

## **VISION AND STRATEGIES**

# **4**

The Vision and Key Strategies described in this chapter enable the East Palo Alto community's overall vision for the different Plan areas of 4 Corners, the Bay Road Central Core, the Innovation and Tech Employment Districts, and the Urban Residential Edges. This overall vision and the corresponding strategies inform the policies and requirements in the chapters that follow.

## 4.1 Vision Statement

By the year 2045, the Ravenswood Business District and 4 Corners area will become a key destination and source of pride for the East Palo Alto community. Along Bay Road and key public streets, new mixed-use development with lively ground-floor shops will be combined with multimodal transportation enhancements to foster a sense of place, safety, slower speeds, and comfort for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Active neighborhood-serving uses will be focused at 4 Corners to create a real “Downtown,” while community-owned businesses clustered near Pulgas Avenue and Bay Road will foster a lively “Main Street.” Plazas at key locations linked by promenades and greenways will give people a unique pedestrian experience and a place for relaxation and social interaction as they stroll down Bay Road on their way to the waterfront.

Through a community-vetted process, new buildings will transform the area and bring the district into the 21st century. The eastern portion of the Plan Area will grow into an employment district with a variety of innovative, clean, and advanced new-generation industries. This new development will create many new jobs, a substantial proportion of which will be held by East Palo Alto residents. The construction of new offices, R&D, life science, and light industrial uses will provide funding to support affordable housing and job training. New residential uses will be added in key locations along the edges of the employment district, enlivening the Area’s trails, streetscapes, and businesses. Overall, this Specific Plan will create a more economically and fiscally secure future for East Palo Alto by generating sustainable employment opportunities and additional revenue to support expanded city services.

Impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods (especially University Village) will be minimized. Current land uses will remain while being enhanced by public capital improvements, such as the redevelopment of the Hetch Hetchy right-of-way into a linear park with outdoor play space, community gardens, and other park amenities and furniture. New buildings near existing single-family homes will have lower heights and reduced massing to protect homeowners’ privacy. A district-wide transportation management association will oversee effective trip reduction measures, public transit programs, and traffic calming efforts to ensure automobile traffic does not detract from the pedestrian experience and daily residents’ commutes.

New major developments will be accompanied by community and public places designed to improve the lives of residents, workers, and visitors alike. Buildings, plazas, parks, and trails incorporating various placemaking elements would be designed, developed, and programmed to celebrate the history, culture, and diversity of East Palo Alto. Subsidized shops or maker spaces will provide a chance for local businesses, vendors, fabricators, and start-ups to get off the ground. New community facilities will create places where people can gather for special events. Pulgas Avenue and Bay Road will be adorned with pedestrian friendly street furniture and emphasized as places for community-oriented activity. Streetscape enhancements that accompany new development will create walkable streets throughout the Plan Area, while recreational facilities will give the city's youth a safe and welcoming place to gather. A continuous waterfront linear park will become a signature amenity for the entire City, connecting to acres of existing and new public open spaces.

### 4.2 Plan Concept

The Plan Concept was created through a collaborative process that took place over the course of three years (Chapter 2 describes in greater detail how the process was built around regular input from community members, property owners, and City leadership). This concept is shown in Figure 4-1; a variety of public, residential, light industrial, and office/R&D land uses along with associated mobility improvements and a comprehensive open space network are depicted within the Plan Area. Key elements of the proposed pedestrian and bicycle network are shown, as indicated by the waterfront promenade and the greenways/multiuse paths. No land use changes are proposed in the University Village residential neighborhood, which is outside of the Plan Area, located east of University Avenue and north of Bay Road. The majority of the planned public amenities, utility and mobility infrastructure improvements, and community benefits are contingent on private development, and therefore would be built out over time as development occurs in future phases/market cycles.

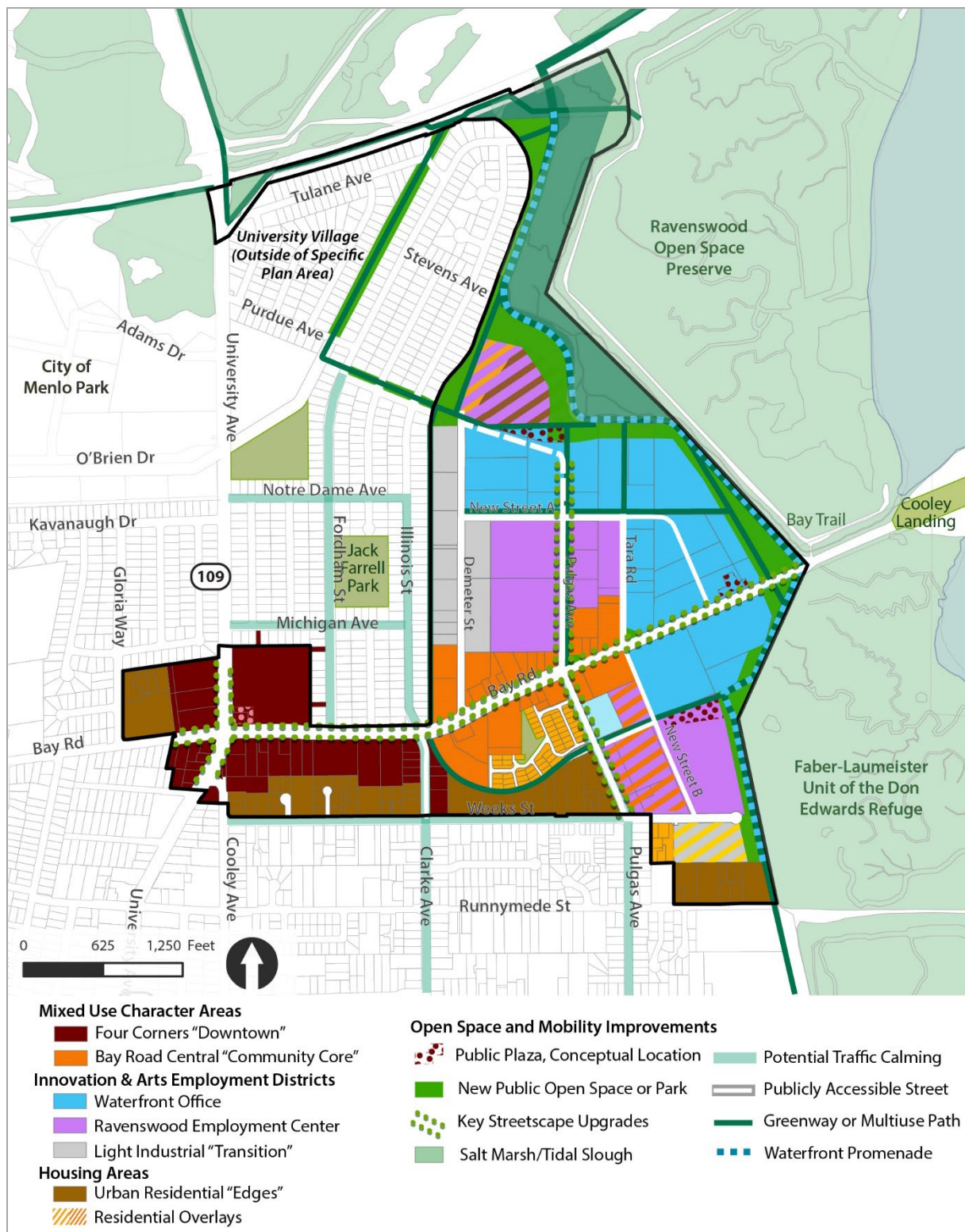
*Note: The Plan Concept is a careful update to the Community's original Preferred Alternative, which was adopted by the City Council in March 2011 and was revised through community input and adopted by City Council on December 3, 2024 after certification of the SEIR.*

The different zones and land uses that make up the Plan Concept are as follows:

- Four Corners: an active, urban, mixed-use Downtown for the City
- Bay Road Central Core: a community-serving nonprofit, medical, and local business core anchored around a lively middle segment with some residential uses and a mix of ground floor activities.
- Innovation & Tech Employment: composed of:
  - Waterfront Office: high-tech and higher-intensity job district with active ground floors and ample public spaces
  - Ravenswood Employment Center: middle-intensity job district, with a rich mix of employment-supporting land uses
- Light Industrial Employment: lower-tech and lower-intensity job district that offers middle-income employment and a mix of production/warehousing spaces.
- Urban Multifamily Residential Edges: multifamily housing intended for local residents and workers that serves as a transition between employment uses and existing neighborhoods.
- Public Parks and Recreation: new publicly accessible parks and recreational facilities.
- Restored Wetlands and Open Spaces: areas along the shoreline on the bay side of the future flood control improvement that are reserved for open space and marshes.

