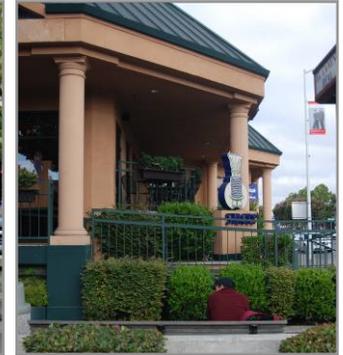




El Camino Real / Downtown Visioning

Discussion Forum



October 24, 2007

Agenda

- Opening Presentation
 - *Overview of topics*
 - *Objectives for tonight*
- History of Planning in El Camino Corridor and Downtown
- Peer Communities Comparison
- Discussion
 - *Q & A*



Context

Menlo Park – a mature community with a significant employment base, a quality living environment, and a walkable downtown

- *What plans have been proposed for El Camino Real and Downtown?*
- *What did these plans recommend? What action did the City take?*
- *How does the city's planning compare with peer communities?*

Growth Trends

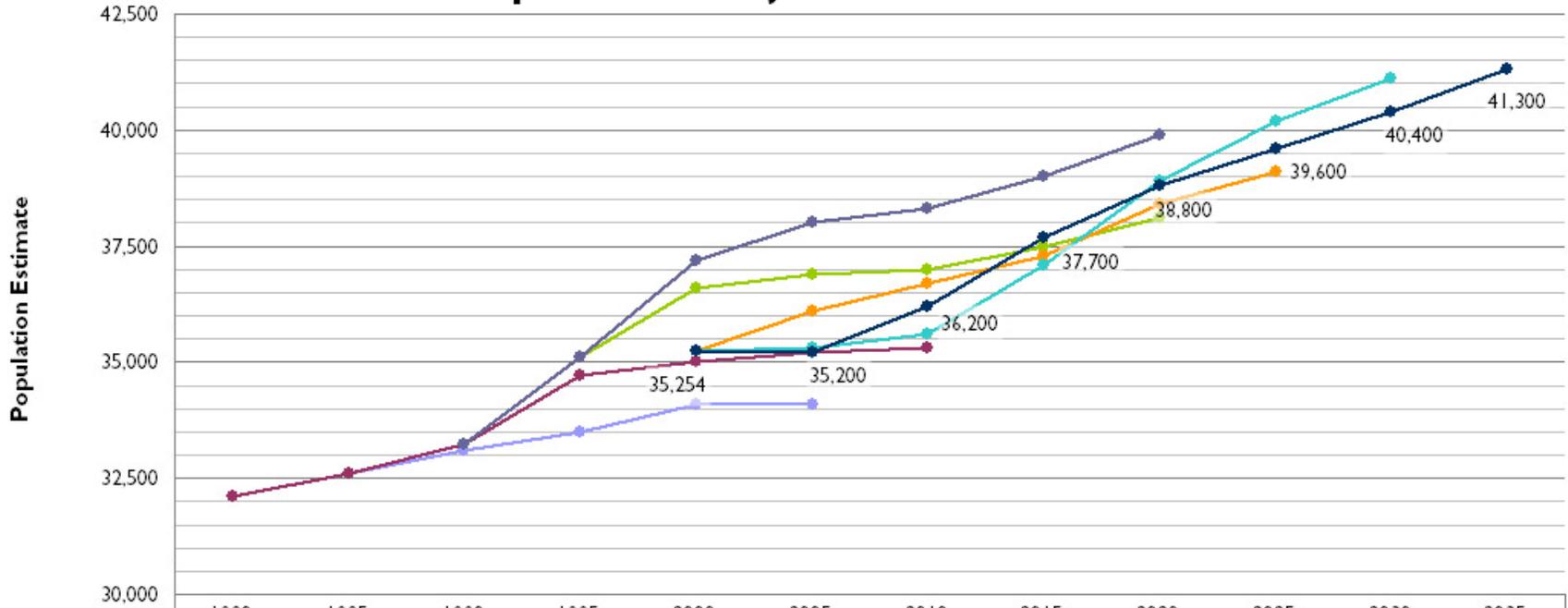
- Expectations about how much growth Menlo Park is to accommodate has changed over the years
 - *In ABAG's 1990 Projections, Menlo Park was to add only about 1,000 persons*
 - *In ABAG's 2007 Projections, the 15-year growth target increases over three times, with a projected population increase of 3,600 persons and 7,650 new jobs. This change in regional forecasts is because of ABAG's emphasis on guiding growth to existing areas with "infill potential" to avoid sprawl and growth at the fringes*
- Expectations for housing in the City are higher today than they were in the early 1990s

Housing Trends

- ABAG predicts that from 2005-2030, Menlo Park's population for the "statistical area" will grow by 15% or 5,200 new residents and employment by 48% or 13,970 new jobs.
- Both population and job growth will increase housing demand

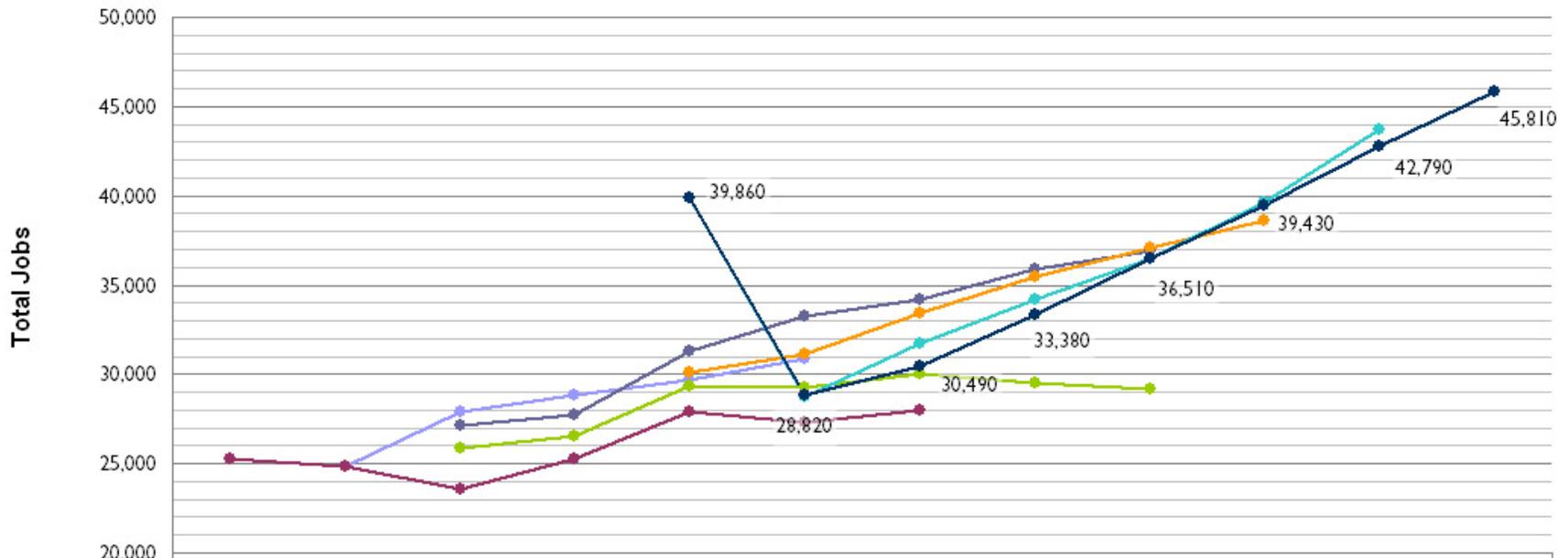


ABAG Population Projections for Menlo Park



	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Projections 90	32,116	32,600	33,100	33,500	34,100	34,100						
Projections 94	32,116	32,600	33,234	34,700	35,000	35,200	35,300					
Projections 98			33,234	35,100	36,600	36,900	37,000	37,500	38,100			
Projections 2000			33,234	35,100	37,200	38,000	38,300	39,000	39,900			
Projections 2002					35,254	36,100	36,700	37,300	38,400	39,100		
Projections 2005					35,254	35,300	35,600	37,100	38,900	40,200	41,100	
Projections 2007					35,254	35,200	36,200	37,700	38,800	39,600	40,400	41,300

ABAG Total Jobs Projections for Menlo Park



	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035
Projections 90	25,227	24,830	27,880	28,800	29,730	30,850						
Projections 94	25,227	24,830	23,570	25,310	27,920	27,350	28,010					
Projections 98			25,850	26,510	29,310	29,300	30,070	29,560	29,220			
Projections 2000			27,100	27,730	31,330	33,220	34,210	35,860	36,880			
Projections 2002					30,150	31,140	33,470	35,450	37,050	38,580		
Projections 2005					39,860	28,750	31,730	34,190	36,480	39,610	43,700	
Projections 2007					39,860	28,820	30,490	33,380	36,510	39,430	42,790	45,810

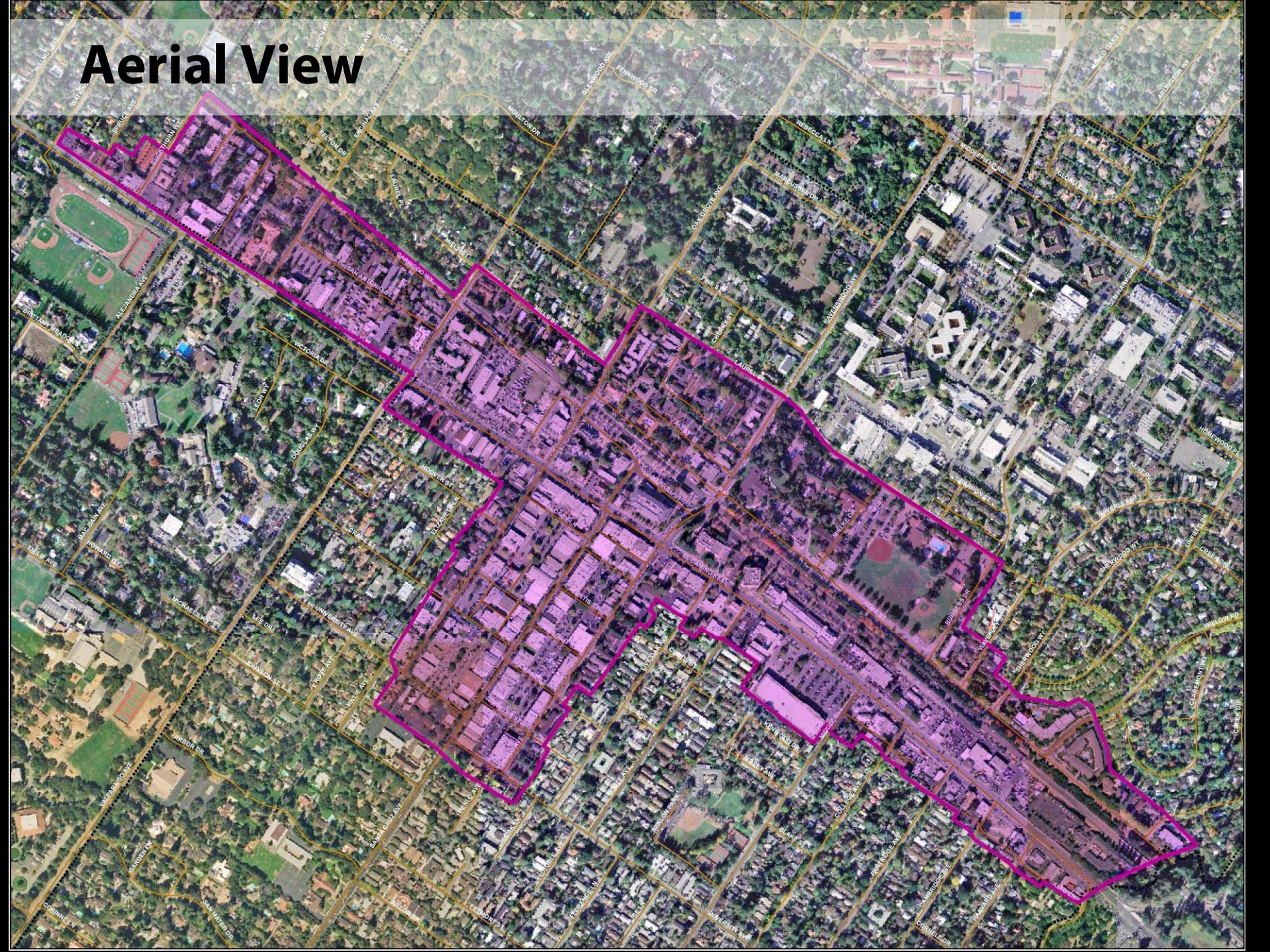
Housing Needs

- Between 1988-1999, Menlo Park was required to provide 1,618 housing units
- Between 1999-2006, Menlo Park was required to provide 982 housing units
- From 2007-2014, Menlo Park is expected to provide 993 housing units

