

Land Use 4

The current land uses in the Station Area vary widely from single-family homes and neighborhood-serving retail to multi-family apartments and regional-serving retail. There are also numerous underutilized parcels along El Camino Real, suitable for more intensive, transit-supportive uses. The careful weaving of new transit-supportive development into the fabric of El Camino Real is a major key to the success of this Station Area Plan. This is consistent with the land use vision established in *Vision 2030*, the City's General Plan. The General Plan land uses are exemplified by intensive and mixed-use compatible land use designations along El Camino Real and the rail right-of-way, and less intensive land use designations away from the main corridor. This Plan does not change existing General Plan land use designations for parcels in the Station Area. The General Plan's designations are already consistent with San Mateo's vision for transit-oriented development around the Hillsdale Station, as was reiterated in the City's recent update of the General Plan. The General Plan land use designations provide a land use framework for the location, use, and intensity of new development in the Station Area Plan.

A. Land Use Framework

The following is a summary of the land use designations and associated development intensities that are found in the Station Area. Figure 4-1 shows a map of land use designations in the Station Area. This map reflects land use designations that are the same as those in the City's General Plan.

Residential densities are stated as the number of housing units per acre of developable land. Development is required within the density range, both maximum and minimum, as stipulated in the land use designation.

1. Low-Density Multi-Family Residential ■

Lower density residential uses such as duplexes and townhouses, ranging from 9 to 17 dwelling units per acre, are allowed in this designation. This designation is intended to serve as a buffer between higher intensity uses along major corridors and single-family neighborhoods.

Figure 4-1: Land Use Map



2. Medium-Density Multi-Family Residential

Apartment and condominium developments at a density range of 18 to 35 dwelling units per acre are allowed in this designation. This land use category is intended to serve as a buffer between higher intensity uses along major corridors and single-family neighborhoods.

3. High-Density Multi-Family Residential

This designation is intended to focus high intensity residential development near El Camino Real and Caltrain. Residential development designed to generate activity and support transit-use at a range of 36 to 50 units per acre is allowed in this designation.

4. Neighborhood Commercial

This designation allows retail, restaurants, services, and offices that serve the immediate neighborhood. Development can vary from shopping centers with off-street parking to clusters of street-facing storefronts. Floor-to-area ratios (FAR) range from 0.5 to 1.0. Residential uses are allowed in this designation.

5. Regional/Community Commercial

This designation allows larger shopping centers and districts with FARs of 1.0 to 2.5 providing goods and services usually not available in neighborhood shopping centers. These centers rely on large trade areas and may include department stores, banks, furniture stores, auto dealerships, appliance stores, toy stores, hotels, and offices. Residential uses are allowed in this designation.

6. Service Commercial

This designation accommodates facilities which provide city-wide and regional services including automobile and truck repair, building material yards, and animal hospitals. These uses are generally located away from residential areas due to potential noise, air quality, and parking conflicts and are characterized by a maximum FAR of 1.0. Residential uses are not permitted in service commercial areas.

7. Regional/Community Commercial/High Density Multi-Family

This designation allows for a mix of Regional/Community Commercial and High Density Multi-Family uses and provides incentives for housing as part of a mixed-use development. FARs range from 1.0 to 3.0.

8. Executive Office ■

This designation allows office parks as well as concentrations of medical or professional offices, and is characterized by FARs of 0.62 to 1.0. Residential uses are allowed in this designation.

9. Public Facilities ■

Facilities owned and/or operated by the City, other governmental agencies, and/or the public school districts are allowed in this designation.

10. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Areas ■

This designation is described more fully in the Rail Corridor Plan. Land uses within this area should be transit supportive, including multi-family housing and major employment centers. Retail uses are intended to be convenience oriented, such as, but not limited to shops which carry smaller goods, cafes, newsstands, dry cleaners, neighborhood grocery stores, specialized services and shops such as daycare, bicycle shops, art stores, or similar uses. These uses should be developed within larger mixed-use buildings, combined with residential or offices uses. Childcare facilities and daycare centers should be incorporated within employment centers and multi-family projects. Densities may range from 25 to 50 units per acre, FARs may range from 0.3 to 3.0, and heights may range from 24 feet to 55 feet.

11. Transportation Corridor ■

This designation is intended for freeways and fixed transit lines which provide mass transportation. Portions of the railroad corridor not required for transportation purposes may be considered for other uses.



