



4. Community Design Element

Los Gatos has maintained the small-town charm that dates to its origins as an old railroad Town. Tree-lined streets and sidewalks give the Los Gatos Downtown a strong pedestrian character, and picturesque views of the Santa Cruz Mountains offer potent but subtle reminders of the Town's unique setting.

A key factor in the charm of Los Gatos is its physical environment. The Community Design Element looks at the key components of this environment and describes the physical features that, together, create Los Gatos' distinct community character. This Element provides a local context and anticipated urban design enhancements for the next 20 years relating to the urban form, architectural styles, landscape, lighting, and pedestrian-oriented environment. In addition, this Element highlights a series of Community Growth Districts which have specific community design policies designed to create unique, one-of-a-kind districts in Town. Lastly, the Element covers the overall preservation of historic areas and the surrounding hillsides to ensure these areas are respected over time, even as development proceeds.

The Community Design Element is divided into the following sections:

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Key Terms

360 Architecture. The intentional incorporation of architectural design style and elements around the entirety of a building regardless of if portions of the building are not facing public view.

Age-Friendly. Age-friendly or livable communities have walkable streets, housing and transportation options, access to key services, and opportunities for residents at all life stages to participate in community activities.

Articulation. The division of a building facade into distinct sections; including the materials, patterns, textures, and colors that add visual interest to a building or facade.

Community Growth District. Within the Los Gatos Planning Area, eight Community Growth Districts are identified based on the proximity of commercial services or employment to support additional development, easy access to transportation systems, having access to infrastructure needed to support future development, and opportunities to include urban design and architectural design characteristic to create unique places. Section 3.7 in the Land Use Element and Section 4.5 in this Element for more information.

Corridor. A transportation pathway allowing movement between activity centers. A corridor may encompass single or multiple transportation routes and facilities, adjacent land uses, and the connecting street network.

Eave. The edge of the roof that overhangs the exterior walls, sometimes with exposed rafters.

Facade. An exterior wall or face, of a building.

Fenestration. The design, construction, and presence of any openings in a building, including windows, doors, vents, wall panels, skylights, curtain walls, or louvers.

Gable. The wall that encloses the end of a roof or the triangular end below a roof overhang.

Gateway. A defining element, type of development, or signage that creates the clear distinction of entering a community or place.

Human-Scale. Is the effort to create an appropriate relationship between human beings and the size/function of surrounding buildings. Human-scale emphasizes building features and characteristics which can be observed in close proximity, at the speed a pedestrian would travel.

Live-Work Unit. An integrated dwelling unit and working space, occupied, and used by a single household, designed or structurally modified to accommodate both residential occupancy and work activity.

Massing. The general shape or shapes of a building, as well as its form and size.

Median. A raised barrier used to separate opposing traffic flow and control access and vehicle turning movements. A median can also provide a pedestrian crossing refuge and streetscape enhancement.

Parklet. A small seating area or green space created as a public amenity on or alongside a sidewalk, especially in a former roadside parking space.

Pedestrian-Oriented. An approach to architectural design intended to facilitate movement on foot in an area, as opposed to design that primarily serves automobile movement. Examples of pedestrian-oriented design include pathways following the most direct route from sidewalk to front door, continuous building street-walls with shop windows, outdoor cafes, street trees and benches, and architectural enhancement in the first two floors that are at human-scale.

Projection. A side wing, tower, or window bay that protrudes from a building.

Rafters. One of several long, inclined, structural members such as wooden beams used in the construction of pitched roofs, supporting the roof-covering, e.g. laths and tiles.

Scale. Refers to how the sizes of different architectural elements relate to one another.

Screening. Elements used to visually screen or separate detrimental elements of a site. Screening is commonly used to obscure parking areas, utilities, dumpsters, etc.

Setback. The distance between a building and the property line or other buildings.

Step Back. A step-like recession in the profile of a multi-story building. A step back requires the building to take a step back from the street for every increase in height of the structure. Step backs can also be a design technique to reduce the visual impact of tall buildings.

Stoop. The uncovered wide step leading into the front or main door of a unit or building.

Streetscape. The elements within and along the street right-of-way that define its appearance, identity, and functionality. These can include, but are not limited to, adjacent buildings and land uses, street furniture, landscaping, trees, sidewalks, and pavement treatments.

Street Furniture. Fixtures installed along the roadway, at or above grade level, including lamp posts, pedestrian lighting, street signs, benches, trash cans, bike racks, news racks, water fountains, and planters.

Urban Design Fundamentals

Throughout this Element, certain urban design terms and concepts will be used to describe a desired effect for what fits in with Los Gatos. These fundamentals, in various combinations, will be applied to project designs through the policies in this Element, either to all projects or to projects within designated Community Growth Districts, as described in Section 4.5. The Community Design Element will focus on the categories shown in Figure 4-1, which will ultimately drive community form over the next 20 years.

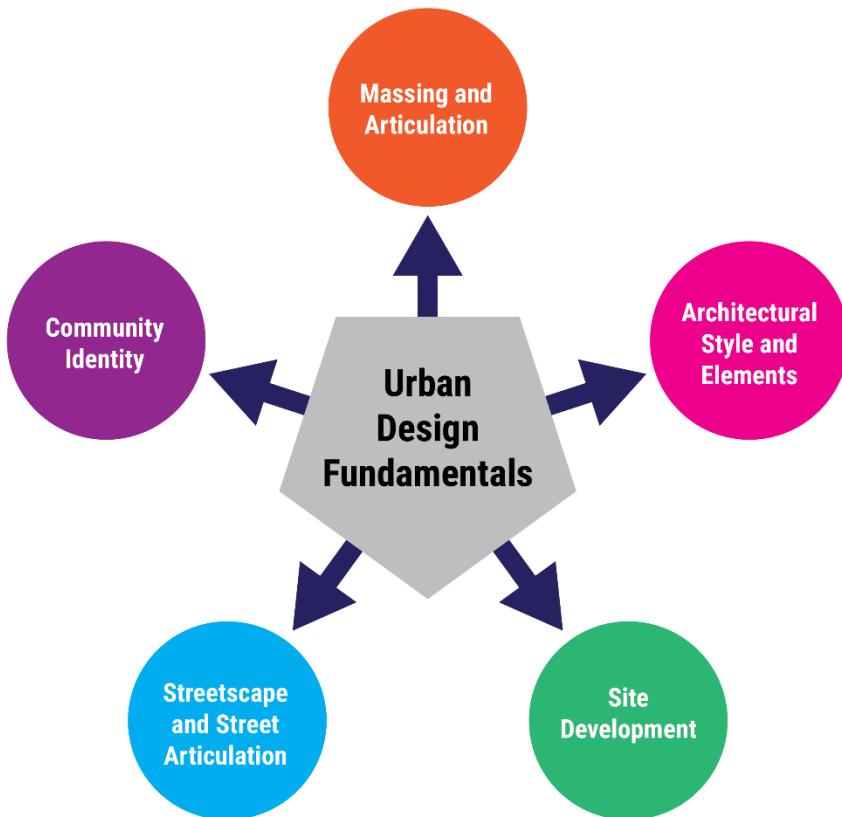


Figure 4-1 **Urban Design Fundamental Categories**

Massing and Articulation

The massing of a building is its overall three-dimensional shape. Massing is a combination of three-dimensional forms, the simplest of which are cubes, pyramids, spheres, and cones. Large masses are used to emphasize elements while small masses are used to subdue elements. A way to influence overall massing is to design a project that is focused on human-scale, which means that overall design is relatable in height to the average human. For example, limiting entrance and floor-to-floor heights to avoid building forms that feel monumental and grand.

Another technique to reduce the overall massing of a project is to include articulation. Articulation can be in the form of step backs on multi-story structures which are meant to provide relatable scale to the street and not a towering monolithic façade, which can create a “canyon” like effect on large arterials. Step backs also allow greater opportunity for daylight exposure and reduce shadowing on smaller adjacent structures. This further reduces the incompatibility with adjacent structures.

Architectural Style and Elements

In the development of a shopping center, mixed-use project, residential area, or extension of the Downtown, an overall “theme” and consistent use of architectural style and elements can be implemented to ensure cohesive design. Varying styles used within an integrated architectural framework for a development or area can help in establishing a strong community identity, as well as consistent patterns of image and character. Design elements are diverse and can range from roof style and form, use of eaves, dormers, supportive columns, glazing, color palettes, as well as the incorporation of stoops, porches, and balconies.

In Los Gatos, and the Bay Area at large, the early twentieth century Victorian and Arts and Crafts Movements made a lasting impression on architectural style and such design has become synonymous with the area. As design practices have shifted over the last century, additional styles, such as Mediterranean and California Modern, have become prevalent as well. Well-defined community design guidance allows the community to embrace its past and also acknowledge the future, by determining appropriate places for new design styles to be located and to relate to traditional styles.

Site Development

Site development is a crucial component to community design and the application of urban design techniques. So much of site development hinges on the characteristics and natural features of the site itself. The terrain of the site will dictate the type of development, placement of the structures, placement of supportive utilities, overall site access, and environmental considerations related to solar exposure and prevailing winds for cooling purposes. In Los Gatos it is also imperative to ensure the site development considers unique aspects of the subject property in the form of tree preservation and topography, compatibility and connectivity with surrounding and adjacent parcels, and recognition of open space and viewsheds. A cohesive approach to site development will allow new or remodeled development to become fully integrated into the existing community fabric. Other approaches to cohesive site development include the incorporation of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques, such as use of private and common open space, landscaping, and lighting. Specifically, CPTED focuses on overall site design techniques to increase public safety and minimize and reduce the potential for crime.

Streetscape and Street Activation

The overall design of a structure and the integration of structures into a site is not the only design consideration. How that structure engages with the streetscape and adjacent pedestrian areas is equally important. Streetscapes and street activation draw from the energy and vibrancy of a building and blend that environment with the bustling activity at the street level. One way to incorporate street activation is to ensure that the building has primary access to and from the sidewalk or that portions of the sidewalk become an extension of the building and its use. This can be achieved through the formation of parklets and outdoor dining spaces. Creating lively furnishings, such as incorporating upgraded landscaped areas and cohesive street furniture/furnishings, will enhance the pedestrian environment. The marrying of the built environment with the street can create a sense of compatibility.

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Community Identity

Community identity can be difficult to design and address holistically. It is critical that a community defines its boundaries and creates a unique environment that is recognizable and memorable. Los Gatos shares common borders with other communities including San Jose, Campbell, and Saratoga, where the defining line between communities is blurred. To create a clear transition into Los Gatos, identification methods such as gateway signs, landscape styles, use of public art and imagery, consistent lighting, street furnishings, and even unique freeway exit designs could be implemented. The intent of community identity is for instant recognition upon arrival into the Town, and cohesive design principles focusing on entrances can further establish the unique qualities of the community.

4.1 Neighborhood Cohesiveness

Neighborhood cohesiveness is essential in order to maintain and enhance neighborhoods. To ensure that the continuity of neighborhoods is not disrupted, all new or remodeled development must be able to adapt and co-exist with established areas. Los Gatos is home to vibrant areas with rich history and this section aims to maintain that vibrancy, respecting existing development while providing direction for how new development can fully integrate into these areas.

The following goal and policies provide guidance to maintain neighborhood cohesiveness as it relates to design.

CD-1	Maintain a Town of diverse and well-structured neighborhoods that meet the community's needs for interconnected, high-quality, and inclusive living environments.
CD-1.1	Building Element Proportion Require building elements to be in proportion, including building massing and height, with existing development in the neighborhood.
CD-1.2	Gated Communities Prohibit the creation of gated communities in an effort to promote social cohesiveness and inclusivity and maintain street network efficiency, adequate emergency response times, and convenient travel routes for all street users.
CD-1.3	Enhance Neighborhood Character Enhance established neighborhoods by requiring new development to respect and respond to those existing physical characteristics of buildings, streetscapes, open spaces, and urban form that contribute to the overall age-friendly aspects and character of the neighborhood.
CD-1.4	Memorable Places Through Infill Development Promote infill development projects that create memorable places throughout the Town through high-quality architecture, pedestrian oriented streetscapes, and age-friendly designed public spaces.

