- Lighting;
- Noise (sound wall to prevent traffic noise);
- Congestion;
- Homeless people;
- Vandalism;
- Property loss (negative business impacts due to widening activities);
- Turn lane off Linden (2 killed in 20 years and 1 injury per month by K-Mart); and
- Safety (sidewalks, parking, turn lanes, sidewalks, turning lane).

Community Comments on Planning Options

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the second community workshop provided an opportunity for the community to review and comment on the three planning options presented in this report. The participants were asked to identify the strengths and features in each option they liked and wanted to include in a preferred concept plan. The following lists their favorite features and concerns:

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- Liked how Option 1 (Commercial Services Emphasis) preserved the existing curb cut access to businesses;
- Wanted to recruit businesses that were compatible with existing businesses;
- Liked how the options improved the design of sidewalks;
- Liked the residential village in the Grand Oaks area;
- Preferred some infill housing;
- Liked undergrounding of utilities;
- Liked gateway(s) and Citrus Heights Business Center;
- Liked community retail center; and
- Liked mixed-use village.

Concerns included:

- Providing a separation of transportation modes;
- Providing streetscape improvements without widening the street;
- Impact of on-street parking and median on access to existing businesses; and
- Consolidating lots for larger tenants and improving the streetscape for areas south of Antelope.

NEXT STEPS

City Staff and the Consultants presented a summary of key issues and the three options described in this report to a joint study session of the City Council and Planning Commission on February 26, 2003. The City Council and Planning Commission will meet a second time on April 9 in a joint study session to review the options described in this report and to provide City Staff and Consultants direction as to the options or elements of the three options that they favor. This direction will be summarized in a Preferred Option Report that will be presented at a third joint study session in late May. Following the approval of a “preferred” option, the City and Consultants will prepare a Draft Auburn Boulevard Specific Plan for formal public review.