

# EXISTING GOALS AND POLICIES

The following are applicable goals and policies from the General Plan (2030).

## GENERAL PLAN – LAND USE ELEMENT

### C. GOALS AND POLICIES

#### CITY WIDE

**POLICY LU 1.4:** **Development Intensity/Density.** Adopt and maintain the development intensity/density limits as identified on the Land Use Map and Building Intensity Plan, and as specified in Policy LU 6A.2. Development intensity/density shall recognize natural environmental constraints, such as flood plains, earthquake faults, debris flow areas, hazards, traffic and access, necessary services, and general community and neighborhood design. **Maintain a density and building intensity range, with densities/intensities at the higher end of the range to be considered based on provision of public benefits such as affordable housing, increased open space, public plazas or recreational facilities, or off-site infrastructure improvements.**

In addition to criteria such as community design, protection of single-family neighborhoods, avoidance of population overcrowding and traffic congestion, the determination of appropriate intensity and density limitations has taken into account natural environmental constraints such as topography and geotechnical hazards. Hazards such as landslide, flooding, and wildfire are discussed in detail in the Safety Element.

Density of residential development is generally thought of as the number of dwelling units per acre. However, State Planning Law requires that density also be expressed as population density: the number of persons in a given land area. Density is displayed in both forms in the Land Use Plan, Figure LU-3 and in the Land Use Categories, Appendix B.

The following language in *italics* was adopted by voter initiative in 2004 and cannot be modified, revised or updated without voter approval.

*The plan permits new multi-family residential development at a range of densities from 9 to 50 units net per acre, with the higher end of the density range to be used only for projects which provide substantial public benefits or amenities. Residential development is also allowed in commercial districts. If expected development takes place, the city-wide average density is expected to increase from 10 to at least 12 units per net acre.*

*Building intensity is a measurement of the amount of physical development allowed on a parcel. The Land Use Element utilizes a combination of building height and floor area ratio (FAR) (the gross floor area of a building divided by the net lot area to measure building intensity.*

*The plan anticipates a range of new non-residential development by providing an FAR range of 0.5 up to a theoretical maximum of 3.0, and by establishing a range of permitted building heights from 25 feet to 90 feet. Higher height limits and the higher end of the FAR range are available only for projects which provide public benefits or amenities substantially greater than code requirements.*

*The city-wide average FAR is expected to increase from .59, but to stay below .70, while average height will remain less than 45 feet.*

(Refer to LU Element, page II-9)

### **3. AREAS OF SPECIAL CONCERN.**

#### **b. El Camino Real.**

**GOAL 3b:** Promote residential land uses and the visual improvement of El Camino Real.

**POLICY LU 3.3:** **El Camino Real.** Retain the general residential and landscaped character of El Camino Real north of Tilton Avenue. Promote the visual upgrading of El Camino Real south of Ninth Avenue through increased landscaping, coordination of public improvements, property maintenance, and sign control, through conformance with the El Camino Real Master Plan. Residential uses shall be encouraged to provide diversity to the existing commercial character, and building setbacks from adjoining residences used to reduce perceived building mass from El Camino Real. Pedestrian activity and safety should be encouraged.

El Camino Real is the dominant commercial boulevard and heavily traveled local corridor in the City. Its long linear form and strip commercial development help mold strong visual images, portions of which may be judged to be unpleasant. More than most other local corridors the street image strongly affects the overall City image. El Camino Real's image should be improved through coordinated comprehensive public and private improvements which follow the guidelines and standards in the El Camino Real Master Plan. Economic development strategies should also be considered as part of any improvement effort along El Camino Real.

In 2001, the City Council adopted the El Camino Real Master Plan which provides a vision for enhancements to El Camino Real from SR 92 to the Belmont City Limits border. The Master Plan provides infrastructure and guidelines to create a vibrant mixed-use community that encourages pedestrian and bicycle activity and safety. The Master Plan includes a streetscape plan for public improvements such as landscaping medians, creating theme intersections with landscaping and street furniture, and recommendations for parking enhancements. Design guidelines address the character of private development along the El Camino Real corridor. Topics such as building facades, setbacks, building form, location of parking, and signage are discussed in the guidelines. The Master Plan identifies a range of land uses for El Camino Real from infill development to larger scale transit-oriented development around the Hillsdale and Hayward Park Caltrain stations.