*More detail regarding the permitted type and density of development can be found in Chapter Six, Development Standards, where land use zones are described. Additional standards are located in Chapter Seven (Parks, Open Space, and Public Facilities), Chapter Eight (Mobility), and Chapter Nine (Utilities).*

Figure 4-1: Plan Concept



## **What distinguishes each of the Plan Concept's areas?**

### **4 Corners**

Bay Road is envisioned as an active and vibrant spine that serves as a focal point for Ravenswood Business District and 4 Corners, as well as for East Palo Alto as a whole. The mixed-use areas will become a central gathering place for residents and provide a cohesive Downtown experience for East Palo Alto. Storefronts and other active ground-floor uses are to be focused at and around the University Avenue/Bay Road intersection on the west. Mixed use developments will generally consist of ground-floor retail shops or community spaces and upper-floor dwellings or offices. The primary goal for this area is to ensure that uses are developed that foster activity, safety, visual interest, and a sense of community. Active frontage standards create lively façades along ground floors.

### **Bay Road Central Core**

The Bay Road Central Core is envisioned to have a similar, active character as 4 Corners; a key difference being that the ground-floor uses here would be more a mixture of retail, community, medical office, or non-profit uses, along with individually accessed residential units. These diverse land uses would be located along Bay Road and up and down Pulgas Avenue. Active frontage requirements also apply in this area. Housing above the ground floor will help provide nighttime activity and "eyes on the street" along Bay Road, as well as support for local businesses by providing a strong customer base.

### **Innovation and Tech Employment**

As shown in the Plan Concept, a variety of medium to high-intensity employment uses is envisioned broadly within the easternmost and central portions of the Plan Area, both north and south of Bay Road, and generally east of Tara Road. Allowed uses include high-quality offices, research and development (R&D), life science, biotechnical research facilities, and advanced manufacturing (subject to performance standards). These developments will offer a large number of jobs to both local residents and people from around the region, helping to bring new tax dollars and fiscal benefits into East Palo Alto.



### **Light Industrial Transition Employment**

Along both sides of Demeter Street, light industrial uses should remain the intended activity. The Plan Concept assumes that many of the existing industrial uses in this area will remain, but also that newer industrial uses would develop in these areas. The Specific Plan's performance and development standards seek to prevent any potential conflicts between residential and industrial uses. Overall, a rich mix of jobs is desired, ranging from storage and trucking uses to new uses such as light manufacturing, R&D, clean tech, robotics, and final stages of auto/electronics fabrication.

### **Urban Residential Edges**

The Plan Concept shows multi-family residential uses along the edges of the Plan boundary. These areas relate to and extend the existing residential neighborhoods south of the Plan Area, acting as a buffer between lower-density neighborhoods.

### **Community Uses (*not shown*)**

Community uses are an anticipated component of any major commercial development. While the Plan does not indicate specific locations for these uses, the Plan Concept indicates conceptual locations for public plazas, which are appropriately situated near community (and civic) uses. Community uses are anticipated to include both space for special events or recreation, spaces to rent for merchants and entrepreneurs, as well as spaces for non-profits, health clinics, and social services, and other uses of this nature. It is envisioned that redevelopment of the large parcel at the northeast corner of the Bay Road & University Avenue intersection would include a meaningful amount of civic/community space. A new recreation center could potentially be located within a new park at the termini of Purdue Avenue and Demeter Street.

### **Restored Wetlands and Open Space**

The Plan envisions continuous wetlands and open spaces along the entirety of the San Francisco Bay edge, on the bay side of the SAFERBAY flood control improvement, with the majority of the Plan Area's open space located north of Bay Road. Existing and future open spaces will be designed and restored with the full participation of City, regional, and State agencies as well as private development. Any buildings would be set back and designed to minimize impact on natural areas and habitats.

### 4.3 Anticipated Development and Growth

Table 4-1 below shows the net development potential anticipated to be built out during implementation of the Specific Plan. The figures below are estimates of likely growth and were also the maximum development totals that were analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report prepared for this Specific Plan. For a more detailed breakdown of potential net new development, employment potential, and other estimates, please refer to the Supplemental Environmental Impact Report.

**Table 4-1: Net Development Potential**

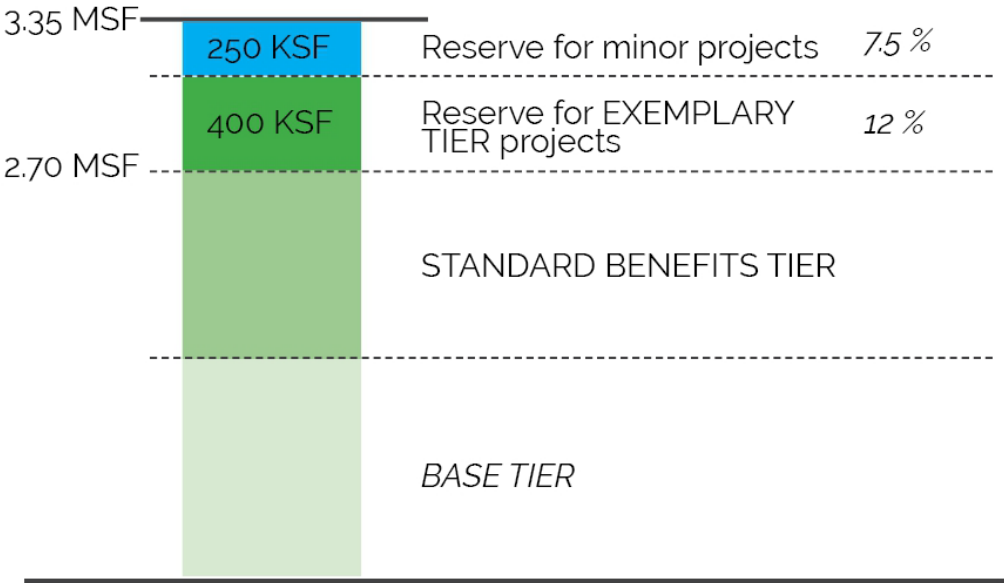
Land Use	Growth Scenario #2
<b>Office/R&amp;D</b>	3,350,000 s.f.*
<b>Industrial</b>	300,000 s.f. **
<b>Retail</b>	112,400 s.f. **
<b>Community/Civic</b>	154,700 s.f. **
<b>Tenant Amenity</b>	53,500 s.f. **
<b>All Units</b>	1,600 units
<b>Multi-family</b>	1,472 units
<b>Single-family/ Townhouse</b>	128 units

\*See Chapter 11, Implementation, for a detailed breakdown of the Development Capacity and the two Development Reserves.

\*\* The Specific Plan's SEIR analyzed and provided mitigations (or an override of significant impacts) for an envelope of maximum impacts associated with the above land uses. If the total amount of land uses is proposed to exceed any of the non-office/R&D land use categories listed in Table 4-1 (for example, if proposed industrial growth exceeds 300,000 square feet), but the cumulative impacts of growth remain below the maximum impacts studied under CEQA, then project land uses in excess of Table 4-1 may be permitted and entitled by Council. Analysis of additional impacts generated by this development in excess of Table 4-1 (such as greater air quality or noise impacts generated by a greater volume of industrial uses) may be required in project-specific CEQA review.



Figure 4-2: Maximum Development Capacity and Reserves



## 4.4 Plan Strategies

The Plan charts a course to unlock this area’s potential as a key part of the East Palo Alto community, through a lasting partnership between residents and property owners/tenants.

### 4.4.1 Community Benefits Framework and Objectives

The Plan contains a “framework” of requirements, policies, mechanisms, and targets to ensure that development projects promote the following community benefit objectives:

- Preservation of the local community and cultures,
- Local ownership of housing and businesses,
- Reinforcing the founding vision of the City, with a focus on economic empowerment & self-determination,
- Fair value in community benefits,
- Public parks, open space, view corridors, and shoreline access.

To achieve this goal, the Plan establishes a base and bonus framework that applies to major commercial developments (or mixed-use projects with a significant office/R&D component). Applicants may request entitlements for a “Base FAR” development project without providing additional community benefits, though they must still pay standard impact fees. However, to earn additional or bonus floor area - at a Standard or the higher Exemplary level - applicants must demonstrate how their project will achieve a flexible combination of various benefits targets identified for district utilities, affordable housing, community and workforce development space, parks and open space, and transportation improvements. Figure 4-3 illustrates the Bonus FAR Tiers and their relationship to the Bonus Targets (which are detailed in Table 4-3).

