

## 4.9 Land Use and Planning Policy

This section evaluates the land use-related effects of the Specific Plan. Potential land use impacts that would result from implementation of the Specific Plan are identified. This section also contains a discussion of the consistency of the Specific Plan with relevant land use policies. However, policy conflicts do not constitute, in and of themselves, a significant environmental impact. Policy conflicts are considered to be environmental impacts only when they would result in direct physical impacts. All other associated physical impacts are discussed in this EIR in specific topical sections, such as the noise, air quality, and transportation sections.

### 4.9.1 Environmental Setting

The following section describes the existing land uses within the Plan area and summarizes relevant land use policy.

Note that the City of Menlo Park street grid is offset from exact compass directions. For the purposes of this discussion, streets that run relatively parallel to the Caltrain tracks are described as running north (toward San Francisco) and south (toward San Jose). Similarly, streets that run relatively parallel to the San Francisquito Creek are described as running east (toward the San Francisco Bay) and west (toward the Santa Cruz Mountains). The location of uses and buildings are similarly described according to these directions.

The Plan area is located in the City of Menlo Park in San Mateo County. Menlo Park is located on the San Francisco Peninsula, approximately 30 miles south of San Francisco and approximately 20 miles north of San Jose. The Plan area is located along El Camino Real from Watkins Avenue in the north to San Francisquito Creek in the south. It extends east to the Caltrain right-of-way and around the Caltrain Menlo Park Station to Alma Street, and it extends west along Oak Grove Avenue, Santa Cruz Avenue and Menlo Avenue to approximately University Drive. El Camino Real is designated as State Route (SR) 82 and is one of the primary arterial roadways and commercial corridors of the San Francisco Peninsula, extending from Mission Street in San Francisco to The Alameda in Santa Clara, near San Jose International Airport. Caltrain is the major commuter rail line serving the San Francisco Peninsula, and it connects Menlo Park with San Francisco to the north and San Jose and Gilroy to the south.

### Existing Land Uses

The Plan area is characterized by a mix of land uses. Traveling north along El Camino Real from Creek Drive, uses in the southern portion of the Plan area are a mix of hotels, motels, small office buildings, small retail spaces, and automotive-related uses, such as gas stations, service shops, and dealerships. Vacant buildings, as well as surface parking lots, are also present in this area. Traveling north over Middle Avenue, larger retail spaces predominate, with uses like the recently renovated Safeway to the west and sporting goods and office supply stores to the east.

The downtown area of the Plan area is characterized by local retail, medical, commercial office, and restaurant uses, including one active movie theater. Menlo Center, which houses commercial and restaurant spaces and a plaza, is on the east side of El Camino Real, just south of Santa Cruz Avenue. Santa Cruz Avenue, downtown's primary commercial corridor, is an east-west route containing a variety of retail and personal services spaces, offices, banks, and restaurants. Parking lots occupy the centers of the blocks between Santa Cruz Avenue and Menlo Avenue to the south and Oak Grove Avenue to the north. Menlo Avenue and Oak Grove Avenue house additional offices and retail and personal services spaces, as well as some residential uses. In addition, the larger retail spaces of the Draegers and Trader Joe's grocery stores are on Menlo Avenue. Primary access to the Caltrain station is along Merrill Street, on the east side of El Camino Real.

North of Oak Grove Avenue, uses on El Camino Real are primarily retail service uses, including home repair and automotive-related uses, with other retail and restaurant uses interspersed among them. The southern half of the block between El Camino Real, Oak Grove Avenue, the Caltrain right-of-way, and Glenwood/Valparaiso Avenues contains primarily vacant office and service buildings, as well as surface parking lots. The northern portion of the block contains commercial office buildings.

North of Glenwood Avenue, the east side of El Camino Real is developed with automotive-related uses, appliance repair shops, a liquor store, and restaurants. Properties on the west side of El Camino Real are outside of the Plan area, though they contain single-family homes oriented toward Victoria Drive, and Menlo College. As with the block immediately to the south, the block bounded by El Camino Real, Glenwood Avenue, San Antonio Avenue, and Encinal Avenue contains some vacant buildings and a large amount of surface parking. North of Encinal Avenue, a mix of residential apartment and office uses comprise the remainder of the Plan area.

Surrounding the Plan area, land uses are primarily single- and multi-family housing. In addition, the Menlo Park Civic Center, housing the local government buildings and Burgess Park, is located directly southeast of Downtown, across the Caltrain right-of-way. In addition, Fremont Park, Nealon Park, and Holbrook Palmer Park are all within two blocks of the Plan area. Menlo College is adjacent to the northern portion of the Plan area, within the Town of Atherton. Across San Francisquito Creek is the Stanford Shopping Center and additional residential and recreational uses, which are within the City of Palo Alto (Santa Clara County).

## 4.9.2 Regulatory Setting

This section discusses land use policies applicable to the Plan area. Applicable plans and policies related to housing, transportation and circulation, noise, and other environmental categories are discussed in other relevant sections of this EIR.

## Menlo Park General Plan

### ***Land Use Designations***

The City of Menlo Park General Plan (General Plan) guides development and use of land in the City. The central purpose of the General Plan, as stated in the document, “is to maintain Menlo Park’s special character as a residential community that includes a broad range of residential, business, and employment opportunities and to provide for the change necessary to maintain a vital community.” The General Plan land use designations currently applicable to the Plan area are described below. The land use and development standards are implemented through the Zoning Ordinance.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>

### **Retail/Commercial**

The downtown area falls within the Retail/Commercial land use designation. This designation provides for retail services, personal services, professional offices, banks, savings and loans, restaurants, cafes, theaters, social and fraternal clubs, residential uses, public and quasi-public uses, and similar and compatible uses. The maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR)<sup>5</sup> for non-residential uses ranges from 0.40 to 2.00 and residential density is limited to 18.5 units per acre.

### **El Camino Real Professional/Retail Commercial**

Most of the properties along El Camino Real within the Plan area fall within the El Camino Real Professional/Retail Commercial land use designation<sup>6</sup>. This designation provides for retail services, personal services, professional offices, executive, general and administrative offices, research and development facilities, banks, savings and loans, convalescent homes, restaurants, cafes, theaters, residential uses, public and quasi-public uses, and similar and compatible uses. The maximum FAR for non-residential uses ranges from 0.40 to 0.75 percent (with vehicle storage associated with an automobile dealership permitted at an additional 0.25 FAR for a total of 1.00) and residential density is limited 18.5 units per acre.

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<sup>1</sup> City of Menlo Park, *General Plan Policy Document – 1994 Amendments to the Land Use and Circulation Elements*. Adopted November 30 and December 1, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> City of Menlo Park, 2008. Zoning Map and Land Use Diagram Sheet 3, available online: <http://www.menlopark.org/departments/pln/zmap/zmap3.pdf>, accessed July 22, 2009, published 2008.

<sup>3</sup> City of Menlo Park, 2007. Zoning Map and General Plan Land Use Diagram Sheet Layout and Legend, available online: <http://www.menlopark.org/departments/pln/zmap/zmap1.pdf>, accessed July 22, 2009, published 1999, updated March 2007.

<sup>4</sup> City of Menlo Park, Zoning District and General Plan Land Use Designation Correspondence Table. available online: [http://service.govdelivery.com/docs/CAMENLO/CAMENLO\\_176/CAMENLO\\_176\\_20060710\\_en.pdf](http://service.govdelivery.com/docs/CAMENLO/CAMENLO_176/CAMENLO_176_20060710_en.pdf), accessed July 22, 2009 (2009b).

<sup>5</sup> Floor-area ratio is the ratio of total applicable floor area within a building to the size of the lot. That is, a two-story building that fully covers its lot would have a floor area ratio of 2.00.

<sup>6</sup> Although 1600 El Camino Real falls within the Administrative and Professional (C-1-A) District of the Zoning Ordinance, the property’s designated land use is the El Camino Real Professional/Retail Commercial in the General Plan (City of Menlo Park, 2009).

### **Professional and Administrative Offices**

Some properties within the Plan area are designated Professional and Administrative Offices. This designation provides for professional offices, executive, general and administrative offices, research and development facilities, banks, savings and loans, convalescent homes, residential uses, public and quasi-public uses, and similar and compatible uses. The maximum FAR for non-residential uses ranges from 0.25 to 0.40 percent and residential intensity is limited to 18.5 units per acre.

### **Medium Density Residential**

Some properties within the Plan area are designated for Medium Density Residential use. This designation provides for single family detached and attached homes, duplexes, multi-family units, garden apartments, condominiums, public and quasi-public uses, and similar and compatible uses. Residential senior rental shall be in the range of 5.1 to 18.5 units per net acre.

### **General Plan Land Use Designations in the Vicinity of the Project Site**

Surrounding the Plan area, properties are designated for Medium- and Low-Density Residential land use, as well as for Professional and Administrative Office land use. Properties in the Civic Center are designated for Public Facility land use. **Figure 4.9-1** shows existing zoning district designations. **Table 4.9-1** shows corresponding General Plan land use designations.

### **General Plan Policies**

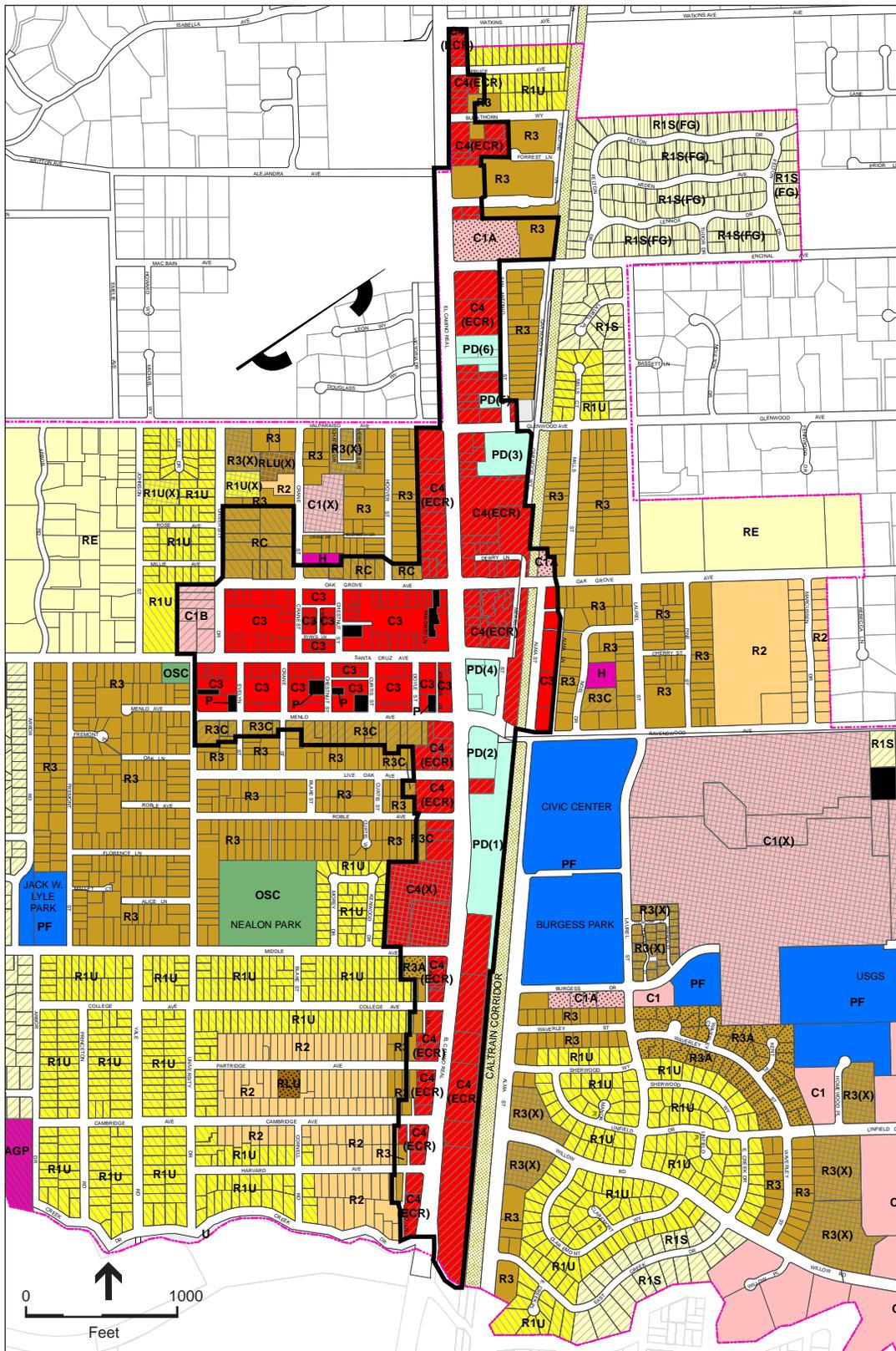
The General Plan also includes goals and policies related to land use, circulation, housing, open space and conservation, noise, and seismic safety and safety. These topics are addressed within the specific elements of the General Plan. Several goals and policies of the General Plan apply broadly to land use and development across the City. The policies specifically relevant to the land use and the Specific Plan are discussed under **Impact LU-3**, below. Applicable policies of other elements are discussed in the relevant sections of this EIR (City of Menlo Park, 1994).

