

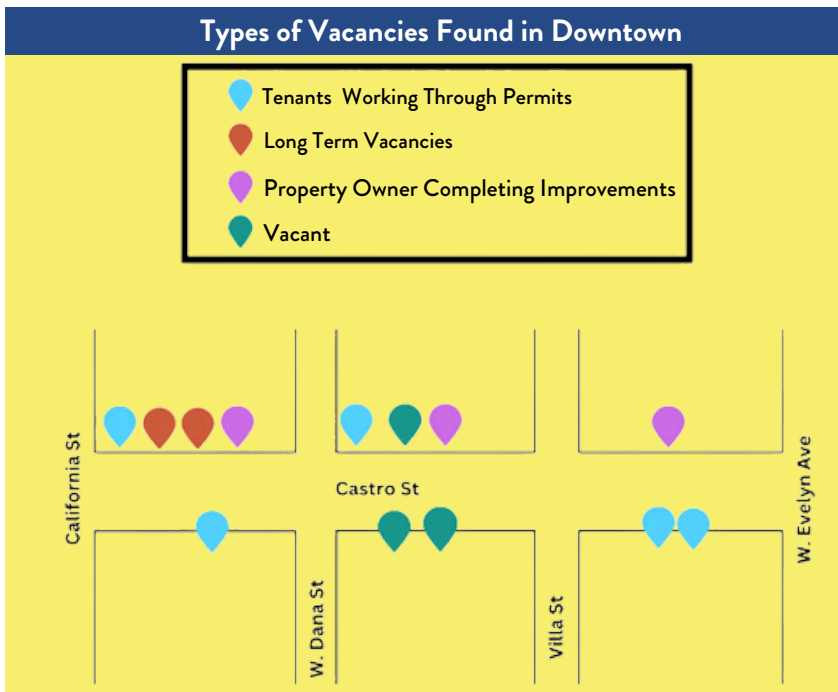
Downtown Digest

Understanding Commercial Vacancy in Downtown Mountain View

Commercial vacancies in downtown areas often draw attention, and addressing vacancies in Downtown Mountain View is a top priority. It is important to understand the complexity and types of vacancies, as this affects the tools and approaches available to fill them. Here's a breakdown of the types of vacancies commonly seen in downtown areas:



- **Actively being marketed:** These spaces are listed on common real estate platforms that include photography and clear leasing terms. These spaces typically have the shortest vacancy periods as a broker or agent is actively and aggressively marketing and promoting the space to prospective tenants.
- **Leased but unoccupied:** These properties are under contract or leased but awaiting permit approvals, which can take four - 12 months depending on the types of permits required. Construction will follow.
- **Financial Obstacles of Upgrading:** Rising costs due to code updates (e.g., ADA compliance) leave some properties in a condition that does not meet tenant expectations for space improvements, resulting in longer vacancies.
- **Identified for redevelopment:** Spaces that are planned for future development (housing, new offices, etc.) will only offer short-term leases as they prepare for redevelopment. Eventually the space will become vacant in anticipation of permit approvals and future construction.



- **Physically or economically challenged spaces:** Older commercial spaces with design issues (narrow frontage, ceiling columns, etc.) or high rent expectations can be more challenging to lease. These spaces often require a local merchant to be willing to accept the imperfections, which can extend the vacancy period.
- **Not marketed through normal channels:** Some spaces aren't listed through traditional real estate channels, limiting visibility and increasing vacancy time.
- **Physically obsolete buildings:** Some properties require costly code upgrades, making it financially prohibitive to modernize, keeping them vacant for longer. Bringing a building up to code can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Addressing Downtown Vacancies

Each vacancy represents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. While some are awaiting tenants or going through regulatory processes, others are tied to larger market trends, like redevelopment plans or evolving tenant expectations.

Addressing these vacancies requires a collaborative approach, with both the public and private sectors playing distinct but complementary roles:

City's Role	Property Owner's Role
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing clear permitting processes • Facilitating zoning changes in response to market demands • Developing incentive programs • Investing in public amenities • Code enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively marketing spaces • Upgrading properties to meet tenant needs and demands • Making necessary improvements to spaces to meet code requirements • Offering flexible leasing options and rates

The City of Mountain View has been proactively taking steps to address vacancies. In addition to the recent strategic amendments to the Downtown Precise Plan which were adopted by the City Council on September 10 (see the [August Issue](#) of the Downtown Digest), a forthcoming comprehensive update will revisit the vision for Downtown and explore ways to create more opportunities and bring more investment to Downtown.

Earlier this year, the City debuted a new permit development website: DevelopmentPermits.MountainView.gov. This customer-focused site provides centralized information on applying for and obtaining permits, typical fees and time frames, as well as details on the many facets of development. The City also launched the Business Ambassador Team, dedicated to helping businesses better understand and navigate the City's permitting application processes.

Additionally, the Economic Development (ED) team has launched incentive programs, including the Façade Improvement Grant, offering financial support for commercial storefront upgrades. In the coming months, the ED team will also work with consultants to launch a pop-up storefront in a vacant space and meet one-on-one with owners of vacant properties.

