

Ravenswood Business District / 4 Corners Specific Plan Update

Planning Commission

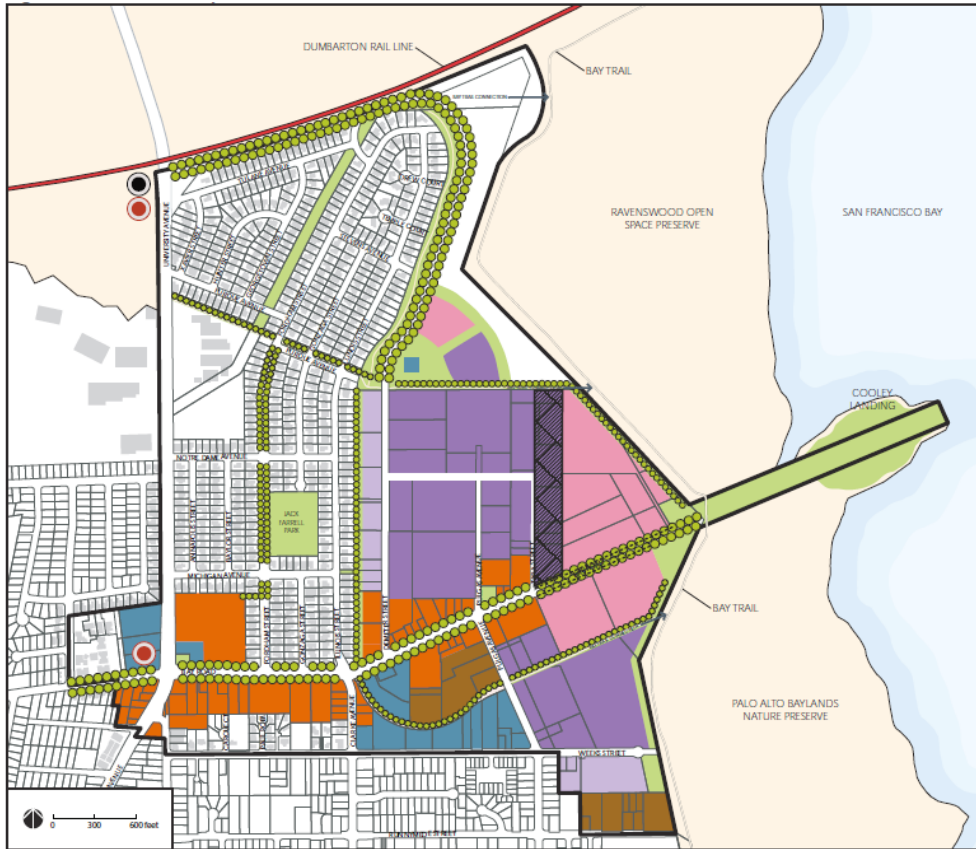
June 14, 2021 | 7:00pm



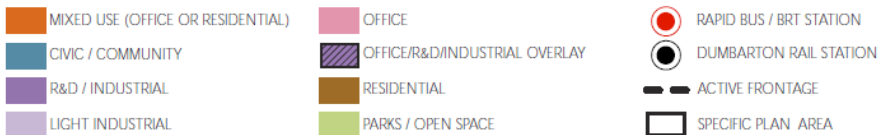
An aerial photograph of a city and a large body of water, possibly a bay or a large lake, with mountains in the distance. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A white rectangular box is positioned in the center, containing the word "Background" in a bold, dark blue font. To the left of this box is a solid orange vertical bar.

Background

Specific Plan Adopted in 2013



* This Diagram shows a conceptual vision for future land uses in the Specific Plan area. Figure 4-1 does not represent zoning for the Specific Plan Area.



Development Amount studied by EIR

Residential	853 units
Retail	112,400 sf
Office	1,268,500 sf
Light Industrial/R&D	351,000 sf
Civic	60,000 sf

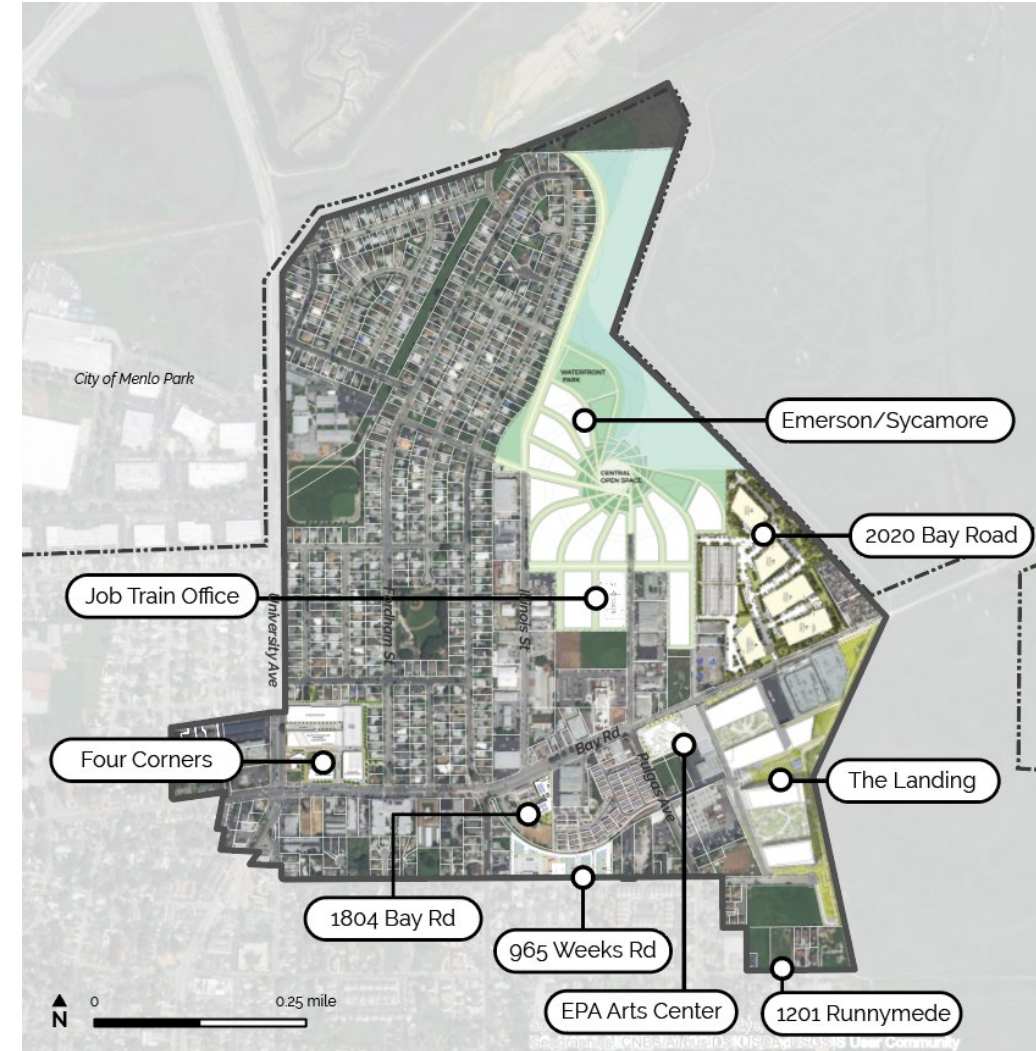
Proposed Development Projects

4 large projects proposed

- Almost **four million square feet** of office/R&D space
- 0 s.f. of industrial space
- 125,000 s.f. of community space
- 60,000 s.f. of retail space
- 440+ housing units

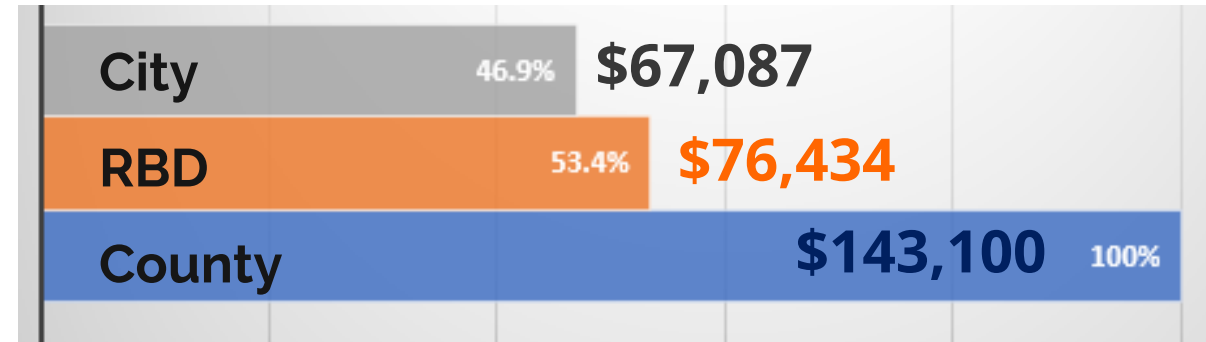
5 smaller projects

- Job Train
- EPA Arts Center
- Ravenswood Health Center
- 965 Weeks, 1201 Runnymede, 1804 Bay Road



Key Changes in the City since 2013

- The City's **Black population** has **decreased**, while **White, Asian, and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander** populations have **grown**
- There are **fewer** children (5 and under) and more older adults (45-65)
- **Household income** has **grown** on average by 30%, but still has not kept pace with the County average
- **Median rent** has **grown** by 50% (\$1,154 -> \$1,766)
- **Median home value** **increased** by 40% (\$ 558,780 -> \$785,880)
- **Retail** remains the most common employment type
- **20% increase** in share of workers 55 and older



2018 represents most recently available census data

Need for Jobs Has Not Changed

Existing Plan emphasized the City's jobs/housing imbalance:

- 0.3 Jobs Per Employed Resident
 - One of the **lowest rates in the State** (compared to 0.82 in San Jose or 1.06 in SF)
- 0.5 Jobs Per Occupied Housing Unit
 - One of the **lowest ratios of cities in the South Bay/Peninsula** (compared to 0.82 in Palo Alto, 0.70 in Menlo Park, or 0.72 in Mountain View)
- Educational attainment in the City still lags behind the County
- One-quarter of EPA jobs are held by those under 30

An aerial photograph of a city and a large body of water, possibly a bay or lake, with mountains in the distance. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A white rectangular box is positioned in the center, containing the text 'Project Overview'. To the left of this box is a solid orange vertical bar.

