

BAY AREA TOUR OF

TRANSIT-FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOODS



Saturday, October 16
8:45 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Agenda

Bay Area Tour Of Transit-Friendly Neighborhoods

Saturday, October 16, 2010; 8:45-5:00pm
San Rafael City Hall

Purpose of the Tour

- See a variety of transit neighborhoods
- Get to know each other

I. Welcome

- a. Depart San Rafael City Hall

8:45 a.m.
9:00 a.m.

II. Tour

- a. West Portal, San Francisco
- b. Downtown Redwood City
- c. Lunch
- d. Downtown Menlo Park
- e. Rockridge, Oakland

10:00 a.m.
12:00 p.m.
1:00 p.m.
1:45 p.m.
3:15 p.m.

III. Arrive back to San Rafael City Hall

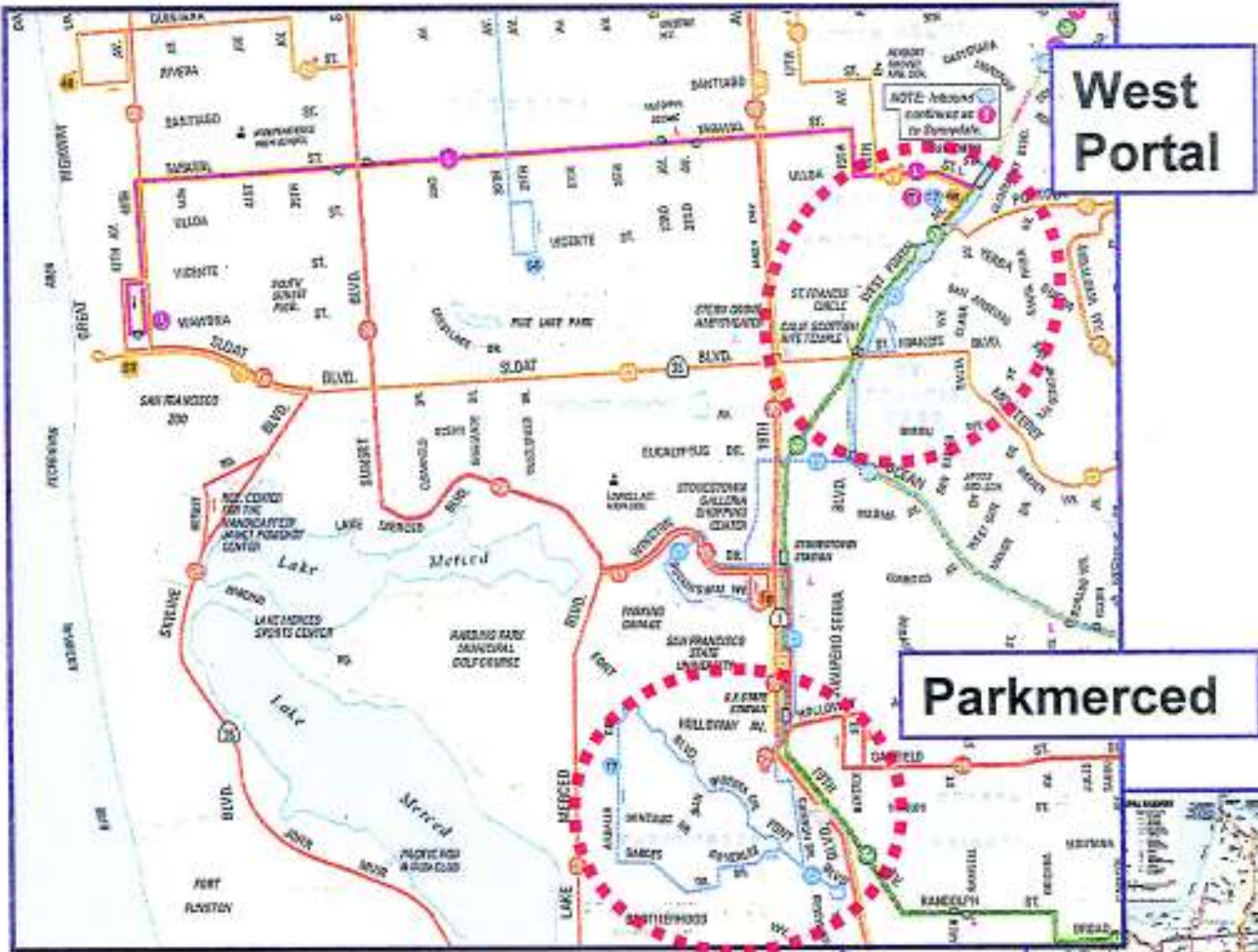
5:00 p.m.

Note: Times are approximate and subject to traffic.



The meeting facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. American Sign Language interpreters and assistive listening devices may be requested by calling (415) 485-3198 (TDD) or (415) 485-3067 (voice) at least 72 hours in advance. Copies of documents are available in accessible formats upon request. Public transportation is available through Golden Gate Transit, Line 22. Paratransit is available by calling Whistlestop Wheels at (415) 454-0864. To allow individuals with environmental illness or multiple chemical sensitivity to attend the meeting/hearing, individuals are requested to refrain from wearing scented products.

West Portal



West Portal

Parkmerced

Locator Map



Coordinates: 37°44′27.32″N 122°27′56.95″W﻿ / ﻿37.7408111°N 122.4658194°W﻿ / 37.7408111; -122.4658194

West Portal, San Francisco

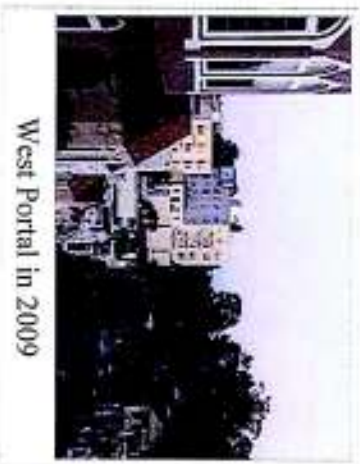
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

West Portal is a small neighborhood in San Francisco, California.

Location

It is at the southern edge of the hills in the interior of the city. Because of West Portal's small size and mom and pop stores, restaurants, and saloons, the neighborhood is often described as having a village atmosphere. The neighborhood is served by a branch of the San Francisco Public Library. Like Glen Park, the neighborhood is one of San Francisco's metro-centered communities. The neighborhood's main corridor, West Portal Avenue, serves as a principal shopping street for much of southwestern San Francisco.

Attractions & Characteristics



West Portal in 2009

The

neighborhood is named for the western terminus of the Muni tunnel beneath Twin Peaks that opened in 1918, the street (West Portal Avenue) and adjacent district is still dominated by the frequent trundlings of the four Muni Metro lines (K, L, M and T) that emerge from the subway to run in the street median. The ride in the subway from West Portal to downtown/Union Square is about fifteen to twenty minutes.

West Portal lies directly adjacent to several larger San Francisco neighborhoods: the affluent and lushly verdant Forest Hill and St. Francis Wood neighborhoods on the east and south, Parkside (a southern sub-district of the Sunset District) on the north, and at the western end of the Avenue, Lakeshore Village and Merced Manor. The residential areas of the West Portal neighborhood, like several of the adjacent

West Portal



Location within Central San Francisco

Coordinates: 37°44′27.32″N 122°27′56.95″W﻿ / ﻿37.7408111°N 122.4658194°W﻿ / 37.7408111; -122.4658194

Government	
 - Board of Supervisors	Sean Elsbernd
 - State Assembly	Fiona Ma (D)
 - State Senate	Leland Yee (D)
 - U.S. House	Jackie Speier (D)
Area	
 - Total	7 km ² (2,705 sq mi)
 - Land	7 km ² (2,705 sq mi)
Population	
 - Total	2,630
 - Density	3,563.7/km ² (9,230/sq mi)
ZIP Code	94116, 94127, 94132
Area code(s)	415
^[1]	

districts, are unusual for San Francisco in that the homes are often detached, albeit with small yards. The frequent fog helps keep the area green in the usually rainless summer months, and on a clear day, the park above the tunnel provides a view of the Marin Headlands and the Farallon Islands in the Pacific.

