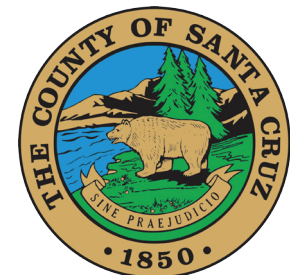


Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan

October 28, 2014

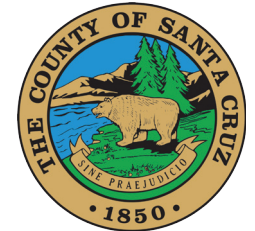



SUSTAINABLE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY
Environment • Neighborhoods • Economy 



Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan

Accepted by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
October 28, 2014



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Plan Overview 1

SUSTAINABLE SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

The Sustainable Santa Cruz County plan is a planning study that describes a vision, guiding principles, and strategies that can lead to a more sustainable development pattern in Santa Cruz County. The time horizon of the Plan is through 2035.

While a primary goal of the Plan is to reduce production of greenhouse gas emissions, which in Santa Cruz County are generated principally by the use of cars, the strategies can also positively affect many other aspects of community life:

- When housing, employment, and services are closer together the “walkability” and diversity of an area increases. When needs can be met within the neighborhood car trips are shorter and some trips can be made without a car.
- When development is directed into already developed areas and projects are designed to be compact, land is conserved and housing choices can increase.
- When certain streets give priority to pedestrians and bicyclists, rather than cars, active lifestyles are supported and it is easier and more pleasant to get around.
- When the local economy is strengthened, job opportunities increase. Well-paying jobs in the local area can reduce long commutes. Good local jobs can also increase expenditures in the local economy, which strengthens businesses and increases the fiscal health of public agencies.

This Plan was shaped by community input about the challenges that County residents currently face and the desires they have for the future. At more than sixteen

community workshops residents responded to questions about sustainability, neighborhoods, transportation, and more. Many residents expressed frustration with traffic congestion, lack of safe infrastructure that feels safe and inviting for biking and walking, limited transit options, housing that is not affordable for many, and lack of investment in commercial properties. Residents also expressed strong desire to preserve the natural environment and to have high quality neighborhoods. This Plan responds to that input by recommending strategies for improving community quality of life through coordinated land use and transportation policies.

The work upon which this Plan is based was funded in part through a grant awarded by the Strategic Growth Council (SGC). SGC grants help local government to plan for more sustainable communities, with an emphasis on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Local government may decide on the contents of these grant-funded plans; no mandates or specific requirements are attached to the grant funding.

AN EVOLVING ENVIRONMENTAL ETHIC

Santa Cruz County is a place of great natural beauty. Mountains, forests, and valleys define the landscape and support ecosystems rich in biodiversity. Agricultural land adds open space and contributes to the local economy. Coastal habitat extends into the Pacific Ocean and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, one of the world’s most productive ocean environments.

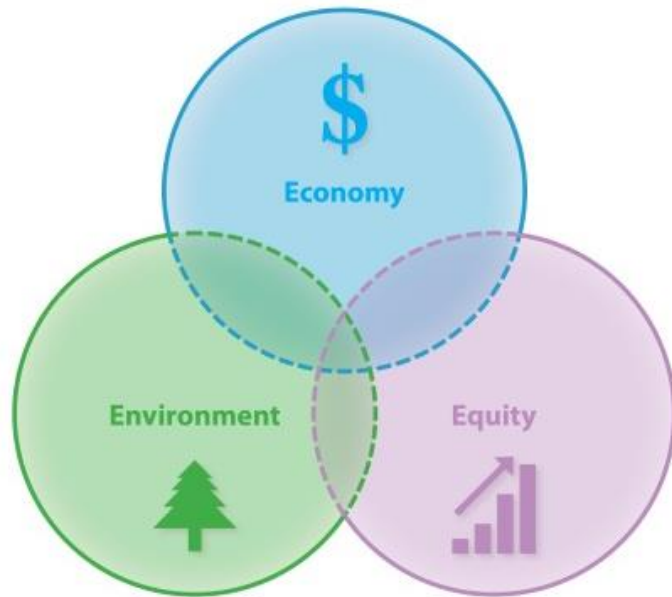
Santa Cruz County has been a national leader in the protection of these natural resources. In 1978, Santa Cruz County voters approved Measure J, which established an annual population growth goal intended to limit the rate of growth to manageable levels. Measure J

Community Voices

The Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan is based on public input received at 16 community workshops. Direct quotes from these workshops are shown throughout this Plan in “Community Voices” text boxes such as this one.

also included agricultural preservation requirements, established an Urban Services Boundary to direct growth to the urban area, and created an affordable housing policy.

In recent years, environmental protection has increasingly been viewed through the lens of sustainable development. A common definition of sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development aims to promote environmental protection, a strong local economy, and social equity.



The Three E's of Sustainability

The concept of sustainability is broad, and can be defined in a variety of ways. For some, sustainability focuses on limiting human impacts on the natural environment,

maintaining a healthy ecosystem, and ensuring diverse and productive biological systems. For others, sustainability means improving human quality of life for all populations. Others see sustainability as respecting the carrying capacity of planet earth, which necessitates limits on population and economic growth.

The concept of sustainable development as used in this Plan links environmental protection to the wise use of urban land resources. In Santa Cruz County, this is particularly important given the relatively limited amount of urban land (see Figure 1-1). Long-term protection of natural resources depends on the efficient use of limited urban land in a manner that supports the County's social, environmental, and economic goals.

Within this framework of sustainable development, this Plan addresses questions such as:

- How can we utilize land resources more efficiently to protect open space and agricultural land?
- How can we provide housing that is more affordable for county residents?
- How can we increase transportation alternatives and reduce reliance on the automobile?
- How can land use and transportation infrastructure patterns help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions?
- How can we strengthen existing communities?
- How can we increase the supply of good jobs available to county residents?
- How can we ensure the fiscal health of governmental agencies so that adequate services are available to protect the public health, safety, and welfare?

PLAN AREA

The area covered by the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan is part of a larger regional context that will influence future growth and development within Santa Cruz County. As shown in Figure 1-1, the County is close to the economic engines of Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Bay Area. Immediately to the west is the City of Santa Cruz, home to the University of California Santa Cruz campus. The Plan area surrounds the City of Capitola and Capitola Mall, and the City of Watsonville is approximately 10 miles to the east.

Figure 1-2 shows the boundaries of the area studied as part of the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan. The area includes the parts of Live Oak, Soquel, and the northern portion of Aptos that are within the County's Urban Services Boundary. The Urban Services Boundary was first designated in the early 1980s and indicates the area within which an urban level of services, such as public water and sewer, are available.

Soquel Drive is the primary transportation corridor connecting the Plan area to Highway 1, the City of Santa Cruz, and Watsonville. Other corridors include Soquel Avenue fronting Highway 1 and the major arterial streets in Live Oak. The Santa Cruz branch rail line also crosses the Plan area through Live Oak and Aptos. The Plan area contains the Dominican and Sutter medical centers, Cabrillo College, numerous public schools, and the Soquel, Aptos, and Seacliff village centers.

The boundaries of the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan were chosen to include the portion of unincorporated Santa Cruz County with the greatest potential to achieve more sustainable land use and transportation patterns. This area has the highest concentration of jobs and housing within unincorporated Santa Cruz County, the strongest

connections to regional employment centers, and the most extensive transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure. There are a number of sizeable vacant and underutilized properties with access to water, sewer, and good roads. The Plan area represents the County's best opportunity to contribute to a new regional transportation and land use framework that prioritizes sustainable outcomes for the local economy and county residents.

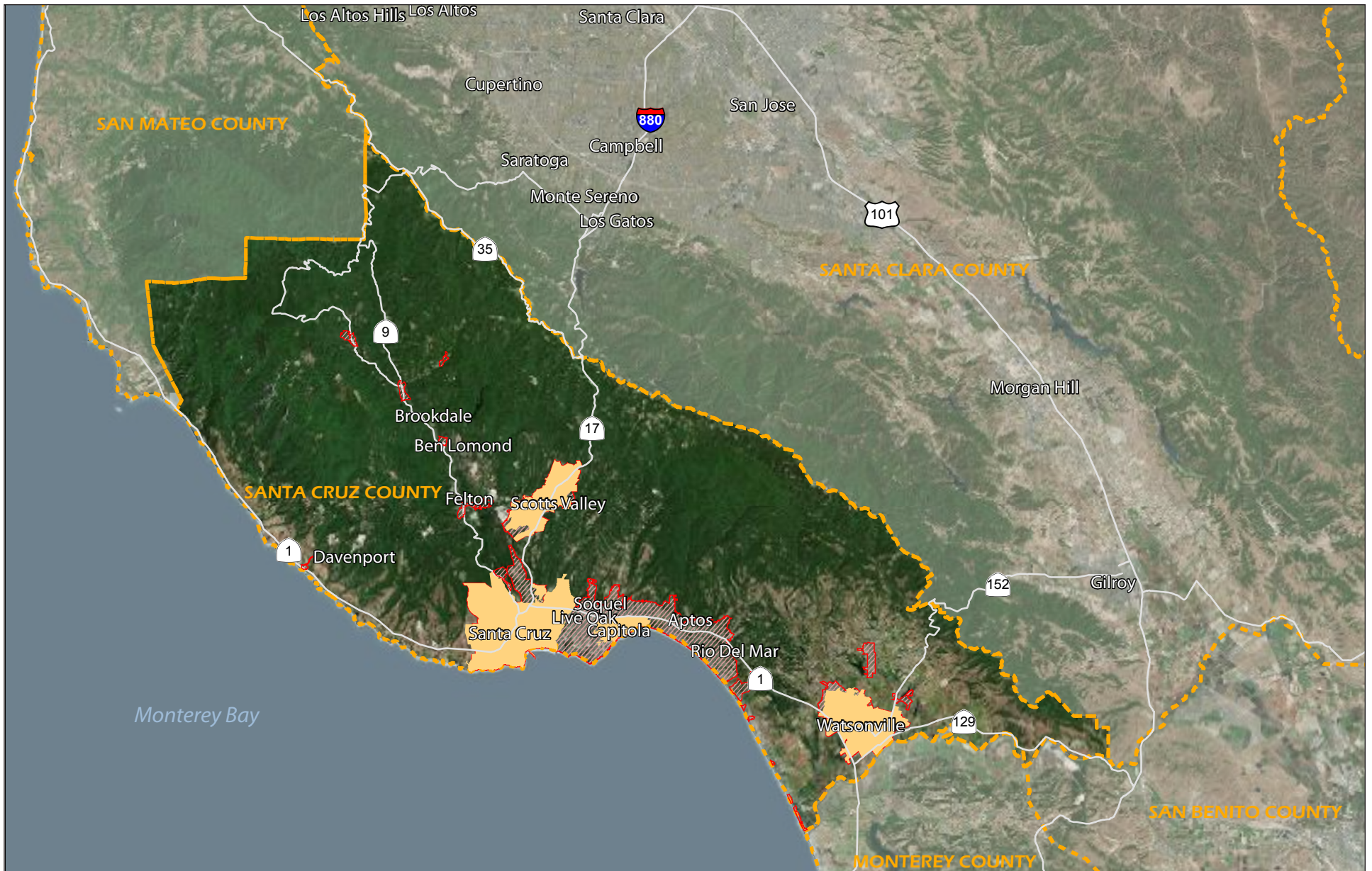
While this Plan focuses on the urbanized areas, certain of the strategies will be applicable in rural areas of the County, especially those strategies related to increasing the types and safety of transportation choices. The future Circulation Element Update is expected to transfer ideas and strategies of this planning study to both urban and rural areas.

RELATIONSHIP TO EXISTING PLANS AND POLICIES

Land use and transportation are regulated by a number of different plans and ordinances in Santa Cruz County. The Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan reflects the contents and requirements of these documents. Among the most important are the following:

- General Plan and Local Coastal Program
- Climate Action Strategy
- Zoning Ordinance (County Code Chapter 13.10)
- Growth Management System (Measure J)
- Economic Vitality Strategy (in public draft form, July 2014)
- Town and Community Plans (Aptos, Soquel, Seacliff and Pleasure Point)

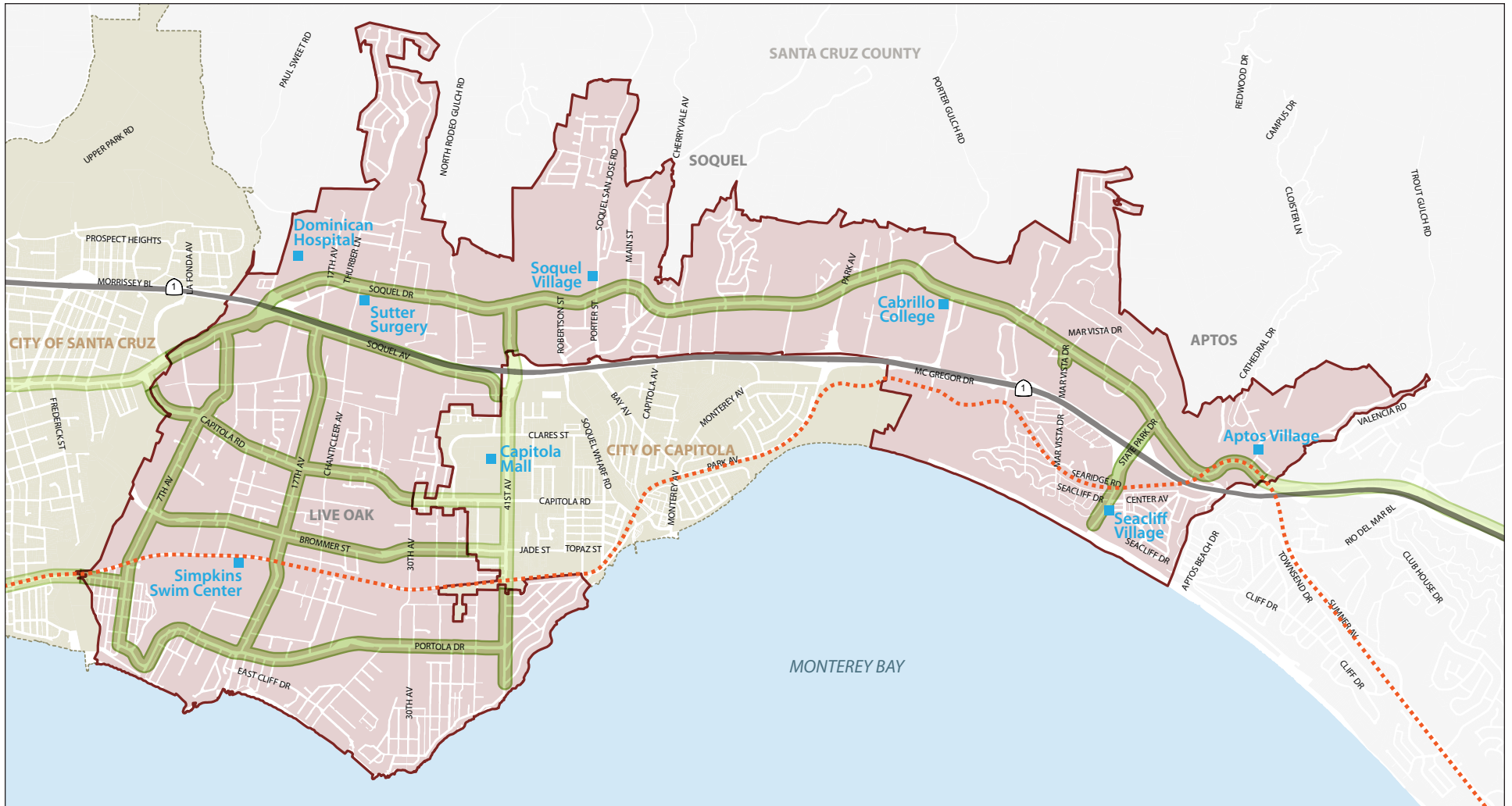
FIGURE 1 - 1 AREAS WITHIN THE URBAN AND RURAL SERVICE BOUNDARIES



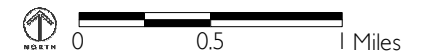
- Urban and Rural Service Boundaries
- Cities
- County Boundaries



FIGURE 1 - 2 PLAN AREA



- Plan Area
- Corridors within Plan Area
- Corridor Outside Plan Area
- Rail Line



Climate Change and Sustainability

The Sustainable Santa Cruz County plan is closely linked to the issue of climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, and is intended to be consistent with the County's Climate Action Strategy, adopted in 2013. In Santa Cruz County, approximately 60 percent of greenhouse gas emissions are generated by the transportation sector. Coordination of land use and transportation policies to decrease reliance on the single-occupancy vehicle, increase the use of transit, and support walking and biking is key to reducing emissions.

