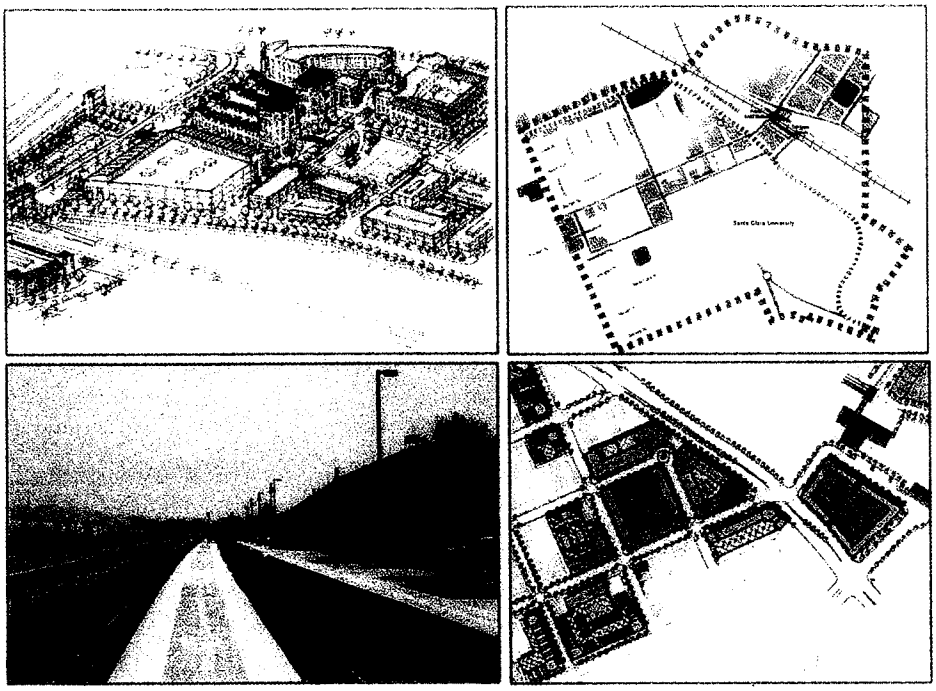
# SANTA CLARA



# TRANSIT AREA CONCEPT PLAN

**October 2002**

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# 1 Introduction and Purpose

## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND GOALS

### BACKGROUND

The City of Santa Clara initiated this Transit Area Study in Fall 2001 for the area around the historic Train Depot. The purpose of the study is to recommend a conceptual development plan for land use in the station area that promotes transit and establishes a strong link to the Depot/future BART station. The study has been authorized by the City Council.

The Study Area is an important regional transportation node. It is located adjacent to the San Jose International Airport. Transit access to the area is currently (in 2002) provided by Cal-Train, Altamont Commuter Express (ACE) and Capitol rail service, as well as Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) buses. In addition, highways 101, 880, and 280 are all located close to the area.

A major effort is underway on detailed planning for a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) extension to the South Bay; the terminal station of this line will be located in Santa Clara, adjacent to the Depot. A people mover from the BART station to the San Jose International Airport and the Guadalupe Light Rail is also being studied. These changes will provide the Study Area with one of the greatest levels of transit accessibility of any place in the Bay Area.

In addition to its strategic location at the confluence of major transit lines, the area's importance to Santa Clara is underscored by several factors. Santa Clara University, with an enrollment of 7,400 undergraduate and graduate students—the oldest college in California and the only one that is a successor to a Spanish Mission—is located in the area. The Train Depot is the oldest operating railroad depot in California. The area also includes the site of Santa Clara's historical downtown, as well as many businesses and residences.

Thus, revitalization of the area and fostering development of land uses that are transit-supportive is vital to both regional and local interests. In addition, the area offers tremendous potential for creating a new vibrant center for Santa Clara – a special place where people come together to share in leisure, entertainment, and cultural pursuits.

### PROJECT GOALS

Major goals of the study include:

- Identify opportunities and constraints for adaptive reuse and infill development;
- Create a community vision for the area;
- Foster development of transit-supportive land uses and increase alternatives to automobile use;

- Strengthen the civic identity of the area by linking historical, cultural, and educational amenities with transportation service and infrastructure;
- Improve pedestrian connections and bicycle routes along travel corridors;
- Enhance streetscape character;
- Ensure historic resource conservation and enhance livability; and
- Make implementation recommendations.

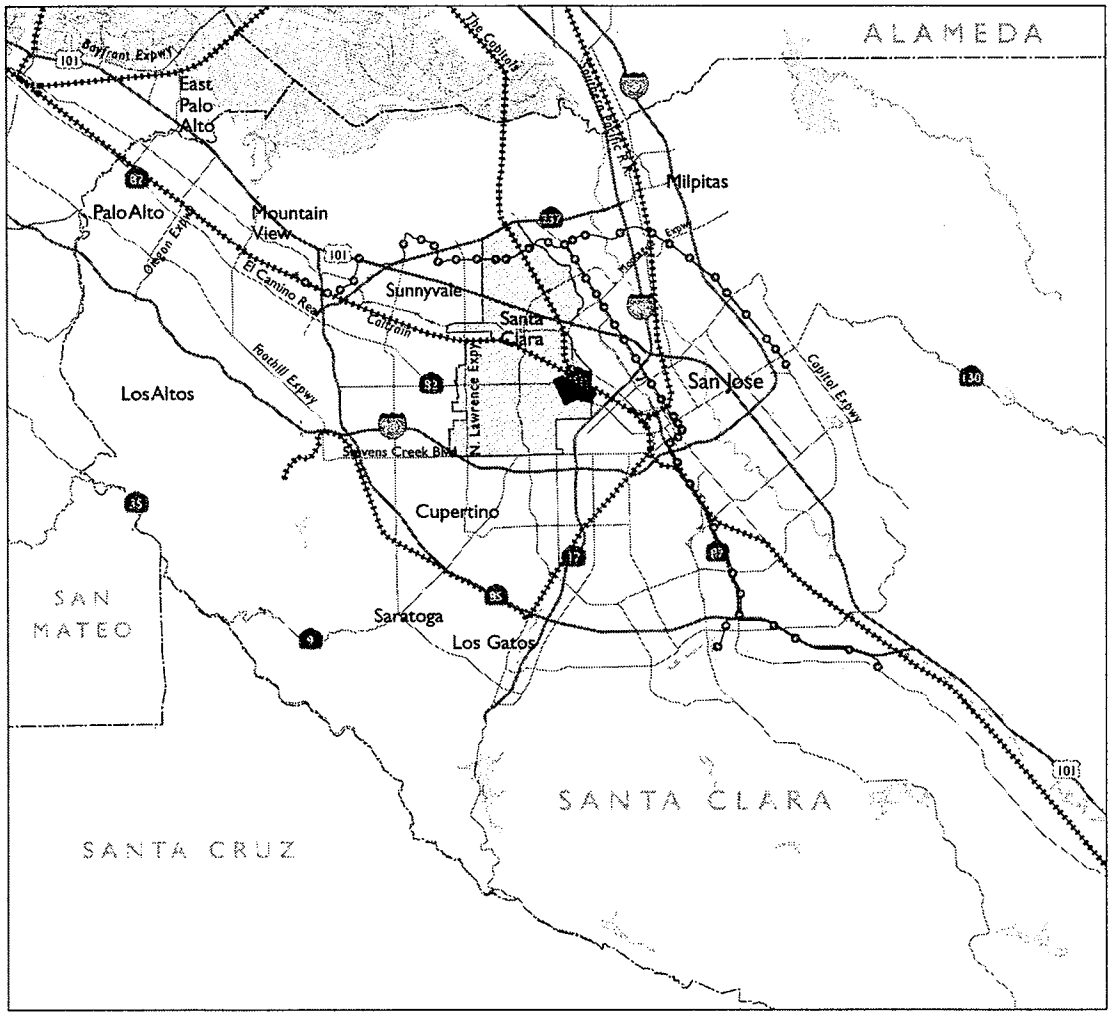
In addition, this study also fulfills two other objectives: (1) It proactively establishes the City's long-range vision by articulating the community's vision for the area, which will enable BART planners and station designers to better integrate station design with the surrounding area, and (2) It provides the foundation to be a framework plan for the Downtown Area Plan, preparation of which is expected to be undertaken shortly.

## 1.2 STUDY AREA LOCATION

The area under study is bounded by the El Camino Real to the north, the Union Pacific Railroad and Santa Clara City limit line to the east, Franklin Street and Homestead Road to the south, and Monroe Street to the west. Figure 1-1 shows the location of the Study Area.

Key features of the Study Area are outlined in Chapter 2: Study Area. The Study Area extends approximately three-quarters of a mile to the west of the Train Depot and about one-quarter mile to the east. Santa Clara University (SCU) occupies approximately 15 percent of the extent of the Study Area. San Jose International Airport is located immediately to the east, while Santa Clara's Civic Center is located two blocks from the northwest boundary of the Study Area.

The Study Area includes, at its western edge, the site of Santa Clara's historical downtown, now called Franklin Square. In one of the controversial actions in the 1960s, the City demolished its original downtown in hopes of creating a new economic center. Using federal Urban Renewal funds, eight blocks along Franklin Street were acquired and torn down. Several of the former downtown business owners relocated to the new two-block Franklin Square. Residential superblock development occurred on four other blocks. Only a handful of buildings from the original downtown—such as the Post Office—remain. While recent efforts, such as the Prometheus development on Homestead Road and Jackson Street and improvements to Franklin Square, have greatly improved this area, it does not yet contain the diversity and intensity of uses to be a vital community-wide center.




VTA Light Rail
Freeway
Major Road
Railroad

0 1 5 10
MILES

Figure 1-1
Santa Clara Transit Area
Study Location

## 1.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation has been an integral component of this study, involving three phases of public review and comment:

- **Phase I** began in Fall 2001, when an advisory and stakeholder group meeting was held in the Council Chambers on October 25, 2001. The purpose of this meeting was to examine existing conditions within the Study Area and identify opportunities for adaptive reuse, in-fill development and public improvements that support and promote transit. Participants at this meeting included City staff, transit agency personnel, community representatives and business owners. The comments and information obtained from this meeting, and a subsequent citywide telephone survey were used to define and articulate the community's interest, commitment and vision for the area.
- **Phase II** involved the preparation and presentation of two conceptual development plans for the Study Area. On July 15, 2002, the City conducted a community meeting at the Santa Clara Senior Center to present alternative development scenarios reflecting a "Downtown" and a "Main Street" design scheme for land use and public improvements within the Study Area. The meeting was designed to engage community participation and to allow the public to critique the proposals, refine the community's vision for the area, and identify preferred strategies for land use and street improvements. The information obtained from this public meeting and subsequent advisory group meetings was used to modify the conceptual plans into a single, preferred development plan for the Study Area.
- **Phase III** of the study entailed the incorporation of community and advisory group input into a preferred plan for the Study Area. Based on community and advisory group participation and direction, the two concept plans were integrated into a single plan to broadly reflect the community's vision for land use and transit-supportive development within the Study Area. A public meeting was held on August 22, 2002 at the Santa Clara Senior Center to present the preferred plan for review and comment. Further revisions were made to the preferred plan following community and advisory group meetings to refine the plan into this final report.

### COMMUNITY SURVEY

A random phone survey of 600 residents, 20 minutes in length each, was conducted in March 2002. The survey ascertained, among other things, residents' perceptions of issues and ideas to revitalize the area. Residents both inside and outside the Study Area were surveyed. Key findings of this survey include:

- Many residents of the City either do not know where downtown is, or do not perceive Santa Clara as having a downtown – 29 percent of the survey respondents said they do not know where downtown is, while another 23 percent guessed another place outside of the Study Area to be Santa Clara's downtown.

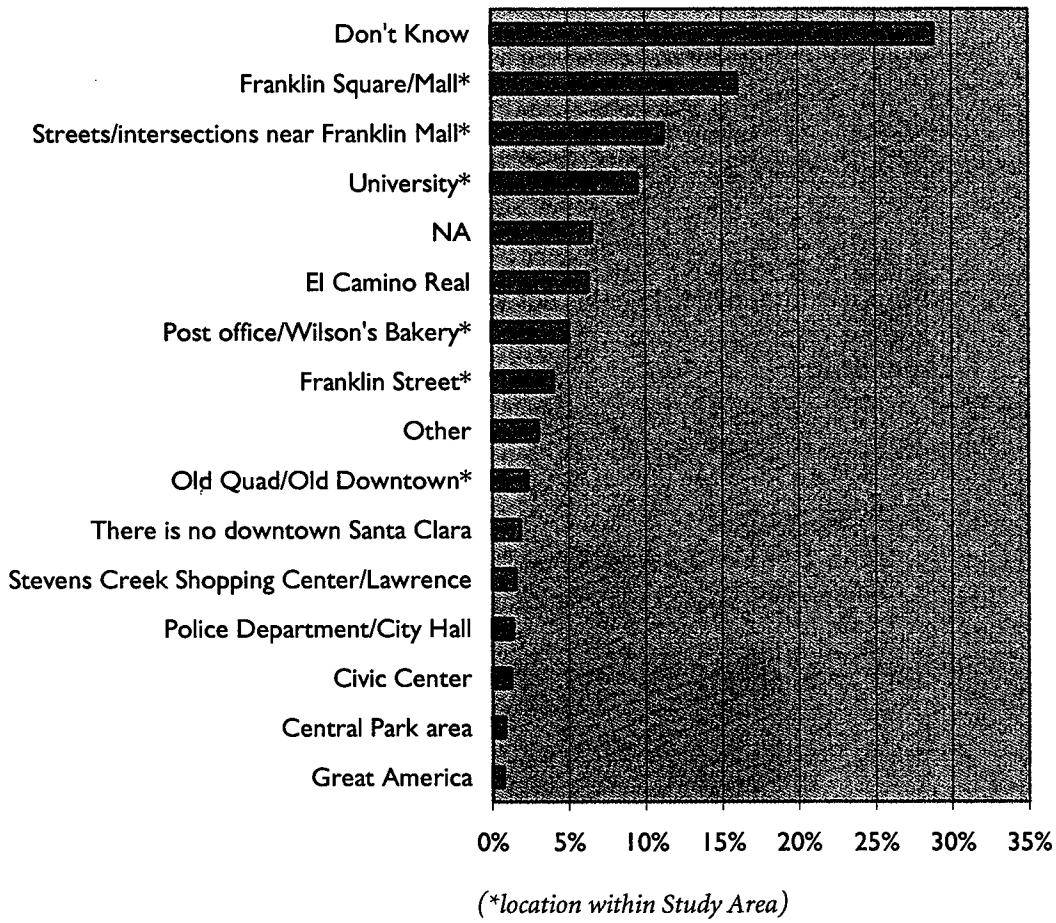



**Chart 1-1: Perception of the Location of Downtown Santa Clara**

- Existing conditions in the Study Area are not rated very highly by residents. Four percent of the surveyed residents rated it 'Excellent', 26 percent rated it 'Good', 28 percent rated it 'Fair', 23 percent rated it 'Poor', and nine percent rated it 'Very poor'.
- Thirty-nine percent of the respondents said they go downtown at least once a week, and the same percentage of respondents said they never go downtown. When respondents who indicated they do not go downtown very often were asked why they do not go, the most common responses were 'Nothing to do/nothing there' (32%) and 'No need to go there' (24%).
- In response to the survey question "How important is it to create a downtown area that is transit supportive in the City of Santa Clara?", 89 percent of the respondents think that it is extremely, very, or somewhat important.

**Table 1-1:**
**Importance of Having a Downtown Area that is Transit Supportive to Residents**

| | *Percent of surveyed residents* |
|---|---|
| Extremely important | 33% |
| Very important | 37% |
| Somewhat important | 19% |
| *Total Extremely, Very or Somewhat Important* | *89%* |

- Eighty-four percent of the respondents supported (either 'Strongly' or 'Somewhat') a proposal for revitalizing the downtown area. Overall support is moderately higher among respondents who rent, respondents who visit downtown, and younger respondents.

