At the outset of the Mixed-Use and Pedestrian Linkages project, an Existing Conditions Memorandum was compiled on December 10, 2003 based on meetings with stakeholders and City staff, site reconnaissance and inventories, analysis of relevant census and parcel data, traffic/pedestrian/bicycle counts and analysis, land use and urban design analysis, and review of existing plans. The Memorandum serves as the baseline for the recommendations, standards, and guidelines recommended in this Plan. This chapter summarizes the findings of the memorandum, with an emphasis on the issues, opportunities, and constraints detailed at the end of the document. The full Existing Conditions Memorandum is available for review from the City of Monterey Park.

### 2.1 Elements of the Existing Conditions Analysis

Existing conditions in Downtown were catalogued in terms of both the public and private realms, including the built environment.

#### 2.1.1 Public Realm

The public realm includes those features of the built environment which are primarily within the publicly owned rights-of-way, such as:

- Bicycle circulation
- Transit service and stops
- Parking
- Vehicular traffic
- Signage/wayfinding
- Urban design features
- Streetscape improvements

#### 2.1.2 Private Realm

Features of the private realm which effect future development potential include:

- Existing land uses
- Character of existing development
- Lot and building size
- Proposed projects

#### 2.1.3 Relevant Plans

Plans which are relevant to the study area include:

- City of Monterey Park General Plan
- Garvey/Garfield and North Atlantic Specific Plans
- Monterey Park Zoning Ordinance
- Downtown Parking Management Program

By drawing on the above information as well as input provided in interviews with local stakeholders, including business owners, property owners, and community members, issues, opportunities, and constraints for future development and investment in Downtown Monterey Park were developed.


2.2 Regional, Socio-Economic, and Market Setting

The City of Monterey Park is located in the western San Gabriel Valley in Los Angeles County. Although situated in the northern part of the City, the Downtown study area is the City’s civic heart and a major commercial destination. Also, Downtown is bounded on the north by the San Bernardino (I-10) Freeway, putting it within reach of major population centers, the regional target markets for Downtown Monterey Park.

A review of socio-economic data shows that the Downtown study area is unique within the City of Monterey Park in several ways (see Table 2-1). For example, a substantial percentage of households do not own a car in the study area when compared to the City as a whole. Almost two-thirds of housing units in the study area are rental units, compared to less than half in the City as a whole. In addition, average income in the study area is substantially lower than in the City as a whole.

The City of Monterey Park retained a consultant to determine the buying power of the City. Some of the results of this study include:

- Monterey Park is a diverse city of 60,051 with 19,564 households, centered within a 3-mile trade area of 204,816 with 63,224 households and a 5-mile trade area of 386,324 with 109,614 households.
- Within the community is a core 68% of the City’s population occupying 66% of the households, the majority working in management, the professional fields, and related occupations. These households earn $75,000 to $250,000 yearly with a net household worth of $250,000 to $500,000.
- The City has nearly twice the nation average of Generation Y. This young group makes up 7 percent of the national consumers but they are spending 21% or 3 times of the number of total national spending.
- Compared to national average spending, Monterey Park residents are shopping at

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2-1: Key Demographic Characteristics of the Downtown Study Area, Compared to the City of Monterey Park and Los Angeles County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study Area</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (2000 Census)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Increase (SCAG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment (SCAG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Increase (SCAG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Est. Employment (SCAG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Units (Census)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero-Vehicle Housing (Census)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Transit, Walking, or Working at Home (Census 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Income (Census)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Under 21 (Census)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 21 to 49 (Census)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 50 and Over (Census)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1997 SCAG Regional Transportation Plan Projections and 2000 Census Data

1 – The study area is illustrated in Figure 1-1. Some demographic information was available only in block groups or census tracts. Where these spatial units overlapped the boundaries of the study area, the entire population of the spatial unit was used. Census data used from 5% sample long-form census which may vary slightly from 100% census results.

2 – Based on 1997 data which part of the current SCAG Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

3 – Estimated 2025 population and employment developed from Census 2000 base numbers multiplied by SCAG projection factors.

4 – Reflects 2000 Census data which would not include the effect of senior housing occupied in the study area since 2000.
national tenants not currently represented in Monterey Park, from 51% to 280% more – a huge trade-area leakage.

### 2.3 Public Realm Inventory

The inventory of existing conditions in the public realm examines those elements of public property and infrastructure that influence the livability of Downtown Monterey Park (see Figure 2-1). Both functions of the public realm – transportation and urban design – are critical to the success of Downtown as a vibrant, inviting livable community. The pedestrian environment is the core of a livable community because pedestrian linkages knit together the other aspects of an urban area. Pedestrian circulation is the primary means of access to most aspects of the community’s daily functions, including shopping, housing, parking, transit, and open space. Figure 2-1 and Table 2-2 provide visual and textual descriptions of the existing conditions of the public realm in Downtown Monterey Park.

