



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 VISION AND GOALS

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The Milpitas Transit Area presents a tremendous opportunity to transform an older industrial area into a vibrant high-intensity transit-oriented district. The site is unique in the Bay Area, offering large land acreages; access to two freeways and an expressway; two light rail stations and a future BART station; property owners experienced in real estate development; the Great Mall as a retail anchor; and a City ready to facilitate new private sector development.

The City undertook this Specific Plan in order to bring about an attractive and livable neighborhood that takes advantage of public investment in light rail and BART, and transforms an older light industrial district to meet high demand for housing, offices, and shopping in the Bay Area. The Plan creates a structure for a walkable, transit-oriented area with a mix of land uses, which thereby encourages walking, biking, and transit trips and minimizes vehicle trips. This type of development can accommodate substantial growth, minimize impacts on local roadways, and reduce urban sprawl at the periphery of the region.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS IN THE MILPITAS TRANSIT AREA



*An Older Industrial Building in the Study Area - Not up to Modern Industrial Standards*



*R&D Building that is Partially Vacant*



*Great Mall Light Rail Station*



*McCandless Drive - A Beautiful Tree-lined Street in an Existing Industrial Park*



*The Great Mall*



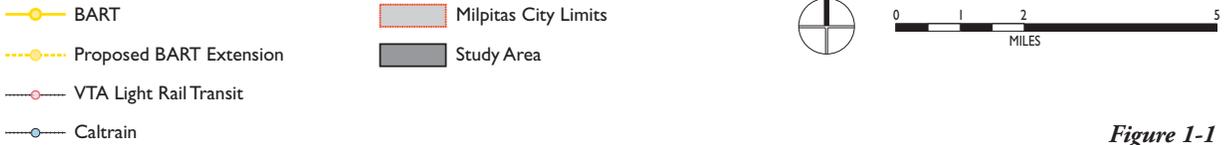
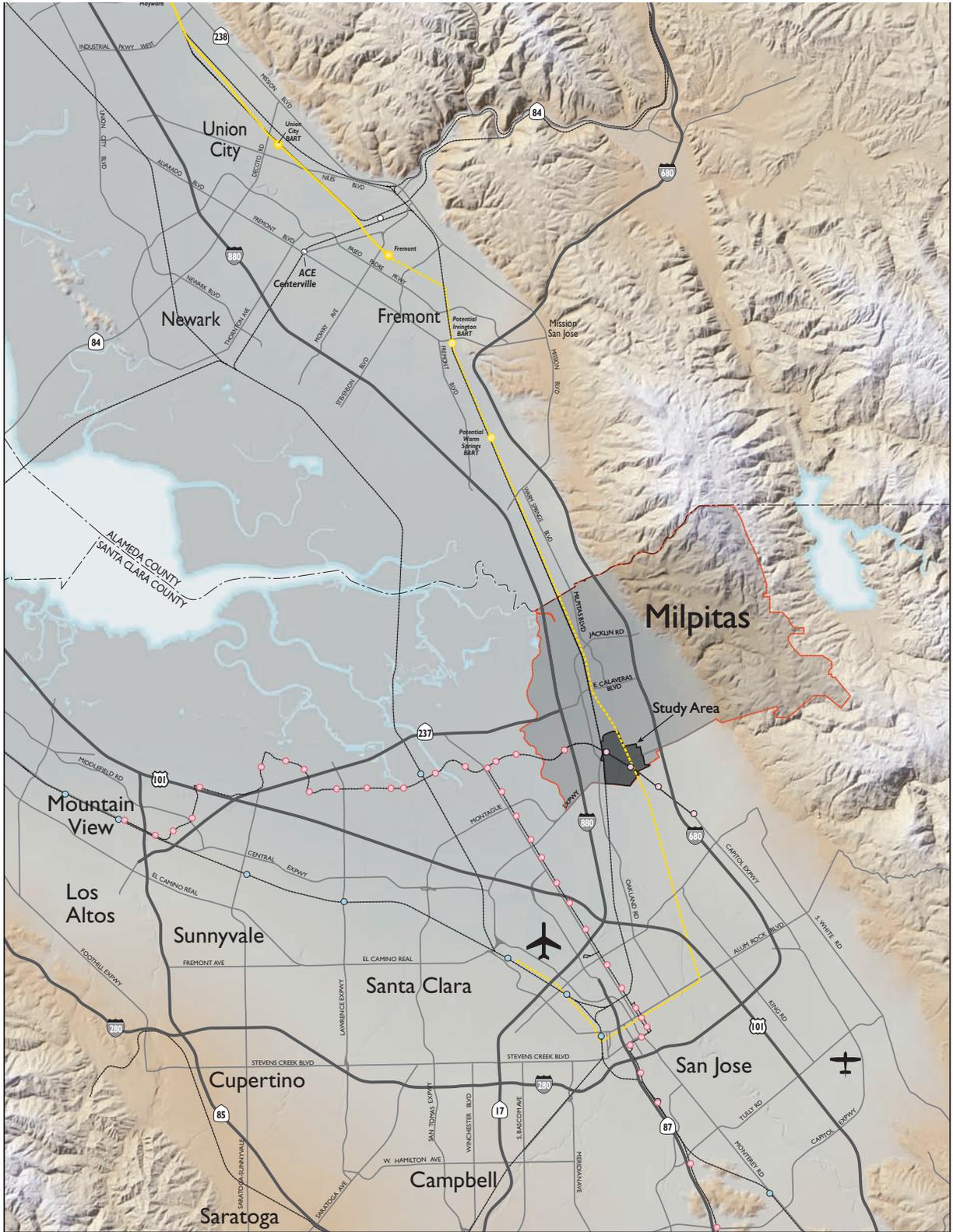
*An Existing Hotel Next to the Great Mall*