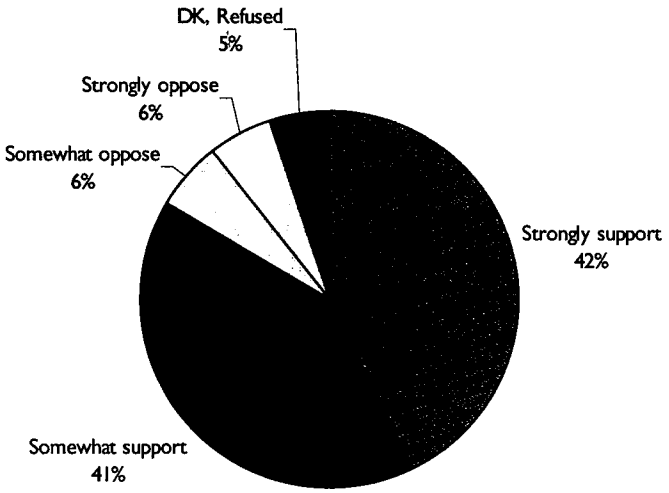



**Chart 1-2: Support for Revitalizing Downtown Santa Clara**

- When asked if respondents would support use of tax dollars for revitalization, 68 percent of the respondents continued expressing support for downtown revitalization. Support was even stronger (exceeding 72 percent) for residents in zip code 95050 that includes downtown.

- Potential aspects of a downtown that residents would like to see include historic preservation, variety of restaurants, community events, and more employment opportunities, as shown in the chart below.

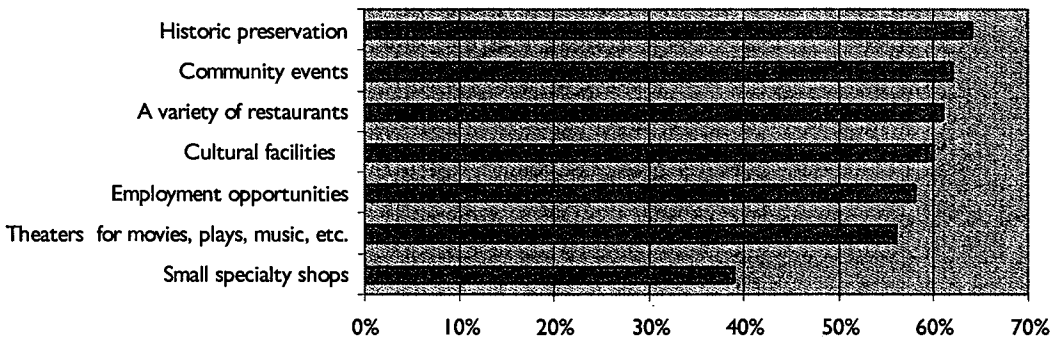



**Chart 1-3: Potential aspects of downtown that residents would like to see**

The results of the survey provided valuable insights for framing the land use alternatives, and were presented at the public workshop, along with the alternative development scenarios. The Concept Plan responds to the community's desire for historic preservation, need for a vital and vibrant center with a diverse range of uses and activities, and increased residential and employment opportunities in a transit-supportive setting.

## 1.4 NEXT STEPS

This Concept Plan may be followed by a Downtown Area Plan, as well as changes to the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and other programs, which may be included as part of the Downtown Plan scope, or prepared separately. Detailed traffic, parking, and environmental evaluation would be conducted in conjunction with preparation of these documents.

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# 2 Study Area Characteristics

## 2.1 EXISTING LAND USE

### LAND USE DISTRITBUTION

As part of Concept Plan preparation, a geographic information systems (GIS)-based database for the Study Area was assembled. Information presented here is derived from this database.

The Study Area encompasses a total of 490 acres. Santa Clara University occupies approximately 15% of the land area, while 'public right of way' (e.g. public streets, rail tracks, etc) comprises the single largest use. Residential use is the second largest use in the study area taking up approximately 91 acres of land. Industrial and manufacturing uses occupy about 31 acres; the largest manufacturing use is United Defense, which occupies approximately 44 acres east of the Depot/planned BART station. Figure 2-1 shows existing land use in the Study Area.

**Table 2-1:**

**Existing Land Use**

| *Land Use* | *Acreage* |
|---|---|
| Public Right of Way | 137 |
| Residential | 91 |
| Santa Clara University | 75 |
| Commercial | 40 |
| Industrial | 31 |
| Manufacturing | 61 |
| Institutional | 22 |
| Offices | 13 |
| Vacant | 14 |
| Parks | 6 |
| *Total* | *492* |

Note: These areas are exclusive of streets

### VACANT AND UNDERUTILIZED LAND

About 14 acres of land is currently vacant or is being used for surface parking. An additional 55 acres is presently under other uses—such as warehousing and storage, a former gas station, or very low intensity strip commercial uses—that are considered underutilized. These sites are also shown in Figure 2-1.

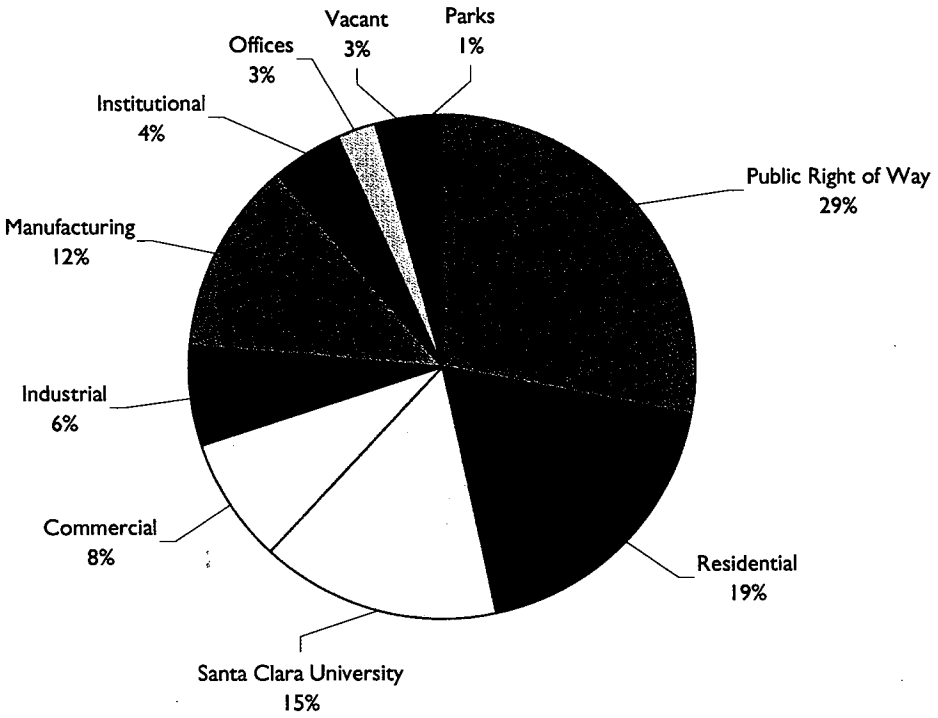


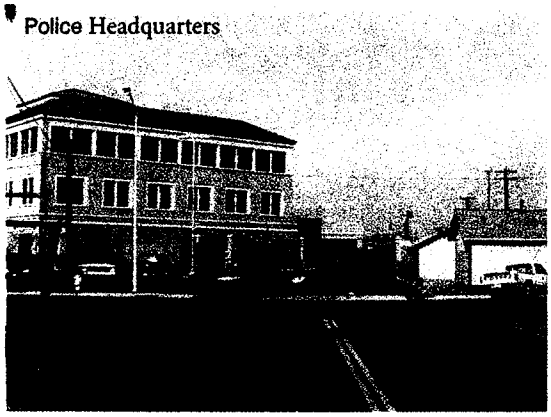

**Chart 2-1: Existing land use distribution**

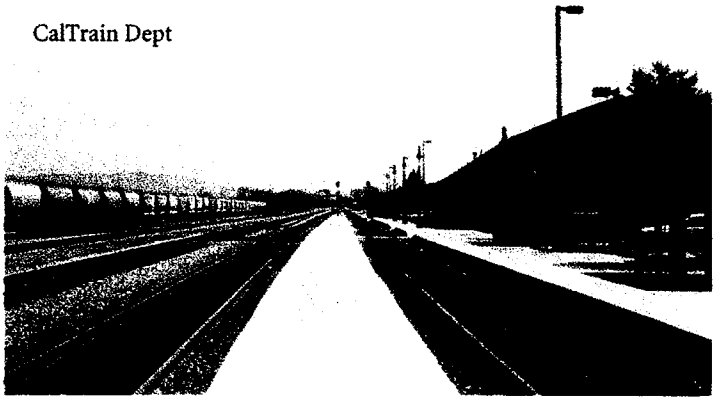
## CURRENT DENSITY/INTENSITY

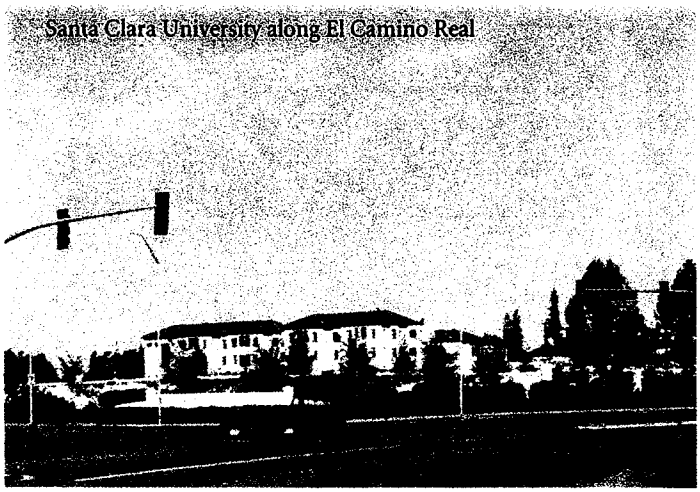
Residential densities and development intensities in the area vary widely. Liberty tower, at 185 units per net acre, has the highest residential density of any development. Average residential density in the area is a relatively high 32 units per net acre; there are at least 46 parcels in the area with densities exceeding 20 units per net acre. The largest development in the area—Prometheus at Benton Street/Jackson Street—has 172 units at an average density of 32 units per net acre. Most residential development is located on small sites.

Non-residential development intensities are towards the lower end. Many warehousing, storage, and strip commercial uses are one-story structures. Newer commercial development near the CalTrain station is three to four stories in height. The tallest non-residential building is a 150-foot tall structure located on the Santa Clara University campus.

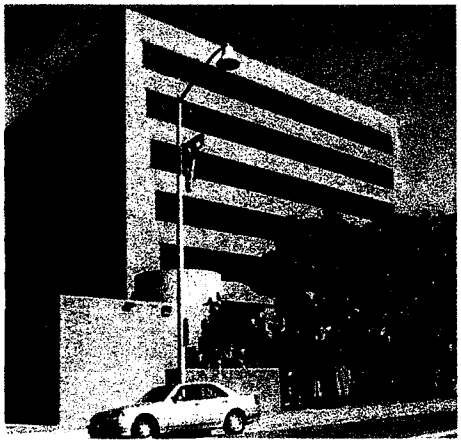
## Around the Station Area



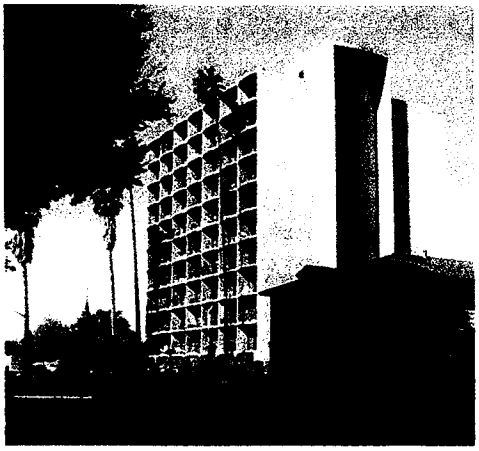




## Building Characteristics in the Study Area



Office Building at Lafayette &Homestead

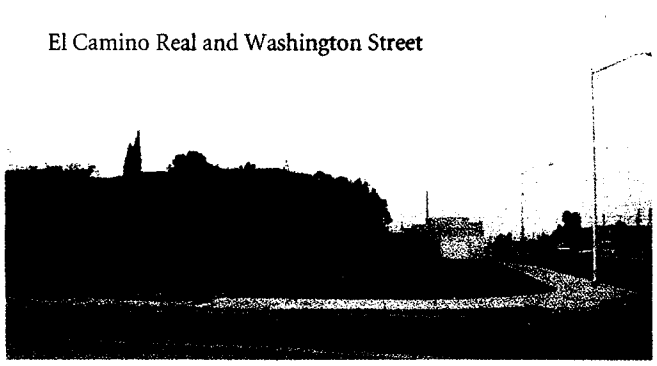


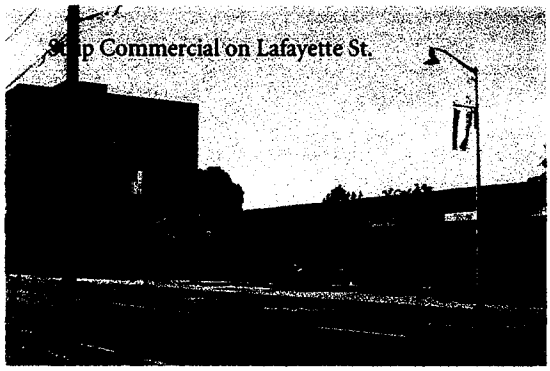
Mid-rise Residential; Liberty Tower

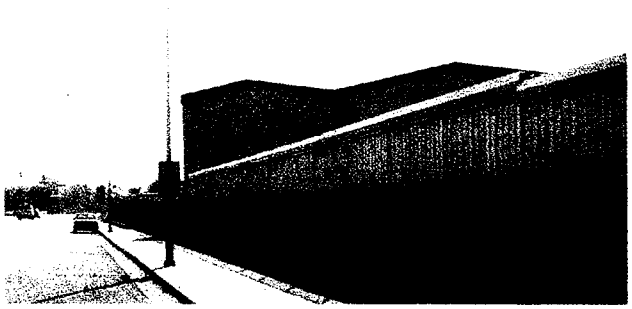
Low-rise Residential Building

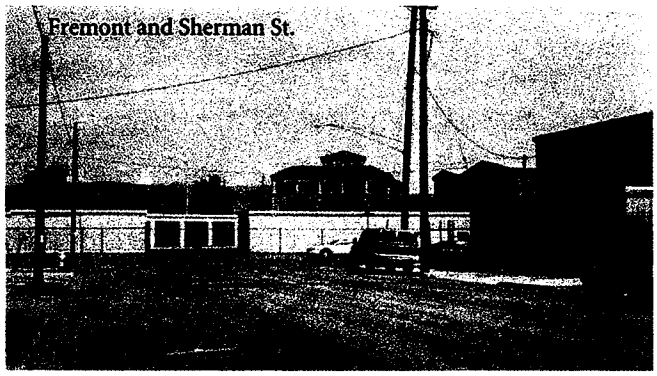
*Vacant and Underutilized Sites in the Study Area*

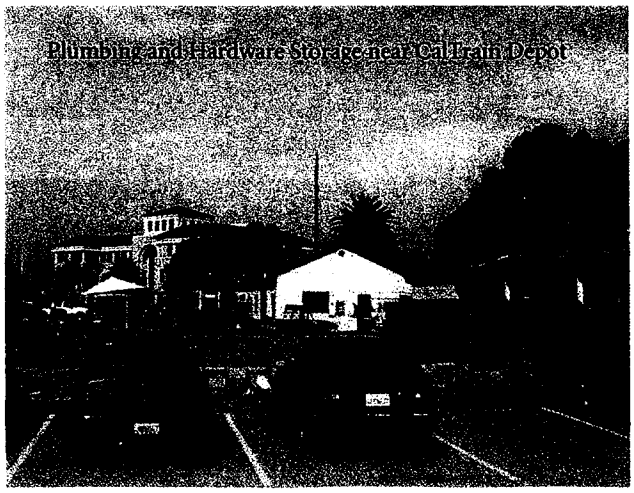
Benton and The Alameda St.

