

Brett, Dan, Ash, Sherri and Eric:

As an additional official comment on the draft Downtown Plan, I generally concur with the recently submitted comments by Jim Gray. It is astounding to me that a plan that is supposed to generate more downtown residential and commercial development is so burdened with unnecessary regulatory requirements that will discourage investment. Instead of being excited by the plan, the few downtown business and property owners with whom I've spoken are experiencing anxiety and concern.

As an example, how does the City expect to attract new restaurants if it follows through with the plan to ban natural gas hookups? Virtually all restaurants cook with natural gas. Yes, new appliances such as electric induction cooktops are becoming available in the residential market, but they are typically MUCH more expensive than natural gas cooktops. Plus, a natural gas cooktop can still be used when there is an electric power outage, simply by turning on the gas and lighting a match (which my wife did last year during an unplanned local PG&E outage).

If cooking with gas is outlawed downtown, I believe few new restaurants will open. And, some existing ones may close. Some City commissioners have reportedly even suggested that natural gas be allowed in restaurants, but only if they pay a "mitigation fee." That would of course raise the cost of meals served by those restaurants.

These proposed restrictions won't induce Davis residents to dine in downtown Davis. Instead, they will drive to towns like Woodland (to restaurants like Morgan's On Main) or to Winters (Buckhorn and Putah Creek Cafe). How will a downtown plan that makes it necessary for residents to drive to other cities for dining achieve the goal of net reductions in GHG emissions? Simple answer: it won't.

The City correctly wants to reduce GHG and criteria air pollution emissions, but there are better ways to achieve that goal than to impose unrealistic restrictions on food is cooked. Please delete this mandate from the Downtown Plan.

Regards, Greg Rowe