**In other words, for the largest commercial developments, the amount of office/R&D square footage that could be granted by Council to an applicant is tied to the project’s proposed and demonstrated ability to provide the maximum amount of prioritized community benefits.**

**Figure 4-3: Base, Standard, and Exemplary FAR Tiers**

<b>Exemplary Maximum FAR</b> <table> <tr> <td>1.5</td><td>0.75</td><td>2.0</td></tr> <tr> <td>WO</td><td>REC</td><td>4C</td></tr> </table>	1.5	0.75	2.0	WO	REC	4C		<b>EXEMPLARY BENEFITS TIER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn at least 8 points on Benefits Scorecard</li> </ul>
1.5	0.75	2.0						
WO	REC	4C						
<b>Standard Maximum FAR</b> <table> <tr> <td>0.95</td><td>0.50</td><td>1.5</td></tr> <tr> <td>WO</td><td>REC</td><td>4C</td></tr> </table>	0.95	0.50	1.5	WO	REC	4C		<b>STANDARD BENEFITS TIER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn at least 4 points on Benefits Scorecard</li> </ul>
0.95	0.50	1.5						
WO	REC	4C						
<b>Base Maximum FAR</b> <table> <tr> <td>0.50</td><td>0.35</td><td>1.0</td></tr> <tr> <td>WO</td><td>REC</td><td>4C</td></tr> </table>	0.50	0.35	1.0	WO	REC	4C		<b>BASE TIER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact Fees, Ordinances, and Measures</li> <li>• No Additional Benefits Program Required</li> </ul>
0.50	0.35	1.0						
WO	REC	4C						

### What is the Community Benefits Framework?

The Specific Plan contains a ‘framework’ for benefits that establishes an explicit relationship between a project’s provision of community benefits and the allocation of limited development capacity (office/R&D square footage). These clear expectations will guide applicants and the City in negotiating a fair deal through Development Agreements. This framework is comprised of requirements and policies that apply at each step of the development process, to guarantee that the community participates in the distribution and part-ownership of new wealth created in the district. The benefits framework includes the following requirements to apply for an allocation of development capacity:

- a) **Financial transparency analysis of benefits and project value.** Applicants for major commercial entitlements are required to conduct consistent and clear financial analyses in order to: confirm the value of proposed community benefits

and determine whether proposed benefits are adequate relative to the development rights granted to ensure that the community is benefiting sufficiently from any square foot allocation. The City's economist will peer review these analyses of the proposed project & benefits package.

- b) Community benefits scorecard, narrative and phasing plan, local jobs strategy and priorities checklist.** The priority list reflects that certain benefits are more desired by community members than others; specifically affordable housing, local jobs and workforce development, and community facilities/spaces. These are listed in Table 4-2.

Allocation of Development Capacity (office/R&D square footage) is tied to the achievement of community objectives. Council will use its discretion to offer Allocations of Development Capacity to projects that are best aligned with community priorities and achieve the targets:

- a) Bonus FAR Tier Targets.** In order to ensure that the highest priority benefits are provided to the community by development projects, the Plan's benefits framework establishes recommended targets (shown in Table 4-3) to guide structured and consistent evaluations of each project's benefits by Council. These tiers (detailed in Chapter 10) provide the framework for a structured negotiation between Council and the applicants over requested allocations of Development Capacity (office/R&D square footage); projects offering benefits exceeding the base may be granted more height and commercial floor area (FAR).
- b) Allocation of capacity based on Staff/Council evaluation of proposed Community Benefits.** City staff will make a recommendation as to whether a project should receive its requested allocation, in light of the project's proposed benefits, their location, suitability, and alignment with identified priorities.
- c) After square footage is allocated and/or development agreements are negotiated, the framework is further implemented through the provision of ongoing revenues** (beyond property taxes), and sustainable community benefits for the City and community.

**Table 4-2: Priority Benefits (in approximate order of priority)**

Type	Description
<b>District Utilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of and dedication of sites for public utilities facilities (e.g., pump station and water tank)</li> <li>Support for the SAFERBAY Flood Control/Levee Project</li> </ul>
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction of deed-restricted rental affordable housing for lower-income households earning 35% to 60% of AMI (primary emphasis; onsite is preferred but offsite within City borders would be allowed at City discretion)</li> <li>Construction of units for “middle-income” households at 60% to 100% of AMI (secondary emphasis)</li> <li>Funding for home ownership programs or for-sale units</li> <li>Funding for acquisition, rehab, and housing preservation and for rental assistance programs</li> <li>Construction of affordable housing units for vulnerable populations such as low-income seniors, large households, at-risk youths and adults, and persons with disabilities</li> </ul>
<b>Jobs and Workforce Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding and subsidized spaces for job training, vocational education, internships, and apprenticeships</li> <li>Funding and/or below market rate subsidized space for entrepreneurs and other small local businesses, especially those displaced at any time from the City or Plan Area</li> <li>Jobs reserved for residents or high school seniors</li> <li>Construction of light industrial, production-oriented spaces or maker, fabricator, or live/work space</li> </ul>
<b>Community Facilities and Local Business Support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing funding for community projects and programs</li> <li>Construction of subsidized space for local community use including for community organizations providing services (e.g. legal aid, core services, etc.) to City residents</li> <li>Funding for local schools and childcare</li> <li>Funding for library, police station, city offices</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and Public Space and Art</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New and renovated public parks and open spaces, including playgrounds and recreational amenities</li> <li>New and renovated trails and greenways</li> <li>Urban forestry enhancement and beautification</li> <li>Restored wetlands and marshland ecosystems</li> <li>Public art &amp; arts programming</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neighborhood traffic calming and safety enhancements</li> <li>Multi-modal improvement projects above the impact fee</li> <li>Funding for city/regional transit improvements and programs</li> </ul>

- **Standard Tier** may be granted by earning a minimum of 4 points.
- **Exemplary Tier** may be granted by earning a minimum of 8 points, with an expectation of at least 1 point in both **Affordable Housing** and **Community Space**. Achievement over 8 points will be reflected in the staff's positive recommendation to Council.

**Table 4-3: Bonus FAR Targets & Expectations**

Category	Base Requirement	Worth 1 point	Worth 2 points	Worth 3 points
		Worth 1 point	Worth 2 points	Worth 3 points
<b>1. Utilities</b>	Impact fees	\$	\$\$	\$\$\$
<b>2. Affordable Housing</b>	Commercial Linkage Fee	\$ Build affordable housing or donate land above Commercial Linkage Fee requirement	\$\$ Build affordable housing or donate land above Commercial Linkage Fee requirement	\$\$\$ Build affordable housing or donate land above Commercial Linkage Fee <b>(Jobs/Housing Target)</b>
<b>3. Community (Civic &amp; Jobs) Space</b>	0% of total project square footage	2.5%	5%	7.5%
<b>4. Public Parks, Plazas &amp; Greenways</b>	WO 5% REC 0% 4C 5%	WO 10% REC 10% 4C 10%	WO 20% REC 15% 4C 20%	WO 30% REC 25% 4C 25%
<b>5. Transportation</b>	Impact fees	\$	\$\$	\$\$\$

See Chapter 10 and Table 10-1 for details on how each category is calculated.



## How does the Framework Support the Community's Priorities?

### Affordable Housing and Anti-Displacement

The Plan supports affordable housing through several mechanisms:

- An ambitious total housing unit target of 1,350 to 1,600 units, enabled by regulations that allow new housing in many areas.
- A framework based around maximizing affordable rental construction, especially at the extremely low-income and very-low-income categories and building units for especially vulnerable populations to affirmatively further fair housing (including housing for seniors, large households (3+ bedroom units), at-risk youths and adults, and persons with disabilities).
- Funding for affordable home ownership in the Plan Area or in other areas in the City is identified as a priority benefit; providing priority benefits is an expectation of high-density development.
- A Jobs-Housing Linkage target integrated into the bonus framework (equivalent to 3 points of affordable housing contributions), such that additional commercial floor area may be obtained in exchange for building more affordable units than required to promote a healthier balance between jobs and housing.
- Enabling partnerships with affordable housing developers (e.g., non-profit organizations, community land trusts, and housing trust funds) to fund and build affordable housing.
- Support for Housing Element policies and programs and implementing the City's overall Affordable Housing Strategy.

### Local Jobs / Business Support and Workforce Development

The Plan employs a handful of strategies to promote jobs for residents:

- Applicants must comprehensively describe their Local Jobs Strategy, indicating how jobs will be provided across the educational spectrum and describing strategies for matching residents' skills to future jobs.

- Light industrial use is required along ground floors on Demeter Street (such as loading, production/distribution/repair, fabrication, catering, or similar).
- Allowed uses in existing employment zones are expanded to accommodate an uncertain market and unknown future technologies.
- Staff are directed to recommend exemplary bonuses for projects that provide funding or spaces for job training.

### Community Spaces and Facilities

The Plan outlines policies and actions to promote abundant new spaces for the local community:

- Over 150,000 square feet exclusively for community use is anticipated and has been analyzed within the Plan's SEIR, including local community retail storefronts/start-ups (especially formerly relocated or displaced local retailers and small businesses), recreational facilities, resource centers, a library, and similar uses.
- The Plan strongly encourages new community spaces to be provided for free or at subsidized rents (which is one possible source of ongoing community-serving funds/revenues).

### Other Key Plan Mechanisms to Achieve Community Desires

- Community involvement in future decision-making related to benefits distribution. As a key implementation action, the Plan calls for the Council to develop a consistent approach to involving the community in future decision-making, which could take the form of regular public forums, resident surveys, or an advisory body composed of representatives from local organizations that offers recommendations to the Council around the use of community benefits funds or spaces.
- Front-loading of community benefits. To combat fears about promised community benefits not materializing, applicants are expected to agree to build, deliver or pay some portion of total project community benefits during early phases of master-planned developments.
- Ongoing revenue streams for the community. Several different

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approaches will be pursued, including:

- The City will collect penalties for not meeting certain requirements of the Plan and its supporting ordinances (i.e., TDM trip reduction targets) to fund ongoing benefits, with a focus on local transportation upgrades in the case of TDM penalties.
- New office and R&D developments will be responsible for significant annual Measure HH and Measure L contributions, representing a major City revenue stream that will fund persistent and ongoing community benefits over time, not just one-time at project approval.
- In the future, the Council may choose to implement other strategies such as collecting funds from development projects to start a revolving loan fund or setting aside a portion of the increase in fiscal revenues to fund key improvements in the area.