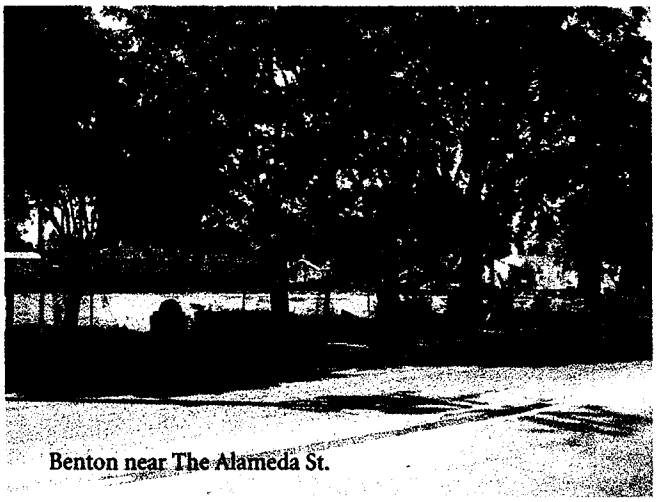

El Camino Real and Washington Street


Strip Commercial on Lafayette St.


El Camino Self Storage


Fremont and Sherman St.


Plumbing and Hardware Storage near Cal Train Depot


Benton near The Alameda St.

## HISTORICAL AND ARCHAELOGICAL RESOURCES

The Study Area west of the railroad tracks is part of the Old Quad neighborhood, which was laid out in a grid pattern in 1866. The area abounds in historical resources, such as the 1860s Santa Clara Depot, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1976, staff and volunteers completed a citywide historic resources survey, which has been periodically updated. Historical resources in the area, based on City of Santa Clara Architecturally or Historically Significant Properties Inventory (last revised12/06/00) are shown in Figure 2-2.

Santa Clara has an active historical resources conservation program. In 1985, the Historical and Landmarks Commission was appointed to act in an advisory capacity to City Council in all matters pertaining to historical landmarks, museums, community functions, special task groups, and to advise local residents and businesses on preservation related matters. The Commission is also responsible for the marking and preservation of historical landmarks/places and other functions as may be required. The City's current efforts in historical resources protection in the Study Area are highlighted in Section 2.2, under Planning Principle #7.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Known archeological sites have been found throughout Santa Clara County, including in the Study Area. Figure 2-2 shows archaeologically sensitive areas in the Study Area, based on the City of Santa Clara Identified Archeologically Sensitive Areas Map for the Old Quad, and the 1051 Sherman Street Project Environmental Impact Report.

## SAN JOSE AIRPORT NOISE CONSTRAINTS

The eastern part of the Study Area (the United Defense site) is adjacent to the San Jose International Airport; the very eastern edge of the Study Area almost abuts the airport's 65 CNEL noise contour. The airport's current plans[1] show a slight reduction in the width of the impacted area in the future, with the result that no part of the Study Area will be within the 65 CNEL in 2010. A small portion at the very eastern edge of the Study Area will be within the 60 CNEL in 2010; this area is shown in Figure 2-1. Height limits from aircraft flight patterns are unlikely to be a limiting factor; any proposed structure that penetrates the flight path surface must be submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for study

[1] San Jose International Airport Master Plan: Proposed Noise Contours 2010; September 1998.

# 3 Concept Plan and Planning Principles

This chapter first describes the Concept Plan for the Study Area, followed by Planning Principles. The Concept Plan is shown in Figure 3-1, and Figure 3-2 shows an illustrative development plan that could result from the Concept Plan.

## 3.1 THE CONCEPT PLAN

The Concept Plan emphasizes several themes; these themes are incorporated and visually illustrated in the Planning Principles (Section 3.2):

### CREATING A NEW COMMUNITY DESTINATION

The Concept Plan emphasizes creation of a new mixed-use district on the west side of El Camino Real that will provide a focus and a new community destination. This district would serve the immediate neighborhood along with a broader market with specialty stores, cafes, and restaurants, as well as housing. It encompasses a "Main Street" on Benton Street between El Camino Real and The Alameda, along with a public square at the intersection of Sherman and Benton streets. It will provide an active pedestrian-friendly center within walking distance of the BART and CalTrain stations, through design, site orientation, streetscape improvements, and pedestrian and bicycle connections. Over time, this core area could grow to become the center of a revitalized downtown.

People will be able to meander in the area along active streetfronts lined with shops, cafes, and restaurants. Many buildings will have two-three stories of housing above retail uses. Street trees, wide sidewalks, and a range of outdoors plazas and squares will provide pedestrian comfort. Diagonal parking on a few streets and a new parking structure will increase the parking supply in this area.

Land use changes will be limited to a small number of sites; a majority of these sites are currently vacant, have buildings that are abandoned, or include uses (such as storage and industrial) that are not transit-supportive and pedestrian-friendly.

### SELECTIVE REHABILITATION AND REUSE OF THE FRANKLIN SQUARE AREA

In order to avoid competition with the new "Main Street" district on Benton Street and recognizing the rich historical resources in the area, the proposed land uses in the Franklin Square area carry lower land use density and intensity. The emphasis here is on rehab and adaptive reuse, rather than on expansion of commercial activity. Washington Street will be re-extended between Benton Street and Homestead Road, and Franklin Street will be extended to this new street as well. Proposed mixed-use designations in the Washington/Franklin area provide flexibility to encompass a variety of uses, such as offices, medium density housing and a small amount of neighborhood-serving commercial uses.

## INFILL HOUSING / MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

The parcels along Franklin Street abutting Santa Clara University are envisioned as housing infill sites. Many of these parcels are owned by the University, and may be developed for university staff and faculty housing, as well as the larger community. The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)-owned parcel to the west of the historic Depot is conceived for medium-density residential use, along with some ground floor commercial uses in proximity to the BART and CalTrain stations. Much of the growth will be in the form of mixed-use developments, including in the new core, along El Camino Real, and in the Lafayette Street/Franklin Street area.

## INTENSIFYING USES AROUND THE BART STATION

The area immediately to the east of the BART station will have some of the highest intensities and provide an array of uses that capitalizes on proximity to the BART and CalTrain stations, the people mover, and the San Jose International Airport. The focus of this area will be a new 2.5-acre park, connected by a parkway to Brokaw Road. The park will be surrounded by two hotels (a total of 600 rooms); three-to-four story residential development with two mid-rise (10-story) residential buildings fronting the park, for a total of 200 housing units in variety of types, including townhomes, apartments, and loft-style development; a new multiplex entertainment complex; and office uses. The internal pedestrian connection provides fluid access to the BART Station and the people mover. The entertainment center and the adjacent residential towers include ground floor retail uses to serve the BART riders, theater users, office employees, and residents. Shared parking between BART and entertainment uses is emphasized. This area north east of the BART station will have pedestrian connections to the CalTrain and BART station along the maintenance facilities on Brokaw and to the south east side across the tracks.

## ESTABLISHING A SENSE OF IDENTITY ALONG EL CAMINO REAL

Reuse along the northern segment of El Camino Real (between De La Cruz overpass and Monroe Street) will focus on flexible mixed uses that do not compete with the Community Commercial focus of the "main street" district. This Plan also promotes and enhances the City's earlier General Plan Gateway Concept for this area. Shallow parcels in this area are well suited to office and business service uses that front El Camino Real, with coordinated parking lots tucked behind, and on-street parking. This configuration will establish a stronger sense of identity along El Camino Real. Some of these sites will develop with mixed-use residential uses as well. Significant streetscape improvements such as widened sidewalks, pedestrian scale lighting, and heavy landscaping—consistent with the underlying El Camino Gateway Land Use and Design Guidelines—would also enhance the corridor and improve pedestrian accessibility and safety along and across El Camino Real.

Table 3-1 shows development that would result from application of assumed densities and building intensities on sites, and the concept is illustrated in Figure 3-1 as a land use plan. The Concept Plan does not specify intensity ranges; thus, if actual densities/intensities vary from the assumptions shown, then buildout would be different. However, Table 1-1 provides a reasonable sense of development that could be anticipated with realization of the Concept Plan.

The Concept Plan would result in the addition of 1,400 housing units; approximately 850,000 square feet of retail, office, and commercial uses; and 600 to 800 hotel rooms. Given that the area currently has approximately 850 housing units (not including any development on the Santa Clara University campus), population in the area will be more than 2.5 times the existing population at buildout.

**Table 3-1:**
**Concept Plan Buildout**

| | *Number of Units* | *Density (Housing Units/Acre)* |
|---|---|---|
| **Residential** | | |
| Very High Density | 200 | 100 |
| High Density | 300 | 70 |
| Medium Density | 500 | 50 |
| Low Density | 100 | 20 |
| Mixed-Use Development | 300 | 20 (density in addition to commercial FAR) |
| **Total** | **1,400** | |
| | *Floor Space (square feet)* | *Average FAR* |
| **Mixed-Use (Commercial)** | | |
| Retail | 130,000 | 0.5 |
| Offices | 110,000 | 0.5 |
| Entertainment | 288,000 | 2.5 |
| **Total** | **528,000** | |
| **Office** | **316,560** | 1.5 |
| **Hotel** | **600 to 800 (rooms)** | 2.0 |
| **Parking** | **800 (spaces)** (assuming 5 levels of parking)g | – |

Note:

*Residential density is in housing units per net acre.*

*FAR stands for floor area ratio, that is, building floor area divided by site area.*

*Structure parking is only for the new core area. It excludes parking at BART, CalTrain, or individual developments.*

## 3.2 PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Achievement of the vision for the Transit Area will require a series of actions—ranging from preparation of detailed plans to General Plan and Zoning Ordinance changes—that will be implemented over an extended time period. This section articulates Planning Principles that encapsulate the recommended vision for the Study Area, and can serve as a guide during preparation of detailed plans and programs.

Each Planning Principle is in the form of a short statement followed by explanatory text. The Principles are purposely broad to ensure flexibility during implementation, while the explanatory text provides detail that clarifies intent.

*Principle 1:* ***Foster development of the Study Area as a vital center of Santa Clara, and a citywide and neighborhood destination.***

Befitting its stature as a city of more than 104,000 residents, and an employment center with more than 135,000 jobs, Santa Clara deserves a real center. While Santa Clara once did have a small vibrant downtown (at the western edge of the Study Area), successive events—such as removal of the trolley lines that once ran down Franklin Street, the superblock residential development that resulted from urban renewal in the 1960s and 1970s, and emergence of other centers in the city—have eroded the importance of this area. According to a survey conducted for this project, most Santa Clara residents today (52%) either do not know where downtown is, or do not perceive Santa Clara as having a downtown.

However, the desire to have a strong and vital downtown or a center in the City is exceptionally strong, with support for revitalizing the Study Area at a very high 84 percent of polled residents. The idea of a renewed downtown also found support in public workshops, although there was some caution that redevelopment mistakes of the 1960s and 1970s should not be repeated.

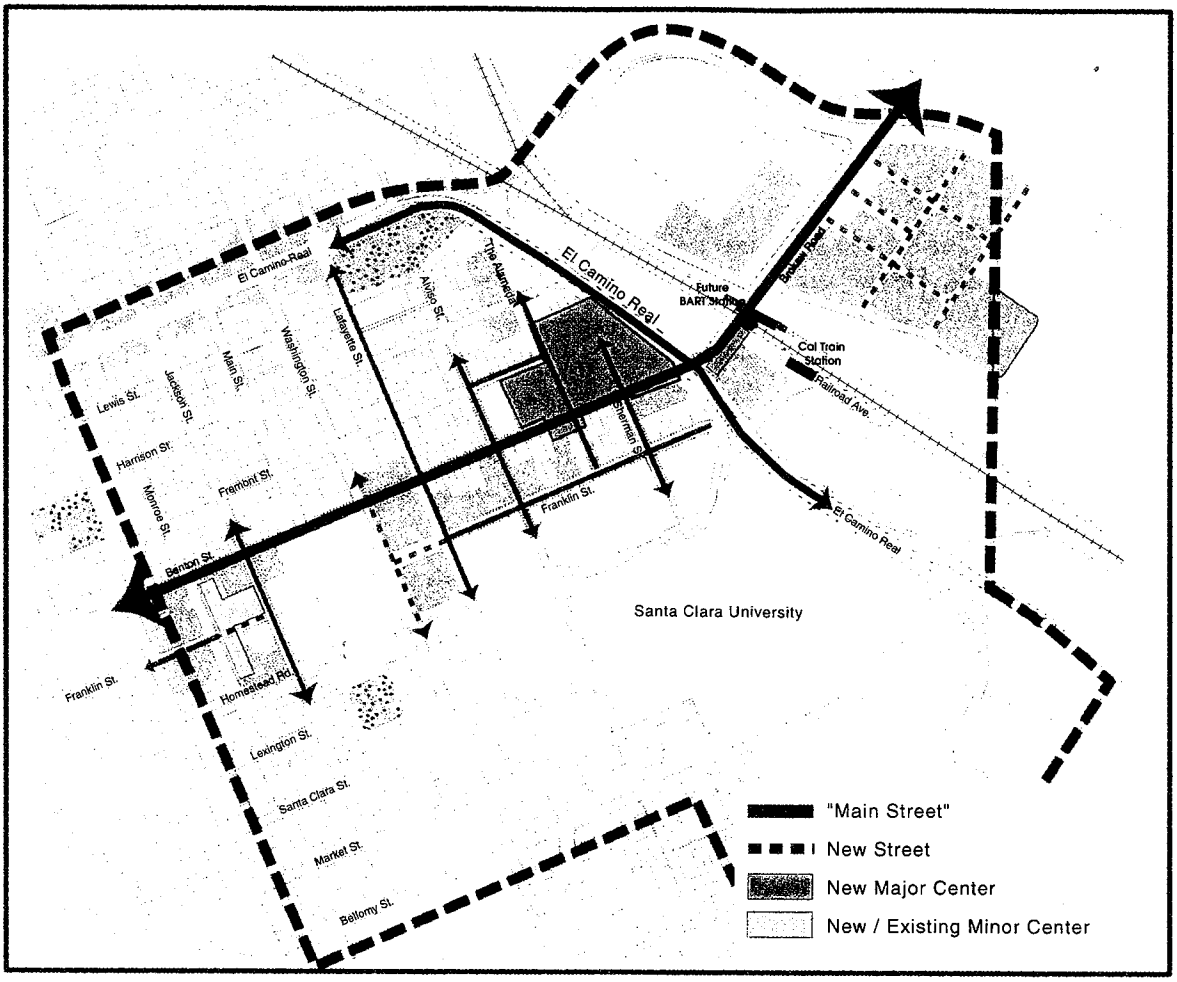
The Study Area has location advantages – it has good access and is proximate to Santa Clara University and one of the largest planned transit centers in the Bay Area. The existing variety and extent of historical architecture in the Study Area can also help strengthen the civic identity. While it may be unable to match the employment levels of the new business centers and the retail draws of the large malls, this area can be a vibrant, special place, where people come together to share in leisure, entertainment, and cultural pursuits. The City's efforts in the Franklin Square area are certainly recognition of this effort.

*Principle 2:* ***Develop the area—approximately 800 feet x 600 feet in size—immediately west of El Camino Real and along and north of Benton Street as the heart of a revitalized downtown.***

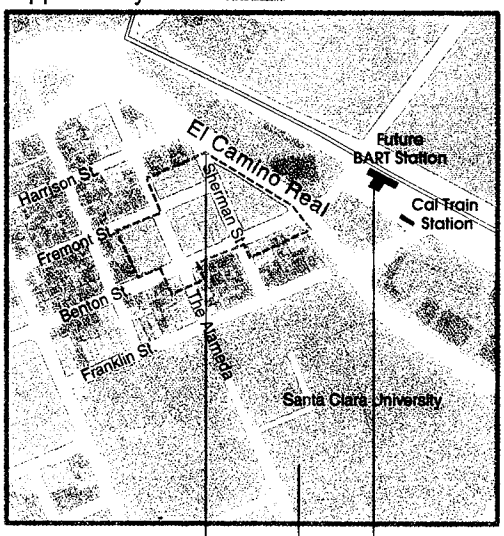
While Santa Clara's original downtown was located adjacent to Franklin and Jackson streets, the area near El Camino Real, Benton Street and The Alameda has several advantages:

- It is close to the CalTrain Depot and the planned Santa Clara BART station.
- It has direct access and visibility from the main thoroughfare, El Camino Real, which also will minimize neighborhood traffic impacts;
- It is adjacent to Santa Clara University; and
- Has very good reuse and intensification potential, given the presence of vacant sites and closed establishments, and obsolete and underutilized uses such as storage.