The Climate Action Strategy identified reduction of "vehicle miles traveled" through long-range planning efforts, such as this plan, as the main method to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector (Climate Action Strategy, Table 3-2, page 22). Recommendations in this plan would implement three of the top five strategies in the Climate Action Strategy.



Resource preservation is linked to the wise use of urban land.

- Live Oak/Soquel Redevelopment Area Implementation Plan
- County Bicycle Plan
- 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy

This Plan includes suggestions for specific amendments to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance and for policies that will encourage the type of development described in the sustainability vision. Any amendments will require the preparation of a CEQA environmental review document and noticed public hearings before they may be implemented. Once the regulatory framework is in place, individual development projects will also be subject to a public hearing and environmental review process consistent with current procedures and State law.

The Plan also recognizes plans prepared by other governmental agencies in Santa Cruz County and the Monterey Bay Area region. This includes General Plans recently updated by the cities of Santa Cruz and Capitola. Relevant regional plans include *Envisioning Monterey Bay*, the Metropolitan Regional Transportation Plan for the Monterey Bay region, prepared by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), the *Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Plan*, and the *Short Range Transit Plan* prepared by the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (SCMTD or Metro).

PLAN CONTENTS

The Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan is divided into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 1: Plan Overview** presents the purpose of the Plan and explains its relationship to existing County plans and policies.
- **Chapter 2: Vision and Guiding Principles** highlights core values and aspirations that serve as a foundation for the Plan.
- **Chapter 3: Sustainable Land Use and Transportation Pattern** graphically presents the Plan's key land use, urban design, and transportation concepts.
- **Chapter 4: Focused Development and Community Character** identifies possible goals and strategies to promote a more sustainable land use pattern and healthy communities.
- **Chapter 5: Transportation** describes how the transportation system in the Plan area can better support sustainability objectives.
- **Chapter 6: Natural Resources** describes how development within urban areas can protect natural resources.
- **Chapter 7: Focus Areas** presents detailed land use, community design and circulation concepts for five geographic areas in the Plan area.
- **Chapter 8: Next Steps** describes additional actions that would be needed to implement the Plan, including amendments to the County's General Plan/Local Coastal Program and Zoning Code.

A number of appendices are attached to this Plan that describe the process to prepare the Plan and identify specific transportation improvements recommended to support the Plan's vision and goals.

- **Appendix A: Illustrative Street Cross Sections** presents sample illustrations of street types discussed in Chapter 6.
- **Appendix B: Transportation Improvements** identifies possible transportation improvements to implement the Plan's vision and goals.
- **Appendix C: AMBAG Population and Employment Trends and Projections** presents population, dwelling unit and employment Projections from 2010 to 2035 prepared by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) and the County's housing need allocation for 2014 to 2023.
- **Appendix D: Potential Multimodal Levels of Service Methods and Next Steps**, prepared by Fehr & Peers, outlines issues and options for adopting new County policies to support a multimodal transportation system.
- **Appendix E: Guiding Principles for Future of East Cliff Village Shopping Center Site** identifies key goals for the future the East Cliff Village site based on public input from two community workshops.
- **Appendix E: Existing Conditions Report**, prepared at the beginning of the project, provides a detailed discussion of existing conditions relevant to the Plan.
- **Appendix F: Public Participation** includes a description of the plan preparation process, a list of all public meetings and workshops, and summaries from all community workshops.

Vision & 2

Guiding Principles

This chapter presents a vision and guiding principles for the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan. These guiding principles are a statement of core community values to guide land use, transportation decisions, and conservation in Santa Cruz County. The guiding principles served as the touchstones for the preparation of the Plan as they help to define the community's special identity and aspirations for the future.

The vision statement and guiding principles were prepared based on public input from a series of community workshops in October of 2012. At this workshop, participants described their vision for the future of the county and discussed the following questions:

1. **What does sustainability mean to you, relating to concepts such as environment, equity, and economy?**
2. **What are the ways that we can become more sustainable in Santa Cruz County?**
3. **Of the ways to achieve more sustainable communities identified in the prior conversations, which ideas are most important for Santa Cruz County?**

Following the community workshops, the County drafted guiding principles and a vision statement based on responses to these questions. The guiding principles and vision were reviewed by the Advisory Group and Planning Commission on December 12, 2012 and approved by the Board of Supervisors on February 12, 2013.



Visioning Workshop small group discussion (top) and card with ideas for promoting sustainable development in Santa Cruz County (bottom)

A Vision for Sustainable Communities in Santa Cruz County

All parts of Santa Cruz County, both urban and rural, benefit from the increased vitality of more sustainable patterns of development and conservation. Within all neighborhoods, investments in transportation improvements have increased residents' transportation options, mobility, and quality of life. The unique needs of the various communities are taken into account in County policy-making and transportation decisions, allowing appropriate solutions for each area. The rural areas maintain the character and densities that recognize their topography and important natural resources, and that distinguish them from the urban part of the County. There are improved links among rural areas and between rural and urban areas. Residents, businesses, non-profit organizations, and governmental agencies work together in an effective partnership to encourage economic growth and private investment that benefits county residents and businesses, and supports the ability of governmental agencies to provide necessary facilities and services.

Within all neighborhoods, there are retail and other services that meet the needs of residents. The robust economy generates increased County revenues, which can then be leveraged to obtain grant-funding necessary to provide the expanded multi-modal transportation system desired by the community. Commercial centers feature quality design and convenient connections to neighborhoods for pedestrians and cyclists. Local businesses contribute to a distinctive sense of place and community pride, with jobs providing a living wage to residents. The area is attractive to knowledge-based industries that benefit from the County's unique assets, such as lifestyle enterprises, ecotourism, and sustainable industries. The environmental and social stresses of a large commuter population have been reduced by increasing the number of local well-paying jobs. All residents have the opportunity to benefit from this growth and prosperity – the area is known as a diverse and inclusive community with equal access to opportunity. A healthy local economy contributes to the fiscal sustainability of schools and public agencies and enables the County to provide the high quality services desired by all residents.

Within urban areas, infill development has occurred on vacant and underutilized commercial properties along key transportation corridors. In some places, this development is mixed use with residential or office uses located above ground-floor commercial uses. The best characteristics of favorite areas, such as the Villages and lower 41st Avenue in Pleasure Point, have been replicated elsewhere. Development is well designed to support a walkable environment and a unique sense of place. Along key corridors, development is of sufficient intensity to support an active environment with transportation choices. New development provides a variety of housing types, and there are housing options that are affordable to households of all income levels. All residents who wish to are able to live within easy walking distance of activity centers that enhance community ties.

A Vision for Sustainable Communities in Santa Cruz County (continued)

Transportation choices are such that residents can leave cars at home for some of their daily trips. Bike and pedestrian infrastructure has been optimized so that there is a good network of on-road lanes and sidewalks, supplemented by some off road facilities. It is easy and safe to walk or bike from one neighborhood or commercial area to another, as new connections supplement the existing grid pattern. The railroad and Monterey Bay Sanctuary Trail Network (MBSST), popularly known as the rail-trail, contribute to transportation and recreation choices, as well as enhancing the sense of community and the vitality of the industries that use the rail. The barrier created by Highway One between the ocean and inland sides of the County has been lessened by strategic improvement of crossings and connectivity to those crossings. Better functioning Highway One reduces travel times on the freeway and also removes some pressure from local streets, increasing the reliability of travel.

Development within urban areas reduces development pressure in rural areas of the County and helps to preserve valued open space. Development in the Plan area is environmentally friendly due to its location, density, and green building practices. Within the urban area open space and natural habitat are protected, and new development is designed to help protect these resources. The area is a part of a sustainable system of food production with community gardens, urban agriculture, artisan food businesses, and organic farming practices. Development is designed to minimize per capita consumption of resources such as water and energy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles were used to guide the preparation of the Transit Corridors Plan for Sustainable Communities in Santa Cruz County.

- **Focused Development.** When market demand stimulates new commercial, residential, office, or retail activity, encourage those new uses to use land efficiently. New development should be compact, located primarily within existing urban areas, and should feature a mixture of uses and development intensities that support transportation choices including transit, cycling, walking, and carpools, and to the extent possible, promote the fiscal sustainability of the area.
- **Transportation Choices.** Develop safe, reliable, and efficient transportation choices to improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote public health, and enhance quality of life. Recognize that specific strategies to promote transportation alternatives will vary depending on

the unique characteristics of different places.

- **Open Space and Resource Preservation.** Preserve the County's unique natural resources and habitats by carefully managing new development outside the urban and rural services line. Inside the urban and rural services line, promote the reuse of existing structures or developed land, and ensure that open spaces and parks are protected, accessible, and open to all County residents.
- **Unique Community Character.** Enhance the unique characteristics of communities by investing in healthy, safe, attractive, and walkable neighborhoods and efficient transportation choices between communities. Focus County investment within existing communities to increase community vitality, provide infrastructure efficiently, increase mobility, and promote social connections while protecting open space and existing community assets.



Santa Cruz Metro bus, Cabrillo



Congregational Church of Soquel

- **Economic Vitality.** Support locally owned businesses that bind the community together and new businesses that generate environmentally friendly, well-paying jobs and local economic prosperity. Encourage businesses that generate tax revenue such as hotels that generate transient occupancy tax, enterprises that generate sales tax, and manufacturing and other basic productive



Medical Offices, Dominican Hospital

economic developments that create demand for indirect supportive economic activity, so that important services such as police, fire, community services and a social safety net can continue to be provided to residents. Support efforts to train and prepare County residents to occupy locally available jobs. Ensure that County regulations encourage private investment and allow for economically feasible development projects consistent with sustainability goals.

- **Housing Options.** Expand housing choices for people of all ages and incomes to lower the combined cost of housing and transportation and to promote diversity in terms of age, income, and family size throughout the County. Recognize that many factors including economic feasibility affect the provision of housing choices.
- **Inclusive Decision-Making.** Encourage community and stakeholder involvement in planning and decision-making. Ensure that

planning decisions are predictable, fair, forward thinking, and cost-effective. Reform the project review process to encourage high-quality infill development and reduce unnecessary uncertainty and expense.

- **Governmental Coordination.** Align policies and funding among local, County, regional, and State governmental agencies, including schools and colleges. Remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, improve local control over local resources, and increase the effectiveness of all levels of government that impact growth and development in Santa Cruz County. Improve financial sustainability of city and county governments, especially given the loss of redevelopment financing for local projects.
- **Fiscal Sustainability.** Recognize that there is a significant gap between the level of governmental revenue that is generated by the existing land use pattern in Santa Cruz County and the level that is needed to sustainably fund necessary public facilities and services. Promote development patterns and specific land uses that generate revenues to provide the infrastructure and services necessary for thriving communities. Recognize that economic development projects help fiscal health by generating revenues that enable high quality public services.

Sustainable Land Use & 3 Transportation Pattern

This chapter presents illustrations of the pattern and type of new development envisioned by the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan. These illustrations show examples of high-quality infill development that utilizes land resources efficiently, increases housing choices, supports a balanced transportation system, and enhances the character of the existing community. In the words of one workshop participant, this chapter illustrates “what we can say yes to” to achieve a more sustainable development pattern in Santa Cruz County.

This chapter illustrates a sustainable development pattern at four different scales and settings:

- Plan Area
- Neighborhood Activity Center
- Corridor Infill
- Village Center Infill

Specific locations for where these types of development could be applied are shown in the Community Land Use and Transportation Pattern diagrams in Chapter 4.

The illustrations are a tool to help the community visualize how new development could support the goals of this Plan. The type of development shown in these illustrations would enhance the quality of life for current and future residents by introducing new urban amenities into existing communities. High-quality infill development will increase housing choices for singles, young families, and seniors. Additional retail and services close to existing neighborhoods and work places will make it easier for residents and employees to walk and bike to destinations. New development could incorporate public spaces to build community and enhance resident and worker access to parks and open space.

LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PATTERN

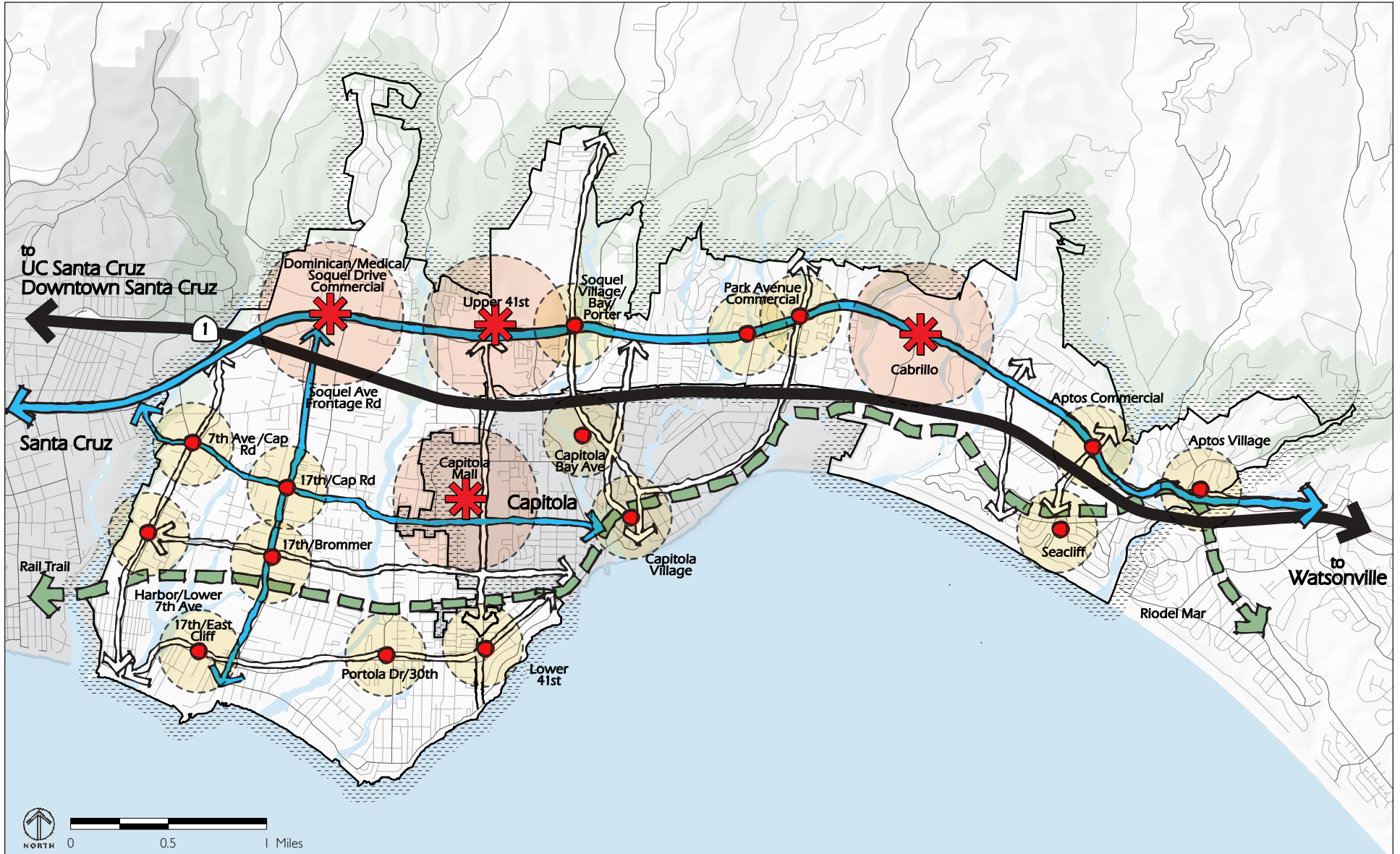
Figure 3-1 presents the general future land use and transportation pattern described by the Vision for the Plan area. This diagram graphically illustrates the guiding principles presented in Chapter 2 of this Plan.

The figure illustrates a set of regional and neighborhood activity centers distributed throughout the Plan area. Growth would be focused in and around these centers, which would support open space preservation elsewhere and help create walkable neighborhoods with convenient access to goods and services.

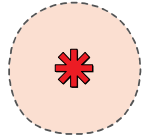
An integrated multimodal network would effectively connect activity centers to each other as well as surrounding areas. Enhanced pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities could help improve mobility along the three major east-west corridors. New Highway 1 crossings would create new local-serving north-south connections for all modes of transportation.

Additional details about the features shown in this diagram are provided in Chapter 4 and 5.

