Town of Colma Land Use and Urban Design Strategy



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INTRODUCTION

The planning staff of the Town of Colma is currently preparing an update of the General Plan, and the Land Use and Urban Design Element will be a key part of the updated General Plan. This document, the Town of Colma Land Use and Urban Design Strategy, presents a guiding framework for the element, and is intended to inform and be integrated into the General Plan Update. The material presented here offers a comprehensive land use structure as well as an overall streetscape framework. It also provides illustrations of buildout scenarios possible under the land use strategy, in an effort to illustrate development scale, and show how new development will fit in the existing setting.

1.1 CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND REPORTS

The Land Use and Urban Design Strategy process began in September 2013. It considers and responds to land use and urban design issues that the Town will likely encounter over the next 20 years, and offers an innovative and informed framework for the General Plan Update. This document is the culmination of that planning effort.

In 2012, BAE Urban Economics prepared the **Colma Economic Development Plan**, which lays out potential strategies to address the Town's overall land use and urban design needs. The associated actions identify the market demand for a variety of uses; however, the actions do not reflect land availability or constraints.

In December 2013, the **Existing Conditions Report** was prepared as the first interim product in the development of the Strategy. It documented the Town's existing land use patterns, streetscapes, and urban design conditions, and summarized the existing development regulations.

In May 2014, the **Draft Concepts for Land Use and Urban Design** presented two alternative frameworks for land use and urban design. That work was based on the information provided in the Existing Conditions Report, as well as additional field observations, discussions with Town staff, and further analysis of individual opportunity sites. The material was largely informed by and consistent with the needs strategies outlined in the Colma Economic Plan, Phase 3: Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan.

In September 2014, the community, the Planning Commission, and the Town Council responded to and provided feedback on the Draft Concepts.

1.2 REGIONAL LOCATION

Located between the cities of Daly City and South San Francisco in northern San Mateo County, the Town of Colma is 1.9 square miles, or 1,222 acres, in size. To the east lies the San Bruno Mountain State Park, and along the western border of the Town lies the junction of Highway 1 and Interstate 280. As shown on Figure 1: Regional Context, El Camino Real, or State Route 82, runs north-south through the middle of town, and BART runs underground and roughly parallel to the El Camino Real corridor, with a BART station just to the north of town (Colma station, located in unincorporated San Mateo County) and to the south (South San Francisco station). The San Francisco International Airport is seven miles to the southeast, and downtown San Francisco is 12 miles to the northeast.

Colma's General Plan was last updated almost 15 years ago. Since that time, Colma and the north San Mateo County area have changed considerably. BART has now been extended past Colma, and South San Francisco has developed a new transit village just south of Colma. Just south of this, and close to Colma's southeastern border, South San Francisco has approved a new El Camino Real/Chestnut Avenue Area Plan that envisions buildings rising to perhaps 150 feet in height. To the north, new high-density housing has been developed around the Colma BART station.





Figure 2: Existing Structure



1.3 EXISTING URBAN DESIGN STRUCTURE

Figure 2 diagrams the Town's overall existing structure based on land use. It shows that almost all the residential uses lie in the Sterling Park neighborhood; that regional shopping centers are generally clustered near the highway along Junipero Serra and Colma boulevards; and that auto-oriented commercial uses line the Serramonte Boulevard corridor. Along Mission Road and the south side of Collins Avenue are primarily light industrial uses, and the node at the intersection of El Camino Real and Serramonte Boulevard contains the Town's anchor of public uses as well as a single large commercial site. East of Hillside Boulevard is exclusively cemetery, golf course, and vacant land.

The major connections within the Town's existing structure are vehicular. The Town is accessed primarily through six major gateways: the Interstate 280 Serramonte Boulevard exit; El Camino Real at F Street; El Camino Real at Arlington Drive; Hillside Boulevard at Hoffman Street; Hillside Boulevard at Lawndale Boulevard; and Mission Road at Lawndale Boulevard. Additional gateways include Junipero Serra Boulevard, south of D Street; Junipero Serra Boulevard north of Hickey Boulevard; and Junipero Serra Boulevard at Southgate Avenue.

