



*City of San Mateo*

# Downtown Area Plan

Approved by City Council on May 18, 2009

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## **II. Supporting Documents**

- A - Downtown Market Analysis and Development Strategy, Economic Research Associates, April 2, 2007
- B - Downtown Civic Plaza and Development Financial Assessment, Economic Research Associates, November 2007
- C - Memo: Preliminary Analysis of Lease Revenue from Kinko's Site From Bill Lee, Economic Research Associates to  
        Laura Snideman, City of San Mateo, March 6, 2007
- D - Study of San Mateo Downtown Parking Ratios, Hexagon Transportation Consultants, February 5, 2007
- E - Analysis of Fourth Avenue Lane Reduction, San Mateo, CA, Hexagon Transportation Consultants

\*NOTE: Supporting Documents are technical documents and are not part of this plan document. They are available for public review at City Hall.

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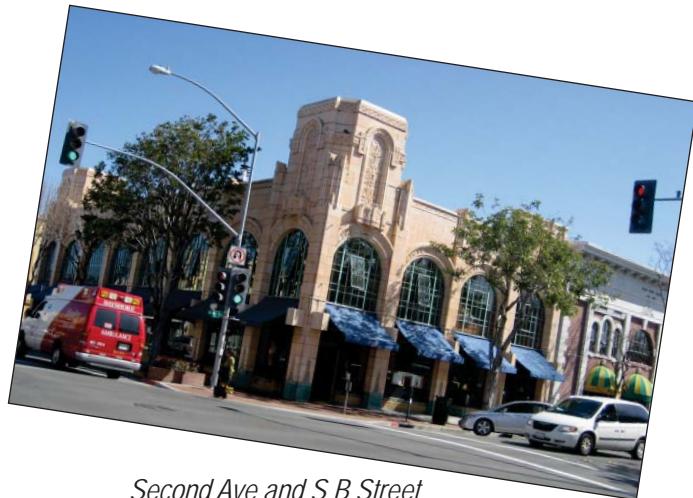
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Second Ave and S B Street

# Introduction

San Mateo's Downtown has historically been viewed as the center of the City. A vibrant retail, office and residential environment has been created over the past several years, as recent developments including the Downtown Cinema, Downtown Train Station, New Main Street Garage and other public and private developments have taken place. Traditionally, the pedestrian nature of the downtown, and its proximity to Central Park have helped to determine the quality of the downtown experience.

With the recent changes in the downtown over the past 10 years, there is a need to examine the future direction of the downtown. The type of private development which should be encouraged, the nature of public improvements, and the role of the City and Redevelopment Agency in actively and proactively supporting the downtown need to be determined.

This Downtown Plan update will provide a framework for future decision making. The policies will provide an overall

direction to be followed, and will be used to evaluate private development projects. Specific implementation measures will be developed to guide the City's and Redevelopment Agency's actions regarding public improvements, and the ultimate disposition of publicly owned land in the downtown.

## Downtown San Mateo

Downtown San Mateo comprises about 70 blocks and is generally bounded by El Camino Real, Tilton Avenue, San Mateo Creek, U.S. 101, 5th Avenue from U.S. 101 to Delaware and Ninth Avenue from Delaware to El Camino Real. The study area encompasses all of the area traditionally known as downtown plus the area known as the Gateway and portions of adjacent neighborhoods (refer to Downtown Plan Study Area Map at end of this chapter).

## OUR VISION FOR DOWNTOWN SAN MATEO

Downtown San Mateo provides for a pedestrian-friendly environment lending to its charm as a traditional center of the community. In the next years, the blend of historic buildings and new development will provide for a mix of retail, entertainment and housing opportunities. Central Park will provide a unique opportunity as an open space, recreational and cultural resource for the downtown, as well as the entire community. The downtown will remain a focal point of the community, both as a reminder of its historic heritage, and as a harbinger of San Mateo's role as the pre-eminent City in San Mateo County.

## Downtown Plan Document Format

The Downtown Plan is laid out in four chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the Downtown Plan, which identifies the general downtown goals and lists eight high priority items. Chapter 2 lists eight priorities for implementation of downtown plan goals and policies. Chapter 3 describes the current downtown context, unique subareas, and identifies specific needs for each subarea. Chapter 4 establishes the downtown plan policies and lists specific priorities under each appropriate goal.

The downtown plan priorities identified in Chapter 2 for further action and implementation are based on the plan's goals and policies, and demonstrate specific ways these goals and policies can be implemented. Nevertheless, it is not intended that they are all inclusive. For example, the priority for a downtown plaza mentions the vicinity of 3rd Avenue and San Mateo Drive, as analyzed by Economic Research Associates' (ERA) report. However, this would not preclude an alternative downtown plaza location should a preferable location be determined.



*East Third Ave*

## Downtown Plan Goals

The Downtown Plan goals establish a framework for specific policies which pertain to new downtown development as well as preservation of existing downtown resources. These goals help describe the major proposals of the Downtown Plan:

### **ONE Enhance Downtown's Role as the City Center and Maintain Its Unique Sense of Place**

Downtown San Mateo possesses a traditional downtown image, including an informal, cozy atmosphere. Key landmarks and landscaping in the form of street trees, San Mateo Creek and Central Park contribute to downtown's unique character. New development should complement this character, while at the same time bringing contemporary elements that revitalize and energize the downtown.

### **TWO Enhance the Vitality and Activity of Downtown by Incorporating an Overall Good Mix and Diversity of Uses**

Maintain and improve on the wide range of uses available downtown including retail and service establishments, entertainment uses, such as the Downtown Century Theater, residential uses and unique facilities, such as Central Park. Facilitate a wide mix of retail stores, service uses such as restaurants, and housing uses.



*East First Ave*

## **THREE** Enhance the Downtown's Pedestrian Environment and Enhance the Safety and Attractiveness of Downtown

Encourage foot traffic and maintain sidewalks as a comfortable outdoor environment. Allow for outdoor uses, such as cafes and sitting areas, to promote the pedestrian activity and multiple destination trips to the downtown. Strengthen the links between Central Park and downtown, and between the downtown and surrounding residential areas.

## **FOUR** Protect Key Landmarks and the Historic Character that Exists In Parts of Downtown

The downtown is of particular importance with respect to historic resources. The areas along Third Avenue and B Street contain the largest concentration of historical structures within the downtown. This sense of history within the downtown adds to its unique sense of place. However, there is a need to balance historic preservation with the need for new development. Encourage development which creates a diverse urban form but, at the same time, ensures that new buildings are in scale and compatible with the existing downtown buildings.

## **FIVE** Ensure Adequate Parking to Meet Expected Needs, Enhance the Quality of the Parking Environment, and Improve Public Perceptions About Parking Availability

Downtown parking should be efficiently arranged so as to minimize the space devoted to parking but also meet demand. Customers need to be aware of the location and availability of parking facilities. Pricing strategies, time limits, access, and safety improvements will increase use in some underutilized areas.

## **SIX** Facilitate Ease of Access Without Impacting Downtown's Character and Sense of Place

While good access should be provided to and from the freeway and El Camino Real the noise, air quality and safety impact of traffic should be minimized. Convenient vehicular and pedestrian access for shoppers and visitors need to be provided while still maintaining downtown's traditional design character. Additionally, downtown vehicular access should not cause serious adverse impacts on neighboring residential areas.

## **SEVEN** Enhance the Fiscal Importance of Downtown to the City as a Whole Through Public and Private Investment

The sales tax generated by the downtown is of importance to the City as a whole. Quality public services, consistent planning and adequate infrastructure (streets, parks, sewer and water) will help to ensure the economic prominence of downtown. Since most of the downtown is in the Redevelopment Project Area, the Redevelopment Agency needs to be kept as an active participant in achieving downtown goals, particularly in the use of tax increment funds.

## **EIGHT** Support Sustainable Initiatives in Downtown

Downtown projects and operations should support the City's sustainability efforts. Specific policies related to the use of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures pedestrian enhancements, use of public transit, support for high density development and high intensity uses (particularly in the vicinity of the Downtown Train Station) support this goal. City-wide sustainable initiatives shall be incorporated and shall be used in the implementation of Downtown Plan policies. Initiatives shall be incorporated and shall be used in the implementation of Downtown Specific Plan policies.

## Priorities for this Downtown Plan

Downtown San Mateo includes distinct sub-areas. Specific policies to address unique needs of each individual sub-area are discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Among the policies, the following actions are viewed as the highest priorities for the Downtown:

- Establishment of a Public Plaza.
- Provide for Nontraditional Housing Opportunities within the Retail Core.
- Development of the former Kinko's site.
- Replacement or Reconstruction of Central Park Tennis Court Garage.
- 4th avenue Pedestrian Improvements.
- Implementation A New Financing Mechanism for Downtown Parking.
- Support the Downtown San Mateo Association (DSMA) in Creation of a Property Based Improvement District for Downtown Improvements and Maintenance.
- Support Sustainable Transportation Initiatives

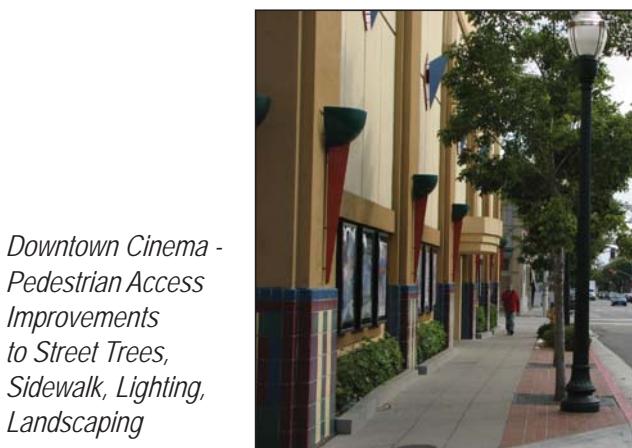
These eight priorities are not listed in any hierarchical order, instead it is the City's intention that each is important and should be examined for incorporation into the City's work program as it pertains to the Downtown area. The significance and implementation measures of these eight high priority items are discussed in further detail in Chapter 2 of the Downtown Area Plan.



*East First Ave*



*South B Street*



*Downtown Cinema -  
Pedestrian Access  
Improvements  
to Street Trees,  
Sidewalk, Lighting,  
Landscaping*



San Mateo Main Library, West Third Ave

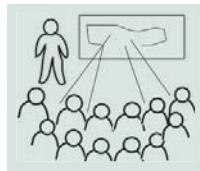
## Building on the Vision

Since the San Mateo Downtown Plan was last revised in 1993, much has been accomplished. A brief discussion of some of the 1993 Downtown Specific Plan policies which have been implemented are listed below:

### 1993 Downtown Specific Plan Policy

### Implementation Status

<b>■ LU-6 Development of Vacant, Under utilized Sites.</b> Promote development of these downtown sites.	The former Levy Brothers Building site has been redeveloped with the Draeger's Supermarket. The former St. Matthews site on 3rd Avenue is now the site of the downtown Walgreen's store.
<b>■ LU-7 Gateway Residential.</b> Encourage residential development in the Gateway	Several residential projects have been built in the Gateway including the Metropolitan (218 units) and Grant Street Condominiums (17 units).
<b>■ LU-13 Office Development.</b> Encourage office development	The 101 Ellsworth Office building was constructed with approximately 90,000 sq. ft. of new office space.
<b>■ LU-16 Mixed Use Commercial-Residential.</b> Facilitate housing as part of mixed use developments.	The Nazareth plaza project, which consists of 54 units and 7,000 sq. ft. of commercial space was constructed at the corner of 9th and B Street.
<b>■ LU-19 Public Facilities.</b> Encourage establishment of public facilities, such as City Hall or the Main Library in the downtown.	The New Main Library is located just outside of the downtown. However, this facility does serve as a transition between the downtown and the Baywood neighborhood to the west.
<b>■ CP-12 Main Street Garage.</b> Demolish the Main Street Garage if a suitable reuse can be found and replacement parking provided.	The Main Street Garage was demolished and replaced by the Century Downtown Theater and New Main Street Garage.
<b>■ CP-14 Downtown Train Station.</b> Relocate the Downtown Train Station	The Downtown Train Station was relocated and a surface and underground parking facility was provided. The station building also includes offices which now house the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown San Mateo Association and a restaurant, the Melting Pot.
<b>■ UD-7 Entryways.</b> Create entry features at (1) Humboldt/Third Avenue and (2) along El Camino Real.	The City and Redevelopment Agency created an entry feature at 3rd and Humboldt Avenue.
<b>■ UD-18 Pedestrian Amenities.</b> Use streetscape improvements to unify the downtown and improve public safety and comfort.	The City has adopted a unified streetscape plan for the B Street and Main Street area in conjunction with the Downtown Cinema project. This template was then used for streetscape improvements along 3rd and 4th Avenues between B Street and the Gateway.
<b>■ UD-20 Mid-Block Pedestrian Crossing.</b> Enhance mid-block pedestrian crossing.	The mid-block crossings on 3rd, 4th, and 5th Avenues between El Camino Real and San Mateo Drive have been improved with a light system in the pavement to alert drivers of pedestrians crossing at these locations. An additional lighted mid-block crosswalk has also been installed on San Mateo Drive between Baldwin Avenue and 2nd Avenue which serve patrons crossing from the parking lot to Mills Medical Center.



## Public Outreach

A number of public workshops have been held as well as City Council study sessions on the Downtown Specific Plan. These workshops were organized as follows:

### **Workshop 1 — Vision (November 16, 2006)**

This workshop was intended to solicit ideas about a possible VISION for Downtown San Mateo to be used in guiding the Downtown Plan Update effort. Approximately 100 persons attended this workshop. The workshop involved a short introductory segment followed by small group discussion of (1) Vision for the Future of Downtown and (2) Trends and Challenges Affecting That Vision.

### **Workshop 2 — Traffic, Parking And Transportation (March 6, 2007)**

The second workshop in March 2007 was held to allow for discussion of traffic, parking and transportation issues in the downtown. The discussions included identification and preferences for specific strategies related to these issues. This information will then be used to guide the Downtown Plan update. Approximately 30 persons attended this workshop which involved a short introductory segment followed by small group discussions of the following topics:

- A. Traffic and Circulation
- B. Parking
- C. Pedestrian/Bicycle Access
- D. Transit/Safety/Other

### **Workshop 3 — Economics and Land Use (May 1, 2007)**

Workshop #3, held in May 2007, allowed discussion of market related topics, such as the establishment of retail sub-districts, retail supportive land uses, and urban design factors which affect the retail environment. The workshop opened with a summary of the work done by Economics Research Associates (ERA), an international economic analysis and consulting firm employed to help evaluate the economic outlook and additional retail needs of Downtown San Mateo. This presentation included a downtown market study overview and public survey findings. Results from the Economics Research Associates study have been incorporated into the City's Downtown Plan update.

Approximately 24 persons attended this workshop which involved a presentation by ERA. The vast majority of time was spent discussing the downtown retail environment (Retail Sub-Districts and Retail Tenants) while the other topics were briefly covered.

#### **Workshop 4 — Implementation (November 20, 2008)**

The fourth workshop was held on November 20, 2008 at the City's downtown Business Resource Center and served as another avenue for the community to comment on the preliminary draft Downtown Plan.

The workshop opened with a summary of the work done to date and overview of the preliminary draft Downtown Plan. Staff also provided a summary of comments and direction from the joint City Council and Planning Commission study session, held on November 3, 2008, and discussions with the Downtown San Mateo Association (DSMA) Board.

Approximately 28 persons attended this workshop which involved a power point presentation by staff and then focused discussions on the eight priorities from the preliminary draft Downtown Plan:

1. Establishment of Civic Plaza
2. Connection with Central Park Plaza
3. Nontraditional Housing Opportunities
4. Re-use of City's 4th Avenue Site
5. Replacement of Tennis Court Garage
6. Implement New Financing Mechanism for Downtown Parking
7. 4th Ave. Pedestrian Improvements.
8. Support DSMA In Creation of Property Based Improvement District

#### **Study Sessions**

- City Council (May 1, 2006) — Downtown Plan Update Work Program
- City Council (November 6, 2006) — Downtown Plan Progress Update
- Joint City Council/Planning Commission (January 23, 2007) — Downtown Plan Vision for Downtown
- City Council (November 19, 2007) — Downtown Plan Major Policy Direction
- Joint City Council/Planning Commission (November 3, 2008) — Preliminary Draft of Downtown Plan



*East Fourth Avenue*

#### **Public Outreach Findings**

The principal findings of the public outreach program include a number of common themes, although in several instances there were conflicting opinions being stated. A summary of these common themes follows below:

- Continue to enhance the pedestrian quality of the downtown.
- Encourage people to get out of their cars.
- Need to balance auto access with the pedestrian nature of downtown.
- Link Central Park to the rest of downtown.
- Keep downtown clean and beautiful.
- Maintain and capitalize on the uniqueness of downtown as a destination.
- Enhance and support a wide mix of retail and service uses in the downtown.
- Consider potential changing demographics and market demand in the downtown.
- Provide housing in the downtown.
- Provide additional parking in the downtown.
- Look at payment and duration of City parking facilities, provide better signage and identification of City parking facilities.
- Make sure in-lieu fees collected instead of providing parking on-site equals the true cost of constructing a parking space.
- Look at one way street systems or other improvements to decrease traffic congestion.

## Related Documents and Downtown Initiatives

### Downtown Market Analysis and Development Strategy

Downtown Market Analysis and Development Strategy The September 2007 Downtown Market Analysis and Development Strategy report by Economics Research Associates (ERA) examines Downtown San Mateo market conditions, identifies current strengths and weaknesses, and provides recommendations to build on the progress achieved since the adoption of the City's previous Downtown Specific Plan in 1993. The report concludes that the potential market for retail, office, and housing is strong, with opportunities for a range of potential development sites.

Downtown San Mateo is a high-income trade area featuring a mix of locally owned and selected chain stores with a good pedestrian environment and an "authentic" character, but is challenged by small properties which limit investment return potential, a lack of onsite parking for residential developments (which would in turn strengthen market support for retail, restaurants, and entertainment), and the absence of a strong central downtown identity that could be marketed beyond local borders to the rest of the Bay Area and beyond. The ERA report included the following findings:

#### Downtown Strengths

- ❑ San Francisco and the Silicon Valley, Downtown San Mateo is well-served by freeways and Caltrain.
- ❑ Good pedestrian environment. The district is generally pedestrian-friendly, with most buildings on small parcels built close to the street, and ranging in height from two to four stories.
- ❑ High-income trade area. The demographics of the market area are very strong, supporting residential and commercial development.
- ❑ Security. For the most part, Downtown San Mateo is perceived as relatively safe.
- ❑ Real "small town" character. The existing retail and services in Downtown, dominated by independent businesses, serve the day to day needs of the local community and have maintained Downtown's charm and "small town" feeling.



East Third Avenue



East Fourth Avenue



East Fourth Avenue

### Downtown Challenges

- ❑ Development sites are small and fragmented. It is difficult to aggregate sufficiently sized properties to undertake projects of significant scale.
- ❑ Development approval process is difficult and uncertain. The process of gaining entitlements should be as streamlined and transparent as possible in order to diminish uncertainties for developers.
- ❑ Location and signage for parking. There is an overall perception that there is a lack of parking Downtown. This may be due in part to lack of signage which may lead confusion for downtown patrons over where to park.
- ❑ Ownership patterns. Many of the parcels in Downtown are owned by absentee landlords or family trusts, many of which lack the incentive to make major investments to improve the district.
- ❑ Lack of clear identity or image. Downtown San Mateo does not have a strong "brand" identity and has not established itself as a destination for area residents.
- ❑ Lack of housing Downtown. There are very few households within the Downtown Retail Core, which reduces the amount of market support within walking distance for shops and restaurants.
- ❑ Historic preservation and other regulatory constraints. Historic restrictions can be an impediment to developers wishing to build in Downtown San Mateo, particularly for housing development. Height restrictions do not significantly reduce the economic feasibility of projects, particularly in comparison with the difficulty of land assemblage.