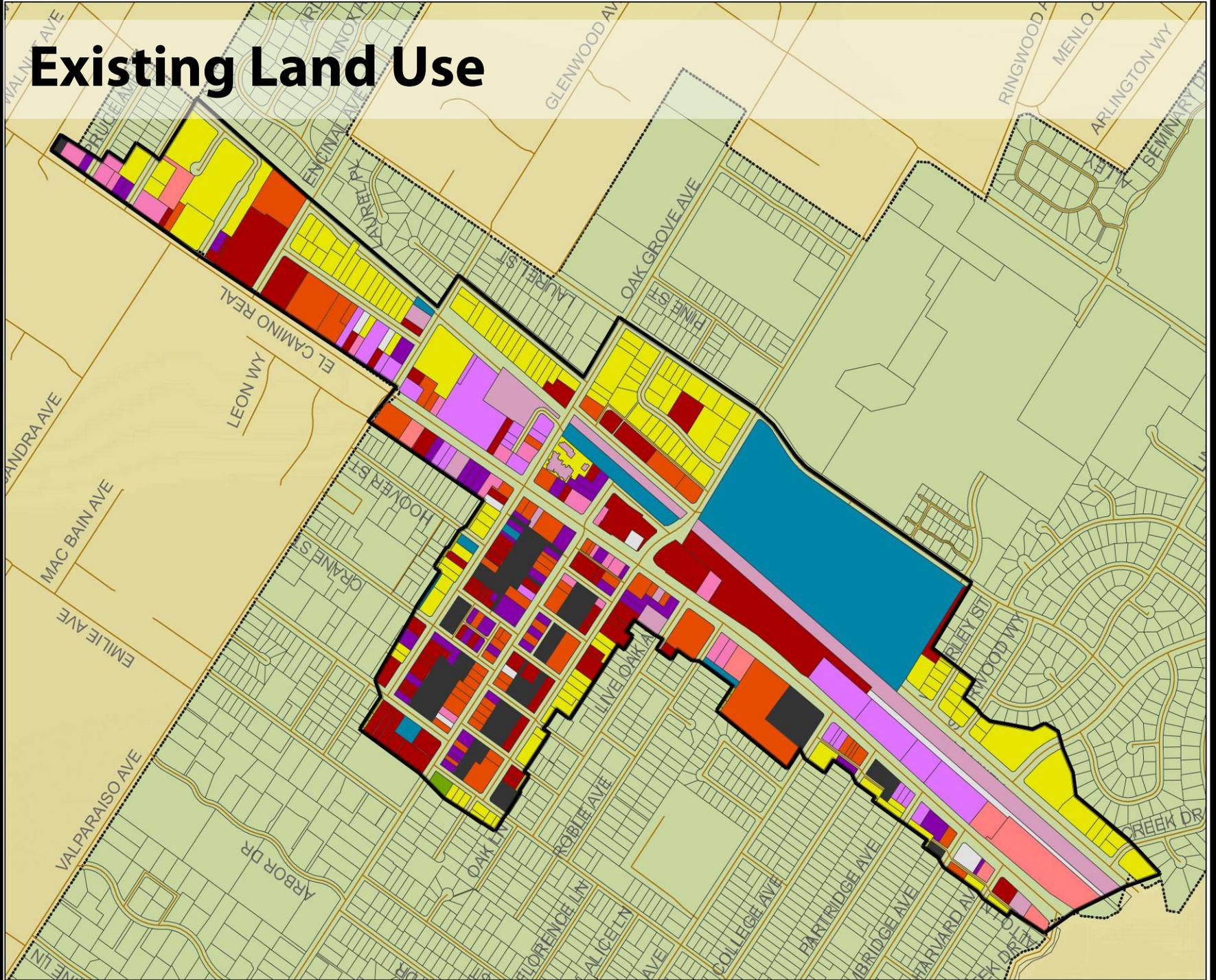
<i>Year</i>	<i>Housing Units</i>	<i>Share of County</i>
1988-1995	1,618	6.3%
1999-2006	982	6.0%
2007-2014	993	6.3%



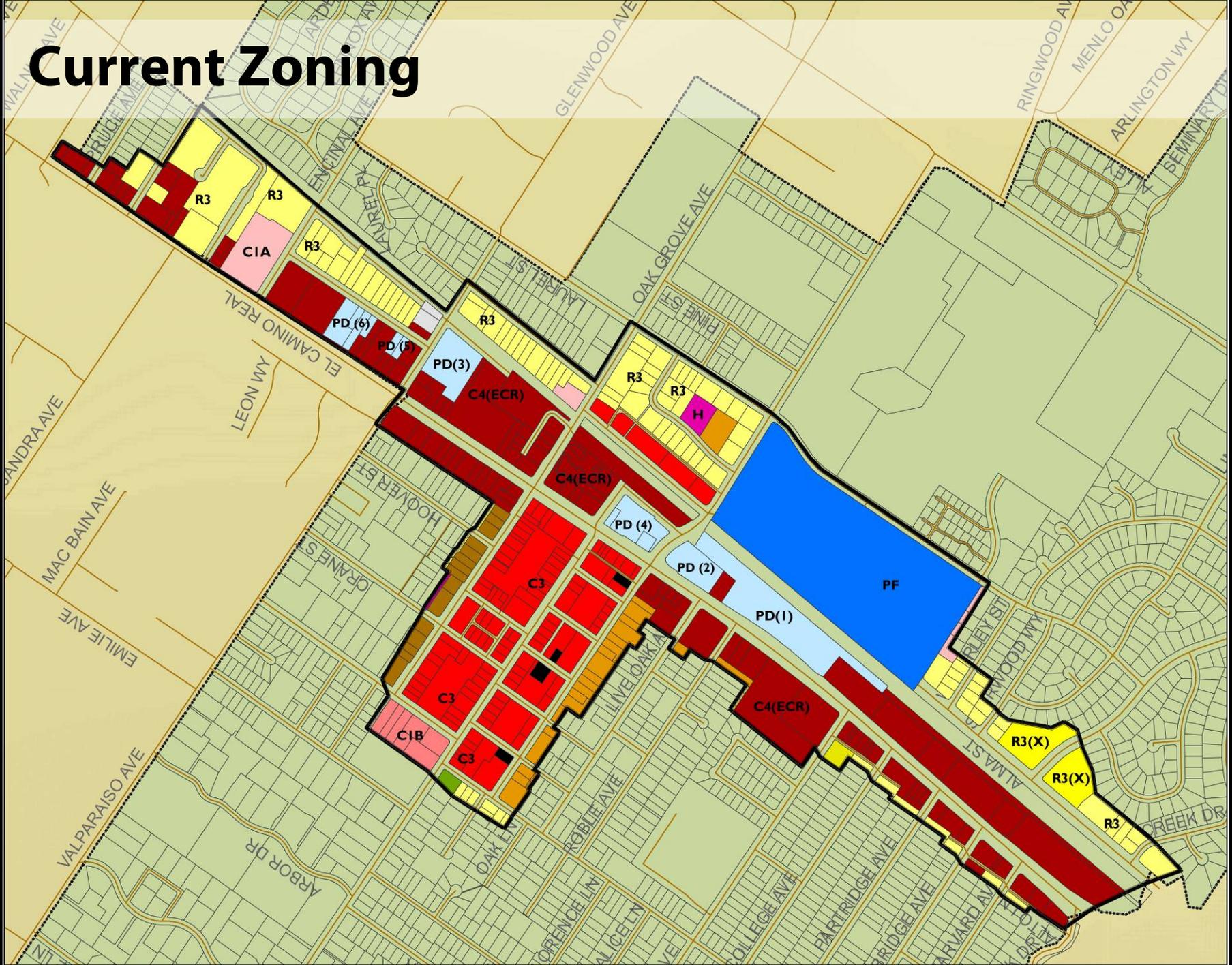
Aerial View



Existing Land Use



Current Zoning

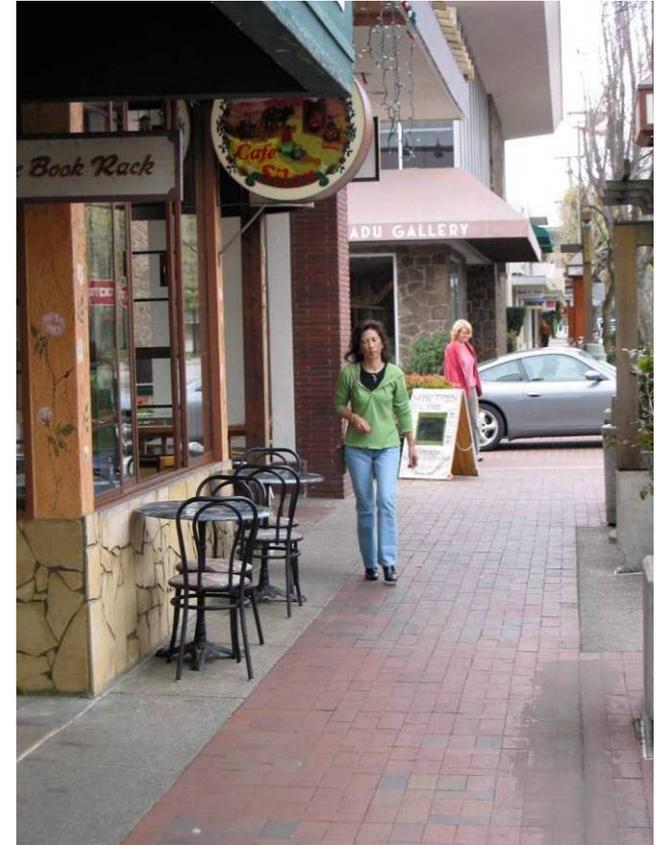


Chronology of Planning

- 1952 *First General Plan*
- 1966 *Second General Plan*
- 1974 *Third General Plan*
- 1978 *El Camino Real/Southern Pacific Railroad Corridor Study*
- 1986 *Fourth General Plan*
- 1987 *Development Guidelines for El Camino Real*
- 1994 *General Plan Update*
- 1996-98 *Center City Design Plan*
- 1999 *Smart Growth Initiative*
- 2000 *Land Use and Circulation Study*
- 2003 *Report on Business Development*
- 2005 *AIA "Imagine a Downtown"*
- 2004-06 *Commercial Streamlining and Zoning*

The General Plan

- Purpose and Scope
 - *The General Plan must be comprehensive, internally consistent, and long-range*
- It must address the seven “Elements”
 - *Land Use*
 - *Circulation*
 - *Housing*
 - *Open Space*
 - *Conservation*
 - *Safety*
 - *Noise*



Plan Design and Policy Framework

- Guiding and Implementing Policies
 - *Direction for zoning, public improvements and growth management*
- Quantifying buildout for internal consistency
 - *Improvement needs must fit buildout*
 - *Park and schools must fit buildout*
- Implementation responsibilities, priorities and funding