While two BART stations lie just outside of the Town limits, Figure 2 shows that the majority of commercial activity is not within a half-mile, or a ten-minute walk from a BART station.

1.4 EXISTING LAND USES

Figure 3: Existing Land Use shows the current uses for all parcels within the Town of Colma. Land use categories shown on Figure 3



Lucky Chances at Serramonte and Hillside boulevards attracts customers from throughout the region.



Cemetery lawns and buildings characterize El Camino Real along the length of the Town.

are derived from the PUC (Property Use Code) within the County Assessors' file.

Colma developed as a town of cemeteries. Open space/cemeteries dominate the Town's land use, with 72 percent of the total land area used or dedicated for future use as cemetery or mortuary.

Within the remaining developable area, about 132 acres currently house commercial and light industrial uses. Commercial uses are dominated by two development types: automobile dealers along Serramonte Boulevard, which has grown into one of the most significant cluster of automobile dealers in the county; and highly successful regionally-oriented retail centers-with establishments including Target and Home Depot-clustered around Junipero Serra and Colma boulevards. The Collins Avenue corridor-much of it much higher in elevation than Serramonte Boulevard—is lined with Auto-Oriented Commercial and Light Industrial/Warehouse uses. The only Commercial Recreation use, and the only significant commercial use along Hillside Boulevard outside of the Sterling Park neighborhood, is the Lucky Chances cardroom.

Almost all the Town's residential uses are clustered in the Sterling Park neighborhood, and outside of the Sterling Park neighborhood, public uses are concentrated at the intersection of Serramonte Boulevard and El Camino Real.

Figure 3: Existing Land Uses



A small number of additional residential uses are located at the end of Hoffman Avenue and along Mission Road.

El Camino Real is one of the most significant travel corridors in the county. However, development along this corridor is limited in Colma as it is largely fronted by cemeteries or land dedicated for cemetery uses. Smaller neighborhoodserving commercial uses occur on the east side of El Camino Real between A Street in Daly City and F Street. Minor commercial uses and public uses including flower and monument shops occur between Colma Boulevard and Serramonte Boulevard.

The most significant commercial development in the Town is between Serramonte Boulevard and Collins Avenue; at the latter intersection is a cluster of offices and banks, but also several vacant sites or buildings. Mission Road, which begins in the southern portion of the Town from El Camino Real, has a wide range of uses. New housing units anchor the south end adjacent to the South San Francisco BART station, and a mix of auto service centers, industrial uses, office uses, residential uses, and vacant parcels extend up to the Y intersection.

1.5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following Guiding Principles for the Urban Design Strategy emerged from discussions and analysis. Taken together, these ideas establish the overall priorities for future development within the Town.

- A Walkable Town Center Destination. ٠ There is demand for a retail, dining, and entertainment district within the Town of Colma, and the updated General Plan should identify a location and accommodate development scaled to suit this need. A central location that is accessible by local residents, workers, visitors, and travellers is preferred. The district should include pedestrian-oriented streets and/or paths; incorporate a density that sustains pedestrian traffic; and project a recognizable style or identity that is consistent with the Town's existing Design Review **Overlay Requirements.**
- Community Facilities and a Cohesive Open Space Scheme. Future development should provide services for local residents near the center of town. These should include recreational open space, a public plaza, and small-scale retail, office, and dining uses. Intensification of development along and near corridors as well as a unified aesthetic will facilitate placemaking for the community.
- Improved Accessibility. The updated General Plan should establish measures consistent with the San Mateo County Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan as well as the Town's own priorities for bicycle and pedestrian accessibility. A cohesive bike network, localized streetscape improvements that prioritize pedestrian movements, and buildingto-street relationships that enhance the pedestrian realm will all help create an inviting urban environment.
- A Stronger Commercial Base. The General Plan should facilitate the expansion of Colma's existing businesses. Auto Row along Serramonte Boulevard; the Lucky Chances cardroom; and dining options for cemetery visitors, the local workforce and travelers are examples of uses that the General Plan should seek to accommodate. A new hotel will also serve to complement and strengthen Colma's commercial base.