4.2 Community Form

Community form includes the visual, contextual, and architectural design that creates a cohesive community. Los Gatos includes a rich and diverse array of architectural styles, historical landmarks, and bustling corridors which contribute to a distinct and unique urban fabric. These community form applications have been refined over the years through the Commercial and Residential Design Guidelines.

The following goal and policies build upon and work together with the Town's existing design guidelines and will drive the future community form and urban design characteristics that shape Los Gatos over the next 20 years. While all policies in this section are under a single goal, they are divided into sub-categories for added clarity.

CD-2

Encourage all development in Town to be designed holistically, eco-friendly, and sustainably to create welcoming and human-scaled neighborhood communities.

MASSING AND ARTICULATION

CD-2.1 Building Setbacks

Building setbacks shall increase as mass and height increase.

CD-2.2 Multi-Story Step Backs

Require multi-story buildings to incorporate step backs on upper floors to create a more human-scale and comfortable pedestrian environment.



Figure 4-2 Multi-Story Step Backs

CD-2.3 Architectural Style

Promote high quality architecture through the use of massing, façade articulation, fenestration, and parapets that reflect a human scale environment.

ARCHITECTURE STYLE AND ELEMENTS

CD-2.4 360 Architecture

Require that all new and remodeled structures emphasize 360 Architecture and include, where feasible, architectural design elements such as molding and cornices as well as roof forms and materials consistent with the structure's architecture.



Figure 4-3 360 Architecture

CD-2.5 Roof Design

Encourage horizontal eaves to be broken up by gables, building projections, or other forms of articulation.



Figure 4-4 Roof Articulation and Design

CD-2.6 [Parking Structure Design](#)
Require all parking structures to include design or screening methods to minimize the visual and lighting impact on surrounding neighborhoods and the environment.

CD-2.7 [Multi-Story Structures](#)
Require that multi-story structures incorporate a change in materials (i.e., brick, stucco, tile, concrete, wood siding, shingles) on the third story and higher to provide distinction in architectural features.

CD-2.8 [Below Grade Square Footage](#)
Encourage below grade square footage and underground parking to provide “hidden” square footage and/or parking in order to reduce visible mass.

STREETSCAPE

CD-2.9 [Multi-Modal Streetscapes](#)
Require new development to create multi-modal streetscapes that are walkable, pedestrian-oriented, tree-shaded, bike-friendly, and human-scaled.

CD-2.10 [Well-Defined Street Fronts](#)
Require new buildings to maintain a consistent setback from the public right-of-way in order to create a well-defined streetscape.

CD-2.11 [Enhanced Walking and Biking](#)
Pursue opportunities to promote walking and biking in new and existing neighborhoods through traffic-calming measures, expanded sidewalks, mid-block crossings, bike route signage, designated bike lanes, tree canopy, the narrowing of streets, and street improvements (i.e., street trees, planting strips).

CD-2.12 [Street Trees in New Development](#)
SUS If feasible, require native, non-invasive, or non-fire-prone street trees to be installed for all new developments, to enhance neighborhood character and identity and to maximize shade coverage when mature.

CD-2.13 [Tree Preservation](#)
SUS Preserve and protect trees designated under the Town’s Tree Preservation Ordinance, as well as existing native and heritage trees as a part of any development proposal.

CD-2.14 [Protecting Hillside Views](#)
Encourage the layout of streets, blocks, and pedestrian corridors in new development to provide views of hillsides.

CD-2.15 [SR 17 On-Ramps and Overpasses](#)
Coordinate with Caltrans to maintain and beautify overpasses, and create and maintain distinct entrances into Los Gatos from SR 17 offramps, especially at Lark Avenue and SR 9, including themed landscaped areas, use of natural terrain and elements, and public art.

STREET ACTIVATION

CD-2.16 [Buildings that Engage the Street](#)
Require new development to be oriented to complement and actively engage the public realm, through such features as building orientation, setbacks, facade articulations, window glazing, and location of parking.

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CD-2.17 Structure Entrances

Require that building facades and entrances directly face the street frontage.

CD-2.18 Parklets and Outdoor Dining

Enhance the street experience with parklets and outdoor dining opportunities where feasible.

DEVELOPMENT TRANSITIONS

CD-2.19 Transition in Scale

Require that the scale and massing of new developments provide transitions in building height and massing to the physical and visual character of adjoining neighborhoods.



Figure 4-5 Transition in Scale

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

CD-2.20 Eyes on the Street

To increase safety for residents, new development with a street frontage shall incorporate a street oriented front entrance and windows facing the frontage. Units not facing the street shall be oriented to provide visual access to entryways, pedestrian pathways, recreation areas, and public spaces.

CD-2.21 Adequate Pedestrian Lighting

Pedestrian-oriented lighting shall be provided in active pedestrian areas and common areas for safety and security.

CD-2.22 Glazing Visibility

Minimize obstructed viewing into street facing windows of commercial buildings in the form of glazing, signage, advertisements, and interior furnishings that can obstruct such views.

COMMON OPEN SPACE

CD-2.23 Community Gathering Spaces

Encourage new developments to include common open space areas in the form of public gathering spaces (i.e., plazas, squares, pocket parks) that are designed to stimulate pedestrian activity and complement the appearance and form of adjoining buildings.

CD-2.24

Public Realm Improvements

Encourage improvements to the public realm, including tree canopies, street furniture, paving, landscaping, and lighting.

PRIVATE OPEN SPACE

CD-2.25

Incorporation of Balconies and Patios

Encourage multi-family developments to provide each unit with private open space in the form of a patio or balcony.



Figure 4-6 Private Open Space Applications

SITE DEVELOPMENT

CD-2.26

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Climate Considerations in Site Design

Encourage applicants to consider the Mediterranean climate in Los Gatos and plan for sustainable site design to address adequate solar access, water conservation and retention, and wind conditions.

CD-2.27

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New Structures Siting in the Hillsides

Require new structures to be sited to maximize privacy, and protection of natural plant and wildlife habitats and migration corridors. Siting should take advantage of scenic views but should not create ecological or visual impacts affecting open spaces, wildlife, public places, or other properties.

CD-2.28

Linking with Existing Developments

Encourage linking new developments to existing developments, parks, and trails through the creation of internal street systems that allow travel by foot, bicycles, and vehicles.

CD-2.29

Natural Contours

Require, where feasible, that buildings, landscapes, and hardscapes follow the natural contours of the subject parcel to protect the natural aspects of the property.

LIGHTING

CD-2.30 Street and Structure Lighting

SUS

Require street and structure lighting to minimize its visual, health, and ecological impacts by preventing glare, limiting the amount of light that falls on neighboring properties, and avoiding light pollution of the night sky.

CD-2.31 Lighting

Encourage lighting for mixed-use and commercial developments such as string lighting, pole mounted lighting, and tree-hanging lighting, to further illuminate the site during nighttime hours for safety and community.

LANDSCAPING

CD-2.32 Landscape Buffering

SUS

Encourage the use of landscaping such as trees, shrubs, and trellised vines to mitigate the effects of building mass and provide benefits to the environment.

CD-2.33 Landscaped Medians

SUS

Provide landscaped medians with drought tolerant and native landscaping where there is sufficient right of way to beautify the streetscape and benefit the environment.



Figure 4-7 **Landscaped Medians**

CD-2.34 Sustainable Landscape Design

SUS

Encourage landscaping plans to include drought tolerant plants with low water irrigation and to maximize the use of trees for energy efficiency, climate control, screening, shading (especially of parking lots), and aesthetics.

PUBLIC ART

CD-2.35 Encourage Public Art

Support new public art Townwide and as part of new commercial and mixed-use development to beautify the community and create unique spaces.

CD-2.36 Placement of Public Art

Public art shall be placed in highly visible and high traffic areas, such as along major thoroughfares or in public gathering spaces.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND GATEWAYS

CD-2.37 Town Identification

Support the incorporation of unifying Town identifiers on community signage, streetlamp banners, Town gateways, and street furnishings as appropriate.

CD-2.38 Wayfinding Program

Encourage a robust, Town-wide wayfinding program that highlights important cultural centers and landmarks, municipal buildings, parks and recreation facilities, tourist attractions, and commercial centers.



Figure 4-8 Example Wayfinding Applications

CD-2.39 Freeway Identification

Coordinate with Caltrans on permitting public art, Town identification signage, and street names on overpasses on SR 17 and SR 85 to delineate Los Gatos from adjacent communities.

CD-2.40 Landscaped Gateways

Ensure that public improvements and private development provide landscaped Town gateways that create visual connections between the natural hillsides and open space areas and the community of Los Gatos with native, non-invasive, or non-fire-prone plant species.



Figure 4-9 **Landscaped Gateways**

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN

CD-2.41 **Sustainable Building Materials**

SUS Encourage the use of environmentally friendly building materials and products for all development.

CD-2.42 **Construction Waste**

SUS Minimize building construction waste by encouraging rehabilitation and remodeling of structures in lieu of tear downs.



For an expanded discussion on sustainability and sustainable practices, please refer to the Environment and Sustainability Element.

Did you know?



Community identification is key to distinguishing one community from another. This perhaps is most difficult along expressway and freeway corridors where there is minimal distinction between adjacent jurisdictions. Los Gatos has a unique opportunity to use SR 17 to emphasize Town boundaries and capture the attention of travelers and motorists. The ability to enhance community identity beyond the traditional Town limits is becoming more common. Over the last few decades several Bay Area communities have partnered with Caltrans to improve and enhance sound attenuation walls, provide the opportunity for murals and public art, as well as provide identification and signage along overpasses. Below are some examples of how other communities in California and around the country have enhanced identification of their community through signage, public art, and landscaping.



4.3 Historic Preservation

The Town of Los Gatos prides itself on a commitment to preserve and maintain historic structures in the community. The Town's commitment to historic preservation also furthers the community's goal to be a sustainable leader. The removal and demolition of structures is an overall contributor to localized Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions which has the potential to cause environmental degradation. Advocating for preservation reduces the Town's carbon footprint and creates a more environmentally-friendly community. Through the adoption of designated sites and Historic Districts by the Town Council, historic preservation has become a dedicated service revered by the community, which has led to the preservation and rehabilitation of historic landmarks and structures. The five Historic Districts regulated by the adopted Historic Preservation Ordinance include: Downtown Commercial, Almond Grove, Broadway, Fairview Plaza, and University-Edelen as shown on Figure 4-10.

The overall intent of the Historic Preservation Ordinance is to preserve historic and architectural resources in Los Gatos. The Ordinance established a Historic Preservation Committee and a Historic Preservation Program that includes a comprehensive series of standards and guidelines concerning the preservation and demolition of historic structures, design guidelines for rehabilitation and new construction, and guidance in the application of historic preservation standards. The Town continues to recognize historic resources as follows: any structure/site that is located within an historic district; any structure/site that is historically designated; or any primary structure constructed prior to 1941 unless the Town has determined that the structure has no historic significance or architectural merit.

The following goals and policies support the preservation of historical structures and landmarks in Los Gatos for the enjoyment of future generations.

CD-3

Preserve historic and architectural features within the Town.

CD-3.1 Avoid Demolition of Historic Buildings

SUS Avoid demolishing historic buildings, unless the Historic Preservation Committee determines, based on required findings, that there is no feasible means to preserve the structure.

CD-3.2 Historic Structure Preservation

Preserve and protect historic structures, including those that have been individually designated or are located within historic districts.

CD-3.3 Historic Preservation Programs

Continue the Town's careful and proactive historic preservation programs while recognizing the changing needs of the community.