### **Menlo Park Zoning Ordinance**

The City of Menlo Park Zoning Ordinance enforces the land uses designated in the General Plan. Chapter 16 of the City of Menlo Park Municipal Code sets forth the City's Zoning Ordinance, the stated purpose of which is "to preserve and extend the charm and beauty inherent to the residential character of the city; to regulate and limit the density of population; encourage the most appropriate use of land; to conserve land and stabilize the value of property; to provide adequate open space for light, air and fire protection; to lessen traffic congestion; to facilitate the provision of community facilities; to encourage tree and shrub planting; to encourage building construction of pleasing design; to provide the economic and social advantages of a planned community." Figure 4.9-1 shows existing Zoning Ordinance designations within and surrounding the Plan area.<sup>7</sup> The existing zoning districts found within the Plan area are briefly summarized below.

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<sup>7</sup> City of Menlo Park, Municipal Code, Chapter 16: Zoning, available online:  
<http://www.menlopark.org/departments/pln/zoneordn.pdf>, effective May 2009.



Specific Plan Area

SOURCE: City of Menlo Park, 2009

Menlo Park El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan EIR . 208581

**Figure 4.9-1**  
Existing General Plan Land Use Designations and Zoning Districts

**TABLE 4.9-1  
 CITY OF MENLO PARK ZONING DISTRICT AND  
 GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATION CORRESPONDENCE TABLE (SEE FIGURE 4.9-1)**

<b>Zoning District</b>		<b>General Plan Land Use Designation</b>
R-E	Residential Estate District	Very Low Density Residential
R-E-S	Residential Estate Suburban District	Very Low Density Residential
R-1-S	Single Family Suburban Residential District	Low Density Residential <sup>a,b</sup>
R-1-S (FG)	Single Family Suburban Residential District (Felton Gables)	Low Density Residential <sup>a</sup>
R-1-U	Single Family Urban Residential District	Low Density Residential
R-2	Low Density Apartment District	Medium Density Residential
R-3	Apartment District	Medium Density Residential
R-3-A	Garden Apartment Residential District	Medium Density Residential
R-3-C	Apartment-Office District	Professional and Administrative Offices <sup>c</sup>
R-4	High-Density Residential District	High Density Residential
R-C	Mixed Use District	Professional and Administrative Offices <sup>c</sup>
R-L-U	Retirement Living Units District	High Density Residential
C-1	Administrative and Professional District, Restrictive	Professional and Administrative Offices
C-1-A	Administrative and Professional District	Professional and Administrative Offices <sup>d</sup>
C-1-B	Administrative, Professional, and Service District	Professional and Administrative Offices
C-1-C	Administrative, Professional and Research District, Restrictive	Professional and Administrative Offices
C-2	Neighborhood Shopping District	Retail/Commercial
C-2-A	Neighborhood Shopping District, Restrictive	Retail/Commercial
C-2-B	Neighborhood Commercial District, Restrictive	Retail/Commercial
C-2-S	Neighborhood Commercial District, Special	Retail/Commercial
C-3	Central Commercial District	Retail/Commercial
C-4	General Commercial District (other than El Camino Real)	Retail/Commercial
C-4 (ECR)	General Commercial District (applicable to El Camino Real)	El Camino Real Professional/Retail Commercial
M-1	Light Industrial District	Limited Industry
M-2	General Industrial District	Limited Industry
OSC	Open Space and Conservation District	Parks and Recreation
P-F	Public Facilities District	Public Facilities
FP	Flood Plain District	Non-Urban <sup>e</sup>
P	Parking District	Retail/Commercial
H	Historic Site District	Medium Density Residential <sup>f</sup>
AAGP	Allied Arts Guild Preservation District	Other
P-D	P-D District	El Camino Real Professional/Retail Commercial
X	Conditional Development	n/a <sup>7</sup>

<sup>a</sup> The General Plan refers to R-1-S as potentially part of either the Very Low Density Residential or Low Density Residential land use designations. However, when developments are built to R-1-S standards, only the Low Density Residential land use designation applies.  
<sup>b</sup> The Stanford Golf Course area between Junipero Serra and Sand Hill Road is part of the Parks and Recreation land use designation.  
<sup>c</sup> The R-3-C and R-C zoning districts may have residential uses, but at densities covered by the Professional and Administrative Offices land use designation.  
<sup>d</sup> 1600 El Camino Real is part of the El Camino Real Professional/Retail Commercial land use designation.  
<sup>e</sup> Bayfront Park is part of the Parks and Recreation land use designation.  
<sup>f</sup> The two parcels currently zoned H are 1040 Noel Drive and 1220 Crane Street.  
<sup>7</sup> Conditional Development districts inherit the land use designation of their base zoning district.

SOURCE: City of Menlo Park, 2008.

### **Central Commercial District (C-3)**

Within the Plan area, the properties bounded by University Drive, Menlo Avenue, El Camino Real, and Oak Grove Avenue and properties along Alma Street between Ravenswood and Oak Grove Avenues are primarily within the General Commercial (C-3) district. In this district, the floor-area ratio (FAR) of buildings may not exceed 1.00, although a FAR of up to 2.00 may be authorized by a use permit when required parking for the FAR above 1.00 is provided on site or nearby. Office uses are limited to an FAR of 0.50. The maximum residential density is 18.5 units per acre and maximum residential FAR is 1.00. The maximum height of buildings is 30 feet. There is no minimum lot area, lot dimension, land coverage, setback requirements, or landscaping requirements in the district. Other properties in this area are within Parking (P) district, where the only permitted use is landscaped, off-street parking subject to approval of the City Engineer prior to development.

### **General Commercial District (Applicable to El Camino Real) (C-4 ECR)**

The majority of the properties fronting El Camino Real within the Plan area are within the General Commercial district specific to properties on the thoroughfare (C-4 ECR). Lot areas must be at least 10,000 square feet, but there are no minimum setbacks or land coverage requirements. A minimum of five (5) to 10 percent of land must be landscaped, depending on the size of the property. Maximum heights are 30 feet, and the FAR may not exceed 0.55, except by use permit (0.75 for general uses and 1.00 for automobile storage in conjunction with an automobile dealership). Office uses are limited to an FAR of 0.40. Residential densities are limited to 18.5 units per acre.

### **Planned Development Districts (P-D)**

The purpose of P-D districts is to encourage the consolidation of smaller parcels into larger parcels to provide benefits to the city which could not otherwise be obtained. In order to obtain these benefits, projects are encouraged to include specific development controls resulting in more usable open space, efficient use of land, utilities and circulation, develop creative and integrated design and allow for innovative and desirable mixed use developments. Within P-D districts, development standards may be altered with the exception of FAR and density requirements, which must be consistent with the pre-existing zoning district prior to rezoning to a P-D designation. Several properties between El Camino Real and the Caltrain right-of-way are within P-D districts. Permits approving development plans are subject to approval by the City Council. Property owners are required to submit detailed plans of proposed projects, including preliminary building plans detailing height, bulk, setbacks, and landscaping, as well as development schedules.

### **General Commercial District, Conditional (Applicable to El Camino Real) [C-4 ECR(X)]**

The purpose of the Conditional (X) district is to allow for adjustment of the requirements of an established zoning district in order to secure special benefits possible through comprehensive planning of larger developments. The adjustments are intended to allow relief from the monotony of standard development regulations and permit new and desired techniques to encourage more

usable open space. The Conditional district is a “combining district” in that it combines with an underlying established district and uses that district’s regulations as a base. The Conditional district designation allows modification of the development standards with the exception of FAR and density. Although similar in function to the P-D district described above, it may be applied citywide (subject to certain minimum size limits) whereas the P-D district is only applicable in the area between El Camino Real and the railroad tracks. Application of the X designation requires rezoning of the property and approval of a Conditional Development Permit (CDP) by the City Council. The Safeway property is within the General Commercial (Applicable to El Camino Real) district, Conditional [C-4 ECR(X)]. This development generally adheres to C-4 ECR standards, with the exception of unique regulations for parking and signage, which are governed by the property’s CDP.

### ***Administrative and Professional District (C-1-A)***

The property at the northwest corner of El Camino Real and Encinal Avenue (1600 El Camino Real) and the property at 530 Oak Grove Avenue are within an Administrative and Professional (C-1-A) district. In C-1-A districts, lot areas must be 10,000 square feet, and setbacks must be 15 feet in the front, 10 feet in the rear, a minimum of five (5) feet on interior sides, and 10 feet on corner sides. Maximum lot coverage is 40 percent, and the maximum FAR is 0.40. The maximum height of buildings is 35 feet.

### ***Administrative, Professional, and Service District (C-1-B)***

Several properties at the northwest corner of Santa Cruz Avenue and University Drive lie within an Administrative, Professional, and Service (C-1-B) district. Lot areas must be 10,000 square feet in C-1-B districts; front setbacks must be 15 feet, rear setbacks 10 feet, interior side setbacks must be a minimum of five (5) feet, and corner side setbacks a minimum of 10 feet. Buildings cannot exceed 35 feet in height, lot coverage is limited to 40 percent, and the maximum FAR in these districts is 0.40.

### ***Apartment District (R-3)***

A few of the properties in the northern and southern portions of the project area are within an Apartment (R-3) district. Lot areas must be at least 7,000 square feet in R-3 districts. Setbacks must be a minimum of 20 feet in the front, a minimum of 15 feet in the rear, 10 feet for the interior side and 15 feet for the corner side. Total land coverage cannot exceed 30 percent, a minimum of 50 percent of the lot area is required to be landscaped, and the height of buildings cannot exceed 35 feet. Maximum FAR in the district is 0.45, and the permitted density of residential units is dependent on the total lot area but varies between 12.4 and 18.5 units per acre.

### ***Apartment-Office District (R-3-C)***

Properties on the south side of Menlo Avenue are within an Apartment-Office (R-3-C) district. Residential uses are subject to R-3 district development regulations, discussed above. Commercial office uses are subject to C-1-A development regulations, discussed above, and approval of a use permit. Residential and commercial uses are not permitted on the same property.

