

Att 2 - Applicable Policies

GENERAL PLAN – LAND USE ELEMENT

GOAL 1d: Concentrate major high-intensity commercial office and retail development in specific focal areas, as delineated on the City Image Plan, Figure UD-1.

GOAL 1f: Provide a wide range of land uses, including retail, commercial services, office, industrial, parks, open space, and housing, to adequately meet the needs of the community.

GOAL 1g: Attain development which occurs in an orderly fashion and which limits adverse environmental impacts to the community.

LU 1.11: Commercial Focal Areas. Concentrate the most intense office and retail uses at locations delineated on the Land Use Plan. Discourage such uses outside the commercial nodes delineated on the Land Use Plan.

LU 1.15: Mixed Use. Encourage developments which mix commercial retail and office uses with residential uses at locations and intensities/densities as delineated on the Land Use Plan and Building Intensity Plan.

GOAL 2a: Promote economic vitality which provides jobs for existing and future residents and maintains the City's ability to finance public improvements and human services.

GOAL 2c: Promote an intensity of commercial activity that enhances the business climate in the City to increase the level of business types which will benefit existing commercial uses.

LU 2.4: Downtown Plan. Establish downtown San Mateo as the social, cultural, and economic center of the City with a wide range of office, medical, residential, entertainment, and retail uses at high intensities and densities while encouraging pedestrian activity and bicycle connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods.

LU 2.10: Optimize Development Opportunities. Ensure that developments optimize the development potential of property in major commercial areas such as the Downtown Retail Core and along South El Camino Real.

LU 3.1: Downtown Plan. As the social, cultural and economic center of the City, the downtown shall maintain a wide range of office, medical, residential, entertainment, and retail uses at high intensities and densities.

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, Measure P, and Measure Y which reduced building heights, floor area ratios and residential densities, were also incorporated, including the provisions following below (the Measure H, P and Y 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.

GENERAL PLAN – HOUSING ELEMENT

H 2.12: Mixed Use. Continue the policy of encouraging residential uses in existing commercial areas, or in locating adjacent or near transit nodes, where the residences can be buffered from noise and safety concerns and can provide adequate on-site parking and usable open space. Provide floor area and/or height bonuses for residential development in selected areas of the City.

DOWNTOWN PLAN

GOALS

ONE Enhance Downtown's Role as the City Center and Maintain Its Unique Sense of Place Downtown San Mateo possesses a traditional downtown image, including an informal, cozy atmosphere. Key landmarks and landscaping in the form of street trees, San Mateo Creek and Central Park contribute to downtown's unique character. New development should complement this character, while at the same time bringing contemporary elements that revitalize and energize the downtown.

TWO Enhance the Vitality and Activity of Downtown by Incorporating an Overall Good Mix and Diversity of Uses Maintain and improve on the wide range of uses available downtown including retail and service establishments, entertainment uses, such as the Downtown Century Theater, residential uses and unique facilities, such as Central Park. Facilitate a wide mix of retail stores, service uses such as restaurants, and housing uses.

THREE Enhance the Downtown's Pedestrian Environment and Enhance the Safety and Attractiveness of Downtown. Allow for outdoor uses, such as cafes and sitting areas, to promote the pedestrian activity and multiple destination trips to the downtown. Strengthen the links between Central Park and downtown, and between the downtown and surrounding residential areas.

POLICIES

I.1 Downtown Core High Density/Intensity Development. Encourage the development of mixed-use high density residential projects and high intensity commercial projects within the Downtown Retail Core.

II.1 Downtown Core Shopping Area. Preserve the downtown's core shopping area between 1st and 5th Avenues from El Camino Real to the railroad.

II.2 Required Retail Frontage. Require the provision of ground floor retail uses with windows on properties located on the primary shopping streets as identified in the Required Retail Frontage Zone Map (see map at the end of this chapter). In addition to traditional retailing activities, permit entertainment and cultural uses, and allow fast food establishments in limited instances.

II.8 Office Development. Encourage the establishment of offices within the Downtown Retail Core and surrounding commercially designated areas.

