



## chapter four

# TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS

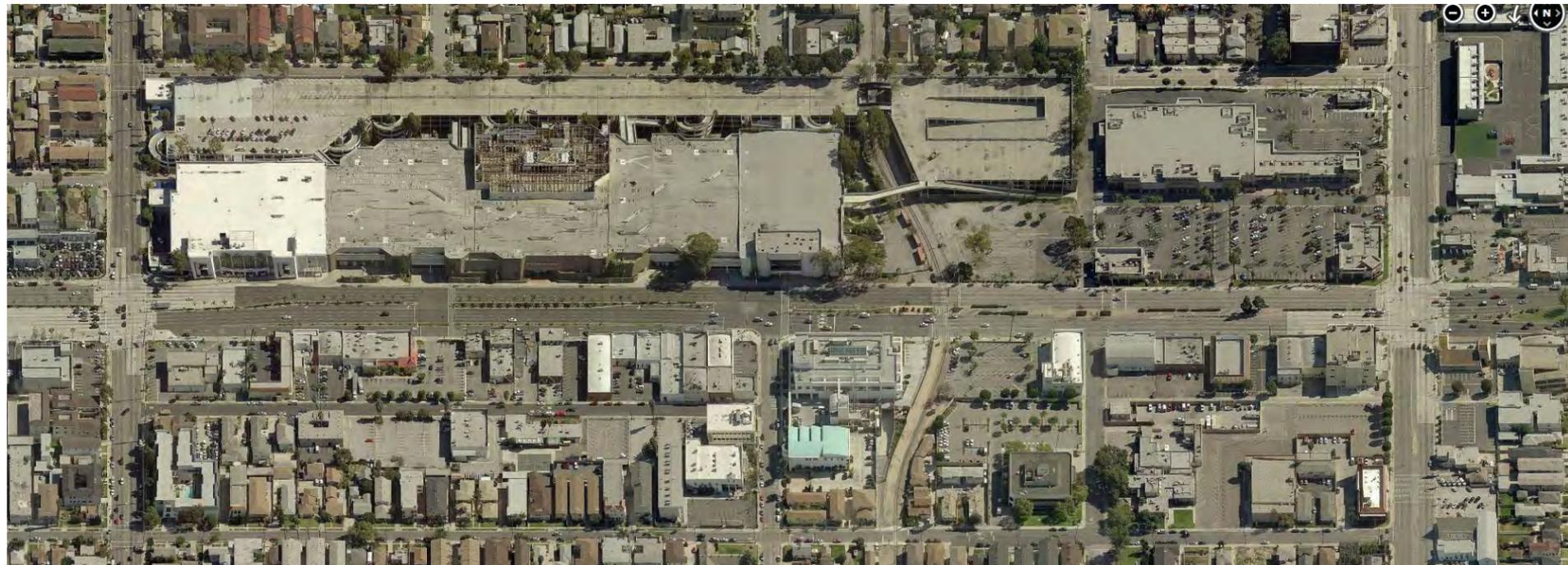
*The ideas and inspirations on the following pages represent core, tangible opportunities to re-energize Downtown Hawthorne. A renewed Civic Center complex surrounded by stores, restaurants and homes creates a central community destination. A revitalized and vibrant Hawthorne Mall becomes the shopping and entertainment hub for the entire city and greater South Bay region. Strategic infill projects, such as mixed use development at South Bay Ford, create energy and excitement in the southern part of Hawthorne Boulevard. Finally, a flexible and functional St. Joseph's Plaza frames both the historic church and Chips restaurant, while adding needed space for community gathering and special events.*



St. Joseph's Catholic Church is a key civic asset in need of plaza space to host events



The South Bay Ford site has potential for strategic, infill development at a smaller scale



The Hawthorne Mall and Civic Center sites represent large, centrally located areas that hold huge potential for public and private investment over the coming years

## Transformative Projects

Each of the five transformative projects presented in this chapter have the potential to create strong anchors of revitalization throughout the community. No single site or project is capable of transforming Downtown Hawthorne on its own, but if accomplished together, these projects will go a long way toward achieving the community vision for Downtown. Building on the detailed Plan Strategies framed in Chapter 3, this Transformative Projects chapter focuses on the following specific areas:

### T1. Hawthorne Mall

*A nearly three-block site that can become the anchor of a revitalized Downtown Hawthorne*

### T2. Civic Center

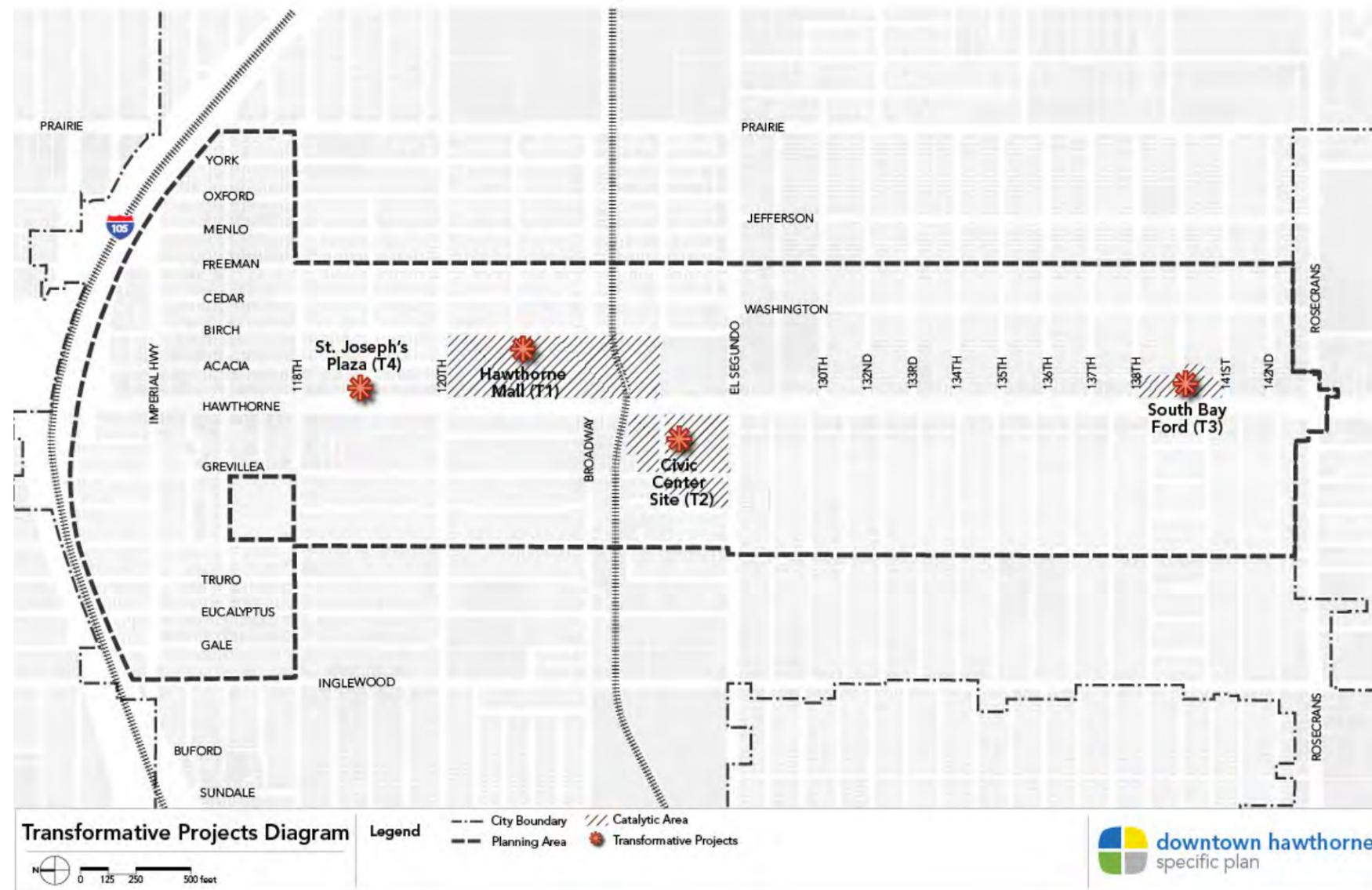
*A public-private partnership opportunity that can have a mix of civic, hotel, retail and housing uses that frame a community gathering space*

### T3. South Bay Ford

*A mid-scale mixed-use development that helps catalyze the southern portion of Hawthorne Boulevard*

### T4. St. Joseph's Plaza

*A underutilized corner that can become a new, dynamic public space*



### MAJOR THEMES

Each **Transformative Project** represents sites where a combination of ownership, redevelopment potential, location and the age/condition of current buildings creates a opportunity for a dynamic and exciting project that results in tangible change for Downtown Hawthorne. Intentionally, these sites vary in size and location. This will allow for different size projects to be created—some which can be accomplished in the near term and with lower costs, and others that will require significant time to fully design and substantial capital investment.