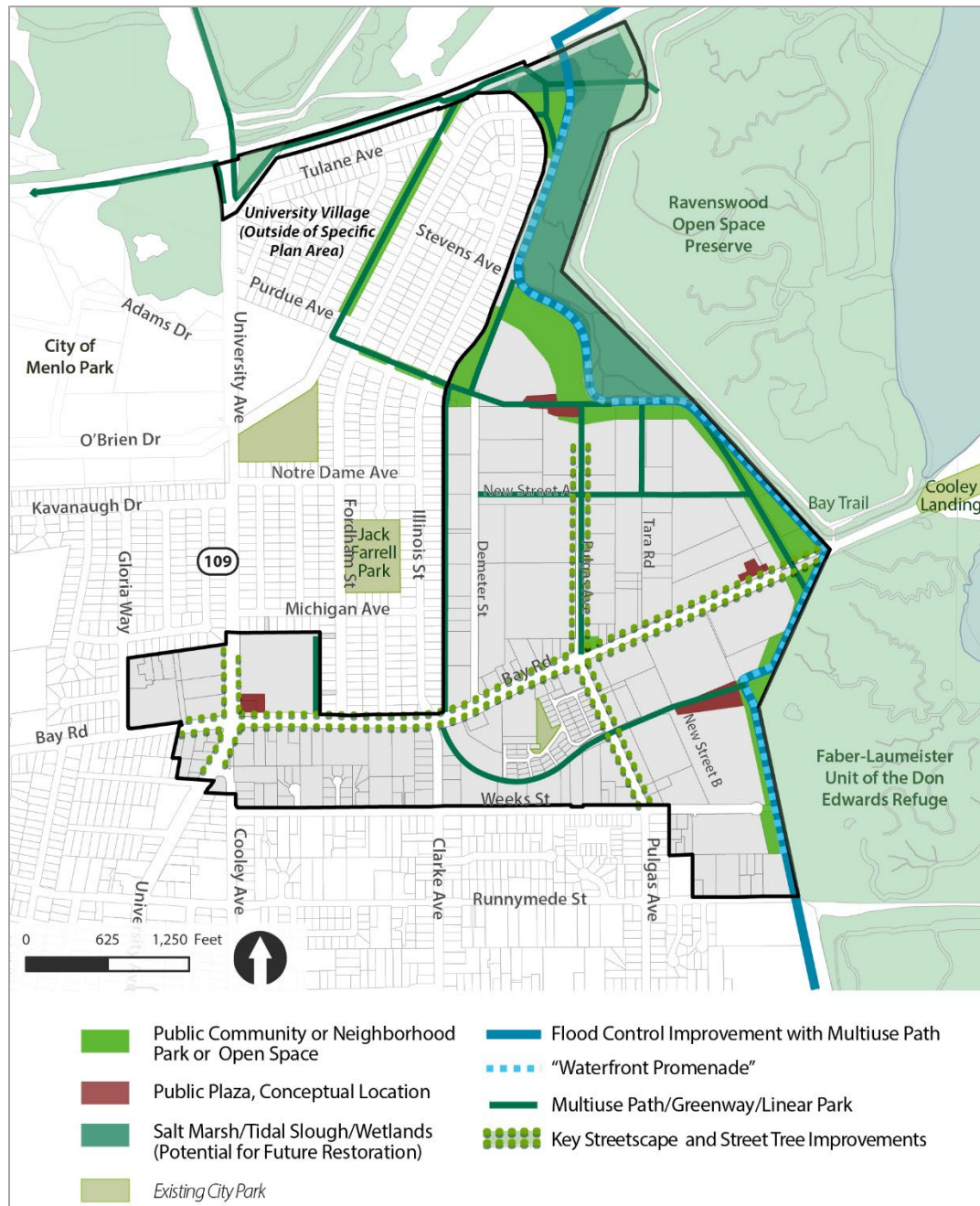
### 4.4.2 Community Design

#### Public Parks and Open Space Concept

A key part of the Specific Plan is a network of public outdoor spaces available to residents, workers, and visitors. Figure 4-4 illustrates the Parks and Open Space Concept developed for and by the community. This concept is integrated with the citywide Parks Master Plan and Urban Forest Master Plan. This Plan adds more than 31 total acres of activated and publicly accessible outdoor space to the city. These new public recreational amenities will serve the increased demand from new residents and workers, in addition to the current residents who are underserved by currently available public open space and parks. The Plan calls for:

- **21 acres of public parks, including:**
  - Several large community parks, including at the northerly extension of Pulgas Avenue, at the northern end of Fordham Street, and at the east end of Bay Road on both sides.
  - A handful of smaller neighborhood parks and mini parks, including at the east end of Weeks Street and along the linear Hetch Hetchy property.
- **At least 2 acres of public plazas:** including at least four separate plazas, one within each major commercial development. Two are envisioned as anchors at either end of Bay Road, between University Avenue and the Ravenswood Preserve, while the other two are intended as significant waterfront gathering spaces at the easterly terminus of Weeks Street and northerly terminus of Pulgas Avenue.
- **5.5 acres of trails and waterfront promenades,** including:
  - An integrated waterfront linear park/Bay Trail with amenities to support jogging, recreation, picnicking, biking, and birdwatching.
  - Two new east-to-west greenway connections (one north and one south of Bay Road).
- **2.5 acres of streetscape & street tree improvements,** with a focus on Bay Road, Pulgas Avenue, and University Avenue at Four Corners.
- In addition to publicly usable spaces, over **16 acres of restored wetlands and natural open spaces** would be protected and put under long-term management.

**Figure 4-4: Public Parks and Open Space Framework**



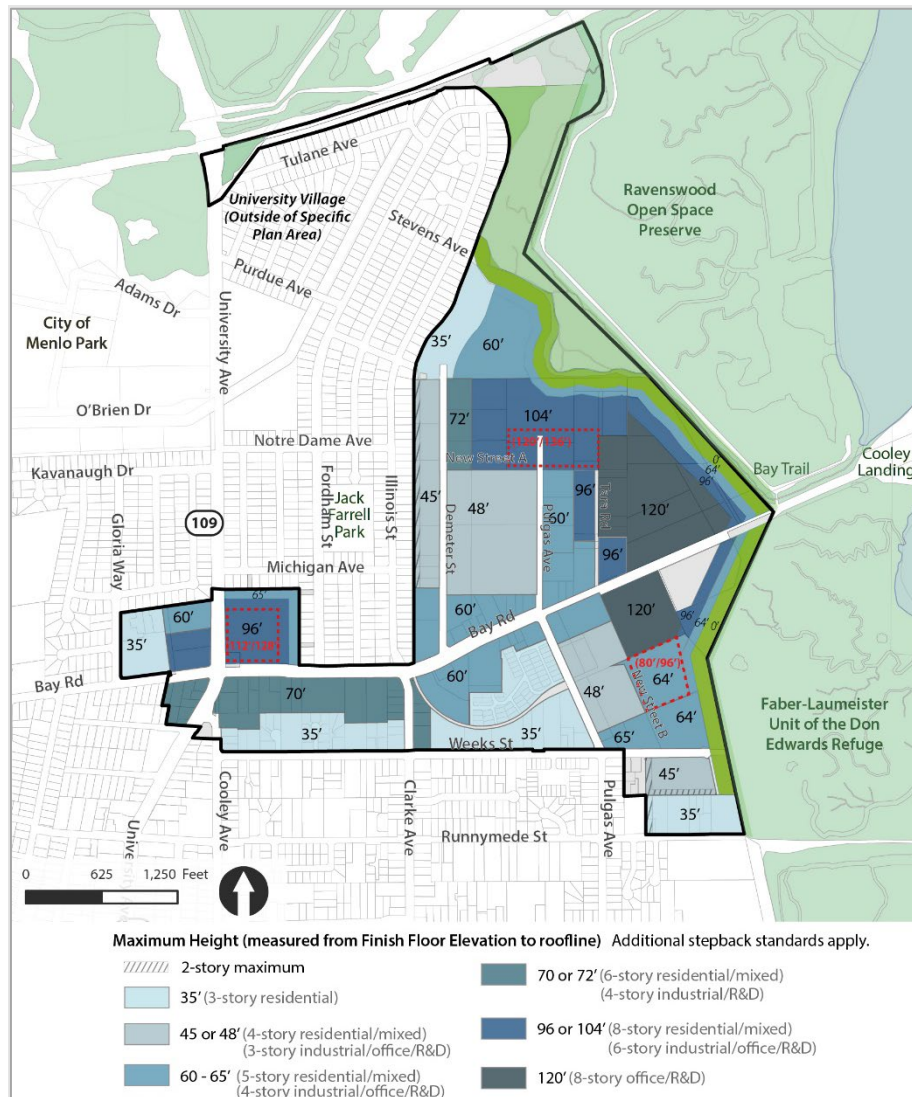
While the figure shows potential locations for parks, plazas, and other open spaces, the map is only a conceptual illustration of where these amenities could potentially be located. The exact location, size, and configuration of new parks and open spaces will be determined as new development occurs and as developers and the City acquire land. Therefore, the majority of the public spaces shown in Figure 4-4 are not specifically zoned as parks or open space but will be implemented through Master Development Plans.



