

## 2 Project Description

The project analyzed in this EIR is the proposed *Castro Valley General Plan*; hereafter identified as the proposed General Plan or proposed Plan. A city or county's general plan has been described as its constitution for development; it establishes the framework for making decisions on how to grow, provide public services and facilities, and protect and enhance the environment. The proposed Plan is intended to address growth and development in the Castro Valley Planning Area over the next 20 years.

Under California Government Code §65300 et. seq., cities and counties are required to prepare a general plan that establishes policies and standards for future development, housing affordability, and resource protection for the entire planning area. By law, a general plan must be an integrated, internally consistent statement of city or county policies. State law provides for the adoption of Area Plans that apply to a specific geographic area but need not deal with the full range of issues that the State law requires a city or county General Plan to address.

The proposed Plan is an Area Plan for Castro Valley, which will become part of the Alameda County General Plan. The Plan will serve as the Land Use and Circulation Element for the urbanized area of Castro Valley, and will also establish policies for other topics specific to Castro Valley. The Alameda County General Plan includes Area Plans for other unincorporated communities as well as Elements that apply countywide. The countywide elements deal with Housing, Resource Conservation, Open Space, Noise, Seismic Safety, and Safety. (The Alameda County Congestion Management Agency has adopted a countywide transportation plan, which is a congestion management plan as required by State law and not a Circulation Element.)

Those County General Plan Elements address issues on a countywide basis and all elements have equal weight; no element supersedes another. This Area Plan has been written to be consistent with all these elements' policies and provisions but, in some instances, provide more specific policies applicable to the Castro Valley Planning Area. In those cases when Castro Valley General Plan policies are more specific than the County General Plan policies, they will supersede the County policies.

This chapter provides background information regarding the regional location of the Castro Valley General Plan Planning Area, as well as the policy development process, General Plan objectives, and key components of the proposed General Plan. Additional details are provided in the Plan itself. This project description provides the basis for the environmental analysis in Chapter 3.

### **2.1 REGIONAL LOCATION & PLANNING BOUNDARIES**

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Castro Valley, an unincorporated sub-area of Alameda County, is the largest unincorporated community in northern California. Centrally located in the western part of the County, Castro Valley is bounded by the City of San Leandro and the unincorporated communities of Ashland and Cherryland to the west, the City of Hayward and unincorporated Fairview to the south, the East Bay Regional Park District to the north, and Contra Costa County and the Dublin Planning Area to the east (see Figure 2.1-1: Regional Context).

Castro Valley is divided by Interstate 580 and the Dublin-Pleasanton BART line, the principal means of access between San Francisco and Oakland to the west, and Dublin, Pleasanton, and Livermore to the east. Castro Valley Boulevard is the major commercial thoroughfare and one of the area's few east-west connectors, generally parallel to I-580. Radiating from the Central Business District (CBD) north and south of Castro Valley Boulevard are a series of primarily single-family residential neighborhoods, most of which were developed from the early 1950s to the late 1990s.

The new Castro Valley General Plan area includes approximately 38 square miles of urbanized land area within the boundaries described above. The planning area is the urbanized area within the County's Urban Growth Boundary, including the Castro Valley Census Designated Place (CDP) as well as the Five Canyons neighborhood, as shown in Figure 2.1-2. The Five Canyons neighborhood, which was previously included in the Cherryland-Fairview sub-regional area, but is now within the Castro Valley Planning Area. These boundaries largely follow the area that was proposed for incorporation in 2002. In addition to excluding the Canyonlands and other areas outside of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) that Alameda County voters approved in 2000, the current planning area also excludes the Fairmont Terrace area just east of Interstate 580.

## **2.2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSED PLAN**

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CEQA Guidelines §15124(b) require a description of project purpose and objectives.

### **PLAN PURPOSE**

Castro Valley's existing General Plan was adopted in 1985. While many General Plan policies are still relevant, the planning context and setting have changed. Preparation of the new General Plan allows the Castro Valley community to take stock of changed conditions and establish a new vision and comprehensive plan for the next 20 years.

The General Plan for Castro Valley will reflect the passage of Measure D, the initiative approved by County voters in 2000 that amended the County's General Plan to establish an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) limiting urban development in most of the rural areas of the county, including the Canyonlands surrounding Castro Valley. The new Plan is also intended to implement amendments to the County's Housing Element that the Board of Supervisors adopted in 2003.

State law provides for the adoption of specific plans to implement general plan policies in all or part of the area covered by a general plan (Gov. code Section 65450 et. seq.) The Central Business District Specific Plan—which Alameda County adopted in 1991 to implement the existing Castro Valley General Plan—provides standards, criteria, and guidelines that govern development in the community's central area, including the Eden Medical Center area. Most of this area is also within the Eden Redevelopment Area, which is covered by a Redevelopment Plan adopted in 2000. Both of these plans were prepared to implement the Castro Valley General Plan and may require amendment to ensure that they remain consistent with the new General Plan.

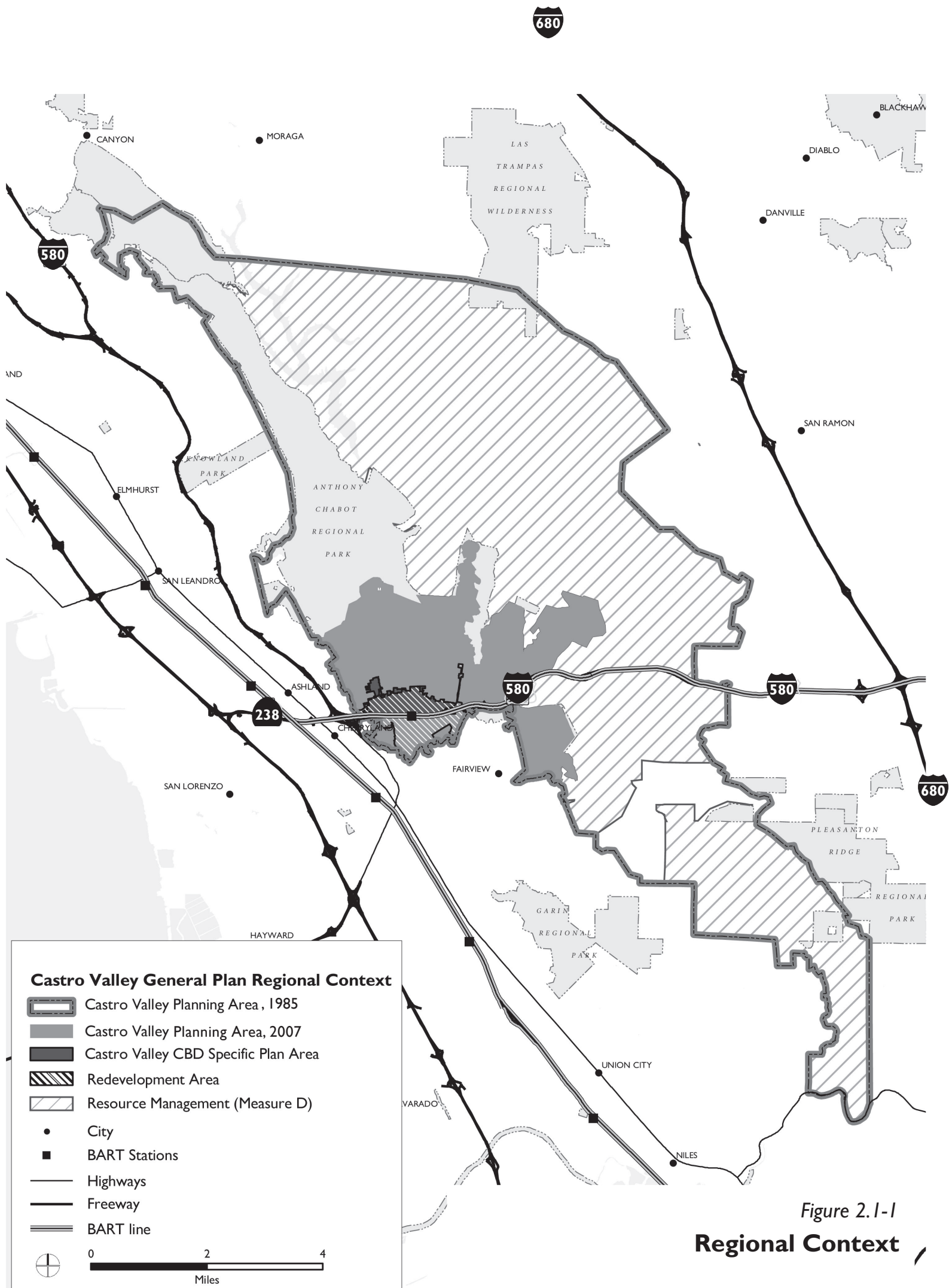
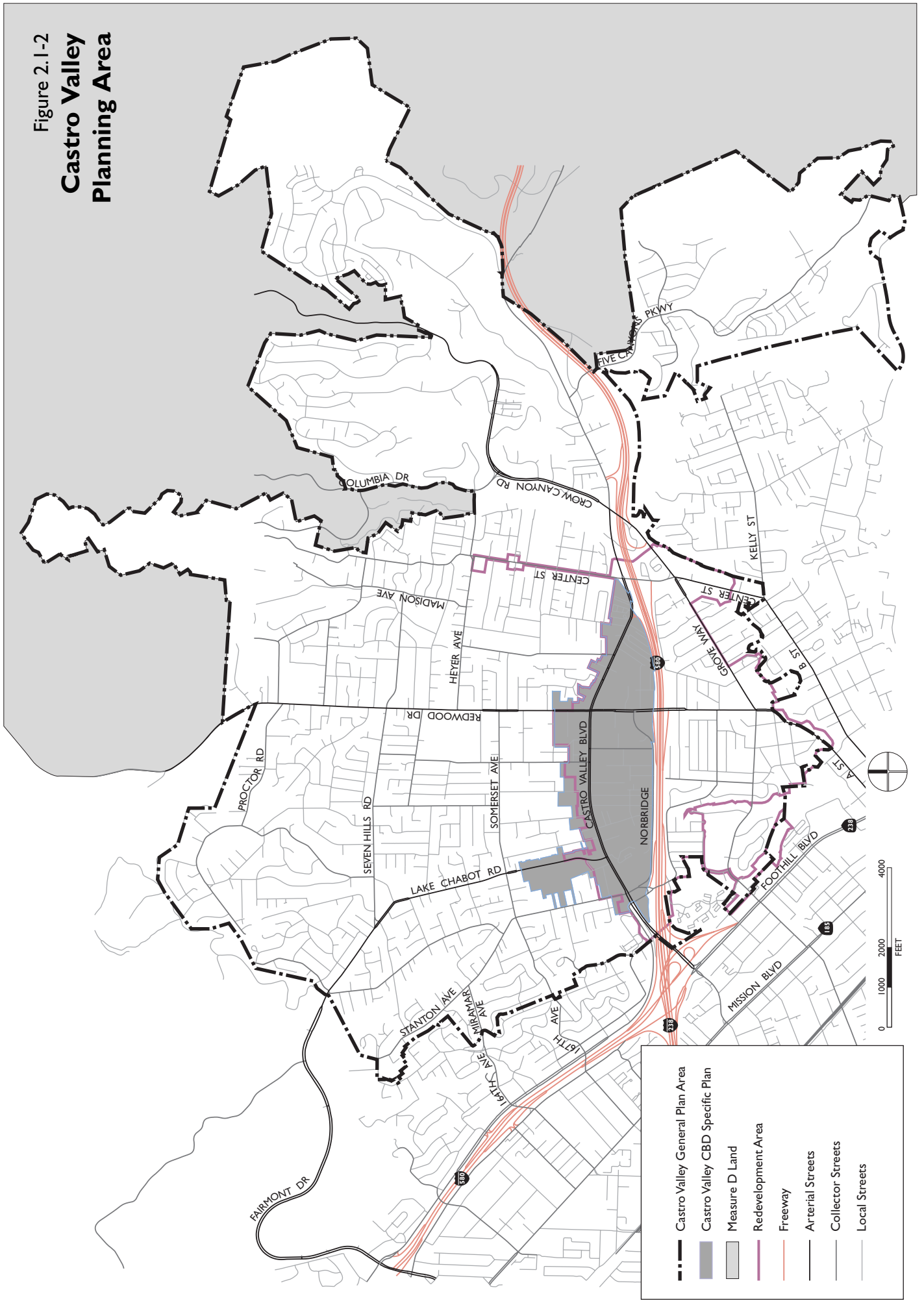