In addition to the streetcar tunnel, West Portal's landmarks include a large movie theater, a library, a school, churches, several restaurants and bars, a bookstore, markets, coffee shops, a bakery, professional offices, and other shops. Despite the semi-recent appearances of larger chain stores, the many unique neighborhood shops give the area a distinctly smaller-city, "retro" charm. The West Portal Muni Metro Station is located at the entrance to the Muni tunnel at the northern end of West Portal Avenue.

- ↑ City Data.com (<http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/West-Portal-San-Francisco-CA.html>)

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Portal,_San_Francisco"
Categories: Neighborhoods in San Francisco, California | Shopping districts and streets in the United States | Streetcar suburbs | California road stubs

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http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=West_Portal



Your place to discover & shape San Francisco history

West Portal

Historical Essay

by Richard Brandl



View of the West Portal late 1990s, looking towards the Sutro Tower.

Photo: Chris Carlsson

The West Portal shopping and residential district takes its name from the Twin Peaks Tunnel, which ushered in streetcar service to the southeast corner of San Francisco in 1918. MUNI streetcar service opened San Francisco's last great wilderness to residential development. Formerly sand dunes and vegetable farms, today West Portal is the area bounded by Portola, Kensington, Taraval, and 15th Avenue. High quality homes on detached lots lead to rapid growth in the 1920s and set the stage for West Portal to become the commercial and transportation hub for the West of Twin Peaks area.

In Spanish times, West Portal was part of the land holdings of Mission de Dolores. After the break up of the Missions, Jose de Jesus Noe was granted a 4,443 acre ranch in 1846, called Rancho San Miguel. The ranch ran from present day UCSF in Parnassus Heights to San Jose Avenue, south to Daly City and north to Juniper Serra Boulevard and Forest Hill, including the area of present day West Portal. Parts of the ranch east of Twin Peaks were subdivided in the late 1800s and became Noe Valley, Eureka Valley, Fairmont Heights, and Sunnyside.

But West Portal remained a ranch until well after the 20th Century. Adolph Sutro bought the remnant of the original rancho in 1880 -- a 1,200-acre parcel that ran from present day UCSF, south along Stanyan Street, up over Twin Peaks due south roughly along present-day Ridgewood Avenue, continuing south to the Ocean View district, then north along Junipero Serra Boulevard to the Laguna Honda reservoir.

While most of the ranch was hilly, the area that later became West Portal was relatively flat, and Sutro rented it to Italian vegetable farmers. For the next 35 years, the rest of Rancho San Miguel remained a nature preserve. Sutro's passion for tree planting eventually covered the slopes of Mt. Sutro and Mt. Davidson as far south as Ocean Avenue with eucalyptus.

When the rancho was put up for sale in 1909 after a contentious battle over Sutro's will, the City was desperate to recover from the 1906 earthquake and fire. City boosters badly wanted to compete with new subdivisions being built on the Peninsula and in the East Bay. The Burnham plan of 1905 and the City Beautiful Movement called for respecting the contours of the land and incorporating landscaping into residential developments. It was no longer acceptable to pack houses tightly together on rectangular street grids that ignored the terrain.

The first neighborhoods to be developed, St Francis Wood and Forest Hill in 1912, were faithful to these new ideas and were carefully designed and built as "residential parks." Both developments prohibited commercial activities and were made up exclusively of large homes from the Craftsman movement, the Chicago school, the prairie style of Frank Lloyd Wright, the Beaux-Arts, and other styles. In contrast, West Portal became a commercial and transportation hub with homes in a wide variety of architectural styles.



West side of Castro St. at Market showing the entrance to Twin Peaks Tunnel. Dec. 1922

Photo: Greg Gaar Collection, San Francisco

The area was originally called "West Portal Park" in a vain attempt to capitalize on the "residential park" mystique. The name didn't stick partly because of its proximity to the tunnel entrance. Three streetcar lines (Parkside "L" line, Ingleside "K" Line, and Oceanview "M" Line) ran through the area along a new street, West Portal Avenue, which paralleled Portola Way. Stores and other commercial activities were attracted to this new transit thoroughfare.

Additionally, Fernando Nelson, who bought the land and developed much of West Portal, was not an architect but a self-made developer. A builder in San Francisco since 1876, he and his sons built homes adjacent to newly constructed streetcar lines in the Richmond and Sunset districts.

West Portal reflects Fernando Nelson and Sons interpretations of contemporary designs. Their first homes, along Portola Drive, mimic the large Arts and Crafts or Spanish style homes across the street in St. Francis Wood. For example, 1590 Portola Drive was completed in 1917 at a cost of \$14,000, comparable in cost and size to those selling in St Francis. (It recently listed for \$1.3 million). But his later houses follow no pattern. The 1920s was a period of tremendous variety in architectural styles, with revivals of Colonial, Tudor, Spanish, and Italianate styles. Nelson followed the trends including some "Marina" style homes as well.

The notable architectural exception in West Portal is the Empire Theatre designed by Garren and Morrow in 1925. This was an imposing Mediterranean style movie house until much of the original detailing was stripped in later years. (Irving Morrow was the consulting architect for the Golden Gate Bridge and he and his wife

are credited for the bridge's Moderne detailing). Another exception is designed the apartment house at 330 West Portal Avenue designed by Hermann Baumann in 1931. Baumann was a prolific architect who built more than 400 apartment buildings in the 1920s and 1930s throughout the Bay Area. He is especially known for the fine detailing in the building's lobbies.



Empire Theatre, originally the Portal Theatre

Photo: courtesy of Richard Brandt

Although no architecturally significant structures have been designated on West Portal Avenue, the movie theater has been a fixture since it opened as the "Portal Theatre" on December 26, 1925. Renamed and re-opened on October 1, 1936 as the "Empire", it had its single screen split into three in 1974.

By the 1930s West Portal looked largely as it does today, a line of shops and a few apartment buildings along West Portal Avenue surrounded by single family homes on the side streets. The Great Depression and World War II did little to change the character of the neighborhood. But the post-war population boom lead traffic engineers to plan a series of freeways that would criss-cross San Francisco, including West Portal.

The "Western Freeway" was run north from present day I-280 along Junipero Serra Boulevard north of Sloat where it would turn northeast and tunnel under Forest Hill and join the Crostown Freeway running from Glen Park Canyon. Many homes stood in the way. Neighborhood clubs, including the West Portal Home Owners Association, challenged the Division of Highways at a meeting on December 2, 1955 in Lincoln High School. This intensified public concern and, along with opposition to other freeways, lead to the famous freeway revolt by the Board of Supervisors in 1959. Although studies continued for a more few years, the freeway was dead.

But the need for better transportation led to the creation of BART in 1962, which posed a new challenge to West Portal. BART planners wanted to dig up West Portal Avenue so that MUNI streetcars could go underground all the way to Sloat Boulevard. West Portal merchants and neighbors, mindful of the chaos on Market Street during BART construction, defeated that idea.

But they were not successful in keeping the original West Portal tunnel entrance, an imposing Beaux Art landmark that was demolished in 1976 to build the current West Portal MUNI Metro station. The Ford administration found the facade eligible as a National Historic Place but local West Portal merchants thought it was an eyesore. The new station wound up costing \$8.5 million, more than twice the entire amount of the 2 1/4 mile tunnel in 1918.

Until recently, most residents were the adult offspring of the people who first settled West Portal, giving the area one of the highest percentage of people over age 60 in the City. The author remembers West Portal in the late 1980s with only a few restaurants and no coffee houses, perhaps the last "authentic" neighborhood in San Francisco. Today, while West Portal remains a land of single-family homes, the first generation has given way to an influx of new families with above average incomes and higher education.

They come seeking the same amenities: good shopping, low density, convenient MUNI service to downtown and the new housing stock (that is, relatively "new" for San Francisco). More than two dozen eating places offer a variety of cuisines and there are even a few national chains, including the ubiquitous Starbucks. While Fernando Nelson didn't quite succeed in building a residential park, he did create a charming village that endures.

from the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society's Argonaut, Summer 2003.

West Portal



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West Portal

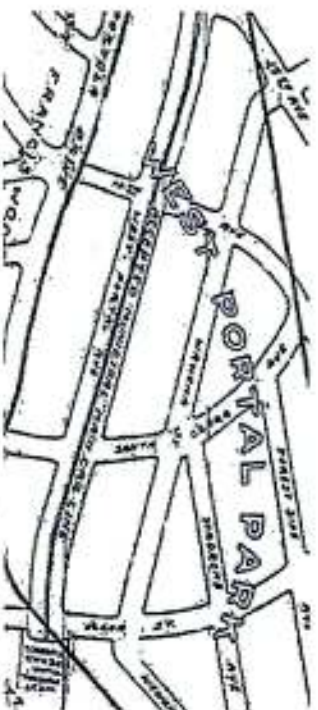


West Portal Avenue 1927 -

Developed: 1910s and 1920s, carved out of the old Rancho San Miguel land grant.