In addition to a general assessment of the Downtown, the downtown market for the three major land uses - residential, retail/restaurant and office was also examined. The conclusions are as follows:

#### Residential Market

- ❑ San Mateo is a highly desirable location for housing, given the excellent quality of life, good schools, and strong regional location.
- ❑ Although there may be a slight slowdown in the housing market over the next year or two, there will be strong demand for housing in the area over the next five to ten years and in the long term.
- ❑ The recently produced for-sale product in San Mateo has been almost exclusively for affluent senior and "empty-nester" households. There has been little development catering to a younger demographic, despite the presence of various start-ups and technology firms near the Downtown



*Fremont Street*

area employing "creative" professionals. However, there is strong demand for more value-oriented housing that appeals to this niche market that has not yet been targeted in Downtown San Mateo.

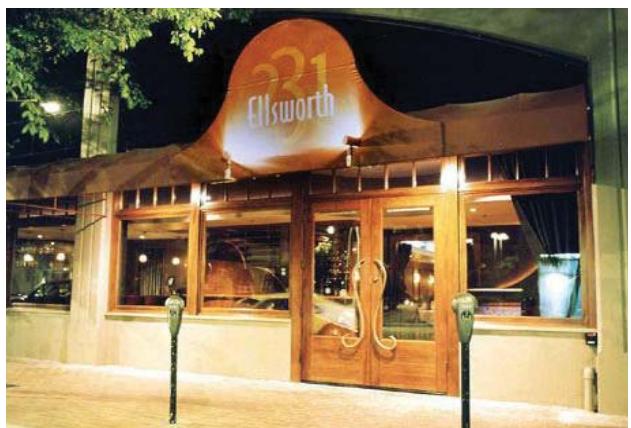
- ❑ More housing units Downtown would strengthen market support for retail, restaurants, and entertainment.

#### Retail and Restaurant Market

- ❑ Downtown retail sales declined substantially during the recession from 2001 to 2003. Although the retail sector has since strengthened, it has yet to rebound to its pre-2001 levels.
- ❑ Despite the decline in sales, the Downtown retail market remains fairly solid, with core strengths in eating & drinking places and food stores.
- ❑ Downtown San Mateo has been able to attract a mix of locally owned and selected national chain stores.
- ❑ The downtown has very good vehicular access, an important asset for retailers.
- ❑ Downtown has some office employees and residents within the district to support retail (though both could be increased.)
- ❑ Draeger's is one of the key anchor stores in Downtown San Mateo. The Downtown's food sector could be further built up with additional specialty food stores, creating a "gourmet" district.
- ❑ The Downtown appears to be much stronger in the evenings, due to the theater and dining, than during the daytime.



*East Third Avenue*



*Ellsworth Street*



*Medical Office Building, San Mateo Drive*

- There are numerous and varied ethnic restaurants in Downtown, which attract residents and visitors. Given the strength of eating and drinking establishments Downtown, there is potential to add more upscale dining options to enhance the offerings. There may also be opportunities to add sidewalk dining in selected areas of the Downtown, which would bring more activity and vitality to the district.
- Downtown is relatively weak in clothing and general merchandise, due to competition from Burlingame Avenue and Hillsdale. It is unlikely that Downtown San Mateo will be able to amass a sufficient scale of apparel and general merchandise stores to compete effectively with those larger shopping centers. There may be some potential to attract some independent apparel and accessories, especially if they are aimed at a younger demographic than the current offerings.
- Downtown San Mateo has some existing home furnishings stores, and could potentially strengthen the sector by going after higher end furnishings and appliance stores.
- The Downtown's specialty stores also perform well, with destination stores like Talbot's drawing customers from outside of the immediate area. There may be potential to add more of stores offering "impulse" shopping items, particularly near the movie theater.

#### **Office Market**

- Much of the existing Downtown office space is occupied by small tenants such as therapists, lawyers, architects, etc. that value the good location and relatively low rents.
- Startup firms are increasingly becoming an important niche for Downtown San Mateo's office market and should be fostered.
- Many of the Downtown's buildings are not connected to high-speed data lines. The ability to offer fast and cheap data connections is a very important component to attracting businesses Downtown.
- Downtown San Mateo does not currently have enough large office spaces. In order to accommodate the expansion of startups or new larger firms, some new modern office space will need to be developed.
- Office workers provide additional market support for retail and restaurants, especially during the lunch hour.

## Preliminary Analysis From Lease Revenue at Kinko's Site

In March 2007, Economics Research Associates (ERA) examined, on a preliminary basis, the highest economic reuse for the former "Kinko's" property and the likely annual revenue such reuse would generate for the City. The ERA report designates condominium use as the preferred use. The development would likely have one level of underground parking with four to five levels of condominium units on top.

These condominium units are assumed to be developed on leased land with the City maintaining the underlying fee title. Depending upon the length and the terms of the lease (e.g. steepness of the escalation), the developer will want to discount the value of the land because he will face buyer resistance. ERA has discounted the value of these condominiums by 12 percent to reflect that they are on leased land.

### ERA Plaza Report

The City of San Mateo Redevelopment Agency commissioned Economics Research Associates (ERA) to explain potential public/private partnerships to facilitate development of a public plaza, since there is not adequate public funding for such a project.

ERA examined the feasibility of a private/public partnership of the property at 2nd and 3rd Avenues and San Mateo Drive. ERA analyzed two scenarios: (1) Housing over retail or restaurant; and (2) Office over retail or restaurant. The project would also include a subterranean garage and creation of a public plaza.

The November 2007 ERA report indicates that private development of condominiums over retail or restaurant with underground parking is feasible. In conjunction with this building located at the corner of 2nd Avenue and San Mateo Drive, the establishment of a public plaza at 3rd Avenue and San Mateo Drive could be funded by tax increment generated by the private development.



*South B Street*

### Downtown Branding Program

The Downtown San Mateo Association in collaboration with the City of San Mateo's Economic Development and Business Assistance Division completed a strategic marketing plan in June of 2008. This new strategy is designed to promote visitation to and business investment in Downtown. The plan lays out a strategy to differentiate Downtown San Mateo in the minds of consumers and the development community and create a brand image that resonates with the authentic characteristics of the district.

The launch of the new Downtown brand is designed to approximately coincide with the release of the new Downtown Area Plan. This comprehensive strategy will create a framework for the future of Downtown's business mix and visitor experience. These two processes are coming together to express a vision where, as our brand statement put it,:;

*"Downtown San Mateo is an authentic place where community is embraced. It is home to an independent spirit where culture, creativity and flavor flourish."*

The details of the branding campaign are currently in development but it is anticipated this effort will incorporate elements of a successful marketing program, such as advertising, events, promotions, streetscape activities, wayfinding, marketing collateral, and website design.

## Downtown Long Range Parking Committee

In 2003, the Long Range Parking Committee, consisting of city staff and members of the Downtown San Mateo Association, made a total of 18 recommendations to the City Council. The recommendations supported seven actions:

- Initiate planning for the addition of approximately 1,000 new downtown parking spaces.
- Form a new parking assessment district.
- Increase downtown parking rates and periodically review.
- Improve parking and traffic enforcement.
- Maintain parking in-lieu fees below actual cost of new parking spaces.
- Improve directional signage to existing public parking.
- Implement cost effective ways to improve appearance of the streets, sidewalks, and parking facilities.

## City Downtown Parking Initiatives

The City has initiated efforts to establish means to maximize downtown parking supply. In 2007, a study session was held with the City Council to discuss downtown parking management and supply issues. These include:



*Main Street Garage, First Ave*

- Parking Expansion Funding Options
- Operation and Maintenance Revenues and Expenditures
- Alternatives to Increase Revenues
- In-Lieu Fee Adjustments
- Operational Improvements and Enhancements

Preliminary comments were provided by the City Council with direction to the Public Works Department on further research. The Public Works Department will be returning to the City Council with specific recommendations.

## USE OF THE DOWNTOWN PLAN

The Downtown Plan's intent is expressed in three ways. Goals, as presented in the first chapter of the plan, establish the overall vision downtown and lists eight high priority items for future implementation. The high priority items are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

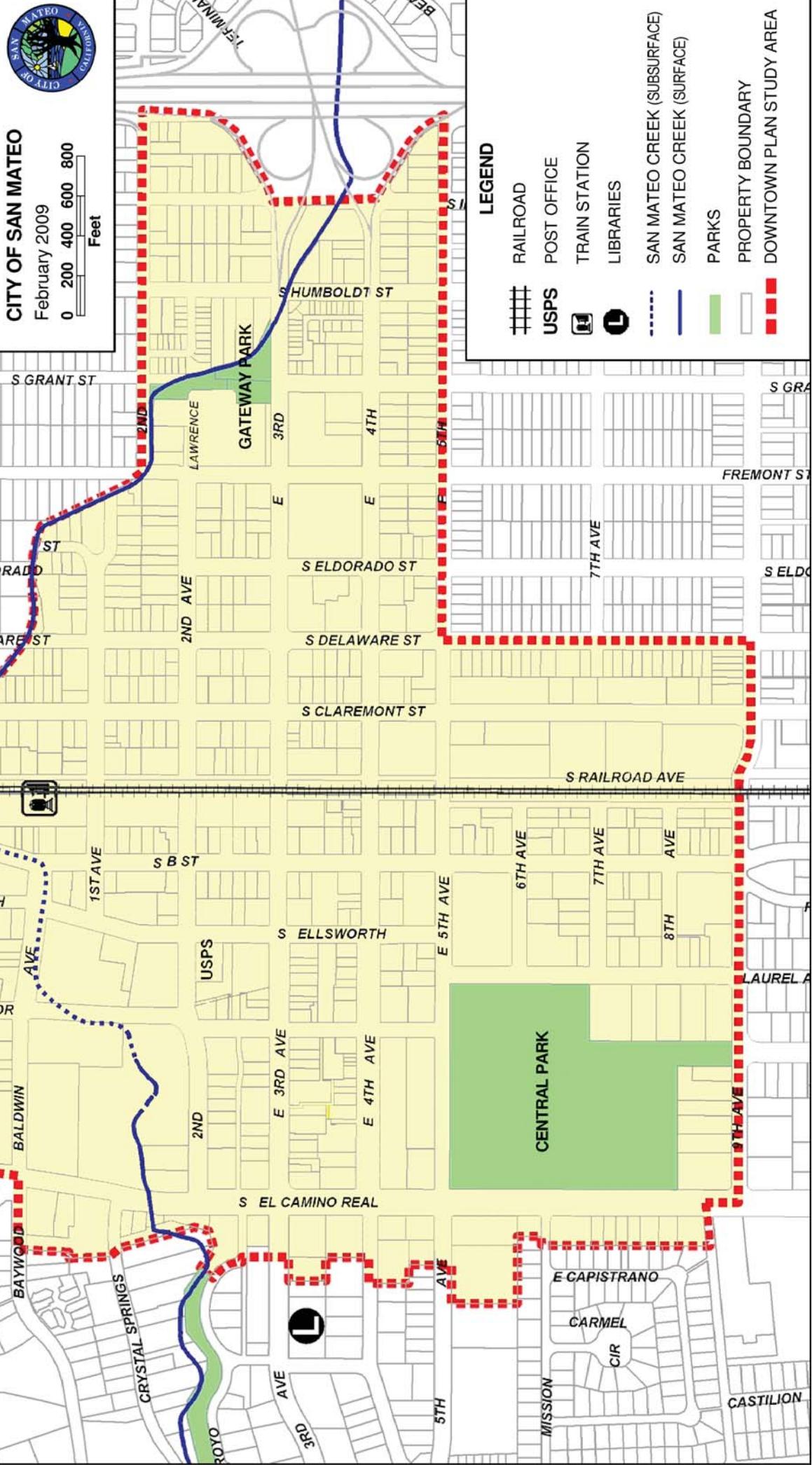
The more specific aspect of the Downtown Plan are the policy statements. Policies establish a recognized community position on a particular issue or subject. These policies are to be used when evaluating both private and public projects for consistency with the Downtown Plan. The policy statements are listed in Chapter 3 of the Downtown Plan.

The last part of the Downtown Plan consists of implementing programs that include the ones identified in Chapter 2 as high priority items as well as others that are of significance to the Downtown.

## DOWNTOWN PLAN STUDY AREA

FIGURE 1

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN



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# Priorities for This Downtown Plan

Given the accomplishments since the 1993 revision of the Downtown Plan, and the goals and policies stated in this most recent version of the Downtown Plan, there is now a concerted effort to determine the “next steps” to maintain the health and vibrancy of the downtown. While listed as part of the policies in the previous chapters, the following actions are viewed as the highest priorities for the Downtown Plan.

While the text following each priority describes a potential implementation strategy, this is not intended to limit alternative implementation measures. For example, while the text indicates a potential site and strategy for the “Establishment of a Public Plaza,” this would not preclude establishment of a public plaza at an alternative downtown location.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF A PUBLIC PLAZA.

As the center of the City, Downtown San Mateo offers a unique shopping experience, renowned attractions, and well celebrated annual events. Downtown events such as the annual Wine Walk and Festa Italia Community Street Fair draw people from all over the Bay Area region to shop, sample food & drinks, enjoy performances, and participate in unique activities.

It is important to reinforce downtown as the City’s center by supporting annual events and encouraging a mix of uses that foster downtown’s sense of place, such as encouraging cultural and public facilities. This can be done by examining opportunities for a public/private partnership to develop such facilities, such as a public



Public Plaza in Front of Downtown Century Cinema, South B Street

plaza, although it will still require substantial City financial commitment.

Due to the costs associated with creation of a public plaza, use of a public/private partnership agreement would be the most likely funding mechanism. This would allow for establishment of uses which would generate a sufficient economic return to assist with funding the creation of a plaza.

Any downtown public plaza should complement adjacent uses, provide a pleasant and usable space, enhance the downtown’s pedestrian environment and add value to downtown as a whole.

### PROVIDE FOR NONTRADITIONAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE RETAIL CORE.

There are insufficient housing opportunities catering to a younger demographic, such as those employed by start-up companies and technology firms near the downtown area. More diverse housing types are necessary in downtown to strengthen market support for downtown retail, restaurants, and entertainment businesses. Look at providing housing for households that will utilize downtown businesses and is within proximity to transit station to reduce vehicle trips and vehicle ownership.

Provide flexibility in architectural style to allow for nontraditional housing designs, such as loft spaces. The City will also need to address parking issues for smaller sites, consider allowing overnight parking in City facilities to enable financial feasibility of these projects.

#### Examples of Mixed-Use Development Housing/Office Above Ground Floor Retail

##### Santana Row, San Jose



### DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER KINKO'S SITE.

The City owned property bounded by 4th, 5th, Railroad and Claremont Street represents a unique opportunity to provide a catalyst for downtown development on the east side of the railroad tracks.

Residential use has been examined and analyzed for the site. However, there have been significant changes to the economy since that analysis. As a result, prior to initiating any efforts at redeveloping this site, the City should commission further analysis to determine the most appropriate use for the property. Any proposed development of the site should consider a range of alternatives to address potential right-of-way impact generated by the establishment of High Speed Rail.



Aerial of Former "Kinko's" Site

### Mountain View



### REPLACEMENT OR RECONSTRUCTION OF CENTRAL PARK TENNIS COURT GARAGE.

The Central Park garage, located underneath the Central Park Tennis Courts, will need seismic retrofit work to be completed. Reconstruction of the garage may examine the feasibility of additional spaces to justify the expense. As an alternative, the City should examine the potential replacement of the parking spaces, and the tennis courts, at an alternative location. Alternatives that may be considered include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

- a. Seismic upgrade of existing parking structure with minor changes to tennis courts,
- b. Demolish existing parking structure and construct new at-grade parking lot (with the relocation of the tennis courts to another area of Central Park or without replacing the tennis courts),
- c. Demolish existing structure and construct new partially subterranean parking structure (with relocation of tennis courts, without replacing tennis courts, or integrate tennis courts) and the level formerly used for tennis courts may serve as another level of parking, or
- d. Demolish existing structure and construct new fully underground parking structure (with relocation of tennis courts, without replacing tennis courts, or with a design that provides at least a 500 net increase in parking spaces and integrates tennis courts).

This action could also be taken in conjunction with other Central Park improvements, as removal of the Tennis Court garage would allow flexibility in programming and planning future Central Park Improvements.

### FOURTH AVENUE PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS.

Explore alternatives based on Freedman, Tung, and Bottomly's previous proposal to reduce lanes on 4th Avenue down to 3 lanes with: flexible street parking, outdoor seating area, and wider sidewalks to enhance pedestrian path of travel.



Main Street Garage



Central Parking Garage



Central Park/Tennis Court Garage



E. Third Ave Mid-block Pedestrian Crossing

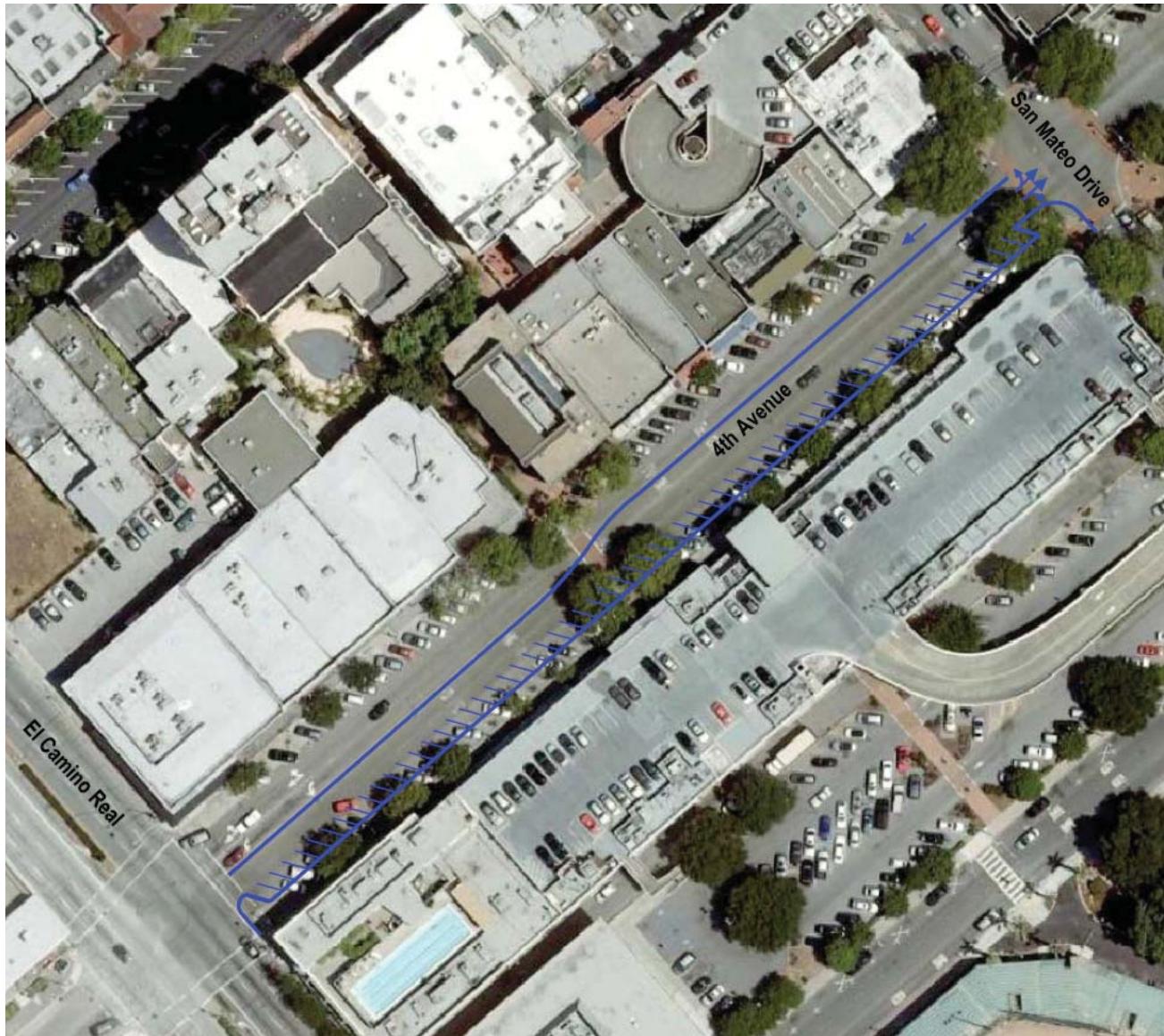


Conceptual 4th Avenue Street Improvement Alternatives (1994)

### Alternative IIa: Trees located in sidewalk.

#### Alternative IIb: Trees located between parking spaces.

Freedman, Tung and Bottomly



E. 4th Ave. Narrowing  
El Camino Real to San Mateo Drive

Hexagon Transportation Consultants

### IMPLEMENT A NEW FINANCING MECHANISM FOR DOWNTOWN PARKING.

The Central Parking and Improvement District (CPID) was created by the City in 1954 as a means of financing land acquisition and construction of downtown public parking facilities. The CPID includes on-street parking, surface lots and five (5) parking structures. The bonds issued to fund these downtown parking facilities have been retired, and the City is presently examining methods to fund additional downtown parking.