Figure 2.1-1  
Regional Context



Figure 2.1-2  
**Castro Valley**  
**Planning Area**



- Castro Valley General Plan Area
- Castro Valley CBD Specific Plan
- Measure D Land
- Redevelopment Area
- Freeway
- Arterial Streets
- Collector Streets
- Local Streets



The new General Plan will guide the future physical development of Castro Valley. The plan is intended to serve as the basis for regulating land use and development until the year 2025, which is referred to as the horizon year of the plan. Key objectives of the General Plan process include:

- Revitalize the Central Business District. Create a pedestrian town center where people walk to shops, meet neighbors, and gather for community events. Provide a variety of shops, restaurants, and services, so residents do not need to leave Castro Valley for their daily needs, and remake Castro Valley Boulevard as a beautiful street where it is pleasant to walk.
- Preserve the area’s defining natural characteristics, embodied in the hills, canyons, creeks, and rural corridors, and views to those natural areas. Update policies to reflect the passage of Measure D, which established an Urban Growth Boundary limiting urban development in most of the rural areas of the county, including the Canyonlands surrounding Castro Valley.
- Improve access to schools, parks and recreation facilities, and provide safer streets for walking and bicycling, in order to create a good environment for raising a family.
- Provide facilities for activities and entertainment venues for all age groups, including places like the Chabot Theater, the Adobe Arts Center, the Aitken Senior Center, and the Community Theater, and the new Performing Arts Center at the high school.
- Design safe streets where traffic speed and noise do not dominate residential streets, and where residents, especially children, can walk or bike to schools, neighbors, stores, and other destinations.
- Preserve the small town character of Castro Valley, with low scale buildings, views to the natural areas, many small local businesses, and a town center where people gather and see their neighbors.
- Reduce impacts of regional traffic and freeway traffic.
- Continue to allow new infill housing on sites that have capacity, in a way that fits in with the existing scale and character of the community. Provide a variety of types of housing are available for all types of households and incomes, including single family homes, townhomes, apartments, condominiums, cottages, and mobile homes. Encourage new housing on designated sites in the Central Business District that are close to BART and other transit facilities.
- Identify changes that need to be made to the Alameda County Zoning Ordinance, the CBD Specific Plan, and other applicable regulations to implement the community’s vision.
- Establish priorities for the investments that the County and other agencies make in the Castro Valley planning area in order to implement the community’s vision.

### **2.3 PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN**

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The proposed General Plan addresses eight major topic areas, that are related to the physical environment of Castro Valley but are intended to achieve a broad range of economic, environmental, and social objectives: Land Use and Community Development; Community Character and Design; Circulation; Biological Resources; Parks, Schools and Community

Facilities; Public Services and Facilities; Natural Hazards and Public Safety; and Noise and Air Quality. Each of the eight topics has four components: a background section describing existing conditions and analysis; a goal; a series of policies for specific sites; and action steps to implement those policies. Maps are used extensively to illustrate information and policy direction.

The plan is designed to be a strategic plan, focused on the primary goals that Castro Valley wants to achieve in the next 20 years, and on the specific actions that will be taken to achieve those goals. The types of actions the Plan recommends are within the County and community's control or influence, including:

- Regulations – Zoning, Subdivision, Creek Protection, Condominium Conversions
- Guidelines – Residential Design, Historic Preservation, Creekside Development
- Programs - Economic Development, Traffic Calming, Pedestrian, Redevelopment,
- Capital Improvements Projects – Streets, Parks, Community Buildings
- Funding for Capital Improvements

## **KEY INITIATIVES**

The following list of 15 initiatives reflects input from more than 400 Castro Valley community members who attended public workshops and meetings held during the development of the General Plan. These represent a list of the major projects the community wants to accomplish within the 20 year planning period.

### **1. Valleys, Creeks, Canyons, and Hillides Preserved**

Establish a framework of legal, managerial, and operational protections for the community's natural resources, including the valleys, creeks, canyons, and hillides, as well as views to those resources. Ensure that there is ongoing stewardship and maintenance.

### **2. Greening Castro Valley**

Plant street trees, install planted medians, create parks and open views to green spaces, and create parks, so that Castro Valley has a green landscaped character that makes it attractive and harkens back to its rural beginnings.

### **3. Design Standards and Guidelines for New Housing**

Establish a comprehensive detailed framework of zoning regulations, development standards and guidelines used in the review of all new housing projects to ensure that new residential development fits with the desired character for Castro Valley.

### **4. Preserve Resources that Embody Castro Valley's Historic Rural Character**

Castro Valley evolved from a rural agricultural area to become a suburban residential community. While there are few "historic resources" eligible for listing on the State and federal registers, there are some resources that can be preserved or enhanced to retain a connection with the community's historic rural character. These include the natural hillside and canyon resource areas, as well as specific sites or structures such as the Adobe Arts Center, the



Strobridge House, and the row of early 20th century commercial storefronts on the western end of Castro Valley Boulevard.

### **5. Traffic Calming**

Allow traffic flow so that auto circulation is convenient for residents, but control the volume and speed of traffic on streets to maximize safety and ensure that the nature of the traffic fits with the character of the area. Develop a traffic calming program that includes education and enforcement as well as control devices such as signals, new sidewalks, speed limits, traffic humps, and roundabouts.

### **6. Walkable Town Center**

Create a central pedestrian-friendly shopping and restaurant area on a few blocks along Castro Valley Boulevard and key side streets, including Castro Village Shopping Center. Over time add and relocate buildings, sidewalks, and parking so that the area has a pedestrian environment. Add a plaza and features that create a public gathering place that can be identified as the heart of the community. If at all possible, create a place for a new post office as part of this area.

### **7. Beautiful Castro Valley Boulevard**

Complete a streetscape improvement project on Castro Valley Boulevard that adds street trees, lights, banners, billboards, medians, bulb-outs and other such features to make it a beautiful boulevard. Establish or continue other programs that improve the appearance of the commercial area, including: Façade Improvement Program; Billboard Reduction Program; Revised Sign Regulations; and Design Review Guidelines for commercial projects.

### **8. New Shops and Restaurants in Castro Valley**

Establish a business attraction program to bring new shops, restaurants, and services to Castro Valley, that helps existing businesses expand or upgrade, and new businesses to get established. The Redevelopment Agency should work to facilitate the provision of adequate sites, parking, and maintenance.

### **9. Castro Valley Community Center**

Build the community library on Norbridge Street. Over time, add other facilities on the site to create a full community center, such as: a community meeting room, facilities for seniors and teenagers, and other features that will make this an inviting gathering place for the Castro Valley community.

### **10. Castro Valley Parks/Recreation Centers**

Over the next twenty years, add at least one new neighborhood park in the underserved western area of Castro Valley, and a large community gym/recreation center. Add quality after-school facilities to make fuller use of existing schools and parks.

