

LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DESIGN

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VISION: *Palo Alto's land use decisions shall balance our future growth needs with the preservation of our neighborhoods, address climate protection priorities through sustainable development near neighborhood services and enhance the quality of life of all neighborhoods.*

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INTRODUCTION

The Land Use and Community Design Element sets the foundation for future preservation, growth and change in Palo Alto and serves as the blueprint for the development of public and private property in the city. It includes policies and programs intended to balance natural resources with future community needs in a way that makes optimal use of available land, to create attractive buildings and public spaces that reinforce Palo Alto's sense of place and community, to preserve and enhance quality of life in Palo Alto neighborhoods, to support thriving commercial areas that meet the needs of local residents, and to maintain Palo Alto's role in the success of the surrounding region.

This Element meets the State-mandated requirements for a Land Use Element. It defines categories for the location and type of public and private uses of land under the City's jurisdiction; it recommends standards for population density and building intensity on land covered by the Comprehensive Plan; and it includes a Land Use Map (Map L-6) and Goals, Policies and Programs to guide land use distribution in the city. By satisfying these requirements, the Land Use and Community Design Element lays out the basic guidelines and standards upon which all of the other Comprehensive Plan elements rely and build. Other elements of the Plan correspond with the land use categories and policy direction contained in this Element, while providing more specialized guidance focused on particular topics, such as transportation or conservation.



CONNECTIONS TO OTHER ELEMENTS

The Land Use and Community Design Element is replete with direct connections to all of the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Its guidance for land uses is strongly linked to the Housing Element's prescriptions for residential development, even though the Housing Element is cyclically updated on a separate State-mandated timetable. The inextricable tie between land use and transportation is clearly apparent both in this Element and the Transportation Element, as the co-location of land uses significantly affects the ability of transit, walking and biking to replace vehicle travel, in addition to capitalizing on the presence of rail service in Palo Alto. The success of programs in the Natural Environment and Safety Elements are largely dependent on land uses decisions that protect the environment as well as people and property. The Land Use Element dovetails with both the quality of life initiatives in the Community Services and Facilities Element, and the prosperity objectives of the Business and Economics Element.

PLANNING CONTEXT

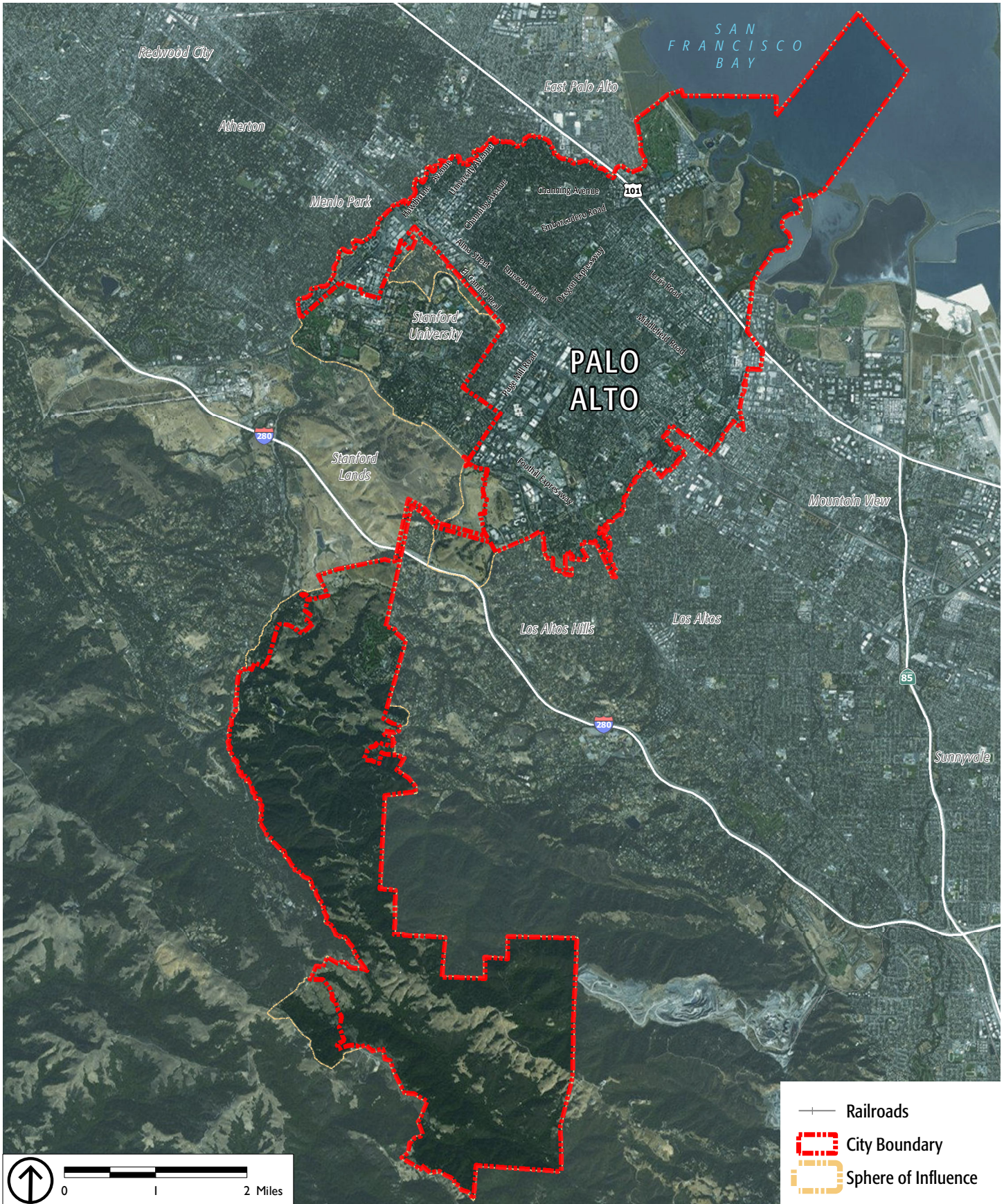
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

With a backdrop sweeping from forested hills to the Bay, Palo Alto is framed by natural beauty. Views of the foothills contribute a sense of enclosure and a reminder of the close proximity of open space and nature. Views of the baylands provide a strong connection to the marine environment and the East Bay hills. Together with the city's marshland, salt ponds, sloughs, creeks and riparian corridors, these natural resources, clearly visible in the aerial photograph in Map L-1, are a major defining feature of Palo Alto's character.

Preserving the city's attractive and valuable natural features is important for a number of reasons. Ecologically, these areas provide key habitat for wildlife, create a buffer from developed areas and act as a natural filtration system for storm water runoff. For the community, they represent an important facet of the look and feel of Palo Alto, contributing to a sense of place both through direct public access to natural areas and the views that establish Palo Alto's local scenic routes.



PALO ALTO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LAND USE



Source: City of Palo Alto, 2013; ESRI, 2016; PlaceWorks, 2016.

REGIONAL PLANNING

Palo Alto cooperates with numerous regional partners on a range of issues of common interest. Regional planning partners include the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and other State agencies, Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, San Mateo County Transit District, Santa Clara County, San Mateo County and neighboring cities. The City of Palo Alto works together with the cities of East Palo Alto and Menlo Park on a variety of shared programs relating to economic development, social services, education, public safety and housing.

Palo Alto also works with Mountain View, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills on joint ventures such as fire protection and water quality control. In addition, Palo Alto elected officials and staff participate in numerous countywide and regional planning efforts, including via both advisory and decision-making boards and commissions.

Palo Alto also maintains a strong relationship with Stanford University. Although the campus lies outside of the city limits, as shown in Map L-2, important Stanford-owned lands are within Palo Alto, including Stanford Shopping Center, Stanford Research Park and the Stanford University Medical Center. The City, Santa Clara County and Stanford maintain an inter-jurisdictional agreement regarding development on unincorporated Stanford lands and collaborate on selected land use and transportation projects.

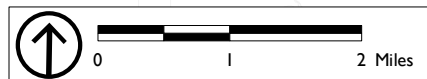
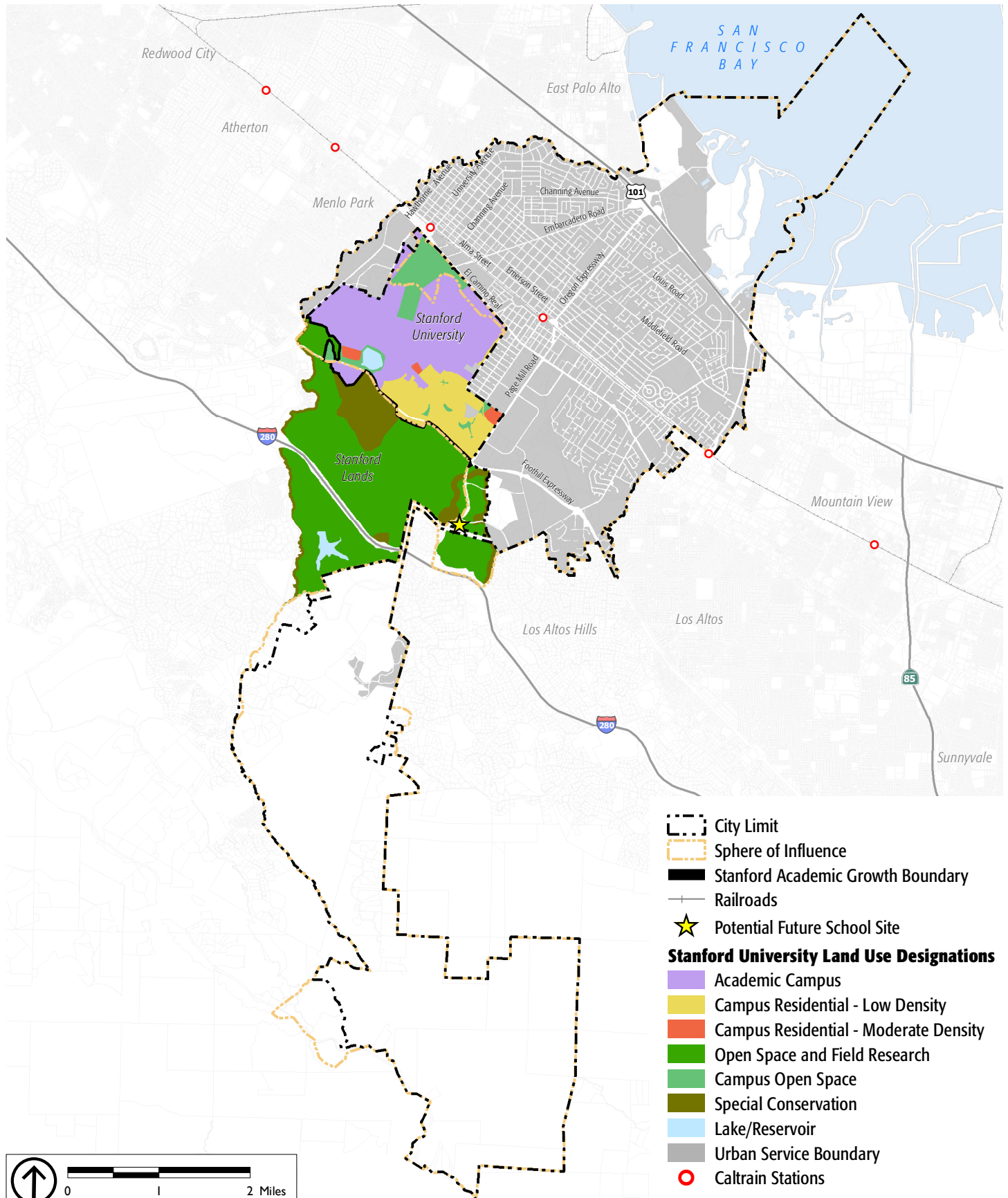
CITY EVOLUTION

EARLY HISTORY

There is evidence in the archaeological record of people living along San Francisquito Creek as far back as 4000 BC, and the first widely recognized inhabitants are the Costanoan people starting in about 1500 BC. The Costanoan are Ohlone-speaking Native Americans who lived near the water from San Francisco Bay to Carmel. Costanoan and earlier artifacts have been identified in the city, particularly along the banks of San Francisquito Creek. Preservation of these resources is a high priority for the City and essential to defining the character of the community.



