

Blueprint for Action



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Danville, in collaboration with the Danville Area Chamber of Commerce, has set out to develop a marketing program to promote Danville as a unique shopping destination of choice. The intent is to build recognition for Danville's retail choices and to make it the preferred shopping destination for local and regional consumers, generating more business and revenue for downtown and the entire area.

A fact-gathering process to gather anecdotal evidence was undertaken to lay the foundation of this Blueprint for Action plan. The research included interviews with business owners and consumers. Also reviewed were materials and reports provided by the Town of Danville, and a survey of commercial real estate professionals to determine and review opportunities for growth. The relationship between shopping, restaurants and existing events was also considered so that the plan can provide a strategic direction for marketing Danville.

The market assessment revealed that the two main audiences currently attracted to Danville as a shopping destination are “mothers and daughters” and “ladies who lunch” (i.e. women with leisure time, many of whom are willing to drive to Danville from outside communities). The marketing plan and implementation strategies recommended in the body of this report is largely focused on these target female audiences, both in Danville and regionally, but it does not disregard the existing population outside the key target audiences such as families, working professionals in various industry sectors, active senior citizens, etc.

Based on the understanding of the target audiences, a branding document was completed to determine the key messages that need to be conveyed through all marketing communications materials and activities. The key brand message: *Danville is the shopping and dining destination for area residents and those in surrounding communities, offering a relaxed hometown feel with a distinct sense of style and sophisticated flair.*

During the fact gathering process, existing consumers clearly articulated that Danville already has the building blocks needed to raise its profile. It is an attractive community with many top-quality and appealing retail establishments, a number of established crowd-pleasing events, and a charming environment with a pedestrian scale that is conducive to both strolling and shopping. As such, the primary strategies in raising the profile of Danville as a shopping destination of choice is to effectively market and promote Danville's existing attributes in a cohesive manner, and therefore includes the following recommended implementation actions:

1. Development of a "Shop Danville" Web Site
2. Development of an annual Advertising Plan
3. Development of an annual Publicity Plan
4. Refocus the Purpose of Special Events
5. Implementation of Program Measurements

The Plan incorporates communication tools and both marketing and non-marketing initiatives. Each initiative is intended to be a high-return opportunity that will communicate the Town's offerings and raise awareness of Danville's image.

This Blueprint for Action presents a marketing program with evolving short-term and long-term focuses with the intent to establish Danville as a unique, first-rate local and regional shopping destination of choice.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF PROJECT

In 2006, the Town of Danville formalized its economic development efforts in an Economic Development Strategy (the “Strategy”) with a primary goal to promote awareness of Danville businesses and find ways to encourage local customers to patronize those businesses for the long-term health of the local economy.

An update of the Strategy (adopted on April 1, 2008) authorized, among other actions, the development and implementation of a “Shop Local First” Marketing Program, in collaboration with the Danville Area Chamber of Commerce (the “Chamber”), as well as this Blueprint for Action report. The goal of the Program is to capture a greater share of the local retail market by appealing directly to local shoppers and to brand the Danville retail areas as a unique shopping destination.

Essential to the successful positioning of Danville and its retail areas is the development of a strategic, comprehensive and cohesive marketing plan that will support local businesses with downtown Danville as the focal point of the area and cross-promoting the specific retail strengths of area destination centers such as Alamo Plaza, Tassajara Crossings, Blackhawk Plaza and the soon to be opened Rose Garden Shopping Center. The intent is to raise the profile of downtown Danville as a unique, in-style shopping destination of choice that has an array of crowd-pleasing events throughout the year.

Placemaking Group has worked in concert with the “Shop Local First” Marketing Program Steering Committee, the Town of Danville and the Danville Area Chamber of Commerce to gather input from consumer and business stakeholders, to identify target audiences, prioritize goals, fine-tune messages and determine assets. We looked at the current market position of the Danville area, with a specific focus on consumer’s shopping habits and expectations, and interviewed area businesses about consumer trends as well as market opportunities and challenges.

When carefully planned and implemented, a marketing plan designed to drive traffic to the Danville area can serve as a significant contributor to the economic health of the community. Furthermore, by enhancing the image of the Danville area, increased retail activity can build an even greater level of pride among the people who live and work in the area.

For some communities, boosting awareness of a retail area is easily developed, utilizing assets that can be made into attractions with little effort. In contrast, other communities must work hard at attracting consumers. Fortunately for the Danville area, it has many attributes and assets that can be marketed to attract locals and visitors. However, even with diverse assets, increasing visitor

patronage is an intensely competitive activity. Within the Bay Area there is no shortage of attractions and events vying for the attention of local residents and tourists from around the region, the state, and the rest of the world. Danville is just one of a very long list of places for people to visit. Despite its attractions, it is currently easy for travelers to by-pass Danville while en route to other better-known destinations.

This marketing plan includes recommendations and marketing communication activities to reposition downtown Danville in order to encourage expanded participation in shopping and events in the entire Danville area. It also recommends actions that can be taken to raise the public's awareness of retail establishments by focusing on actively incorporating merchants and other business owners in established events. Additionally, it recommends add-on events to provide even more opportunities for participation by locals and visitors.

CURRENT MARKET POSITION

The Danville area has numerous coffee shops, apparel shops and boutiques, an arts community, a small downtown performing arts theatre, and a wide choice of restaurants ranging from family-friendly to sophisticated dining. In addition to local customers, some of the customers who visit the area's restaurants are from throughout the Bay Area as well as from out-of-state. The area has been recognized nationally with its recent naming by *Forbes* magazine as the 69th Best Place to Live and Launch [a business] in the U.S. and *Frommer's* Tri-Valley "10 Wonderful Day Trips from San Francisco."

