

# 5

## Community Character and Design

Castro Valley has a unique character that has evolved based on its natural setting and its history. Residents of Castro Valley feel strongly about preserving the character of Castro Valley, and enhancing the aspects of it that they enjoy. This element contains policies and actions to preserve and enhance the community character and design of Castro Valley. The main features that define the desired character of Castro Valley are:

- ***Natural Setting.*** The natural amenities that contribute Castro Valley's quality of life include: hillsides, canyons, creeks, trees, and the views of these natural resources.



*Castro Valley's natural setting is a key feature of the community's character.*



Mature trees in front yards and the lack of sidewalks along certain streets reflect the small-town character of Castro Valley.



This cafe in the Castro Village Shopping Center acts as a community gathering place.

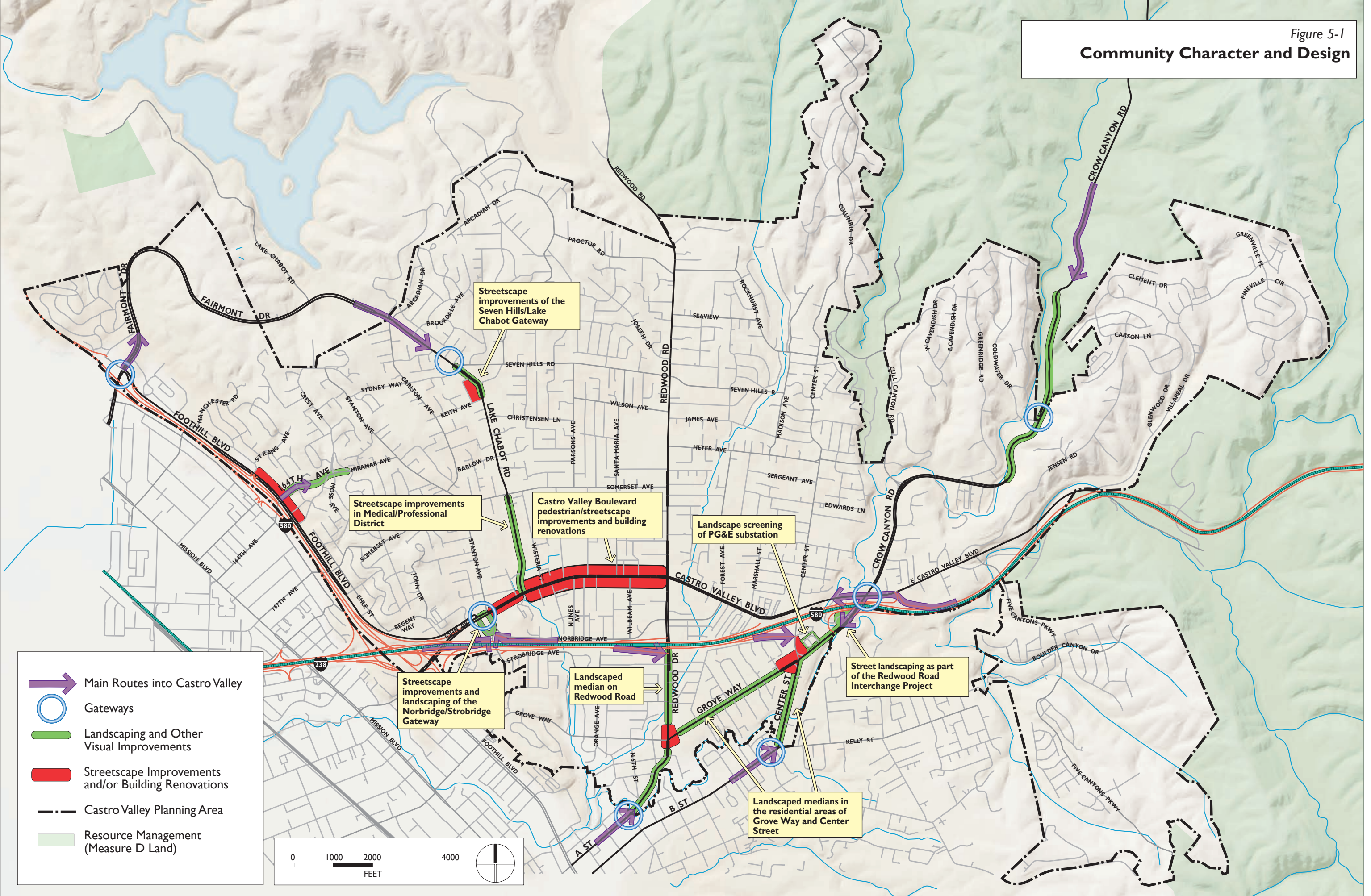








- **Neighborhood Character.** There are physical features that reflect the agricultural and small-town character of Castro Valley before it became a suburban bedroom community. These include some remaining agricultural sites, undeveloped hillsides and canyons, neighborhoods with streets without curbs and sidewalks, and mature trees in front yards and along streets.
- **Downtown and Commercial Area Revitalization.** Revitalizing the Central Business District (CBD) is one of the primary community objectives for the next 20 years. The shops, restaurants, and small businesses along Castro Valley Boulevard, along with the physical fabric of small buildings, give Castro Valley a unique identity. Additional pedestrian access, new retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses, and major streetscape improvements are necessary to transform the CBD into the town center envisioned by the community. In addition to the CBD, there are pockets of commercial development intermixed with the residential neighborhoods. Renovating these areas with new development and improvements is another top priority for the community.
- **Street Design: Gateways and Landscaping.** Part of the long-term vision for the community is to improve the overall appearance and establish a consistent and unified look for Castro Valley. Much of this objective can be accomplished through street design, gateways, and landscaping. There are several key locations where people enter Castro Valley, where gateways can provide a sense of arrival.
- **Community Gathering Places.** While Castro Valley is not an incorporated city with a “Civic Center,” there are places where the community comes together that are identified uniquely with Castro Valley. These include the library, Castro Village Shopping Center, the post office, cafes located in the Central Business District, and other public and semi-public spaces.
- **Cultural Resources.** Castro Valley has a number of older buildings that reflect the different time periods of Castro Valley’s history. While only a handful may qualify as “historic resources” according to State and federal definitions, these structures have value to Castro Valley as a local cultural resource because they give unique character to the community.

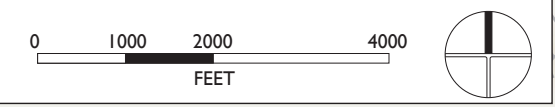
Key recommendations are shown in Figure 5-1.



Figure 5-1  
Community Character and Design



-  Main Routes into Castro Valley
-  Gateways
-  Landscaping and Other Visual Improvements
-  Streetscape Improvements and/or Building Renovations
-  Castro Valley Planning Area
-  Resource Management (Measure D Land)





## 5.1 NATURAL SETTING

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The topography of Castro Valley is a ring of hillsides surrounding a sloping bowl. From most streets, there are views to the hillsides or canyons of Castro Valley, which are covered with natural vegetation. Thus, the natural setting of hillsides and canyons is an integral part of community character. Many of the hillside areas have been preserved as part of planned unit developments. Generally, housing is clustered on the flatter areas of the property, while the steeper hillside areas are set aside as permanent open space. In order to preserve this serene and beautiful aspect of Castro Valley’s character, it is important to preserve the views to these natural areas as infill development occurs. It is also important to preserve the natural areas themselves, and limit development on steep slopes. The implementation of the Biological Resources Overlay Zone defined in Chapter 7 will also help ensure that the natural setting is preserved.



*There are views to the hillsides from most streets in Castro Valley.*



*Protect and enhance Castro Valley's hillsides, canyons and creeks.*

### NATURAL SETTING GOAL

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- GOAL 5.1-1**      **Protect and enhance the hillsides, canyons, and creeks that are the foundation of Castro Valley’s natural setting and visual character as well as the views of these resources from public streets, parks, trails, and other community facilities.**

### NATURAL SETTING POLICY

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- Policy 5.1-1**      **Creative Site Design.** Only allow residential development on or near hillsides, canyons, and creeks when such development employs creative site design, landscaping, and architecture that blend with the characteristics of each location and surroundings, and offer superior design solutions.





*Cluster development on larger development sites to preserve hillside, creek, and canyon areas with biological resources.*



*Cull Canyon Lake is a distinctive component of Castro Valley's visual identity as well as a flood control facility.*

## NATURAL SETTING ACTIONS

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### **Action 5.1-1**

**Require Visual Impact Analysis.** Require visual impact analysis During the development review process for public and private projects to ensure protection of views to natural areas from public streets, parks, trails, and community facilities.

### **Action 5.1-2**

**Cluster Development.** Encourage planned unit developments that cluster lots and preserve large areas of open space for new subdivisions in hillside, creek, and canyon areas and in areas with significant biological resources.

### **Action 5.1-3**

**Cull Canyon Lake.** Maintain water levels in Cull Canyon Lake, when economically feasible, in order to preserve its role as an important visual resource.

## 5.2 NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

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Castro Valley is a collection of neighborhoods, as illustrated in Figure 4-5. The neighborhoods are defined by their schools and parks, the basic geography of Castro Valley's hills and bowl, and the major roadways that divide different areas, such as I-580, Crow Canyon Road, Lake Chabot Road, and Redwood Road. Residential densities in neighborhoods range from less than one unit per net acre along lower Greenridge Road to 14 dwellings per net acre south of I-580. The average net residential density for the planning area is between 5 and 6 dwelling units per acre.

