

# Live, Work, Play

## A Toolkit for Mixed-Use Development in Sunnyvale



City of Sunnyvale

Community Development Department, Planning Division

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# Introduction



Mixed-use development combines two or more types of land use into a building or set of buildings that are physically and functionally integrated and mutually

supporting. This can be some combination of residential, commercial, industrial, office, institutional, or other land uses.

Mixed-use development can be vertical or horizontal. Vertical mixed-use occurs when different uses inhabit the same building and sit atop one another, such as housing or offices over ground-floor retail. Horizontal mixed-use occurs when uses are placed next to each other, such as an apartment building adjacent to offices, restaurants, or retail shops. Mixed-use areas often encompass the main street/downtown, activity center, or commercial corridor of a local community, district, or neighborhood.

Mixed-use development can reduce dependence on driving by promoting walkability and bikeability, enabling trip-linking (combining several trips into one), connecting to public transit, and supporting transit-oriented development. Less automobile dependence reduces land consumption, energy use and air pollution. Mixed-use also provides:

- Independence of movement, especially for the young and the elderly who can conveniently walk, cycle, or ride transit;
- Support for those who work at home, by making services and amenities more accessible; and
- A variety of housing choices, so that the young and old, singles and families, and those of varying economic ability may find places to live.

## Purpose

The design guidelines in this toolkit were formulated to shape the built form and character of mixed-use developments in Sunnyvale. Commercial development is constantly reinventing itself. Strip malls are being transformed to more pedestrian-friendly shopping experiences; big box stores and auto dealerships are evolving into mixed-use centers with entertainment uses; and malls are turning themselves “inside-out,” using storefronts that mimic traditional downtowns. Cities are converting brownfields into urban villages with housing,

retail, entertainment, and civic uses, and e-commerce is spawning small businesses in old warehouses and along main streets. All of these innovations pose opportunities and challenges for managing growth in our communities.

Mixed-use development guidelines establish a regulatory framework to meet the community expectations, and are used in conjunction with zoning regulations. This toolkit is a part of the Citywide Design Guidelines, and consists of policy statements and guidelines to work with typical zoning standards, such as height, setbacks, density, and other regulations.



# Guiding principles

While creating successful mixed-use projects is more art than science, there are some general principles that can be followed. The guiding principles listed below should be observed by developers as they design mixed-use projects, by City officials as they review such projects, and by residents as they consider proposed developments in their neighborhood.

## ① Diversity of uses

Increase the diversity and range of uses and activities, such as housing, retail, services, offices and civic or community facilities; this will attract activity at different times of the day at appropriate locations. At the same time, care should be taken to avoid token amounts of any one type of use.



## ② Appropriate mix of uses

Ensure the uses complement other uses on site and are compatible with the surrounding area.

## ③ Integration with existing neighborhoods

Minimize potential negative impacts on neighboring properties by transitioning the size, scale and character of mixed-use development to respect existing adjacent

neighborhoods. Efforts should also be taken to protect viable and legal non-conforming businesses and to address concerns of existing adjacent residents along with the expectations of new residents of mixed-use development.



#### ④ Pedestrian orientation

Incorporate pedestrian-friendly site design with direct walking and bicycling connections within the site and to surrounding areas, with pedestrian-oriented architecture, and well-defined street edges, active ground floors and interesting building details.



#### ⑤ Flexible transportation and parking approach

Parking requirements can be reduced to reflect the less-car-dependent nature of mixed-use, availability of transit and potential for shared parking. Creative solutions—such as shared parking, unbundled parking, car sharing and aggressive transportation-demand management measures—should be explored.

#### ⑥ Focal point for the community

Mixed-use development should serve as a community focal point for the neighborhood(s) it serves. It should be located at higher-profile locations; occupy sites of at least one acre; be easy to access by foot, transit and bicycle; feature gateway or landmark elements; incorporate inviting gathering places and community activities; and offer a central space for community activities.



#### ⑦ Attractive design

Mixed-use development should exhibit distinctive and attractive architecture, featuring a variety of compatible building types and sizes. It should appear “organic,” as if having been built



over time, rather than all at once; balance creativity and diversity in architectural styles with a sense of cohesion; use styles and details that reflect Sunnyvale's context and history; and preserve and highlight any existing historical, cultural or environmental resources.

### ⑧ Environmental sustainability

Incorporate green building techniques and infrastructure in building design for the efficient use of energy, water and construction materials and waste reduction.



### ⑨ Coordination of development strategies

Coordinate planning and economic-development strategies to help increase the range of uses at mixed-use developments ~~with flexible zoning regulations; in particular, to~~ encourage neighborhood-serving uses—especially food outlets and everyday services—to attract surrounding residents and employees.



# Site elements guidelines

The location of mixed-use developments is an important part of the feasibility and success of projects. The mix of uses should be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood, and the buildings sited in a way that minimizes impacts to adjacent uses. The following criteria address the siting and area-wide consideration for mixed-use developments in Sunnyvale.

## Site selection

### Intent

Mixed-use development is appropriate in downtowns, neighborhood-oriented centers, transit nodes, main streets, and some community commercial centers. Locating stores, offices, residences, public services, and recreation spaces within walking distance of each other in these locations promotes: less dependence on automobiles, activated public and private spaces, and the availability of living, shopping and employment opportunities.

### Guidelines (SS)

- SS-1** A mixed-use project site should be close to transit stops, such as Caltrain and VTA light rail, be compatible with surrounding uses, maintain the look and feel of the existing neighborhood, and protect existing use patterns that are consistent with the City's General Plan.
- SS-2** Take ~~advantage of opportunities for infill and redevelopment while taking~~ into consideration adjoining

uses when designing projects and avoid designs that limit light to surrounding properties, substantially increase noise, or significantly change the character of the area.

- SS-3** The design of each mixed-use project site should contribute to the sense of place and evolving character in the area.

## Consistency with surrounding area

### Intent

There are areas of the City that contain opportunities for redevelopment on underutilized sites. The design of infill development must be sensitive to the existing neighborhood context and positively contribute to the public realm. The compatibility of new development with existing development is especially important when new development includes new uses or higher densities. Good site design must carefully balance the need to respond to the existing context with the objective of introducing new development that can improve the character and the scale of the surrounding area. Areas part of a larger plan

area that transforms the use pattern from industrial to mixed-use should allow different uses, such as employment and residential uses adjacent to each other.

### Guidelines (SA)

- SA-1** Encourage development which is sensitive to the character and scale of surrounding development, with particular attention to transition areas in which different uses may have coexisted for years or even decades.
- SA-2** The design of each mixed-use project site shall contribute to creating a sense of place and character in the area.
- SA-3** Any project site planning must consider the internal organization of a development project and the external relationship with the public right-of-way and other projects.
- SA-4** Coordination between multiple sites can help to develop or maintain a consistent community character. New projects need to consider adjacent sites to identify potential opportunities for the coordination of building programs, site amenities and functional operations.
- SA-5** Develop shared facilities such as driveways, parking areas, plazas and walkways in order to increase pedestrian use and to allow access across separate properties. On larger sites with multiple buildings, design parking areas and open spaces so several buildings can share them.
- SA-6** Coordinate site designs with existing development on adjoining properties to avoid creating excessive noise or

intrusions on privacy, particularly when development is adjacent to sensitive uses such as housing.

- SA-7** ~~Ensure neighboring homes are not impacted by mixed~~Mixed-use project elements, such as balconies, deliveries and trash storage, employee smoking areas, or shading for solar opportunities, should be designed to minimize impacts on surrounding uses.

### Block pattern and size

#### Intent

The City's goals include improving circulation and connectivity for all modes, including pedestrians, cyclists and transit riders. One of the most important considerations in achieving this goal is block size and the pattern of streets.