Despite the area's excellent attributes, local residents, as well as those in neighboring areas, are not choosing the Danville area as their first choice for shopping and dining. Instead, they are going to other East Bay cities such as Walnut Creek and Pleasanton for shopping, dining and entertainment. To gain an understanding of consumer behavior, personal surveys and face-to-face interviews were conducted (rather than a retrospective data analysis) to gain a depth of understanding regarding Danville's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Information, observations and opinions were obtained from the following sources:

- SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) meeting with members of the Steering Committee.
- Review of existing research reports and other information sources.
- Informal interviews with people who are shopping in Danville.
- Phone interviews with local business people.
- Phone interviews with local residents.
- In-person conversations with local business people.
- Surveys sent to Danville Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.
- Background provided by Town officials and staff members.

SUMMARY OF MARKET ANALYSIS - DOWNTOWN DANVILLE

(Complete details on the Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats can be found in *Survey Input* in Appendix on page 30).

Survey findings revealed that most consumers are unaware of the retail choices available in Danville and perceive that retail is expensive. Very few can name more than one or two retail stores. Most people who shop in Danville are local area residents. They choose to go downtown based on the fact that the area is attractive, conveniently accessible and has available parking. Women especially in the 35 to 54 age range go with a specific retail location in mind, usually women's apparel. Also, both men and women go downtown for the purpose of eating at specific restaurants. The most notable finding is that the two main audiences currently attracted to Danville are "mothers and daughters" and "ladies who lunch" (i.e., women with leisure time, many of whom view Danville as the unique shopping destination of choice).

Interviews with merchants revealed that they viewed limited store hours as a problem, but few of the existing consumers said they felt retail hours of operation are an issue. Due to time limitations, the market analysis did not assess whether longer hours would in fact expand the consumer base in the Danville area. It is recommended that this subject be further explored as an implementation measure of this Blueprint for Action.

Those interviewed are more familiar with restaurants than retail shops and can easily name three to five eating establishments. Events are also popular with consumers, especially Fall Crafts Festival and the Fourth of July Parade. People who attend events state that they often choose to dine at Danville restaurants, but not as many report going into retail stores or other businesses.

Survey interviews with Steering Committee members and local merchants reveal that what differentiates the Danville area from the competition is its sense of community; its lack of congestion; available parking; the fact that the Town is conducive to walking; its many sophisticated and one-of-a-kind retail choices; its share of trendy and first-rate restaurants; and its established and popular events.

SUMMARY OF MARKET ANALYSIS - DANVILLE AREA RETAIL CENTERS:

In addition to the downtown Danville area, surveys and interviews were conducted in person, by phone, and through social networking sites to gain an anecdotal overview of the following geographic areas: Danville (including Tassajara Crossings), Blackhawk Plaza Shopping Center, and the Alamo area.

Blackhawk Plaza Shopping Center

Survey results indicated that – while people enjoy Blackhawk’s attractive landscaping, good parking and its walkability – they choose to go to Blackhawk Plaza for “committed shopping” rather than simply to meander through the area. Committed shopping is defined as destination and purpose-oriented. In this scenario, shoppers typically have purchases in mind, often go directly to a store where they believe the purchase can be made, and depart the center shortly after making those purchases without being drawn into surrounding shops.

To this end, they visit the Plaza for the Blackhawk Auto Museum, movie theater and Blackhawk Grille. Members of Bally’s Health Club report that people will work out and then go to Starbuck’s. Other merchants report that consumers go to Draeger’s market and then browse through some of the shops such as Ann Taylor. Merchants, such as those at the Pride of the Mediterranean restaurant or Patrick James, attract customers from throughout the Bay Area because they offer products that are one-of-a-kind or are difficult to find elsewhere. One person who visited the museum stated after seeing the exhibit, he was not aware of anything else to do in the Plaza. Parents of young children report that Blackhawk Plaza is a meeting place for them for coffee and socializing, rather than shopping.

Merchants are positive about the Concerts at Blackhawk events because they view them as raising consumer awareness of their stores and products. Current negative factors are construction at the Plaza and unawareness of the Plaza itself. One merchant suggested that an event be held when construction is completed.

In summary, the findings indicate that the Blackhawk Shopping Center is poorly positioned from a geographic perspective (distance from I-680 and I-580), leading to an unawareness of the Plaza as a shopping destination.

Tassajara Crossings Shopping Center

Tassajara Crossings is primarily a place local consumers go for purpose-driven committed shopping (predominantly to Safeway and/or Longs Drugs). Restaurants report that they benefit from Blackhawk Plaza's movie theater and museum attendees.

The survey findings indicate that, because the center is designed to be - and effectively serves as - a neighborhood center, it draws from localized market area. As such, specific retailers and/or restaurants in the center that seek a greater geographic market area would benefit from cross-promotion with Danville-oriented special events. Additionally, the findings also indicate the need for a web site redesign, because it is difficult to navigate the current site to find a list of retail locations.

Alamo Plaza

Alamo Plaza and the nearby retail areas provide convenient shopping with easy parking for Danville and Alamo residents and those in south Walnut Creek. Similar to the Tassajara Crossings Shopping Center, consumers interviewed say they patronize Alamo Plaza for committed shopping. They have a specific shopping destination of one or more locations, complete their shopping tasks and then depart. Most reported Safeway, Yellow Wood Café, and the US Post Office as their shopping destinations. Many say that Alamo is not their first choice; they prefer to do their shopping in Walnut Creek. Some who were interviewed noted that Alamo Plaza is not conducive for public gathering, limiting its ability to provide an ideal shopping experience for the local market area.

Merchants report that the price of gas has affected business. Alamo Plaza merchants report that promotion of the Plaza would be helpful, but that it might not be effective since it is difficult for people to change their shopping habits.

The survey findings indicate that, because of the center's committed shopping orientation and spatial layout, specific Alamo Plaza retailers and/or restaurants that desire to reach out to a greater geographic market area would benefit from cross-promotion with area-wide special events, including those hosted in downtown Danville.