General Plan Buildout

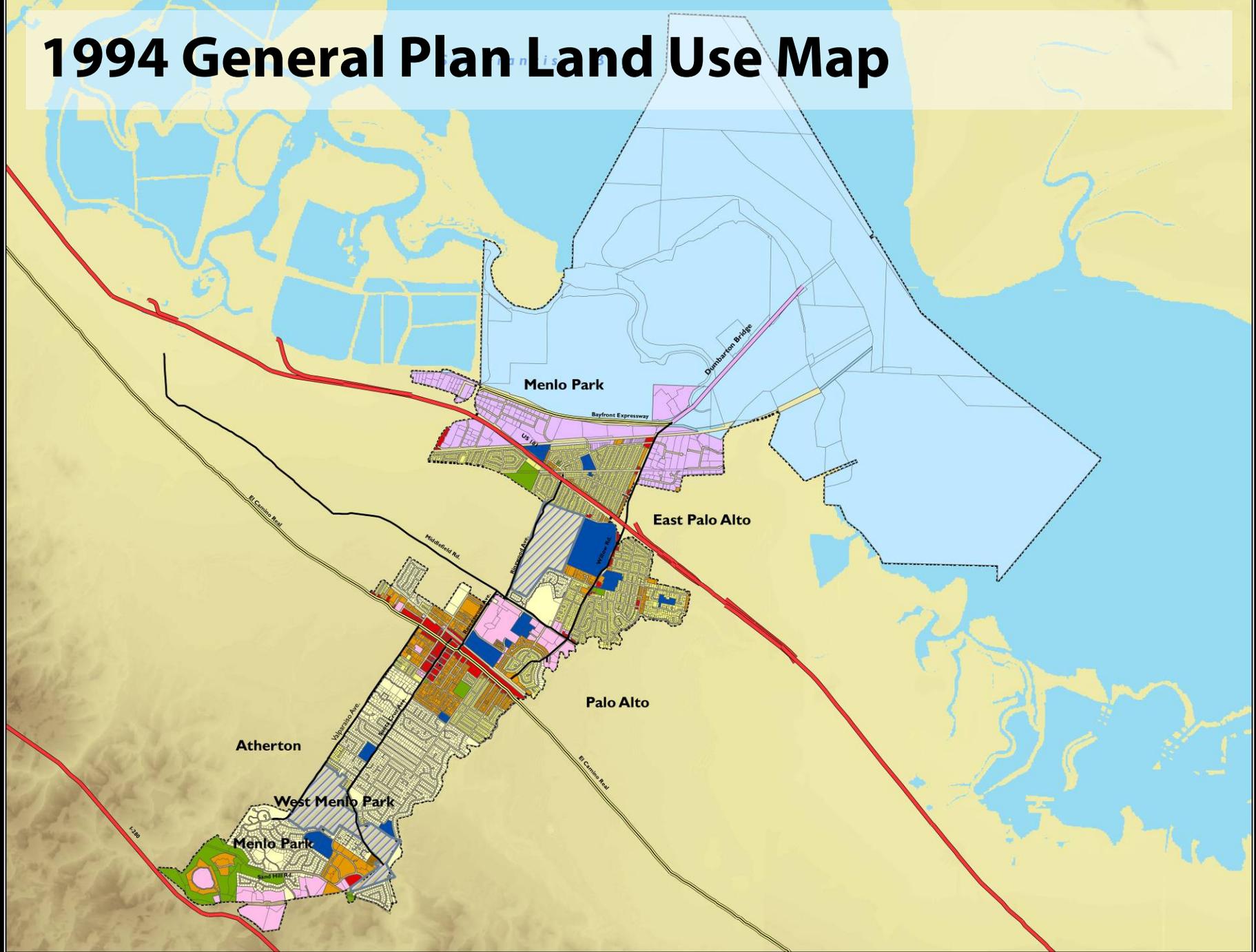
- Full development under General Plan is referred to as “buildout”
- Typically, the Plan applies a 25 year planning horizon, but does not specify or anticipate when buildout will actually occur
- Designation of a site does not mean the site will be built/redeveloped with that use in the next 25 years

History of General Plan Preparation

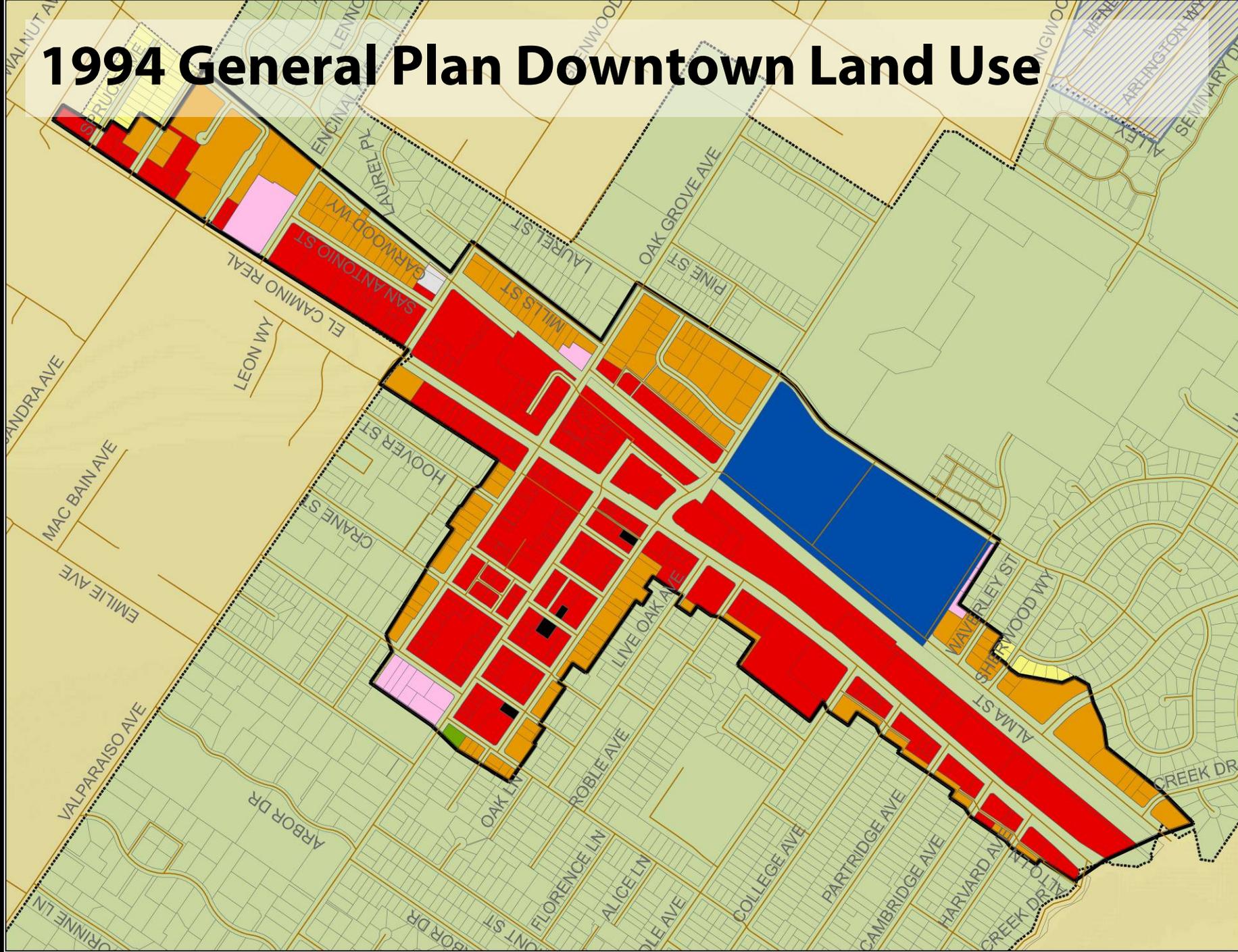
- The first General Plan adopted in 1952
- The second in 1966
- The third in 1974
- Next General Plan was in 1986
- In 1994, the City conducted an update of the Plan to include new development and technical standards



1994 General Plan Land Use Map



1994 General Plan Downtown Land Use



Land Use Element

Key Policies:

- *Allow residential with commercial uses if there are no conflicts between the uses.*
- *Encourage housing in commercially zoned areas near Downtown.*
- *Encourage housing on the north side of Oak Grove Avenue and the south side of Menlo Avenue.*
- *Strengthen Downtown as a shopping area while preserving its historic atmosphere.*
- *Provide attractively designed parking areas to serve the retail needs of Downtown.*



Land Use Element

- Key Policies (cont')
 - *Encourage uses that will strengthen the relationship between the Transportation Center and Downtown/El Camino Real area.*
 - *Encourage creativity in development of the El Camino Real corridor.*
 - *Encourage new and upgraded retail development along El Camino Real, especially stores that complement Downtown's retail mix.*
 - *Allow small-scale offices along El Camino Real.*
 - *Encourage auto dealerships in the City at suitable locations.*

Circulation Element

- *Achieve and maintain Level of Service D or better on El Camino Real.*
- *Consider transit modes in transportation improvements and approval of development projects.*
- *Support full pedestrian access at the signalized intersections along El Camino Real*
- *Provide adequate parking in Downtown.*
- *Prioritize short-term retail customer parking in parking plazas.*
- *Work with the Joint Powers Board to provide adequate parking at the Downtown Transportation Center.*



Housing Element

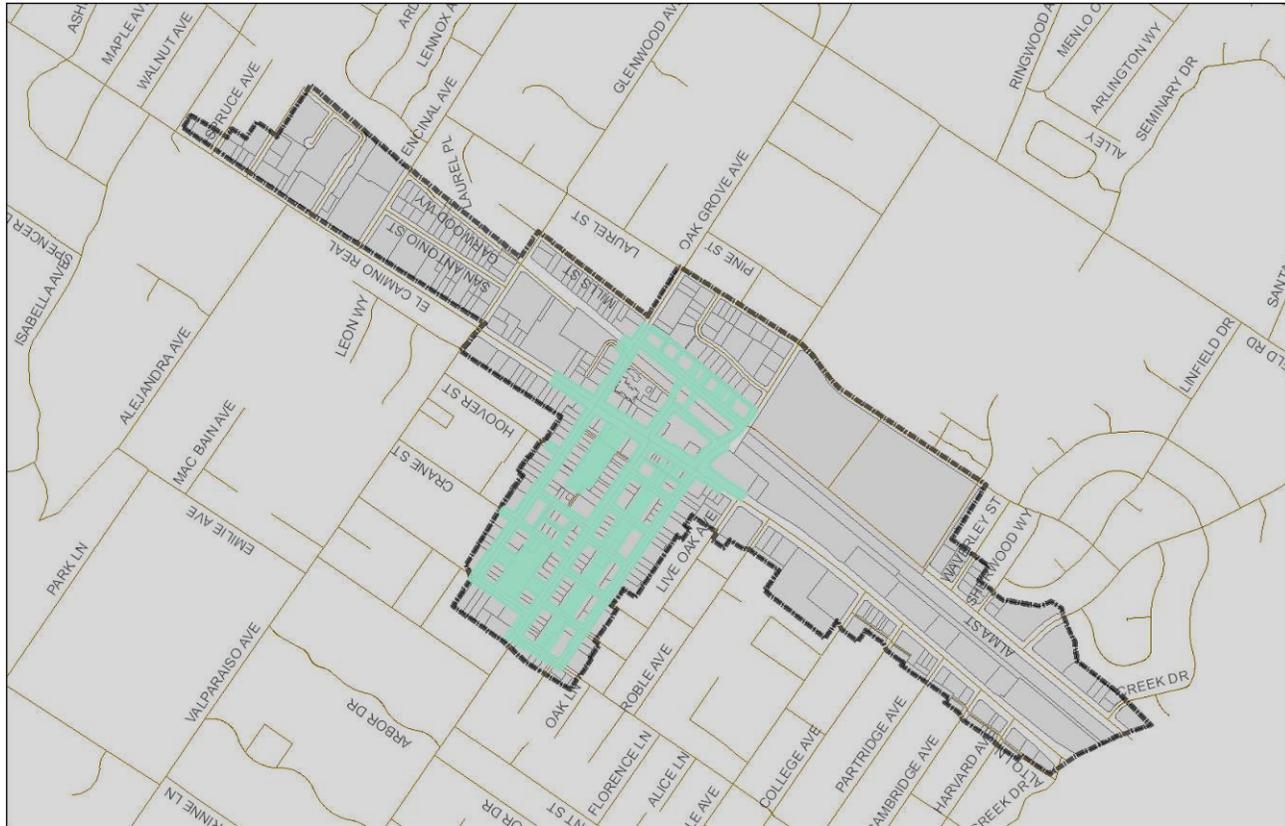
- Key Policies
 - *Promote the development of mixed-use, medium- or higher-density residential and commercial projects in the Central Business District (Downtown) and along El Camino Real.*
 - *Explore the feasibility of using air-rights in parking plazas in Downtown.*
 - *Increase the supply of land available for residential development by rezoning parcels for multi-family residential, particularly near public transit and major transportation corridors.*
 - *Promote higher-density residential development, taking into consideration compatibility issues.*