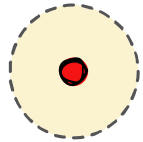
FIGURE 3 - 1 FUTURE LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION PATTERN



Future Land Use and Transportation Pattern Symbols



Regional Employment Center



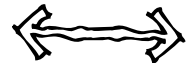
Neighborhood Activity Center



Highway 1



Primary Transit Corridor



Secondary Transit Corridor



Monterey Bay Sanctuary
Scenic Trail Network (MBSST)
and Santa Cruz Branch Rail
Line

Important features of this concept that are highlighted in Figure 3-1 include the following:

Multimodal Transit Corridors

Regional destinations shown within the Plan area are connected by three primary multimodal transit corridors: Soquel Drive, Capitola Road, and 17th Avenue. Secondary transit corridors connect to neighborhood destinations. Land use density, design, and diversity along these corridors support more frequent and convenient transit service. Bicycle storage, shared parking structures, and park-and-ride lots support transportation alternative along the corridors.

Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST) and Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line

The MBSST is shown as an important recreational amenity and east-west connector. Access to the trail is enhanced from adjacent uses. Land uses adjacent to the trail complement its recreational and transportation functions. The Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line, owned by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, hosts portions of this scenic trail. The rail line is also being studied for a range of passenger rail options.

Highway 1

Highway 1 is improved to become a more functional, important east-west connector through the Plan area. Increased transportation options and new local multimodal connections within the urban area will help to alleviate traffic congestion on the highway, or at least better enable residents to avoid highway congestion.

Regional Employment Centers

Regional employment centers are focused around the Dominican and Sutter/Palo Alto Medical Foundation medical district, 41st Avenue, and Cabrillo College in the Plan Area, and Capitola Mall in Capitola. New employment uses and transit infrastructure will be concentrated in these centers as well as at new nodes such as 17th and Brommer and along Soquel Avenue south of Highway 1. New housing is located in places where residents can more easily walk, ride bicycles, or take transit to employment centers.

Neighborhood Activity Centers

Neighborhood activity centers contain commercial and public uses to serve surrounding neighborhoods. Community gathering places are well connected to neighborhoods through bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Residential and mixed-use development in appropriate locations enhances the vitality of the activity centers.



Example of a community-serving activity center within walking distance of nearby housing

INTRODUCTION TO CONCEPT FIGURES

The following concepts for the Plan area represent three different types of locations, which are presented to illustrate concepts of sustainable design appropriate for each type of location. The three settings differ in the type of surroundings into which new buildings and transportation improvements must fit and the needs they should serve. The different concepts reflect the unique character of different neighborhoods within the Plan area.

NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITY CENTER CONCEPT

Figure 3-2 presents an illustration of a prototypical neighborhood activity center as envisioned by this Plan. This concept is based on the intersection of 41st Avenue and Portola Drive in Pleasure Point, but the ideas apply to other neighborhood activity centers that incorporate a variety of housing, commercial, employment, and public uses. Additional ideas about neighborhood activity centers are provided in Chapter 4. Important features of this concept include the following:

Community Character

New development depicted by Figure 3-2 maintains and enhances the unique Santa Cruz character. Building and site design is eclectic, creative, and respectful of the surrounding neighborhood. New development maintains the area's pedestrian scale and strengthens a sense of place.

Economic Vitality

The illustration shows additional retail and restaurant uses that increase pedestrian activity and enhance

economic vitality. Public gathering places create destinations that attract shoppers and encourage them to linger. Additional housing accommodates working households whose expenditures support local independent businesses. Office spaces accommodate businesses and employees that earn living wages.

Natural Resources

Natural resources are protected, and new development incorporates rooftop photovoltaic panels, green building practices, and urban agriculture. Existing structures are improved to accommodate modern uses. Redevelopment of vacant and underutilized lots in the urban area supports the wise and efficient use of land resources.

Transportation Choices

Increased residential and commercial intensity supports more frequent bus service. Bike lanes, enhanced crosswalks and other infrastructure improvements increase safety, comfort, and convenience for bicyclists and pedestrians. Mixed-use development creates more destinations that are accessible to area residents by bus, bicycles, and walking. Shared structured parking allows visitors to park once and walk to different destinations.

FIGURE 3 - 2 NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITY CENTER CONCEPT

Frequent transit service

Additional Street Trees

Stores and services close to residents

Variety of housing

Eclectic building design

Reinvest in existing structures

Urban agriculture

Public gathering places

Renewable energy

Enhanced design and safety at intersections

Pedestrian-scale building design

Shared structured parking

Pedestrian improvements

Improved bicycle facilities

Diversity: vertical and horizontal mixed-use



CORRIDOR INFILL CONCEPT

Figure 3-3 illustrates an example of a mixed-use infill project along a primary transit corridor near a regional employment center. Some important features of this concept include the following:

Housing

The increased supply and variety of housing expand housing choice. Housing types include single-family homes, townhomes, small apartments, and mixed-use buildings. New housing can be conveniently located close to stores, services, and transit. More dense housing is located along travel corridors and not within the interior portions of single family areas.

Land Use

The illustration includes a variety of housing types, including townhomes and apartments, which are located close to jobs and transit. High quality commercial spaces accommodate retail and service uses serving residents and nearby workers. A destination is created by the mix of businesses and services.

Public Spaces

Public plazas, courtyards, and outdoor dining provide outdoor gathering places for residents, workers, and the general public. Outdoor spaces can be designed for public safety and comfort.

Building Design

Buildings in the illustration feature varied architectural styles and design character. Architecture is pedestrian friendly and human-scale, with active ground floor uses. Primary building entrances are oriented to the street or

public courtyards. Public safety is enhanced with increased “eyes on the street.”

Parking

As shown here, off-street parking can be located and designed to support pedestrian activity. Parking can be provided behind buildings and buffered from adjacent residential uses. Structured parking could be economically feasible with increased residential density and commercial vitality.

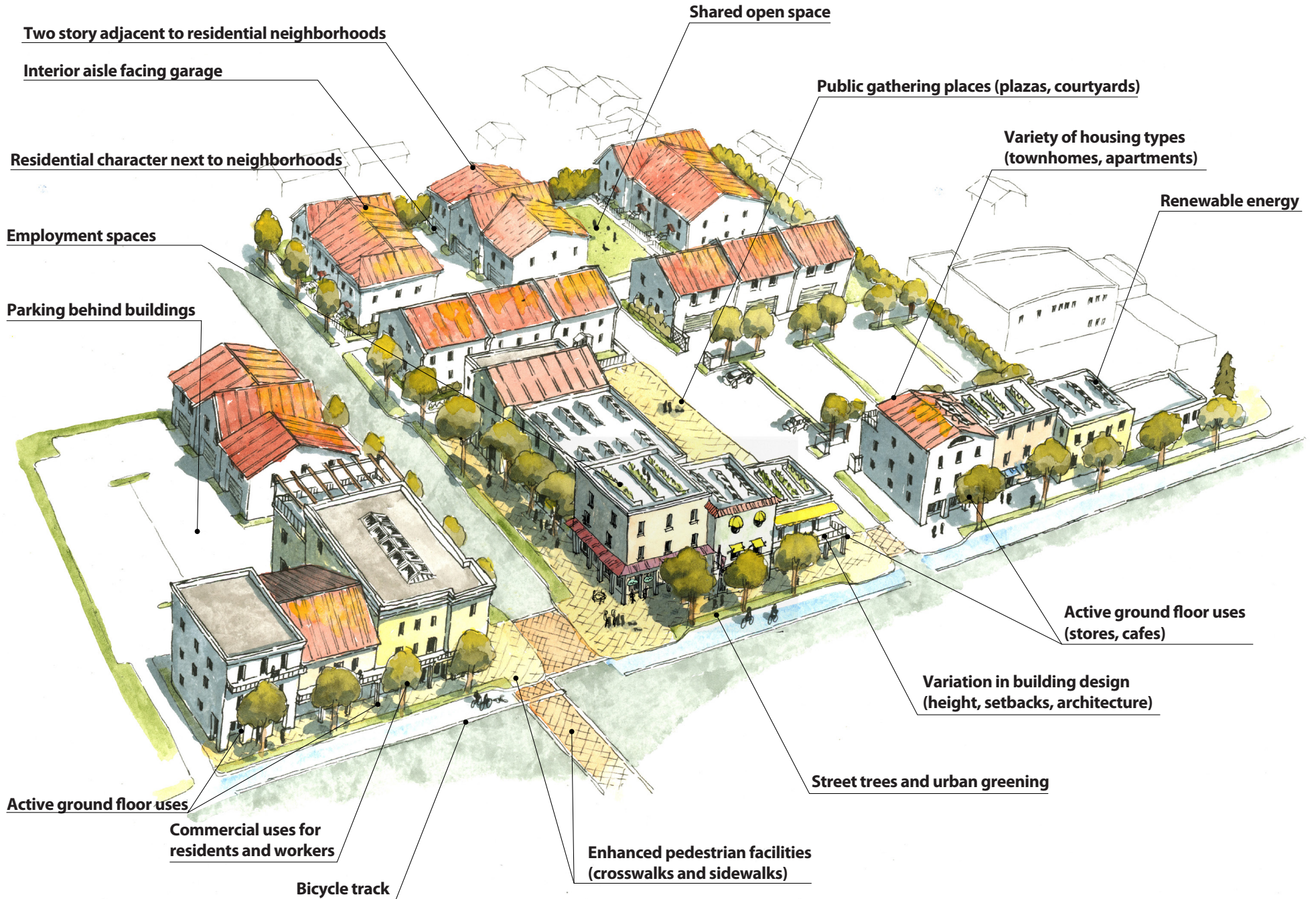
Neighborhood Context

New development should minimize impacts on adjacent residential uses. Taller and larger buildings should be located away from adjacent homes, as illustrated. Landscaped buffers are shown between parking lots and adjacent homes. Buildings that adjoin single family areas adjacent to homes are limited to two stories at the transition area and respect the surrounding residential character.

Economic Vitality

Infill development on an underutilized site along a key transportation corridor can increase the vitality of an employment center. As illustrated, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development complements medical uses and educational institutions and helps attract additional investment to an area.

FIGURE 3 - 3 CORRIDOR INFILL CONCEPT



VILLAGE CENTER INFILL CONCEPT

Figure 3-4B presents a visual simulation of one idea for a mixed-use, infill project at the corner of Center Street and Broadway in Seacliff Village. The concepts shown in this simulation are applicable to other village center locations. Important ideas in this simulation include the following:

Land Use

The illustrated mixed-use development includes ground floor retail and restaurants to serve residents and visitors. Upper floor residential uses add to the vitality of the village center and expand housing choices. A small boutique hotel at the rear of the site could provide visitor accommodations.

Site Design

The entire site has been envisioned as an integrated project consistent with the Seacliff Village Plan. Courtyards, public gathering places, and areas for outdoor dining enhance the vitality of the village and increase pedestrian activity.

Building Design

Active ground floor businesses are shown to reflect the scale and character of existing buildings on the opposite side of Center Street. Buildings are human scale and feature rhythm and variation in building forms, material, and colors.

Parking

A parking district could manage the supply and demand of parking for all of Seacliff Village. Required on-site parking could be reduced through payment of in-lieu fees and coordinated shared use of the State beach parking lot. On-site parking could be located to the rear and interior of the development site.

Streetscape Improvements

In the foreground of the simulation, pedestrian safety and convenience has been enhanced with widened sidewalks, textured street crossings, and street lighting. Undergrounded utilities and street trees further enhance the public realm.



Seacliff Village, south side of Center Street

**FIGURE 3 - 4A
(EXISTING)**

SEACLIFF VILLAGE, NORTHEAST CORNER OF CENTER STREET AND STATE PARK DRIVE VISUAL SIMULATION



FIGURE 3 - 4B SEACLIFF VILLAGE, NORTHEAST CORNER OF CENTER STREET AND STATE PARK DRIVE VISUAL SIMULATION (WITH A MIXED-USE, INFILL PROJECT)



Focused Development & Community Character 4

The adopted Guiding Principles for the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan call for more focused development in order to use land efficiently. New development should be compact, located primarily in urban areas, and feature a mixture of uses and development intensities to support housing and transportation choices. New development should enhance the distinctive characteristics of communities and honor existing town and village plans.

How can development patterns in Santa Cruz County best support this vision? What opportunities exist to shift existing land use conditions in ways that better support sustainable communities in Santa Cruz County? This chapter suggests answers to these questions and identifies ways to encourage private development and redevelopment of the type that promotes sustainability and is desired by the community.

The chapter begins with a description of the existing development pattern in the Plan area and an overview of the relationship between land use, urban design, and transportation behavior. It then presents suggested land use and community design goals and policies. Strategies for how these goals could be implemented through the adoption of new planning tools are in Chapter 8.

Existing Conditions

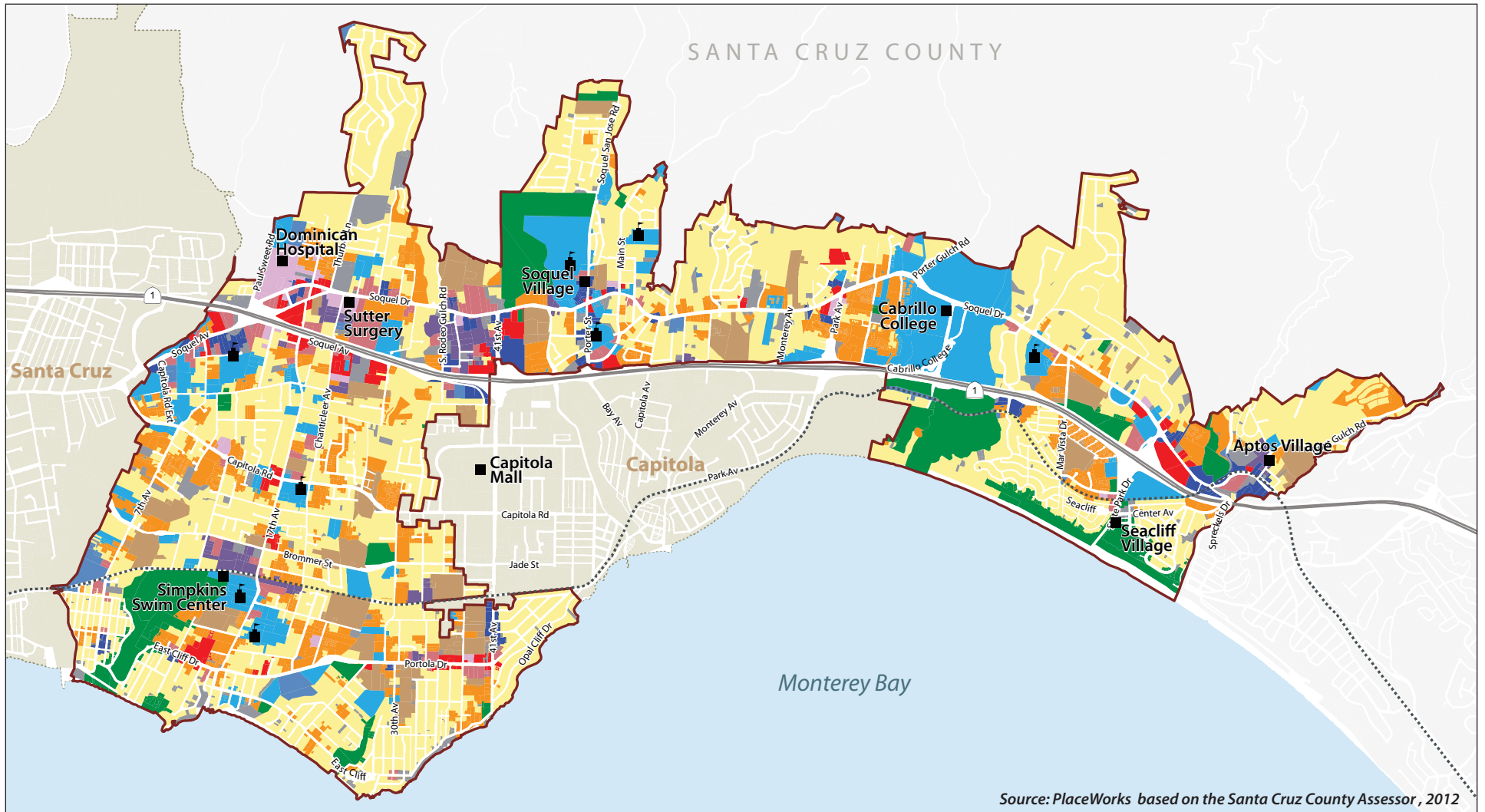
Below is a summary of existing conditions information most relevant to the ideas contained in this chapter. More detailed existing conditions information can be found in the Existing Conditions Report, prepared for the Plan (Appendix E).