## *Principle 2: The heart of a Revitalized Downtown*



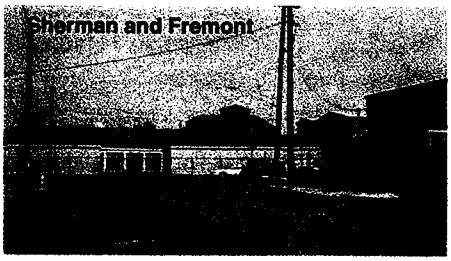

Opportunity Sites

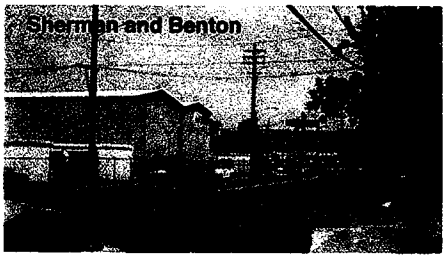


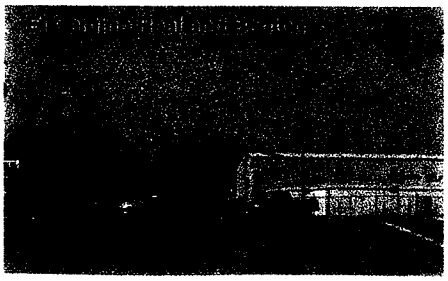

Direct access and visibility from El Camino Real

Proximity to BART and Cal Train Station

Adjacent to Santa Clara University

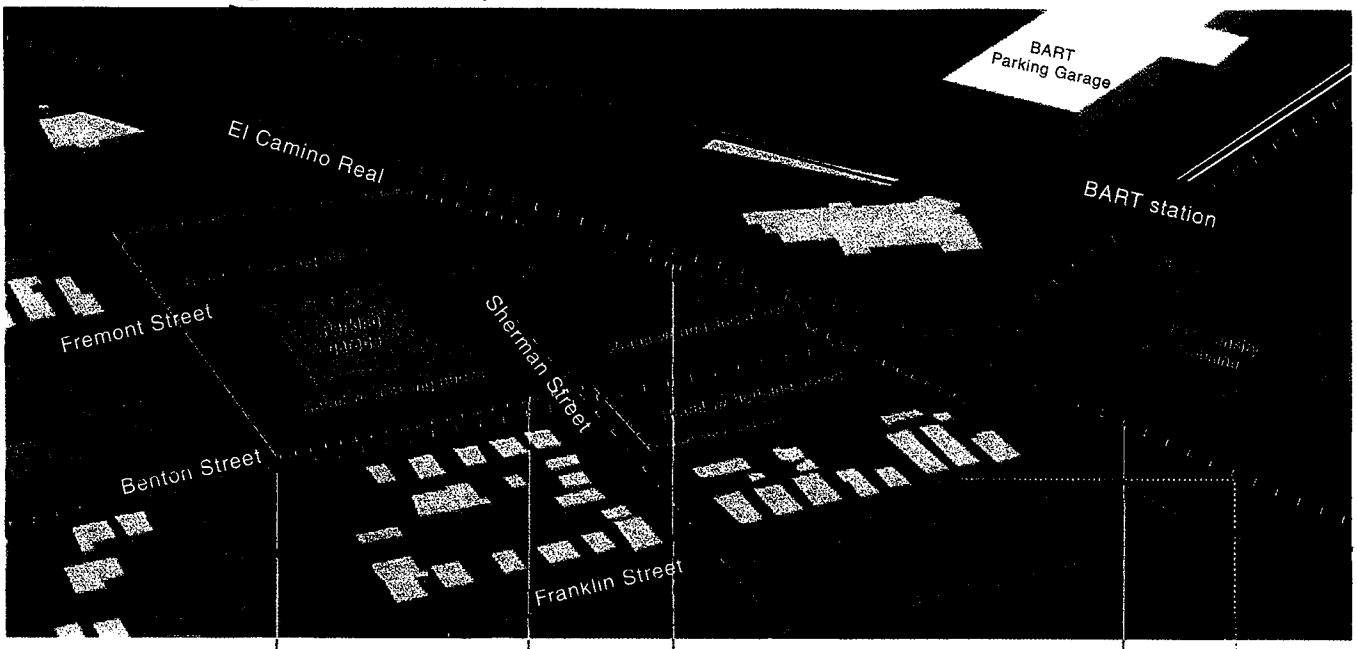


***Principle 3:*** ***In the core area, foster development of uses, development intensity, and overall character that supports vitality, and pedestrian-oriented streets, squares, and public spaces.***

Fulfilling the core's role as a focus for the City requires bolstering the range and depth of businesses that draw people and provide services to the surrounding residents and university employees and students. These include a variety of restaurants, bookstores, record stores, cafes, services, and specialty retail, as well as one or two anchor drugstores/supermarkets. Residential uses will have proximity to Santa Clara University and transit, add vitality, and help support businesses. It is equally important to create an environment that is conducive to pedestrians and public activity. This includes streetscape improvements (see Principle 9), pedestrian and bike connections, and institution of design and development standards to improve the public realm.

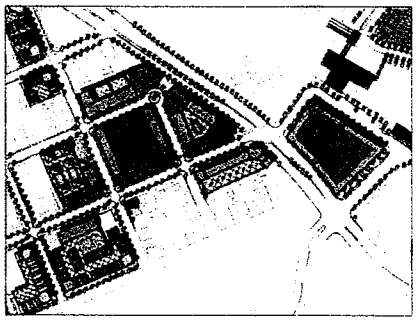


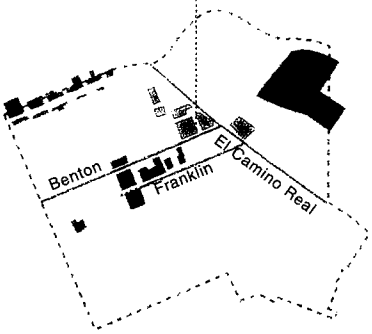

Benton Street:
Tree-lined main Retail Street

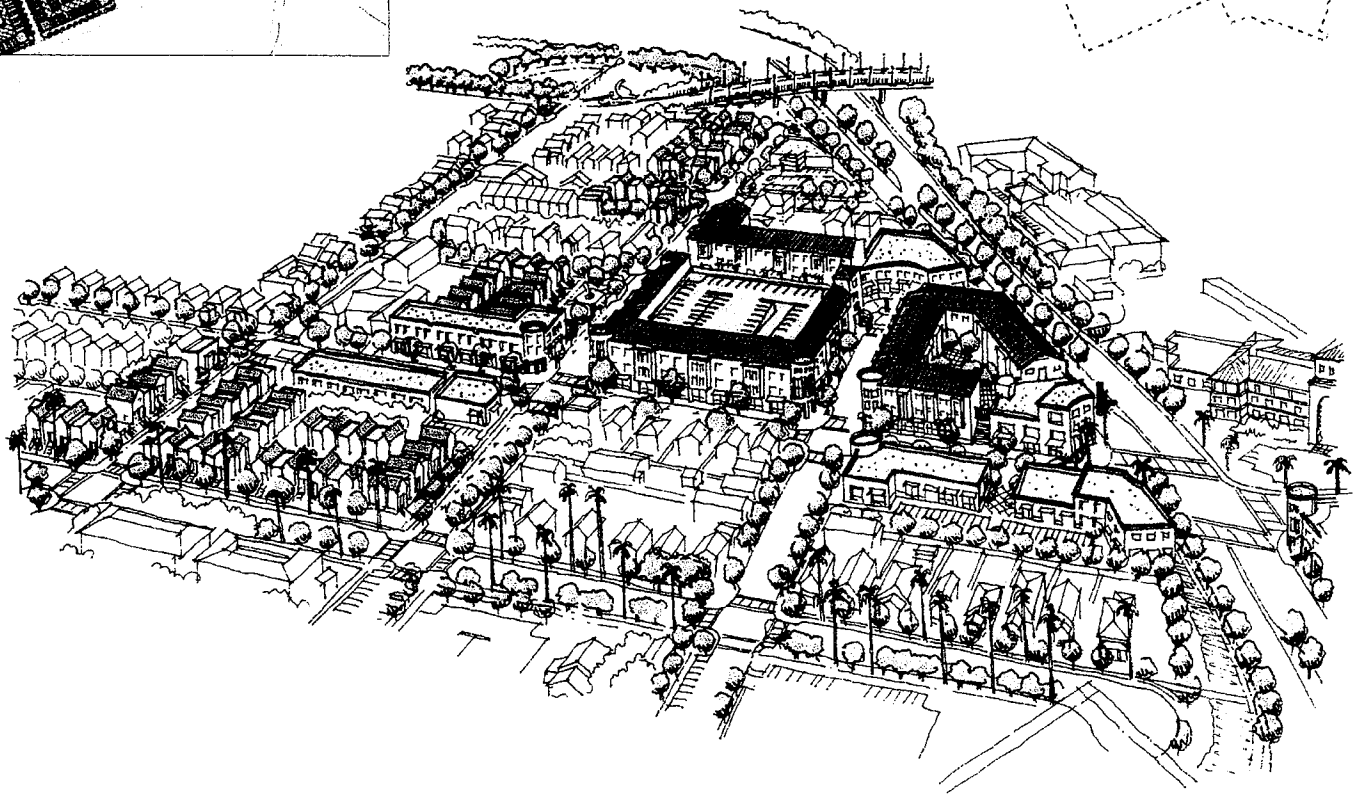
Pedestrian-oriented
store frontage

Visibility from BART Station
and El Camino Real

El Camino Real:
Tree-lined Boulevard w/ bike lanes

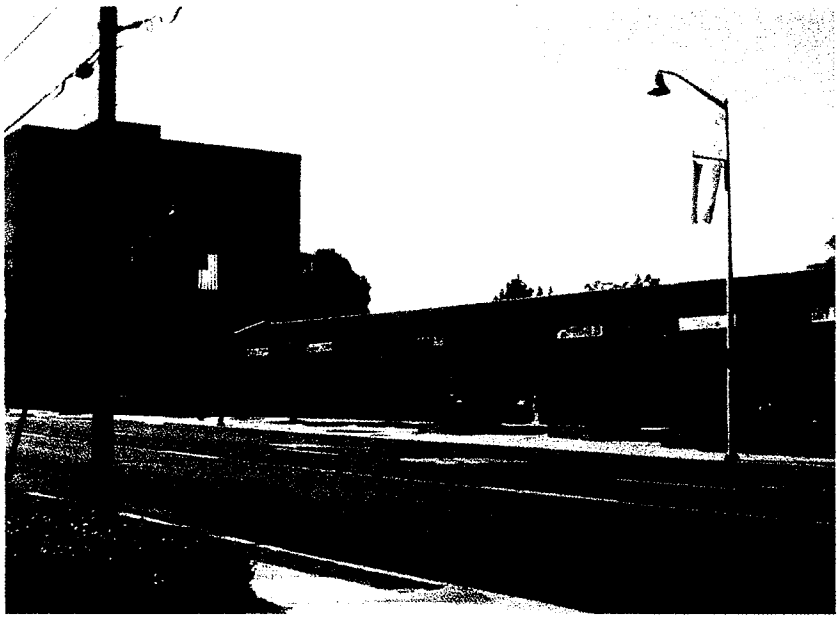




***Principle 4:*** ***Allow a variety of uses in the area bounded by Benton, Lafayette, and (extended) Washington streets, and Homestead Road.***

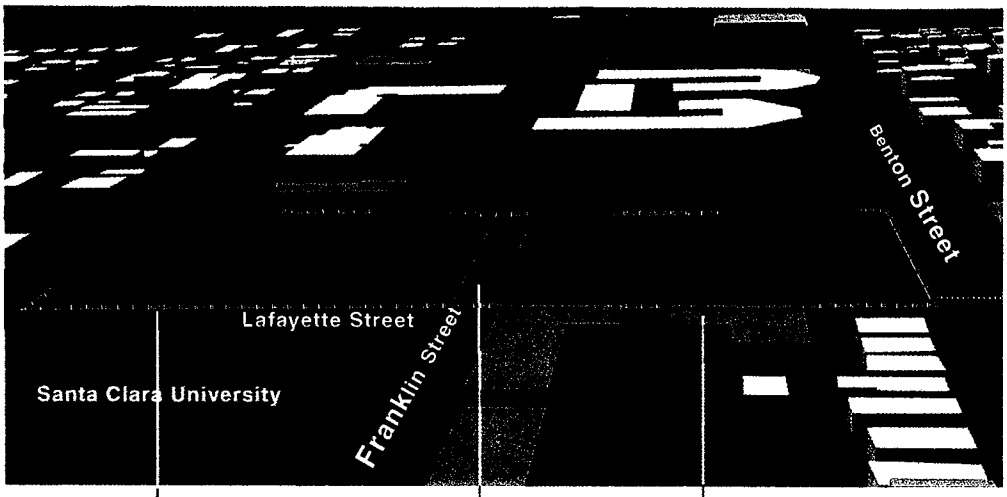
This is a crucial area linking the historical downtown to the proposed new core area. The Concept Plan proposes re-establishment of the street grid in this area, which will also improve accessibility and connectivity to CalTrain / BART Station. These two blocks are presently underutilized, and are well located-with good accessibility from the new core area, the BART station, and the Santa Clara University-for a variety of uses - including offices and residential, as well as civic and other public uses. The City owns most of the land in this area, and Santa Clara University owns the remainder. At the time of reuse of this area, consideration should also be given to creation of a small commercial node highlighting the intersection of Lafayette Street and Homestead Road.