Project Overview

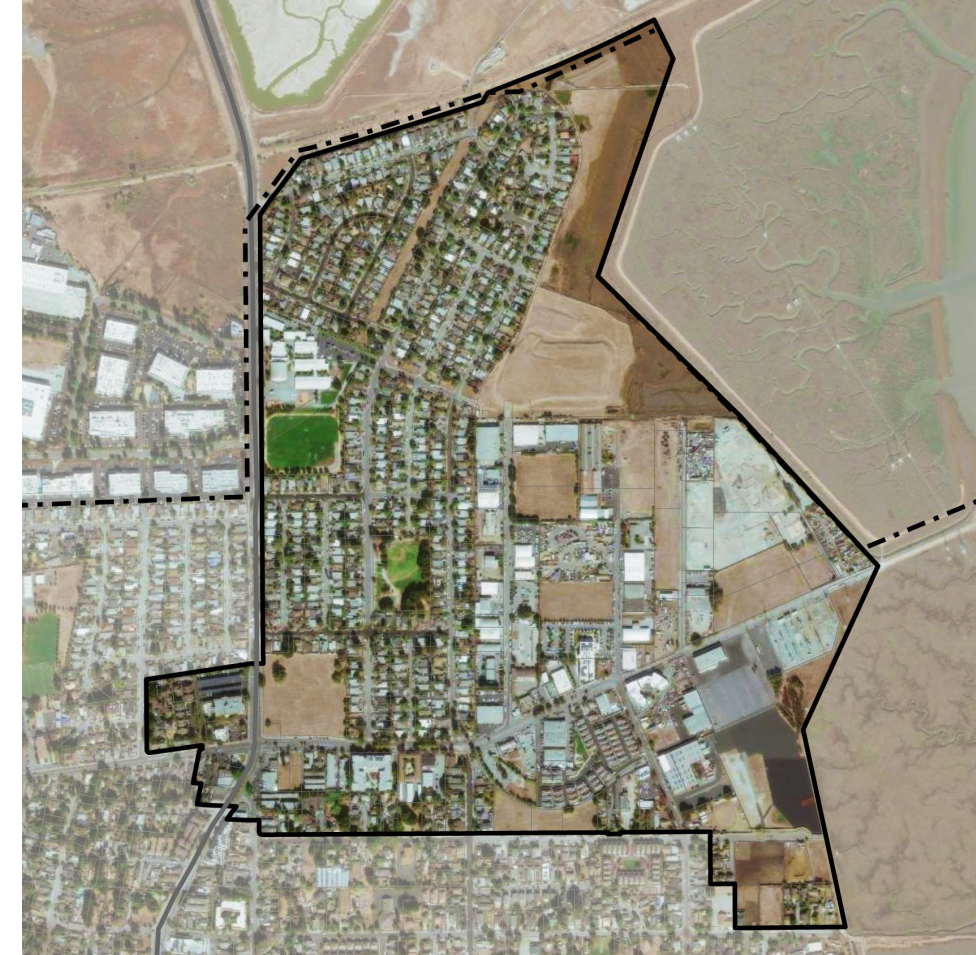
Ravenswood Business District / 4 Corners Specific Plan Update

What?

A **targeted amendment** to the adopted 2013 Specific Plan document which regulates land use and growth within this area ->

Why?

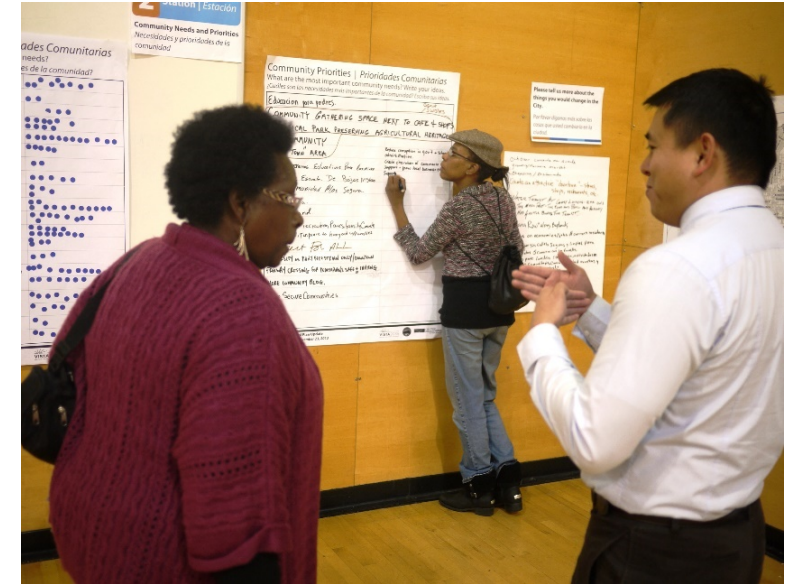
- City has experienced **significant changes since the original plan's adoption**
- Several proposed development projects **exceed** the amount of development analyzed 2013 Specific Plan EIR (2.75 million s.f. more)



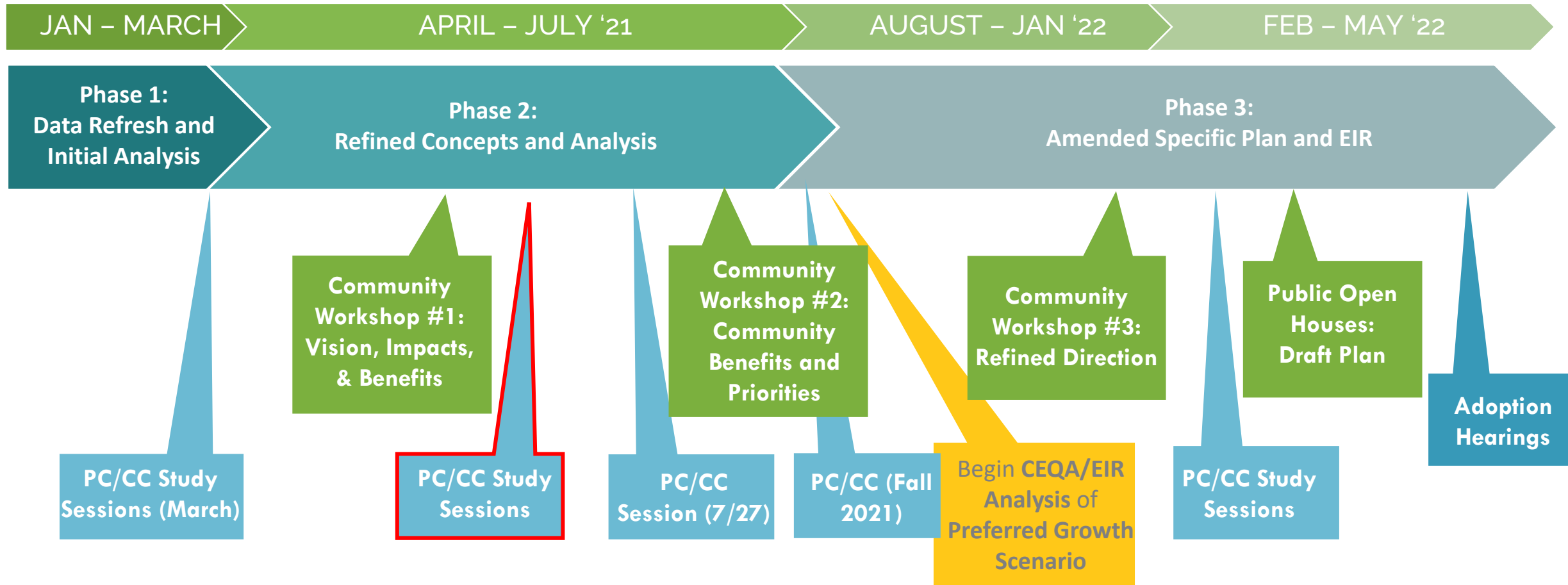
Specific Plan Area

Objectives of the Plan Update

1. Explore increased **development beyond 2013**
Plan analysis
2. Evaluate “impacts” and “benefits” of allowing more development
3. Analyze the impact of development on **traffic, infrastructure, housing affordability, and displacement**
4. Develop a detailed framework for **community benefits**
5. Develop **urban design standards that create a new neighborhood**
6. Evaluate potential **fiscal benefit** to the City



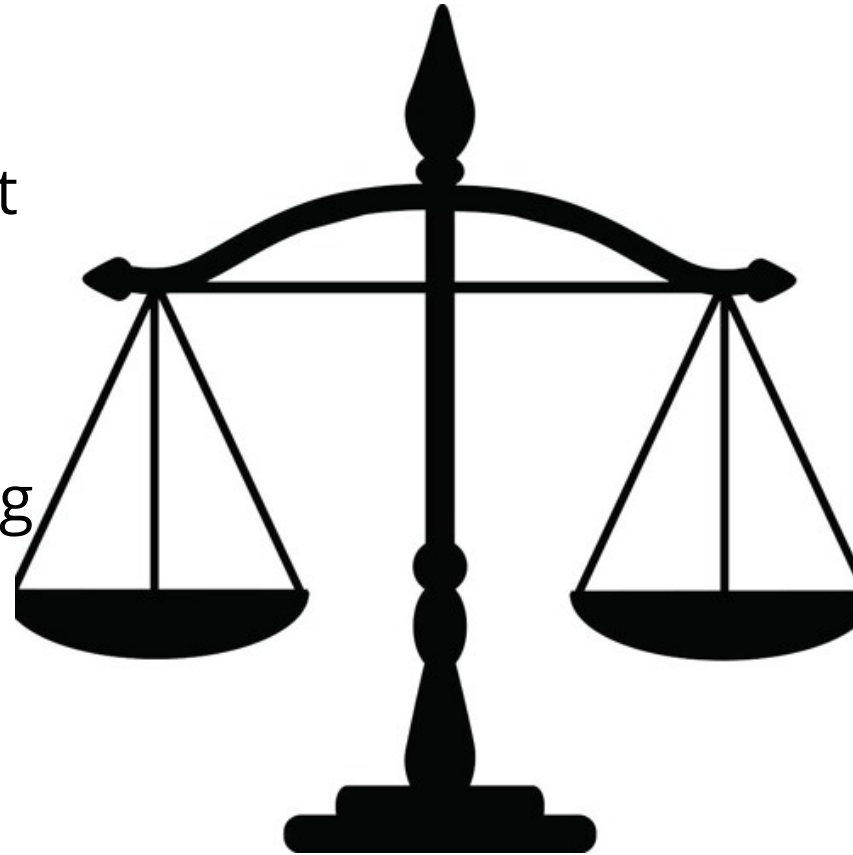
Project Schedule



Context: Key Trade-offs

Impacts

- Congested roadways
- Potential displacement and/or gentrification
- Rising housing costs
- Visual impacts
- Sea level rise + flooding