### **11. Lake Chabot Road Medical District**

Allow the rebuilding of Eden Hospital so it can continue to provide high-quality medical and emergency services in structures that can withstand earthquakes. The hospital and the citizens of Castro Valley should form a working committee to ensure that the new campus and

surrounding sites create an attractive and functional medical district with medical offices, retail, restaurants, and supportive housing. Establish standards and guidelines to ensure that the medical facility construction and operation does not negatively impact the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

## **12. Castro Valley Neighborhood Centers**

Renovate or rebuild on the neighborhood commercial sites in Castro Valley so that there are convenience stores and services close to residences, and the properties look attractive and well maintained so they contribute to the community. Establish zoning that allows the construction of housing or other uses that make the renovation or rebuilding financially viable; and work with project applicants to facilitate the renovation through all means available, including Redevelopment Agency tools.

## **13. Housing In and Around the Town Center**

Adding new housing in and around the town center is a way to meet housing needs for smaller and more affordable units, and offer housing choice where residents can walk to shops and transit. It will also help support downtown businesses by locating customers within walking distance. The neighborhood between Somerset and Castro Valley Boulevard, the BART station, and some of the existing mobile home parks all offer potential housing sites. New housing should fit in with the desired character of the area – in attractive buildings no more than 2-4 stories tall, with open space.

## **14. An Improved Look for Castro Valley**

Improve the general appearance of Castro Valley by establishing and funding several types of programs: Streetscape Improvements, Planting Programs, Façade Renovation, New Sign Regulations, and Gateway Entry Structures.

## **15. Enforcement**

Enforce the zoning regulations, conditions of zoning permit approval, traffic regulations, and all the other types of agreements that the community has adopted through public participation and/or legislation. Establish more thorough Plan Check and Inspections procedures to make sure that buildings are built as approved; public notice is provided when project designs are substantially revised, etc.

## **GENERAL PLAN LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS**

The land use framework of the General Plan is illustrated in the General Plan Diagram (Figure 2.3-1), which is a graphic representation of the land use policies in the Plan. It designates the proposed general location, distribution, and extent of land uses and development for the next 20 years. As required by State law, land use classifications—shown as color/graphic patterns, letter designations, and labels on the diagram—specify a range for housing density and building intensity for each type of designated land use. These density/intensity standards allow circulation and public facility needs to be determined. The General Plan Diagram is designed to reflect the planning objectives and key initiatives listed above.

The Diagram is to be used and interpreted only in conjunction with the text and other figures contained in the proposed General Plan. The legend of the General Plan Diagram includes the land use classifications described below, which represent an adopted component of the Plan.

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**Figure 2-3: General Plan Land Use Diagram**

**Back of Figure**

Tables 2.3-1, 2.3-2, and 2.3-3 describe the land uses indicated on the General Plan Land Use Diagram and list the density (housing units per acre) and intensity (floor-to-area ratio, or FAR) standards for each one.

<b>Table 2.3-1: Land Use Classifications – Residential</b>					
<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Map Designation</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Typical Uses</i>	<i>Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts</i>	<i>Maximum Density</i>
Rural Residential	RI-RR	Establish a new rural residential zone that is for larger lots in the more rural areas, and allows some animal keeping on those lots.  These could be areas where second units are not permitted, because they all have access limitations and are in areas with steep slopes and/or habitat areas.	RI-RR-40: Rural Residential – 40,000 sf lot size	R-1 (B-E) – 40,000 sf lot size	1-2 Units Per Net Acre
			RI-RR-20: Rural Residential – 20,000 sf lot size	R-1 (B-E) – 20,000 sf lot size	
Hillside Residential	RI-H	Establish a new hillside residential zone in areas where there are steep slopes, and/or a high fire hazard due to proximity to regional open space. Generally require larger lot sizes in these areas. Establish a sliding scale of lot sizes based on slope. Establish provisions that allow for height averaging on sloped lots, exceptions to front yard setbacks on steep upslope lots, standards for retaining wall heights, and other provisions specific to hillside areas. Consider stricter lot coverage limits, due to need to minimize water runoff on steep lots.	Hillside Single Family Residential – 5000 – 10,000 sf lot size depending on lot slope		4-8 Units Per Net Acre
			RI-H-10: 10,000 sf lot size	R-1 (B-E) – 10,000 sf lot size	
			RI-H -8: 8,000 sf lot size		
			RI-H -7.5: 7,500 sf lot size	R-1 (B-E) – 7,500 sf lot size	
			RI-H -6.5: 6,500 sf lot size	R-1 (B-E) – 6,500 sf lot size	
			RI-H -5: 5,000 sf lot size	R-1 (B-E) – 5,000 sf lot size	
Residential – Single Family	RI	This is the district for single family homes which predominates throughout	RI-7.5: Single Family Residential; 7500 sf lot size	R-1 (B-E) – 7,500 sf lot size	6-8 Units Per Net Acre

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Map Designation</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Typical Uses</i>	<i>Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts</i>	<i>Maximum Density</i>
		Castro Valley, and should be kept as it exists. Allow modifiers where they exist already as a BE district, e.g. RI-7.5 (7500 sf lot size) on Alana.	RI-5: Single Family Residential; 5000 sf lot size	R-1 (5,000)	
Residential - Small Dwelling	RS	Establish a classification for duplexes, small lot single family lots, and townhouses. This would encompass the existing zones of R2, RS D-35, and RS D-25. The density of those zones is 12-17 dwelling units per acre. This zone would also establish standards for the new small lot subdivisions where lots are less than 5000 sf, but greater than 3500 sf, so there would be need to be a new zone (proposed as RS-5) for those lot sizes, which equate to 8-12 units per acre. Thus there would be a base zone for these, instead of always doing it with a PD.	RS-5: Single Family, Duplexes and Townhouses – 5000 sf lot area/unit	RS	8-17 Units Per Net Acre
			RS-3.5: Small Single Family Detached; 3500-5000 sf lot area/unit	RS (D-35) – 3,500 sf	
			RS-2.5: Duplexes and Townhouses – 2500 sf lot area/unit	R-2 - 2,500 sf RS (D-25) – 2,500 sf	
Residential – Low Density Multifamily	RLM	This is the district for high density townhouses; and low density apartments and condominiums. Maintain the existing zoning densities allowed under R3 and RS (D-20).	RLM: Apartments and Condos – 2000 sf lot area	R-3 RS (D-20) – 2,000 sf	18-22 Units Per Net Acre



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Residential –Medium Density Multifamily	RM	This is the district for medium density apartments and condominiums. Maintain the densities of the existing zones of RS D-15 (1/1500 sf), and RS D-3 (1/1500 sf). Consolidate RS D-15 and RS D-3, as they seem to be virtually the same.	RM: Apartments and Condos – 1500 sf lot area	RS (D-3) – 1,500 sf RS (D-15) – 1,500 sf	23-29 Units Per Net Acre
Residential Mixed Density	RMX	Establish a zoning district for the areas close to the commercial business districts that allows for a mix of housing types from low to medium density, including single family homes, duplexes, townhomes, and two-story apartment buildings. It establishes an overall character for the area, and avoids having constant requests for rezoning on a case by case basis.	RMX: Rather than having a patchwork of zoning as now exists, establish density based on lot width and lot size. Smaller narrow lots can have single family homes and duplexes, medium size lots or long narrow lots can have townhouses; and larger wider lots can have multifamily housing. This is consistent with the existing development pattern.  Allow for some reduced parking requirements based on proximity to transit and shopping.	R-1 R-2 R-3 R-4 RS RS (D-25) RS (D-3) RS (D-35)	8-29 Units Per Net Acre
Residential Mixed Use	CBD-RMU	Establish a new zoning district for higher density downtown housing that encourages ground floor retail and other commercial space fronting on busy streets. This is uniquely appropriate to	CBD-RMU- 40: Apartments and Condominiums. 40du/acre	No existing district CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Areas 7, 8, 10	30-40 Units Per Net Acre
			CBD-RMU- 60: Apartments and Condominiums. 60du/acre		40-60 Units Per Net Acre

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<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Map Designation</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Typical Uses</i>	<i>Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts</i>	<i>Maximum Density</i>
		the central business district, and is targeted for the sites designated in the housing element for rezoning for multifamily development. The proposed density range is 30-60 units per acre.	Require ground floor retail, restaurants, office, or other commercial uses along Castro Valley Boulevard if west of Forest Avenue or Norbridge, and landscaped front yards if east of Forest Avenue.		
Source: Kahn/Mortimer/Associates and Dyett & Bhatia (2005); Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan (1993)					

<b>Table 2.3-2: Land Use Classifications – Public and Open Space</b>					
<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Map Designation</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Typical Uses</i>	<i>Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts</i>	<i>Maximum Density</i>
Public Facilities	PF	Create a public facilities zone, so that public facilities are clearly designated, and if there are proposed changes to land use, a consideration of rezoning is required.	Schools, Community Centers, Fire Stations, Utilities – Water Reservoirs	No existing district – sites exist primarily with single family zones	Not Applicable
Open Space - Parks	OS-P	Create a new open space zone for parks.	Public Parks and Recreation Facilities	No existing district – sites exist primarily with single family zones	Not Applicable
Open Space - Natural	OS-N	Create a new open space zone for natural resource areas designated for permanent conservation.	Permanent Open Space - established as part of Planned Unit Developments, permanent easements for no development, public parks in a natural state for only passive recreation.	No existing district – sites exist primarily with single family zones	Not Applicable

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Map Designation</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Typical Uses</i>	<i>Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts</i>	<i>Maximum Density</i>
Habitat Conservation Overlay Zone	C	Create an overlay zone on the areas with sensitive biological resources, including creeks, so that special review is required for new development projects and development can be clustered or reduced to ensure habitat protection.		No existing district – sites exist primarily with single family zones	Not Applicable