Figure 2-1 illustrates the interconnectivity between each aspect of the public realm. Sidewalks form the core of a pedestrian-oriented public realm, as they include not just the concrete walkway itself but many of the other elements described in Table 2-2, including curb cuts, street trees, bus stops, lighting, street furniture, and signage.

In addition to a survey of existing physical conditions in the public realm, the inventory also included an analysis of existing pedestrian, bicycle, and auto traffic. The following are some of the results of that analysis:
- The most congested intersection in Downtown is Hellman / Atlantic.
- The Garvey / Atlantic intersection and Garfield at Garfield Hospital have the most pedestrian crossings.
- Garfield at Garfield Hospital and Garvey / McPherrin have the most bicycle traffic.
- Intercity bus service is every 10 minutes on Garvey and on Atlantic.
- Local Spirit bus service only runs every 40 minutes on each of its routes.

Additional details of the public realm inventory are provided in Chapter 2 of the Existing Conditions Memorandum, available by request from the City of Monterey Park.

### 2.4 Private Realm Inventory

The inventory of existing conditions in the private realm examines aspects of private property in Downtown Monterey Park that would influence the type and scale of future development in the area, as well as the livability of Downtown.

Table 2-3 on the following pages summarizes the critical aspects of existing private development in Downtown Monterey Park. In addition to a general description of existing land uses, the table provides summaries of the scale of development in each “subarea” of Downtown along the major corridors of Garvey, Atlantic, and Garfield (subareas, derived from the City’s General Plan, are described explained further in Section 2.5). Much of the data is described in terms of floor-to-area ratio (FAR). FAR can be understood as the square footage of development divided by lot size in square feet. For example, a two-story building which completely filled its lot would have an FAR of 2.0.

The FAR data in Table 2-3 gives the reader an idea of the relative intensities of existing development and allows a comparison between existing development intensity and that allowed by the General Plan. Parcel-by-parcel data collected to compile Table 2-3 in the Existing Conditions Memorandum.

Based on the data summarized in Table 2-3, Figure 2-2 illustrates different lots which mostly likely could support new development in the Downtown project area. The parcels highlighted are vacant parcels, residential parcels in commercial zones, parcels with an FAR below 0.25, and City-owned parcels. Also shown are locations which are being currently being considered by developers for potential development. While these factors do indicate that a property may be available for new development, the likelihood of new development is also dependent on other factors such as land value, age of the current development, parcel size, and inclination of the owner.
### Chapter 2. Existing Conditions and Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

