



ATTACHMENT 2

Agenda Item

DATE: AUGUST 20, 2020

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

**FROM: CARMELA CAMPBELL, ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**

**SUBJECT: STATION DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN: REVIEW OF GUIDING
PRINCIPLES AND SUBAREA PLANNING ALTERNATIVES**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff is requesting feedback from the Planning Commission regarding the draft guiding principles for the Station District Specific Plan, as well as feedback for the different sub-areas of the Station District. This report provides an overview of the Station District Specific Plan planning considerations, draft guiding principles, background conditions, and community feedback to date.

BACKGROUND

The Station District is a 293-acre area surrounding the Union City BART station. City staff and the consultant team has been working with stakeholders and community members to create an updated Specific Plan for the area identified below in Figure 1, with adoption anticipated in mid-2021. The process will include a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The “Station District Specific Plan” is intended to ensure consistency with the Union City 2040 General Plan, which was adopted in December 2019, while providing an opportunity to refine the vision, planning details, and implementation strategies for the Station District. The Union City General Plan 2040 envisions the Station District as a world-class, transit-oriented community with new retail, public amenities, and high-density housing and job centers, all linked by bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The Specific Plan is anticipated to address a range of topics including land use, urban design, transportation, infrastructure, open space, and community amenities for the different sub-areas of the Station District.

In 2018, the City was awarded a Priority Development Area Planning Grant by the Metropolitan Commission to update the existing Decoto Industrial Park Study Area (DIPSA) Specific Plan. The Station District Specific Plan will replace and alter the boundaries of the existing Decoto Industrial Park Study Area (DIPSA) Specific Plan, as shown below in Figure 2. The proposed Station District Specific Plan boundary is identical to the recently updated boundary for Union City’s regional



Priority Development Area (PDA). The PDA boundary was updated through a resolution by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), in coordination with the City, in February 2020.

Land Use

The Station District Specific Plan area has a range of existing land uses, including residential, retail, schools, public uses, parks, and office space, as shown below in Figure 3. General Plan allowed land uses enable a similar range of land uses as detailed in Figure 4.

