

**APPENDIX B  
RESIDENTIAL DENSITY**

# RESIDENTIAL DENSITY - SPECIFIC AREAS OF THE CITY

## Policy Issue

Examine specific areas of the City to determine appropriate residential densities.

Public comments have expressed that zoning for multi-family development is not consistent with the existing development patterns in certain neighborhoods. Neighborhoods identified include: portions of both Central and North Central neighborhoods and the 42nd Avenue/El Camino Real area. City staff has met with representatives from the Central Neighborhood Association and Home Association of North Central San Mateo to review requests for evaluations of land use in these neighborhoods. In total, there are 14 specific areas that these neighborhood representatives have expressed interest in the City evaluating.

## General Plan Policies for Land Use Changes

There are several factors that must be taken into consideration when creating or making changes to land use designations, including: review of the existing predominant land uses and patterns in a given area; the potential for creating legal non-conforming uses of property; and potential issues of eliminating buffers or transitional land use densities between high density and commercial uses to lower density residential areas.

The City's General Plan provides guidance for minimizing non-conforming uses and looking at existing land use patterns in re-designating land.

**Land Use Element Policy LU 1.9** states:

“LU 1.9 Single-Family and Duplex Preservation. Protect established predominantly single-family areas by limiting new development in such areas to single-family uses, and protect predominantly duplex areas by limiting new development to low-density residential uses as delineated on the Land Use Map. Consider re-designating multi-family areas to single-family and low-density residential uses where such uses predominant and where the creation of additional legal non-conforming uses would be minimized.”

In addition, the City has developed land use patterns that allow for transitional properties at densities and land uses that create buffers from high density zoned areas to lower density properties to allow for a gradual increase in building mass, height, and residential density. It is important to maintain these buffers in order to prevent density extremes

from one parcel to an adjacent parcel which could result in impacts to the lower density properties, and to create a gradual visual change from one land use to another use.

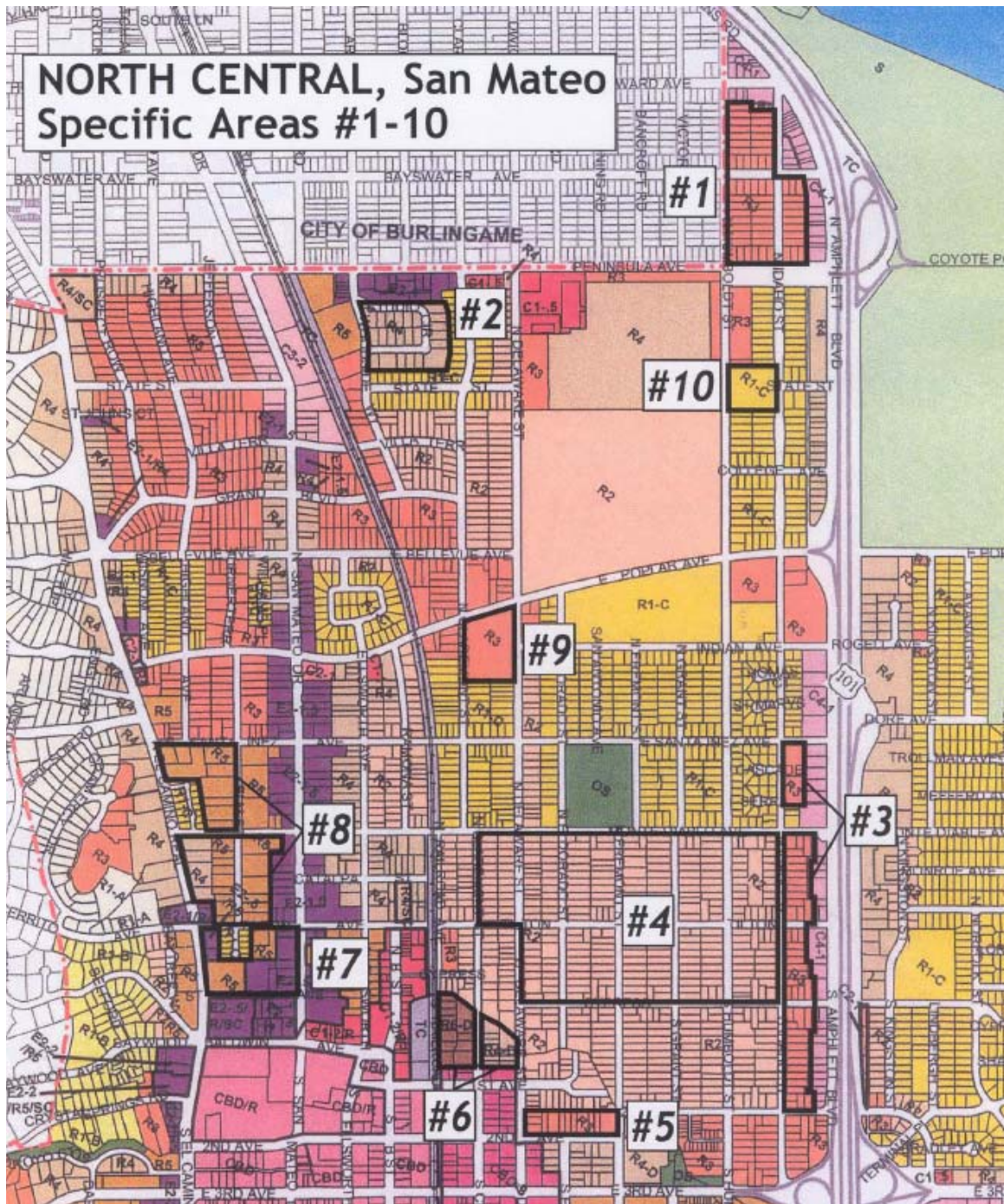
### Potential Impacts of Density Changes