Source: Kahn/Mortimer/Associates and Dyett & Bhatia

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Typical Uses</i>	<i>Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts</i>	<i>Maximum Density*</i>
Neighborhood Commercial	Small –scale commercial goods and services to serve the daily needs of surrounding residents and mixed-use with residential above ground floor	Groceries, retail shops, convenience stores, specialty foods, dry cleaning agents, drug stores, exercise and dance studios, video rental stores, shoe repair shops, book stores, small restaurants, day care centers, banks, barber shops, clothing stores, flower shops, pharmacies, gas stations (not including auto repair), small appliance repair shops, accountants, insurance agents, copy services, tax services, live-work, dwelling units in mixed-use development, etc.	Neighborhood Business (C-N)	Up to 22 Units Per Net Acre in mixed-use development and 1.0 FAR

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Typical Uses</i>	<i>Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts</i>	<i>Maximum Density*</i>
Community Service and Offices	Low-intensity administrative and professional offices	Accountants, architects, attorneys, insurance agents, tax services, charitable organizations, copying services, medical, dental, chiropractor, live-work, etc.	Administrative Office (C-O)	1.0 FAR
Community Commercial	A wide range of commercial goods and services to meet community needs generally in an auto-oriented setting.	Retail Stores, supermarkets, banks, home improvement stores, restaurants, drive-in and drive-through uses, plant nurseries, live-work, animal hospitals, funeral homes and mortuaries, auto repair and service, parking lots and structures, hardware stores, locksmiths, commercial recreation, religious assembly, clubhouses and lodges.	Retail Business (C-1) General Commercial (C-2)	1.5 FAR
General Commercial	Retail and service uses that provide goods and services to meet sub-regional and regional needs.	All of the uses allowed in community commercial; and in addition: machine shops, equipment rental and repair, commercial print shops, auto sales, adult business, storage facilities, wholesale business, ambulance services, large-format retail, etc.	General Commercial (C-2)	1.0 FAR
Central Business District	Low- to mid-rise commercial, institutional, and civic uses and residential development in mixed-use projects in specified areas; auto-oriented development at the western and eastern ends of Castro Valley Boulevard around a pedestrian-oriented core.	See below for proposed uses by CBD Sub-Area	CBD Specific Plan	Up to 60 Units Per Net Acre in mixed use development where specifically permitted.
Low-Intensity Retail	Auto-oriented uses retail, service, wholesale commercial and industrial uses.	Auto sales and service, motels, contractor's yards, carwash, convenience markets, distribution facilities.	CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area I	1.5 FAR

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Typical Uses</i>	<i>Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts</i>	<i>Maximum Density*</i>
Regional Retail and Entertainment	Large-scale and auto-oriented community and regional retail and entertainment uses.	Hotels, motels, large-format retail, miniature golf, drive-in and drive-through food service.	CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area 2	2.0 FAR
Heritage Area	Preserve and improve Castro Valley Boulevard frontage for small-scale retail and service uses with general commercial and service uses and live-work to north along San Carlos and east to Lake Chabot Road.	Professional offices, arts and crafts, hobby shops, picture framing, antique stores, camera shops, specialty retail, and live-work development. Create two sub-areas: one for pedestrian retail on properties facing Castro Valley Boulevard; and one for general commercial uses facing San Carlos Avenue.	CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area 3	Up to 20 Units Per Net Acre for live-work and 1.0 FAR.
Professional-Medical District	Medical offices, medical support facilities, and related office and commercial uses with convenience retail sales and services to meet needs of employees working in the District and nearby residents.	Hospital, clinics, medical and dental offices and laboratories, ambulance services, pharmacies, congregate care and senior housing, convalescent homes, ambulances, restaurants, other food service outlets, laundry and cleaning agents, convenience stores, flower shops, gift shops.	CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area 4	2.0 FAR
Entertainment-Theater District	Restaurants, specialty retail, galleries and other uses to support and complement theater use.	Movie and live-performance theaters, galleries, full-service restaurants, cafes, gift shops, arts and crafts, hobby shops, book stores, music stores, music and ballet schools.	CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area 5	2.0 FAR

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Typical Uses</i>	<i>Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts</i>	<i>Maximum Density*</i>
Downtown Commercial	Generally auto-reliant commercial goods and services to meet community needs.	Banks, video sales and rental, real estate, title insurance, hardware, sporting goods, restaurants, drug and variety stores, clothing stores, auto parts (not service or installation), book stores, specialty foods, supermarkets, convenience stores, fitness centers, childcare, etc.	CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area 6	2.0 FAR
Core Pedestrian Retail	Pedestrian-oriented commercial retail uses with offices and residential above and behind retail frontage.	Banks, video sales and rental, hardware, sporting goods, restaurants, drug and variety stores, clothing stores, bookstores, flower shops, gift shops, hobby shops, art galleries, framing shops, camera stores, specialty foods (not supermarkets or convenience stores), etc. (Title insurance not permitted.)	CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area 7	2.0 FAR
BART Transit Village	High-density residential.	Multi-family residential, senior housing, childcare facilities.	CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area 8	40-60 Units Per Net Acre and 2.0 FAR
Redwood Road Office/Commercial District	Offices and pedestrian-oriented retail along Redwood Road to serve nearby residents and office workers and BART patrons. New BART parking structure.	Banks, restaurants, specialty food stores (not supermarkets or convenience stores), clothing stores, camera shops, stationery stores, pharmacies, copy services, barber and beauty shops, video sales and rentals, shoe repair, laundry and dry cleaning agents, book stores, medical and dental offices, accountants, tax services, travel agencies, childcare facilities, fitness centers, BART parking.	CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area 9	2.0 FAR

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Typical Uses</i>	<i>Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts</i>	<i>Maximum Density*</i>
Downtown Commercial	Generally auto-reliant commercial goods and services to meet community needs.	Banks, video sales and rental, real estate, title insurance, hardware, sporting goods, restaurants, drug and variety stores, clothing stores, auto parts (not service or installation), book stores, specialty foods, supermarkets, convenience stores, fitness centers, childcare, etc.	New Sub-Area within CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area 10	2.0 FAR
Downtown Civic and Community Center	Library, community meeting center, government and other offices.	Banks, title insurance, headquarters offices, government offices, social service agencies, library, childcare facilities, community assembly, library.	New Sub-Area within CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area 10	2.0 FAR
Downtown High Density Residential	High-density residential. Ground-floor non-residential along Castro Valley Boulevard.	Multi-family residential, senior housing, childcare facilities, and commercial and office uses on the ground floor. Require ground floor retail, restaurants, office, or other commercial uses along Castro Valley Boulevard if west of Forest Avenue or Norbridge, and landscaped front yards with residential on the ground level if east of Forest Avenue.	New Sub-Area within CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area 10	40-60 Units Per Net Acre and 1.0 FAR
Residential-Low Density	Residential-single family and duplex	Predominantly single family homes on small lots (5000 sf). Duplexes allowed in some areas.	CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area 11	Up to 10 Units Per Net Acre
Residential-Medium Density	Residential-Townhouses, Condos and Apartments	Higher density permitted on larger lot sizes closest to Castro Valley Blvd. and BART; sliding scale based on lot size and width.	CBD Specific Plan, Sub-Area 11	Range of 8-29 Units Per Net Acre
<p>*FAR = Floor Area Ratio. Floor Area Ratio is the total square feet of floor area divided by the total square feet of lot area. Floor area excludes areas devoted to parking.                      On sites with mixed-use development, commercial density (FAR) and residential density (units per acre) are allowed to be combined, provided that buildings meet all other development standards.</p>				

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Typical Uses</i>	<i>Corresponding Existing Zoning Districts</i>	<i>Maximum Density*</i>
<i>Source: Kahn/Mortimer/Associates and Dyett &amp; Bhatia (2005); Castro Valley Central Business District Specific Plan (1993)</i>				

## **2.4 BUILDOUT UNDER THE PROPOSED PLAN**

Full development under the proposed General Plan is referred to as “buildout.” Although the proposed General Plan applies a 20-year planning horizon, the Plan is not intended to specify or anticipate when buildout will actually occur; nor does the designation of a site for a certain use necessarily mean the site will be built or redeveloped with that use in the next 20 years. Buildout does not reflect the maximum capacity that the planning area could accommodate based on the proposed Plan, but rather the most likely level of development based on development trends, permit history, demographic characteristics, and a variety of other relevant factors that are discussed below. Please refer to the Land Use Element of the proposed Plan for more detailed analysis of General Plan buildout.

This section describes the implications of the proposed General Plan buildout in terms of future population, housing units, and jobs.

### **POPULATION GROWTH AND HOUSING**

#### **Buildout Population**

As shown in Table 2.4-1, the Castro Valley Plan Area will accommodate a population of approximately 64,935 people at buildout, an increase of about 7.9 percent over the estimated 2005 population of 60,200. Over a 20-year period, the addition of about 4,735 people represents an average annual growth rate of 0.4 percent, a lower rate than that experienced by Castro Valley over the last 15 years (1990-2005), which was around 1.6 percent.

**Table 2.4-1: Households and Population at Buildout**

	<i>Estimated 2005<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Change 2005-2025</i>	<i>Buildout<sup>3</sup></i>
Housing units	23,200	+2,090	25,290
Average household size	2.64	2.62	2.62
Households <sup>2</sup>	22,780	+2,005	24,785
Population	60,200	+4,735	64,935



- 
1. Estimates of households, household size, and population are based on the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency's 2005 data, which are considered to be the most accurate representation of Castro Valley's current status. This data is based on ABAG's 2002 projections for job and housing growth in the Bay Area, which are similar in methodology to ABAG's 2005 projections. The estimated 2005 housing units assume a vacancy rate of 1.8%, as reported in the 2000 US Census.
  2. A vacancy rate of 2% is assumed in calculating future households.
  3. To project population at buildout, the number of new housing units was added to current housing units. Households were then calculated by multiplying total housing units by 0.98 to take the assumed 2% vacancy rate into account. The households were then multiplied by the assumed average household size.
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*Sources: Existing Information from CMA 2005, projected from ABAG 2003 numbers. Projected growth from Dyett and Bhatia, 2005, based on parcel by parcel analysis of development potential under the new Castro Valley General Plan.*

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## **Residential Development**

Approximately 22,780 households currently reside in the Castro Valley Plan Area, based on Alameda County CMA estimates. The proposed General Plan would add around 2,005 households increasing the total number of households in Castro Valley to 24,785 by 2025. In contrast to much of the planning area's growth in the past, these units would be added through infill development, primarily from the redevelopment of under-built sites, additional units on lots that are already developed, subdivision of large lots, and development on vacant lots.