BRANDING BLUEPRINT

Based on surveys and input from the Steering Committee, the following Branding Blueprint document was created. This document will be used as a source for key messages related to the “Shop Local First” Marketing Program and serves as the foundation for establishing and building the Danville brand. It also provides a vision for where Danville strives to be.

For maximum effectiveness, it is essential for all communication vehicles to communicate the brand messages in support of the overall marketing of the “Shop Local First” Marketing Program’s goal to “brand the Danville retail areas as a unique shopping destination of choice.” This can be achieved by using the messages in the Branding Blueprint to focus on downtown Danville and cross-promote specific retail strengths of area retail centers such as Alamo Plaza, Tassajara Crossings, Blackhawk Plaza and the soon-to-be-opened Rose Garden Shopping Center.

BRANDING BLUEPRINT

Danville Area

Brand Elements	Strategies, Descriptions, Comments
Brand/Product Destination	Small-hometown ambience, uncongested, excellent quality of life, stylish shops, choice of restaurants, family-friendly outdoor activities, popular events.
Brand Vision	Shopping destination of choice for Danville area residents and those in surrounding communities.
Brand Positioning (Current)	Currently Danville area residents and beyond are unaware of available retail choices.
Brand Target	Danville area residents, Tri-Valley residents, Bay Area residents, Danville area merchants, real estate brokers, local-area entrepreneurs. Shopping-women 35+
Brand Name	Danville CA
Brand Identity	TBD
Brand Promise	Needs to be developed. Currently awareness is limited. Assets need more development: signage, advertising, web site linking events to retail opportunities
Brand Personality	Charming, friendly, historical, relaxing, stylish, classy, family-friendly, sense of community
Brand Emotion	Easy to get here. Easy and fun to be here. Relaxing. Friendly. Variety of retail choices.
Brand Experience	Friendly, memorable, range of retail and restaurants, enjoyable shopping experience, hometown atmosphere, strong sense of community.
Brand Quality	Top-quality retail including one-of-a kind and specialty shops, memorable restaurants, not congested, relaxing.
Brand Pricing	Ranges from competitive to higher than competitive areas
Brand Packaging	Charming, historical, classic, timeless feel. Better development and unification of all marketing images, materials and activities.
Brand Distribution	Currently limited exposure, advertising but without a cohesive plan.
Brand Association	Danville
Brand Credentials	<i>Forbes</i> : 69th Best Place to Live and Launch in the Nation. Frommer's Tri-Valley "10 Wonderful Day Trips from San Francisco"
Brand Message	Danville is the shopping and dining destination for area residents and those in the surrounding communities offering a relaxed hometown feel with a distinct sense of style and sophisticated flair.

DANVILLE VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement gives shape and direction to the future. It is essential to the creation of a unified presence in the marketplace and provides a common view around which to build and implement an impactful marketing program. The vision statement should make all members of an organization feel proud, excited and committed to a common goal.

Danville Vision Statement

Danville is the shopping and dining destination for area residents and those in the surrounding communities, offering a relaxed hometown feel with a distinct sense of style and sophisticated flair. The Town has style.

It is uncongested, has a strong sense of community and an excellent quality of life. It offers a solid mix of top-quality retail establishments - from nationally known stores to unique shops; a wide variety of restaurants - from family-friendly to fine dining; a charming environment with a pedestrian scale that is conducive to both strolling and shopping; and popular events that are attended by area residents and visitors from throughout the Bay Area.

Danville provides a wonderful opportunity to experience a relaxing day shopping, dining and visiting cultural attractions in a setting unlike most others found in the region.

Danville Features

- Unique one-of-a-kind independently-owned shops
- National and regional retail stores that serve as a consumer draw but maintains a physical scale appropriate to Danville
- Top-rated and family-friendly restaurants
- Events that are highly-regarded throughout the Bay Area
- Local and regional cultural institutions
- One of the best places to live in the nation

MARKET STRATEGY

The overriding purpose of the Shop Local First Marketing program is to bring more residents and visitors to the Danville area to spend money at restaurants, retail locations and cultural attractions. The market strategy focuses on elevating the retail profile of downtown Danville as the focal point (the “rising tide that carries all boats”) for the promotion of the entire Danville area. The strategy will also cross-promote the specific retail strengths of area destination centers such as Alamo Plaza, Tassajara Crossings, Blackhawk Plaza and the soon to be opened Rose Garden Shopping Center. The intent is to raise the profile of downtown Danville as a unique, in-style shopping destination of choice that has an array of crowd-pleasing events throughout the year.

Goals of the Shop Local First Marketing Program

The following broad goals are designed to achieve the overarching purpose of the marketing program and to implement the strategy to create awareness of retail choices of the area:

- Increase awareness of all Danville area shopping locations
- Increase shopping activity in Danville
- Increase attendance at Danville events
- Increase overall sales tax revenues in Danville

Marketing Objectives

To accomplish these objectives, the marketing program would work toward the following:

- Elevate the positive image of downtown Danville retail and restaurant choices, and events, among target audiences (“mothers and daughters” and “ladies who lunch”)
- Develop an all-inclusive “Shop Local First” web site to serve as the primary promotional vehicle for all Danville area shopping locations and special events
- Drive traffic to the “Shop Local First” web site by implementing an annual advertising plan in conjunction with a publicity plan that drives traffic to the “Shop Local First” web site

Non-Marketing Objectives

- Incorporate retail and service establishments into existing special events
- Increase the mix of retail offerings in downtown Danville
- Identify a circulation plan to improve the ease of walking and way finding between shopping areas in the downtown
- Promote and publicize beautification improvements

STRATEGIES FOR REACHING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The task of increasing awareness of Danville as a shopping destination locally and regionally is easier than with many other communities. It is clear, as evidenced by consumer perspectives articulated during the fact gathering process, that Danville already has the building blocks needed to raise its profile. It is an attractive community with many top-quality and appealing retail establishments, a number of established crowd-pleasing events, and a charming environment with a pedestrian scale that is conducive to both strolling and shopping.