### ***Mixed-Use District (R-C)***

Finally, properties on the north side of Oak Grove Avenue are within a Mixed-Use (R-C) district. The purpose of the R-C district is to provide for mixed office and residential developments that integrate the functional and physical elements of the development. Residential portions of projects are required to utilize the R-3 district controls (see above), except that residential density is established at 18.5 units per acre as opposed to the range of densities in the R-3 district. Commercial uses are governed by C-1-A district controls (see above). FAR is limited to 0.45 for residential uses, 0.40 for commercial uses, and 0.85 in total for mixed residential and commercial developments.

### ***Zoning Districts in the Vicinity of the Project Site***

Surrounding the Plan area, properties are primarily within Low and Medium Density Apartment Districts (R-2, R-3), the Apartment-Office District (R-3-C), and Single-Family Urban and Suburban Residential Districts (R-1-U, R-1-S). Properties in the Civic Center area are within the Public Facilities (P-F) district.

## **4.9.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

### **Significance Criteria**

Implementation of the Specific Plan would have a significant impact on land use if it would:

- Physically divide an established community;
- Alter the type or intensity of land use on a project site, in a manner that causes it to be substantially incompatible with surrounding land uses or the overall character of surrounding neighborhoods;
- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the General Plan, Specific Plan, Local Coastal Program, or Zoning Ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect; and/or
- Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

As stated in Section 4.3, *Biological Resources*, the Specific Plan area does not lie within the planning area for any adopted or proposed habitat conservation or natural community plans. Therefore, there would be no impact related to this criterion, and this issue is not discussed further.

## Impacts

### **Impact LU-1: Implementation of the Menlo Park El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan would not physically divide an established community. (Less than Significant)**

The Specific Plan area has an existing street grid that establishes the framework of the Plan area and along which exists a variety of building styles, sizes and heights. The Specific Plan would not alter the existing street grid, therefore would not create a new physical barrier that would divide the community. However, the Specific Plan would allow for taller buildings than exist. The majority of the Plan area is comprised of one- and two-story height buildings, with one-story buildings commonly having heights of approximately 14 feet and two-story buildings commonly having heights of approximately 29 feet. Primarily along El Camino Real, taller buildings of three- and four-stories can also be found. Examples include Menlo Center at 46 feet in height, Menlo Square at approximately 45 feet inclusive of roof screening and 50 feet including the elevator tower, two buildings near the southeast corner of El Camino Real and Ravenswood Avenue at 47 and 56 feet in height and the Stanford Park hotel at 45 feet in height. The Specific Plan would allow for taller heights of 38 feet for the downtown, north El Camino Real and southwest El Camino Real, 48 feet for public parking plazas 1 and 3, and 60 feet for the station area and southeast El Camino Real. Figure 4.1-6 depicts the proposed maximum building heights. The maximum heights are moderated in most areas by the inclusion of upper level setbacks and 45 degree building profiles above façade heights of 30 feet for 38-foot heights, 38 feet for 48-foot heights, and 45 feet for 60-foot heights. Bulk controls that restrict upper levels above the maximum façade heights to 175 feet in length and 200 feet diagonal are also required in the station area and the southeast side of El Camino Real where the tallest heights would be allowed. With these massing controls, the visual perception from the ground level would be reduced and façade heights would be similar to existing two- and three-story buildings. Additionally, the proposed heights would not introduce heights not already existing in the Plan area. As discussed in Section 4.1, *Aesthetic Resources*, the proposed heights would result in less than significant impacts to view corridors and no scenic views or vistas would be obscured. With new development occurring along the existing street grid pattern and proposed building heights and massing controls resulting in buildings relatively compatible with existing buildings, development proposed under the Specific Plan would not result in a physical or visual barrier, therefore would not physically divide the community.

Although the existing street grid system establishes the framework for the Plan area and provides for visual and physical connections between the downtown, station area and El Camino Real, there are existing barriers to connectivity created primarily by the railroad right-of-way and El Camino Real. The railroad right-of-way currently presents a physical barrier between the Plan area and neighborhoods to the east. The Specific Plan includes elements for the enhancement of the east-west connectivity, as expressed in the Plan's Design Guidelines detailed in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, Table 3-2. The Specific Plan incorporates a new Civic Plaza at the existing train station leading to new pedestrian and bicycle access across the railroad right-of-way (above or below, depending on the final layout of the High Speed Rail project) (Guidelines D.3.26 through D.3.29). The new crossing of the railroad tracks would connect to a 15-foot wide

sidewalk along Alma Street identified as the Alma Street Civic Walk, creating a stronger pedestrian connection between the railroad station and the Civic Center (Guidelines D.3.12 through D.3.19). A final connection would be formed with the Ravenswood Gateway that would include small plazas at the intersection of Ravenswood Avenue and Alma Street and a unique landmark to identify the area (Guidelines D.3.20 through D.3.25). The Specific Plan also calls for a new east-west connection in the vicinity of Burgess Park and Middle Avenue in accordance with Guidelines D.4.12 through D.4.17. Construction of these facilities would increase the opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle circulation and connectivity between El Camino Real and neighborhoods east of the railroad right-of-way.

El Camino Real is also a physical barrier to east-west connectivity because long crossing distances make traversing the street uninviting and inconvenient. The Specific Plan incorporates amenities such as countdown timers, high visibility crosswalks, extended crossing time, and curb extensions at key locations to improve the east-west connectivity. Specific Plan Guidelines D.4.06 through D.4.11 provide direction on the design of the curb extensions. Curb extensions would require the removal of right-turn lanes while retaining the existing number of through lanes. (The impacts to vehicular traffic are discussed in Section 4.13, *Transportation, Circulation and Parking*.) The Specific Plan not only improves east-west connectivity but also the quality of the north-south pedestrian experience along El Camino Real by widening sidewalks through a combination of property setbacks and narrowing of travel lanes where feasible. Specific Plan Design Guidelines D.4.01 through D.4.05 address the widening of the sidewalks, with sidewalks of 15 feet minimum on the east side of the street and 12 feet minimum on the west side.

Access and connectivity would also be improved along other project area streets. Sidewalks along Santa Cruz Avenue would be widened in the space created by replacing diagonal parking with parallel parking and would incorporate a minimum 12-foot wide pedestrian zone as well as a minimum five-foot wide furnishings zone in accordance with Specific Plan Guidelines D.2.01 and D.2.07 through D.2.11. In addition, Guideline D.2.02 includes elements such as marked crossings, clear signage, supplementary lighting and curb extensions to enhance safe pedestrian crossings. Guidelines D.2.03 through D.2.06, D.2.11 and D.2.13 address landscaping and furnishing design details as well as maximizing space for outdoor seating and minimizing the cluttering of sidewalks. Improvements are outlined in Guidelines D.2.52 through D.2.56 for connections between Santa Cruz Avenue and the proposed parking garages and pocket parks. The Specific Plan also includes support for bicycle improvements included in the City's Comprehensive Bicycle Development Plan, as well as recommendations for additional bicycle facilities including bicycle lanes on Oak Grove Avenue, bicycle routes on Crane Street, Garwood Way and Alma Street, and bicycle parking and storage facilities. More discussion of existing and planned bicycle improvements can be found in Section 4.13, *Transportation, Circulation and Parking*. These improvements would enhance cyclist access through and to downtown and the station area.

The addition and improvement of public plazas would also increase connectivity. Implementation of the Specific Plan would include new plaza space at the Santa Cruz Avenue Central Plaza, providing public space on Santa Cruz Avenue between Chestnut and Crane Streets. The plaza

would connect to new pathways from the proposed parking garages and pocket parks, as discussed above, and to the proposed Chestnut Street Paseo. Although the paseo would require the closing of a portion of Chestnut Street south of Santa Cruz Avenue to vehicular traffic, the paseo would enhance pedestrian access and connectivity. Although this closure would create a physical barrier to vehicular traffic, as stated in Section 4.13, *Transportation, Circulation and Parking*, impacts related to vehicular circulation would be less than significant. The Specific Plan also includes a new Central Plaza near the train station and improvements to the Menlo Center Plaza to connect the two plazas and provide integrated vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle and transit modes of travel. Design Guidelines D.2.15 through D.2.21 address the Santa Cruz Avenue Central Plaza, Guidelines D.2.22 through D.2.28 address the Chestnut Street Paseo, Guidelines D.2.52 through D.2.56 address the garage parking and pocket park connections, and Guidelines D.3.01 through D.3.11 address the Civic Plaza and Menlo Center Plaza.

In summary, although the Specific Plan would allow for taller buildings, any new development would occur along the existing street grid pattern and proposed building heights and massing controls would result in buildings relatively compatible with existing buildings found in the Plan area. The proposed development would not create a physical or visual barrier, therefore would not physically divide the community. Planned improvements to pedestrian and bicycle travel, including widened sidewalks, street crossings, public plaza space and bicycle facilities, would serve to enhance connections both within the Plan area and to the neighborhoods east of the Plan area. Therefore, the Specific Plan would enhance connectivity in, rather than physically divide, the community and the impact would be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None required.

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**Impact LU-2: Implementation of the Specific Plan would alter the type and intensity of land uses in the Plan area, but not in a manner that would cause them to be substantially incompatible with surrounding land uses or neighborhood character. (Less than Significant)**

The Specific Plan establishes an approach to land use that is based on the Plan's overall objective of preserving and enhancing community life, character and vitality through public space improvements, mixed use infill projects sensitive to the small town character of Menlo Park and improved connections across El Camino Real. The objective is based on community workshops that led to the formation of both the Phase 1 Vision Plan goals and the guiding principles of the Specific Plan itself. The five guiding principles are: (1) enhance public space; (2) generate vibrancy; (3) sustain Menlo Park's village character; (4) enhance connectivity; and (5) promote healthy living and sustainability.

The land uses for the Plan area are derived primarily from the City's existing uses, revised to reflect the Specific Plan's goals and guiding principles. As such, the land uses are generally compatible with existing uses in the area but would allow for more mixed use, especially mixed use that would include a residential component, as a factor in generating the vibrancy necessary to support retail business, activate public spaces, and support transit as a mode of travel. The

Specific Plan also acknowledges the community's interest in limiting some types of commercial activity to ensure a desired mix of retail uses in the downtown, limit competition to independent business and limit uses with the potential to generate large volumes of traffic. As such, the uses are either permitted, permitted with limits, conditionally permitted thereby requiring an administrative or conditional use permit, or prohibited. The Plan provides two ways in which uses may be permitted with limits. The first are limits on the sizes of specific types of uses, primarily non-retail service and office uses. For example, banks and financial institutions are limited to 5,000 square feet in size in the downtown and station areas. Offices are limited to one half of the otherwise allowed Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and medical and dental offices are limited to one-third of the otherwise allowed FAR. The second includes use of a "Main Street" overlay in the downtown and station areas that would restrict ground floor uses on Santa Cruz Avenue to primarily retail and restaurant uses. In general, the Specific Plan supports similar uses to those existing in the area and would not allow for substantially incompatible uses such as heavy industry or power plants.

The Specific Plan also establishes new FAR and residential density standards that would be higher than what exists in the Plan area. The Plan uses both base and public benefit bonus levels of FAR and residential density. The base FAR and density are those that are explicitly allowed by the Specific Plan. The difference between the base and public benefit bonus amounts represent the amount of FAR and density that could be achieved by a developer in exchange for public benefits. The Plan states that in no case may development exceed the public benefit bonus FAR and density identified for each proposed zoning district. The allowable FARs and residential densities reflect community preferences as explored through the community workshops. At the three workshops, participants commented on and selected preferences for overall building character as depicted in precedent photographs, photo montages, sections and sketches derived from initial community feedback, market analysis of demand for various uses, site accommodation studies and a planning level pro-forma to gauge project viability. This iterative process through the community workshops resulted in development prototypes used to develop the proposed FARs and residential densities. Detailed summaries of the community workshops as well as the presentation graphics are included in Appendix H.3 of the Specific Plan. In general, the highest FARs and densities would be found in the station area and along southeast El Camino Real. Within the station area, the higher FARs and densities serve to activate the area by increasing the resident population necessary to support the retail activities of the downtown and station area and increase transit use and the station's identity as a destination. The higher FARs and densities also serve to stimulate the development of the underutilized parcels found in the station area and along southeast El Camino Real.