Existing Land Uses

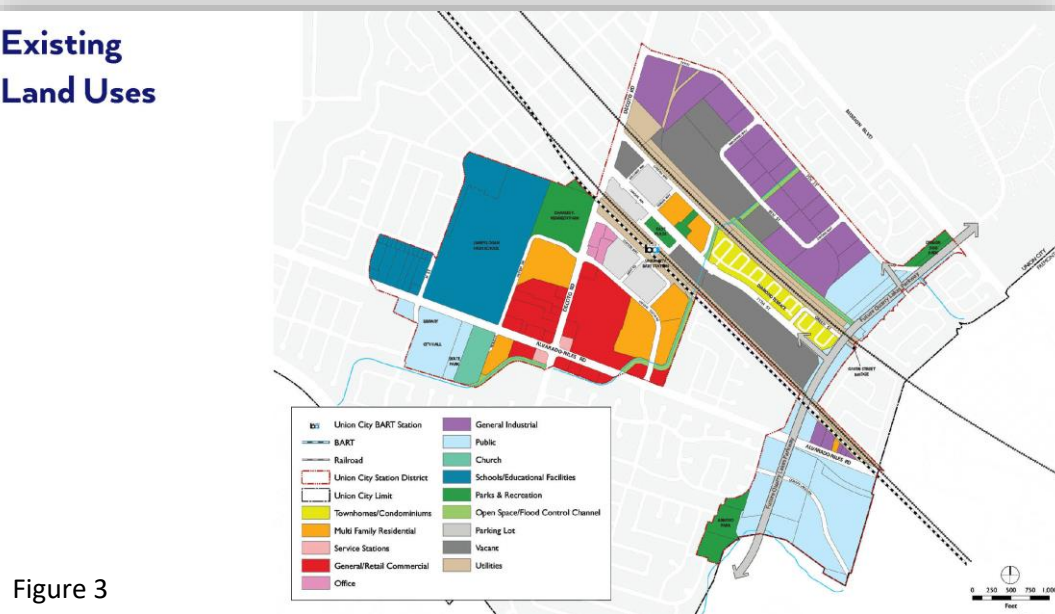


Figure 3

General Plan Allowed Land Uses

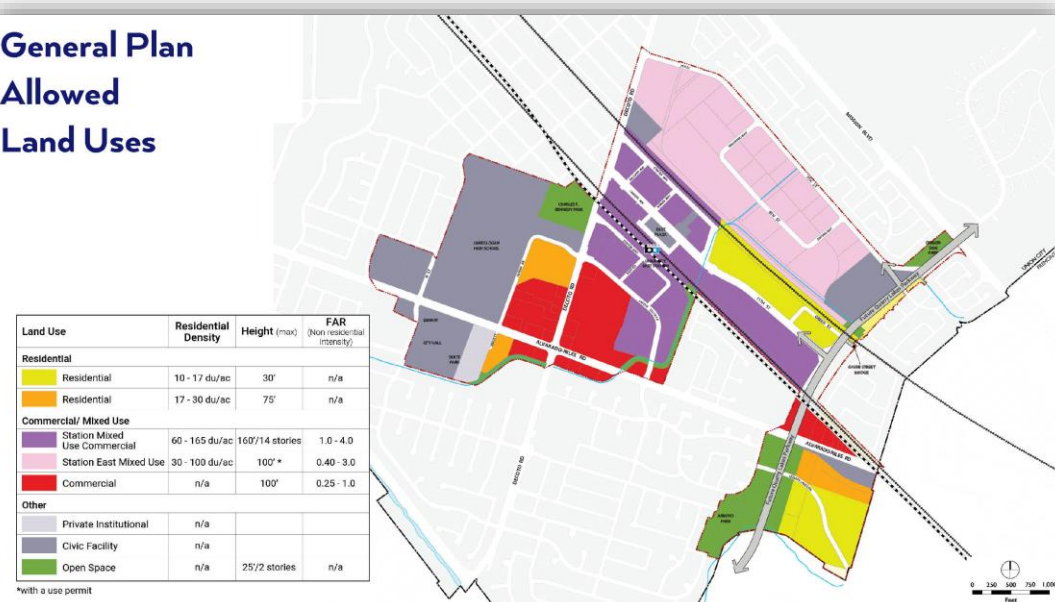


Figure 4

Project Schedule and Community Engagement Process

The consultant team of Dyett & Bhatia was selected through a competitive bidding process to assist the City in completing work on the Station District Specific Plan. Work on the project commenced in 2019. Since that time, the project team of City staff and the consultant team have created a detailed report of existing conditions for the Station District area; established a 5-person Community Advisory Committee (CAC); created a project website (www.unioncity.org/SD); and conducted stakeholder interviews with property owners, neighbors, and others with an interest in the area. The existing conditions report for the Station District Specific Plan area includes background information regarding land use, urban design, transportation, environmental setting, and infrastructure and can be found on the Station District project website at <https://www.unioncity.org/423/Resources>.

This background work was the foundation for the Station District planning alternatives and guiding principles, which are summarized in this staff report. The Station District planning considerations and guiding principles were presented to the Station District CAC on July 9, 2020, and at a citywide community workshop on July 21, 2020. The CAC meeting and workshop were both held virtually, in accordance with the current Alameda County Health Officer Order and City policy. Results from these meetings, along with a summary of stakeholder interviews, are included as attachments.

July 9 CAC Meeting. The July 9 CAC meeting was attended by all five CAC members. The CAC expressed support for the key strategies as presented. The CAC also expressed general support for the concepts presented for each sub-area, with suggestions and refinements that were incorporated into the material presented to the community workshop. Specific sub-area comments by the CAC included the following:

- Core Station District – supportive of office/residential/retail mix and increased connectivity; need for design attention along Decoto Road across from the Decoto neighborhood
- Station East – Supportive of increased connectivity and pathways through the area
- Marketplace – Interested in the potential to add a mix of uses while retaining retail, which is heavily utilized, and providing appropriate parking
- Gateway – Supportive of an “agrihood” concept with housing and community facilities integrated with community gardens and small-scale agricultural use
- Civic District – Interested in potential to increase public art in the district, such as with art on the pillars under the BART tracks.

Full CAC comments are included as Attachment 2 to this staff report.

July 21 Community Workshop. The City held a virtual community workshop on July 21, which had participants and focused on similar planning alternatives material as is presented to the Planning Commission below. Community members were able to participate in live polling during the workshop and were able to type questions to the project team during the meeting. The project

team provided response in writing during the meeting as feasible, along with verbal responses at the end of the meeting. The results of these polling questions and a transcript of Questions and Answers from the community meeting is included as Attachment 3 to this staff report. Overall, participants expressed support for the range of guiding principles. Many comments were focused on the Marketplace – where the addition of mixed-use development and improved street frontage were identified as a priority – and Station East – where enhanced pedestrian connections and a network of parks and greenways were identified as a priority.

Community Survey. Community feedback was also provided through an online survey accessed from the project website, which is available to all interested community members through August 17. The survey asks for community input on similar planning alternatives material that is presented to the Planning Commission below. Final results of the survey have not yet been tabulated, but as of August 11 it has been taken by 33 community members, 84% of whom were residents. 45% of respondents have lived or work in Union City for over 20 years. Complete survey results will be available for the September 8 City Council meeting, but initial results indicate that respondents have been:

- Supportive of the guiding principles for the Station District
- Supportive of increased connectivity and walkability
- Concerned about a potential increase in traffic
- Supportive of recreational open space and programming
- Supportive of a range of housing types and levels of affordability.

ANALYSIS

Informed by existing conditions analysis, community engagement, and policy direction in the General Plan, City staff and the consultant team have developed a set of guiding principles for the Station District as a whole, along with planning considerations for each sub-area. These are summarized below.

General Plan Vision

The 2040 Union City General Plan established a vision “to continue to transform the Station District into a dynamic, transit-oriented district with a diversity of uses that create a vibrant atmosphere where people live, work and socialize.” The Station District Specific Plan is intended to enact that vision, while adding details of policy, design, feasibility, geographic specificity, and implementation that were not established by the General Plan.