LAND USE

Existing land use in the Plan area based on County Assessor data is shown in Figure 4-1. Key observations about existing land uses include the following:

- **Residential Uses.** Single-family residential is the predominant land use in the Plan area. Multi-family residential uses are located mostly along Soquel Drive, near Highway 1, in Live Oak, Soquel, and Aptos, and along major arterials in Live Oak. A notable number of mobile home parks are found throughout the Plan area, with the largest number in Live Oak.
- **Medical and Educational Uses.** A cluster of medical uses is located at the western end of Soquel Drive, anchored by Dominican Hospital and the Sutter Surgery Center. The Cabrillo College campus occupies a large area on Soquel Drive south of Park Avenue.
- **Retail Uses.** Large-scale retail uses are focused on Soquel Avenue and Soquel Drive near the Highway 1 interchange, 41st Avenue at Soquel Drive, and Soquel Drive at State Park Drive. Smaller-scale retail uses are found near major intersections along Soquel Drive and near the intersection of major arterials in Live Oak.
- **Commercial Service Uses.** The Plan area contains a variety of non-retail, heavy commercial service uses. These include auto services, auto storage, and landscape/timber businesses. Some of these uses can consume a large amount of land while providing relatively few jobs.

FIGURE 4 - 1 EXISTING LAND USE



Source: PlaceWorks based on the Santa Cruz County Assessor, 2012

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Plan Area | Mobile Home Park | Medical | Open Space/Park/Recreational/Agricultural |
| Rail Line | Retail and Services | Industrial | Vacant |
| Single-Family Residential | Office | Utilities and Public Infrastructure | Public Schools |
| Multi-Family Residential | Other Commercial | Public/Quasi Public | |



- **Industrial Uses.** Industrial uses are concentrated in an area surrounded by 41st Avenue, Highway 1 and Soquel Drive. There are also a few isolated sites of industrial uses in Live Oak.
- **Local Schools.** A number of public schools are located in the Plan area, including Soquel High School, Mar Vista Elementary School, and Live Oak Elementary School among others. These schools function as important community centers but also generate a significant amount of local traffic.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Table 4-1 presents a summary of key demographic characteristics of residents within the Plan area. These characteristics are compared to Santa Cruz County overall and the State of California. Demographic characteristics that are most relevant to the Plan include:

- **Age.** Residents in the Plan area are, on average, older than residents in the rest of the county and the state. The percentage of senior citizens in the area will increase at a rate that exceeds that in the county and state.
- **Education.** Plan area residents have relatively high levels of educational attainment, with significant variation between communities. Aptos and Pleasure Point have the highest percentage of residents 25 and older with a college degree, and Live Oak and Twin Lakes have the lowest percentage.
- **Household Income.** Median household income in the Plan area is lower than in the county overall. There is significant variation in household income among communities in the area, with Aptos having the highest income and Twin Lakes the lowest.

- **Ethnicity.** The Plan area overall is somewhat less ethnically diverse than the county and much less ethnically diverse than the state. This does vary significantly across the Plan area communities, with Live Oak and Twin Lakes both having relatively large Latino populations. Moreover, the number of Latinos as a percentage of the Plan area population has been growing relatively rapidly from 15 percent in 2000 to 21 percent in 2012.
- **Language.** The most common language spoken at home in the Plan area is English (80 percent) followed by Spanish (15 percent). Both Live Oak and Twin Lakes have large communities of Spanish speakers.

JOBS AND EMPLOYERS IN THE PLAN AREA

The current economic base within the Plan area is heavily concentrated in health care and education, with smaller concentrations of professional and business service jobs and retail jobs. Manufacturing and leisure and hospitality comprise a lower proportion of all jobs in the Plan area compared to the county. The Plan area's share of agriculture is very small unlike the county, which has a large presence in this sector. The largest employers in the Plan area include Dominican Hospital, Cabrillo College, Home Depot, and Safeway.

Principal employment clusters within Mid-County are located in downtown Santa Cruz, at the University of California Santa Cruz, and in Capitola. Within the Plan area, jobs are clustered around Dominican Hospital, Cabrillo College, and along Soquel Drive between 41st Avenue and Porter Street. Additional employment is found stretched out along Soquel Drive into Aptos, and dispersed in Pleasure Point and Twin Lakes.

TABLE 4-1 KEY DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESIDENTS

	Plan Area		Santa Cruz County	California
Population (2012)				
Total Population	46,654	--	262,804	37,718,293
Age (2012)				
Median Age	40.8	--	36.7	34.8
17 Years and Younger	9,556	20.5%	22.5%	25.7%
18 to 64 Years	31,074	66.6%	66.3%	63.1%
65 Years and Older	6,024	12.9%	11.2%	11.2%
Race (2012)				
White	32,658	70.0%	58.6%	39.0%
Black/African American	462	1.0%	0.9%	5.7%
Asian	1,720	3.7%	4.2%	13.2%
Other Race	1,785	3.8%	2.9%	2.8%
Hispanic	10,028	21.5%	32.9%	38.5%
Language Spoken at Home (2012)				
English Only	37,691	80.8%	71.9%	57.1%
Spanish	6,836	14.7%	23.0%	28.5%
Other Language	2,127	4.5%	5.1%	14.4%
Education (2010)				
Population 25+ with College Degree	14,978	46.6%	45.3%	37.7%
Income (2010)				
Median Household Income	\$60,562	--	\$65,253	\$60,883

Source: BAE Urban Economics, 2012, based on data drawn from Nielson, the US Census, and the 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS).

GROWTH TRENDS

The Existing Conditions Report prepared for this Plan included a set of Economic and Population projections for an area of the County that is roughly the same as the Plan area. These projections were based on a set of assumptions and past trends that included the influence of the economic downturn of 2008. The plan projections made at the time were more modest than recent projections made by other demographers considering the same time period.

The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) is the regional planning agency responsible for reviewing the State of California's growth projections, along with other demographic and employment related information. AMBAG projects that 5,388 new housing units will be needed to meet the needs of current and new residents between 2010 and 2035 (Appendix C).

The location and type of housing units that could be added over the next few decades is a key component of sustainable community planning. Combined with the demographic information that shows households are aging and shrinking, these growth projections demonstrate a need for smaller units in convenient locations to be added to the mix of single-family homes and townhomes in the Plan area and throughout the County.

In addition to the overall growth projection for new households, AMBAG determines the County's fair share housing obligation, known as the Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA). The RHNA is discussed in further detail in Appendix C, but is essentially the minimum level of new housing units the County must plan to accommodate over the next Housing Element period, which is the 10-year period

from January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2023. For the unincorporated County, the RHNA is 1,314 housing units.

The growth projections presented by AMBAG, as well as those developed for the Existing Conditions Report, provide a frame of reference for considering the amount, type, and best location for housing and employment throughout the County.

COMMUNITY DESIGN

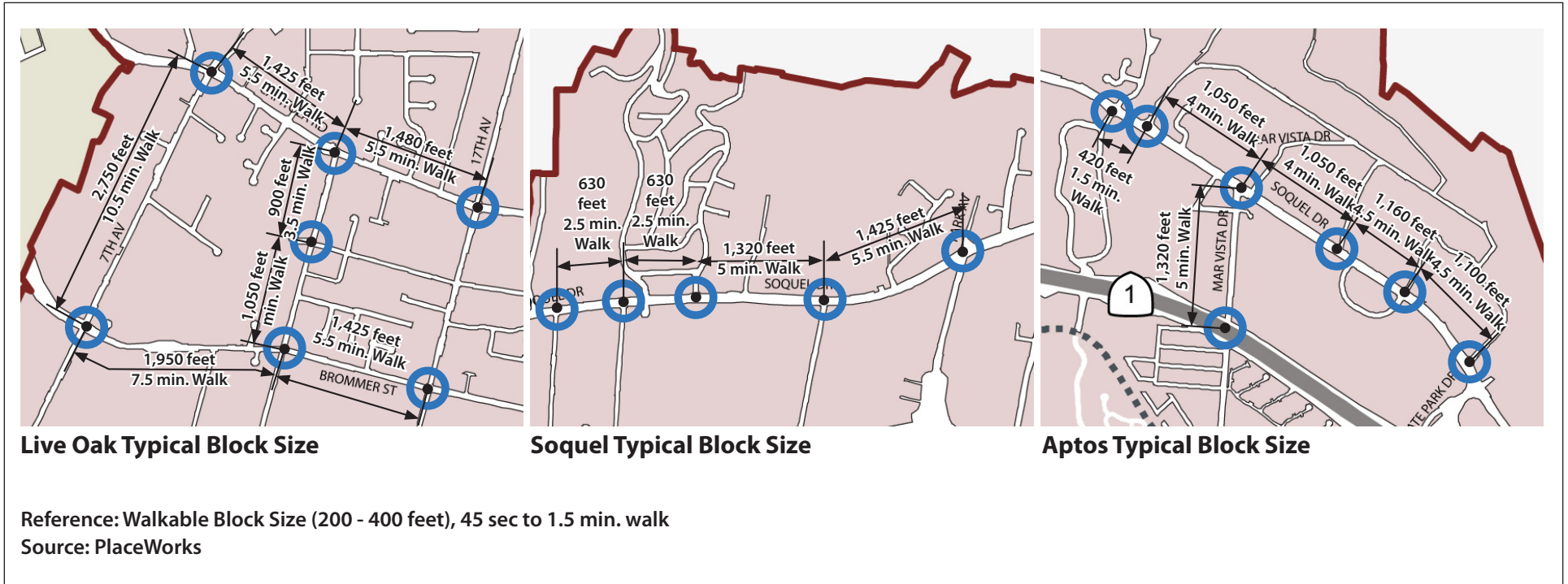
Corridors, Districts, and Neighborhoods

The urban area of the county is organized around a network of corridors, districts, and neighborhoods. Soquel Drive is the dominant corridor and changes in character along its seven-mile length. Individual segments exhibit distinct design character. In Soquel and Aptos, a series of employment and commercial centers are surrounded by residential neighborhoods. In Live Oak, commercial centers and residential neighborhoods are shaped by an intersecting pattern of arterial roadways. The design character of all places within the Plan area is shaped by the natural setting of hills, ocean, and creeks.

Street and Block Pattern

Street and block patterns play a large role in defining the design character of a place. Figure 4-2 shows typical street and block patterns in Live Oak, Soquel, and Aptos. In these neighborhoods block lengths are greater than the 200 to 400 feet needed to support more walkable neighborhoods. In Live Oak, long block lengths are compounded by numerous cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets, which further limit walkability and pedestrian connectivity. In Soquel and Aptos,

FIGURE 4 - 2 STREET AND BLOCK PATTERNS





Live Oak Supermarket storefront facing Capitola Road



This market in Live Oak serves area residents

residential areas are connected to one another primarily by Soquel Drive, which is generally not a pedestrian-friendly environment due to narrow or missing sidewalks and high vehicle speeds.

Site and Building Design

The design character of a site is defined by building placement, parking location and design, landscaping, building orientation, and vehicle, bicycle, and pedestrian circulation. Figure 4-3 compares the site and building design in two distinct places: Soquel Village and Upper 41st Avenue. In Soquel Village, buildings abut the front sidewalk with main entries oriented to the street and parking located behind buildings. Along Upper 41st Avenue, buildings are placed towards the rear of the site to accommodate vehicle circulation and large parking lots.

Elements of building design include massing, façade treatments, materials, and architectural style. In Soquel Village, buildings feature active ground-floor uses with windows that help to activate the street. Building height and width reflect human-scaled proportions. On Upper 41st Avenue, buildings are expansive, self-contained structures that accommodate large numbers of shoppers. Exterior treatments, materials, and architectural style reflect the buildings' function as a regional shopping destination.

Soquel Village and Upper 41st Avenue are examples of extremely contrasting places, but they do help to illustrate the range of design conditions present in the Plan area.

FIGURE 4 - 3 SITE AND BUILDING DESIGN

SOQUEL VILLAGE

- Building at front sidewalk
- Parking behind building

PHOTO BELOW



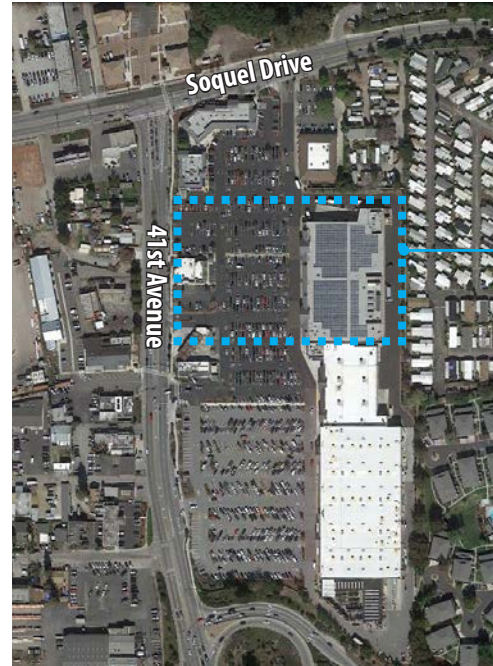
- Variation in building height
- Active ground floor uses
- Pedestrian scale



HOME DEPOT SHOPPING CENTER

- Primary buildings set back from street
- Parking between buildings and street

PHOTO BELOW



- Uniform building height
- Horizontal orientation
- Automobile scale
- Long distances between street and building entrances



Travel Behavior and the Built Environment

The relationship between development patterns and travel behavior is one of the most heavily researched subjects in urban planning. Not surprisingly, research has found a strong connection between the spatial arrangement of cities and how frequently people take transit, bicycle, or walk to destinations, and how far they travel to reach their destinations.

The principal factors that influence travel behavior are often referred to as the “Three D’s”: Density, Diversity, and Design. Density refers to the concentration of population (residents per acre) and the concentration of employment (jobs per acre). Diversity relates to the mixture of land uses and the balance of jobs and housing in a given area. Design refers to physical characteristics of development, including street networks and block patterns, pedestrian amenities, and building form and placement. Many researchers have found that ease of access to destinations, including employment centers, is another important variable influencing travel behavior. The “Three D’s” term relates to a “Three S’s” term that is particularly relevant to Santa Cruz County: the housing needs of “singles, students, and seniors.” People in this demographic are more willing or more reliant on transit, cycling, and walking.

Relatively low rates of transit use in the Plan area are related to existing patterns of low land use density, low diversity, limited employment density outside the medical corridor and Cabrillo College, low quality pedestrian environment, and destinations not on transit corridors. To increase

transportation alternatives and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the Plan recommends modifying these existing land use patterns in ways that support a more sustainable community and enhance residents’ quality of life.

POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATION

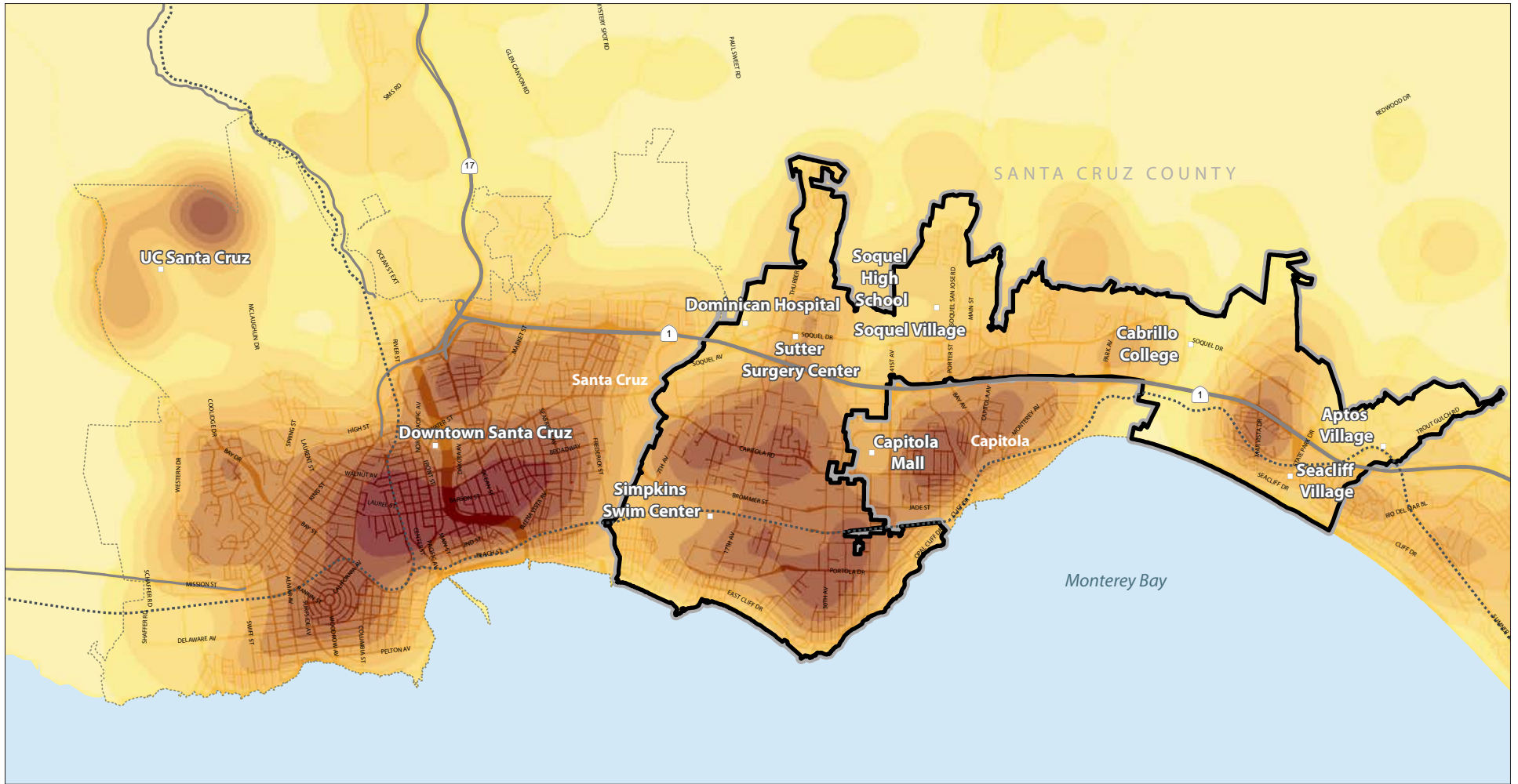
Figure 4-4 identifies areas of population concentration within the mid-County area. Based on Census data, downtown Santa Cruz has the highest population concentration. Other areas of relatively high population concentration include the University of California at Santa Cruz, areas along Capitola Road and Portola Drive in Live Oak, the Jewel Box neighborhood in Capitola, and the area near Mar Vista Drive and Highway 1 in Aptos.

As shown in Figure 4-5, Downtown Santa Cruz has the greatest employment concentration. Other areas of employment concentration include UC Santa Cruz, the medical services area around Dominican Hospital and the Sutter Surgery Center on Soquel Drive, Capitola Mall, and Cabrillo College.

DIVERSITY OF LAND USE

Figure 4-6 provides a graphic representation of the diversity of land use within the Plan area. Areas with the greatest diversity of land uses within the Plan area tend to be located in historic town centers and community- and neighborhood-serving commercial areas. Soquel Village, Aptos Village, Seacliff Village, and lower 41st Avenue near Portola Drive all have relatively high land use diversity. There appears to be a correlation between land use diversity and historic, traditional grid street patterns with short blocks.

FIGURE 4 - 4 POPULATION CONCENTRATIONS



Plan Area

Population Concentration
 High (42 persons per acre)
 Low (0 persons per acre)



FIGURE 4 - 5 EMPLOYMENT CONCENTRATIONS

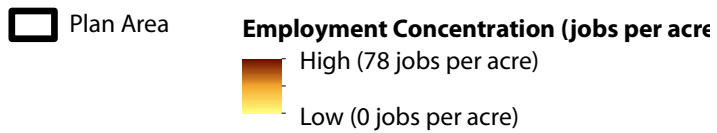
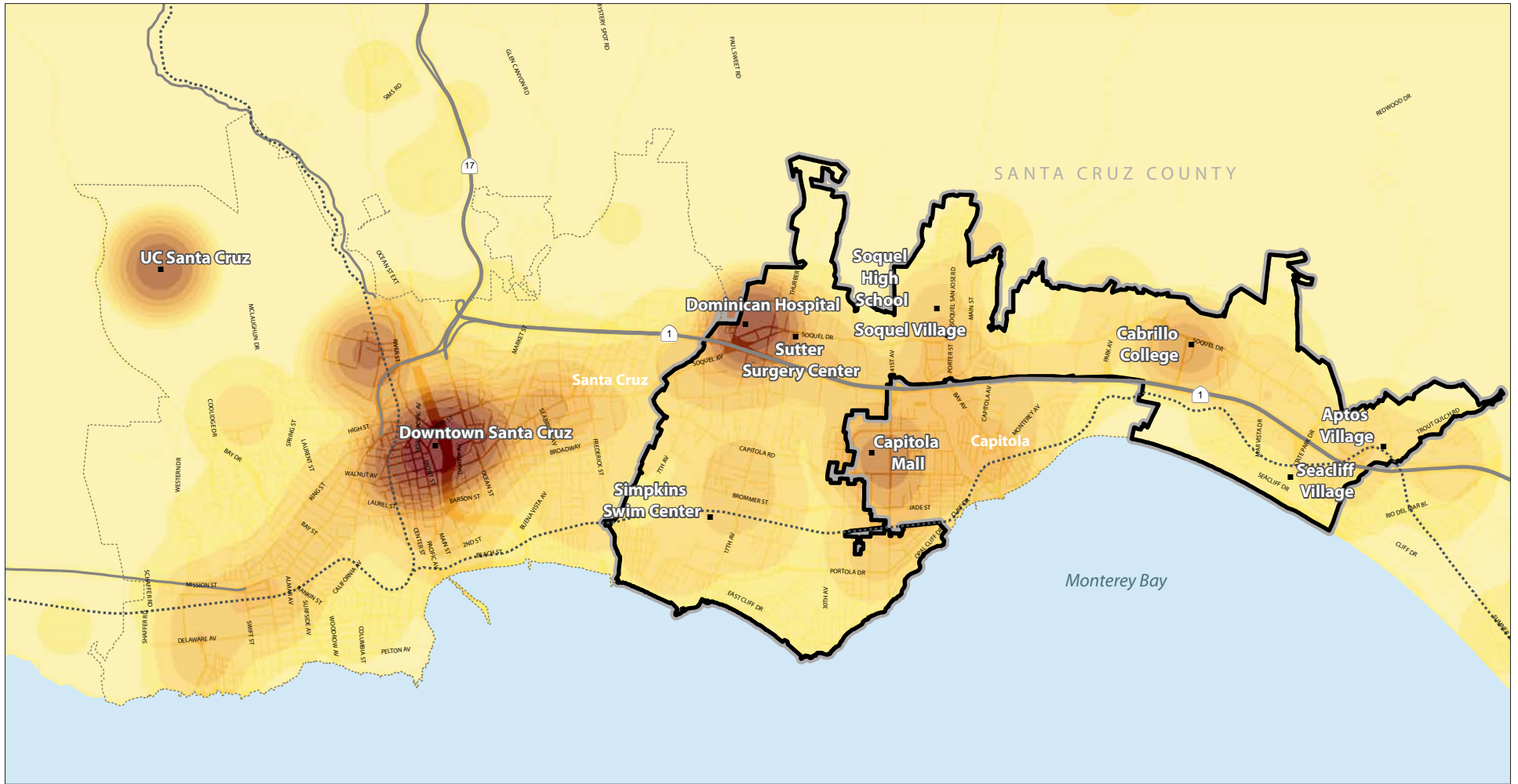
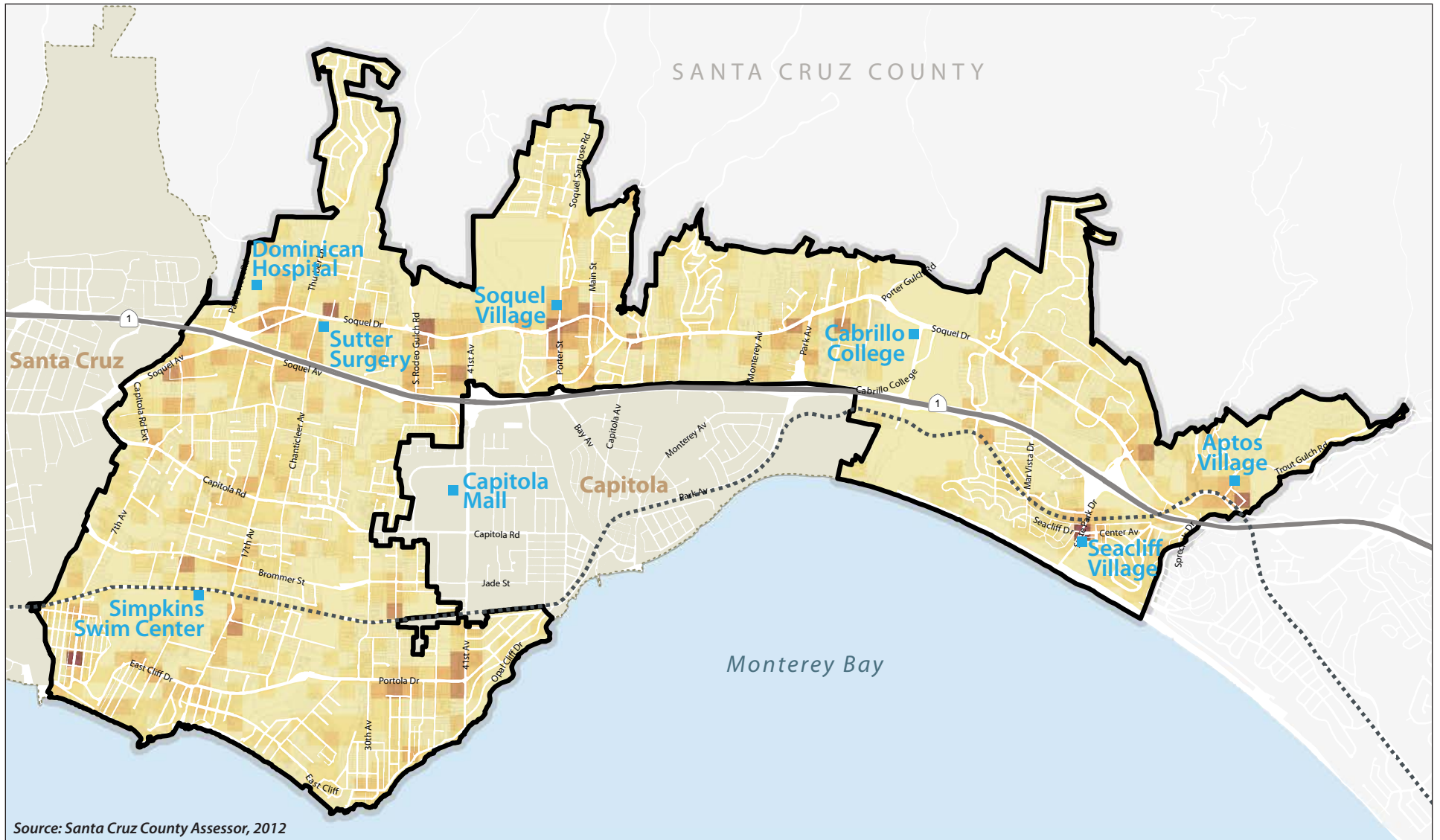
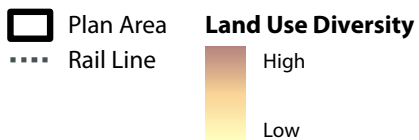


FIGURE 4 - 6 LAND USE DIVERSITY



Source: Santa Cruz County Assessor, 2012



Jobs/Housing Balance

A good balance of jobs and housing is an important component of a sustainable community. With this balance, residents have greater opportunity to find employment close to where they live and are less dependent on commuting long distances to find work. Communities with a good job/housing balance typically have a number of jobs that is close to the number of employed residents in the community.

Recent U.S. Census data shows 17,218 jobs compared to 22,370 working residents within the Plan area. The County overall is also unbalanced, with 121,706 working residents but only 109,927 jobs in the County. Many of these residents commute to jobs over the hill in Santa Cruz County.

Promoting a healthy jobs/housing balance is an important goal for the Plan, but the focus should be on promoting a healthy balance overall in the county, not just in the Plan area. Plan area residents can easily access jobs in employment centers in the City of Santa Cruz and Watsonville, and vice versa. As one integrated region, a healthy jobs/housing balance in Santa Cruz County will increase transportation alternatives, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote economic vitality for all communities in the county.

DESIGN

The design character of the built environment varies throughout the Plan area. As described above, there are design elements in historic villages that support transportation choices. Active ground floor uses are oriented to the street, with parking located behind buildings; shorter blocks support walkability. However, narrow sidewalks, limited streetscape improvements, and incomplete bicycle facilities can make walking, biking, or taking transit feel inconvenient or unsafe. These same conditions exist in older residential neighborhoods.



Variation in building design in Aptos Village

Other commercial areas are designed primarily to accommodate the automobile. Buildings are placed toward the rear of a site to accommodate large parking lots. Long blocks and limited street connections make walking to destinations unappealing. Amenities for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit are typically limited. Many residential neighborhoods share similar characteristics.

Goals and Strategies

Land Use and urban design strategies in this chapter are organized around four main goals:

- Vibrant Centers
- Housing Choice
- Livable Community Design
- Increased Connections

For each goal, strategies are suggested to support a more sustainable development pattern in Santa Cruz County. Chapter 8 presents specific recommendations for how these strategies could be implemented through amendments to the County's General Plan and Zoning Code.

VIBRANT CENTERS

Vibrant centers are an essential component of a sustainable development pattern in Santa Cruz County. These centers of activity contain a diversity of land uses, which create opportunities for people to walk or bike to destinations. Concentrations of housing and jobs support frequent transit service. Active public gathering places build community and enhance quality of life. Resident-serving stores and services



A parking lot located between buildings and street in Aptos

strengthen adjacent neighborhoods and contribute to economic vitality. Compact urban form accommodates a variety of more affordable housing choices.

As discussed below, this Plan describes three general strategies to create vibrant centers:

- Revitalize existing shopping centers.
- Create mixed-use activity nodes.
- Strengthen existing town centers.

Revitalize Existing Shopping Centers

An important finding from the County's Draft Economic Vitality Strategy is that there is a strong need for renovation and modernization of existing commercial buildings. Many of these existing commercial buildings are several decades old and do not reflect current customer and tenant demands for modern and attractive shopping destinations. Some centers are also "too big" given their proximity to competing shopping areas in Downtown Santa Cruz and Capitola.

Community Voices

"Match infrastructure improvements to increased needs"

"Increase density at strategic nodes"

"Make beautiful and compelling urban design a priority"

"Compact Mixed Use Communities"

"Create mixed use developments around neighborhood nodes"

Figure 4-7 shows the location of major shopping centers in the Plan area, including East Cliff Village in Live Oak, El Rancho Shopping Center in Pleasure Point, Rancho Del Mar in Aptos, and the Home Depot shopping center on Upper 41st Avenue. Some of these shopping centers, such as East Cliff Village, are ready for immediate improvement. Changes to more recently constructed centers, such as the Home Depot center, would likely occur over the longer term.

Existing shopping centers could be transformed into lively places that support the County's sustainability goals. Key to this transformation is an increase in land use diversity and pedestrian-friendly urban design. More specific ways to revitalize existing shopping centers include the following:

- Renovating existing commercial space to create higher quality space that is more modern, inviting, clean, attractive, and active.
- Creating additional commercial space with larger and more adaptable space to better suit the types of businesses requested by the community.