Primary developer: Fernando Nelson and Sons

Streetcar portal to the West of Twin Peaks section of San Francisco. West Portal acted as the staging area for the construction of the Twin Peaks Tunnel. The best way to learn more about the neighborhood's history and role in the growth of western San Francisco is to click through our virtual West Portal History Walk.



West Portal Articles

Arden Wood

The First Church of Christ, Scientist selected the plot of land in the newly-developed West Portal neighborhood for its west coast nursing facility in the 1920s.

Fernando Nelson

Builder of West Portal, Parkway Terrace, and Merced Manor

Riding Home with Willie Mays

Tom O'Toole remembers the day he was the luckiest kid in San Francisco.

St. Cecilia's Parish

History and memories of St. Cecilia's Catholic Church in the Parkside District.

Streelwise - Dad & Bill's Night Out

Memories of the 1950s fight against the Western Freeway.

Streelwise - Up & Down West Portal

A walk on West Portal Avenue is a walk down Memory Lane.

S^r Twin Peaks Tunnel

The Twin Peaks Tunnel connected downtown with the west side in 1918

West of Twin Peaks

The Neighborhoods including St. Francis Wood, Ingleside Terraces, Sunnyside, Balboa Terrace, Forest Hill, and West Portal

West Portal Creamery

118 West Portal Avenue

West Portal Elementary School

Class photos, history, and memories

West Portal History Walk

An historic tour of West Portal Avenue, 15 Web pages of historic photos and text!

Image: Detail of map from San Francisco Chronicle article, Saturday, October 14, 1916.

Contribute your own stories about western neighborhoods places!

Page launched 13 May 2002; Updated 26 Jaunary 2009.



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The Western Neighborhoods Project is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of western San Francisco neighborhoods.

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West Portal History Walk

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West Portal - Introduction

Welcome to the "virtual" version of the West Portal History Walk, a self-guided historical tour along West Portal Avenue. With support from the California Council for the Humanities, participation from the merchants of West Portal Avenue and a great deal of work by Richard Brandi, the walk debuted in storefront windows on February 1, 2002.

Richard is a West Portal resident and fourth-generation San Franciscan who dug through historical collections for representative images and wrote this brief history of the neighborhood.

Surrounding the West Portal neighborhood are the unique urban developments of Forest Hill, St. Francis Wood, Balboa Terrace, and other "residential parks" that were designed with prohibitions on commercial use. West Portal Avenue acted as the commercial strip serving these neighborhoods.

This almost complete separation of commercial and residential districts later became commonplace with the advent of true suburbs after World War II. In the setting of a major city, and with neighborhoods whose very existence was owed to the construction of mass transportation (the Twin Peaks streetcar tunnel), this balanced relationship between developments is historically significant.

We hope you enjoy yourself on this trip to one western neighborhood's past!

The West Portal History Walk
First stop

Index of the walk:

Introduction (Poster)

1. West Portal Avenue at Lillioa Street, 1924
2. Claremont Court looking west from Portola Drive, 1916
3. Looking south from Edgehill, 1920
4. Twin Peaks Tunnel under construction, 1916
5. Twin Peaks tunnel from Claremont Avenue, 1927
6. West Portal Avenue and Lillioa Street, 1920
7. Streetcar rail work being done on West Portal Avenue in 1917
8. West Portal Avenue from the air, 1935
9. West Portal Avenue, 1929 and 1947
10. Empire Cinema, 1925
11. Shaw's Ice Cream, 1940
12. 314 West Portal Avenue, 1941
13. West Portal and Vicente, 1927
14. West Portal and 14th Avenue, 1946

Image: Poster of the downtown and outlying districts shaking hand through the Twin Peaks Tunnel.



Signal to bypass the air and the trestles

Courtesy of the California Historical Society.

Contribute your own stories about western neighborhoods places.!

Page launched 1/11/02



Eric Castongia
Residential Sales Specialist

Get the San Francisco Real Estate Scoop @
SEHotBuy.com

415.307.1700

Eric@SFHotBuy.com
DRE No. 01188380



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Redwood City

station is the southern terminus for the BART system, and offers connections to Caltrain and SamTrans buses. The station area touches South San Francisco to the north and, more substantially, Burlingame just two blocks to the south. The station is adjacent to El Camino Real and within half a mile of Highway 101.

Milbrae's Station Area Specific Plan allows for significant housing development around the Millbrae BART/Caltrain station. The plan envisions a new public square and new mixed use buildings oriented around the station. Land uses in the southern end of the station are under the jurisdiction of the City of Burlingame. As with Millbrae, Burlingame has plans that allow higher density housing and mixed use along El Camino Real in this area.



The Millbrae Station Area Plan pioneered the concept of El Camino Real as a European-style boulevard. The planned extension of the existing frontage road would help to create this boulevard landscape. In addition, Milbrae's tree-planting program along El Camino Real should create a more consistent streetscape between the city and unincorporated Burlingame.

Although Milbrae has already implemented many streetscape improvements, new development in the area between El Camino Real and Highway 101 continues to foster automobile traffic. Likewise, Burlingame has planned the land uses closer to 101 for a new auto row while encouraging mixed use, pedestrian neighborhoods along El Camino Real. Along El Camino and west of the station, several new development proposals would create new housing in dense, walkable communities.

Redwood City Caltrain Station Area



Walkable, urban neighborhoods are almost every side distinguish the Redwood City Caltrain station area from other stations along El Camino. While there are parking lots and highways, the city's vibrant downtown is the dominant landscape. The six-lane El Camino Real runs parallel to the Caltrain tracks, and is intersected by several densely developed major streets. Between the station and El Camino Real is a mid-century commercial development, Sequoia Station, that is oriented to transit passengers on one side and automobile traffic on the other. South of El Camino, the downtown has a number of shops and restaurants with outdoor seating, as well as a cultural center - the Fox and Usher Fox Theaters - and a 20-screen cinema complex under construction. On the opposite side of El Camino Real and the tracks lies a historic main street district. Industrial uses border Veterans Boulevard on the edge of the station area.

From downtown redevelopment to parking management, Redwood City is a leader in the region for vision-supporting planning. Its General Plans have long supported alternative transportation choices and a vibrant, dense downtown. The city's new Downtown Plan aims to make it "the premier walkable downtown on the Peninsula, midway between San Jose and San Francisco." Notably, the city decided to leverage the strong regional demand for housing as the primary engine of revitalization. The city has comprehensively approached its downtown redevelopment to modernize the use of land near transit and create a rich a stimulating pedestrian environment. Plans provide diverse housing, transportation, and retail choices for the Redwood City community, and rely heavily on design specifications to encourage new buildings that enhance the city's appearance.

The key planned transportation improvement for this area is a pedestrian network that connects downtown neighborhoods to the train station and to each other. Strategic designs suggest that streets could change from vehicle thoroughfares into places for people.



The city's exemplary public engagement in its downtown planning process looks well for the plan's potential implementation. Plans for cultural centers and a pedestrian environment complement this housing growth and reap benefits for the existing community. Although approval of the Draft Downtown Plan is still pending at time of publication, the completed City Center Plaza, Franklin Street development, and Courthouse Square are all consistent with its guidelines.

