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## **Downtown Commercial**

*By admin*

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***Downtown Benicia is the community's main destination for visitors and local residents. The waterfront, shopping, entertainment and historical settings are all key attractions.***

**Location.** The downtown commercial district runs along First Street from Military East, south to the pier on the peninsula.

**Character.** Downtown is the heart of the community and closely linked to Benicia's identity. It is a special place, full of historic buildings, waterfront views, and bustling shops and restaurants. The Arsenal, at the eastern edge of town, is a historic military facility converted to an artist colony with a growing retail element, including clothing, furniture, and consignment stores.

**Good Fits.** Over 90% of downtown businesses are locally owned and operated. The retail mix includes clothing boutiques, restaurants, antiques, and home furnishings. Office users include architects, real estate companies, and financial services. There are also a number of spas and salons. A recent Retail Market Analysis identified three business clusters that are poised to expand:

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**Apparel**

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Specialty Retail (Kitchen Shop, Running Store, Fabric Arts, etc.)

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Home Furnishings

### Improvements and Distinguishing Features

**California Main Street.** Benicia Main Street is one of only 25 certified California Main Street Districts. Benicia Main Street is the primary customer marketing organization for downtown and the community at large, with 27 events annually. The City provides significant monetary support to the organization.

**Tourism Development.** The City offers strong support to visitor development through ongoing investments in heritage tourism resources — both historic properties and organizations promoting history — and a large investment in visitor oriented public relations and advertising including the implementation of [VisitBenicia.org](http://VisitBenicia.org) and related efforts highlighting Benicia's beautiful waterfront, vibrant arts community, significant historical assets, and unique shopping & dining venues.

**Physical Improvements.** The City of Benicia has invested thousands of dollars in street and lighting maintenance, signage and development of the marina and promenade. Additionally, the City contributed \$3 million to preserve and restore the historic Commanding Officers' Quarters (COQ), which is both a historic attraction and a potential venue for special events and meetings.

**Business Improvement District.** In November 2012 Benicia First Street Business Owners formed the Benicia Business Improvement District. A business improvement district is a source of funding which is used to provide special improvements and/or services within the district. It is a self-assessment levied by and upon those business owners that exist within the district. The primary improvement of this district is the installation and maintenance of decorative tree lights.

**Commercial Properties.** Downtown Benicia has about 200,000 square feet of commercial and office space. The vacancy rate is extremely limited due to the success of the

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restaurants and shops on First Street. Sometimes small spaces do not make it into the database, so we may be aware of something through word of mouth. Contacts at the City of Benicia and Benicia Main Street may be able to help you locate available space.

[View Sample Properties](#)

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### **Contacts**

**Benicia Office of Economic Development**

**Mario Giuliani**

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*Available listings, business location assistance, retail market data*

**Downtown Benicia Alliance**

**(707)745-0254**

**www.downtownbeniciaalliance.com**

**Benicia Main Street**

**www.beniciamainstreet.org**

*Community events, and available listings.*