2 LAND USE FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the land use strategy for the Town of Colma. While exact locations of specific uses are not explicitly identified on the land use diagram, the strategy described here seeks to achieve the principles stated in Chapter I and accommodates the Town's various needs that are anticipated over the next 20 years.

The land use strategy introduces new land use categories which are not currently in the General Plan. The Mixed Use (MU) and Mixed Use-Town Center (MU-TC) designations accommodate a mix of uses, including residential, commercial, executive/administrative, and public. Within these designations, active uses are required at the ground floor in order to promote an active pedestrian environment. Active ground floor uses such as restaurants, retail, and entertainment are encouraged. Active uses may also include hotel lobbies, personal service uses, small office and professional services. The MU and MU-TC designations differ only in terms of maximum allowable intensity, as determined by height and FAR.

The land use strategy also includes commercial uses; however, the commercial land use designa-

tions are simplified. In the new General Plan, all commercial districts are reduced to two separate designations: Commercial (C) and Commercial-Town Center (C-TC), which also differ only in maximum allowable FAR and height.

In addition to land uses, the strategy proposes a revised Design Review overlay district. The Design Review overlay district, which requires the incorporation of building, site, and landscape design elements that represent the Spanish/Mediterranean style, currently applies to the whole Town, with the exception of the Sterling Park neighborhood. The Design Review Overlay applies along the length of the El Camino Real corridor as well as at key areas close to the BART stations and Town gateways.

Following the land use map is a summary of the development regulations (height, FAR, density, and setbacks) for each land use category, as well as a height map that applies to the MU-TC district only. The categories as described here are simplified, and may be further elaborated upon or stratified in the Land Use Element.





The land use strategy addresses the future intensity and character of key areas within the Town of Colma. The El Camino Real corridor at the north end of Town (top) and near the center of Town (bottom) are two key areas.



The Design Review Overlay, which requires Spanish/Mediterranean-style building design, will continue to apply to the length of the El Camino as well as to key commercial and gateway areas throughout the Town.



City Toyota - Scion on Junipero Serra Boulevard and San Pedro Road in Daly City shows a more intense auto dealership design. Its multi-story garage brings the total FAR to 1.0.

2.1 LAND USE STRATEGY

Figure 4: Land Use Strategy identifies the overall land use framework for the Town of Colma. This strategy creates multiple potential mixeduse destinations within the Town as well as commercial-only areas that allow for more flexibility in building massing and design.

In this framework, a new compact Town Center is accommodated on the existing Kohl's block at the southwest corner of El Camino Real and Serramonte Boulevard. Designated as Mixed-Use Town Center (MU-TC), development on this site would likely be located along new internally-focused pedestrian-oriented streets with commercial uses at the ground level and residential uses rising up to eight stories. At the same time, commercial uses facing El Camino Real project a unified identity along the boulevard.

Alternatively, the Town Center site could potentially accommodate a hotel and/or a relocated cardroom—uses which would benefit from the central location and proximity to an expanded commercial sector, particularly retail and dining uses.

Residential uses are also permitted as part of mixed-use development at the Town's northern and southern ends, in areas within walking distance of BART stations—specifically, north of F Street and along Mission Road. The Design Review Overlay, which applies along the length of the El Camino Real corridor and at key locations near BART and Town gateways, is greatly reduced in size compared to present. In areas where it no longer applies, larger-scale commercial uses, auto uses, and light-industrial uses would be permitted to show a more modern or contemporary aesthetic. Auto dealerships in particular may choose an architectural style that reflects the company's design philosophy.

2.2 LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

Uses and development standards within the **Residential, Executive Administrative, Public**, and **Cemetery** land use designations would remain as is under the existing General Plan. New and revised land uses are described below.

Mixed Use (MU)

The new Mixed Use land use designation applies to several parcels on the east side of El Camino Real in the Sterling Park neighborhood, as well as the east side of Mission Road south of the Y. These parcels will accommodate development up to 56 feet in height and an overall FAR of up to 2.0. A range of uses is permitted, with active uses required at the ground floor and residential uses encouraged above.





