

Study Area

Boundaries

The area selected to be studied for a Building Form Overlay includes 14 blocks spanning from Washington Street to the north, Petaluma Blvd to the east, D Street to the south and Howard, Liberty and D Streets to the west.

The aerial to the right shows the parcels within the study area as well as whatever buildings, open space or parking lots are found on these sites. The northeast areas along Petaluma Boulevard and Washington Street are more continuously developed with fewer empty or underdeveloped sites than some other areas. Similarly, the residential areas to the southwest can be seen to include more developed lots with landscaping such as trees and lawns.

Areas to the northwest and southeast are among the least developed, with more vacant sites as well as many small buildings on large lots dominated by parking, often along the street frontage. These underdeveloped sites are not conducive to pedestrian activity.

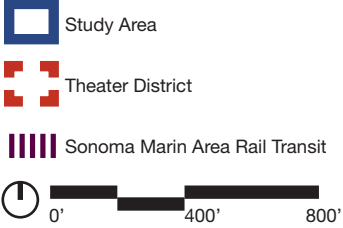
Planning History/Context

The study area is proposed within the “Downtown Subarea” in the General Plan 2025 where mixed-use and civic facility zoning currently exist. The Theater District Overlay Zoning has predefined a portion of this area, and is anticipated to sunset in August 2023.

Additional documents regulating this area include the 2008 Petaluma General Plan, the Implementing Zoning Ordinance (IZO), and the Central Petaluma Specific Plan, as described in the following pages.

Study Area

Source for Theater District : <https://cityofpetaluma.org/zoning-map/>



General Plan - Land Use

The 2025 Petaluma General Plan identifies fifteen guiding principles that define a framework for development. The development of Downtown is guided by four of these principles:

- 7. Enhance Downtown by preserving its historic character, increasing accessibility and residential opportunities, and ensuring a broad range of businesses and activities.*
- 8. Foster and promote economic diversity and opportunities.*
- 9. Expand retail opportunities to meet residents' needs and promote the city's fiscal health, while ensuring that new development is in keeping with Petaluma's character.*
- 10. Continue efforts to achieve a jobs/housing balance, emphasizing opportunities for residents to work locally.*

The General Plan identifies the study area as the Downtown district of Petaluma. It identifies as Goal 2-G-3:

Advance Downtown Petaluma as a focus of civic and cultural activity in the community, retain a strong pedestrian orientation and scale, preserve and enhance building of historic and architectural importance.

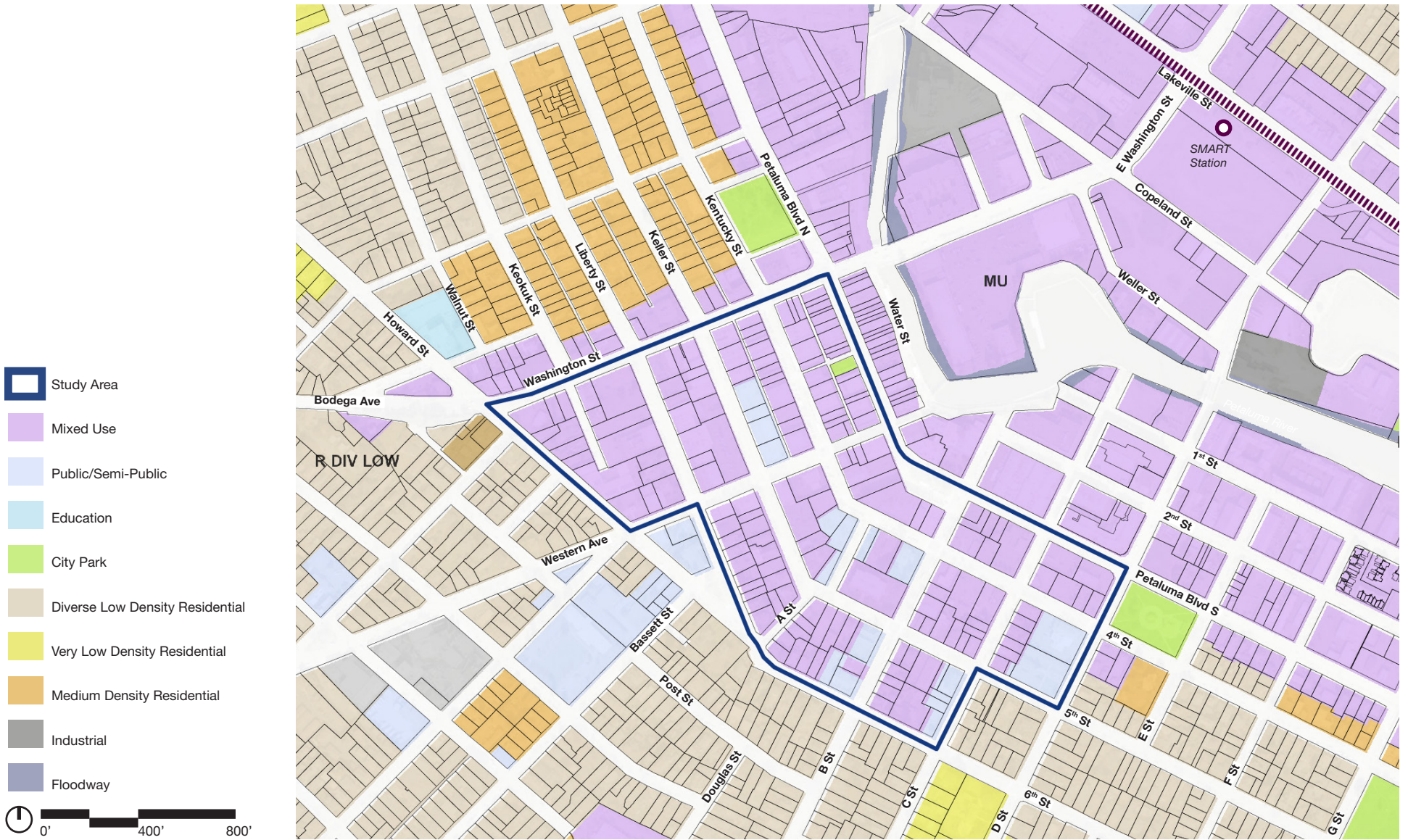
It also identifies as policies:

- 1-P-11 Allow land use intensification at strategic locations along the arterial corridors leading to Downtown and Central Petaluma, including aging commercial and industrial sites.*
- 2-P-14: Promote the development and intensification of the Downtown commercial core as both a visitor destination and a neighborhood retail center.*
- 2-P-57 Foster connections to the river from surrounding areas and ensure that new development adjacent to the river is oriented toward it.*
- 9-P-12 Maintain and expand Downtown as a hub of commercial and retail activity with residential opportunities.*
- 9-P-13 Expand and diversify Petaluma's retail base.*

The General Plan designates the study area as Mixed Use. This designation allows a wide variety of building and site uses as reflected in the businesses and activities currently in the area, including retail, residential, service commercial, and office. It sets a maximum FAR (floor area ratio) at 2.5 and a maximum residential density of 30 dwelling uses per acre.

General Plan - Land Use

Source: "City of Petaluma: General Plan 2025", 2008, May 2021 Revision



Study Area Existing Land Use

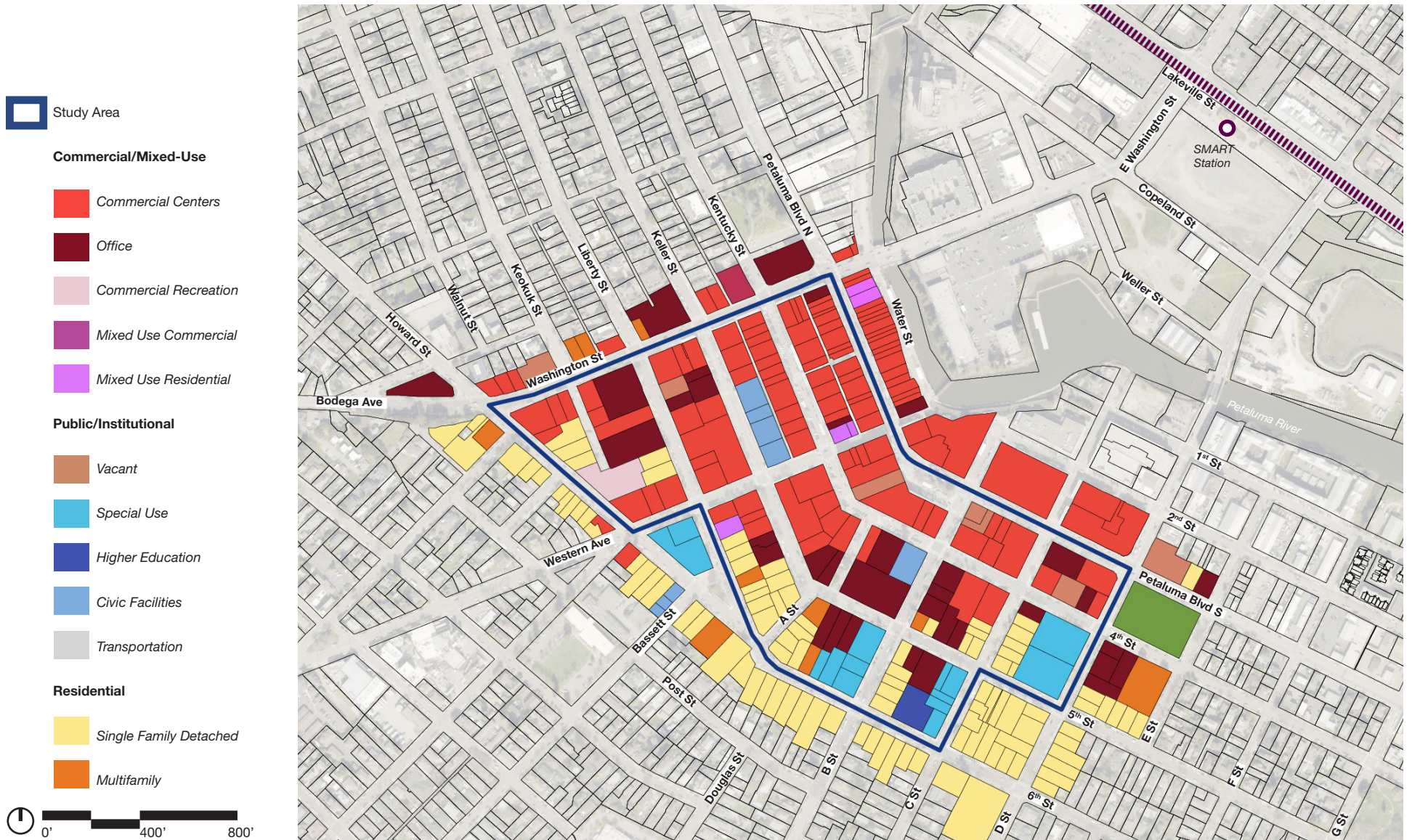
Currently, the distribution of land uses in the study area are mostly commercial, office and civic use. Most of the residential uses are concentrated towards southern boundary of the study area along Howard St.