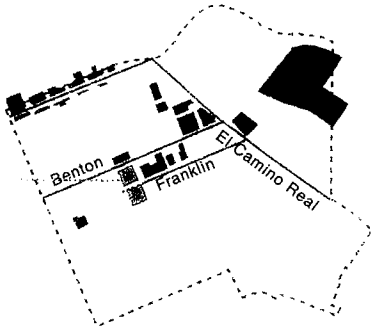


**Existing Lafayette Street near Franklin Intersection**

**Proposed Lafayette Street near Franklin Intersection**

## *Principle 4: Development of Flexible Mixed Use Area*

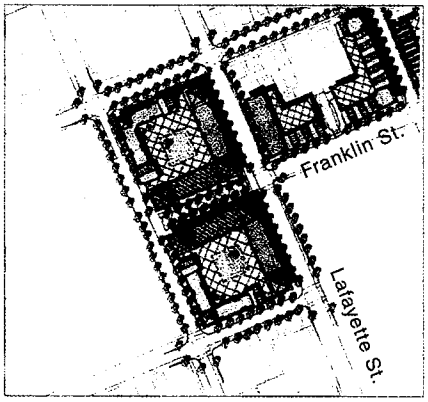


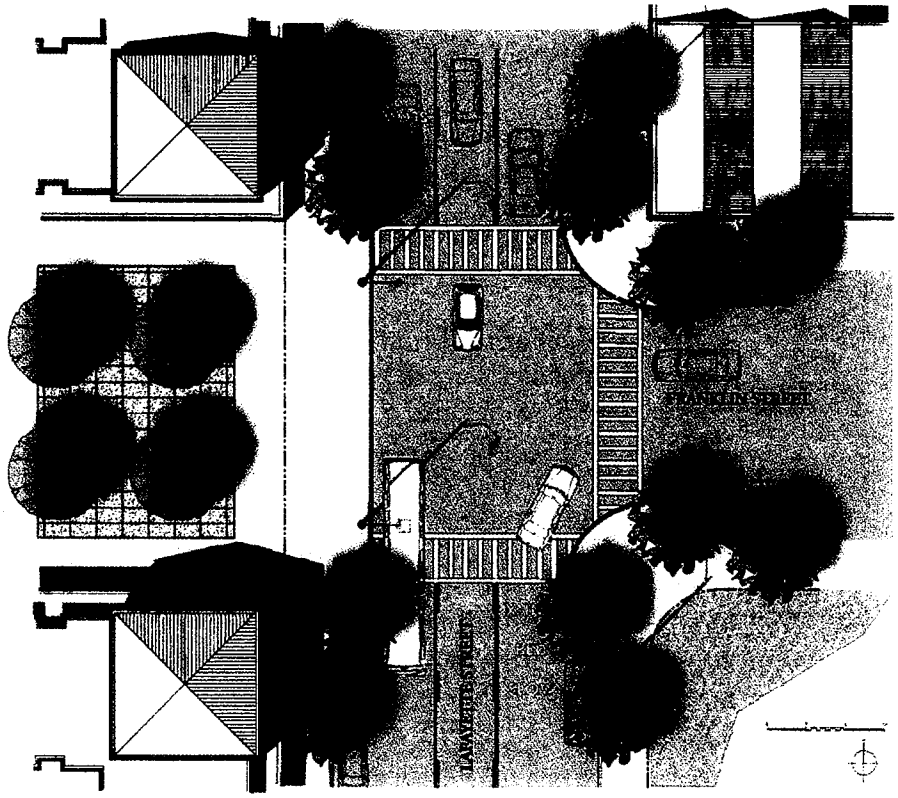




Flexible Mixed Use Development (Civic / Commercial / Residential)

Franklin Street Extension (Pedestrian Connection)

Activity Node/ Gateway at the intersection




**Lafayette and Franklin: Proposed Intersection**

***Principle 5: Utilize the new BART connection by redeveloping the site east and south of the BART station (United Defense/FMC) at a high intensity with a diverse mix of uses.***

This area, immediately adjacent to the BART station can support the highest intensity of uses in the Study Area without impacting existing neighborhoods.
Any plans for this area should emphasize:

- *A high intensity of development.* Studies done as part of the concept plan suggest that the site could support residential densities as high as 100 units/net acre (with sensitive design and building placement) and non-residential intensity of 2.0 FAR.

- *A diversity of uses.* The concept plan for the area shows a variety of uses, including residential, hotels (including extended stay), theaters/entertainment, offices, and supporting retail. A market assessment prepared for the Santa Clara station area as part of the work on BART planning suggests a good demand for hotels, given the area's proximity to the San Jose International Airport, and regional connections that BART will provide. Additionally this area could provide a multitude of housing opportunities. It also has adequate acreage and transit connections for entertainment/theater uses that Santa Clara residents are desirous of.

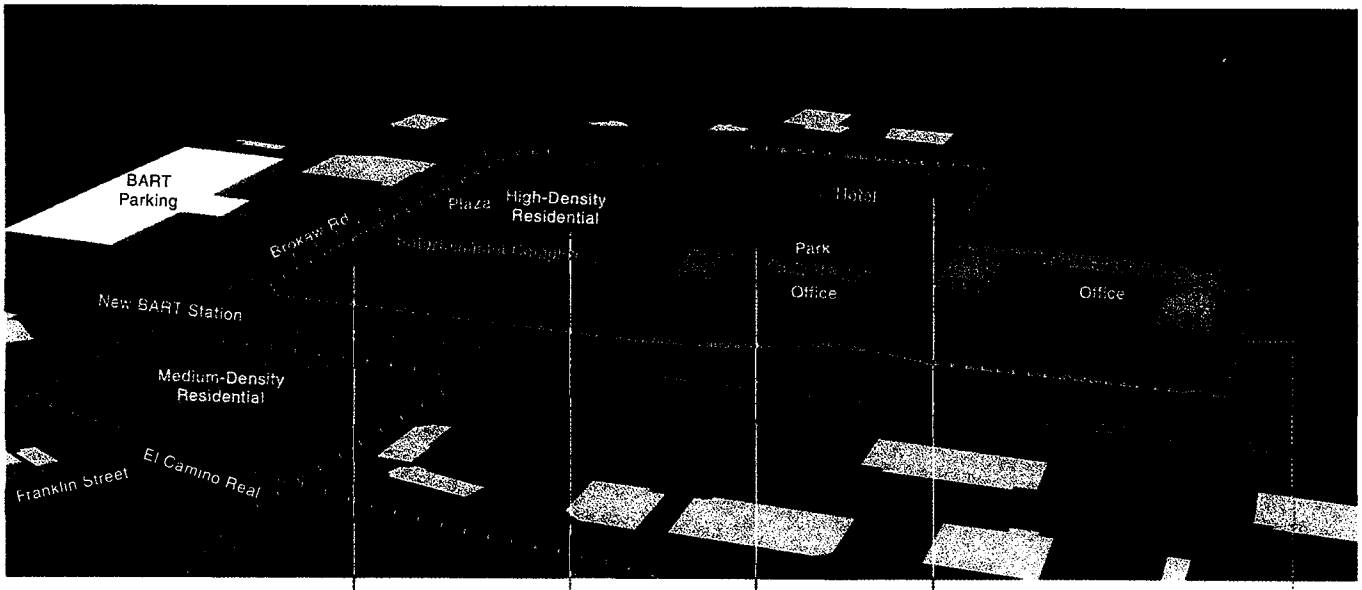
- *Site planning that supports transit, pedestrian movement.* Buildings should be located close to the BART station, and present a public face on Brokaw Road and Coleman Avenue. Development should be accessible and porous to pedestrians. This area east of the BART station should have pedestrian connections to the CalTrain and BART station along Brokaw and to the south east side across the tracks.

- *An entertainment complex adjacent to the BART station, with parking shared with the planned BART parking structure.* The uses complement each other in terms of timing for peak parking demand - BART's peak parking demand is during the regular business hours whereas the entertainment center will receive most customers after business hours.

- *A critical mass of residential development, supported by careful site planning.* If residential uses were to be a part of any development, a minimum of 150 housing units should be included to prevent a feeling of isolation. Additionally, given the nature of surrounding uses, residential development needs to be carefully sited to create an interesting and hospitable environment. The Concept Plan shows residential uses centered on the central open space, away from the BART maintenance facility, slightly setback from the people mover to minimize any noise impacts, and away from Coleman Avenue to mitigate impacts from airport and traffic noise.

- *Coordination with City of San Jose with planning for the FMC site.* The FMC site straddles both Santa Clara and San Jose; thus coordinated planning will be essential.

## *Principle 5: Development of the area around the BART Station*

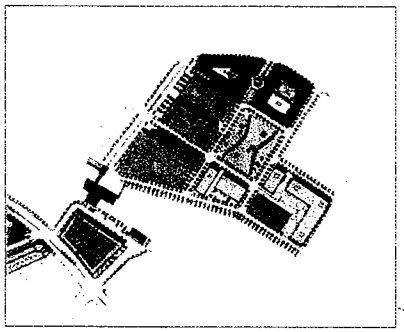


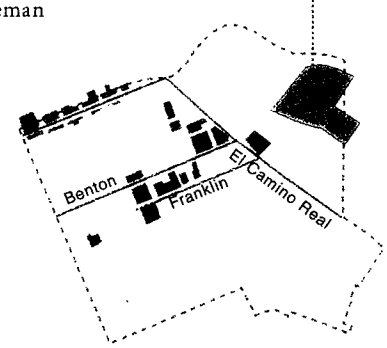

Large-scale Entertainment Complex with some retail spaces on the ground floor

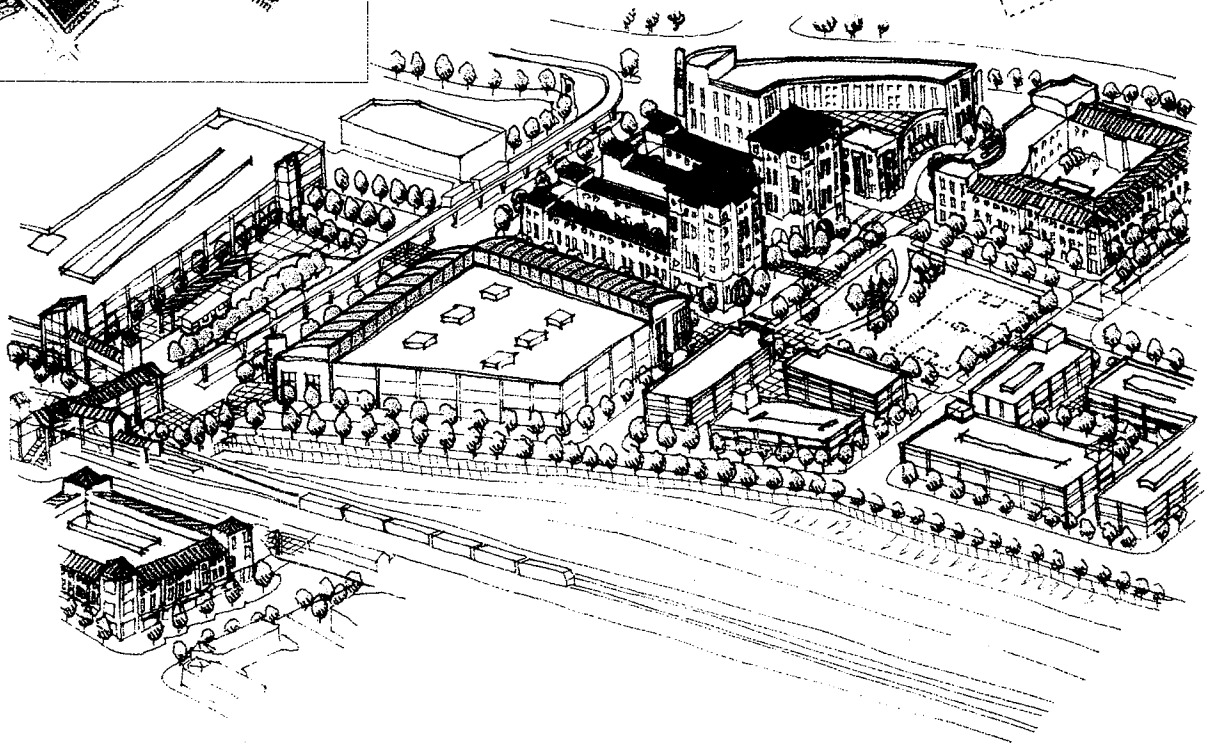
High density residential towers with a plaza in front

Park for tower residents and hotel guests

Hotel buildings fronting Coleman Avenue



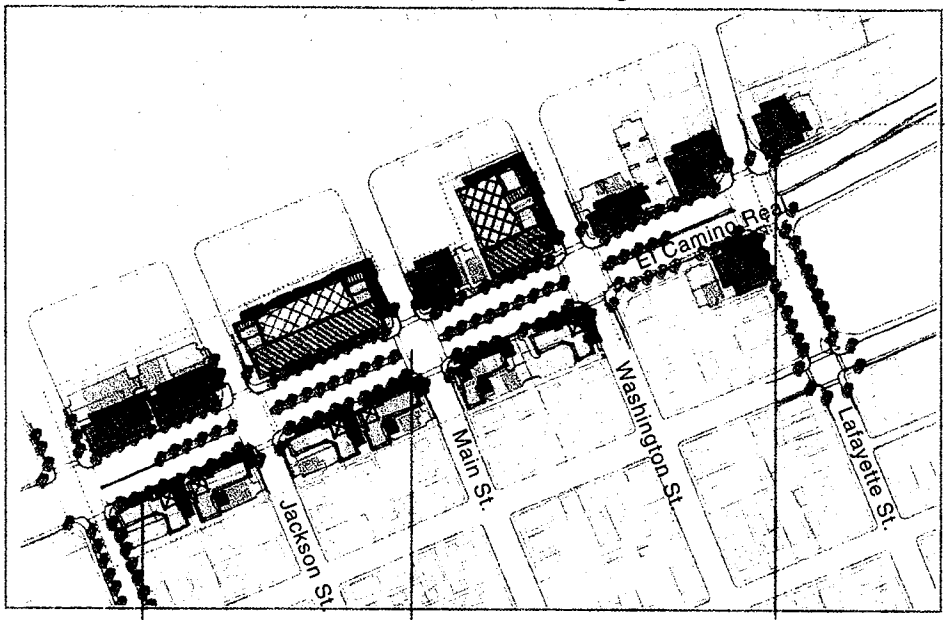


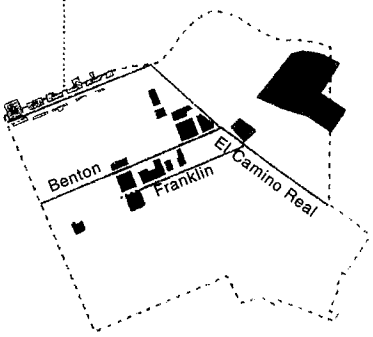



***Principle 6:*** ***Encourage infill development of the El Camino Real corridor in the northern part of the Study Area (between Monroe and Lafayette streets) to create an active "boulevard" with a mix of uses.***

This area has vacant sites, struggling older uses, as well as underutilized sites. The current El Camino Gateway designations provide flexibility and incentives for reuse and intensification. El Camino Real has been reconfigured to its current 120-foot wide auto-dominated corridor. More trees, a planted median, and accommodation of pedestrians, will help to enliven the corridor. Because the street is designated as a state highway, cooperation of Caltrans will be required.

## *Principle 6: Encouraging infill development along El Camino Corridor*



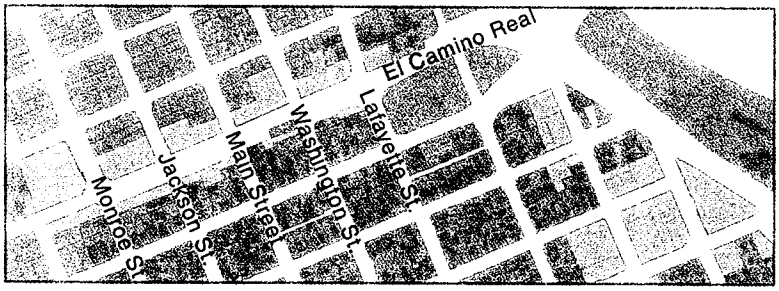




Incentives for reuse and intensification

El Camino Real: Create active bloulevard with landscaping and bike lanes

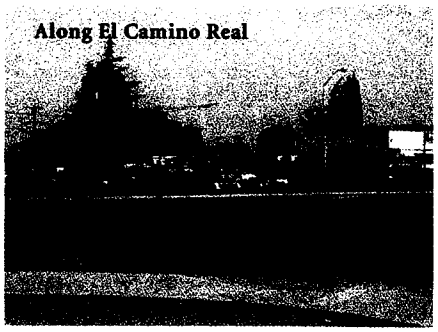
Mixed-use development with pedestrian-oriented frontages

**Opportunity Sites**

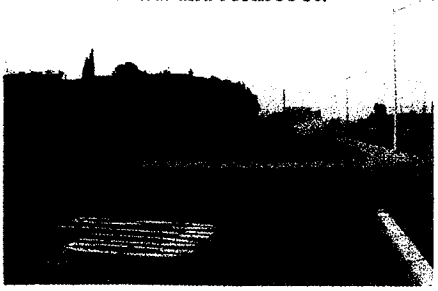



**Along El Camino Real**

**Along El Camino Real**



**El Camino Real and Monroe St.**



***Principle 7: Ensure that historic resources in the Study Area are protected.***

The Study Area contains numerous historic resources (see Chapter 2: Study Area Characteristics). Many groups and individuals-such as the City Council, Historical and Landmarks Commission, and non-profits-are engaged in conserving visible reminders of Santa Clara's past for future generations as well as important archaeological and cultural resources. As an example, in cooperation with Caltrans, the South Bay Historical Railroad Society, a nonprofit group founded in 1985, undertook the successful renovation of the Santa Clara Depot in 1986. Today, in addition to serving as a passenger depot it also houses a railroad museum.