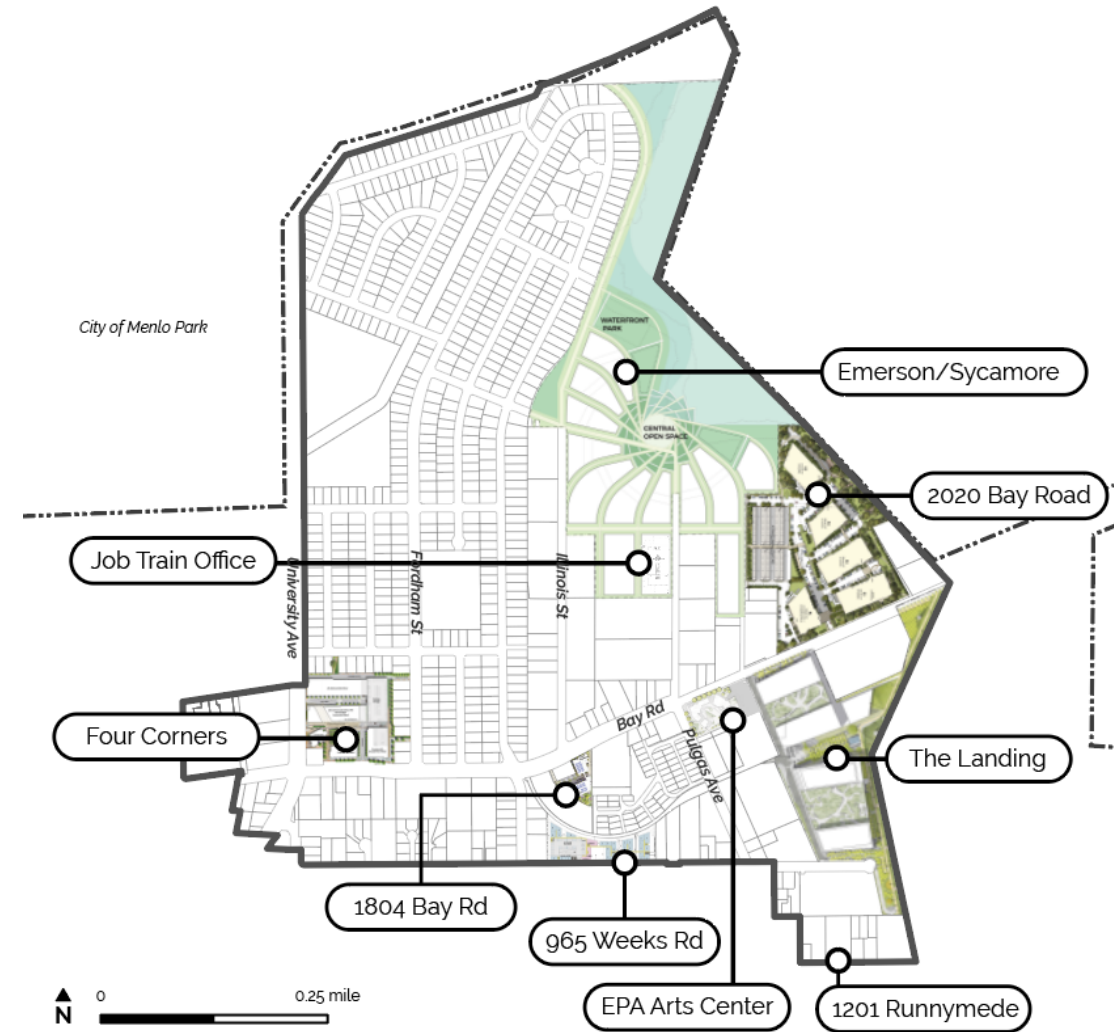


Benefits

- New public facilities
- Local job opportunities
- Fiscal (new taxes/fees)
- New neighborhood retail
- New open spaces + trails
- A revitalized 'Downtown'

Current Situation

- Proposed office and R&D development currently **far exceeds** the development amount studied in the 2013 Specific Plan
- Major challenges must be solved before significant development can occur: traffic, infrastructure, sea level rise, etc.
- Potential for significant benefits to EPA and its residents



Proposed development in RBD as of 2021

An aerial photograph of a city and a large body of water, possibly a bay or lake, with mountains in the distance. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A white rectangular box is positioned in the center, containing the text 'Progress Update'. To the left of this box is a solid orange vertical bar.

Progress Update

Recap from March 23rd Study Session

- Data refresh reinforces why an update is needed
- Draft design principles are a good start - continue refining to create a complete and interconnected neighborhood
- Supportive of adding additional housing
- Study up to maximum amount of development but less is likely
- Supportive of a defined process of community benefits in exchange for more development



Summary of 1st Public Workshop

Zoom Workshop was held on May 27th, 2021

- Approximately 90 concurrent attendees

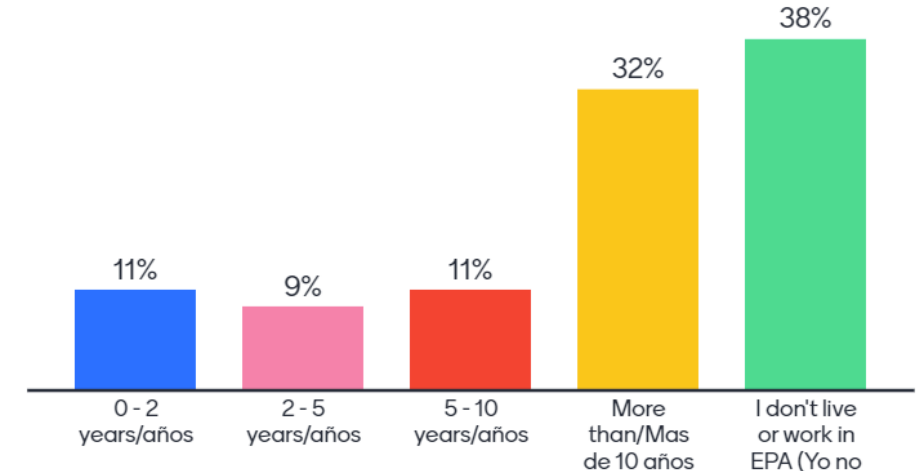
Key questions:

1. What are the challenges and what are your concerns about new development in RBD?
2. How should this place look and feel in the future?
3. What are key community benefits that you want the City to prioritize from new development?

1st Workshop - Participation

- Approximately 60% of participants lived or worked in the City
- One-third of participants had lived or worked in the City for more than ten years
- Three-quarters of participants had heard of the Specific Plan before

How long have you lived or worked in East Palo Alto?
 ¿Cuánto tiempo ha vivido en East Palo Alto?

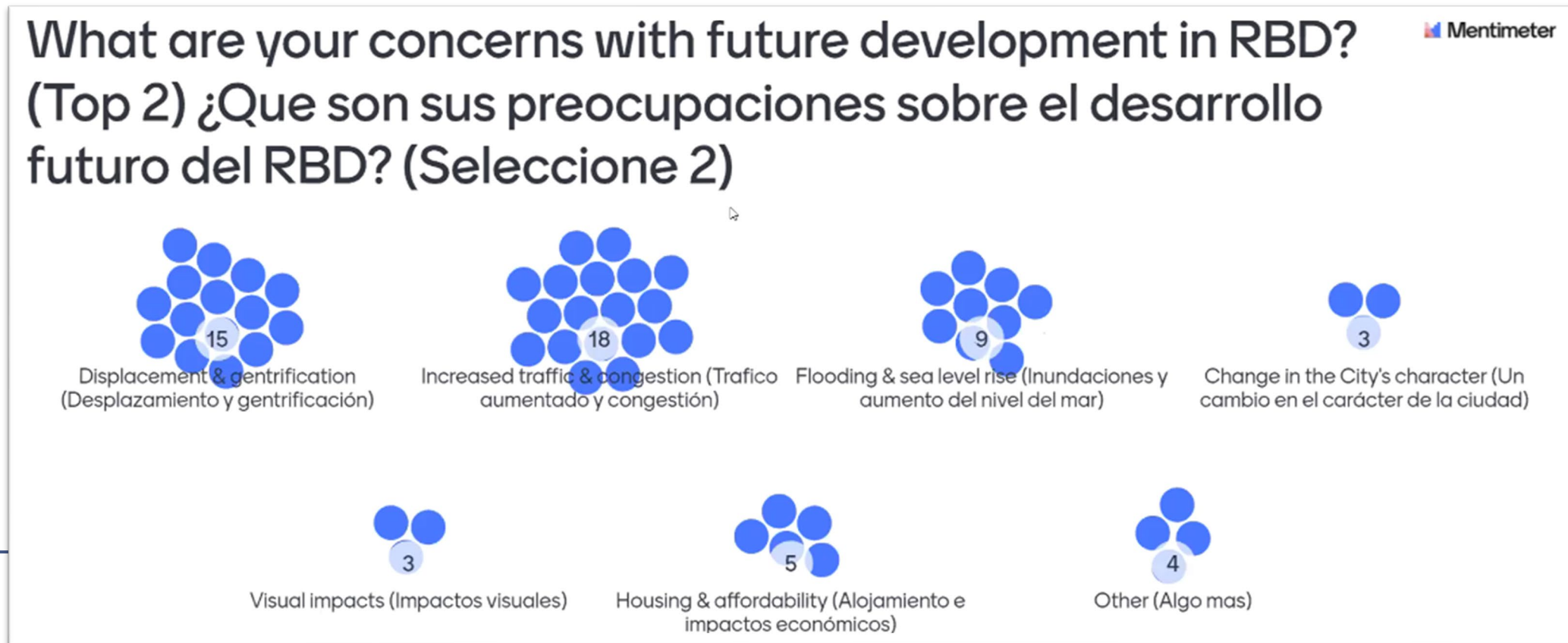


How would you describe yourself? Select all that apply
 ¿Como se describiría? Seleccione todos que aplican