Through the Grand Boulevard Initiative Plan, which is a collaboration of cities and other agencies in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, the City will continue planning efforts to  
(Refer to LU Element, page II-20)

## AREA SPECIFIC POLICIES

The Land Use Element divides the community into 10 planning areas, as delineated on Figure LU-1 San Mateo Planning Area, for the primary purpose of tailoring policies to the unique characteristics of each area. These area specific policies indicate major policies within each planning area.

(Refer to LU Element, page II-46)

### 3. DOWNTOWN.

The goals, policies, and objectives for downtown San Mateo are located in the Downtown Plan. A general discussion of the downtown also occurs in Section 3 of this Land Use Element.

Provisions of the voter-approved Measure H and Measure P, which reduced building heights, floor area ratios and residential densities, were also incorporated, including the provisions following below (the Measure H and P provisions are in *italics*).

- a. *A Specific Plan for the Downtown was adopted by the City Council in July 1985, and amended in 1993 consistent with the provisions of Measure H as adopted by the voters in November 1991. This Specific Plan also constituted an amendment to the previous General Plan.*
- b. *Densities up to 75 units per acre, heights up to 75' and appropriate FARs may be allowed in the following areas of the Downtown, for projects which provide public benefits or amenities substantially greater than code requirements:*
  1. *the area designated on the Land Use Plan (LU-3) as Downtown which is bounded by El Camino Real (SR 82), East Fourth and East Fifth avenues and the SPRR railroad tracks;*
  2. *the area designated on the Land Use Plan (LU-3) as Downtown which is bounded by El Camino Real (SR 82) and Ellsworth, Baldwin and Second avenues;*
  3. *the area designated on the Land Use Plan (LU-3) as Mixed-Use (Executive Office) which is bounded by El Camino Real (SR 82), San Mateo Drive, St. Matthews Avenue, and Baldwin Avenue; and*
  4. *those properties in the area designated on the Land Use Plan (LU-3) as Mixed Use (Neighborhood Commercial) which are between San Mateo Drive and Ellsworth Avenue, and which have frontage on the north side of Baldwin Avenue as of 1 January 1992.*

*c. Densities up to 75 units per acre, heights up to 75 feet, and appropriate FARs may be allowed in the following areas of the Downtown for projects which to the greatest extent feasible protect and preserve key historic resources in accordance with the following conditions:*

- 1. the area designated on the Land Use Plan (LU-3) as Downtown which is bounded by B Street, Ellsworth Avenue, First Avenue and Second Avenue;*
- 2. all buildings on the site with frontage along Second Avenue or B Street which are identified as Individually Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or contributory to a National Register Eligible Historic District as per the City of San Mateo Historic Building Survey dated September, 1989 (in this area changes in the facade or significant exterior or interior features shall be reviewed for their consistency with the architectural character of the building by applying criteria outlined in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation);*
- 3. FARs and residential densities may be calculated based on the total site square footage; however the FARs and densities for buildings protected in accordance with paragraph (c)(2) immediately preceding may be excluded from the allowable FARs and densities for new construction permitted on the site.*

(Refer to LU Element, page II-50)

#### **4. SHOREVIEW.**

**POLICY PA 4.5:** **Norfolk/SR 92 Vicinity.** Encourage redevelopment of the area along South Norfolk Avenue between Susan Court and SR 92 as follows:

- 1. For properties between Norfolk Avenue and Marina Lagoon, encourage medium scale public-serving commercial uses, as delineated on the Building Height and Intensity Plans, such as retail and restaurants. Redevelopment shall maximize public access to and along the lagoon.*

Intensification or redevelopment of the land abutting Marina Lagoon is encouraged contingent on provision of continuous landscaped public access along the Lagoon from Susan Court to SR 92, and on achieving a building design that is oriented to and sensitive to the waterway.

- 2. Retain the Parkside Shopping Center, allowing limited expansion of low-scale commercial uses. Any redevelopment shall be contingent on retaining neighborhood retail uses and on finding no appreciable increase in through traffic in residential neighborhoods or significant impacts on Norfolk Street service levels. Provide development incentives to encourage mixed retail and high-density housing, should redevelopment occur. Permit heights greater than 35 feet, but to a maximum of 55 feet, for projects which meet the following criteria and are approved by the City Council.*

- a. The project provides amenities, such as affordable housing, landscaped plazas, and public improvements, substantially in excess of those required by City standards;
- b. The building has high design quality, which is enhanced by additional building height;
- c. Increased building heights are visually related to surrounding building heights and promote the creation of a coherent City image;
- d. Increased building heights are compatible with surrounding land uses, and will not create adverse shadow or visual impacts on surrounding residential uses; and
- e. The City's infrastructure is adequate to accommodate the proposed development.