Center City Design Plan

- Initiated in 1996 to formulate a design vision for the Center City
- Main Concepts:
 - *Consolidate*
 - *Identify*
 - *Connect*
 - *Envision*
- To implement through Capital Improvements and design guidelines



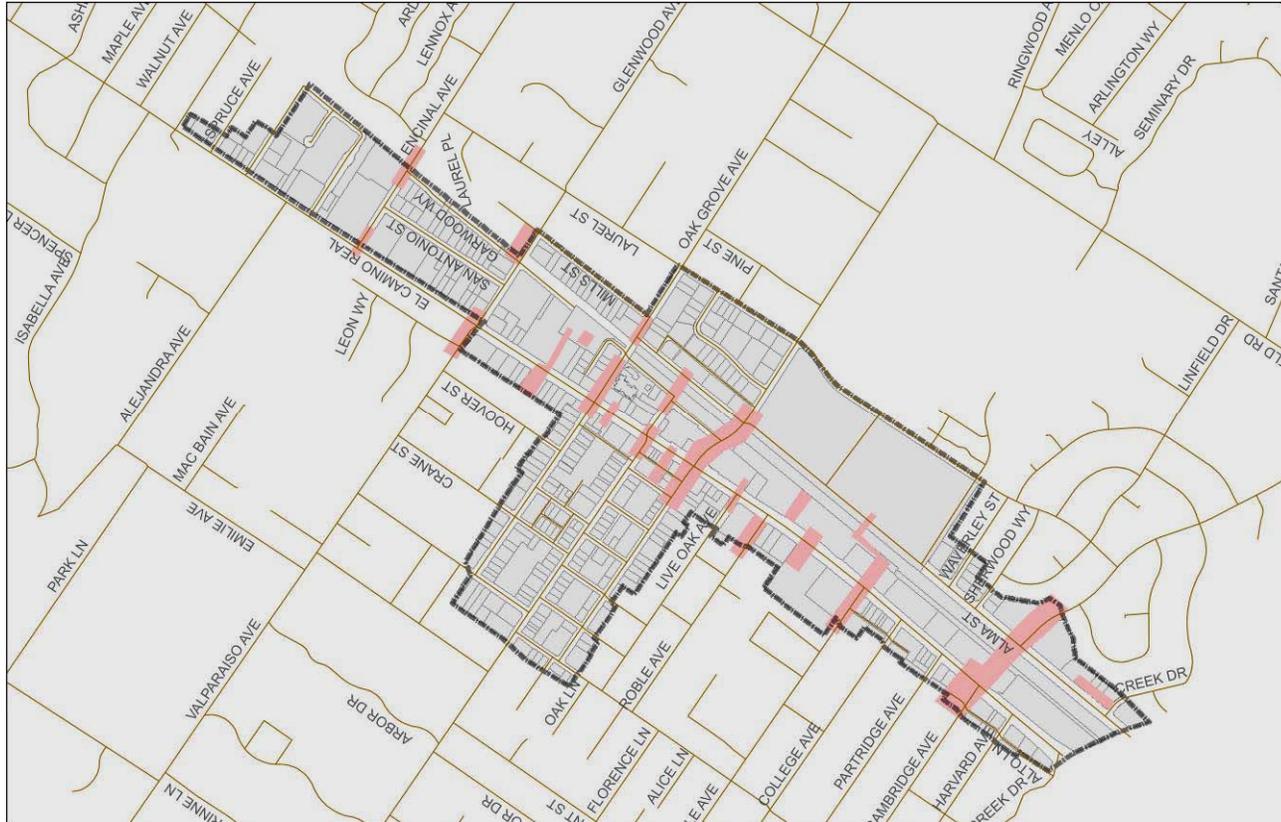
Center City Design Plan



CONSOLIDATE

- Create a pedestrian-friendly active Downtown centered on Santa Cruz Avenue and extend to other areas of City Center
- Provide gathering and public participation spaces
- Create new elements in harmony with existing urban fabric

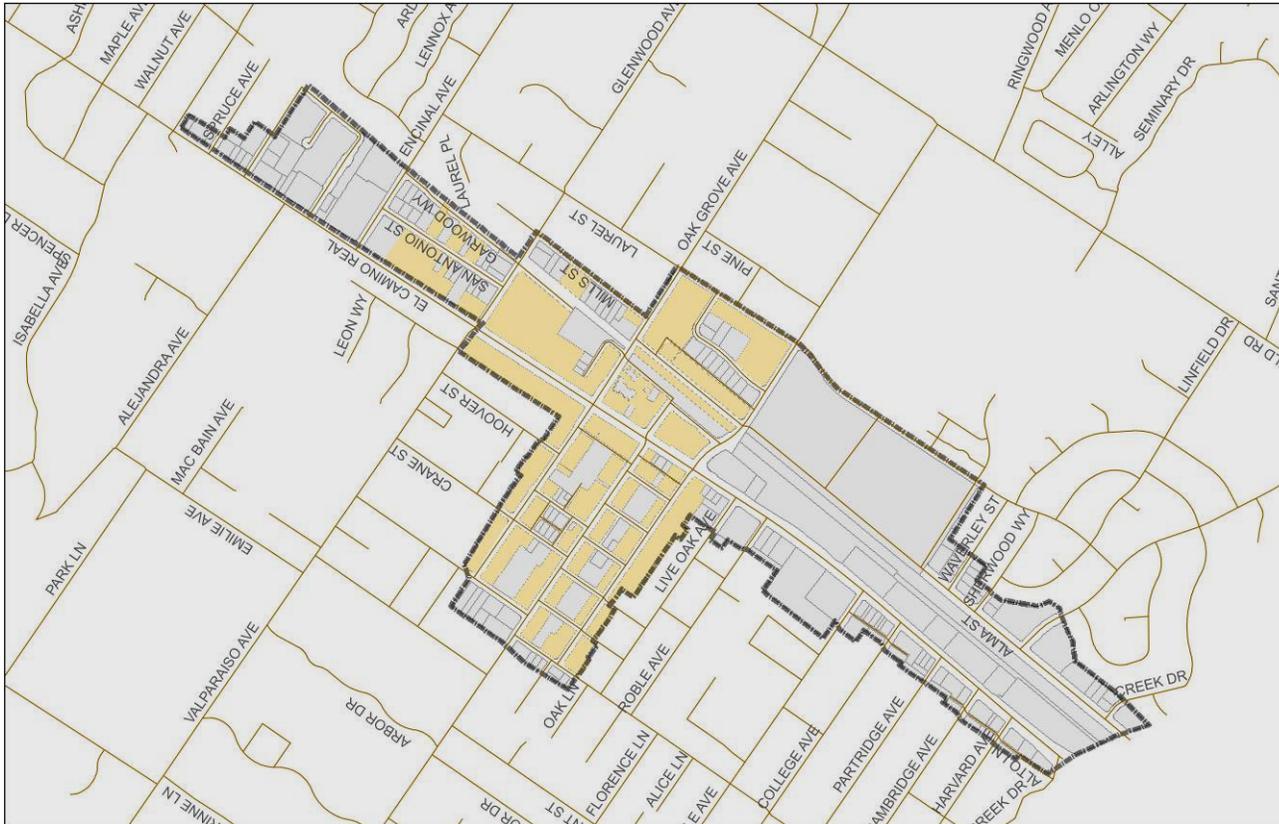
Center City Design Plan



CONNECT

- *Connect important segments of town in understandable/inviting way*
- *Require network to be expanded with public realm along greater pedestrian access*
- *Opportunity to choose ways and modes of transportation*

Center City Design Plan



ENVISION

- *Envision new uses. Allow mixed-use and higher densities to promote diversity*
- *Introduce more housing into City Center*
- *Encourage private development, public improvements, and community participation in future*

Community/Council Review

- Community Reaction
 - *Concern about building heights*
 - *Concerned about funding the Center City Plan's Capital improvement projects*
 - *Supported the Plan's recommendation for pedestrian usage but not sure about residential-commercial zoning*
- Council Reaction
 - *Supported the Plan's main concepts*
 - *Wanted more time to study zoning and parking issues, particularly those related to "increasing density"*

Community/Council Review

- Chamber of Commerce/Business Leaders' Reaction
 - *Concerned about Plan-related changes to City ordinances*
 - *Wanted clear priorities:*
 - Parking spaces in downtown need urgent attention
 - *CoC not supportive of mid-block crossings and extension of pedestrian network but business owners were supportive*
- In the end, the guidelines were not adopted due to concerns about the potential for increased building height and densities

Smart Growth Project

- Initiated in 1998 to shape land use and transportation policies and preserve a “small-town” character
- Novel and ambitious approach to provide the vision for Menlo Park
- Three components:
 - *Mobility Study*
 - *Land Utilization Study*
 - *Community Visioning Process*



Smart Growth Action Program

- Mobility Study
 - *Study found traffic has increased significantly towards the edge of Menlo Park, but not near the center*
 - *79% employees drove to work*
 - *50% of the evening peak hour traffic was regional*
- Land Utilization Study
 - *Study found intense demand for office space*
 - *Most commercial development occurred in the commercial district*
 - *Recommendations:*
 - Allow housing in Downtown
 - Allow higher densities in El Camino Real up to 40 units per acre
 - Consider livability, mobility and project aesthetics

Smart Growth Action Program

- Community Visioning Process
 - *Interviews and workshop in summer and fall 1998*
 - *Key finding was Menlo Park residents placed the greatest priority in protecting their quality of life*
 - *Residents said no to “big box” and over-commercializing downtown*
 - *Residents viewed traffic as the most pressing problem*