As previously stated, density reductions may generate impacts related to the use of property and land value. Owners of properties that are proposed for density reductions may experience a loss in land value. Reclassifying property from a higher residential density standard to a lower residential density standard would also create a non-conforming use of properties, if new density standards cause existing residential development to exceed the maximum density permitted on a given site.

Reclassifying property from commercial to residential use could create a significant legal non-conforming issue for property owners and tenants. The main purpose for re-designating commercial to residential is to require redevelopment of an area to residential use over time. However, existing buildings and uses may remain as a legal non-conforming building or use. If a non-conforming commercial building is destroyed by more than 50 percent of its value, it must be replaced with a conforming residential building or use.

### Specific Areas & Neighborhoods Group's Requests

There are a total of 14 specific areas that the neighborhood representatives asked staff to evaluate the need to downzone residential densities. In order to comprehensively look at the issues related to these potential changes, staff has added the review of these 14 specific areas into the work program for the General Plan Update and/or Downtown Specific Plan Update. The following are the specific areas:



**Specific Area #1**

Rezone from R3 (medium density) to R1 (single family) the residential area north of Peninsula Avenue between Humboldt Street and Amphlett Boulevard.

Although this area is currently designated for medium density multi-family (R3), the majority of the properties are developed with single family and duplex dwellings, especially to the west of Idaho Street. Of the 45 parcels west of Idaho Street, two contain multi-family dwellings, 13 have two units, and 30 are single family residences. On the east side of Idaho Street there are five multi-family properties, five duplex dwellings and 3 single family residences. This residential area is bordered by service commercial to the east and north.

#### Area 2.

Rezone to R3 (medium density) the area bordering Studio Circle that is currently zoned R4 (high density). The Studio Circle area was developed in the early 1960's with six and seven unit apartment buildings on each lot, with the exception of two lots that have 12 and 16 units. The majority of the properties are built-out at 85 percent of the maximum permitted floor area or higher (one at 32 percent and three at 60 to 70 percent). This area is bordered by executive office and single family zoning.

#### Specific Area #3

Rezone from R3 (medium density) to R2 (low density multi-family) the area on the east side of North Idaho Street between East Santa Inez and Second Avenue.

Area 3 is generally bounded by single family and duplex zoning to the west and north, multiple family zoning to the south, and service commercial to the east. Of the 45 properties in this area, 11 are developed with multi-family dwellings, 7 have two units, and the remaining 27 parcels contain single family dwellings. The two large parcels located north of Monte Diablo Avenue are developed with both 18 and 16 unit apartment buildings. Existing development in the remainder of the area is mixed among multi-family, duplex, and single family without an apparent pattern of development.

#### Area 4.

Rezone to R1 (single family) the area bounded by Cypress Avenue, North Idaho Street, Monte Diablo Avenue, Claremont and Delaware streets (currently R2 low density multi-family).

*Need to check land use patterns in this area*

#### Area 5.

Rezone to R2 (low density multi-family) the area north of Second Avenue between Fremont Street and Delaware Street. This area is located in the Gateway Area within the boundaries of the Downtown Specific Plan. The land use designation is medium density multi-family (R3). Existing development consists of a mixture of single family, multi-family, and mixed use properties.