**Table 2-2. Public Realm Existing Conditions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Description</strong></td>
<td>This portion of Garvey Avenue links Atlantic Blvd. with the Downtown core. A mix of low-rise (1-2 story) retail and office development is generally built up to the sidewalk, although a few shopping centers do have off-street parking along the sidewalk. This area has not received streetscape enhancements like the Business Improvement District, but it does have ficus street trees and medians landscaped with trees. Cross-streets along this stretch of Garvey are generally lined with multi-family housing and some commercial close to Garvey.</td>
<td>Garvey east of the Business Improvement District is less dense and busy than the remainder of its length through Monterey Park. While there is some development built up to the sidewalk, a significant proportion of development is auto-serving, and some parcels are vacant. However, the sidewalks in this section are some of the widest in Monterey Park. Existing streetscape is minimal, generally ficus trees in the sidewalks and landscaped medians in the road.</td>
<td>Atlantic Boulevard is a busy, wide street as it extends south from the I-10 Freeway to Garvey. Sidewalks are 8'-10' wide, and there are street trees intermittently along the sidewalk. Existing development is generally auto-oriented, particularly on the east side of the road, with many curb cuts and parking lots up to the sidewalk. However, existing development between Garvey and Emerson on the west side of the street is built right up to the street, with some outdoor seating at Starbucks. A proposed mixed-use project on the east side of the road north of Emerson could increase pedestrian-orientation.</td>
<td>Garfield south of Garvey is a less active portion of the downtown core. Critically, the sidewalks are typically only 4.5' wide. Some trees have been preserved from the 1970's widening of the pavement by creating tree bump-outs along the curb into the parking lane. In a few locations, businesses have been set back from the sidewalk in anticipation of an overall widening of the sidewalk. Most businesses, however, are housed in older one-story commercial buildings, some converted from houses. One the east side of the road, frequent driveways cut into the narrow sidewalk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Right-of-Way Width</strong></td>
<td>100'</td>
<td>100' (105' Orange-Alhambra)</td>
<td>100'</td>
<td>70' to 85'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sidewalk</strong></td>
<td>Width</td>
<td>N: 10' S: 12'</td>
<td>N: 10' S: 12'</td>
<td>8' typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Condition</strong></td>
<td>The sidewalk is in relatively good condition. In a few locations, parkway turf existing along curb.</td>
<td>The sidewalk is still split into half-parkway / half-sidewalk, a holdover from when development was largely residential along East Garvey. The turf in existing parkways is largely dead.</td>
<td>The sidewalk is in relatively good condition. Sidewalk right-of-way includes some parkway along curb in area of Atlantic Times Square project.</td>
<td>Wider sidewalks are in relatively good condition, but the narrow sidewalks in front of older properties do show some decay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crosswalks</strong></td>
<td>Decorative textured asphalt crosswalks throughout</td>
<td>2 unsignalized crossing at Sefton and Rural</td>
<td>1 signalized midblock crosswalk (s/o Emerson)</td>
<td>1 signalized midblock crosswalk (at Garfield Hospital)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Block Size</strong></td>
<td>510' long</td>
<td>530' long</td>
<td>430' long</td>
<td>1320' long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Signal Spacing</strong></td>
<td>Every 670'</td>
<td>Every 660'</td>
<td>Every 810'</td>
<td>Every 880'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curb Cuts</strong></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>1 driveway per 210'</td>
<td>1 driveway per 590'</td>
<td>1 driveway per 380'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>Curb cuts are particularly clustered near Atlantic Boulevard at gas stations and 99 Ranch shopping center.</td>
<td>Curb cuts are very infrequent in this area. Half are between Ramona and Garfield on south side of street.</td>
<td>Curb cuts are relatively infrequent. Cluster of curb cuts between Florence and Elizabeth on north side of street.</td>
<td>Curb cuts throughout except between Garvey and Emerson on west side of street (Harbor Village and Mar Center).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Segments</td>
<td>Garvey Avenue to Nicholson Avenue</td>
<td>Nicholson Avenue to New Avenue</td>
<td>Hellman Avenue to Garvey Avenue</td>
<td>Hellman Avenue to Garvey Avenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4 miles (2020')</td>
<td>0.5 miles (2640')</td>
<td>0.6 miles (3240')</td>
<td>0.5 miles (2640')</td>
<td>0.5 miles (2640')</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Street Trees
- **Species**: Ficus typical, Queen Palm typical, Ficus typical, Ficus typical, Ficus typical, Eucalyptus typical
- **Description**: Newly planted pairs of Queen Palms typically spaced 50’ OC. Trees approximately 30’ OC. Trees planted infrequently along street, generally in front of more recent development. Only trees located in infrequent tree “bump-outs” in the parking lane. Trees have died in some bump-outs.
- **Spacing**: Trees planted 50’ OC typical with occasional gaps in planting pattern.
- **Tree Wells**: 4’ square gaps in sidewalk, no planting or grate
- **Raised Medians**: Landsaped median intermittent with left turn lane. Median includes large established trees and low groundcover.
- **Alleys**: North side from Lincoln east to halfway through block.
- **Bus Stops**: Routes Spirit 2 (40 min. peak)
- **Amenities**: All stops have seating (concrete benches) and trash receptacles. Four of the six stops have shelters.
- **Lighting**: Standard cobra lighting.
- **Street Furniture**: Bicycle Racks

### Public Realm Existing Conditions, cont.
- **Street Segments**: Friendship Place to Garvey
- **Species**: Ficus typical, Queen Palm typical, Ficus typical, Ficus typical, Ficus typical, Eucalyptus typical
- **Description**: Newly planted pairs of Queen Palms typically spaced 50’ OC. Trees approximately 30’ OC. Trees planted infrequently along street, generally in front of more recent development. Only trees located in infrequent tree “bump-outs” in the parking lane. Trees have died in some bump-outs.
- **Spacing**: Trees planted 50’ OC typical with occasional gaps in planting pattern.
- **Tree Wells**: 4’ square gaps in sidewalk, no planting or grate
- **Raised Medians**: Landsaped median intermittent with left turn lane. Median includes large established trees and low groundcover.
- **Alleys**: North side from Lincoln east to halfway through block.
- **Bus Stops**: Routes Spirit 2 (40 min. peak)
- **Amenities**: All stops have seating (concrete benches) and trash receptacles. Four of the six stops have shelters.
- **Lighting**: Standard cobra lighting.
- **Street Furniture**: Bicycle Racks