Community/Council Review

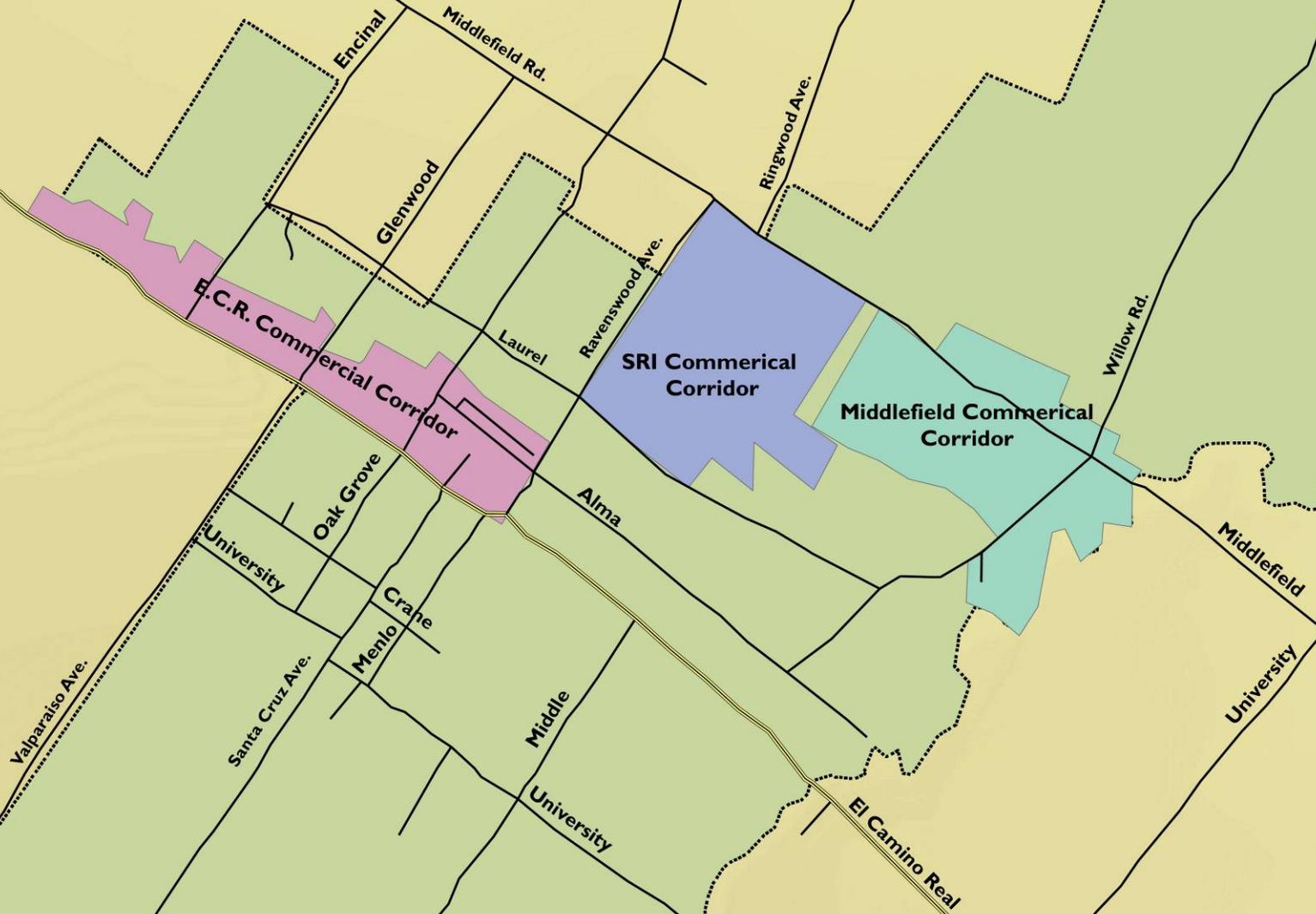
- Some community members expressed concerns about densification of residential and commercial uses and proximity to commercial or industrial uses
 - *“Any type of growth will only add to our existing problems”*
- Other members noted the City’s growth is long-term, Council should work on more immediate problems
- No census reached at the meeting.

Land Use and Circulation Study

- Short-term study in 1999
- Studied the impact on commercial development on traffic conditions, using council-defined scenarios of “maximum buildout”
- The study found that:
 - *Replacing office with housing reducing trips and congestion*
 - *Down-zoning reduces trip generation*

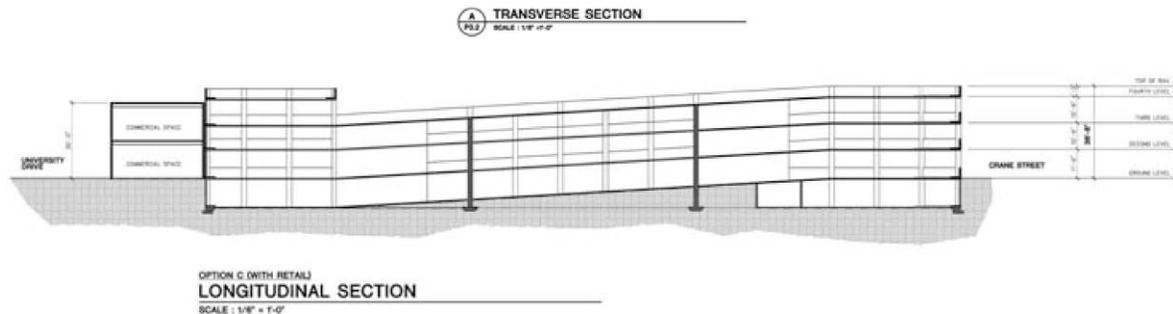


Land Use and Circulation Study Areas



Downtown Parking Studies

- 1999 Downtown Parking Study
 - *1999 Downtown Parking Study*
 - *Study found parking in the business core was barely sufficient to meet the needs of businesses*
- 2004 Downtown Parking Structure Study
 - *Parking Plaza 3 selected for development*
- 2006 MTC-funded Parking Study
 - *To create “Smart Growth” policies*



Downtown Parking Studies



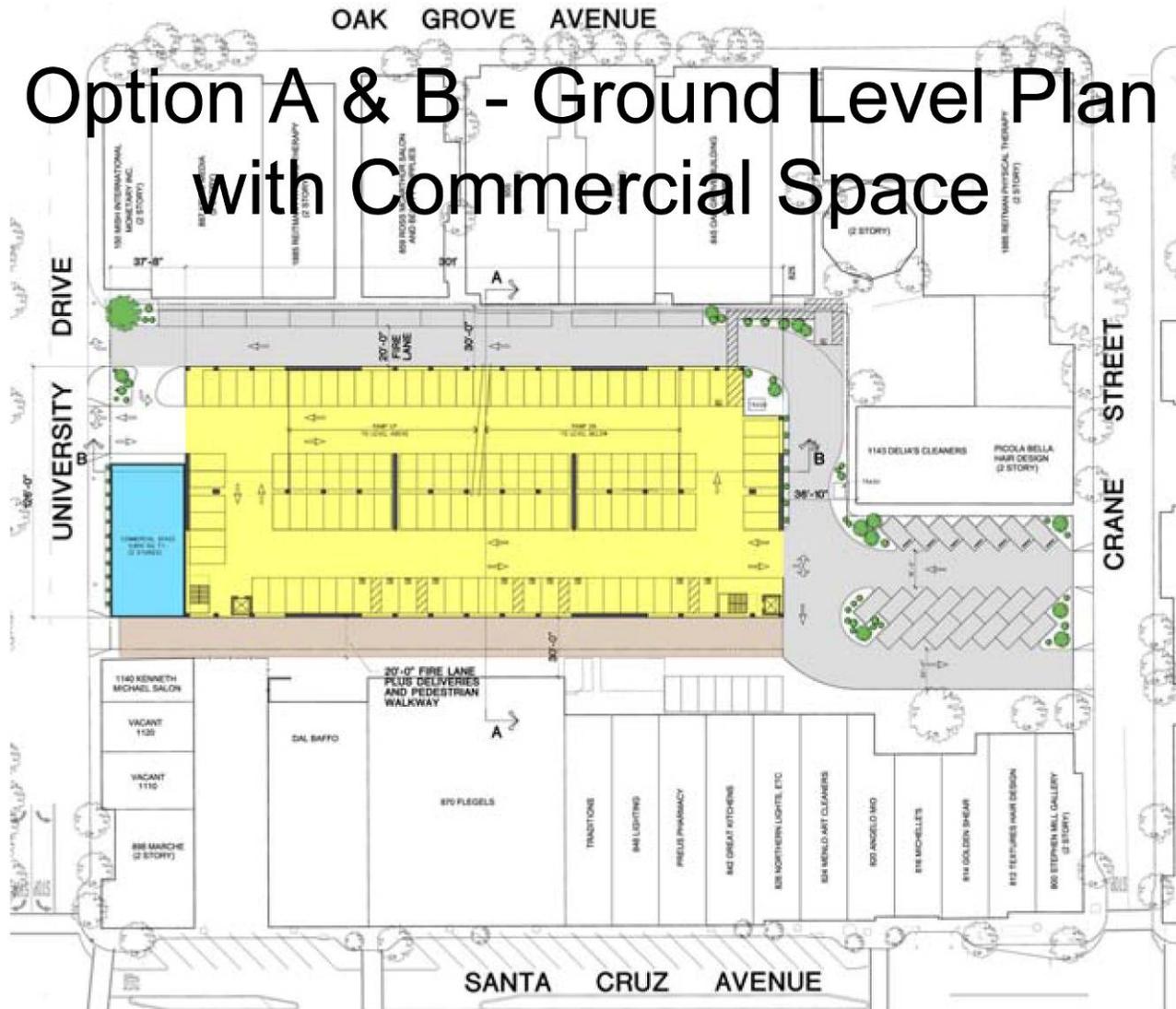
Downtown Parking Structure Study

Option A and B with Commercial Space - Elevation



Downtown Parking Structure Study

Option A & B - Ground Level Plan with Commercial Space



Other Planning Studies

- Railroad Corridor and Grade Crossing Studies
 - *1978 El Camino Real Railroad Corridor Study*
 - *2003 CalTrain Railroad Grade Separation Study*

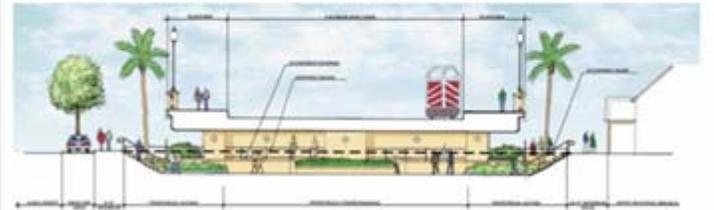


Underpass

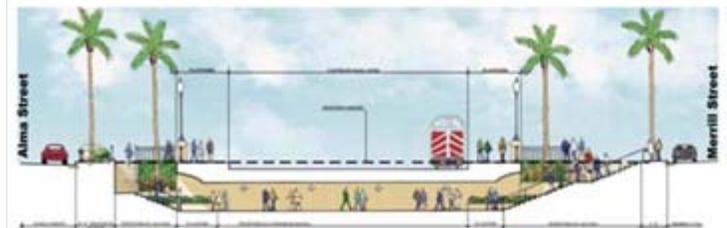


Split

COMPARISON: PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS



Depressed Street and Elevated Tracks (Split)

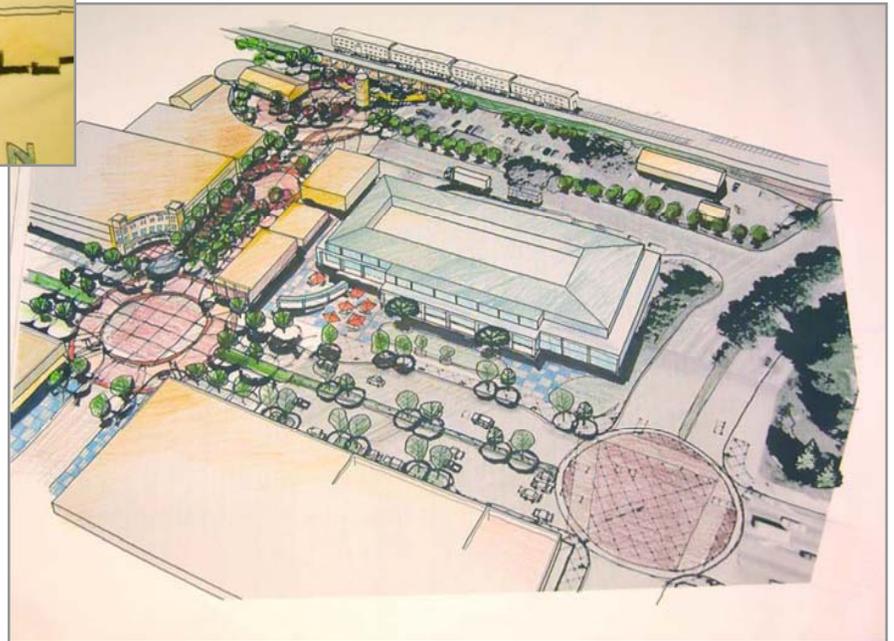
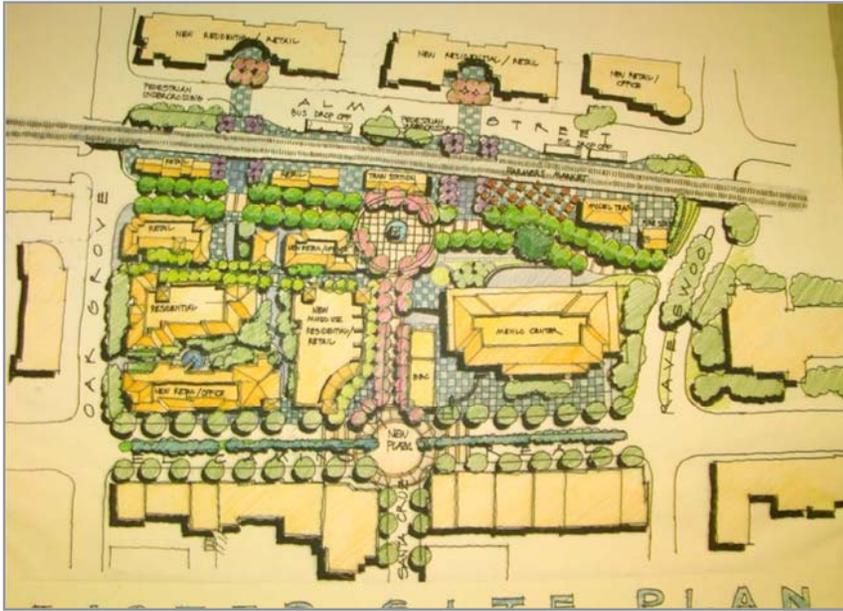


