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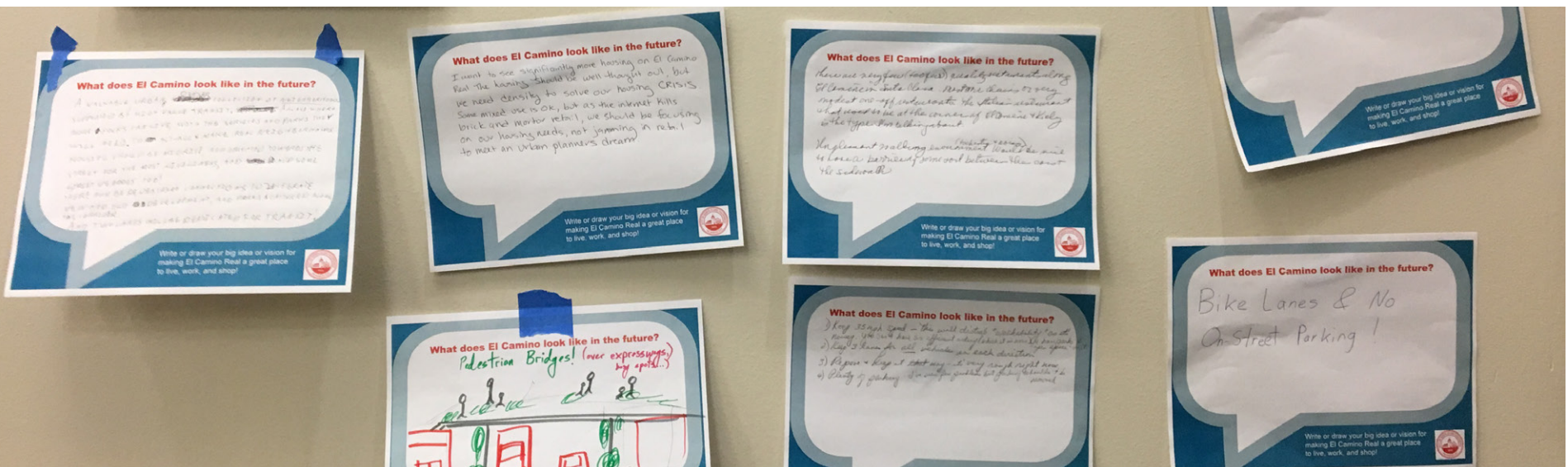
# VISION AND FRAMEWORK 2

# VISION AND FRAMEWORK

## 2.1 Vision

The El Camino Real Specific Plan represents the implementation of the General Plan’s goals and policies for the El Camino Real Focus Area. The El Camino Real of the future will be a mixed-use, multi-modal corridor anchored by vibrant shopping destinations and public open space. Centers of commercial and pedestrian activity at key intersections will feature a diverse range of stores, services, and restaurants for neighbors, workers, and visitors, as well as active plazas and open spaces for public gathering and enjoyment. New homes will be built for a range of incomes and life stages. Buildings will be designed to respect the scale and character of adjacent residential neighborhoods, while creating an attractive and engaging pedestrian environment along the corridor.

Transportation improvements for all modes will ease travel along and across the corridor. Pedestrians will enjoy wider sidewalks, tree canopy, and safer crossings. Signature landscaping, streetscape design, signage, and public art will create a clear identity for the corridor, foster walkability, and improve access to transit, stores, restaurants, open space, housing, and nearby amenities. Bicyclists will have access to major destinations and nearby amenities via new direct access along El Camino Real and comfortable travel off the corridor. Enhanced bus stops, boarding areas, and other street improvements will create a better experience for riders and encourage transit use.



## 2.2 Desired Outcomes

The El Camino Real Specific Plan's vision is implemented through the following desired outcomes, described below. The desired outcomes were developed based on community input and priorities. They set the stage for the Specific Plan's overall planning framework and are supported by area-wide policies, design standards and guidelines, and implementation actions in the rest of the Plan.

1. **More parks, plazas, and open space.** Increase the amount of parks, green space, plazas, and other public space that encourages pedestrian activity, recreation, and access to nature, including recreation opportunities along Calabazas and Saratoga Creeks.
2. **Landscaping and street trees.** Integrate a variety of landscaping and street trees along the corridor to create a more comfortable walking environment, break up large expanses of hardscape, and provide a buffer from vehicular traffic.
3. **More walkable environment.** Improve the pedestrian experience, public space, aesthetics, safety, and design quality throughout the Plan Area to attract visitors, serve residents, and promote walking.
4. **Better mobility and connections.** Improve pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and vehicle connections in the Plan Area, with a focus on better connections between El Camino and adjacent neighborhoods as well as to/from key destinations such as shopping centers, community facilities, the Old Quad, and Santa Clara Station.
5. **More transportation options.** Provide a range of multimodal transportation options and improvements such as bicycle facilities, wider sidewalks, more frequent bus service, and shuttles to Caltrain.