Figure 5-2 analyzes the physical form of a series of Castro Valley neighborhoods based on aerial photographs, existing land use, zoning, road structure, and intersections. The residential development typologies highlighted are explained here, in generally chronological order of development:

- The Multi-Family study area is just north of Castro Valley Boulevard and south of Somerset Avenue. Anita Avenue and San Miguel Avenue run north-south, connecting Castro Valley Boulevard with Somerset Avenue. Development in this area occurred gradually, from the layout of the lots in the 1920s to the construction of apartments through the 1980s.
- The Long Lots neighborhood is a testament to the agricultural heritage of Castro Valley. Long, narrow lots were originally used for chicken farming starting in the 1920s and continuing through the 1950s. Today, many of these lots are being subdivided. Private roads, like the very narrow one off Proctor in "street pattern" diagram, provide access to the new lots.
- Postwar "starter" homes laid out on a street grid can be found both west of the high school and south of I-580. The lots in these areas are smaller and very regular.
- Lot sizes in residential subdivisions developed from the 1960s through the 1990s tend to be fairly regular; street layouts are curvilinear, with a preponderance of cul-de-sacs. Many, like Columbia and Palomares Hills are planned developments (PD), which enable greater design flexibility by allowing deviations for development standards required by the zoning code and set aside substantial areas as permanent open space. The most recent neighborhood form study area shows a very dense PD off Sydney Way.





*Infill development opportunity on a long deep lot with an existing single-family home.*



*Ensure that new residential development is consistent with the desired community character.*

## NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER GOAL

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**GOAL 5.2-1**      **Preserve and enhance the small town character of Castro Valley, while allowing for infill development.**

## NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER POLICIES

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**Policy 5.2-1**      **Neighborhood Character.** Ensure that new residential development is consistent with the desired community character, protects sensitive biological resources, and is not subject to undue natural hazards.

**Policy 5.2-2**      **Residential Design.** Ensure that residential development projects comply with all adopted design standards and guidelines.

**Policy 5.2-3**      **Design Exceptions.** Exceptions to design standards and guidelines will only be considered through a discretionary review process, and only approved if:

- there are site-specific conditions that make it physically infeasible to follow the standards or guidelines; and
- the proposed design provides an equal or better design solution in terms of livability for residents and impacts on neighboring properties.

**Policy 5.2-4**      **Lot Sizes.** Lot sizes shall be consistent with the desired character of the area.

Figure 5-2.1

# Castro Valley Neighborhood Form Analysis

Analysis Unit: 100 acres  
(2,087 ft x 2,087 ft)  
Scale 1:15,000

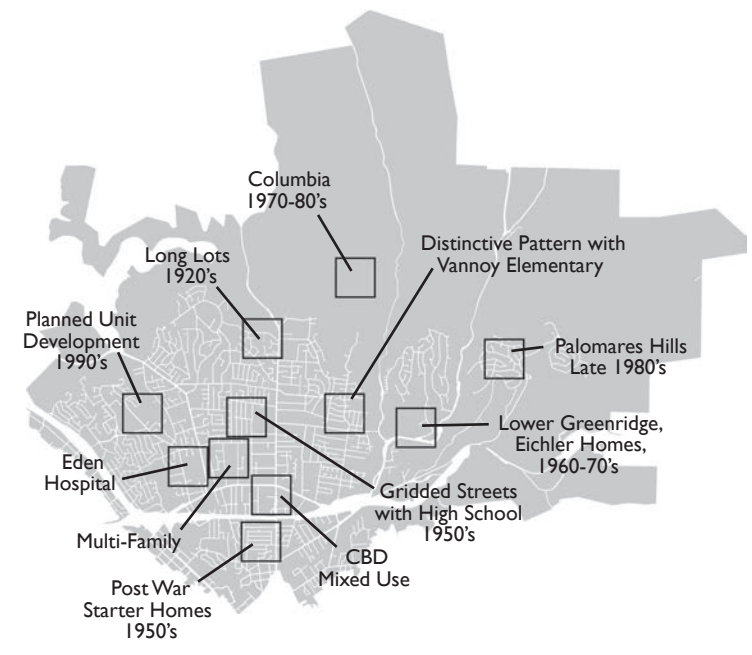
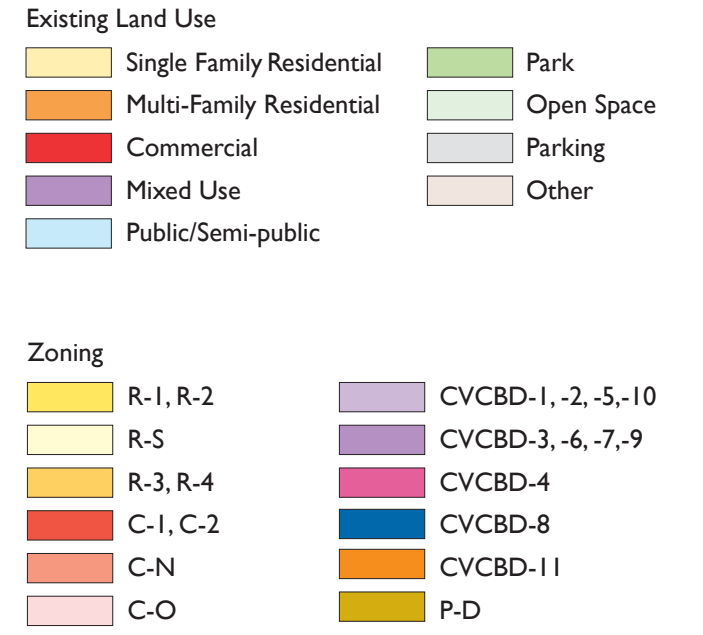
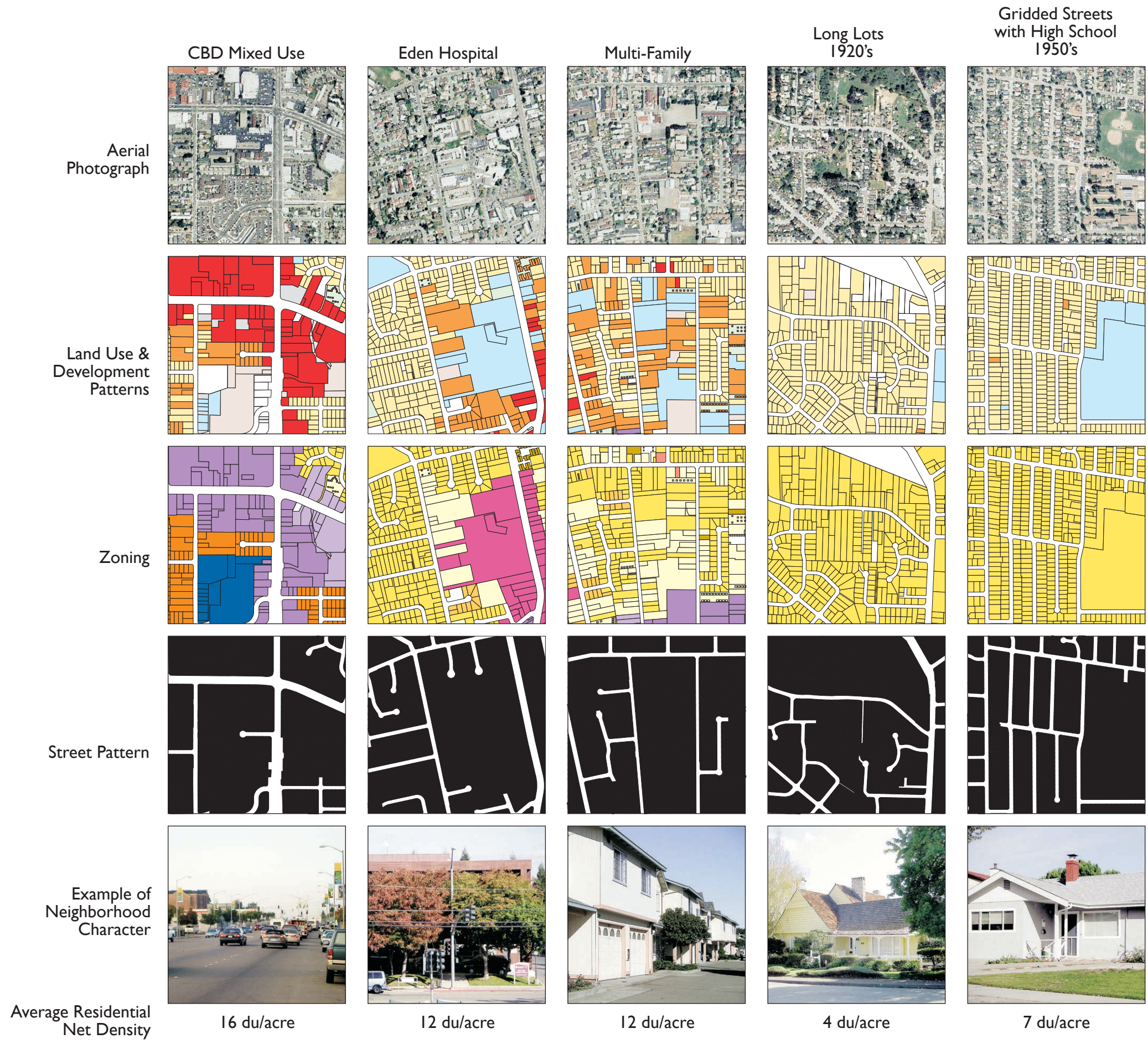
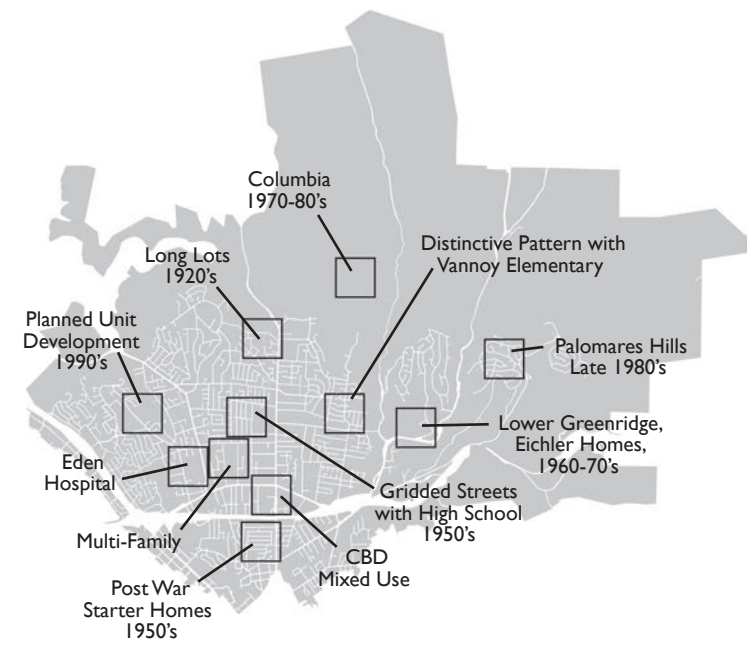
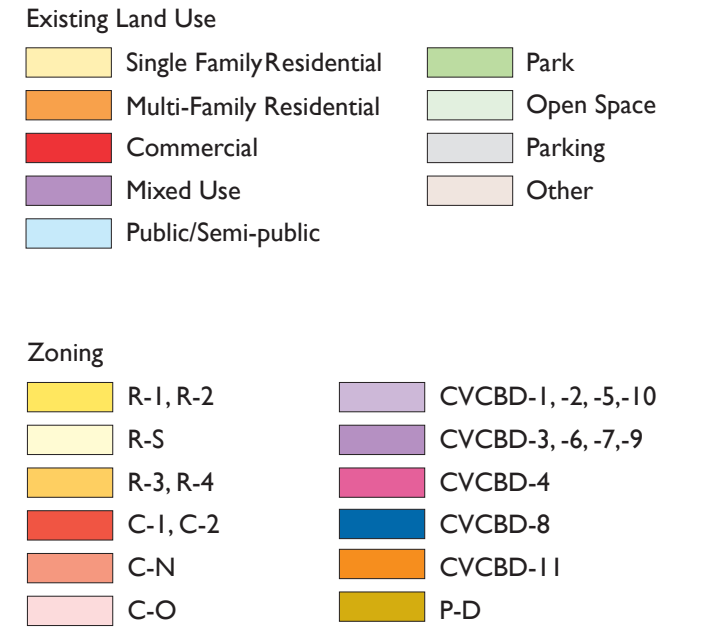
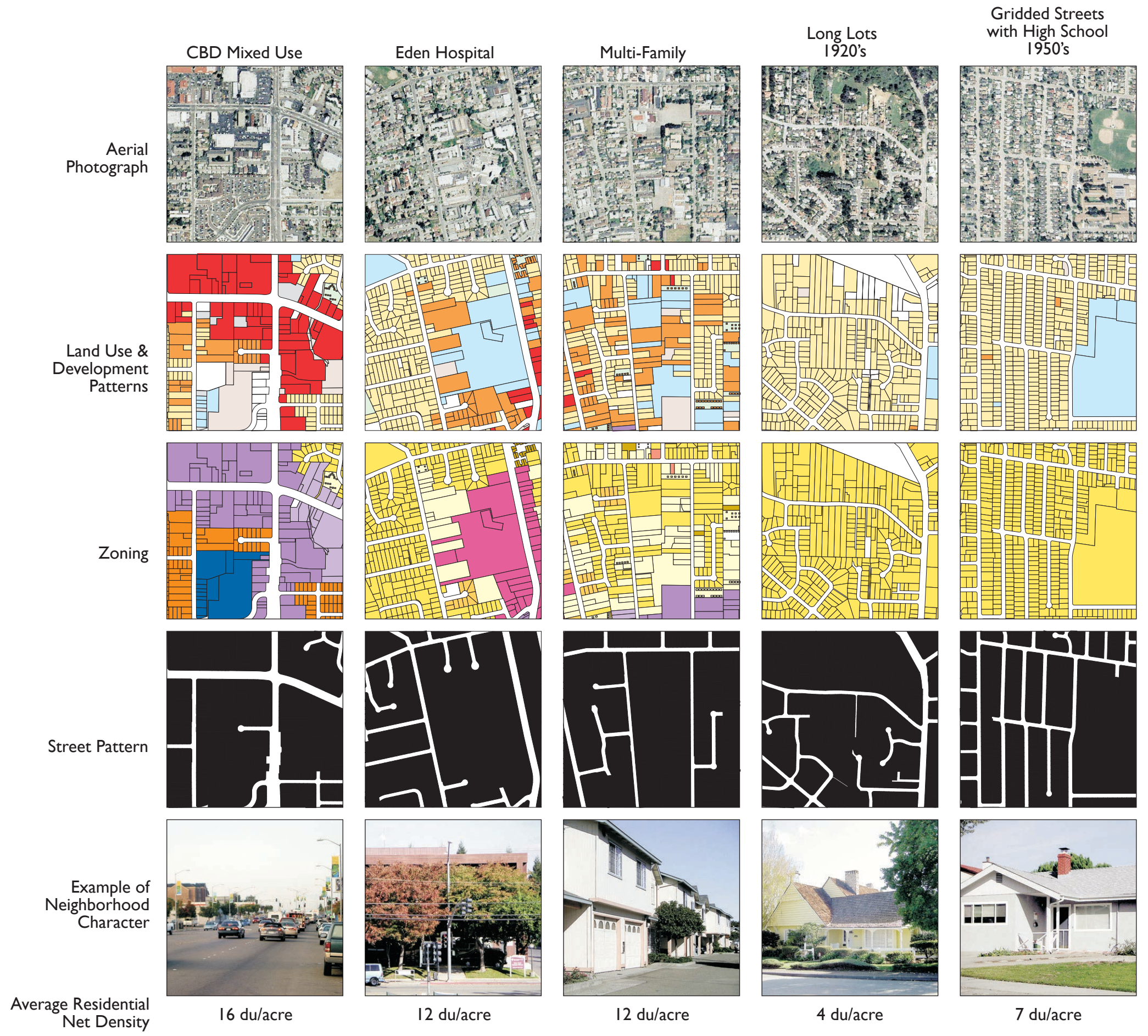