These strategies are intended to increase awareness of downtown Danville and the neighboring retail areas and inform target audiences of all that the area has to offer to residents and visitors.

1. **Comprehensive Marketing Program:** Develop a consistent and cohesive marketing program to enhance and promote Danville to the two primary target audiences (“mothers and daughters” and “ladies who lunch”).
2. **Coordinated Promotional Efforts:** Implement a structure or an initiative that leverages the strengths of the Town of Danville, Danville Area Chamber of Commerce and Discover Danville Association and that jointly promotes existing events and programs.
3. **Capitalizing on Regional Tourism Activity:** Develop marketing synergies with the Danville Area Chamber of Commerce and other Tri-Valley marketing and tourism-related organizations to promote Danville events as a day-trip tourism experience.
4. **Portraying a Unified Retail Front:** Encourage downtown Danville merchants to work together towards the common goal of enhancing the uniqueness and top quality offerings of the downtown area through coordinated promotional efforts (e.g., themed events) and a common shopping experience (e.g., similar store hours and days of operation).

TARGET MARKET

Based on survey input and a review of existing materials provided by the Town of Danville, target audiences for the “Shop Local First” Marketing Program are sophisticated consumers interested in upscale shopping, a range of restaurant choices, special events and social experiences. In general, these customers have a median household income greater than \$100,000 per year, are college educated and family oriented. More specifically, as identified through the field surveys and interviews, the profiles of the two main target audiences can be described as “mothers and daughters” and “ladies who lunch.”

Primary Market Area:

The primary target market area is the Danville area, San Ramon Valley, Tri-Valley, Lamorinda and Central Contra Costa County (consumers residing in Contra Costa along the I-680 corridor from the Benicia Bridge to the Highway 24 interchange).

Secondary Market Area:

The secondary market area includes Bay Area regional visitors seeking boutique shopping and quality dining experiences either as stand-alone activities or connected with special events. These visitors are typically seeking to explore a new geographic area that offers a new version of the upscale shopping and social experiences to which they are accustomed within their immediate area of residence.

Implementation of the marketing strategies should focus first on the primary market area, and should funding resources and/or circumstances permit, expand the effort to the secondary market area to reach the target audiences throughout the Bay Area.

MARKETING IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The key brand message designed to appeal to the two primary target audiences is: *Danville is the shopping and dining destination for area residents and those in surrounding communities, offering a relaxed hometown feel with a distinct sense of style and sophisticated flair.*

To effectively market this brand message to the primary target audiences and promote Danville's existing positive attributes in a cohesive manner, the following actions are recommended:

Marketing Implementation Actions

1. *Develop a Logo and Tagline:* To reinforce the brand message, a logo and a tag line is under development. While there are a variety of businesses in Danville, the purpose of the logo and tagline is to reach out to the target audiences rather than to represent the entire Danville business community. The resulting logo and tagline should be consistently carried out in all marketing communication vehicles.
2. *"Shop Danville" Web Site:* A top priority implementation action is the development of a search-optimized web site that includes all Danville area businesses. It would serve as the primary marketing instrument for increasing the awareness of Danville and driving consumers to its business establishments. All advertising, publicity and marketing collateral should refer back to the web site. It would cross-link with each individual shopping areas' web sites as well as sites of individual businesses. The site would also include timely content including a special events calendar.
3. *Advertising:* Advertising is paid space in the media (radio, TV, newspapers, internet). The person who buys the space has control over what it says. An implementation action would be the creation of an annual advertising plan to increase awareness of Danville's retail location, events and businesses.
4. *Publicity:* Publicity is an article or report in the media. It is not paid for. Generally information is submitted to the media and there is not total control over how the media presents the information. A publicity campaign for Danville would feature articles on stores, restaurants and chefs, a specific shopping area (e.g. an article on the shops on Prospect Avenue), commercial real estate projects and events. Publicity would occur in local Danville publications such as

Danville Life, but also in (Bay Area publications, i.e., the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Contra Costa Times*, *KGO-TV*, *East Bay Business Times* and more.

5. *Events*: Events would continue to play a key role in driving traffic to Danville. The implementation action would drive the traffic already attracted to the area's many popular events into surrounding businesses and would involve three components:
 - Comprehensive promotional campaign that involves a combination of publicity, advertising email blasts and web site content. More importantly, the promotional campaign needs to focus not only on the target audiences locally and regionally, but also Bay Area day-trippers.
 - Coordinated approach from the merchant community to showcase their merchandise during the events (e.g., golf themed displays and/or merchandise during the LPGA tournament week).
 - Consider event modifications or additions, including the creation of a Golf Festival during the weekend prior to the LPGA Tournament, integrating restaurants into the "Shop Local First" Nights. Consider events that cater to the key audiences of "mothers and daughters" and "ladies who lunch," such as a mother-daughter brunch or pampering/spa events for women.

6. *Shoppers' Guide*: Develop a cooperative shopping guide in conjunction with a local publication and/or business organization to produce a brochure-size (3-1/2 X 8-1/2) directory that can easily fit in a purse or jacket pocket. The guide would serve as an excellent resource to raise the awareness of all retail choices in the Danville area. It could include Danville area merchants across all industry sectors. The guide would be available at retailers and other locations. The guide is also an excellent resource for out-of-town visitors to the area and could be placed in area hotels. Distribution can also occur through the Danville Area Chamber of Commerce, Discover Danville Association and other business organizations. Given its potential structural constraints and cost, this action is not a top priority recommendation.

All marketing communication activities should tie to the goal of promoting Danville as a unique shopping destination of choice and drive traffic to an all-inclusive "Shop Local First" web site that provides a greater level of information for consumers whose interests have been piqued by the marketing material.