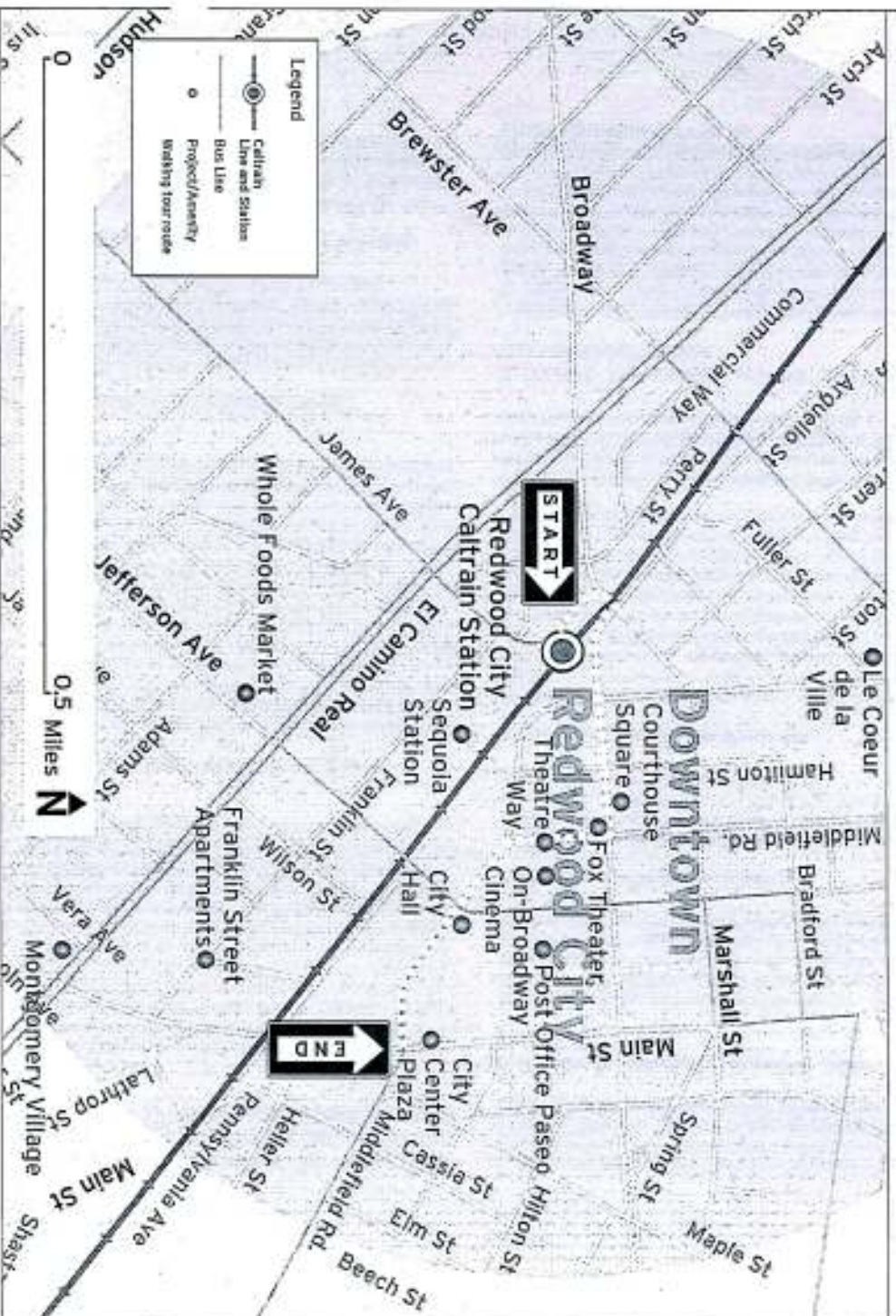
The Palo Alto Caltrain Station Area

The Palo Alto Caltrain station area has unique historic and natural character. On one side lies Stanford University, one of the first major developments on the Peninsula. On the opposite side is downtown Palo Alto and Professorville, a neighborhood that grew along with Stanford University as professors and students migrated to the area. Professorville is now a designated historic district. In the station area there is also a significant amount of land protected for the Stanford Arboretum.



Palo Alto has a number of creative and well-articulated policies to encourage infill development, provide non-motorized transportation, and protect open space. These policies have helped the city create a vibrant downtown environment and to overcome many of the challenges of building new housing. The Comprehensive Plan discusses the need to balance regional housing needs with local community character. It proposes meeting that challenge by zoning more land for housing and restraining other uses

DOWNTOWN Redwood City



Redwood City – Downtown

Transit:

- Redwood City Caltrain Station: Caltrain; SamTrans
- El Camino Real: SamTrans

Development highlights:

- City Center Plaza Apartments: 130 affordable units with ground-floor restaurants (Mid-Peninsula Housing Coalition)
- Franklin Street Apartments: 206 units (30 affordable) above retail space (Irvine Apartment Communities, 2002)
- Montgomery Village Apartments under construction (First Community Housing)
- On Broadway: 20-screen movie theater with 85,000 square feet of ground-floor restaurant and retail space (John Anagnosio/Broadway Entertainment, LLC, 2006)
- Le Coeur de la Villa (formerly Tuscan Towers): 21 affordable townhomes, another 88 units proposed (Habitat for Humanity)

Amenities:

- City Center Plaza just east of city hall
- Theatre Way: new pedestrian-priority promenade
- Courthouse Square
- Post Office Paseo linking surface public parking with the new cinema block, and expanding outdoor dining venue

- Fox and Little Fox Theaters on Broadway
- Whole Foods Market
- Sequoia Station retail center includes supermarket, cafe, drugstore and other conveniences

Planning:

- Redwood City General Plan (2001, update in progress)
- Downtown Area Plan (introduced 2001)
- Redwood City Downtown Precise Plan and Program EIR (due for adoption in early 2007)

Innovations:

- Parking management strategy with on-street and off-street parking rates that vary by location and time of day
- Tax credits for rehabilitation of landmarks in Main Street Historic District
- Sidewalk Cafe Design Guidelines encourage outdoor dining, adding vitality to downtown streets.

Future development:

- Downtown Precise Plan proposes higher density with 8- to 12-story residential and mixed-use development considered in downtown core and east side of El Camino Real between Brewster and Maple.

1.2. BUILDING THE VISION

The Downtown Precise Plan is based upon a clear *Vision* of what the community wants Downtown to become. This section of Book I describes the goals, principles and specific pieces of that *Downtown Vision*. They are intended to be implemented in a manner whereby every built piece contributes to the formation of a vibrant and beautiful city center. The following *Goals and Guiding Principles* provide guidance for actions not specifically covered by the *Regulations or City Actions*. The *Regulations* to implement the *Vision* are in Book II, *The City Actions* to implement the *Vision* are in Book III.

1.2.1. GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Redwood City community has established this *Downtown Precise Plan* to orchestrate public and private investment in the Downtown to accomplish the following:

A) Revive Downtown by creating a beautiful and memorable urban district interwoven with the City's identity

The Precise Plan's central goal is to restore Downtown as the indispensable hub of the City where a mix of diverse services, conveniences, experiences and lifestyle choices are provided in a way that preserves Downtown's rich supply of historic resources, while remaining appropriate to the social and economic conditions of life in the 21st Century. The community intends to create a visually appealing and memorable urban district that is the primary iconic image that stands for Redwood City. The Precise Plan sets clear and detailed standards for quality design of the reuse and restoration of precious historic buildings and spaces as well as the careful design and construction of new buildings. The buildings will also help shape the spaces in-between into good places that can be remembered, where people are comfortably inside them, not outside looking at objects (even if the objects are attractive). A variety of community outdoor places, primarily urban, will be part of this place-making and will accommodate all people comfortably, regardless of age, economic status, disability, or ethnicity. These community outdoor places may include sidewalks and streets, parking lots and facilities, patios and plazas, even privatized rooftops and courtyards, as well as Courthouse Square and Theatre Way.



B) Actively encourage and promote the preservation of Redwood City's historic resources, and reduce the deferral of judgment on how to preserve them as much as possible

Rather than simply hope for preservation, or passively encourage it—the City of Redwood City intends to use the Downtown Precise Plan as a powerful tool to manifest the greatest degree of preservation possible. Typically, decisions on what changes may be made to historic resources are determined on a case-by-case basis, deferring judgment on many such matters to a future time. However, to provide a sense of security to the local preservation community, the DTPP attempts to provide as much guidance in advance as possible. The DTPP clearly informs property owners, developers, and tenants of the City's intentions for preservation and dissuades a false sense of entitlement to those who would prefer to completely remove historic resources in order to maximize their property's development potential. The plan provides specific regulations, up front, to those wishing to build on or near historic sites in an appropriate manner.