The following sections discuss the proposed and existing land use, FAR and residential density standards for each of the land use designations in the Specific Plan, with the exception of the *Downtown/Station Area "Main Street" Overlay*. The overlay designation serves to enhance the retail emphasis of the *Downtown/Station Area Retail/Mixed Use* designation by specifically limiting non-retail ground floor uses on Santa Cruz Avenue, but otherwise is consistent with regards to development standards and guidelines with the underlying designation. With regard to existing FARs and residential densities, information has been obtained from City records that allow for a

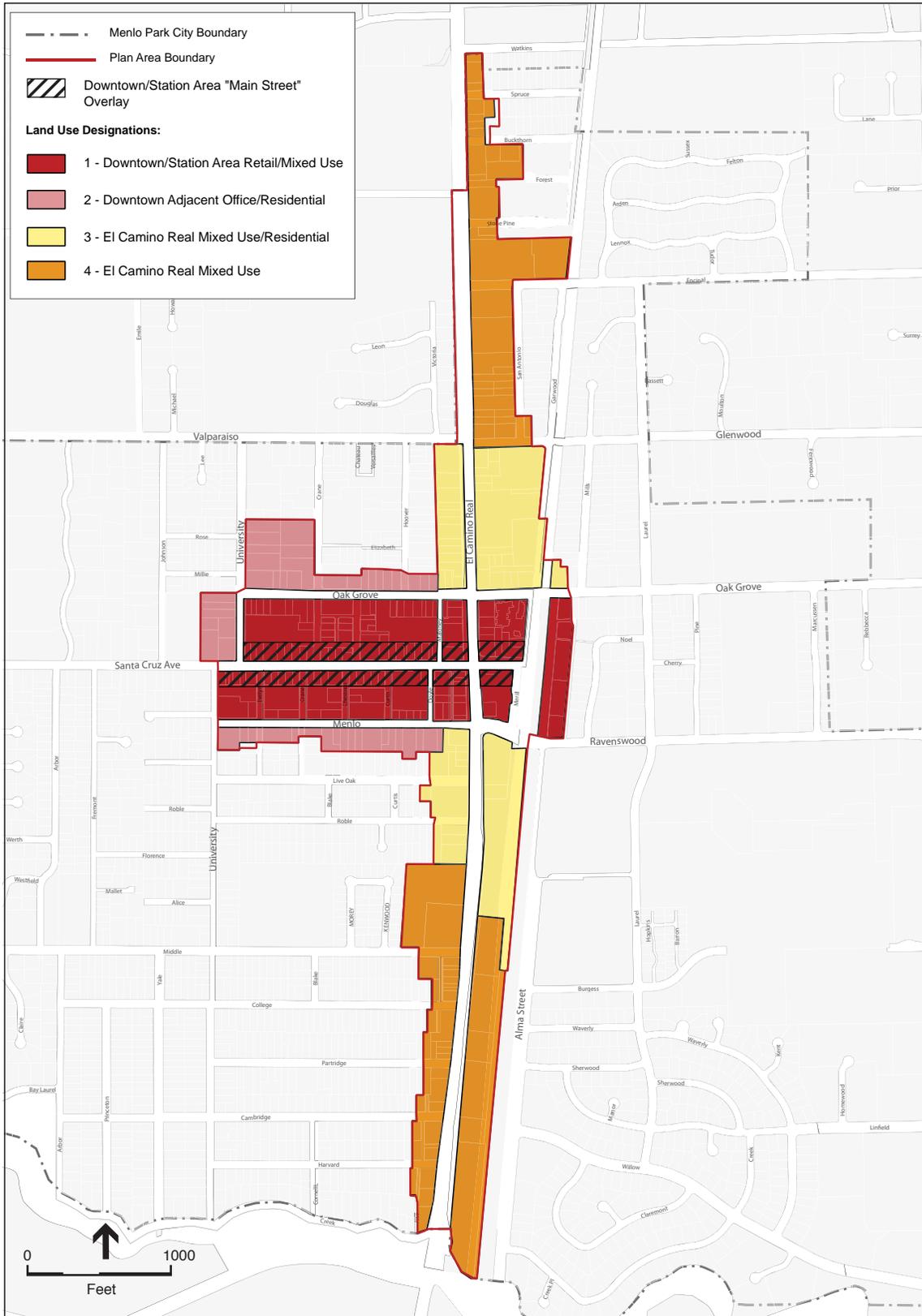
representative comparison to proposed FARs and densities. In some cases, existing buildings may have FARs or densities higher than described in Section 4.9.2 *Regulatory Setting* as the result of buildings legally constructed prior to the current regulations, application of density bonuses related to the provision of affordable housing or other approvals granted by the City. Although heights are also a factor in building compatibility, the following discussions focus on FAR and residential density as the key components of land use compatibility. Heights are discussed in detail in Section 4.1, *Aesthetic Resources*. Proposed Specific Plan Land Use Designations are shown in **Figure 4.9-2**, and proposed Zoning Districts are shown in **Figure 4.9-3**. For analysis purposes, the existing land uses in the Plan area are shown in **Figure 4.9-4**.

As part of the following detailed discussions, specific standards and guidelines that help reduce impacts related to the land uses, FARs and densities are provided. However, there are a number of standards and guidelines that apply broadly to most land use designations and which serve to limit the potential conflicts with surrounding development. These are discussed below and referenced in the following detailed discussions.

Standards are the rules that new development is required to follow. Guidelines encourage features of good design. Together they are intended to encourage infill development while respecting the smaller scale, fine-grain character of downtown and the Plan area's proximity to existing residential uses. Projects proposed under the Specific Plan will be required to adhere to the applicable standards, while consistency with the applicable guidelines will be a key component of the discretionary review process for projects.

Key standards used to achieve compatibility between new buildings and the existing built character are based on massing controls and include limits on setbacks, façade heights, upper level profiles, bulk controls and façade modulation. Setbacks are used to ensure buildings fit within the context of their specific location. The Plan imposes front and side setbacks necessary to reinforce existing street patterns and yet allow for widened sidewalks, plazas and landscaped spaces. Rear setbacks are specifically used to provide open space and distance between new development and existing residential neighborhoods. Façade heights work in combination with upper level setbacks, 45-degree building profiles and bulk controls of 175 feet in length and 200 feet diagonal on upper levels to reduce the perception of height on taller buildings and adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods. Façade modulation requires changes in street and public space facades for every 100 feet of building length. Other controls, such as allowed building projections for canopies, awnings and similar features, building breaks and required minimum open space further support existing patterns in the built environment.

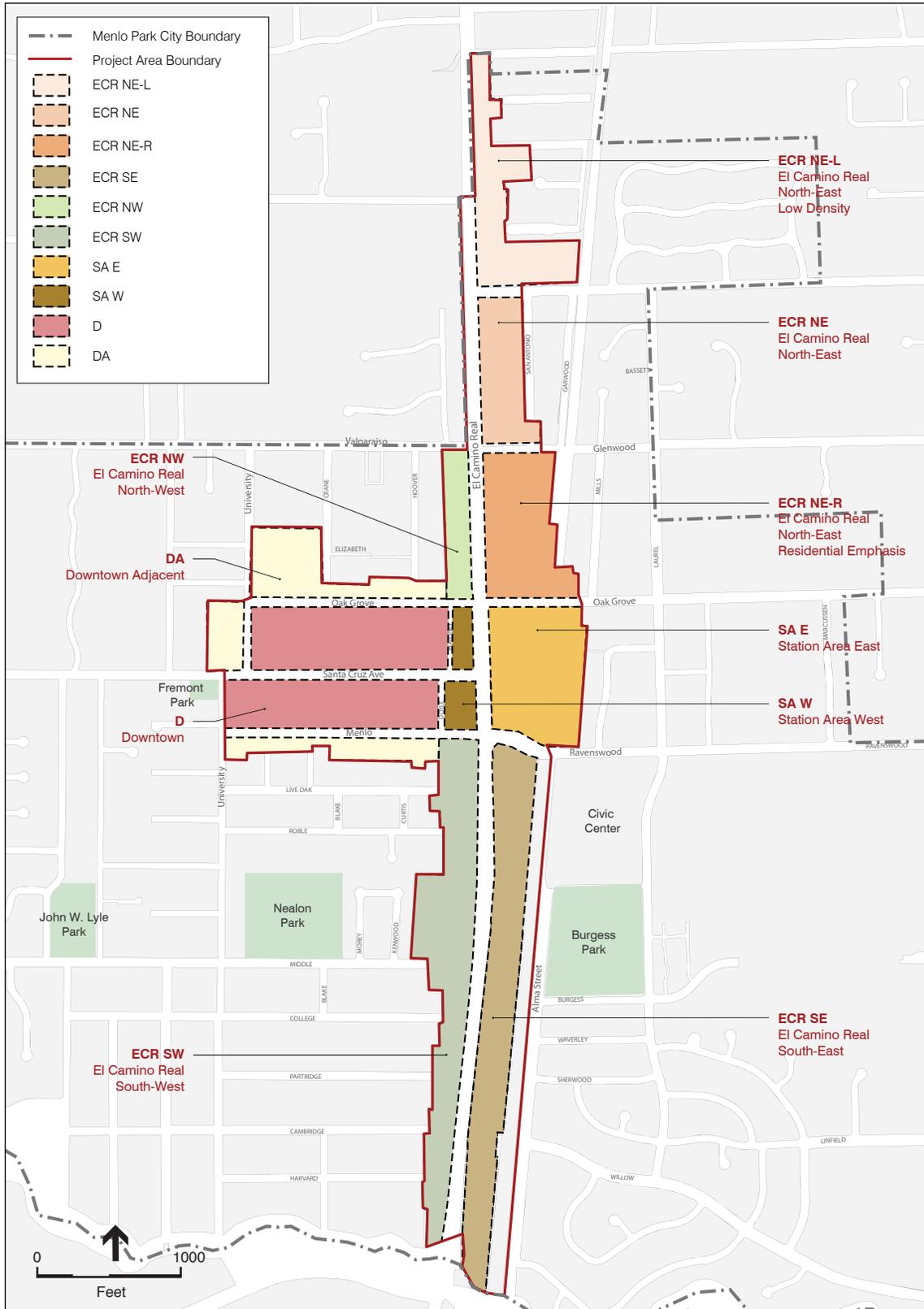
Specific Plan guidelines further address the intent of the Plan that new development be compatible to its existing surroundings. Related to massing and modulation, Guidelines E.3.4.01 through E.3.4.03 promote sensitivity to the low-scale, horizontal character of the Plan area by encouraging horizontal articulation that helps to differentiate the ground floor from upper levels or the roof, with special emphasis on compatibility of adjacent buildings along rear property lines. Additional guidelines address building ground floor treatments that help to provide a pleasant and safe pedestrian experience, successful retail environment, and appropriate transition between



SOURCE: City of Menlo Park, 2009

Menlo Park El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan EIR . 208581