It's recommended that the focus be on high-return opportunities that will showcase and communicate Danville's offerings and serve to increase Danville's already positive image. The core of a "Shop Local First" program will consist of publicity, advertising, Internet marketing, and events and programs that fulfill a number of objectives:

- Promote Danville's stylish, top-quality retail and restaurant offerings
- Convey key messages to residents and visitors that reflect the target audience profiles
- Engage downtown merchants, business owners and cultural organizations
- Utilize local experts, resources and local and regional celebrities
- Revolve around already existing popular events
- Create opportunities for special promotions, publicity and exposure

The intent with all marketing communication vehicles and events is to create a "buzz" about Danville through the continuous and consistent use of PR, advertising, internet marketing and events. Events and communication vehicles will utilize Danville's shops, restaurants and cultural offerings. This will extend Danville's brand message and offers additional ways to communicate with target audiences.

Danville already has many crowd-pleasing popular events that are well regarded and have good attendance. However, the events do not currently connect with shopping. Area merchants can be educated on how participation in events can increase foot traffic into their establishments. Merchants need to be agreeable to become part of events, open their doors and extend their product/services into the outdoors.

Marketing Implementation Opportunities

The following events present opportunities to coordinate with retail establishments and as a result, serve to enhance the image of the Danville area as a unique shopping destination:

- **Danville's 150th Anniversary Celebration:** This historical event has potential for keeping Danville in the public eye and can be an ongoing promotion throughout the year rather than for only one weekend. Activities include:
 - 150th anniversary themed floats in the 4th of July Parade
 - Parade dress in period costume
 - Special 150th Anniversary *Danville Life* issue that looks at the Town then and now
 - Museum of the San Ramon Valley special exhibition of Danville area history
 - Village Theatre special production related to the anniversary

- Retailer-sponsored poster contest for school-age children to create a poster with a theme such as Danville Past and Present. The winning poster is professionally produced and displayed in Danville merchant locations. The top three winning posters receive a Danville area shopping spree including gift certificates from Danville area shopping locations that are youth-related, such as: Baskin Robbins Ice Cream, Blackhawk Movie Theater, Primo's Pizza, Ascona Pizza, Games Unlimited, etc.

Marketing Communication

The Sesquicentennial events would be promoted through a combination of the following web site promotions, press releases, improved signage (e.g., downtown light pole banners, Old Oak Tree, or other visible location), and email marketing.

- **“Shop Local First” Nights:** These two events have the potential to create a vehicle to increase visibility for Danville and to draw locals and visitors into stores and restaurants. However, there needs to be an incentive beyond shopping to attract a large audience. Examples of such enticements could involve:
 - Offering a “Shop Local First” shopping bag for attendees, advertised to be available at specific participating retailers.
 - Offering specific gift cards in participating stores, to be used immediately or in the immediate future.
 - Pairing local restaurant tasting samples (e.g., appetizers or drinks) with participating retail stores.
 - Place local fashion models throughout downtown locations, distributing incentives to promote foot traffic in stores.
 - For the “Summer Serenade” evening, consider featuring musicians of various styles (jazz, classical, rock, etc.) at various points in Town to encourage attendees to stroll throughout the area and discourage the use of stages, which has a tendency to draw people to a select area rather than encourage shopping.
 - For the “Summer Fest” event, the wellness-themed evening can include areas for local chefs to provide healthy-cooking demonstrations. Consider featuring a recipe contest to draw an interest-specific audience. Consider utilizing a local or regional chef, who has authored a cookbook, to give a demonstration along with a book signing. This could be implemented in conjunction with a local bookstore, such as Rakestraw Books. Incorporation of the Pacific Coast Farmers’ Market as the source for healthy, natural ingredients would be ideal during this demonstration.

Marketing Communication

- Web site
 - Press releases
 - Radio and TV interviews
 - Signage (Old Oak Tree and street light banners)
 - Email marketing
 - Internet search marketing (e.g. Google ad words)
 - Flyer with featured activities listed (place in area merchant locations)
 - Event ads in local and regional publications
 - Posters for merchant windows
- **LPGA Weekend Events:** This nationally televised sports event provides an opportunity to raise awareness of Danville to an audience outside the Bay Area and presents some exciting promotional opportunities. The actual weekend of the LPGA is not a beneficial time for promotional programs. However, the weekends before and after the event have promotional appeal:
 - Providing a “Welcome Tour of Danville” to select LPGA players by the Danville Mayor or other Danville area business leaders. Players would be taken through select and featured area locations. This would be based on approval from the LPGA.
 - Offering variations of a “LPGA signature dish” by participating restaurants during the two-week time period of the event.
 - Hosting Pre and Post LPGA parties with LPGA players, celebrities, music, food, wine, etc. The party provides opportunities for people from outside Danville to experience the area, extending the reach of the key messages. Include items from local retailers in gift bags for attendees.
 - Consider hosting a “Golf Show” or a “Golf Festival” the weekend prior to the LPGA Tournament with demos of golf equipment; players can sign autographs, local well-known golfing instructors can provide free lessons, local golf clubs can be featured, and “tickets” can be obtained inside retail locations so that visitors, or a select number of visitors, can redeem memorabilia autographed by a high profile LPGA player.

Marketing Communication:

- Web site
- Press Releases
- Radio, TV and newspaper interviews for Golf Show/Festival
- Email marketing

- Internet search marketing (e.g. Google ad words)
- Flyer with featured activities listed (place in locations frequented by golfers)
- Event ads in local and regional publications
- Event marketing through golfer-related blogs and co-op with a local and regional golf retailer

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The success of the community-based “Shop Local First” Marketing Program is dependent upon not only the comprehensive and cohesive promotional efforts described, but also on the willingness of the merchant community to portray a “unified front” to the consumers.