C) Create a network of great public open spaces

A network of sunny and comfortable public open spaces, linked to each other, housing, jobs, and adjacent neighborhoods by attractive and walkable tree-lined streets, will be an important part of making Downtown a livable urban neighborhood. Downtown parks should be designed with this urban context in mind, and should be meaningful, enjoyable, useful spaces. Parks should be numerous enough that most Downtown residents and workers are within a three-minute walk of one, but should not be so large in number as to be underused, a drain on scarce resources, or to limit the space available for housing. Public open spaces in Downtown should come in a variety of types to serve a variety of needs, such as plazas, patios, playgrounds, large greens, and small pocket parks. These spaces should be situated in busy locations that are accessible and free of barriers, and are safe due to high visibility and "eyes on the street." Redwood Creek should be utilized as a natural resource, a public open space, and the first leg of a green connection between Downtown and the waterfront.

D) Provide the choice of "convenience living"

A balanced and synergistic mixture of employment and a range of well-designed rental and for-sale housing types in close proximity to entertainment, restaurants, special events, shopping and public services that will be supported by and linked to public transportation, providing "car-less" access to other communities as well as to the San Francisco International Airport.

E) Create *the* entertainment center of the Peninsula

The combination of the 20-screen Century Theatres cinema and the live performances offered by the Fox Theatre and a number of smaller entertainment venues position Downtown as one of the premier entertainment destinations of the Peninsula. This destination is supported by the opportunities inherent

in the programming of both Courthouse Square and Theatre Way to be active year around with a variety of community events as well as a place for everyone to "hang out." Also, art facilities and other cultural venues which support and reinforce entertainment should be encouraged.

F) Create a strong employment district and "vital center"

The modern workplace and "vital center"¹ features settings that foster informal meetings and idea exchange that enhance creativity and productivity. When these settings are in close proximity to cafes, restaurants, meeting halls, set, high quality public transportation, and cultural resources, an employment district is created that the most sought-after employees prefer.

G) Make pedestrians the priority

Downtown is a comfortably walkable urban place, and the Downtown Precise Plan aims to make it more so as changes occur. In the event of conflict between motor vehicles and pedestrians, it is City policy that pedestrian comfort, safety, convenience, and enjoyment have priority.

H) Integrate transit and bicycle use

The Precise Plan encourages the creation of a model of transit integration, featuring a convenient transit station on display in the center (rather than at the edge) of Downtown, seamlessly connected to Broadway, Courthouse Square, El Camino Real and adjacent neighborhoods. It is intended that it be so well integrated into the activity patterns, viewsheds and pathways of the district that the train becomes the primary mode of transportation chosen by the daytime and evening commuting populations within walking distance of the station. In addition, modern streetcars are envisioned as a means of convenient circulation within Downtown, as well as a way to connect Downtown and the Caltrain station to adjacent districts and transit hubs.

Bicycles have become a viable alternative to the auto. They are clean, efficient, and provide a healthy way to travel to and through the Downtown. It is intended that the City integrate more bicycle routes, bicycle storage, and other bicycle-friendly improvements in the Downtown.

I) Provide "just enough" parking and create a "park-once and walk" district

It is the goal of the Downtown Precise Plan to plan, manage and operate the overall supply of parking (both public and private) in a manner that will provide "just enough" parking at the right price to serve the needs of people living, working and visiting Downtown. In addition, it is important to organize the parking facilities in relation to Downtown destinations and activities in a manner that will create a "park-once and walk" district. Facilities shall be well lit, aesthetically pleasing and well maintained as an important component of the overall network of community outdoor places. Parking facilities should be located unobtrusively, and should never be permitted to interfere with the appealing environment of Downtown.

Depot Circle

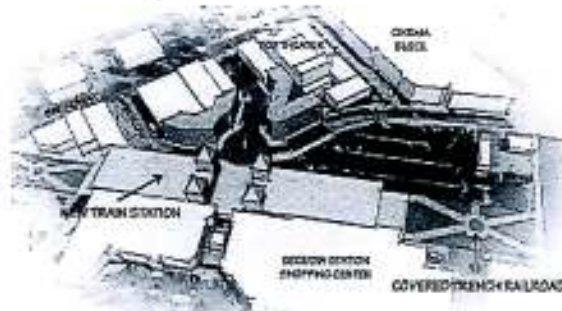
Depot Circle is a proposed traffic circle, in the tradition of Paris and Washington DC, which will dramatically restructure the area around the train station. This restructuring will transform the area into a focal point and will create a grand and welcoming entrance to Redwood City for train passengers. It is also intended to provide a strong connection across the railroad tracks between the eastern and western sides of Downtown. Currently, this connection is uninviting. Hamilton Street will be realigned and extended beyond the tracks to El Camino, providing a strong vehicular and pedestrian connection between El Camino Real and the Courthouse Square area. The realigned Hamilton Street will converge with an adjusted Winslow Street in a traffic circle featuring a public open space and a monument. This space will be located at the entrance and exit of an expanded Redwood City train station, featuring regional Caltrain service and possibly Dumbarton rail service to the East Bay and statewide High Speed Rail service, as well. When the proposed streetcar system is created, Depot Circle may serve as its hub, too, providing a vital multimodal link.

The creation of Depot Circle is expected to occur in three phases, most likely in this order:

Phase 1: The first phase of the development of Depot Circle will occur north of the railroad, on the side of the historic Downtown Core, with Hamilton Street realigned to center on the gateway into Sequoia Station, and new buildings featuring ground-level shopfronts constructed on the remaining land formerly occupied by street right-of-way and surface parking lots. New investment will be coordinated to insure that buildings at the intersection of Winslow and Hamilton form a crescent focused toward the connecting point to Sequoia Station, Caltrain and SamTrans. The confluence of streets and new pedestrian crossings will be rationalized by the construction of a traffic circle and public open space in the center of the new right-of-way. A monument will preside over the space and provide dramatic visibility to train riders as well as from Broadway and El Camino Real. This may be realized as part of a redevelopment project on City-owned parking lots in the area. To insure future train infrastructure can be properly accommodated, the City will coordinate with the Caltrain JPB and California High Speed Rail (HSR) Authority to determine (and ultimately reconfigure if need be) the necessary width of the railroad right-of-way at the station platform area that will ultimately exist between Sequoia Station and Winslow Street/Middlefield Road. That width may ultimately require the realignment of Winslow/Middlefield right-of-way a bit further to the north. The City will work with property owners on surrounding blocks including the Fox Theatre block, the block to the south of the Cinema Block, and the block to the west of Hamilton Street to implement corresponding reconfigurations of the blocks and properties to accommodate the right-of-way realignments.