Guiding Principles

The project team has developed five draft guiding principles for consideration. The guiding principles are intended to guide the overall strategy, policies, design, and investments that will be included in the Station District Specific Plan, and are integrated into concepts for each sub-area of the Specific Plan.

Principle 1: Central Pedestrian Spine. Create a pedestrian spine that connects the Marketplace, BART, and the Station District East area.

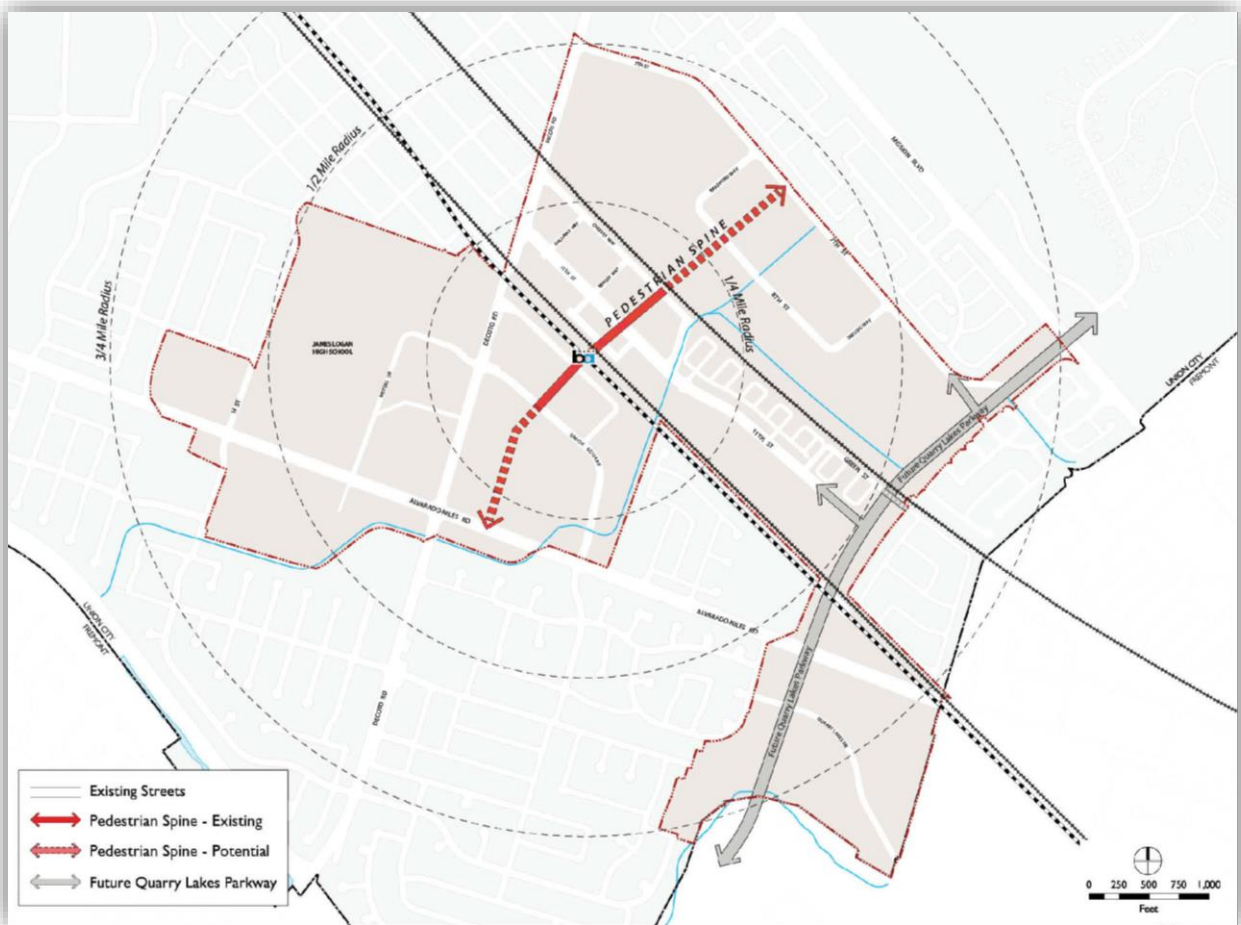


Figure 5

sidewalks, bicycle lanes and pathways, and multi-use trails.