Depressed Street (Underpass)

Other Planning Studies

- 2005 “Imagine a Downtown” Charrette
 - *78 volunteer architects asked to create an urban vision and design plan for alternative grade separation scenarios*
 - Elevated Tracks and Depressed Road Scenario
 - No Grade Separation Scenario
 - Fully Depressed Below Grade Scenario
 - Fully Elevated Track Scenario

- *Elevated Tracks and Depressed Road Scenario*



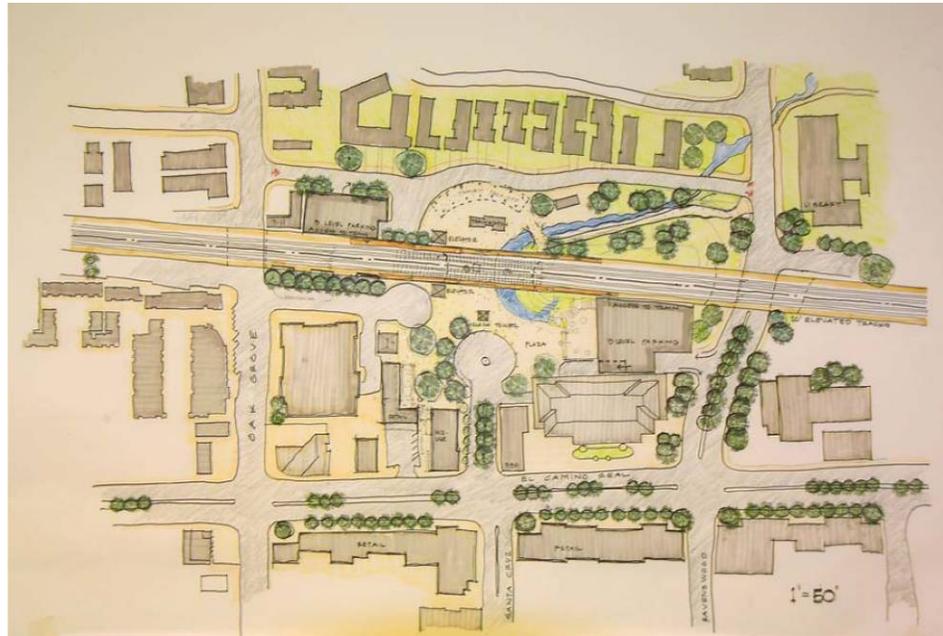
- *No Grade Separation Scenario*



- *Fully Depressed Below Grade Scenario*



■ *Fully Elevated Track Scenario*



Other Planning Studies

- Ongoing Study
 - *Grand Boulevard Initiative*
 - Study how El Camino Real can be developed to its full potential as a place to work, live, play, shop



Report on Business Development in Menlo Park

- 2003 report assessed business environment and presented strategies to ensure long-term City vitality and fiscal stability
- Report found that there was a need for an overall “Vision” and the City must be more pro-active about business development



Commercial Streamlining

- In 2004, City began a Commercial Streamlining Project to streamline the discretionary permitting process for commercial and industrial uses
- Held in three phases:
 - **Phase I** created a review process for certain land uses
 - **Phase II** created a zoning amendment that eliminated the need for a use permit for certain uses
 - **Phase III** Commercial Zoning Ordinance Update (CZOU)



Commercial Zoning Ordinance Update (CZOU)

- In 2006, CZOU project to develop clear set of commercial use classifications in each district
- Create an up-to-date and user friendly document
- CZOU Process
 - *Stakeholder interviews:*
 - Participants included property and business owners, developers, design professionals and residents



Commercial Zoning Ordinance Update (CZOU)

- *Community Workshop:*
 - Participants expressed desire for more pedestrian-friendly districts and reducing traffic impacts of new development
- *Working Group Meetings:*
 - Provide guidance and review progress of CZOU



Recurring Themes

- Character, Intensity and Scale of Development
 - *Reports called for increased densities and heights in downtown or near transit*
 - *They also recommended mixed-use*
 - *Residents cautious about this because of potential for added traffic and effects on visual quality*
- Transportation and Parking Solutions
 - *Reports called for promotion of all modes of transit*
 - *Residents cautious because many believe this may lead to “densification”*

Recurring Themes (cont')

- Whether or not to have grade separation
 - *Several alternatives put forward*
 - *Residents generally are undecided on this topic*
- Whether or not to build structure parking
 - *At least 3 studies recommend multi-level parking structures, some with retail uses*
- Public Realm Improvements
 - *Studies called for uniform street frontages, public plazas, street furniture, trees, etc. to enliven downtown*
 - *Community is generally receptive to this idea*

Peer Communities Comparison

MOUNTAIN VIEW



- *Mountain View*
-

SAN CARLOS



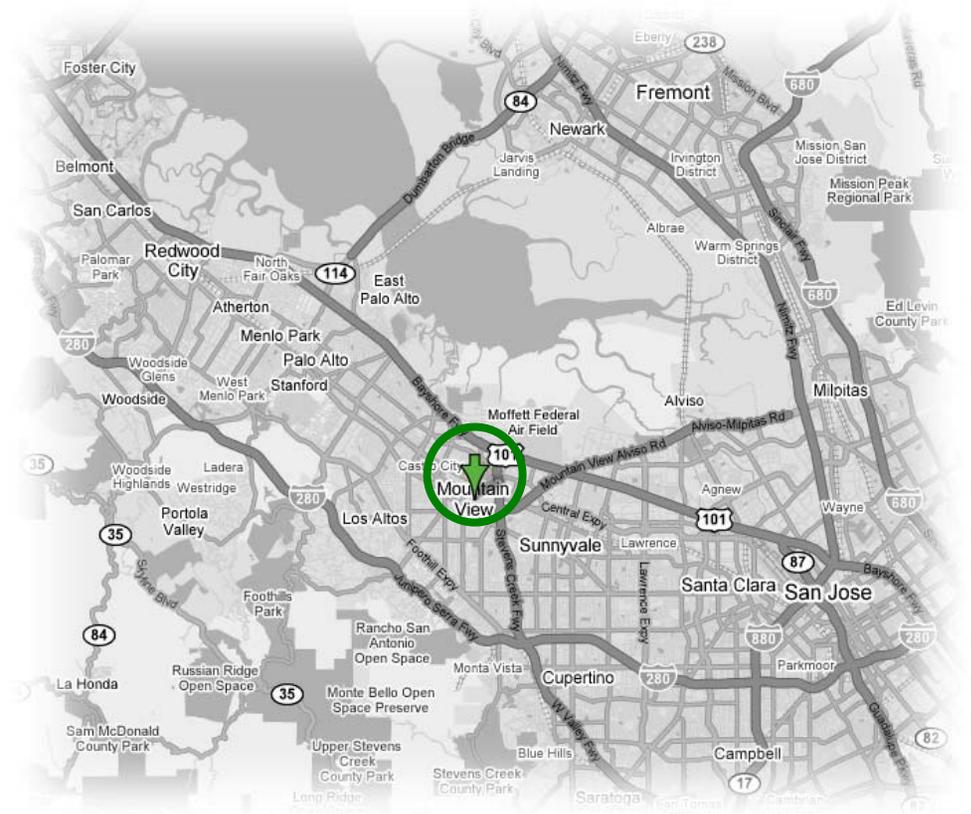
- *San Carlos*
-

ALBANY



- *Albany*
-

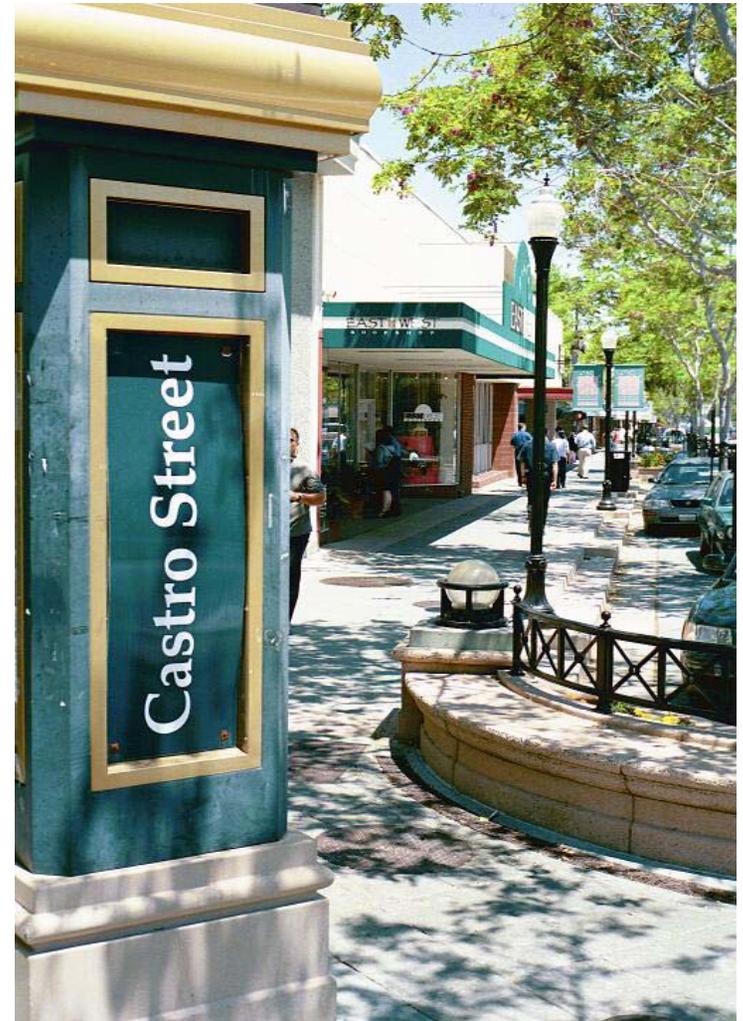
Mountain View



Context

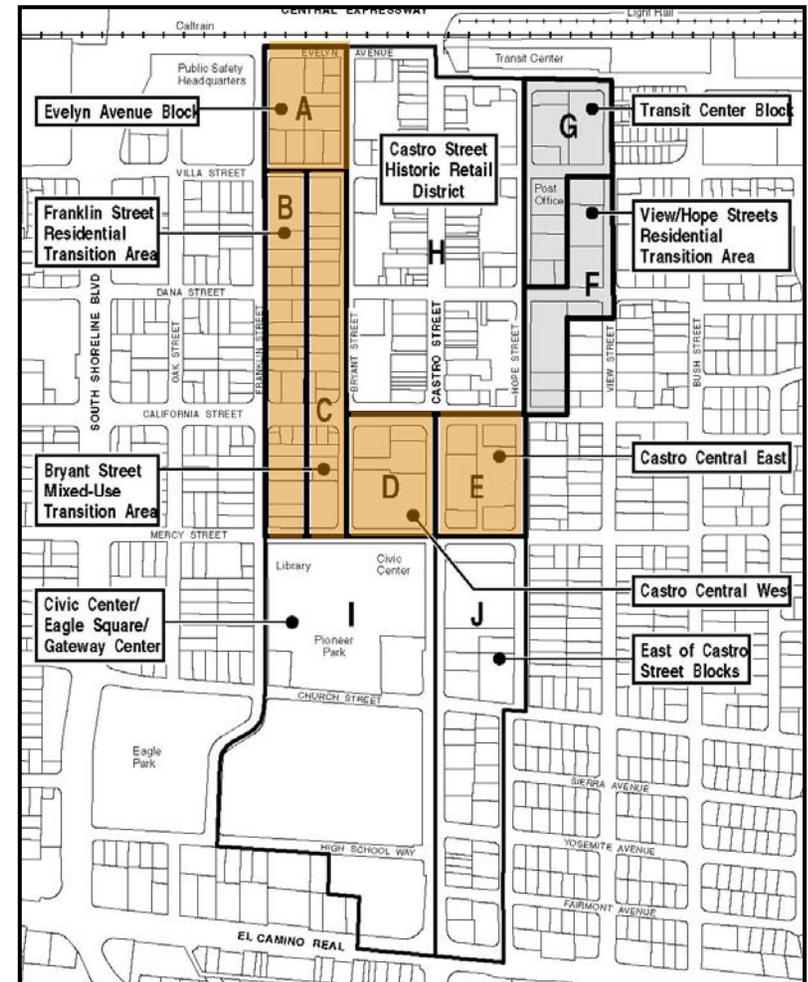
- Pedestrian-oriented downtown
- 22 city blocks, walkable
 - *Mix of retail, civic/cultural, public facility, residential, transit use*
 - *Well designed transition areas*