### Additional Information
- **Garvey Avenue to Nicholson Avenue**: Eastern Segment
- **Nicholson Avenue to New Avenue**: Western Segment
- **Hellman Avenue to Garvey Avenue**: Southern Segment
- **Hellman Avenue to Garvey Avenue**: Northern Segment
- **Garvey Avenue to Newmark Avenue**: Eastern Segment

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street Segments</th>
<th>Garvey Avenue to Nicholson Avenue</th>
<th>Nicholson Avenue to New Avenue</th>
<th>Hellman Avenue to Garvey Avenue</th>
<th>Hellman Avenue to Garvey Avenue</th>
<th>Garvey Avenue to Newmark Avenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.4 miles (2020')</td>
<td>0.5 miles (2640')</td>
<td>0.6 miles (3240')</td>
<td>0.5 miles (2640')</td>
<td>0.5 miles (2640')</td>
<td>0.2 miles (990')</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 2. Existing Conditions and Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

Figure 2-1. Public Realm Inventory
### Table 2-3: Private Realm Existing Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subareas (per General Plan)</th>
<th>North Atlantic</th>
<th>North Garfield</th>
<th>“West Garvey”</th>
<th>Downtown</th>
<th>East Garvey</th>
<th>Project Area Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Existing Land Use Summary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perimeter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship of development to the pedestrian environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Core</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Perimeter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 – Private realm analysis includes only those parcels within each subarea which have frontage along the three main corridors – Garvey, Atlantic, and Garfield.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subareas (per General Plan)</th>
<th>North Atlantic</th>
<th>North Garfield</th>
<th>&quot;West Garvey&quot;</th>
<th>Downtown</th>
<th>East Garvey</th>
<th>Project Area Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Lots</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Lot Square Footage</td>
<td>Total for Subarea</td>
<td>1,411,000</td>
<td>877,000</td>
<td>408,000</td>
<td>718,000</td>
<td>539,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average per Lot</td>
<td>42,800</td>
<td>36,500</td>
<td>13,200</td>
<td>19,900</td>
<td>18,600</td>
<td>8,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Building Square Footage</td>
<td>Total for Subarea</td>
<td>474,000</td>
<td>536,000</td>
<td>148,000</td>
<td>317,000</td>
<td>240,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average per Lot</td>
<td>14,400</td>
<td>22,300</td>
<td>4,800</td>
<td>8,800</td>
<td>8,300</td>
<td>3,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Existing FAR</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum Permitted FAR acc. General Plan¹</td>
<td>2.0 (2.25)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0²</td>
<td>1.0 (1.25)</td>
<td>0.65 (0.90)</td>
<td>0.5 (0.75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Potential Development Sq. Footage (acc. General Plan)²</td>
<td>2,348,000 (2,700,000)</td>
<td>340,000</td>
<td>263,000</td>
<td>410,000 (583,000)</td>
<td>95,000 (174,000)</td>
<td>146,000 (313,000)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 – General Plan gives an addition 0.25 FAR bonus for mixed use development (shown in parenthesis).
3 – Maximum permitted FAR for "West Garvey" taken from Zoning Ordinance (maximum permitted for C-S, C-P, or O-P with CUP).
Figure 2-2. Potential Parcels for Development
2.5 Current Plans

2.5.1 City of Monterey Park General Plan
The City of Monterey Park General Plan was adopted in July 18, 2001. The General Plan is required by state law and sets forth overall goals and objectives and policies to guide development in a city. The General Plan provides a framework for future development and all development must be consistent with this plan. Figure 2-3 illustrates the General Plan Land Uses in the Study area. The designations along the main streets of Downtown are mixed-use or commercial. Superimposed are the General Plan Focus Areas and FAR subareas.

For clarity, General Plan subareas have also been used in this planning effort: North Atlantic, North Garfield, Downtown Core, Downtown Perimeter, and East Garvey. However, an additional “subarea” called “West Garvey” has been added to those included in the General Plan, in order to define the portion of Garvey Avenue between North Atlantic Boulevard and the Downtown Perimeter.