The housing mix for units added during the planning period is presented in Table 2.4-2. Around 43 percent of Castro Valley's new housing units (900 units) are expected to be added in the central business district, almost doubling the housing stock in that area. Outside of the central business district, the construction of single-family and multi-family units at an average rate of 55 units per year over the next 20 years will result in the projected addition of 800 new single-family units and 310 new multi-family units. The new single-family units will primarily be created through the subdivision of existing single-family lots, most of which already include one unit.

These residential growth rates are based on a weighted average of recent residential development rates in Castro Valley. From 2004-05, housing units were built at a rate of 32 per year; from 2000-05 the rate was 72 units per year although; and from 1990-2005 the rate was 135 units per year. However growth rates from 1990 to 2005 included several very large subdivisions, and with the new Urban Growth Boundary established by Measure D, there are no large sites remaining that can be subdivided. The projected buildout takes into account not only the pace of development over the past 16 years, but also the many factors that limit housing development on individual sites in Castro Valley. These include restrictions due to slope and biological resources, limited access to some lots, the number of people willing to subdivide their lots, a constraint on the number of new units that can be absorbed in a year, and difficulty in adding units to existing building configurations and meeting parking and frontage requirements. All of these factors severely limit residential development, and that is why just 15 percent of maximum possible residential construction is expected to occur.

Within Castro Valley's Central Business District, residential development is expected to occur at a higher rate as sites have recently been rezoned to allow for denser, mixed-use development. The analysis studied the ratio of the value of improvements to the value of land in order to

identify opportunity sites for development. Depending on the size and existing structures on the opportunity sites within different sub-areas of downtown, development is expected to occur on between 25 and 100 percent of the opportunity sites. Table 2.4-2 shows the number and type of units anticipated in the CBD, as well as in the rest of Castro Valley.

Secondary units are expected to be added at a rate of around 4 per year, which is slightly higher than the rate of 3.25 per year added between 2002 and 2006, and assumes that secondary units will be built on one percent of single-family lots that can accommodate them. Around 80 accessory units are anticipated at buildout.

**Table 2.4-2: Residential Buildout through 2025**

	Existing Units	New Single-Family Homes	New Second Units	New Multi-Family Units	Net New Units	Total Units (Existing and New)
CBD	1,100	-	-	900	900	2,000
Rest of Castro Valley	22,100	800	80	310	1,180	23,290
Total	23,200	800	80	1,210	2,090	25,290

Source: Existing Information from CMA 2005, projected from ABAG 2002 numbers. Projected growth from Dyett and Bhatia, 2005, based on parcel by parcel analysis of development potential under the new Castro Valley General Plan.

## EMPLOYMENT

Castro Valley is projected to accommodate approximately 1,460 new jobs at buildout, an increase of 16 percent over the Alameda County CMA’s estimate of 9,275 jobs in the community in 2005.

About half of the new employment (675 jobs) will be generated by an estimated net increase of 200,000 square feet in Castro Valley’s commercial floor area, which represents a 22 percent increase above the community’s current commercial floor area of 919,000 square feet. This amount of development corresponds with economic demand analyses undertaken for the Existing Conditions report and the Redevelopment Strategic Plan (Alameda County Community Development Agency, completed December 2005) which estimate that over the next 20 years Castro Valley would experience demand for approximately 150,000 square feet of new retail space, 15,000 square feet of medical office space, 40,000 square feet of other office space, and 5,000 square feet of neighborhood retail space.

**Table 2.4-3: Projected Employment Growth**

Type/Location	Number of new jobs	Percent of total
CBD and neighborhood Commercial	675	46 percent
Hospital	100	7 percent
Work from home	389	27 percent
Home-based employment	259	18 percent
Schools	36	2 percent
TOTAL	1,459	100 percent

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2006

There are three types of areas where commercial development will likely occur in Castro Valley: around the BART station, in mixed use projects elsewhere in the CBD, and on other sites that are developed for a variety of exclusively commercial uses. The anticipated degree of development of each, taking into account the loss of existing commercial floor space, is shown in Table 2.4-3.

**Table 2.4-4: Commercial Buildout through 2025**

<i>Location</i>	<i>Existing Building Square Footage</i>	<i>Existing Lot Square Footage</i>	<i>Projected Non-Residential FAR</i>	<i>Percent of Sites to be Redeveloped</i>	<i>Est. New Square Footage</i>	<i>Existing Square Footage Demolished for Redevelopment</i>	<i>Total Net New Square Footage</i>
BART Site	0	488,927	0.20	100%	97,800	0	97,800
Mixed-Use Sites in CBD	245,250	1,398,855	0.10	35%	49,000	85,838	-36,800
Other Commercial	673,747	3,078,129	0.35	35%	377,100	235,811	141,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>918,997</b>	<b>4,965,910</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>523,900</b>	<b>321,649</b>	<b>202,300</b>

*Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2006*

For the BART site, which is designated as mixed-use, it was assumed that sites would build out to the maximum possible with 20 percent of the structures being used for non-residential space and the remainder for housing. For mixed-use sites in the central business district, it was assumed that retail would be placed on the ground floor of the structure with a depth of 80 feet or less. For the other commercial sites, an average FAR of 0.35 is the typical density of a single story commercial structure with surface parking.

About 33 percent of the projected new employment will occur outside of the Castro Valley CBD, much of it from jobs not located in stores or offices:

- The 2000 Census reported that 3.7 percent of Castro Valley's employed residents worked at home. The General Plan projects that the number of residents who work at home will increase to 5 percent in both existing and new units, based on increasing demand and technology available for working from home. This will result in 389 home occupations, or 27 percent of Castro Valley's job growth.
- Home-based employment (gardeners, cleaning services, etc.) is expected in one of every 8 new households. This will create 259 new jobs, or 18 percent of the job growth.
- The remaining nine percent of the job growth will be in education and health services. School employment is expected to increase slightly (36 jobs), to reflect minimal increases in the total number of students over the next 20 years based on projected demographic trends. Eden Medical Center does not project any increase in total employment because the hospital does not plan to increase the number of beds. An increase of 100 jobs was assumed to be conservative, since the hospital is planning to rebuild its facilities, and more modern facilities may attract more patients. The Plan also proposes the creation of a Hospital and Medical Office District and includes policies intended to optimize the role of Eden Medical Center as a catalyst for health-related development.

The combination of the central business district development and the distributed addition of other jobs results in the anticipated net increase of 1,460 jobs in Castro Valley over the next 20 years.

## **2.5 KEY POLICIES OF THE PROPOSED PLAN**

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The proposed General Plan addresses eight major topics that are related to Castro Valley's physical environment but are intended to achieve a broad range of economic, environmental, and social objectives:

- Land Use and Community Development
- Community Character and Design
- Circulation
- Biological Resources
- Parks, Schools, and Community Services
- Public Services and Facilities
- Natural Hazards and Public Safety; and
- Noise and Air Quality

The key objectives of the General Plan regarding future development include:

- Revitalize the Central Business District;
- Preserve the area's defining natural characteristics;
- Improve access for children to schools, parks and recreation facilities;
- Provide facilities for activities and entertainment venues for all age groups;
- Ensure safe residential streets;
- Preserve the small town "rural" character of Castro Valley;
- Reduce impacts of regional traffic and freeway traffic;
- Continue to allow new infill housing on sites that have capacity, in a way that fits in with the existing scale and character of the community;
- Identify regulatory changes that need to be made to implement the plan; and
- Establish priorities for the capital improvement projects.

This section provides an overview of the policies in each section of the proposed General Plan and lists key policies. The Plan itself identifies additional policies to achieve the Plan's goals. All of these policies are incorporated by reference into this project description and analyzed in this EIR.

### **LAND USE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

This chapter contains goals and policies regarding how land will be used and developed to achieve the Plan's objectives listed above. The overall goal of these policies is to revise the land

uses and densities in Castro Valley and establish a regulatory framework to implement the Plan that will better respect existing conditions and environmentally sensitive areas while providing areas for infill housing development to meet a wide range of housing needs and areas for new retail, restaurants, services, and employment.

The land use and community development policies are intended to achieve the following goals:

1. Accommodate infill residential development. Ensure that new development is consistent with the desired community character, protects sensitive biological resources, and is not subject to undue natural hazards. Require parks or open space, infrastructure, and other public facilities necessary to support new residential development.
2. Develop Specific Plans or Precise Plans for areas that have significant remaining development potential and have special conditions such as steep slopes and/or biological resources.
3. Encourage civic uses and community facilities such as churches, schools, and day care within residential neighborhoods, and minimize impacts of those facilities on residences in the immediately surrounding area.
4. Retain neighborhood commercial land use within residential neighborhoods, and encourage the development of mixed use projects that include neighborhood retail, restaurants, and services on the ground floor and housing. Minimize impacts of those facilities on residences in the immediately surrounding area.
5. Provide residents and businesses with access to a wide variety of commercial goods and services, and expand employment to increase opportunities for Castro Valley residents to work in the community where they live.
6. Enhance the Central Business District to create a pedestrian-oriented district of shops, restaurants, and services with a distinctive small-town character that reflects Castro Valley's history and culture. Improve the overall appearance of Castro Valley Boulevard. Attract and retain small local retail and restaurant businesses that will enhance the quality of life in Castro Valley.
7. Upgrade and modernize Eden Medical Center in order to provide health services and jobs for the community. Design the hospital site and surrounding sites in the Professional-Medical District to achieve the community's goals for improving the area along Lake Chabot Road, and to minimize any negative effects on surrounding residential properties.
8. Provide a wide range of goods and services to meet community needs, including auto repair, personal storage, equipment rental, lumber yards, etc. Locate those uses on sites where there is good automobile access and impacts on residential uses can be minimized.