Parkside Shopping Center's location adjacent to US 101/SR 92 interchange makes it highly susceptible to redevelopment. However, traffic from northbound US 101 must travel through residential neighborhoods to reach the Center. Redevelopment to other uses is allowed contingent on the retention of neighborhood retail uses. Mixed use development which includes high density multi-family is preferred and should be encouraged with development intensity bonuses. PA 4.6: J. Hart (Refer to LU Element, page II-52-53)

## 5. HAYWARD PARK.

### PA 5.1: Mid-El Camino Real.

1. Allow commercial and *high density* residential use of the area between Ninth Avenue and SR 92, as delineated on the Building Height and Intensity Plans. For all buildings over two stories high, provide a minimum setback of ten feet adjacent to El Camino Real. Additionally, provide a minimum setback adjacent to residential parcels of one-half the maximum building height subject to the El Camino Real Master Plan.
2. *For lots 100 feet deep and less, maximum building height is 40 feet. For lots more than 100 feet deep, permit heights up to 55 feet for projects which meet the following criteria and are approved by the City Council:*
  - a. The project provides amenities, such as landscaped plazas, covered parking, setbacks from the street, stepbacks of upper stories, and public improvements substantially in excess of City requirements;
  - b. The building has high design quality, which is enhanced by additional building height;
  - c. Increased building heights are visually related to surrounding building heights and promote the creation of a coherent City image;
  - d. Increased building heights are compatible with surrounding land uses, and will not create adverse shadow or visual impacts on surrounding residential uses; and
  - e. The City's infrastructure is adequate to accommodate the proposed development.

*Prepare design criteria to implement this policy prior to approval of any building over 40 feet high.*

*In this area, El Camino Real (SR 82) is characterized by a mixture of commercial uses ranging from single-story to high rise. It is expected that most new development will be medium scale commercial or high-density residential or mixed-use due to the limited depth lots and potential impact on adjacent residential sites.*

**PA 5.2:**                    **SR 92/Grant Street/Concar Drive/Delaware Street Vicinity.** For properties within the focal area:

1.        Allow a concentration of large scale retail, office and hotel uses, as delineated on the Building Height and Intensity Maps.
2.        Require building setbacks from the street, freeway and adjoining residential neighborhoods to reduce visual impacts, with greater setbacks required for greater heights.
3.        *Permit densities up to 75 units per acre, and heights greater than 40 feet but up to a maximum of 75 feet for projects in the area designated in the Land Use Plan (LU-3) as Regional/Community Commercial which is bounded by South Grant Street, US 101, SR 92 and the north property line of the Dunfey Hotel, which meet the following criteria and are approved by the City Council:*
  - a.        The project provides amenities, such as landscaped plazas, and public improvements, substantially in excess of those required by City standards;
  - b.        The building has high design quality, which is enhanced by additional building height;
  - c.        Increased building heights are visually related to surrounding building heights and promote the creation of a coherent City image;
  - d.        Increased building heights are compatible with surrounding land uses, and will not create adverse shadow or visual impacts on surrounding residential uses; and
  - e.        The City's infrastructure is adequate to accommodate the proposed development.
4.        Provide development incentives for high density residential development adjacent to the railway.
5.        Require that any redevelopment of the Marriot Hotel property address major citizen concerns pertaining to traffic, truck loading, trash/recycling Land Use II-56 Adopted by the City Council on October 18, 2010, Resolution No. 134-2010 Amended by the City Council on April 18, 2011, Resolution No. 42 (2011) Amended by the City Council on April 6, 2015, Resolution No. 36 (2015) activities, noise, appearance, and public safety as part of the site plan and design of a development proposal.

6. Allow transit-oriented development within the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) area in the vicinity of the Hayward Park station according to the provisions of the San Mateo Rail Corridor Transit Oriented Development Plan.

The excellent freeway access and visibility, large lots, and area's relative isolation from residential neighborhoods make portions of this area favorable for large scale regional office and retail growth. The anticipated improvements to the Hayward Park train station at Concar Drive would add to the area's transit access and make it especially suitable for high-density residential development. (Refer to LU Element, page II-54-56)

## 6. MARINA LAGOON.

**POLICY PA 6.3: Mariner's Island Specific Plan.** Allow development that includes low to highdensity multi-family residential uses and small to large scale commercial retail and office uses, as delineated on the Building Height and Intensity Plans. Consider increasing the building intensity standards to include structured parking in the floor area ratio calculations.