Figure 5: MU-TC Height Diagram

Mixed Use-Town Center (MU-TC)

The MU-TC land use designation is limited to two locations: the current Bocci site near the Colma BART station, and the Kohl's block at the southwest corner of El Camino Real and Serramonte Boulevard. The General Plan envisions future development on these sites to be similar in nature to uses on the MU parcels. Height limits; however, will be context-sensitive, to ensure that the scale of buildings is both responsive to and respectful of neighboring development.

Heights in the MU-TC district are determined by Figure 5: MU-TC Height Diagram. On the Bocci site, heights up to 72 feet are allowed, enabling development to meet the scale of the neighboring La Terrazza. The Town's tallest heights—up to 110 feet—will be allowed on the west side of the Kohl's block, where tall buildings will neither obscure views of nearby hills nor detract from the rural quality of El Camino Real. Heights are required to step down across the site to a maximum of 36 feet, so as not to overshadow existing key civic structures along El Camino Real.

Commercial (C)

The Commercial land use designation applies throughout the Town, including Auto Row, shopping centers, and outlying commercial areas. This designation allows development of a commercial nature up to 1.5 FAR and 48 feet in height.

Commercial-Town Center (C-CT)

The C-TC designation is limited to the commercial parcels along the east side of El Camino Real in the center of Town. The uses allowed are the same as those in the Commercial (C) district; however, heights are limited to 36 feet so that development will remain consistent in scale with buildings across El Camino Real, and will not overshadow existing nearby key civic structures.

TABLE 1: NEW L	TABLE 1: NEW LAND USE DESIGNATIONS				
Land Use	Mixed Use (MU)	Mixed Use-Town Center (MU-TC)	Commercial (C)	Commercial-Town Center (C-TC)	
Residential Density	20-40 du/ac	20-60 du/ac	-	-	
Maximum FAR	2.0	3.0	1.5	1.0	
Maximum Height (ft)	56	See Figure 2: MU-TC Height Diagram	48	36	

3 STREETSCAPE AND KEY CORRIDORS

This chapter discusses the Town's existing streetscape, introduces basic streetscape typologies that can be applied to the Town's rightsof-way, and presents a new overall streetscape scheme.

3.1 EXISTING STREETSCAPE CHARACTER AND ACCESS

The proximity of the Town to Highway I and Interstate 280 is beneficial in providing both easy access and visibility to much of the Town's development. Likewise, the major thoroughfares El Camino Real, Serramonte Boulevard and Junipero Serra Boulevard provide direct vehicular access to virtually all of the non-cemetery development within the Town.

Existing roadways are not, however, generally accommodating to pedestrian traffic. Development is also not close to BART stations—no portion of Serramonte Boulevard or Collins Avenue, and only part of the Mission Road district, is within a half-mile, or a ten minute walk from BART. Figure 6 illustrates the existing rights-of-way for several of the Town's key roadways: Serramonte Boulevard; El Camino Real; Collins Avenue; and Mission Road. These sections show that where sidewalks exist, they are uniformly six feet in width, and where street lighting is installed, it is uniformly a cobra-head style. A consistent street tree scheme exists only for a short distance along the west side of Mission Road south of the Y, and street parking is provided only along portions of Collins Avenue and Mission Road. With the exception of a short segment of Serramonte Boulevard, there are no buffers between the sidewalk and roadway.

The sections also demonstrate a wide range of building setbacks along key corridors. While the zoning code requires a minimum of 30 feet along El Camino Real north of its intersection with Mission Road, existing setbacks vary from 20 to over 300 feet. Along Serramonte Boulevard, setbacks vary from 20 to 200 feet. Only the west side of the Mission Road corridor maintains a narrower range, with setbacks consistently between 15 and 40 feet.





Colma's key corridors, including Auto Row on Serramonte Boulevard (top) and El Camino Real near the Colma BART station (bottom) would benefit from streetscape improvment that enhance pedestrian accessibility and comfort.