The predominant types of commercial use are retail services, business parks, auto shops, and other professional services. Most of the retail activity clustered in the study area includes a variety of boutique shops (e.g., restaurants, cafes, bars, clothing stores, and antique shops) on a walkable street grid. Commercial uses along the Washington Street and Petaluma Boulevard corridors are a mix of strip malls, auto-oriented shopping centers, and some freestanding retail.

The public/institutional uses in the study area includes a broad range of community-serving uses, including schools, civic buildings, religious centers, parking and transportation facilities, and utilities, among others.

A mix of both low- and higher-density housing (e.g., multiplexes and apartments) can be found in the study area, with a concentration of single family homes along Howard St/6th St, with some along A, B and C streets.

Source: "City of Petaluma General Plan Update: Existing Conditions Overview", October 2021



Zoning

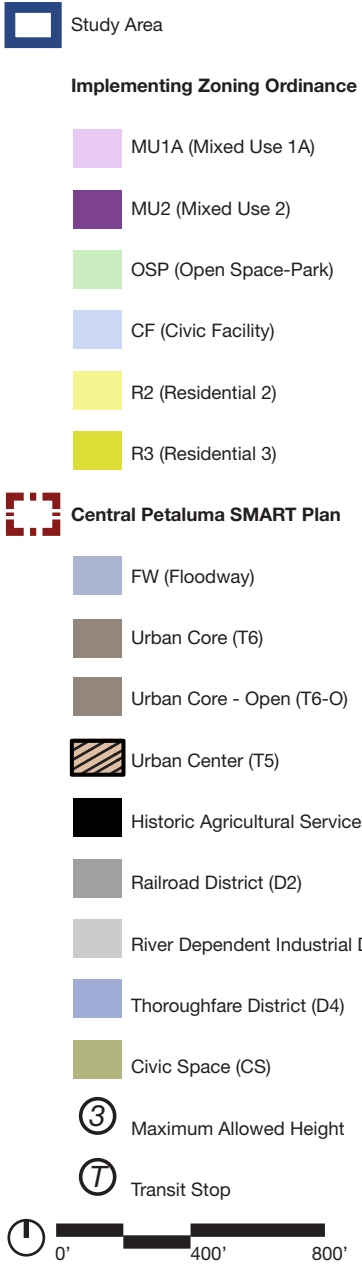
Parcels in the study area are predominantly zoned MU-2 under the City of Petaluma Implementing Zoning Ordinance (IZO) with a limited number zoned Civic Facility/ Civic Use. The IZO carries out the policies of the Petaluma General Plan by classifying and regulating the uses of land and structures within the City, consistent with the General Plan.

The City has two Mixed Use zones, MU-1 and MU-2. The MU-2 district allows uses to be somewhat taller and denser than the MU-1 district, which is largely found across the Petaluma River beyond. The MU-2 district allows a wide variety of uses and is consistent with and implements the mixed-use land use classification of the General Plan. The district designation as defined in the IZO guides building form as well as allowable uses.