Characteristic	Mountain View
Downtown Land Area, Acres	93.6
Retail Core Area, Acres	24.1
Downtown Building Heights	2 to 12 stories
Downtown FAR	1.0 to 2.75



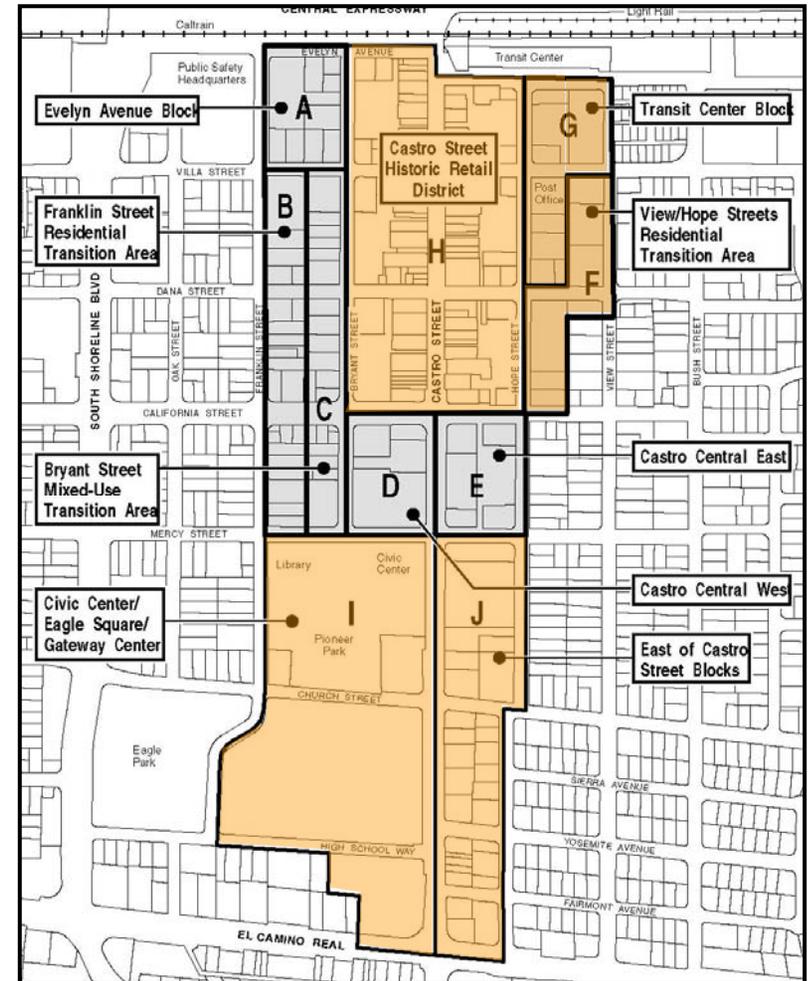
Downtown

- 10 sub-areas
 - *Area A*
(Commercial Residential)
 - *Area B*
(Residential Transition)
 - *Area C*
(Mixed-use Transition)
 - *Area D*
(Downtown Core)
 - *Area E*
(Office Transition)



Downtown

- *Area F*
(Residential Transition)
- *Area G*
(Transit Center)
- *Area H*
(Historic District)
- *Area I*
(Civic Center/Gateway)
- *Area J*
(Mixed use)



10. Pedestrian Character

Ensure new development—esp. larger sites—respect fine-grained character of downtown.

2. Development on Bryant and Hope Streets

Explore issues and opportunities for creating multi-block downtown with appropriate transitions.

3. Building Height

Explore allowing 4 stories under existing 55 foot height limit. Minimum height remains 25 feet.

13. Parking Standards and Management

Evaluate changes to parking standards, with consideration of parking management options.

5. Streetscape Improvements to Side Streets

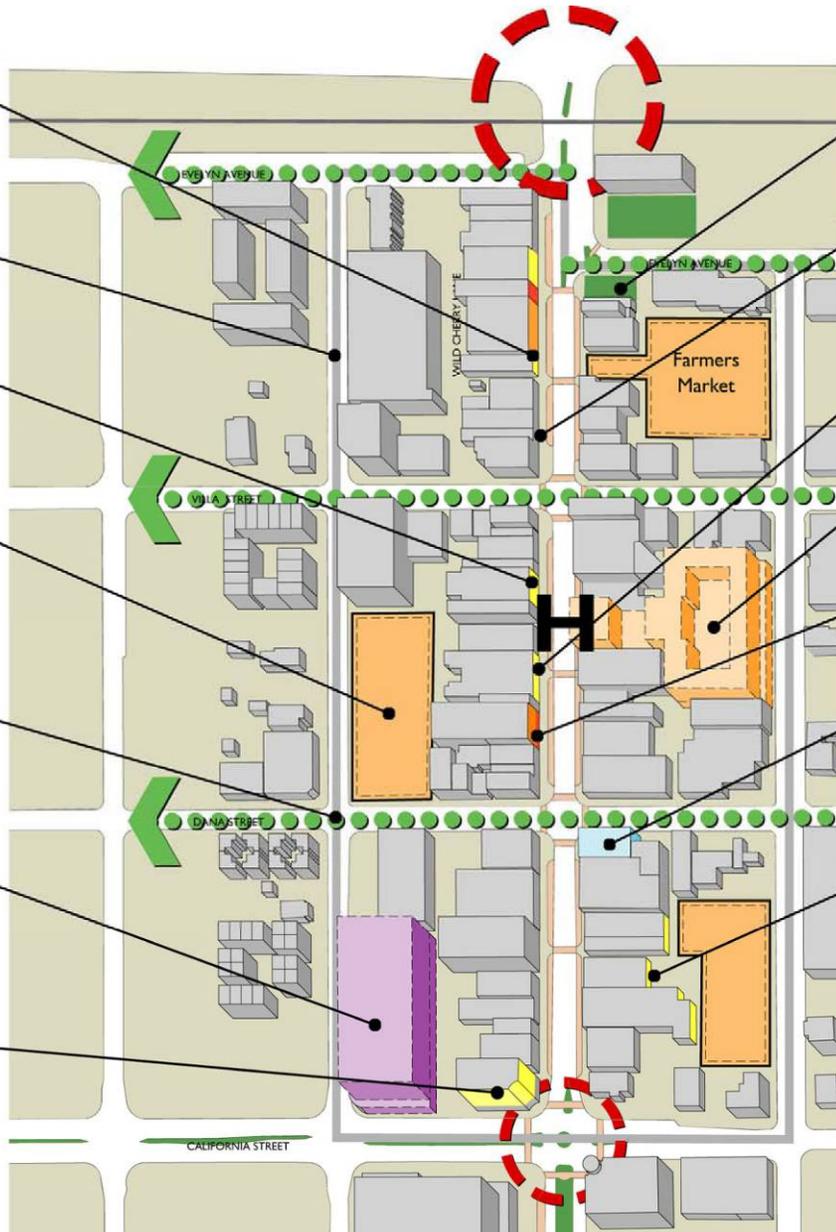
Explore issues and opportunities for creating multi-block downtown with appropriate transitions.

12. Parking Structure

Evaluate long-term need for an additional public parking structure included in private development.

11. Upper Floor In-Lieu Parking Policies

Explore modifications to parking in-lieu fees for upper level uses (including residential) to encourage development projects.



10a. Open Space

Evaluate downtown open space network and determine strengths, weaknesses and opportunities.

4. Retail Space

Evaluate opportunities to create ground floor spaces with appropriate dimensions for anchor tenants.

6. Facade Improvement Program

Encourage improvements to existing building stock. Include program for backs of buildings.

1. Public Parking Lot Infill

Selective infill on public parking lots with potential assembly of select Castro Street parcels. Lot 5 Prototype.

1a./9. Mixed Use Issues

Evaluate allowable land uses on existing upper floors fronting Castro Street.

14. Historic Conservation

Develop local standards and design guidelines to direct improvements to historic structures. Conservation a consideration, not a strong priority.

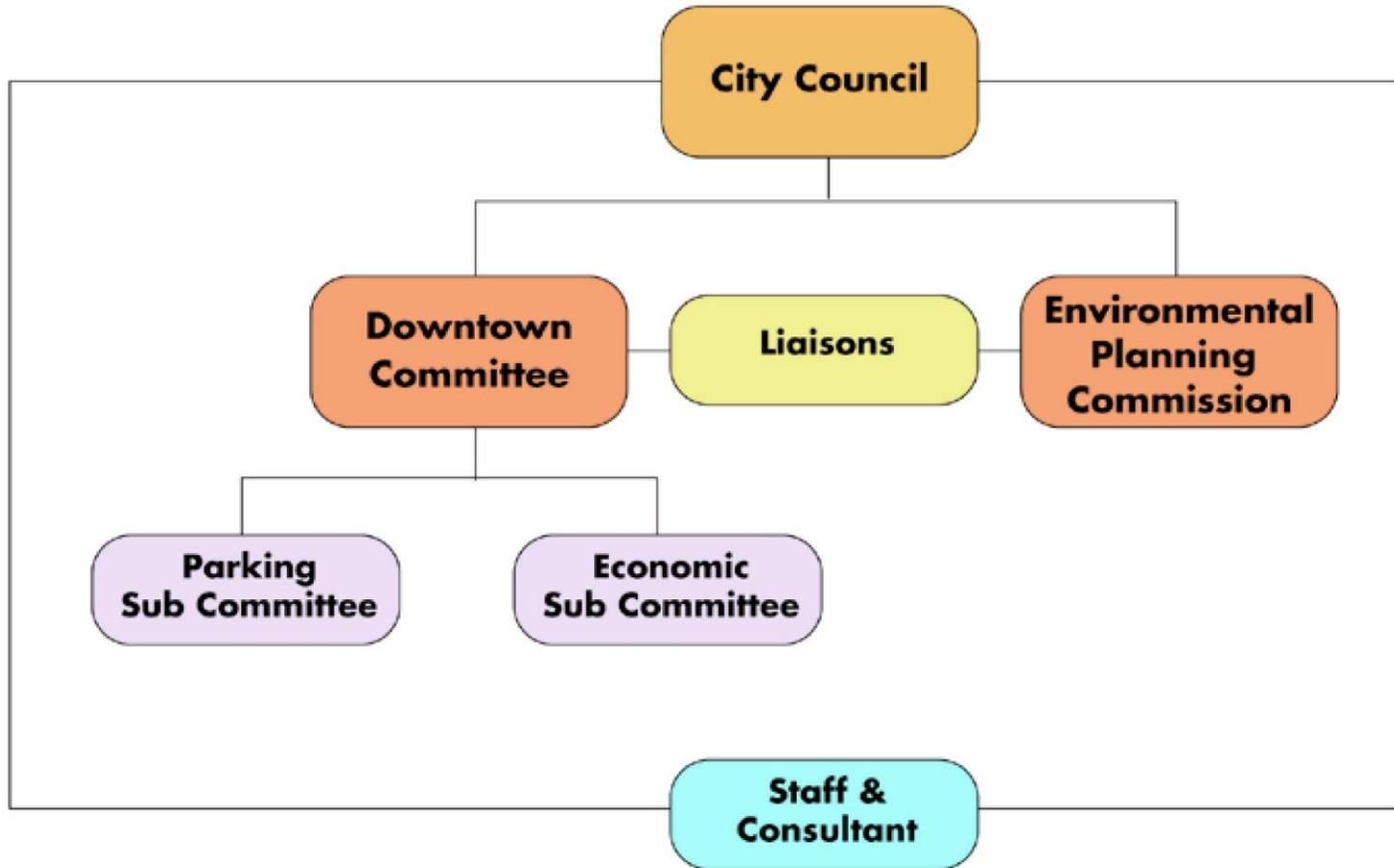
7. Design Standards

Create standards for backs of buildings facing parking areas. Take advantage of potential second entries/seating.