Initial Feedback from 1st Public Workshop

- Transportation was the top issue identified by residents; concerns over impacts to local mobility/increased roadway traffic
- Other top concerns were 2) displacement + gentrification 3) flooding and sea level rise, and 4) housing affordability



Feedback on Community Benefits

- Strong desire for long-term, quality jobs that uplift residents (especially middle-income)
- On-site community facilities could include: work space for students, play areas for all ages, libraries, museum/cultural center, dog park
- Designated office space or funding for local organizations and businesses
- Need for improved infrastructure including roads and utilities such as water
- Benefits could extend beyond the physical to include programs such as financial literacy courses, youth academy, free Wi-Fi, public health initiatives, etc.
- Community benefits must also be considered from a city-wide perspective
- Redundancies in community benefits should be avoided: transparent communication and coordination across the various developers is key
- Developers should prioritize working with local organizations throughout

Recap from June 8th – Council Recommendations

- Use 2013 RBD/4 Corners Specific Plan EIR trips as a baseline outcome of the Plan update

Daily Trips	AM Peak Hour Trips	PM Peak Hour Trips
24,752	2,908	2,989

- Support for an approach using trips as the determining “currency,” likely in addition to total square footage
- Support for requiring and/or incentivizing desired land uses
- Base the development capacity on existing, known projects (not on transportation projects that not guaranteed to occur)
- Drop the largest growth scenario

Recap from June 8th – Trip Scenarios

	Office/ R&D	Flex/ Industrial	Retail	Civic	Units	Daily Trips w/ (40% TDM)	PM Trips w/ (40% TDM)
<i>2013 Baseline</i>	1.23 MSF	240 KSF	112 KSF	60 KSF	835 du	24,752 (no TDM)	2,989 (no TDM)
Scenario 1	2.8 MSF	240 KSF	112 KSF	60 KSF	835 du	24,752	2,245
Scenario 2	3.35 MSF	240 KSF	112 KSF	60 KSF	835 du	27,994	2,535
Scenario 3	4.15 MSF	300 KSF	125 KSF	100 KSF	1,100 du	34,734	3,161
Scenario 4	5.25 MSF	350 KSF	150 KSF	150 KSF	1,650 du	45,075	4,067

An aerial photograph of a city and a large body of water, possibly a bay or lake, with mountains in the distance. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A white rectangular box is positioned in the center, containing the text 'Next Steps'. To the left of this box is a solid orange vertical bar.

Next Steps

Moving Forward

- **Community Survey** will be live tomorrow
- Additional information on project website (through **cityofepa.org/planning**)
- Questions & feedback can be shared with **rbd@cityofepa.org**

Upcoming meetings

- **July 27, 2021** – RBD City Council Study Session, focused on Community Benefits and Placemaking (joint session)
- **Fall 2021** – RBD City Council Session, focused on overall impacts/benefits and selection of maximum development scenario


Moving Forward

- **Concerns voiced at the workshop regarding lack of awareness and low attendance/participation by EPA residents**
- Continued stakeholder conversations and listening sessions during June, July and August
- Additional interaction/communication with EPA community groups
- Focusing primarily on community benefits during July Council meeting
- Go back to Council in September for a decision on RBD development capacity

Thank you!

<https://www.cityofepa.org/planning>

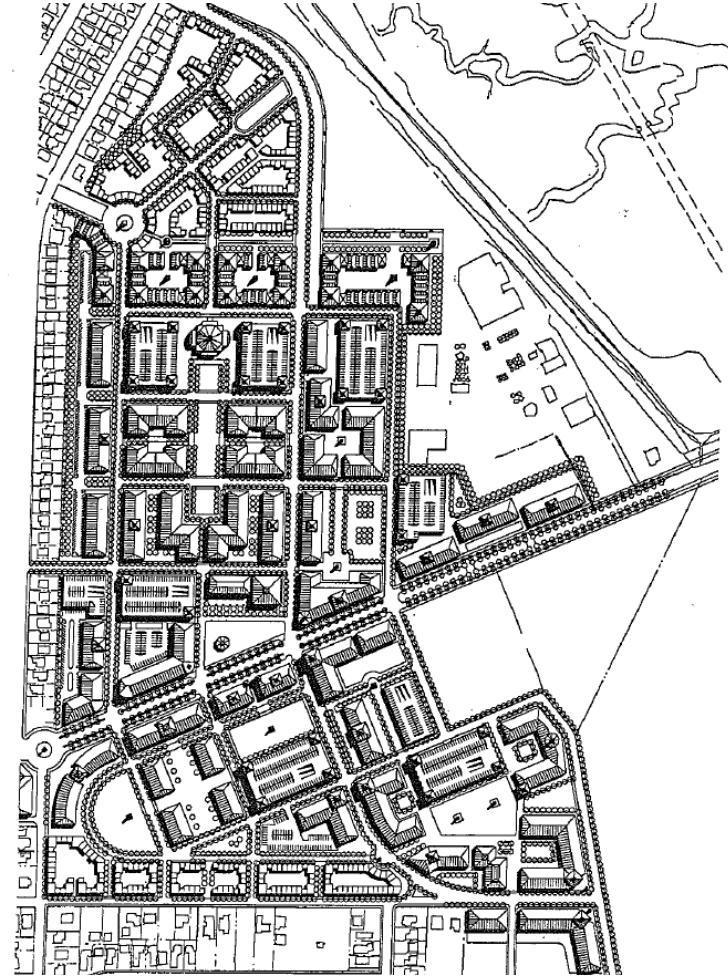


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Draft Placemaking and Design Principles

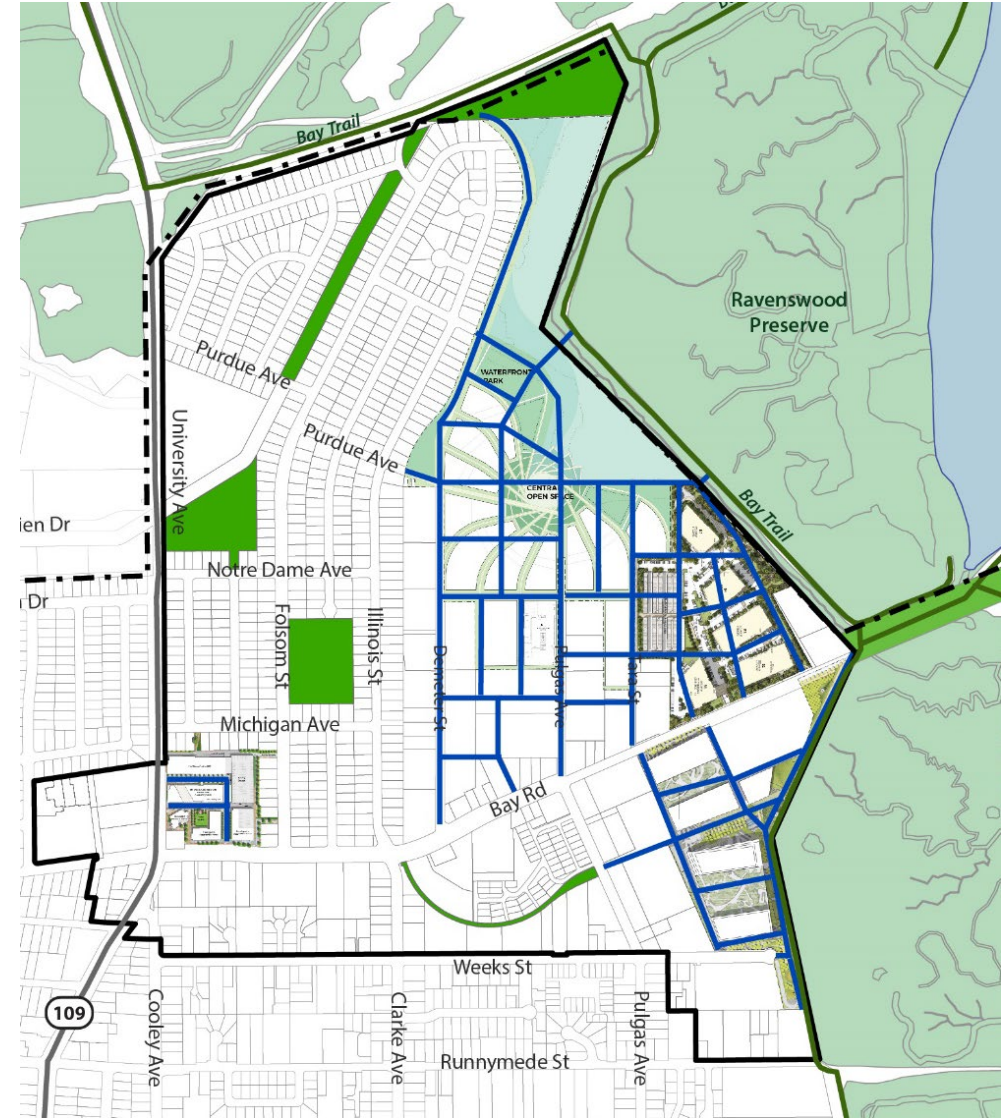
#1. Create a Complete Neighborhood

- Blend office, R&D, industrial, retail, and residential uses together with public open space, amenities, and civic uses to create a real neighborhood
- Plan development in a coordinated and cohesive fashion
- Create a place greater than the sum of its parts



#2. Build walkable blocks

- Create small blocks with frequent space between roadways, & pedestrian connections.
- Use alleys, paseos, greenways, and similar connections to increase walkability and access through the area



#3. Create an interconnected transportation network

- Build Complete Streets for multiple users
- Align new connections with existing networks or adjacent projects and don't create dead ends
- Create new high-quality, wide pedestrian pathways and sidewalks
- Expand bicycle networks by incorporating new protected bicycle infrastructure through the area
- Orient heavy traffic away from neighborhoods