Figure 5-2.2

# Castro Valley Neighborhood Form Analysis

Analysis Unit: 100 acres  
(2,087 ft x 2,087 ft)  
Scale 1:15,000





**Five Canyons**



**New Homes on Vacant Lots**



**New Homes Behind Existing Homes**





**Small Second Units and Granny Flats (Accessory Units)**



**Gated Subdivisions**



**Cluster Subdivisions**



**Subdivisions**





**Small Lot Single Family Homes**



**Townhomes**



**Condominiums and Apartments**





Ensure consistent lot sizes to maintain desired character of neighborhoods.

## NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER ACTIONS

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### *Character Preservation*

#### **Action 5.2-1**

**Neighborhood Character Preservation.** Consider adopting conservation districts, specific plans, or other similar mechanisms to preserve the character of neighborhoods that have a unique design character.

- Design review criteria, standards, and guidelines can be established through an overlay district in the Zoning Ordinance or through a specific plan.
- Modified setback, height, and other standards can be prescribed to ensure the consistency of new buildings and additions with the existing neighborhood development patterns.
- Design guidelines can be written and illustrated in order to preserve the design character of neighborhoods.

### *Development Standards*

#### **Action 5.2-2**

**Lot Size.** Ensure that lot sizes specified in the zoning and subdivision ordinances are consistent with the General Plan Land Use classifications so that the desired character of the area is maintained.



**Action 5.2-3**

**Hillside Residential Development Standards.** Include standards in the new Hillside Residential Zoning district that ensure that the scale of residential development is consistent with surrounding development and blend with the natural setting. Standards shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Require lot sizes to be between 5,000 and 10,000 square feet in Hillside Residential Districts. Establish a sliding scale of lot sizes based on slope.
- Develop new height limits and a new methodology for calculating height appropriate for hillside lots. The revisions need to take into account upslope and downslope conditions, and provide a new way of measuring height that relates height limits to the contours of the land. Require buildings to step down following the slope of the lot.
- Establish lot coverage limits and/or consider floor area ratio or daylight planes to limit the bulk and size of a house based on the size of the lot.
- Establish provisions that allow exceptions to front yard setbacks on steep upslope lots.
- Establish minimum landscaping requirements.
- Develop standards and guidelines to ensure that entrances, fences, and walls are designed to reflect the prevailing character of neighborhoods, especially in areas that have retained their rural character. Standards could include requiring fences to be lower in height and/or more open.
- Entrances could be required to be proportionate to the scale of the façade (e.g. less than 2/3 of the building height) so as to not be monumental in scale or appearance.
- Establish height limits for retaining walls of 4-6 feet, and establish a minimum distance separation between retaining walls. Allow exceptions in special circumstances for driveways where greater retaining wall heights are absolutely necessary to meet driveway slope and front yard standards.



*Include standards in the new Hillside Residential Zoning district to ensure scale of residential development is consistent with surrounding development.*



*Develop new height limits and new methodology for calculating height appropriate for hillside lots.*



*Require subdivisions to be designed to avoid environmentally sensitive areas.*



*Revise and augment standards for Single Family Residential.*

**Action 5.2-4**

**Alternative Standards for Environmentally Sensitive Areas.** Require subdivisions to be designed to avoid areas that are environmentally sensitive, or have high fire hazards, steep slopes, natural vegetation, or mature trees. To accommodate such conditions, provide for modifications to required lot sizes and design standards including, but not limited to:

- Creating smaller lots clustered together with permanent open space designations for steep slopes and environmentally sensitive areas;
- Creative building designs within a planned unit development; and/or
- Reduction in development intensity up to 75 percent of the maximum permitted.