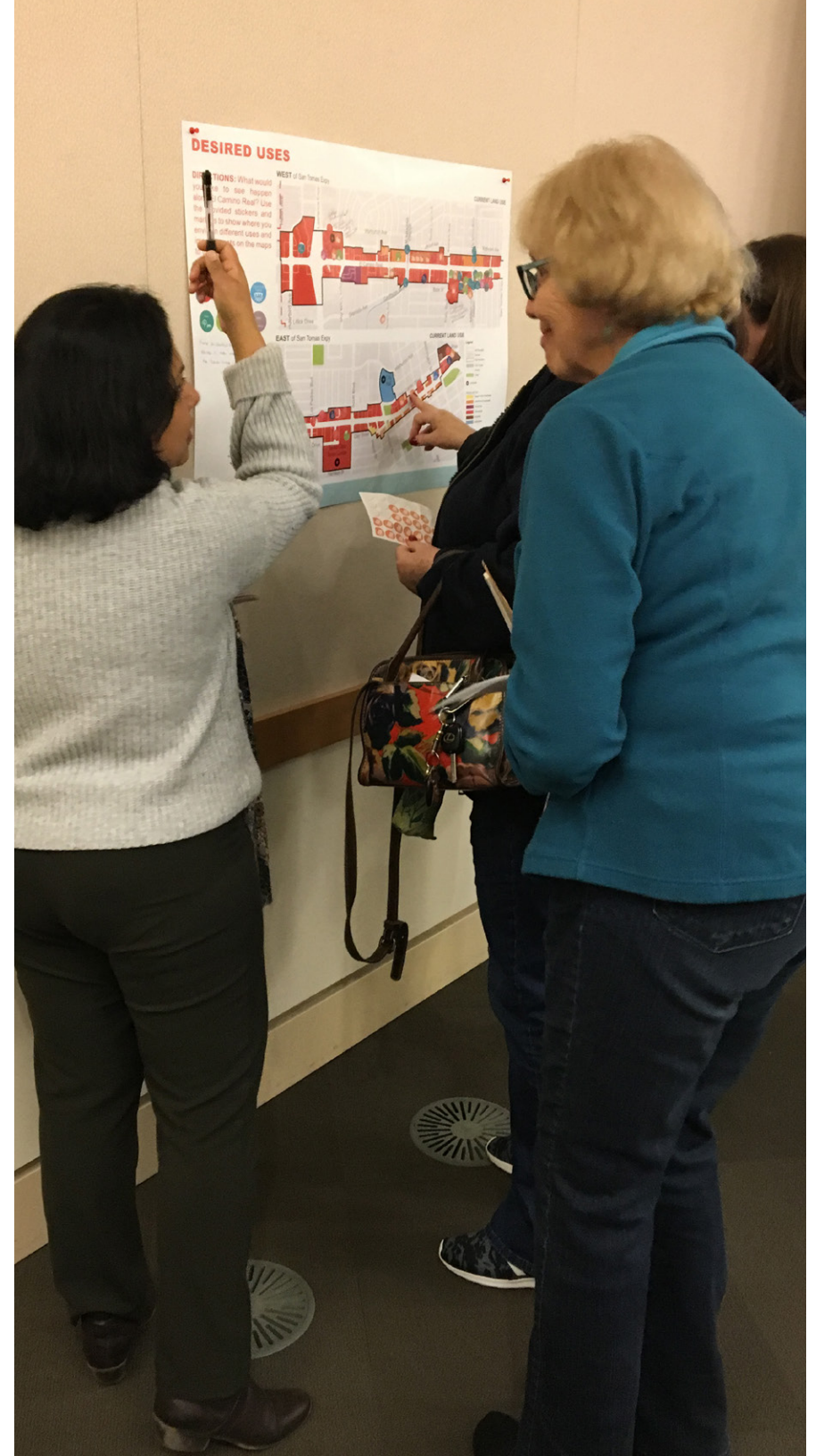
6. **Efficient and shared parking.** Implement parking management solutions that most efficiently use parking resources, including sharing of spaces between uses onsite or offsite, structured parking, parking demand reduction measures, and park-once strategies.
7. **Compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods.** Ensure compatibility with the residential neighborhoods that are adjacent to the planning area and encourage sensitive design transitions in bulk, height, and massing, provision of public amenities, and uses and services that benefit surrounding neighborhoods.
8. **Local and regional destination.** Increase the variety of retail amenities and amount of public space and gathering places to create destinations along the corridor that will draw both local and regional populations.
9. **Diversity of uses and retail amenities.** Support a diverse mix of uses within the Plan Area including retail, housing, civic spaces, and community facilities. Protect existing small and culturally diverse retail establishments while introducing more varied essential goods and services such as grocery stores, pharmacies, banks, laundromats, entertainment venues, social services, restaurants, cafes, and a range of small, mid-sized, and large retail businesses.
10. **Balanced approach to housing.** Support a variety of appropriately scaled and designed housing types, both market rate and affordable housing, along the corridor while protecting existing neighborhoods from privacy, shading, and traffic impacts.
11. **Beautification and placemaking.** Beautify the El Camino Real corridor by renovating streets, improving the visual appearance and character of existing building facades, and requiring high-quality design for new development and renovations. Incorporate historic and distinctive wayfinding signage, add unique and memorable landscaping, street furnishings, and open spaces, and encourage public art as placemaking tools.
12. **Green building and sustainable infrastructure.** Create a sustainable urban environment that incorporates green building, energy efficiency, water conservation, and stormwater management best practices.
13. **Support health and wellbeing.** Support health and wellbeing through cross-cutting strategies such as active transportation, connections to open space, access to healthy foods, and improved air quality by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

## 2.3 Planning Frameworks

The following conceptual frameworks are integrated throughout the El Camino Real Specific Plan and set the stage for the policies, standards, and guidelines throughout the Plan:

- Focus development at key activity nodes
- Respect the character of adjacent neighborhoods
- Create memorable public open spaces
- Enhance connectivity along and across the corridor
- Improve multimodal access and safety for all travel modes
- Promote a range of housing options

Each conceptual framework is illustrated and described on the following pages. These frameworks build on the desired outcomes to show how they play out on the ground. They are intended to be visionary yet flexible as the Plan is implemented into the future. These framework concepts are not regulatory, but they are consistent with – and implemented by – the more detailed standards and guidelines found in the rest of the Plan.