1. **Bridgepointe Retail and Office/Residential Site.** Allow expansion and/or redevelopment of the Bridgepointe retail and office/residential area, formerly known as "The Island" Shopping Center, for any of the following uses, as delineated in the Bridgepointe Master Plan: high-rise, high-density residential; retail, offices, and hotel. Limit redevelopment potential based on traffic generation which is equal to, or less than, that anticipated from a retail mall of 0.62 floor area ratio (FAR).
2. **Ancillary Commercial Sites, Area I.** Expand the list of allowable uses to include churches, subject to a special use permit.
3. **Height Limits.** *Maximum densities of up to 75 units per acre and maximum heights of up to 75' and appropriate FARs may be allowed in the following areas of Mariner's Island, for projects which provide public benefits or amenities substantially greater than code requirements:*
  - a. *the area designated on the Land Use Plan (LU-3) as Mixed-Use Incentive (Regional/Community Commercial) which is commonly described as Fashion Island Shopping Center and is circumscribed by Arthur Hansen Drive; and*
  - b. *the area designated Executive Office on the Land Use Plan (LU-3) which is north of SR 92 and bounded by Fashion Island Boulevard, Mariner's Island Boulevard, and Fashion Island Shopping Center.*

The Bridgepointe retail and office/residential area is a very large site with excellent freeway access and visibility, and relative isolation from single-family neighborhoods. The site provides revenue for the City, creation of jobs, and needed housing. Covered parking for office use shall not be counted as floor area.

The Mariners Island Specific Plan limited floor area ratio (FAR) for this and other commercial sites in the area based on anticipated traffic capacity. For the Bridgepointe and adjacent office/residential property, a range of FAR's is provided, based on traffic generation.  
(Refer to LU Element, page II-57-58)

## **7. HILLSDALE.**

### **POLICY PA 7.6: South El Camino Real.**

1. Allow commercial and high density residential use of the area of South El Camino Real between SR 92 and the Belmont City limits, as delineated on the Building Height and Intensity Plans. For all buildings over two stories high, provide a minimum setback of ten feet adjacent to El Camino Real. Additionally, provide a minimum setback adjacent to residential parcels of one-half the maximum building height.
2. *For lots 100 feet deep and less, maximum building height is 40 feet. For lots more than 100 feet deep, permit heights up to 55 feet for projects which meet the following criteria and are approved by the City Council except as noted in 3, below:*
  - a. The project provides amenities, such as landscaped plazas, covered parking, setbacks from the street, stepbacks of upper stories, and public improvements substantially in excess of City requirements;
  - b. The building has high design quality, which is enhanced by additional building height;
  - c. Increased building heights are visually related to surrounding building heights and promote the creation of a coherent City image;
  - d. Increased building heights are compatible with surrounding land uses, and will not create adverse shadow or visual impacts on surrounding residential uses; and
  - e. The City's infrastructure is adequate to accommodate the proposed development.
3. Allow transit-oriented development within the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) area in the vicinity of the Hillsdale station according to the provisions of the San Mateo Rail Corridor Transit-Oriented Development Plan.

*Prepare design criteria to implement this policy prior to approval of any building over 40 feet high.*

*In this area, El Camino Real (SR 82) is characterized by a mixture of low-scale commercial uses. It is expected that most new development will be medium scale commercial or high-density residential or mixed-use, due to urban design concerns and traffic congestion.*

(Refer to LU Element, page II-61-62)



## 8. BERESFORD PARK

### POLICY PA 8.1: South El Camino Real.

1. Allow commercial and high density residential use of the area of South El Camino Real between SR 92 and 29th Avenue, as delineated on the Building Height and Intensity Plans. For all buildings over two stories high, provide a minimum setback of ten feet adjacent to El Camino Real. Additionally, provide a minimum setback adjacent to residential parcels of one-half the maximum building height.
2. *For lots 100 feet deep and less, maximum building height is 40 feet. For lots more than 100 feet deep, permit heights up to 55 feet for projects which meet the following criteria and are approved by the City Council:*
  - a. The project provides amenities, such as landscaped plazas, covered parking, setbacks from the street, stepbacks of upper stories, and public improvements substantially in excess of City requirements;
  - b. The building has high design quality, which is enhanced by additional building height;
  - c. Increased building heights are visually related to surrounding building heights and promote the creation of a coherent City image;
  - d. Increased building heights are compatible with surrounding land uses, and will not create adverse shadow or visual impacts on surrounding residential uses; and
  - e. The City's infrastructure is adequate to accommodate the proposed development.