**Action 5.2-5**

**Standards for Single Family Residential (R-1) Development.** Revise and augment development standards for single family homes in the R-1 district to ensure adequate light and air, privacy; usable open space; landscaping; and attractive street appearance. Standards shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Establish lot coverage limits and consider floor area ratio or daylight planes to limit the bulk and size of a house based on the size of the lot.
- Limit the extent to which garages dominate the façade; they should occupy no more than 50 percent of the width of the street facing façade. Establish special design and location requirements for three-car garages.
- Limit the percentage of paving on a parcel, and establish minimum standards for site landscaping.

**Action 5.2-6**

**Standards for Small Lot Single Family (RSL) Residential Development.** Create development standards specific to small lot single-family homes in the RSL district to improve their quality and appearance; and to ensure adequate light, air, privacy, usable open space, landscaping, and attractive street appearance. Standards shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Minimum lot sizes such that net density is between 8 and 17 units per acre;
- Maximum lot coverage;
- Limits on the extent to which garages dominate the facades;
- Size and location of private and common open space;
- Minimum site landscaping; and
- Design of building facades that face streets.



*Create development standards specific to small lot single-family homes.*





*Create development standards specific to townhouses and rowhouses.*

**Action 5.2-7**

**Development Standards for Townhouses and Rowhouses.** Create development standards specific to townhouses and rowhouses in the RSL, RLM, and RMX districts to improve the livability, quality, and appearance of this type of development. Standards shall include but not be limited to:

- Appropriate densities for townhouses: 12 units per net acre (RSL-3.5, RMX);
- Appropriate densities for rowhouses: 17-22 units per net acre (RSL 2.5, RLM, RMX);
- Parking requirements, including ratios for guest parking and reductions for transit proximity;
- Location of front entrances and garages;
- Lot coverage;
- Building height;
- Height and setback transitions to adjacent lower density residential;
- Front, rear, and side setbacks;
- Design of building facades facing the street;
- Minimum distances between buildings;
- Size and location of private and common open space; and
- Landscaping requirements in driveway areas and at unit entrances.

**Action 5.2-8**

**Development Standards for Multifamily Projects.** Create development standards specific to apartments and condominiums in the RLM, RM, and RMX districts to improve the quality and appearance of this type of development. Standards shall include but not be limited to:

- Limiting garages and parking areas fronting the street;
- Design strategies to avoid a “box-like” appearance;
- Adequate landscaping in parking areas and at unit entrances;
- Side yard setbacks for taller buildings with primary windows facing the side yard;
- Size and location of private and common open space; and
- Requirements for inclusion of personal storage space within units.

**Action 5.2-9**      **Development Standards for Front Yard Paving and Planting.** Amend the Zoning Ordinance to limit the amount of front yard paving to that required for a driveway and walkway to the entrance in residential districts. Require that at least 50 percent of the front yard be landscaped.

**Action 5.2-10**      **Development on Long, Deep Lots.** Continue to allow development at the rear of deep lots and establish special standards for subdivisions and buildings on long deep lots, typically those deeper than 135 feet where new lots are created without frontage on a public street. New standards shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Special setbacks, height limits, and/or daylight planes to ensure adequate privacy for adjoining properties.
- Special provisions to allow exceptions to front, side, and rear yard setbacks, if it can be demonstrated that the site plan achieves a better design solution for the occupants and neighbors in terms of light, air, building bulk, usable open space, and privacy; and achieves an equal or greater total amount of setback area.

*Design Guidelines*

**Action 5.2-11**      **Design Guidelines.** Adopt design guidelines to provide greater detail about design expectations for residential development in Castro Valley.



*Create development standards specific to apartments and condominiums.*



*Amend Zoning Ordinance to limit the amount of front yard paving.*



*Development Review Process*

**Action 5.2-12**

**Development Review Process.** Amend the Zoning Ordinance to establish procedures for incorporating design review in the development review process. Maximize the use of staff level review in order to minimize the time and cost of project review for homeowners and developers. Zoning ordinance revisions shall address the following issues:

- Thresholds of review;
- Residential additions;
- New homes;
- Subdivisions creating less than five lots;
- Subdivisions creating five lots or more;
- Multifamily and mixed-use projects with five units or more;
- Non-residential development;
- Assignment of review and decision-making responsibilities;
- New revised and expanded development standards;
- Implementation of design guidelines;
- Role of the Municipal Advisory Committee;
- Requests for variances or exceptions;
- Decision-making body;
- Criteria; and
- Upper limit on exceptions.

**Action 5.2-14**

**Variances and Other Exceptions to Regulations.** Establish more detailed criteria for exceptions to regulations, and upper limits on requests for exceptions. Evaluate variance requests over the past several years, and determine if there are regulations that need to be revised to respond to frequently requested types of exceptions.

- Action 5.2-15**      **Enforcement of Development Policies and Standards.**  
Enforce adopted development regulations through the project review process and inspections of construction.
- Require applicants to pay for special inspections if appropriate and necessary to ensure compliance with approved plans and conditions.
  - Require public notice if projects submitted for building permits have been substantially revised from the approved project.
- Action 5.2-16**      **Permit Fees.** Establish revised permit fees to reflect the level of review required, such that the cost for the review of development applications is borne by the applicant.
- Action 5.2-17**      **County Staff.** Hire new staff and train existing staff to have expertise in design review of residential development.



## 5.3 DOWNTOWN AND COMMERCIAL AREA REVITALIZATION

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### Central Business District

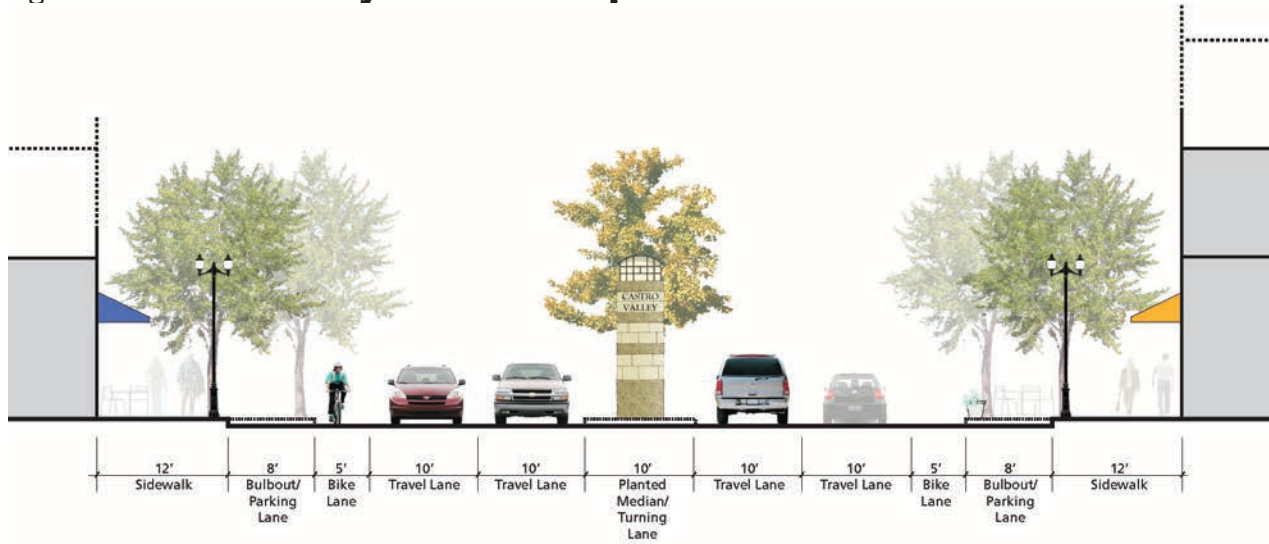
The creation of a pedestrian-friendly town center with a variety of retail and services uses and public spaces, and improving Castro Valley Boulevard are two of the highest priorities for the Castro Valley community over the next 20 years. Residents would like to create a true community center with an abundance of shops and restaurants, an attractive comfortable walking environment, and public spaces where the community comes together. To achieve these goals, Castro Valley needs a multi-faceted program of streetscape improvements; business retention and attraction; façade improvements; and catalyst projects. This program is a top priority for the County Redevelopment Agency's efforts in Castro Valley. The General Plan builds on the Central Business District Specific Plan and the Redevelopment CBD Land Use and Development Strategy to guide the revitalization process.

One important step has been the approval of the Redevelopment Agency's Strategic Plan, which includes a development strategy and urban design proposals that will define a vision for the CBD and improve the future economic potential for downtown Castro Valley. The Plan's objectives are to create:

- a downtown where people want to go and spend time;
- an environment that will support economic vitality;
- a pedestrian friendly main street atmosphere