2.5.2 Specific Plans
Two Specific Plans were adopted in October 1987 for portions of the Central Commercial Redevelopment Area. The Garvey/Garfield Specific Plan is focused on properties adjacent to the intersection of Garvey Avenue and Garfield Avenue from Emerson Avenue to south of Newmark Avenue along Garfield Avenue and from Huntington Avenue to Lincoln Avenue on Garvey Avenue (Figure 2-4). The North Atlantic Boulevard Specific Plan includes an area on both sides of Atlantic Boulevard from Hellman Avenue to just south of Garvey Avenue (Figure 2-5). Specific Plans and/or zoning ordinances provide for the implementation of the General Plan policies. It should be noted that the General Plan is the guiding land use policy document of the City. In Monterey Park, the General Plan has been adopted more recently than the Specific Plans, and the Specific Plans will need to be updated, revised, or deleted in order to reflect the policies of the General Plan.

2.5.3 Zoning Ordinance
In addition to the General and Specific Plans, the downtown area is governed by the City’s Zoning Ordinance. The zoning ordinance contains standards for development including the type of uses permitted, lot sizes, FARs, property setbacks, building height, and parking requirements. The zoning standards for the three corridors are generally commercial in nature. Segments of each corridor fall within various zones. Note that most lots within the project area other than along Garfield between Hellman and Emerson fall under a PD overlay zone. This “Planned Development” overlay is currently the means for implementation of mixed-use developments in commercial zones.
Figure 2-3. General Plan Land Uses

Maximum Floor Area Ratios (Heights) by Area:
- North Atlantic - 2.0 (75)
- North Garfield - 1.0 (60)
- D Core - 1.0 (75)
- D Perimeter - 0.5 (55)
- East Garvey - 0.5

Land Use Categories:
- Low Density Residential
- Mixed Use I
- Mixed Use II
- Public Facilities
- Open Space
- High Density Residential
- Mixed Use III
- Commercial
Figure 2-4. Garvey/Garfield Specific Plan Area
2.5.4 Downtown Parking Management Program

The Downtown Parking Management Program approved by the City in 2000 provides parking strategies for commercial businesses. This parking study tabulates the parking supply in the Downtown area for individual businesses and on-street. A toolbox of options is provided to address parking issues. A few of the parking options as summarized in the General Plan include:

- **Joint use.** A parking arrangement that serves two or more land uses.
- **Clustered parking.** Combines several parking uses in a facility to better use parking spaces, maximize land use, and to reduce overall development costs.
- **In-lieu of parking fees.** Offers the developer the option of building the required parking or contributing funds for future parking or transportation improvements.
- **Demand-based parking requirements.** Bases parking requirements on actual local demand levels. Requires current and future parking demand study.
- **Preferential parking for rideshare vehicles.** Reserve conveniently located parking spaces for carpools and vanpools.
2.6 Stakeholder Comments

In addition to the inventories of existing conditions, community members provide additional information based on their personal knowledge of Downtown Monterey Park. These comments contributed significantly to an understanding of the issues, opportunities, and constraints for establishing a pedestrian-oriented livable community in downtown. Some of the topics which stakeholders commented on include:

- Existing mix of businesses Downtown,
- Business climate,
- Possible new businesses for Downtown,
- Mixed-use development,
- Lot size
- Identity of Downtown Monterey Park,
- Competition with neighboring cities,
- Tour buses,
- Pedestrian movement,
- Cycling,
- Transit,
- Traffic,
- Parking, and
- Streetscape / Open Space

Specific stakeholder comments are reflected in Section 2.7. However, for a more detailed listing of stakeholder comments, refer to Chapter 5 of the Existing Conditions Memorandum, available by request from the City of Monterey Park.

2.7 Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

This section explores how the information gleaned from the existing conditions inventory has affected the development of the vision and recommendations for Downtown Monterey Park. Each subsection contains descriptions of specific issues, opportunities, and constraints which affect the nature of improvements that are needed and feasible in Downtown Monterey Park.

2.7.1 Mix of Uses

Historically, the downtown area of Monterey Park is known for its excellent Asian restaurants. However, today other areas are competing for downtown Monterey Park’s business including Alhambra, San Gabriel, and Rowland Heights. Today, downtown Monterey Park still has many excellent restaurants. However, according to the BID management, extensive price competition between restaurants is making many of these restaurants poor investments. In the Downtown area, most of the restaurants are concentrated along Garvey but with some major restaurants along Atlantic. In addition, the area has a considerable number of beauty shops, travel agencies and more recently tutoring facilities. There are five major supermarkets in the area (see Figures 2-6 to 2-8).

Some of the missing uses in downtown found in pedestrian-friendly areas include outdoor cafes, bookstores, retail clothing catering to a more
Chapter 2. Existing Conditions and Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints

diverse population, home improvement stores and nighttime uses such as a movie theater and night clubs. Also missing are new residential uses to create a 24/7 environment, extending the time period when downtown is used. Members of the community have mentioned that national retail chains are absent and should be represented in the area.