*Short city blocks—like those of Portland, OR—create multiple access routes in walkable increments in all directions and a finer-scaled, diversified pedestrian experience.*

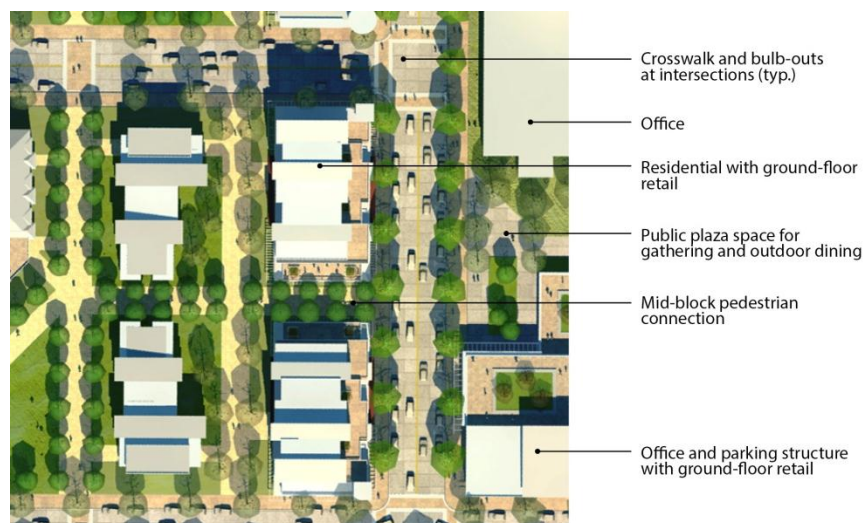
In general, block sizes of approximately 300 feet on a side are ideal as they allow multiple circulation routes in walkable increments in all directions. At an average walking pace, this means that each block length can be traversed in just over a minute, thus creating a finer-scaled, diversified pedestrian experience. Such block sizes also provide multiple opportunities for vehicular traffic circulation as well as for access to land and buildings.

Many areas of the city have not been developed in this pattern, but with new development of existing, large parcels there is an opportunity to consider a more fine-grained pattern of streets,

walkways, or service lanes that can help achieve this improved circulation pattern.

### Guidelines (BP)

- BP-1** Wherever possible, establish a grid of public streets and walkways, and a block pattern with block sizes of approximately 300 feet on a side.
- BP-2** Limit maximum street block lengths between public streets to a maximum of 400 feet (as an example, the 100 block of Murphy Avenue is approximately 550 feet in length).
- BP-3** Where block lengths exceed approximately 300 feet, provide mid-block pedestrian connections. Mid-block connections may take the form of a pedestrian access way or a shared pedestrian and emergency-services path.
- BP-4** To the extent feasible, add publicly accessible pathways in existing development areas where street connectivity is limited.
- BP-5** Encourage ~~smaller~~ buildings that provide easy access to and through each building location.



*Mid-block pedestrian connections should be provided where block lengths exceed approximately 300 feet.*

### Minimum lot size

#### Intent

Mixed-use projects typically require unique features and design, including parking for different types of uses, appropriate separation between the uses on site, and different open areas for use by each use type. If taken together, these features require sufficient land to work effectively. A small site might not have available the area for features necessary to provide a quality mixed-use project. Although small sites developed into mixed-use projects individually may forgo the opportunity for parcel assembly where more efficient designs could be incorporated, several small lots developed into mixed-use can share infrastructure such as parking and open space.

### Guidelines (ML)

**ML-1** Minimum 1-acre parcel for mixed-use projects with residential components.

**ML-2** ~~Encourage parcels less than one acre in size should be assembled with other properties in order to make a mixed-use project feasible and properly scaled for properties smaller than one acre in size.~~

### Separation of uses

#### Intent

Ensure the compatibility of commercial and residential uses that share a site. Encourage ground floor uses that activate the site, including retail, restaurants and customer-oriented office uses (such as real estate, insurance, offices). ~~A~~avoid ground floor office space in vertical mixed-use buildings.

### Guidelines (SU)

**SU-1** Permanent commercial loading areas should be located as far as possible from residential units and should be completely screened from view from adjacent residential portions of the project. Use of loading and unloading zones should be staggered and be located to minimize interference with traffic flow.

**SU-2** In order to provide security and privacy for residents, provide s~~Separate gates for access to residential uses and residential parking areas. S~~as well as for securing~~commercial parking areas when businesses are closed, can provide additional security for residents and other~~



property users. Design parking areas to provide residential parking needs when allowing shared parking.

**SU-3** Loading and unloading zones should provide adequate space for maneuvering into and out of a loading position without impacting residential uses on site.

**SU-4** Mixed-use projects with restaurants in the complex must be designed so venting is incorporated into the building design to avoid impacts on residents or others users of the property.

## Site planning

### Intent

Site development and the locations of buildings relative to the street and sidewalk have a significant effect on the character of the pedestrian environment. Rather than being set back behind surface parking and large planted setbacks, new development should have a more pedestrian-friendly and visually interesting character and should be located adjoining the public environment of streets and walkways. Building setbacks will vary by street type (consult the City's zoning code for detailed standards).

Whenever possible, new structures should be clustered for a vertical mixed-use project. This creates plazas and pedestrian malls and prevents long "barracks-like" rows of structures. When clustering is impractical, a visual link between separate structures should be established. This link can be accomplished through the use of arcades, trellises, or other open structures. Developing a complex of buildings rather than a single large structure can

break up the visual bulk and scale of a project, and can provide pedestrian plazas, courtyards and other outdoor gathering areas.

### Guidelines—Building design and orientation (SP-1)

**SP-1.1** Site buildings adjacent to the street, maximizing building frontage along primary streets (boulevards, local streets and pedestrian retail streets).

**SP-1.2** Activate the street and sidewalk by providing active ground floor uses, locating building entries and windows in appropriate locations, and providing pedestrian-scaled elements.

**SP-1.3** Emphasize building entries with small entry plazas, vertical massing, and architectural elements such as awnings, arcades or porticos. Consider providing at least 15 percent of the building façade to be stepped back beyond the setback. This allows entry for courts, public plazas, and building articulation at the ground level.

**SP-1.43** Consider sunlight and shadow on buildings and open spaces when locating building orientation and height.



*Rather than being set back behind parking lots, buildings should reinforce street edges and corners. This creates a more urban and visually interesting character.*

**SP-1.54** Proper placement and size of a building can help to reduce the air circulation or wind tunnel that is created between the new and existing buildings.

**SP-1.65** Placement of structures should consider the existing built context of the commercial area, the location of incompatible land uses, the location of major traffic generators and air quality pollutants, as well as an analysis of a site's characteristics and particular influences.

**SP-1.76** Building orientation and landscaping should minimize a direct line of sight into adjacent residential private open space.

**SP-1.87** Buildings must be located where they can connect to the public realm, but they must also be arranged within the site so that appropriate space is provided for parking, outdoor seating and other activities.



*Transition zones for ground-level residential provide privacy and separation from the street through the use of stoops, raised floors and landscaping.*

### **Guidelines—Ground floor space (SP-2)**

**SP-2.1** Include a transition zone for ground-level residential on non-retail streets to provide privacy and separation from the street. Within the transition zone stoops, raised floors and private gardens are encouraged.

**SP-2.2** Incorporate ground floor retail as a compatible use with office and residential uses, including live/work units.

**SP-2.3** Locate pedestrian-friendly uses along the front of the property to encourage a safe, inviting and comfortable environment.

~~**SP-2.4** Place entrance doors and windows for retail uses fronting directly onto the street at ground level.~~

### Guidelines—Setbacks and heights (SP-3)

**SP-3.1** Densities, intensities and building heights should step down where developments abut low-density residential properties.