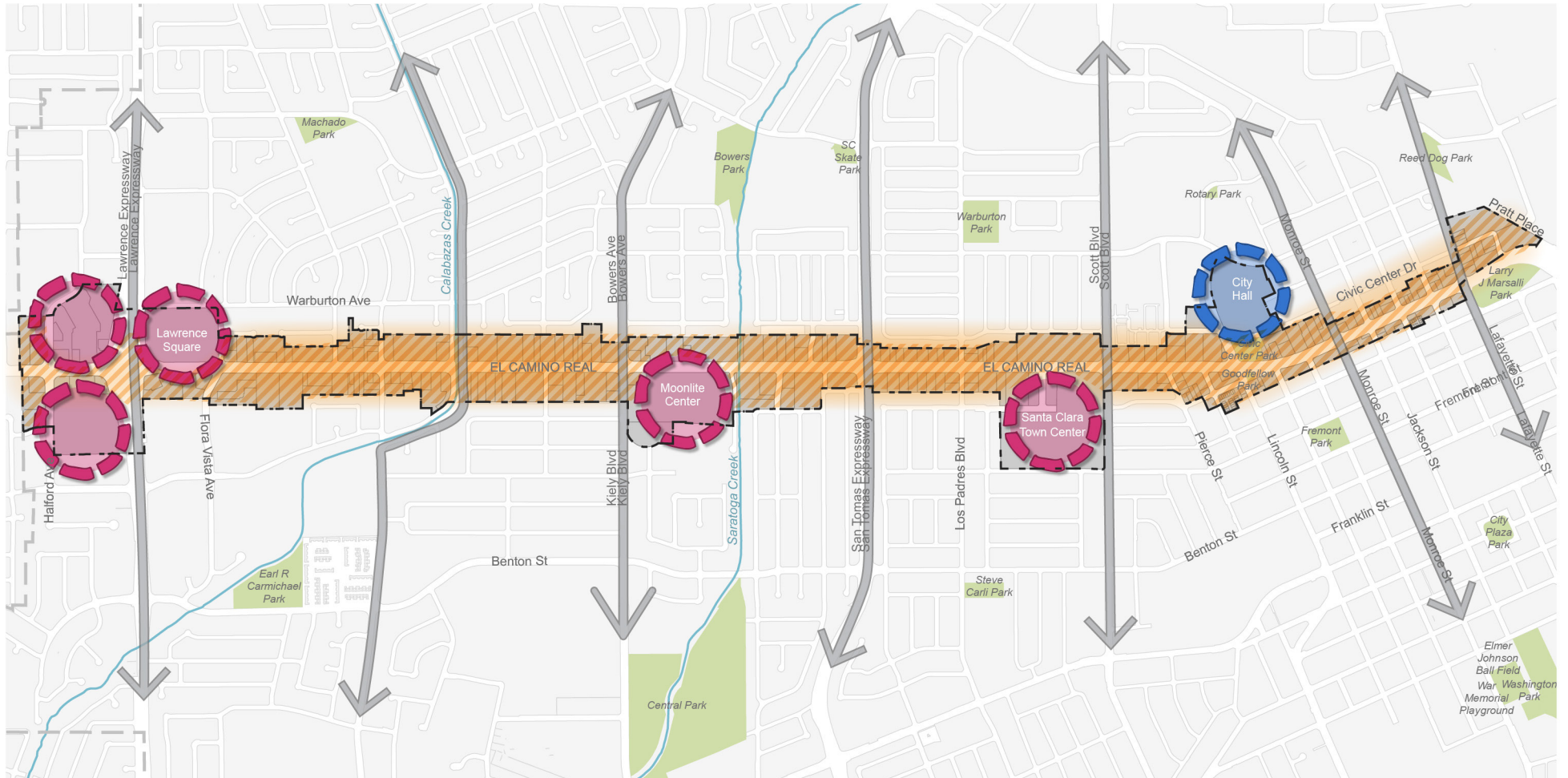












## 1 Focus development at key activity nodes

The Specific Plan uses a strategy that focuses more intensive development and public improvement at nodes of activity, such as key intersections and large commercial destinations. This strategy coordinates development, streetscape, and open space improvements with areas of highest intensity and pedestrian activity. The Plan Area is organized into distinct character areas, while allowing a range of commercial and residential uses along the corridor. Key locations with more intensive and focused new commercial and residential development, as well as pedestrian and open space improvements, are designated “Activity Centers.” Activity Centers will serve as the key commercial destinations along the corridor, providing places to eat, shop, socialize, and fulfill daily needs. The areas “in-between” these Activity Centers will feature a lower-intensity mix of commercial and residential uses. These areas will have moderate improvements to urban design and pedestrian accessibility and will support seamless transition to adjacent lower-density residential neighborhoods. This nodal strategy for land use and character is shown in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1. Land Use and Character Framework



**Legend**

-  City Boundary
-  Plan Boundary
-  Parcels
-  Parks
-  Creeks
-  Civic Activity Center
-  Commercial Activity Center
-  Less Intensive "In-Between" Areas
-  Major Connections