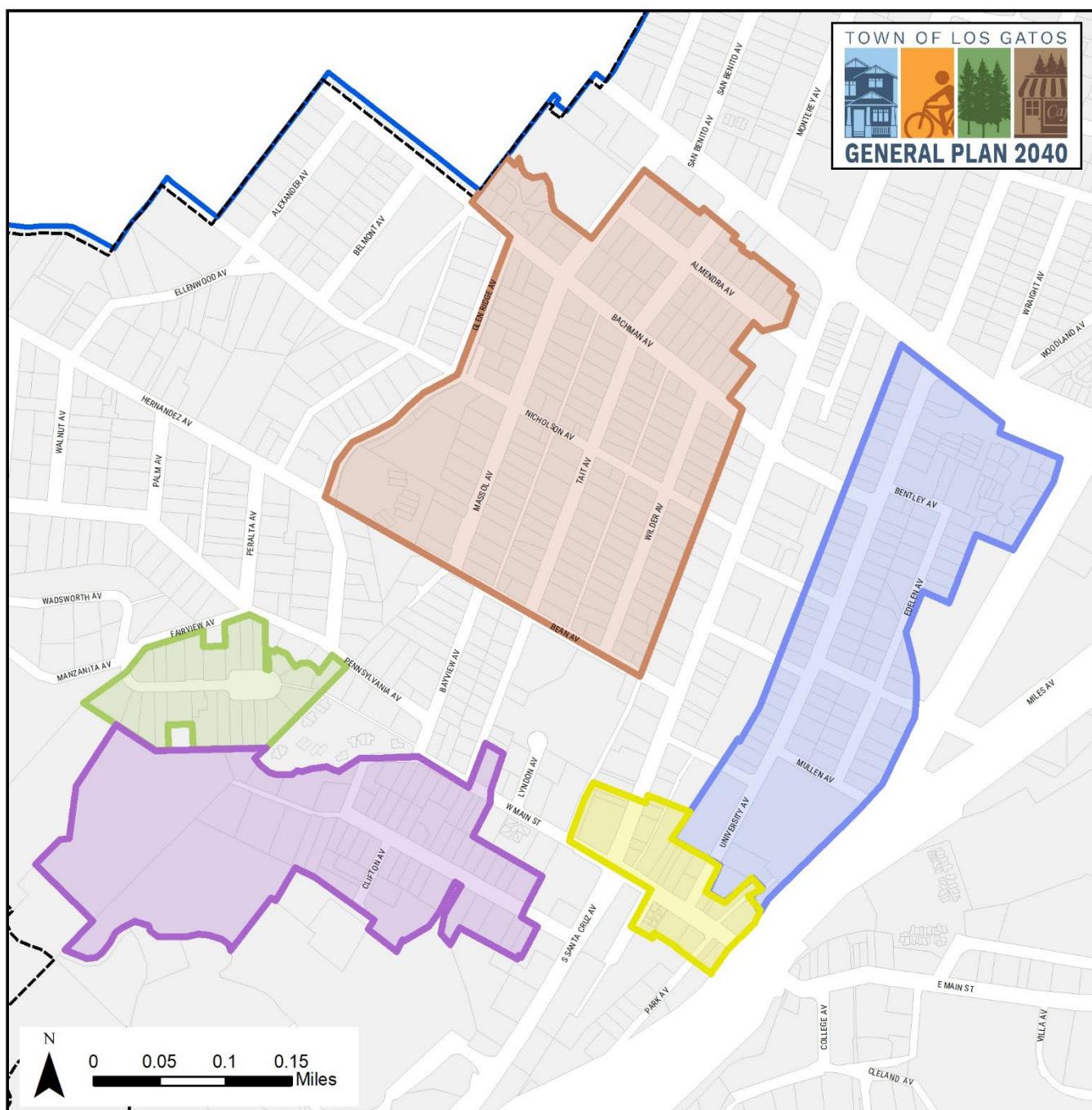
CD-3.4 Historic Preservation Committee Review

Require the referral of zone changes, planned development applications, and zoning approvals that may result in the demolition of historic structures to the Historic Preservation Committee for review and recommendation prior to review by the Planning Commission.

CD-3.5 New Structures and Remodels within Historic Districts

Require new structures or remodels within historic districts to be designed to complement structures within the district and refer these to the Historic Preservation Committee for review and recommendation prior to review by the Planning Commission.

Figure 4-10 Historic Districts



Historic District

 Almond Grove

 Broadway

 Fairview Plaza

 Downtown Commercial

 University-Edelen

 Town of Los Gatos

 Planning Area

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CD-3.6 Potential Impacts to Historic Landmarks and Features
 Require all projects to identify any adverse effect to historic landmarks and features on or in the vicinity of the proposed project. Require that any development having potential adverse impacts:

- Accommodate the historical structure or feature;
- Mitigate potential adverse impacts to a level acceptable to the Town; or
- Relocate the historical feature to an appropriate site.

CD-4	Support and encourage thoughtful rehabilitation or reuse of historic structures.
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CD-4.1 Historic Structure Rehabilitation
 Rehabilitation of damaged historic structures shall be consistent with the policies of the Safety Element and the State Historic Building Code.

CD-4.2 Historic Structure Renovations
 Require exterior renovations or remodels of historic structures to be architecturally compatible with the original structure.

CD-4.3 Restoration Project Assistance
 Provide applicants and developers with information and staff time to assist in restoration projects.

CD-4.4 Financial Benefit Information
 Provide information about financial benefits including tax law benefits for rehabilitation of historic structures.

CD-4.5 Reuse of Existing Buildings
SUS Encourage the preservation, maintenance, and adaptive reuse of existing residential, commercial, or public buildings.

CD-4.6 Historic Structure Use or Donation
 Encourage property owners to use historic structures or, if not feasible, encourage their donation to the Town.

4.4 Hillside Development

The Hillsides comprise most of the southern portion of Los Gatos. Rural in character, hillside areas have larger, wooded lots and private access roads. In January 2004, the Town adopted the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines, which apply to all new hillside development and major hillside additions and renovations. The intent of the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines is to regulate development and preserve the hillsides.

The following goals and policies support the preservation of hillside areas.

CD-5	Preserve the natural beauty and ecological integrity of the Santa Cruz Mountains and surrounding hillsides.
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CD-5.1

Rural Atmosphere Preservation

Minimize development and preserve and enhance the rural atmosphere and natural plant and wildlife habitats in the hillsides.

CD-5.2

Hillside Development Limitation

Limit hillside development, specifically in VHFHSZ's, to mitigate wildfire risk.

CD-5.3

Effective Visible Mass

Reduce effective visible mass through such means as stepping structures up and down the hillside, following topographical contours, and limiting the height and mass of wall planes.

CD-5.4

Hillside Area Environmental Analysis Requirement

Require thorough environmental analysis for projects in hillside areas to ensure appropriate consideration of potential environmental impacts associated with projects.

CD-5.5

Mountain and Hillside Viewshed Preservation

Preserve and protect the natural state of the Santa Cruz Mountains and surrounding hillsides by discouraging development on and near the hillsides that impacts viewsheds.

CD-6

Preserve the natural topography and ecosystems within the hillside area by regulating grading, site placement, fencing, landscaping, and lighting.

CD-6.1

Least Restrictive Development Areas

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All development, including those in VHFHSZ's, is required to adhere to the Least Restrictive Development Areas (LRDA) to ensure minimal disturbance of the natural environment and to avoid wildfire and geological hazards.

CD-6.2

Ridge Line Grading Prohibition

Protect the natural ridge lines as defined in the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines by prohibiting any grading that would alter the natural ridge line.

CD-6.3

Natural Land Contours

New construction shall be designed to follow natural land contours and avoid mass grading. When possible, flat pads should be avoided, and houses should be designed to conform to or step down the contours rather than be designed for flat pads. Grading large, flat yard areas should be avoided.

CD-6.4

Hillside Landscaping Design

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Hillside landscaping shall be designed to minimize formal landscaping and hardscapes and site them close to the residence, follow the natural topography, and preserve native trees, native plant and wildlife habitats, and migration corridors.

CD-6.5

Lighting Design in Hillside Areas

Outdoor lighting shall be limited and shielded so as not to be viewable from non-hillside areas and shall be of low intensity.

CD-6.6

Hillside Fencing Design

Fences in the hillsides should be of open design to allow passage of native wildlife.



For goals and policies relating to wildfire safety and planning for high fire hazard areas, including the hillsides, please refer to Section 9.2 (Urban and Wildland Fire Hazard) in the Hazards and Safety Element.

4.5 Community Growth Districts

Within the Town, eight Community Growth Districts (Figure 4-11) are identified for having the most potential for future multi-family and/or mixed-use development, because of the residential densities specified in the Land Use Element. These Districts align with the overall General Plan effort to provide opportunities for a more diverse range of housing types meant to fulfill the State's Regional Housing Needs Allocation in the future update of the Town's Housing Element. The boundaries of the Districts are primarily focused on areas that have commercial and mixed-use land use designations where there is an increase in the maximum allowed residential densities and the potential to support higher intensity uses, but they also include adjacent medium and low-density residential areas that should be considered in the design of any future redevelopment. The boundaries of these Districts were placed to capture retail nodes as well as surrounding residential areas to create more walkable, neighborhoods thus creating a more sustainable urban fabric that focuses on alternative modes of travel to access amenities rather than the sole use of vehicles.

The intent of the Community Growth Districts within the Community Design Element is to continue the tradition in Los Gatos of creating unique and identifiable areas of Town that provide diversity in both development and community gathering spaces. Rather than focusing on specific uses or densities in these areas, which are addressed in the Land Use Element, the Community Design Element focuses on the integration of design, overall urban form, design driven connectivity, and compatibility between varying development types. Each Community Growth District includes:

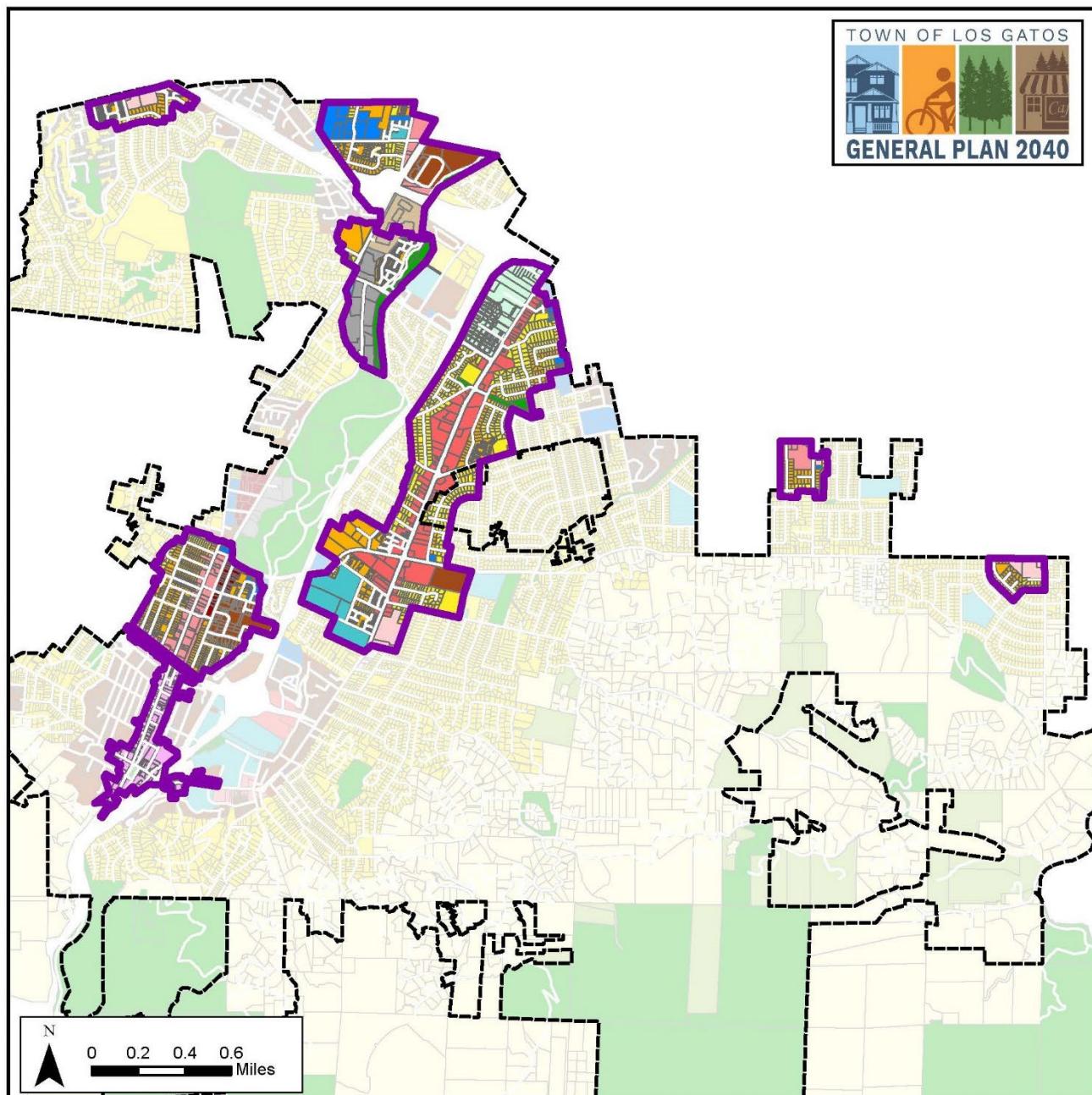
- An overview of existing uses and character on the ground today (2021/2022),
- A map of the Community Growth District, and
- An aspirational 2040 Vision written in the present tense describing what each Community Growth District is intended to become over the next 20 years.