**SP-3.2** Multiple-story buildings should be stepped back from the street edge at upper levels to not overwhelm the street feel of the building and to allow sunlight onto the street.

**SP-3.3** Setbacks for portions of façade for ground-floor retail can be reduced to emphasize the retail zone and widen sidewalks when entries face the street as follows:

- ~~• Up to five feet maximum setback from the property line, with zero allowed setback along El Camino Real.~~
- Contiguous with the sidewalk grade and accessible to the public.
- ~~• May be devoted to outdoor dining and merchandising uses.~~
- Sidewalk widths should be increased where multiple-story buildings are built close to the sidewalk.
- A minimum sidewalk width of 15 feet should be used if a building three-stories or greater is built to the sidewalk line.

### Guidelines—Compatibility (SP-4)

**SP-4.1** Maintain neighborhood and street character by locating residential uses across the street from one another where possible.

**SP-4.2** Consider existing adjacent land uses during site planning to locate compatible uses next to each other.

**SP-4.3** Avoid public access at the rear of commercial structures when adjacent to potentially incompatible uses.

**SP-4.4** Design buildings so that the height, massing, setbacks and design character are compatible with surrounding buildings.

**SP-4.5** Link compatible residential and nonresidential uses by utilizing access roads, walkways, common landscape areas, building orientation, and unfenced property lines.

### Guidelines—Circulation (SP-5)

**SP-5.1** ~~Consider Orient residential, public and serviceservice and access needs and locate uses appropriately on site~~ to accommodate vehicular circulation while also ~~and~~ mitigating pedestrian and vehicular conflicts.

**SP-5.2** Private drives should be designed as pedestrian-friendly streets that ~~are a natural extension of~~ match the surrounding neighborhood.

**SP-5.3** Whenever possible, locate residential site entries on side streets in order to minimize pedestrian/vehicular conflicts. Avoid designs that incorporate shared access between commercial service uses and residential uses.

**SP-5.4** Encourage convenient and direct pedestrian connections to adjacent retail uses and transit stops.



# Building design guidelines

The purpose of urban design guidelines for mixed-use development is to create an attractive built environment; enhance the public realm, neighborhood identity and livability; facilitate the role of private development; and seek to minimize negative impacts, particularly on neighboring properties. The following building design guidelines were formulated to shape the built form and character of mixed-use developments in Sunnyvale.

## Building massing and articulation

### Intent

Varying the massing of buildings will help reduce their apparent scale, ensuring a comfortable and attractive environment. New buildings and additions should be delineated both vertically and horizontally to reflect a human scale. Building massing includes consideration of the bulk and dimensions of various parts of a building. Articulation includes potential variations in the various planes of the building such as roofs and façades.

### Guidelines (BM)

- BMA-1** Incorporate within the project architecture a sense of harmony and human scale, while providing for visual interest and individual unit identity, as well as privacy and security for each resident and the project as a whole.
- BMA-2** Reduce the apparent bulk of a building by breaking it into several smaller masses.



*Breaking a large building into smaller masses and varying the roof line with architectural elements are effective ways to reduce its apparent bulk.*

- BMA-3** Define and add variations in the roofline with architectural elements such as fascias, eaves and gables.



**BMA-4** In the massing and articulation of building façades, consider the impacts of shade and wind on important open space, pedestrian corridors, retail streets and adjacent properties.

**BMA-5** Screen mechanical and other equipment from sight whether on roofs or in ground-level service areas.

## Building design and architecture

### Intent

Build and maintain a neighborhood with diversity in architectural styles, building type, materials and details, building square footage, setbacks, lot widths, and landscaping. No one architectural theme is being promoted, but rather the emphasis is to promote variety within a traditional neighborhood design framework. There should be a soft, attractive, and smooth transition between commercial properties and residential neighborhoods. ~~Care~~caution should be exercised when considering architectural styles or detailing that have recently become popular, but have not yet stood the test of time, but innovative designs can provide unique perspective to the Sunnyvale built environment. In new construction, historic styles that cannot be replicated gracefully should be avoided. Projects located at the intersection of two streets should be more prominent. More people pass by corner sites, and the buildings on these sites are more visible. The design of corner sites should acknowledge and celebrate this prominence, and it should help to define the edges of the street intersection.

### Guidelines—Architecture (BD-1)

**BD-1.1** Façades of buildings that face the street should incorporate human-scale detailing through the varied use of reveals, belt courses, cornices, expression of structural or architectural bays, recessed windows or doors, material or material module changes, color and/or texture differences, ~~or~~ strongly expressed mullions, or awnings, arcades or porticos.

**BD-1.2** Architectural features should be used to provide weather protection for pedestrians and highlight building features and entries.

**BD-1.3** Include special architectural and design features on buildings located at corners, such as taller building elements or architectural detail, but respect adjacent residential uses and building massing. Additional corner treatments might include a rounded or angled facet on a corner building entrance or an embedded corner tower.

**BD-1.4** Corner buildings should have a strong tie to the front setback lines of each street.

**BD-1.5** Angled building corners or open plazas are encouraged at corner locations.

**BD-1.6** Place buildings located on street corners so that they ~~meet the corner~~ emphasize a corner feature, or use a small setback to provide a public plaza with direct access to the building.

- BD-1.7** Provide a high percentage of windows on the ground-floor façades of commercial buildings to facilitate greater visual transparency.

#### Guidelines—Mass (BD-2)

- BD-2.1** Create modules of 25 to 50 foot wide as traditionally found in Main Street environments.
- BD-2.2** A clear visual division between upper and lower floors should be incorporated through a change in materials, colors, and use of canopies and awnings.
- BD-2.3** Use quality building materials and colors and help establish a human scale while providing visual interest.

#### Guidelines—Fixtures (BD-3)

- BD-3.1** Awnings and canopies should be used to emphasize the ground floor commercial uses.
- BD-3.2** Upper floor balconies are encouraged.
- BD-3.3** Decorative lighting fixtures are encouraged on commercial storefronts, but attention should be paid to residential uses above or adjacent to the lighting.
- BD-3.4** Subdued signage and signage lighting that is compatible with the residential uses should be used. These should be designed into the project at an earlier stage.

### Building height

#### Intent

Allowable building heights will differ based on location and land use. ~~The goal should be to maximize heights along corridors,~~

~~especially at intersections, and to step them~~ Step down buildings next to existing residential neighborhoods and close to sidewalks or roadways to provide a transition in scale (the zoning code contains more detailed standards). Beyond prescribed standards, other considerations regarding the height of buildings and building elements, including the ones listed below, should guide the design of mixed-use projects.



*Gateways with taller buildings and distinctive architectural design should be established at major intersections.*

#### Guidelines

- BH-1** The height of buildings should provide for a human scale to the overall streetscape while respecting surrounding development in the area. Building height should not exceed that specified by the City Zoning Ordinance, ~~except for roof elements (as provided in the zoning code).~~

**BH-2** Buildings should be designed taking into account adjacent uses and buildings, and a new building should not block solar access.

**BH-3** Vary building heights in the following situations:

- Around parks to maintain maximum daylight/sky exposure and pedestrian scale.
- Adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods, stepping down to two or three stories.
- At major street intersections, establish gateways through taller building heights with distinctive architectural design.
- To break up buildings greater than 100 feet in length.

**BH-4** Maximize sky exposure and views along streets and at public spaces by keeping sightlines and visual axes open and by stepping back the upper stories of buildings.

**BO-1.2** Orient the primary façades and entrance areas of all buildings to the street, open space areas, or other pedestrian-oriented circulation areas, but do not obstruct the public right-of-way.

**BO-1.3** Encourage windows and storefronts at the street level and ground floor with clear, non-reflective glazing.

**BO-1.4** Emphasize building entries with small entry plazas, vertical massing, and architectural elements such as awnings, arcades, or porticos; design entries so that they are clearly identifiable from the street; provide a walkway leading from the street to the building entrance if not located directly off of a sidewalk.