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

 5 minute walk





## 2 Respect the character of adjacent neighborhoods

Throughout the Specific Plan process, the community voiced concern regarding appropriate transitions between new development and existing lower-density residential neighborhoods surrounding the corridor. As shown in Figure 2-3, most of the residential parcels surrounding the El Camino Real corridor area directly abut non-residential or higher-density parcels within the Plan Area. The Specific Plan proposes a neighborhood transition strategy to ensure that new development provides appropriate and sensitive transitions in height and scale to existing neighborhoods with the goals of preserving neighborhood character and protecting light and privacy. This transition strategy limits building heights and requires taller buildings to step down toward existing neighborhoods. Other design treatments, such as deeper setbacks, encouraging house-form building types and varied rooflines, and required landscaping will also help to buffer existing homes from new development (see Figure 2-2).

Figure 2-2. Neighborhood Adjacency

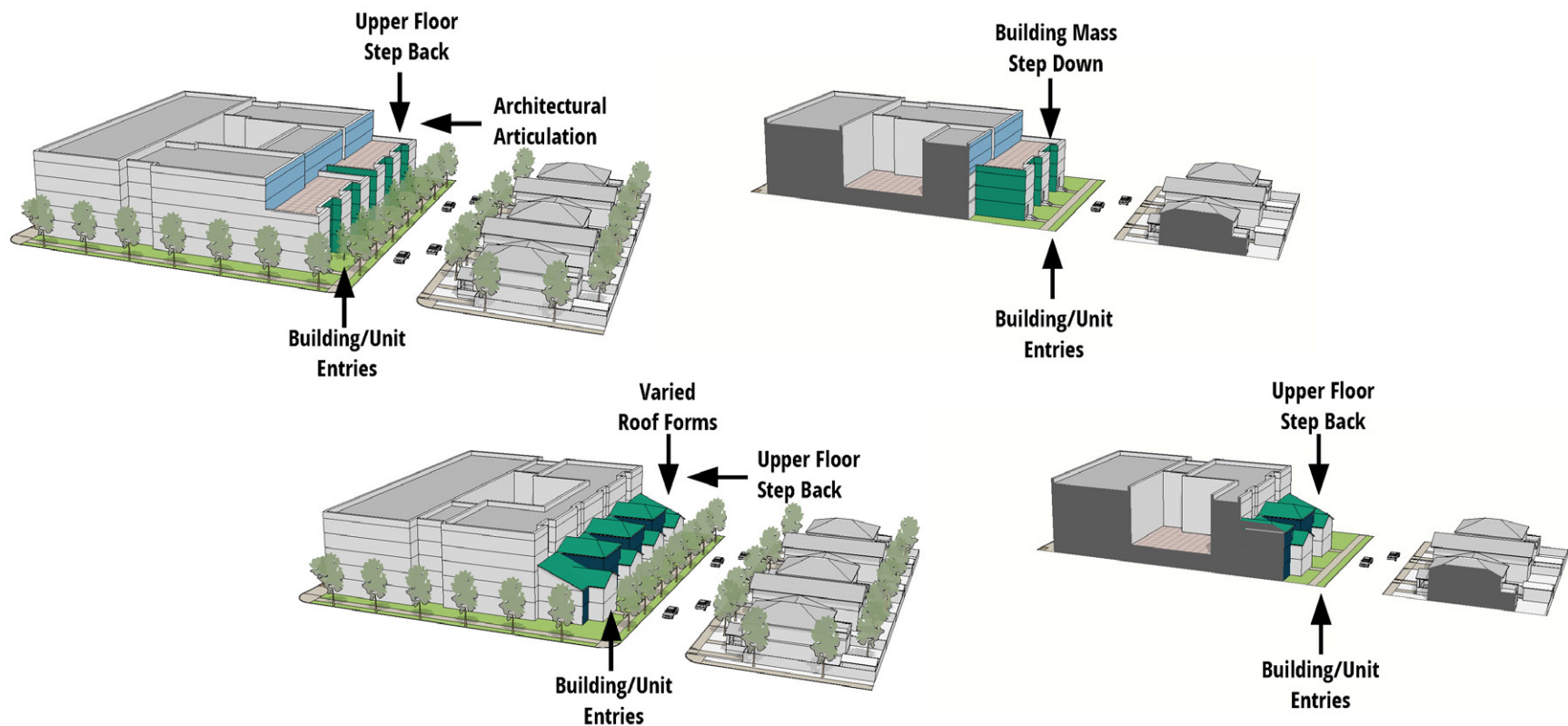
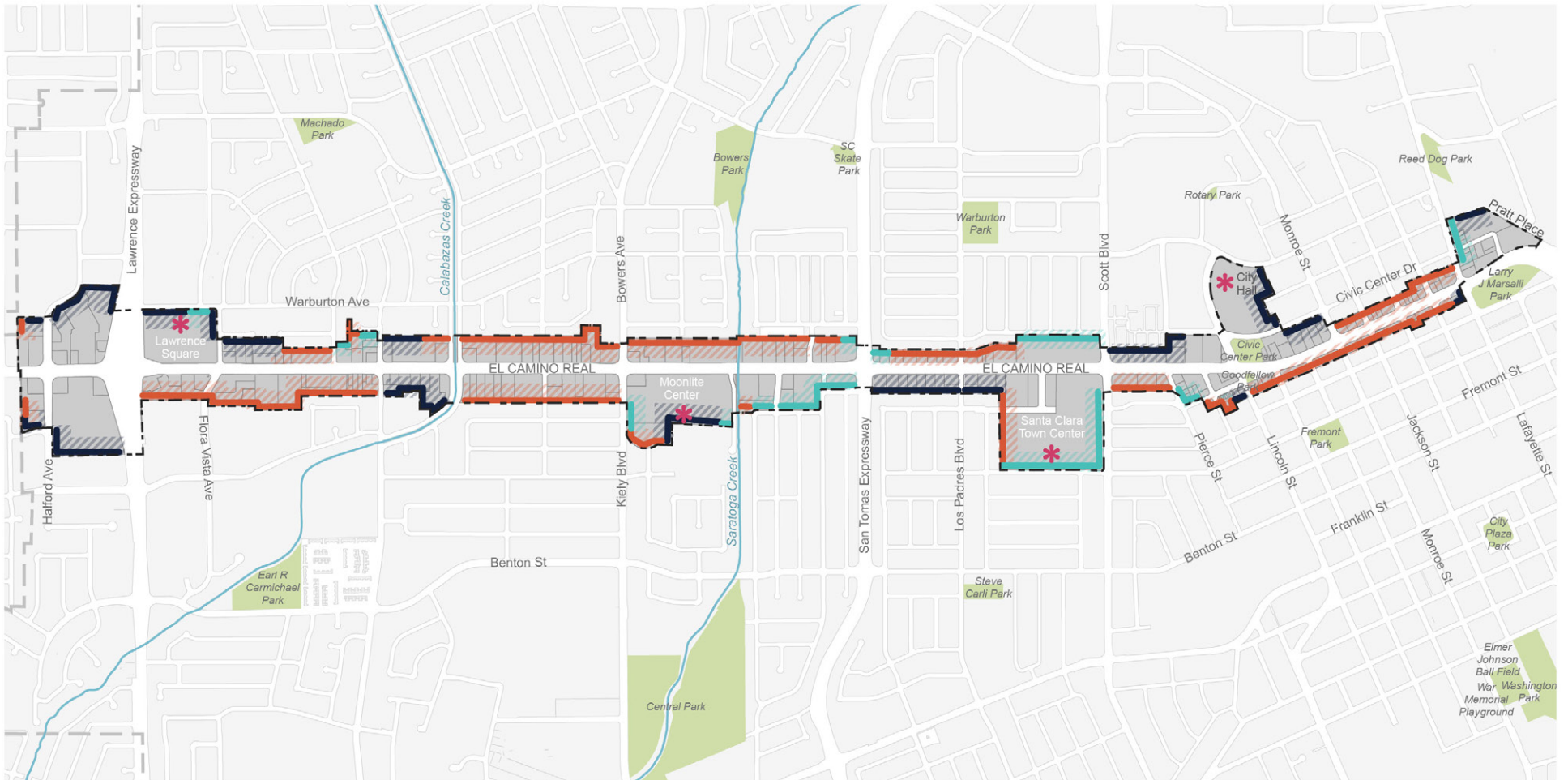