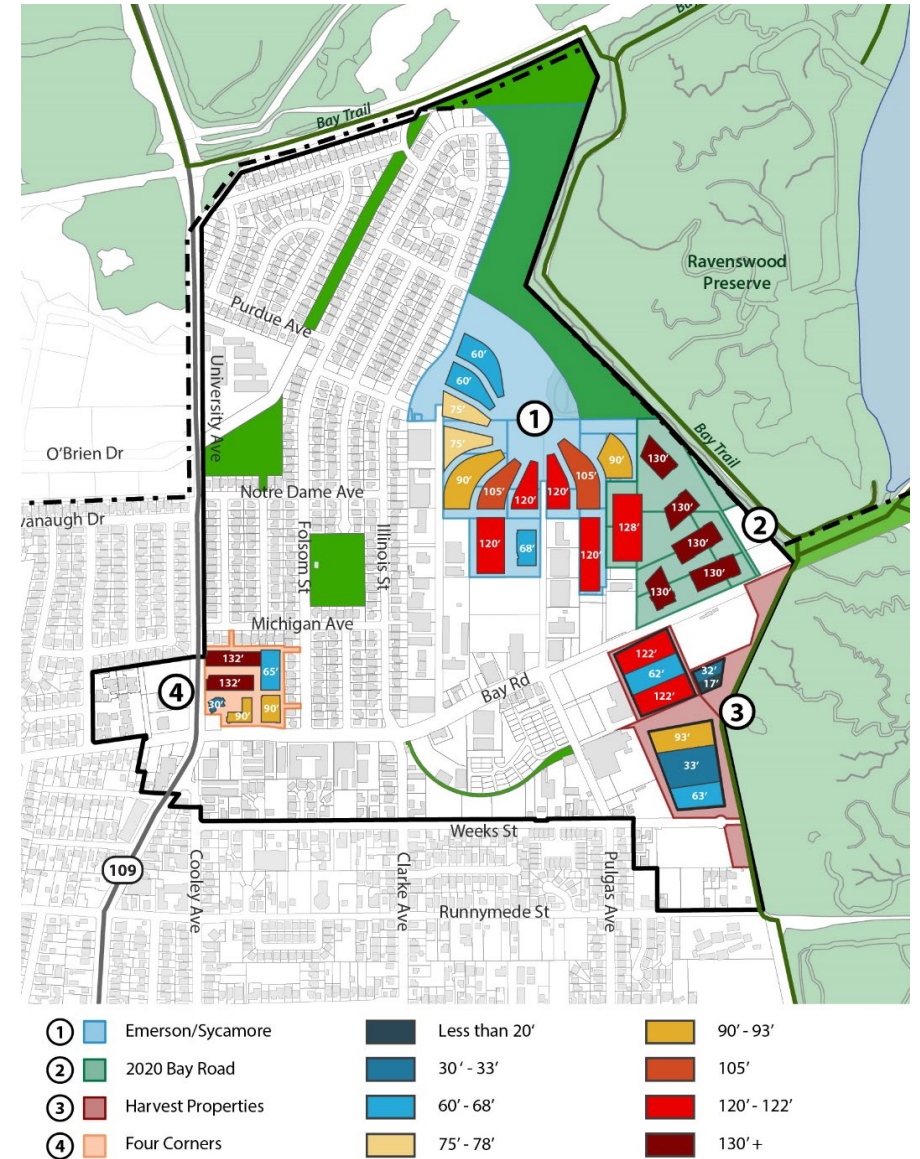
#4. Activate Bay Road

- Provide pedestrian-friendly design, building transparency, and active uses such as retail, entertainment, civic, and community uses along Bay Road
- Set buildings close to the street, and avoid blank facades
- Develop a network of community-serving spaces



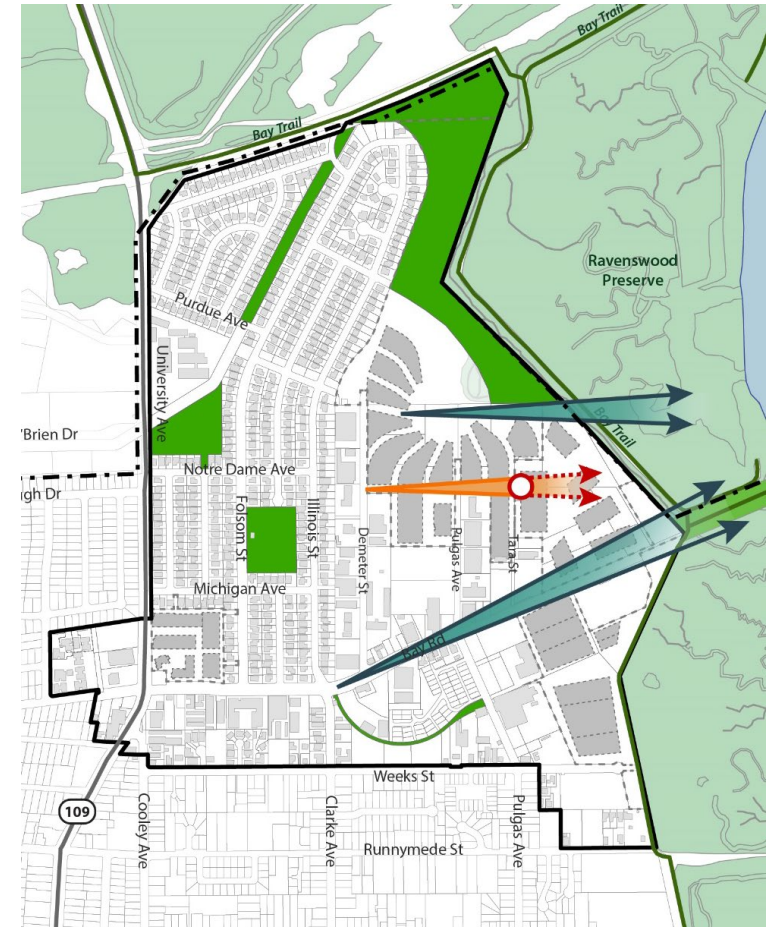
#5. Moderate building size

- Limit the amount of floor area built up to maximum heights
- Use material changes, screening, articulation, and massing transitions to reduce the physical impact of new buildings, especially upper stories
- Transition in height adjacent to residential uses or waterfront areas
- Minimize building dimension perpendicular to the waterfront



#6. Enhance public views of the Bay

- Ensure regular, consistent views of the water, especially from Bay Road
- Maintain sufficiently wide view corridors through all projects to preserve visual access to the Bay
- “Don’t block the Bay”



Viewsheds identified in existing Specific Plan

#7. Connect people to the waterfront

- Ensure that streets, bicycle, and pedestrian networks provide regular access to the Bay Trail
- Upgrade sections of the Bay Trail
- Create through-connections to the waterfront



#8. Develop a welcoming network of open spaces

- Create a diverse mixture of open spaces at various scales and types (active and passive)
- Create spaces that are easily usable and accessible by the community
- Ensure that new open spaces and trails are connected to the rest of the City
- Line public and common open space with active uses and engaging ground floor architecture
- Create transitions between different spaces
- Minimize surface parking lots



An aerial photograph of a city and a large body of water, possibly a bay or lake, with mountains in the distance. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A white rectangular box is positioned in the center, containing the text 'Additional Slides'. To the left of this box is a solid orange vertical bar.

Additional Slides

Community Benefits from 2013 Specific Plan

Local Job Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New high-quality job opportunities for residents; “many of the new jobs going to East Palo Altans”• Light Industrial uses
Transportation Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New/upgraded internal roads• Loop Road• New bike lanes
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New recreation center, community center & library• At least 60,000 sf of community space
Parks, Plazas, & Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New parks, plazas, & trails (approx. 20 acres of new parks and trails)
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New affordable housing
Utility Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water, storm drain, & sanitary sewer improvements

New Potential Benefits

Transportation Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional sidewalk improvements throughout the area• Neighborhood traffic calming improvements• Long-term transportation & transit improvements
Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional affordable housing units (above inclusionary)• Additional contributions to affordable housing funds
Local Jobs & Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free or subsidized 'makerspaces' / creative spaces• Space, funding, or support for small local businesses• Workforce development programs• Youth/young adult education + internships
Community Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free or subsidized space for organizations• Assistance for displaced organizations
Parks, Plazas, & Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional trail improvements or other public amenities• Additional acres of public parks or passive open space• Public art installations

Project Team

City of East Palo Alto Planning

- Amy Chen, Director of Community & Economic Development Dept.
- Elena Lee, Planning Division Manager

Raimi + Associates (lead, land use/design, engagement)