#### Area 6.

Downzone to R4 (high density) and R3 (medium density) the area bounded by the rail corridor to the west, Cypress Avenue, South Claremont Street, and First Avenue, currently designated R6-D (high density - downtown) and R4-D (high density - downtown). This area is located in the both the Gateway and Central Claremont areas in the Downtown Specific Plan. This area is located directly across the rail corridor from the City's Transit Center, and contains a mix of commercial and residential land uses.

#### Area 7.

Rezone to R3 (medium density) the area bounded by Tilton Avenue, El Camino Real, St. Matthews Avenue, and North San Mateo Drive, currently zoned R5 (high density) and mixed use E2-.5 (executive office with high density residential). This area is located in the North B/Tilton Avenue Area within the boundaries of the Downtown Specific Plan. Existing land uses include Commercial offices, multi-family residential developments, two duplex and two single family parcels.

#### Area 8.

Rezone to R3 (medium density) the area bounded by El Camino Real, East Santa Inez, Elm Street, and Tilton Avenue, currently zoned both R5 (high density) and R4 (high density). This area encompasses portions of several city blocks and is located to the north of the boundary of the Downtown Specific Plan area. Existing residential uses are mixed with predominantly multi-family dwellings, three single family dwellings, and two religious institutions. The majority of the multi-family dwellings have been constructed at or near the maximum floor area and high density designation permitted on the properties.

#### Specific Area #9

Rezone from R3 (medium density) to R2 (low density multi-family) the large parcel located on the southeast corner of East Poplar Avenue and North Claremont Street.

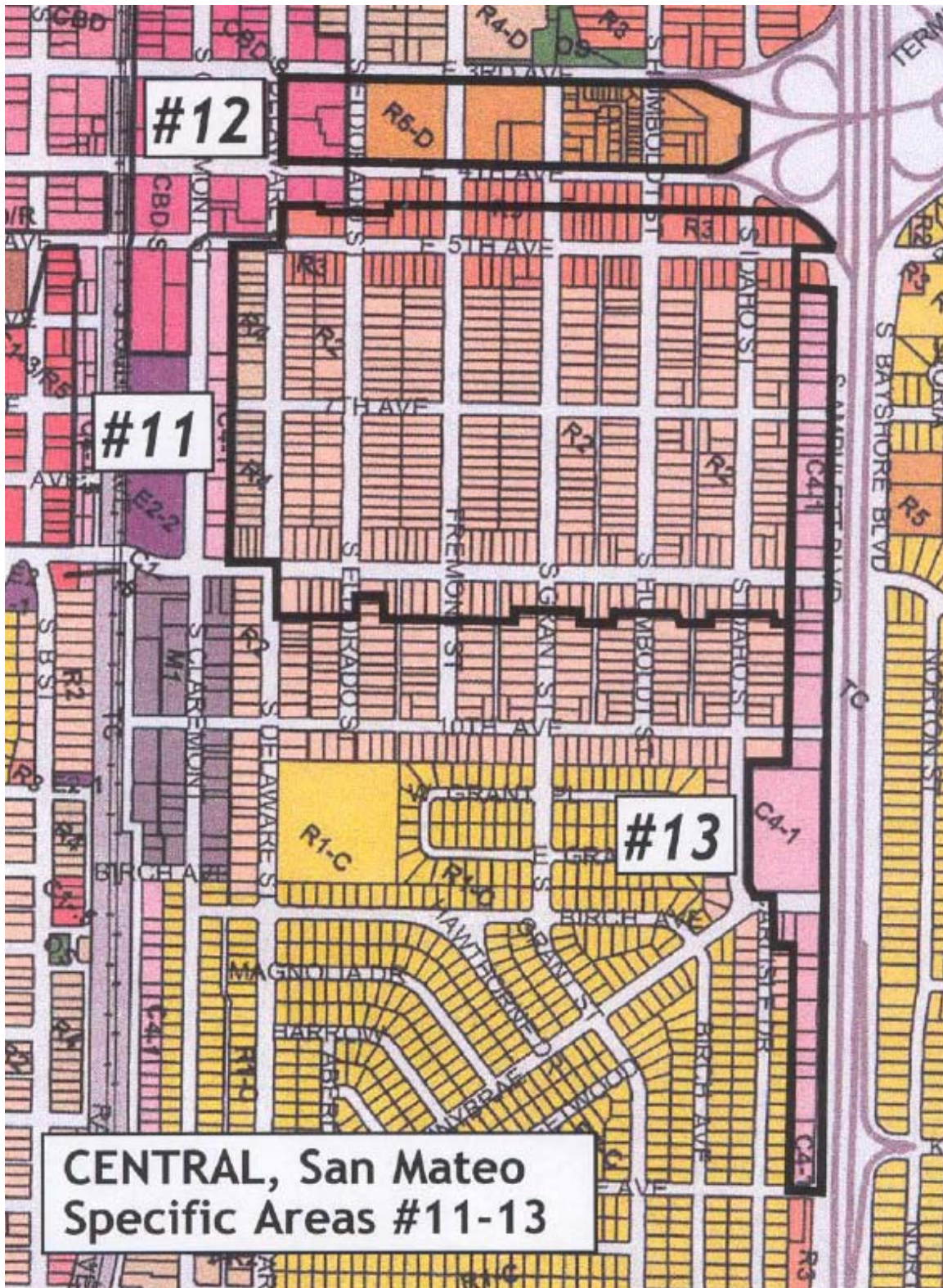
This property is currently owned and used by the California Water Service Company. Redevelopment of the property at medium density would yield a maximum of 116 dwelling units. At the proposed lower density, approximately 58 units could be constructed.