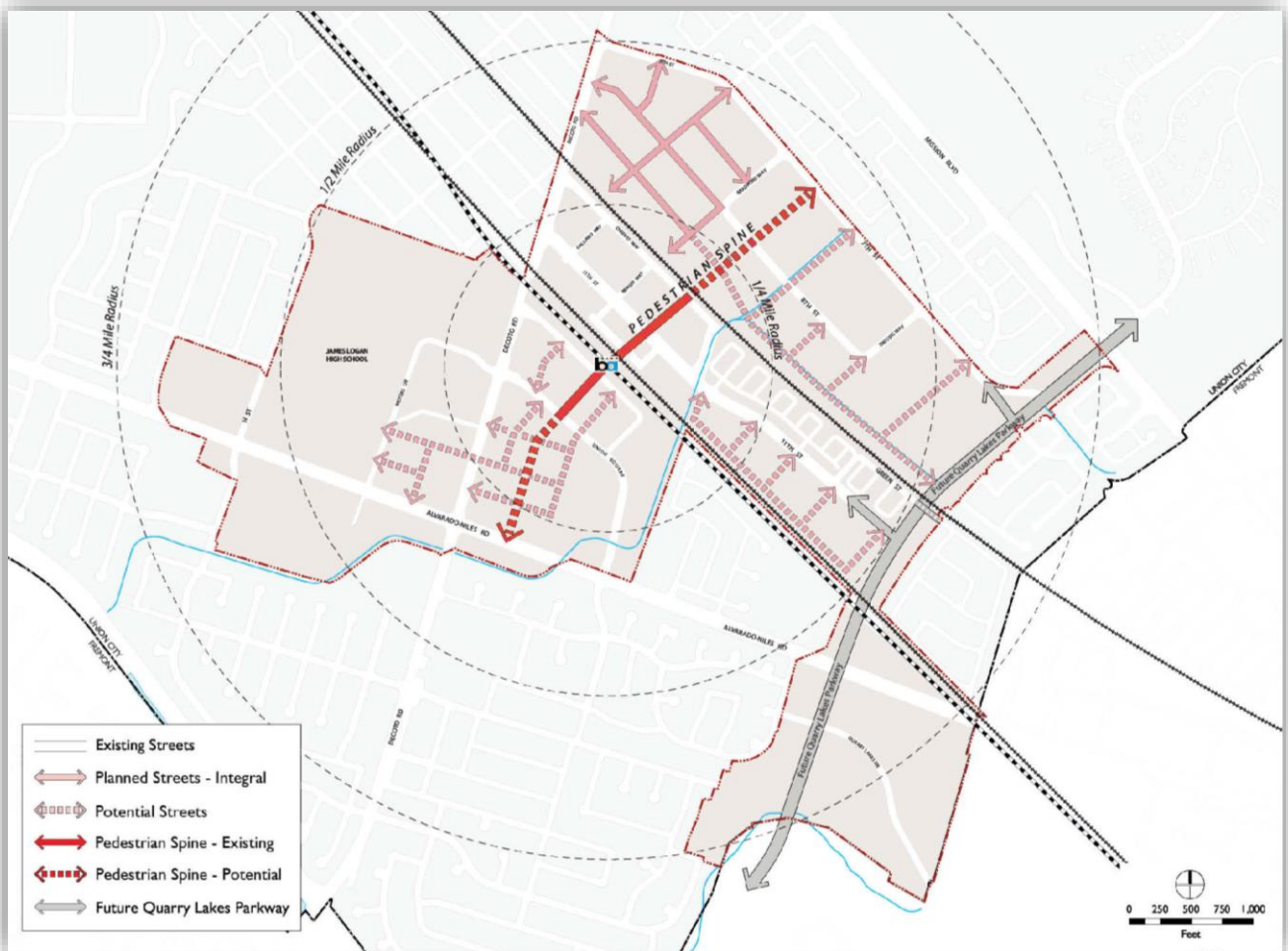


Figure 6

Principle 3: Open Space Network. Use public open spaces such as parks and plazas to encourage pedestrian activity, foster connection to the surrounding neighborhoods and provide open space for exercise and recreation.



Figure 7

Principle 4: Complete Neighborhood. Create a complete neighborhood with a mix of housing, businesses and retail uses.