PALO ALTO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
LAND USE



Source: City of Palo Alto, 2013; USGS, 2010; NHD 2013; ESRI, 2010; Tiger Lines, 2010; Stanford University, 2000; PlaceWorks, 2014.

CITY DEVELOPMENT

From its earliest days, Palo Alto has been a world-class center of knowledge and innovation. The city incorporated in 1894 on land purchased with the specific intent of serving the newly established Stanford University. Originally centered on University Avenue, Palo Alto grew south and east, incorporating the older town of Mayfield and its California Avenue district in 1925. By the 1970s, the city had almost doubled in size, stretching into the foothills and south to Mountain View, with commercial centers along Middlefield Road in Midtown and El Camino Real through formerly unincorporated Barron Park, and research and development areas at the city's outskirts.

Today, Palo Alto covers almost 26 square miles (16,627 acres) of land, about a third of which is open space, including 34 city-owned parks and 1,700 acres of protected baylands. Ensuring that activities in and around the baylands, including airport operations, occur with minimal environmental impacts is of major importance to the City and region.

COMPACT DEVELOPMENT

Palo Alto was an early adopter of compact development principles, as embodied in the Urban Service Area designated to manage growth in the current Comprehensive Plan. Through this strategy, the City has endeavored to direct new development into appropriate locations—such as along transit corridors and near employment centers—while protecting and preserving neighborhoods as well as the open space lands that comprise about half of the city.

SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCE

Palo Alto is regarded as a leader in sustainability, having adopted its first Climate Action Plan in 2007 and continuing through the City's multi-faceted efforts to



eliminate the community's dependence on fossil fuels and adapt to the potential effects of climate change. Through the direct provision of public utility services by the City to the community, Palo Alto is able to achieve truly outstanding energy efficiency and water conservation. The City and community also are leaders in promoting non-automobile transportation, waste reduction and diversion and high-quality, low-impact development.

In addition to efficiency and conservation, the City sees an adequate housing supply as a fundamental component of a sustainable and equitable community. As of the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, renting or owning a home in Palo Alto is prohibitively expensive for many. The housing affordability crisis in Palo Alto and in the Bay Area more broadly has a number of negative consequences, including diminished socioeconomic diversity and increased traffic congestion as local workers commute from distant places where housing is cheaper. In response, this Element lays out a multi-faceted strategy to both preserve existing housing and create new housing in a variety of types and sizes. Most new housing is anticipated to be multi-family housing on redeveloped infill sites near housing. These policies and programs work hand-in-hand with Housing Element programs and focus change along transit corridors, while preserving the character of established single-family neighborhoods.

Together, all of these efforts make Palo Alto a more resilient community, able to adjust behaviors and actions in an effort to protect and preserve environmental resources.

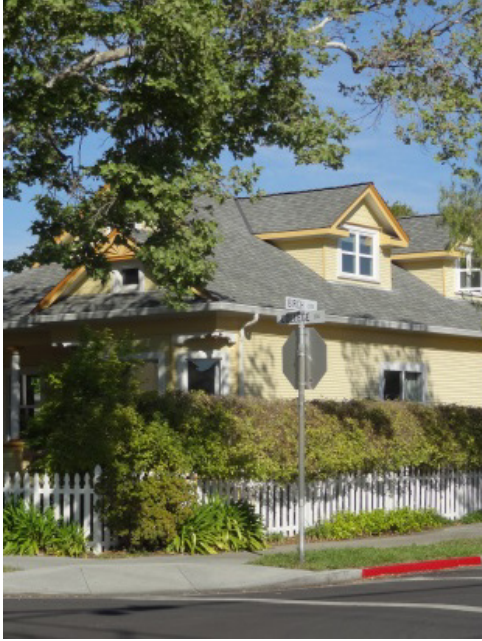
CITY STRUCTURE

COMPONENTS

The city is composed of unique neighborhoods and distinct but connected commercial centers and employment districts. Understanding how these different components of the city structure support one another and connect to the region can help inform land use planning. By reflecting the existing structure in its policies, Palo Alto will ensure that it remains a community that encourages social contact and public life and also maintains quality urban design.

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Palo Alto's 35 neighborhoods are characterized by housing, parks and public facilities. Their boundaries are based on land use and street patterns and community



perceptions. Most of the residential neighborhoods have land use classifications of single-family residential with some also including multiple-family residential, and transitions in scale and use often signify neighborhood boundaries.

Each neighborhood is a living reminder of the unique blend of architectural styles, building materials, scale and street patterns that were typical at the time of its development. These characteristics are more intact in some neighborhoods than in others. The City strives to complement neighborhood character when installing streets or public space improvements and to preserve neighborhoods through thoughtful development review to ensure that new construction, additions and remodels reflect neighborhood character.

Neighborhoods built prior to the mid-1940s generally have a traditional pattern of development with relatively narrow streets, curbside parking, vertical curbs and street trees between the curb and sidewalk. Many homes are oriented to the street with parking often located to the rear of the lot.

Many later neighborhoods were shaped by Modernist design ideas popularized by builder Joseph Eichler. The houses are intentionally designed with austere facades and oriented towards private backyards and interior courtyards, where expansive glass walls “bring the outside in.” Curving streets and cul-de-sacs further the sense of house as private enclave, and flattened curbs joined to the sidewalk with no planting strip create an uninterrupted plane on which to display the house. Some neighborhoods built during this period contain other home styles such as California ranch.

Both traditional and modern Palo Alto neighborhoods have fine examples of multi-unit housing that are very compatible with surrounding single-family homes, primarily because of their high-quality design characteristics, such as entrances and gardens that face the street rather than the interior of the development. Examples include duplexes and small apartment buildings near Downtown, as well as second units and cottage courts in other areas of the city.

COMMERCIAL CENTERS

Centers are commercial and mixed-use areas that serve as focal points of community life. These commercial centers are distributed throughout the city, within walking or bicycling distance of virtually all Palo Alto residents, as shown in Map L-3. There are three basic types of Centers in Palo Alto:

- **Regional Centers** include University Avenue/Downtown and Stanford Shopping Center. These areas are commercial activity hubs of citywide and regional significance, with a mix of shopping, offices and some housing.

Downtown is characterized by two- and three-story buildings with ground floor shops. Downtown Palo Alto is widely recognized for its mix of culture, architecture and atmosphere of innovation, which make it a uniquely special place. Trees, benches, outdoor seating areas, sidewalks, plazas and other amenities make the streets pedestrian-friendly. Transit is highly accessible and frequent. Downtown plays a key role in concentrating housing, employment, shopping and entertainment near each other and regional rail and other transit, exemplifying and supporting citywide sustainability and resiliency. However, a recent cycle of economic growth has brought increased pressure for additional office space in Downtown Palo Alto. In recent years, the demand has become so strong that other important uses that contribute to Downtown’s vitality, such as storefront retail, are at risk of being pushed out. This Element includes policies and programs to preserve ground floor-retail uses Downtown and sustain its role as a gathering place. Programs are also included to convert some unused development potential from commercial to residential potential in the future.

Stanford Shopping Center has evolved from its original auto-oriented design into a premier open-air pedestrian environment known for extensive landscaped areas surrounded by retail and dining.

- **Multi-Neighborhood Centers**, including California Avenue, Town and Country Village and South El Camino Real, are retail districts that serve more than one neighborhood with a diverse mix of uses including retail, office and residential. They feature one- to three-story buildings with storefront windows and outdoor seating areas that create a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.

These centers also contain retail uses clustered around plazas and parks that provide public gathering spaces. They can be linked to other city Centers via transit.



- **Neighborhood Centers**, such as Charleston Shopping Center, Edgewood Plaza and Midtown Shopping Center, are small retail areas drawing customers from the immediately surrounding area. These centers are often anchored by a grocery or drug store and may include a variety of smaller retail shops and offices oriented toward the everyday needs of local residents. Adjacent streets provide walking, biking and transit connections.

