LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HISTORY OF DOWNTOWN VENTURA

As we move forward with change, travel through the past and see the progress that's already been made.

PROGRESSION

Main Street and Downtown, as a whole, has always been the cultural core and 'heart' of the community. Since the beginning of its development, Downtown has been ever-changing. Having the unique intersection of government, commerce, culture, and community, it's always adapting to change in time. As we move forward, this is what we hope to continue with. To see some of how Downtown Ventura has transformed throughout history, continue reading below.

WE'LL BEGIN IN THE 1700'S...

Mission San Buenaventura was founded by Franciscan priest Junipero Serra in 1782. During its prime the Mission was a prosperous center of orchards, gardens, and cattle. By the 1860's a town had grown around the Mission and Main Street started to fill with stores and restaurants.

San Bue

THE LATE 1800'S

In 1873, Ventura County was created after its split from Santa Barbara County. This split was due to the oil boom that occurred in the area and the thriving agriculture. This boom brought a lot of new people and infrastructures to the area.

MAIN STREET'S FIRST BRICK BUILDING: 1877

Ventura's first commercial brick building was constructed in 1877 for Italian merchant Alex Gandolfo. In 1890, Gandolfo's nephew Nick Peirano took over the general store and kept it in the family until the late 1980's. It

Corner of Main Street and Figueroa Street. Taken from the San Buenaventura Mission.

was converted into Jonathan's Restaurant in 1998, and is now Peirano's market.

THE EARLY 1900'S

By the early 1900's, Downtown Ventura saw a big transformation. There was now an architectural mix of red brick storefronts, terra cotta banks, and Victorian-style homes. The building of the Ventura County Courthouse, or what is now City Hall, tied everything together.

THE ORIGINAL CITY HALL: 1903-1925

Surprisingly, the current City Hall on Poli St. is not the original Ventura City Hall. The original City Hall used to be on the corner of Main Street and California. This is now the location of the Ventura Inn, previously called Hotel Ventura. The current City Hall was built in 1913.

Original Ventura City Hall on the corner of Main Street and California.

THE LATE 1900'S TO TODAY

As Downtown Ventura continued to grow, city leaders in the 90s continued to invest in widened sidewalks and additional street trees along Figueroa Street. This expanded Downtown's walkability and pedestrian-oriented environment. Main Street was now, and still is, a big part of Ventura's social environment.

MOVIE THEATER MOVES IN: 1996-1998

The construction of the 70,000 square foot Art Deco theater started in 1996 and was completed in 1998. This new theater cemented Downtown's position as the entertainment and nightlife hub of the county.

Left: Front of theater. – Right: Newspaper clipping showing construction of theater.

Photos and information
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