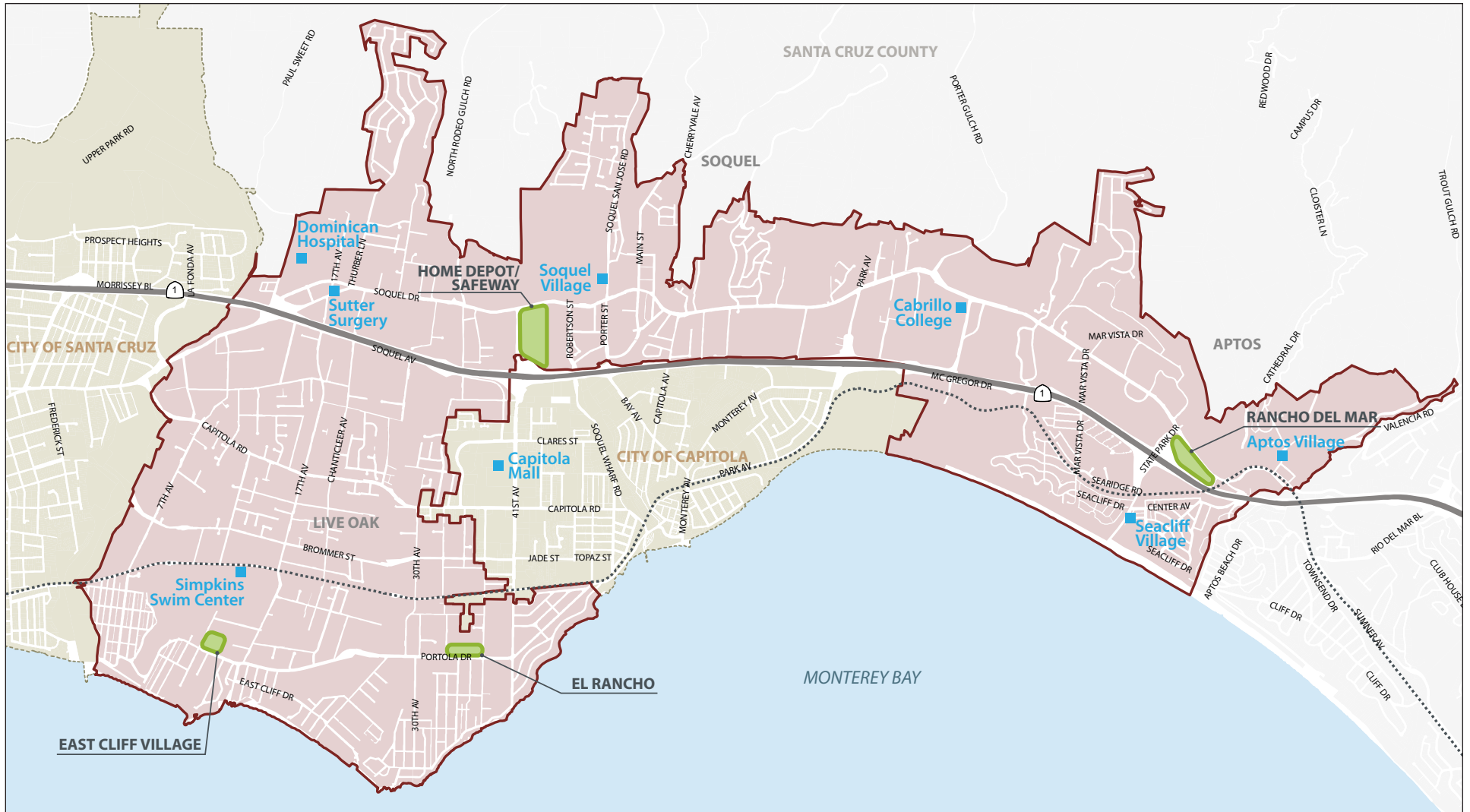
El Rancho Shopping Center on Portola Drive

- Adding landscaping to create a more inviting and pleasant environment.
- Adding public gathering places, such as plazas, courtyards, and outdoor dining areas.
- Adding new office space so that jobs can be located closer to residents, stores, and services.
- Adding residential uses, such as townhomes or apartments, so that residents can live closer to stores and services; additional housing can support businesses and add to the economic vitality of the shopping center.

The transformation of aging shopping centers has been successful in many other communities. An early example is the Hillcrest District Uptown Project in San Diego. Twenty years ago this project transformed an aging shopping center into a lively, mixed-use community center. The completed project contains a grocery store anchor with housing above ground level commercial uses. New townhomes, public spaces, and community uses contribute to the vitality and success of the project. This type of project could serve as a model for long-term transformation of places such as upper 41st Avenue and El Rancho shopping center on Portola Drive.

Closer to Santa Cruz, the recent Alma Street mixed use project in Palo Alto is an example of the transformation of a smaller commercial property into a neighborhood-serving mixed-use center. Prior to redevelopment the site contained a strip commercial-style shopping center with a grocery store. The site was redeveloped with a new grocery store with offices above, and condominiums at the rear of the property. This model of commercial property redevelopment could be appropriate for East Cliff Village and other small shopping centers in the county.

FIGURE 4 - 7 MAJOR SHOPPING CENTERS



- Urban Service Line/Study Area
- Major Shopping Centers
- Rail Line



East Cliff Village Shopping Center Community Workshops

In April and June of 2013 the County hosted two community workshops to discuss the future of the East Cliff Village shopping center site. At these workshops residents described the need to update and activate the site and improve public safety. Many participants supported creating new public gathering places such as outdoor seating areas and an area that could continue to accommodate the Farmer's Market and other community events.

Desired land uses for the site included a small grocery store, café, restaurant, and neighborhood-serving retail and services. Participants also expressed general support for new professional or medical office. Opinions were mixed on the question of adding residential uses on the site. Some felt that housing would increase vitality and safety in the area, while others were concerned about neighborhood impacts from parking and traffic. All agreed that any type of new development should respect the scale and character of the neighborhood.

Suggested guiding principles for redevelopment of the East Cliff Village Shopping Center from these two workshops are attached to this Plan in Appendix E.



Uptown Shopping Center Redevelopment in San Diego.



Townhomes and residential above ground floor commercial in same center

Create Mixed-Use Activity Nodes

In addition to transforming shopping centers, vibrant centers also can be created through mixed-use infill development on sites in strategic locations. Figure 4-8 shows the types of locations where new mixed-use infill might be appropriate. These locations include areas close to major employment centers such as the Dominican/Sutter medical district and Cabrillo College, segments of transit corridors with an existing commercial character, and at the intersection of major arterials in Live Oak.

Figure 3-3 in Chapter 3 provides an illustration of what an infill, mixed-use project along Soquel Drive could look like. In the illustration retail, housing, and public spaces create a new activity center that complements the nearby medical uses. The scale and intensity of the development reflects its location on a transit corridor and proximity to a major employment center. Less intensive mixed-use development would be more appropriate in locations outside of employment centers such as at the intersection of major arterials in Live Oak and Aptos.

Creating new centers through infill and mixed-use development supports the County's sustainability goals in the following ways:

- New townhomes and multi-family housing increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Retail and services located close to jobs provide more opportunities for nearby workers to walk to stores and services.
- New public amenities strengthen the real estate market and make further investment more likely.






The East Cliff Village shopping center (above) could be redeveloped with pedestrian-friendly design and new public gathering places (below).

FIGURE 4 - 8 MIXED USE INFILL ATTRACTORS AND POSSIBILITIES



Types of Areas for Mixed Use Infill

-  Live Oak Major Intersections
-  Existing Employment Centers
-  Transit Corridor with Existing Non-Residential Character



- Opportunities for shared parking reduce the amount of land needed for parking and increase the economic feasibility of infill development.
- New public gathering places serve residents and workers.
- New commercial development provides modern retail space to better meet market demand.

Strengthen Existing Village Centers

Vibrant centers can also be achieved by strengthening existing village centers. The historic villages of Soquel, Aptos, and Seacliff contribute to a unique sense of place and community identity. They are home to a variety of small local businesses that serve the daily needs of residents, workers, and visitors. The traditional pedestrian-friendly and mixed-use development pattern provides opportunities for nearby residents to walk or bike to a variety of destinations.

Figure 4-9 shows the boundaries of town plans for Soquel Village, Aptos Village, and Seacliff Village. These town plans describe the desired type of development as well as transportation and public improvements. Any new development within towns must reflect the distinctive character of each community through careful site planning, building design, and architectural style. New development must also respect adjacent residential uses and minimize traffic, parking, and noise impacts within these neighborhoods.

There are vacant and underutilized lots that can accommodate infill development within existing town centers. New residences in commercial buildings would increase pedestrian activity and economic vitality in core



Outdoor dining as part of a mixed-use development



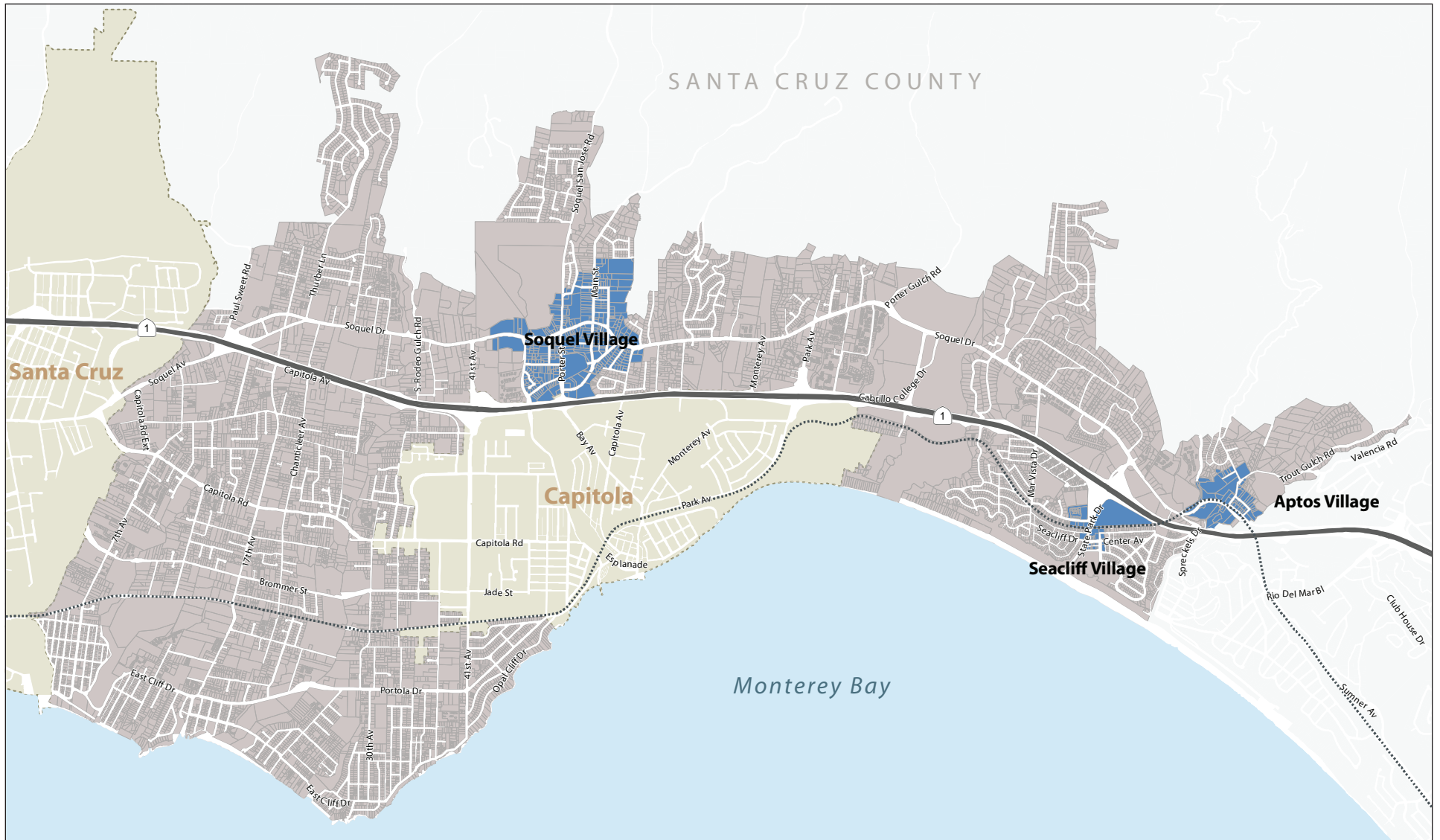
Two-story mixed-use project with office above retail

Community Voices

“Families need places to go that they can walk to”

“More community gathering places.”

FIGURE 4 - 9 TOWN PLAN BOUNDARIES



- Plan Area
- Rail Line
- Town Plan Area



areas. New ground floor retail, restaurants, and outdoor dining would provide valued amenities for residents and visitors. New visitor accommodations in designated areas would also activate those areas and supply additional customers for shops and restaurants. Figure 3-3 in Chapter 3 illustrates one example of infill development.

Opportunities also exist for infill residential development around the edges of town centers. In these areas a variety of housing types, including small-lot single-family homes, townhomes, and small apartments would increase housing choices and support local businesses within the town centers.



Aptos Village Center

HOUSING CHOICE

The adopted Vision for the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan (Chapter 2) includes increased housing choices to meet the broad range of housing needs and preferences within the county. Most housing in the Plan area today is in the form of single-family detached homes. These homes are typically located away from stores, services, and areas with good transit service, and are the most expensive housing. As the average age of residents in the County continues to increase, this type of housing will create challenges for seniors who wish to age in place. The existing housing stock is also poorly suited to meet the needs of singles, students, and young families.

Community Voices

“Affordable, flexible housing stock”

“Develop housing near or within services, jobs”

“Socio-economic diversity through planning and implementation”

“Variety of housing price levels at locations served by alternative transportation”

Housing affordability is a critical issue in Santa Cruz County. Based on data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the Santa Cruz-Watsonville area is the third least affordable area in the country for renters. Of the 226 areas tracked by National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), the Santa Cruz-Watsonville area ranks 220th in terms of affordability of for-sale housing. Among metropolitan areas with less than 500,000 residents, the Santa-Cruz Watsonville area is the second least affordable metro area in the nation (median household cost relative to median household income).

Increasing housing choice will be even more important in the future as demographics continue to shift. To increase housing choice consistent with the principles of sustainable development, this Plan suggests the following two strategies:

- Locate housing close to jobs, stores, and services
- Encourage a variety of housing types



Small lot single-family homes facing a central courtyard.



Rental townhomes in Soquel

Locate Housing Close to Jobs, Stores, and Services

New housing should be located in places that reduce resident dependence on the automobile. Ideal locations for new housing in the Plan area include areas that are close to major employment centers or that have access to transit that

serve these centers. New housing should also be located to allow residents to walk or bike to neighborhood-serving stores and services. These destinations could be existing (such as in existing village centers) or could be provided as part of new mixed use and commercial infill along transit corridors and in neighborhood centers.

Ideally, all residents should be able to walk or bike to a variety of neighborhood-serving stores within 20 to 30 minutes. This concept is referred to as “walk circle” and is an important component of a sustainable community. Generally, participants at Plan workshops responded well to the concept of a “20 minute neighborhood” which contains neighborhood-serving uses within walking distance.

Locating new housing in these types of places is consistent with existing County policy. Housing Element Program 3.5 states:

“Support additional incentives that will expand the opportunities for increased residential uses within mixed use developments in the County, such as flats above retail uses, including expanding the Planned Unit Development (PUD) Ordinance to facilitate such uses. Potential incentives include defining nodes/corridors where mixed use projects would be strongly encouraged or required and exploring reduced parking and other standards for mixed use projects.”

Figures 4-12 and 4-14 at the end of this chapter show some possible locations for new multi-family housing along Soquel Drive in Soquel and Aptos. These locations include the Atilia’s site, among others. Implementation of the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan will involve further analysis of the suitability of these sites for additional housing.

Encourage a Variety of Housing Types

Housing types are not limited to detached single-family homes or apartment buildings. A broad array of housing types are possible within the Plan area. A variety of housing types will increase choices for residents and better meet the housing needs of a diverse community.

Following are illustrations of various types of residential developments. However, the full range of options is not available at this time to Santa Cruz County because the current General Plan and County Code do not allow some types, and can discourage others. Planned Unit Developments and variances would be required to develop some of these styles, where existing site standards and density are limitations that prevent these housing choices.

Housing affordability is closely linked to density. The County can promote affordable housing choice by allowing a greater variety of housing types that require less land area per unit. Denser housing must be carefully located and designed to complement its surroundings and enhance the quality of life for current and future residents.

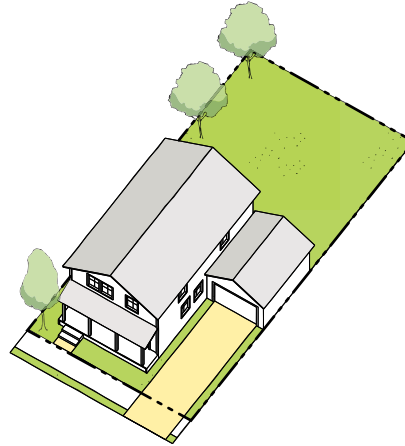
Figure 4-10 illustrates some example housing types grouped into three general categories:

- **Single-Family Types** include small lot single-family homes, accessory dwelling units/second units, side yard homes, and bungalow courts. This housing type is well suited for young families and can be located within or adjacent to existing single-family neighborhoods.
- **Multi-Family Types** include duplex, triplex, and quadplex homes, townhomes, small apartment buildings, and studios. Multi-family housing provides more affordable housing choices for seniors, singles, and students.