The synergy and relative uniformity generated by this collaboration would help advance area retailers’ ability to compete head-to-head with the advantages offered by shopping centers. The following actions are recommended for consideration in this endeavor:

Organizational Implementation - Actions for Business Success

1. *Evaluate Area-wide Retail Hours:* To promote downtown Danville as a cohesive shopping area, it is recommended that business hours of retail establishments be evaluated to determine if current business hours can achieve optimal success. Consider exploring the possibility of identifying and extending retail store hours in geographic clusters of retail, restaurants and cultural/entertainment areas.
2. *Explore Merchant Training Opportunities:* To reduce or eliminate obstacles to shopping in the unique retailers in Danville, consider implementing a structure (or partnering with a small business development agency) to provide on-going training, information sharing, and education for retailers on subjects such as:
 - Methods and ideas to leverage foot traffic from special events
 - Cross-promotional opportunities
 - Ideas to build a “buzz” from a consistent marketing program
 - Web site development, maintenance and advertising
 - Customer service and customer relations training (including purchase/return policies)
 - Effectiveness of retail advertising, including how to:
 - Increase understanding of what’s available and what they uniquely offer
 - Promote broad categories and niches
 - Promote convenience and proximity
 - Promote customer service
 - Promote products that local consumers frequently purchase out of the area, and may not be aware that it can be found in Danville

3. *Business Promotion Funding:* Consider the establishment of Business Promotion Funding criteria which stipulates that funding needs should fit into the “Shop Local First” marketing goal to increase awareness and elevate the positive image of Danville among target audiences (“mothers and daughters” and “ladies who lunch”) of retail and restaurant choices, and events in downtown.
4. *Business Mix:* Consider implementation of a collaborative structure which convenes Danville Town officials with leaders of the business community and commercial real estate professionals to identify the ideal future business mix strategies within the downtown and area shopping locations. The goal is to recruit and retain a strong retail mix, with no gaps, that has long-term staying power and that fits with the area’s character and physical scale.

Organizational Implementation - Actions for Environmental Enhancement

1. *Enhance Signage:* Visible signage is an integral component of a comprehensive marketing plan. This is particularly important for any activity that does not rely upon a public street closure to signify the occurrence of a special event. Currently, special events in Danville – unless it is associated with a street closure – have limited visual promotional opportunities. It is recommended that the following signage enhancements be considered to further Danville’s economic development goals:
 - Utilize thematic street light banners to promote special events
 - Utilize the frame of the Old Oak Tree for informational and event signage
 - Improve directional and interpretive signage within downtown Danville
 - Create attractive signage to indicate entry portals to downtown Danville
 - Provide directional signage from Interstate 680 signage (subject to Caltrans approval)
2. *Improve Foot Traffic:* While downtown Danville is extremely pedestrian friendly, many consumers surveyed indicated limited knowledge of retail destinations beyond those they sought to patronize during their visit. Given that the “mental maps” of the downtown retail area are limited, it is critical to identify and implement a circulation plan to facilitate shopping exploration by foot traffic. It is recommended that the actions be considered to further Danville’s economic development goals:
 - Update the existing downtown walking map as a guide for shoppers
 - Create an electronic, downloadable, version of the walking map for the web site

- Explore the feasibility of installing these maps in small informational stands throughout the downtown to serve as directional signage and to raise awareness of downtown Danville's retail and restaurant offerings
3. *Beautification Designation*: Explore possibility of designating downtown Danville as a National Preserve America Community. (<http://www.preserveamerica.gov>). The program recognizes and designates communities that protect and celebrate their heritage. Benefits include White House recognition, official notification of designation to state tourism offices and visitors bureaus, enhanced community visibility and more.

MEASUREMENT

It is recommended that a set of measurements be adopted to determine the long-term success of the implementation measure of the Blueprint for Action. Program evaluation and measurement efforts can be implemented in a variety of ways, depending on the depth and breadth of resources available. A basic simple approach to measuring the Blueprint for Action's results would include tracking:

- Web site hits
- Restaurant revenue figures
- Retail sales tax figures
- Event attendance (including foot traffic from events into retail stores)
- Reach of promotional campaigns (patronage by local and regional visitors through zip codes)

As the marketing campaign is established, additional measurements of market behaviors (actions related to the intent to make a purchase) could be considered, including:

- Database marketing
- Customer behavior capture
- Customer relationship marketing, including frequency programs and affinity programs

IMPLEMENTATION ROLL-OUT

In order to achieve a dynamic “Shop Local First” Marketing Program with evolving short-term and long-term focuses, we recommend that the program be rolled out as follows:

Near-Term Implementation (Next Six Months: July – December 2008)

1. *Adopt the “Shop Danville” Logo and Tagline:* Adoption of the logo, tagline, and all use and placement parameters to ensure consistent marketing communication.
2. *Develop an all-inclusive “Shop Danville” web site:* Develop a user-friendly all-inclusive Danville-area “Shop Danville” web site to serve as “information central.”
 - All marketing communication vehicles should drive consumers to the site.
 - The site should be developed in a manner that is primarily appealing to the two primary target audiences.
 - Initiate a web site search optimization program to ensure the Danville area’s site shows up when people are searching for something to do in the Bay Area.
 - Publish, in cooperation with a local publication or merchant(s), a Shoppers’ Guide to include all Danville area merchants
3. *Develop a Publicity Plan:* Develop a month-to-month year-long publicity plan to generate media coverage highlighting shops, restaurants and events that drives traffic to the “Shop Danville” web site. The publicity plan components include:
 - Media press releases related to events and things-to-do, as well as development activity within focused areas of Danville.
 - Media placements for restaurants and/or retailers related to events. Placements need to have a call-to-action to communicate key messages and drive consumers to the web site, events, or retail locations.
 - Storyline focus on one restaurant each month for radio, TV and/or print for coverage (this does not have to be related to an event, but needs to have something unusual, timely, seasonal, or related to media editorial calendars).
 - Feature stories about specific retail locations in the Danville area, utilizing an advertorial publication.
 - Identify remote broadcast opportunities, including supportive blogs to maximize web search optimization.
 - Coordinate with the Tri-Valley CVB for tour-bus operator familiarization trips.