## Building orientation, entries and façades

### Intent

An interesting and active ground level helps to create pedestrian comfort, especially where access to transit and to local amenities is desired. The street, sidewalk and open space/plazas can be activated through strategic uses, locations of building entries and windows, and through building design.

### General guidelines (BO-1)

**BO-1.1** Activate plazas with adjacent ground level retail uses and other active building uses, such as personal services that include real estate or insurance office-type uses.



*Emphasize building entries so that they are clearly identifiable from the street with entry plazas and architectural elements such as awnings, arcades or porticos.*

- BO-1.5** Enhance building entries and the adjoining pedestrian realm with plazas and landscaping.
- BO-1.6** Design the floor-to-ceiling height of the first floor to be greater than that of upper floors to accommodate ground-floor retail space where permitted. Generally, the height should be 15–20 feet.
- BO-1.7** Include features that add depth, shadow and architectural interest, such as balconies, recesses, cornices, bay windows, and step-backs at upper floors, consistent with the building's style.

- BO-1.8** Limit blank walls to no more than 30 percent, or 20 linear feet, of the façade of a building on any pedestrian way or street without being interrupted by a window or primary entry.
- BO-1.9** Place residential entries on quieter, less-trafficked street frontages.
- BO-1.10** For retail development, orient multiple store entries to the plaza in addition to street-side entrances. Utilize outdoor plazas for cafés or other outdoor retail uses.

#### **Guidelines—Ground level and entry designs (BO-2)**

- BO-2.1** Ground-floor storefronts should have a transparent appearance. ~~The types~~ Tenants of commercial uses ~~selected~~ should be discouraged from preclude the use ~~of~~ ing draperies and blinds ~~to shut off transparency~~.
- BO-2.2** Recessed commercial vestibule entries are encouraged.
- BO-2.3** Decorative walls and/or enhanced landscaping should be used at main entrances. Special paving, raised medians and gateway structures should also be considered.





*Building entrances should face the street, without obstructing the public right-of-way. Windows and storefronts with clear, non-reflective glazing at street level enhance the pedestrian environment.*

- BO-2.4** For corner sites, the main entry to buildings should be emphasized through flanked columns, decorative fixtures, a recessed entryway within a larger arched or cased decorative opening, or a portico (formal porch).
- BO-2.5** Corner buildings should feature angled entrances and plazas and continue storefronts on side streets.
- BO-2.6** Locate the main entrance of corner buildings at the corner, where feasible.
- BO-2.7** Architectural, landscaping and furniture at ground level is important for pedestrian interest.

**BO-2.8** For pedestrian retail streets in downtown, ~~locate-when~~ the primary first floor retail building façade is located at the property line, ~~include-with~~ recessed spaces for seating. Portions of the ground-level street façade can vary in setback to accommodate pedestrians and emphasize the retail zone.

### Guidelines—Residential (BO-3)

- BO-3.1** Locate individual residential entries on quieter frontages where possible.
- BO-3.2** Locate grand, multi-unit residential entry lobbies on pedestrian-friendly streets.
- BO-3.3** Consider building orientation, height and fenestration to capture sunlight for residential units.
- BO-3.4** To provide privacy and separation from the street for ground-level residential unit, consider stoops, raised floors and private gardens.

### Building materials

#### Intent

Building materials help to define the character and scale of a building. The use of materials should convey durability and performance, as well as maximum feasible transparency. Sustainable criteria should influence all building design.

Any project proposed in Sunnyvale should take care to include the highest quality, sustainable designs and materials in order to meet the goals of the City. The State CalGreen program and City

green building program maintain high standards in this area, but mixed-use projects should be encouraged to go beyond the green building minimum standards.

### Guidelines (BM)

- BM-1** Throughout the exterior and public interior spaces of the buildings, use stone, brick, wood and other high-quality, durable architectural materials and finishes that provide a sense of permanence.
- BM-2** To minimize the overall environmental impact of development, give preference to sustainable materials, buildings systems, and technologies over conventional methods.
- BM-3** At a minimum, new buildings and development should meet city and state codes, guidelines and standards for green building practices and use of sustainable materials. Sustainable materials could include: solar panels, low-volatile organic compounds (VOC) materials and paints, sustainably-harvested or recycled lumber, on-demand hot water heaters, energy efficient appliances, green and cool roofs, and local stone and building materials.
- BM-4** Employ accent materials such as tile insets or natural stone especially, at the ground level to articulate vertical wall elements and accent elements such as corners; and also to add texture, color, and visual interest along all pedestrian corridors.



*Accent materials such as tile inserts or natural stone should be employed at the ground level to add texture, color and visual interest.*

- BM-5** Include “green infrastructure,” such as on-site measures for renewable-energy production and treatment and reuse of stormwater and graywater where feasible.

### Gathering places and open space

#### Intent

Outdoor spaces and amenities should enliven the sidewalk level and provide for private open space for shoppers, employees, and residents. A thoughtfully designed site can include small plazas, piazzas, courtyards and other outdoor spaces, or be oriented towards existing outdoor spaces. These spaces can create a visual connection to the public realm as well as a physical transition zone between the building and the street. They provide important spaces for formal and informal community gatherings,

and their design should be coordinated with new development. While these areas should be large enough to accommodate everyone who wants to use them, they should also be small enough to create an active, lively feel when they are occupied.

### Guidelines—Scale (OS-1)

- OS-1.1** Outdoor spaces should be appropriately scaled for the intended use and be designed to include safety and security measures.
- OS-1.2** Common open space should be provided in large, meaningful areas and not fragmented or consist of “leftover” land. Large areas can be imaginatively developed and economically maintained. Without sufficient area, common open space cannot serve the purpose for which it is intended.
- OS-1.3** Projects should strive to include a minimum 10% of lot area of public and private open space in the form of pocket parks, courtyards and plazas.

### Guidelines—Open space (OS-2)

- OS-2.1** A variety of outdoor spaces should be considered, including passive and active open spaces.
- OS-2.2** A small portion of the public open space may be used for more-private yet enlivening uses such as outdoor dining and building entrances.
- OS-2.3** Public art should be included as part of open space improvements, per the requirements of relevant Sunnyvale public art ordinances.

- OS-2.4** All courtyards and plazas shall be designed and oriented in a way that allows the majority of the space to have direct sunlight for the duration of the day to eliminate damp, dark corridors for the health and safety of the pedestrian.
- OS-2.5** Ensure that outdoor areas are visible from public streets and accessible from buildings, as well as streets, footpaths and bikeways.
- OS-2.6** Design plazas and building forecourts to maximize circulation opportunities between adjacent uses within the setback area between buildings.
- OS-2.7** Provide a focal point for pedestrian gathering in the center of the plaza such as a fountain or sculpture.
- OS-2.8** Design public and private outdoor spaces to provide sunny and shaded areas.

### Guidelines—Open space access (OS-3)

- OS-3.1** Do not exceed a grade differential greater than four feet between a public open space or plaza area and the adjacent sidewalk grade.
- OS-3.2** Provide access to public open spaces with convenient and attractive pedestrian rights-of-way.
- OS-3.3** Access shall be provided from both the public right-of-way sidewalk and ground floor commercial spaces.
- OS-3.4** An interior courtyard should have a major entrance that is clearly visible from the street.

- OS-3.5** Design plazas and building forecourts to maximize circulation opportunities between adjacent uses.
- OS-3.6** For larger projects, develop a comprehensive open space network that includes plazas and other open space elements to connect different uses. Integrate adjacent land uses on a site into the open space areas and the paths that link them. Site buildings to define open space areas.