*The Crossings: Existing Residential Units*



*An Existing Vacant/Underutilized Site*



**Figure 1-1**  
**Regional Location**



*Vision – High Density Urban Neighborhood (San Francisco, CA)*



*Vision – Mix of Uses with Lively Pedestrian Streets Lined with Retail and Restaurants (Pasadena, CA)*



*Vision – Residential Neighborhoods Near Transit and Employment, with Good Pedestrian Connections (Hayward, CA)*

The Specific Plan not only establishes the land use vision, but also establishes specific policies, standards, and capital improvement projects that are necessary to achieve the vision. Detailed standards for street design and building form are provided. The Plan sets forth the public improvements and services needed to serve the Transit Area’s future residents and workers, including streets, parks, pedestrian/bike bridges, community facilities, sewer and water facilities, storm drainage, etc. The Plan includes an implementation strategy, and a financing strategy has been prepared as a separate document, to ensure that the Plan is fiscally responsible for both the City and for property owners.

## VISION

The City has established the following overall vision for the Milpitas Transit Area, balancing its goals for fiscal stability and quality development with regional objectives for housing and transportation.

### Vision Statement

*Create attractive high density urban neighborhoods with a mix of land uses around the light rail stations and future BART station in Milpitas. Create pedestrian connections so that residents, visitors, and workers will walk, bike, and take transit. Design streets and public spaces to create a lively and attractive street character, and a distinctive identity for each subdistrict.*

## GOALS

The following goals have guided the preparation of the Specific Plan and should be used to evaluate development proposals and any proposed future amendments to the Plan.

## Land Use

- Transition from older industrial uses to a high intensity mixed use area with housing, office, retail, restaurants, personal services, hotels, parks, and community facilities.
- Add a large amount of housing in order to meet regional housing needs. Adding housing improves the jobs/housing balance in the South Bay and can thereby reduce regional traffic congestion.
- Develop land uses and high densities that maximize transit ridership, so that land use planning supports the large public investment in transit facilities. Locate the highest densities closest to the transit stations.
- Provide a mix of land uses that responds to market demand over the next twenty years, and provides opportunities for complementary uses, such as by locating hotels and offices near retail and restaurants.
- Site neighborhood-serving retail uses in each subdistrict of the Transit Area so residents and workers can easily walk to shops, restaurants, and services.
- Develop retail and hotel uses and other revenue-generating uses to help support the cost of capital improvements and ongoing public services for residents and workers in the Transit Area.
- Minimize noise and traffic impacts on residences.