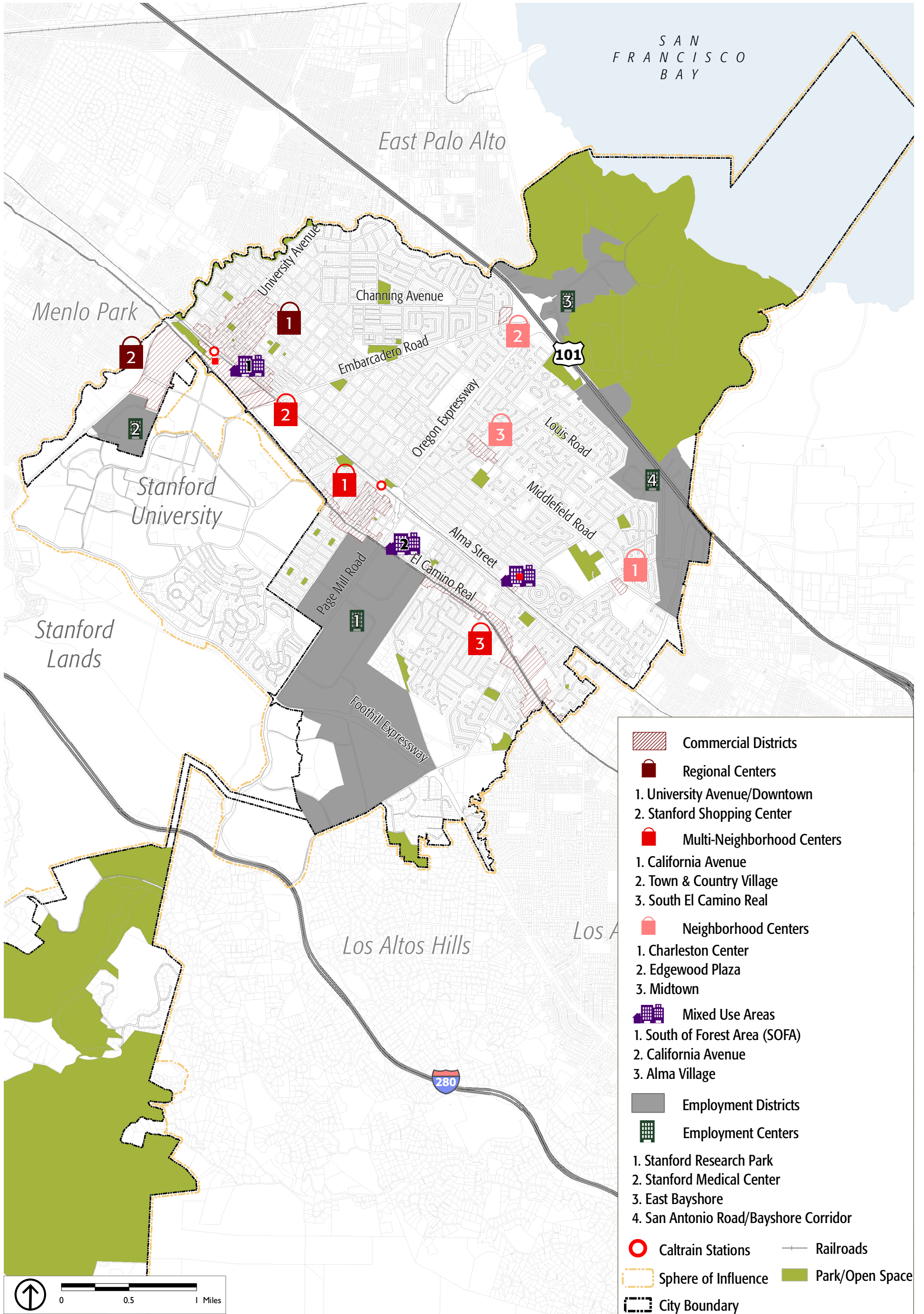
EMPLOYMENT DISTRICTS

Palo Alto's employment districts, such as Stanford Research Park, Stanford Medical Center, East Bayshore and San Antonio Road/Bayshore Corridor, represent a development type not found in other parts of the city. These Districts are characterized by large one- to four-story buildings, with some taller buildings, separated by parking lots and landscaped areas. The Districts are accessed primarily by automobile or employer-supported transit, though future changes in land use and tenancy could support a shift toward transit, pedestrian and bicycle travel.

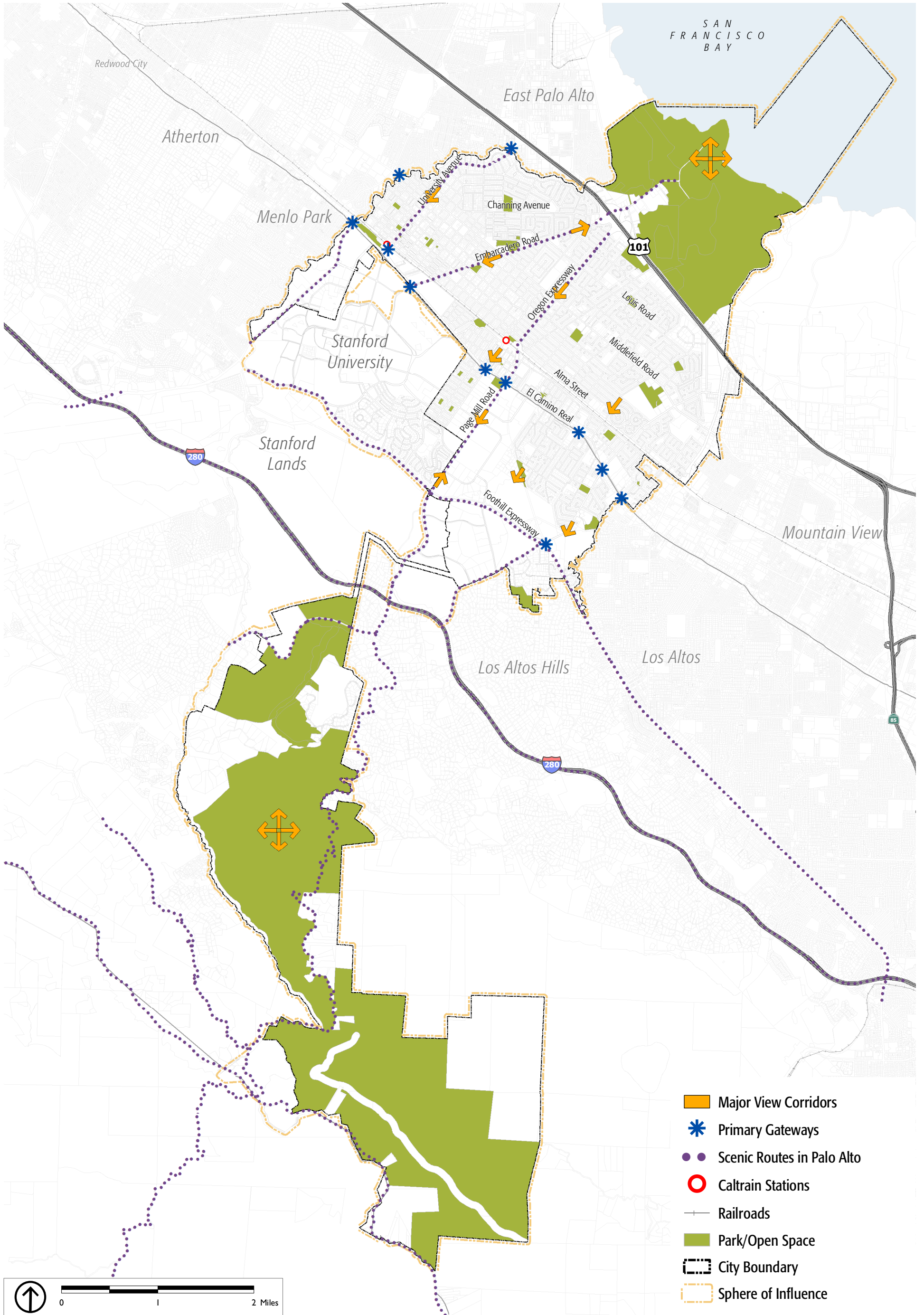
GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The pace of non-residential growth and development in Palo Alto has been moderated by a citywide cap on non-residential development first adopted by the City Council in 1989. This Plan presents an updated cumulative growth management and monitoring system as approved by the voters in the Palo Alto Reduced Office/R&D Development Cap Initiative. This system moderates the overall amount of new office/R&D development to enhance Palo Alto's livability.


This updated approach uses 2015 as the baseline from which to monitor new development and establishes a cumulative, citywide cap on office/R&D uses, including conversions of existing square footage to office/R&D space.



Source: City of Palo Alto, 2013; USGS, 2010; NHD 2013; ESRI, 2010; Tiger Lines, 2010; PlaceWorks, 2014.



Source: City of Palo Alto, 2013; USGS, 2010; NHD 2013; ESRI, 2010; Tiger Lines, 2010; PlaceWorks, 2014.

-  Major View Corridors
-  Primary Gateways
-  Scenic Routes in Palo Alto
-  Caltrain Stations
-  Railroads
-  Park/Open Space
-  City Boundary
-  Sphere of Influence

URBAN DESIGN

The look and feel of Palo Alto is shaped by urban design, which encompasses the wide variety of features that together form the visual character of the city. These elements range from aesthetic to functional and include the design of buildings, the historic character of structures and places, public spaces where people gather, gateways or entrances to the city, street trees lining neighborhoods, art decorating public spaces, as well as parking lots and essential infrastructure. Key community design features are illustrated on Map L-4.

BUILDINGS

Palo Alto has many buildings of outstanding architectural merit representing a variety of styles and periods. The best examples of these buildings are constructed with quality materials, show evidence of craftsmanship, fit with their surroundings and help make neighborhoods comfortable and appealing. To help achieve quality design, the Architectural Review Board reviews buildings and site design for commercial and multi-family residential projects. Palo Alto's commercial and residential buildings have received regional and national design recognition. Design issues in residential neighborhoods include sympathetic restoration and renovation of homes, protection of privacy if second stories are added, and efforts to make streets more inviting to pedestrians.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Palo Alto has a rich stock of historic structures and places that are important to the city's heritage and preserving and reusing these historic resources contributes to the livability of Palo Alto. The City's Historic Inventory lists approximately 400 buildings of historical merit, with more than a dozen buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as three historic districts (Green Gables, Greenmeadow and Professorville) and one architectural district (Ramona Street). Map L-5 illustrates historic resources in Palo Alto.

Historic sites include the El Palo Alto Redwood, believed to be the site of a 1776 encampment of the Portola Expedition and one of 19 California Points of Historical Interest in the city. The garage at 367 Addison that was the birthplace of Hewlett-Packard is one of seven sites or structures listed on the California Register of Historic Landmarks. The length of El Camino Real from San Francisco to San Diego, including the section that passes through Palo Alto, is a State Historic Landmark. Many historic





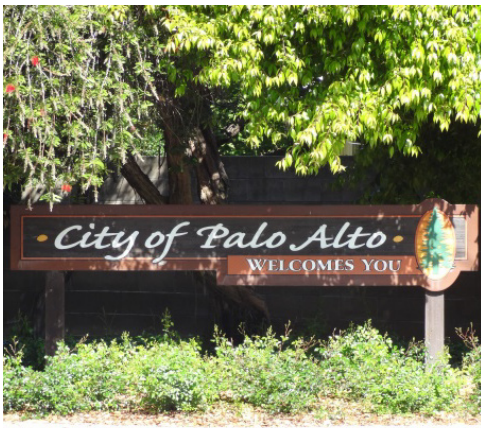
buildings in the city have been rehabilitated and adaptively reused as office or commercial spaces, including former single-family homes in and near downtown.

PUBLIC SPACES, STREETS AND PARKING

Throughout Palo Alto are a variety of public spaces from parks and schools to plazas and sidewalks, to cultural, religious and civic facilities. Each of these can increasingly serve as centers for public life with gathering places, bicycle and pedestrian access, safety-enhancing night-time lighting and clear visual access, and, in some cases, small-scale retail uses such as cafes.