FIGURE 4 - 10 HOUSING TYPES - SINGLE FAMILY (1 OF 4)

SMALL LOT SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

A small lot single-family home is a detached residential structure on a small lot that provides a complete, independent living facility for one household. This type of development is typically located in low- to medium-density residential neighborhoods or in transition areas between commercial areas and low- to medium-density residential neighborhoods.



SECOND UNITS/ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (ADUS)

An accessory dwelling unit or ADU is a secondary dwelling unit located as a part of a structure, or above or behind a detached or semi-detached garage structure. ADUs contribute to a more diverse housing stock and can provide affordable housing opportunities. This type of development is typically located in low- to medium-density residential neighborhoods.

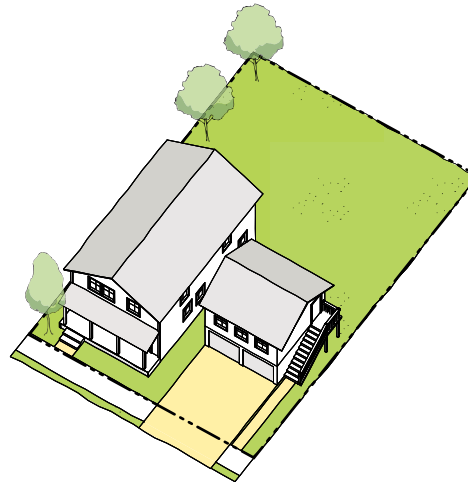
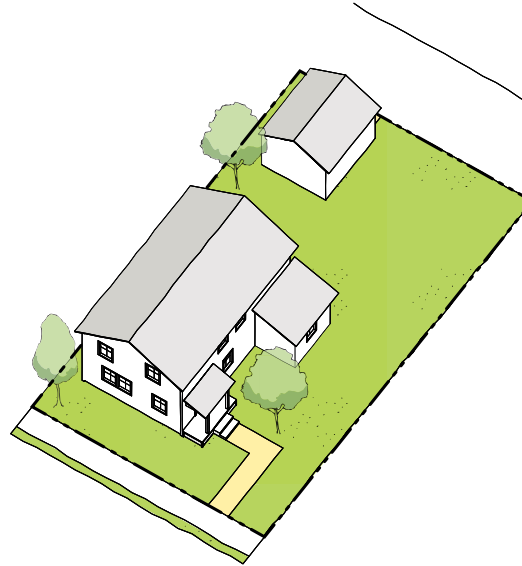


FIGURE 4 - 10 HOUSING TYPES - SINGLE FAMILY (2 OF 4)

SIDE YARD HOMES

A side yard home is a single-family home that occupies one side of a lot, leaving a spacious side yard. Typically, the side yard home is oriented on a narrow lot so that the primary façade takes advantage of a southern or southwestern exposure, and vehicle access is taken from an alley. This type of development is typically located in low- to medium-density residential neighborhoods.



BUNGALOW COURTS

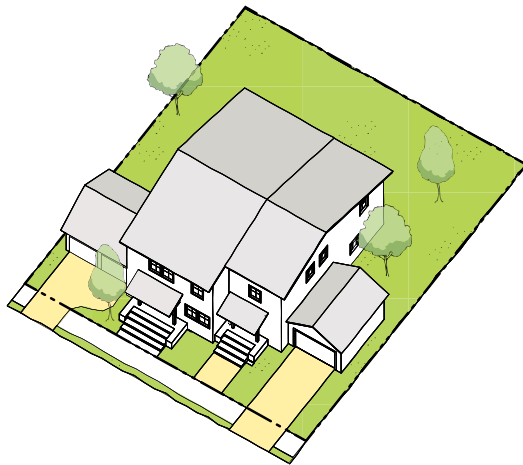
A bungalow court consists of a grouping of detached single-family homes arranged around a courtyard that is typically perpendicular to the street. This housing type allows a high-quality, single-family living environment with shared outdoor space. This type of development is typically integrated into low- to medium-density residential neighborhoods.



FIGURE 4 - 10 HOUSING TYPES - MULTI-FAMILY (3 OF 4)

DUPLEX, TRIPLEX, AND QUADPLEX

A duplex, triplex, or quadplex is a single residential structure that contains two to four dwelling units, with each unit having its own entrance. The dwelling units may be positioned side-by-side, back-to-back, or stacked above each other. This type of development is typically located in low- to high-density residential neighborhoods or in transition areas between commercial areas and residential neighborhoods.



TOWNHOMES OR ROWHOUSES

A townhome is a single-family home attached to one or more other single-family homes in a linear arrangement, either as multiple townhome units per parcel or one townhome unit per parcel. Because of its linear arrangement, a townhome typically features a yard and a garage in the rear. This type of development is located in medium-density residential neighborhoods or in transition zones between commercial areas and low-density residential neighborhoods. Rowhouses tend to be narrower and more dense than townhomes, and are a traditional style in older neighborhoods.



SMALL APARTMENT BUILDINGS

A small apartment building is a 2- to 3-story structure that contains multiple dwelling units that share one or more common entries. A small apartment building is developed at a scale that is compatible with adjacent single-family homes. As such, small apartment buildings are typically located in medium- to high-density residential neighborhoods or in transition zones between commercial areas and residential neighborhoods.

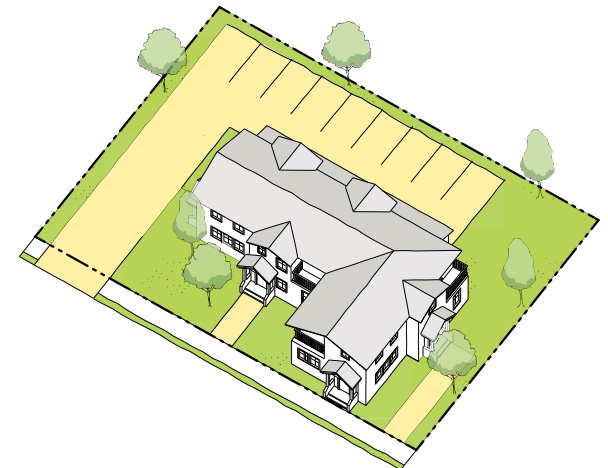


FIGURE 4 - 10 HOUSING TYPES - MIXED-USE AND LIVE/WORK (4 OF 4)

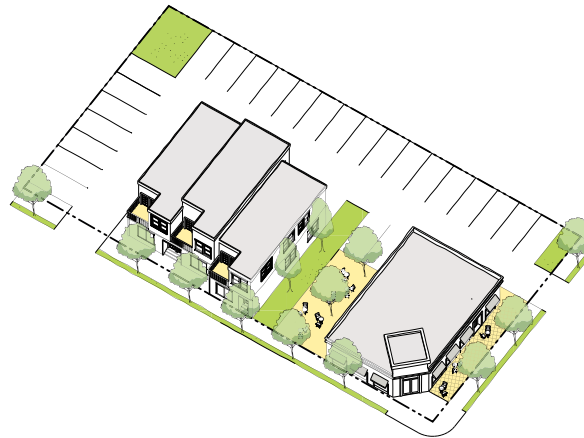
VERTICAL MIXED USE

A vertical mixed-use building is a small- to medium-scale building that provides a mix of uses. It typically consists of retail, service, and/or office uses on the ground floor and residential uses on the upper floors. In areas with a fair amount of pedestrian traffic, vertical mixed-use buildings provide pedestrian-oriented retail or services on the ground floor. This type of development is typically located in downtown commercial neighborhoods, along major arterials and transit corridors, or on corner lots in residential neighborhoods.



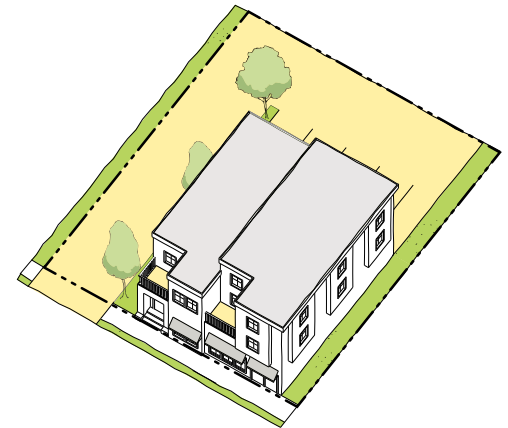
HORIZONTAL MIXED USE

Horizontal mixed use is a type of mixed-use development where residential uses are located behind or next to non-residential uses on the same development site. The uses could be placed in the same building or in separate buildings on the site. This type of development is typically located in downtown commercial neighborhoods, along major arterials and transit corridors, or in transition zones between commercial areas and residential neighborhoods.



LIVE/WORK

A live/work unit is a building that is used jointly for commercial and residential purposes. A live/work unit is typically 2- to 3-stories high with a non-residential use on the ground floor. This type of development is typically located in downtown areas, commercial and service-commercial areas, and higher-density residential neighborhoods where the residential uses are compatible with adjacent non-residential uses.



Housing Element Update

Santa Cruz County is beginning a process to update its General Plan Housing Element as required by State law. This Housing Element must identify adequate sites to accommodate the County's fair share of housing over the next ten years. As determined by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG), the County's fair share housing requirement during this period is 1,314 units from 2014 to 2023.

Sites to accommodate a portion of these units must allow residential densities sufficient to accommodate housing that is more affordable to lower-income households. The State typically requires sites to have a density of at least 20 units per acre to meet this requirement.

The Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan envisions higher density housing located close to employment centers, stores, and services. Adopting the housing strategies described in this chapter would help the County to comply with State Housing Element law and would expand the supply of affordable housing needed by residents.

- **Mixed-Use and Live/Work Types** include housing integrated with commercial in one building (vertical mixed use) and in separate buildings on one property (horizontal mixed-use). Live/work units incorporate commercial and residential uses within a single space. Housing in mixed-use projects increases land use diversity and the supply of housing within close proximity to stores and services.

An additional type of housing could be a unit or a lot that allows for small markets or small co-working opportunities within residential neighborhoods. The commercial use could occupy either a portion of a housing unit or a lot within a neighborhood that is zoned with a Neighborhood Commercial (NC) Overlay and approved for commercial use.

LIVABLE COMMUNITY DESIGN

Well-designed buildings and public spaces are an essential component of a sustainable community. Good design enhances a unique sense of place, supports economic vitality, and facilitates community interaction. Good design also influences residents' overall quality of life and sense of well-being.

Community design also affects transportation choices and behavior. An attractive and inviting public realm encourages bicycle and pedestrian activity. Communities designed around the needs of automobile discourage walking, biking, and use of transit.

This section describes aspects of livable community design as it relates to development sites, buildings, and parking. Specific recommendation and guidelines are provided for each of these general topics.

Site Design

- **Building Orientation.** Buildings should be highly visible and readily accessible from the sidewalk, encouraging people to walk from place to place. Orient buildings towards the street, so that they frame the pedestrian environment.
- **Building Placement.** Site commercial buildings near the back of the sidewalk to provide a strong definition of the public realm. Consider setting portions of a building back from the street to create usable outdoor space. Use fences, walls, planters, or landscaped areas to define the edge of the outdoor space.
- **Setback Variation.** Buildings should be set back varying distances from the street frontage.
- **Plazas and Open Space.** Integrate semi-public outdoor spaces, such as plazas or courtyards, into private development where feasible to help support pedestrian activity and connect to the public realm. Ensure that outdoor areas are visible from public streets and accessible from buildings, streets, and pedestrian and bicycle networks.
- **Vehicle Access.** Limit access points to the minimum necessary to serve the property. Minimize the width of all driveways. If a driveway must accommodate large vehicles, such as delivery trucks, use the minimum width that can accommodate the effective turning radius of these vehicles.



Building placed close to the sidewalk and oriented to the street



Outdoor dining creates activity and visual interest

Crime Prevention

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) is the practice of designing sites, buildings, and public spaces with the goal of reducing crime, alleviating the fear of crime and improving quality of life. The following is a list of the guiding principles of CPTED:

- **Natural Surveillance.** Encourage legitimate activity and provide visual access to spaces, in order to increase the number of people using, watching, and caring about the place.
- **Territory Reinforcement.** Ensure that the transitions between private and public space are visible, so that people have an appropriate perception of how spaces are meant to be used.
- **Access Control.** Clearly communicate where people are allowed and not allowed to prevent illegitimate use of a space.
- **Maintenance.** Ensure that development is designed in a way that reduces maintenance needs after construction. Poorly maintained spaces send a signal that the community is willing to tolerate negative activities in these spaces.
- **Appropriate Use.** Utilize design rails and decorative ledges to discourage skateboard use of seating walls. Avoid blank walls that can provide a blank surface for graffiti.

- **Outdoor Seating.** Incorporate seating into high-traffic outdoor areas to maximize opportunities for people to interact.
- **Landscaping.** Incorporate landscaping into projects to provide green elements and shade. Landscaping can also soften the interface between the front of a building and the sidewalk as well as allow for stormwater infiltration.
- **Building Entrances.** Orient the main entrances of a building toward a public street, and include architectural features that give them prominence. Locate transit stops, pedestrian seating, bicycle parking, and similar amenities near building entrances.

- **Pedestrian and Bicycle Access and Connectivity.** All sites must provide clear, safe points of access for pedestrians and bicyclists. Provide attractive, well-marked pedestrian links through and around the site that create a clear path of travel between parking, buildings and sidewalks.

Building Design

- **Building Rhythm.** Establish a rhythm for building façades that is small-scale, with individual building bay widths of 25 to 50 feet. Design each building with varying wall planes, heights, and/or contrasting materials to break up visual mass and avoid large, featureless structures.

- **Mass, Proportion, and Façade Detail.** Subdivide horizontal mass into portions or segments compatible with the scale of adjacent buildings. Employ vertical architectural elements such as columns, piers, or pilasters to subdivide buildings into smaller increments at the ground floor and upper stories.
- **First Floor Ceiling Height.** Provide adequate ceiling heights (12 to 15 feet) for first floor retail uses to create attractive and comfortable spaces for tenants.
- **Ground Floor Activities** Locate public and publicly oriented uses on the ground floor of buildings to encourage pedestrian activity. In buildings containing retail, commercial, community-serving, or other active uses, position windows for visibility by both pedestrians and motorists at street level. Maintain a minimum of 50 to 60 percent of the ground floor linear dimension as evenly distributed display windows.
- **Entries.** Accentuate all entries with features such as moldings, lighting, overhangs, or awnings. Locate residential entries on the front façade of buildings and provide direct access to the sidewalk or street.

Parking

- **Parking Lot Placement.** Place parking lots behind buildings wherever possible, so that pedestrians can access buildings more easily and buildings have a visual presence on the street.
- **Buffers and Screening.** If a parking lot is adjacent to a residential area, provide fences, walls, and landscaping to create a buffer around the back and side of the lot. Where parking lots are adjacent to a street, use low walls and attractive, varied landscaping to provide screening.

- **Parking Structures.** Break up the building's façade with vertical elements, such as projecting columns and offset wall planes, as well as variations in color, texture, and materials. Reinforce the pedestrian realm by wrapping the parking garage with retail or office uses.