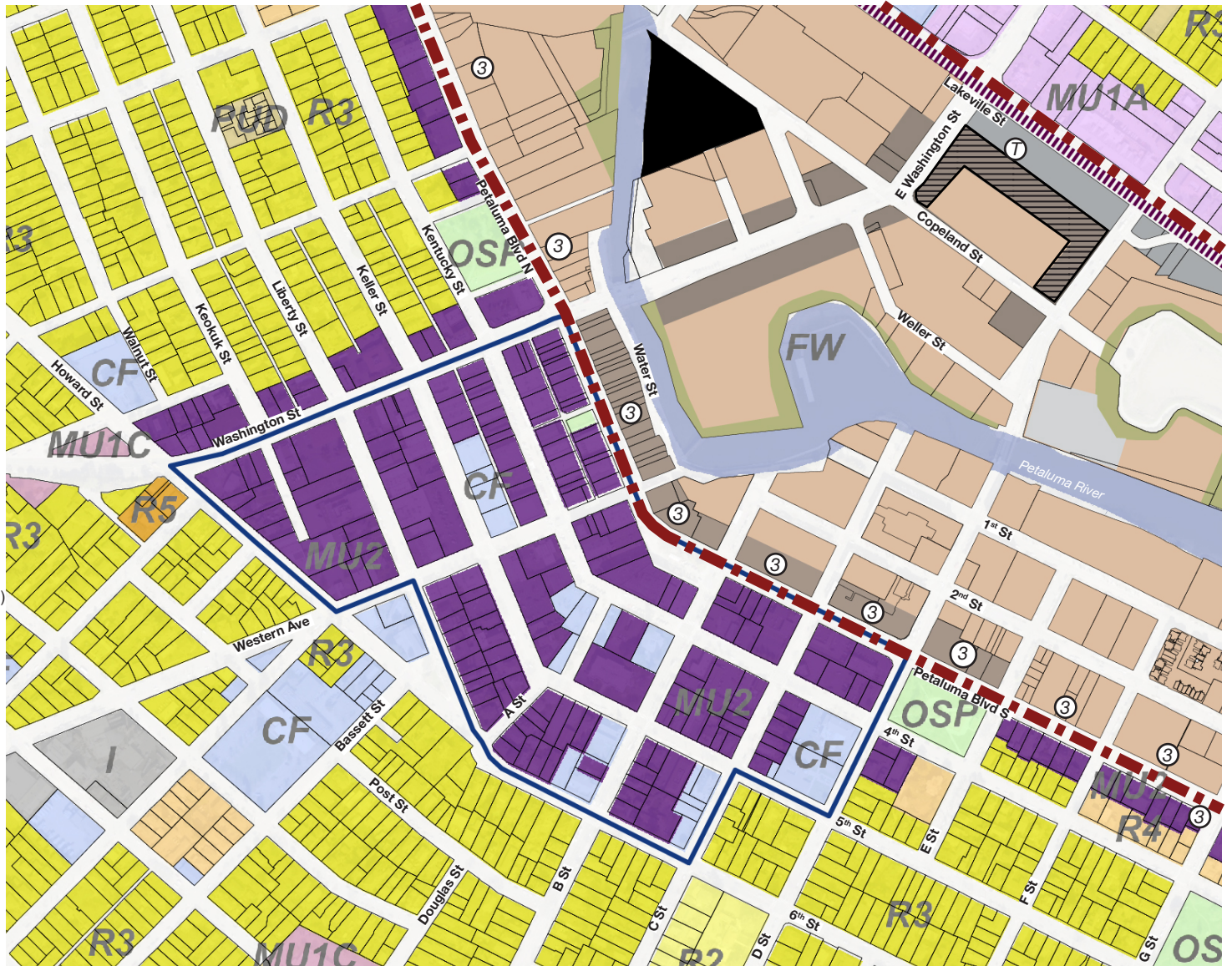
The Public/Semi-Public use designation is intended for civic facilities as well as religious or educational sites.

Adjacent to the study area, north of Petaluma Boulevard and extending to Lakeville St, parcels are governed by a SMART Code under the Central Petaluma Specific Plan (CPSP) which was adopted in 2003. A Specific Plan provides a vehicle to examine specific areas and districts in greater detail than would be possible in a General Plan. The SMART Code provides a “kit of parts” for building a pedestrian-oriented urban district with a focus on the scale and character of new development and its relationship to the public realm.

Per the CPSP Zoning Map and Downtown Regulating Plan, most of the parcels are zoned for development up to 5-storays tall and parcels along the Washington Street corridor are zoned for development that is up to 6-storays tall.