The Concept Plan provides for conservation of existing historical buildings in the area. Additionally, several efforts aimed at historic conservation in the city are underway; the draft Historic Conservation District Ordinance, currently under review, is Santa Clara's most recent preservation initiative. The Ordinance recognizes the substantial aesthetic, environmental and economic importance of its historic and cultural resources. It establishes policies, regulations and standards to protect historic and cultural resources and seeks to ensure that development in the Historic Conservation District is compatible with and enhances the quality and character of Santa Clara.[2] The District would cover a large area, including all of the Study Area west of the railroad tracks, where historical resources are located.

2. http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/santaclara/preservation.htm; September 25, 2002.

***Principle 8:*** ***Maintain the scale and character of the Franklin Square area, emphasizing rehabilitation and adaptive reuse, rather than changes in land uses and building intensities.***

While at one time this area served as a small downtown, the center of gravity of the Study Area will shift eastward with the construction of the BART station. Thus, the emphasis in the Franklin Square area should on preserving existing historical buildings, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse.

***Principle 9:*** ***Reestablish the street grid to the extent feasible, and develop new streets to create smaller-sized blocks and enhance walkability.***

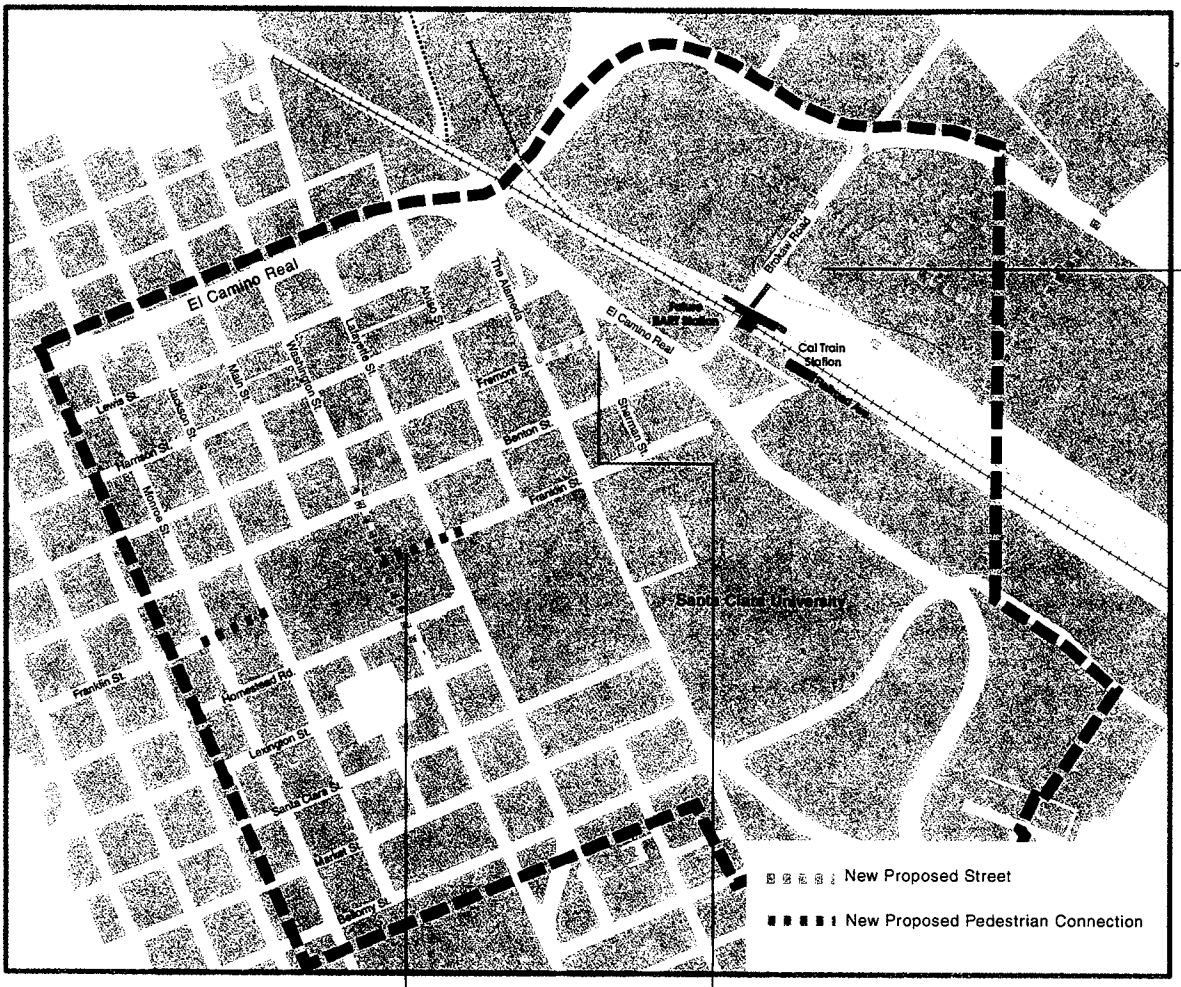
The Concept Plan envisions several new connections and improvements to establish links with surrounding development and the existing CalTrain and future BART facility. Selective street extensions are proposed to improve internal accessibility to activity areas and to further biking and walking. These include:

- Re-extending Washington Street in the stretch between Benton Street and Homestead Road and connecting Franklin Street from the east to it.

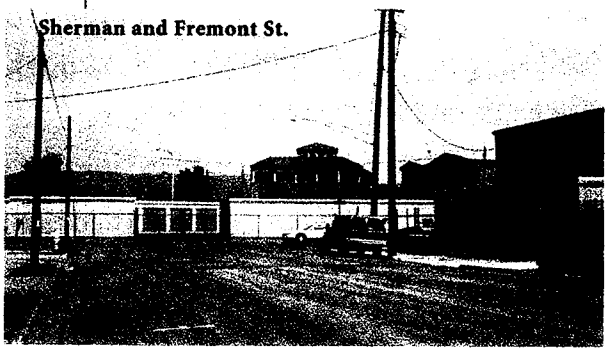
- Extending Sherman and Fremont streets and creating a plaza with a traffic roundabout, that also connects to El Camino Real.

- Establishing a grid of through streets for the site (currently United Defense) east of the BART station, with new connections to Brokaw Road, Coleman Avenue, and a new frontage road along the planned BART maintenance facility.

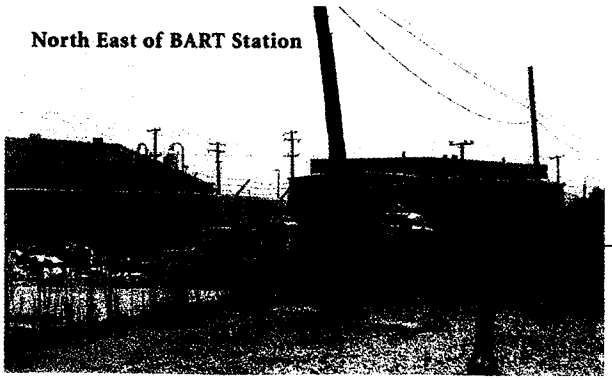
## *Principle 9: Re-establishiment of Street Grid*



Lafayette and Franklin St.



Sherman and Fremont St.



North East of BART Station

***Principle 10: Undertake strategic streetscape improvements and create pedestrian linkages.***

Streetscape and traffic improvements will be made to streets in the area as appropriate, particularly on El Camino Real, Benton Street, The Alameda on North and South side of the University, Lafayette Street, Homestead Road, and Monroe Street. Improvements will include new or updated pedestrian crossings, pedestrian scale lighting, bike facilities, furnishings, and street trees and landscaping.

Illustrative examples of improvements include:

**Streets cape**

- Benton Street. Streetscape improvements-including wider and/or divide sidewalks (with park strips), trees on either side of the street, benches, new lighting, bus shelters, etc. - to create a "main street" feeling.

- Franklin Street. Potentially diagonal parking on one side, while retaining parallel parking on the other, planting new trees in appropriate locations to supplement existing trees, directional and historical signages.

- The Alameda Street. Wider sidewalks, parallel parking on each side, planting of trees in sidewalks, new lighting, and directional historic signages.

- Lafayette Street. Landscaped medians, maintaining parallel parking on each side, new lighting, directional historic signages, maintaining street trees.

- El Camino Real. Potentially a "boulevard" with rows of trees, bike lanes, new lighting, directional and historical signages, and a mix of uses and increased building intensities.

**Gateways**

Landscape treatment at selected intersections to provide direction and create emphasis. These special gateways might include:

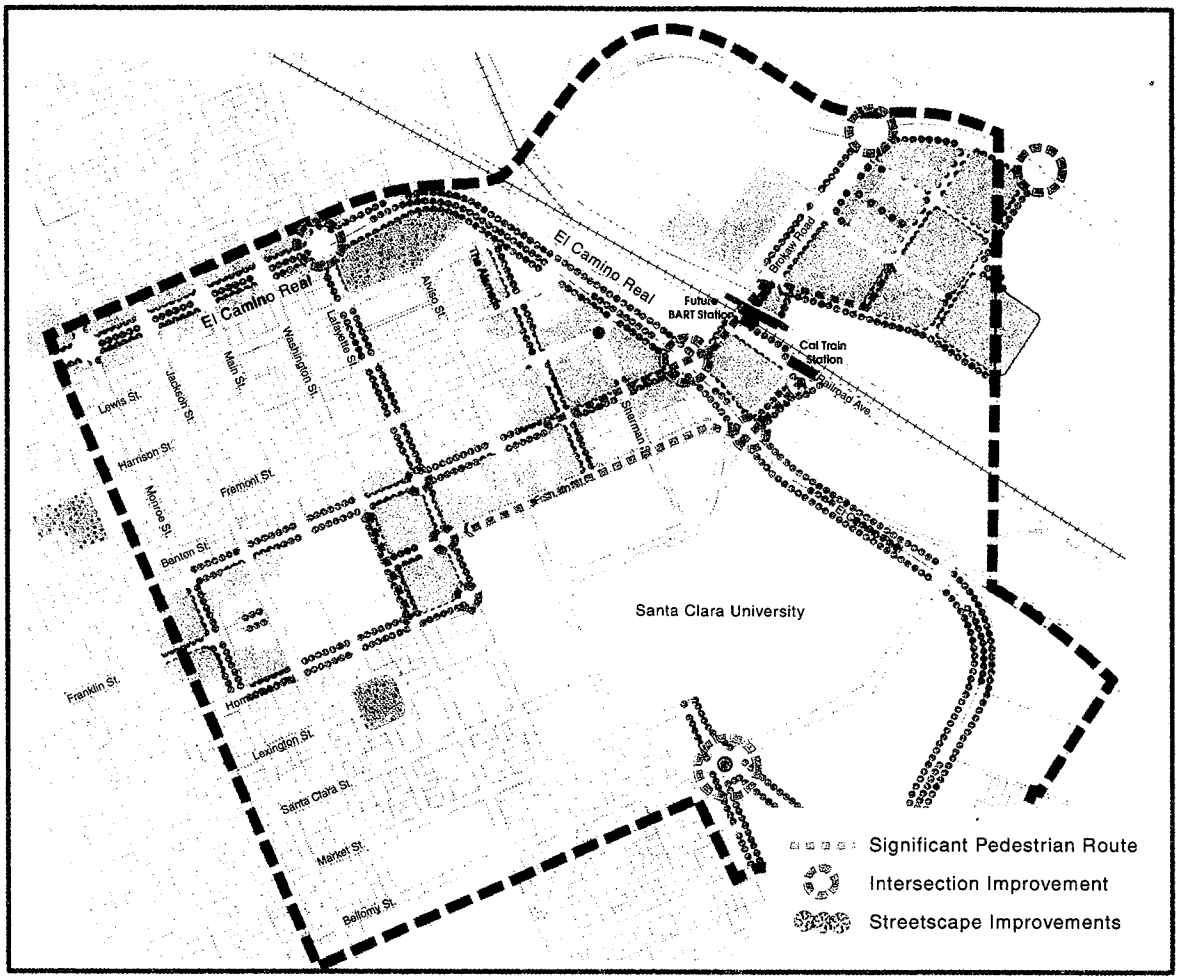
- Benton Street/El Camino Real
- El Camino Real/Lafayette Street
- Coleman Avenue/Brokaw Road

Additionally, special treatment of intersections within the Study Area may also be desirable

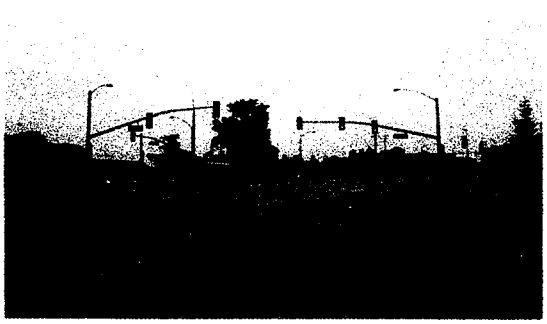
**Pedestrian Linkages/Improvements**

New linkages and improvements to enhance pedestrian comfort are desirable in several areas. These are shown in Figure 3-1.