Funding of additional public parking in downtown should consider the following principles:

- a. Property owners should participate in the funding of future parking expansion through assessments or other appropriate methods.
- b. Parking in-lieu fees when combined with assessments and other parking revenues should be maintained at a level to provide the full cost of constructing a new parking space.

### SUPPORT THE DOWNTOWN SAN MATEO ASSOCIATION IN CREATION OF A PROPERTY BASED IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FOR DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS AND MAINTENANCE.

As a way to provide funding for additional parking facilities, the Downtown San Mateo Association (DSMA) is currently exploring the formation of a Property Based Improvement District (PBID) as well as other funding options, including options with contributions by property owners and/or tenants. The City should continue to support these efforts in an attempt to address funding issues related to the provision of additional downtown parking facilities.

Outdoor Seating Hayward



### SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES.

In order to improve pedestrian, bicycle, shuttle, and transit access implement Downtown Area Plan policies to reduce vehicle trips and encourage transit use and promote bicycle and pedestrian accessibility.

Additionally, the Downtown Area Plan includes vehicle trip reduction, bicycle and pedestrian accessibility policies. These policies will be employed on a case by case basis as development is reviewed, with the goal of reducing vehicle trips and promoting alternative means of mobility.



Outdoor Seating, Mountain View



Outdoor Seating Hayward





## Downtown Sub-Areas

This section is a summary only, the specific issue policies in Chapter 4 should be used to evaluate a project's conformance with the Downtown Plan. The discussion on the following pages describe each sub-area, including general background information on the area and expected future conditions. Summary policy maps for each sub-area are also included, at the end of this chapter, showing key plan recommendations as they would affect the sub-area.



The unique ability of downtown to serve a variety of functions — commercial, residential, transportation and institutional — provides an opportunity to enhance downtown's role as the city center. The Downtown Plan is intended to provide those policies which will assist downtown in fulfilling this role.

Sub-areas in downtown San Mateo are diverse, ranging from the higher intensity, more urban character of the retail core, to the more suburban feel of the surrounding neighborhood with service commercial and residential areas adjacent to the retail core.



### DOWNTOWN SUB-AREAS

#### ■ Downtown Retail Core

#### ■ North B Street/Tilton

#### ■ Central Claremont

#### ■ South Claremont

#### ■ Gateway

#### ■ Central Park

#### ■ West of El Camino

## Downtown Retail Core

### Background

The Downtown Retail Core extends from 5th Avenue to 2nd Avenue between El Camino Real and the Railroad. 3rd Avenue, 4th Avenue and B Street are the primary retail streets (see map at end of this chapter). The two vacant former gas station sites at 3rd Avenue/El Camino Real present opportunities and challenges at this gateway to the downtown. Mills Health Center, the Downtown Century Cinema, and the Downtown Transit Center (see next sub-area discussion) are also included in this sub-area.

### Future Conditions

Downtown Plan policies continue to support the retail core shopping area by requiring retail uses along 2nd, 3rd and 4th Avenues, San Mateo Drive, Ellsworth Avenue, and B Street. This will require a good mix of ground floor retail uses that will contribute to foster retail vitality and downtown's pedestrian oriented environment. New priorities for the retail core include:

- a. Provide housing for new households that will utilize downtown businesses and is within proximity to the transit station to reduce vehicle trips and vehicle ownership. In order to implement this policy, the City should allow flexibility in architectural style to facilitate use of nontraditional housing designs, such as loft spaces, and allow flexibility in design where more modern forms relate to existing buildings within an historic environment.
- b. Examine the feasibility of reducing lanes on 4th Avenue down to 3 lanes to provide pedestrian enhancements.
- c. Examine the potential for providing a public plaza in the retail core. The City has commissioned ERA to examine a public plaza at the northwest corner of 3rd Avenue and San Mateo Drive in conjunction with a mixed use development at 2nd Avenue and San Mateo Drive.



- d. Continue to seek additional sites for parking and actively explore alternative methods to manage existing parking inventory. Parking inventory management may include experimenting with long term/overnight reserved parking for premium fees, use of technological advancements, encouraging short term parking turn over, and other methods as they become available.
- e. Provide an entry feature at the entryways to downtown in the vicinity of the 3rd Avenue/El Camino Real intersection, 4th Avenue/El Camino Real intersection, B Street/5th Avenue intersection, and B Street/1st Avenue intersection.
- f. Improve pedestrian linkages to Central Park and other plazas, and provide additional widened sidewalks where adequate parking and circulation can be maintained.
- g. Focus on 5th Avenue/San Mateo Drive and opportunities to directly tie Downtown to Central Park, including physically and visually open up to intersection at 5th/San Mateo Drive.
- h. Look at development opportunities on 5th Avenue and where public benefits may be used to help fund linkages to and/or improvements in Central Park.

## North B Street/Tilton Avenue

### Background

Uses north of Baldwin and west of Ellsworth include small scale medical offices along San Mateo Drive, the Peninsula Regent (200+ unit senior citizen project), the Mills Square mixed-use high rise office/residential project and single family homes are located on Tilton Terrace.

Along B Street there is a mix of uses including those continued from the retail core as well as neighborhood commercial uses that serve nearby residential areas. Recent renovation and establishment of new uses, such as Cappelini's restaurant, has been increasing in this area.

### Future Conditions

Land use designations in the area will support existing uses, including the neighborhood commercial uses along B Street. The emphasis for the North B Street/Tilton Avenue policies include:

- a. Enhance North B Street area and designate it as a unique district serving the nearby neighborhood population. Encourage retail/restaurant uses to locate on ground floors and office/service uses to locate in upper level spaces, while maintaining the existing character of this district. To further develop this unique district, establish relationships with existing bilingual services in the community and merchants.
- b. Encourage and facilitate development of large, vacant, underutilized parcels such as the former Blue and White Laundry site on North B Street. Development of underutilized parcels with significant development which attempts to maximize use of the sites will not only have direct economic impacts generated by the projects themselves, but also contribute to the overall downtown shopping environment.



## Central Claremont

### Background

This area has a variety of uses. San Mateo Creek is the northern most boundary of this sub-area. The northern portion is designated high density residential, but there are substantial non-conforming auto service and repair uses along Railroad Avenue. 3rd and 4th Avenues act as an entry to the downtown retail core. Uses in this area are predominantly smaller restaurants, fast food restaurants and service uses. The 3rd and 4th Avenue corridor has the potential to link the retail core and Gateway.

The visual appearance of the Claremont area is disordered due to a variety of different types and sizes of buildings occurring at different setbacks, visible storage yards, unscreened parking areas, inconsistent landscape treatments and varying levels of property maintenance. In addition, potential noise and safety impacts of the railroad need to be considered. Future widening of the railroad corridor may eliminate access from Railroad Avenue.

### Future Conditions

The northern portion of this sub-area is designated for high density residential use because of its proximity to the relocated train station. The rest of the sub-area's land use is designated as Central Business District Support to serve as a link between the Gateway and Retail Core; however, uses not appropriate for an entry to the Retail Core (such as auto-repair uses) are not permitted. New directions for Central Claremont include:

- a. Encourage, but do not require, ground floor retail uses on 3rd and 4th Avenues to link this area with the downtown retail core. Uses that promote pedestrian activity shall also be encouraged.
- b. Continue to utilize improvements such as street trees, street lights, and pavement to unify the areas east of the railroad tracks with the Downtown Retail Core. These improvements should be consistent with those used in the Retail Core so as to provide a visual and pedestrian connection between these two areas.

- c. Determine an appropriate reuse of the City's 4th Avenue Site (former Kinko's site). Execute sale or lease of this City owned property for a suitable re-use. The City owned property bounded by 4th, 5th, Railroad and Claremont Avenues represents a unique opportunity to provide a catalyst for downtown development on the east side of the railroad tracks. Consider the recommendation of ERA report which designated housing (specifically condominium) use as the preferred use. Consider other alternative uses if economically feasible.

Grant Street  
Condominiums



The Metropolitan

## South Claremont

### Background

This area includes both sides of the railroad tracks (see map at end of this chapter). Service uses are located on both sides of the tracks and back up to low density residential uses which front onto Delaware Street. The west side of Claremont is made up predominately of offices; however, market analysis indicates a very limited office demand in the future for this area. Potential future widening of the railroad corridor may eliminate access from Railroad Avenue.

### Future Conditions

Future land use reflects existing office and auto service uses. These areas are designated Downtown Retail Core Support. The policy focus for this area include:

- a. Permit support service uses which support the Downtown, but should not be located in the Retail Core.
- b. Continue to utilize improvements such as street trees, street lights, and pavement to unify the areas east of the railroad tracks with the Downtown Retail Core. These improvements should be consistent with those used in the Retail Core so as to provide a visual and pedestrian connection between these two areas.
- c. Determine a suitable re-use for the city owned site bounded by 5th Avenue, the railroad and South Claremont Street. Any use should be evaluated as to its ability to fulfill the following functions:
  - Help establish the downtown as the city center.
  - Support existing downtown retail.
  - Provide opportunities for additional parking.
  - Capitalize on the site's unique proximity to Downtown San Mateo.

## Gateway

### Background

The Gateway area extending from U.S. 101 to Claremont Street is the main entry to downtown. The area currently provides a poor entryway and transition to the downtown core area. The approach to the downtown includes several multi-family structures which have been built consistent with Downtown Plan policies. A neighborhood shopping center, recently renovated, and service uses also exist in this area. To the north and south are lower density residential neighborhoods.

The sites located directly next to the freeway have access that is indirect and difficult, requiring passage through residential neighborhoods. Office or hotel uses are inconsistent with this area's lack of access and the proximity to residential neighborhoods.



Humboldt Square

### Future Conditions

The multi-family residential character of the area will be maintained and extended to include those blocks directly adjacent to U.S. 101. Gateway design guidelines have been developed to address concerns regarding compatibility between new construction and existing neighborhoods. Requiring that all new development along 3rd and 4th Avenues be built to a consistent building setback line and providing street trees will help to create a more consistent, positive transition from the Gateway to the Downtown Retail Core. Gateway policies include:

- a. Continue to designate the northern and southern portions of the Gateway as low density and medium density multi-family residential in order to achieve a transition to adjacent neighborhoods and provide a buffer to high density residentially designated areas.
- b. Continue to protect and utilize the open space and natural qualities of San Mateo Creek.
- c. Enhance visual and pedestrian connections to the Downtown Retail Core. The City recently improved the areas along 3rd and 4th Avenues in an attempt to link the Gateway and the Downtown Retail Core. Improvements to sidewalks, street trees, and street lights, undergrounding of overhead utilities, and location of utility boxes are all aspects of the pedestrian environment which should be considered.



## Central Park

### Background

The focal point in this sub-area is Central Park itself, which provides a variety of recreation uses. The main image of the park from Downtown is along 5th Avenue, where the view ranges from improved landscaping at the corner of Laurel Avenue to the tennis court parking garage and back side of the baseball bleachers. The mature landscaping and architectural fence along El Camino Real and 5th Avenue serve as a focal point and provides a substantial green area within the broader urban area that is the character of Downtown San Mateo.

Multi-family housing is located on the blocks east of Central Park, including two senior citizen residential projects, Park Towers and the Stratford. This sub-area also includes neighborhood serving restaurant, retail and service uses along B Street.

### Future Conditions

Central Park will be retained as an existing open space for recreation use. The residential and neighborhood commercial parts of the sub-area will remain. New policies for Central Park include:

- a. Improve pedestrian linkages between the Downtown and Central Park.

- b. Utilize street trees and/or landscaping, street furniture, and street light in the public right of way to enhance the view and pedestrian connection between Central Park and the Downtown core. Support development of streetscape improvement plans along 5th Avenue and San Mateo Drive.
- c. Enhance view and pedestrian connections between Central Park and other plazas (both public and private).
- d. Develop a master plan for Central Park with guidelines that will enhance Downtown as commercial center as well as continue to serve as a community resource for recreational activities for all ages.

## West of El Camino Real

### Background

This sub-area contains high rise offices and accessory parking in the vicinity of the Downtown Retail Core. Multi-family uses are located in the southern portion of the sub-area, while smaller scale commercial uses and offices are located to the north. The City's recently completed Main Library is also located west of El Camino Real on 3rd Avenue. This sub-area provides a transition between the Baywood and Parrot Park neighborhoods to the west and the Downtown to the east.

### Future Conditions

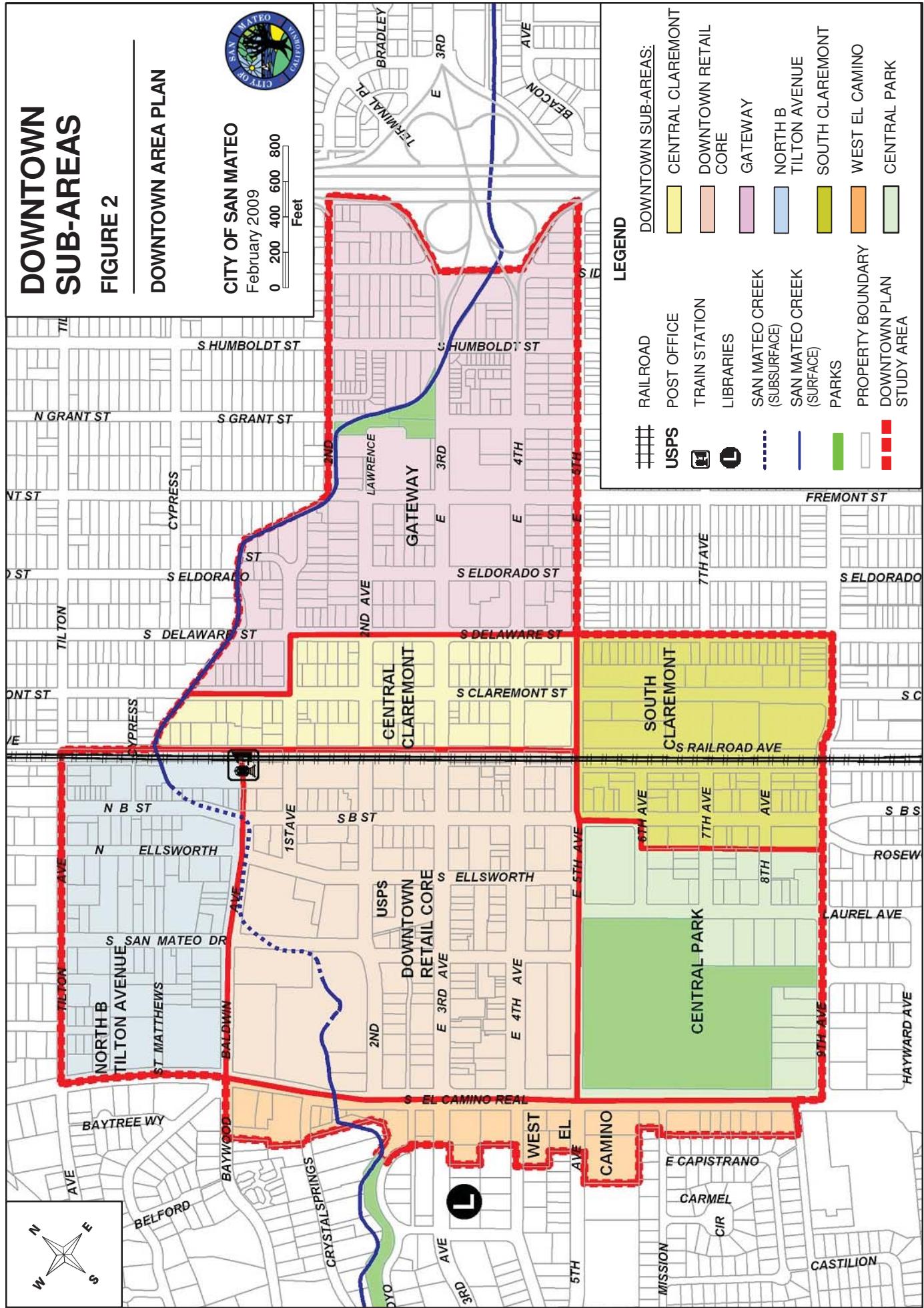
Most existing land uses will remain. Parking standards will be maintained at City-wide requirements due to the distance to City parking facilities located across El Camino Real. New policies for this sub-area include:

- a. Continue to participate in the region wide Grand Boulevard Initiative effort to enhance & improve El Camino Real.
- b. Enhance pedestrian connections from west of El Camino Real to the Downtown.