Sources: "City of Petaluma: General Plan 2025", 2008, May 2021 Revision, "Central Petaluma Specific Plan, June 2003



Historic Districts

The study area includes portions of two of the City's historic combining districts - the Historic Commercial District, and the 'A' Street Historic District. The Oakhill-Brewster Historic District lies across Washington Street to the north.

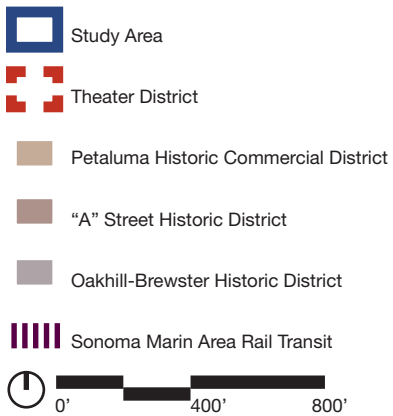
The commercial district includes representatives of late 19th and early 20th century design, with many buildings being from the Victorian era. Building range in size from simple one- or two-story commercial buildings to much taller and more ornate structures.

The "A" Street Historic District contains an eclectic mix of residences, churches, and apartments nearly all built before 1925, illustrating a cross-section of architectural history over the 65-year period of the neighborhood's development from 1860 to 1925. In general, except towers and steeples, buildings in the district are one- or two-stories in height.

Contributing buildings in these historic districts help define the unique character of the urban environment in Petaluma and establish key relationships between the private and public realm, especially at street level. Most structures meet both the front and side lot lines, forming a continuous street façade.

Guidelines for New Construction in the Petaluma Historic Commercial District Design Guidelines encourage new construction on vacant lots, but with attention to good design and consideration of the design of neighboring structures.

The Building Form Overlay is intended to be applied over the existing historic districts. This additional layer of development standards would support the historic district guidelines to work with the district's character and not against it.



Contributing Buildings in the Historic Commercial District

The Petaluma Historic Commercial District is an area of approximately 23 acres and supports historic resources, identified as contributing, non-contributing, and local landmarks. The district is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is also listed as a local historic district. The district is representative of the City's commercial development from the mid-nineteenth century to the Second World War and contains a mix of diverse commercial architecture not found anywhere else in Sonoma County.

The historic significance of the district is based not only on its uniqueness, but also on its high degree of integrity and architectural and functional cohesiveness, which helped the district remain a functional vibrant downtown. Contributing factors include:

- Originally recorded with 63 contributing structures out of 96
- Compared to non-contributing buildings, contributing buildings are larger and more prominent
- Contributing buildings, in general, share two important characteristics: complete lot coverage (extending to the sides and front of the parcel) and storefronts with recessed entrances and flanking windows. These characteristics are also shared by many non-contributing buildings, which enhances the overall cohesiveness of the district.
- Since streets have maintained their original uses, patterns and, in some cases, their widths, all buildings face a street and today's user experience of the district is closely comparable to the post-WWII era (when the youngest contributing buildings were completed).
- Contributing buildings are consistent in use, including commercial, services and office and mixed-use (including apartments)
- Prominent contributing buildings rise to three or four stories.

Sources:
 National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Petaluma Historic District, 1994
 Petaluma Historic Commercial District Design Guidelines, City of Petaluma, 1999
<https://cityofpetaluma.org/zoning-map/>

City And National Landmarks/Places

1. Old Petaluma Opera House
2. Free Public Library of Petaluma
3. U.S. Post Office

Local Historic Landmarks

4. Coca-Cola Sign on Mutual Relief Building
5. Andersen Building
6. W.C.T.U. Drinking Fountain
7. Great Petaluma Mill
8. Old Post Office Building
9. McNear Building
10. 119 Howard St
11. Lee Residence
12. River Cafe Building (Farrell House)
13. Burdell Building