The key policies proposed to achieve these goals are:

### **Residential Development**

- Lot sizes shall be consistent with desired character of the area, as established in new General Plan land use classifications. Subdivision plans shall be designed to avoid areas that are environmentally sensitive, or have high fire hazards or steep slopes

- Streets in new subdivisions shall provide adequate access for residents, emergency vehicles, and service vehicles. Public streets shall be provided for subdivisions with greater than 10 lots. Allow streets without curbs, gutters, and sidewalks in areas where they do not currently exist in order to maintain the natural character of the area, provided that drainage and stormwater treatment requirements can be met.
- Establish a new hillside residential zone in areas where there are steep slopes, and/or a high fire hazard due to proximity to regional open space. Require lot sizes of between 5000 and 10,000 sq. ft. in these areas. Establish a sliding scale of lot sizes based on slope.
- Continue to allow development at the rear of deep lots so that neighborhood character as viewed from the street is preserved, but establish setbacks and daylight planes to ensure privacy and minimize bulk.
- Revise and add development standards for single family homes in the R1 and RS districts to ensure adequate light and air, privacy; usable open space; landscaping; and attractive street appearance.
- Establish development standards and guidelines specific to different building types. Develop a checklist of standards and guidelines that can be applied to all development applications. Use the new standards as the basis for review of development applications.
- Establish a comprehensive design review process that creates an appropriate level of review for each type of project. Establish development standards and guidelines specific to each zoning district and/or building type. Develop a checklist of standards that can be applied to all development applications. Use the new standards as the basis for review of development applications. Establish different levels of review based on the number of units, number of new lots, and/or acreage of the project.
- Establish more detailed criteria for exceptions to regulations, and upper limits on requests for exceptions.
- Planned Unit Developments applications should be used when an application meets the general plan land use and density regulations, but proposes an alternative site plan or design that departs from basic zoning standards. These types of applications are not appropriate as a substitute for rezoning.
- Enforce existing and new development regulations through the project review process and inspections of construction.
- Lot subdivisions and building footprints shall be designed to preserve natural vegetation, biological resources, and stands of large trees to the maximum extent feasible.
- Prohibit gated streets.
- Require that new development comply with zoning standards and be compatible with the scale and character of surrounding development.

### **Special Policies for Focus Areas**

- Prepare specific plans, precise plans, or special design guidelines for the following areas:
  - Madison Common.

- EMBUD Site
- Johns Drive Area
- Crow Canyon Road Area
- Jensen Ranch

### **Civic Uses and Community Facilities in Residential Neighborhoods**

- Require that new development comply with zoning standards and be compatible with the scale and character of surrounding development.
- Review proposed non-residential uses to minimize traffic impacts on residential areas.
- Maximize joint use of existing schools, religious uses, and community centers to provide facilities to serve surrounding residents.

### **Neighborhood Commercial Uses in Residential Neighborhoods**

- Existing neighborhood commercial sites shall not be converted to exclusive residential use unless their size and location precludes viable commercial or mixed-use development.
- Maintain, upgrade and redevelop neighborhood commercial properties to provide services that meet residents' daily needs, and provide a place where community residents can interact on a regular basis. Include walkways or very small outdoor plazas.
- Allow residential uses on neighborhood commercial sites if neighborhood-serving commercial or civic uses (such as day care) are maintained on the ground floor. Allow townhouses, condominiums or apartments at a density of 15-20 units per net acre at a scale of up to three stories
- Encourage the redevelopment of the two larger neighborhood commercial sites at Lake Chabot Road/Quail and Heyer/Center for mixed use development with housing above and commercial below.
- Development in neighborhood commercial areas shall be designed to be compatible with the surrounding residential area and minimize impacts on adjoining residential properties, with respect to height, bulk, building massing, architectural design, building orientation, parking location, signage and other features.
- Allow small automobile repair facilities that do not include heavy repair activities such as body work or automobile painting within neighborhood commercial sites. Establish standards to ensure that such facilities do not have negative affects on surrounding residential uses.
- Establish and enforce requirements to ensure that neighborhood commercial sites, buildings, paved areas, and landscaping are well-maintained and upgraded over time as building or site modifications occur.

### **Economic Development**

- Attract and retain retail and food services to satisfy resident's demands and enhance community livability.

- Attract targeted types of commercial businesses that are desired in Castro Valley and for which there is an underserved market.
- Retain and attract small local businesses in Castro Valley that serve resident needs and contribute to the small town local character of the downtown.
- Retain sites designated for Commercial use in the General Plan Land Use Plan in order to ensure that there is adequate land for retail, restaurants, and personal services to meet the needs of Castro Valley residents.
- Maintain appropriate locations for general commercial and auto-related land uses to meet the needs of Castro Valley residents and businesses.
- Encourage home based businesses that meet County ordinance criteria. They support the local economic, provide income for community residents, reduce traffic, and provide work arrangements that are family-friendly.

### **Central Business District**

- Create a central pedestrian-friendly shopping and restaurant area on a few blocks along Castro Valley Boulevard and key side streets, including Castro Village Shopping Center. Over time, add and relocate buildings, sidewalks, and parking so that the area has a pedestrian environment. Create a plaza or central green place with features to create a public gathering place that can be identified as the heart of the community.
- Improve the appearance of Castro Valley Boulevard with traffic calming measures, tree planting, attractive street furniture, etc. that will contribute to the creation of a distinctive image for Castro Valley's Downtown.
- Improve the visual appearance of the private properties on Castro Valley Boulevard through façade improvements, new signs, reductions in billboards, etc.
- Create a variety of attractive publicly-owned and privately-owned public spaces throughout the CBD including seating areas, landscaping, water-features, and public art.
- Attract a wider range of shops and restaurants than currently exists in Castro Valley, including apparel shops, bookstores, and table cloth restaurants.
- Attract more cultural, arts, and entertainment venues that offer quality arts and entertainment functions such as live music, theater, or comedy. Ensure that such venues do not impact residents or adjacent businesses due to late hours, noise, etc.
- Cluster Retail and Services to Create Sub-districts with a strong identity where people can easily walk from one business to the other. Cluster related businesses so they attract a greater customer base than any one business can attract on their own; for example clustering cinema with restaurants; or a grocery store with other small shops and personal services.
- Work with BART on joint development of the BART Station site to add housing, office and retail uses in addition to structured parking on the BART parking lots.
- Create additional housing, including apartments, condominiums, and live-work, in and within walking distance of the Central Business District. Redevelop existing mobile



home parks for residential and mixed-use development, and make best efforts to include housing units affordable to existing residents of mobile home parks.

- Additional residents in downtown support downtown businesses and services, take advantage of BART and bus transit service, and reduce the demand for development in outlying areas of the community with environmental or other development constraints.
- Add public parking in strategic locations within the downtown, where there is a demonstrated parking shortage, and where it can be located within walking distance of pedestrian-oriented shopping. Consolidate and redesign existing privately owned parking areas to improve circulation and access and augment parking.
- Maintain public improvements and private property in the downtown to improve its overall appearance.
- Create an attractive pedestrian-friendly circulation system to serve to provide attractive connections between the CBD's pedestrian core, downtown residential, the BART station, the future library, and parking areas. Design the pedestrian system to incorporate and enhance Castro Valley Creek.

#### **Professional Medical District**

- Continue to modernize and upgrade Eden Medical Center so that it serves as a catalyst for health-related development around the hospital, provides jobs for Castro Valley residents, and supports local retail and restaurants.
- Create a high-quality image on the Eden Medical Center site and on surrounding properties in the district through design, landscaping, and maintenance.
- Encourage medical office and commercial development on Lake Chabot Road that improves the area's appearance and creates a vibrant district with employment, restaurants, retail, and personal services.
- Plan new development to minimize adverse effects on surrounding residential areas.
- Allow a variety of health-related professional and technical support uses, nursing homes, retail, restaurants, and services to meet the needs of employees and residents.
- Partner with a non-profit organization or a park district or HARD to develop and program a joint-use fitness center for community and hospital use that promotes exercise and healthy lifestyles.

#### **Commercial, Community Services, and Offices Districts Outside of Downtown**

- Identify and maintain sufficient appropriately-located areas to meet the needs of residents and businesses for auto-reliant general retail and service use
- Sites adjacent to I-580 entrances and exits with frontage on major arterials shall be retained for general commercial uses such as gasoline service station, storage, auto repair, and auto-reliant commercial uses.
- Existing general commercial and auto-reliant uses located in areas that the General Plan proposes for pedestrian-oriented, neighborhood commercial, or mixed-use development must be regulated to ensure that they do not preclude redevelopment for more

appropriate commercial uses consistent with the General Plan and do not serve as a deterrent to investment in property improvement and redevelopment.

- Allow community-serving office and low-intensity commercial and service uses along Redwood Road south of I-580 so long as they are compatible with adjacent residential uses.
- Locate office and storage uses between I-580 or other arterials and adjacent residential neighborhoods, so those uses serve as a buffer between roadways and adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Strengthen East Castro Valley Boulevard as a gateway to the CBD and a regional-serving retail area that will attract shoppers from throughout Castro Valley and other nearby areas.
- Maintain and improve the appearance of commercial properties so they make a positive contribution to Castro Valley's livability and attractiveness.
- Regulate general commercial and auto-reliant uses to minimize noise, odors, dust, and traffic impacts.
- Prohibit any additional personal storage facilities in Castro Valley. Prohibit other general commercial and auto-reliant businesses that are incompatible with surrounding residential and retail uses.