## Landscaping

### Intent

Landscaping and publicly accessible open space provides visual interest and community and environmental benefits. Site landscaping of all building types provides visual interest in the urban environment and helps mitigate any heat-island effect. Site landscaping is also a means to satisfy regional stormwater management mandates through the use of drainage swales and detention basins. Site landscaping is an important component of any future development (see the City's zoning code for detailed standards).

### Guidelines (LS)

- LS-1** Use planted buffers and other transition strategies to reduce privacy and visual impacts, especially when adjacent to existing residential neighborhoods.
- LS-2** Provide a landscape buffer or open space between different uses on the same property.
- LS-3** Employ landscaping to screen parking lots from adjacent residential uses and streets.
- LS-4** On sites with multiple structures, buildings should be linked visually and physically. These links can be accomplished through architecture and site planning, such as trellises, colonnades or other open structures combined with landscape and walkway systems.
- LS-5** Emphasize the use of drought-tolerant planting and water-efficient irrigation.
- LS-6** Employ landscaping as a buffer to adjacent uses.
- LS-7** Street trees should be in scale with the width of the street and the height of adjacent buildings.
- LS-8** Use water-pervious materials for parking areas, driveways and pathways to the extent such that they do not cause damage to public streets or other infrastructure or impede pedestrian access.
- LS-9** Use sustainable surface materials for paving, such as reclaimed pavers, locally produced materials, or concrete and asphalt with fly ash content, for example.
- LS-10** Incorporate onsite stormwater management through the use of covered retention areas, rills (narrow channels to aid water runoff), bio-swales, and cisterns.
- LS-11** Place outdoor furniture, such as seating, low walls, trash receptacles, bike racks and other elements, in outdoor pedestrian spaces.





*Water-pervious materials should be used for parking areas, driveways and pathways, provided they do not cause damage to public streets or other infrastructure.*

- LS-12** Coordinate the design and placement of outdoor furniture with the design of the building.
- LS-13** Hardscape and vegetation should be combined to create plazas that people can use for rest, congregating, recreation, and dining.
- LS-14** The redevelopment of a site should avoid the removal of existing mature trees, or should relocate mature trees elsewhere on the site.

# Parking Guidelines and Strategies to Reduce Auto Use

Parking design is a key element in the design of a mixed-use project. Listed below are parking design guidelines. Also, strategies for different parking options are included in this section. Conventional parking solutions do not always work well for mixed-use development. To encourage pedestrian activity and accommodate often higher-density uses, mixed-use projects need less intrusive parking—and less of it, relative to conventional development. Creating a successful mixed-use project requires creative thinking when it comes to transportation, in order to reduce the project's demand for parking.

## Parking design

### Intent

In some cases it will be feasible to provide parking in above- or below-ground structures rather than at ground level in surface lots. Minimizing the footprint of surface parking creates a more attractive environment with more opportunities for well-designed buildings and site landscaping.

### General parking guidelines (PK)

- PK-1** Share access drives to parking facilities wherever feasible to minimize curb cuts and disruptions to pedestrians.
- PK-2** Provide well-designed and maintained transit shelters, bicycle parking, street furniture and other amenities for pedestrians, transit riders and cyclists.
- PK-3** Bicycle parking racks should be located near building entrances or along direct paths to building entrances, where both surface and parking structures are located, but should not interfere with pedestrian access.

**PK-4** Ensure that bicycle parking is secured and weather-protected and is located in highly visible areas for safety and security.

**PK-5** Consider using innovative bike rack designs to compliment the building.



*Parking lots should be set back from the street edge or located behind buildings, and should be screened with decorative screening, landscaping or other low screening.*

### Guidelines for parking lots (PL)

- PL-1** Where used, surface parking lots should be located away from street edges or behind buildings and should provide decorative screening, landscaping or other low screening.
- PL-2** Landscape perimeter setback areas around parking lots.
- PL-3** Incorporate pervious paving to soften the look of large paving areas and allow for stormwater drainage.
- PL-4** Accommodate pedestrians and bicycle traffic with pedestrian-only pathways and bicycle facilities through parking areas. Shade these areas with trees and architectural elements such as trellises and awnings.



*For more convenient pedestrian access, parking lots should be threaded with shaded walkways that lead directly to building entrances and transit stops.*

~~PL-5—Meet City requirements for electric car charging stations and encourage preferential location on-site.~~

- PL-56** Parking lots should be shaded by tree canopy as required by the Zoning Code. Other “green” parking practices should be considered as well, such as providing solar panels on parking lot roofs, good quality soil and generous landscaped areas, enhancing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and stormwater management on-site.

### Guidelines for private garages (PG)

- PG-1** In areas where traditional street and block patterns would be difficult to create, arrange development where applicable in a “mews” configuration (in a row, facing around a paved yard, court or lane), which provides an internal focus as well as a street orientation.
- PG-2** Mews should be well landscaped and display the character of a small urban street. Planter beds with trees or potted plants should be located between garage doors and adjacent to porches.



*In a mews configuration, buildings are in a row and face around or across a paved lane or courtyard.*

**PG-3** Organize at-grade garages for lower-density residential development (i.e., row houses, townhouses) in well-landscaped mews and parking courts leading to individual garages.

#### **Guidelines for parking structures (PS)**

**PS-1** Where possible, locate parking structures away from primary pedestrian access but provide direct walkways for easy connection.

**PS-2** Wrap the ground level of parking structures with active uses (commercial, residential, office, etc.) when such structures front along residential and pedestrian-oriented streets.

**PS-3** Design street-facing parking structures to reduce their apparent bulk and create visually interesting façades or screen structures and site them away from public streets.

**PS-4** Design options to reduce bulk and appearance from adjoining streets include the following:

- Variation in the dimension and proportion of openings of the façade.
- Decorative screens, railings, and trellises of durable, high-quality materials that screen cars and hide sloped floors.
- Base materials and designs similar to surrounding buildings on site to enhance the visual interest of the structure at the ground level.
- Awnings, arcades, trellises, or porticos along street-facing façades and pedestrian connections.





*Wrapping the ground level of parking structures with active uses reduces their apparent bulk of and creates visual interest, as does screening cars and lining the façades with decorative elements.*

- PS-5** Locate and design pedestrian entries and stairwells for parking structures:
- As identifying architectural elements.
  - Adjacent to public streets and along major pedestrian connections.
  - To ensure that they are visually open and free of visual obstruction so as to promote a feeling of security and comfort.
  - To minimize conflicts between pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles.
- PS-6** Shield parking lot lighting from adjacent uses.

# Potential Strategies



This section includes several creative transportation and parking strategies that ~~should can be incorporated into a be considered in the planning of mixed-use development in Sunnyvale.~~ These strategies can reduce car dependence, encourage the use of

transportation alternatives and mitigate a project's potential traffic and parking impacts. The City of Sunnyvale ~~has not adopted these strategies as policy, but are included for discussion and consideration for future projects. will need to adopt policies and possibly regulations to enable most of these strategies as part of development projects.~~

## Shared parking

The main transportation-related strategy to be considered should be shared parking, since it plays into the nature of mixed-use development. This strategy allows neighboring land uses with different peak times for parking demand to use the same parking spaces. A dinner restaurant, for example, could share a parking lot with an office building, since they experience their highest demand at different times of day. Moreover, the same lot could be made available for temporary uses during the weekend, such

as a flea market or farmers market. Shared parking provides an adequate supply of parking with fewer spaces while resulting in a more efficient use of land and reducing development costs. In some cases, shared parking can reduce the need for parking spaces by 50–55%. Generally, the amount of parking required for a mixed-use project should be based on the maximum demand at any time period across all land uses present at the project.