#### Specific Area #10

Review zoning and land use for the County Courthouse, currently zoned R1 (single family).

This site is owned by the County of San Mateo and used as a county court facility. The City of San Mateo does not have land use jurisdiction over San Mateo County owned property, with the exception of review of County development proposals for conformance with the City's General Plan. The General Plan designates the site as a Public

Facility. The RI zoning delineates the type and intensity for redevelopment of the site to match surrounding single family residences if the County sells the property.



## Specific Area #11

Rezone the area from Idaho Street to both sides of Delaware Street, Fifth Avenue, and Ninth Avenue to R1 (single family residential).

The majority of this area is currently designated low density residential (zoned R2, two family dwellings). Properties on the west side of Delaware Street are designated high density residential (zoned R4, multiple family dwellings), and properties on both sides of Fifth Avenue are designated medium density residential (zoned R3, multiple family dwellings). Properties on the north side of Fifth Avenue are located in the Gateway Area within the boundaries of the Downtown Specific Plan. The survey provided by the homeowners indicates that this area is developed with 67 percent single family dwellings, 27 percent duplexes, and 7 percent multifamily dwellings. It should be noted that the 1990 General Plan process rezoned the majority of properties in this area from R3 to R2, with the exception of the Fifth Avenue area which was rezoned from R4 to R3.

### Area 12.

Reduce density on Third and Fourth Avenues from Idaho Street to Delaware Street. This area is located in the Gateway Area within the boundaries of the Downtown Specific Plan. The land use designation is both high density residential (R5-D, high density downtown) and downtown retail core support (CBD-S, Central Business District - Support). Existing development consists of a range of low to high density residential uses with commercial uses to the west of Eldorado Street.

### Area 13.

Replace the service commercial zoning on South Amphlett Boulevard from Fifth Avenue to Folkstone to low density residential. This area is designated service commercial (C4-1, service commercial) and lies between residential properties and South Amphlett Boulevard adjacent to the US 101 freeway. The commercial buildings in this area provide a transition from the freeway to lower density residential land uses to the west.





**Area 14.**

42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Area. The issue of increasing residential density in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue area was raised at the public workshop and TAC meeting related to land use changes. The General Plan designates this area for mixed use as Neighborhood Commercial/High Density Residential (50 units per acre). In addition, General Plan Land Use Element Policy PA 9.1 requires the preparation of a specific plan to determine land use compatibility, site planning, and circulation in the area. The policy and associated text states the following:

“PA 9.1: Forty-Second Avenue Center. Develop a Specific Plan for the area between 41st Avenue, Beresford Street, South El Camino Real (SR 82) and the Belmont border to improve the efficiency of the site design, circulation, appearance, and design relationship to surrounding uses, and to allow mixed commercial and residential expansion. Allow heights and intensities/densities as delineated on the Building Height and Intensity Plans.”

“The 42nd Avenue Shopping Center is intended to be the major neighborhood retail center in the southern portion of the City. Problems such as circulation, parking, access, and appearance have limited the market performance of the area. A Specific Plan will be prepared to address these problems and to maximize the center's economic vitality, provide housing opportunities, and encourage mixed use.”

In addition, the El Camino Real Master Plan states that this area should be developed to create a neighborhood oriented mixed-use center that serves as a gateway into San Mateo. Land use objectives include the establishment of a mixed-use plan that includes significant retail along El Camino Real, a neighborhood supermarket, and higher intensity residential development. Redevelopment in this area will be evaluated in conformance with the guidelines and policies contained in the Master Plan.