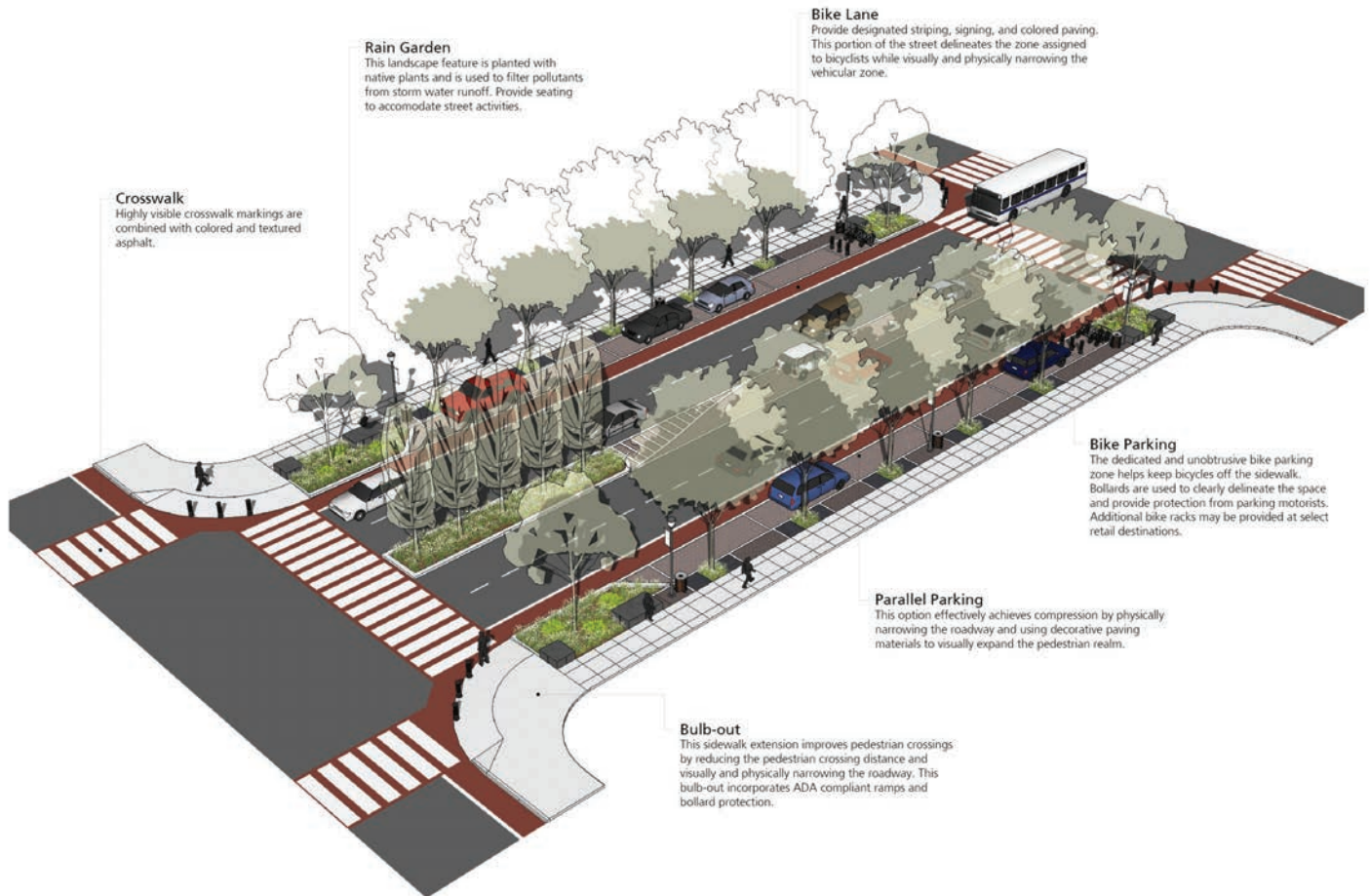
The first phase of the Strategic Plan is a series of street improvements intended to help turn Castro Valley Boulevard into a pedestrian-oriented "Main Street" for the community. These improvements include reconfiguring traffic lanes and providing on-street parking with bicycle lanes that will maintain adequate traffic capacity on the Boulevard while creating an inviting pedestrian environment. The first phase of the project, between Redwood Road and San Miguel Avenue, features widened sidewalks with ample seating areas, a canopy of street trees and planter beds, landscaped bulb-outs, street furnishings and gateway markers.

Figure 5-3 **Castro Valley Boulevard Improvements**



Source: Alameda County Redevelopment Agency: <http://www.acgov.org/cda/redevelop/projects/cvsp/conceptsections.htm>

Figure 5-4 **Castro Valley Boulevard Streetscape Project Concept Rendering**



Source: Alameda County Redevelopment Agency: <http://www.acgov.org/cda/redevelop/projects/cvsp/conceptsections.htm>



Central Business District



**General Commercial Areas Near the Medical Center**



**Redwood Road Corridor**



**Grove Way Corridor**



**Grove and Center Commercial Area**





**Other Commercial Areas**

As described in the Land Use Chapter, there are a number of general commercial and neighborhood commercial areas outside the Central Business District. Many of these areas are auto-reliant strip commercial centers and dominated by surface parking. Improving the appearance of these areas will be accomplished over time through renovation and redevelopment; façade improvement programs; adoption and implementation of development standards and design guidelines; and the enforcement of regulations and maintenance requirements.



*Improve Castro Valley Boulevard appearance through street design and community landscaping.*

**DOWNTOWN AND COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION GOAL**

**GOAL 5.3-1**      **Support the revitalization of the Central Business District and other commercial areas by actively participating in projects and programs to improve the appearance and character of these areas.**



*Facade improvements help improve the visual appearance of Castro Valley Boulevard.*

**DOWNTOWN AND COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION POLICIES**

- Policy 5.3-1**      **Improve Castro Valley Appearance.** Undertake capital improvement projects such as street redesign, community landscaping, and other similar projects in order to improve the appearance of Castro Valley and foster a community identity unique to Castro Valley.
- Policy 5.3-2**      **Castro Valley Boulevard Appearance.** Create programs to improve the visual appearance of the private properties on Castro Valley Boulevard through façade improvements, new signs, and reducing the number of billboards.
- Policy 5.3-3**      **Commercial and Mixed Use Design.** Ensure that commercial and mixed-use development projects comply with all adopted design standards and guidelines.
- Policy 5.3-4**      **Compatibility with Surrounding Residential.** Development in neighborhood commercial areas shall be designed to be compatible with the surrounding residential area and minimize impacts on adjoining residential properties, with respect to height, bulk, building massing, architectural design, building orientation, parking location, signage, and other features.
- Policy 5.3-5**      **Property Maintenance.** Maintain and improve the appearance of public improvements and, where appropriate, private properties so they make a positive contribution to Castro Valley's livability and attractiveness.



Amend sign regulations to improve signage in all commercial areas.

## DOWNTOWN AND COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION ACTIONS

### All Commercial Areas

- Action 5.3-1 Site Upgrades and Improvements.** Require that as part of building remodeling, site changes, or new signage, site upgrades are installed to improve the overall appearance of the property. Requirements shall be commensurate with the scale and cost of the proposed project.
- Action 5.3-2 Code Enforcement.** Augment and enhance code enforcement programs to require property-owners in all commercial and mixed-use areas to: maintain buildings, paved areas, and landscaping; properly store and dispose of trash; and remove graffiti.
- Action 5.3-3 Funding Priorities.** Establish priorities for public improvements and programs that help support existing businesses and attract new ones. (See Action 4.5-7)
- Action 5.3-4 Sign Regulations.** Amend the sign regulations with new standards and guidelines to improve signage in all commercial areas.
- Action 5.3-5 Streamline Project Review.** Solicit feedback from the business community in order to streamline project review and permit procedures for commercial projects.

### Central Business District

- Action 5.3-6 Design Standards and Guidelines for CBD Housing and Mixed Use.** Update the standards and guidelines in the CBD Specific Plan to provide detailed standards for future housing and mixed use development. Include provisions to address:
- Building setbacks and relationship to the street;
  - Front yard landscaping and street landscaping to create an attractive and livable environment for residents;
  - Side and rear setbacks to provide adequate light, air, and ventilation to units;
  - Building design – articulation, quality materials;
  - Ground floor uses;
  - Privacy for any ground floor residential units;
  - Adequate setbacks and insulation to minimize noise;
  - Location of parking; and
  - Height and setback transitions to adjacent lower density residential.

**Action 5.3-7**      **Design Standards and Guidelines for CBD Commercial Projects.** Update the standards and guidelines in the CBD Specific Plan to provide additional guidance regarding building design. Require discretionary design review.

**Action 5.3-8**      **Design Standards and Regulations for CBD Older Buildings.** Amend the Specific Plan as necessary to include design standards and regulations to protect and enhance the appearance of early to mid-20th century commercial buildings that enhance the historic and small-town character of the Central Business District. The zoning ordinance should include provisions that would encourage adaptive reuse of such structures.

**Action 5.3-9**      **Funding Mechanisms.** Identify funding mechanisms for improvements within the Central Business District, including streetscape enhancements, public space, façade renovation, and parking improvements. Explore a wide variety of options, including: redevelopment funds, development fees, community facilities districts, public improvement bonds, and regulatory programs applicable to new development.

**Action 5.3-10**     **Façade Improvement Program.** Continue to support and enhance the County’s Façade Improvement Program. Encourage participation from Castro Valley property owners, so that older building facades are renovated and the overall appearance of the Central Business District is improved.

**Action 5.3-11**     **Reduce Billboards.** Work with private property owners, the Redevelopment Agency, County departments, State government officials, and other public agencies to reduce the number of billboards visible from Castro Valley Boulevard.



*Update CBD Specific Plan to provide detailed standards for housing in the CBD.*





Reduce number of billboards visible from Castro Valley Boulevard.

**Action 5.3-12**

**Sign Regulations and Enforcement.** Implement the provisions of the Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan that require modification or replacement of signs that do not conform to the Specific Plan's sign regulations.

*Other Commercial Areas*

**Action 5.3-13**

**Design Standards and Guidelines Non-Residential Development.** Establish design standards and guidelines to ensure high quality design in new commercial and non-residential development outside the Castro Valley CBD. The standards and guidelines shall include a ministerial checklist design review for smaller projects and discretionary review for larger projects and development at identified catalyst sites. Standards and guidelines shall address the following issues:

- Building relationship to the street and other public spaces;
- Building height, bulk, and articulation;
- Ground floor design;
- Building design and quality of materials;
- Location of entrances;
- Pedestrian access from sidewalks and parking areas;
- Location of surface parking;
- Parking lot landscaping; and
- Streetscape improvements including street trees.