## Unbundled parking

Unbundled parking involves renting or selling parking spaces to the occupants of commercial or housing units, or offering discounts if parking is not needed, rather than folding the cost of parking into the rent or purchase price of those units. This “reveals” the cost of parking to tenants or owners and gives them a financial incentive to own fewer cars or even go car-free, especially in areas within walking distance of good transit service. ~~If unbundled parking is considered, To make this strategy feasible,~~ parking requirements ~~must be reduced for developments with unbundled parking; that way, should be considered so~~ developers are free to provide only the number of spaces that occupants will be willing to pay for. However, since unbundled parking gives people the incentive to find other places to park, it may result in parking spillover onto neighborhood streets. In the absence of residential permit parking, unbundled parking works best for projects that are located in areas where

on-street parking is limited or not in very high demand or at transit locations where car ownership could be reduced.

### Car and bike sharing

Car sharing gives people easy access to a communal car on a short-term basis, typically by the hour. Some people will use car sharing instead of having a second car while others will use it instead of owning a car at all. A developer could provide one or more shared cars on-site through an agreement with a car sharing service. Developers should also consider providing bicycles for communal use. While it is not the cost of owning a bicycle that generally deters people from using one, shared bikes could encourage non-cyclists to try riding before perhaps going on to buy their own bike.

### Subsidized transit passes and shuttles to transit

In most cases, it is cheaper for a developer to provide free or discounted transit passes to project occupants than additional parking spaces. VTA's Eco Pass program offers deep discounts to eligible employers, developers and residential associations on monthly transit passes purchased in bulk. Subsidized transit passes would be strongly reinforced by developer-provided bus shelters, information kiosks and, especially, shuttles operating from the project to nearby Caltrain stations.

### Bicycle parking

Parking for bikes is a low-cost yet effective



way to encourage cycling: it reduces the threat of theft, makes bicyclists feel welcome and increases the visibility of bicycling. All mixed-use projects should provide both short- and long-term bike parking in garages and near building entrances. Generally, racks should be provided for short-term (visitor) parking and lockers for long-term (employee or commuter) parking. Racks and lockers should be located in secure, well-lighted, highly visible and, ideally, covered areas; and be located as close as possible to main entrances and no farther from the entrance than the nearest non-handicapped car parking space. The required number of bike-parking spaces should depend on the size of a project and mix of uses but should generally be 10–20 percent of the required number of car-parking spaces. Also, developers should consider providing bike-repair tools or services on site for tenants.

### GreenTrip

GreenTrip is a certification and reward program for mixed-use and other development projects that meet certain criteria. To receive GreenTrip certification, projects must, among other actions, limit the amount of parking they provide and incorporate up to three strategies to encourage new residents to drive less and own fewer cars. The three strategies are unbundled parking, discounted transit passes and car sharing, all discussed above. Developers of proposed mixed-use projects should be encouraged to obtain GreenTrip certification and reduce parking requirements for certified projects. See <http://www.transformca.org/landing-page/greentrip-certification-program> for information on benefits and various options.

# Putting it all together: Two sample projects

What might mixed-use in Sunnyvale look like if ~~developers and City officials followed~~ accepted principles and urban design guidelines are followed? This section imagines a corridor mixed-use project and a village mixed-use project on representative sites. The illustrations highlight how the design guidelines can be applied at each site to develop a mixed-use project.

The sites are currently occupied by conventional car-oriented commercial developments. Accompanying aerial photographs note some of the deficient conditions at these existing developments that the mixed-use projects seek to remedy.

## Project ①: Corridor mixed-use



The first project is representative of corridor mixed-use development. It demonstrates potential redevelopment of the **Pavlina Plaza shopping center**, an older

commercial property on the west corner of El Camino Real and East Remington Drive. The property is bordered by retail uses on the west and apartment buildings and offices on the south. Surface parking currently takes up approximately half the site.

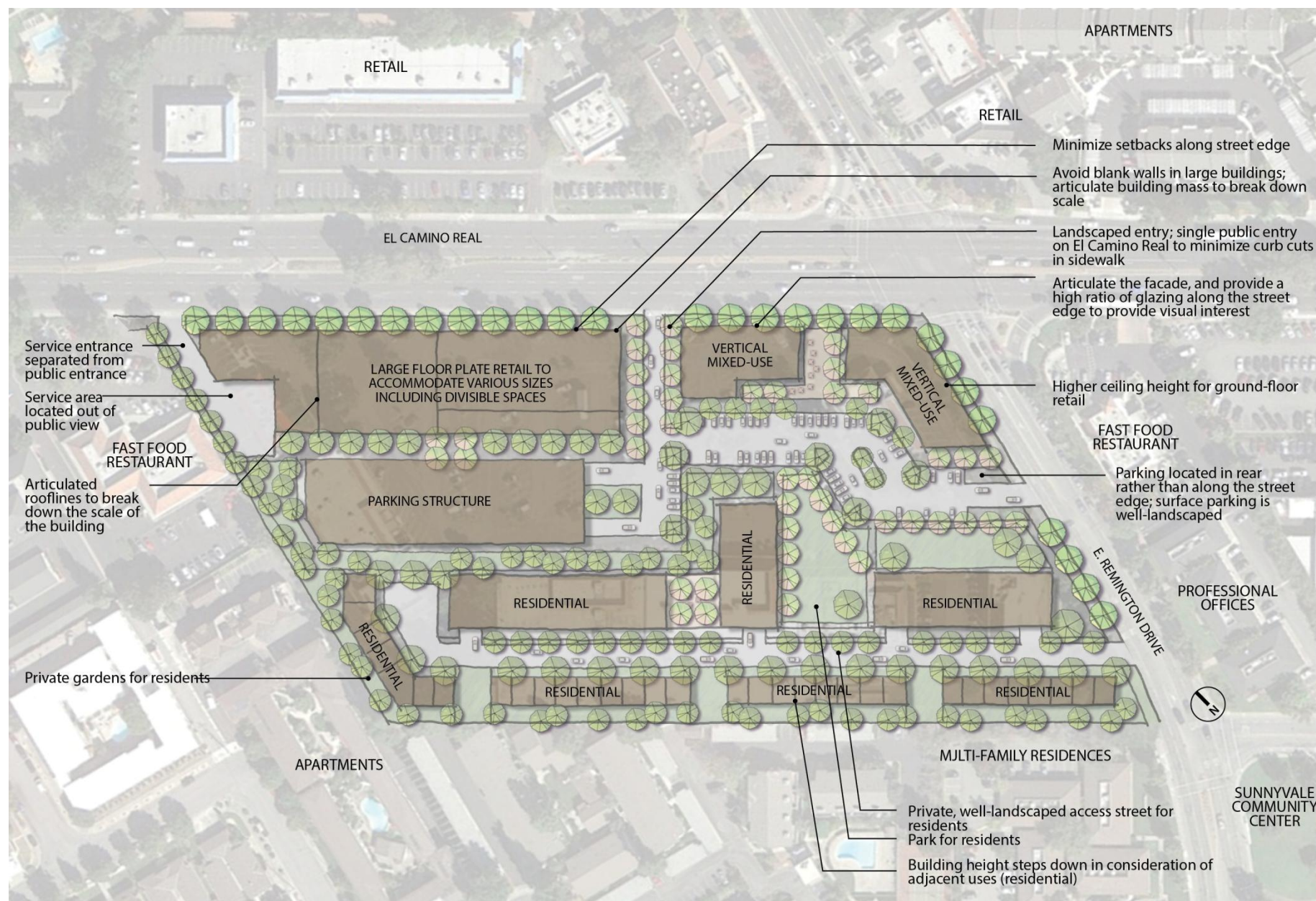
## Project ②: Village mixed-use

The second project represents village mixed-use. It shows how the site of the **Fremont Shopper shopping center**, another older commercial development, could be converted to mixed-use. The site, which includes a gas station, is on the northeast corner of Fremont Avenue and Saratoga–Sunnyvale Road, across from Fremont High School. It is surrounded by apartment buildings on the north and east and by single-family homes on the northeast.