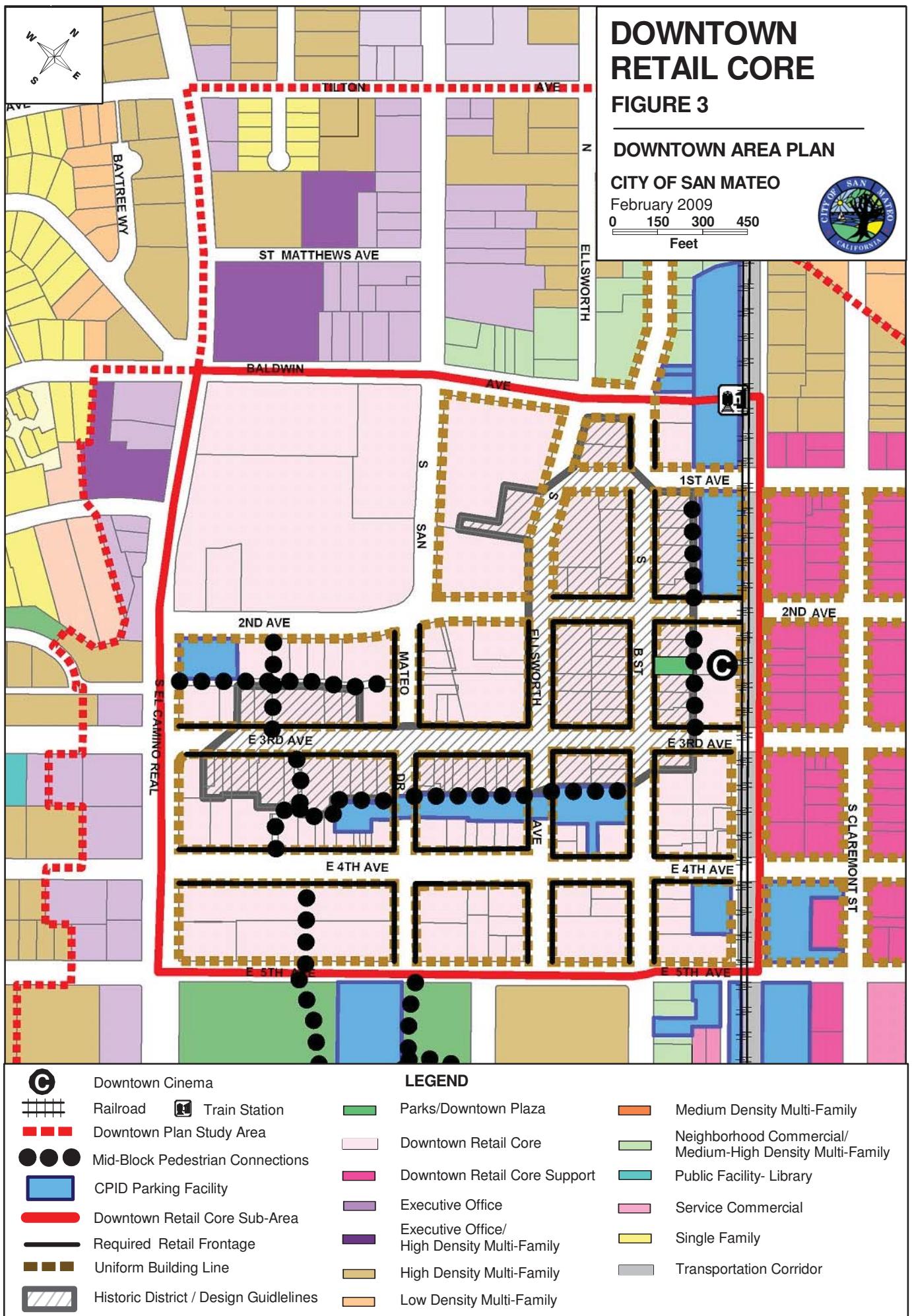
## DOWNTOWN SUB-AREAS

## FIGURE 2

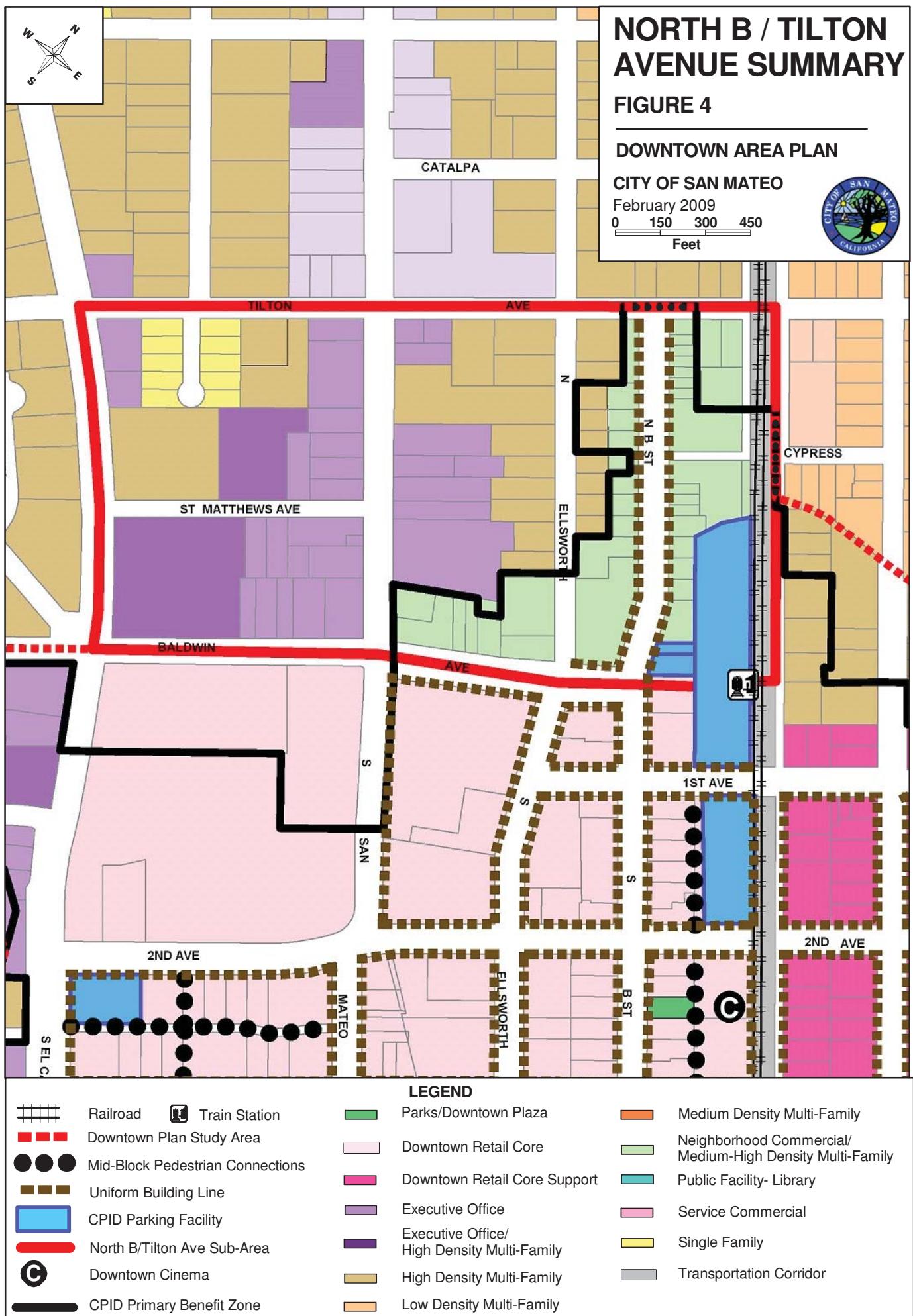
DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN



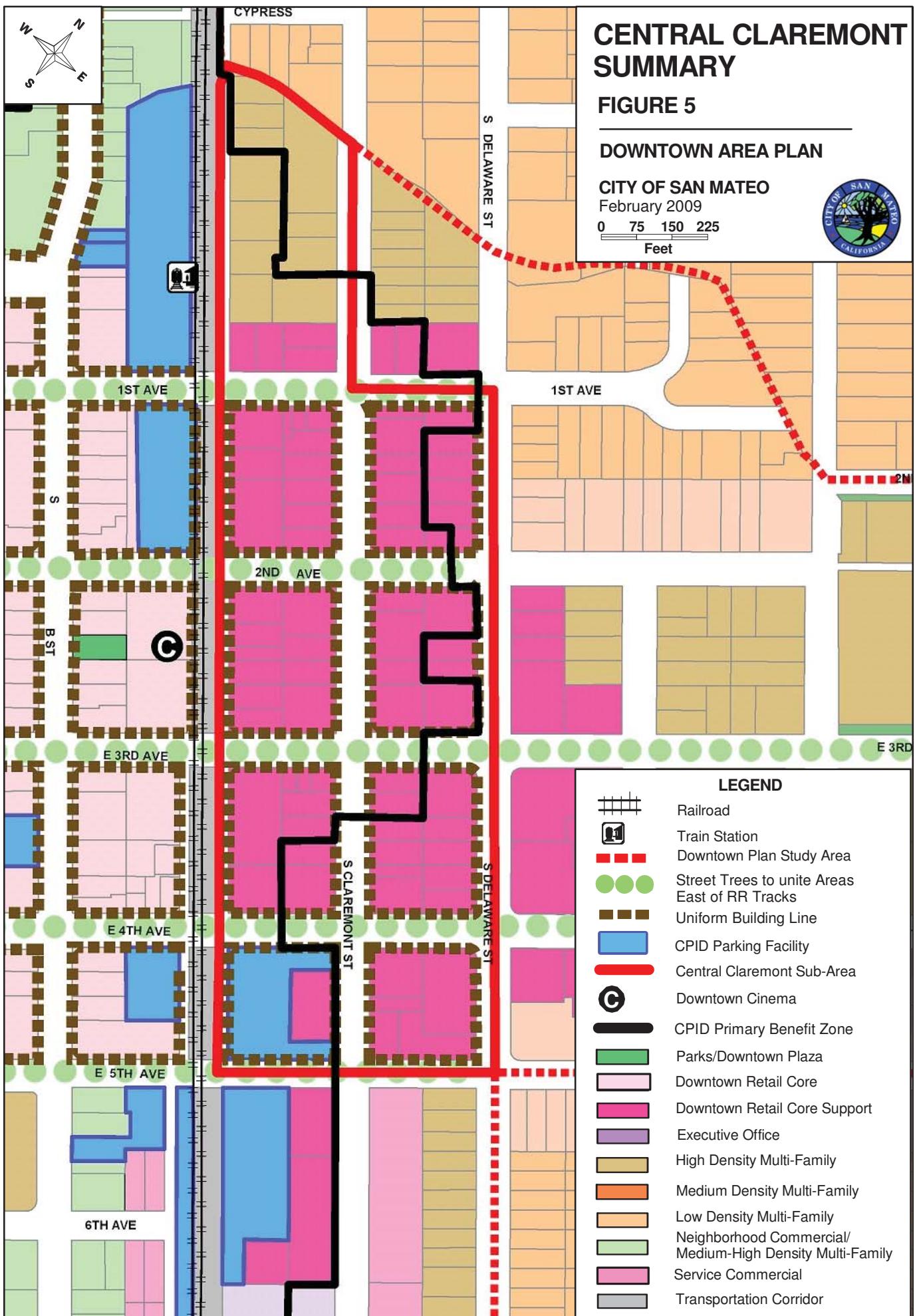
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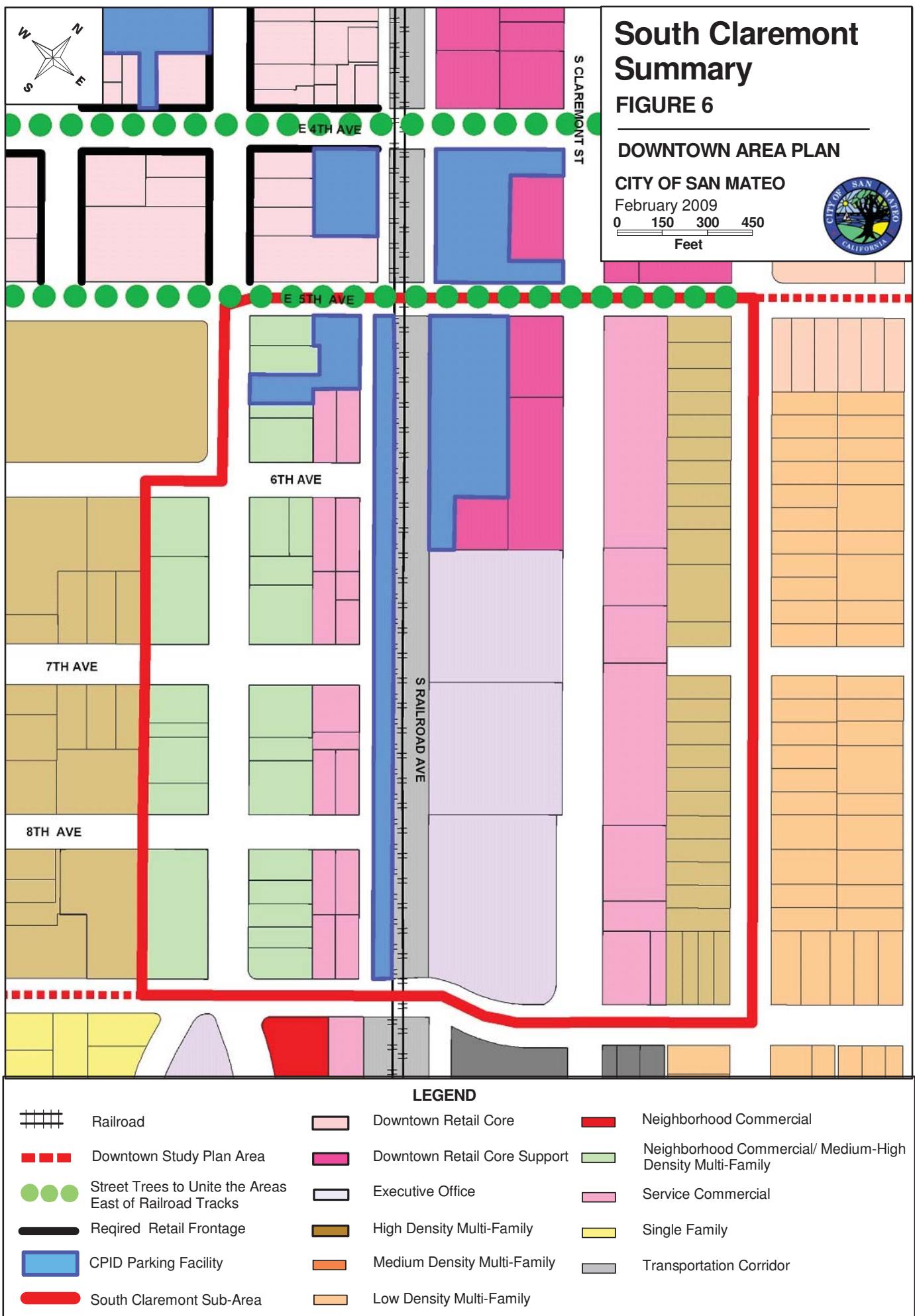
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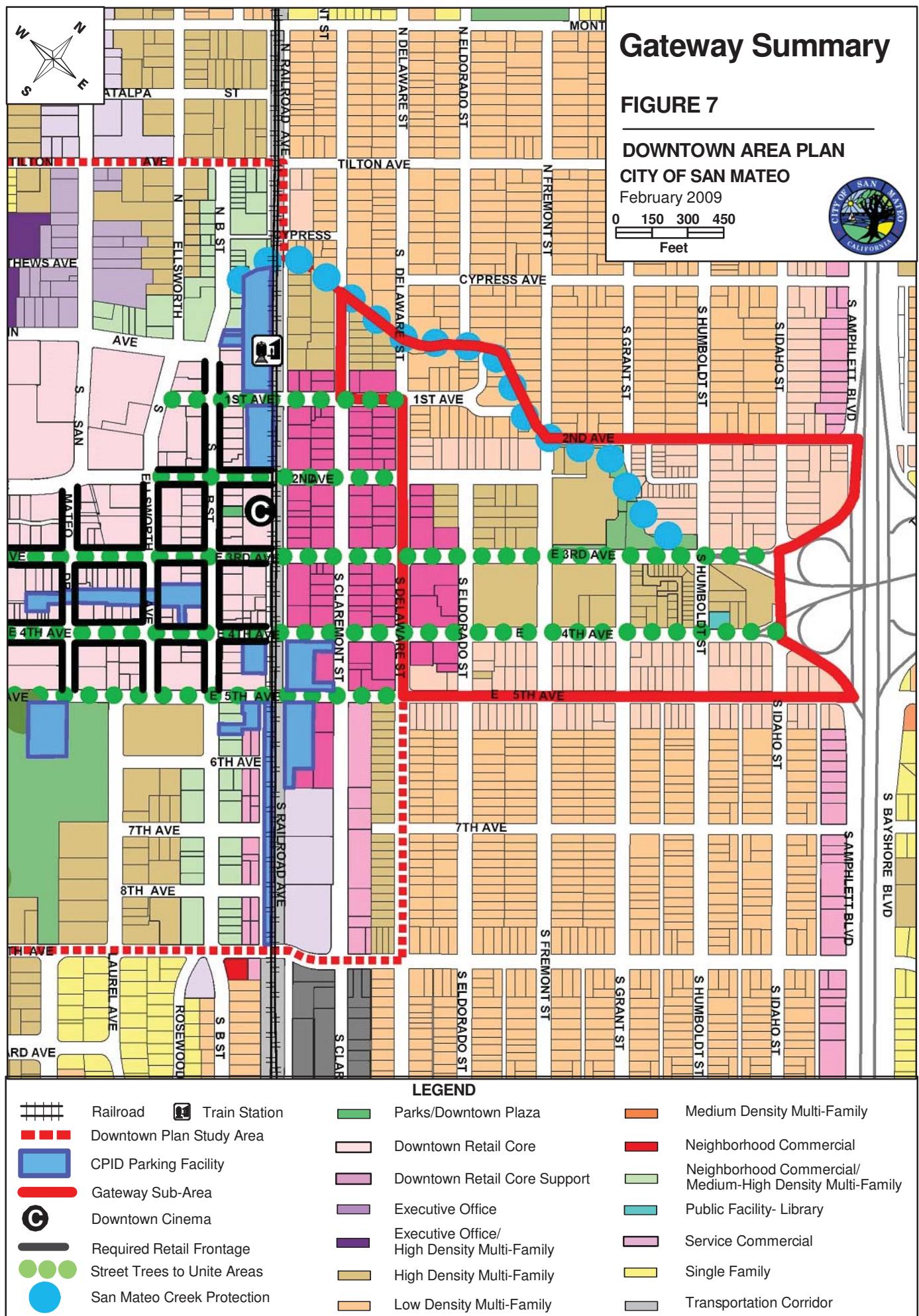
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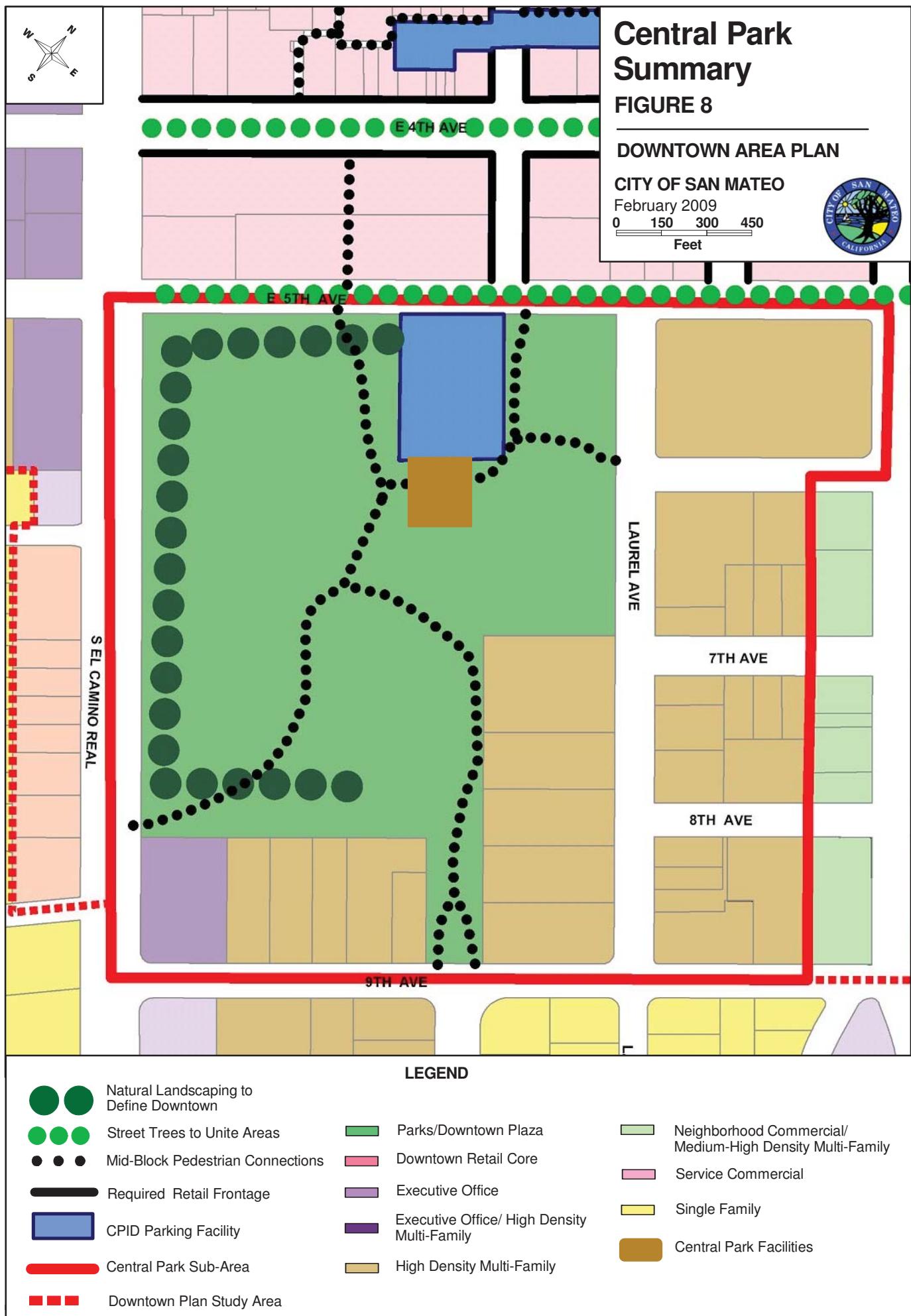
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# Downtown Plan Policies

The Downtown Plan policies are grouped under each of the goals which were introduced in Chapter 1. While many of the policies may fulfill more than one goal, they are listed once under the goal that will be the most affected by the implementation of the policy..