*Goal – Neighborhood-Serving Retail: Grocery Store and Sidewalk Cafe (San Mateo, CA)*



*Goal – Hotels and Retail Uses (San Mateo, CA)*



*Goal – An Employment Destination with Modern Office Buildings (Redwood City, CA)*



*Goal – High Density Residential Near Transit to Meet Regional Housing Needs and Maximize Transit Ridership (Redwood City, CA)*

**TRANSIT AREA PLAN VISION**

**Before**



*Montague Expressway*

**After**



*Piper/Montague Subarea*



*McCandless Drive*



## Community Design

- Build quality neighborhoods and commercial districts that are desirable in the marketplace and hold their value over time.
- Design an attractive pedestrian environment that encourages walking. Establish zoning and design guidelines for ground floor uses and facades, streets, sidewalks, landscaping, and lighting.
- In order to attract residents and businesses, establish a unique identity for each of the subdistricts in the Transit Area through the mix of land uses and the design of public improvements.
- Establish design standards for buildings and streets that create a unified and desirable street character on both sides of the street, with changes in land use and density occurring mid-block rather than across the street, and parking located behind structures.

## Circulation

- Create a new network of streets through the area that is appropriate for the mix of land uses and encourages walking, biking and transit use rather than auto trips.
- Divide the area into smaller two to three-acre blocks to facilitate direct and easy pedestrian access between different land uses and areas.
- Target a traffic “level of service” of E at all major intersections if feasible, and level of service D at all local intersections. However, level of service F may be acceptable during peak periods, in order to balance auto circulation needs with goals for pedestrian and bike circulation, and to encourage transit use and carpooling.
- Maximize the use of transit by residents and workers through the placement and density of land uses, and the creation of safe attractive pedestrian, bike, and bus routes to the light rail and BART stations.
- Create attractive comfortable pedestrian connections for the following types of trips between destinations:
  - residents to the BART and light rail stations;
  - workers from BART and light rail stations to offices;
  - office workers, hotel patrons, and other visitors to restaurants, retail, and entertainment;
  - residents to retail, personal services, and restaurants;
  - residents to parks, trails, schools, and community facilities; and
  - visitors, residents, workers, and students to the Great Mall.



*Goal – An Attractive Pedestrian Environment (San Mateo, CA)*



*Goal – Quality Neighborhoods and Districts with a Unique Identity (San Mateo, CA)*



*Goal – Attractive Pedestrian Connections in Mixed-Use Districts (Mountain View, CA)*



*Goal – Attractive Pedestrian Connections in Residential Areas (Santa Clara, CA)*



*Goal – Small Urban Parks for Passive Recreation (Milpitas, CA)*



*Goal – Larger Adult Playing Fields for Children's Recreation (Santa Clara, CA)*



*Goal – Recreation Facilities for Small Children (Mountain View, CA)*



*Goal – Linear Parks and Paths for Walking, Jogging, and Dog-Walking (Davis, CA)*

### **Parks and Public Spaces**

- Provide adequate developed park space to meet the active and passive recreation needs of Transit Area residents and workers.
- Provide for a range of activities within the parks, including: walking, jogging, picnicking, bicycling, arts and exercise classes for both children and adults, tennis courts, basketball courts, and sports playing fields.
- Distribute park space to ensure that all residents can access a park by walking without having to cross a major thoroughfare.
- Site parks in order to minimize impacts on existing property owners.
- Ensure that parks and public spaces are of an adequate size to provide a sense of identity and efficient maintenance.
- Implement trails that link into the citywide trail system in order to aid connectivity and leisure activities.

### **Public Services**

- Plan for areawide infrastructure in a coordinated fashion so that all properties in the area can be developed in accordance with the Specific Plan goals and standards. Infrastructure that must be provided on an areawide basis for the proposed mix of uses includes: new streets, improvements to existing streets, storm drainage, sewer, water, reclaimed water, flood protection, parks, and schools.
- Create a revenue stream from property tax, sales tax, community facilities district fees and other similar funding mechanisms that are adequate to pay for public services and facilities capital costs and on-going maintenance.
- Provide good quality schools, parks, and emergency services for the new residents, visitors, and businesses.
- Equitably allocate the responsibility for areawide infrastructure improvements among property owners and developers.