DEPOT CIRCLE, PHASE 1



DEPOT CIRCLE, PHASE 2



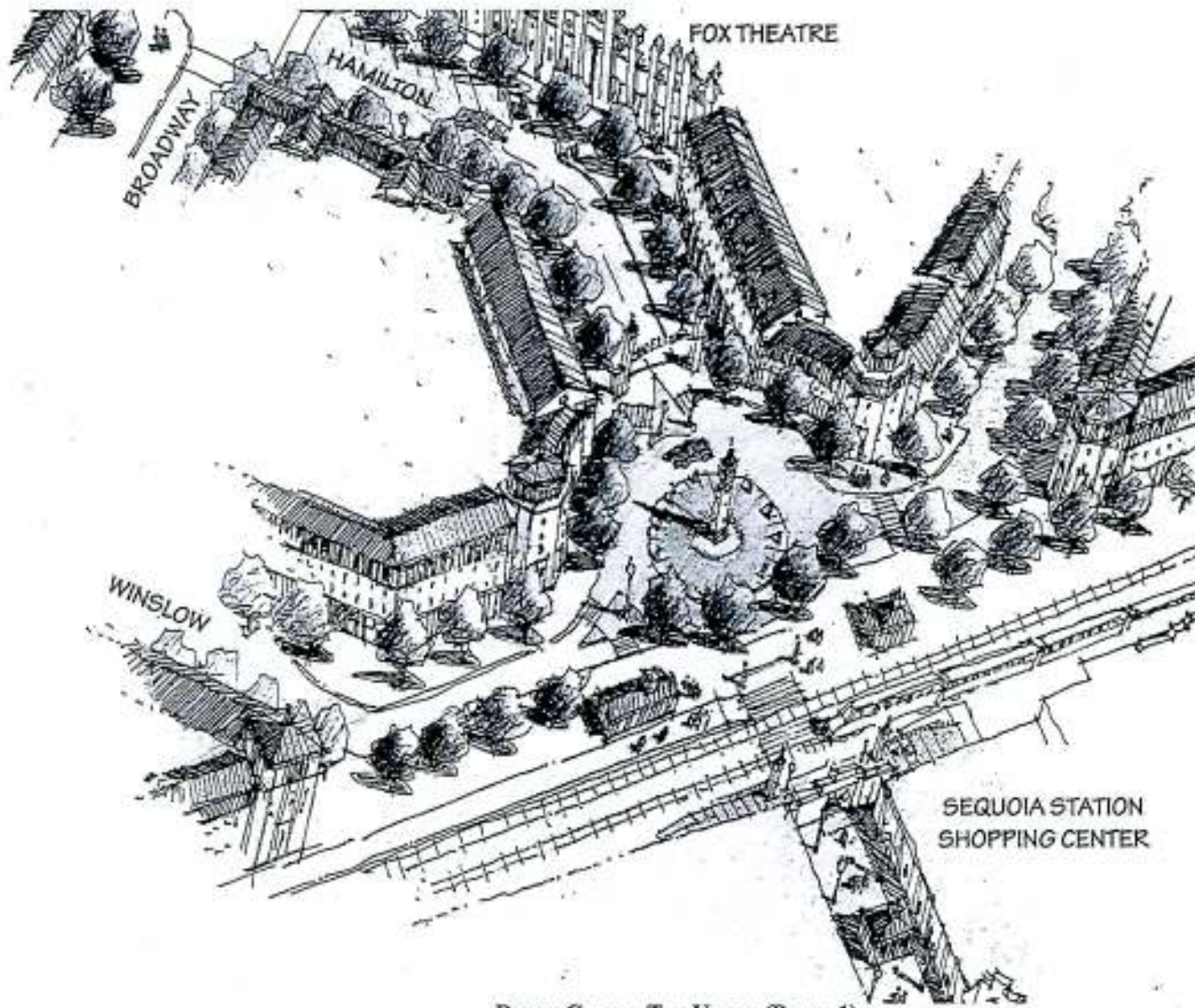
DEPOT CIRCLE, PHASE 3

Phase 2: Second, the railroad tracks would be grade-separated. As of this writing, it is the City's preference that the grade separation take the form of a covered trench, due to its low impact on the urbanism of Downtown, particularly with regard to noise, vibration, and aesthetic impacts on surrounding properties. The grade separation, induced by HSR, will also entail a new train station (possibly serving only regional Caltrain service, but also possibly serving statewide HSR trains) which will be centered on Depot Circle and the pedestrian connection to Sequoia Station and El Camino Real. This grade-separated railway will be carefully designed to become one of Downtown's major assets. If a covered trench is built, the space above should be used for beneficial purposes, such as a grand avenue, retail shops, parks and plazas, and/or bike paths.

Phase 3: If the owners of Sequoia Station Shopping Center redevelop their site, Hamilton Street will be extended from Depot Circle to El Camino Real, with a wide linear park in its center. This will create a walkable connection from El Camino to Depot Circle and the rest of the Downtown Core.



DEPOT CIRCLE, EXISTING CONDITIONS



DEPOT CIRCLE, THE VISION (PHASE 1)

Menlo Park

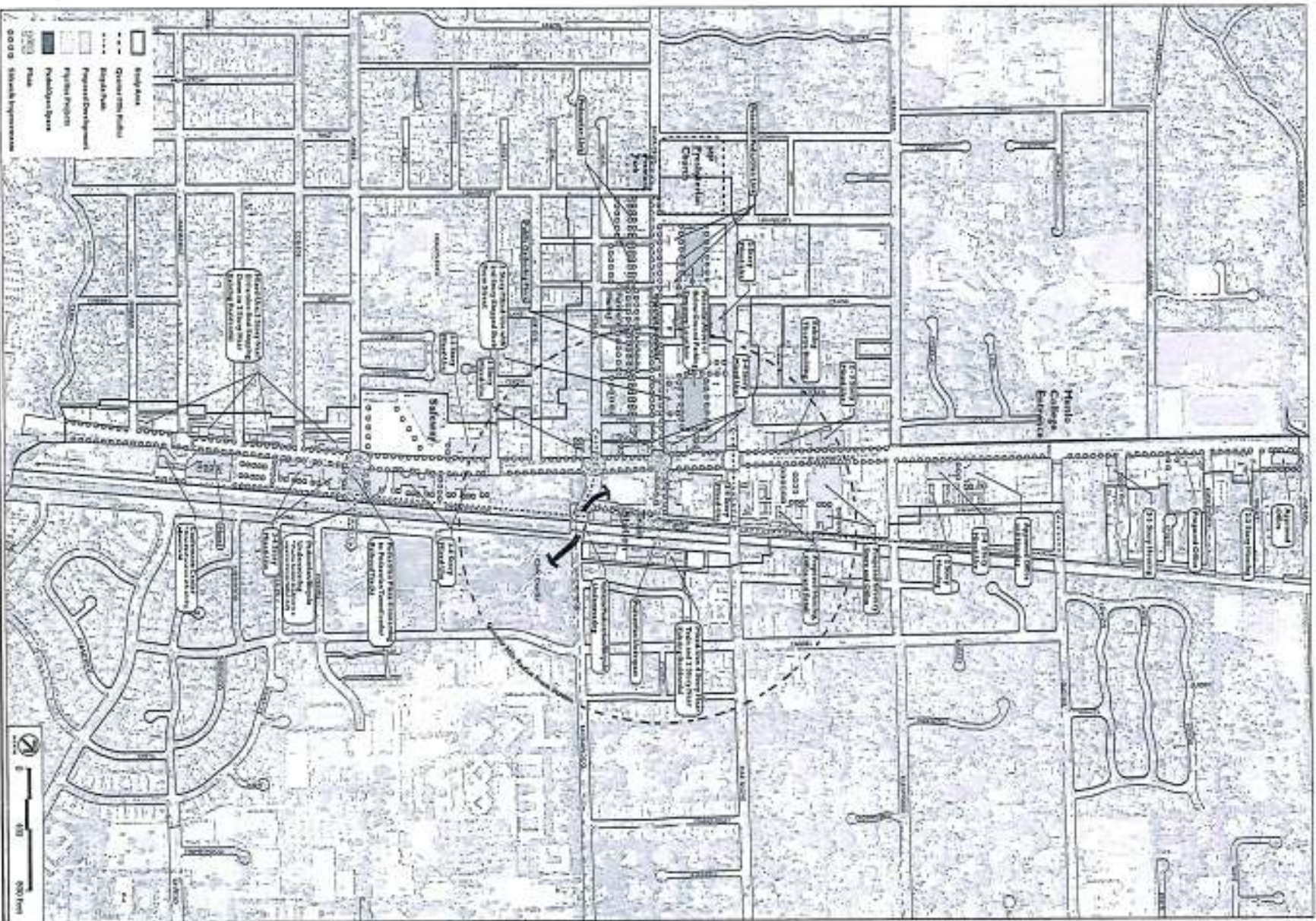


FIGURE 2
CONCEPTUAL ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

2. East-West Connectivity

Background

East-west connectivity was identified as an important issue for the Vision Plan Area during the community outreach process. Community members specifically identified El Camino Real and the Caltrain tracks as barriers to traveling from east to west through Menlo Park, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists.

During the workshop process, most people reported they liked the idea of a bicycle and pedestrian underpass of the train tracks and a plaza, tentatively identified at the terminus of Middle Avenue, particularly along with improved bicycle and pedestrian crossings of El Camino Real at Middle Avenue. Figure 4 shows an artist's rendering of the underpass and plaza. Community mem-



Figure 4. Rendering of a Potential Plaza and Pedestrian/Bike Underpass near Middle Avenue.

bers also expressed an interest in improved connections between the west side of El Camino Real and the train station and Civic Center areas. There were a variety of ideas expressed for how such connections could be improved, ranging from pedestrian and bicycle underpass/overpass to a grade separation, to putting some or all of El Camino Real underground as it goes through Menlo Park. Trenching Caltrain through Menlo Park was another potential solution identified by community members.



Bicycle bridge over major arterial.

Pedestrian and bicycle bridges over or tunnels under El Camino Real were also identified as potential measures for improving east-west connectivity. One idea was to connect taller buildings on opposite sides of El Camino Real with bridges between their upper floors. It was also proposed that the east and west sides of El Camino Real be connected underground at its intersection with Santa Cruz Avenue, with significant underground parking areas at either end of the pedestrian connection.

During targeted outreach sessions in Belle Haven, it was reported that some members of that community do not go to the west side of town because the transit connections between the east and west are slow and infrequent. They would like to use the train and the recreational amenities of Burgess Park but need to be able to access those areas of town more easily.