APPLICABLE TO ALL COMMUNITY GROWTH DISTRICTS

The following goal and policies provide guidance on community design applicable to all CPDs.

CD-7	Enhance specific districts and areas to guide redevelopment of unique places in the community to promote sustainable growth of livable, walkable neighborhoods.
CD-7.1	Neighborhood-Friendly Design Encourage buildings and sites within all Community Growth Districts regardless of designation, including shopping centers undergoing redevelopment, to integrate design features that create a pedestrian- and neighborhood-friendly environment, such as by siting buildings close to the sidewalks, providing space for small plazas, and including public art.
CD-7.2	Encourage Mixed-Use Development Encourage redevelopment of commercial properties to incorporate mixed-use to provide additional housing in close proximity to neighborhood serving commercial.
CD-7.3	Open Space Require open space including green open space such as planters and park strips in all commercial and mixed-use areas to enhance livability as well as the pedestrian experience.
CD-7.4	Connectivity Require all new or remodeled developments to include connections and linkages in the form of walkways or paseos between adjacent developments to reduce automobile use and promote walking and biking.

Figure 4-11 Community Growth Districts



Land Use Designation

- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Public
- Hillside Residential
- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Very High Density Residential

- Central Business District
- Office Professional
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Service Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Albright Specific Plan
- North Forty Specific Plan

Community Growth Districts

- Town of Los Gatos

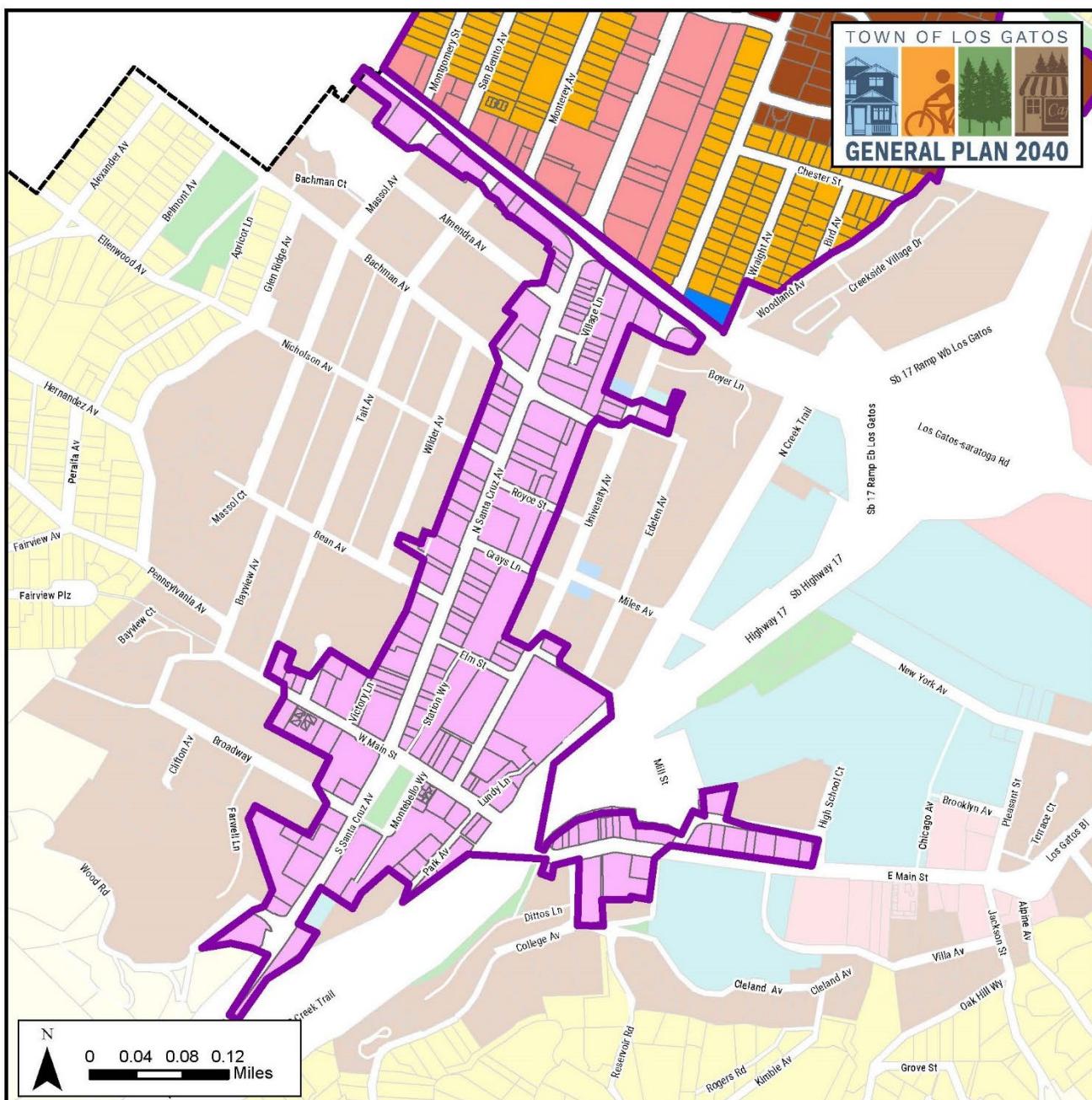
DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

The Downtown District is the historic heart of Los Gatos and encompasses much of the southwest section of Town. To many, the Downtown covers a larger area, as shown in Figure 3-7 (Downtown Area Map). However, for the purposes of this General Plan, the Downtown Community Growth District has been provided with specific boundaries as shown in Figure 4-12. This area includes what is designated currently as the Central Business District as shown on the General Plan Land Use Map in the Land Use Element.

The Downtown District is composed of many retail shops, boutiques, coffee shops, restaurants, and several hotels. Being that the Downtown is the original historic center of the Town, it is naturally home to some of the iconic architectural styles that make Los Gatos unique and has a rich history of architectural excellence. Located within and adjacent to this District, are the Town's Historic Districts which are meant to honor and preserve Los Gatos' roots as a rural foothill community. This District is home to many outdoor public spaces including the Town Plaza Park, Los Gatos Town Hall, and library outdoor promenade, which hosts several popular community events that draw visitors throughout the region.



Figure 4-12 **Downtown District**



Land Use Designation

- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Public
- Hillside Residential
- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Very High Density Residential

Central Business District

- Office Professional
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Service Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Albright Specific Plan
- North Forty Specific Plan

Community Growth Districts

- Town of Los Gatos

4. Community Design Element

Downtown District

The community treasures the Downtown District's unique architectural character and place as the social and historic core of Los Gatos. After more than a century of successful planning and design, the community puts an emphasis on the District's unique architectural character and discourages conflicting styles from erasing what is quintessentially Downtown. New structures are constructed at a human-scale to maintain the continuity of the historic development pattern.

The Downtown District emphasizes first floor retail and restaurant uses and encourages office and residential units above the first floor. It is through this mixed-use development that residential growth is accommodated. Multi-story mixed-use transitions in scale seamlessly with nearby residential which includes growth through small multi-unit housing while maintaining the charm and character of these neighborhoods. The Downtown District provides a truly walkable environment, where sidewalks are wide and pedestrian friendly. The expanded sidewalks accommodate additional space for outdoor dining, public art, and street furniture. Enhancing the visitor experience in the Downtown District, digital display informational kiosks with establishment directories provide a 21st century amenity. Updated building signage, a Downtown wayfinding system, and gateway entrance signs mark the Downtown as the core of the community. The Downtown District thrives as one of the most beloved areas of the Town, one that has stood the test of time and continues to do so.

The following goal and policies provide guidance on community design applicable to the Downtown District.

CD-8

Enhance the character of the Downtown District and the quality of life for its citizens through high-quality building design.

CD-8.1

Downtown District Identity

Maintain the Downtown District as the cultural, social, and historic core of Los Gatos.

CD-8.2

Preservation

SUS

Preserve, restore, rehabilitate, and reuse existing historic buildings whenever possible.

CD-8.3

Mass and Scale

Ensure there are no abrupt changes of scale and mass between new development and historic structures in the Downtown District.

CD-8.4

Street Environment

Elements of the street environment such as parklets and street furniture and equipment (including but not limited to lights, street, bus shelters, refuse receptacles, planters, signs both public and private) shall be designed to be cohesive, human scale, pedestrian friendly, and to reinforce the architectural history of the Downtown District.

CD-8.5

Incorporation of Sustainable Building Practices

SUS

Encourage the use of sustainable building materials that compliment surrounding buildings.