*Prepare design criteria to implement this policy prior to approval of any building over 40 feet high.*

*The intent of this policy is the same as for other portions of El Camino Real (SR 82) as described in Policies PA-7.6.*

(Refer to LU Element, page II-63-64)

## 9. SUGARLOAF

### POLICY PA 9.2: South El Camino Real.

1. Allow commercial and high density residential use of the area of South El Camino Real between 36th and 41st avenues, as delineated on the Building Height and Intensity Plans. For all buildings over two stories high, provide a minimum setback of ten feet adjacent to El Camino Real . Additionally, provide a minimum setback adjacent to residential parcels of one-half the maximum building height subject to the El Camino Real Master Plan.

2. *For lots 100 feet deep and less, maximum building height is 40 feet. For lots more than 100 feet deep, permit heights up to 55 feet for projects which meet the following criteria and are approved by the City Council:*

- a. The project provides amenities, such as landscaped plazas, covered parking, setbacks from the street, stepbacks of upper stories, and public improvements substantially in excess of City requirements;
- b. The building has high design quality, which is enhanced by additional building height;
- c. Increased building heights are visually related to surrounding building heights and promote the creation of a coherent City image;
- d. Increased building heights are compatible with surrounding land uses, and will not create adverse shadow or visual impacts on surrounding residential uses; and
- e. The City's infrastructure is adequate to accommodate the proposed development.

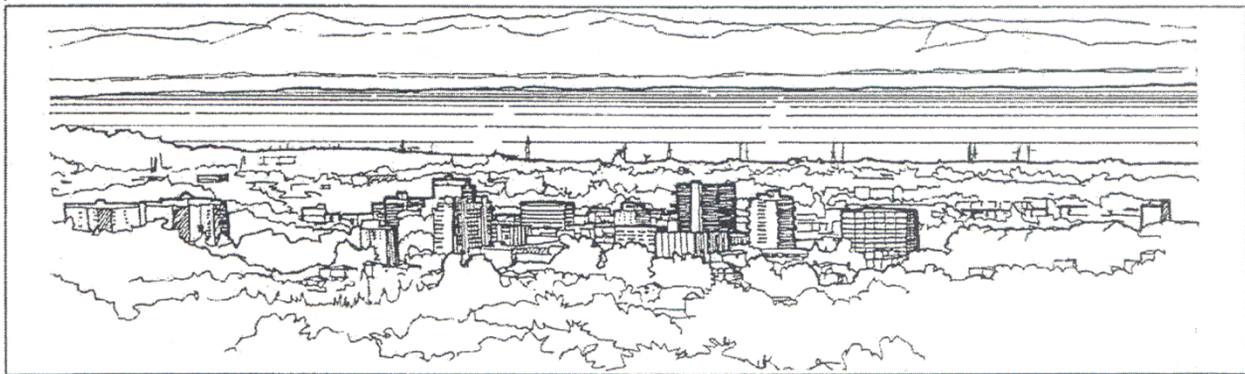
*Prepare design criteria to implement this policy prior to approval of any building over 40 feet high.*  
(Refer to LU Element, page II-66-67)

# GENERAL PLAN – URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT

## B. CITY IMAGE

### FOCAL POINTS

Focal points provide orientation by serving as landmarks and designating important places. The Downtown is a recognizable focal point because of its density, tall buildings, retail, restaurant, and entertainment environment and historic character. Hillsdale Shopping Center is another focal point because of its great number of retail shops and large scale structures at an important intersection. The San Francisco Bay and western hills are natural focal points. The "Crossroads" office buildings at SR 92 and US 101 help to mark this important intersection. The Borel/Bovet offices stand just behind the SR 92 and El Camino Real intersection and denote the major office developments lining SR 92. The office development at Mariner's Island marks a focal point at the eastern edge of the City that visually relates to development in Foster City. Other significant buildings along El Camino Real also create isolated focal points.