Well-designed streets also invite public use and enhance quality of life. Palo Alto's reputation as a gracious residential community is due not only to its fine street trees and attractive planting areas, but also to appropriate street width for neighborhood character, accommodation of pedestrians and bicycles, height and setbacks of buildings and color and texture of paving materials. These components help to ensure that streets are pleasant and safe for all travelers.

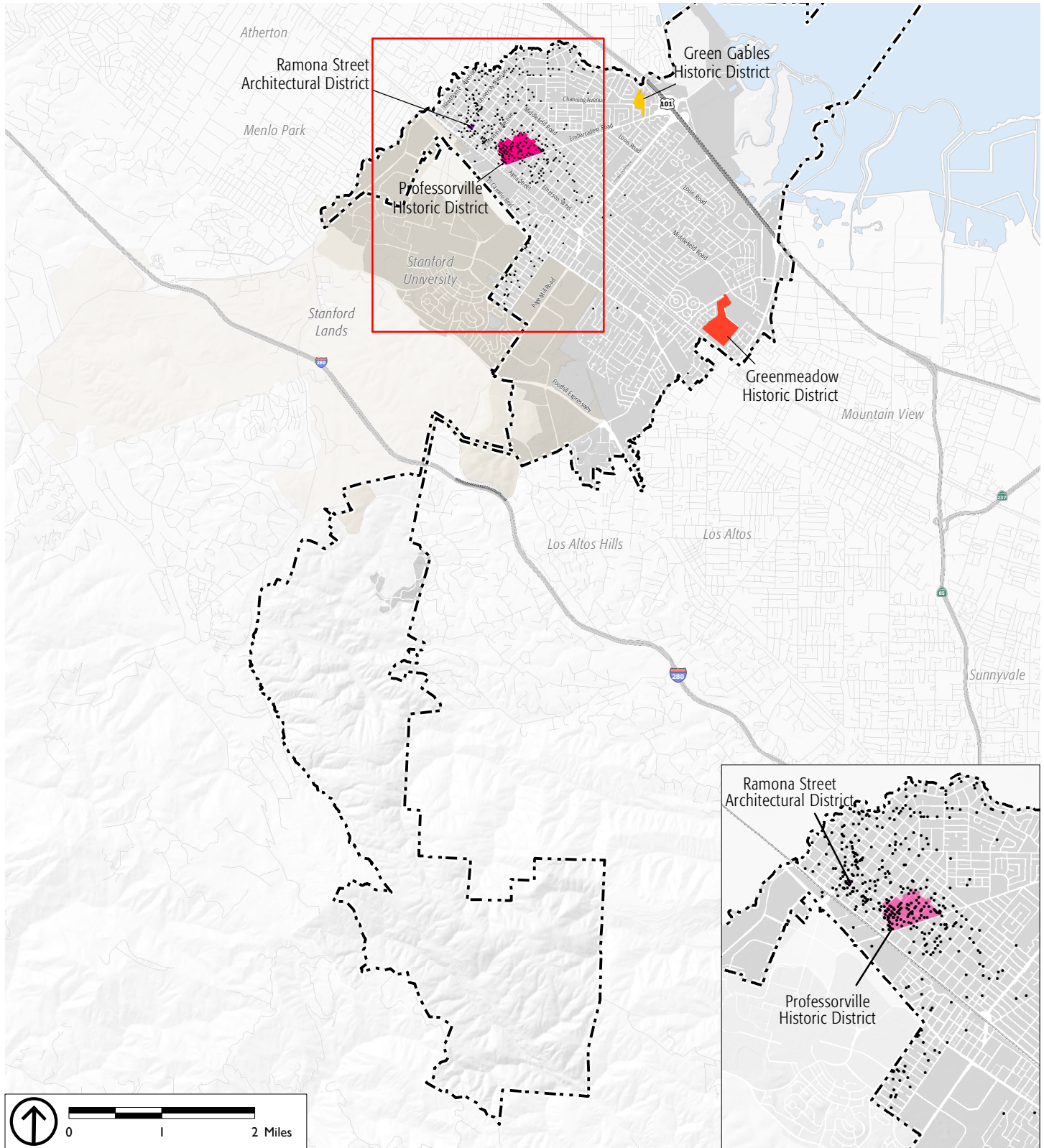
Parking lots occupy large amounts of surface area in the city. Well-designed parking lots make efficient use of space while contributing positively to the appearance of the surrounding area. A parking lot can provide an opportunity for open space and outdoor amenities rather than just a repository for cars. Many parking lots in Palo Alto include trees, landscaping and public art.



GATEWAYS

Community identity is strengthened when the entrances to the city are clear and memorable. In Palo Alto, these entrances or gateways include University Avenue, El Camino Real, Middlefield Road, Oregon Expressway/Page Mill Road, San Antonio Road and Embarcadero Road and the Palo Alto Transit Center and California Avenue Caltrain station. Well-designed gateways are defined by natural and urban landmarks that complement the character and identity of the neighborhood.

PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
LAND USE ELEMENT



Source: PlaceWorks, 2016; The City of Palo Alto, 2013.

- Cultural or historic resource*
- Highways
- - - City Limit

*Cultural and historic resources include Historic Structures on the City of Palo Alto Historic Inventory (categories I, II, III, or IV), and/or Buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, and/or California Registered Historic Landmarks, and/or Points of Historical Interest.
 This map is for illustrative purposes only and does not depict the full inventory of historic structures, landmarks, or other cultural resources in Palo Alto. For a more complete listing, please refer to the content of the Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan and the associated environmental review documents.

URBAN FOREST

Palo Alto's urban forest—including both public and privately owned trees—is a key part of the community's history, identity and quality of life. It offers enormous social, environmental and financial benefits and is a fundamental part of Palo Alto's sense of place. Regular spacing of trees that are similar in form and texture provides order and coherence and gives scale to the street. A canopy of branches and leaves provides shade for pedestrians and creates a sense of enclosure and comfort. On the city's most memorable streets, trees of a single species extend historic character to the corners of blocks, reducing the apparent width of streets and intersections and defining the street as a continuous space. Protecting, maintaining and enhancing the urban forest, as called for in the 2015 *Urban Forest Master Plan*, is among the most effective ways to preserve Palo Alto's character.

PUBLIC ART

Public art helps create an inviting atmosphere for gathering, fosters economic development and contributes to vital public spaces. Palo Alto's public art program reflects the City's tradition of enriching public spaces with works of art, ranging from the subtle inclusion of handcrafted artifacts into building architecture to more traditional displays of sculpture at civic locations. The Municipal Code requires both public and private projects to incorporate public art.

UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

A city is supported by its infrastructure—features such as paving, signs and utilities. These features represent substantial public investments and are meant to serve all community members. Infrastructure improvements must meet current needs and keep pace with growth and development. While the purpose of infrastructure is usually utilitarian or functional, attention to design details can add beauty or even improve urban design. For example, replacing a sidewalk can provide an opportunity to create larger tree wells and provide new street trees.

State law (California Government Code Section 65302.10) requires the City to address potential regional inequity and infrastructure deficits within disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs) in this Element. There are no DUCs within the Palo Alto Sphere of Influence (SOI) with public services or infrastructure needs or deficiencies.



PALO ALTO AIRPORT

Palo Alto Airport (PAO) is a general aviation airport owned and operated by the City of Palo Alto. PAO occupies 102 acres of land east of Highway 101 in the baylands and has one paved runway. The airport functions as a reliever to three Bay Area airports. PAO facilities include an air traffic control tower operated by the Federal Aviation Administration and a terminal building. Flight clubs and fixed base operators operate on-site, offering fuel sales, flight lessons, pilot training and aircraft sales, rentals, maintenance and repair. From 1967 to 2015, PAO was operated by Santa Clara County under a lease agreement. Operations and control have since been transferred to the City and key challenges ahead include addressing deterioration of runway conditions, addressing noise impacts and hours of operation and the relationship between the Airport and the Baylands Master Plan.



LAND USE MAP AND LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

Map L-6 shows each land use designation within the city of Palo Alto. The land use designations translate the elements of city structure into a detailed map that presents the community's vision for future land use development and conservation on public and private land in Palo Alto through the year 2030. Residential densities are expressed in terms of dwelling units per acre. Population densities per acre are not absolute limits.

Building intensities for non-residential uses are expressed in terms of floor area ratio (FAR), which is the ratio of gross building floor area (excluding areas designated for parking, etc.) to net lot area, both expressed in square feet. FAR does not regulate building placement or form, only the spatial relationship between building size and lot size; it represents an expectation of the overall intensity of future development.

The maximums assigned to the land use designations below do not constitute entitlements, nor are property owners or developers guaranteed that an individual project, when tested against the **Comprehensive Plan** policies, will be able or permitted to achieve these maximums.