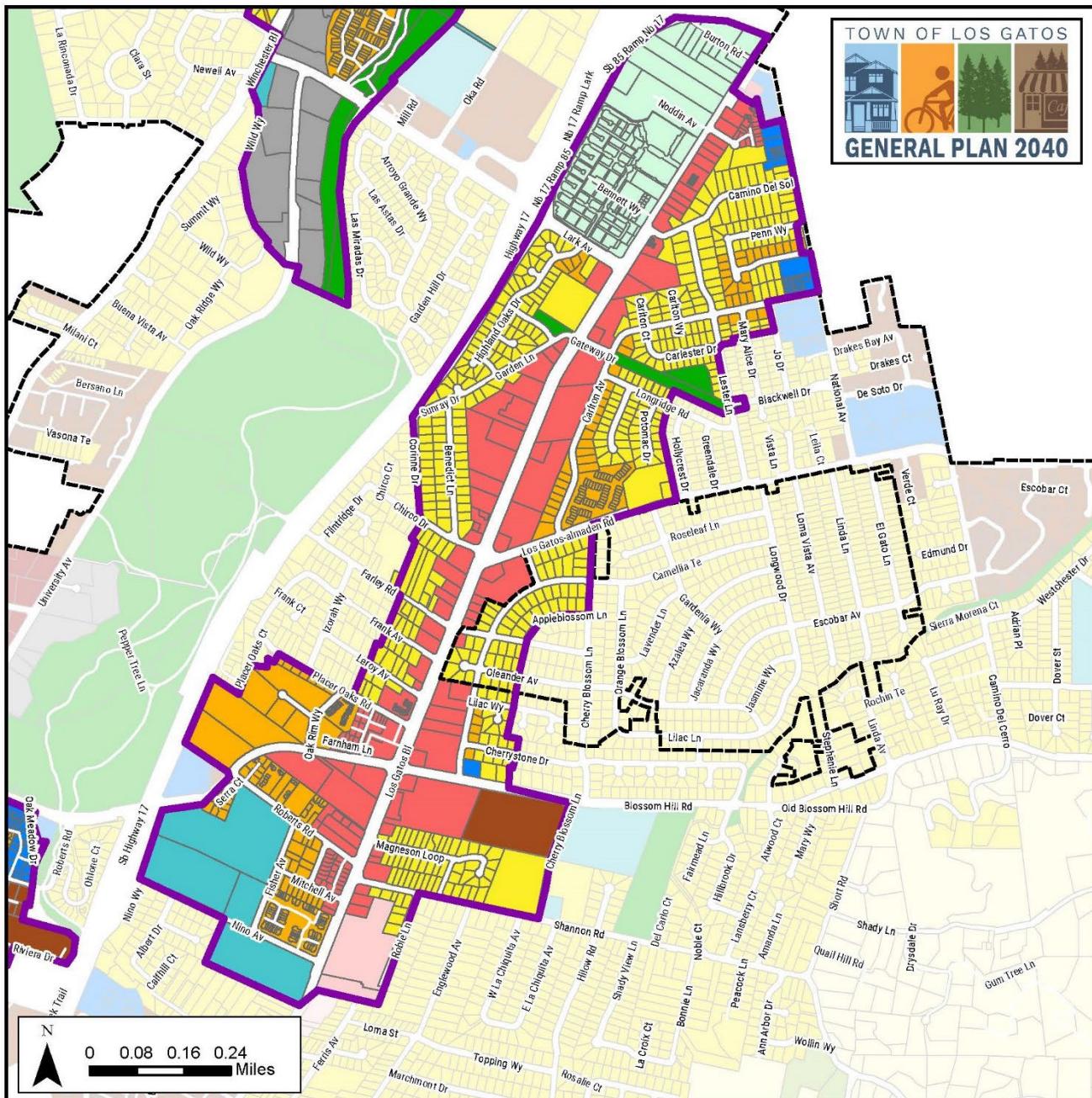
LOS GATOS BOULEVARD DISTRICT

The Los Gatos Boulevard District (Figure 4-13) extends along Los Gatos Boulevard from Louise Van Meter Elementary School north to the Town boundary with San Jose. This area was developed as an automobile-oriented corridor with a mix of stand-alone retail and office, car dealerships, and several neighborhood-serving shopping centers, such as Blossom Hill Pavilion, Kings Court, Cornerstone, El Gato Village, and Los Gatos Village Square. These centers are set back far from the street with expansive surface parking lots fronting the Boulevard. This type of development largely focused on retail centers with limited ability to incorporate other uses, such as office and residential. Residential neighborhoods backing the commercial corridor are primarily low-density residential, with some medium- and high-density parcels. Transition in scale as part of the original plan includes stepping down height and intensity moving south.



4. Community Design Element

Figure 4-13 Los Gatos Boulevard District



Land Use Designation

- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Public
- Hillside Residential
- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Very High Density Residential

- Central Business District
- Office Professional
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Service Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Albright Specific Plan
- North Forty Specific Plan

Community Growth Districts

- Town of Los Gatos

Los Gatos Boulevard District

The Los Gatos Boulevard District reflects a comprehensive transformation from a 1950s automobile-oriented corridor to a multi-modal District with 21st century amenities. The Los Gatos Boulevard District includes high-density residential living over retail and commercial offices. It is a pedestrian-oriented district with clearly defined bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and mid-block pedestrian crossings. Increased landscaping provides visual consistency between the Boulevard and the scenic backdrop of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The numerous shopping centers border the street with human-scale enhancements. Housing in the form of lofts, live-work units, apartments, condominiums, and townhomes are above and adjacent to commercial development in a mixed-use design, allowing residents to easily walk from home to shopping and services. Street activation is accomplished by moving parking to the rear, which has enabled valuable land to be repurposed for increased outdoor amenities in the form of parks, plazas, and other common open space areas. The revitalized mixed-use buildings transition seamlessly to nearby residential neighborhoods which in turn are revitalized and grow through the addition of small multi-unit housing. Going from north to south, the time-honored practice of stepping down development height and intensity continues towards the southern end of the district where three public schools are located. The integration of office space, restaurants, and hotels adds to a vibrant district, a place where residents desire to live, work, and play. Not only a destination to congregate, but the Los Gatos Boulevard District also attracts visitors from across the Bay Area to experience the uniqueness of the community.

The following goal and policies provide guidance on community design applicable to the Los Gatos Boulevard District.

CD-9

Emphasize housing opportunities and redevelopment through multiple methods, such as encouraging higher density mixed-use housing with a diverse range of neighborhood commercial uses, complemented by extensive street activation, and gathering opportunities

CD-9.1

Setbacks and Step Backs of Massing

Require High Density Residential, Very High Density Residential, Commercial, and Mixed-Use parcels in the Los Gatos Boulevard District adjacent to single-family parcels to include increased site setbacks and multi-story step backs to minimize the impact and increase compatibility with smaller adjacent structures.

CD-9.2

Boulevard Complete Street

Support Los Gatos Boulevard as a complete street between Lark Avenue and Blossom Hill Road by eliminating travel lanes in each direction, reducing the speed limit, increasing sidewalk widths, adding bike lanes, and including trees and bioswales.

CD-9.3

Housing Diversity

Encourage a diverse range of housing types through the redevelopment of commercial properties to include lofts, live-work units, apartments, condominiums, and townhomes.

CD-9.4

Aesthetic Shopping Improvements

Encourage aesthetic upgrades to commercial centers including paint, materials, and structural enhancements.

CD-9.5 Pedestrian Activation

Encourage pedestrian activation for all new developments and redevelopment by fronting buildings along the Boulevard.



For goals and policies relating to complete street and multi-modal environments, please refer to Section 5.3 (Multimodal System/Complete Streets) in the Mobility Element.



Figure 4-14 Street Activation

CD-9.6 Parking Re-location

Encourage parking structures or subterranean parking in lieu of surface parking to free land for outdoor amenities.

CD-9.7 Interconnectivity

Encourage all new development and redevelopment to incorporate safe pedestrian linkages and connections between commercial centers and surrounding neighborhoods via paseos and pathways.

CD-9.8 Pedestrian and Bike Infrastructure

Encourage the expansion and rehabilitation of pedestrian and bike improvements including tree canopies, accessible sidewalks, buffered bike lanes, and bollards at primary intersections.

CD-9.9 Landscaping

To soften the appearance of hardscape, incorporate landscaped medians using edible food producing, drought tolerant, native, non-invasive, or non-fire-prone plants, landscape buffers, or street trees.

CD-9.10 Mid-Block Crossings

Consider the installation of mid-block crossings to reduce vehicle speed and transform Los Gatos Boulevard from an automobile-oriented environment to a multi-modal environment.

CD-9.11

Corner Fronting Entrances

Support corner fronting entrances on Los Gatos Boulevard with additional architectural elements (i.e., tower, spire, clock, turret).



Figure 4-15 Corner Fronting Entrances

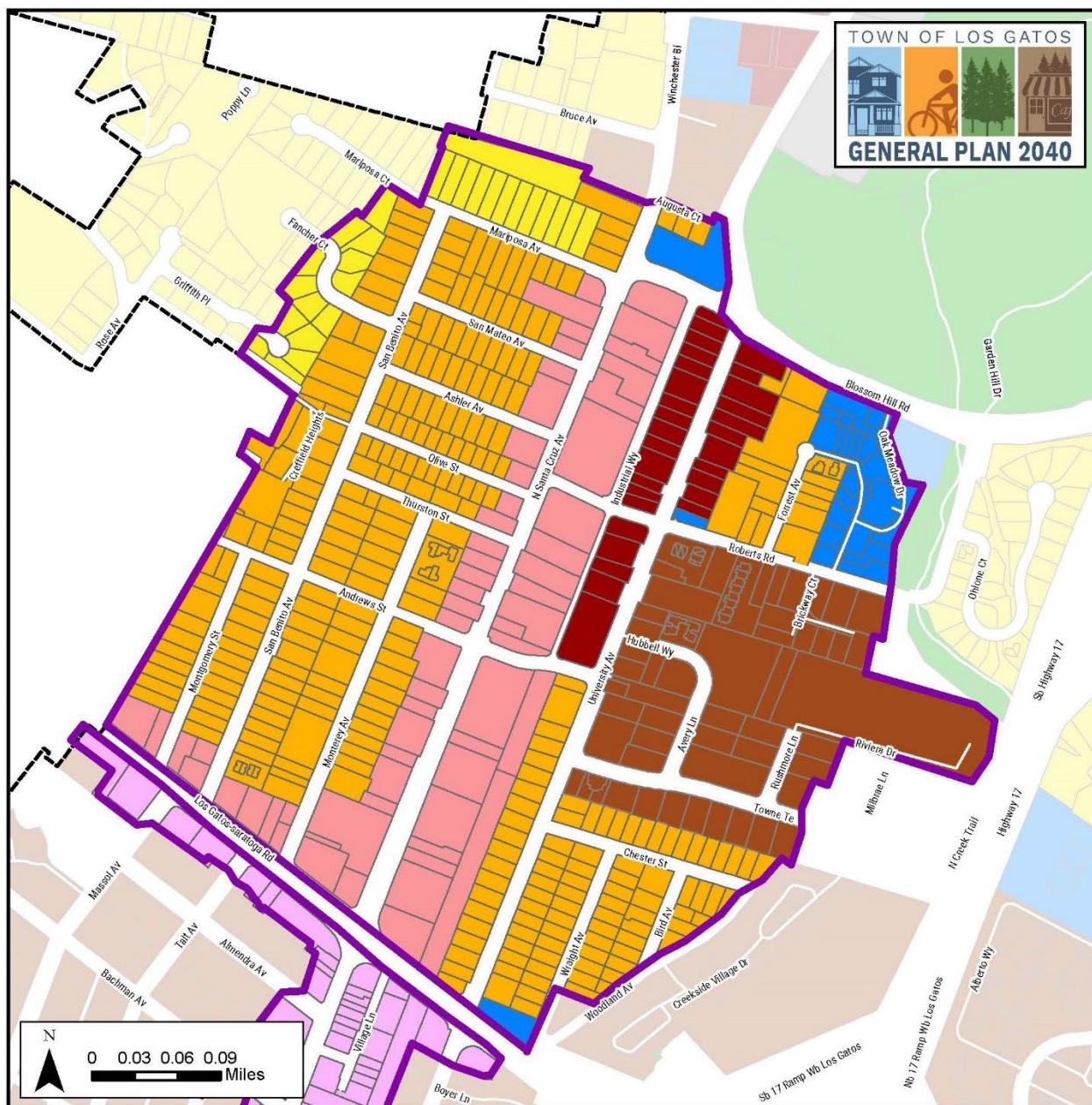
NORTH SANTA CRUZ AVENUE DISTRICT

The North Santa Cruz Avenue District (Figure 4-16) extends along North Santa Cruz Avenue between Blossom Hill Road and Los Gatos-Saratoga Road, adjacent to the Downtown Los Gatos District. Uses along North Santa Cruz Avenue vary from office and professional, retail, light industrial, and hospitality. Various commercial uses are intermingled along North Santa Cruz Avenue, including a national chain grocery store. Medium-density and infill high-density housing developments are also present within the North Santa Cruz Avenue District. The District's eclectic mix of building types and styles sets it apart from the more cohesive and historic architecture of the Downtown District.



4. Community Design Element

Figure 4-16 North Santa Cruz Avenue District



North Santa Cruz Avenue District

The North Santa Cruz Avenue District is a vibrant mixed-use area that features an eclectic range of architecture and public amenities. Growth in residential living opportunities include the introduction of mixed-use with smaller residential units placed over ground floor retail/restaurants/services along with small multi-unit housing incorporated into nearby residential. The overall building massing and form is consistent with and connects well with the Downtown District but incorporates varying architectural styles that evoke different and more contemporary periods in the Town's rich history. Use of rooftop decks and parklets provide unique vibrancy to the area. Parklets and other public open space provide opportunities for community members to gather. Landscaping further connects this District to Vasona County Park located at the northern end of this District.

The following goal and policies provide guidance on community design applicable to the North Santa Cruz Avenue District.

CD-10

Encourage new and innovative housing opportunities to create a unique place.

CD-10.1

Innovative Housing Opportunities

Encourage innovative housing opportunities including live-work spaces and mixed-use developments to create a vibrant and diverse district.

CD-10.2

Multi-Story Residential

Encourage incorporation of second and third story lofts and apartments above existing businesses to provide additional housing types for community members, creating a truly mixed-use corridor.



Figure 4-17 Multi-Story Residential

4. Community Design Element

CD-10.3 **Transitions**

Ensure the transition between new development and historical buildings respects scale and architectural cohesiveness.

CD-10.4 **Commercial Center Redevelopment**

Encourage commercial centers to relocate surface parking to the rear of the property and incorporate landscape buffers to create a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

CD-10.5 **Street-Level Activation**

Encourage street-level activation using parklets as well as other forms of public open space to create welcoming places for outdoor gathering.