National Register Of Historic Places

14. Philip Swede House

 Study Area

National Register District

 Petaluma Historic Commercial District

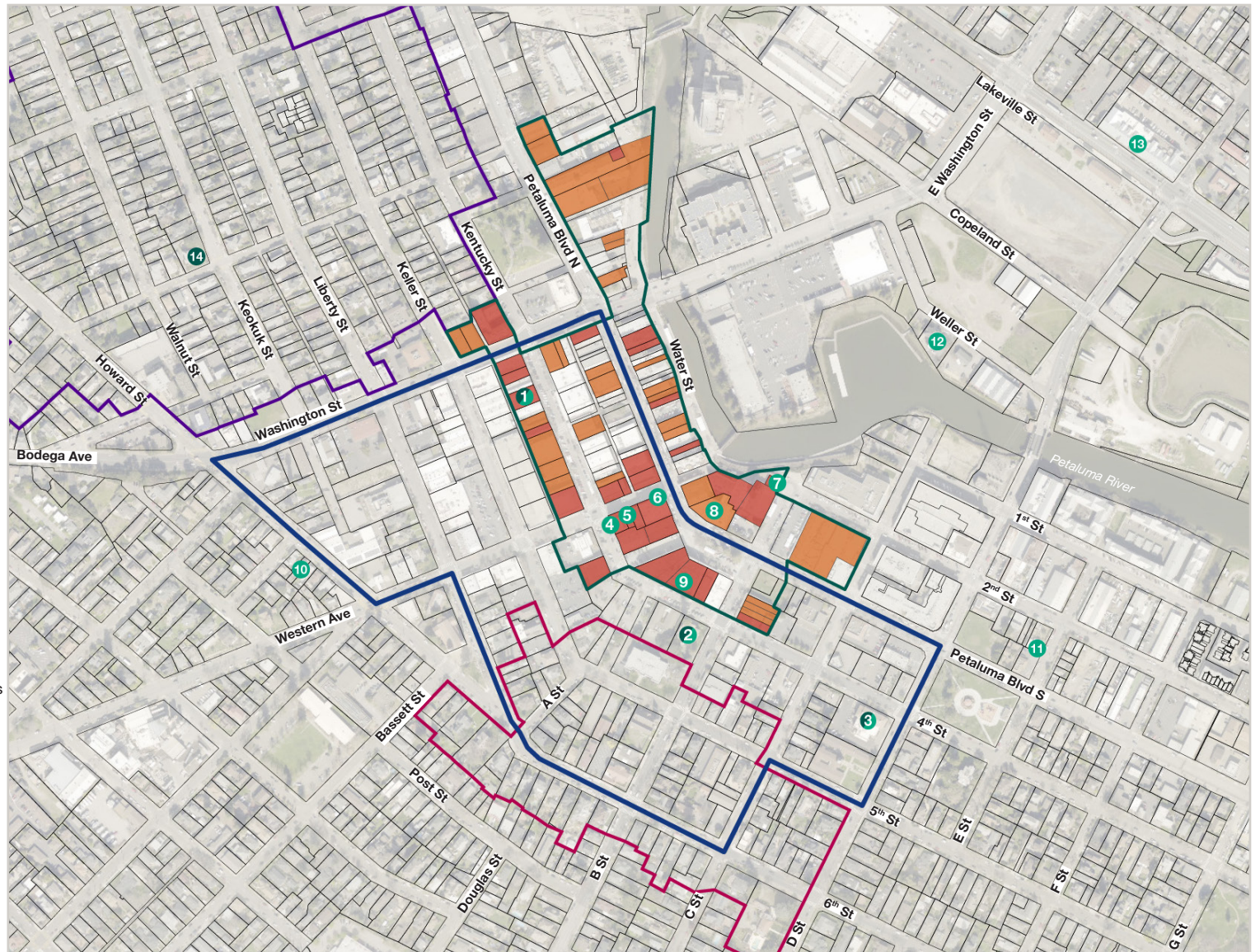
 Contributing Building - Two or More Stories

 Contributing Building - Under Two Stories

Locally Designated Districts

 Oakhill-Brewster District

 "A" Street Historic District



Building Form Overlay

Goals and Principles

The proposed Building Form Overlay intends to provide additional development standards for parcels within its boundary without changing the underlying IZO.

The quantitative development standards and qualitative design guidelines for the Downtown Overlay District are guided by a set of goals. These are directed towards-

1. Encourage higher density, mixed-use infill developments that prioritize additional housing in the downtown core.
2. Acknowledge, reflect, and compliment the downtown's historic context and its historic resources.
3. Activate and encourage neighborhood and cultural tourism-oriented uses.
4. Spur economic growth by creating attractive development opportunities in downtown.
5. Enhance the pedestrian experience with high quality streetscapes that include primary entrances that face the street, links towards the Petaluma River with access and visibility, and context sensitive building designs.
6. Improving quality of life in the downtown and around the Petaluma River.

Boundaries

The study determined that the boundaries of the Building Form Overlay should exclude three blocks in the south east portion of the study area. These blocks have in fact a more residential and civic character, distinct from the rest of Downtown. The proposal suggests that these remain MU-2 as zoned under the IZO.

Furthermore, the proposal suggests the delineation of a special condition zone along these blocks outlined in the following pages that buffers existing homes from the visual impact of new developments.

Similarly, the proposal suggests the application of a special condition when new development abuts a historic resource.