II.9 Housing in the Retail Core. Provide housing for new households that will utilize downtown businesses and is within proximity to the transit station to reduce vehicle trips and vehicle ownership.

II.10 Mixed Use Commercial-Residential. Facilitate housing production by allowing multi-family dwellings as part of mixed use developments in all downtown commercial and office land use categories, except areas designated service commercial and parks/open space in the General Plan.

IV.2 Store Fronts in the Retail Core. Maintain the traditional store front environment of the Downtown Retail Core area by requiring new buildings to be constructed to the street property line. In the retail core area, require ground floor building walls to be dominated by windows and pedestrian entrances

IV.3 Design Guidelines. Evaluate the Downtown Design Guidelines to ensure that it:

- (1) Emphasizes the public realm - streets and sidewalks and public spaces in building design, scale, detail, and pattern of new developments;
- (2) Encourages building design to be compatible with the historic and architectural features common to many buildings in the Downtown;
- (3) Encourages a compatibility of diverse building styles; and
- (4) Encourages building details, surfaces, textures and materials that are interesting for the pedestrian.

IV.6 Downtown Design Guidelines/Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines. Revise the Downtown and Historic District Design Guidelines to give consideration to new development within a historic preservation context, thereby providing a balance between preserving a unique community asset (in the form of a historic district with intact distinct historic and contributor structures) and providing for new development and improvements within the downtown area.

IMPLEMENT A NEW FINANCING MECHANISM FOR DOWNTOWN PARKING.

The Central Parking and Improvement District (CPID) was created by the City in 1954 as a means of financing land acquisition and construction of downtown public parking facilities. The CPID includes on-street parking, surface lots and five (5) parking structures. The bonds issued to fund these downtown parking facilities have been retired, and the City is presently examining methods to fund additional downtown parking.

Funding of additional public parking in downtown should consider the following principles:

- a. Property owners should participate in the funding of future parking expansion through assessments or other appropriate methods.
- b. Parking in-lieu fees when combined with assessments and other parking revenues should be maintained at a level to provide the full cost of constructing a new parking space.

SUPPORT THE DOWNTOWN SAN MATEO ASSOCIATION IN CREATION OF A PROPERTY BASED IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT FOR DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENTS AND MAINTENANCE.

As a way to provide funding for additional parking facilities, the Downtown San Mateo Association (DSMA) is currently exploring the formation of a Property Based Improvement District (PBID) as well as other funding options, including options with contributions by property owners and/or tenants. The City should continue to support these efforts in an attempt to address funding issues related to the provision of additional downtown parking facilities.

Outdoor Seating
Hayward



SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES.

In order to improve pedestrian, bicycle, shuttle, and transit access implement Downtown Area Plan policies to reduce vehicle trips and encourage transit use and promote bicycle and pedestrian accessibility.

Additionally, the Downtown Area Plan includes vehicle trip reduction, bicycle and pedestrian accessibility policies. These policies will be employed on a case by case basis as development is reviewed, with the goal of reducing vehicle trips and promoting alternative means of mobility.