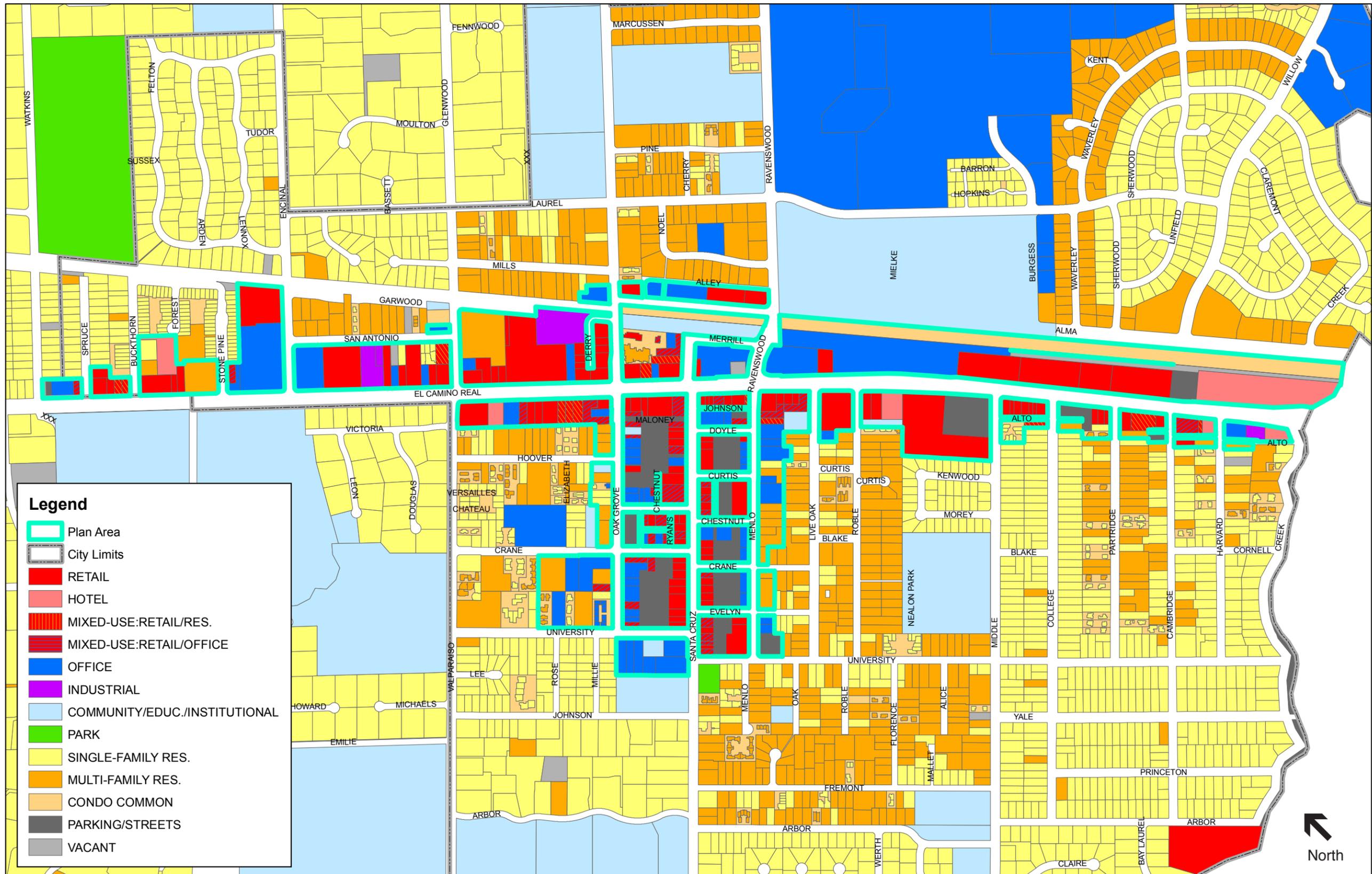
**Figure 4.9-2**  
Proposed Land Use Designations



SOURCE: City of Menlo Park, 2009

Menlo Park El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan EIR . 208581

**Figure 4.9-3**  
Proposed Zoning Districts



SOURCE: City of Menlo Park, 2011

Menlo Park El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan EIR . 208581

**Figure 4.9-4**  
Existing Land Uses

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buildings and sidewalks and other public spaces. Guidelines E.3.5.01 through E.3.5.09 address ground floor orientation and relationship of buildings to the street by encouraging orientation of retail and direct-access residential units to the street, provision of visually interesting and active uses along the street, ground floor transparency of retail and office uses, and use of canopies, awnings, and building design to break up building mass, add visual interest and provide shelter and shade. Guidelines E.3.5.10 through E.3.5.14 encourage building entries that are oriented to the street and made prominent and visually distinct with the use of scale, materials and architectural detail. Multiple entries are encouraged to reinforce existing street patterns where such patterns exist. Guidelines E.3.5.15 through E.3.5.20 encourage storefront designs that are consistent with a building's overall design and contribute to establishing well-defined facades along the street yet are distinct from the building and other storefronts. Storefront elements should lend interest to building facades and maintain transparency with clear glass, open views and lit nighttime views into retail spaces. Recessed doorways for retail uses are further encouraged to help identify the location of store entrances, provide an opportunity for interesting paving and signage, and provide shade.

Overall, the land uses and increased FAR and residential density proposed under the Plan would not, in itself, result in substantial adverse effects on the compatibility of surrounding land uses. Other physical effects of increased FAR and density, such as traffic impacts and increased emissions of criteria air pollutants and greenhouse gases, are discussed in the applicable sections of this EIR.

#### **Downtown/Station Area Retail/Mixed-Use**

The *Downtown/Station Area Retail/Mixed-Use* land use designation, which would apply to the core of downtown between Oak Grove and Menlo Avenues eastward to Alma Street, focuses on uses that enhance downtown and the station area vibrancy by building upon existing community-serving retail and personal services. While emphasizing retail for ground floor uses, the designation allows for a mix of uses to support downtown vibrancy through an increased customer base. The designation allows for general retail sales, food and beverage sales (with the exception of liquor stores), restaurants, cinemas, hotel and residential uses as permitted uses. Other uses such as financial institutions, business services, offices, personal services and cultural institutions would be subject to limitations in size and or location in order to foster the retail nature of the designation. Similarly, some uses such as bars and lounges, convenience markets, liquor stores, clubs and lodges, day care centers and animal clinics and boarding would be subject to a conditional use permit review process through the Planning Commission. Finally, uses such as adult business establishments, automobile sales and leasing, gas stations and community social service and public safety facilities would be prohibited. As noted above, the *Downtown/Station Area "Main Street" Overlay* provides additional support for the retail nature of the designation by specifically limiting non-retail ground floor uses on Santa Cruz Avenue.

The proposed uses would be substantially similar to existing uses which have a mix of retail, restaurant and office as the primary uses with smaller numbers of financial institutions, service and residential uses. Within the station area, existing uses include office, retail, restaurants and personal service. Also within the station area, Menlo Center includes retail and restaurant uses

located on the ground level with offices above, while Menlo Square has a large residential component. Within the downtown area, the predominate ground floor uses are retail and restaurant, at approximately 90 percent of the ground floor tenant spaces along Santa Cruz Avenue. Offices are typically located on the second floor of buildings. Along Oak Grove Avenue and Menlo Avenue, there is a higher percentage of office uses on the ground floor as well as on upper levels. In that the Specific Plan would allow for retail, restaurant, and residential uses as permitted uses, and limited office, financial and personal service use, the Plan would support the continuation of the existing types of uses. Additionally, the “*Main Street*” *Overlay* would serve to further strengthen the focus on retail and restaurant uses along Santa Cruz Avenue.

The Specific Plan would allow for two types of uses that would be new to the station area and downtown. The first is cinemas which would be a permitted use in the *Downtown/Station Area Retail/Mixed Use* designation, but not within the “*Main Street*” *Overlay*. Although no cinemas are currently present in the downtown or station area, cinemas have been and continue to be located along El Camino Real near the downtown and would not introduce a new use to the area. In that cinemas draw customers that would also be likely to use other retail uses and restaurants they would be complementary to the existing uses in the downtown and station area.

The second use new to the downtown and station area are hotels which would be allowed as a permitted use in the land use designation, but only as a conditional use in the “*Main Street*” *Overlay*. Several letters in response to the Notice of Preparation referenced the location of a hotel on public parking plaza 8. Although documents and graphics used in the community workshops included this location as a possible concept for public consideration, the draft Specific Plan under evaluation in this EIR does not include a hotel on public parking plaza 8, consistent with community feedback. Instead, the draft Specific Plan includes hotel use as a general use category that could be developed on private property if such an opportunity were to emerge. Hotels currently exist along El Camino Real. Similar to cinemas, hotels help to add to the customer base for the types of uses and services found in the downtown as well as for the transit services, and would be complementary to the existing uses.

The Specific Plan also includes concepts for a marketplace along Chestnut Street south of Santa Cruz Avenue and non-parking improvements on several of the public parking plazas. Although the uses contemplated would not introduce new uses to the downtown, the use of public parking plazas for permanent structures to house these uses would be a change from existing conditions. The Plan envisions the marketplace as relatively small at approximately 4,000 square feet located along Chestnut Street in parking plazas 6 and 7 and housing retail and restaurant uses. The intent of the marketplace is to provide services complementary to the existing Farmer’s Market, currently operating in Plaza 6, and other permanent businesses in a manner that would draw additional foot traffic to the area to benefit other retailers in the area. The Specific Plan includes Guideline D.2.29 that defines the marketplace as contributing to the Farmer’s Market identity and presence in the region. Guideline D.2.30 provides for alternative physical forms of the marketplace including being an extension of the Chestnut Street Paseo, a roofed but open-air structure, or an enclosed building. Guidelines D.2.31 through D.2.36 further outline the physical design of the marketplace as being oriented to activate the Chestnut Street Paseo, Farmer’s

Market and flex space parking areas during special events, preserving and integrating the existing heritage oak tree, and retaining vehicular access to and from parking plazas 6 and 7. The Specific Plan does not design the physical appearance or establish the uses of the market place. The Specific Plan states that if the community decides to pursue a marketplace, additional public outreach would be necessary to determine the appropriate size, character and tenant mix with the primary goals of increasing foot traffic and complementing both existing grocers and the Farmer's Market. For purposes of the EIR evaluation, the small scale of the marketplace and types of retail and restaurant uses envisioned would be consistent with the existing one- and two-story buildings and retail and restaurant uses currently in the downtown.

The Specific Plan considers the publically-owned parking plazas as opportunities for public open space and selective infill development, including retail and residential in combination with new parking structures that would satisfy parking demand in downtown. As with the concept of the marketplace discussed above, the Specific Plan does not mandate the development or design of the parking plazas but allows for the community to decide if it is in the community's best interest to enhance the parking plazas with new improvements. If development on parking plazas were pursued, additional community outreach would be necessary. However, the Specific Plan acknowledges that parking in support of businesses must be the City's top priority when considering how, when and if to pursue such development. For purposes of evaluation in the EIR, the possible uses, including parking, residential, retail, offices and open space are consistent with uses that currently exist in the downtown therefore would not introduce new uses that would have the potential to conflict with existing conditions. The actual design of the structures would be subject to height, setback and massing controls that would lessen any potential impact on surrounding properties to a less than significant impact, as discussed in Section 4.1, *Aesthetic Resources*. Parking and traffic impacts are discussed in Section 4.13, *Transportation, Circulation and Parking*.

The FAR and residential densities of land use are also factors in the determination of land use compatibility with the existing neighborhood. Existing FARs in the station area vary from 0.20 to 1.70 with one-story buildings having the lowest FARs and older two-story buildings along El Camino Real having the highest FARs. Newer development, such as Menlo Center and Menlo Square, has FARs of 0.73 and 0.85, respectively. Existing residential densities range from approximately 12 to 38 dwelling units per acre, with Menlo Square having a density of 20 units per acre. The station area also abuts existing residential uses to the east of Alma Street. These residential units have FARs of approximately 0.45 with densities that range from 25 to 50 dwelling units per acre.