Figure 2-3. Neighborhood Adjacency



Legend

- City Boundary
- Plan Boundary
- Parcels
- Plan Parcels
- Parks
- Creeks
- ▨ Directly abuts a single-family residential parcel
- ▨ Across the street from a single-family residential parcel
- ▨ Directly abuts or across the street from a multi-family residential parcel



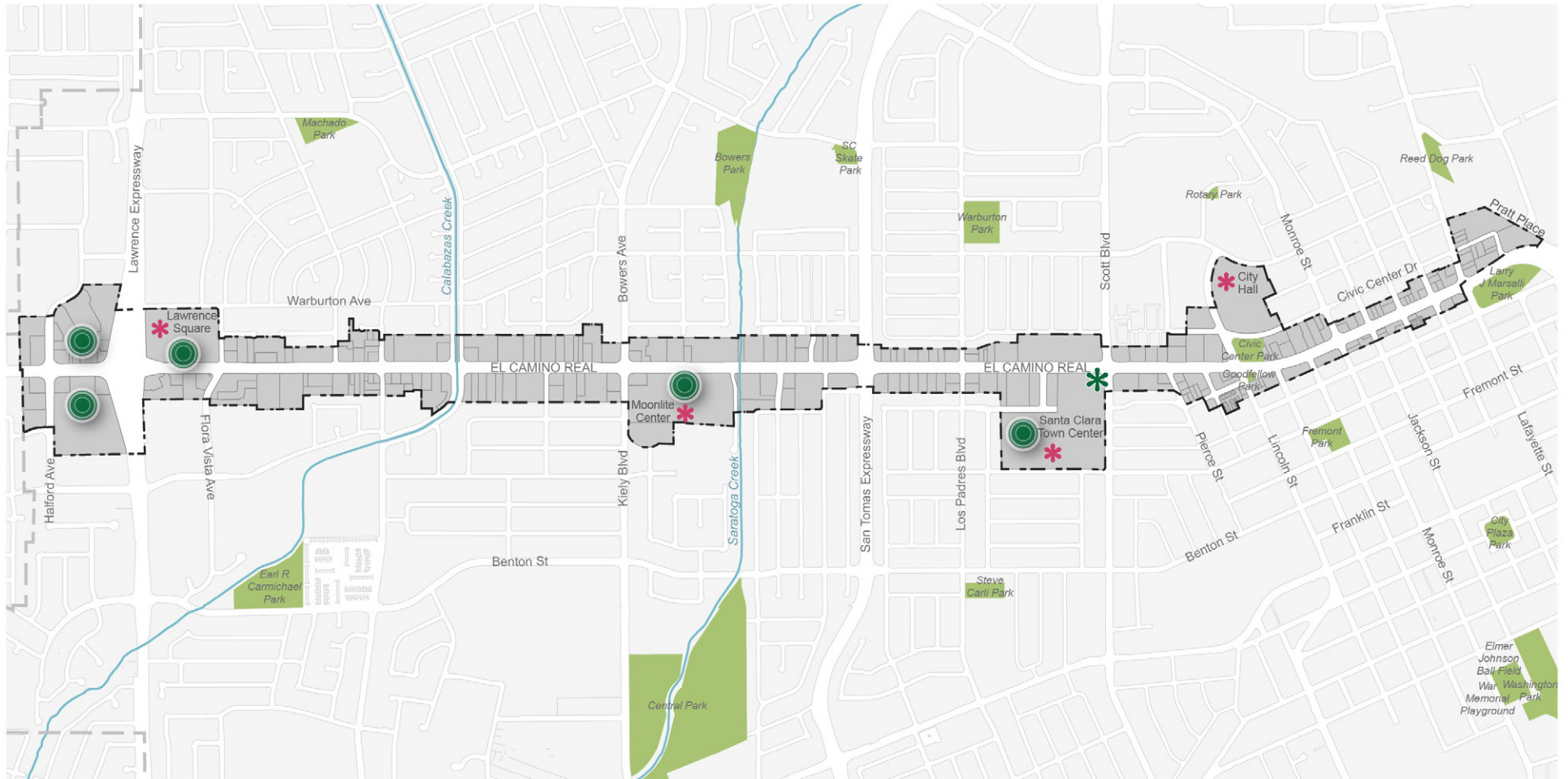
### 3 Create memorable open spaces

While many valuable open space amenities can be found just outside the corridor, El Camino Real currently lacks public open spaces. The Specific Plan seeks to create new public open spaces as required under the City’s Park and Recreational Land Ordinance (Chapter 17.35 of the City Code), as well as publicly-accessible, but privately-maintained open spaces, such as plazas along the corridor that provide a place where residents and visitors can gather comfortably, have their own distinctive identity, are safe and visually attractive, and contribute to local character. This network of open spaces includes the public parks required by the City Code complemented by additional publicly-accessible privately-owned open space, as shown in Figure 2-4. Key to the successful transformation of El Camino Real is creating a network of memorable open spaces. Special places such as plazas, pedestrian-oriented streets, and other public gathering spaces can create a strong identity for the corridor as an important center of activity. Some of the key features of the future open space network are as follows:

- A primary functional and identifiable public or publicly-accessible open space should be located at the heart of each new Activity Center along the corridor.
- New publicly-accessible, privately-owned open spaces should be designed to facilitate and encourage social gathering and events.
- Open space sizes, uses, and design types should be varied throughout the Plan Area.
- Stormwater detention, drainage swales, and green infrastructure should be integrated as open space features.
- Calabazas and Saratoga Creeks should become attractive, accessible, and recreationally valuable trail amenities that connect El Camino Real to larger public open spaces just outside the corridor.



Figure 2-4. Public Open Space Framework



**Legend**

- City Boundary
- Plan Boundary
- Parcels
- ✱ Landmarks
- Creeks
- ⊙ Conceptual Parks and Plazas
- ✱ Existing Publicly Accessible Private Open Space
- Parks