## **COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND DESIGN**

This chapter proposes goals and policies that are intended to protect and enhance the elements of Castro Valley's natural and built environment that define the community's visual character. The Plan's goals are to:

1. Protect and enhance the natural setting of hillsides, canyons, and creeks that establish Castro Valley's visual character. Protect views to these natural resources from public streets, parks, trails, and community facilities.
2. Improve the appearance of Castro Valley by adding trees, landscaping, and other streetscape design features along major arterials, in commercial areas, and at major gateways to the community. Retain the "small-town" and "rural character" of Castro Valley's hillside streets.
3. Create and enhance community gathering places in order to foster Castro Valley's identity and civic participation.
4. Protect historic sites and structures and other cultural resources that help to maintain the special character and identity of Castro Valley and represent important physical connections to the community's past.

The key policies the Plan proposes to achieve these goals are:

- Establish hillside development standards including requirements for clustering development, maximum lot coverage limits and minimum landscaping in hillside areas.
- Improve the community's appearance and maintaining its small-town character by preserving existing street landscaping, undertaking street redesign projects that add land-

scaping, and not adding curbs, gutters, and sidewalks in residential hillside areas except where necessary for pedestrian safety or near schools.

- Improve existing community gathering places and creating a variety of new outdoor and indoor public spaces.
- Protect and preserve federal and State-designated historic sites and structures and properties to the maximum extent feasible and establishing appropriate strategies to protect local cultural resources that do not qualify for designation as historic resources but still reflect Castro Valley’s history and traditions.
- Integrate consideration of historical and cultural resources into the development review process to promote early resolution of conflicts between cultural resources preservation and other community goals and objectives.

## **CIRCULATION**

The Circulation element establishes goals and policies for all transportation modes, including transit, pedestrian, and bicycle, with the overall objective of creating a comprehensive “multi-modal” system that offers residents different ways to move around the community and beyond. The goals of the Plan are to:

1. Provide a multi-modal transportation system that includes a variety of facilities and routes to meet the diverse needs of Castro Valley residents, workers, businesses, and visitors.
2. Reduce regional roadway congestion to reduce visual, noise, air quality, and traffic congestion impacts on Castro Valley including elimination of localized areas of congestion, provided that such improvements are not highly detrimental to pedestrian, bike, or transit circulation.
3. Protect residential neighborhoods from through traffic, speeding, and non-residential parking.
4. Increase transit ridership and service to residences, employment, schools, and Eden Medical Center. Expand and improve local bikeway connections and provide a safe environment for bicycle travel throughout the community.
5. Provide a safe and attractive walking environment accessible for all users, particularly disabled users, seniors, transit users, and children, and promote a pedestrian-friendly downtown.

The primary policies that the Plan proposes to achieve these goals include:

- Balancing the needs of all circulation modes and assessing the performance of the transportation system by measuring how well pedestrians, bicycles, and transit vehicles, as well as cars and trucks are able to move within and through the community.
- Applying an LOS of E or better for Congestion Management Program (CMP) Roadways Castro Valley Boulevard, Center Street, Grove Way, Crow Canyon Road, and Redwood Road and LOS D or better for non-CMP roadways during peak travel periods unless specified circumstances apply.

- Working with regional agencies to develop and implement regional solutions to reduce local traffic problems created by growth outside of Castro Valley.
- Improving traffic circulation by improving intersections at strategic locations.
- Protecting neighborhoods by calming traffic on streets where traffic frequently exceeds speed limits and preventing encroachment of non-residential parking, particularly due to overflows from the BART station.
- Promoting transit access by making transit stops and stations more pleasant and safe, improving access to transit (especially for those who do not have or are unable to use private automobiles) and working with transit agencies to provide safe, efficient, and convenient access to shopping areas, community facilities, and other primary destinations .
- Providing a comprehensive bikeway system that is coordinated with facilities in other communities and provides convenient and safe access to community and regional activity centers and primary destinations.
- Implementing the County Pedestrian Master Plan and developing Safe Routes to Schools program to provide safe and attractive pedestrian facilities.
- Balancing the needs of automobiles with pedestrian comfort and scale and adding pedestrian amenities in the Central Business District.

## **BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

This chapter addresses the protection and enhancement of Castro Valley's significant biological resources, which are concentrated in creek corridors, canyons, and hillside open space areas set aside as part of planned developments. The specific goals are to:

1. Protect and enhance native wildlife through conservation and restoration of a continuous network of connected natural habitat.
2. Preserve creek channels and riparian habitat to protect and enhance wildlife corridors, flood protection, and the quality of surface water and groundwater.
3. Maintain, preserve, and enhance trees and vegetation to provide habitat and protect the natural environment.

To achieve these goals the Plan proposes:

- Design guidelines for property within or adjacent to the proposed Biological Resources Overlay Zone.
- Discouraging loss of riparian woodlands and wetlands by requiring replacement mitigation.
- Encouraging agencies responsible for public infrastructure to design and build projects to protect wildlife corridors, creeks, and regional trails.
- Requiring that open space for new development be designed to achieve multiple objectives including recreation, scenic values, habitat protection, and public safety.

- Right-of-way and setback requirements to new development to accommodate multi-use objectives including storm drainage, flood control, and habitat protection.
- Implementing the existing Tree Ordinance and requiring new development to preserve, replace, and add native trees and plant species.

## **PARKS, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

This chapter includes goals and policies applicable to specific public and semi-public community facilities but also proposes an overarching strategy to ensure that community services are located, designed, and funded in ways that are equitable and of benefit to all local residents and visitors. The Plan's goals include:

1. Provide and maintain adequate sites and facilities to meet the education, cultural, recreation, health care, and related needs of all present and future Castro Valley residents making optimal use of facilities while minimizing disruption to neighborhoods.
2. Provide and maintain, in coordination with other public agencies, a system of local public park and recreation facilities offering a variety of active, passive, and cultural recreational opportunities to meet the diverse recreational needs of residents and also considering the demands of those who work in the community but are not residents.
3. Provide a system of hiking, equestrian and bicycle trails to connect major park and recreation areas within and adjacent to the Planning Area, to connect neighborhoods, and to provide an alternative means of access between neighborhoods and the downtown.
4. Provide for a system of schools and other educational facilities to meet the needs of community residents or all ages and promote community identity.
5. Provide a variety of affordable childcare facilities to meet the needs of present and future Castro Valley residents and those who work in the community.
6. Develop a new library that will meet the diverse needs of present and future residents and will serve as a focal point and place of civic pride for the Castro Valley.

The primary policies proposed to achieve these goals are:

- Ensure environmental justice in the provision of community services and facilities to meet the needs of all segments of the community.
- Design and locate programs and facilities to avoid over-concentration that may create adverse impacts and maximize access allowing for alternatives to the automobile and, when appropriate, close to retail uses to minimize vehicle trips.
- Allocate public funds to provide new or improved parks and other services and facilities in accord with specified priorities.
- Use the General Plan and any adopted specific plans to govern decisions about the use of closed or surplus public service sites.
- Maintain a parkland standard of at least 3 acres for every 1,000 residents.
- Use HARD standards to identify underserved areas and to plan community and neighborhood parks and recreation facilities.

- Provide pocket parks to serve smaller areas.
- Integrate trails and greenways in new development and, when feasible, locate trails within the boundaries of flood control and riparian corridors.
- Provide sufficient K-12 school sites to meet or exceed State and local standards while minimizing conflicts with surrounding residences.
- To the extent possible, ensure that public school facilities are available for community use and activities.
- Support changing school district boundaries to include all of Castro Valley in the Castro Valley Unified School District.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

The primary objective of this element is to ensure that the public facilities and services that Castro Valley relies on will have the capacity to serve new development under the General Plan without degrading existing service levels. The Plan's goals include:

1. Provide public utilities and facilities that are designed, located, and sized to serve development that is or would be consistent with this Plan and any applicable Specific Plan that the County adopts consistent with this Plan.
2. Provide and maintain a safe environment for Castro Valley residents, workers, visitors and property owners.
3. Provide a safe, adequate, and reliable water supply in compliance with State and Federal standards to meet the needs of existing development and new development that is consistent with this Plan.
4. Ensure the availability of adequate and effective wastewater collection and treatment to protect public health and safety.
5. Ensure the provision of adequate utilities and communication systems to serve existing and future residents and businesses.
6. Continue to reduce solid waste generation through waste reduction and recycling programs.
7. Maintain public streets in good condition to protect public safety, reduce property damage, and sustain or improve Castro Valley's overall appearance.

The key policies to achieve these goals are:

- Ensuring that new development pays its fair share of the cost of infrastructure necessary to support growth without reducing service levels and, where feasible, shall pay a proportionate amount toward ongoing operating and maintenance costs where these would exceed costs normally associated with serving other development in the community.
- Retain all public service facilities in public ownership and maintain their use for public benefit.

- Adopt and maintain public safety service standards that meet or exceed standards for comparable incorporated cities in Alameda County.
- Maintain and regularly update a standardized Emergency Management Plan in coordination with County and regional agencies and public safety agencies in surrounding cities.
- Incorporate defensible space principles in new development and plan new public and private buildings to minimize the risk of fire and reduce fire hazards to persons and property in existing development.
- Ensure that disaster plans for Castro Valley are up-to-date and that all residents and businesses are informed of the plan and its procedures.
- Expand programs to replace and repair aging public and private sewer lines and stormwater collection systems.
- Reduce the need for developing new water supply sources and sewer system improvements by incorporating water conservation measures in new development, working with EBMUD to develop wastewater reclamation programs, and appropriate use of recycled water for new and existing development.
- Reduce release of contaminants into the water system by requiring new development to minimize stormwater runoff.
- Working with utilities to ensure that facilities are designed and planned to minimize their impact on current and future residents and to improve the appearance of transmission line corridors.
- Implementing programs to ensure that property owners understand their responsibilities for maintaining sidewalks, ROW landscaping, and other features adjacent to their property.