In the last two decades, there has been little development. The General Plan adopted in 2001 recommends a mix of uses including mixed-use projects in the downtown area. This opportunity has stimulated developer interest in several mixed-use projects with both residential and retail combined with new parking. The challenge will be to capitalize on this opportunity to diversity the mix of uses downtown and at the same time to design new projects to include an environment with adequate parking and walkable amenities such as wider sidewalks, outdoor dining and other pedestrian amenities within the pedestrian realm.

2.7.2 Market Potential
Market studies of Monterey Park have shown that the potential exists to increase commercial activity in the Downtown area, with an opportunity to increase the number of national chain tenants. Factors which highlight the potential for growth in downtown include a large number of high-spending “Generation Y” residents, many professional families earning more than $75,000 per year, and a current under-representation of national tenants when compared to other communities with similar spending traits.

2.7.3 Residential Uses along the Corridors
The General Plan recommends mixed-use projects in the Downtown study area. Mixed-use includes a combination of commercial uses with residential uses. Along the project area corridors, there is very little residential today, and the residential that exists is old and typically run-down. However, within the study area itself there are over 8,000 residential units within walking distance of the corridors. By 2020, substantially more housing units are projected for the Downtown study area. However, several key issues must be addressed to create an environment along these corridors more conducive to residential development.

Key issues and constraints to developing residential uses as a part of mixed-use project along the corridors include:

- Shallow and small parcels along the corridor, especially along Garvey, making development difficult
- Wide streets carrying a substantial amount of traffic with few pedestrian and streetscape amenities except in the BID area along Garvey (Figure 2-9)
- Long blocks with a lack of parallel accessways such as alleys, requiring that access to individual parcels be directly from the major streets
- Relatively high land values and few vacant buildings or parcels making projects difficult to pencil out
- Absence today of development standards for mixed-use projects addressing issues such as setbacks, parking, façade treatment, mix of uses, open space, height, and parking (see Figure 2-10)

With appropriate mixed-use standards, many of the above issues and constraints may be
overcome. Potential development standards and guidelines to explore include:

- Concepts for improving the pedestrian realm of each major corridor, making the area more conducive to residential uses
- Reflecting proximity to transit, more flexible parking standards for residential to incorporate potential for live-work units
- More flexible requirements for amount and type of open space
- Requirements for sound insulation and air conditioning to address potential noise intrusion from major corridors
- Requirements for window placement and building height transition when adjacent to low-density residential development
- Guidelines for building articulation and design of ground floor uses
- Guidelines for size and type of units (live-work, lofts, flats) and separation of entries
- Guidelines and standards requiring buildings to be located along the sidewalk with parking underground or behind
- Guidelines for signage
- Some relief from lot consolidation standards for mixed-use development

2.7.4 Diversity of the City

Over time, Monterey Park has become a more diverse population, which could be a selling point for locating businesses, shopping, and residents in downtown. Members of the community have expressed that the opportunity exists for capitalizing on Monterey Park’s image for excellent food. This could include marketing the area not only for Chinese food but also other International foods such as Thai food, Mexican food, etc. Perhaps an international marketplace, farmers-market project combined with mixed use with a strong pedestrian orientation would be an excellent opportunity to appeal to the Los Angeles regional market. Placing Monterey Park food venues together in appropriate regional and national food guides, plus kiosks or signage to guide patrons in the downtown area might encourage others to come for the food and shop after that for other goods and services.

2.7.5 Parking

Parking was mentioned by most local Monterey Park residents as a problem in Downtown. A recent Downtown Parking Management Program prepared 1998-2000 indicates that substantial parking is available in downtown but not always where parking is needed. In front of the busiest proprietors, parking is often fully utilized (see Figure 2-11), especially on the weekends. The plan indicated a series of tool box parking options to better utilize existing parking such as joint use, clustered parking, in lieu of parking fees, and demand based parking requirements.

Another issue is that parking requirements for multiple residential in the City are quite high. Requirements are per bedroom. For example, 3½ spaces are required for a 3 bedroom unit. These requirements may not be appropriate for mixed use which assumes that many trips will be satisfied by walking and transit. In the mixed-use ordinances from other cities in the area, the City found that most required 2 spaces per unit or fewer. In Santa Monica, only one space per unit is being considered. There is an opportunity for reducing the amount of parking required in Monterey Park, particularly if combined with many of the pedestrian-oriented recommendations and toolbox parking options mentioned in the Parking Management Program.