4. *Develop an Advertising Plan:* Develop a year-long advertising plan with ads that include a call-to-action and tell a story. In particular, it is important to advertise events and feature one-of-a-kind businesses and retail locations. These locally known, but differentiating factors, can serve to drive traffic among local and regional consumers.

5. *Implement Direct Mail/Email Marketing Program:*

- Explore the possibility of transitioning the existing *Danville Life* to a direct mail publication with lifestyle content. It would involve the development of an electronic version that can be used as an email newsletter that informs the community of news and events and links to the “Shop Danville” web site. Explore the possibility and feasibility of purchasing the Contra Costa Times email distribution list.
- Consider a coordinated email marketing plan with area shops and restaurants to send consolidated emails to their customer lists.
 - Work with specialty travel e-newsletters (e.g., Weekend Sherpa) to advertise Danville events.
 - Consider a cooperative direct mail marketing effort to clubs and organizations that have shopping field trips, as well as schools.

6. *Implement Special Events focused on Shopping:*

“Shop Local First” Nights

- Beginning with the August 7 event, identify 10 retailers that will participate in evening by giving away promotional items and/or discounts or coupons for discounts
- Identify one chef to do a cooking demonstration during the event
- Promote retailers and chefs to media through local advertising

Danville’s 150th Anniversary

- Work with public and private schools in Danville to participate in poster contest
- Identify five or more retailers who will contribute to prizes for top three young artists
- Publicize contest through “Shop Local” web site and local media

LPGA Weekend Events

- Identify six restaurants that will create signature LPGA menu item
- Secure placement on TV, radio or in local media

Mid-Term Implementation (6 to 12 Months)

1. *Explore Common Extended Retail Hours:* Consider extending the Steering Committee structure to explore the value of extending store hours within defined retail clusters.
2. *Explore Merchant Training Opportunities:* In conjunction with the Small Business Center, develop a retail training program and a merchant outreach plan.

Long-Term Goals (12 Months and longer)

1. *Implement Enhanced Signage, including:*
 - Thematic street light banners to promote special events
 - Informational/event signage at the frame of the Old Oak Tree
 - Directional and interpretive signage with downtown Danville
 - Downtown entry portal signage
 - Directional signage from Interstate 680 to key areas of the Town (subject to Caltrans approval)
2. *Implement Foot Traffic Connectivity Improvements, including:*
 - Update the existing downtown walking map as a guide for shoppers
 - Create an electronic, downloadable, version of the walking map for the web site
 - Explore the feasibility of installing these maps in small informational stands throughout the downtown to serve as directional signage and to raise awareness of downtown Danville's retail and restaurant offerings.
3. *Consider Beautification Designation* through the National Preserve America Community program (<http://www.preserveamerica.gov>)
4. *Shoppers' Guide:* Develop a cooperative shopping guide, which includes merchants across all industry sectors, to serve as a resource to raise the awareness of Danville area shopping choices.

APPENDIX 1

Survey Input

Based on the input we received from consumers and merchants, downtown Danville is a small, charming and quaint town. It is a place people go to walk and browse, but not necessarily with specific shopping in mind.

Configuration

Downtown Danville is concentrated on the following streets running generally north and south: Hartz Avenue/San Ramon Valley Boulevard, Railroad Avenue, and Front Street.

The retail district is in a linear configuration extending over a number of blocks, covering approximately one mile. As a result, it is not practical to walk from one end of this commercial district to the other. Therefore, if shoppers want to visit shops and stores up and down the commercial district, for example, Prospect Avenue to the Town and Country Shopping Center, it generally requires driving from one location to the other.

This is in contrast to more modern concentrations of shopping in downtown Danville – such as the Livery -- which clusters stores within an easily walkable area.

Retailer Mix

The majority of the stores, shops and restaurants in the downtown area are locally owned and managed. There are a few national chain stores in the retail mix, for example Starbuck's, Peet's Coffee and Papyrus. But these are exceptions. Some shoppers expressed the fact that they are positive about the limited number of retail chains because they feel it helps the Town maintain its character.

There were, however, those in the commercial property sector who felt that certain retail chains within Danville's physical scale would help to draw more shoppers to the area.

The local ownership adds substantially to the appeal of downtown Danville. There are, however, some shortcomings that need to be addressed including: customer service, directional signage, and business-specific signage.

Character

The linear configuration of the downtown area with tree-lined streets, outdoor restaurants, and sidewalk-facing window displays encourages “strolling” of a two to three block area, providing visitors with the opportunity to leisurely explore shops and enjoy relaxed dining.

Who Shops There?

Informal interviews with a sampling of shoppers in downtown Danville determined that the majority of the customers are from Danville. Danville residents choose to go to the downtown area based largely on the convenience of the location, the attractive character of the area, the restaurants, in some cases to shop at specific retailers (mostly women’s clothing), and the relaxed environment.

With the exception of a few people from out of state who were visiting friends or relatives, all of the people interviewed in the downtown area were from the East Bay.

Retail Leakage

The majority of the stores and shops located in downtown Danville are smaller retailers, serving niche markets.

Costco is the only “big box” store in Danville. While it is in the town limits, it is not in the downtown area or in walking distance of the downtown area.

No research has been initiated to determine the nature and volume of retail revenue leakage. A majority of consumers stated that they shop in Walnut Creek and Pleasanton. And, given the absence (other than Costco) of large retailers, it is assumed that a significant volume of retail purchases are made outside of Danville.

Shopper Reactions

Comments were obtained informally from shoppers at the Danville Thursday Farmers’ Market to determine positive and negative reactions to downtown Danville’s retail area. Interviewees were chosen at random. The following is an overview of comments obtained informally from shoppers at the Danville Thursday Farmers’ Market to determine positive and negative reactions to downtown Danville’s retail area. Interviewees were chosen at random.