The proposed base FAR in the station area is 1.35 and up to 1.75 with a negotiated public benefit. The proposed residential density is different in the station area east and west of El Camino Real. East of El Camino Real, the proposed base density is 50 dwelling units per acre and up to 60 dwelling units per acre with a public benefit bonus. West of El Camino Real, the proposed base density is 25 dwelling units per acre and up to 40 dwelling units per acre with a public benefit bonus. The proposed FARs and residential densities would represent a change to higher intensities and densities in the station area, although the proposed FAR would be compatible to

the higher existing FARs and density would be generally consistent with densities of up to 50 units per acre existing in the residential area to the east of the station area.

Existing FARs in the downtown primarily range from 0.70 to 2.00, although some buildings along the cross streets have FARs below 0.70. The same patterns occur along Oak Grove and Menlo Avenues, but with higher percentages of FARs at or near 2.00. In general, one-story buildings have the lowest FARs, one-story buildings with mezzanine space a middle range of FARs and two-story buildings the highest FARs. Residential development is limited in the downtown, primarily occurring as two or three units above select buildings with densities of approximately 18 units per acre.

The proposed base FAR for the downtown is 2.00 and up to 2.25 with a negotiated public benefit. In that existing buildings within this area have FARs up to 2.00; the Specific Plan would not introduce a substantially higher FAR than exists in a number of buildings. The proposed residential density would be somewhat higher than existing densities, although given the relatively small size of lots in the downtown the density increase would not result in substantial increases in the number of units. For example, on a typical 5,000 square foot parcel, the base density would allow for two units, similar to the existing conditions, and four units at the maximum density that could be achieved with a public benefit bonus. The allowance of a modest increase in residential development would be consistent with the existing residential use in the downtown.

As noted earlier, the increased FARs and residential densities reflect community preferences as determined through the community workshops. The preferences are embodied in the Specific Plan objectives to enhance the Plan area through mixed use development, inclusive of a strong residential component, necessary to generate the vibrancy needed to support retail business, activate public spaces, support transit as a mode of travel and support the station area and downtown as a destination. In the workshops, the community also emphasized the need for design controls in order to minimize impacts of larger buildings and increase compatibility with the existing character of the Plan area. As discussed above, the Plan includes standards and guidelines intended to respect the smaller-scale, fine grain character of downtown and achieve compatibility between new buildings and the existing built environment. In this land use designation, the Specific Plan standards require that all buildings have maximum façade height limits of 30 feet for 38-foot heights, 38 feet for 48-foot heights, and 45 feet for 60-foot tall heights, above which upper level setbacks of 10 feet minimum and 45-degree building profiles would be required. Additionally, facades would be required to be modulated along public streets and projections such as awnings and canopies would be allowed in order to provide further visual interest and character to building facades. Other standards reflect the different character of the downtown and the station area east of El Camino Real. Within the downtown, setbacks are not required in order to mimic the existing strong street edge created by a continuous line of relatively narrow storefronts. Guideline E.3.4.04 encourages new development to maintain a tight and varied rhythm of facades compatible with the existing character, specifically relating to the typical 50 foot wide parcel through vertical modulation and façade modulation. The one exception is the proposed parking garages where minimum 25 foot setbacks are required on all

sides of the garages in order to allow for appropriate access and interface between the garages and existing buildings. Guideline E.3.5.05 encourages any future development of garages to integrate with adjacent existing buildings and avoid monolithic massing. A similar strong street edge would be created in the station area, with the exception of Alma Street which would have front setbacks ranging from seven to 12 feet in order to accommodate wider sidewalks and rear setbacks of 10 feet minimum where the Specific Plan area abuts multiple-family residential development. Because of the likelihood of larger buildings in the station area, bulk controls, breaks in buildings and a 20 percent minimum open space requirement are also applicable to new development. As discussed in this section and Section 4.1, *Aesthetic Resources*, with the massing controls and design guidelines included in the Specific Plan, the increased FARs and residential densities in the *Downtown/Station Area Retail/Mixed-Use* designation would not, in itself, result in substantial adverse effects on the character of the neighborhoods within or adjacent to the Specific Plan area.

#### **Downtown Adjacent (Office/Residential)**

To the north, south, and west of the downtown core, properties would be designated as *Downtown Adjacent*, where the only permitted use is residential. Other uses, such as financial institutions, business services, offices, and personal services would be allowed with limitations on size and location, and uses such as hotels, day care centers, and religious and safety facilities would only be allowed through a conditional use permit. The more restrictive nature of the land uses serves to emphasize the designation's relationship to adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The proposed uses would be substantially similar to the pattern of existing uses. Along the south side of Menlo Avenue approximately 60 percent of the uses are residential with the majority being larger multiple-family developments. The remainder of the use is primarily office. Uses along the north side of Oak Grove Avenue represent a mix of uses with no one use predominating that includes residential, office, financial and personal services and institutional uses. The segment also includes mixed residential and commercial development. Along both Menlo and Oak Grove Avenues, adjacent neighborhoods are primarily residential. Along the west side of University Drive, the uses both in and adjacent to the Plan area are primarily office and institutional with single-family residences to the northwest of the Plan area. The Specific Plan's focus on residential uses with limited office and support services would be consistent with the existing patterns in the *Downtown Adjacent* designation and would help to create a buffer between the adjacent residential neighborhoods and the more active retail and restaurant focus of the downtown core. Therefore, the proposed uses would be substantially compatible with surrounding land use character.

Proposed intensities include a base FAR of 0.85 and up to 1.00 with a public benefit bonus. The proposed residential density is a base of 18.5 units per acre and up to 25 units per acre with a negotiated public benefit bonus. The proposed FAR is generally consistent with the existing conditions where FAR ranges from 0.18 to 0.85 with the higher FAR found in mixed use buildings located along Oak Grove Avenue and multiple-family residential buildings along Menlo Avenue. The existing residential densities are, in some cases, higher than what is proposed, ranging from single-family residences to large multiple-family buildings with densities of approximately

40 dwelling units per acre. Although the proposed FAR and density would not introduce substantial new intensities not already found in the area, smaller buildings could be replaced with larger development. The proposed FARs and densities would address objectives of the Specific Plan to enhance mixed use and residential development for an increased customer base and added vibrancy for the downtown and station area. Additionally, the standards and guidelines discussed above will serve to ensure that new development complements and integrates with existing development. Specifically, the *Downtown Adjacent* designation limits total height to 38 feet and requires minimum 10 foot upper level setbacks and 45 degree building profiles above a maximum façade height of 30 feet. Front setbacks of between five and 20 feet are required in order to provide for minimum 11 foot sidewalks and rear setbacks of 10 feet minimum are required adjacent to surrounding neighborhoods. Therefore, the increased FARs and residential densities would not, in itself, result in substantial adverse effects on the character of the neighborhoods within or adjacent to the Specific Plan.

### **El Camino Real Mixed-Use/Residential**

The *El Camino Real Mixed-Use/Residential* land use designation would encompass the areas between Glenwood/Valparaiso Avenues and Oak Grove Avenue, and again between Ravenswood Avenue and approximately Middle Avenue (not including the existing supermarket). The designation emphasizes residential in close proximity to the station area and downtown in order to support area businesses, transit use and overall downtown vibrancy. Residential is a permitted use in the designation as well as a mix of other uses, including general retail, food and beverage sales (excluding liquor stores), general personal services, restaurants, business services, automobile sales, cinemas, financial institutions and hotels. Offices and cultural institutions are allowed with limitations on size. Other uses, such as animal clinics and boarding, gas stations and light vehicle service, small scale commercial recreation, bars and lounges, liquor stores, conveniences markets, funeral and internment services, clubs and lodges, and community, social, religious and safety facilities would only be allowed through a conditional use permit.

The existing land uses include many of the same uses as proposed in the Specific Plan. In the segment between Glenwood/Valparaiso Avenues and Oak Grove Avenue, uses include retail, restaurants, business and personal services, financial services, office, motel, gas stations and other automobile services, and residential. In the segment between Ravenswood Avenue and approximately Middle Avenue uses include retail, restaurants, business and personal services, office, cinema and a hotel. Although the varied nature of the existing uses reflect the range of uses that would be allowed, either as permitted or conditional uses in the Specific Plan, the Plan's emphasis on residential uses could bring more residential use to the area than currently exists. The residential use would complement existing retail, restaurant, cinema and service uses by creating a stronger customer base for these uses. Additionally, the emphasis on residential use would be compatible with the residential neighborhoods that surround this area and the proximity of the Civic Center and Burgess Park would be an amenity for residents. However, residential uses also potentially conflicts with existing automotive-related uses. Possible impacts related to noise, hazardous materials, air quality and pedestrian safety are discussed in applicable sections of this EIR and were found to be less than significant.

Proposed base FARs would be 1.10 in all areas of the *El Camino Real Mixed-Use/Residential* designation with the exception of the southeast side of El Camino Real where the base FAR would be 1.25. With negotiated public benefit bonuses, the FARs could range from 1.50 to 1.75 respectively. Residential densities would range from a base of 25.0 dwelling units per acre (40.0 with a public benefit bonus) in the areas on the west side of El Camino Real (both north of Oak Grove Avenue and south of Ravenswood Avenue) to a base of 32.0 dwelling units per acre (50.0 with a public benefit bonus) on the east side of El Camino Real north of Oak Grove Avenue and a base density of 40.0 (60.0 with a public benefit bonus) dwelling units per acre on the east side of El Camino Real, south of Ravenswood Avenue.

Existing FARs within the *El Camino Real Mixed Use/Residential* designation range from less than 0.20 for service stations and similar small buildings to over 0.80 for one- and two-story buildings with no or small parking and landscaped areas. The three-story building at the southwest corner of El Camino Real has an FAR of 0.65. The neighboring retail complex, including the four-story tall building, has an FAR of 0.20. The primary residential use in the designation is the Glenwood Inn, a senior residential facility with an FAR of 1.14 and a density of 55 units per acre. With the exception of the Civic Center which borders the southwest segment, the remaining segments are bordered by residential uses. The residential uses adjacent to the northeast segment are primarily two-story tall multiple-family developments with densities that range from 10 to 40 dwelling units per acre. The majority of the residential developments are approximately 25 units per acre. The residential uses located adjacent to the northwest and southwest segments are a mix of single-family and multiple-family developments at a lower density of approximately 12 units per acre, although buildings up to 25 units per acre are found adjacent to the northwest segment.

As discussed above, the higher FARs and residential densities included in the Specific Plan were developed based on community preferences as established at the workshops in order to encourage the development of underutilized parcels found along the northeast segment of this land use designation and to generate vibrancy through an increased customer base for commercial uses in the downtown and station area and for transit use. Additionally, the standards and guidelines discussed above will serve to ensure that new development complements and integrates with existing development. Specifically, the *El Camino Real Mixed-Use/Residential* designation varies the application of the standards in recognition of the differences in the surrounding neighborhoods.

The northeast segment primarily abuts two-story multiple-family residential uses with densities up to 40 units per acre. The northwest segment abuts a mix of single-family and multiple-family residential uses with densities up to 25 units per acre. Given the character of the surrounding neighborhoods and the location close to downtown and the transit station, the Plan limits heights to 38 feet, generally consistent with maximum allowed heights of 35 feet in the surrounding neighborhoods. Although there are no upper level setbacks or building profiles required, rear setbacks are required to be a minimum of 20 feet along the northwest segment where the Plan area directly abuts the adjacent neighborhood, and a minimum of 10 feet along the northeast segment which is separated from the surrounding neighborhood by Garwood Way and the

railroad right-of-way. New development would also be required to include 20 percent minimum of the lot area in open space.