Given this input and preliminary analysis, it is recommended that Menlo Park establish the following goal and objectives to create better east-west connections:

Goal: Provide greater east-west, town-side connectivity.

Objective:

- Improved pedestrian/bicycle connections across the railroad tracks.
- Improved vehicular connections across railroad tracks.
- A pedestrian/bike underpass of the railroad tracks in conjunction with a public park or plaza.
- Improved crosswalk and pedestrian/bicycle connections across El Camino Real.



Pedestrian-friendly street crossing.

EL CAMINO REAL/DOWNTOWN VISION PLAN

- Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections between Downtown and Civic Center/Burgess Park.

It is recommended that this goal and corresponding objectives be implemented through the following actions:

- Train tracks grade separated to allow Ravenswood to run underneath.
- Pedestrian/bicycle underpass of rail in conjunction with a public park or plaza at Middle Avenue (or other appropriate location).
- Pedestrian/bicycle underpass or other protected crossing of train tracks within the station area.
- El Camino Real crossing improvements at grade, including features such as textured pavement, pedestrian refuges and count-down signals, where feasible.
- Improved connections to Civic Center/Burgess Park; including resolving possible conflict with grade separations.

Other solutions for improving east-west connectivity, including the undergrounding of Caltrain and El Camino, are not recommended for the following reasons:

- Costs of these methods are high, and it is unlikely that funding could be secured during the lifespan of this Vision Plan.
- The horizontal distance required to underground Caltrain would require extensive new infrastructure, and likely have an effect on Caltrain outside of the Menlo Park city limits.
- Undergrounding Caltrain or El Camino Real would dramatically change current block and street pattern in Menlo Park, including demolition of existing buildings.
- Undergrounding Caltrain could require deep tunneling to ensure that San Francisquito Creek is not disturbed.
- Pedestrian and bicycle bridges are often used with less frequency than anticipated due to the additional time required for their use. Tunnels are often underused due to safety and lighting concerns.



Vehicle underpass of Caltrain tracks in Redwood City



Pedestrian/bicycle underpass in Palo Alto

6. Train Station Area

Background

Community members expressed that the train station area should be livelier and provide something for people to do as they are waiting for the train. During community walking tours of the Downtown, participants expressed that the uses around the station do not take advantage of their location. Even the generally-approved-of Menlo Center (the building housing Kepler's Books and Café Borrone) turns its back on the train station and does not show much of an entrance to the station area.

Given this desire of the community, it is recommended that Menlo Park establish the following goal and objectives to promote increased activity, new uses and plaza spaces near the Caltrain station area:

Goal: Activate the train station area.

Objectives

- Expanded housing opportunities, particularly for seniors and all segments of the workforce.
- New cultural institutions or similar facilities contribute to the liveliness of this area.
- New parking facilities in this area are generally underground.
- A public plaza terminating Santa Cruz Avenue serves as a forecourt to the station.
- Mixed-use development with active ground floor retail uses.
- Increased Caltrain service at the Menlo Park station.



Mixed use near transit.

Figure 9 shows an artist's rendering of the Caltrain station area including implementation of these objectives.

Community members have expressed concern about the cost of underground parking in this area. Underground parking would likely be provided privately as part of a larger development project. Underground parking could also be provided through a public/private partnership between a developer and the City to ensure that some number of parking spaces would be made available to members of the public.

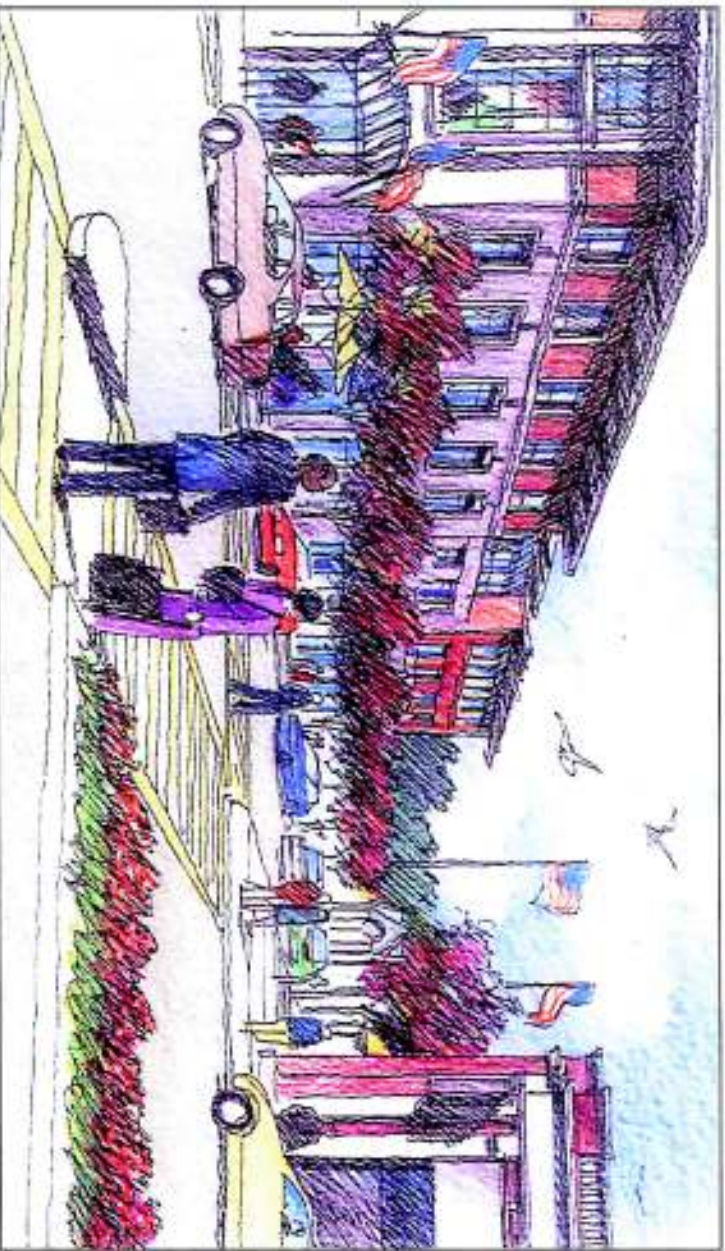


Figure 9. Rendering of Potential Station Area Development

Rockridge



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East Bay Neighborhoods: Oakland's Rockridge

Post in the San Francisco Chronicle
on Monday, February 02, 2004
Written by Chronicle Staff Writer

search

Amenities and Treasures of Oakland

Oakland – Prior to the building of the Bay Bridge in 1936, Rockridge, located at the foot of the Oakland Hills between Alcatraz Avenue to the north and 51st Street to the south, and between Telegraph Avenue to the west and Broadway to the east, was a sleepy neighborhood of cottages and bungalows owned by those who preferred the quiet life to the urban bustle of San Francisco across the bay.

Today, many of these homes remain, and they represent some of the most coveted real estate in the Bay Area, for several reasons: the weather in this particular microclimate is often sunny and warm; the commute from the Rockridge BART is easy; the homes on the leafy residential streets have been charmingly restored; and the area's main thoroughfare, College Avenue, is lined with atmospheric cafes, gourmet restaurants, independent bookstores and, more and more, antiques shops that people go out of their way to patronize.

Although some have derided the neighborhood for being too upscale, too yuppie, Rockridge is, unlike many other gentrified areas, ethnically diverse. After all, this is still Oakland, the most integrated city in the United States. It's true, the area has a chic edge. But it's also a place where people greet each other on the street, chat in line while they wait for their burritos at Carcius Taqueria, walk home together from BART. In the hamlet of Rockridge, a down-home feel prevails.

Best Time to Go

Weekend mornings – and in Rockridge, that includes Fridays -- are a great time to visit the neighborhood. Destination cafes like Oliveto, La Faine and Royal Coffee are buzzing with activity as locals settle down over the morning paper, coffee and decadent pastries. Late afternoons Monday through Saturday are also happening. Stroll in and out of boutiques, bookstores and antiques shops, then pop into Ben-N-Nick's for a pint of beer or A Cold for a kir. If you'd like to stay for dinner, be aware that you will have to wait at any of the better restaurants. Fortunately, no matter what time you visit, parking is not a problem. You may have to hunt around the side streets for a spot, but you'll find one more quickly than you would in other neighborhoods.