## **Goal I. Enhance Downtown's Role As The City Center And Maintain Its Unique Sense Of Place.**

### ***I.1 Downtown Core High Density/Intensity***

*Development. Encourage the development of mixed-use high density residential projects and high intensity commercial projects within the Downtown Retail Core.*

Measure P established areas in the Downtown Retail Core which allow building heights up to 75 feet and residential development up to 75 units/ acre, which are the highest in the City. This maximum height and density is to be permitted for projects that provide public benefits or amenities substantially greater than code requirements or that provide for protection of key historic structures.

***I.2 Central Park.*** *Improve the appearance of Central Park from Downtown while maintaining traditional features of the park. Examine the potential for additional pedestrian connections with the Downtown Retail Core. Develop signage for entryways to Central Park and incorporate Central Park as a destination point in any directional signage program that is developed for downtown.*

Central Park is significant as the community's signature park and is a great community gathering place. Popular activities and unique features of Central Park, such as the



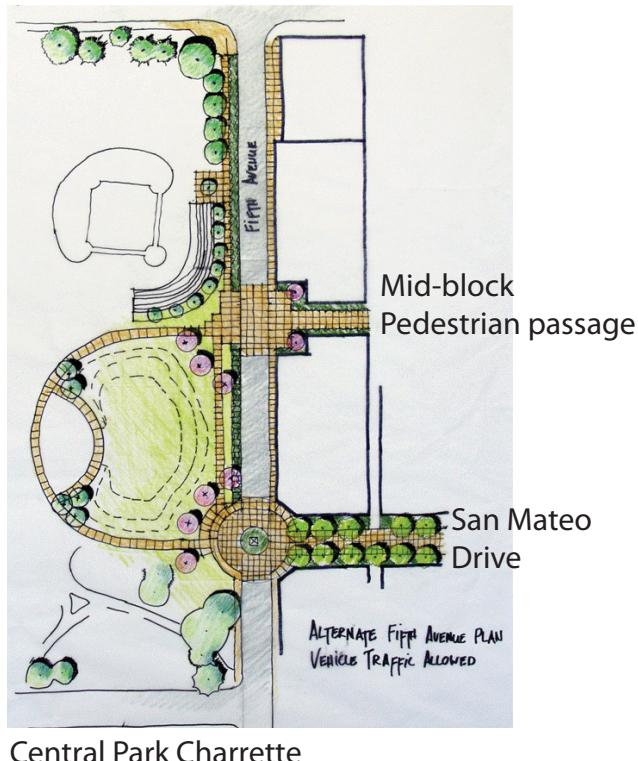
Central Park Music Series and the Japanese Tea Garden, attract many local & regional visitors to the downtown area.

As a local and regional destination point, the location of Central Park provides an opportunity to capitalize on its draw and link it with Downtown. Enhanced visual and physical connections from the Park to the core of

Downtown would encourage visitors to explore and experience Downtown San Mateo.

Central Park's mature landscaping and architectural fence along El Camino contribute to the traditional downtown character of San Mateo. A visual and physical connection from the downtown core to Central Park is via San Mateo Drive. While this entrance is framed with attractive landscaping, there is a lack of directional signage directing people to Central Park. Installation of directional and wayfinding signage throughout downtown will help identify important destination points in and around downtown. Street trees/landscaping and street furniture along San Mateo Drive would also provide a connection by extending the greenscape from Central Park into the retail core. Identify characteristics of public art that can serve as landmarks for Central Park.

One potential connection includes development of an open space feature at the park's entrance at the terminus of San Mateo Drive, thereby providing a direct



connection to the downtown. This could further be linked to a new potential public plaza (see also Policy 1.4 Provide for a Public Plaza in the Downtown Retail Core). Enhancements to connections with the downtown should be a priority in any City plans for Central Park improvements.

**I.3 Entryways.** Establish the 3rd & 4th Avenue corridors as a main entry and connection to the Downtown core areas and utilize the natural landscaping of San Mateo Creek and Central Park to define the boundaries of the downtown. Create major entry features to the City at: (1) 3rd/4th Avenues from El Camino, (2) from the north and south of B Street to the retail core, and (3) from east of the railroad tracks

Provide identifiable entry features at the entrances to the downtown that will help define the gateways to downtown, orient visitors and enhance downtown's image. An opportunity exists along El Camino at the 3rd/4th Avenue intersections to develop an entry feature and/or require new developments to incorporate an architectural statement. Additionally, improving 3rd/4th Avenues with street trees and other sidewalk and street improvements will enhance the visual appeal of the streets and enrich the pedestrian experience.

Landscaping at San Mateo Creek and Central Park currently denote the edges of the Downtown along El Camino Real. Central Park defines the southern edge of the Downtown core with its strong landscaped character, and the tall trees of the Creek define a distinct northern edge to the Downtown. In the Gateway neighborhood the Creek separates the higher density Gateway area from lower density residential neighborhood to the north. It is important that this significant landscape presence along the Creek and Central Park remain and be strengthened where possible.

**I.4 Provide for a Public Plaza in the Downtown Retail Core.** It is important to reinforce downtown as the City's center by providing a gathering space for activities that foster downtown's sense of place, such as cultural and public events.

As opportunities present themselves, the City should examine the feasibility of establishing a downtown public plaza. If a sufficiently large privately held site is redeveloped, there may be an opportunity for a public/private partnership, although it will still require substantial City financial commitment.

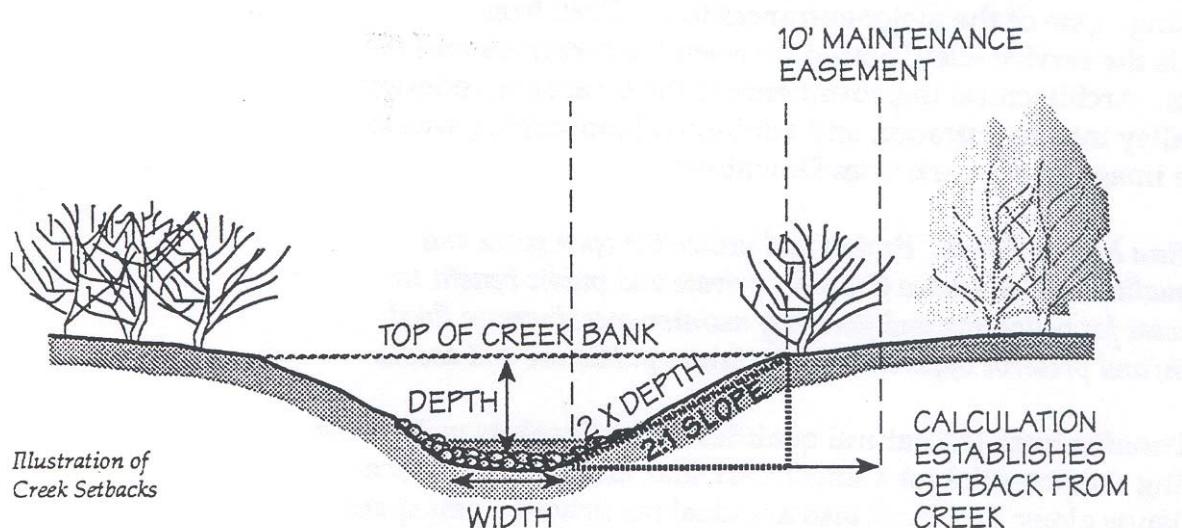
**I.5 San Mateo Creek.** Protect and utilize the open space and natural qualities of San Mateo Creek for private and public benefit to: assure access for police, fire, and floodway maintenance; increase flood protection; and preserve opportunities for future public use, access, and enjoyment.

San Mateo benefits from the natural qualities of the San Mateo Creek which helps wildlife in urban areas, sustains riparian vegetation, and provides opportunities for future public open space areas. The lands along the Creek also are ideal for private open space use by individual developments. However, the private use of the areas should not preclude opportunities to establish public access linkages and park space in the future. Public easements will satisfy the minimum needs for public safety and maintenance and protect essential public interests in the Creek.

**I.6 San Mateo Creek Flood Protection.** Protect new development adjacent to San Mateo Creek by requiring adequate building setbacks from creek banks, provision of access easements for creek maintenance purposes, and creek improvements such as bank stabilization.

Developments adjacent to the San Mateo Creek shall continue to adhere to the creek standard which requires setback for new development and provision of maintenance easements equal to (1) two times the depth of the channel measured along a 2:1 slope from the base of the slope (toe of bank) plus a 10 foot maintenance easement, or (2) a 10 foot maintenance easement from the top of bank, whichever is greater.

This creek standard is necessary for adequate maintenance access, to permit creek improvements and to protect buildings from creek erosion and flooding. All future construction shall require adherence to the creek standard, while actual dedication of the maintenance easement will be required as a condition of approval for all planning applications.



## II. Enhance The Vitality And Activity Of Downtown By Incorporating a Good Mix And Diversity Of Uses.

**II.1 Downtown Core Shopping Area.** Preserve the downtown's core shopping area between 1st and 5th Avenues from El Camino Real to the railroad.

**II.2 Required Retail Frontage.** Require the provision of ground floor retail uses with windows on properties located on the primary shopping streets as identified in the Required Retail Frontage Zone Map (see map at the end of this chapter). In addition to traditional retailing activities, permit entertainment and cultural uses, and allow fast food establishments in limited instances.

The requirement that retail be provided on the ground floor is intended to maintain downtown's commercial vitality and continuity within the retail core. Uses within this area should enhance the pedestrian scale of the downtown core and allow for a compact walking environment. While retail is required in certain identified areas in the retail core, retail uses are also permitted, but not required, elsewhere in the downtown within commercially designated areas.

**II.3 Cultural and Entertainment Facilities.** Encourage the establishment of cultural and entertainment facilities in the downtown core and allow these types of uses to fulfill retail frontage requirements.

Theaters, cinemas, restaurants, and other activities make downtown more attractive at night. These types of facilities will promote the night time use of downtown, as opposed to uses that are primarily active during the working day; and will be encouraged by allowing them to fulfill ground floor retail frontage requirements. These types of uses will also contribute to the night time environment which has been spurred by the development of the Downtown Century Cinema



Central Park Plaza, East Fourth Avenue

### II.4 Encourage Establishment of Downtown Sub-Districts.

Encourage clustering of compatible retail offerings in sub-districts that complement each other, but also provide a merchandise concentration of similar products and services.

The street configuration and layout of downtown results in long walking distances, which may discourage potential customers from walking the entire downtown area. This can be mitigated by clustering compatible retail offerings in sub-districts within a smaller geographical area.

These sub-districts can capitalize on the existing character of these areas and also enable branding of each individual district within downtown. Some potential sub-districts include the following:

- ❑ Enhance North B Street area and designate it as a unique district serving the nearby neighborhood population. Encourage retail/restaurant uses to locate on ground floors and office/service uses to locate in upper level spaces, while maintaining the existing character of this district.
- ❑ Additional area around Cinema — encourage concentration of more night time activities including: restaurants and entertainment type uses along B Street.

- Establish Home Furnishing Sub-district along South B Street . Use Scandinavian Designs as an anchor for this district.

Efforts at establishing sub-districts should be by incentives rather than restrictions. For example, in the vicinity of the Cinema, allow longer hours for entertainment activities through Entertainment Permits. Other incentives/support for subdistricts could include the following:

- Target these areas for public infrastructure improvements and wayfinding signage.
- For North B Street area, establish relationship with existing bilingual services in community and existing merchants.
- Ensure adequate evening security in these areas.
- Stricter enforcement of codes and ordinances to enhance appearance.

**II.5 Downtown Retail Core Support.** *Provide adequate commercial uses to both support traditional downtown (CBD) uses as well as serve adjacent residential neighborhoods.*

The area east of the railroad tracks, generally between 1st and 5th Avenues, to Delaware Street is intended to serve as a link between the Gateway and retail core. Commercial uses shall be the same as those generally in the retail core, however, some uses, such as automobile service stations, may be permitted in order to serve downtown employees, customers and residents. Residential uses will also be encouraged in order to provide additional downtown housing opportunities.

**II.6 Neighborhood Commercial Uses.** *Provide adequate neighborhood commercial support for existing and new residential development.*

Neighborhood commercial is designated for those areas adjacent to downtown residential neighborhoods, such as along North B Street and in areas east of the railroad tracks, adjacent to the Gateway. It is intended that these areas provide retail stores and services necessary to serve the day to day shopping needs (such as food stores, drug stores, etc.) of existing and future residents.

**II.7 Service Commercial Uses.** *Permit support service uses within the downtown, but outside the retail core.*

These types of service uses, such as printers, janitorial services, auto repair, wholesaling and warehousing are not dependent on walk-in traffic and do not require a centralized downtown location. Some are not appropriate for the retail core due to the nature of their activities. Two locations for these uses are: (1) Along the west side of the railroad south of 5th Avenue; and (2) along the east side of South Claremont south of 5th Avenue.

**II.8 Office Development.** *Encourage the establishment of offices within the Downtown Retail Core and surrounding commercially designated areas.*

Office uses are permitted in the downtown to ensure that general office space can be accommodated close to existing office concentrations and close to the retail core, due to the importance of office employment to support downtown retailing.

The downtown core 75-foot height limit and 3.0 FAR maximum, highest in the City, encourage the development of offices above ground floor retail and service uses. East of the railroad tracks, office development is more easily accessed and served by parking. However, due to the proximity of residential neighborhoods, height limits and FAR maximums are below those permitted in the downtown core.

**II.9 Housing in the Retail Core.** *Provide housing for new households that will utilize downtown businesses and is within proximity to the transit station to reduce vehicle trips and vehicle ownership.*

There are not very many housing opportunities catering to a younger demographic, such as those employed by start-up companies and technology firms near the downtown area. More diverse housing types are necessary in downtown to strengthen market support for downtown retail, restaurants, and entertainment businesses.

Residential development of this type would be different from the traditional design and would target creative, younger professional households as identified in ERA's report which notes that, "a creative developer can, through good design and marketing, appeal to niche market that has not yet been targeted in Downtown San Mateo."

In order to implement this policy, the City should allow flexibility in architectural style to facilitate use of nontraditional housing designs, such as loft spaces, allow flexibility in design where more modern forms relate to existing buildings within an historic environment.

In addition, the City will need to address parking issues for smaller sites, consider allowing overnight reserved parking in City facilities to enable financial feasibility of these projects.

**II.10 Mixed Use Commercial-Residential.** *Facilitate housing production by allowing multi-family dwellings as part of mixed use developments in all downtown commercial and office land use categories, except areas designated service commercial and parks/open space in the General Plan.*

In order to make available additional housing opportunities in the downtown core area to support retailing and to increase nighttime activity, residential activity is encouraged in mixed use developments. In addition, downtown core densities of 75 units/acres, highest in the City, encourage the establishment of residential uses. In

order to maximize the development of housing in the retail core, provide for flexibility in architectural style to allow nontraditional housing designs, such as loft spaces.

### **III. Enhance The Downtown's Pedestrian Environment and Enhance The Safety And Attractiveness Of Downtown.**

**III.1 Sidewalk Widening.** *Consider widening sidewalks to encourage outdoor restaurant seating and improve pedestrian amenities where adequate parking and circulation can be maintained.*

San Mateo has few outdoor seating areas in the Downtown core. However, in some areas, street width may be adequate to provide adequate vehicular circulation, parking and wider sidewalks. Extra sidewalk width could be used for a variety of activities including civic events, special events, public seating or outdoor cafes, or additional landscaping.

**III.2 Pedestrian Amenities.** *Enhance the sidewalk environment of primary pedestrian streets as indicated on the Pedestrian, Park and Open Space Policies map, by providing improvements to the appearance, comfort, convenience and safety of pedestrian areas. Develop a Coordinated Streetscape Plan for future sidewalk amenities and physical improvements.*

Special sidewalk paving, pedestrian bulbs at intersections, benches, bicycle racks, trees, and other sidewalk improvements in the Retail Core area have served to unify the diverse architectural environment in the downtown and improve public safety and comfort. The streetscape environment of downtown helps to define the pedestrian nature of the area, and also provides an identity through the use of streetlights, sidewalks and landscaping. As part of the Main Street Garage/Century Theater project, City staff began an effort to unify the design of these streetscape features. Subsequent improvements on Main Street, South B Street and 3rd and 4th Avenues between

B Street and South Fremont Street have been designed in a uniform manner.

The City should continue to implement a coordinated streetscape plan (1) as private redevelopment takes place; (2) as public funding becomes available, such as the C/CAG Livable Communities program (funds awarded to cities which approve, and have constructed, development in proximity to rail stations), or (3) through a combination of funding sources.