Peninsula Station is a recent affordable housing project in the Station Area.

B. Housing Affordability

The Hillsdale Station Area Plan and other City policy documents set out a framework for transit-oriented development around the Hillsdale Caltrain station. An additional goal of this Station Area Plan is to ensure that the type of TOD developed in the Station Area includes housing that is affordable to a range of households.

While transit-oriented development (TOD) planning and projects can improve neighborhoods, increase transit use, and reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions, these benefits do not always accrue to lower-income residents in the area. Many new

TOD projects serve upper-income households who can afford to pay premium rents and sales prices. In addition, new TOD projects can lead to real estate appreciation in the community, resulting in displacement of lower-income households or small businesses who can no longer afford to live and operate in the neighborhood. As such, neighborhood revitalization through TOD should be balanced with efforts to preserve affordable residential and commercial districts, and support the production of affordable homes. These include both subsidized affordable units, as well as market rate homes that are more accessible to low- and moderate-income households through their design and pricing.

Following is a discussion of housing affordability measures contained in the Plan. An Affordable Housing Strategy that will help implement these goals can be found in Chapter 8, Implementation.

Ground Floor Uses

In an effort to create an active street frontage and promote walkability, the City has encouraged residential developers in the Hillsdale Station Area to include ground-floor commercial space as part of their projects. However, depending on the location and amount of space, ground-floor commercial uses can hinder a project's financial performance, making it harder for projects to "pencil out." Affordable housing developers, in particular, have to identify additional financing for commercial uses, which are not supported by many housing funding sources, such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program.

For these reasons, the Station Area Plan limits the requirements for ground-floor non-residential uses in the Hillsdale Station Area to the front part of parcels that directly face onto El Camino Real and onto 25th Avenue, with some exceptions as noted in Policy LU-1.1. This area together constitutes the "Active Zone" in the Station Area, which has the greatest pedestrian focus. Street life is particularly important and design guidelines in Chapter 5: Urban Design focus on ways to bring interest to the street environment.

The focus on non-residential uses is intended to continue to allow a wide range of uses, not all of which will be retail. This is because during the initial implementation of the Hillsdale Station Area Plan, the area will be in transition as it is improved and becomes more accessible to pedestrians and passengers. As new mixed-use developments are built in this transition time, support for ground floor retail may remain modest due to

the gradual economic recovery, current vacancies in the area, and the need to establish the area as a pedestrian-oriented environment. These vacancies in new spaces can limit building owners' ability to maintain façades and make ongoing improvements. Over time, long-term vacancies can depress lease rates, making it more difficult for future developers to include commercial space in mixed-use projects. Therefore, this Plan is flexible about ground floor uses, permitting any non-residential use, which may include offices, personal services such as banking or hair salons, and other uses not focused on retail transactions. Throughout the Station Area, affordable housing developments can include ground-floor residential uses. All ground floor uses are subject to the design standards in Chapter 5: Urban Design.

Appropriate Parking for Residential Development

Parking can often dictate the feasibility of a development because of the amount of land required for the provision of spaces for residents and guests. There is also a relationship to the number of parking spaces to the costs of residential units. The provision of parking spaces is a large portion of the construction cost, and is passed on to the cost of the housing unit. Reduced parking requirements or tandem parking strategies are measures that can preserve the affordability of new housing in the Station Area.

While projects in the TOD districts do not have specific parking requirements according to the Rail Corridor Plan, the Corridor Plan contains other parking management related requirements. According to Policy 7.19 of the Rail Corridor Plan, all development projects must complete a Trip Reduction and Parking Management Plan as part of the development application. Policy 7.19 states that the Parking Management Plan “would be tailored to reflect the location of the project, proximity and access to transit, walkability, proposed land uses, proposed phasing, if applicable, and other relevant factors.” Thus the Parking Management Plan offers developers an opportunity to document and justify the amount of parking they are proposing to provide. According to Policy 7.22 specific parking minimum and maximum standards for a new development project will be established as part of the conditions of approval process.

The Station Area Plan supports the implementation of Rail Corridor Policies 7.19 and 7.22 as mechanisms to combat high housing costs and displacement. In addition, see the Transportation chapter of this Plan for parking policies.

