
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Community Plan has been prepared by the City of Fremont as an implementing action of the recently adopted General Plan. The Plan amends the General Plan 2035 and the current zoning designations in the Downtown area to enable the development of a vibrant mixed-use urban destination with street level commercial activities and mid-rise office and residential buildings. The Downtown Plan in draft form was previously known as the Midtown Community Plan.

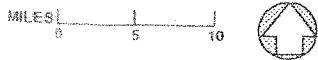
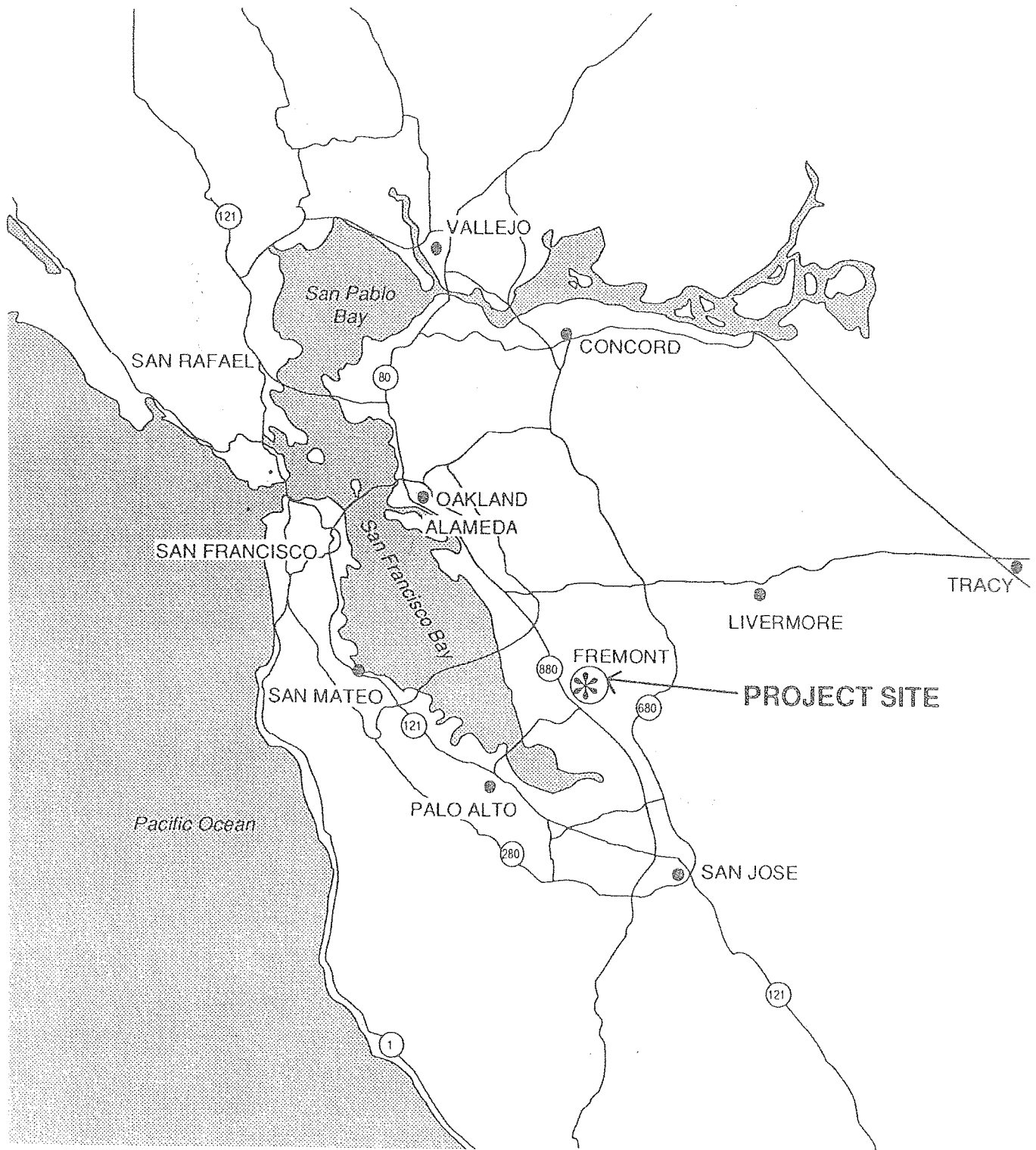
REGULATORY CONTEXT

Adoption of the Downtown Community Plan will necessitate an amendment to the City of Fremont's General Plan 2035 and modifications to the City's current zoning regulations.