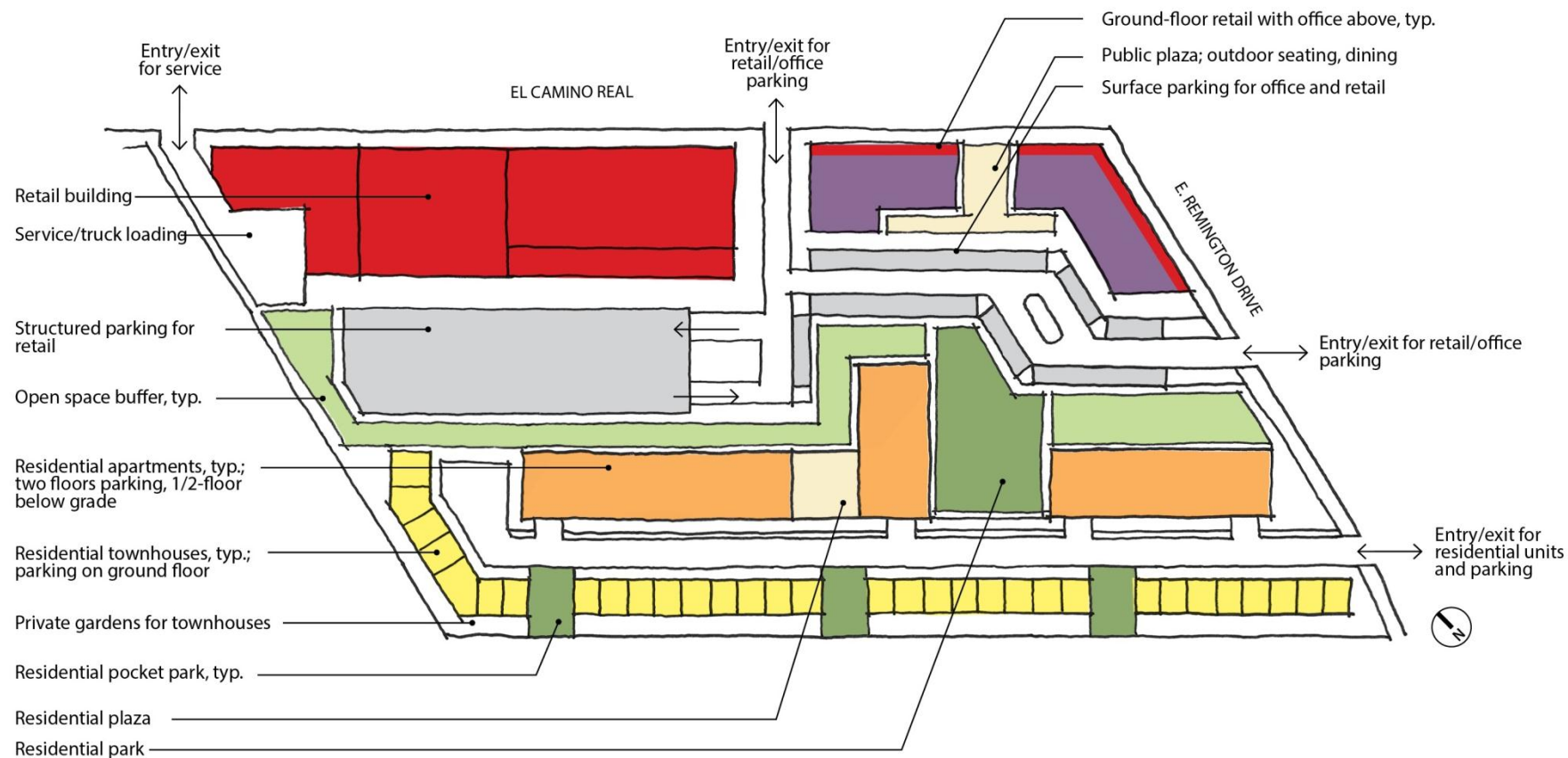
Approximately half of this site is also currently occupied by surface parking.