CD-10.6 **Pedestrian Enhancements**

Incorporate a variety of pedestrian safety enhancements including wider sidewalks, landscape buffers, and mid-block crossings to ensure a safe and vibrant living environment.

NORTH LOS GATOS DISTRICTS

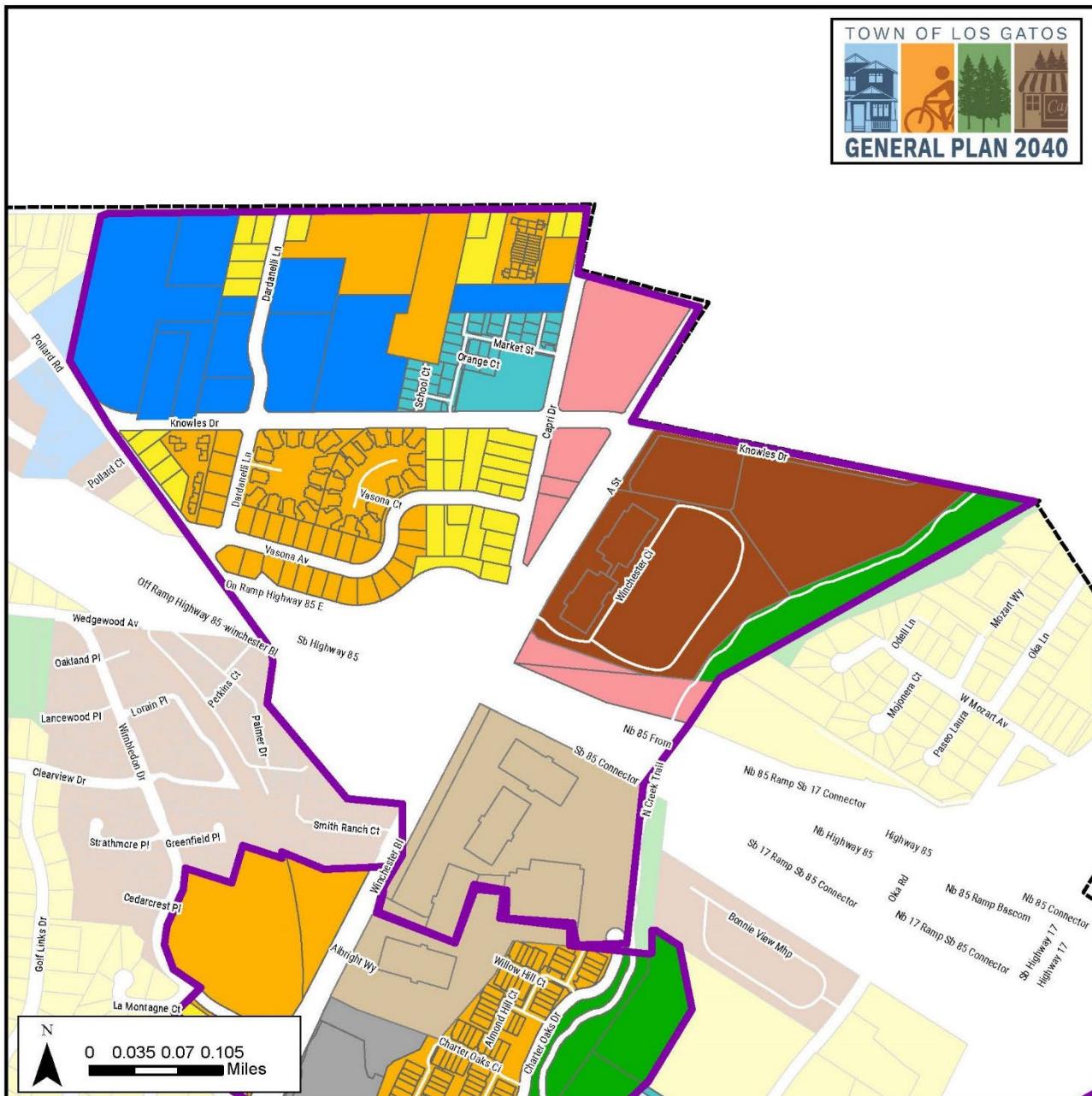
The North Los Gatos Community Growth Districts are comprised of the Winchester Boulevard District and Lark Avenue District. Both districts are located along the northern periphery of the community adjacent to the City of Campbell. Both districts are distinct in nature since they include the bulk of light industrial and office related uses and businesses within in Town. These areas also provide vastly different urban forms and architecture compared to the other locations in Town which are predominantly focused around the historic Downtown and the transition between hillside development.

Winchester Boulevard District

The Winchester Boulevard District (Figure 4-18) is focused on the intersection of Winchester Boulevard and Knowles Drive, bordering the City of Campbell. This district also includes office and medical uses adjacent to Netflix and El Camino Hospital. This area is home to a complex and eclectic mix of architectural styles and development types. Existing commercial at Vasona Junction, office, medical, and residential developments are compartmentalized and disconnected from each other. Winchester Boulevard, the primary arterial in the District, is a wide thoroughfare with moderate traffic speeds which impede a more pedestrian-oriented environment. The commercial shopping centers in the area have been updated but are single-story and offer primarily neighborhood-serving hospitality.



Figure 4-18 Winchester Boulevard District



Land Use Designation

- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Public
- Hillside Residential
- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Very High Density Residential

Community Growth Districts

- Central Business District
- Office Professional
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Service Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Albright Specific Plan
- North Forty Specific Plan

Community Growth Districts

- Town of Los Gatos

Winchester Boulevard District

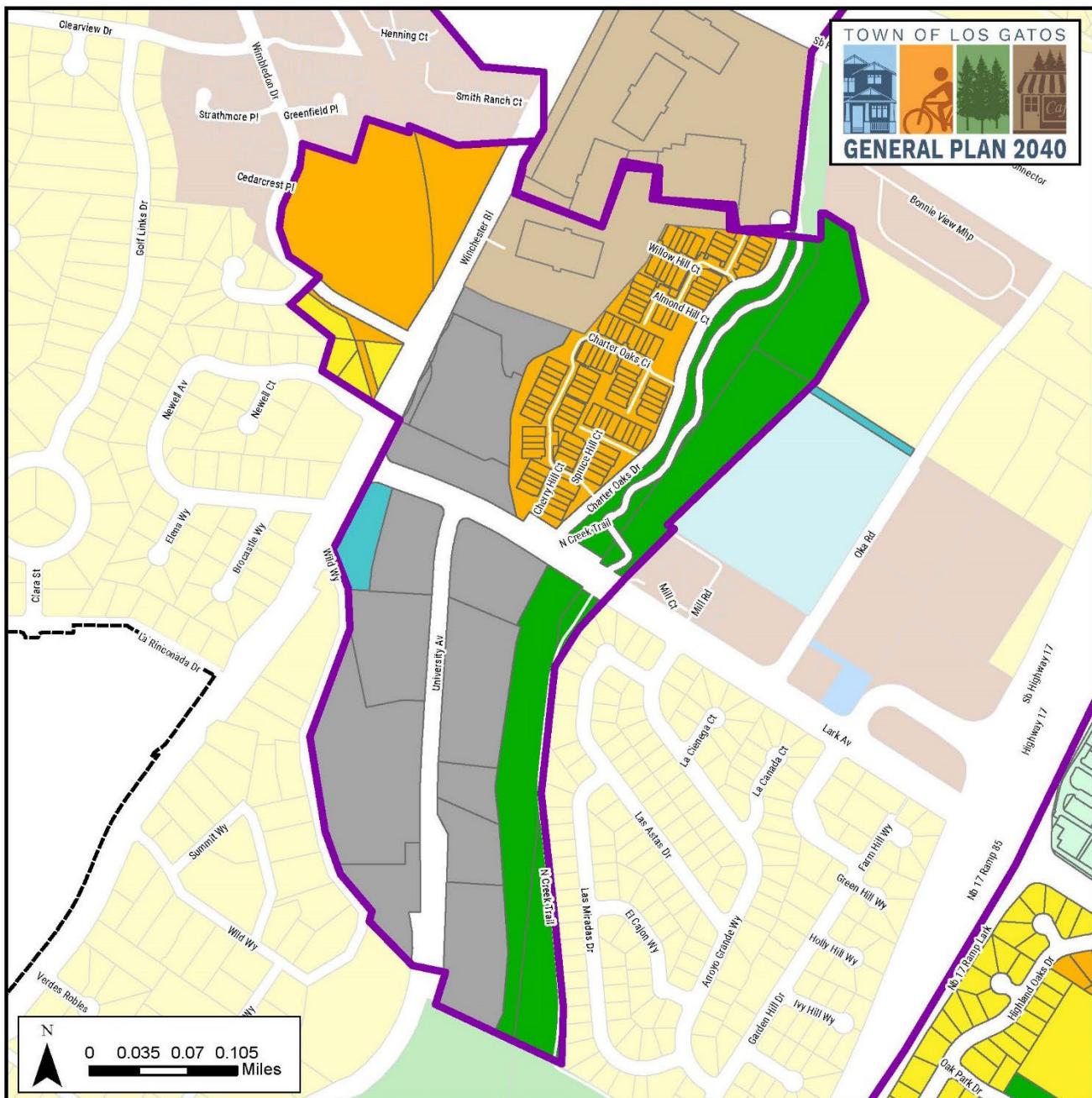
The Winchester Boulevard District is a community hub for innovation, technology, and contemporary design. The District is situated with easy access to the adjacent communities as well as a direct link to SR 85. The Winchester Boulevard District includes modern amenities, a variety of entertainment venues, and hospitality-oriented businesses geared toward multiple generations calling Los Gatos home. Wide sidewalks and expansive outdoor dining and retail creates a unique atmosphere unlike other areas of the Town. Mixed-use configurations seamlessly integrate additional smaller housing options with shopping, dining, work, and play. An emphasis on dense, urban style housing in the form of live-work units, lofts, flats, apartments, micro-units, and condominiums provide ample housing opportunities supported by access to the Vasona and Winchester Light Rail stations.

LARK AVENUE DISTRICT

The Lark District (Figure 4-19) includes a portion of Winchester Boulevard, Lark Avenue from Winchester Boulevard to University Avenue, and a segment of University Avenue including a portion of the Los Gatos Creek Trail. The area includes most of the Town's industrial uses and office complexes, as well as primary frontage to the enormously popular Los Gatos Creek Trail. Office parks in this area are reminiscent of the technology boom in the early 1980s, containing single-story buildings and an abundance of parking. The district is currently surrounded by a mix of low and medium density residential.



Figure 4-19 Lark Avenue District



Land Use Designation

- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Public
- Hillside Residential
- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Very High Density Residential

- Central Business District
- Office Professional
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Service Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Albright Specific Plan
- North Forty Specific Plan

 Community Growth Districts
 Town of Los Gatos

4. Community Design Element

Vision 2040

Lark Avenue District

The Lark Avenue District encapsulates modern office park planning and development by integrating the District's natural features and encouraging outdoor recreation. This District includes multi-story buildings and subterranean parking. Residential growth and sustainability are accomplished by adding live-work buildings and neighborhood-serving commercial. Removing surface lots increases outdoor gathering spaces for residents and employees. Developments include entrances along University Avenue and along the Los Gatos Creek Trail, allowing bike commuters to get to work without relying on heavily-used streets and corridors and promoting use of the nearby Creekside Sports Park. Development is open to the natural terrain of Los Gatos Creek and the trail and allows a seamless transition between the natural and built environments.

The following goal and policies provide guidance on community design applicable to the Winchester Avenue and Lark Avenue Districts.

CD-11

Encourage the development or redevelopment of an architecturally modern district center that includes innovative higher density housing opportunities, a diverse range of businesses, and maximized recreation opportunities.

CD-11.1

Multi-Story Office Development

Require all new or remodeled office developments to consider compact multi-story massing while providing articulation and consistency along major corridors.

CD-11.2

Subterranean Parking

Encourage developments to provide subterranean parking in lieu of surface parking to provide opportunity for the development of common open space.

CD-11.3

Innovative Work Environments

Encourage innovation centers and other creative models of live-work development.