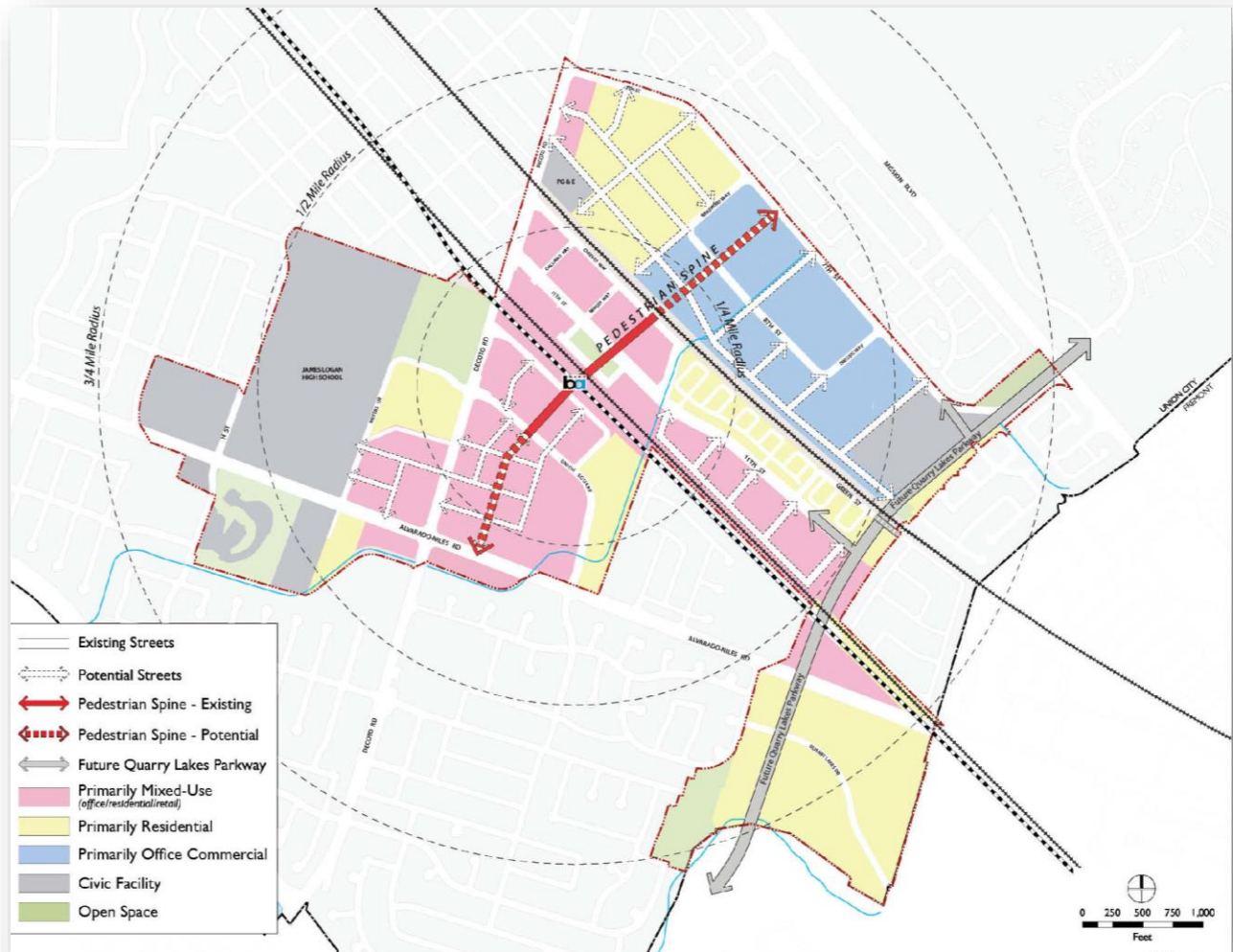


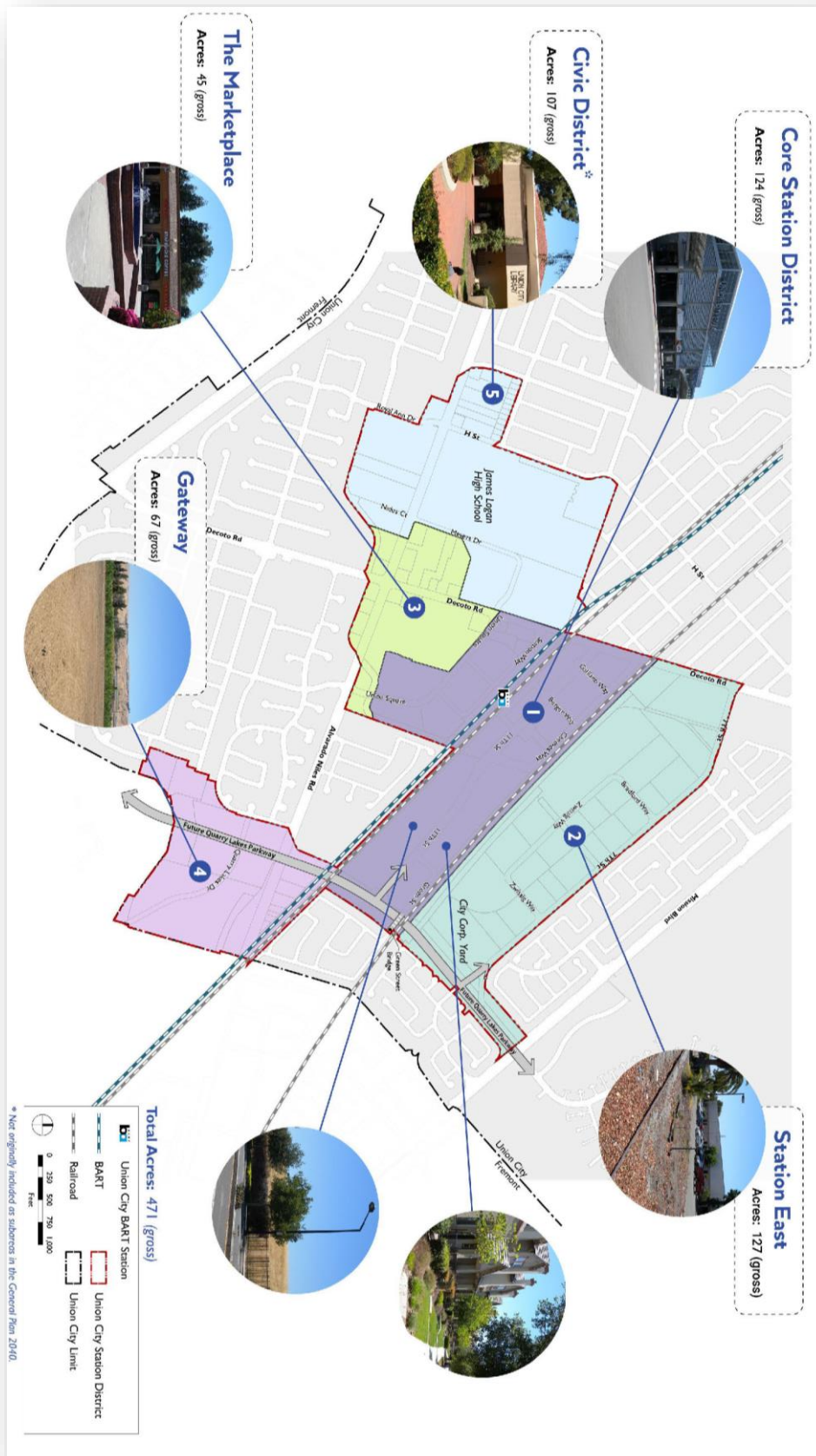
Figure 8

Principle 5: High Quality Design. The architecture and landscape reflect Union City’s unique identity and fosters a sense of character for the neighborhood.

Planning Alternatives by Sub-Area

The project team has developed a set of planning considerations for each sub-area of the Specific Plan Area. The sub-areas are consistent with those identified in the General Plan, with a small number of refinements to the various sub-area boundaries. The sub-area boundaries are shown below in Figure 9, followed by a summary of subarea goal and planning considerations for each area. Please note that the subarea goals have been slightly updated from prior outreach.

Figure 9



Core
 Station

District

The draft proposed goal for the Core Station District is *“To develop the core of the Station District surrounding the Intermodal Station as a major transit hub, business center, and residential address that is well connected with the rest of the city.”* Potential enhancements and areas of focus for the Core Station District could include the following:

- Enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections to BART and the surrounding communities.
- Network of parks and linear greenways.
- Public realm improvements (e.g. plazas, seating, public art, etc).
- A balance of land uses including high density residential and office uses.
- Other improvements and programming.

The Core Station District is envisioned to include a continuation of the land use pattern and development projects that have occurred in recent years, consistent with the General Plan. In addition to recent developments such as Union Flats and Station Center, and other existing housing like Avalon Bay, the Verandas, and Pacific Terrace, several development projects have been proposed or approved in the Core District. This includes “Windflower 2” – the second phase of the Union Flats Apartments, which would be completed by the same developer – and Union 1.2, which would include 1.2 million square feet of office development on three sites.

The “Restoration Site,” between 11th Street and the BART tracks, is envisioned by the General Plan to include a flexible mix of residential, office, and/or retail with open space, but there is no active development proposal on this site. There is also the longer-term potential for office and mixed-use development on the BART Station parking lots themselves. The project team has been coordinating with BART to understand its long-term development intentions for this property, which will be summarized in BART’s upcoming 10-Year Work Plan for Transit-Oriented Development. Future development in the Station District would also include new street and pedestrian improvements, creation of new open spaces, continued improvements to existing open spaces such as Station District Plaza, and a range of public and private parking. This range of development activity, consistent with the direction of the General Plan, is proposed to be accommodated and encouraged in the Station District Specific Plan. See Figure 10 for an overview of the subarea.