LAND USE DEFINITIONS

OPEN SPACE

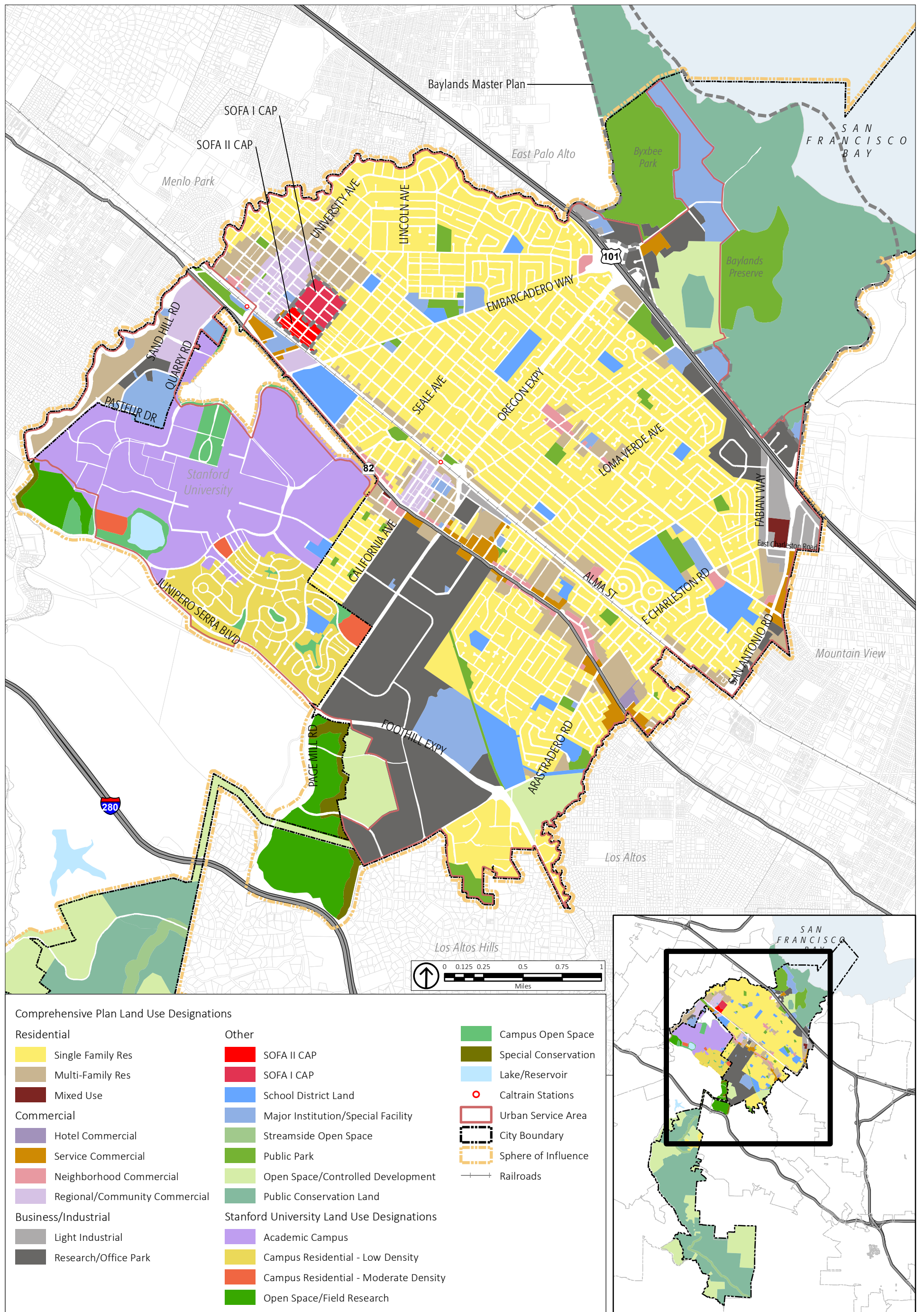
Publicly Owned Conservation Land: Open lands whose primary purpose is the preservation and enhancement of the natural state of the land and its plants and animals. Only resource management, recreation and educational activities compatible with resource conservation are allowed.

Public Park: Open lands whose primary purpose is public access for active recreation and whose character is essentially urban. These areas, which may have been planted with non-indigenous landscaping, may provide access to nature within the urban environment and require a concerted effort to maintain recreational facilities and landscaping.

Streamside Open Space: This designation is intended to preserve and enhance corridors of riparian vegetation along streams. Hiking, biking and riding trails may be developed in the streamside open space. The corridor will generally vary in width up to 200 feet on either side of the center line of the creek. However, along San Francisquito Creek between El Camino Real and the Sand Hill Road bridge over the creek, the open space corridor varies in width between approximately 80 and 310 feet from the center line of the creek. The aerial delineation of the open space in this segment of the corridor, as opposed to other segments of the corridor, is shown to approximate scale on the Proposed Land Use and Circulation Map.

Open Space/Controlled Development: Land having all the characteristics of open space but where some development may be allowed on private properties. Open space amenities must be retained in these areas. Residential densities range from 0.1 to 1 dwelling unit per acre but may rise to a maximum of 2 units per acre where second units are allowed, and population densities range from 1 to 4 persons per acre. Other uses such as agricultural, recreational and non-residential uses may be allowed consistent with the protection and preservation of the inherent open space characteristics of the land.





Source: ESRI, 2010; Tiger Lines, 2010; USGS, 2010; NHD, 2013; City of Palo Alto, 2013; PlaceWorks, 2015.

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RESIDENTIAL

Single-Family Residential: This designation applies to residential neighborhoods primarily characterized by detached single-family homes, typically with one dwelling unit on each lot. Private and public schools and churches are conditional uses requiring permits. Accessory dwelling units or duplexes are allowed subject to certain size limitations and other development standards and duplexes may be allowed in select, limited areas where they would be compatible with neighborhood character and do not create traffic and parking problems. The net density in single family areas will range from 1 to 7 units per acre, but rises to a maximum of 14 units on parcels where second units or duplexes occur. Population densities will range from 1 to 30 persons per acre.



Multiple-Family Residential: The permitted number of housing units will vary by area, depending on existing land use, proximity to major streets and public transit, distance to shopping and environmental problems. Net densities will range from 8 to 40 units and 8 to 90 persons per acre. Density should be on the lower end of the scale next to single-family residential areas. Densities higher than what is permitted may be allowed where measurable community benefits will be derived, services and facilities are available, and the net effect will be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Population densities will range up to 2.25 persons per unit by 2030.



Village Residential: Allows residential dwellings that are designed to contribute to the harmony and pedestrian orientation of a street or neighborhood. Housing types include single-family houses on small lots, second units, cottage clusters, courtyard housing, duplexes, fourplexes and small apartment buildings. Design standards will be prepared for each housing type to ensure that development successfully contributes to the street and neighborhood and minimizes potential negative impacts. Net densities will range up to 20 units per acre. Population densities will range up to 2.25 persons per unit by 2030.

Transit-Oriented Residential: Allows higher density residential dwellings in the University Avenue/Downtown and California Avenue commercial centers within a walkable distance, approximately 2,500 feet, of the City's two multi-modal transit stations. The land use category is intended to generate residential densities that support substantial use of public transportation and especially the use of Caltrain. Design standards will be prepared to ensure that development successfully contributes to the street and minimizes potential negative impacts. Individual project requirements will be developed, including parking, to ensure that a significant

portion of the residents will use alternative modes of transportation. Net density will range up to 50 units per acre, with minimum densities to be considered during development of new City zoning regulations. Population densities will range up to 2.25 per person per unit by 2030.

COMMERCIAL

Neighborhood Commercial: Includes shopping centers with off-street parking or a cluster of street-front stores that serve the immediate neighborhood. Examples include Charleston Center, Edgewood Center and Midtown. Typical uses include supermarkets, bakeries, drugstores, variety stores, barber shops, restaurants, self-service laundries, dry cleaners and hardware stores. In locations along El Camino Real and Alma Street, residential and mixed use projects may also locate in this category. Non-residential FARs will range up to 0.4. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's encouragement of housing near transit centers, higher density multi-family housing may be allowed in specific locations.

Regional/Community Commercial: Larger shopping centers and districts that have a wider variety of goods and services than the neighborhood shopping areas. They rely on larger trade areas and include such uses as department stores, bookstores, furniture stores, toy stores, apparel shops, restaurants, theaters and non-retail services such as offices and banks. Examples include Stanford Shopping Center, Town and Country Village and University Avenue/Downtown. Non-retail uses such as medical and dental offices may also locate in this designation; software development may also locate Downtown. In some locations, residential and mixed use projects may also locate in this category. Non-residential FARs range from 0.35 to 2.0. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's encouragement of housing near transit centers, higher density multi-family housing may be allowed in specific locations.

Service Commercial: Facilities providing citywide and regional services and relying on customers arriving by car. These uses do not necessarily benefit from being in high volume pedestrian areas such as shopping centers or Downtown. Typical uses include auto services and dealerships, motels, lumberyards, appliance stores and restaurants, including fast service types. In almost all cases, these uses require good automobile and service access so that customers can safely load and unload without impeding traffic. In some locations, residential and mixed-use projects may be appropriate in this land use category. Examples of Service Commercial areas include San Antonio Road, El Camino Real and Embarcadero Road northeast of the Bayshore



Freeway. Non-residential FARs will range up to 0.4. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s encouragement of housing near transit centers, higher density multi-family housing may be allowed in specific locations.

Mixed Use: The Mixed Use designation is intended to promote pedestrian-oriented places that layer compatible land uses, public amenities and utilities together at various scales and intensities. The designation allows for multiple functions within the same building or adjacent to one another in the same general vicinity to foster a mix of uses that encourages people to live, work, play and shop in close proximity. Most typically, mixed-use developments have retail on the ground floor and residences above. This category includes Live/Work, Retail/Office, Residential/Retail and Residential/Office development. FARs will range up to 1.15, although development located along transit corridors or near multi-modal centers will range up to 2.0 FAR with up to 3.0 FAR possible where higher FAR would be an incentive to meet community goals such as providing affordable housing. The FAR above 1.15 must be used for residential purposes. FAR between 0.15 and 1.15 *may* be used for residential purposes. As of the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan, the Mixed Use designation is currently only applied in the South of Forest Avenue (SOFA) area. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s encouragement of housing near transit centers, higher density multi-family housing may be allowed in specific locations.

Commercial Hotel: This category allows facilities for use by temporary overnight occupants on a transient basis, such as hotels and motels, with associated conference centers and similar uses. Restaurants and other eating facilities, meeting rooms, small retail shops, personal services and other services ancillary to the hotel are also allowed. This category can be applied in combination with another land use category. FAR currently ranges up to 2.0 for the hotel portion of the site. An implementation program indicates that the City will explore increasing this FAR.

Research/Office Park: Office, research and manufacturing establishments whose operations are buffered from adjacent residential uses. Stanford Research Park is an example. Other uses that may be included are educational institutions and child care facilities. Compatible commercial service uses such as banks and restaurants and residential or mixed-uses that would benefit from the proximity to employment centers, will also be allowed. Additional uses, including retail services, commercial recreation, churches and private clubs may also be located in Research/Office Park areas, but only if they are found to be compatible with the surrounding area through



the conditional use permit process. In some locations, residential and mixed-use projects may also locate in this category. Maximum allowable FAR ranges from 0.3 to 0.5, depending on site conditions. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, multi-family housing may be allowed in specific locations.



Light Industrial: Wholesale and storage warehouses and the manufacturing, processing, repairing and packaging of goods. Emission of fumes, noise, smoke, or other pollutants is strictly controlled. Examples include portions of the area south of Oregon Avenue between El Camino Real and Alma Street that historically have included these land uses, and the San Antonio Road industrial area. Compatible residential and mixed use projects may also be located in this category. FAR will range up to 0.5. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's encouragement of housing near transit centers, higher density multi-family housing may be allowed in specific locations.

INSTITUTIONAL

School District Lands: Properties owned or leased by public school districts and used for educational, recreational, or other non-commercial, non-industrial purposes. FAR may not exceed 1.0.

Major Institution/Special Facilities: Institutional, academic, governmental and community service uses and lands that are either publicly owned or operated as non-profit organizations. Examples are hospitals and City facilities. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's encouragement of housing near transit centers, higher density multi-family housing may be allowed in specific locations.

Major Institution/University Lands: Academic and academic reserve areas of Stanford University. Population density and building intensity limits are established by conditional use permit with Santa Clara County. These lands are further designated by the following sub-categories of land use:

- **Major Institution/University Lands/Campus Single-Family Residential:** Single-family areas where the occupancy of the units is significantly or totally limited to individuals or families affiliated with the institution.
- **Major Institution/University Lands/Campus Multiple Family Residential:** Multiple family areas where the occupancy of the units is significantly or totally limited to individuals or families affiliated with the institution.