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

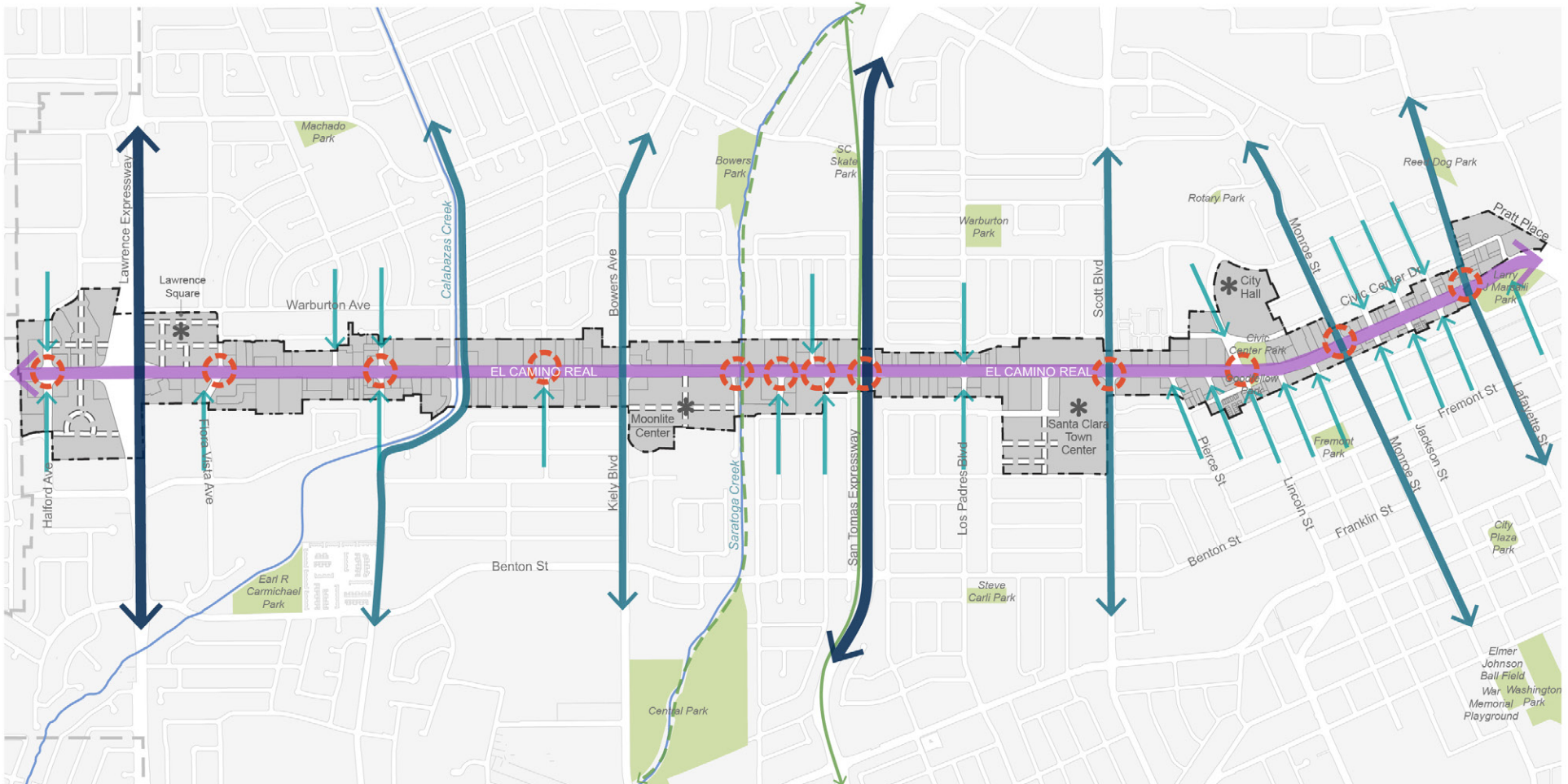
5 minute walk

## 4 Enhance connectivity along and across the corridor

Connections to and from El Camino Real for all users including transit riders, vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists are important for the long-term success of the corridor’s retail businesses and residential neighborhoods. A number of north-south corridors and pathways cross El Camino Real at regular intervals. These include major arterials such as Calabazas Boulevard, Bowers Avenue/Kiely Boulevard, and Scott Boulevard, as well as smaller streets that provide connections to surrounding residential neighborhoods. The western portion of the Plan Area is less walkable, with longer blocks and fewer cross streets, whereas the area east of Scott Boulevard features numerous neighborhood connections at shorter intervals. This Plan recommends improvements to existing routes and crossings as well as new routes to increase connectivity to, from, and along the corridor. Larger Activity Center parcels should be divided into smaller blocks over time as development or onsite improvements occur, creating new connections and more walkable blocks. New connections should be publicly-accessible and prioritize pedestrian and bike users to encourage a “park once” experience. The diagrammatic network of streets and other connections shown in Figure 2-5 and elsewhere in the Plan illustrates the Plan’s vision, while leaving flexibility for reasonable adjustments during the creation of final development plans.



Figure 2-5. Connections Framework



Legend

- City Boundary
- Plan Boundary
- Parcels
- Parks
- \* Landmarks
- El Camino Real
- Regional Connection
- Local Street Connection
- Neighborhood Connections
- Existing Trail Connection
- Future Trail Connection
- New Street or Bike/Ped Connection (conceptual)
- Priority Pedestrian Crossing Improvement