Outdoor Seating,
Mountain View



Outdoor Seating
Hayward



Downtown Retail Core

Background

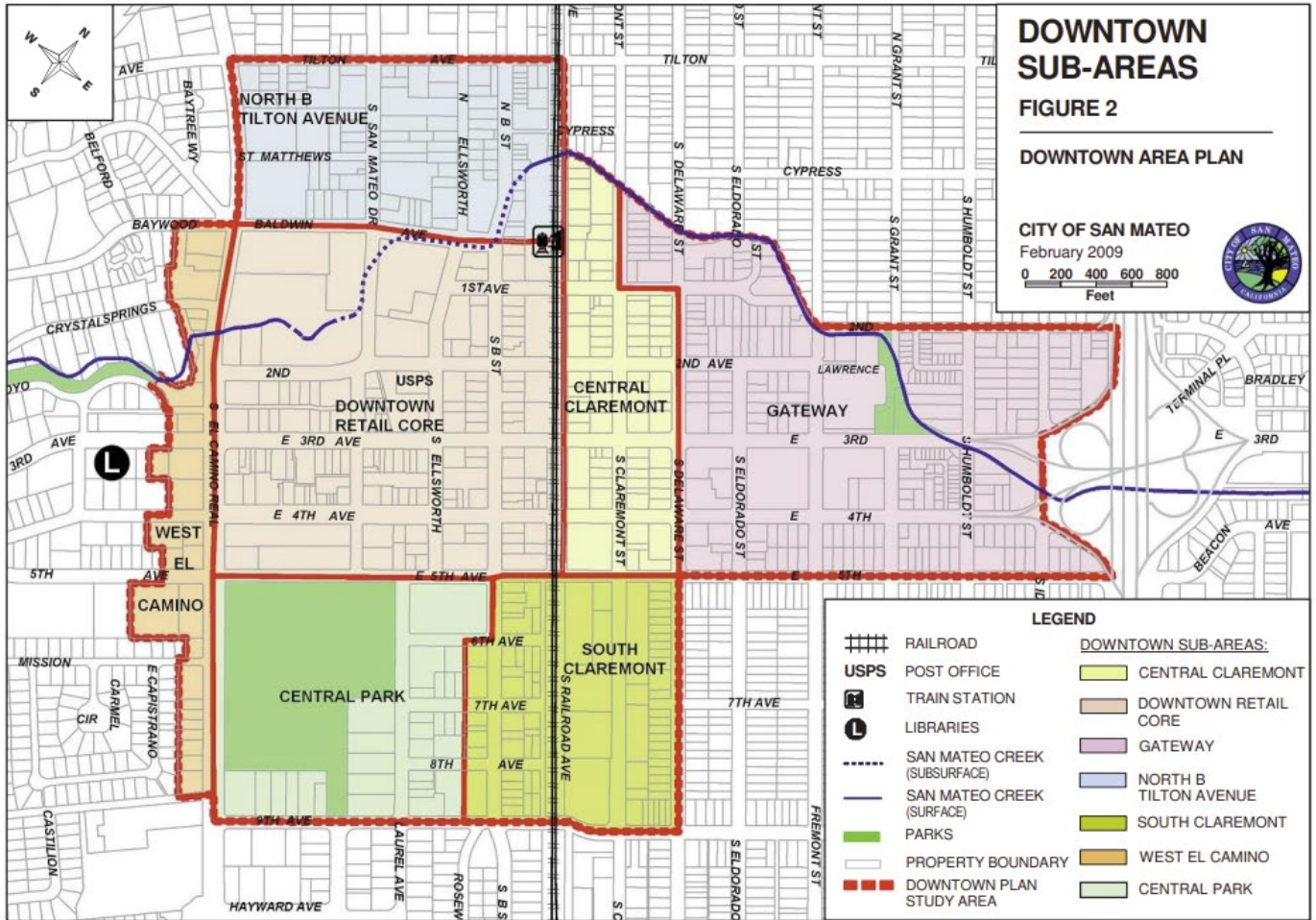
The Downtown Retail Core extends from 5th Avenue to 2nd Avenue between El Camino Real and the Railroad. 3rd Avenue, 4th Avenue and B Street are the primary retail streets (see map at end of this chapter). The two vacant former gas station sites at 3rd Avenue/El Camino Real present opportunities and challenges at this gateway to the downtown. Mills Health Center, the Downtown Century Cinema, and the Downtown Transit Center (see next sub-area discussion) are also included in this sub-area.