The Hawthorne Mall site presents an opportunity to create catalytic retail or mixed-use development on Hawthorne Boulevard

# t1. hawthorne mall



Hawthorne Boulevard's streetscape and pedestrian experience benefit from the existing buildings having been placed directly on the street, with parking located behind



New development should help activate and enliven the street, not deaden it with blank walls and unused, barren spaces



Hawthorne Mall's street frontage needs improvements



Transforming uninviting pedestrian paths into places with outdoor dining and lively activity will improve the pedestrian experience along Hawthorne Boulevard

## Design and Development Concepts Land Use Strategies

Spanning nearly three city blocks, the former Hawthorne Mall presents a key opportunity to transform the heart of Downtown with a single, large-scale development project. This may include complete demolition and reconstruction of the site, or an adaptive reuse project that takes advantage of the building's "bones" to lower construction costs.

**T1.A** Allow for **medium to high density mixed use** retail, dining, residential, flex space and commercial uses

**T1.B** Create new **plazas and greenways** that provide outdoor public spaces while sensitively linking the site to neighboring streets

**T1.C** Improve **wayfinding and signage** throughout the site to help people navigate the space and easily identify parking

**T1.D** Expand **transit, bike facilities and pedestrian access**, connections and safety to Hawthorne Boulevard

## Development Guidelines

New development and rehabilitation should improve rather than degrade the pedestrian experience. This includes extending outward onto Hawthorne Boulevard, rather than designing an inward facing complex, to better serve the parking garage; complement rather than detract from successful nearby retail businesses; and offer additional public space that can be enjoyed by all who come to Downtown.

**T1.E** Create a **pedestrian-oriented mixed-use district** that serves as a central retail and dining destination for Downtown Hawthorne and attracts patrons from throughout the South Bay region

**T1.F** Include **flexible office and research space** that can become an incubator for start-up companies

## t1. hawthorne mall

**T1.G** Require **upper-story step-backs** for floors over three stories to limit bulk near the boulevard and to increase natural lighting

### Street Frontage Guidelines

Hawthorne Mall was built directly fronting Hawthorne Boulevard, rather than with a parking lot fronting the street, this helped maintain a more pedestrian experience even as the mall stood empty. But too much of the original mall faced inward, not outward onto the street. New development should address this condition and serve to help Downtown become more lively and pedestrian friendly, in addition to boost economic development and tax revenues. Outdoor dining and other retail spaces need to invite people from the street to help create a more lively experience. The width of the street and the expansive size of the site offer many opportunities for more pedestrian and public spaces along the street frontage.

**T1.H** Encourage developers to design any new buildings so they are **open and inviting to pedestrians** along the site's street edge, in order to promote retail and outdoor dining fronting Hawthorne Boulevard

**T1.I** Use development improvement funding to **enhance the streetscape** along the mall site by widening the sidewalk in order to provide significant new public, retail and outdoor dining space

**T1.J** Explore redesigning the triangular open area bordering the rail line at the southern edge of the site as a **downtown gateway and public plaza**



Downtown Hawthorne stands to benefit most from a revitalized Hawthorne Mall, if new redevelopment has a strong and active street frontage. New corner plazas and outdoor dining located on a widened sidewalk along the boulevard, rather than an internal "food court," will dramatically benefit the street environment



Development should be open and friendly to the street, with outdoor dining and improved landscaping



New or remodeled buildings should support improved public spaces, and setbacks should be incorporated into building design to reduce bulk and preserve natural light

## t2. civic center



While the Civic Center area has the benefit of having a large number of civic institutions clustered together, it has no cohesive design and is largely designed for automobiles



The site currently contains a mix of key public uses, such as a library and fire station, which should be enhanced and expanded upon as new development occurs