*Principle 10: Streetscape Improvements*

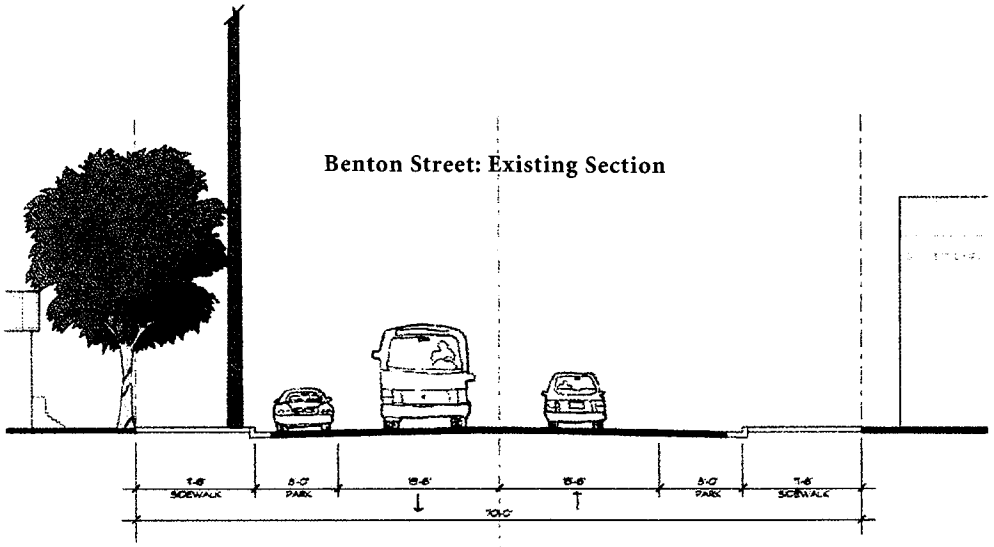


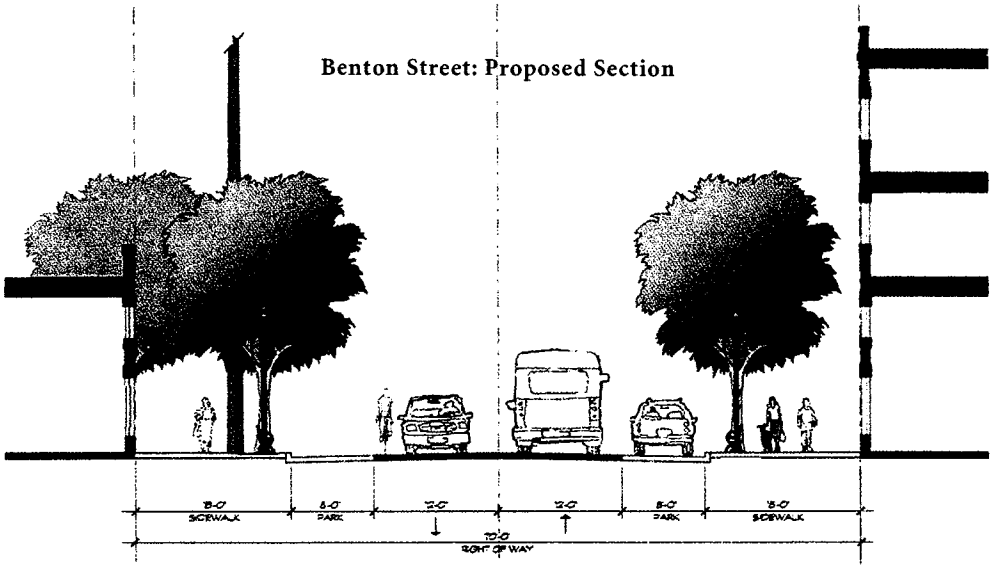
**El Camino Real**

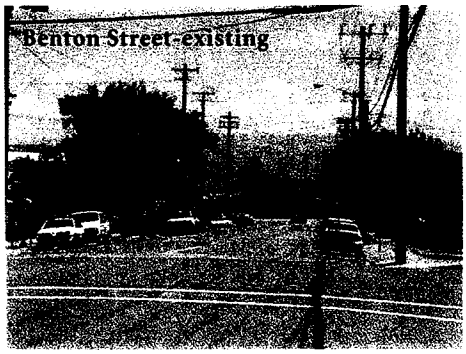


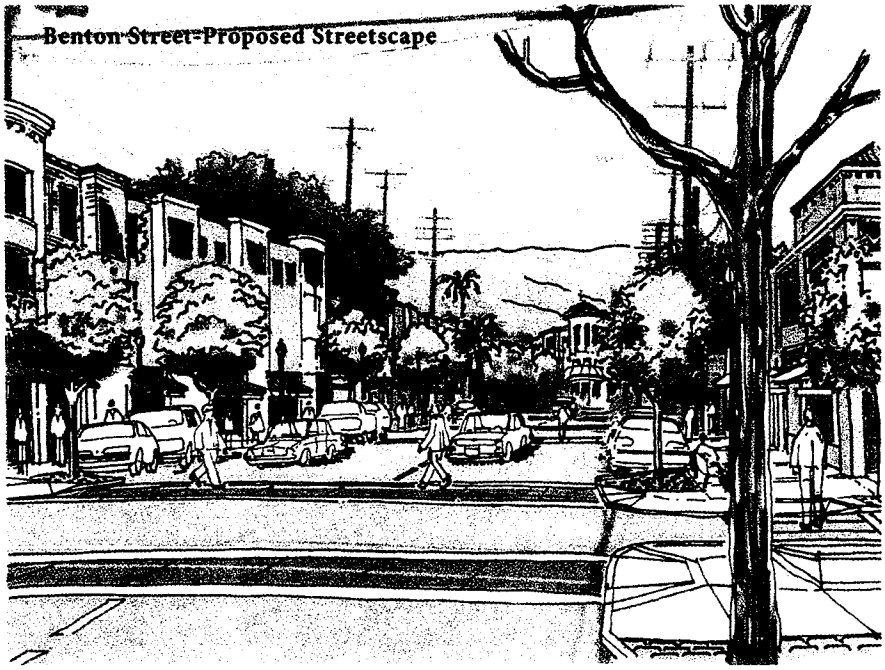
**Benton Street**

**Lafayette Street**


Benton Street: Existing Section
SIDEWALK
PARK
PARK
SIDEWALK
70'-0"


Benton Street: Proposed Section
SIDEWALK
PARK
PARK
SIDEWALK
70'-0"
RIGHT OF WAY


Benton Street-existing


Benton Street-Proposed Streetscape

***Principle 11: Expand park and recreation opportunities for residents, as well as workers and visitors.***

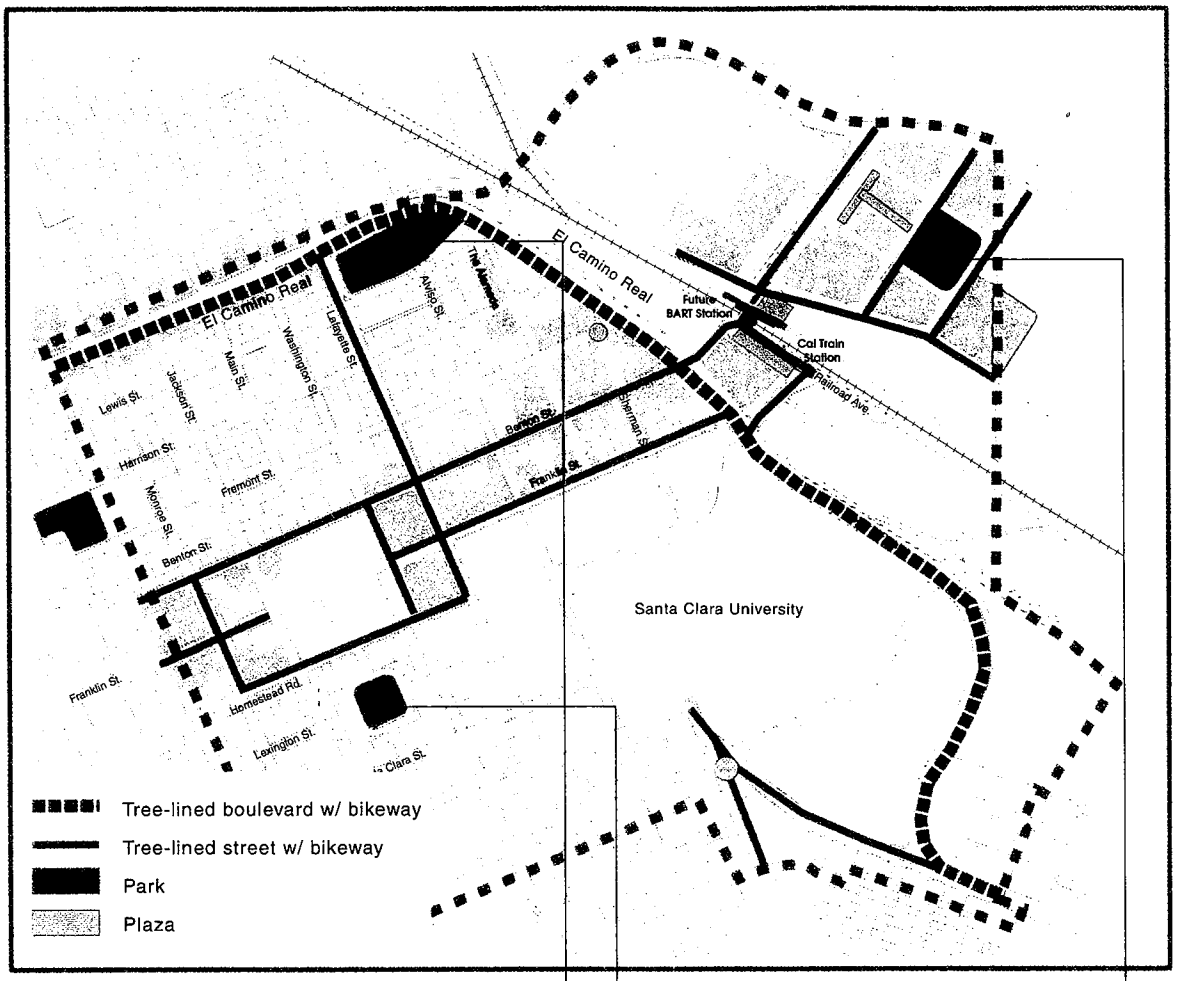
Methods to achieve this include:

A new 2.5 acre park in the area east of the BART station, which will help meet the recreational needs of the 400-500 new residents of this area, as well as visitors to the entertainment facilities and hotels, and office workers.

Development of plazas and outdoor spaces in the new core area.
The Concept Plan shows a gathering space at the intersection of Sherman and Fremont streets, as well as smaller interspersed plazas. In addition benches, and outdoor seating to create an inviting public setting should be provided.

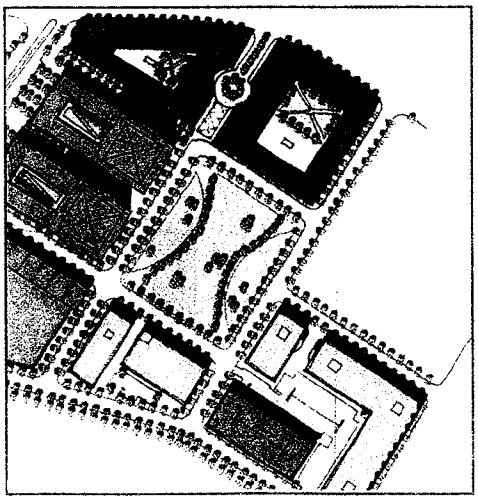
Improving access and connections to Marsalli Park at El Camino Real and Lafayette Street for neighborhood accessibility.

## *Principle 11: Park and Recreation Opportunities*




**Park on El Camino Real and Lafayette St.**

**Proposed Park NE of BART Station**



**City Plaza Park on Lexington St.**

*Principle 12:* ***Undertake proactive measures to ensure cohesive development patterns, spur reuse and intensification, and provide incentives.***

While much of the development will result from private initiative, because of the need for parcelization and assembly, parking issues that extend beyond individual developments, as well as the need for cohesive development, the City should study proactive measures to improve economic and physical conditions in designated areas. These could include establishment of benefit districts (see also Section 5.1: Implementation Strategy), development on City-owned properties in the Lafayette Square area, and pooling resources with other agencies.

*Principle 13:* ***Implement a comprehensive parking strategy that includes creative streetscape improvements to achieve greater on-street parking, shared parking, and construction of a parking structure.***

The need for additional parking in the area will stem from many sources – reuse of surface parking lots, increased activity in the Study Area, continued expansion of Santa Clara University, and construction of the new BART station. Actions for the City recommended by a comprehensive parking study is completed and include:

- Enforce on- street parking regulations;
- Review time of day and time limit restrictions;
- Increase on- street parking supply through diagonal parking on selected streets with sufficient street widths;
- Create markings for parking stalls on streets and curbs; and
- Implement a full- time Residential Permit Parking Program.

Additionally, the following steps may be considered, either as stand-alone measures or as part of preparation of the detailed Downtown Plan:

- Creation of a Parking Assessment District. In an assessment district, business owners choose to be assessed a fee, which is collected on their behalf by the City, for use in promoting and improving the business area. Monies collected among other things to construct and maintain a parking structure (see below).
- Development of a parking structure in the block bounded by Fremont, Sherman, and Benton streets, and The Alameda. This could be a joint effort with the Santa Clara University (for student/employee parking and parking for mixed-use developments in the core area). A five-story structure in this block, encapsulated by retail and office uses, could provide space for as many as 800 cars, if needed.
- Joint use of the BART parking structure with entertainment/theater facilities along Brokaw Road. Because parking peaks for the two uses occur at different times (day v. evening, and weekday v. weekend), such joint use permits a more efficient use of the planned parking facility.

*Principle 14: Promote a multi-modal transportation system, underpinned by emphasis on efficient walking and transit.*

Downtown Santa Clara is located at one of the greatest confluence of transportation options—rail, bus, air travel, automobile, cycling, and walking—in the Bay Area. It is adjacent to the San Jose International Airport, and is currently served by CalTrain and the Altamont Commuter Express (ACE). The planned BART station, which will the terminus station for regional travel, as well as a planned people mover system linking the station to the airport and Guadalupe light rail, will further increase transit accessibility.

Improving the linkages between these options will make travel to the downtown area more efficient. Downtown's ideal setting for walking should be enhanced through pleasant, secure connections between activity nodes and transit systems. Demand management strategies should emphasize reduction in car trips, while coordinated parking management will ensure that downtown remains accessible. Consideration should also be given to a local shuttle that makes reaching downtown destinations quick and easy without contributing to traffic and parking congestion.

# 4 Key Sites: Illustrative Plans

The following pages illustrate conceptual plans for two key sites: the new core area near Benton Street/El Camino Real and the area east of the CalTrain/BART stations. These concepts will be worked out and modified as appropriate during the subsequent stages of the planning process.

## 4.1 BENTON STREET AND EL CAMINO REAL

The Concept Plan focuses moderate-intensity community commercial uses and new housing along Benton Street to create an active "main street" district that is within walking distance of the CalTrain Depot and future BART station. Up to 550 new dwelling units, both for-sale and rental, and 100,000 square feet of new commercial uses create an intense, active new neighborhood in a desirable setting.

Larger scale buildings establish a more urban edge against the large scale of the El Camino Real, and an integrated parking structure serves the district, as well as perhaps some of the needs of Santa Clara University, to ensure that on-street parking is not unduly impacted. The "main street" retail development consists of mixed-use buildings comprised of retail shops on the ground floor with residences above. Buildings are generally three and four stories tall, with podium level courtyard open spaces above parking. The retail parking is aggregated into a shared parking structure, which is more efficient and cost effective than providing retail parking on individual parcels. The design of the parking structure includes wraparound ground floor retail and other active uses.

As new development moves further into and toward the single-family residential areas, project sizes and building types scale down accordingly. The larger parcels take advantage of their size by developing partially below-grade podium parking garages with a combination of two- and three-story buildings with flats and townhomes which face the street with porches or stoops, a pattern similar to that found in the historical Old Quad buildings. Open space is provided on podiums and small front yards. Smaller parcels have courtyard housing and smaller apartment buildings to maximize the housing opportunities, while also fitting into the area. The architecture of all new projects is carefully detailed to respond to the area's historic character.

## 4.2 EAST SIDE OF TRACKS

This area is envisioned as a high intensity district with a mix of uses centered on a 2.5-acre park, connected by a parkway to Brokaw Road. The park will be surrounded by two hotels (a total of 600 rooms); three-to-four story residential development with two mid-rise (10-story) residential buildings fronting the park, for a total of 200 housing units in variety of types, including townhomes, apartments, and loft-style development; a new multiplex entertainment complex; and up to 400,000 square feet of office uses.

The major entertainment complex is the cornerstone of the area, potentially sharing the BART parking structure in a joint development agreement with BART to provide evening and weekend parking for the entertainment visitors during BART's off-peak hours. This shared parking arrangement benefits both BART and the entertainment complex offsetting expensive and land consumptive parking requirements. The entertainment complex is envisioned as a multi-story multiplex theatre with retail oriented to entertainment, and dining opportunities for moviegoers, adjacent office workers, and residents.

The high-density residential development consists or four stories of residences over a two story-parking podium fronted by retail and/or residential uses at the street level. Elegant residential towers (ten-stories tall) overlooking the large park punctuate the smaller-scale residential blocks.

The hotels, located along Coleman Avenue and Brokaw Road, provide easy access to BART and the airport via the people mover. These hotels are envisioned as four- to eight-story courtyard structures with integrated parking podiums. They share a porte-cochere drop off area with views to the park and to the hills. Their entries and ground floor uses orient to the urban park open space, which in turn provides pedestrian connection to the BART station. The people mover is also within walking distance; perhaps coordinated design even links it directly to the hotel complex with an additional stop.

The mixed-use developments also include offices with a balance of structured parking and emphasis on transit riders, allowing for a reduction in parking requirements. Office buildings are three to four stories of medium-sized floor plates, with larger buildings beyond within San Jose. The complexes orient to the streets with parking structures located behind and connected to the office buildings through pedestrian courtyards. This area east of the BART station has pedestrian connections to the CalTrain and BART station along Brokaw Road and across the tracks further west.

This area is very urban in its nature and has high levels of daytime employment activity and nighttime entertainment and residential use. The area—less than a quarter mile from the Benton Street "main street" district—is well connected to the district with a pedestrian crossing. Over time, this area will become a destination neighborhood, integral to Santa Clara.