- **Major Institution/University Lands/Campus Educational Facilities:**
Academic lands with a full complement of activities and densities that give them an urban character. Allowable uses are academic institutions and research facilities, student and faculty housing and support services. Increases in student enrollment and faculty/staff size must be accompanied by measures that mitigate traffic and housing impacts.
- **Major Institution/University Lands/Academic Reserve and Open Space:**
Academic lands having all the characteristics of open space but upon which some academic development may be allowed provided that open space amenities are retained. These lands are important for their aesthetic and ecological value as well as their potential for new academic uses.

GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

GOAL L-1 A compact and resilient city providing residents and visitors with attractive neighborhoods, work places, shopping districts, public facilities and open spaces.

CONCENTRATING DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE URBAN SERVICE AREA

POLICY L-1.1 Maintain and prioritize Palo Alto's varied residential neighborhoods while sustaining the vitality of its commercial areas and public facilities.

POLICY L-1.2 Limit future urban development to currently developed lands within the urban service area. The boundary of the urban service area is otherwise known as the urban growth boundary. Retain undeveloped land west of Foothill Expressway and Junipero Serra as open space, with allowances made for very low-intensity development consistent with the open space character of the area. Retain undeveloped land northeast of Highway 101 as open space.

POLICY L-1.3 Infill development in the urban service area should be compatible with its surroundings and the overall scale and character of the city to ensure a compact, efficient development pattern.

POLICY L-1.4 Commit to creating an inventory of below market rate housing for purchase and rental. Work with neighbors, neighborhood associations, property owners and developers to identify barriers to infill development of below market rate and more affordable market rate housing and to remove these barriers, as appropriate. Work with these same stakeholders to identify sites and facilitate opportunities for below market rate housing and housing that is affordable.

REGULATING LAND USE

POLICY L-1.5 Regulate land uses in Palo Alto according to the land use definitions in this Element and Map L-6.

POLICY L-1.6 Encourage land uses that address the needs of the community and manage change and development to benefit the community.

PROGRAM L1.6.1 Review regulatory tools available to the City and identify actions to enhance and preserve the livability of residential neighborhoods and the vitality of commercial and employment districts, including improved code enforcement practices.

POLICY L-1.7 Use coordinated area plans to guide development, such as to create or enhance cohesive neighborhoods in areas of Palo Alto where significant change is foreseeable. Address both land use and transportation, define the desired character and urban design traits of the areas, identify opportunities for public open space, parks and recreational opportunities, address connectivity to and compatibility with adjacent residential areas; and include broad community involvement in the planning process.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

POLICY L-1.8 Maintain an active engagement with Santa Clara County, San Mateo County, neighboring cities, other public agencies including school districts and Stanford University regarding land use and transportation issues.

PROGRAM L1.8.1 Maintain and update as appropriate the 1985 Land Use Policies Agreement that sets forth the land use policies of the City, Santa Clara County and Stanford University with regard to Stanford unincorporated lands.

POLICY L-1.9 Participate in regional strategies to address the interaction of jobs, housing balance and transportation issues.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING

POLICY L-1.10 Cap new square feet of office/R&D development citywide at 850,000 square feet, exempting medical office uses in the Stanford University Medical Center (SUMC) vicinity. Use January 1, 2015 as the baseline and monitor development towards the cap on an annual basis. Continue to exempt medical, governmental and institutional uses from the cap on office/R&D development, no other exemptions are allowed.



Through December 31, 2030, this Policy L-1.10 may not be amended or repealed except by a vote of the people, provided, however that the Palo Alto City Council may reduce the citywide cap of 850,000 new square feet of office/R&D development without the vote of the people.

POLICY L-1.11 Hold new development to the highest development standards in order to maintain Palo Alto's livability and achieve the highest quality development with the least impacts.

POLICY L-1.12 The City will monitor key community indicators on a regular basis to determine whether the policies of this plan and the efforts of Palo Alto residents and businesses are effective at promoting livability. Suggested indicators and monitoring frequency are listed in Table L-1.

TABLE L-1 COMMUNITY METRICS		
Measure	Metric	Recommended Monitoring Frequency
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	80% below 1990 emissions by 2030 (S/CAP goal)	Annually as part of Earth Day Report
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per Capita	Decrease year over year	Annually as part of Earth Day Report
Jobs/Housing Balance (Expressed as a Ratio of Jobs to Employed Residents)	Ratio of jobs to employed residents	Every 4 years
Below Market Rate (BMR) Units	Number of units	Annually as part of report to California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)
Progress toward Housing Element Goals	Annual Report to State Housing and Community Development Department	Annually as part of report to HCD
Traffic Volumes on City Streets	Change in PM peak hour traffic volumes at 10 representative local intersections	Every 2 years
Availability of Parks	Percent of residents who live within 1/2-mile of a city park	Every 4 years
PAUSD School Enrollments	Changes in student enrollment at public elementary, middle and high schools	Annually

A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

GOAL L-2 An enhanced sense of “community” with development designed to foster public life, meet citywide needs and embrace the principles of sustainability.

POLICY L-2.1 Maintain a citywide structure of Residential Neighborhoods, Centers and Employment Districts. Integrate these areas with the City’s and the region’s transit and street system.

POLICY L-2.2 Enhance connections between commercial and mixed use centers and the surrounding residential neighborhoods by promoting walkable and bikeable connections and a diverse range of retail and services that caters to the daily needs of residents.



PROGRAM L2.2.1 Explore whether there are appropriate locations to allow small-scale neighborhood-serving retail facilities such as coffee shops and corner stores in residential areas.

POLICY L-2.3

As a key component of a diverse, inclusive community, allow and encourage a mix of housing types and sizes, integrated into neighborhoods and designed for greater affordability, particularly smaller housing types, such as studios, co-housing, cottages, clustered housing, accessory dwelling units and senior housing.

POLICY L-2.4

Use a variety of strategies to stimulate housing, near retail, employment, and transit, in a way that connects to and enhances existing neighborhoods.

PROGRAM L2.4.1 Amend the Housing Element to increase housing sites along San Antonio Road between Middlefield Road and East Charleston Road and increase residential densities in Downtown and the California Avenue.

PROGRAM L2.4.2 Allow housing at Stanford Shopping Center, provided that adequate parking and vibrant retail is maintained and no reduction of retail square footage results from the new housing.

PROGRAM L2.4.3 Allow housing on the El Camino Real frontage of the Stanford Research Park. Explore multi-family housing elsewhere in the Stanford Research Park and near Stanford University Medical Center (SUMC).

PROGRAM L2.4.4 Assess non-residential development potential in the Community Commercial, Service Commercial and Downtown Commercial Districts (CC, CS and CD) and the Neighborhood Commercial District (CN), and convert non-retail commercial FAR to residential FAR, where appropriate. Conversion to residential capacity should not be considered in Town and Country Village.

PROGRAM L2.4.5 Update the municipal code to include zoning changes that allow a mix of retail and residential uses but no office uses. The intent of these changes would be to encourage a mix of land uses that contributes to the vitality and walkability of commercial centers and transit corridors.

PROGRAM L2.4.6 Explore changing the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) ordinances for both buildings of historic significance and for seismic retrofits so that transferred development rights may be used for residential capacity.

PROGRAM L2.4.7 Explore mechanisms for increasing multi-family housing density near multimodal transit centers.

PROGRAM L2.4.8 Identify development opportunities for BMR and more affordable market rate housing on publicly owned properties in a way that is integrated with and enhances existing neighborhoods.

POLICY L-2.5

Support the creation of affordable housing units for middle to lower income level earners, such as City and school district employees, as feasible.

PROGRAM L2.5.1 Collaborate with PAUSD in exploring opportunities to build housing that is affordable to school district employees.

POLICY L-2.6

Create opportunities for new mixed use development consisting of housing and retail.

POLICY L-2.7

Support efforts to retain housing that is more affordable in existing neighborhoods, including a range of smaller housing types.

PROGRAM L2.7.1 Review development standards to discourage the net loss of housing units.



POLICY L-2.8

When considering infill redevelopment, work to minimize displacement of existing residents.

PROGRAM L2.8.1 Conduct a study to evaluate various possible tools for preventing displacement of existing residents.

PROGRAM L2.8.2 Develop and implement a system to inventory the characteristics of existing housing units and track changes in those characteristics on a regular basis. Make the information publicly available.

POLICY L-2.9

Facilitate reuse of existing buildings.

POLICY L-2.10

Ensure regular coordination between the City and PAUSD on land development activities and trends in Palo Alto, as well as planning for school facilities and programs. Under State law, impacts on school facilities cannot be the basis for requiring mitigation beyond the payment of school fees or for denying development projects or legislative changes that could result in additional housing units. The City will, however, assess the reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts of development projects that result in new school construction or enrollment.

PROGRAM L2.10.1 Collaborate with PAUSD to plan for space to accommodate future school expansions or new school sites, and evaluate zoning space to accommodate new schools.

POLICY L-2.11

Encourage new development and redevelopment to incorporate greenery and natural features such as green rooftops, pocket parks, plazas and rain gardens.

POLICY L-2.12

Ensure that future development addresses potential risks from climate change and sea level rise.

DISTINCT NEIGHBORHOODS

GOAL L-3 Safe, attractive residential neighborhoods, each with its own distinct character and within walking distance of shopping, services, schools and/or other public gathering places.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMPATIBILITY

POLICY L-3.1 Ensure that new or remodeled structures are compatible with the neighborhood and adjacent structures.

POLICY L-3.2 Preserve residential uses from conversion to office or short-term rentals.

PROGRAM L3.2.1 Evaluate and implement strategies to prevent conversion of residential and neighborhood-serving retail space to office or short-term vacation rentals.

POLICY L-3.3 Recognize the contribution of cottage cluster housing to the character of Palo Alto and retain and encourage this type of development.

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

POLICY L-3.4 Ensure that new multi-family buildings, entries and outdoor spaces are designed and arranged so that each development has a clear relationship to a public street.

POLICY L-3.5 Avoid negative impacts of basement construction for single-family homes on adjacent properties, public resources, and the natural environment.

PROGRAM L3.5.1 Develop a program to assess and manage both the positive and negative impacts of basement construction in single family homes on the community and the environment, including:

- Impacts to the natural environment, such as potential impacts to the tree canopy, groundwater supply or quality and soil compaction.
- Safety issues such as increased surface flooding increased groundwater intrusion with sea level rise, emergency access and egress, or sewage backflows.