C. Existing Hillsdale Caltrain Station Parcel

The existing Caltrain Station is located on a parcel that is designated Transportation Corridor and owned by Caltrain. Located north of Hillsdale Boulevard and bounded by El Camino Real and the railway tracks, this parcel is designated Transportation Corridor, which prohibits residential uses. However, only the portion immediately adjacent to the train tracks is necessary to support the tracks and associated right-of-way. Once the Caltrain Station relocates north, the parcel's designation as Transportation Corridor would make it difficult to construct housing or mixed-use consistent with this Plan's vision for the area. For this reason, this Plan recommends that Caltrain or a future property owner consider applying to the City to redesignate the portion of this parcel not needed for Caltrain tracks and right-of-way to TOD. This would allow development on the parcel that would incorporate it into the greater network of transit-oriented uses.



Caltrain railway tracks are within parcels designated Transportation Corridor.

D. Land Use Goals and Policies

Existing policies supportive of TOD are found in the General Plan and Rail Corridor TOD Plan. This plan respects and builds on those policies. The following are goals and policies specific to the Station Area. They promote a mix of uses that will create a lively, transit-friendly, and affordable Station Area.

Goal LU-1: Encourage land uses that support use of Caltrain, SamTrans, and other transit providers, and make the Station Area a place where daily needs can be met by walking, cycling, and taking transit.

Policy LU-1.1: North of 31st Avenue, require non-residential ground-floor uses in the Active Zone of the Station Area, defined as the portion of parcels that face onto El Camino Real from 25th to 31st Avenues and the portion of parcels that face onto 25th Avenue. This requirement applies only to the first 30 feet of depth of a building facing onto El Camino Real. For parcels with more than 300 feet of frontage along El Camino Real, a minimum of 50% of the parcel frontage (measured in linear feet) must meet this requirement. Residential entryways, lobbies, and other accessory uses related to upper story residential are permitted.

Policy LU-1.2: To encourage the production of affordable-only housing development, such projects may have ground floor residential in any location in the Station Area.

Policy LU-1.3: Ground floor residential uses are permitted outside of the Active Zone of the Station Area as defined in Policy LU-1.1.

Policy LU-1.4: Encourage resident-/commuter-serving commercial uses outside of the Hillsdale Shopping Center, north of 31st Avenue on El Camino Real to enhance the character of the Station Area and expand the ability of residents and commuters to meet their daily needs.

Policy LU-1.5: Following station relocation, a rezoning by the property owner of the parcel north of Hillsdale Boulevard and between El Camino Real and the Caltrain tracks to TOD is encouraged. This parcel will also need to be divided up into two parcels to allow for the train tracks to continue to be designated Transportation Corridor. Such a rezoning and parcel division would be subject to normal City review and requirements.

Policy LU-1.6: Encourage the establishment of entertainment facilities in the Station Area and allow these types of uses to fulfill non-residential ground-floor frontage requirements.

Goal LU-2: Promote housing of a variety of types that is affordable to San Mateo residents.

Policy LU-2.1: Actively support housing affordable to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households as defined by the State of California through ongoing City programs and policies.

Policy LU-2.2: Continue to avoid displacement of current renters in the Station Area, through ongoing programs including implementation of the Condominium Conversion Ordinance, support for first-time homebuyers who want to purchase units in the area, and providing funding for affordable housing development.

Policy LU-2.3: Continue active support of affordable housing programs in the City, such as the density bonus and related incentives, concessions, and waivers and modifications of development standards consistent with State law and the Density Bonus and Inclusionary Zoning Ordinances.

Policy LU-2.4: Encourage the development of housing in appropriate locations on the Hillsdale Shopping Center property in conjunction with remodels of Shopping Center buildings by making housing a permitted use on the Shopping Center property. Any redevelopment or major expansion on the site will require a Master Development Plan, per the City's General Plan

Policy LU-2.5: Continue to encourage the development of housing specifically targeted for seniors through the use of the Senior Citizen Overlay District and public funding of affordable housing set aside for senior residents.

Goal LU-3: Support land uses consistent with implementation of the Sustainable Initiatives Plan

Policy LU-3.1: Support intensification of land uses around the Hillsdale Caltrain station that make the use of alternative forms of transportation more viable.

Policy LU-3.2: Continue to implement the City's Green Building Ordinance, and encourage developers within the Station Area to voluntarily exceed requirements of the ordinance. Look for intersections between the required Trip Reduction and Parking Management Program for new projects in the Station Area and green building techniques.

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