*Figure 4-1: Benton Street and El Camino Real*

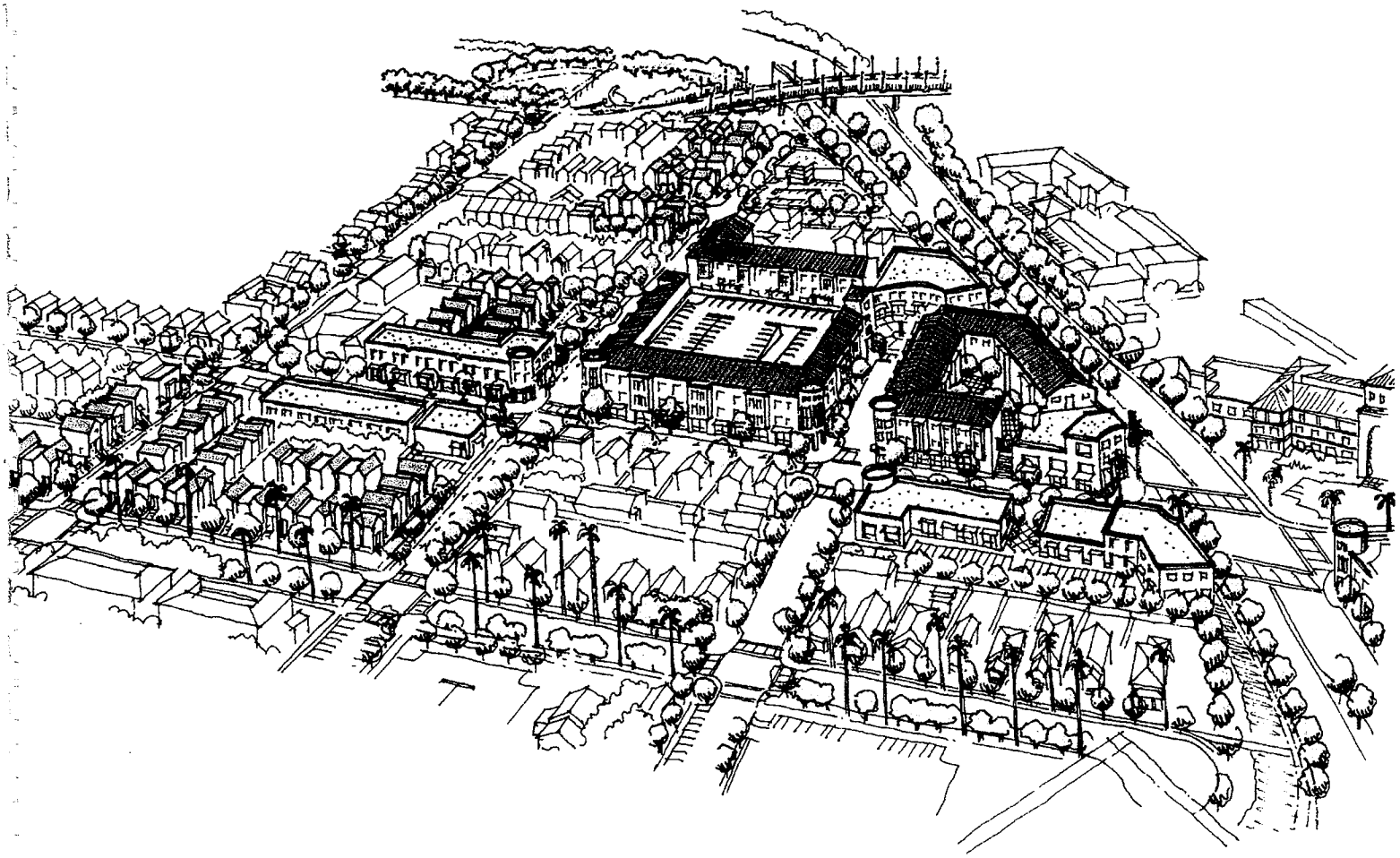
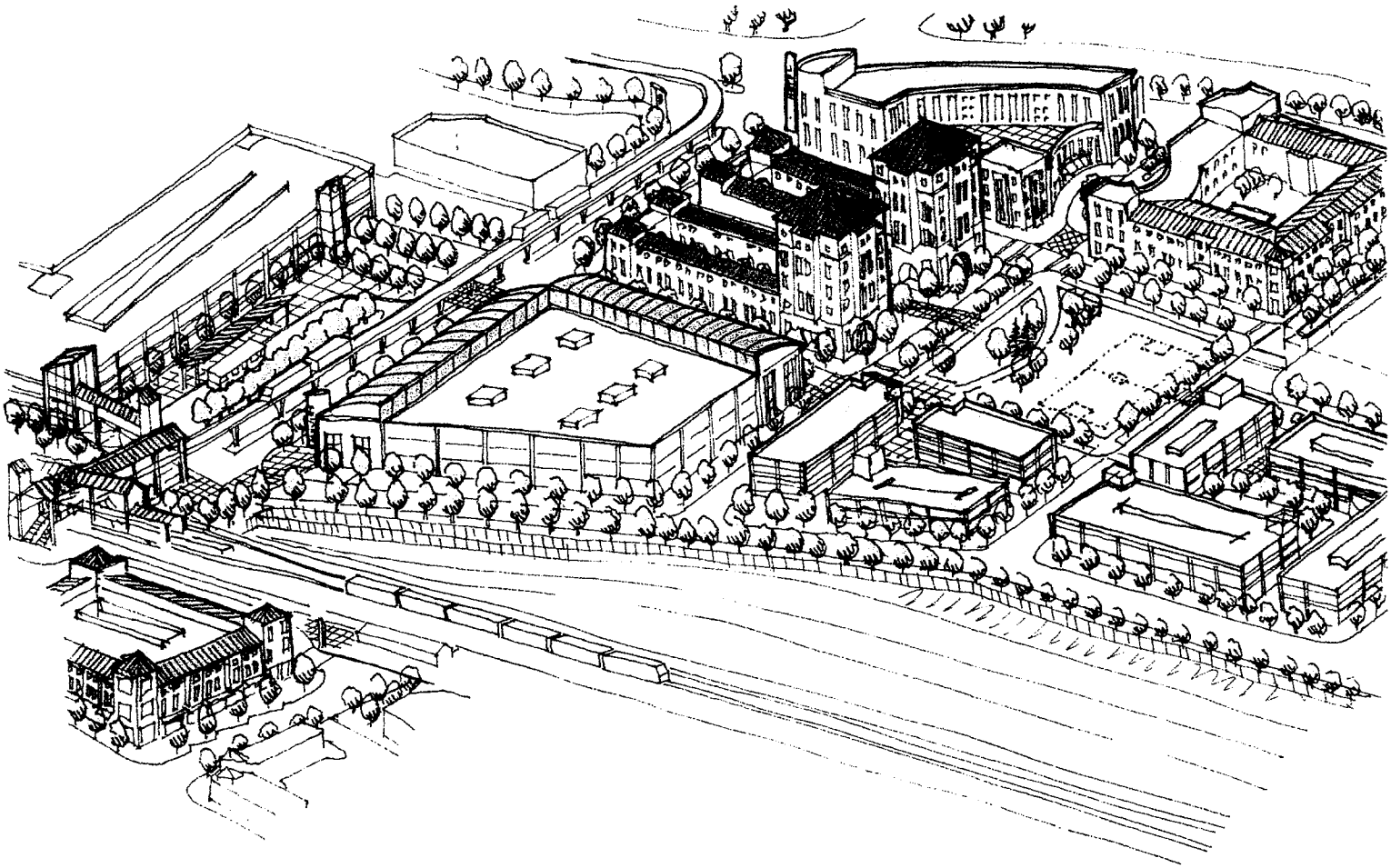


*Figure 4-2: East Side of Tracks*



# 5 Implementation

The Concept Plan establishes a vision and overarching principles for the Study Area. Implementation of the Plan will require a multi-pronged strategy, ranging from working out details to preparing comprehensive development standards and regulations. These, and other complementary strategies, will need to be prioritized by the City Council.

## 5.1 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The implementation strategy includes several key components:

- Preparation of a detailed Downtown Plan, outlined as a goal by the City Council. This planning process could include some or all of the other implementation components;
- Amendments to the City's General Plan to incorporate land use strategies of the Concept Plan;
- Amendments to the City's Zoning Ordinance to establish transit–supportive zoning, potentially in the form of a Transit Area Overlay District. Detailed design and development standards and guidelines may also be prepared;
- Neighborhood traffic calming study to prevent cut-through traffic that might result from BART;
- Joint Development opportunities for publicly-owned land and for parking facilities.

These strategies are elaborated below.

### PREPARATION OF A DOWNTOWN PLAN

Among the goals established by the City Council in June 2001 was preparation of a Downtown Area Plan. The Concept Plan provides an excellent springboard for preparation of this plan, which could also encompass all of the other implementation strategies. Given that this Concept Plan establishes the overall framework, the Downtown Plan can focus on working out the details and on specific implementation strategies.

### AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY'S GENERAL PLAN

Santa Clara's General Plan was last comprehensively updated in 1992. Changes that should be considered to the General Plan—either as part of a comprehensive update of the General Plan or as part of preparing the Downtown Plan—include establishment of appropriate land use designations for the area. While the General Plan provides a diverse range of land use designations, the Study Area will benefit from some new designations tailored to its particular needs. These include a new Mixed-Use or Downtown Commercial classification, or incorporation of the Downtown Plan designations by reference. The General Plan's Community and Regional Shopping designation, with large minimum setback requirements, is more oriented toward suburban than urban needs. The current Mixed-Use designation has low maximum residential density ceilings, as well as limitations on attainable densities in areas of single-

family residential development. The General Plan's High Density Residential classification does not have maximum density limitations. Thus, the highest envisioned densities—east of the railroad tracks—should be attainable with current designations. However, appropriate density ranges for the intermediate densities envisioned in the Concept Plan will be needed.

## AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE

Santa Clara's current Zoning Ordinance includes several base districts, including a Downtown Commercial District, as well as Planned Development and Combining Districts. A High Density Multiple-Dwelling Zoning District-Central Business District, while applied to a few parcels, is not listed, and it is expected that this district shall be repealed when properties are no longer in this district.

The Current Downtown Commercial district does not permit residential uses or residential/commercial mixed-uses—the kinds of uses anticipated by the Concept Plan—by right. No special parking requirements apply to this district. Attainment of many of the objectives of the Concept Plan in specific developments would thus require application of the Planned Development district, which has specific requirements and procedures as well as uncertainty of outcome that small property owners may not favor. Moreover, these requirements do not prevent non-transit supportive development from occurring such as by establishing minimum density/intensity limitations.

Preparation of specific zoning recommendations is outside the scope of this study. However, at such time that specific zoning amendments are undertaken, it would be helpful to consider establishment of a Transit Area (TA) Overlay District. This zoning district may establish provisions for mixed-use development, incentives for intensification within the Study Area, and standards for pedestrian-oriented design and transit-oriented development. These include:

- Establishing limitations on auto-oriented uses within a certain distance (say 1,000 feet) of the Depot/BART station.
- Establishing limitations on low-employment generating uses within one-quarter mile to promote higher intensity uses.
- Allowing second units on lots within single-family districts that are within a prescribed distance of a station platform (e.g., quarter mile) and abut a non-residential zoning district or a two-family or multi-family zoning district.
- Establishing minimum residential densities and minimum floor area ratios to promote compact development.
- Establishing maximum front setback requirements in specific areas to bring buildings closer to the street and establishing a maximum building setback;
- Requiring pedestrian circulation;
- Offering additional building height for residential and hotel uses, where appropriate;
- Offering additional FAR for structure/underground parking and public amenities and for housing; and

- Setting parking "lids" and restrictions on the location of parking (not in front of buildings).

Additionally, how new development relates to the street and to adjacent uses—building siting and setback requirements—often is determined by the development standards set for each zoning district. Ideally, standards for transit-supportive development should also provide for a pedestrian-oriented environment, one in which buildings are built to the sidewalk with parking on the side or behind buildings, street-level storefronts are transparent with many entrances, architectural elements and landscaping provide protection from sun, sidewalks and pedestrian connections link transit stops to stores and residences, and pedestrian amenities (benches and shelters) are provided.

## PREPARATION OF A NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC CALMING STUDY

At the workshops, many residents expressed concern about existing "cut-through" traffic, and feared that this might worsen when the BART station is operational. Issues related to traffic impacts resulting from BART operation are currently being evaluated by the BART planning team. Once BART station area design plans are more crystallized, it might be helpful to evaluate traffic flow patterns and their impacts on the Study Area and the Old Quad neighborhood.

## JOINT DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There may be other joint development opportunities in the Study Area as a result of City-owned sites, site owned by the VTA west of the Depot, as well as sites owned by Santa Clara University, and BART.

### *Why Consider Joint Development?*

A range of innovative funding sources and institutional arrangements could be used as the sole source of funding or the single institutional arrangement for a particular facility. Or more likely, these strategies could be used in combination with conventional public funding strategies as a means to reduce financial or liability exposure, accelerate implementation, or leverage federal, State and local funds (particularly those with cost sharing formulas). These types of public/private partnerships are generally referred to as joint development.

Joint development efforts typically leverage public ownership of land by inviting private investment in commercial and residential buildings, hotels and recreational facilities to fully exploit the market and locational advantages provided by publicly-owned land adjacent to transit stations. Santa Clara University, VTA, BART and/or the City also may need to invest in parking facilities and improved transit service to help make the private investment pay off.

### *Joint Development Arrangements*

There are generally two types of joint development arrangements that could be considered for the Study Area and they include revenue sharing strategies and cost sharing strategies, as described below:

Revenue Sharing

- *Leases:* BART/VTA or the City leases land parcels, air or subterranean rights, or unimproved space to private developers or commercial tenants – this tends to be the most common form of joint development in the U.S.
- *Facility Connection Fees*: a fee is collected from a landowner or private tenant for the right to physically connect a project, usually a retail store or office building, to a train station or multi-modal transportation terminal
- *Benefit Assessment District:* a specially designated district is established around a potential joint development site, for which benefiting landowners pay assessment fees for proximity to the site. The fees can help finance capital projects that directly benefit these landowners; benefit assessments also can be used for funding operating and maintenance (on-going) costs for street lighting and landscaping, for example.
- *Tax Increment Financing:* where a project is located in a redevelopment project area, incremental gains in property tax receipts can be earmarked to pay capital obligations or fund operating deficits of qualifying redevelopment project activities if there is state enabling legislation for such financing.

Cost Sharing

- *Voluntary Agreements:* agreements between the joint development sponsor, developers and private property owners can be instituted to reduce the development costs of each party through coordinated planning, design, and construction. For example, voluntary agreements could include shared parking facilities, landscaping or security, HVAC systems, and land assemblage and purchase.
- *Incentive-Based Agreements*: if authorized by local zoning and approved by the landowing public agency, the co-developer could receive a developer's development bonuses (e.g., higher Floor Area Ratio [FAR] requirements) in exchange for partial or full funding or other on-site public infrastructure. The on-site infrastructure could include pedestrian amenities, access roads, and landscaping. Alternatively, if employers provide dedicated shuttle bus service from their facility to the CalTrain/BART station, Santa Clara Zoning Ordinance could provide a development credit to use their parking spaces for office expansion and construction.
- *Mandatory Programs*: zoning or other land use regulations could be instituted to require that developers building in designated areas pay an "impact fee" that would help fund a priority projects identified by the detailed Downtown Area Plan as a traffic mitigation measures for their development impacts. The fee would be based on the developer's proportional share of costs based on traffic generation and potential transit ridership at the facility.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

This Concept Plan sets the course for achieving the community's vision for the Study Area, a vision predicated on creating a new vibrant center for Santa Clara as well as cultivating a land use pattern that promotes transit ridership, emphasizing strong linkages to the Depot/future BART station. The vision and the principles articulated in this Concept Plan are grounded in community dialogue that emerged from the many public workshops and the survey conducted for the project. The Planning Commission and Historical Landmarks Commission, along with other community members and stakeholders, contributed valuable experience and insight as well.

The Concept Plan suggests the Study Area's tremendous potential as a new center for Santa Clara – a special pedestrian-oriented place, where people come together to share in leisure, entertainment, and cultural pursuits. It shows how the area can support new housing and employment-oriented uses, while celebrating the community's historical assets. The Plan provides a proactive strategy for coordinating with BART on station area planning, and forms the cornerstone for future land use, development, and capital improvement planning in the Study Area. Now that this visionary foundation has been established, Santa Clara's decision makers must prioritize the next steps.