Core Station District



Figure 10

Station East

The draft proposed goal for the Station East area is *“To transform the Station East area into a vibrant, 21st century mixed-use district that is a center of prosperity and innovation, focused on providing a quality experience for those who live and work in Union City.”* Potential enhancements and areas of focus for the Station East area could include the following:

- Enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections to BART and the surrounding communities.
- Network of parks and linear greenways.
- Public realm improvements (e.g. plazas, seating, public art, etc).
- Creation of a major employment center.
- Range of housing types including affordable housing.
- Other improvements and programming.

The proposed Integral project, which is located within the Station East area, would integrate housing, retail, street-improvements, and on-site open space, pedestrian pathways, and bicycle facilities. Other portions of the Station East area would be envisioned to include a range of uses over the longer term, including office and R&D uses, plazas, recreational outdoor space, and the continuation of some existing commercial and other non-residential uses. This range of land uses would be complemented by a network of new and expanded green spaces and pedestrian connections linking important destinations throughout the Station East area, and accessed through the Pedestrian Spine that extends west to BART and the Core Station District. See Figure 11 and 12 below.

Station East



Figure 11

Range of Potential Connections and Open Space



Figure 12

Marketplace Subarea

The draft goal for the Marketplace area is *“To transform the Marketplace shopping area into a vibrant, walkable, well-designed community-serving retail center and potential mixed-use area that maintains its focus on meeting the needs of Union City residents and employees and becomes an integral destination as part of the emerging transit-oriented development of the Greater Station District.”*

Potential enhancements and areas of focus for the Marketplace area include the following:

- Enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections to BART and the surrounding communities.
- Public realm improvements (e.g. plazas, seating, public art, etc).
- Buildings located closer to the street with parking lots located behind or in garages.
- Addition of mixed-use development (i.e. retail on the ground floor with either residential or office above).
- Other improvements and programming.