Collaboration is key to solving vacancy issues. While property owners can make their spaces attractive and ready for tenants, the City provides the frameworks and incentives to accelerate occupancy. Together, the public and private sectors work to ensure that Downtown Mountain View remains vibrant, inviting, and economically resilient.

Summer Events Wrapping Up



As summer wraps up, so do City summer events.

The final performance of Concerts on the Plaza will take place on Friday, Sept. 27 and will feature Cumbia Paradiso.

Music on Castro, taking place every Wednesday on the 200 block of Castro Street, will continue through the end of October.

Mountain View Art & Wine Festival Recap

Mountain View celebrated its 52nd annual Art and Wine Festival on Sept. 7 - 8. Over 180,000 visitors from across the Bay Area attended for food, art, wine and fun!

“I’m so impressed by the number and variety of vendors,” a first-time attendee said. “I go to a lot of regional Art and Wine festivals, and there are ton of vendors here I have never seen before. What a great event!”

Events are a great way to bring first time and returning visitors to Downtown Mountain View, and attendees are always encouraged to explore nearby businesses. Throughout the Art and Wine Festival, attendees could be seen stopping into retail businesses and eating at local restaurants.



“It was an incredible weekend!” one Downtown business representative said. “The weather was perfect, and the atmosphere was lively, with everyone having a great time. The Art & Wine Festival is always one of our busiest weekends, and we love seeing visitors from all over, including from places like Oakland and Santa Cruz.”

El Camino Real Construction Update



El Camino Real, also known as State Route 82, is owned and operated by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). It is an important multimodal transportation corridor that travels through Mountain View and is a spine of activity connecting downtown shops and businesses with freeways, trails, neighborhood streets and transit.

In support of the City of Mountain View El Camino Real Precise Plan, adopted in 2014, Caltrans began a pavement and ADA improvement project. This project aims to improve ride quality, comply with current ADA standards, and improve safety, access, and mobility for pedestrians and bicyclists. The project kicked off in January of this year, and Caltrans has already completed improvements at every crosswalk (new curbs and gutters, new curb ramps, etc.).

The next stage of the project, repaving of the road, began in Palo Alto in early September and Caltrans anticipates crews will reach Mountain View and begin work in early October. Other improvements will include bike lanes, high visibility crosswalks, and pedestrian hybrid beacons at key crossings.

For more information, visit MountainView.gov/ElCamino.

Moffett Boulevard Precise Plan

The Moffett Boulevard Precise Plan Project was identified as one of the City's Strategic Priorities in the Council's Fiscal Year 2023 – 2025 Work Plan.

The project will implement the goals, policies and land uses from the Mountain View 2030 General Plan, which envisioned a revitalized corridor with a mix of land uses, functioning as an important gateway to the City's Downtown.

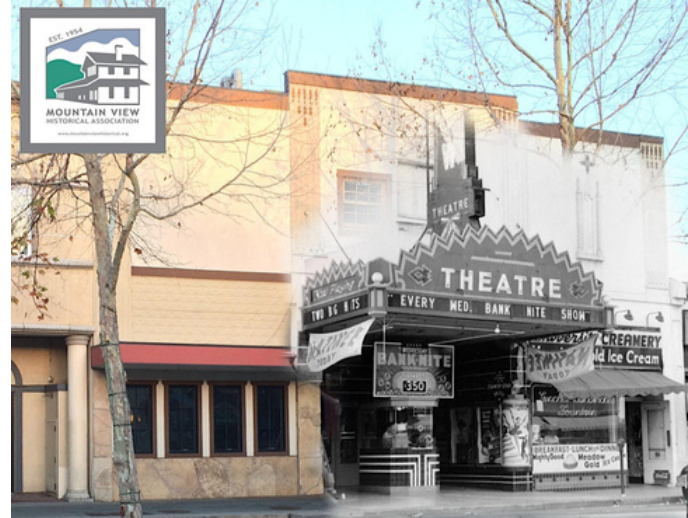
Those interested in learning more and providing input via the online survey can visit MountainView.gov/MoffettBlvd.

Historical Walking Tours

Monthly Historical Walking tours continue, organized and led by the Mountain View Historical Association.

Join the next tour on Sunday, Sept. 22 and learn about the 150+ year evolution of Mountain View through stories of historic sites and buildings on and around Castro Street.

Sign up at MountainViewHistorical.org.



Caltrain Electrification Events



On Saturday, Sept. 21, Caltrain will launch its much-anticipated electrified service.

Several events are planned to commemorate the electrified service including free Caltrain rides all weekend:

- Caltrain Electric Service Launch Party on Saturday, Sept. 21, from 1:15 – 1:45 p.m. at the Mountain View Caltrain Station, 600 W. Evelyn Ave.
- Electric Slide Dance Party on Sunday, Sept. 22, from 9 a.m. – noon at the Mountain View Farmers Market, 600 W. Evelyn Ave.

For more information, visit Caltrain.com/Electrification.