## **NATURAL HAZARDS AND PUBLIC SAFETY**

Castro Valley's physical setting poses a variety of risks related to seismic and geological conditions, fire, and flooding. The Plan's goals regarding these public safety issues are:

1. Protect lives, property, and the environment by working with Alameda County Fire Department to reduce fire hazards.
2. Provide surface drainage and flood protection facilities to protect the public safety and maintain and improve water quality to comply with all applicable requirements and protect the natural environment.
3. Minimize risks of property damage and personal injury posed by geologic and seismic hazards.
4. Minimize the risk to life and property from the production, use, storage and transportation of hazardous materials and waste.

The following policies are proposed to minimize the risk of damage to property or injury to people:

- Increase preparedness for and reduce impacts from wildland fires.

- Restrict the use of wells for domestic, irrigation, municipal, and industrial uses in central Castro Valley to limited or monitored uses.
- Lower the risk for downstream flooding by reducing impervious surfaces on new development and protecting existing drainage patterns.
- Design and construct structures to withstand groundshaking forces of a minor earthquake without damage, of a moderate earthquake without structural damage, and of a major earthquake without collapse. Design and construct critical and essential structures and facilities to remain standing and functional following a major earthquake.
- Ensure that risks of exposure to hazardous materials are minimized by educating the public, establishing special zoning regulations for uses that involve hazardous materials, and evaluating soil and/or groundwater contamination as part of development project review.

## **NOISE AND AIR QUALITY**

The predominant sources of noise and air pollution in Castro Valley are vehicular traffic and BART. The goals of this element are to:

1. Protect residents and workers in Castro Valley from noise that affects comfort and health. Reduce noise to within established noise limits to the maximum extent feasible; curtail the increase of noise levels in the future; and mitigate noise impacts on sensitive uses through siting and design.
2. Improve air quality and meet all Federal and State ambient air quality standards by reducing the generation of air pollutants from stationary and mobile sources and by appropriate siting and design of sensitive land uses.

The primary policies proposed to achieve these goals are:

- Avoid siting new noise-sensitive uses in areas with projected noise levels greater than 70 dBA. Where such uses are permitted, require incorporation of mitigation measures to ensure that interior noise levels are acceptable.
- Limit traffic speeds to levels that do not produce noise in excess of established County noise standards.
- To reduce air pollutant emissions from automobiles, promote pedestrian, bicycle, and transit modes of travel and land use mixes and development densities that encourage these modes of travel. (Action Steps for this policy are located in Chapters 4 and 6 regarding Land Use and Community Development and Circulation.)
- Protect sensitive receptors, including residential uses, schools, day care centers, parks with recreation facilities, and medical facilities, which are located within 1000 feet of the Interstate 580 corridors from air pollutants and locate new sensitive receptors at least 300 feet away, and ideally 500 feet away, from the edge of Interstate 580.

### **General Plan Correspondence to Alameda County General Plan**

Because Castro Valley is an unincorporated area, land use and development decisions must also conform to countywide General Plan elements unless they are less restrictive than provisions of



the proposed plan. Table 2.5-1 indicates which elements of the proposed Castro Valley Plan and which countywide elements are applicable to Castro Valley.

**Table 2.5-1: Castro Valley General Plan Correspondence Table**

<i>Required Element</i>	<i>Castro Valley General Plan Element</i>	<i>Countywide General Plan Element</i>
Land Use	Land Use and Community Development, Community Character and Design	Alameda County Scenic Route Element (1976)
Circulation	Circulation	
Open Space	Land Use and Community Development, Parks, Schools, and Community Services	Alameda County Open Space Element (1973, rev. 1989), Alameda County Park and Open Space Element (1956 rev. 1966 )
Conservation	Biological Resources, Community Character and Design, Natural Hazards and Public Safety	Alameda County Conservation Element (1976 rev. 1994)
Safety	Natural Hazards and Public Safety; Public Services and Facilities	Alameda County Seismic and Safety Elements (1982)
Noise	Noise and Air Quality, Alameda County Noise Element	Alameda County Noise Element (1976 rev. 1994))
Housing	N.A.	Alameda County Housing Element (2001 rev. 2003)

## 2.6 PROPOSED PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The proposed General Plan provides specific policy guidance for implementation of plan concepts in each of the Plan elements and establishes a basis for coordinated action by Alameda County, adjacent jurisdictions, BART, AC Transit and regional and state agencies.

The Board of Supervisors' role in implementing the General Plan will be to set implementation priorities and approve zoning map and text amendments, consistent with the General Plan, and a Capital Improvement Program and budget to carry out the Plan. The Board of Supervisor also acts as the Redevelopment Agency and, in this capacity, will help finance public facilities and improvements needed to implement the Plan.

The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing and recommending adoption or amendment of the General Plan, zoning and subdivision ordinances and other regulations, resource conservation plans, and programs and legislation needed to implement the General Plan. The Planning Commission also may prepare and recommend adoption of specific plans, neighborhood plans or special plans, as needed for Plan implementation. As provided under State law, the Planning Commission reviews annually the County's Capital Improvement Program for consistency with the General Plan.

The Castro Valley Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) reviews and comments on land use and development issues in the Castro Valley Planning Area. The MAC also provides a forum for Castro Valley residents and business owners to raise issues related to public health, safety, and general governance. All MAC decisions are advisory to the County Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

The Community Development Agency is responsible for the general planning, development review, economic development and housing program functions undertaken by the County; it also is staff to the Redevelopment Agency and Planning Commission. Specific duties related to General Plan implementation include preparing zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments, design guidelines, reviewing development applications, conducting investigations and making reports and recommendations on planning and land use, zoning, subdivisions, design review, development plans and environmental controls. Finally, the Department will have the primary responsibility for preparing the annual report on the General Plan and conducting the five-year review.

The County will use a variety of regulatory mechanisms and administrative procedures to implement the General Plan. Overall responsibility for plan implementation is vested in the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Castro Valley Municipal Advisory Council, and Board of Zoning Adjustments - West County. California law requires the Zoning Ordinance and Maps be consistent with the General Plan. Other regulatory mechanisms, including subdivision approvals, building and housing codes, capital improvement programs, and environmental review procedures also will be used to implement Plan policies. See Appendix D for the complete list of General Plan Implementation Actions.

### **Zoning Ordinance Amendments**

The County's Zoning Ordinance (General Code Title 17) will translate plan policies into specific use regulations, development standards and performance criteria that will govern development on individual properties. The Zoning Map will provide more detail than the General Plan Land Use Diagram. The County will bring both the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map into conformance with the General Plan. Until such time the Zoning Map is amended, the Plan proposes to use the Land Use Diagram as the Zoning Map for Castro Valley (Action 4.1-1).

New or amended regulations will be adopted so that the key General Plan initiatives can be accomplished. Some specific sites will be rezoned to make adjacent uses more compatible. New zoning districts and overlays will be created and new standards and guidelines will be written. These regulations will ensure that development is safe, protects public health, conserves natural and cultural resources, improves physical appearance of Castro Valley, improves traffic circulation and access, supports alternative transportation modes, and complies with regional, state and federal policies.

### **Capital Projects**

Alameda County's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) includes a list of public works projects that the City intends to design and construct in coming years, consistent with the General Plan. Examples of the types of capital projects are: improving public drainage facilities; replacing or repairing sewer lines and stormwater collection systems; streetscape improvements including street design, landscaping, pedestrian and transit facilities and bikeways; on-street and off-street parking facilities; and building community gathering places.

### **Process Improvements**

Many of the recommended regulation changes relate to how Alameda County plans, reviews and implements new development. For example, the Plan recommends regulations that

establish an interdepartmental review process which includes the Public Works Agency, the Sheriff's Office, the Fire Department, and the Department of Environmental Health as necessary, in addition to the departments with the Community Development Agency. This is balanced with the direction to prioritize County resources and streamline the review and permit procedures. Other actions include methods for educating developers, residents, and business owners about safety hazards, County programs, or resource conservation.

### **Inter-agency Coordination**

The General Plan calls for the County to work closely with over 25 regional, State, and federal agencies and utility providers, as well as local property owners, businesses, residents, workers, and other organizations.

### **Planning Documents and Studies**

New or revised Specific or Precise Plans will create even more specific regulations for particular geographic areas of Castro Valley, such as the Central Business District, Madison Common, John Drive, Crow Canyon Road, and Jenson Road areas. Surveys and feasibility studies will be the basis for future decisions about local historic resources, new access routes and development opportunity sites, as well as safety preparedness plans.

### **Redevelopment and Economic Development Programs**

New and revised economic development and redevelopment programs such as landscaping, business attraction and retention, local, small business support, catalyst projects, façade improvement, events programming will be implemented in order to share the cost the public goods between the County and property owners.

### **Other County Programs and Ordinances**

A variety of other County programs and ordinances will need to be amended or created over the course of the planning horizon. For example, the Watercourse Protection Ordinance will be revised to better protect Castro Valley creeks and adjacent riparian habitat and a Hazard Mitigation Plan will be adopted

### **Code Enforcement**

A high priority to accomplish full implementation of the General Plan will be to enforce the regulations and requirements, particularly for property, tree and landscape maintenance, zoning, use, and health and safety compliance, and non-conforming signage.

### **Public Works Projects**

The Public Works Agency plans, designs, and inspects construction of County road and flood projects as proposed in the General Plan. They assist in the planning and permitting of new subdivisions, commercial developments, and infrastructure.

### **Subdivision Ordinance Amendments**

Amendments to the County Subdivision Ordinance (General Code Title 16) primarily pertain to street design standards.

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