## Building Heights and Form

Community members communicated a desire for buildings at varying scales throughout the Plan area and maintaining privacy for adjacent homeowners. Accordingly, as illustrated in Figure 4-5, the Plan's height standards focus the tallest buildings (seven to eight stories) at the far end of Bay Road, in Four Corners with appropriate transitions, and in the employment core. Four and five-story buildings are allowed along the middle of Bay Road to help activate the street while buffering neighborhoods from taller buildings. In general, maximum heights are significantly lessened as one moves closer to single-family neighborhoods.

**Figure 4-5: Maximum Heights**



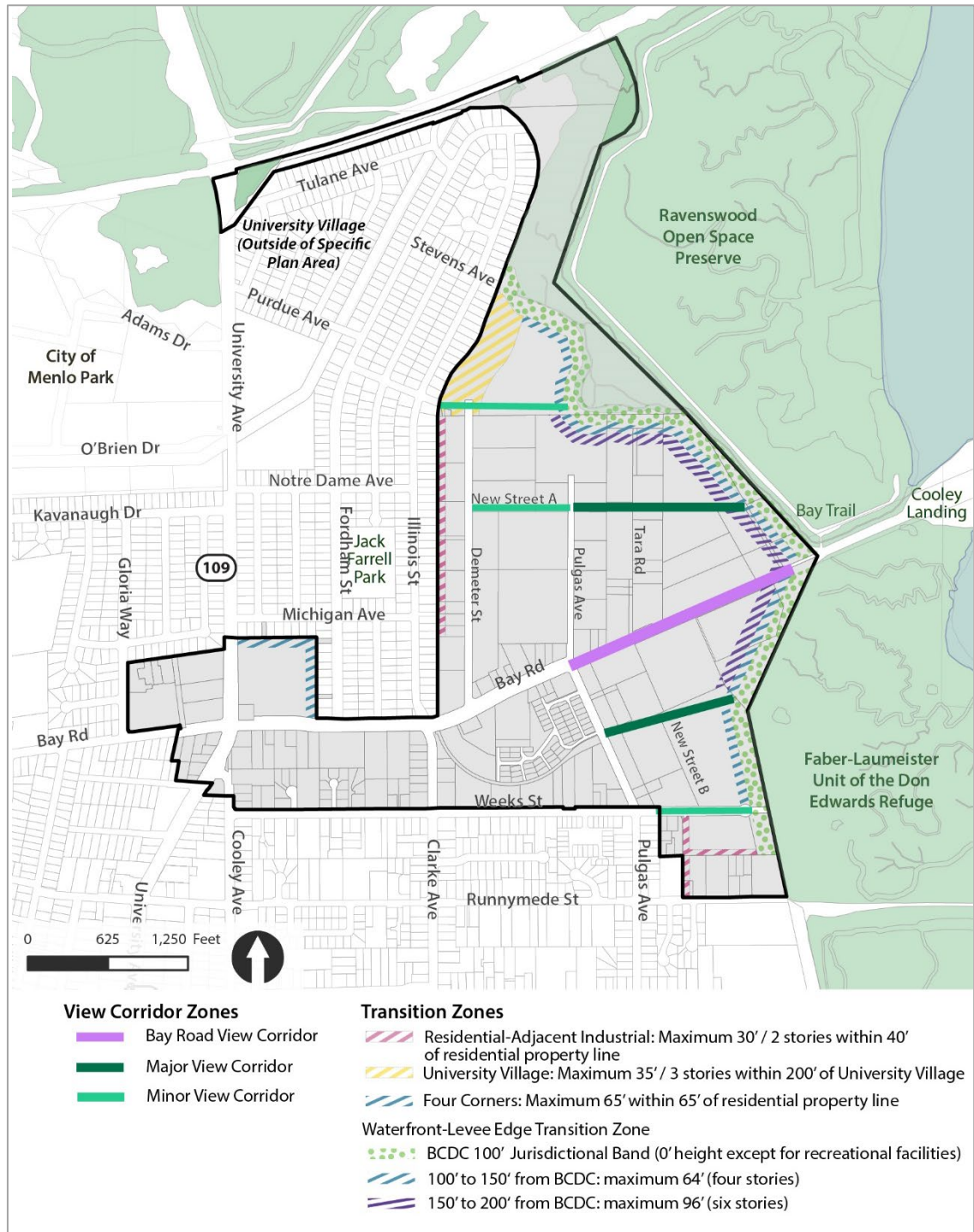


### Stepbacks and View Corridors

To supplement the maximum height standards and to reduce the apparent size of buildings, the Plan includes view corridor policies and stepback zones (shown in Figure 4-6) that are centered around three broad objectives:

1. Protecting existing character, privacy, and access to sunlight for single-family homes, especially in University Village, through:
2. A stepback zone along the back side of 4 Corners.
3. A stepback zone along the back of University Village.
4. A rear stepback zone for uses in Industrial Transition.
5. Additional restrictions on upper portions of high-rise buildings.
6. Minimizing building shadow impacts on wetlands, natural open space, and habitat, through an upper floor stepback zone that extends inward 100' from the edge of BCDC (Bay Conservation and Development Commission) jurisdiction. Heights are progressively restricted to four and six floors.
7. Enhancing public views of the waterfront, by requiring an upper floor stepback for buildings fronting along Bay Road east of Tara Road, and through stepback & minimum building separation standards along major and minor "view corridors."

***Stepbacks are reductions in upper floor building height and massing; the higher floors of buildings are being "stepped back" away from adjacent homes or the waterfront. These are distinguished from setbacks which regulate the distance between the perimeter of the ground floor of a building in relation to property lines.***

**Figure 4-6: Stepbacks and View Corridors**

### Active Frontages

A critical objective for this Specific Plan is the activation of Bay Road. Achieving this goal will continue to be a challenge due to a lack of retail demand, fragmented ownership, shallow parcels that make structured parking infeasible, and the location of existing buildings. In response, the Plan contains an “active frontages” strategy that indicates the most appropriate street frontages for the limited amount of retail storefronts and active land uses and supports this activation through additional design and land use controls. Planned mobility improvements will be aligned with these priority frontages to support a cohesive urban streetscape environment. See Figure 4-7 below for the most crucial locations where active ground floors shall be located:

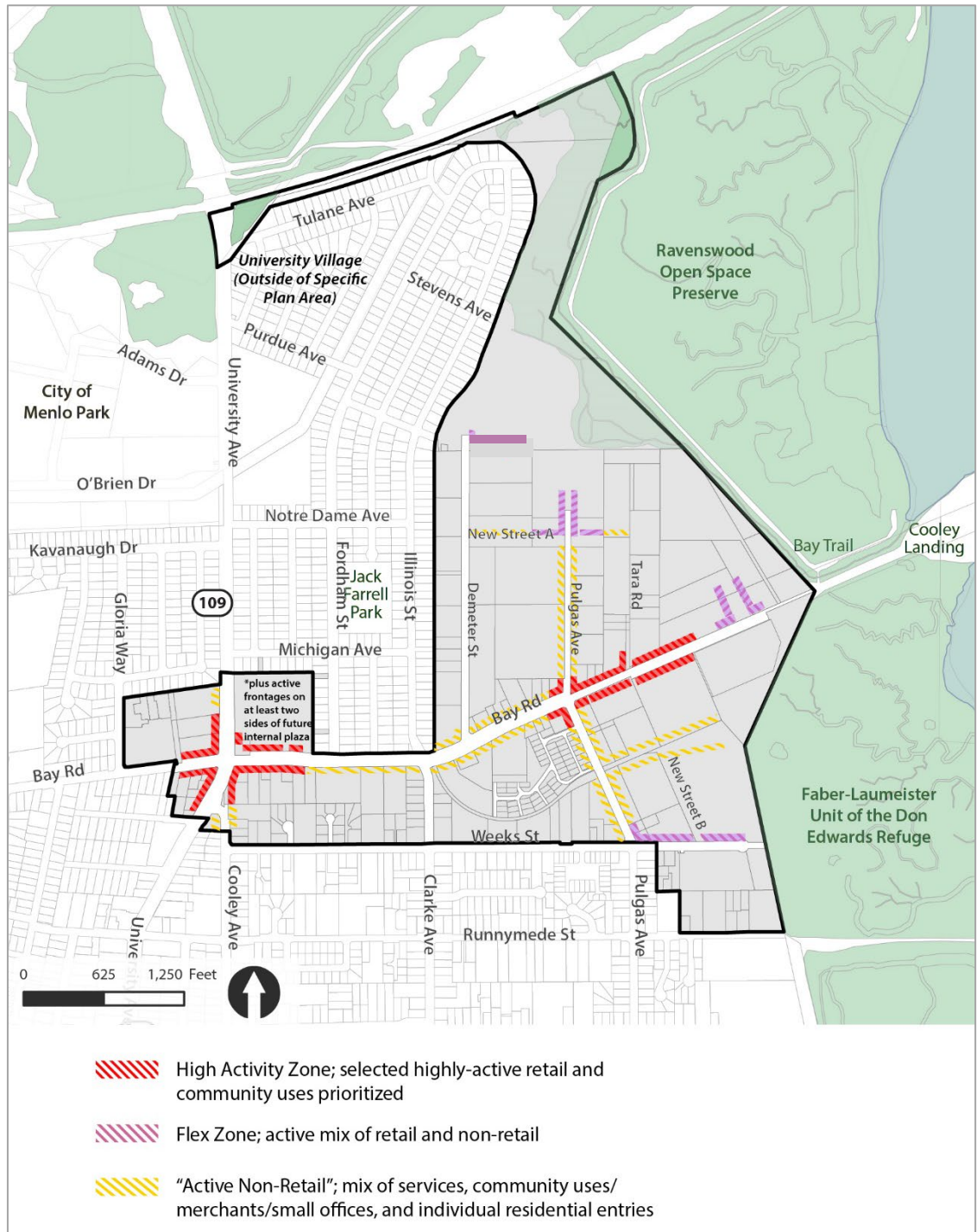
- At 4 Corners; along Bay Road and most of University Avenue, and surrounding any public plaza on the vacant corner site; and
- Along Bay Road near the Ravenswood Health Center and CENTERARTS.