COMMERCIAL CENTERS

GOAL L-4 Inviting pedestrian scale centers that offer a variety of retail and commercial services and provide focal points and community gathering places for the city's residential neighborhoods and employment districts.

COMMERCIAL CENTERS AND MIXED USE AREAS

POLICY L-4.1 Encourage the upgrading and revitalization of selected Centers in a manner that is compatible with the character of surrounding neighborhoods, without loss of retail and existing small, local businesses.

POLICY L-4.2 Preserve ground-floor retail, limit the displacement of existing retail from neighborhood centers and explore opportunities to expand retail.

PROGRAM L4.2.1 Study the overall viability of ground-floor retail requirements in preserving retail space and creating an active street environment, including the types of locations where such requirements are most effective.

PROGRAM L4.2.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of formula retail limits adopted for California Avenue. Develop incentives for local small businesses where warranted.

PROGRAM L4.2.3 Explore and potentially support new, creative and innovative retail in Palo Alto.

POLICY L-4.3 Encourage street frontages that contribute to retail vitality in all Centers. Reinforce street corners in a way that enhances the pedestrian realm or that form corner plazas. Include trees and landscaping.

POLICY L-4.4 Ensure all Regional Centers and Multi-Neighborhood Centers provide centrally located gathering spaces that create a sense of identity and encourage economic revitalization. Encourage public amenities such as benches, street trees, kiosks, restrooms and public art.

PROGRAM L4.4.1 Study the feasibility of using public and private funds to provide and maintain landscaping and public spaces such as parks, plazas, sidewalks and public art within commercial areas.

PROGRAM L4.4.2 Through public/private cooperation provide well-signed, clean and accessible restrooms.

PROGRAM L4.4.3 Collaborate with merchants to enhance the appearance of streets and sidewalks within all Centers. Encourage the formation of business improvement districts and undertake a proactive program of maintenance, repair, landscaping and enhancement.

PROGRAM L4.4.4 Identify priority street improvements that could make a substantial contribution to the character of Centers, such as widening sidewalks, narrowing travel lanes, creating medians, restriping to allow diagonal parking and planting trees.

POLICY L-4.5 Support local-serving retail, recognizing that it provides opportunities for local employment, reduced commute times, stronger community connections and neighborhood orientation.

PROGRAM L4.5.1 Revise zoning and other regulations as needed to encourage the preservation of space to accommodate small businesses, start-ups and other services.

PROGRAM L4.5.2 Consider planning, regulatory, or other incentives to encourage property owners to include smaller office spaces in their buildings to serve small businesses, non-profit organizations, and independent professionals.

HOTELS

POLICY L-4.6 Sites within or adjacent to existing commercial areas and corridors are suitable for hotels. Give preference to housing versus hotel use on sites adjacent to predominantly single-family neighborhoods.

PROGRAM L4.6.1 Explore increasing hotel FAR from 2.0 to 3.0 in the University Avenue/Downtown area and 2.5 in areas outside of Downtown.

REGIONAL CENTERS

University Avenue/Downtown

POLICY L-4.7 Maintain and enhance the University Avenue/Downtown area as a major commercial center of the City, with a mix of commercial, civic, cultural, recreational and residential uses. Promote quality design that recognizes the regional and historical importance of the area and reinforces its pedestrian character.

POLICY L-4.8 Ensure that University Avenue/Downtown is pedestrian-friendly and supports bicycle use. Use public art, trees, bicycle racks and other amenities to create an environment that is inviting to pedestrians and bicyclists.

PROGRAM L4.8.1 Prepare a Coordinated Area Plan for Downtown.

PROGRAM L4.8.2 Study the feasibility of converting parts of University Avenue to a pedestrian zone.

Stanford Shopping Center

POLICY L-4.9 Maintain Stanford Shopping Center as one of the Bay Area's premiere regional shopping centers. Promote bicycle and pedestrian use and encourage any new development at the Center to occur through infill.

PROGRAM L4.9.1 While preserving adequate parking to meet demand, identify strategies to reuse surface parking lots.

PROGRAM L4.9.2 Explore adding additional Floor Area Ratio (FAR) for retail at Stanford Shopping Center.



MULTI-NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

California Avenue

POLICY L-4.10

Maintain the existing scale, character and function of the California Avenue business district as a shopping, service and office center intermediate in function and scale between Downtown and the smaller neighborhood business areas.

PROGRAM L4.10.1 Prepare a coordinated area plan for the North Ventura area and surrounding California Avenue area. The plan should describe a vision for the future of the North Ventura area as a walkable neighborhood with multi-family housing, ground floor retail, a public park, creek improvements and an interconnected street grid. It should guide the development of the California Avenue area as a well-designed mixed use district with diverse land uses and a network of pedestrian-oriented streets.

PROGRAM L4.10.2 Create regulations for the California Avenue area that encourage the retention or rehabilitation of smaller buildings to provide spaces for existing retail, particularly local, small businesses.



POLICY L-4.11

Improve the transition between the California-Cambridge area and the single family residential neighborhood of Evergreen Park. Avoid abrupt changes in scale and density between the two areas.

Town and Country Village

POLICY L-4.12

Recognize and preserve Town and Country Village as an attractive retail center serving Palo Altans and residents of the wider region. Future development at this site should preserve its existing amenities, pedestrian scale and architectural character while also improving safe access for bicyclists and pedestrians and increasing the amount of bicycle parking.



POLICY L-4.13

In Town and Country Village, encourage a vibrant retail environment and urban greening.

POLICY L-4.14

In Town and Country Village, encourage improvement of pedestrian, bicycle and auto circulation and landscaping improvements, including maintenance of existing oak trees and planting additional trees.

El Camino Real

POLICY L-4.15 Recognize El Camino Real as both a local serving and regional serving corridor, defined by a mix of commercial uses and housing.

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

POLICY L-4.16 Improve the local-serving focus, and provide safe pedestrian, bicycle and multimodal access to all three Palo Alto Neighborhood Centers – Charleston Shopping Center, Edgewood Plaza and Midtown Shopping Center. Support their continued improvement and vitality.

PROGRAM L4.16.1 Maintain distinct neighborhood shopping areas that are attractive, accessible and convenient to nearby residents.

POLICY L-4.17 Encourage maximum use of Neighborhood Centers by ensuring that the publicly maintained areas are clean, well-lit and attractively landscaped.

POLICY L-4.18 Maintain Midtown Shopping Center as an attractive, pedestrian-oriented, one- to two-story Neighborhood Center with diverse local-serving uses and adequate parking, and a network of pedestrian-oriented streets, ways and gathering places. Encourage retention of Midtown’s grocery store and a variety of neighborhood retail shops and services.

EMPLOYMENT DISTRICTS

GOAL L-5 High quality employment districts, each with their own distinctive character and each contributing to the character of the city as a whole.

POLICY L-5.1 Foster compact Employment Districts developed in a way that facilitates transit, pedestrian and bicycle travel. Provide mixed uses to reduce the number of auto trips.

PROGRAM L5.1.1 Explore with Stanford University various development options for adding to the Stanford Research Park a diverse mix of uses, including residential, commercial hotel, conference center, commercial space for small businesses and start-ups, retail, transit hub and other community-supporting services that are compatible with the existing uses, to create a vibrant innovation-oriented community.



POLICY L-5.2 Provide landscaping, trees, sidewalks, pedestrian path and connections to the citywide bikeway system within Employment Districts. Pursue opportunities to include sidewalks, paths, low water use landscaping, recycled water and trees and remove grass turf in renovation and expansion projects.

POLICY L-5.3 Design paths and sidewalks to be attractive and comfortable and consistent with the character of the area where they are located.

POLICY L-5.4 Maintain the East Bayshore and San Antonio Road/Bayshore Corridor areas as diverse business and light industrial districts.

GOAL L-6 Well-designed buildings that create coherent development patterns and enhance city streets and public spaces.

DESIGN OF BUILDINGS AND PUBLIC SPACE

POLICY L-6.1 Promote high-quality design and site planning that is compatible with surrounding development and public spaces.

PROGRAM L6.1.1 Promote awards programs and other forms of public recognition for projects of architectural merit that contribute positively to the community.



POLICY L-6.2 Use the Zoning Ordinance, design review process, design guidelines and Coordinated Area Plans to ensure high quality residential and commercial design and architectural compatibility.

POLICY L-6.3 Encourage bird-friendly design.

PROGRAM L6.3.1 Develop guidelines for bird-friendly building design that minimizes hazards for birds and reduces the potential for collisions.

POLICY L-6.4 In areas of the City having a historic or consistent design character, encourage the design of new development to maintain and support the existing character.

POLICY L-6.5 Guide development to respect views of the foothills and East Bay hills along public street corridors in the developed portions of the City.

POLICY L-6.6 Design buildings to complement streets and public spaces; to promote personal safety, public health and well-being; and to enhance a sense of community safety.

PROGRAM L6.6.1 Modify design standards to ensure that mixed use development promotes a pedestrian-friendly relationship to the street, including elements such as screened parking or underground parking, street-facing windows and entries, and porches, windows, bays and balconies along public ways, and landscaping, and trees along the street. Avoid blank or solid walls at street level.

POLICY L-6.7 Where possible, avoid abrupt changes in scale and density between residential and non-residential areas and between residential areas of different densities. To promote compatibility and gradual transitions between land uses, place zoning district boundaries at mid-block locations rather than along streets wherever possible.

PROGRAM L6.7.1 Implement architectural standards to assure they effectively address land use transitions.

POLICY L-6.8 Support existing regulations that preserve exposure to natural light for single-family residences.

POLICY L-6.9 Discourage the use of fences that obscure the view of the front of houses from the street.

POLICY L-6.10 Encourage high quality signage that is attractive, energy-efficient, and appropriate for the location, and balances visibility needs with aesthetic needs.

GOAL L-7 Conservation and preservation of Palo Alto's historic buildings, sites and districts.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

POLICY L-7.1 Encourage public and private upkeep and preservation of resources that have historic merit, including residences listed in the City's Historic Resource Inventory, the California Register of Historical Resources, or the National Register of Historic Places.

PROGRAM L7.1.1 Update and maintain the City's Historic Resource Inventory to include historic resources that are eligible for local, State, or federal listing. Historic resources may consist of a single building or structure or a district.

PROGRAM L7.1.2 Reassess the Historic Preservation Ordinance to ensure its effectiveness in the maintenance and preservation of historic resources, particularly in the University Avenue/Downtown area.



POLICY L-7.2

If a proposed project would substantially affect the exterior of a potential historic resource that has not been evaluated for inclusion into the City's Historic Resources Inventory, City staff shall consider whether it is eligible for inclusion in State or federal registers prior to the issuance of a demolition or alterations permit. Minor exterior improvements that do not affect the architectural integrity of potentially historic buildings shall be exempt from consideration. Examples of minor improvements may include repair or replacement of features in kind, or other changes that do not alter character-defining features of the building.