Figure 6: Existing Sections of Key Roadways



Serramonte Boulevard, west of El Camino Real *Typical, Looking East*



Serramonte Boulevard, east of El Camino Real *Typical, Looking East*



Collins Avenue near El Camino Real *Typical, Looking East*







El Camino Real at Serramonte Boulevard *Typical, Looking North*





El Camino Real, south of the Y intersection *Typical, Looking North*



Mission Road *Typical, Looking North*





3.2 STREET TYPOLOGIES

Successful commercial and mixed-use centers require sensitive design of the primary roadways and building-to-street relationships. Colma's General Plan establishes a palette of streetscapes that are independent of roadway capacity and that are applied to areas or corridors based on land use, intensity, and abutting building use and character. Figure 7 identifies the overall streetscape structure and lists basic streetscape typologies. Generally, the streetscape typology corresponds to the adjacent land use. Like the land uses, these typologies may be further stratified within Circulation Element of the General Plan.

Auto Row

This typology applies to the areas of Serramonte Boulevard that are adjacent to commercial uses but outside of the Town Center area. One of the most significant clusters of automobile dealers in the country, this stretch of Serramonte Boulevard merits a consistent street design and identity features. Improvements to these areas should be focused on elements that enhance the visibility and branding of the auto dealerships and accessory uses: signage, lighting, and low landscaping.

Where feasible, this streetscape typology should include a continuous planter strip of a minimum width of 10 feet between the sidewalk and roadway. Front and street side setbacks for development abutting Auto Row should be a minimum of 50 feet.

Pedestrian Public Realm Focus

Pedestrian Public Realm Focus roadways are adjacent to all mixed-use areas and certain commercial areas. This roadway typology is designed to encourage pedestrian activity and to enhance the public realm at the human scale. All roadways adjacent to the Town Center as well as any new roadways that are established within the Town Center will fall into this category.

The Pedestrian Public Realm Focus streetscape should include high-visibility crosswalks, median refuges, corner bulb-outs, and sidewalk widening. Widened sidewalks should incorporate street trees in tree grates, bus stop amenities, and pedestrian-scaled lighting. Design of streetscape furniture should match or echo that of the Sterling Park neighborhood. Where feasible—particularly on new rights-of-way within the Town Center—street design should include parallel on-street parking.

Adjacent to Pedestrian Public Realm Focus roadways, development should be placed at a generally consistent distance from the right-ofway, in an effort create a "street wall" of pedestrian-oriented uses. This can be accomplished through establishing a narrow range of allowable front and street side setbacks (maximums as well as minimums) for development adjacent to this streetscape typology. In addition, buildings should exhibit facade articulation and a high level of transparency at the ground-level.

Generally, this streetscape typology does not include a planter strip. In active areas, locating sidewalks adjacent to the roadway enhances both the visibility and accessibility of adjacent uses. The exception, however, is the segment of El Camino Real between Serramonte Boulevard and Collins Avenue. This segment would require a landscaped setback of at least six feet, in order to maintain the rural, low-intensity feel of the corridor.

Boulevard

In segments of El Camino Real not adjacent to commercial or mixed uses, a Boulevard streetscape is appropriate. Widened sidewalks are unnecessary; rather, a consistent planter strip or vegetated areas between the sidewalk and the roadway would enhance pedestrian comfort and safety. On-street parking is a low priority. Improvements in these areas in particular should strive to implement water efficient landscaping.



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4 KEY OPPORTUNITY SITES

This chapter identifies all opportunity sites within Colma and presents conceptual site plans for several key sites. The opportunity sites, which are defined as vacant or underutilized areas which have the greatest potential to undergo a land use or intensity change, are shown on Figure 8 and described in Table 2. Figure 9, photographs of several opportunity sites follows Figure 8.