Rockridge doesn't have any tourist sights -- it's just a really nice place to live and hang out. However, curious visitors might be interested in the Firestorm Community Mural Project. Located outside the Rockridge BART station, this collection of more than 2,000 handpainted tiles pays tribute to those who fought, and those who were lost in, the 1981 Oakland Hills firestorm. Some of the more moving tiles were created by kids who lost pets and families who wanted to honor the firefighters who risked their lives to save their homes. The project is a beautiful representation of the community feeling that is such an important part of Rockridge. Rockridge BART, 5660 College Avenue, Oakland.

The Rockridge Branch Library is a particularly pleasant public library, with an arbor of wisteria out front and sunny reading rooms inside. 5366 College Avenue at Manila, (510) 597-5017.

Rockridge is known for its cute bungalows and abundant gardens. Those who are interested in home decor and gardening might take a stroll along its residential streets, particularly on Lawton and Manila between Shafter to the west and Broadway to the east.

Related links:

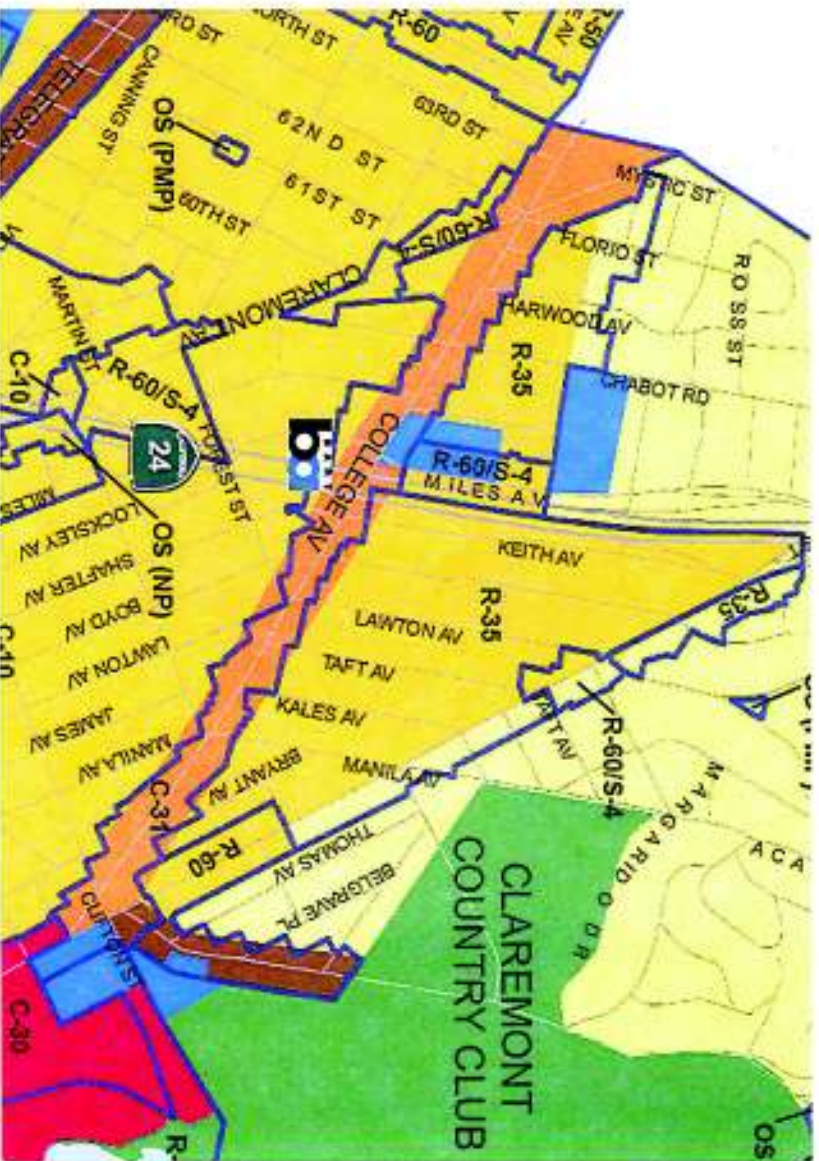
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Rockridge, Oakland



Zoning

- | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|
| C-10 | Local Retail |
| R-35 | Special One-Family |
| C-31 | Special Retail |
| R-60/S-4 | Medium High Density/Design Review |

General Plan

- | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
| Dark Orange | Neighborhood Center |
| Orange | Mixed Use |
| Blue | Mixed Housing Type Residential |
| Yellow | Institutional |
| Brown | Detached Unit Residential |
| Red | Urban Residential |
| | Community Commercial |

Neighborhood Housing Classifications

Four classifications are used to map the city's primary neighborhood housing areas. The classifications reflect key differences among types of neighborhoods. All of the classifications encourage quality and variety in building and landscape design, compatibility of use and form, and encourage school, community facilities, and "corner store" type of commercial activity, where appropriate.

The Mixed Housing Type Residential classification is primarily used in the old, established neighborhood housing areas of Oakland where a mix of unit types (single family homes, townhouses, and small multi-unit buildings) along with small scale neighborhood serving businesses are frequently found in close proximity to each other.



Mixed Housing Type Residential



Intent: The Mixed Housing Type Residential classification is intended to create, maintain, and enhance residential areas typically located near the City's major arterials and characterized by a mix of single family homes, townhouses, small multi-unit buildings, and neighborhood businesses where appropriate.

Desired Character and Uses: Future development within this classification should be primarily residential in character, with live-work types of development, small commercial enterprises, schools, and other small scale, compatible civic uses possible in appropriate locations.

Intensity/Density: Development of single family homes, townhouses, and small multi-unit buildings is allowed in this classification. Maximum allowable density in these areas is 30 principal units per gross acre. Within these mixed housing type neighborhoods, there exist areas and pockets of lower density housing which should be preserved through appropriate zoning designations.

Policy Framework Basis for the Classification: Neighborhood Goals; Neighborhood Objectives N2, N3, N6, N7, N8, N10, N11 and related policies. Waterfront Objectives W8, W12, and related policies. Downtown Objectives D1, D10, and related policies.

Neighborhood Center Mixed Use areas support adjacent neighborhood areas by providing distinctive and conveniently located mixes of retail shops, services, housing, and public facilities. Oakland has many good examples of pedestrian-oriented neighborhood center commercial areas, such as Piedmont Avenue, East 18th Street at Lake Merritt, and Fruitvale at International Boulevard.



Neighborhood Center Mixed Use

Intent: The Neighborhood Center Mixed Use classification is intended to identify, create, maintain and enhance mixed use neighborhood commercial centers. These centers are typically characterized by smaller scale pedestrian-oriented, continuous street frontage with a mix of retail, housing, office, active open space, eating and drinking places, personal and business services, and smaller scale educational, cultural, or entertainment uses.

Desired Character and Uses: Future development within this classification should be commercial or mixed uses that are pedestrian-oriented and serve nearby neighborhoods, or urban residential with ground floor commercial.

Intensity/Density: The maximum FAR for this classification is 4.0. The maximum residential density is 125 units per gross acre. Vertical integration of uses, including residential units above street-level commercial space, is encouraged.

Policy Framework Basis for the Classification: Neighborhood Goals; Neighborhood Objectives N1, N2, N3, N6, N8, N9, N10, N11, and related policies. Industry and Commerce Goals; Industry and Commerce Objectives I/C 1, I/C 2, and I/C 3. Transportation Objectives T2, T6.



ROCKRIDGE MARKET HALL



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About Market Hall



Anyone who lives in the Rockridge area, or has passed through the Rockridge BART station in North Oakland, is sure to notice Market Hall. The developers of Market Hall, siblings Sara, Tony and Peter Wilson, wanted to give the Bay area an alternative to the weekly trips to the supermarket, so they pooled their talents and developed the only European style market place in the Bay area. Recognizable for its unique architectural design as well as the eight individual food and flower shops open to the sidewalk, Market Hall is a bustling cornerstone to the very unique, active, and abiding Rockridge district.

We're located at 5655 College Avenue in Oakland, CA 94618.

[Google Map](#)
[Directions](#)
[Employment Opportunities](#)
[Site Credits](#)

MH Business Office Information

Phone: 510-450-6000
Fax: 510-601-8893
Office Hours:
Monday - Friday
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