FREMONT GENERAL PLAN 2035

Under the General Plan 2035, the entire 100-acre Downtown sub-area is within the broader City Center land use designation. The City Center land use designation reflects the intended nature of the area to be an urban core with a mix of retail, office, and residential uses. The City Center designation applies to the 460+ acre area in the heart of Fremont (see **Figure 3.1**). The area was envisioned as Fremont's downtown more than 50 years ago and today includes a mix of mostly auto-oriented commercial, office, civic, health care, and limited residential uses. Looking forward, City Center will become more urban in character, with more intense infill development and redevelopment, particularly within ½ mile of BART. Trees, sidewalks, benches, plazas, public art and other amenities that make the streets pedestrian-friendly and create a "Main Street" ambiance are envisioned. While the City Center includes local-serving uses, it is envisioned primarily as a regional commercial center, employment center, and entertainment and cultural center. The designation also accommodates mid to high-rise residential projects and mixed use projects incorporating housing above non-residential uses. Because of the large size of the City Center, it includes sub-area districts of which Downtown is the first to have a formally prepared Community Plan for its 100 acre project area.

Figure 3.1: Project Location



Non-residential projects in the City Center are subject to a minimum FAR of 0.80 and maximum FAR of 1.5. Mixed use projects with ground floor commercial and residential uses above are subject to a minimum FAR of 1.25 and maximum FAR of 2.5. FAR increases of up to 3.0 are permitted within the TOD overlay. Mixed use projects located within the TOD Overlay are subject to minimum residential density of 50 units per acre. Such sites or projects may be zoned for exclusive residential uses even though they fall within the City Center General Plan designation.

FREMONT ZONING ORDINANCE

The major portion of the Downtown area is zoned CBD (Central Business District), which is intended to provide for a concentration of retail, service, and office uses reflecting the needs of the entire city and the subregion. There are three areas designated Planned Development (P). One, P-2009-9, allows development of a civic park and 301 multi-family units known as Urban Housing and is located on 3.85 acres surrounded by Walnut Avenue, California Street and Beacon Avenue. A second area, P-2005-76, extends along both sides of Mt. Vernon Street allowing for mixed-use development (commercial space and residential use above at 50 – 70 units/acre). A third area, P-2008-177, is located at the northeast corner of Capitol Avenue and Hastings Street allowing a 4-story mixed-use (12 residential units over two levels of retail and office space). Planned development areas are intended to encourage and provide a means for effectuating desirable development, redevelopment, rehabilitation and conservation in the city, which features variations in siting, mixed land uses, and/or varied dwelling types.

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY PLAN OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The City of Fremont's vision for Downtown is to create a lively mixed-use, transit-oriented downtown as a sustainable neighborhood. The Downtown is a sub-district of the overall City Center and within the City Center Priority Development Area (PDA). The public realm will be more pedestrian-friendly and activated by street-level commercial, retail, civic uses and public open spaces that stimulate economic activity and entice high-quality, high-intensity development to the District. The building development patterns will change character from today's low-density, vehicular-oriented suburban development fronting surface parking lots to a mid-density, transit-oriented development directly fronting streets and sidewalks.

The Downtown Community Plan and Design Guidelines set forth the land use and design regulations within the District. The Plan outlines the vision, goals and objectives contained within the General Plan and the 2001 Central Business District Concept Plan and serves as the implementing tool in the review of public and private development projects within this District. Projects that foster the vision, goals and objectives are to be rewarded via

streamlined project review and, in earlier years, incentives to facilitate development. The Downtown Community Plan is expected to be implemented over an extended time period, between ten to twenty-five years.

The Downtown Community Plan sets the overall concept and design parameters for the District's new development patterns. A hybrid form-based code serves to guide future development in terms of building orientation, massing and architectural character while providing flexibility in the land uses to meet changing market demands. The design guidelines serve to direct development to a consistent level of quality and aesthetic, to ensure an improved public realm and an identifiable sense of place.