The southwest segment also directly abuts a residential neighborhood, although in recognition of the lower density of approximately 12 units per acre in the neighborhood, the Plan limits the height to 38 feet and includes façade height maximums of 30 feet above which minimum 10 foot upper level setbacks and 45 degree building profiles are required. Additionally, rear setbacks of 10 feet minimum and open space requirements of 20 percent apply to new development north of Live Oak in recognition of the area's proximity to the downtown. Larger rear setbacks of 20 feet minimum and greater open space requirements of 30 percent minimum are required south of Live Oak Avenue.

The southeast segment is unique given its existing development of three- and four-story buildings and large buffer created by Alma Street, the railroad right-of-way and the Civic Center. As such, the Plan proposes the largest buildings in this area. Although heights would be allowed up to 60 feet, buildings would be required to maintain maximum façade heights of 45 feet on all street and corner sides of buildings above which upper level setbacks, 45 degree building profiles and bulk controls would apply. Additionally, rear setbacks of 20 feet minimum would be required as well as breaks between buildings, building modulation, and 40 percent minimum open space. Front setbacks would be required throughout the four segments to enable wider sidewalks where called for in the Specific Plan in order to enhance the north-south connectivity.

Overall, the land uses proposed by the Specific Plan are consistent with existing land uses. The emphasis on residential use is compatible with surrounding neighborhoods and the increased FARs and residential densities support the community's objectives to encourage the development of underutilized parcels, generate vibrancy in the downtown and station areas, increase the use of transit and provide for additional residential opportunities. The included standards and guidelines help to integrate new development into the existing environment and therefore, the change in intensities and densities would not, in itself, result in substantial adverse effects on the character of the neighborhoods within or adjacent to the Plan area.

### **El Camino Real Mixed Use**

*The El Camino Real Mixed Use* land use designation would encompass the areas approximately north of Glenwood Avenue and south of Middle Avenue (including the existing supermarket) in the Specific Plan area. The designation allows for the same set of uses as the *El Camino Real Mixed-Use/Residential* designation with the exception that small-scale commercial recreation would be a permitted use as opposed to a conditional use, cinemas would be a conditional use as opposed to a permitted use, and bars and lounges and public parking facilities would be prohibited. These differences reflect the designation's distance from the downtown and station area where entertainment is a more focused feature. The proposed uses are similar to the existing uses in the designation which include retail, restaurants, personal and business services, offices, three hotels, three gas stations and residential uses. The area also includes automobile-related uses including a car wash, auto repair, one active automobile dealership and several vacant automobile dealerships, most notably located along the southeast segment of El Camino Real.

The southwest segment is anchored by the Safeway complex. Although the proposed uses would not represent a significant change in use, as described in the *El Camino Real Mixed Use/Residential* designation, residential uses could conflict with existing automotive-related uses with regard to noise, hazardous materials, air quality and pedestrian safety. These potential impacts are discussed in the applicable sections of this EIR and were found to be less than significant.

The proposed FARs and residential densities vary in this land use designation in order to be compatible with surrounding neighborhoods. The lowest proposed FARs and densities occur in the most northerly segment of El Camino Real where the Plan area abuts primarily single-family residential development. In this area, base FARs would be 0.75 and up to 1.10 with a public benefit bonus. Base densities would be 20 units per acre and up to 30 units per acre with a public benefit bonus. The existing commercial buildings have FARs that range from approximately 0.25 to 1.25 with the lowest FARs for small one-story buildings and the highest FARs for large two-story buildings. The only residential building in the area is a three-story apartment building with a density of 72.5 units per acre. The adjacent single-family residential neighborhood has a density of 14.6 units per acre. Although the proposed FARs and densities represent a possible increase over the smaller buildings in the area, they would not introduce higher FARs or densities than already exist in the area.

The remainder of the northeast segment is separated from existing multiple-family residential development by San Antonio Street, thereby allowing for higher FARs and densities. Proposed base FARs in this area are 1.10 and up to 1.50 with a public benefit bonus. Base densities are 25 units per acre and up to 40 units per acre with a public benefit bonus. The same FARs and residential densities would also be applicable in the southwest segment, where the Plan area is adjacent to both single-family and multiple-family development. Within the northeast segment, the existing commercial buildings have FARs that range from less than 0.20 for the gas station to 0.55. Residential development occurs primarily near the intersection of Glenwood Avenue and San Antonio Street with densities that average approximately 17 units per acre. The multiple-family residential developments along the east side of San Antonio Street have densities that range from 12 to 43 units per acre. Along the southwest segment, commercial FARs range from a low of 0.08 for one of the gas stations to between 0.75 and 0.82 for larger two-story buildings. The Safeway complex has an FAR of 0.35. There are no comparable residential densities in this segment, although the neighborhoods to the west are comprised of single-family and multiple-family development with densities of approximately 12 units per acre.

The highest FARs and densities are proposed along the southeast corridor of El Camino Real partly in recognition of the buffer created by the segment's location adjacent to the railroad right-of-way and Alma Street, which separate the segment by approximately 200 feet from the adjacent neighborhood. The base FAR is proposed to be 1.25 and up to 1.75 with a negotiated public benefit bonus. Base residential density is proposed to be 40 units per acre and up to 60 units per acre with a public benefit bonus. With the exception of the hotel with 0.70 FAR, existing FARs are fairly low at between 0.13 and 0.25 for the former and current automobile dealerships. There are no comparable residential densities in this segment however multiple-family residential developments along the east side of Alma Street have densities ranging from 25 to 30 units per acre.

Consistent with the other land use designations discussed above, the higher FARs and residential densities included in the Specific Plan were developed based on community preferences for larger buildings in order to generate vibrancy in the Plan area and provide for residential opportunities near jobs and shopping areas. Specific to the southeast segment, the community expressed a strong preference for the redevelopment of the underutilized automobile dealership properties. In order to ensure that new development complements and integrates with existing development, the Specific Plan includes standards and guidelines as described above. Similar to the *El Camino Real Mixed-Use/Residential* land use designation, this designation also varies the application of the standards in recognition of the differences in the adjacent neighborhoods. The most northerly segment (north of Encinal Avenue) limits total heights to 38 feet, and façade heights to 30 feet. Above the façade heights, buildings are required to include upper level setbacks and 45-degree building profiles to further reduce the perception of the height. Setbacks and open space requirements provide distance between new development and adjacent buildings. Front and corner side setbacks are required to be between 10 and 20 feet to enable the development of a 15-foot wide sidewalk along the east side of El Camino Real. Interior side setbacks between 10 and 25 feet and rear setbacks of 20 feet minimum are also required. Developments are required to provide a minimum of 30 percent open space and façade modulation to increase the visual interest of the buildings.

As noted above, the northeast segment between Encinal and Glenwood Avenues is separated from the adjacent multiple-family residential neighborhood by San Antonio Street. Given the higher densities of the adjacent neighborhood, the Plan limits heights to 38 feet, generally consistent with maximum allowed heights of 35 feet in the surrounding neighborhoods. Although there are no upper level setbacks or building profiles required, front and side setbacks would be the same as for the segment to the north. Rear setbacks of 10 feet minimum would be required, in recognition of the buffer created by San Antonio Street. New development would also be required to include 30 percent minimum of the lot area in open space as well as provide façade modulation to increase the visual interest of buildings.

The southwest segment directly abuts a residential neighborhood of both single-family and multiple-family development. In recognition of the mixed density of the neighborhood, the Plan limits the height to 38 feet and includes façade height maximums of 30 feet above which minimum 10 foot upper level setbacks and 45 degree building profiles are required. Additionally, front and corner side setbacks of 5 feet, interior side setbacks of up to 25 feet maximum, rear setbacks of 10 feet minimum and open space requirements of 20 percent minimum apply to new development north of Live Oak in recognition of the area's proximity to the downtown. Larger front and corner side setbacks of between seven and 12 feet and rear setbacks of 20 feet minimum as well as greater open space requirements of 30 percent minimum are required south of Live Oak Avenue.

As noted previously, the southeast segment is unique given its existing development of taller buildings on the ends of the segment and large buffer created by Alma Street, the railroad right-of-way and the Civic Center. As such, the Plan proposes the largest buildings in this area. Although heights would be allowed up to 60 feet, buildings would be required to maintain maximum façade heights of 45 feet on street and corner sides of buildings above which upper level setbacks,

45 degree building profiles and bulk controls would apply. Additionally, rear setbacks of 20 feet minimum would be required as well as breaks between buildings, building modulation, and 40 percent minimum open space. Front setbacks would be required to enable wider sidewalks with a minimum 15-foot width to enhance the north-south connectivity.

Overall, the land uses proposed by the Specific Plan are consistent with existing land uses. The increased FARs and residential densities support the community's objectives to encourage the development of underutilized parcels and generate vibrancy through new mixed use development and increased residential opportunities. The included standards and guidelines help to integrate new development into the existing environment and therefore, the change in intensities and densities would not, in itself, result in substantial adverse effects on the character of the neighborhoods within or adjacent to the Plan area.

**Mitigation:** None required.

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**Impact LU-3: Implementation of the Menlo Park El Camino Real/and Downtown Specific Plan would not substantially conflict with the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, or other land use plans or policies adopted for the purpose of mitigating an environmental effect. (Less than Significant)**

The adoption of the Specific Plan would be accompanied by a General Plan amendment that would effectively replace existing General Plan land use designations, goals and policies for the Plan area. As such, the Specific Plan includes a description of the relationship of selected General Plan goals and policies to the Specific Plan. Building on that assessment, **Table 4.9-2** presents an analysis of consistency of the proposed Specific Plan with existing General Plan goals and policies related to land use and which may mitigate environmental effects. The consistency of the Specific Plan with General Plan policies related to other potential impacts, such as transportation, are discussed in other applicable sections of this EIR. As shown in the table, the Specific Plan is broadly consistent with relevant land use policies in the General Plan, as is required by State planning and zoning law.

The Specific Plan includes Zoning Ordinance elements, and as such pre-empts the Zoning Ordinance unless otherwise specified. The Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinance would be amended with the controls of the Specific Plan, but individual project review procedures included in the Zoning Ordinance (including conditional use permits, architectural control, administrative permits, and variances) would remain, requiring in some cases new, Plan-specific findings. To the extent that the Specific Plan would amend the Zoning Ordinance, the impacts of those amendments are considered in the relevant sections of this EIR. An amendment to the Zoning Ordinance constitutes an environmental impact only when it results in a substantially adverse physical change in the environment.