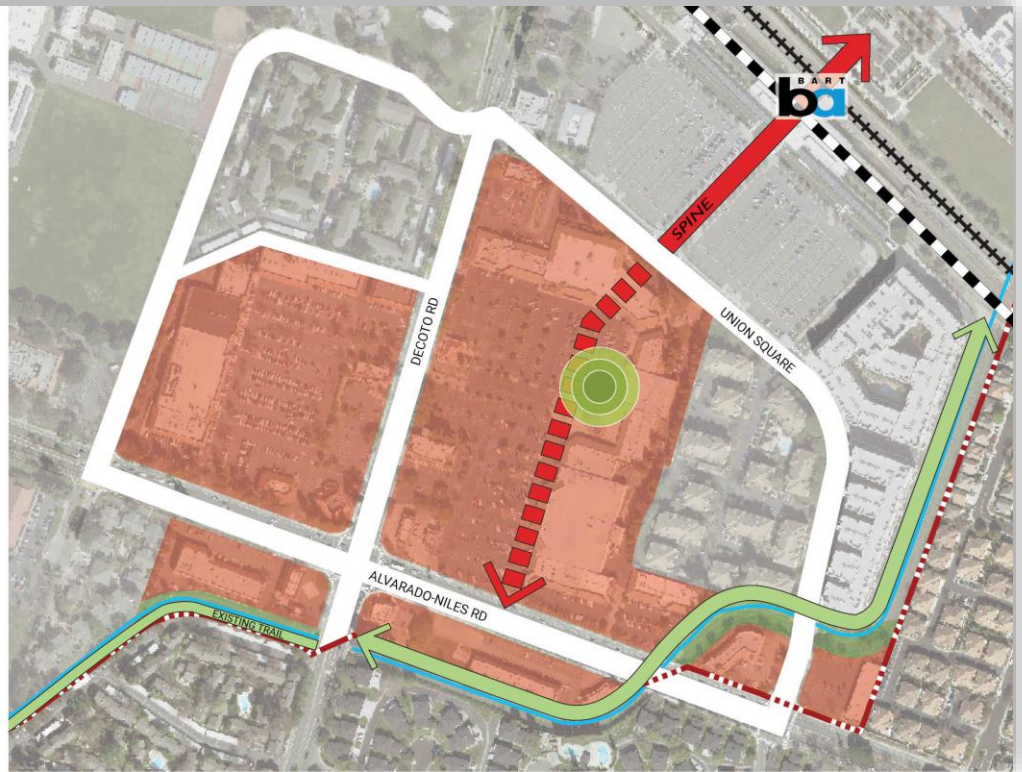
It is understood to be a strong City and community priority to retain the amount and diversity of stores, services, and retail shopping options that currently exist in the Marketplace area. This is particularly true for residents of nearby areas such as the Decoto neighborhood and the Core Station District, which rely on the area for important everyday needs such as grocery shopping.

At the same time, there may be opportunities to enhance and complement the Marketplace’s existing retail character with improved public spaces, active street frontage, and the introduction of residential in targeted locations. This could occur at a range of scales and timelines, but may be most likely as existing retail buildings reach the end of their life cycle and require remodeling or replacement by property owners.

The concepts below (Figures 13 and 14) demonstrate the range of future changes that could occur in the Marketplace area, for consideration by the Planning Commission. The first concept focuses primarily on enhanced connections and public realm improvements, including an extension of the existing pedestrian spine that connects to the BART Station. This concept could occur with or without other land uses changes, with small amounts of additional public space and minor façade improvements.