City Hall has some open space and elements of a public plaza that should be improved and expanded as part of a comprehensive design



A bird's eye view of the Civic Center area today shows virtually all the land not built upon is devoted to parking

### Design and Development Concepts Land Use Strategies

With its cluster of civic anchors and boulevard-fronting stores and restaurants, the Civic Center site is a key site at the corner of Hawthorne Boulevard and El Segundo Boulevard. The site presents a special opportunity to unite a disparate set of municipal buildings into a cohesive and inviting civic center, with a central city square or plaza. With parking consolidated into parking structures, existing surface parking lots can be transformed into new uses and public spaces that can provide needed open space and become the civic heart of Downtown Hawthorne.

**T2.A** Consider entering into a **public-private partnership** to facilitate new catalytic development at the Civic Center site, including a mix of uses such as residential, retail, hotel or office

**T2.B** Consider **office uses** only if a viable tenant (such as the City of Hawthorne) is already in place

### Development Guidelines

Redevelopment of the Civic Center area should be sensitive to, and take advantage of, the area's high concentration of civic and institutional anchors. A primary goal of the development should be to unite and centralize key civic facilities.

**T2.C** Create a **consistent architectural theme** and rhythm of buildings throughout the Civic Center site to create an attractive and identifiable place

**T2.D** Incorporate **energy and water reducing design** throughout the site to reduce operational and maintenance costs and promote sustainability

**T2.E** Install **iconic art and design features** to create a unique plaza environment within the site that brings prominence to the area

## t2. civic center

**Design Concept 1: Civic and Commercial Expansion**

This concept represents a modest change to the overall site with improvement of public space via transformation of public right-of-way and publicly-owned land. West 126th Street, which runs through the Civic Center, would be transformed into a shared plaza, tied together with expanded and enhanced open spaces surrounding City Hall and the municipal building across 126th Street. New street trees would help green the area, calm traffic, and provide shade for workers' and visitors' daily enjoyment. Additional civic or new commercial buildings and a hotel could be accommodated along the site's southern edge bordering El Segundo Boulevard. Parking would be consolidated and designed to be more efficient.

**Design Concept 2: Full Mixed-Use Redevelopment**

This concept would involve a major re-imagining and overhaul of the Civic Center site, to transform the area into a full mixed use district with possibly a hotel. Most surface parking would be consolidated into parking garages, with ground-floor retail fronting onto Hawthorne Boulevard. The center of the site would be transformed into a new, pedestrian-friendly mixed use area, with vibrant new open and public space at its core, which would serve as a major new Downtown square for residents, shoppers and visitors.

**Design Concept 1**

Redesign 126th Street as a shared plaza street

Re-purpose surface parking lot space into a new downtown civic plaza

Expand and enhance open space around City Hall, and plant new street trees

Redevelop southern edge of site with civic or commercial development

**Design Concept 2**

Consolidate surface parking lots into parking garages, with ground-floor retail

Redevelop core area with new mixed use buildings or hotel

Capitalize on mixed use and hotel development to provide new signature public space

Enhance and improve street-level frontages along Hawthorne and El Segundo Boulevards



# t3. south bay ford



The South Bay Ford site is currently comprised primarily of parking lots



Development should enhance the streetscape and improve the pedestrian experience

## Design and Development Concepts

### Land Use Strategies

South of El Segundo Boulevard, the former South Bay Ford site is a smaller catalytic development site that has the potential to serve as a demonstration project for mid-scale development along Hawthorne Boulevard. The site is large enough to be a commercial center, while also offering the chance to provide a model for a high-quality mixed-use residential development. It can also provide a legible transition and bridge from the mostly commercial Hawthorne Boulevard to the lower-density residential areas just off the roadway.

- T3.A** Allow for **horizontal mixed-use**, with a possible larger-format commercial center that can anchor the southern portion of Hawthorne Boulevard
- T3.B** Include **medium and higher density residential** uses that can take advantage of bus transit, as well as improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities

### Development Guidelines

Redevelopment of the South Bay Ford site should incorporate strong and vibrant ground-floor retail uses that activate the boulevard and improve the pedestrian experience in this auto-dominated area. At the same time, the redevelopment design should respond to lower-density residential uses at the back of the site, furthest from Hawthorne Boulevard. Residential and mixed uses will be most appropriate for much of the site. A transformative project that serves as a model for mid-scale development should be a key goal for redevelopment of this site.