**TABLE 4.9-2  
 GENERAL PLAN POLICY CONSISTENCY**

City of Menlo Park General Plan Policies	Specific Plan Consistency
<b>SECTION I: LAND USE POLICIES (1994)</b>	
Residential Policies	
<b>1-A-4</b>	Residential uses may be combined with commercial uses in a mixed use project, if the project is designed to avoid conflicts between the uses, such as traffic, parking, noise, dust and odors.  The Specific Plan allows for mixed-use commercial and residential development that will be subject to architectural review to ensure design features that help address compatibility issues.
<b>1-A-5</b>	Development of housing, including housing for smaller households, is encouraged in commercially-zoned areas in and near Downtown. (Downtown is defined as the area bounded by Alma Street, Ravenswood Avenue/Menlo Avenue, University Drive and Oak Grove Avenue.) Provisions for adequate off-street parking must be assured.  The Specific Plan encourages housing development along El Camino Real and in the station and downtown areas through increased allowable development intensities. It requires adequate off-street parking.
<b>1-A-6</b>	Development of residential uses on the north side of Oak Grove Avenue and on the south side of Menlo Avenue adjacent to the Downtown commercial area is encouraged.  The Specific Plan allows for housing development in these areas.
Commercial Policies	
<b>1-B-1</b>	The Downtown shall include a complementary mix of stores and services in a quality design, adding natural amenities in to the development pattern.  The Specific Plan allows for a complementary mix of stores and services, coupled with design standards and guidelines which help ensure quality design. It adds significant new public space and landscape downtown.
<b>1-B-2</b>	Parking which is sufficient to serve the retail needs of the Downtown area and which is attractively designed to encourage retail patronage shall be provided.  The Specific Plan provides for a variety of parking facilities, including surface parking lots, on-street parking and parking garages to provide adequate parking to meet the needs of visitors and employees. Design guidelines and standards will ensure attractive designs for any new parking facilities.
<b>1-B-4</b>	Uses and activities shall be encouraged which will strengthen and complement the relationship between the Transportation Center and the Downtown area and nearby El Camino Real corridor.  The Specific Plan proposes new public space improvements and sidewalk extensions that enhance connections between downtown and the station area. It encourages Santa Cruz Avenue "main street" retail uses to extend from El Camino Real to the Caltrain Station.
<b>1-C-1</b>	New and upgraded retail development shall be encouraged along El Camino Real near Downtown, especially stores that will complement the retailing mix of Downtown. Adequate parking must be provided and the density, location, and site design must not aggravate traffic at congested intersections. The livability of adjacent residential areas east and west of El Camino Real and north and south of Downtown must be protected.  The Specific Plan guidelines call for development along El Camino Real that incorporates ground-floor uses, including retail that activate the street and provide for adequate on-site parking. The Specific Plan design guidelines also require setbacks and other massing limitations that protect residential neighborhoods.
<b>1-C-2</b>	Small-scale offices shall be allowed along most of El Camino Real in a balanced pattern with residential or retail development.  The Specific Plan encourages a mix of appropriate uses, including offices. The Specific Plan also requires that new office uses, either in isolation or as part of a mixed-use project, have a minimum FAR that is one-third to one-half of the overall maximum FAR, which will additionally encourage a mix of uses.
<b>1-E-2</b>	Hotel uses may be considered at suitable locations within the commercial and industrial zoning districts of the City.  The Specific Plan allows for hotel uses in the plan area.

**TABLE 4.9-2 (Continued)  
 GENERAL PLAN POLICY CONSISTENCY**

City of Menlo Park General Plan Policies		Specific Plan Consistency
<b>SECTION I: LAND USE POLICIES (1994) (cont.)</b>		
<b>1-E-3</b>	Retention and expansion of auto dealerships in the city shall be encouraged. Development of new auto dealerships or combined dealerships in an auto center shall be encouraged at suitable locations in the city.	The Specific Plan allows for auto dealerships along El Camino Real.
<b>Open Space Policies</b>		
<b>1-G-2</b>	The community should contain an ample supply of specialized open space in the form of squares, greens, and parks whose frequent use is encouraged through placement and design.	The Specific Plan proposes expansive new public space improvements, particularly in the downtown and stations areas. Such improvements include widened sidewalks, plazas, paseos, and pocket parks.
<b>Public Transit Policies</b>		
<b>II-B-2</b>	As many activities as possible should be located within easy walking distance of transit stops, and transit stops should be convenient and close to as many activities as possible.	The Specific Plan proposes increased densities of development, including housing, retail and commercial uses, in the station and downtown areas. It proposes enhanced public improvements, including sidewalks, and accommodates increased bus service and access to the Caltrain station.
<b>SECTION III: HOUSING POLICIES (1992)</b>		
<b>III.A.4</b>	The City will promote the development of housing on appropriate City-owned land.	The Specific Plan proposed infill housing on downtown parking plazas, assuming downtown retail and commercial parking needs are met.
<b>III.A.5</b>	The City will promote development of mixed medium or high-density residential and commercial projects in the Central Business District and along El Camino Real as a means of providing more housing on job sites to help offset the impact of new employment on the regional housing market.	The Specific Plan, through increased allowable densities and other incentives, encourages higher density housing in the plan area, particularly in the station area and downtown.
<b>III.A.10</b>	The City will increase the supply of land available for residential development by redesigning and rezoning targeted residential and non-residential parcels for multi-family residential use, particularly near public transit and major transportation corridors in the city.	The Specific Plan, through increased allowable densities and other incentives, encourages higher density housing in the plan area, particularly in the station area and downtown. It allows for housing throughout the entire plan area.
<b>III.A.11</b>	The City will promote the distribution of new, higher-density residential developments throughout the city, taking into consideration compatibility with surrounding existing residential uses, particularly near public transit and major transportation corridors in the city.	The Specific Plan, through increased allowable densities and other incentives, encourages higher density housing in the plan area, particularly in the station area and downtown. Design guidelines and standards, such as upper-story setbacks, will provide protections to neighboring residential properties.
<b>OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION POLICIES (1973)</b>		
<b>1</b>	Provide open space lands for a variety of recreation opportunities. Make improvements, construct facilities, and maintain programs which encourage a maximum of resident participation.	The Specific Plan proposes increased public spaces, including widened sidewalks, pocket parks and plazas that accommodate a variety of public gathering opportunities.

SOURCE: Downtown Menlo Park/El Camino Real Draft Specific Plan, 2010.

The City has no other applicable plans or policies adopted for the purpose of avoiding an environmental effect (habitat conservation plans are discussed below). The Specific Plan would not substantially conflict with existing General Plan and Zoning Ordinance policies adopted for mitigating an environmental effect, and the impact would be less than significant.

**Mitigation:** None required.

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## Cumulative Impacts

**Impact LU-4: Implementation of the Menlo Park El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future plans and projects, would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to land use. (Less than Significant)**

### ***Geographic Scope***

The cumulative land use analysis encompasses all known past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects within the vicinity of the Specific Plan area in which land use changes could contribute to cumulative land use impacts. Past projects are those already existing in the built environment, described in Section 4.9.1 *Environmental Setting*. Present projects include those approved, under construction, or being tenanted. Future projects include projects and plans in development or pending approval, described in **Table 4-1**. The rough geographic scope of this area depends on surrounding land uses, natural features, built corridors, and municipal boundaries.

To the west, the boundary varies. Beginning at the northern end of the Specific Plan area, the existing Menlo School and Menlo College in the Town of Atherton are distinctly separate and different from the City of Menlo Park due to their style of street grid, concentration of institutional land uses, and introverted orientation with opaque fences facing onto both El Camino Real and Valparaiso Avenue. Changes in land uses in these areas would be limited and would not considerably contribute to cumulative land use impacts to the City of Menlo Park. Moving southward, both the City of Menlo Park's boundaries and downtown's main thoroughfare, Santa Cruz Avenue, extend westward. Middle Avenue also extends westward from El Camino Real, providing access to the residential land uses in the southwest area of the City. Land use changes within one-half mile of the Specific Plan area (approximately to Olive Street) could contribute to cumulative land use impacts. Areas beyond one-half mile would not meaningfully interact with land use changes downtown. However, given the primarily residential nature of the surrounding area, no substantial changes to the area are expected.

To the south, the geographic scope ends at the City limits because Palo Alto and Stanford University to the south have a distinct land use pattern, as well as institutional blocks of uses, that are separated from Menlo Park by Sand Hill Road, Palo Alto Avenue, and the San Francisquito Creek.

To the east, the boundary is approximately Middlefield Road, across which changes to the residential land uses and institutional Menlo-Atherton High School would be limited and would not considerably contribute to cumulative land use impacts. In addition, although the Specific Plan proposes to increase connectivity and access across the Caltrain right-of-way, the tracks would still present a physical barrier, however porous to cumulative impacts of land use changes.

To the north, the boundary is approximately Fair Oaks Lane in Atherton. This corridor traverses neighborhoods of primarily single-family, detached houses where land use changes would not cumulatively contribute to land use impacts in Menlo Park. In addition, the corridor serves as a dividing line and midway point between the Specific Plan area and Redwood City.

### ***Analysis***

As stated above, the Specific Plan area does not lie within the planning area for any adopted or proposed habitat conservation or natural community plans and would have no impact related to this criterion. Therefore, in combination with cumulative projects, the Specific Plan would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to habitat conservation or natural community plans.

Several of the cumulative development projects listed in Table 4-1 fall within the boundaries of the Specific Plan. These include the proposed residential project at 389 El Camino Real, commercial project at 1300 El Camino Real, mixed use project at 1460 El Camino Real, office projects at 1706 and 1906 El Camino Real, and the mixed use project at 580 Oak Grove Avenue. The construction of these projects would be generally consistent with the land use character of the Specific Plan and existing plans and policies, which encourage these uses along El Camino Real. The projects would not result in substantial physical division of an established community. To the contrary, they would bring more uses, residents, and consumers to the Specific Plan area. This would intensify activity in the Specific Plan area and create nodes of complementary uses that would not substantially conflict with existing land uses.

The intensity and density of the projects within the boundaries of the Plan area would also be generally consistent with the Specific Plan. The proposed project at 389 El Camino Real proposes an FAR of 0.89 and a density of 21 units per acre, below the Plan's proposed base FAR of 1.10 and base density of 25 units per acre. The project at 1300 El Camino Real includes an FAR of 0.74 where the Specific Plan would allow a base FAR of 1.10. The office portion of the project would have an FAR of approximately 0.40 where the Specific Plan would allow 0.55. The mixed use project at 1460 El Camino Real includes an FAR of 0.75, office FAR of approximately 0.40, and a density of approximately 10 units per acre, below the Plan's proposed base FAR of 1.10, proposed office FAR of 0.55 and the base density of 25 units per acre. The office projects at 1706 and 1906 El Camino Real have FARs of approximately 0.37 and 0.38, respectively. The project FARs are close to the base FAR allowed for general office uses at 0.375 but would be higher than the base FAR of 0.25 allowed for medical office use. Using the negotiated public benefit FAR, the projects would be consistent with the allowed office FAR of 0.55 and close to the allowed medical office use of 0.366. The proposed mixed use project at 580 Oak Grove Avenue would have a commercial FAR of approximately 0.17 and a residential density of approximately

31 units per acre where the Specific Plan would allow a base density of 32 units per acre. Overall, the projects would not result in cumulatively considerable impacts to land use.

Other cumulative developments would expand research-and-development, office and residential uses in surrounding areas. Research-and-development and office projects include the General Motors site, AMB Business Park, and Menlo Business Park projects in the Willow Business Area, the 1283 Willow Road commercial development, and the 2550 Sand Hill Road office. Residential projects include developments at 110 Linfield Drive and 2122 Santa Cruz Avenue. These uses would be consistent with the land use character and existing plans and policies in the respective areas. In combination with the Specific Plan, they would not create substantial physical barriers that would divide a community. Although they could lead to increased traffic, and associated impacts to air and noise, those cumulative effects are discussed in the applicable sections of this EIR.

Also, although outside of the geographic area for analysis discussed above, the Stanford Medical Center Renewal Project would contribute to cumulative land use changes on a regional level. The project would rebuild facilities to meet seismic standards, modernize and expand the children's hospital to meet family needs, and renovate the Hoover Pavilion to accommodate community physicians whose practices would have to be relocated. Although these changes could affect regional demand for medical office spaces, they are not anticipated to result in a substantial change in land use character, divide an established community, or conflict with established land use plans and policies. To address potential changes in medical office demand in downtown Menlo Park, the Specific Plan limits medical office uses to one-third of the floor area that would otherwise be allowed. This provision would further reduce potential impacts to land use character.

The remaining developments are east of U.S. Route 101. These developments would be located too far from the Specific Plan area to result in cumulatively considerable impacts to land use.

In summary, the Specific Plan, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, would not result in cumulatively considerable land use impacts.

**Mitigation:** None required.