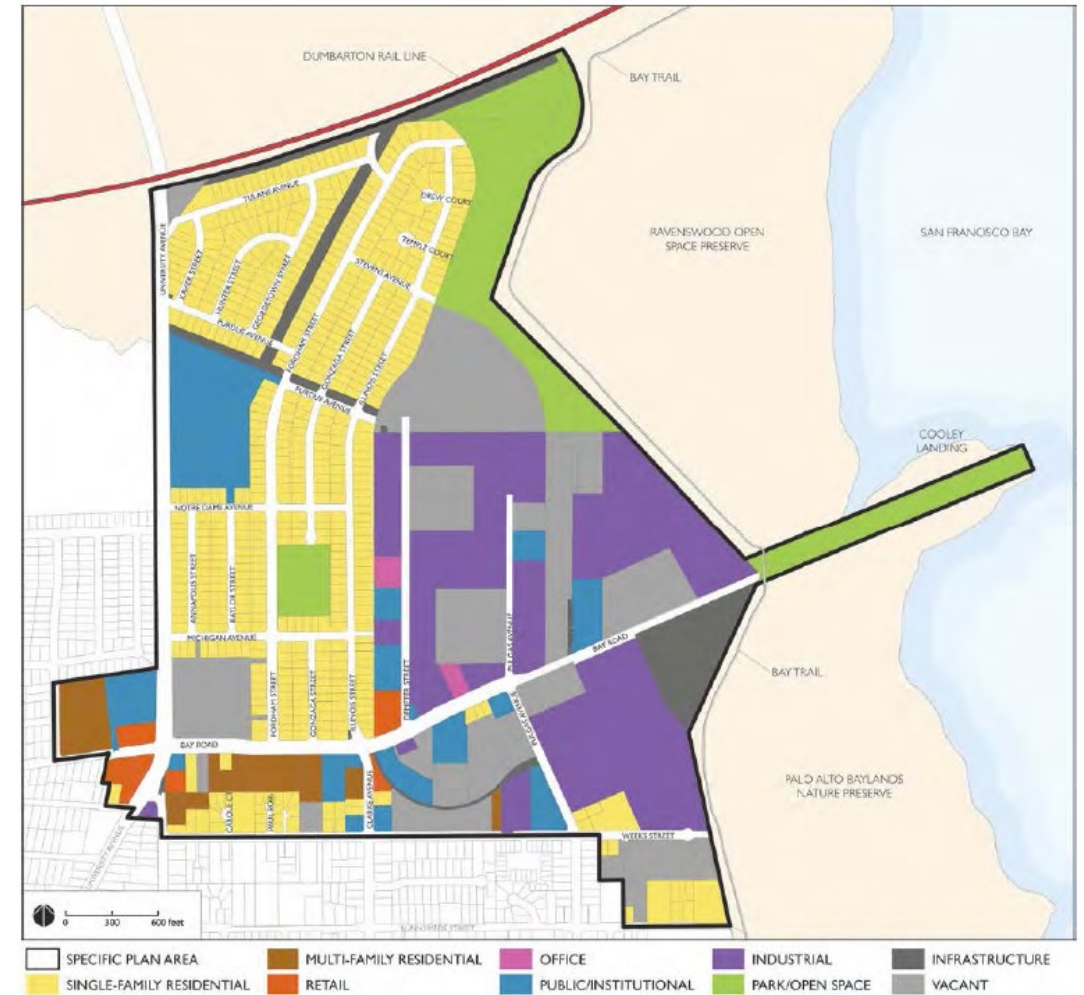
- Matt Raimi & Troy Reinhalter

Subconsultants

- **Strategic Economics** (economic/fiscal analysis)
- **Hexagon Transportation** (transportation analysis)
- **Schaaf + Wheeler** (infrastructure analysis)
- **David J. Powers & Associates** (environmental analysis)

Existing Specific Plan

- Completed in **2013**
- Developed out of an **extensive community engagement process**
- Challenges at that time:
 - **Pollution concerns** from legacy industrial and manufacturing uses (e.g. toxic substances at former Romic site shut down by the community)
 - **Lack of developer interest** during recession
 - Small parcels and **many owners**
 - **Limited vehicle access**



2013 land uses in RBD

2013 Specific Plan Vision

“Transform the area into a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use destination with a significant increase in employment, institutional uses, and moderate increase in housing”

RAVENSWOOD / 4 CORNERS TOD SPECIFIC PLAN CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO



2013 Specific Plan Goals

- Redevelop into a major **employment district**
- Develop a “**new downtown**” along Bay Road
- Create lasting **fiscal solvency** for the City
- Create new **job opportunities** for EPA residents
- Foster a **thriving community** that provides housing; employment opportunities; parks and open spaces; and amenities for all of East Palo Alto

*However, key constraints such as **fragmented ownership, circulation, aging infrastructure, and pollution** would need to be overcome.*

An aerial photograph of a coastal city, likely San Francisco, showing a dense urban area with a mix of residential and commercial buildings. In the background, a large body of water (the San Francisco Bay) is visible, along with distant hills. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. A white rectangular box is positioned in the center, containing the title text. To the left of this box is a solid orange vertical bar.

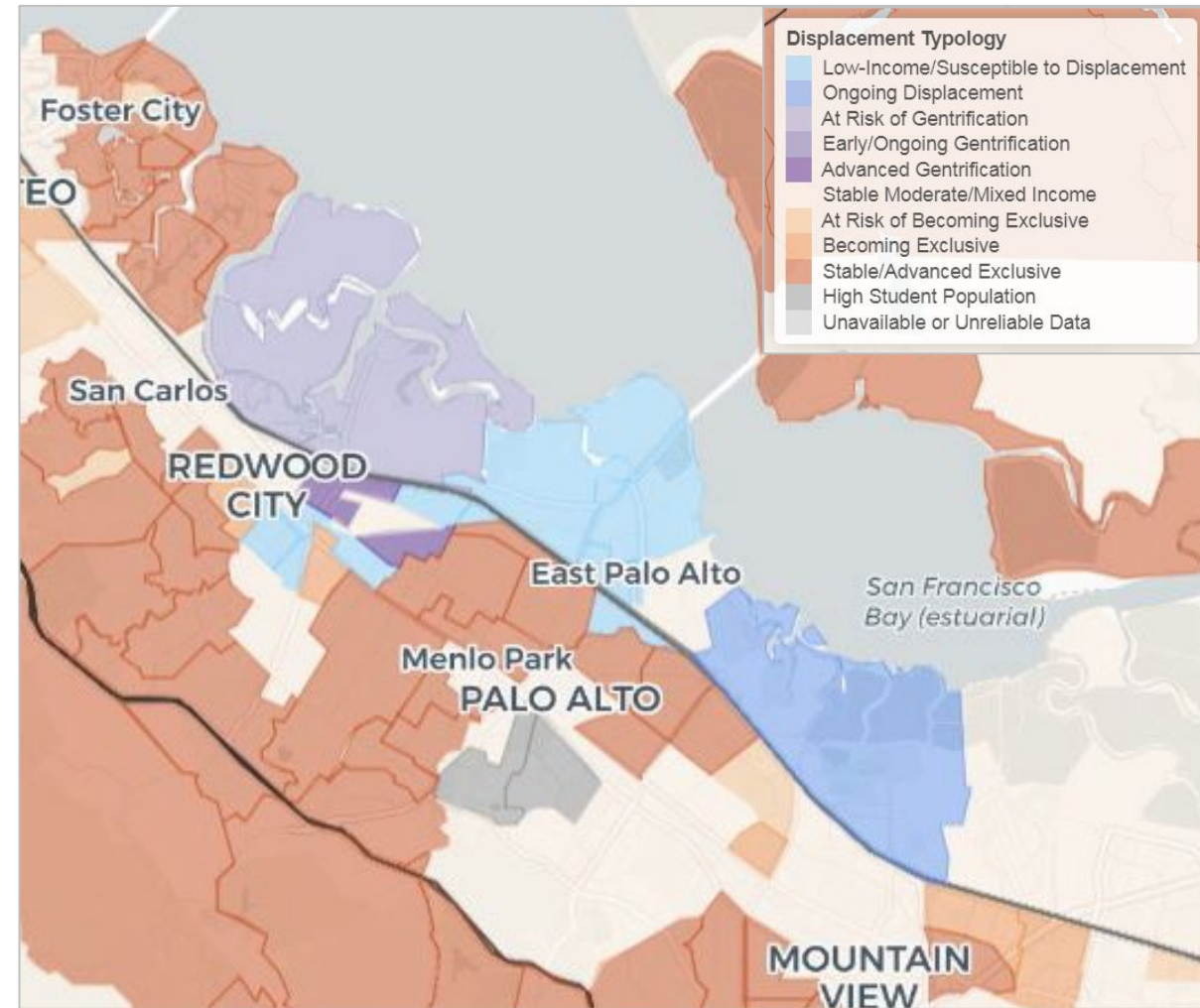
Changes in Ravenswood & East Palo Alto since 2013

Key Changes since 2013 (continued)

- **Median rent** has **grown** by 50% (\$1,154 -> \$1,766)
- **Median home value** **increased** by 40% (\$ 558,780 -> \$785,880)
- **Retail** remains the most common employment type
- **20% increase** in share of workers 55 and older

Displacement Pressures

- East Palo Alto is considered “Susceptible to Displacement”
- **Anti-displacement** measures have been put in place to support residents including:
 - **Rent Control**
 - **Inclusionary Housing**
 - **Just-Cause policies**

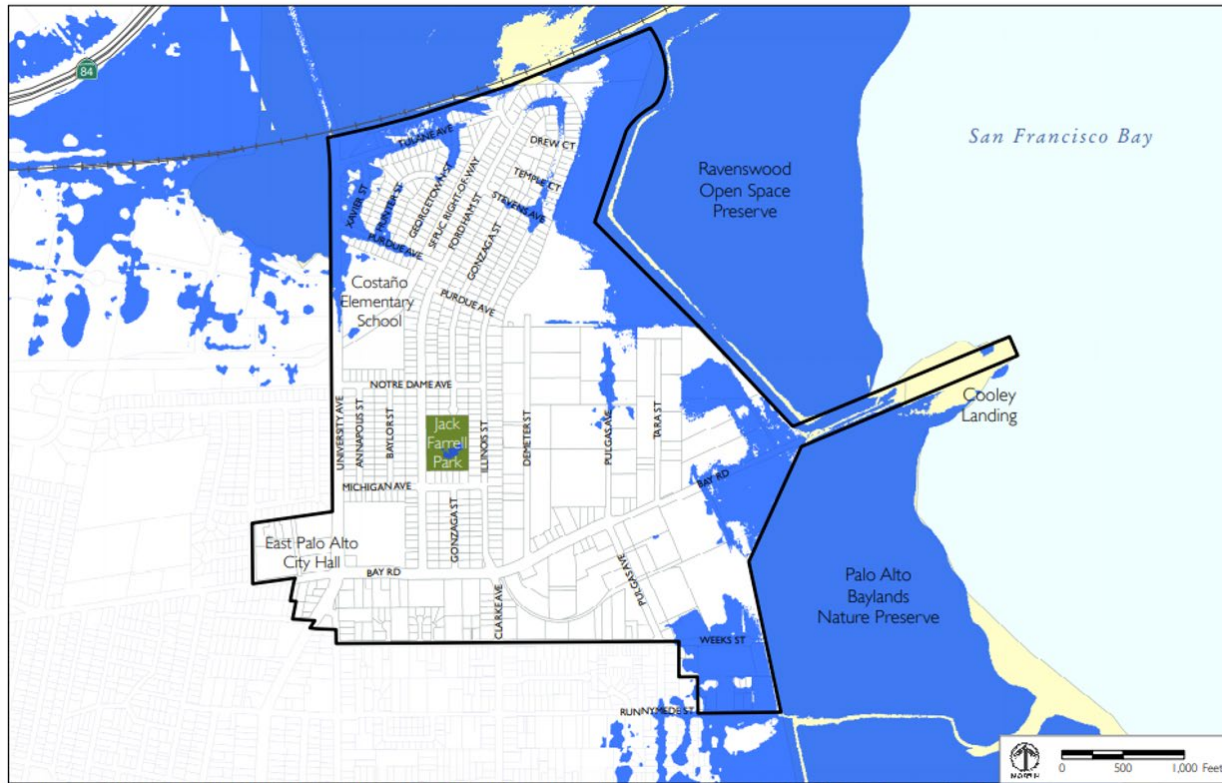


Source: Urban Displacement Project 2018 Update, Center for Community Innovation at UC Berkeley, 2020.