The conceptual site plans, massing diagrams, and photosimulations that follow—figures 10 through 17—illustrate potential approaches to development on key Focus Areas which are identified in Figure 8. Overall build-out data is provided, and, unless noted, parking ratios comply with the Town's existing standards. Where relevant, potential circulation and open space connections are called out. These diagrams are intended to help visualize the scale and massing of development under the proposed land uses and development regulations.

TABLE 2: OPPORTUNITY SITES Site Location Description/Tenant(s) Size (ac.) 1 3601 Junipero Serra Extra Space Storage site 5.3 2 Colma BART station area Bocci site, Sandblaster site, and former Prime Auto 1.3 Detail site 3 1160 El Camino Real Vacant site adjacent to Art in Stone Memorials, por-0.2 tion east of Colma Creek only Corner of Olivet Parkway and Serramonte Blvd. Parcels on the north side and south side of Olivet 4 1.6 Parkwav 5 600 Serramonte, portion along Serramonte Blvd. Serramonte Certified Used car sales 1.6 6 Northwest corner of El Camino Real and Serramonte Town Hall and Town Hall Annex site 1.8 7 3.7 1500 Collins Avenue at Junipero Serra Hvundai Serramonte site 8 600, 650, and 900 Collins Ave Parking lots and Uniake Construction 2.8 9 735 Serramonte Blvd. Dollar Tree site 2.0 10 248 Collins Ave. Standard Plumbing site 0.7 11 SW Corner of El Camino Real and Serramonte Blvd. Kohl's site and adjacent parcels 13.1 12 The southeast corner of El Camino Real and Serramonte Vacant office building and surface parking 2.4 13 435, 445 and 455 Serramonte Blvd. Vacant former Serramonte Body Shop and existing 8.8 Serramonte Auto Plaza Body Shop 14 1299 El Camino Real, southern portion Vacant part of Hills of Eternity along El Camino Real 2.3 15 Northern portion of Mission Road corridor The Y intersection between Mission Road and El 4.9 Camino Real 16 1670-1692 Mission Road The triangle-shaped parcel across Mission Road 3.2 from the Y intersection 17 1545/1595 Mission Road Site with historic structure in southern portion of 0.4 Mission Road corridor 18 27 Colma Blvd. West half of 280 Metro Center Approx. 11



Figure 9: Opportunity Site Photos



Site 1, from Junipero Serra Boulevard





Site 2, east side of El Camino Real (top) and west side of El Camino Real (bottom)



Site 6, from Serramonte Boulevard



Site 7, from Collins Avenue



Site 9, looking east



Site 10, from Collins Avenue





Site 11, from Collins Avenue looking north (top) and the corner of El Camino Real and Collins Avenue (bottom)



Site 12, street frontage along El Camino Real



Site 13, from Serramonte Boulevard



Site 15, looking south along Mission Road



Site 16, from Mission Road



Site 17, from Mission Road



Figure 10: Conceptual Site Plan for the Bocci Site (west side of Opportunity Site 2)

- 8,500 SF Commercial
- 42 Residential units; 52 du/ac
- 5 Stories; 68 feet
- Total FAR = 2.4
- No commercial parking provided

Figure 11: Conceptual Site Plan for Town Center on Opportunity Site 11



- 160,000 SF Commercial
- 240 Residential units; 22 du/ac
- Max. 5 Stories; 72 feet
- Total FAR = 1.8
- Colma Creek restored aboveground

Figure 12: Town Center Photosimulation from Eye-level





Figure 13: Town Center Photosimulation from Police Station Balcony





Figure 14: Conceptual Site Plan for Opportunity Site 15



- Mix of commercial and office uses along Mission Road; office uses along El Camino Real
- 2 to 3 Stories; Max 42 feet
- Structured parking

Figure 15: Conceptual Site Plan for Opportunity Site 16



- 15,000 SF Commercial
- 64 Multi-family units; 22 du/acre
- 5 Stories, 56 feet
- Total FAR = 1.3

Figure 16: South of the Y Photosimulation (Opportunity Sites 15 and 16)









Vehicular connection



- 110,000 SF Net new commercial
- 2 Story commercial; Max.
- Three levels parking garage
- East half of shopping center and buildings along Colma

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