**Action 5.3-14**

**Design Standards and Guidelines for Professional Medical District.** Amend CBD Specific Plan to establish design standards and review procedures to ensure high quality design and site planning in the Professional Medical District. Standards and guidelines shall address the following issues:

- Location, setbacks, and scale of new buildings at the Medical Center, such that they do not loom over adjacent residential neighborhoods;
- Access points for emergency vehicles;
- Access points for other vehicles;
- Building design and quality of materials;
- Minimum setbacks from residential uses;
- Relationship of buildings to streets;
- Street trees and improvements; and,
- Site landscaping.

**Action 5.3-15**      **Funding Mechanisms.** Evaluate the feasibility of establishing Community Improvement Districts or Benefit Assessment Districts and other approaches such as a voter-approved bond measure in order to fund physical improvements, maintenance, historic and cultural resource preservation and other programs to enhance commercial areas.

**Action 5.3-16**      **Façade and Site Improvement Programs.** Implement and expand existing regulations and programs for façade and landscaping maintenance and improvement to upgrade commercial areas. Programs shall focus on upgrading facades, installing landscaping, improving signage, screening outdoor storage and buffering such uses from surrounding residential and retail uses

**Action 5.3-17**      **Improve Building Façades.** Work with property owners and the Redevelopment Agency to improve building façade appearance and signage and promote new quality infill development in the major commercial centers of the community and at key gateway locations, specifically including the following priority areas:

- Castro Valley Boulevard from Redwood Road to Lake Chabot Road;
- Castro Valley Boulevard from Lake Chabot Road to Norbridge Avenue;
- Lake Chabot Road from Seven Hills Road to Quail Avenue;
- Commercial properties near the Grove Way and Center Street intersection;
- Commercial properties near the Grove Way and Redwood Road intersection; and
- Commercial properties on Foothill Boulevard from Miramonte Avenue to Carolyn Street.

**Action 5.3-18**      **Enforcement.** Establish an aggressive program to enforce the requirements of the County’s Health and Safety Code, and the County’s Neighborhood Preservation Code, regarding unlawful outdoor storage, overgrown vegetation, litter, graffiti, parking violations, broken windows, and other conditions along Redwood Road, Grove Way, Center Street and Foothill Boulevard.



*Prepare design standards and guidelines for development on neighborhood commercial sites.*

## **5.4 STREET DESIGN: GATEWAYS AND LANDSCAPING**

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The primary roadways of Castro Valley are a major determinant of community character, because every resident sees and experiences those streets every day as they travel to and from their homes. The arterials that carry large traffic volumes are not considered to be particularly attractive, and improving them with additional landscaping would greatly enhance community character. The commercial façades along these arterials are also a significant determinant of community character. While some buildings have been renovated over the years, many have not and the building faces that front the streets look old and in some cases dilapidated. Improving the building fronts with new paint, signs, awnings, and materials would greatly enhance the community character of Castro Valley.

Although previous efforts to create a welcome sign for the community were not successful, adding gateway features at key entrances into the community would give Castro Valley a stronger identity and remains a good idea. The gateway features could be a simple structure, such as a sign, a landscape feature, or some combination.

Some roadways are heavily landscaped, and do not have curbs and gutters, which contributes a unique “rural” character that Castro Valley residents value. These byways should be preserved without curbs and gutters, except where sidewalks are critical for pedestrian safety and safe routes to schools.

### **STREET DESIGN: GATEWAYS AND LANDSCAPING GOAL**

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| <b>GOAL 5.4-1</b> | <b>Improve the character and appearance of Castro Valley streets by adding trees, landscaping, and other streetscape design features.</b> |
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## STREET DESIGN: GATEWAYS AND LANDSCAPING POLICIES

- Policy 5.4-1**      **Improve Castro Valley Appearance.** Undertake capital improvement projects such as street redesign, community landscaping, and other similar projects in order to improve the appearance of Castro Valley and foster a community identity unique to Castro Valley.
- Policy 5.4-2**      **Street Landscaping.** When County, State, Federal and other agencies undertake street improvement projects, ensure that the projects include landscaping and other design improvements that mitigate the visual impacts of paved roadways and improve the appearance of the community.
- Policy 5.4-3**      **Existing Street Landscaping.** Retain and improve existing landscaping in street right of ways that retain the “small-town” and “natural hillside character” of Castro Valley.
- Policy 5.4-4**      **Community Gateways.** Create simple entry sign structures combined with planting and add street landscaping at key entries into the community identifying Castro Valley.



*The Castro Valley Welcome sign was an unsuccessful attempt to mark an entrance to the community.*



Rows of trees planted along the street right of ways improve the appearance of the street.



Ensure that street improvement projects include landscaping that mitigates the visual impact of paved roadways.

## STREET DESIGN: GATEWAYS AND LANDSCAPING ACTIONS

### Street Improvements

**Action 5.4-1**      **Castro Valley Boulevard.** Complete the streetscape improvement project on Castro Valley Boulevard to make it a beautiful boulevard that contributes to a distinctive community image.

- Add traffic calming measures, street trees, street furniture, lights, banners, medians, bulb-outs, and other pedestrian-friendly measures.
- Widen sidewalks to improve the pedestrian experience.
- Add bulb-outs and/or island (mid-intersection) safety zones to improve pedestrian safety and comfort at crossings and provide areas for community interaction at street.

**Action 5.4-2**      **Lake Chabot Road Area.** Improve Lake Chabot Road and require landscaping to be installed along property frontage and within the public right of way as properties are redeveloped in order to improve the appearance of Lake Chabot Road and create a distinctive identity for the Professional-Medical District.

**Action 5.4-3**      **Improve Lake Chabot.** Add streetscape improvements on Lake Chabot Road as part of, but not limited to, the hospital renovation and rebuilding in order to improve the appearance of this area from Summerset Avenue to Castro Valley Boulevard.

**Action 5.4-4**      **Redwood Road and Grove Way – Parking and Street Design.** Redesign Redwood Road to provide additional on-street parking, include more extensive and taller landscaping in the medians, and add street trees on both sides of the street. Also identify areas on Grove Way where additional on-street parking can be added to support commercial uses.

**Action 5.4-5**      **Residential Hillside Street Character.** Unless requested by the residents, do not add curbs, gutters and sidewalks to residential streets in the Residential Hillside land use classification that do not already have such improvements, except on collector streets where such improvements are necessary for pedestrian safety, or on pedestrian routes to schools.

*Street Landscaping and Appearance*

**Action 5.4-5 Landscaping in Street Projects.** Add street landscaping and other visual improvements along the following streets during the 20-year planning period of the General Plan:

- Lake Chabot Road between Seven Hills Road and Quail Avenue;
- Lake Chabot Road between Somerset Avenue and Castro Valley Boulevard;
- Norbridge/Strobridge Intersection between I-580 and Castro Valley Boulevard;
- Redwood Road between Grove Way and I-580 – landscaping and trees in the median;
- Grove Way between Redwood Road and Center Street;
- Grove Way from Center Street to I-580, including adjacent to the PG&E substation;
- ‘A’ street from the Planning Area boundary to Grove Way;
- Center Street from the Planning Area boundary to Grove Way;
- Crow Canyon Road in the segment just within and outside the Castro Valley Planning Area; and,
- Miramar Avenue from Foothill Boulevard to Page Street.

**Action 5.4-6 Street and Parking Lot Landscaping.** Require street and parking lot landscaping as a condition of approval for new construction, alterations, or changes of use that are subject to discretionary review.

**Action 5.4-7 Lobby for Landscaping as Part of Regional Roadway Projects.** Identify all large-scale development projects and public roadway projects planned within and around the Castro Valley planning area. Review Environmental Review documents for such projects. Request and lobby for landscaping improvements that mitigate visual impacts and improve the appearance of Castro Valley to be part of those projects.

**Action 5.4-8 Underground Overhead Utility Lines.** Work with PG&E and other public agencies to underground overhead utility lines along major commercial corridors using Rule 20A monies and other funding sources.



*Widen sidewalks and add island safety zones to improve pedestrian safety along Castro Valley Boulevard.*



*Add streetscape improvements on Lake Chabot Road as part of the hospital rebuilding and renovation.*





*Add street landscaping and other visual improvements along arterial streets, for example, on Grove Way as shown here.*

### Gateways

#### Action 5.4-9

**Gateways.** Add simple entry sign structures and street landscaping in the following gateway locations, which are entrances into the Castro Valley Planning Area:

- Seven Hills Road and Lake Chabot Road;
- Norbridge/Strobridge Gateway at Interstate 580;
- 'A' Street near the Planning Area boundary;
- Center Street near the Planning Area boundary;
- Crow Canyon Road near the Planning Area boundary;
- East Castro Valley Boulevard near the I-580 exit ramp; and
- Foothill Boulevard at Fairmont Drive and/or at Foothill Boulevard and Miramar Avenue.

## 5.5 COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACES

Having places and events where the community comes together is a critical component of community identity. When people identify with the place where they live and know others who live and do business in the community, they are more likely to offer support to neighbors and become more involved in local improvement projects. Castro Valley residents are very committed to their community, as evidenced by locally-driven improvement projects, such as the performing arts theater at the high school and the new library.

Castro Valley needs attractive, comfortable places where residents can gather to continue to foster this community spirit. The new Castro Valley library will be very valuable in this regard, and is planned to include a community meeting room in addition to library facilities. Similarly, the creation of a central plaza in the Central Business District would be an important addition to this effort. There is also a need for places for regular community events, such as the small but successful farmers' market at the BART station. There may be opportunities to create more such venues in cooperation with the Castro Valley Unified School District or the Medical Center.

## COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACES GOAL

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- GOAL 5.5-1**      **Create and enhance community gathering places in order to foster Castro Valley’s identity and civic participation.**



## COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACES POLICY

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- Policy 5.5-1**      **Create Community Gathering Places.** Establish a variety of community gathering places in Castro Valley by expanding or improving existing facilities and by creating new outdoor and indoor public spaces.