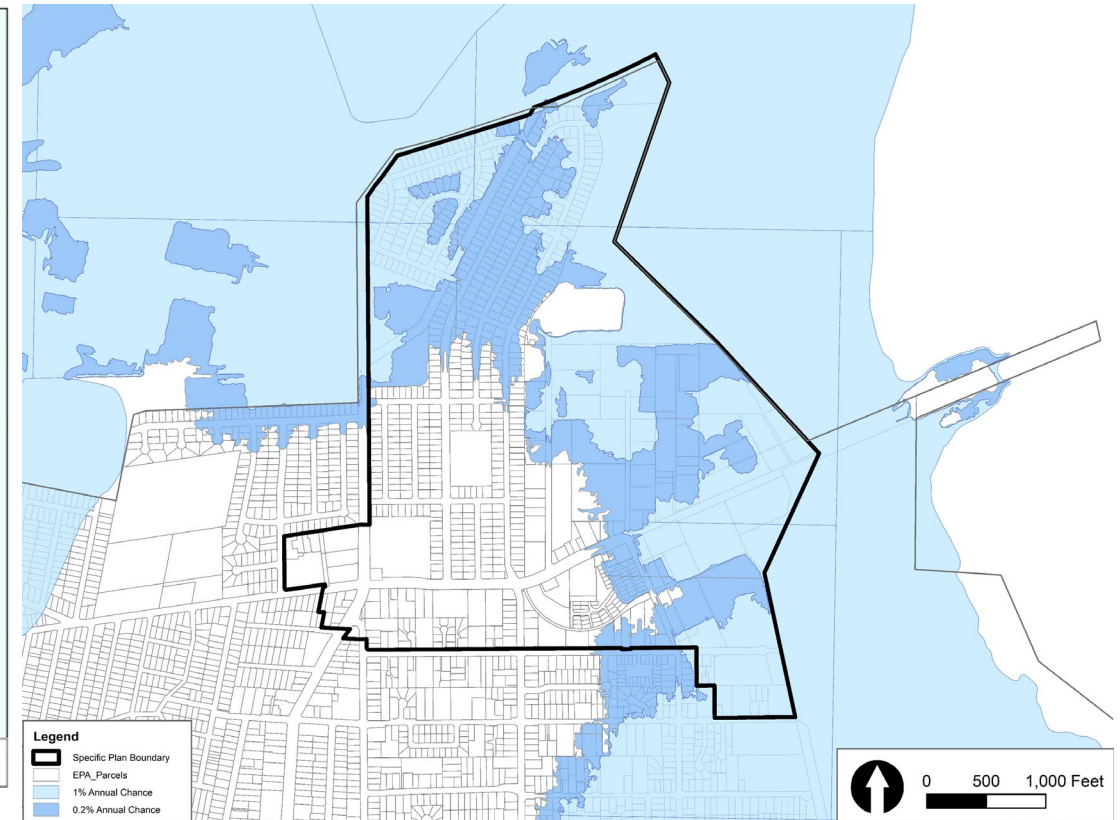
Potential Sea Level Rise Impacts Increased

Projected Sea Level Rise has become **more significant**

2012 data



2020 data



Projections for year 2050

“2020 Bay Road”

- Owner: Three Cities Research, Inc.
- Status: Submitted and under Review

Office / R&D	1,275,000 sf
Retail	5,000 sf
Civic	50,000+ sf
Parking Spaces	4,500 spaces
Open Space	6+ acres
Building Height	8 stories (130')



2020 Bay Rd: Proposed Benefits

- 53,000 square feet of ground-floor civic space (civic center)
- 1.75 acre waterfront park with Bay Trail connection and pedestrian path
- TDM reduction goal of at least 25% with preferential parking for carpool/EVs, bicycle showers & lockers

Required Improvements include

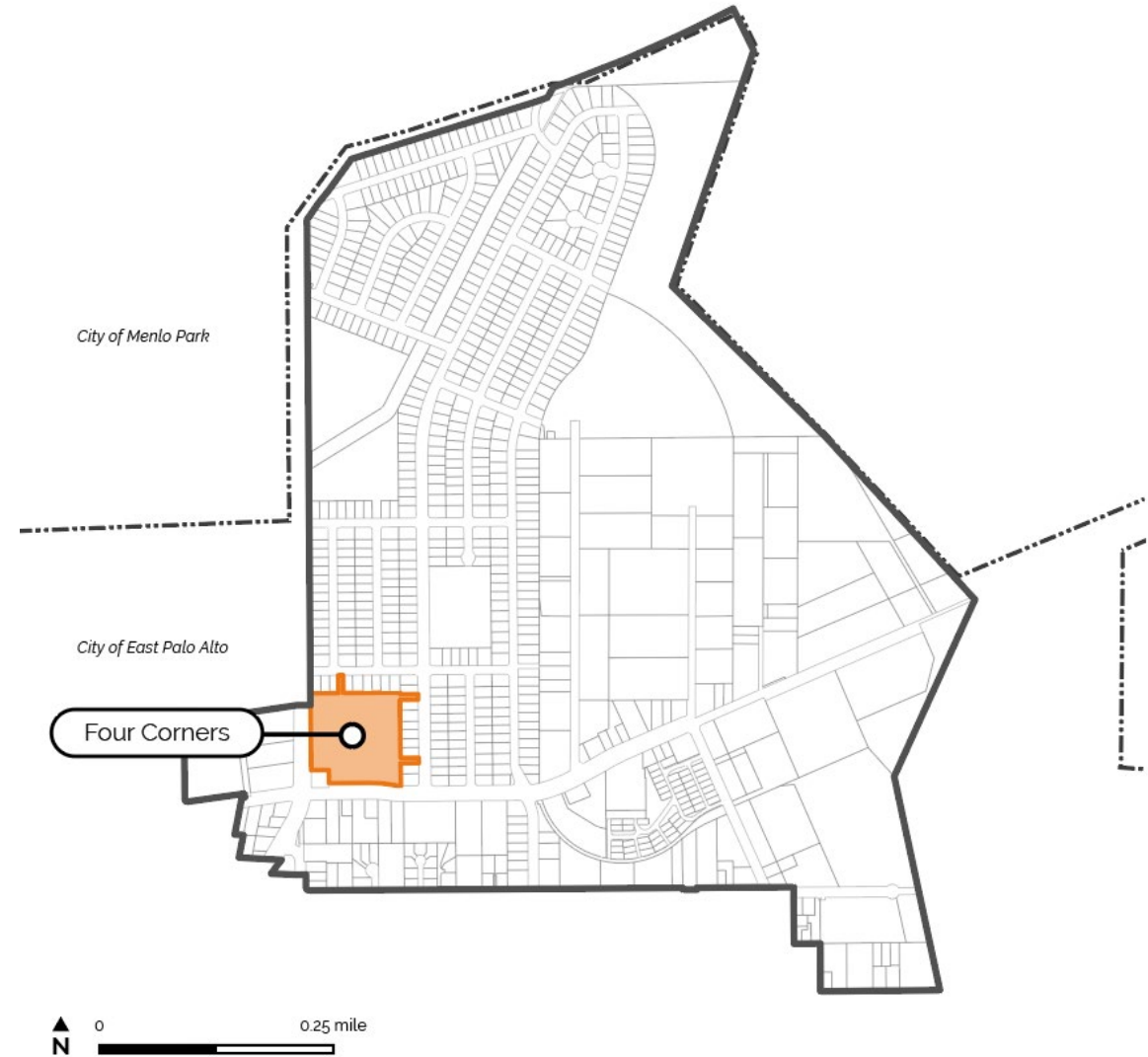
- Roadway and sidewalk improvements, including Tara Street
- Measure HH fees and other impact fees
- On-site stormwater management infrastructure
- Site contamination clean-up + mitigation



“Four Corners”

- Owner: Sand Hill Property
- Status: Full Application Submitted

Office / R&D / Lab	500,000 sf
Retail	20,000 sf
Civic	~20,000 sf
Housing Units	180 units
Parking Spaces	1,300 spaces
Open Space	1.0 acres
Building Height	5 to 8 stories (130')



Four Corners: Proposed Benefits

- Civic space or public library (20,000 sf)
- Ground-floor neighborhood retail along Bay Road and internal plaza
- New affordable housing units
- Public plaza across from City Hall
- Public art installations
- Pocket park on Michigan Avenue