CONSUMERS

Positive Attributes (Strengths)

- Store hours are acceptable
- Good walking town
- Not congested
- No big retailers
- Unique shops
- Interesting merchandise
- Enjoy going to restaurants (Most people could name several)
- Like the events
- Good meeting place
- Easy parking
- Variety and quality of restaurants
- Library

Negative Attributes (Weaknesses)

- People don't know what shops are available
- Too expensive
- Limited retail choices
- Limited retail for men
- Don't like the shops
- Not enough variety
- Improved circulation needed (walking)
- Hard to find stores
- Parking not long enough (three hours)
- Not enough parking
- Need more promotion of events
- Need more kid's events after 3:00 pm
- Need more breakfast places
- Lack "artsy" movie theatre
- Lack hardware store

BUSINESSES

Input from Business Community

Summary of input obtained from the Danville business community. Interviews were based on SWOT criteria (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) and were obtained in two ways:

- The steering committee participated in a meeting focused on the SWOT criteria.
- Interviews were conducted with business people to obtain their opinions.

Strengths

- Up-scale market
- Clean
- Trendy
- Up-beat
- Locally owned
- Close proximity to other markets
- Well-established downtown
- Pleasant downtown feeling
- Fine dining
- Diverse specialty stores
- Good parking
- Lack of congestion
- Easy freeway access
- Good weather
- Sense of community
- Well managed businesses
- Diverse special events
- No “big box” or major national chain stores
- Safe
- Events are an effective marketing tool

Weaknesses

- Limited bike parking
- Perceived as expensive
- Overpriced, not competitively priced
- Limited hours of operation

- Perception of inadequate parking
- Non-contiguous retail
- Parking time limits
- Lack of anchors or big box
- Inadequate night lighting
- Inexperienced, non-professional management
- Lack of vision for downtown
- Lack of consumer awareness
- Inadequate nightlife
- Limited overnight accommodations
- Consumers won't walk more than three blocks from where car is parked
- Improved quality of service
- Inadequate event participation by merchants
- Space cost has gotten too high for profitability
- Need more retail
- Need more diverse retail
- Need anchor retail
- "Hot Summer Night" car shows not directed at optimal market segments

Opportunities

- Promote historic downtown and museum
- More nightlife
- Better communication about the district
- Develop a cohesive plan for the entire downtown
- More involvement of merchants in events
- Encourage local shopping
- Improved signage
- Develop complete list of businesses
- Encourage group activity (PTA, Chamber, others)
- Organize co-op marketing
- Promote district to local businesses
- Farmers Market outreach
- Market to nearby communities
- Market to home-based business people
- Tourism: Mt. Diablo, San Damiano, Tao House
- LPGA tour

- Artist communities
- Theatre downtown, movies on green
- Kid opportunities
- Help businesses be more professional; seminars

Threats

- General economic conditions
- Competition from Walnut Creek
- Competition from other retail areas
- Competition from San Ramon City Center project
- Permitting and processing through Town
- High rental rates
- Congestion
- Labor availability
- Business turn-over
- Cost of gas

Input Overview

Based on surveys with consumers and businesses, we are able to provide some answers to the following significant questions.

What makes Danville stand out in the minds of target audiences and differentiates it from surrounding areas?

- Small town atmosphere and characteristics
- Quaint
- Historic town
- No big-box stores
- Lack of congestion
- Sense of community
- Good parking
- Good walking
- Well-established downtown

What opportunities are being missed?

Market outreach should be expanded to capture a broader geographically-targeted audience.

Currently most shoppers are from the greater Danville area. Expanding marketing efforts to a wider

geographic area can increase business for retailers. It may also serve to attract new retailers and increase shopping options. On the negative side, it may create traffic issues and a demand for more parking.

What are the negative internal factors?

- Lack of coordinated, integrated marketing program to drive consumers to Danville
- Consumers are unfamiliar with retail choices
- Linear strolling nature of the Town is not fully utilized (However, consumers currently see the walkability of the Town as a positive factor).
- Lack of a shopping directory in the form of a map, kiosk, web site, printed brochure, etc.

What are the negative external factors?

Because consumers are unfamiliar with what's available in downtown Danville, they often think first of other places to shop. The high price of gas will limit visitors, especially from outside the area.

SPOT Analysis Strengths, Problems, Opportunities and Threats

The following provides an overview of how to effectively utilize Danville's strengths and opportunities and how to handle its problems and weaknesses:

Invest-Strengths and Opportunities

- Create a "Shop Local First" web site that would increase the quality of search-optimized web presence for the downtown area including, Alamo Plaza, Tassajara Crossings, Rose Garden and Blackhawk Plaza with cross-links between the sites, cross-links with the web sites of individual businesses, and landing pages for individual retail categories
- Street light banners promoting events and other community information
- Improve the ease of walking between shopping areas in the downtown area
- Educate retailers regarding taking advantage of marketing and promotional activities
- Partner with the Small Business Center to offer low cost or free classroom based education related to the management and day-to-day operations of their businesses, providing them with information on customer service, legal issues, marketing, web promotion, etc.
- Promote the downtown area as the center of Danville
- Incorporate retail locations into events

Defend-Strengths and Threats

- Carve out a niche for unique shopping
- Embrace the downtown area, and retail soon to come (Danville Hotel complex's new 30,000 square feet of retail shops and restaurants)
- Strategize mix of new retailers without losing the Town's charm and character
- Improve wayfinding with improved directional and interpretive signage, which may include special event directional signage, possibly located at the Old Oak Tree

Decide Opportunities and Problems

- Better communicate downtown offerings, image
- Promote area in phases, short term and long term, promote unique retail and dining locations
- Work with downtown merchants on becoming involved in events
- Explore the value of extended store hours

Damage Control Threats and Problems

- Accept that retail is weak now with current economic conditions and competition with Walnut Creek and Pleasanton. Improvement is a long-term project
- Promote retail locations and businesses that are currently strong
- Carve out a niche separate from competition unique retail shops, restaurants, events