*Gateway—Crow Canyon. Add simple entry sign structures and street landscaping at key gateway locations that are the entrances into Castro Valley.*

## COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACES ACTIONS

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- Action 5.5-1**      **Capital Improvement Plan.** Create a capital improvement plan for Castro Valley community gathering places, potentially including the Old Castro Valley library.
- Action 5.5-2**      **Castro Valley Library.** Study the feasibility of maintaining the Old Castro Valley library as a community gathering place.
- Action 5.5-3**      **Central Community Plaza.** Create a central community plaza in the core pedestrian area of the Central Business District that can host civic events.
- Action 5.5-4**      **Joint Use of Public Facilities.** Set up joint use agreements with other agencies, such as public schools and Eden Medical Center, for the shared use of meeting rooms and performance spaces at existing facilities.
- Action 5.5-5**      **Farmers’ Market.** Continue to operate a farmers’ market in the Central Business District.
- Action 5.5-6**      **Post Office.** Work with the federal government to improve or relocate the Castro Valley post office site and consider including a small public plaza as part of the project.

## 5.6 CULTURAL RESOURCES

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### Community History

Castro Valley has a rich cultural history that predates the late 18th century exploration of the region by Spanish expeditions. In addition to the style and pattern of the built environment, the area's natural features have also helped to define this important aspect of the community's character. Archaeological research shows that the planning area was probably once occupied by Chochenyo-speaking members of the Costanoan groups who found the central basin of the San Lorenzo watershed, surrounded by rolling hills and steep canyons, to be an ideal location for hunting and fishing. The Native American resources that have been discovered on ridges, mid-slope terraces, and near water courses such as San Lorenzo, Cull, and Crow Creeks is evidence of their presence.

During the 19th century, Spanish ranchers found that the grassy hills surrounding the valley were ideal grazing lands. Until the early part of the 20th century, much of the land in the planning area, which was once part of Guillermo Castro's Rancho San Lorenzo, was devoted to grazing and, well into the last century, the primary land uses were agricultural. The climate and soils created optimal conditions for cultivating vegetables and fruit orchards while proximity to the redwood groves that flourished in the nearby East Bay hills stimulated the development of logging and sawmill operations.<sup>1</sup> The region's topography also provided protection from San Francisco Bay winds, creating a temperate climate that was particularly well-suited for raising chickens. By the end of the 1920's, Castro Valley was one of northern California's primary poultry industry centers.

### Historic Structures and Sites

During the building boom that followed World War II and up until the 1970's, most of Castro Valley's 19th century structures and some of those built in the first half of the 20th century were demolished as the area changed from an agriculture-based economy to a suburban bedroom community. Castro Valley's built environment presents a variety of architectural styles and development patterns that track the community's history since the late 19th century and also typify different parts of the community. One of the most prevalent older

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<sup>1</sup> Lucille Lorge, et al., *Images of America: Castro Valley*, Arcadia Publishing, 2005.



building types is the California or Craftsman bungalow, which is typically a one-story structure with a low-pitched roof and front porch. Another common style in neighborhoods dating from the 1920's to 1940's is what is called Period Revival architecture. These buildings include homes with features associated with California's Spanish and Mexican periods such as stucco walls and tile roofs and Tudor-style cottages with half-timbered upper floors. Castro Valley also boasts a number of well-preserved homes built by Joseph Eichler in the Greenridge development, which is one of the only Eichler neighborhoods built on slopes.

In addition to historic-period sites, there are numerous recorded archaeological resources within the project area and there is a high possibility of identifying additional Native American as well as historic-period archaeological sites.<sup>2</sup> One prehistoric archaeological site (CA-ALA-60), adjacent to, but not within, the Area of Potential Effect of the I-580/Redwood Road interchange in Castro Valley, has been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historical Places.<sup>3</sup>

A few of the historic sites and structures in the planning area are already listed in the State Historical Resources Inventory (SHRI) but other properties lack such protection. A list of potential landmarks and contributing buildings prepared by County consultants includes 19 in Castro Valley.<sup>4</sup> Another 21 properties have been identified as potential structures of merit.<sup>5</sup> In all, 56 properties are on a list of sites in the unincorporated area that the County Parks, Recreation, and Historic Resources Commission (PRHC) has selected for documentation.

The properties include 19th century barns and farmhouses in the canyons, Victorian-era cottages, early 20th century bungalows, and a variety of commercial buildings dating from the 1920's and 1930's such as the Chabot Theater. Some of the sites are located in neighborhoods and districts, like the western portion of Castro Valley Boulevard, that have retained their distinctive character because they

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Jillian E. Guldenbrein, California Historical Resources Information System, to Kelly M. Ross, Dyett & Bhatia, May 30, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> I-580/Castro Valley Interchange, Initial Study/Environmental Assessment, Chapter 2.4 (Cultural Resources), June 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Alameda County Landmarks & Contributing Buildings Identified in 2005-2008 Comprehensive Survey

<sup>5</sup> Alameda County Structures of Merit, PRHC, 10/17/07



*Create a central community plaza in the core pedestrian area of downtown, for example, within or near the Castro Valley Shopping Center.*



*Work with the federal government to improve or relocate the Castro Valley Post Office.*



California bungalows are prevalent in Castro Valley.



Stucco residences with tile roofs, are typical of Period Revival architecture.



Stanton House was built in 1860 and moved to its present location in 1975.

include clusters of buildings that are typical of a particular style that was prevalent during a period of historical significance. Among Castro Valley's most notable sites and structures are:

- **Redwood Schoolhouse Site, 1866.** The site of the first public school in Castro Valley was part of the original Don Castro Land Grant. In 1866, pioneer settler Josiah Grover Brickell donated it for 'educational purposes only' and paid the salary of the teacher, who taught children in the one-room schoolhouse by day, and farm-hands by candlelight at night. State Landmark 776
- **Stanton House, 1860.** Built by the Mattox family and purchased in 1868 by Michael Stanton who once owned 500 acres of land along Castro Valley Boulevard. Streets in Castro Valley named for the Stanton family include Anita Avenue, John Street, and Stanton Avenue. The house, which is the oldest surviving residence in Castro Valley, was moved to its current location from its original site on Lake Chabot Road in 1975. California Register P412
- **Herrick-Strobridge House, 1894.** Built for A.F. Herrick, the home of E.K. Strobridge, a State Senator and son of James Harvey Strobridge, who supervised construction on the Central Pacific line through the Sierra before coming to the Castro Valley area with a contract to build a railroad from Niles to Oakland. California Register P778
- **Castro Valley Exchange Site, 1881.** I.W. Thomford operated what was probably Castro Valley's first business on the site at the intersection of Redwood Road and Grove Way now occupied by Trader Joe's. The exchange included a storefront that served as a saloon, a barn, and a fenced area used as a stockyard.
- **Palomares School Site, 1868.** A one-room school was built on land that was originally part of Guillermo Castro's Rancho San Lorenzo. William Hayward squatted on the land about 1850. He declined Castro's offer to sell him the site and, instead, bought about 80 acres in what is now downtown Hayward. In 1955, after a larger three-room school was built across the creek from the original site, the school building was leased to the Chanticleer's Theatre Group, who remodeled it and used it as a theatrical playhouse until July 7, 1976 when it was completely destroyed by a fire.

- **Jensen House, 1872.** Built by brothers E.R. and J.C. Jensen on land purchased from Atherton in 1867, the “salt box” design farmhouse has had only a few major alterations including the addition of a dormer window in 1882 and extra bed and bathrooms in 1939. It is probably one of the oldest homes in Alameda County continually lived in by descendants of the original family.
- **Auguste Borloz (McDoulette) Farm.** The site on Proctor Road was evaluated at the time it was proposed for residential development. The consultant determined that the site appeared eligible for the California Register under Criterion 1, at the local level, as a complete and relatively early example of a chicken farm in Castro Valley.
- **Red Barn, 1855.** William Cull and Daniel Luce operated a sawmill on a 2, 400-acre site in Cull Canyon that was part of William Cull’s ranch.
- **Adobe Art Center, 1938.** Built by the Works Project Administration (WPA), the adobe structure was originally used as headquarters for the Castro Valley Elementary School District.
- **Fairmont Hospital, 1936.** William G. Corlett was the architect for several of the ward buildings that were built by the Works Project Administration. Corlett and his firm designed a number of school, hospital, and other public projects, including many built under WPA. Among these are the Alameda County Courthouse and Berkeley High School’s Community Theatre, now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>6</sup>
- **Valley Cathedral at the Crossroads (now Neighborhood Church), 1969.** One of few East Bay buildings designed by architect Welton Beckett, who is best-known for Los Angeles area icons including the cylindrical Hollywood Capitol Records building, the plan for Century City, and the Los Angeles Music Center. Becket and Associates were also architects for the Kaiser Center in Oakland (1959), many San Francisco office buildings, and the Serramonte, Hillsdale, and Stanford Shopping Centers.<sup>7</sup>
- **Castro Village Center, 1949.** Developed by R.T. Nahas, the Center was one of the first shopping centers in Alameda County.



*Jensen Ranch was established in the 1870's and farmed by the same family until the 1960's when much of the land was sold for residential development.*

<sup>6</sup> David Gebhard, et al., *A Guide to Architecture in San Francisco & Northern California*, Peregrine Smith, 1973.