**III.3 Building Bulk.** *Control the bulk of tall buildings to provide maximum sunlight exposure to sidewalks, streets and open space; and to allow views through and out of the Downtown in a manner consistent with the City's Building Height and Bulk Plan.*

Both the height and bulk of buildings affect the degree to which views are disrupted; the image of the skyline; and the amount of sunlight reaching the street. In the Downtown core and in the commercial areas along North B Street and east of the railroad tracks to Claremont Street, buildings are required to be constructed to the property line in order to maintain the traditional storefront environment.

To allow sunlight to reach pedestrians at the primary streets and sidewalks, portions of buildings above the required 'street wall' are to be set back. This is shown in the Building Bulk Standards diagram, Building Height and Bulk Plan, and the Street Wall Illustrations located at end of this chapter.

Additionally, Downtown buildings that maintain a uniform building line enhance the pedestrian experience and provide a visual continuity. New construction and remodels should maintain the uniform building line along the frontages shown on the Downtown Urban Design Plan.

**III.4 Outdoor Display and Eating, Food and Plant Vendors.** *To add visual interest and activity to sidewalk areas, allow outdoor display of plants, books and food, restaurant seating areas, and outdoor food and plant vendors.*

#### *Outdoor Seating & Bicycle Parking, Palo Alto*



Allowing activities on the sidewalk and at building entrances that attract people is an essential key to any commercial area. Outdoor cafes, outdoor display of select merchandise and vendors would all contribute to the excitement of downtown that draws people.

**III.5 Midblock Pedestrian Crossings.** *Enhance and extend the midblock pedestrian crossings in the Downtown Retail Core to provide safe and attractive pedestrian circulation..*

Mid-block pedestrian crossings on 3rd Avenue, 4th Avenue, and 5th Avenues (between San Mateo Drive and El Camino Real) and on San Mateo Drive (between Baldwin Avenue and 2nd Avenue) are in place. Enhancement of other mid-block street crossings and walkways with a more uniform level of landscaping, lighting, entry feature/signage and design quality would improve visibility, safety and increase use. The pedestrian walkway connection behind the Benjamin Franklin Hotel between 3rd and 4th Avenues provide an example of mid-block pedestrian walkway that is dated and may benefit from improvements.

**III.6 Downtown 4th Avenue Lane Reduction.** *Reduce lanes on 4th Avenue down to a three (3) lane, 2 way street to provide pedestrian enhancements.*

East 4th Avenue is currently a three lane, two-way street between South B Street and Ellsworth Avenue and a four lane, two-way street between Ellsworth Avenue and South El Camino Real. In this vicinity, reducing East 4th Avenue by one traffic lane will provide opportunities for flexible street parking and outdoor seating areas, and wider sidewalks to enhance the pedestrian and accessible path of travel while at the same time maintaining a two-way street system for convenient vehicular access along East 4th Avenue.

The feasibility of reducing one lane on East 4th Avenue was analyzed by Hexagon Transportation Consultants. The study examined East 4th Avenue between El Camino Real and Delaware Street and found that East 4th Avenue could be narrowed to three lanes with a two-way street system without adversely affecting intersection levels of service or queuing. Further planning and detailed drawings should be developed that provides an identifiable entrance to downtown. The drawings should include travel lane configurations, street parking, sidewalks, street trees and other enhancements to the path of travel environment.

**III.7 Pedestrian Access – Pedestrian Safety is a Priority in the Pedestrian improvements should incorporate the following concepts to develop a consistent pedestrian-friendly environment:**

- a. *Pedestrian access to peripheral garages should provide a safe and attractive walking environment.*
- b. *Sidewalks should be well maintained and be widened as opportunity becomes available to provide a pedestrian boulevard experience that might include elements such as outdoor dining.*
- c. *Vertical street elements should be minimized to improve pedestrian access.*
- d. *Continue practice of using pedestrian scale lights in the Downtown.*

- e. *Monitor the placement of utilities and other similar items to ensure that they do not adversely affect pedestrian movement and safety.*

The Downtown has long been identified as being one of the City's most important pedestrian environments. This includes not only the Downtown Retail Core itself, but also Central Park and the connections to surrounding neighborhoods. The pedestrian nature of downtown should be maintained and enhanced as opportunities are provided with both public and private projects.

**III.8 Street Tree Plan.** *Update the Street Tree Master Plan for the downtown area that provides identity to individual streets, identifies major corridors, and acknowledges the visibility needs of retail uses, including sidewalk amenities.*

Street tree plantings in the downtown are sometimes inconsistent and do not unify the street. Consistent and prominent street tree plantings on key streets connecting downtown with other parts of the City, such as 3rd and 4th Avenues, would provide a clear visual link to the downtown.

The 1995 Street Tree Master Plan should be updated to provide an identifiable character to individual streets and denote their relative importance. The plan should continue to include a wide enough variety of trees so as to protect the City's trees from any single unanticipated horticultural problem. The selection and placement of trees should also consider maintenance and the needs of retailers to have visible signage. A consistent planting of street trees extending both east and west of the railroad tracks will also assist in linking outlying areas with the downtown core.

**III.9 Gateway Design Standards.** Continue to implement the Gateway Design Standards.

The City of San Mateo has adopted Gateway Design Guidelines to address design quality, architectural compatibility, pedestrian safety and aesthetics for the Gateway sub-area. Building setbacks and upper floor building stepbacks are called for by these design guidelines. These guidelines also address architectural features such as porches, front door entries, bay windows and low walls to enhance new development compatibility with the existing neighborhood character. These guidelines are used in combination with the City's other residential design guidelines (Multi-Family, Small Lot Multi-Family, Duplex and Single Family Design Guidelines) as appropriate. The guidelines also call for a consistent landscape setback along 3rd and 4th Avenues. This landscape setback identifies the residential use of the Gateway while allowing buildings of varying heights to occur without creating visual confusion.

## IV. Protect Key Landmarks And The Historic Character That Exists In Parts Of Downtown.

**IV.1 Building Heights.** Relate the height of new buildings to the pattern of downtown and to the character of existing and proposed development.

Building heights in the Downtown are limited to 55-feet in most areas with 75-feet permitted on some sites. However, the existing development pattern includes one to three story building heights throughout much of the Downtown core area. New development shall be encouraged to step down towards some existing buildings in order to be compatible with the pattern of Downtown. This becomes more important where existing buildings are not likely to redevelop due to historical or architectural importance or site, see Building Height and Bulk Plan located at the end of this chapter.



Castro Street, Downtown Mountain View

**IV.2 Store Fronts in the Retail Core.** Maintain the traditional store front environment of the Downtown Retail Core area by requiring new buildings to be constructed to the street property line. In the retail core area, require ground floor building walls to be dominated by windows and pedestrian entrances.

The urban core is characterized by continuous building facades that define the boundary of the public space and provides a contrast to the surrounding more suburban, landscaped areas of the City. Policies that sharpen this contrast will promote a distinctive downtown image and provide a firm boundary for the city's urban center.

To foster an active street life, it is important to create an engaging, interesting experience for the pedestrian through visually appealing and active storefronts with frequent building entrances and large storefront windows. Design guidelines should define the percentage of ground floor walls for windows, depth of display windows, frequency of pedestrian entrances, and depth of active storefronts. Also incorporate height of raised planters or window bases to define base of building; if planters are used, examine potential use as seating during street oriented activities.

**IV.3 Design Guidelines.** Evaluate the Downtown Design Guidelines to ensure that it: (1) Emphasizes the public realm - streets and sidewalks and public spaces in building design, scale, detail, and pattern of new developments; (2) encourages building design to be compatible with the historic and architectural features common to many buildings in the Downtown; (3) encourages a compatibility of diverse building styles; and (4) encourages building details, surfaces, textures and materials that are interesting for the pedestrian.

The retail core of the downtown is made up of many architecturally diverse buildings. Storefronts are relatively narrow, building fronts change at regular intervals of about 20 to 50 feet, and many buildings have extensive amounts of architectural detailing at the street front. This level of detail and richness in variation at the building fronts help to create a traditional small-scale downtown character. Design guidelines should help new developments enhance the character of downtown San Mateo and ensure that buildings are interesting for the pedestrian.

Despite the great diversity of building styles and mix of architectural elements of storefronts, basic architectural elements are present that can visually unify the streetscapes. Design guidelines should define elements of the streetscape that are important to overall quality, including: (1) methods to achieve compatible form and detailing between new and old buildings; (2) methods to articulate the pedestrian space through the use of awnings, recessed windows, recessed entryways (however deep recesses are discouraged for public safety purposes), raised planters (that are secured to the ground), street trees, entry features, sidewalk furniture and paving; and (3) methods to provide interest to building facades through the use of detailing and articulation of building cornices, reveals, parapets, window and door frames, and awnings. When viewed as a whole block or street, these elements define the overall quality of the



East Third Ave

streetscape.

**IV.4 Downtown Historic Character.** Preserve and retain the historic and architectural character of structures within the downtown.

**IV.5 Historic District.** Maintain the identified historic district along portions of 3rd Avenue and B Street, and continue to implement regulations to protect the overall historic and architectural character and integrity of the area.

The City's Downtown area is of particular importance and interest with respect to historic structures. These historic structures, as identified in the City of San Mateo Historic Building Survey Final Report, contribute to downtown's identity and add to the overall character of the City. The areas along 3rd Avenue and B Street contain the largest concentration of historical structures within the downtown. This sense of history within the downtown adds to its unique sense of place. However, it is important to balance historic preservation with the need for new development.

The Zoning Code includes regulations pertaining to downtown historic structures in Chapter 27.66, Historic Preservation. These Zoning Code provisions implement the Downtown Plan's historic preservation policies.

#### **IV.6 Downtown Design Guidelines/Downtown Historic District**

**Design Guidelines.** Revise the Downtown and Historic District Design Guidelines to give consideration to new development within a historic preservation context, thereby providing a balance between preserving a unique community asset (in the form of a historic district with intact distinct historic and contributor structures) and providing for new development and improvements within the downtown area.

The areas along 3rd Avenue and B Street contain the largest concentration of historical structures within the downtown. This sense of history within the downtown adds to its unique sense of place. The design standards for 3rd Avenue and B Street clearly articulate the community's interest in maintaining architectural and historical assets. Design standards should continue to require adherence to specific historical/architectural design features for development on 3rd and B Street. It is important to balance historic preservation with new development as they occur in Downtown.

Current regulations for historic preservation include guidelines and standards covering specific historical/architectural features, materials, colors, etc. for all new construction, as well as treatment of existing historic structures that are based on the policies regarding individually eligible buildings and contributor buildings.

The City and community have expressed a strong interest in respecting existing historic and architectural features while allowing for new development/redevelopment to occur within the downtown historic area. An update of the design guidelines will help convey the City's goal and serve as a tool in evaluating projects. The update shall include development of guidelines to allow a variety of building design and styles and provide more detailed explanations on statutory (federal and state) requirements that are applicable to projects involving individually eligible historic structures as well as those in an historic district.

Additionally, when funding becomes available, the City shall develop an informational booklet/handout which will identify types of improvements/changes that may be considered for historic/contributor buildings, describe the application & review process, and identify useful resources.

**IV.7 Incentives.** Give historic structures priority status for available rehabilitation funds and provide incentives for their maintenance and rehabilitation.

Historic structures identified in the 1989 Historic Resources survey should be given priority for City loans or grants such as Redevelopment Agency funds for the purposes of historic preservation and seismic upgrading. The City should also examine other financial assistance options, such as the Mills Act provisions, which allow for a reduction of property taxes on eligible historic properties. The City should also examine the possibility of allowing for deviation from land use standards in exchange for a long term commitment to preserve downtown historic building.

#### **V Ensure Adequate Parking To Meet Expected Needs, Enhance The Quality Of The Parking Environment, And Improve Public Perceptions About Parking Availability.**

**V.1 Downtown Parking.** Enhance Downtown Parking Supply. The following should be examined for feasibility:

- a. Public parking at 5th and Railroad Avenues in combination with redevelopment of the site at 4th, 5th and Railroad (former Kinko's site).
- b. Additional parking in the vicinity of 5th Avenue and San Mateo Drive in the event that the existing Central Park Tennis Court Garage is demolished. This additional parking should, at a minimum, be sufficient to replace the eliminated spaces.
- c. Public parking at the City-owned site bounded by 5th Avenue, the railroad, and South Claremont.

Parking in these locations would be used in combination with a parking management strategy to encourage employees to park at perimeter Downtown lots. In general, parking expansion within Downtown San Mateo should occur at the periphery of the downtown instead of within the retail core. Additionally, new public parking facilities would only be provided if adequate funding is secured (see below).

**V.2 Downtown Parking Funding Strategies.** *Funding of additional public parking in Downtown should consider the following principles:*

- a. *Property owners should participate in the funding of future parking expansion through assessments or other appropriate methods.*
- b. *Parking in-lieu fees when combined with assessments and other parking revenues should be maintained at a level to provide the full cost of constructing a new parking space.*

Existing Central Parking Improvement District (CPID) policies call for a payment of \$9,000 in-lieu of providing parking on site. In 2008 dollars, this \$9,000 covers less than 33% of the cost to actually build a parking space. This amount was originally supplemented by CPID assessments. However, with retirement of the CPID



Benjamin Franklin Hotel, East Third Ave

bonds, those assessments are no longer made. This supplemental funding source has been eliminated. In order to fund future public parking facilities, additional funding sources will need to be secured. An increase of the in-lieu fee amount will be explored in combination with efforts to secure funding for additional public parking facilities.

**V.3 Downtown Parking Management Strategies.** *The City shall actively manage downtown parking facilities through the use of parking rates, time limits and other methods including advances in technology.*

Parking rates and durations can be actively used to manage the City's downtown parking supply. This includes freeing-up parking spaces in the retail core for customer use and promote high turnover of those spaces while moving downtown employees and other long-term (more than 2 hour stays) users to off-street public parking facilities. In addition to managing parking supply, parking rates and duration will be used to enhance potential revenue to fund downtown parking operations, maintenance and capital programs.



Old City Hall Building, South B Street

**V.4 Public/Private Downtown Parking Partnerships.** When sites are redeveloped, opportunities should be pursued for private/public partnerships to provide additional public parking within Downtown San Mateo. These may include providing excess parking for public use above project requirements, joint use of parking lots, or use of private lots during off-peak hours.

As private development takes place in the Downtown, opportunities for provision of public parking should be explored. This may take the form of an additional level of parking devoted to public parking, joint use of parking facilities, or enable private parking facilities to be made available for public use during off-peak hours.

**V.5 Limited Parking Zone.** *Restrict parking on primary pedestrian retail streets to reduce traffic congestion, ensure retail continuity and maintain the pedestrian environment.*

The Limited Parking Zone, as shown on the CPID map, restricts parking on primary pedestrian streets to ensure that they are not interrupted by surface parking lots, curb cuts and other vehicular traffic oriented improvements. This is accomplished by:

- (1) Restricting curb cuts;
- (2) Limiting off-street above grade parking;
- (3) Limiting commercial parking provided onsite to the visitor component only; and,
- (4) Retaining angled, on-street parking.

**V.6 Residential Parking Standards.** *Allow reduced residential parking standards in the Downtown Retail Core.*

A 2008 survey of downtown residential projects indicates that vehicle ownership patterns in the downtown supports lower parking requirements than the City-wide standard. However, this reduced requirement should only apply in the retail core due to the proximity of CPID parking facilities; residential projects outside the core should provide parking equal to City-wide standards. Even within the downtown core, visitor parking should be provided on-

site in order to reduce on-street parking impacts.

**V.7 Downtown Plan Parking Standards.** *Maintain reduced parking requirements within the Downtown Plan area for non-residential uses. Explore new technologies to increase parking availability and/or efficiency.*

Persons shopping or using services often visit a number of establishments during one trip to downtown. Parking requirements can be reduced since many uses share the same parking. In addition, the existence of public parking facilities and on-street parking spaces reduce the demand for private on-site parking spaces.

In addition, as new non-residential developments take place within the CPID, use of in-lieu fee payments to fulfill parking requirements will need to be monitored to ensure adequate availability of spaces. While there presently exist sufficient spaces to handle foreseeable demand in the near-term, there may be a need to construct additional facilities should new projects rely on the CPID to provide parking, as opposed to providing parking on-site. The City should explore the joint use of private parking facilities to complement public parking facilities, as a 2008 study indicates that there is sufficient reserve in private parking facilities (also see Policy V.4) Additionally, new technologies opportunities to increase parking supply or improve efficiency of existing parking supply. New private and public developments should explore and, where feasible, incorporate new technologies that increase parking availability or efficiency.

**V.8 Parking for Projects Within One-Half Mile of the Downtown Transit Center.** *On a case-by-case basis, consider parking reductions for projects within 0.5 mile of the Downtown Transit Center.*

For projects within 0.5 miles of the Downtown Transit Station (see map at end of chapter), measures should be taken to enhance transit use and decrease reliance upon auto trips. Additionally, the short distance to the Downtown Transit Station may also reduce the need for vehicle trips as employees, residents, and visitors can walk, bike or utilize other means to reach the station for commuting purposes. As individual development projects within 0.5 miles of the Downtown Transit Center are evaluated, consider parking reductions based upon the provision of Transportation Demand Management measures (also see policy VIII.2 Transportation Demand Management).

Parking reductions should be considered as an element of downtown transportation demand management strategies. Consideration for parking reductions shall include, but not be limited to: anticipated parking demand; pedestrian access from the site to the Downtown Transit Center; and use of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures.



Transit Center North Building



Transit Center South Building



Public Art (Across from Transit Center)

## VI. Facilitate Ease Of Access Without Impacting Downtown's Character And Sense Of Place.

### VI.1 3rd Avenue/4th Avenue Widening. *Support the widening of 3rd and 4th Avenues from 2 to 3 lanes between Humboldt and Delaware due to projected peak hour traffic volumes.*

The major east-west arterials in the downtown are 3rd and 4th Avenues which provide access between Downtown San Mateo and Highway 101. Both arterials include signals and turn lanes at major intersections and provide two way access west of Delaware. To the east of Delaware Street, 3rd Avenue is one-way westbound while 4th Avenue is one-way eastbound. Projected peak hour traffic volumes indicate that widening of 3rd and 4th Avenues from two to three lanes between Humboldt and Delaware is needed to accommodate projected peak hour traffic volumes.

### VI.2 Existing Downtown Retail Core Two-Way Street System. *Maintain the existing two-way street system in the downtown core on 3rd and 4th Avenues between El Camino Real and Delaware Street.*

Both 3rd and 4th Avenues are three lane, two-way streets between Delaware and B Streets. Between El Camino Real and Delaware Street, 3rd Avenue is one lane in both directions while 4th Avenue is a three lane, two-way street between B Street and Ellsworth Avenue and a four lane, two-way street between Ellsworth Avenue and El Camino Real. The two-way circulation system shall be maintained since conversion to a one-way system would increase vehicle speeds and adversely affect the Downtown's pedestrian environment. In addition, increased turning movements generated by a one-way street system would further add to downtown traffic congestion.

**VI.3 Railway Improvements.** *Depress the rail line through the downtown with street crossings remaining at grade as Caltrain service is increased and high speed rail through the corridor is implemented. Depressing the rail line should include examination of a tunnel alternative and potential use of air rights to fulfill Downtown Plan goals and policies.*

Any rail improvement should avoid physically dividing the community in "east" vs. "west" segments. All significant environmental impacts should be mitigated to minimize impacts on the adjacent community.

Consider alternative design solutions to minimize the additional right of way required to construct proposed improvements and reduce impacts on adjacent properties.