Finally, the City of Fremont seeks to create a model for sustainable development. As such, the Downtown Community Plan incorporates the standards necessary to achieve green building thresholds consistent with the United States Green Building Council's (USGBC) new Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) certification.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Downtown District Goals: The Goals for the Downtown redevelopment include five key elements:

- Create a social heart for the City
- Encourage economic development
- Create an identifiable civic center and public realm
- Leverage the BART Station for transit-oriented development
- Initiate a sustainable model neighborhood

Downtown District Objectives: The Objectives for Downtown are consistent with those of the City Center:

- Create a distinct and memorable downtown destination
- Encourage a vibrant district of mixed-use development
- Support economic vitality and expand business and retail opportunities for residents
- Improve the street + block pattern as well as the streetscape design and amenities
- Create a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environment

- Improve pedestrian connections to the Fremont BART station and the HUB Shopping Center
- Encourage a network of shared public and private parking facilities
- Reflect Fremont’s cultural diversity
- Encourage energy efficiency, green building construction and environmental stewardship
- Promote a thriving employment center that is a destination of choice

DEVELOPMENT ASSUMPTIONS

The Downtown Community Plan would increase the allowable density in the District to be in the range of 0.8 to 1.5 FAR.

In the near-term, the Downtown Community Plan assumes that commercial/retail development will total 443,100 gsf, City offices will total 250,000 gsf (with an additional 27,000 gsf for Performing Arts space), and depending on the mix of office and residential development resulting from market demand, between 705,500 gsf and 1,943,500 gsf of office development and between 404,500 gsf (860 units) and 1,642,500 gsf (2,680 units) of residential development would take place.

For the purposes of the environmental assessment, the following long-term development assumptions for the Downtown District under the Downtown Community Plan have been made by the City:

<u>Land Use Category</u>	<u>Total Development at Buildout</u>
Office	1,988,800 square feet
Civic	278,000 square feet (includes 28,000 gsf Performing Arts space)
Retail/Commercial	443,100 square feet
Residential	2,500 units
Open Space/Plaza	2.3 acres

There is currently a total of approximately 497,880 gsf of commercial/retail space and approximately 615,880 square feet of office space (including City Offices) within the Downtown District, and there are also approximately 11,200 gsf of housing (7 units) within the District at present. The level of development anticipated under the Downtown Community Plan assumes the redevelopment and intensification of the approximately 1,114,000 gsf of existing commercial/retail, office, and civic uses through 2035.

The long-term development assumptions consider an average buildout of 1.5 FAR throughout Downtown; however, any individual site in the district may have individually higher intensities of an allowable use ranging from residential to commercial. Design Guidelines and particular zoning standards will not impose height restrictions but establish design requirements for build-to lines at street property lines, pedestrian-oriented ground floors, parking standards, green building, public art, and materials and finishes. The intent of the Downtown Community Plan is to function primarily as a form-based code rather than a traditional use-based zoning code.

Office uses under the Downtown Community Plan will include general office, professional services and medical offices. Development anticipated under the Civic Center land use category includes consolidation of City office space and a new performing arts venue, with these uses coordinated around public open space and plazas. Retail/Commercial development (low-rise commercial, mid-rise commercial, and commercial/institutional campus) will include establishments that provide personal services, restaurants, retail shops and other uses consistent with downtown development patterns. Residential development will consist of high-density urban housing types, including low-rise residential, mid-rise residential, and live-work buildings. Minimum density guidelines for residential development will be 50 units per acre if projects are stand-alone residential development not integrated within mixed-use buildings.

Under the Downtown Community Plan, a key feature of creating a new identity for the Downtown District is a distinctive public realm, providing a variety of publicly accessible places for individual respite to large public gatherings, enriched by an extensive District Arts Program. The centerpiece of the District is the Civic Center, centrally located and providing a large open space with adjacent building facilities to support a variety of large community events for the City of Fremont. There are two locations for proposed community parks, both situated on City-owned property and adjacent to the proposed New Middle Road that services pedestrians and bicyclists moving to the Fremont BART station.