Building Form

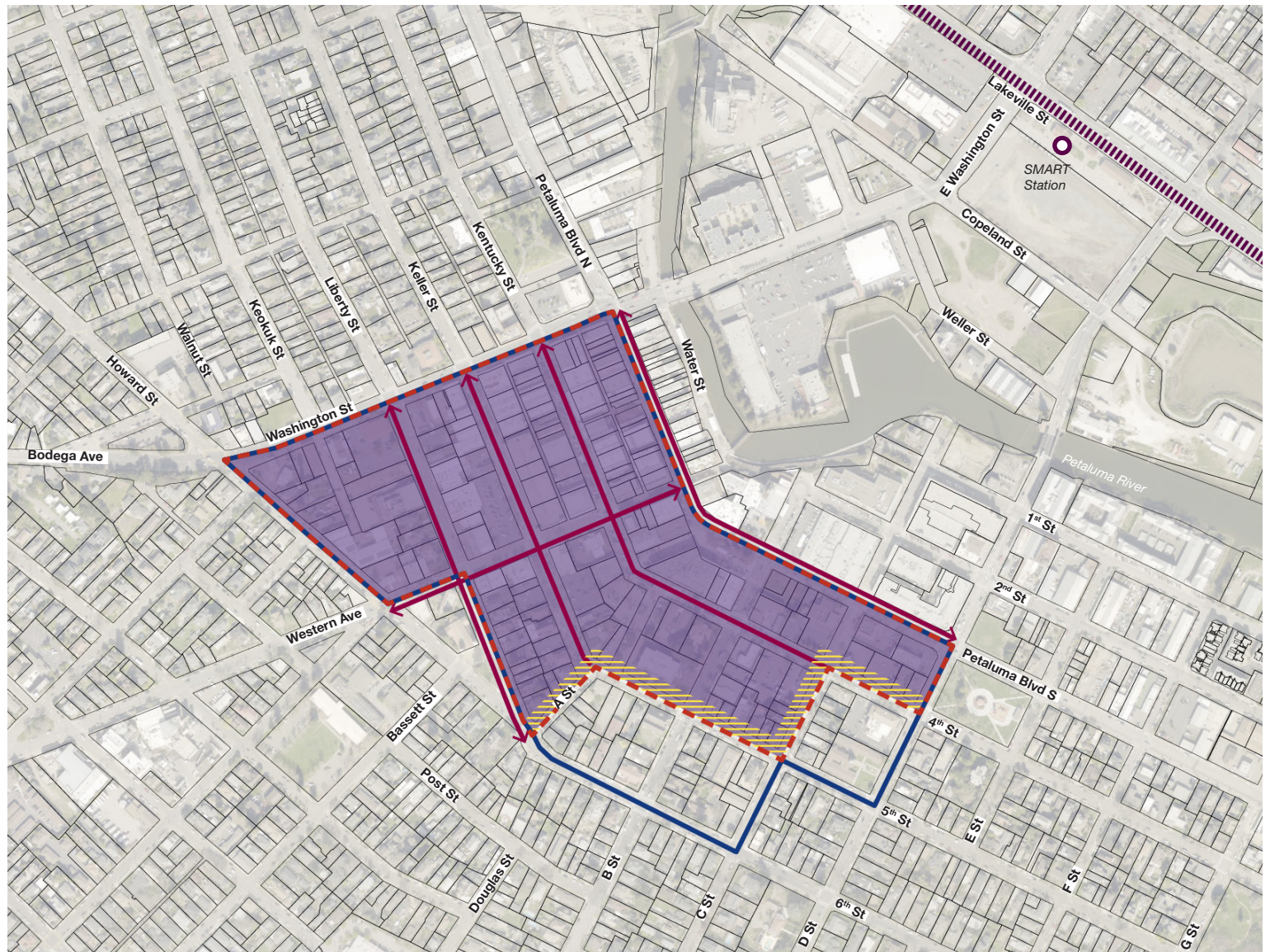
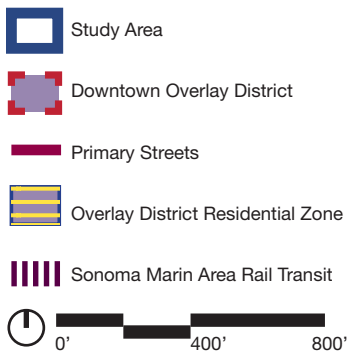
The Building Form Overlay as proposed allows for a building height of 60' by-right and up to 75' when the defined approval criteria is met. Additional stepback requirements and approval criteria for discretionary review are outlined in the following pages.