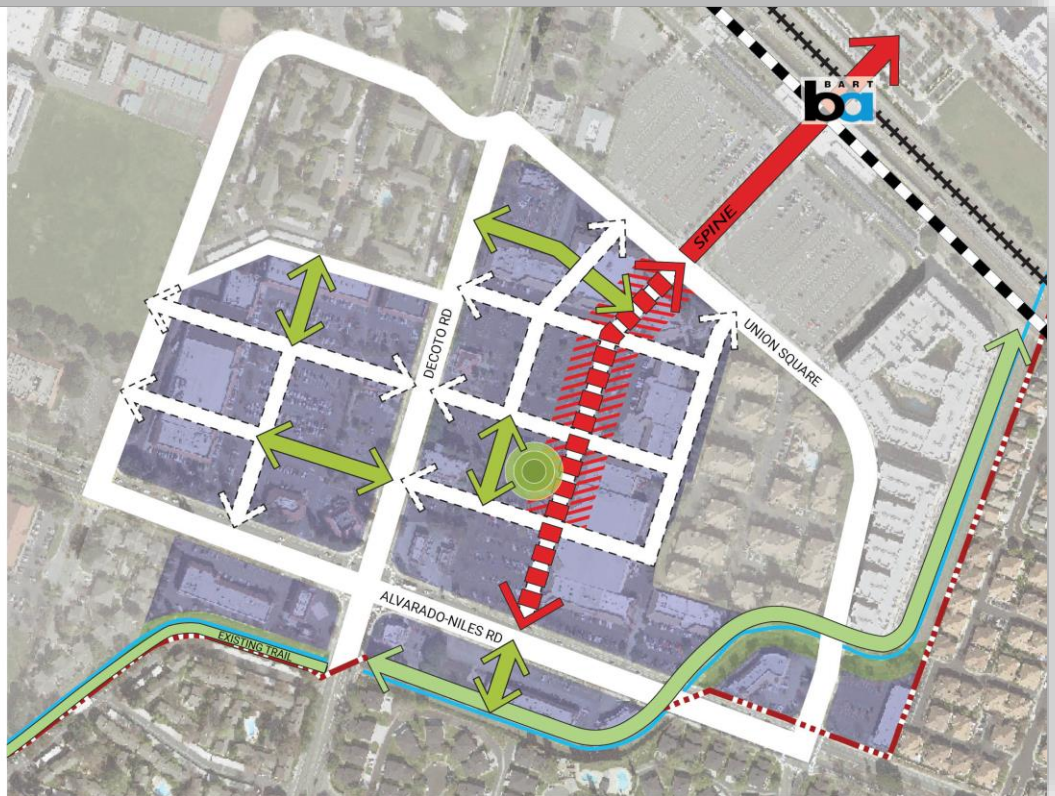
The second concept demonstrates full redevelopment of the Marketplace area, which could occur over a longer time period with phased development activity. This concept retains the existing amount of retail, but would provide it in a range of formats, including stand-alone retail and retail integrated into mixed-use buildings. It also includes more extensive public space and open green space, which would be more feasible to achieve with larger scale redevelopment. This diagram is only conceptual, and a future development proposal would likely require a more detailed master planning process in close coordination with property owners. In addition, there is the option of partial or phased redevelopment of the area, with phased introduction of new housing or mixed-

Figure 13



Marketplace Concept 1: Enhanced Connections and Public Realm Improvements

Figure 14



Marketplace Concept 2: Enhanced Connections and New Mixed-Use Development

use buildings on select parcels or portions of parcels in the Marketplace area, as they become available for development by interested property owners. This concept could be an interim phase to longer-term development, or could represent the long-term condition where some parcels redevelop and others do not.

Both concepts show potential improvements to the creek trail, extending citywide connections between the BART Station area and Alameda Creek Trail to the west.

Gateway Area

The draft goal for the Gateway area is “ To create a new gateway to Union City that provides for a variety of housing opportunities, including open space and park amenities and enhanced facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians facilitated by construction of the Quarry Lakes Parkway

The recently updated General Plan identifies the Gateway area for housing, as well as complementary open space and retail. See Figure 16 below. Open space could be provided as stand-alone public space as well as in coordination with residential development, and could occur within a range of scales, orientations, facility types, and programming options. These could include playgrounds, community gardens, recreational open space, passive open space, or other open space and ecological areas including potential connections to the adjacent Arroyo Park and Quarry Lakes Regional Recreation Area. Housing types could include a range of styles, formats, and density levels, including apartments, townhomes, mixed-use development, or even an integrated “agrihood,” where housing and on-site community facilities are integrated with agricultural uses that could have public or private use. The Gateway area also includes area for the alignment for the future Quarry Lakes Parkway, which would include a dedicated off-street bicycle/pedestrian pathway providing direct connections to the Core Station District and further destinations to the north and south.

Civic Center

The draft goal for the Civic Center area is *“To better integrate the Civic Center sub-area into the larger Station District area by increasing connectivity and ensuring facilities and programming meet the needs of the community.”*

The existing mix of land uses is envisioned to largely remain in place within the Civic Center, as shown in the accompanying diagram (Figure 17). However, there may be opportunities to improve connections, open space, civic facilities, and community programming in the Civic Center. Options to consider for future facility and programming improvements could include the following:

- Better walking and bike connections, including along the creek trail to both BART and the Alameda Creek Trail
- Intersection improvements linking to the Marketplace area and other destinations within the Civic Center

Gateway Area: Connections and Allowed Land Use

Figure 16



Civic Center Area: Connections and Allowed Land Use

Figure 17



- Library improvements
- More or enhance public space
- Skate park improvements
- Senior Center improvements
- New or improved City Hall
- Cultural programming
- Civic events and activities
- James Logan High School shared-use agreement
- Affordable supportive housing
- Programming for existing spaces (i.e. Kennedy Youth Center, Library, Senior Center)
- Public art.

Potential future improvements would be subject to funding availability and would likely need to be refined and prioritized based on community needs and input.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is requesting feedback regarding the draft guiding principles for the Station District Specific Plan, as well as feedback for each sub-area of the Station District.

The Planning Commission feedback, along with the community feedback received to date, will be forwarded on to the City Council for consideration. Following Council input, staff and the consultant team will continue with development of a public draft Station District Specific Plan for consideration by the public, the Planning Commission, and ultimately the City Council for approval.

ATTACHMENTS - See Community Outreach Summary document included in City Council Report dated September 8, 2020.

Attachment 1: Stakeholder Interviews Summary

Attachment 2: July 9, 2020 Community Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Attachment 3: July 21, 2020 Community Workshop Summary