The San Mateo County Transportation Authority, the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board and the California High Speed Rail Authority are examining improvements along the rail corridor in the City of San Mateo, as well as the rest of the San Francisco peninsula. Recent information from the California High Speed Rail Authority indicates the need to accommodate a 4 track alignment: 2 tracks for high speed rail, 2 tracks for Caltrain. All existing grade crossings would be converted to grade separated crossings along the entire length of the peninsula corridor, between San Francisco and San Jose.

The existing rail corridor is at its narrowest in the downtown primarily due to the existence of Railroad Avenue on the east side of the tracks. As noted above, depressing the rail would allow for grade separated crossings while at the same time minimizing noise, visual and other impacts on the surrounding community.

As the San Mateo County Transportation Authority, the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board and the California High Speed Rail Authority develop improvement plans, the criteria noted above should be used for evaluation of any proposed plans and alternatives.

The Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, which operates and maintains the Caltrain system, is preparing a Footprint Study, examining alternative alignment and construction alternatives for the redevelopment of the Downtown Train Station to accommodate a 4 track alignment. Future improvement plans to accommodate High Speed Rail should incorporate the findings of the Footprint Study and be consistent with the City's recommendations regarding the Footprint Study.

**VI.4 Railroad Corridor Widening.** *Plan for railroad corridor widening through the downtown and limit redevelopment of sites with access only to Railroad Avenue.*

In the event that separation of freight and passenger rail lines is necessary due to substantial increases in passenger service and incorporation of High Speed Rail, the rail corridor will need to be expanded. The existing rail corridor is at its narrowest in the downtown primarily due to the existence of Railroad Avenue on the east side of the tracks. Future widening may limit access to some parcels along Railroad Avenue. In the event that such widening is needed, the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board (PCJPB), consisting of local transit operators and Caltrain, will be responsible for acquisition of any necessary right-of-way. The necessity for property acquisition due to widening is being examined as part of the Footprint Study being prepared by the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board. In the interim, redevelopment of sites with access only to Railroad Avenue should be limited.

## **VII. Enhance The Fiscal Importance Of Downtown To The City As A Whole Through Public And Private Investment.**

**VII.1 Re-use of the City's 4th Avenue Site (former Kinko's site).**  
*Execute sale or lease of this City owned property for a suitable re-use.*

The City owned property bounded by 4th, 5th, Railroad and Claremont represents a unique opportunity to provide a catalyst for downtown development on the east side of the railroad tracks. Residential use has been examined and analyzed for the site.

The recently produced for-sale residential product in San Mateo has been almost exclusively of traditional design and much of it has been luxury units for affluent senior households. There has been little residential development catering to a younger demographic, despite the presence of various start-ups and technology firms near the downtown area employing "creative" professionals. Innovative design and marketing may appeal to a niche market that has not yet been targeted in Downtown San



Aerial of Former "Kinko's" Site

Mateo.

However, there have been significant changes to the economy since the residential analysis. As a result, prior to initiating redevelopment of the site, the City should commission further analysis to determine the most appropriate use for the property. Additionally, any proposed development of the site should consider a range of alternatives to address potential right-of-way impact generated by the establishment of High Speed Rail.

**VII.2 Re-Use of City's 5th Avenue Site.** *Determine a suitable re-use for the City owned site bounded by 5th Avenue, the railroad, and South Claremont Street.*

The long term use of this City owned site should be determined. Any use should be evaluated as to its ability to fulfill the following functions:

- Help establish the downtown as the city center.
- Support existing downtown retail.
- Provide opportunities for additional parking.
- Capitalize on the site's unique proximity to Downtown San Mateo.

**VII.3 Development of Vacant, Underutilized Parcels.**

*Encourage development of large vacant, underutilized sites which break up the continuity of the retail core experience. Regulatory and economic incentives may be considered in encouraging significant development which maximizes use of these sites.*

Large, vacant, underutilized parcels within Downtown, such as the former Blue and White Laundry site on North B Street and the former Thrifty/Rite Aid building on South B Street break up the retail continuity on primary downtown streets to the detriment of downtown economic health and vitality. Development of these sites with significant project(s) which attempts to maximize use of the site will not only have direct economic impacts generated by the projects themselves, but also contribute to the overall downtown shopping environment.

The City and Redevelopment Agency should pursue regulatory and economic incentives to encourage

significant development of these sites. Significant development will present a substantial economic development opportunity for the City and will likely attempt to maximize use of the site. Regulatory incentives could include but are not limited to elimination of the requirement for strict conformance with individual Downtown Plan policies, provided the project is consistent with the applicable goal statements in the Downtown Plan. In no case however, shall the project exceed the maximum height and bulk standard and building intensity standard as set forth in Chapter 27.40 Building Height and Bulk Overlay District and the Building Height and Intensity Plan



Former "Thrifty/Rite Aid" Site, South B Street of the General Plan.

**VII.4 Public Facilities.** *Examine opportunities to bring civic and cultural activities and buildings downtown. This could include City Hall, a downtown plaza, children's museum and other similar uses.*

Locate public facilities in the downtown to reinforce the image of Downtown as the center of the City and contribute to its economic vitality.

As the City looks at redevelopment of City owned property, the potential for these types of uses should be examined. If a sufficiently large privately held site is redeveloped, there may be an opportunity for a public/private partnership.

**VII.5 Private Development in Conjunction With Public Facilities.**

*Wherever feasible, encourage private development in conjunction with public facilities, including air rights development and leased space.*

Where feasible, private development should be permitted within public facilities, such as parking structures. This includes ground floor retail use in public garages and private office and residential development over or adjacent to public parking. In some cases, sale of air rights could make feasible placement of parking below grade.

**VII.6 Public Improvement Funding and Redevelopment**

**Tax Increment Funds.** *Implement strategies for funding public improvements downtown which are the most consistent with the goals and policies of the Downtown Plan. Leverage Redevelopment tax increment funds to maximize capital investments from other sources to defray, partially or fully, costs of improvements, especially off-site improvements, which will benefit multiple properties or the City as a whole.*

Downtown public improvements may be financed through a wide variety of sources including State and Federal funds, development impact fees, grants, assessment district revenues, local bond proceeds, and redevelopment revenues. However, the limited or unpredictable nature of other funding mechanisms, the Agency is the most viable funding source for the capital projects identified in this Downtown Plan. Therefore, issuing new bonds paid for with Redevelopment tax increment is the most likely source of the greatest amount of funds for new projects.

It is anticipated that increased success for the project area results in an increase of revenues for the City of San Mateo Redevelopment Agency through increased property values. Given estimated property value increases over the next two fiscal years (2008-2009 and 2009-2010), there is a possibility of approximately \$1 million in additional annual tax increment revenue that could be available for new or expanded capital



Central Parking Garage, South B Street



Main Street Garage

projects in the Downtown Redevelopment Project Area (see Redevelopment Project Area Map at the end of this chapter). Additional analysis is underway to determine the potential for future bond revenue to fund additional larger projects. Agency operating costs and proposed State takeaways are the two primary factors potentially limiting the bond capacity.



Downtown Caltrain Station

## VIII Support Sustainable Initiatives in Downtown.

**VIII.1 Transit Services.** Encourage increased transit use viability to and around Downtown by:

- a. Support increase to rail service, including the "Baby Bullet".
- b. Support coordination between multi-modal agencies (bus, train, etc.).
- c. Enhance integration of mass transit into Downtown.
- d. Investigate the feasibility of a Downtown shuttle.
- e. Encourage increased transit services and increased transit use for travel downtown, particularly by employees.

The downtown is served by SamTrans with routes through the downtown and connecting with adjacent areas. The City should encourage SamTrans service by considering the need for bus stops within downtown and provision of adequate space for bus movement when designing street improvements or reviewing private development projects. The City should also encourage expanded transit service by Caltrain and SamTrans.

The City should examine opportunities to provide transit passes for downtown employees to reduce parking demand in downtown parking facilities.

**VIII.2 Transportation Demand Management (TDM).** Required participation in TDM measures, such as car/van pooling, car sharing, staggered work hours and transit use, as a condition of approval for projects anticipated to generate significant parking and traffic impacts.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures should be examined to change travel behavior and reduce trips during peak commute hours. These measures include ridesharing, work pattern changes, transit use, and preferential parking controls. Implementation of these measures will result in a reduction of parking and traffic impacts generated by employees who work in Downtown San Mateo. While this would be required for projects anticipated to generate significant traffic impacts, smaller scale projects should be examined for opportunities to incorporate TDM measures.

Additionally, improvements in the pedestrian environment will help encourage walking, biking and utilization of other means of transit, thereby reducing vehicle trips. The policies under Goal III — Enhance The Downtown's Pedestrian Environment and Enhance The Safety And Attractiveness Of Downtown are intended to facilitate these improvements.

**VIII.3 Downtown Transportation Management Agency (TMA).** Develop a Downtown TMA to provide support and oversight of the Downtown residential and commercial transportation opportunities and enhance the use of public transit and/or bicycles while reducing the use of single-occupant vehicles.

To enhance utilization of public transit within the Downtown, and support and promote the economic viability of the Downtown through a cooperative, business-supported program that promotes an efficient, balanced transportation system, a Transportation Management Agency (TMA) should be developed to provide management and oversight of the multi-modal transportation opportunities in the Downtown.

**VIII. 4 Support Sustainable Transportation Initiatives.**

Implement Downtown Area Plan policies calling for use of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures, establishment of a Transportation Management Association (TMA), and other measures to reduce vehicle trips and encourage transit use and promote bicycle and pedestrian accessibility.

The Downtown Area Plan seeks to improve pedestrian, bicycle, shuttle, and transit access by creating direct connections to the train stations and other transportation facilities and local destinations. Additionally, the Downtown Area Plan includes vehicle trip reduction, bicycle and pedestrian accessibility policies. These policies will be employed on a case by case basis as development is reviewed, with the goal of reducing vehicle trips and promoting alternative means of mobility.



**VIII.5 City-Wide Sustainable Initiatives Plan.** As the recommendations of the Sustainable Initiatives Plan and Climate Action Plan for Operations and Facilities are implemented by the General Plan or by separate ordinance, resolution or procedures, incorporate them by reference into the Downtown Plan.

The Sustainable Initiatives Plan is a companion document to the Climate Action Plan for Operations and Facilities (CAP). The CAP focuses on citywide efforts and programs of the City that reach out to and for the public. The CAP is for City efforts and includes specific actions that will reduce the energy and fuel use in City facilities and operations, thus lessening the climate change effects that the City is responsible for impacting.

The Downtown Plan will incorporate the recommendations of these two documents as implementation is approved by the City Council.

#### Examples of Green Living Walls in Urban Context



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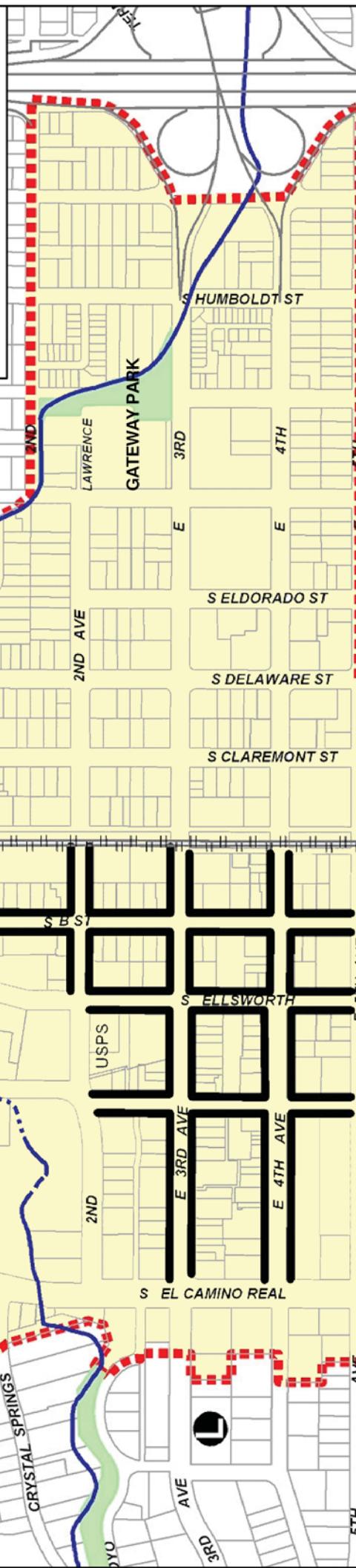
# REQUIRED RETAIL FRONTAGE ZONES

FIGURE 11

## DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN



CITY OF SAN MATEO  
February 2009  
0 200 400 600  
Feet



### LEGEND

RAILROAD	POST OFFICE	TRAIN STATION
USPS		
LIBRARIES		
PARKS		
PROPERTY BOUNDARY		
DOWNTOWN PLAN STUDY AREA		
REQUIRED RETAIL FRONTAGE		

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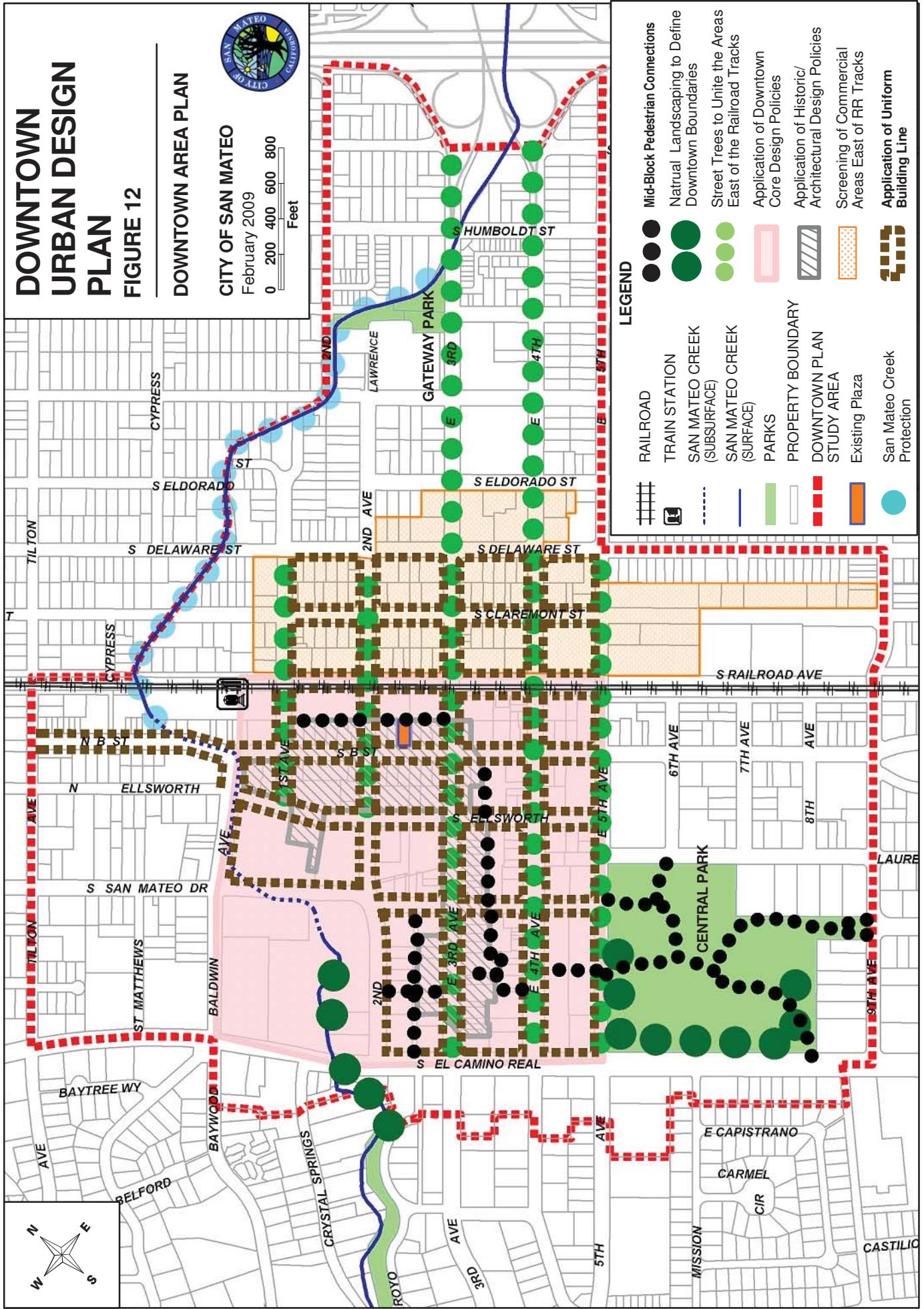
# DOWNTOWN URBAN DESIGN PLAN

## FIGURE 12

### DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN



CITY OF SAN MATEO  
February 2009  
0 200 400 600 800  
Feet



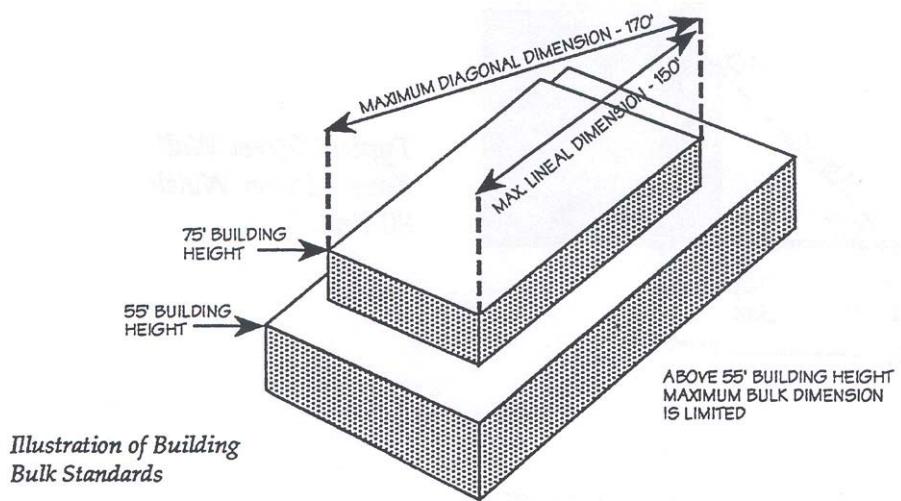
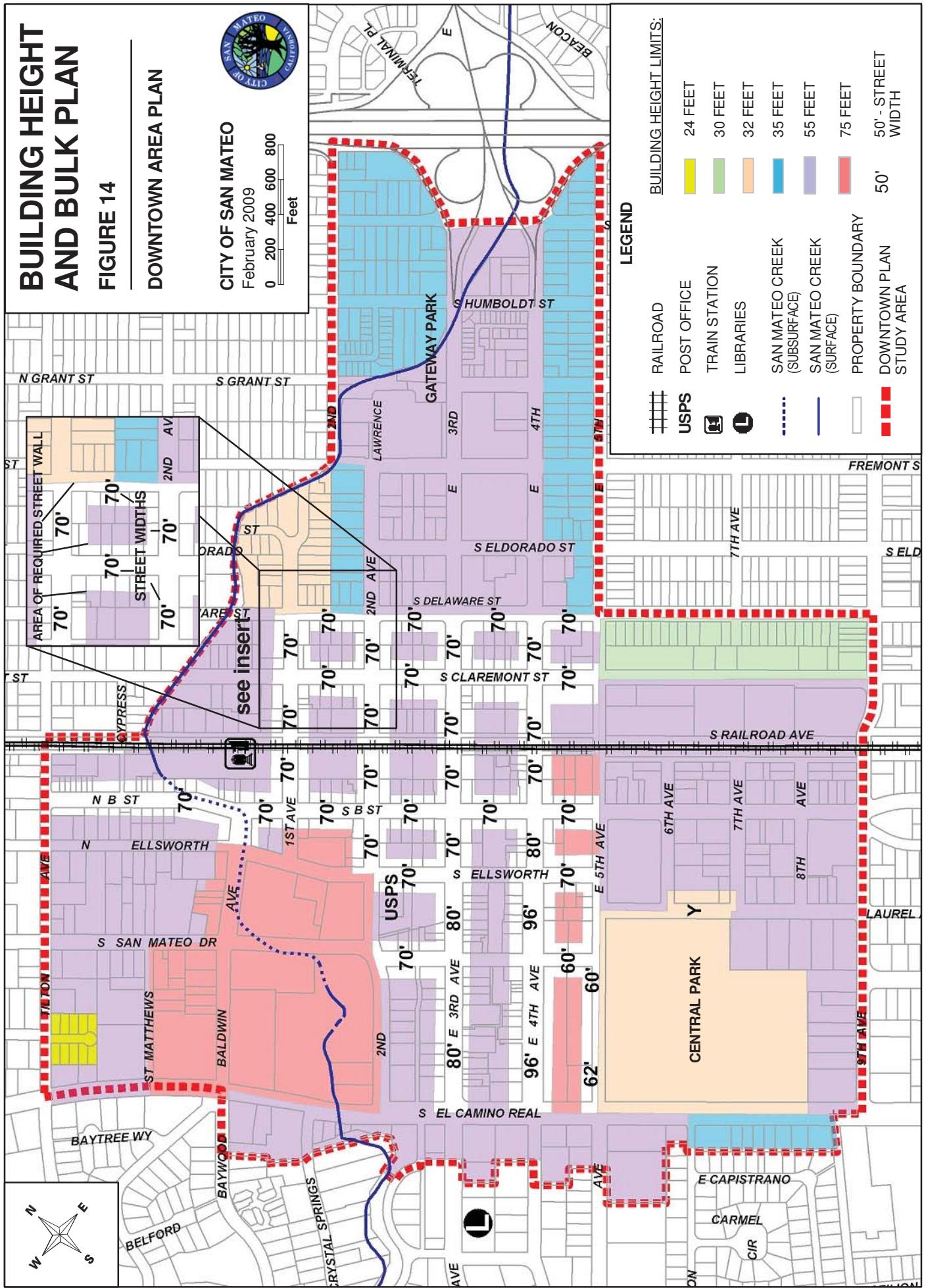