To connect neighborhoods to the most active areas, active frontages are required to a lesser extent in the following areas:

- Along Weeks Street,
- Along the community-oriented corridor of Pulgas Avenue,
- On portions of the future connection between the ends of Pulgas Avenue and Purdue Avenue,
- Along major pedestrian/bicycle greenways, and
- Facing at least two sides of public plazas (three sides in Four Corners).

*See Chapter Six for other detailed design standards applicable to new private development in the Plan Area.*

Figure 4-7: Active Frontages



### 4.4.3 Mobility and Transportation Network

This section presents the vision for enhanced vehicle, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connectivity in the Plan area. The overarching goal is to create a multimodal network with beautiful pedestrian-oriented streets that enhance the identity and character of the neighborhood, while also increasing access to the waterfront. *Chapter 8 of this Specific Plan illustrates planned mobility improvements in greater detail with cross-sections.*

#### Vehicular Street Improvements

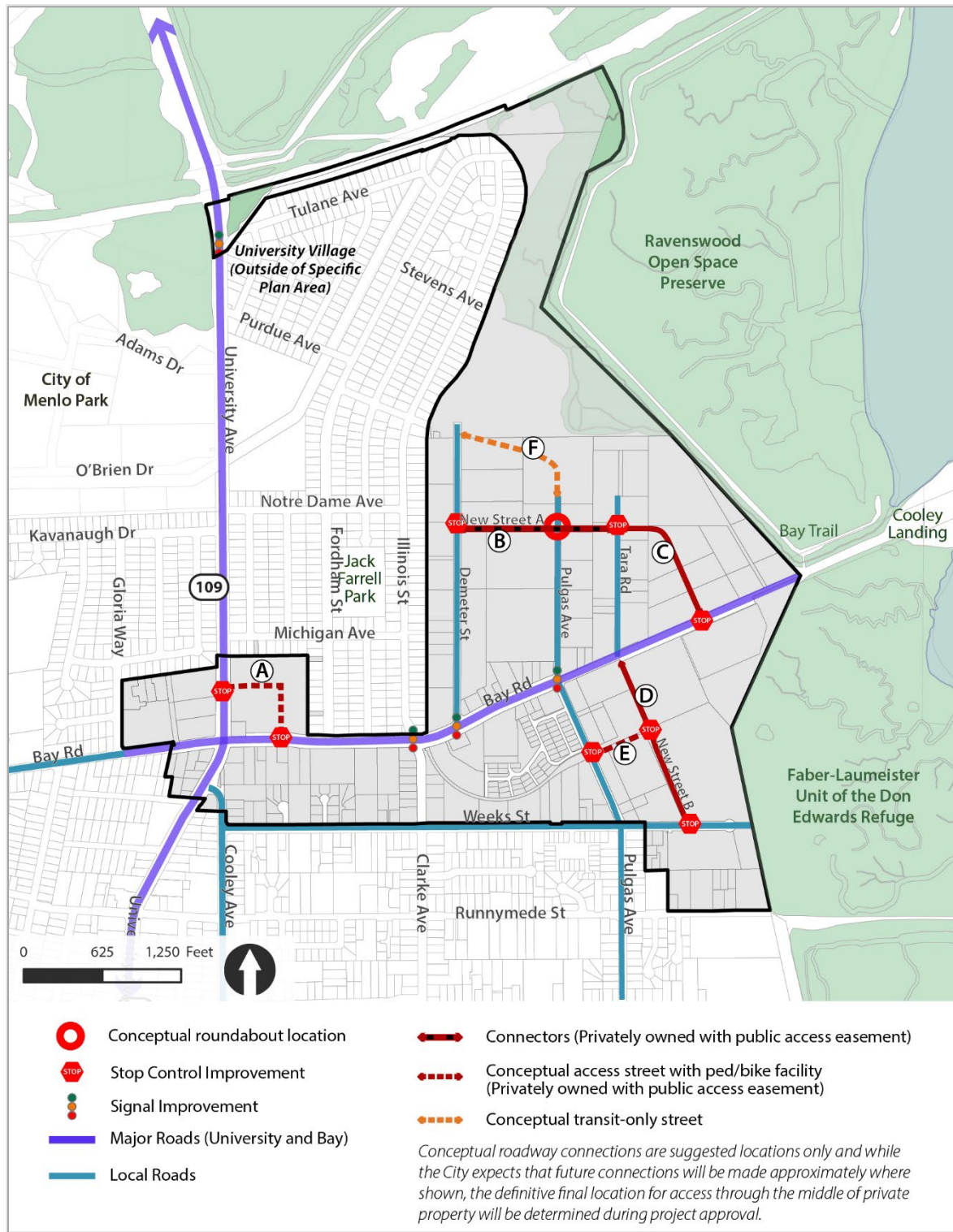
The Future Public Roadway Network diagram below (Figure 4-8) illustrates the new and upgraded existing streets in the Plan Area. Key improvements include:

- New Privately Owned Streets with Public Access Easements. Access roads to serve the interior of developments, providing fire access, emergency routes, and public access.
  - A.** An internal street at Four Corners between University Ave & Bay Road.
  - B.** New Street A, which is a new east-west street to improve circulation and reduce vehicle trips on Bay Road.
  - C.** A new street running southeast from Tara to Bay Road
  - D.** New Street B, a southern extension of Tara Road to Weeks Street.
  - E.** An east-west street south of Bay Road between the Tara Road extension and Pulgas Avenue.
  - F.** *Conceptual Transit-Only Street.* Depending on future transit service, a transit-only (no private vehicles) connection may be built between Pulgas Avenue and Purdue Street.
- New Slow or Shared Streets. Unique pedestrian-friendly street environments where street and sidewalk grades are equal. Locations for these are not identified on the network diagram.

- Improvements to Existing Streets
  - H. Bay Road Widening.** Bay Road east of Pulgas Avenue will be improved to address pedestrian safety and widened to accommodate on-street parking on one side and left turn lanes where needed.
  - I. Pulgas Avenue.** Pulgas Avenue will be enhanced as an important community-oriented spine, with expanded sidewalks and a cycle track, street trees, and street furniture. A single-lane roundabout is planned where Pulgas intersects New Street A (the “East-West Connector”).