Planning History

- In 1989, Precise Plan for Downtown to revitalize area
- From 1989-1999, CIP projects total \$100 million for light rail, improvements to streetscape and lighting, and development of cultural areas
- In 1999 new City Council launched Precise Plan Update
 - *Phase 1 (1999-2000) for subareas A-G*
 - *Phase 2 (2003) for subareas H-J*
- In 2004 Precise Plan Update was finally complete
 - *New development standards, code enforcement, sign standards, setbacks, FARs, lot coverage, parking requirements*

Downtown Precise Plan Update Decision Making Framework

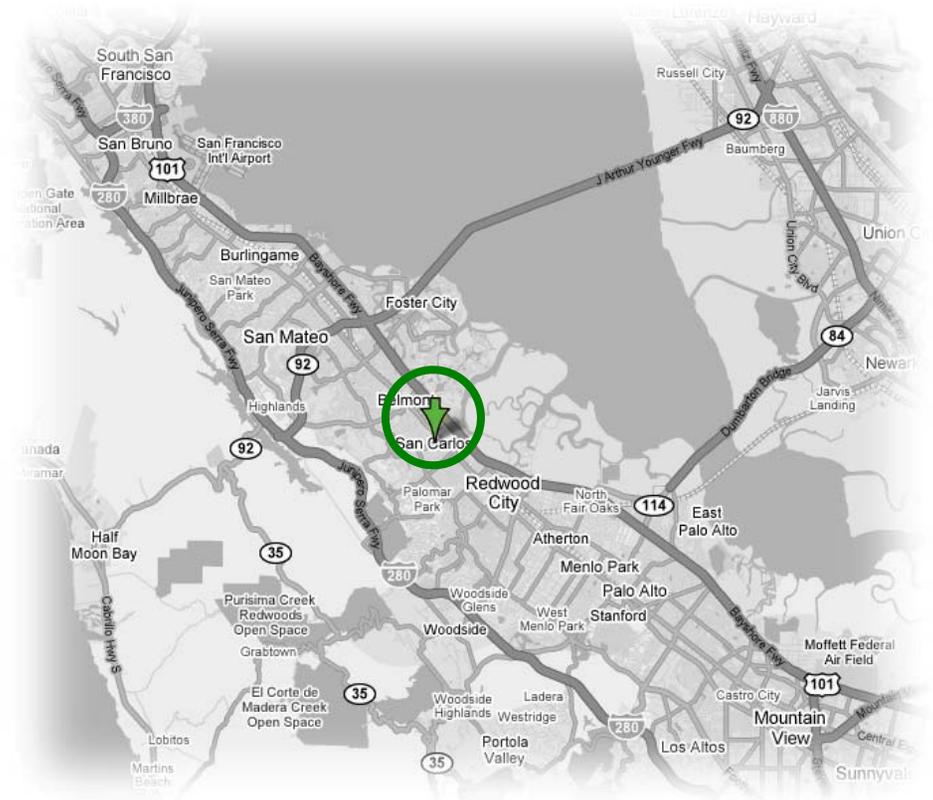


Mountain View Key Proposals

- 400 Castro Street
 - *Six-story office with restaurants below*
- 658 Castro Street
 - *Six-story residential building with restaurants and retail*
- 800 California Street
 - *Four-story office with restaurants below*
- Bryant Street
 - *Four two to four story residential*



San Carlos



Context

- In 2000, Downtown Visioning process with extensive input from community
- Use of computer modeling and web-based template
- Vision:
 - *A “small-town” downtown*
 - *Encouraging housing*
 - *Increased density*
 - *High-quality design*



Context

- City residents deeply engaged in process
- Area covers 15 blocks with wide mix of uses and styles but a unified storefront and massing



Characteristic	San Carlos
Downtown Land Area, Acres	122.7
Retail Core Area, Acres	18.5
Downtown Building Heights	Maximum 50 feet
Downtown FAR	Not to exceed 3.0

Planning Context

- Downtown Design Guidelines 2001 codified the vision
 - *Building placement (100% coverage at ground level)*
 - *Building articulation (transparency at ground level, rhythmic vertical and horizontal elements)*
 - *Façade design*
 - *Street furnishings and outdoor eating*



Major Projects

- Laurel Street Improvements
- Hacienda Gardens
 - *(four-story mixed-use residential)*
- The Castilian
 - *(multi-family residential)*
- South Plaza
 - *(rental housing)*

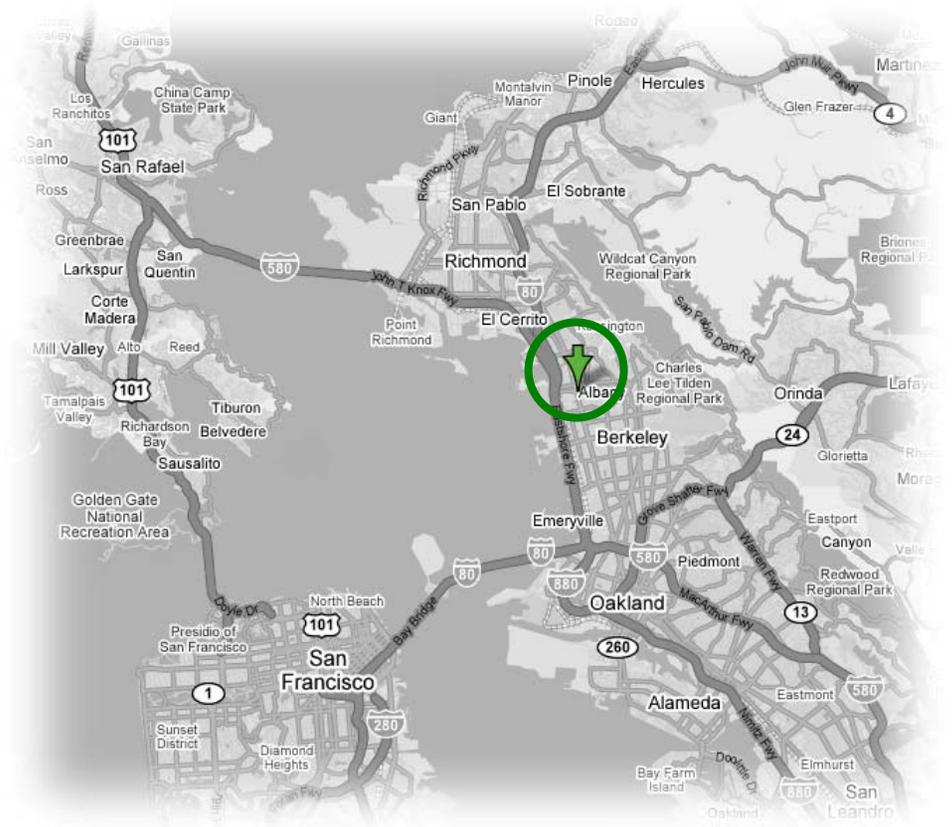


Major Projects

- San Carlos Marketplace
- Wheeler Plaza
 - *Mix of commercial and residential uses and parking*
- Salvatore Restaurant
 - *Mixed-use office and housing*

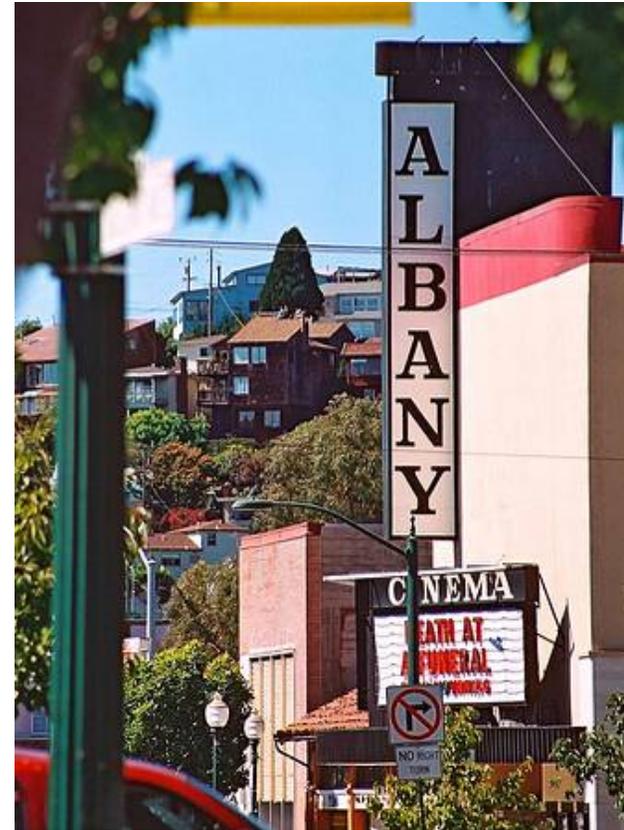


Albany



Context

- Downtown centered around San Pablo Ave
- Subject of numerous planning and design initiatives
 - *1989 San Pablo Ave Urban Design Concept Plan*
 - *1993 San Pablo Ave Design Guidelines*
 - *1997-2001 Vision Plan and Streetscape Plan*



Characteristic	Albany
Downtown Land Area, Acres	64.1
Retail Core Area, Acres	38.1
Downtown Building Heights	Maximum 35 feet
Downtown FAR	1.25 to 2.25

Vision Plan

- 1997 *Vision for San Pablo Avenue* drew upon market realities and included ideas such as:
 - *Encouraging TOD*
 - *Encouraging large scale development (consolidation of small lots to allow mixed-use projects)*
 - *Recognizing San Pablo/Solano intersection as a key node*
 - *Improvements to existing facades*
 - *Improvements to streetscapes*
 - *Redevelopment of University Village fronting San Pablo Ave*

Vision Plan

- Vision Plan also required follow-up actions:
 - *Zoning amendments*
 - *Revision to San Pablo design guidelines*
 - *Parking code changes*
- In 2000-2001 the City developed a Streetscape Master Plan to put the vision into practice



New Projects

- New Projects and current planning include:
 - *705 San Pablo (three-story mixed-use retail and residential)*
 - *727 San Pablo (three-story mixed-use retail and residential on large lot)*
 - *914 San Pablo (three-story mixed-use retail and residential on large lot)*



Lessons for Menlo Park

- A longer, slower comprehensive planning process can be better;
- Build support at all levels;
- Pay attention to what the community has to say;
- Clearly present trade-offs of all planning options;
- Address tough issues early;
- Create transitions with sensitive neighboring uses;

Lessons for Menlo Park

- Take advantage of transit;
- Work plan should have a defined scope;
 - *Don't try to do too much!*
- Ensure plan is grounded in reality;
- Fine-tune plan details;
- Develop Guiding Concepts or Principles to keep grounded;
- Make sure the first project implementing the plan is a well-designed one.

Discussion



Thank you