The Downtown Community Plan incorporates “complete streets” to accommodate all modes so that driving is an option, but not a necessity. Capitol Avenue would be extended to become a new primary thoroughfare (“main street”) through the District. A new north-south street (New Middle Road) would be added parallel to and east of Capitol Avenue to provide additional connectivity, access, and to supplement vehicle movements on Capitol Avenue. Three new east-west street would be developed between Capitol Avenue and the new north-south street: New North Street, New California Street, and New South Street. Where new roadways are proposed, new utility infrastructure (e.g., water mains, sanitary sewer lines and storm drain lines) would also be installed, and some existing water mains within the District would be removed.

The Downtown Community Plan would establish minimum and maximum off-street parking ratio requirements as follows:

Type of Use	Minimum (non-exclusive use)	Minimum (exclusive use)	Maximum
Assembly Uses	1:5 seats	1:4 seats	1:3 seats
Commercial Uses (non-medical)	1:400 sf	1:300 sf	1:200 sf
Medical Uses	1:300 sf	1:250 sf	1:200 sf
Residential Uses	0.75 spaces/unit	1 space/unit	2 spaces/unit

Projects wishing to provide less parking than the required minimum may elect to secure off-site parking through an agreement, pay an in-lieu fee, or if proposed reduce their minimum parking burden by agreeing to provide non-exclusive parking. Projects wishing to exceed the maximum parking shall contribute to an annual impact fee used to assist with Transportation Demand Management Programs within the District. Prior to authorizing on-site parking in excess of the parking maximums, the project developer can demonstrate that other options have been evaluated to reduce on-site parking demand by other methods, including:

- Parking demand management strategies such as parking cash-out for employees and unbundled parking for residents; and
- Vehicle trip reduction strategies, such as subsidized transit passes, car sharing programs, or free employee/visitor shuttle from BART.

The Downtown Community Plan includes Transportation Demand Management (TDM) implementation programs to reduce vehicle travel and parking demand to the maximum extent feasible. These include City assistance in the formation and management of a Transportation Management Association (TMA), exploration of the feasibility of requiring all new development to provide transit passes to employees and residents, exploring the feasibility of requiring new development projects to implement on-site car sharing programs for use by their residents or employees, promoting the Guaranteed Ride Home program (sponsored by 511.org), exploring the feasibility of a trolley bus shuttle which would circulate in the Downtown District when development has created sufficient demand, and exploring the feasibility of using TMA funds to pay for improvements to transit, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. The TMA may be privately or publicly operated or a partnership of public and private entities. Due to the limited geographic area and concentration of uses in the Downtown and City Center overall, only a limited number of shuttle/bus vehicles would be needed to serve the area and would be able to be accommodated in the future through use of existing facilities in the City of Fremont.

ANTICIPATED ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

With adoption of the Downtown Community Plan, the General Plan 2035 would be amended as needed and the current zoning ordinance would be modified to enable more intensive development in the Downtown area than would currently be permitted by the CBD zoning. The applicable portions of the current zoning ordinance would be modified to reflect the changes identified in the Downtown Community Plan. Once these changes in the zoning ordinance have been made following adoption of the Downtown Community Plan, implementation would be accomplished through the actions of the Zoning Administrator, the Zoning Adjustments Board, the Planning Commission and the City Council as individual development projects proposed in the Downtown area come forward for City review and approval.

USE OF THE EIR

The Downtown Community Plan Supplemental EIR will be the primary document for CEQA clearance of subsequent development activities undertaken in reliance upon goals and objectives of the Plan, this includes:

- Amend the General Plan
- Amend Zoning Code
- Amend Design Stands and Specifications
- Construction of new residential units
- Construction of new retail and commercial uses
- Construction of new office uses
- Construction of a Civic Center and City Hall
- Demolition of existing buildings, site improvements, landscaping
- Utility infrastructure upgrades
- Street improvements and modifications, including roadways, sidewalks, bike lanes, and intersection operations
- Property Acquisition and Sale
- Extension of Capitol Avenue from State Street to Fremont Boulevard, including acquisition of right-of-way.

- Public Art Program
- Operation of Transportation Demand Management Association, including providing parking and shuttle resources

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