Figure 4-8: Future Public Roadway Network



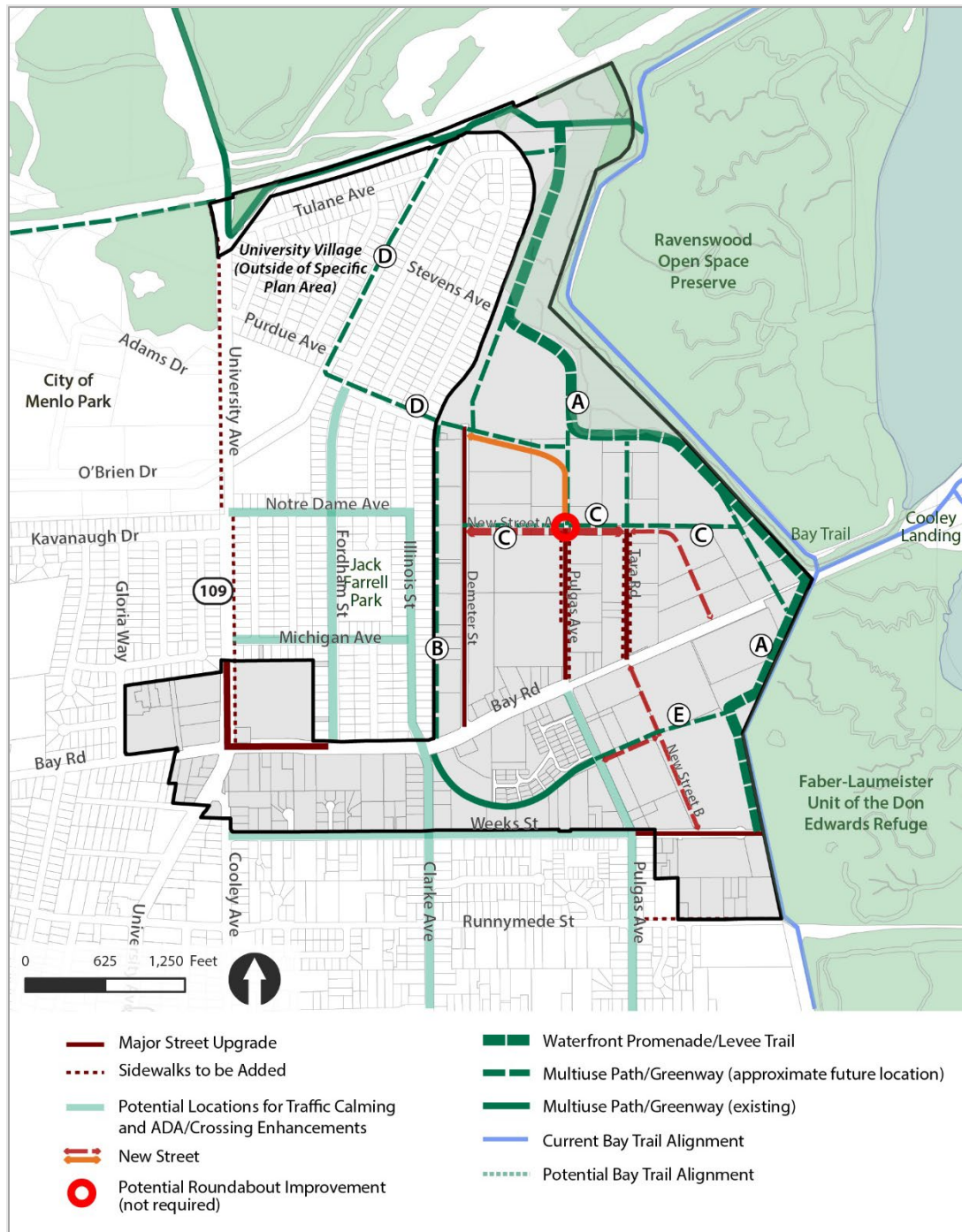
## Pedestrian Network

As shown in Figure 4-9, the pedestrian network is envisioned as a cohesive system of pedestrian connections and trails linking retail, amenities, and parks together that collectively provides an alternative to driving. Key elements include:

- Specific Improvements (letters below correspond to the figure)
  - A. Waterfront Promenade/Bay Trail. A continuous recreational trail flanked by public amenities stretching from University Avenue to Weeks Street within the Plan Area (and beyond).
  - B. Union Pacific Rail Spur Pedestrian/Bicycle Path, North of Bay Road. Segment of an old railroad right-of-way to be converted into a continuous multi-use pedestrian trail with the northern segment running parallel to Illinois Street from Purdue Avenue down to Bay Road.
  - C. East-West Greenway. This connector between Demeter and the Bay Trail would support enhanced mobility and waterfront access.
  - D. SFPUC Hetch Hetchy Linear Park/Purdue Avenue Path. A continuous pedestrian/bicycle trail running along the Hetch Hetchy right-of-way and then turning east along Purdue Avenue under the electrical lines. It would extend further east to connect with the Waterfront Promenade/Bay Trail.
  - E. UP Rail Spur Pedestrian/Bicycle Path, South of Bay Road. Segment of an old railroad right-of-way to be converted into a continuous multi-use pedestrian trail with the southern segment running between Pulgas Avenue and the Bay Trail.
- District-Wide Improvements
  - New Sidewalks. All sidewalk gaps will be closed within the Plan Area. In addition, any new or reconstructed vehicle roadway will include high-quality pedestrian facilities.
  - Traffic Calming Improvements. To prevent local roads from being used as cut-through routes and impacting resident quality of life, the Plan envisions traffic-calming measures on: Fordham Street, Pulgas Street, Weeks Street, Clarke Street, &

Illinois Street. The location of specific improvements will be determined by City Public Works over time.

**Figure 4-9: Pedestrian Network and Improvements**



### Bicycle Network

As shown in Figure 4-10, the Plan recognizes the need for enhanced bicycle facilities to encourage bicycle use and improve multimodal transportation in the Plan Area:

#### Class I Bike Paths:

- A. North-south connection along the waterfront, SAFERBAY and the various waterfront-adjacent properties, parallel to (or in replacement of) the Bay Trail, running from Fordham to Weeks Street. Several options for alignment at the northern end are shown.
- B. East-west connection between Pulgas Avenue and the Bay Trail, south of Bay Road
- C. North-south connection parallel to Demeter Street between Bay Road and Purdue Avenue
- D. East-west bicycle connection along Purdue Avenue, east of the public utilities corridor to its terminus
- E. Bike path along the public utilities corridor parallel to Fordham Street between Purdue Avenue and the east-west Class I path on the north side of the University Village neighborhood.
- F. Bike path connecting from Tara Road to the waterfront promenade/Bay Trail.

Flexible Connections, like multiuse paths or shared streets with bicycle access are also proposed in the Plan area.

- G. East-west path/shared street between the eastern end of Purdue Avenue and the Bay trail, connecting Pulgas to Demeter Street
- H. Two north-south paths/shared streets in the 391 Demeter St property, between New Street A and the Bay Trail
- I. North-south internal connection between Tara Road and Bay Road
- J. North-south multiuse path connecting Bay Rd to Weeks along New Street B

#### Class II bike lanes:

## VISION AND STRATEGIES

K. Pulgas Avenue, south of Bay Road

L. Bay Road, Pulgas to the eastern end

Class III bike routes:

M. Fordham Street, between Bay Road and Purdue Avenue

N. Weeks Street, between Cooley Avenue and Bay Trail

O. Clarke Avenue, south of Bay Road

P. Notre Dame Avenue, between University Avenue and Fordham Street

Class IV cycle track/protected bike lanes:

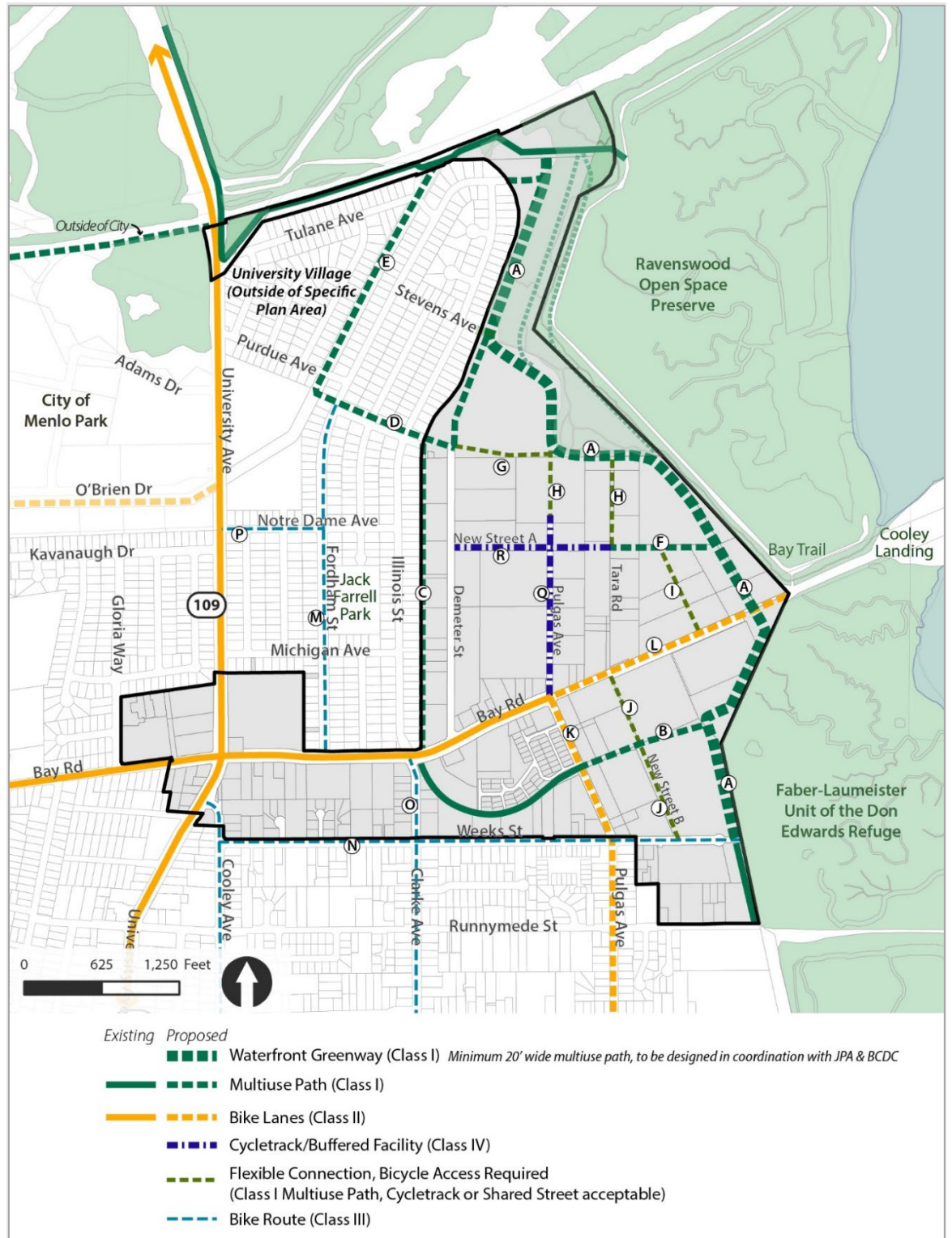
Q. North-south connection along Pulgas Avenue between Bay Road and Street B