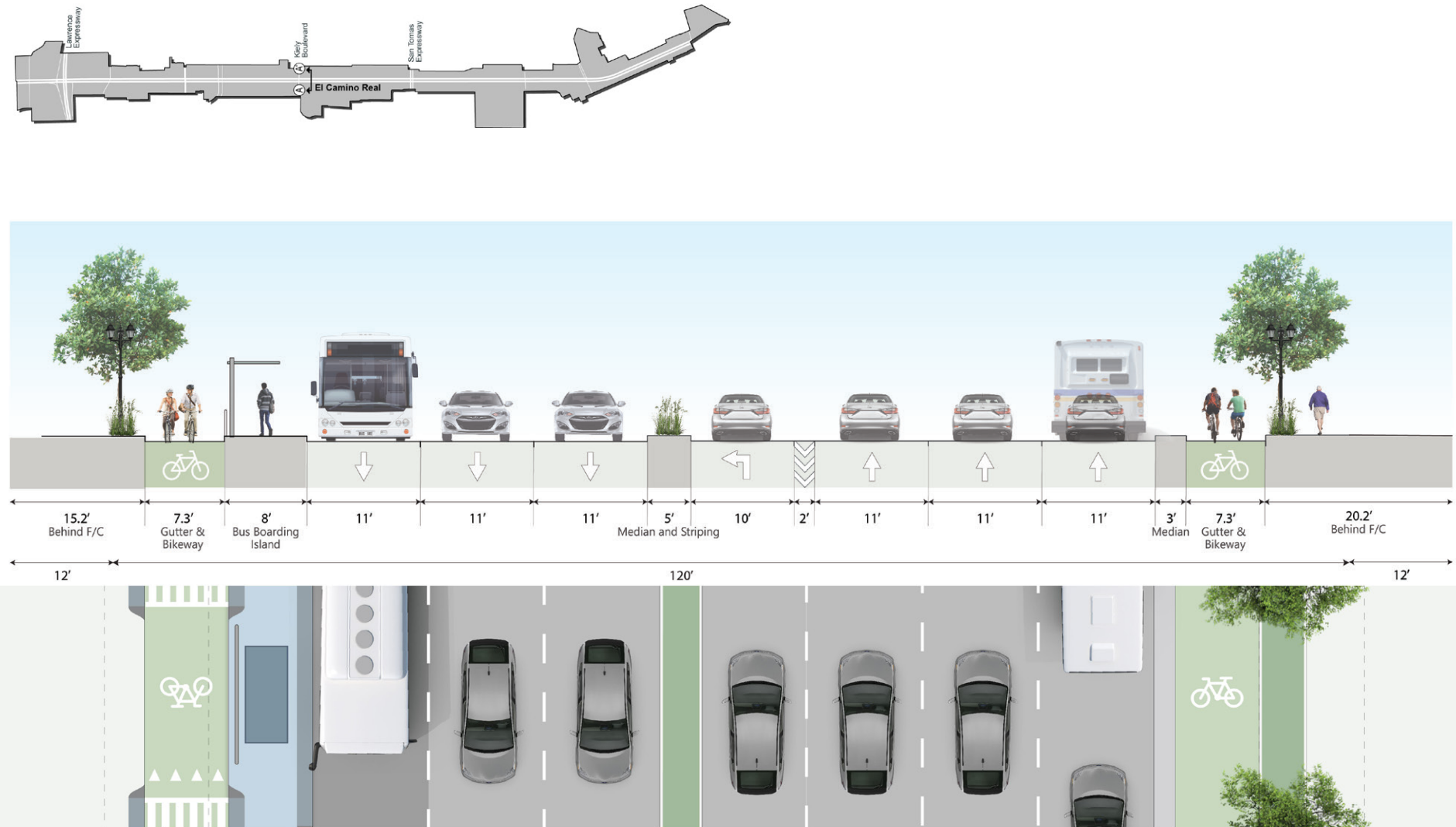
## 5 Improve multimodal access and safety for all travel modes

The vision for El Camino Real is to transform this auto-oriented arterial into a multimodal “complete street” designed to accommodate all travel modes. Complete streets provide safe mobility for all users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, transit vehicles, and motorists regardless of age or ability. The proximity of the Plan Area to the Santa Clara Caltrain and future BART station presents a unique opportunity to maximize transit trips by improving the multimodal functionality of the corridor. The long-term design concept for El Camino Real recommends modifications to the right-of-way that will better balance users, reduce conflicts, and create a safer experience for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders (see Figure 2-6). To improve multimodal access and safety on El Camino Real, the Plan outlines a series of improvements including adding protected bicycle lanes, providing enhanced bus stop/boarding areas, widening sidewalks, creating new and improved intersections and crossings, requiring better landscaping and lighting, and improving the pedestrian environment. This is further supported by design standards and guidelines that will create aesthetically pleasing and well-defined streetscapes and corners, and frontages that foster pedestrian activity and interest.

The images that follow highlight the key features of the proposed street and streetscape improvements for El Camino Real.



Figure 2-6. Right-of-Way Concept for El Camino Real



CONCEPTUAL - NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION  
 DETAILED ANALYSIS AND ENGINEERING DESIGN REQUIRED



## **6 Promote a range of housing options**

Similar to other cities in the San Francisco Bay Area, there is a shortage of housing in Santa Clara, particularly affordable housing, to serve the needs of its growing employment base. New housing anticipated in this Specific Plan is consistent with the goals in the City's Housing Element and General Plan, which project a portion of the City's future residential growth to occur along the corridor. Housing is envisioned to play an important and increasing role in the El Camino Real Specific Plan Area, leveraging the transit-oriented location and existing retail amenities while meeting a critical local and regional need for increased housing supply. The intention of the Specific Plan is to promote a range of housing options and affordability levels to realize the vision for a mixed-use, mixed-income community along the corridor. As such, this Plan includes an inclusionary housing policy that goes above and beyond the City's Affordable Housing Ordinance to promote the provision of units at deeper levels of affordability along El Camino Real.

In addition to state laws that support the provision of affordable housing (such as the Housing Accountability Act or the State Density Bonus Law), there are a number of locally controlled policies and programs that are available to cities to increase the supply of affordable housing. Santa Clara has implemented some of these, such as adopting an inclusionary housing ordinance, which requires new residential and non-residential developments to contribute to affordable housing, either through development of onsite units or the payment of fees to support the creation of affordable housing. Based on the City's 15% affordable housing on-site requirement that applies to developments with 10 or more units, it is estimated that between 450 and 1,200 new affordable inclusionary housing units will be integrated with market rate units in the Plan Area over the next 10 to 20 years, in addition to significant fee revenue to support construction of affordable units. Together these affordable housing strategies will support the goal that at least 20% of new homes in the Specific Plan Area will be affordable to lower and moderate-income households. These additional affordable units will make a significant impact on the overall stock of affordable housing in the City of Santa Clara as well as the City's compliance with meeting Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) targets.

Other tools available to the City to support the creation of affordable housing include various county, state, regional, and federal resources such as the Santa Clara County Measure A Housing Bond Funds, The Housing Trust Fund Silicon Valley which has a multi-family rental loan program and first-time homebuyer program, Housing Successor Agency Program Income, the California Multifamily Housing Program, and the Federal HOME program and Low Income Tax Credits, among others.