Building Form Overlay

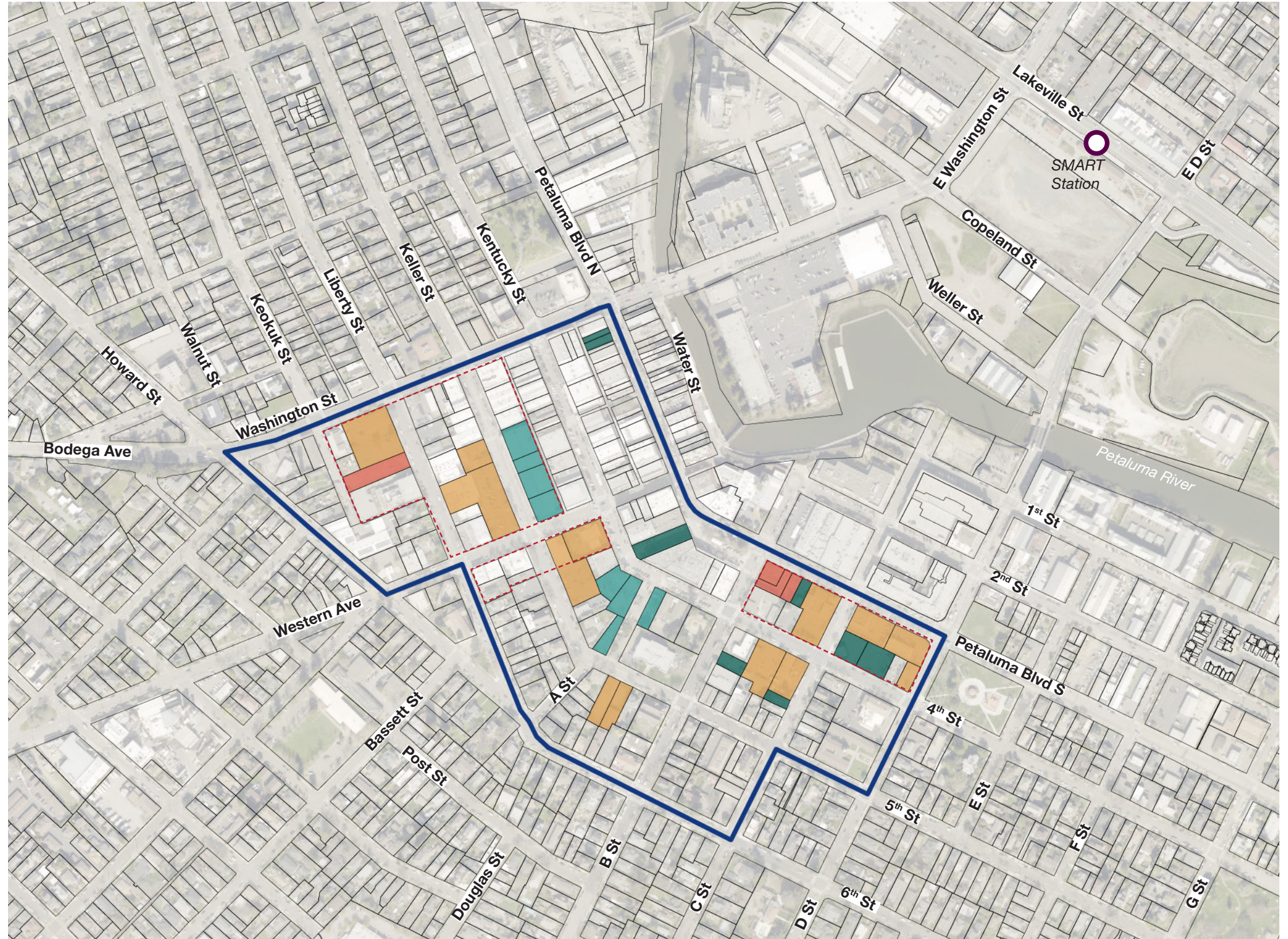
Presented at 6/13/23 Study Session







Absolute Maximum Height of Occupiable Envelope in Overlay District:

60 ft by-right and up to 75' with discretionary review. No exceptions for mechanical equipment, screening, elevator shaft or vertical other projections.



Opportunity Sites in Downtown Petaluma



-  Study Area
-  Public Parking
-  Other Parking
-  Vacant
-  Underutilized
-  1" = 200'

Revised Building Form Overlay

- **City And National Landmarks/Places**
 1. Old Petaluma Opera House
 2. Free Public Library of Petaluma
 3. U.S. Post Office
 - **Local Historic Landmarks**
 4. Coca-Cola Sign on Mutual Relief Building
 5. Andersen Building
 6. W.C.T.U. Drinking Fountain
 7. Great Petaluma Mill
 8. Old Post Office Building
 9. McNear Building
 10. 119 Howard St
 11. Lee Residence
 12. River Cafe Building (Farrell House)
 13. Burdell Building
 - National Register Of Historic Places**
 - 14. Philip Swede House
 - Study Area
 - National Register District**
 - Petaluma Historic Commercial District
 - Contributing Building - Two or More Stories
 - Contributing Building - Under Two Stories
 - Locally Designated Districts**
 - Downtown Historic District
 - Oakhill-Brewster District
 - "A" Street Historic District
 - Building Form Overlay Proposal (comprises of areas A, B & C)
- ⌚ 1" = 200'