CD-11.4

New Housing Opportunities

Encourage a diverse range of small-unit housing opportunities in a live-work, mixed-use, or other innovative configuration to accommodate working professionals.

CD-11.5

Linking Employment and Housing

Provide clear connections between residential developments, commercial centers, and places of employment in the form of walkways, paseos, and paved trails.

CD-11.6

Connection to Los Gatos Creek Trail

Require development that is adjacent to the Los Gatos Creek Trail provide secondary public access to the trail, as permitted by Valley Water when applicable.

CD-11.7

Reduced Setbacks

Allow reduced setbacks to foster a more urban environment focused on corporate centers, commercial shopping areas, medical services, and hospitality uses.

CD-11.8

Modern Influences

Encourage the use of contemporary styles of architecture to distinguish these districts as unique and vibrant urban centers in Town.

CD-11.9

Neighborhood Commercial

Support additional neighborhood commercial mixed-use development to service a variety of residents.

Neighborhood-Oriented Districts

The Neighborhood-Oriented Community Growth Districts are comprised of the Harwood Road, Pollard Road, and Union Avenue districts. Unlike the other five community growth districts, these three are true neighborhood centers focused on neighborhood-serving commercial which serves residents of Los Gatos and surrounding communities. The neighborhood-oriented districts play a distinct role of providing a transition between more heavily developed areas of Town and established neighborhoods. The intent of these districts is to encourage a gradual increase in development intensity and density, while establishing walkable mixed-use neighborhood serving centers.

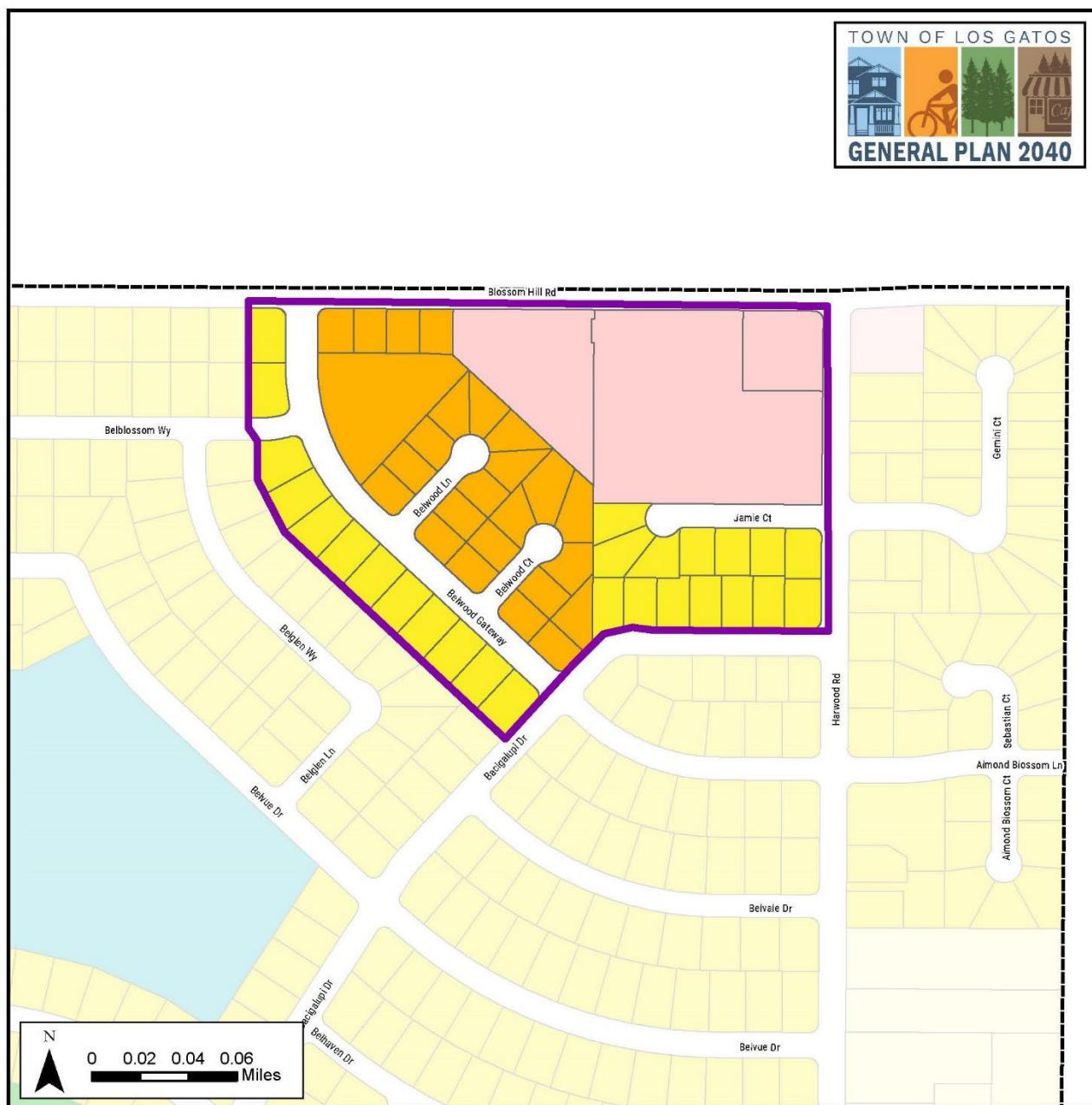
HARWOOD ROAD DISTRICT

The Harwood Road District (Figure 4-20) is focused on the intersection of Harwood Road and Blossom Hill Road, bordering the City of San Jose and anchored by the Blossom Hill Square Shopping Center. This commercial center is home to several national chains. The layout of the center, like most in Los Gatos, is automobile-oriented with a street fronting parking lot with access points on both side of the intersection. This commercial center serves residents of Los Gatos and San Jose. The District is surrounded primarily by low-density residential, intermixed with a few medium-density residential parcels. Nearby residents utilize the center for convenient shopping. Nearby Noddin Elementary School in San Jose educates the neighborhood youth of both Los Gatos and San Jose and adds to the sense of community.



4. Community Design Element

Figure 4-20 Harwood Road District



Land Use Designation

- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Public
- Hillside Residential
- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Very High Density Residential

- Central Business District
- Office Professional
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Service Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Albright Specific Plan
- North Forty Specific Plan

Community Growth Districts

- Town of Los Gatos

Harwood Road District

The Harwood Road District is a primary commercial hub for the east end of Los Gatos and serves as a vibrant gathering place for community members to mingle and enjoy local amenities. Successful street activation of the shopping center area is evident with parking relocated to the rear of property, shielded from the public view. Residential growth is accommodated by the addition of small multi-unit housing and mixed-use design incorporating neighborhood commercial on the first floor and smaller residential units above. Contemporary design and dense landscaping buffers revitalize and complement surrounding neighborhoods, creating a welcoming and inclusive destination.

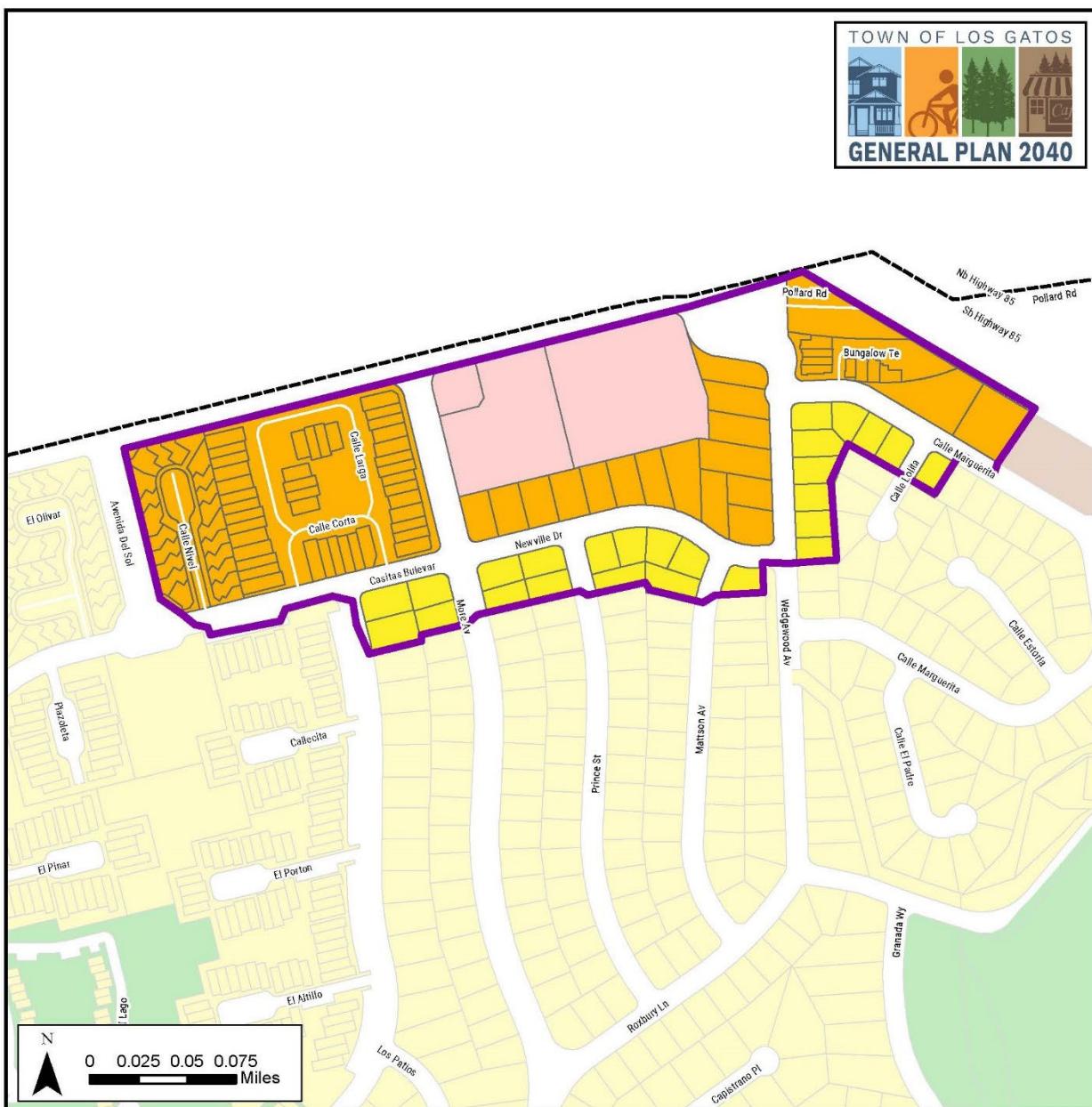
POLLARD ROAD DISTRICT

The Pollard Road District (Figure 4-21) at the intersection of Pollard Road and More Avenue borders the City of Campbell. This District is anchored by the Rinconada Shopping Center. The shopping center is anchored by a national chain grocery store, pharmacy, and other local dining and neighborhood services. The center is neighborhood-serving, surrounded by largely residential neighborhoods that rely on the center for daily needs, and families whose children attend nearby Rolling Hills Middle School. Pollard Road is less travelled than other Los Gatos arterials, which emphasizes the neighborhood focus.



4. Community Design Element

Figure 4-21 Pollard Road District



Land Use Designation

- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Public
- Hillside Residential
- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Very High Density Residential

- Central Business District
- Office Professional
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Service Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Albright Specific Plan
- North Forty Specific Plan

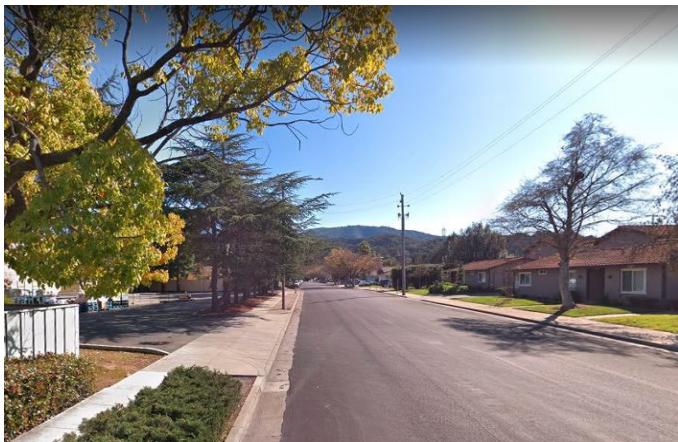
- Community Growth Districts
- Town of Los Gatos

Pollard Road District

The Pollard Road District is a welcoming and vibrant neighborhood gathering space and commercial center for community members to mingle and enjoy local amenities. Successful street activation is evident with parking relocated to the rear of the property, shielded from the public view. Additional residential living opportunities are accommodated by the addition of smaller residential units above retail or office in a mixed-use configuration. A dense landscape buffer at the rear of the center provides a thoughtful transition obscuring the commercial structures from neighboring residential areas which in turn have been revitalized with the introduction of small multi-unit housing in some areas. Wide sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities ensure a safe and connected community. Office space intermingled with commercial uses and higher density residential units reveals an attractive and efficient mixed-use district.