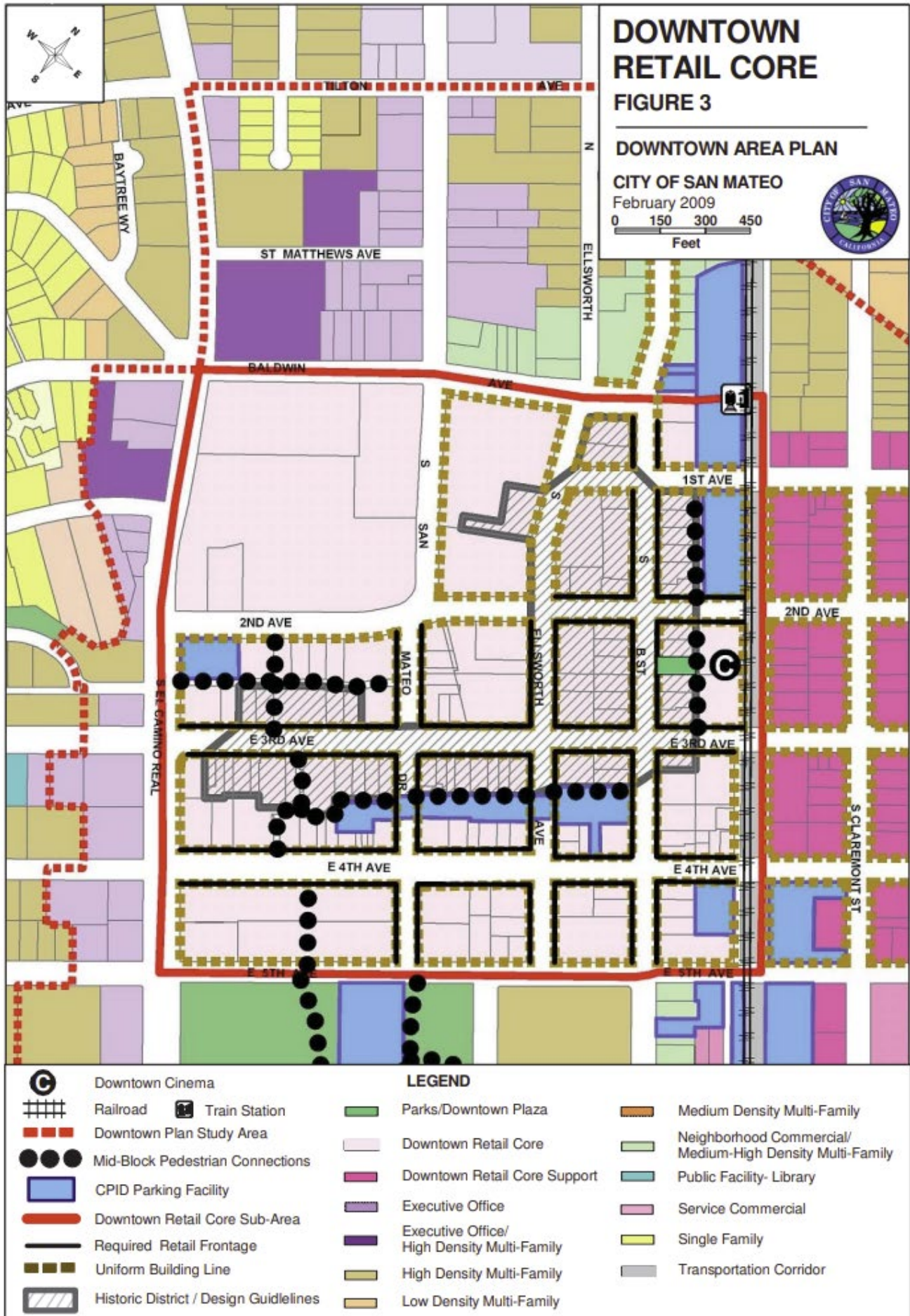
Future Conditions

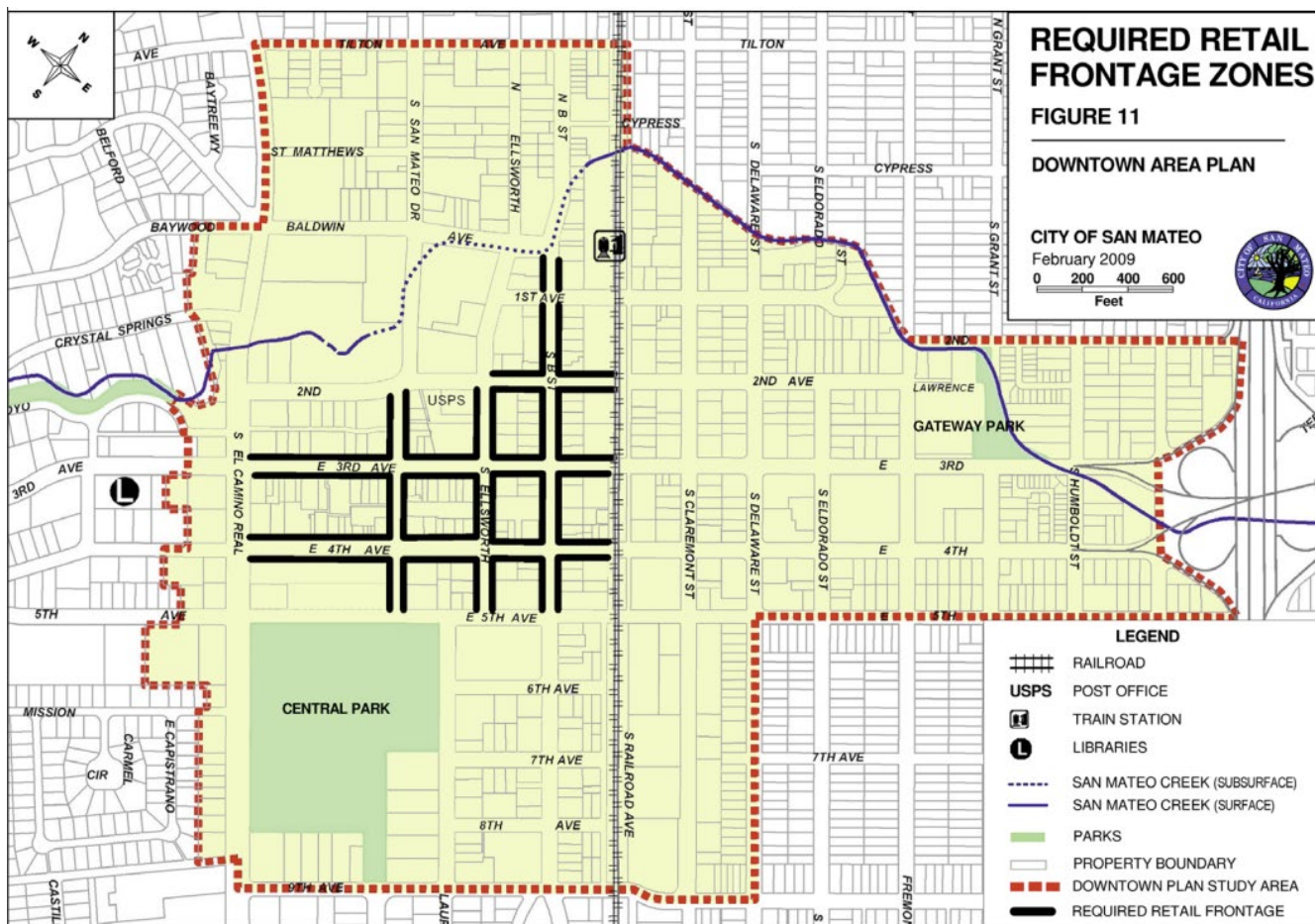
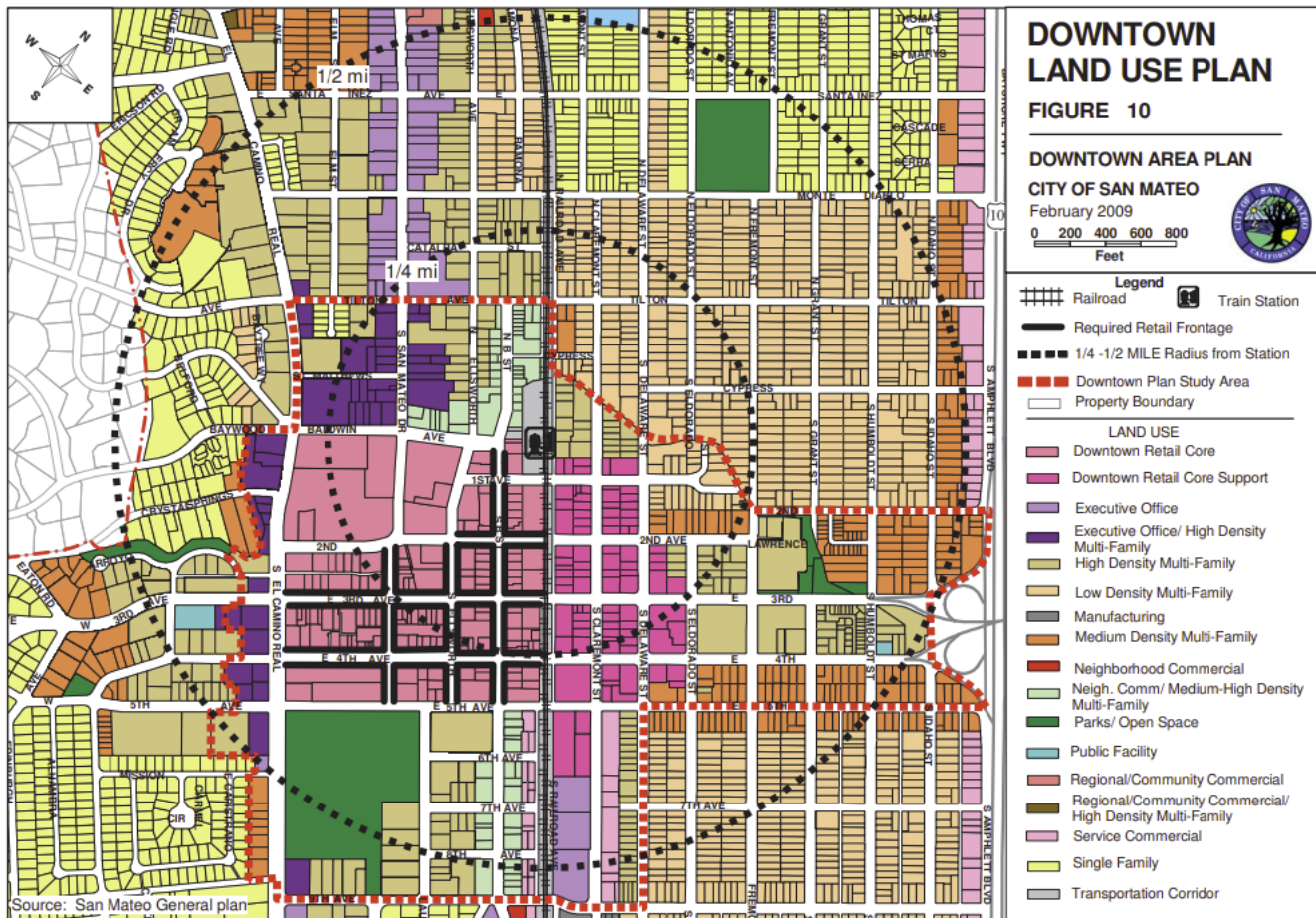
Downtown Plan policies continue to support the retail core shopping area by requiring retail uses along 2nd, 3rd and 4th Avenues, San Mateo Drive, Ellsworth Avenue, and B Street. This will require a good mix of ground floor retail uses that will contribute to foster retail vitality and downtown's pedestrian oriented environment. New priorities for the retail core include:

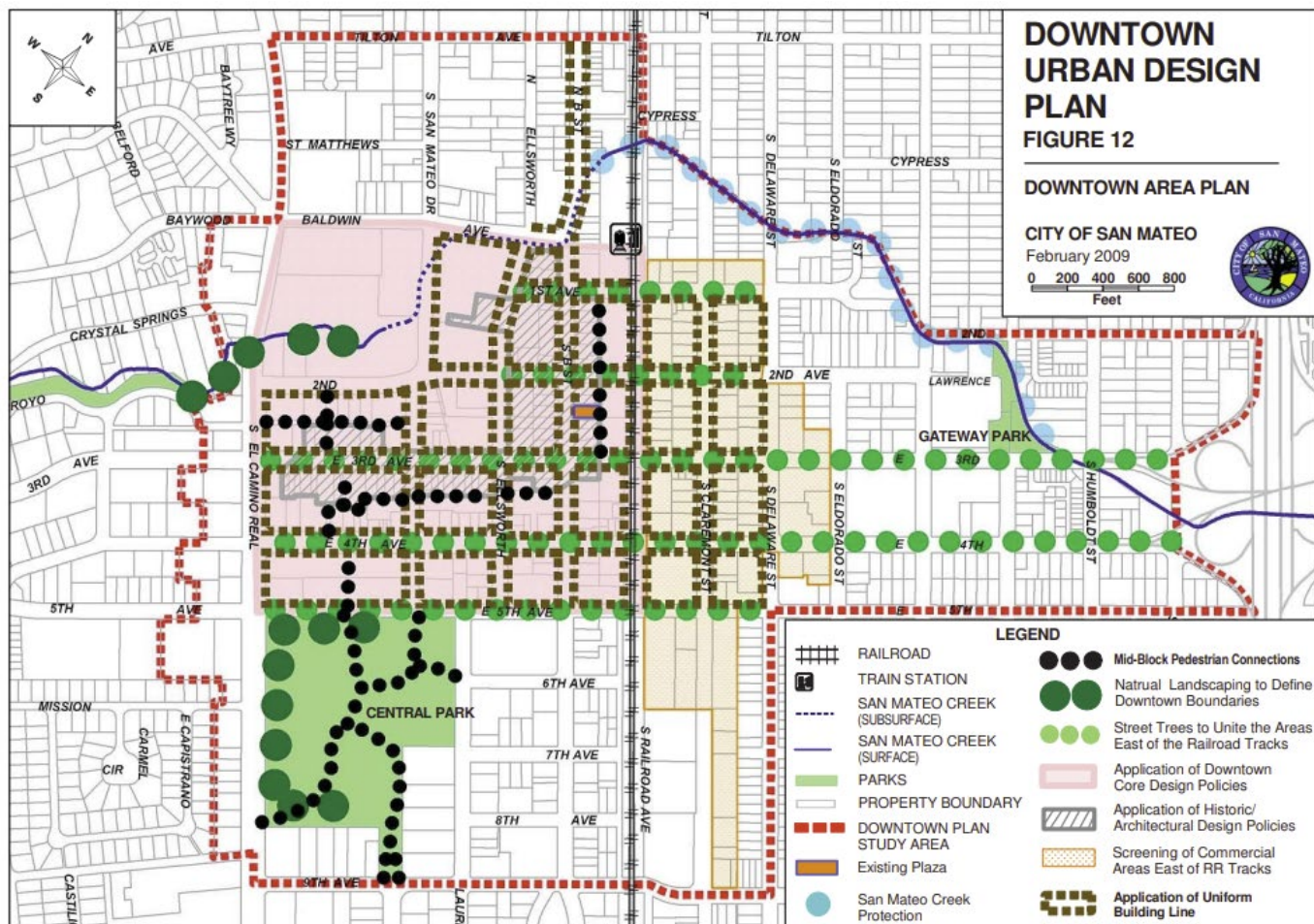
- a. Provide housing for new households that will utilize downtown businesses and is within proximity to the transit station to reduce vehicle trips and vehicle ownership. In order to implement this policy, the City should allow flexibility in architectural style to facilitate use of nontraditional housing designs, such as loft spaces, and allow flexibility in design where more modern forms relate to existing buildings within an historic environment.
- b. Examine the feasibility of reducing lanes on 4th Avenue down to 3 lanes to provide pedestrian enhancements.
- c. Examine the potential for providing a public plaza in the retail core. The City has commissioned ERA to examine a public plaza at the northwest corner of 3rd Avenue and San Mateo Drive in conjunction with a mixed use development at 2nd Avenue and San Mateo Drive.
- d. Continue to seek additional sites for parking and actively explore alternative methods to manage existing parking inventory. Parking inventory management may include experimenting with long term/overnight reserved parking for premium fees, use of technological advancements, encouraging short term parking turn over, and other methods as they become available.
- e. Provide an entry feature at the entryways to downtown in the vicinity of the 3rd Avenue/El Camino Real intersection, 4th Avenue/El Camino Real intersection, B Street/5th Avenue intersection, and B Street/1st Avenue intersection.
- f. Improve pedestrian linkages to Central Park and other plazas, and provide additional widened sidewalks where adequate parking and circulation can be maintained.
- g. Focus on 5th Avenue/San Mateo Drive and opportunities to directly tie Downtown to Central Park, including physically and visually open up to intersection at 5th/San Mateo Drive.
- h. Look at development opportunities on 5th Avenue and where public benefits may be used to help fund linkages to and/or improvements in Central Park.