- T3.C** Maintain a consistent scale and theme with surrounding commercial uses on Hawthorne Boulevard
- T3.D** Step-back higher floors to ensure adequate light and character along the boulevard
- T3.E** Provide parking for residents with community space over parking podiums rather than open surface parking lots

### Design Concept

This development concept, seen in the rendering on the following page, shows the old South Bay Ford site transformed into a vibrant mixed-use area with distinctive and active buildings that enliven the street and enhance the neighborhood. Medium density buildings with careful articulation and setbacks would provide a strong street wall in place of surface parking lots, while inviting ground-floor frontages would improve the pedestrian experience along Hawthorne Boulevard. Parking could be centralized beneath private resident courtyard and open space on a podium, or could be tucked out of the sight from the street. Townhouses would provide a graceful and sensitive transition to the lower-density residential neighborhoods furthest from the boulevard.



A massing diagram of the existing site and its buildings reveals a disjointed, relatively poorly-utilized space

# t4. south bay ford

potential future conditions



## t4. st. joseph's plaza



New events, such as farmer's markets and community festivals, can take full advantage of the sites prime location along Hawthorne Boulevard



St. Joseph's School already restricts vehicle access onto Acacia Avenue for students' safety, underscoring a strong need for improved public space in this area

### Design and Development Concepts

#### Land Use Strategy

A gas station currently occupies what could be a lively new neighborhood plaza framing two major neighborhood landmarks, St. Joseph's Church, and Chips Restaurant. A new public plaza could enhance the open space needs in the area, while also serving to support the church and its accompanying school's public space demands, and to help cement Chips' role as a major community landmark.

- T4.A** Recreate the site into a new, **landmark public plaza** that serves as a community focal point, and helps frame the historic St. Joseph's Catholic Church and Chips restaurant
- T4.B** Allow **event flexibility at the new plaza** so it can easily host community events, farmer's markets, formal private events and other gatherings that support the community and help activate this part of Downtown

#### Development Guidelines

Development at this site should seek to replace the existing use with one that would provide greater benefit to its important neighbors. St. Joseph's Catholic Church and adjacent school already require public open space, which they currently obtain by restricting vehicle access on Acacia Avenue during daytime hours. The pedestrian environment around the new plaza should be enhanced to improve access and safety for all users. Green features should be integrated into the plaza's overall design.

- T4.C** Ensure the plaza, and activities held there, are **compatible with surrounding uses**, especially St. Joseph's Catholic Church, but also restaurants, retail and office uses
- T4.D** Create a small-scale **neighborhood plaza or park** that showcases St. Joseph's Catholic Church and enhances the street corner
- T4.E** Expand opportunities for **bike, pedestrian and transit access** to and from the site

#### Design Concept

The site is currently occupied by a gas station. This development concept, as seen in the photo simulation on the following page, would transform the site into a vibrant new public plaza. Sidewalks and crosswalks would be upgraded to improve pedestrian conditions, while a green bike lane would offer a new facility for bicyclists. The plaza would offer much-needed open space and public amenities for day and night use.

# t5. st. joseph's plaza



# Summary

The Transformative Projects presented in this chapter hold the potential to spur the positive evolution of Downtown Hawthorne for years to come. These projects vary in scale and location, creating opportunities for short-term changes in addition to longer-term investments. Larger-scale projects, such as the redevelopment Hawthorne Mall and Civic Center Complex take cues from surrounding uses and densities to ensure that designs seamlessly integrate into the neighborhood fabric, while catalyzing the growth and improvement of the area. These developments will transform existing underused or blighted sites into lively mixed-use and entertainment destinations for the city and South Bay region. Smaller-scale infill projects, such as South Bay Ford and St. Joseph's Plaza, provide opportunities to enliven Hawthorne Boulevard with creative and vibrant spaces for community events, housing and mixed use projects.

Each of the Transformative Projects prioritizes public realm and mobility enhancements, ensuring a safe and inviting environment for pedestrians and bicyclists alike. Together, they provide a range of opportunity to begin an exciting transformation of Downtown Hawthorne.