POLICY L-7.3

Actively seek state and federal funding for the preservation of buildings of historical merit and consider public/private partnerships for capital and program improvements.

POLICY L-7.4

Relocation may be considered as a preservation strategy when consistent with State and national standards regarding the relocation of historic resources.

POLICY L-7.5

To reinforce the scale and character of University Avenue/Downtown, promote the preservation of significant historic buildings.

POLICY L-7.6

Promote awards programs and other forms of public recognition for exemplary Historic Preservation projects.

POLICY L-7.7

Streamline, to the maximum extent feasible, any future processes for design review of historic structures to eliminate unnecessary delay and uncertainty for the applicant and to encourage historic preservation.

REHABILITATION AND REUSE

POLICY L-7.8

Promote adaptive reuse of old buildings.

PROGRAM L7.8.1 Promote and expand available incentives for the retention and rehabilitation of buildings with historic merit in all zones and revise existing zoning and permit regulations to minimize constraints to adaptive reuse.

PROGRAM L7.8.2 Create incentives to encourage salvage and reuse of discarded historic building materials.

PROGRAM L7.8.3 Seek additional innovative ways to apply current codes and ordinances to older buildings. Use the State Historical Building Code for designated historic buildings.

POLICY L-7.9

Allow compatible nonconforming uses for the life of historic buildings.

POLICY L-7.10 Ensure the preservation of significant historic resources owned by the City of Palo Alto. Allow such resources to be altered to meet contemporary needs consistent with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

POLICY L-7.11 For proposed exterior alterations or additions to designated Historic Landmarks, require design review findings that the proposed changes are in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

POLICY L-7.12 Maintain the historic integrity of building exteriors. Consider parking exceptions for historic buildings to encourage rehabilitation.



PROGRAM L7.12.1 Review parking exceptions for historic buildings in the Zoning Code to determine if there is an effective balance between historic preservation and meeting parking needs.

POLICY L-7.13 Encourage and assist owners of historically significant buildings in finding ways to adapt and rehabilitate these buildings, including participation in state and federal tax relief programs.

POLICY L-7.14 Continue to use a TDR Ordinance to allow the transfer of development rights from designated buildings of historic significance in the Commercial Downtown (CD) zone to non-historic receiver sites in the CD zone. Consider revising the TDR Ordinance so that transferred development rights may be used only for residential development on the receiver sites.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

POLICY L-7.15 Protect Palo Alto's archaeological resources, including natural land formations, sacred sites, the historical landscape, historic habitats and remains of settlements here before the founding of Palo Alto in the 19th century.

POLICY L-7.16 Continue to consult with tribes as required by California Government Code Section 65352.3. In doing so, use appropriate procedures to accommodate tribal concerns when a tribe has a religious prohibition against revealing precise information about the location or previous practice at a particular sacred site.

POLICY L-7.17 Assess the need for archaeological surveys and mitigation plans on a project-by-project basis, consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Historic Preservation Act.

POLICY L-7.18 Require project proponents to meet State codes and regulations regarding the identification and protection of archaeological and paleontological deposits, and unique geologic features.

PARKS AND GATHERING PLACES

GOAL L-8 Attractive and safe parks, civic and cultural facilities provided in all neighborhoods and maintained and used in ways that foster and enrich public life.

POLICY L-8.1 Facilitate creation of new parkland to serve Palo Alto's residential neighborhoods, as consistent with the Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan.

POLICY L-8.2 Provide comfortable seating areas and plazas with places for public art adjacent to library and community center entrances.

POLICY L-8.3 Encourage small-scale local-serving retail services, such as small cafes, delicatessens and coffee carts, in civic centers: Mitchell Park, Rinconada Library and Cubberly Community Center.

POLICY L-8.4 Create facilities for civic and intellectual life, such as better urban public spaces for civic programs and speakers, cultural, musical and artistic events.

POLICY L-8.5 Recognize public art and cultural facilities as a community benefit. Encourage the development of new and the enhancement of existing public and private art and cultural facilities throughout Palo Alto. Ensure that such projects are compatible with the character and identity of the surrounding neighborhood.

POLICY L-8.6 Seek potential new sites for art and cultural facilities, public spaces, open space and community gardens.

POLICY L-8.7 Encourage religious and private institutions to collaborate with the community and the surrounding neighborhood.



PUBLIC STREETS AND PUBLIC SPACES

GOAL L-9 Attractive, inviting public spaces and streets that enhance the image and character of the city.

STREETS AND PARKING

POLICY L-9.1 Recognize Sand Hill Road, University Avenue between Middlefield Road and San Francisquito Creek, Embarcadero Road, Page Mill Road, Oregon Expressway, Interstate 280, Arastradero Road (west of Foothill Expressway), Junipero Serra Boulevard/Foothill Expressway and Skyline Boulevard as scenic routes and preserve their scenic qualities.

PROGRAM L9.1.1 Evaluate existing zoning code setback requirements to ensure they are appropriate for scenic routes.



POLICY L-9.2

Encourage development that creatively integrates parking into the project, including by locating it behind buildings or underground wherever possible, or by providing for shared use of parking areas. Encourage other alternatives to surface parking lots that minimize the amount of land devoted to parking while still maintaining safe streets, street trees, a vibrant local economy and sufficient parking to meet demand.

POLICY L-9.3

Treat residential streets as both public ways and neighborhood amenities. Provide and maintain continuous sidewalks, healthy street trees, benches and other amenities that promote walking and “active” transportation.

PROGRAM L9.3.1 Review standards for streets and signage and update as needed to foster natural, tree-lined streets with a minimum of signage.

PUBLIC SPACES

POLICY L-9.4

Maintain and enhance existing public gathering places and open spaces and integrate new public spaces at a variety of scales.



POLICY L-9.5

Encourage use of data-driven, innovative design methods and tactics and use data to understand to evaluate how different community members use public space.

POLICY L-9.6

Create, preserve and enhance parks and publicly accessible, shared outdoor gathering spaces within walking and biking distance of residential neighborhoods.

PROGRAM L9.6.1 Analyze existing neighborhoods and determine where publicly-accessible shared, outdoor gathering spaces are below the citywide standard. Create new public spaces, including public squares, parks and informal gathering spaces in these neighborhoods.

GATEWAYS

POLICY L-9.7

Strengthen the identity of important community-wide gateways, including the entrances to the City at Highway 101, El Camino Real and Middlefield Road; the Caltrain stations; entries to commercial districts; Embarcadero Road at El Camino Real and between Palo Alto and Stanford.

PROGRAM L9.7.1 Develop a strategy to enhance gateway sites with special landscaping, art, public spaces and/or public buildings. Emphasize the creek bridges and riparian settings at the entrances to the City over Adobe Creek and San Francisquito Creek.

URBAN FOREST

POLICY L-9.8

Incorporate the goals of the Urban Forest Master Plan, as periodically amended, into the Comprehensive Plan by reference in order to assure that new land uses recognize the many benefits of trees in the urban context and foster a healthy and robust tree canopy throughout the City.



PROGRAM L9.8.1 Establish incentives to encourage native trees and low water use plantings in new development throughout the city.

POLICY L-9.9

Involve the Urban Forester, or appropriate City staff, in development review.

UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

POLICY L-9.10

Design public infrastructure, including paving, signs, utility structures, parking garages and parking lots to meet high-quality urban design standards and embrace technological advances. Look for opportunities to use art and artists in the design of public infrastructure. Remove or mitigate elements of existing infrastructure that are unsightly or visually disruptive.

PROGRAM L9.10.1 Continue the citywide undergrounding of utility wires. Minimize the impacts of undergrounding on street tree root systems and planting areas.

PROGRAM L9.10.2 Encourage the use of compact and well-designed utility elements, such as transformers, switching devices, backflow preventers and telecommunications infrastructure. Place these elements in locations that will minimize their visual intrusion.

POLICY L-9.11

Provide utilities and service systems to serve all urbanized areas of Palo Alto and plan infrastructure maintenance and improvements to adequately serve existing and planned development.

PROGRAM L9.11.1 Implement the findings of the City's Infrastructure Blue Ribbon Committee and its emphasis for rebuilding our civic spaces.

PROGRAM L9.11.2 Identify City-owned properties where combinations of wireless facilities can be co-located, assuming appropriate lease agreements are in place.

POLICY L-9.12 Recognize the importance of regional infrastructure, such as the Regional Water Utility Infrastructure owned by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC).

PROGRAM L9.12.1 Coordinate with regional utility providers on activities that would impact their infrastructure and right-of-way.

GOAL L-10 Maintain an economically viable local airport with minimal environmental impacts.

PALO ALTO AIRPORT

POLICY L-10.1 Operate Palo Alto Airport (PAO) as a vital and efficient facility at its current level of operation without intruding into open space areas. PAO should remain limited to a single runway and minor expansion shall only be allowed in order to meet federal and State airport design and safety standards.

PROGRAM L10.1.1 Relocate the terminal building away from the Runway 31 clear zone and closer to the hangars, allowing for construction of a replacement terminal.

PROGRAM L10.1.2 Update the Airport Layout Plan in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration requirements, as needed, while ensuring conformance with the Baylands Master Plan to the maximum extent feasible.

PROGRAM L10.1.3 Identify and pursue funding to address maintenance, safety and security improvements needed at PAO.

POLICY L-10.2 Regulate land uses in the Airport Influence Area to ensure consistency with the Palo Alto Airport Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the Baylands Master Plan.

POLICY L-10.3 Minimize the environmental impacts associated with PAO operations, including adverse effects on the character of surrounding open space, noise levels and the quality of life in residential areas, as required by federal and State requirements.

PROGRAM L10.3.1 Establish and implement a system for processing, tracking and reporting noise complaints regarding local airport operations on an annual basis.

PROGRAM L10.3.2 Work with the airport to pursue opportunities to enhance the open space and habitat value of the airport. These include:

- Maintaining native grasses;
- Reconstructing levees to protect the airport from sea level rise while enhancing public access and habitat conservation; and
- Evaluating the introduction of burrowing owl habitat. This program is subject to federal wildlife hazard requirements and guidelines for airports.

POLICY L-10.4 Provide public access to the Airport for bicyclists and pedestrians.

PROGRAM L10.4.1 Continue to provide a bicycle/pedestrian path adjacent to Embarcadero Road, consistent with the Baylands Master Plan and open space character of the baylands subject to federal and State airport regulations.

POLICY L-10.5 Address the potential impacts of future sea level rise through reconstruction of the Bayfront levee in a manner that provides protection for the Airport and greater habitat along the San Francisco Bay frontage.

POLICY L-10.6 Encourage the use of alternatives to leaded fuel in aircraft operating in and out of Palo Alto Airport.