Distant View of Downtown San Mateo

Focal points should be developed where they logically orient people and mark significant places. The taller buildings in the Downtown are an excellent example of this. Intersections that mark major business areas are also marking significant places within the City. Misplaced focal points detract from the intended emphasis on important places. Tall buildings intermittently spaced along a street suggest a special area when it may be just part of a commercial strip.

*Many things can be done to strengthen major focal points. The Downtown Specific Plan includes requirements for ground floor retail, and the General Plan permits mixed uses and building heights of up to 75 feet in the Downtown. Hillsdale Mall could be strengthened by higher floor area ratios (the ratio of building floor area to lot area), visible retail uses (outward focusing), and a more consistent architectural or landscape treatment. The office development along SR 92 could be enhanced by permitting taller buildings up to 75 feet in height, altering higher floor area ratios and architectural and landscape treatments. Focal points can be discouraged in the middle sections of El Camino (SR 82) and many other commercial zones by changing the zoning to permit no high-rises or buildings with excessive bulk. (Refer to UD Element, page II-)*

## C. CITY IMAGE GOALS AND POLICIES

**GOAL 2:** Make El Camino Real (SR 82) a livable residential and successful commercial street that displays a positive image of San Mateo.

**POLICY UD 1.1:** **Focal Points.** Emphasize and improve established focal points identified as the Downtown, Hillsdale Station Area, including the Caltrain Station and the Hillsdale Shopping Center, Bridgepointe, Hayward Park Caltrain Station and adjacent office development areas, the intersections of US 101 and SR 92 and SR 92 and El Camino Real (SR 82), and the SR 92 corridor. Encourage focal points by emphasizing a particular use, or feature, or through entry or landscape treatments. Focal points should be discouraged at inappropriate locations.

Significant places in the City should be emphasized. Treating them as focal points and making them more prominent by allowing concentrations of high buildings in designated areas, emphasizing a particular use, or a special landscape treatment accomplishes this. Tall or bulky buildings randomly placed confuse the most important areas of the City with other areas and should be avoided.

**POLICY UD 1.5:** **Direct Corridors to Focal Points.** Visually improve and direct toward focal points the major corridors of Third Avenue, Fourth Avenue, Hillsdale Boulevard and El Camino Real (SR 82) with the installation of street trees, street lights and consistent building setbacks.

As constructed, many major corridors lack a visual connection to the City's focal points. Improving this connection emphasizes the focal points and improves the appearance of these heavily traveled streets. Street trees, distinctive and aesthetic street lights and consistent building setbacks are the main ways to accomplish this. Further study may indicate that other public improvements and design standards will also improve the corridors.

**POLICY UD 1.6:** **El Camino Real (SR 82)** Ensure that new development and public improvements conform to the goals, policies, and guidelines established in the El Camino Real Master Plan to give El Camino Real an organized and appealing image. The street should maintain a landscaped residential character north of Downtown and allow mixed uses south of Ninth Avenue. The Guiding Principles of the Grand Boulevard Initiative shall be incorporated into future plans to be developed that involve El Camino Real in San Mateo.

El Camino Real is the dominant commercial and through street in the City. Much of the commercial image of San Mateo comes from this street. Because of the importance of El Camino Real, a Master Plan was adopted to improve it visually and economically. The Master Plan provides a vision for enhancements to El Camino Real from SR 92 to the Belmont border to further its role as a major traffic arterial, and provide infrastructure and guidelines to create a vibrant mixed-use community. It is extremely important that new private development and public improvements comply with the provisions contained in the Master Plan.

The Grand Boulevard Initiative has developed 10 Guiding Principles for El Camino Real that are based on common themes throughout various planning documents in the multiple jurisdictions in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

The Guiding Principles are: Target housing and job growth in strategic areas along the corridor; Encourage compact mixed-use development and high quality urban design and construction; Create a pedestrian-oriented environment and improve streetscapes, ensuring full access to and between public areas and private developments; Develop a balanced multimodal corridor to maintain and improve mobility of people and vehicles along the corridor; Manage parking assets; Provide vibrant public spaces and gathering places; Preserve and accentuate unique and desirable community character and the existing quality of life in adjacent neighborhoods; Improve safety and public health; Strengthen pedestrian and bicycle connections within the corridor; and Pursue environmentally sustainable and economically viable development patterns.

These Guiding Principles are consistent with the adopted El Camino Real Master Plan, and are strategies that will be incorporated into future plans for improvements along El Camino Real.