The Garvey / Garfield Specific Plan recommended downtown parking structures be developed to create a sufficient amount of public parking in large structures so that patrons will clearly know where to park when shopping in downtown. This is a technique that has been utilized in revitalizing downtown Santa Monica and Pasadena; however, both these cities already had the structured parking available from previous failed retail complexes. Monterey
Park, however, would need to finance these structures in today’s dollars, which will be a challenge. Construction of a new parking structure could be investigated by the City in the City-owned lots near Garvey/Garfield, or as a part of private development in areas where small businesses have no parking today.

2.7.6 Specific Plans
The two Downtown Specific Plans, North Atlantic and Garvey/Garfield, both prepared in 1987, are complicated and are not entirely consistent with the updated General Plan. They need to be modified or eliminated and replaced with new mixed-use standards. However, certain portions of these Specific Plans are valuable, such as:

- Circulation concepts that require consolidation of driveways and key access points such as a new intersection along Atlantic between Hellman and Emerson.
- Many of the pedestrian-friendly development standards (see Figure 2-12).

2.7.7 Development Potential / FARs
In order to encourage mixed-use development in the corridors, the City’s General Plan provides a 0.25 FAR bonus for mixed-use development. However, a bonus of 0.25 FAR may not be enough to encourage mixed-use development, particularly in subareas where the base FAR is already fairly low, such as East Garvey and the Downtown Perimeter. In these locations, even with the 0.25 bonus allowable FAR would still be less than 1.0. This FAR may not be enough to allow financially feasible developments that combine commercial and residential.

2.7.8 Vehicular Traffic Dominates the Pedestrian and Transit Environment along the Corridors
Pedestrians use sidewalks to gain access to private development and to move through the community. When provided with additional amenities, sidewalks become social spaces where individuals can gather, relax, shop, and dine. For a street to be walkable with room for pedestrians, street trees for shade, and other pedestrian amenities, a 10’ sidewalk is the absolute minimum and 12’-15’ is more comfortable.

However, the major streets (Atlantic and Garfield) leading to Downtown from the freeway are dominated by vehicular traffic. These streets have been widened to carry vehicular traffic at the expense of the pedestrian and transit users. Sidewalks on Atlantic are adjacent to the curb and in some cases only 8’ wide, inhospitable to the pedestrian and making it difficult to locate transit shelters and amenities. On Garfield, the sidewalks are even less, 4.5’ to 7.5’ wide (see Figure 2-13) with tall Eucalyptus trees in curb bump outs, too small in size to have a positive impact on the sidewalk.

Garvey, in the Business Improvement District, has a more pedestrian-friendly development with new streetscape amenities including new palm trees, a landscaped median with gateway,
making crossing distances less, new historically inspired lighting, new benches, new trash receptacles, transit shelters, and sidewalks at least 10’ wide. Also, most businesses are located with building entrances adjacent to the sidewalk, which fosters pedestrian activity. The City of Monterey Park General Plan calls for even wider sidewalks of 17’ to 20’ wide, which were not built when the streetscape plan was implemented. The Garvey/Garfield Specific Plan calls for a five-foot setback on private property adjacent to the sidewalk, a policy which should be continued and would result in a 15’ to 20’ sidewalk.

This study needs to investigate opportunities to expand the pedestrian environment along all corridors by such mechanisms as setbacks on private property and/or expand the sidewalks into on-street parking areas when parking may be provided in private or city parking structures.

2.7.9 Pedestrian Crossings

Pedestrian crossings are made more difficult because of enhancements to the street for automobiles. Curb queuing areas are quite small in some places, making waiting to cross the street uncomfortable. It should be noted, however, that the Garvey/Garfield Specific Plan calls for pedestrian plazas at the corners of the Garvey/Garfield intersection that would assist with pedestrian queuing. So far, only one plaza has been constructed, at the northwest corner of the intersection. Potential developments being considered at the other corners of this intersection should continue this pattern of establishing pedestrian plazas at the corners.

The intersection of Garvey/Atlantic is possibly the most difficult intersection for pedestrian crossings in the study area for several reasons (see Figure 2-14). The roadway is particularly wide, separate left (and right) turn signals make judging traffic flows difficult, and curb cuts near the intersection (for the gas stations) compound the difficulty of navigating the area. However, this intersection is a critical pedestrian node because it links two of the project corridors, and it is the transfer point for two major MTA bus lines. In fact, pedestrian counts of major intersections showed this intersection to have the highest level of pedestrian activity in Downtown Monterey Park. Improvements to this intersection should be a focus of later phases of this project.