Figure 13. Illustration of Building Bulk Standards

# BUILDING HEIGHT AND BULK PLAN

FIGURE 14

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN



## Street Wall Illustrations

Scale 1" = Approximately 50'

*The height of the required street wall is equal to the distance from the street midpoint to the street property line. See Building Height and Bulk Plan.*

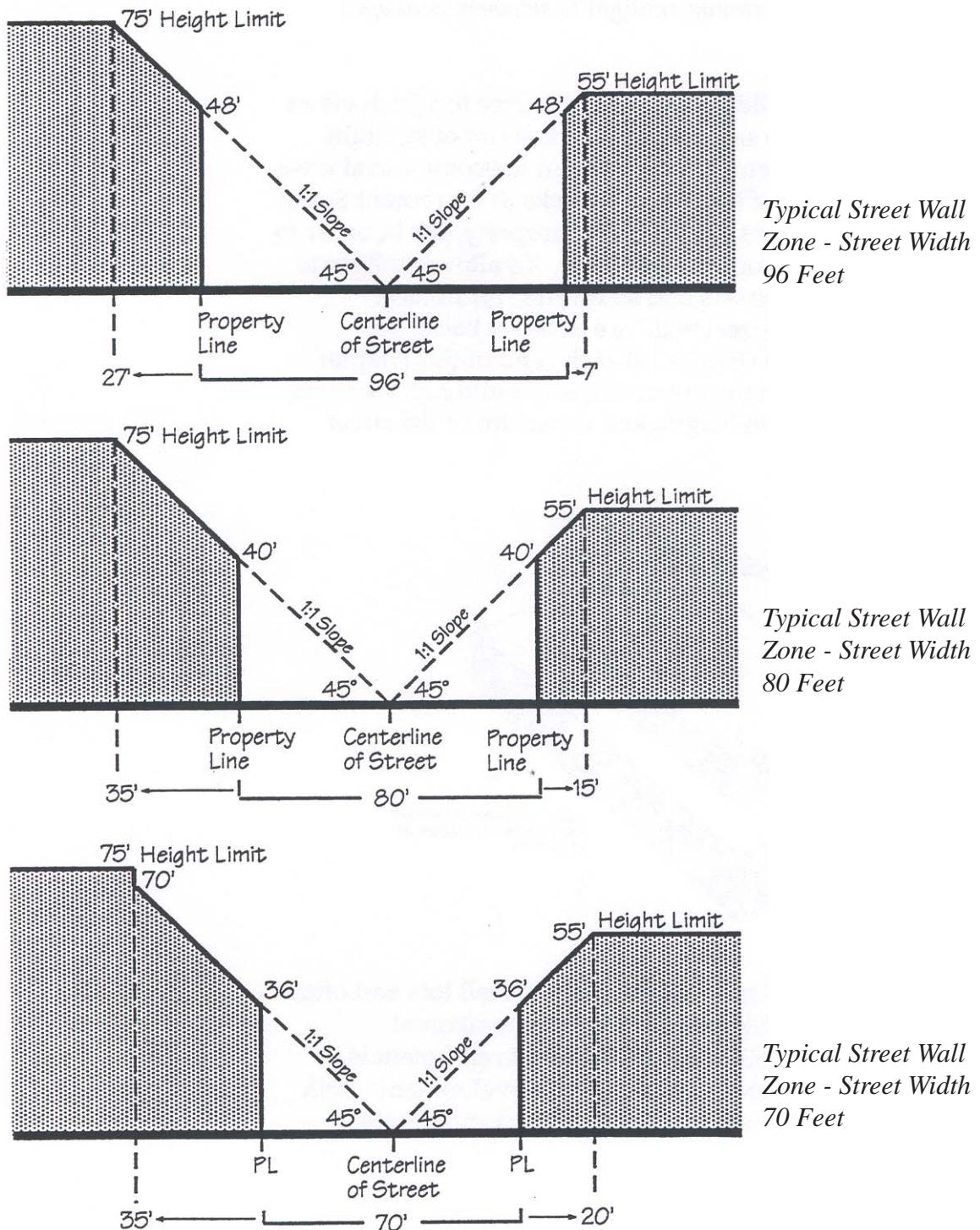
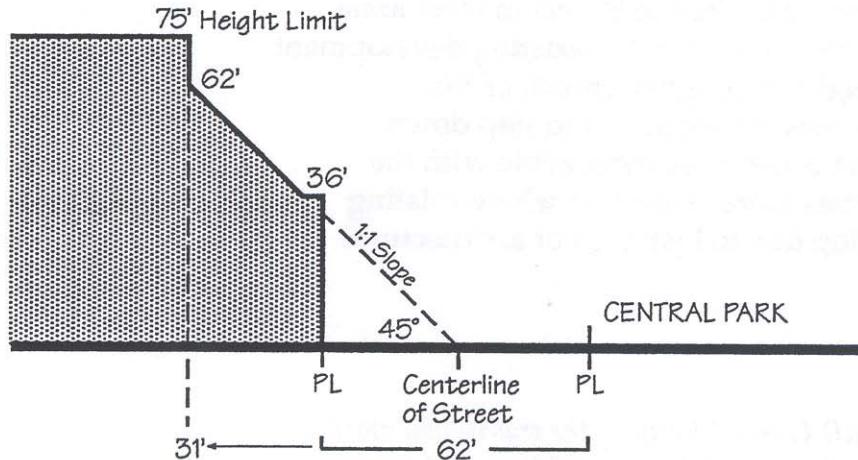


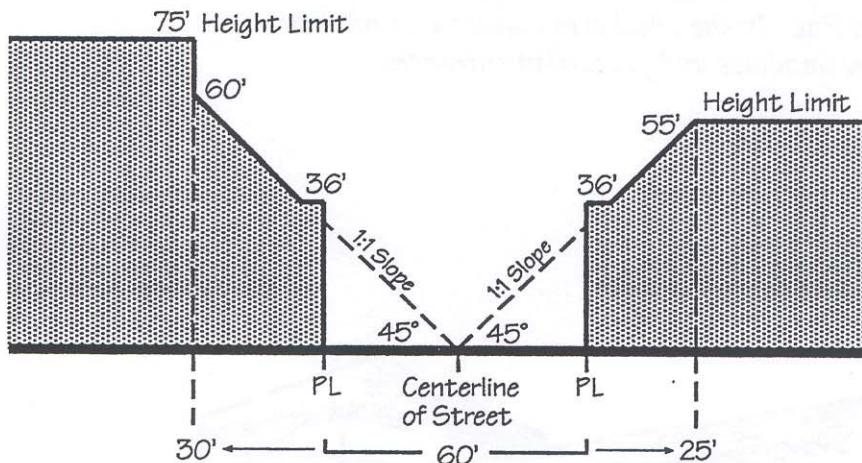
Figure 15. Street Wall Illustrations

**Street Wall Illustrations (continued)**

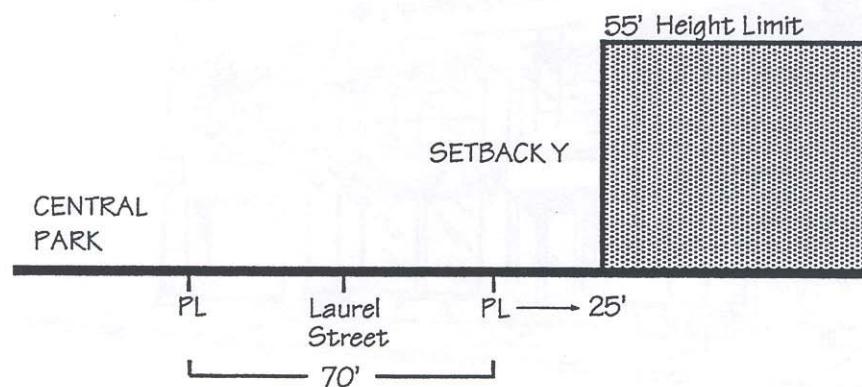
Scale 1" = Approximately 50'



Typical Street Wall Zone - Street Width 62 Feet



Typical Street Wall Zone - Street Width 60 Feet



Setback Requirement -  
East Side of Laurel Street  
Between 6th and 7th  
Avenues

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# HISTORIC RESOURCES

FIGURE 16

## DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN



CITY OF SAN MATEO

February 2009

0 200 400 600 800  
Feet

### LEGEND

- Railroad
- Post Office
- Train Station
- Library
- San Mateo Creek (subsurface)
- San Mateo Creek (surface)
- Property Boundary
- Downtown Plan Study Area

### HISTORIC DISTRICTS:

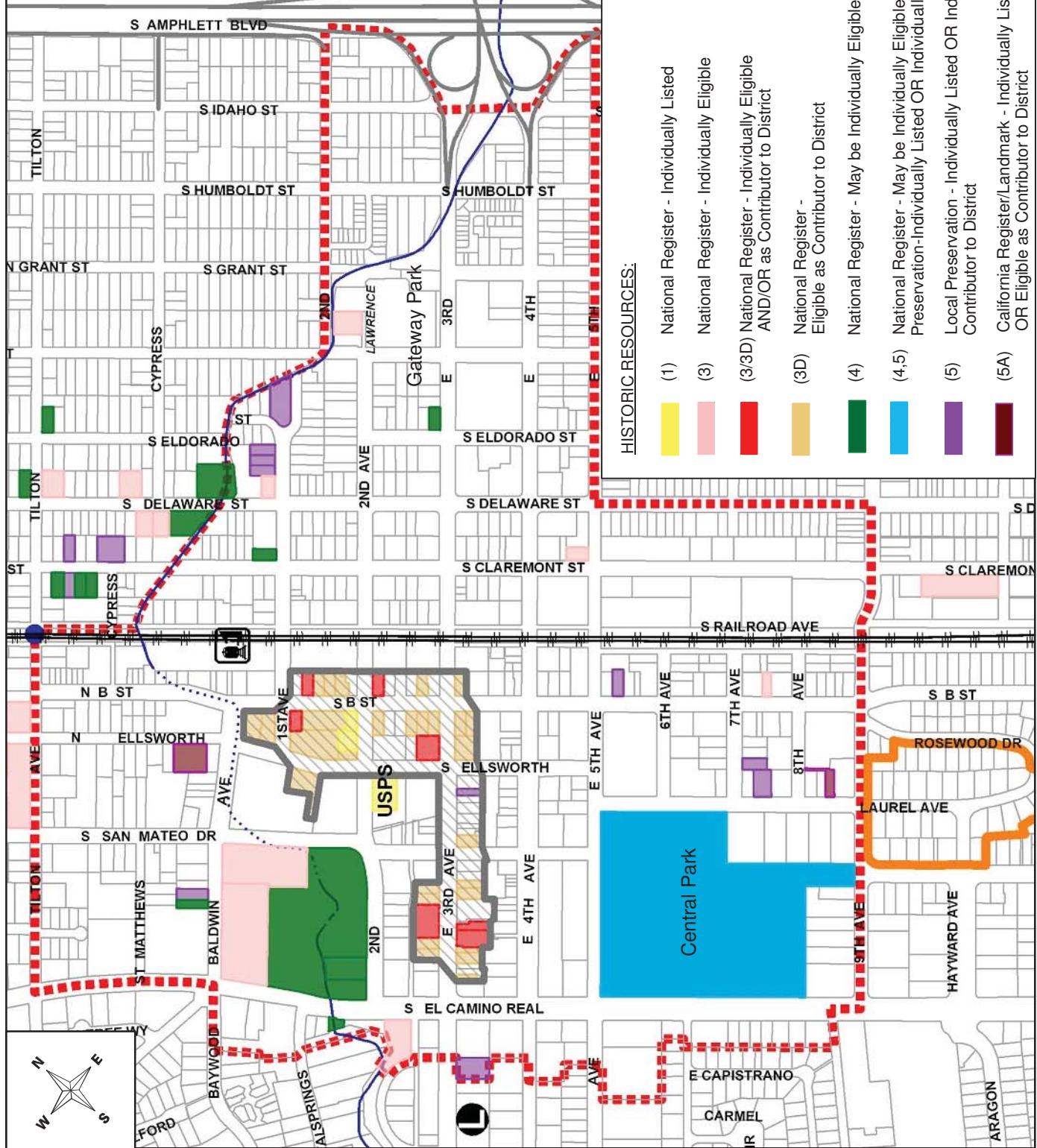
- Downtown Historic District
- Glazierwood Historic District

### HISTORIC POINTS:

- Railroad Bridges

### HISTORIC RESOURCES:

- (1) National Register - Individually Listed
- (3) National Register - Individually Eligible
- (3/3D) National Register - Individually Eligible AND/OR as Contributor to District
- (3D) National Register - May be Individually Eligible with Additional Research
- (4) National Register - Eligible as Contributor to District
- (4,5) National Register - May be Individually Eligible with Additional Research AND Local Preservation-Individually Listed OR Individually Eligible OR Eligible as Contrib.to District
- (5) Local Preservation - Individually Listed OR Individually Eligible OR Eligible as Contributor to District
- (5A) California Register/Landmark - Individually Listed OR Individually Eligible OR Eligible as Contributor to District



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# CENTRAL PARKING IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT SERVICES

FIGURE 17

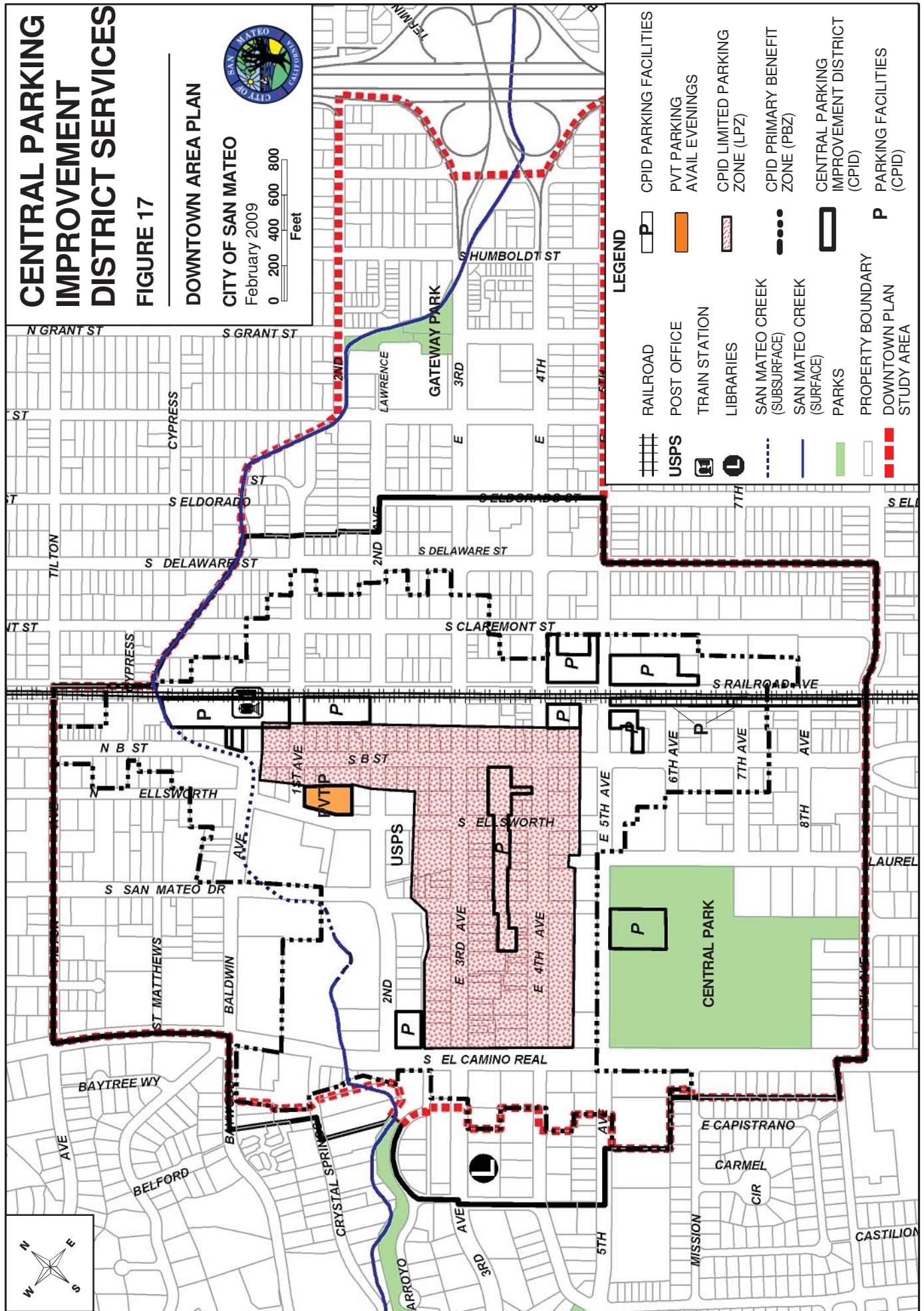
## DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN



### CITY OF SAN MATEO

February 2009

0 200 400 600 800  
Feet



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# REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AREA

FIGURE 18

## DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN



CITY OF SAN MATEO

February 2009

0 200 400 600  
Feet