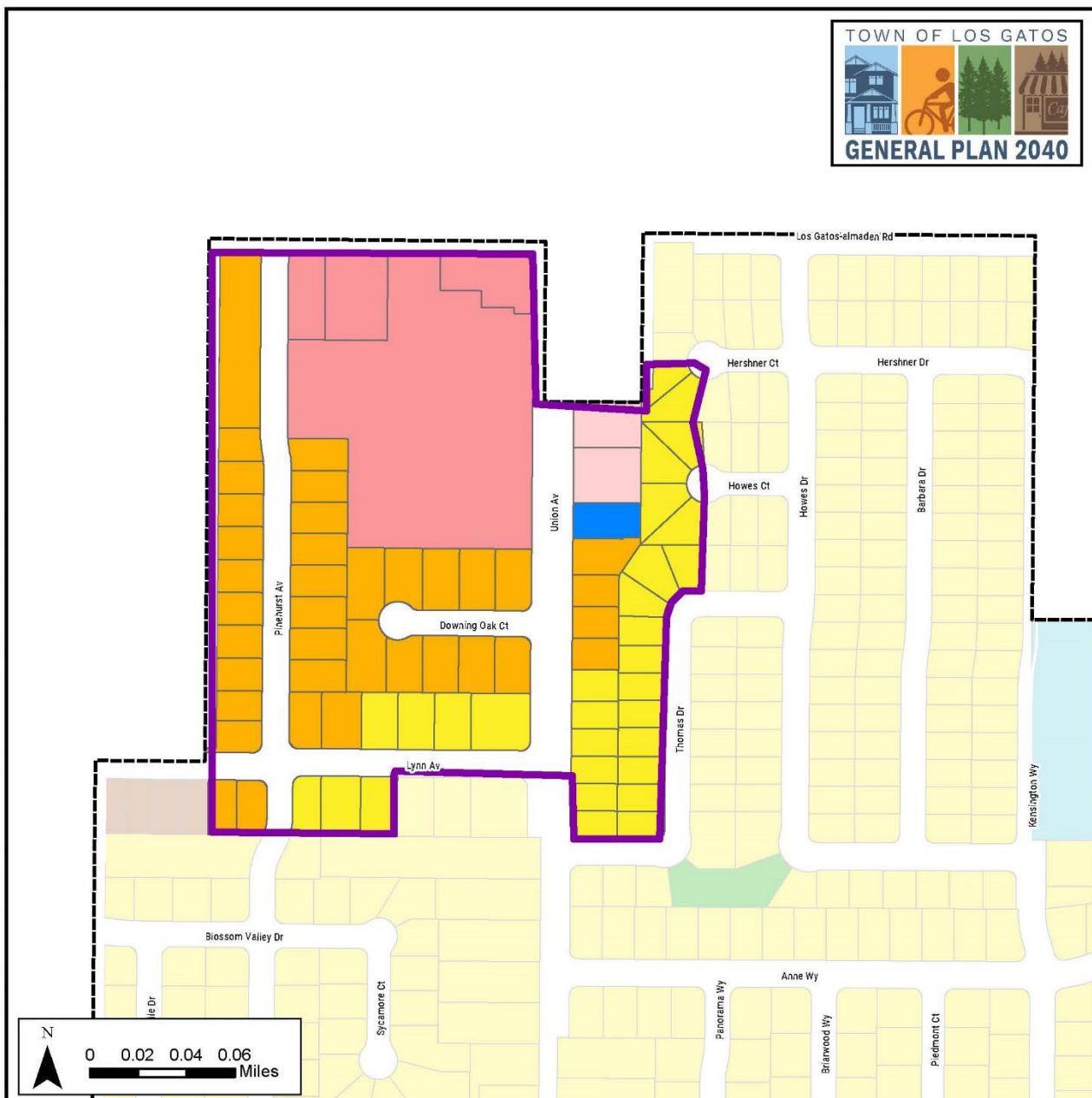
UNION AVENUE DISTRICT

The Union Avenue District (Figure 4-22) is focused on the intersection of Union Avenue and Los Gatos-Almaden Road, bordering the City of San Jose. This District is anchored by the Downing Center, which is designed as an automobile-oriented shopping center with street-fronting parking and access points on either side of the center. This commercial center is anchored by a national chain grocery store and serves the daily needs of Los Gatos and San Jose residents. Nearby Union Middle School and Alta Vista Elementary School enhance the sense of community, serving the youth of both Los Gatos and nearby San Jose neighborhoods.



4. Community Design Element

Figure 4-22 Union Avenue District



Land Use Designation

- Open Space
- Agriculture
- Public
- Hillside Residential
- Low Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Very High Density Residential

- Central Business District
- Office Professional
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Community Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Service Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Albright Specific Plan
- North Forty Specific Plan

Community Growth Districts

Town of Los Gatos

Union Avenue District

The Union Avenue District is a welcoming and vibrant neighborhood gathering space and commercial center for community members to mingle and enjoy local amenities. Successful street activation is evident with parking relocated to the rear of property, shielded from the public view. The relocation of parking has provided new opportunities for street activation including parklets and outdoor dining. New and wider sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities provide for safe and connected living conditions. Additional new residential living opportunities include smaller units placed in a mixed-use configuration over retail and office. A dense landscape buffer at the rear of the center provides a thoughtful transition obscuring the commercial structures from neighboring residential areas. Office space intermingled with commercial uses and higher density residential units reveals an attractive and efficient mixed-use district. Small multi-unit housing offers an attractive medium- and high-density transition to surrounding single-family residential neighborhoods.

The following goal and policies provide guidance on community design applicable to the Union Avenue District.

CD-12

Encourage the evolution of neighborhood-oriented districts that provide mixed-use development complimented by street-level amenities and safe connections to surrounding residences.

CD-12.1

Street Activated Commercial Centers

Foster redevelopment of the commercial center in each district to encourage street-level activation and minimize the effects of surface parking by relocating it to the rear of the property and providing landscape buffering.

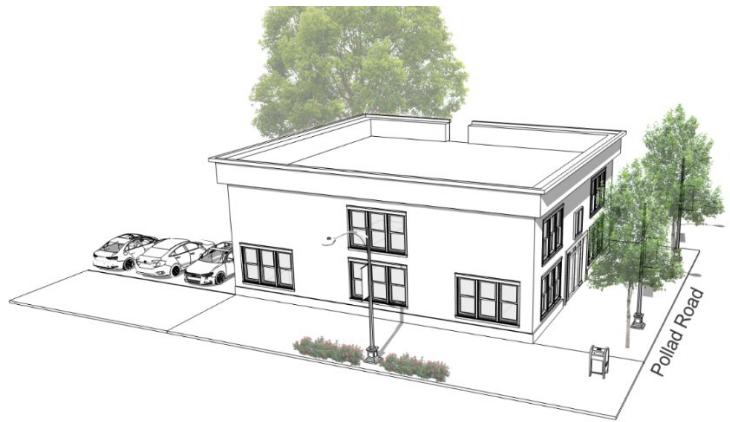


Figure 4-23 Shielded Parking

CD-12.2

Human-Scale Mixed-Use Developments

Support human-scale mixed-use developments that incorporate small-unit housing types.

CD-12.3

Public Realm Enhancements

Encourage safe pedestrian linkages and connections from the commercial centers to surrounding neighborhoods via paseos and pathways.

CD-12.4

Seamless Transitions

Ensure a seamless transition both in mass, scale, and architectural style, occurs between new development and existing development.

4.6 Implementation Programs

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
A Multi-Family Objective Design Standards Amend the Town Code to include a comprehensive set of Objective Design Standards for incorporation into the Zoning Ordinance. The Objective Design Standards at a minimum shall be consistent with the Community Design Element and Senate Bill 35 (SB 35), include quantifiable design standards, and apply to all multi-family and mixed-use zones.	Goal CD-2	Community Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
B Commercial Design Guidelines Update Update the Commercial Design Guidelines to reflect the updated General Plan and to ensure that new and remodeled buildings strengthen the form and image of the Town and Community Growth Districts.	CD-2 CD-7 CD-8 CD-9 CD-10 CD-11 CD-12	Community Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
C Study Expanding Setback Regulations Conduct a study to research increasing yard setback regulations to include considerations for building height and update the Town Code as necessary.	CD-2.1 CD-2.2 CD-9.1 CD-10.4	Community Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
D Freeway Beautification Study the feasibility of partnering with Caltrans on including public art and themed landscaping along freeway off- and on-ramps, and along overpasses on SR 17.	CD-2.15 CD-2.39	Town Manager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
		Parks and Public Works				
E Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Parameters Adopt a CPTED Ordinance that establishes design parameters for buildings, streetscapes, and lighting which help prevent crime.	CD-2.20 CD-2.21 CD-2.22	Community Development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
		Parks and Public Works				
		Police Department				
F Gateway Identification Program Create a gateway sign program that addresses gateways into the community and provides a clear distinction of being in Los Gatos.	CD-2.37 CD-2.38 CD-2.39	Town Manager	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
		Parks and Public Works				
		Community Development				

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
G Review Historic Landmark Preservation Legislation Periodically review historic landmark and preservation legislation and update the Town Code as necessary.	Goal CD-3	Community Development				<input type="checkbox"/>
H Mills Act Study Study the feasibility of implementing the requirements and standards of the Mills Act to historic properties within the Town.	CD-3.2 CD-3.3	Town Manager Community Development		<input type="checkbox"/>		
I Conduct a Historic Resources Survey Review the historic resources survey every five years to identify valuable and historical architectural styles and features within the Central Business District, and residential historic districts, as well as the potential to add additional resources to the list.	CD-3.3 CD-3.4	Community Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
J Establish Public Information Programs Establish public information programs designed to make owners of historic structures and the general public aware of the value of historic buildings and to encourage their maintenance.	CD-3.3 CD-3.4	Community Development Town Manager		<input type="checkbox"/>		
K Revise Buildable Slope Standards Determine maximum buildable slope and revise the Town Code accordingly.	CD-5.1 CD-5.3	Community Development Parks and Public Works		<input type="checkbox"/>		
L Update Hillside Development Plans Update the Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines, including the standards and guidelines pertaining to below grade square footage and above ground massing.	CD-5.1 CD-5.2 CD-5.3 CD-5.5 CD-6.3	Community Development		<input type="checkbox"/>		
M Study Scenic Easements Program Study the feasibility of establishing a program to acquire scenic easements through dedication.	CD-5.5	Community Development Parks and Public Works		<input type="checkbox"/>		
N Adopt Guidelines to Protect the Environment Adopt guidelines for development review that protect: a) Rare plants and wildlife and their habitats; b) Natural watersheds; c) Historic sites; and d) Aesthetically significant sites.	CD-6	Community Development Parks and Public Works		<input type="checkbox"/>		

4. Community Design Element

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
		Supporting Department(s)				
O Revise the Grading Ordinance Revise the Town's grading ordinance to be consistent with the General Plan, Hillside Specific Plan, and Hillside Development Standards and Guidelines.	CD-6.2 CD-6.3	Parks and Public Works Community Development				
P Maintain Signage Design Controls Maintain sign design standards and guidelines to enhance the Town.	CD-8.1 CD-8.4	Community Development				
Q Develop a Downtown Landscaping Plan Develop and adopt a landscaping plan that heightens user understanding of the Downtown District.	CD-8.4	Community Development				

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