Required Improvements include

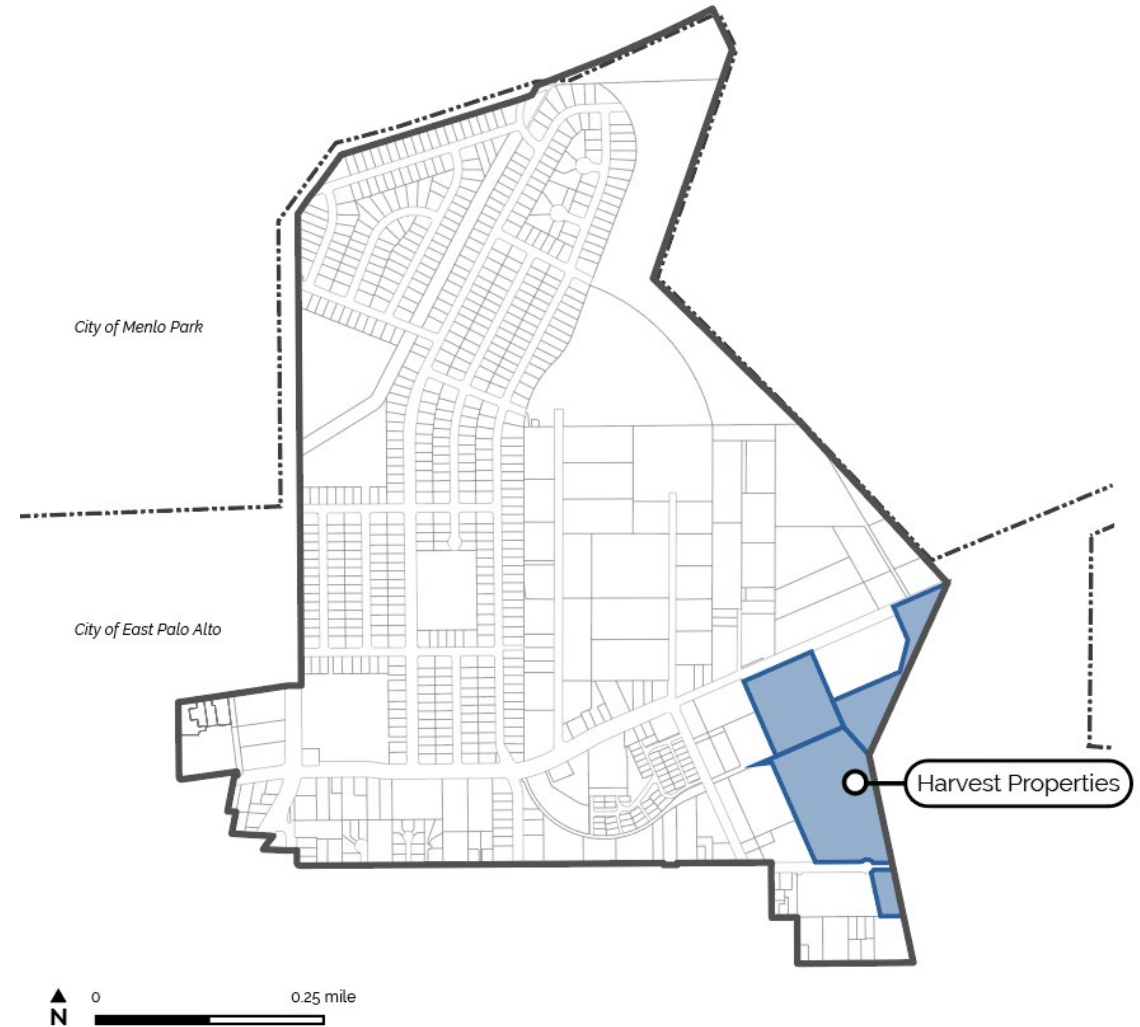
- Roadway and sidewalk improvements
- Measure HH fees and other impact fees
- Intersection mitigations including bike lanes



“The Landing”

- Owner: Harvest Properties
- Status: Pre-Application

Office / R&D	871,000 sf
Retail	10,000 sf
Civic	14,000 sf
Parking Spaces	2,900 spaces
Open Space	6.5 acres
Building Height	4 to 8 stories (122')



The Landing: Proposed Benefits

- 6.5 acre park along the Bayfront
- Dog park, community gardens, outdoor café and retail, outdoor amphitheater, playground, fitness areas, and outdoor picnic/seating areas
- Small business grants & free or subsidized community business spaces
- On-site public local art and arts funding
- Aggressive TDM and green building measures

Required Improvements include

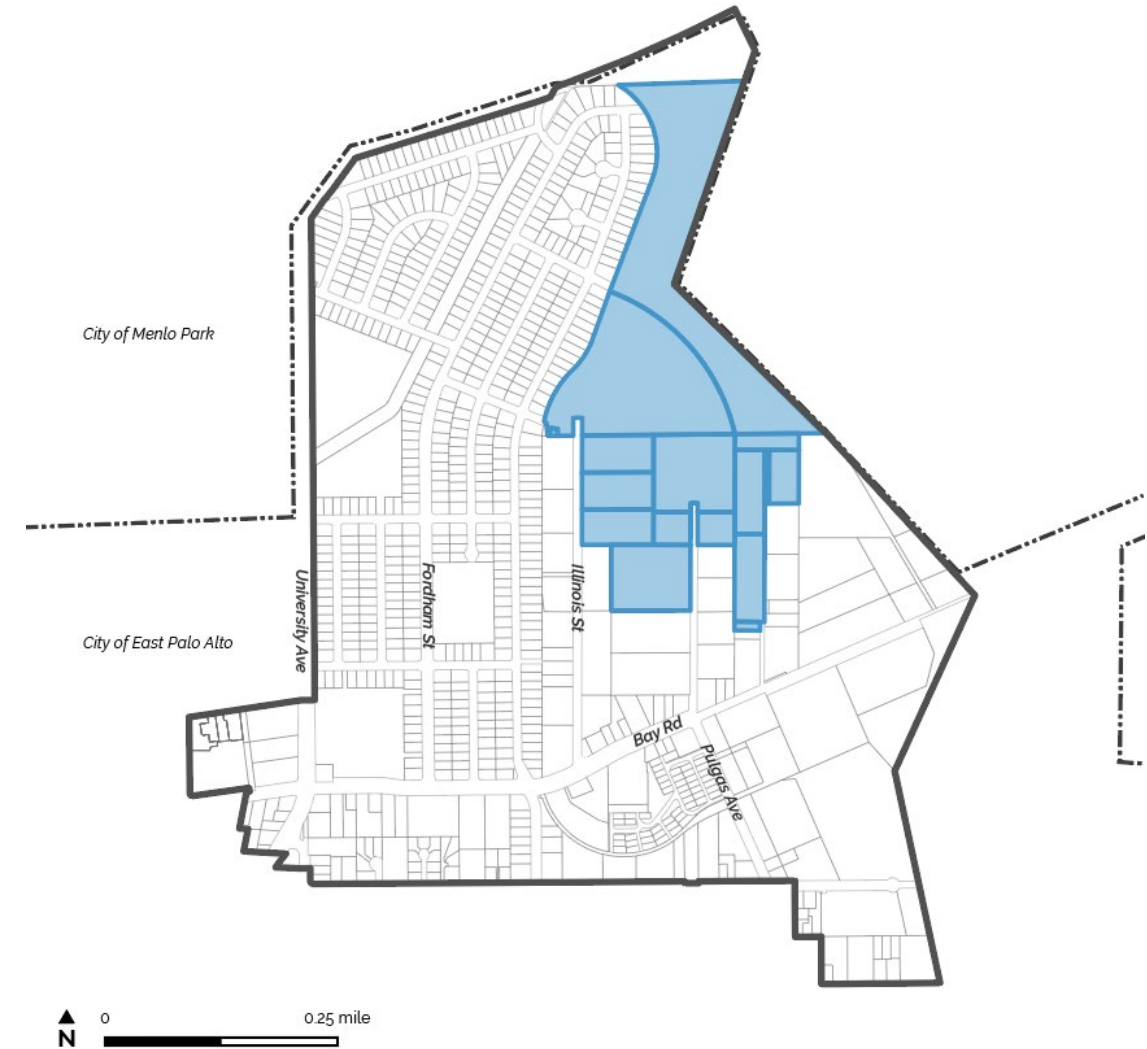
- Roadway and sidewalk improvements
- Measure HH fees and other impact fees
- Site contamination clean-up + mitigation
- Levee land dedication



“EPA Waterfront”

- Owner: Emerson Collective/Sycamore
- Status: Pre-Application

Office / R&D	1,300,000 sf
Retail	25,000 sf
Civic	40,000 sf
Housing Units	260 units
Parking Spaces	4,300 spaces
Open Space	9+ acres (and 15+ acres wetlands)
Building Height	Up to 8 stories (120')

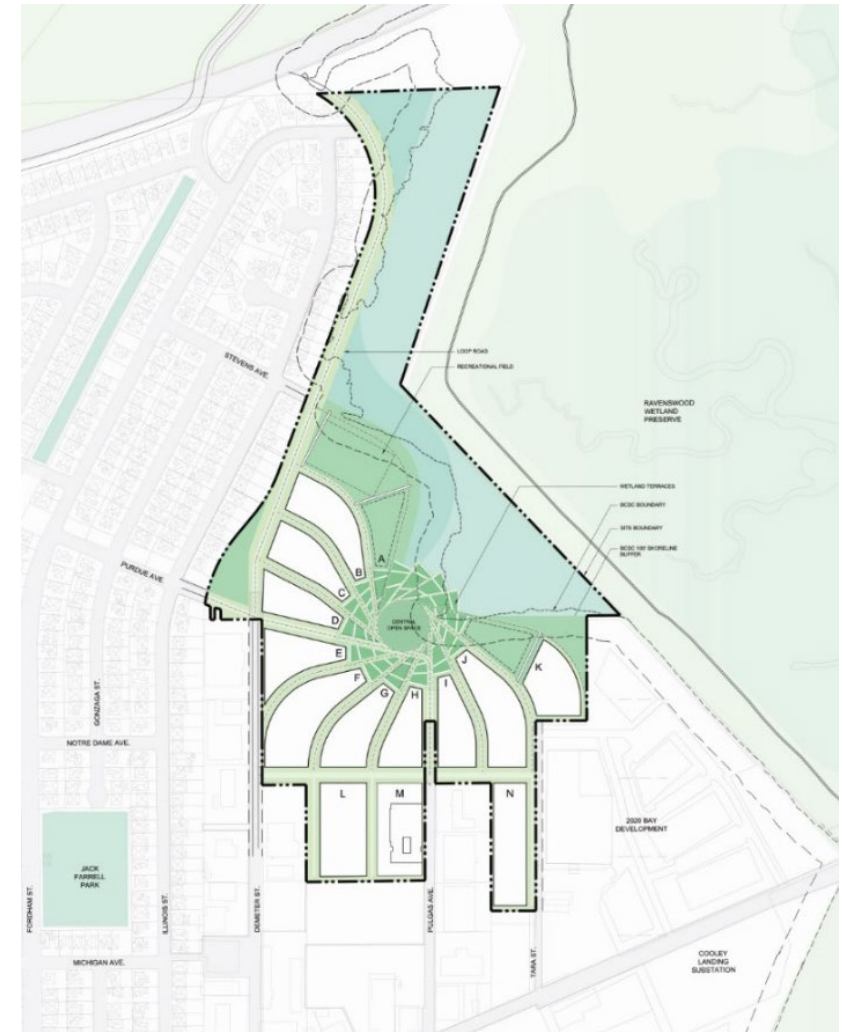


EPA Waterfront: Proposed Benefits

- 9+ acres of publicly accessible open space and waterfront trails
- New affordable housing units
- Restoration of acres of habitat + wetlands
- Ample community spaces and new retail
- Central gathering space/plaza
- JobTrain partnership

Required Improvements include

- Roadway and sidewalk improvements
- Measure HH fees and other impact fees
- Site contamination clean-up + mitigation



Minor Projects

Name
Job Train
Ravenswood Health Center Office
965 Weeks St
1804 Bay Road
1201 Runnymede
EPA Arts Center



Proposed