Sample Findings for Approval:

Special Use Permit (SUP) (SMMC 27.74.020)

The appropriate approval body shall have the power to hear evidence that the granting of such permit will or will not adversely affect the general health, safety and/or welfare of the community, and that the use, if permitted, will not cause injury or disturbance to adjacent property traffic or by excessive noise, smoke, odor or noxious gas, dust, glare, heat or fumes, or industrial waste. Any physical alteration, physical expansion, or change of an existing approved special use shall require a review by and be final with the Planning Commission, unless appealed to the City Council in accordance with [Section 27.08.060](#).

Site Plan and Architectural Review (SPAR) (SMMC 27.080.030(a))

In making its review, the Zoning Administrator, Development Review Board, and Planning Commission shall be guided by the standards adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council. The application shall be approved if the Zoning Administrator or Commission finds all of the following to exist:

- (1) The structures, site plan, and landscaping are in scale and harmonious with the character of the neighborhood;
 - (2) The development will not be detrimental to the harmonious and orderly growth of the City;
 - (3) The development will not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the vicinity, and otherwise is in the best interests of the public health, safety, or welfare;
 - (4) The development meets all applicable standards as adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council, conforms with the General Plan, and will correct any violations of the zoning ordinance, building code, or other municipal codes that exist on the site;
 - (5) The development will not adversely affect matters regarding police protection, crime prevention, and security.
- (b) All buildings, structures, landscaping, and other establishments shall be constructed in accordance with the approved drawings.
- (c) The City Council shall review and make the final determination on all buildings exceeding 55 feet in height or where required by express General Plan provisions.

Site Development Planning Application (SDPA) (SMMC 23.40.040(a)(4)).

Prior to recommending approval of a site development planning application, the approval body shall find that all concerns regarding surface grading, structure foundations, drainage, subsurface conditions, erosion, landscaping and tree removal have been addressed. The approval body shall consider the following factors, where applicable, in making the above finding:

- (A) Saturation of fill and unsupported cuts by water, both natural and domestic;
- (B) Runoff of surface waters that produce erosion, and silting of drainage ways;
- (C) Subsurface conditions such as the rock strata and faults;
- (D) Nature and type of soil or rock that when disturbed by the proposed grading may create earth movements;
- (E) Effect upon the potential for optimum subdivision design;
- (F) Effect upon the visual relationships with other development in the vicinity of the site;
- (G) Appropriateness of the proposed site development for the character of a planned community or planned unit development proposal;
- (H) Capability of proposed slopes to be landscaped;
- (I) Whether the natural landscape and major vegetation is unnecessarily scarred through the proposed grading or removal of vegetation;
- (J) The report from the Project Arborist with respect to Protected Trees pursuant to Chapters [27.71](#) and [13.40](#);
- (K) Any other considerations arising from any environmental impact report which will eliminate or mitigate environmental damage.

Density Bonus request for waivers and reduced development standards (SMMC 27.15.080(b)).

The request to waive or reduce development standards shall be considered by the decision-making body with the authority to act on the Covered Project, and shall be subject to the following findings:

- (1) The requested deviations will not conflict with the General Plan;
- (2) The development is of an excellent design quality and is consistent with applicable Design Guidelines;
- (3) The development is in the best interests of the public health, safety, or welfare;
- (4) The development will not impair the desirability of investment or occupation in the vicinity; and
- (5) The project has demonstrated use of all allowable incentives consistent with [Government Code Section 65915](#).
([Ord. No. 2020-10 § 1.](#))