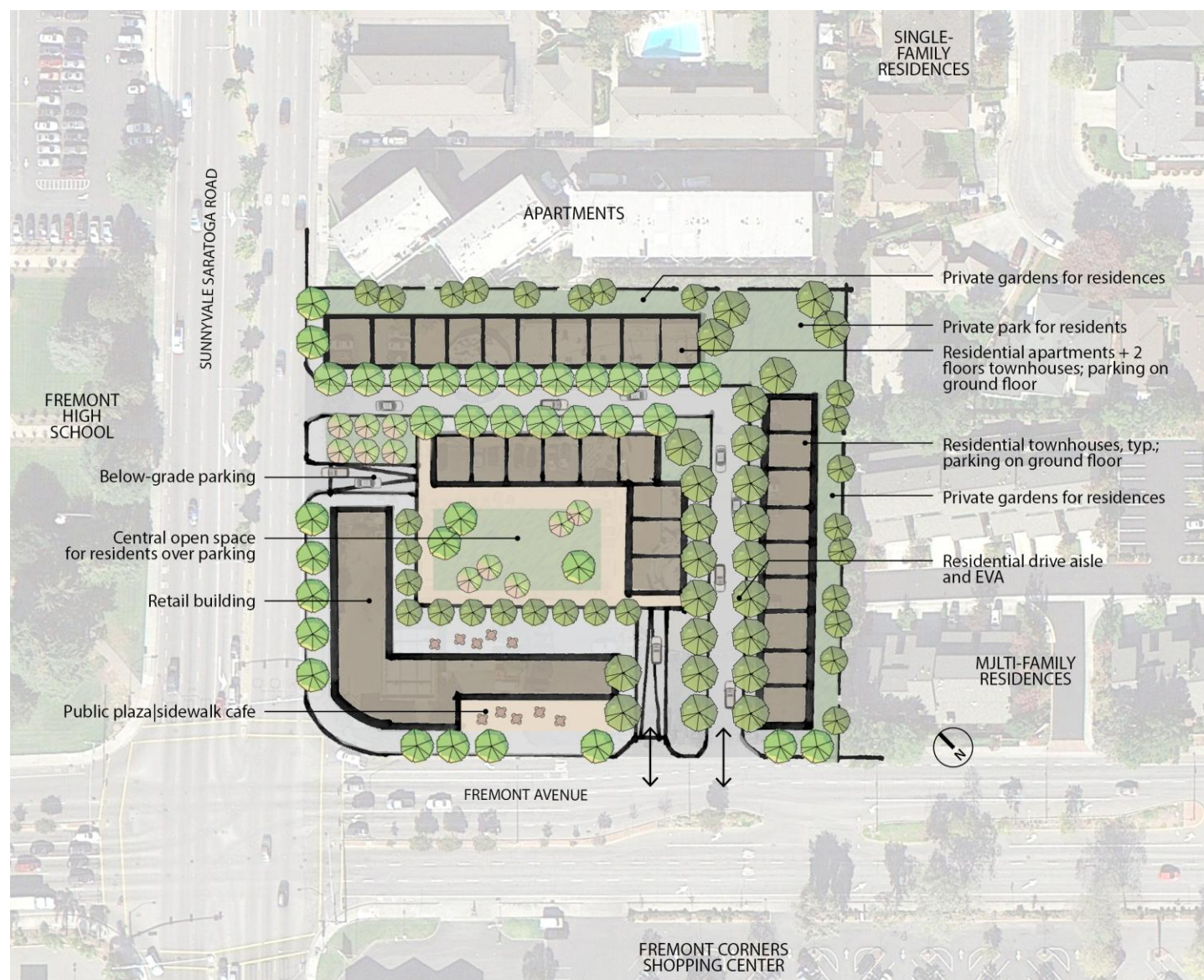


### Illustrative site plan of representative corridor mixed-use site

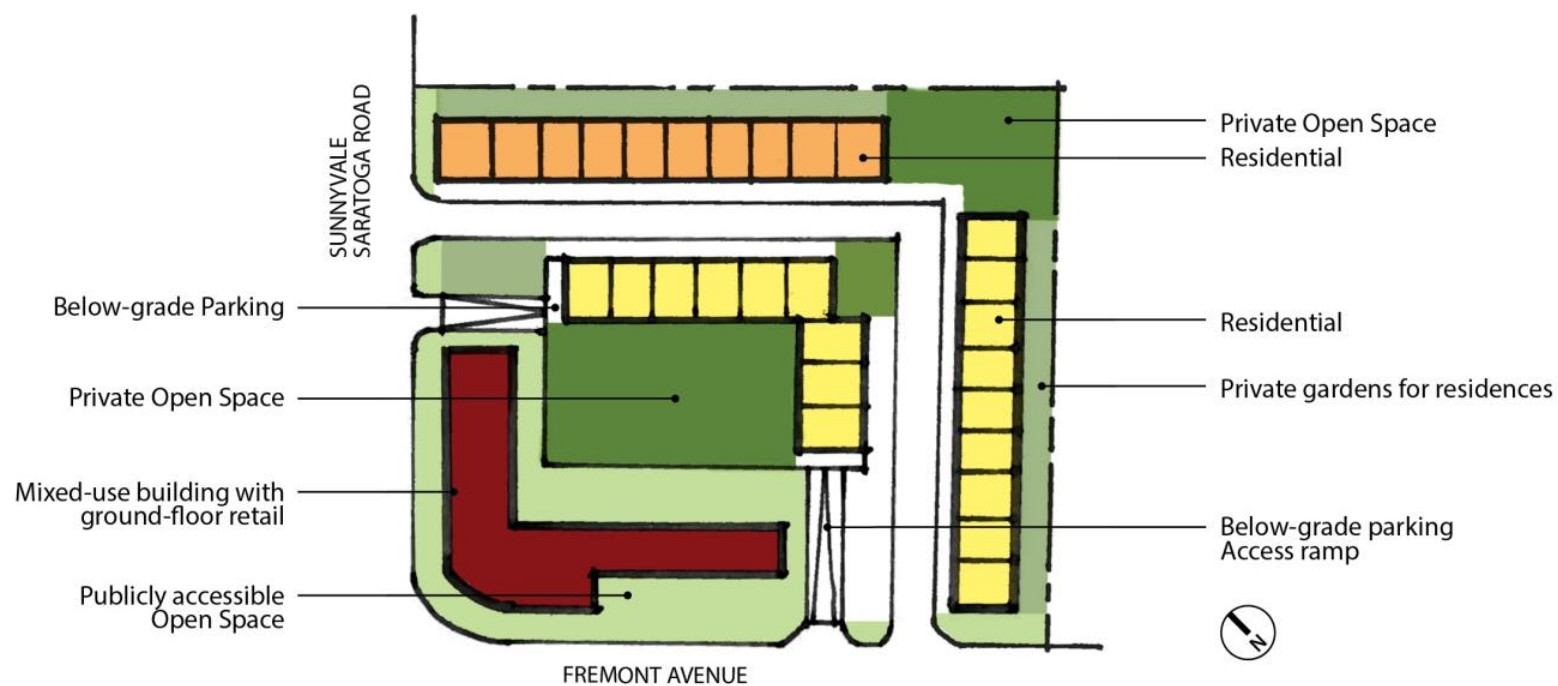


Land use plan of sample project at representative corridor mixed-use site





Illustrative site plan of representative village mixed-use site



Land use plan of sample project at representative village mixed-use site



# Other resources



Below are resources with additional information on the City of Sunnyvale's efforts to promote mixed-use development (the links on this page are up to date as of January 2015):

- **Land Use and Transportation Element** of the Sunnyvale General Plan ("Horizon 2035" draft): <http://bit.ly/16csqXM>
- **Climate Action Plan** (2014; ~~draft~~): <http://bit.ly/YUAPfl>
- **Zoning Code**: <http://bit.ly/14UldOV>
- **Downtown Specific Plan** (2003): <http://bit.ly/YpPl4n>
- **Precise Plan for El Camino Real** (2007): <http://bit.ly/16cthYq>
- **Lawrence Station Area Plan** (in progress): [www.lawrencestationinsunnyvale.org/](http://www.lawrencestationinsunnyvale.org/)
- **Lakeside Specific Plan** (2005): <http://bit.ly/141J94B>

The following is a partial list of organizations that make available articles, fact sheets, reports and other information on mixed-use, infill, transit-oriented development, smart growth and similar development concepts:

- **VTA Pedestrian Technical Guidelines** (Santa Clara County): [vta.org](http://vta.org)
- **Greenbelt Alliance** (Bay Area focus): [greenbelt.org](http://greenbelt.org)
- **TransForm** (Bay Area focus): [transform.org](http://transform.org)
- **Local Government Commission** (California focus): [lgc.org](http://lgc.org)
- **Smart Growth America** (nationwide focus): [smartgrowthamerica.org](http://smartgrowthamerica.org)
- **Urban Land Institute** (focus on real-estate development, nationwide): [uli.org](http://uli.org)
- **Project for Public Spaces** (focus on public spaces, primarily in the U.S.): [pps.org](http://pps.org)

# Glossary

**Corridor mixed-use:** Development typically incorporating housing and larger, regional-, citywide- or employment-serving commercial uses along a major thoroughfare.

**Development standards:** Typically quantitative conditions or requirements to control an aspect of the size and scale of development such as lot size, building height, residential density and number of parking spaces.

**General plan:** A long-range planning and policy document to guide a community's growth and development. California state law requires that every city and county prepare a general plan and maintain it up to date.

**Horizontal mixed-use:** Development with a mix of land uses in different buildings but on the same block or adjoining blocks.

**Land use:** The activity or purpose for which land or a building is used or intended. Common types of land use include residential, commercial, industrial and open space.

**LUTE:** The Land Use and Transportation Element (or chapter) of the Sunnyvale General Plan. It aims to guide land use and transportation decisions citywide—for how much the city will grow, where growth will take place and how the streets and other parts of the transportation system will function—over a 25-year planning period.

**Mixed-use:** Development with a mix of compatible land uses, such as commercial, office and residential.

**Shared parking:** Strategy through which neighboring properties—especially those that are busiest at different times—use the same parking spaces. It allows for the more efficient use of parking facilities.

**Specialized plan:** Area plan, precise plan, specific plan or other detailed planning document for a discrete area of a city or county. It contains specific, concrete recommendations to supplement the broader recommendations in a general plan.

**Transit mixed-use:** Specifically, this is a land-use designation in the Sunnyvale General Plan that provides for higher-density mixed-use development in the downtown and the area around the Lawrence Caltrain station.

**Urban design guidelines:** Set of detailed recommendation to guide the development of specific aspects of the built environment (for example, site and building design, landscaping and parking lots).

**Vertical mixed-use:** Development with a mix of land uses in the same building (for example, residential above stores).

**Village mixed-use and village centers:** Development that provides for neighborhood-serving commercial uses integrated with housing, typically at the intersection of major thoroughfares. This type of development is meant to become the focus of activity for their respective neighborhoods, serving as nearby gathering places for residents and allowing people to meet their everyday needs easily and conveniently.

**Zoning code:** Regulatory mechanism which provides specific policy guidance for the development of various land uses. It establishes zoning districts and for each district lists permitted and restricted land uses, detailed development standards and other specific guidance for development projects.