<sup>7</sup> Gebhard, *ibid.*



## Regulatory Setting

### *Federal Regulations*

The 1966 National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) established the National Register of Historic Places, authorized funding for state programs with participation by local governments, created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and established a review process for protecting cultural resources. The NHPA provides the legal framework for most state and local preservation laws. The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Projects that may affect the historic significance of properties or districts listed in the National Register are subject to review under the California Environmental Quality Act<sup>8</sup> and, if the project is receiving Federal funding or subject to Federal approval, under Section 106 of NHPA.<sup>9</sup> The CEQA Guidelines consider compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and rehabilitation guidelines to be adequate mitigation of potential impacts in most cases.<sup>10</sup>

### *State Regulations*

The California Register of Historical Resources was established in 1992 by amendments to the Public Resources Code. The Register includes resources that are formally determined eligible for, or listed in, the National Register, State Historical Landmarks numbered 770 or higher; Points of Historical Interest recommended for listing by the State Historical Resources Commission (SHRC); resources nominated for listing and determined eligible in accordance with criteria and procedures adopted by the SHRC, and resources and districts designated as city or county landmarks when the designation criteria are consistent with California Register criteria.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) defines historical resources as those listed in (or determined eligible for listing in) the California Register; included in a local register of historical resources or identified as significant in a historical resource survey that meets certain requirements; and any object, building, structure, site, area,

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<sup>8</sup> California Public Resources Code Sec. 15064.5

<sup>9</sup> Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation website, <http://www.achp.gov/work106.html>

<sup>10</sup> California Public Resources Code, op. cit.

place, record, or manuscript which a lead agency determines to be significant. Generally, a resource is considered to be historically significant if it meets the criteria for listing in the California Register. However, a lead agency under CEQA is not precluded from determining a resource is significant that is not listed in (or determined eligible for listing in) the California Register, not included in a local register, or identified in a historical resources survey as a historical resource, as defined in the Public Resources Code.

Under CEQA, any project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment. Projects that may affect archaeological sites are also subject to review under CEQA even if the site does not meet the law's criteria for defining historic resources but is a "unique archaeological resource" as defined by the law.

Several state laws address the importance of Native American involvement in the development review process and provide requirements for the treatment of human remains and grave goods and protection of cultural places. Among these is the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 2001. This Act was adopted to conform to the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and is intended to ensure that all California Indian human remains and cultural items are treated with dignity and respect. In addition, sections of the California Health and Safety Code address the discovery of human remains outside a dedicated cemetery and provide requirements for consultation with appropriate Native American individuals for disposition of the remains. Government Code Sections 65352.3, 65352.4, 65562.5 also require local agencies to consult with identified California Native American Tribes, as part of the general plan adoption or amendment process and prior to the dedication of open space. To comply with these requirements, the County contacted representatives of the Ohlone, Costanoan, Miwok, and Patwin tribes and provided copies of draft policies and other materials but did not receive any response.

State law also offers a number of incentives for historic preservation. These include the option of using the State Historic Building Code<sup>11</sup> to regulate alterations to designated properties and tax relief under the Mills Act.<sup>12</sup> The program, which is only applicable to income-

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<sup>11</sup> California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Part 8

<sup>12</sup> California Government Code, Sec. 50280 et seq.

producing property, gives property owners a significant reduction in local property taxes in exchange for their promise to actively participate in restoring, rehabilitating, repairing and preserving their properties.

### *Local Regulations*

The Alameda County Parks, Recreation, and Historical Commission advises the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors on matters related to historic resources. The Historic Preservation Ordinance for the County of Alameda adopted January 10, 2012 established procedures for maintaining a County Register of Historic Resources, designating landmarks, and reviewing alterations to designated properties.<sup>13</sup> The ordinance contains criteria for designating several categories of historic properties and districts including landmarks, historic preservation districts, contributing resources within preservation districts, structures of merit, and conservation areas, which do not meet the criteria for designation as districts but are nevertheless distinguished by cultural, historical, or visual characteristics. The ordinance is also intended to qualify the County as a Certified Local Government under the National Historic Preservation Act. This recognition would allow the Commission to review and comment on projects subject to Section 106 of the Federal act.

Prior identification and evaluation of historic resources will facilitate the development of appropriate strategies for their preservation and protection in advance of the development review process. The formulation of other preservation tools, such as design standards and guidelines, would also allow a more proactive approach to resource protection. Design review criteria, standards, and guidelines can be established through an overlay district in the Zoning Ordinance or through a specific plan. The County could also allow modifications to setback, height, and other standards to ensure that new buildings and additions are compatible with the existing neighborhood development patterns. These special standards and guidelines would supplement or supersede the County's Residential Design Standards and Guidelines for the Unincorporated Communities of West Alameda County.

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<sup>13</sup> Historic Preservation Ordinance for the County of Alameda, January 10, 2012



## CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL

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- GOAL 5.6-1**      **Protect historic sites and structures and other cultural resources that help to maintain the special character and identity of Castro Valley and represent important physical connections to the community’s past.**

## CULTURAL RESOURCES POLICIES

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- Policy 5.6-1**      **Preserve Designated Historic Sites.** Protect and preserve Federal and State-designated historic sites, structures, and properties that are deemed eligible for designation to the maximum extent feasible. Enhance the maintenance of key historic structures such as the Stanton House, Strobridge House, and the Adobe Arts Center, and ensure that they remain, or are relocated, to attractive and prominent settings consistent with their character and history.
- Policy 5.6-2**      **Cultural Resources Protection Strategies.** Establish appropriate strategies to protect local cultural resources that do not qualify for designation as historic resources but reflect Castro Valley’s history and traditions. Possible strategies include:
- Conservation districts for older neighborhoods with a unified distinctive character, such as the neighborhood of Eichler homes;
  - Lower densities or conservation easements in environmentally sensitive areas that reflect Castro Valley’s agricultural history such as: Palomares Canyon and properties with barns and stables located along creek beds and Crow and Cull Canyon Roads.
- Policy 5.6-3**      **Consider Cultural Resources in Development Review Process.** Integrate consideration of historical and cultural resources into the development review process to promote early resolution of conflicts between cultural resources preservation and other community goals and objectives.



*Greenridge Eichlers. Consider conservation districts for older neighborhoods with unified distinctive character such as the Greenridge neighborhood of Eichler homes.*

**Policy 5.6-4**

**Balance Goals for Historic Preservation with Infill Development Goals.** Balance preservation goals with goals for promoting infill development and for renovating and improving the appearance of commercial areas in Castro Valley. Strategies to consider include:

- Ensuring that project review requirements are based on a clear understanding of public and private responsibilities;
- Promoting and facilitating projects that incorporate new development while preserving the character of local cultural resources that contribute to the community.

**Policy 5.6-5**

**Promote Cultural Resource Rehabilitation.** Promote the maintenance, restoration, and rehabilitation of historic and cultural resources through a variety of financial and regulatory incentives.

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## CULTURAL RESOURCES ACTIONS

**Action 5.6-1**

**Complete Historical Resources Survey.** Complete the Historical Resources Survey of the Castro Valley Planning area and prepare documentation for properties that appear eligible for listing in the State Register.

**Action 5.6-2**

**Historic and Cultural Resource Regulations.** Adopt regulations to protect and preserve historic and local cultural resources in the Castro Valley Planning Area based on the results of the Historical Resources Survey of the Castro Valley Planning area. Establish the following three different categories of historic and local cultural resources, and regulations for alterations, additions, and demolition commensurate with the value of the resources:

- Historic Resources that qualify for Federal or State designation;
- Local Historic Resources that may not qualify for federal or state designation but are of local interest and are worthy of preservation; and
- Local cultural resources that are not historic resources as defined by CEQA but enhance the character of the community through their architectural character or their connection to local history.

**Action 5.6-3**

**Demolition of Historic or Cultural Resource Regulations.** Adopt regulations for the protection of historic and local cultural resources that provide clear guidance and criteria to determine when demolition of a historic or local cultural resource is permitted. Specify appropriate mitigations in cases where demolition is permitted, consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act and commensurate with the size and scale of the project and the value of the resource. Such mitigations may, for example, include donations to programs that restore historic or cultural resources.



**Action 5.6-4**

**Enforce Historic and Cultural Resource Regulations.** Revise the project review process to ensure that regulations and policies related to preservation of historic and local cultural resources are enforced.

- Establish or designate the review process through which additions, alterations, and demolition of historic or local cultural resources will be reviewed, for example through design review, site plan review, etc.
- Refer all projects subject to environmental review, and all projects on creekside properties (as defined in Chapter 7) that involve more than one new residential unit or more than 10,000 square feet, to the Northwest Information Center to conduct project review to determine whether known historic or archaeological resources are present and whether a study has been conducted on all or a portion of the project site.
- Require a staff evaluation of structures more than 50 years old proposed for demolition to determine if a structure is a historic or local cultural resource.



*Establish lower densities for conservation easements and/or other strategies to protect resources that may not qualify for historic designation but still reflect Castro Valley's history and traditions, such as these properties off Crow Canyon Road.*

**Action 5.6-5**

**Preserve Neighborhood Character.** Consider adopting design review districts, specific plans, or other similar mechanisms to preserve the character of neighborhoods that have a unique design character. These may be considered for designation as historic districts, or may be designated as local cultural or design districts if they do not qualify for designation as a historic district.



**Action 5.6-6**

**Coordinated Historic and Cultural Resource Programs.** Work with County departments, the Alameda County Parks, Recreation and Historical Commission; the East Bay Regional Parks District; the Hayward Area Historical Society; other public agencies; businesses; and nonprofit organizations to establish programs for preservation of historic and local cultural resources. Consider establishing the following types of programs:

- A historic preservation fund that provides a monetary source for local preservation incentives such as an architectural assistance program and archaeological site protection plan. The fund may be supported through grants, private or public donations, or other sources.
- Permanent displays for the new Castro Valley Library describing the culture of Native American communities who lived in the area and the history and development of the community since European settlement in the 19th century.
- A “receiver site” program that provides relocation sites for historical resources (buildings, structures or objects) that cannot be preserved onsite. Receiver sites should be located within the community in which the resource was originally located and should maintain a context and setting comparable to the original location.
- An “adopt a resource” program to encourage and assist the public and local businesses to become involved in the protection and preservation of historical and cultural resources, sponsor preservation of individual properties, and conduct the necessary fund-raising.