In the past, the City has also had a policy of removing striping from unsignalized pedestrian crossings of major streets because cars did not observe pedestrians, creating dangerous situations. While removal of the striping may cause pedestrians to be more cautious, it also discourages movement across the street. Few pedestrian signals have been installed to enable safe pedestrian street crossings, but this is an opportunity to be considered. Along Garvey, the installation of decorative asphalt crosswalks has not only added to the attractiveness of the area, but has increased the visibility of crosswalks, enhancing their safety.

Several stakeholders also commented that “scramble”-phase crossings of intersections, where all vehicular traffic is stopped and pedestrians are able to cross in any direction through an intersection, would be beneficial. These scramble-phase crossings provide pedestrians with a clear window of opportunity to move through the intersection in any direction. While current pedestrian levels in Downtown do not warrant their installation, as pedestrian traffic increases due to new pedestrian-oriented development, scramble crossings could be implemented at intersections in Downtown. In addition, there are opportunities to install other crossing improvements, including “count down”
pedestrian signals at intersections that let pedestrians know how many seconds they have until the light turns red.

2.7.10 Other Downtown Linkages

Issues and opportunities for linkages in Downtown Monterey Park are described here in terms of pedestrians, transit, and bicycles:

- **Pedestrian**
  As the inventory of the public realm discussed, there already exist several nodes in the Downtown project area that support substantial amounts of walking (illustrated with the quarter-mile radii in Figure 2). In these areas, people may be willing to walk between destinations. However, Figure 2 also shows that in the context of the project area as a whole, the walking radii either barely overlap or do not overlap at all. There is a particularly large gap between the pedestrian nodes centered around Garfield / Garvey and the pedestrian nodes (existing and proposed) centered around Atlantic. It will be critical to find ways to either encourage pedestrian movement between the Garfield and Atlantic activity areas, or to provide alternative means (most likely transit) of getting between the two areas.

- **Transit**
  Transit, both into the Downtown area from the surrounding region and circulator service around the Downtown area, should be better integrated into the pedestrian environment. While there are sufficient bus stops along the project corridors, transit has not yet been a major consideration in design of public infrastructure. For example, new bus shelters were not included in the BID streetscape program (see Figure 2-15). In fact, few bus stops have shelters. Curb bump-outs at the bus stops could also be considered to provide additional space on the sidewalk where riders are waiting for service. The intersection of Atlantic/Garvey is a major transfer point between two MTA bus lines, both of which run at least every ten minutes during weekdays. Future phases of this project should focus on that intersection.

Because the project corridors are too long to be comfortably walkable by the average pedestrian, circulator transit service should be provided through the Downtown area. Existing Spirit bus service does provide some circulator service, but headways are too large (every 40 minutes). Increasing headways or developing more focused routing could enhance this service. In addition, there is an opportunity for a shuttle service to the Eastside light rail project, which with a stop at Atlantic Boulevard and Pomona. The Eastside light rail project is scheduled for completion in 2007.

- **Bicycle**
  Bicycle circulation is currently fairly minimal through the Downtown study area. Some locations do show increased levels of cycling however, particularly near Garfield Hospital and the intersection of McPherrin / Garvey (near Ynez and St. Stephen’s Schools). However, cycling would provide a beneficial alternative means of access to the project corridors from the surrounding area, increasing the area from which the project corridors could draw visitors and workers without bringing additional vehicles into the area.

The only Class II bike lanes in the City are along Alhambra Avenue. Parallel Class II bike lanes on other north-south streets, possibly McPherrin Avenue, could provide additional access to Garvey. (Class II bike lanes are striped on the street, providing an exclusive space for cyclists. They are preferable to Class III bike routes which do not provide an exclusive lane for cyclists.) Currently, both Emerson and Newmark bear significant vehicular traffic, particularly during peak hours. However, with traffic calming improvements, it may be possible to
make these streets more comfortable for Class III east-west bicycle movement.

2.7.11 Traffic
The following are some of the vehicular traffic issues which should be addressed in this project:

- **Hellman / Atlantic**
  The existing level of service is very poor with additional complexity due to the freeway ramps. Investigate possible alternatives for vehicular and pedestrian circulation, especially when the proposed Atlantic Times Square project is developed.

- **McPherrin / Garvey**
  The existing level of service is poor. There are many bicycles in this area, potentially because of the proximity of the two elementary schools (Ynez and St. Stephen’s). Consider enhancements which protect bicycle and pedestrian movement in this area.

In addition, the General Plan includes a program of street widening for both Atlantic Boulevard and Garfield Avenue. As new development occurs, there will be opportunities to implement this widening program. However, if the livability of Downtown is to be improved, this widening should occur in conjunction with pedestrian-oriented improvements to the streets.