## 1.2 PROCESS FOR PREPARING THE SPECIFIC PLAN

The preparation of the Milpitas Transit Area Specific Plan began with the preparation of a Concept Plan. Over a six month period City staff, consultants, stakeholders, and the City Council worked together to prepare an overall vision for the area. Individual interviews were held with a variety of stakeholders, and two visioning workshops were conducted. A market study was prepared, and a variety of alternatives were considered. The Planning Commission and City Council reviewed the work and approved two alternatives for further consideration. The Milpitas Transit Area Concept Plan was adopted as a working document by the City Council in April 2005.

The next phase of the work focused on a study of development issues and potential environmental impacts. The following topics were studied in detail: market analysis, fiscal impacts, schools, parks, public services, transportation impacts, BART and railroad lines, urban design, air quality, biology, noise, hazardous materials, geology, and cultural resources. Based on this work, a report on Development Issues and Potential Environmental Impacts was prepared in April 2006, and a preferred plan was recommended. This was reviewed along with stakeholders at a meeting presenting the Notice of Preparation for the Environmental Impact Report and at a hearing before the Milpitas City Council.

Design standards and guidelines were the next focus, moving to a greater level of detail that included street dimensions, street landscaping, building heights and setbacks, and other related topics. These were reviewed with City staff from a variety of departments, and a stakeholders' workshop was held to discuss the recommended provisions. Property owners were given several weeks to study the material and comment. Based on further discussions with City staff, property owners, and public agencies, a revised preferred plan was prepared, and presented to the City Council along with a consideration of fiscal impacts. City Council endorsed the revised Preferred Plan on December 18, 2006.

In addition to the Specific Plan itself, an implementation plan was prepared that encompasses two components: zoning and development standards to execute the Plan on a regulatory level, and areawide infrastructure that must be installed over time to support the intensification of land use called for in the Specific Plan. This implementation plan was reviewed with City staff, and a final stakeholders meeting was held in August 2007. Simultaneously the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project was prepared. The Draft Plan and Draft EIR were released for public review in October 2007. The Revised Draft Plan and Final EIR were released in May 2008 for public review. The Plan was adopted on June 3, 2008 by the Milpitas City Council.



*Multiple stakeholder meetings were held at Milpitas City Hall to review land use strategies, explain environmental and development issues, and gather community feedback.*

### **1.3 RELATIONSHIP TO THE MIDTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN AND THE CITY OF MILPITAS GENERAL PLAN**

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The Transit Area was within the area covered by the Midtown Milpitas Specific Plan (except for a 40 acre area between Piper Drive and Milpitas Boulevard, and the Great Mall which was already outside the Midtown Specific Plan area.) The Midtown Specific Plan called for the creation of a detailed precise plan for the area near the proposed BART station. This plan, the Milpitas Transit Area Specific Plan, fulfills that requirement. The Transit Area Specific Plan will be independent of the Midtown Specific Plan when adopted. Amendments to the Midtown Specific Plan will be made to eliminate overlapping and redundant policies and references.

Once adopted, the Transit Area Specific Plan becomes a component of the City's General Plan and has binding legal authority to guide land use, circulation, and infrastructure in the Planning Area. The Transit Area Specific Plan is consistent with the General Plan as follows:

- The Transit Area Specific Plan furthers the Land Use Guiding Principles by providing a mixture of land uses that recognize Milpitas' role as a transit hub, and a center of housing and employment in the Silicon Valley.
- The Transit Area Specific Plan supports local and regional jobs/housing balance programs by providing additional employment and high-density housing adjacent to transit stations and employment centers.
- The Transit Area Specific Plan diversifies Milpitas' housing stock by providing additional high-density housing options adjacent to transit stations.
- The Transit Area Specific Plan facilitates a compact urban form by supporting more in-tense infill development.
- The Transit Area Specific Plan extends the city's park-like setting by providing for parks, creek-side trails, landscaped buffer areas, and other open spaces throughout the Transit Area.
- The Transit Area Specific Plan supports the provision of adequate schools through the payment of developer fees.
- The Transit Area Specific Plan improves the viability of pedestrian, bicycle and transit systems by including provisions such as wider sidewalks, streetscape improvements, pedestrian routes to transit stations and schools, and enhancements to the citywide trail network.
- The Transit Area Specific Plan facilitates the conservation of natural resources by providing "smart growth" through infill development, supporting alternative modes of transportation, increasing the use of recycled water, and improving parks and trails while serving the needs of the community.
- The Transit Area Specific Plan plans for community facilities and utilities commensurate with the present and anticipated needs of the Transit Area.