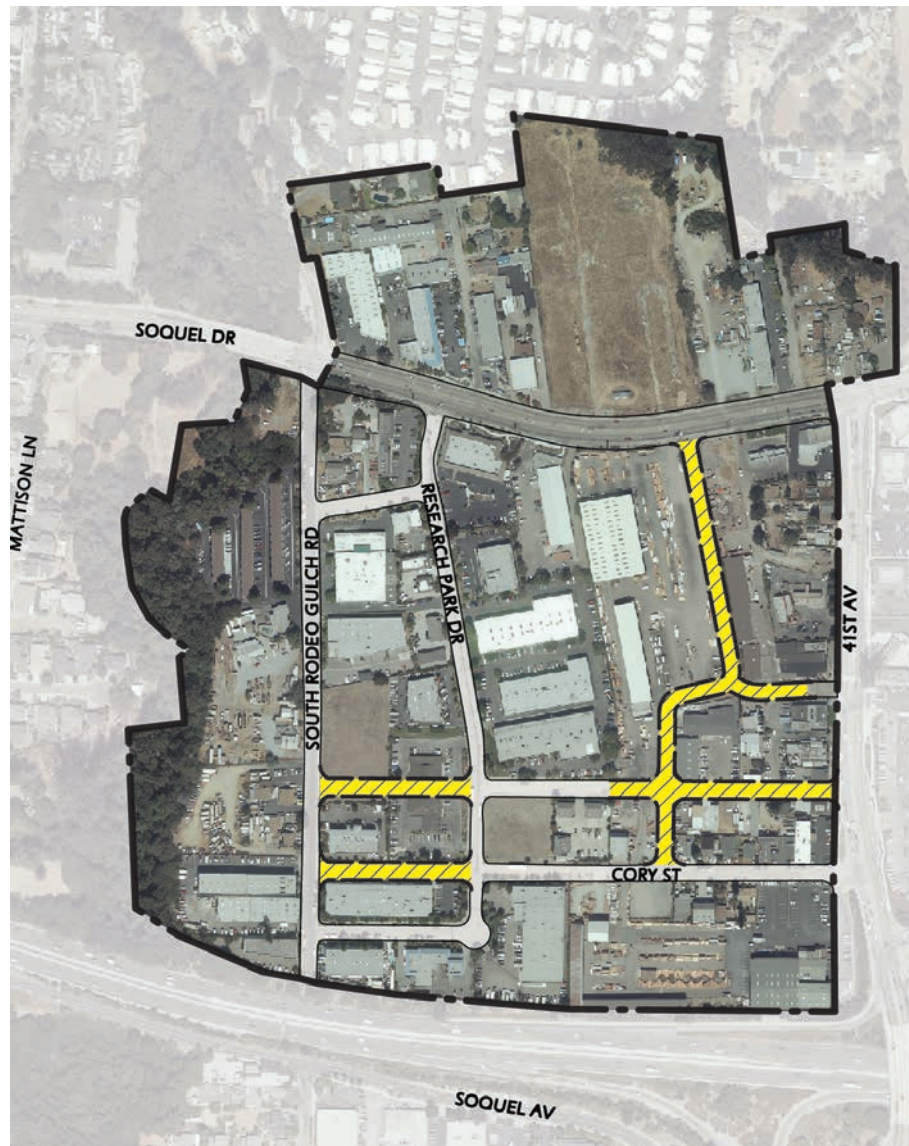


Shop front windows create visual interest and enhance vitality



Building articulation creates pedestrian-scale rhythm

Figure 4-11 New Streets



INCREASED CONNECTIONS

At community workshops for the Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan, residents frequently identified traffic congestion as a major concern. Residents are looking for solutions to reduce congestion, increase mobility, and expand transportation choices both in terms of type of transportation (mode) and route.

Reducing traffic congestion will primarily result from targeted improvements to the transportation system as well as long-term shifts in the county's land use pattern. Another way to reduce traffic congestion is to increase the number of connections for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians. New connections can be created as bicycle and pedestrian pathways through and between properties. In addition to improving circulation, these new connections can also activate public spaces and improve public safety by increasing the number of people who occupy public spaces.

In the long term, new connections can be created for vehicles as well. While costly, a few new streets may be considered in areas where new development is likely to occur, which may help to fund the improvements. New streets can be publicly or privately owned and can be located in both residential and non-residential areas.

At Workshop Series #2, residents reviewed ideas for new streets in the four land use focus areas and the Apts circulation focus area. Workshop participants expressed strong support for new streets to increase vehicle connections and reduce traffic congestion. Figure 4-11 shows a conceptual alignment for new streets in the Upper 41st focus area. Chapter 7 shows additional ideas for new streets in the focus areas.

Creating new streets provides a variety of benefits. In addition to reducing vehicle congestion, they could also increase public safety by improving emergency vehicle access to properties. New streets may stimulate private investment and increase development opportunities by improving property access. Breaking up large block patterns also utilizes land more efficiently and creates a more pedestrian-friendly environment. A walkable block pattern is one of the community design features shown to increase the frequency by which people walk or ride bicycles to destinations. As discussed earlier in this chapter, block lengths of 200 to 400 feet are ideal for walkable neighborhoods.

There are a number of ways that the County can encourage this concept. A first step is to adopt design guidelines that encourage through passage and right-of-way dedication. Where new connections are particularly important, new streets can be adopted as part of a detailed area plan, specific plan, or Planned Unit Development (PUD), and new development would be required to respect these plan lines. In some cases, new streets may be privately owned and maintained; in other cases, property owners could dedicate land to the County as a public street. Experience from other communities has shown that property owners are often supportive of creating new streets, as it substantially increases the value of property by improving public access.

The County should consider creating new zoning tools, including incentive zoning and the creation of master plans and specific plans, to help support creation of new connections. This may be particularly important for the Sutter/Palo Alto Medical Foundation campus and Rittenhouse property on the northeast corner of Soquel Drive and Thurber Lane, as well as the upper 41st Avenue area.



A pedestrian walkway increases connections through a property

Community Diagrams

Figures 4-12 through 4-15 graphically illustrate many of the ideas described above combined with transportation ideas described in Chapter 5 of this Plan. These figures divide the Plan area into four sections:

- Soquel Drive from the County border to 41st Avenue
- Soquel Drive from 41st Avenue to Cabrillo College
- Aptos from Cabrillo College to the Plan boundary
- Live Oak south of Highway 1

These figures synthesize ideas discussed in this Plan to show where new neighborhood activity centers could be located, together with possible new vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian connections between these centers and other destinations. The figures show possible new locations for multi-family housing and how these locations relate to existing and future employment centers. The figures show how land use density, diversity, and design can be guided in a way that increases transportation choices and supports a more sustainable development pattern.

FIGURE 4 - 12 WEST SOQUEL DRIVE COMMUNITY LAND USE PATTERN

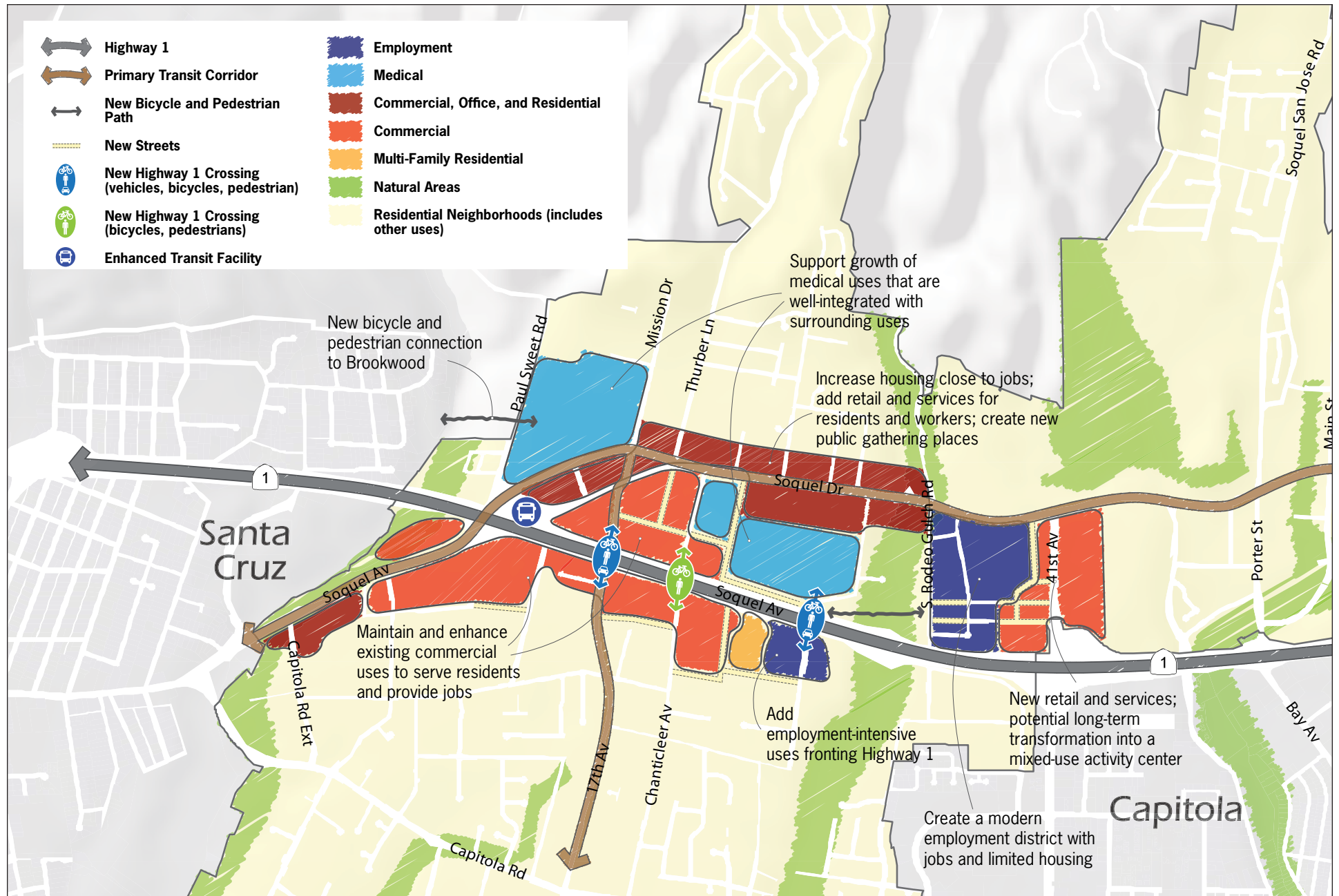


FIGURE 4 - 13 SOQUEL COMMUNITY LAND USE PATTERN

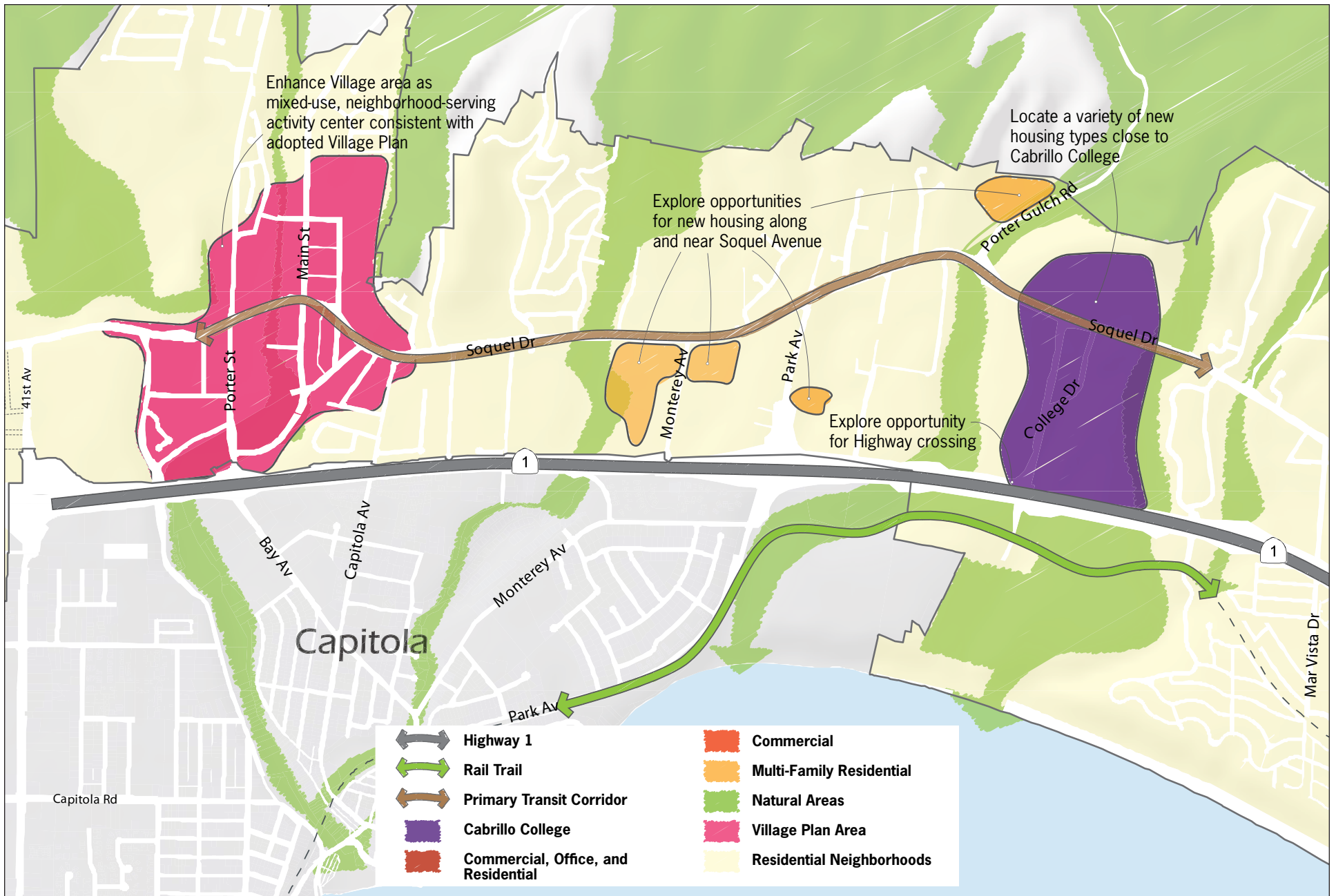


FIGURE 4 - 14 APTOS COMMUNITY LAND USE PATTERN

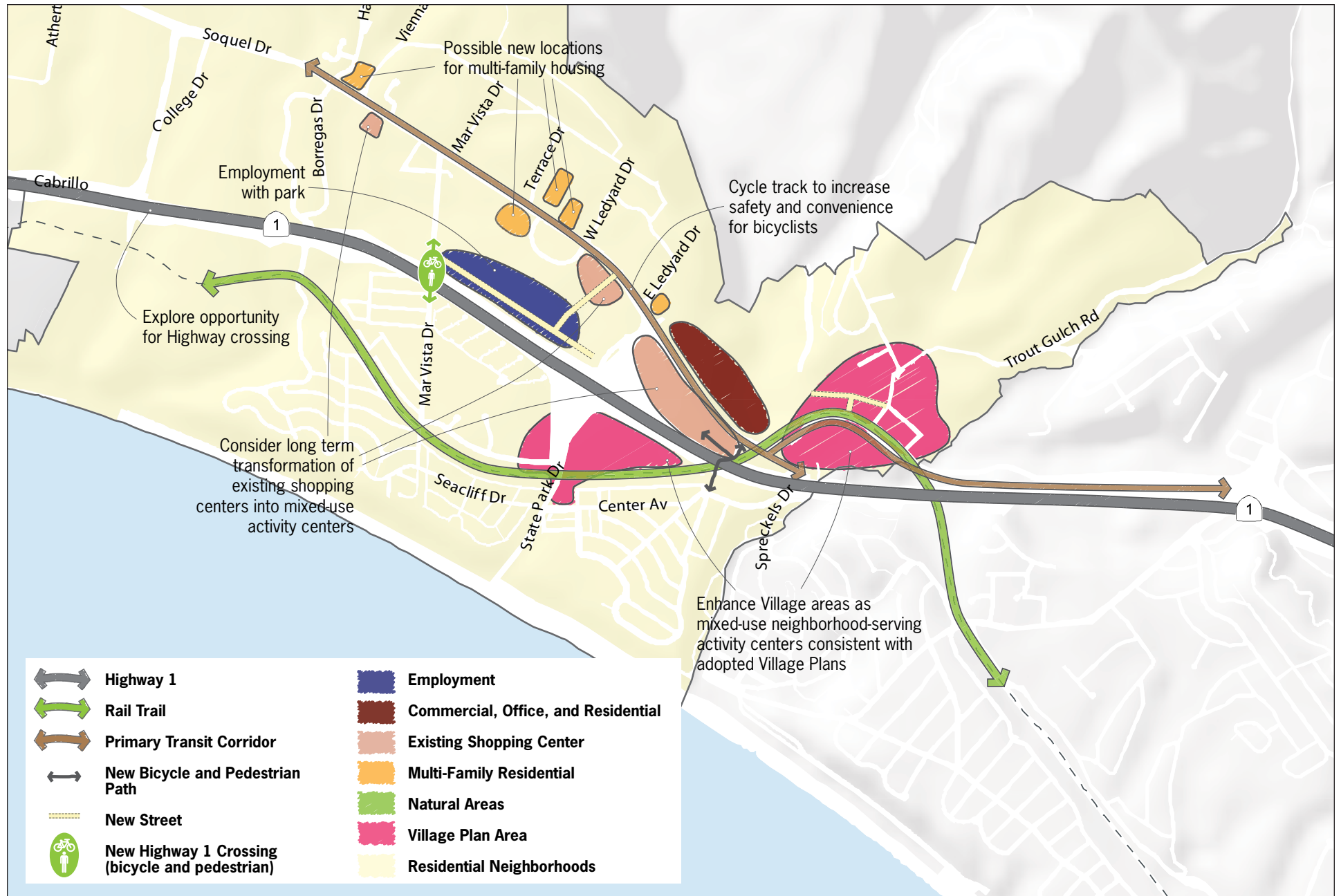


FIGURE 4 - 15 LIVE OAK COMMUNITY LAND USE PATTERN