R. East-west connection along Street B between Demeter Street and the Bay Trail

*Chapter 8 of this Specific Plan identifies all improvements to the Plan Area's bicycle network.*



Figure 4-10: Bicycle Network





#### 4.4.4 Reducing Trips & Traffic

The community desires to limit traffic impacts from new developments. The Plan includes several elements to achieve this objective:

##### **Transportation Demand Management (TDM)**

TDM consists of a combination of programs, policies, and infrastructure designed to reduce overall vehicle trips. TDM seeks to provide incentives and options for the Plan Area employees and residents to choose alternative modes such as walking, bicycling, transit, carpooling/ridesharing (or not driving at all by working remotely). Per the City's TDM ordinance, daily trips generated by new developments in the Area are required to be 40% below ITE trip estimates. Through a joint transportation management association (a "TMA"), trip reductions efforts and programs will be coordinated. Penalties for failing to meet trip reduction targets include financial penalties in addition to programmatic or operational changes. Citywide programs funded by the TMA may qualify for trip reduction credit.

##### **Parking**

The Plan manages parking through a set of multi-faceted requirements:

- Maximum parking standards intended to be "right sized," providing an adequate amount of parking to maintain market competitiveness but not so low as to undercut the aggressive trip reduction target.
- The configuration, location and landscaping of surface and structured parking is regulated to produce attractive, pedestrian-friendly streets.
- Parking structures located on Bay Road or within residential mixed-use buildings must include ground-floor liner uses.

##### **Future Transit Improvements**

The Plan envisions several improvements to transit within the area:

- The first is incremental reductions in headways on SamTrans routes.
- The second is enhanced access to future BRT, either via a station at University Avenue or a Class I multi-use path to Willow Village.
- The third is a public shuttle to Caltrain which the TMA may be required to expand into a more robust, looped system.

- Finally, several long-term improvements have been discussed for University Avenue, including a transit-priority lane, a peak hour reversible lane, bus rapid transit, or congestion pricing/tolling).

#### 4.4.5 Climate Adaptation and Resilience

##### **SAFER Bay Flood Control Project**

To protect against sea level rise, the City of East Palo Alto (in partnership with the SFC Joint Powers Authority and major waterfront-adjacent property owners) will construct an integrated flood control improvement along its shoreline, in the approximate location shown in Figure 4-11. Beyond safeguarding against repetitive water damage, this project would reduce or eliminate the need for flood insurance for residents and property owners. The vision is for a seamless transition between private development, future flood control structures, and the Bay Trail, with private development sites being raised to meet the levee grade (or close to it). This integration will transform the City's previously inaccessible edge into a beautifully landscaped open space and recreational amenity. The design of the SAFER Bay project will vary based on site conditions, with most segments built as wide earthen berm levees and other segments built as narrow floodwalls. Projects will be required to:

- Dedicate land and/or provide easements for construction and maintenance,
- Respect the 100' BCDC building setback,
- Implement upper floor stepbacks to reduce shadow impacts,
- Be consistent with the Bay Plan, which requires maximum feasible public access to the shoreline and adaptation to sea level rise.

##### **Sustainability**

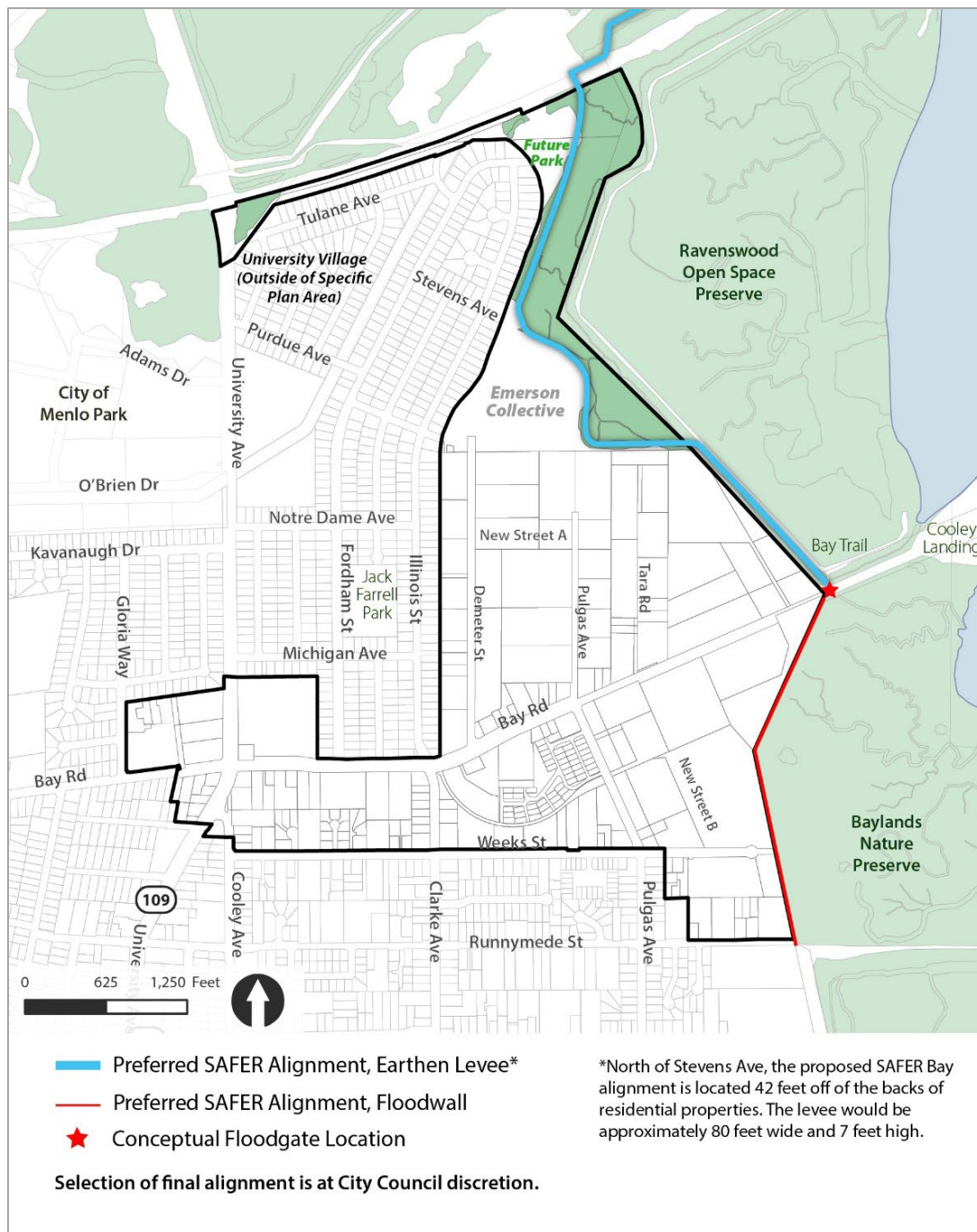
The City of East Palo Alto is committed to advancing sustainability in the Plan Area, in support of the City's recently adopted Climate Action Plan. The following sustainability concepts will be implemented in the Plan:

- Applying relevant portions of the City's current building codes,
- Restrictions on stormwater run-off from development sites,
- Improvements to the storm drainage system to reduce flooding,
- Environmental clean-up of past contamination/hazards,
- Hundreds of new trees to reduce urban heat island effects,

## VISION AND STRATEGIES

- Expansive use of rooftop photovoltaic (enabled through flexible rooftop standards), and
- Updated bird-safe design standards for new buildings.

**Figure 4-11: SAFER Bay Flood Control Project, Preferred Alignment**



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