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## 1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT PREPARED FOR THE SPECIFIC PLAN

A programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared concurrently with preparation of the Specific Plan, pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Policies in the Specific Plan were prepared based on the analysis for the EIR to ensure that the plan minimizes or reduces significant environmental impacts to the extent feasible; in this way the plan is “self-mitigating.” Transportation analysis was conducted using a new model prepared by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) for analyzing regional circulation. The EIR undertook extensive quantitative analysis and modeling to assess service requirements for sewer, water, and storm drainage, including water supply and sewer treatment capacity as well as distribution and collection facilities. The EIR also made a full quantitative analysis of the buildout and traffic impacts of the existing General Plan policies, which were compared to those of the Transit Area Specific Plan project. Refer to the Milpitas Transit Area Specific Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report, Clearinghouse Number 2006032091, dated October 2007; and the Final Environmental Impact Report, dated May 2008.

### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The Milpitas Transit Area Specific Plan EIR assesses the implications of an assumed program of residential, commercial, industrial, and open space uses, which is described in Chapter 3. When specific development proposals are submitted to the City for development in the Transit Area, the City will determine whether or not the environmental effects of proposed projects were addressed in the Transit Area Plan EIR. If the City finds that a proposed development project will have no additional significant effect on the environment beyond those identified in the master environmental impact report and that no new or additional mitigation measures are required, the City shall make a written finding based upon the information contained in the development proposal’s initial study that it is within the scope of the Transit Area Plan EIR. If the City determines there are potential environmental impacts not studied in the EIR, or that environmental conditions have changed substantially since the EIR was prepared, the City could require further environmental review to determine appropriate revisions to the project, conditions of approval, or mitigation measures.

The maximum amount of development analyzed in the EIR is shown in Table 1-1 below. If the total amount of development in the Transit Area exceeds this amount, further environmental impact analysis will be required.

<b>Table 1-1: New Development Analyzed by the EIR</b>	
<b>Housing Units</b>	7,109
<b>Office (sq. ft.)</b>	993,843
<b>Retail (sq. ft.)</b>	287,075
<b>Hotel (rooms)</b>	350

## 1.5 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

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The following additional documents have been prepared to implement the Milpitas Transit Area Specific Plan and ensure that all governing documents are consistent. Those documents were considered by the Planning Commission and City Council as part of the package for enactment of the Milpitas Transit Area Specific Plan. The amendments are available as separate documents from the City Clerk and on the City’s website, and will also be incorporated into the General Plan, Midtown Specific Plan, and Zoning Code the next time those documents are updated:

- General Plan Amendment
- Midtown Specific Plan Amendment
- Zoning Text Amendments
- Zoning Map Amendments

Key next steps after adoption of the Milpitas Transit Area Specific Plan and related documents include the following actions. For more detail, see Chapter 7, Implementation.

- Establishment of impact fees to fund areawide infrastructure.
- Establishment of a new Community Facilities District, or amendment of the City’s existing Community Facilities District, to provide ongoing revenues for public services and facilities maintenance.

- Preparation of an areawide plan for storm drainage and street elevations.
- Planning for new parks – land acquisition, program, facilities design, phasing, and funding.
- Coordination with the school districts regarding new school facilities.
- Establishment of an interdepartmental review process for proposed development projects and required infrastructure.
- Planning for city services such as police, fire, and recreation facilities as the area is developed.
- Coordination with BART and the Valley Transportation Authority regarding land acquisition, design and implementation of the new Milpitas BART station.



*The Crossings - New housing in the Transit Area. Transitioning from an industrial area to a high density residential/mixed-use area will require additional public services and capital facilities.*

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