



Figure 4-31. Wedge Concept.

D. THE WEDGE – PARK AVENUE/FAIR STREET AREA

The Wedge presents a largely-untapped resource within the neighborhood. Where the existing development pattern is rather low intensity with limited investment, more intense development in this area could offer additional jobs, opportunities for business owners, housing, and revenue to fund the City's capital improvement projects. New development also could help mitigate the presence of hazardous materials in the area.

Goals and Objectives

- ◆ Develop a range of uses in the Wedge that are appropriate to their immediate context.
- ◆ Provide additional local employment and housing opportunities.
- ◆ Facilitate private investment in the area.
- ◆ Improve local and regional circulation.

Recommendations

Figure 4-31 provides a conceptual illustrative of the entire Wedge, loosely partitioned into four zones with new conceptual street alignments, intensified development and recommended uses. Generally, live-work and residential uses should be concentrated in the northern section with more industrial uses focused toward the south. Retail uses should front East 20th Street and Park Avenue. Development of a retail-industrial district along Park Avenue and the Wedge's frontage on East 20th Street has been addressed in the Park Avenue discussion above. The following recommendations apply to other uses in the Wedge.

I. Encourage Live/Work Housing

With the exception of the Victor Industries site - where residential use is restricted pursuant to a land use covenant - the portion of the Wedge below East 20th Street could be a transitional zone, hosting alternative types of residential development that can coexist near existing light industrial and commercial uses. Two- or three-story live/work housing is an appropriate form of development, with alley loaded parking and ground floor office or workspaces with front doors oriented to the street. This area could be considered for high quality affordable housing projects to catalyze improvements in the area.

Another potentially suitable form of development is “flexhousing.” This is a form of development that allows the interior building spaces to evolve over time as needs change. The first floor layout is designed to accommodate several possible uses, including living, office, or retail space, which occupants can configure for their specific needs, while upper floors serve as residential space. Figure 4-32 shows a concept for mixed-use housing on Fair Street, with lofts above work spaces.



Figure 4-32. Live-work Housing Concept.

2. Encourage Commercial/Industrial Flex Condos

Another type of development to be considered in the Wedge is commercial/industrial/flex condo development that provides small shops and workspaces. Economic analyses indicates that these are in demand. This kind of development could upgrade the look of the Wedge over time while providing employment and other economic benefits to the Southwest Neighborhood. Figure 4-33 illustrates an industrial/flex condo development along Fair Street and fronting a new street.

3. Create New Connections

To facilitate connections to new development in the Wedge area, the 3,300-foot-long frontage along Park Avenue and Fair Street should be split into smaller parts by providing new streets as shown in the Wedge conceptual plan in Figure 4-31. This could also create new opportunities along the new street frontages and natural transitional spaces with mixed uses in the north and primarily retail-industrial uses to the south.



Figure 4-33. Potential Live-work Housing Concept for the Wedge.

3. Develop Lower Park Avenue as a Retail-Light Industrial District

Existing industrial uses along Park Avenue south of East 20th Street do not need the high visibility Park Avenue provides. As recommended by the economic and financial analysis prepared for this plan, the high visibility sites along Park Avenue should have a retail face, with more industrial or background commercial functions behind or in the Meyers Industrial Area. Such businesses would benefit from the visibility and the City's existing investment in streetscape, bikeway and landscaping improvements along Park Avenue. Existing businesses could maintain their current

operations, while expanding with retail frontages serving for home-improvement and industrial arts and crafts, and possibly with offices above. An illustration of this kind of development is shown in Figure 4-17. If existing businesses have no need for public or retail frontage, relocation within the city to areas should be enabled through a formal relocation program.

The existing frontage road parallel to and east of Park Avenue creates a potential for a district of complementary businesses, building on the successful model that Orient & Flume Art Glass Co. provides at 2161 Park Avenue. Properties



Figure 4-17. Potential Retail-Industrial frontage on Park Avenue and the bikeway.

along the frontage road could build synergy as a “design district” for Chico, offering a range of goods and materials for home improvements, furnishings and art.

A similar approach of moving retail/office building frontages toward the street with industrial operations in the rear is also appropriate for parcels west of Park Avenue and on Fair Street.

4. Support Existing Park Avenue Businesses

The prior recommendations offer mechanisms for capitalizing on Park Avenue’s unique potential to foster a healthy local economy. Existing businesses will play an important role in creating an attractive area. A local voluntary business district could become an effective advisory group, and work with the City to facilitate public improvements in the Park Avenue corridor and surrounding neighborhoods. For existing structures on Park Avenue showing signs of age or disrepair, funding through the City’s façade improvement program should be made available.

C. THE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

The residential neighborhoods in Southwest Chico are active livable places rich with character and heritage. It is important to maintain their positive aspects, such as a healthy urban forest, compact scale, a range of housing types and styles, interesting gardens and welcoming frontages. At the same time, energy should be put into improving other aspects such as paving, sidewalks, lighting and alleys, as well as development of much-needed park space.

Goals and Objectives

- ◆ Retain the “not-suburban” character of the residential neighborhoods.
- ◆ Provide safe networks for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists.
- ◆ Ensure a safe, clean neighborly environment.
- ◆ Maintain a diversity of housing types.
- ◆ Create park spaces so that all residences are within a 5-minute walk to a park.

Recommendations

I. Physical Infrastructure

Many residents voiced concerns about the condition of existing infrastructure in the residential neighborhoods. The most commonly voiced concerns were poor street paving and sidewalk conditions, lack of stormwater drainage, problems with sewer infrastructure and public streetlighting. Following are recommendations for improving the physical infrastructure of the residential neighborhoods. A variety of sources can be used to fund infrastructure improvements including redevelopment, Community Development Block Grant, and enterprise funds. Grants at both the federal and State level become available periodically as well.

Streets and Sidewalks

Southwest Chico has a pleasant pedestrian environment, but there are many opportunities for improvement. The paving widths on almost all streets in the Plan Area are much wider than necessary. The existing sidewalk conditions range from a full curb, gutter and sidewalk with

