

3 Land Use, Physical Design, and Growth Management

This chapter summarizes existing conditions and issues relevant to land use in the Planning Area, including existing land use patterns, densities and intensities, land ownership patterns, recent development activity, and applicable plans and regulations. A summary of findings and implications is provided at the end of the chapter.

Existing Land Use and Urban Form

The Planning Area is comprised of approximately 1,895 acres of land, including 1,667 acres within the City limit and 228 acres in the Sphere of Influence (SOI). An analysis of the current land use pattern and trends in land use changes can help to assess the opportunities for future development.

OVERALL PATTERN

The City of San Pablo is physically divided by Interstate 80 (I-80) into two sections: (1) a larger area to the west, characterized by an older, urban scale of medium-density development on small, relatively flat lots with a gridded roadway pattern and (2) a smaller, hillier, and more suburban, largely residential area to the east. The two sections are linked only by San Pablo Dam Road. The City's commercial and retail corridors are located in the center of the planning area, along San Pablo Avenue, 23rd Street, and El Portal Drive. These corridors are surrounded by residential neighborhoods, schools, and other institutional uses. The residential areas can be grouped roughly into six major neighborhoods defined by roads, natural features, age, and pattern of development. These neighborhoods include:

- **Old Town**, located in the southwestern part of the City;
- **Rumrill**, situated roughly between Brookside Drive and Broadway Avenue to the west of Contra Costa College;
- **Bayview**, in the north of the City;
- **El Portal**, between the College and Road 20;
- **Rollingwood**, adjacent to El Portal Drive; and
- **Central**, on both sides of San Pablo Avenue roughly from McBride Avenue to Church Lane.

A variety of industrial uses are located to the west of the City, along Giant Road and portions of Rumrill Boulevard to the east of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad. This area is currently occupied by a mix of warehouses, salvage yards, and wholesalers.

Due to the historic pattern of urban development in the City, open space and parkland space remain scarce in San Pablo. The largest public park is John Herbert Davis Park, which is 11.4 acres with developed recreational facilities including two baseball fields and one open field used for soccer or football. Significant recreational open spaces are also provided at Rumrill Sports Park, at Wanlass Park, and along the Wildcat Creek trail. A future park is planned for 2600 Moraga Road near Contra Costa College and a pocket park is planned at 17th and Bush Avenue. The City also includes undeveloped land designated as open space located east of San Pablo Dam Road, on the sloped hills toward Hillcrest Road and further to the south in the East Bay Regional Park District's Wildcat Canyon Regional Park and the historic Alvarado Park. More information about parks and recreational facilities is included in Chapter 5: Schools, Parks, and Public Facilities.

LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS

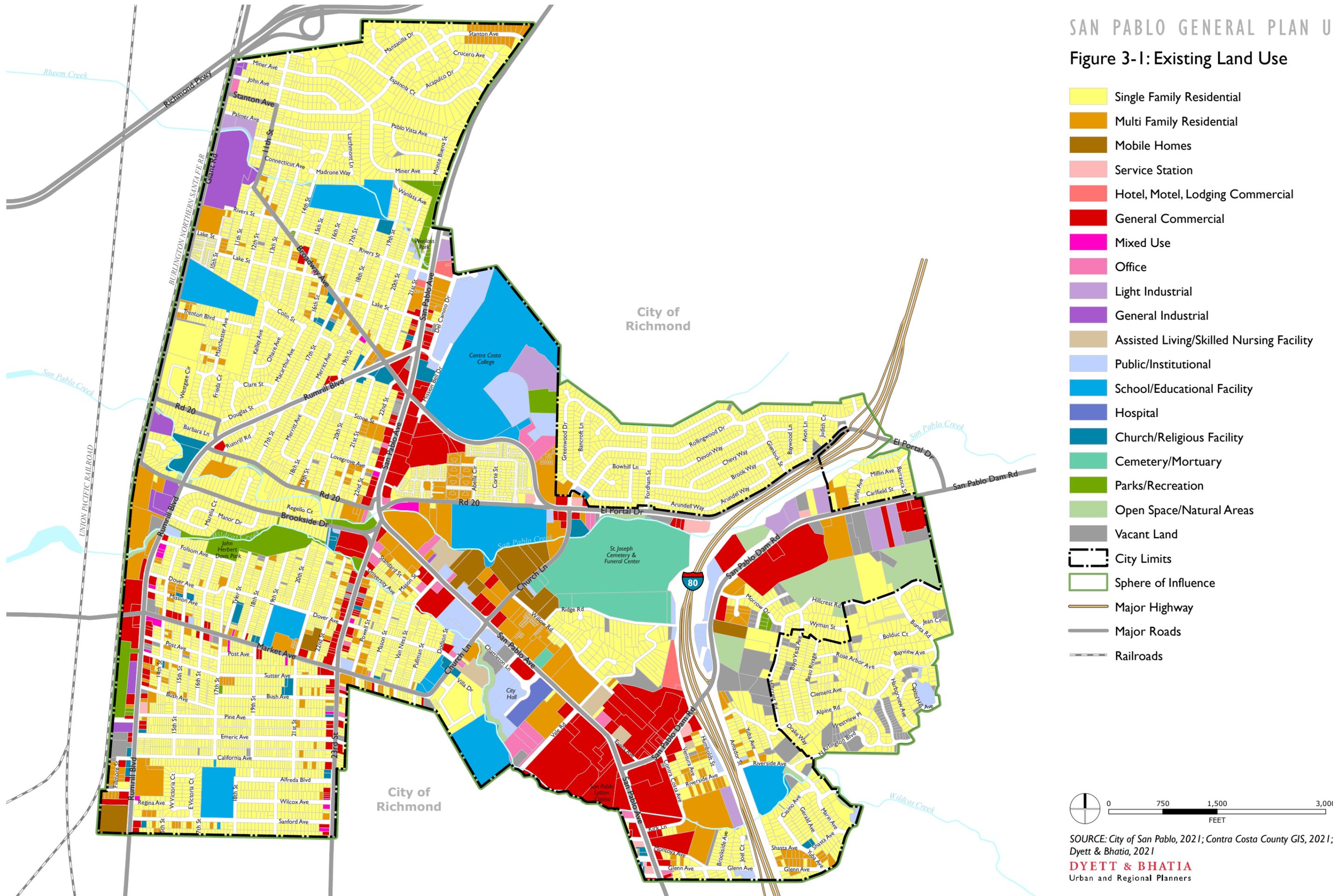
As shown in Figure 3-1 and Table 3-1, single-family residential is the most prominent existing land use within the City limit, occupying 35.7 percent (595.4 acres) of the incorporated land. In contrast, land for multifamily housing accounts for 8.4 percent (140.1 acres) of land within the City, and land for mobile homes makes up another 1.4 percent (23.2 acres). In total, residential land accounts for almost half of the incorporated land at 54.5 percent, or 758.7 acres. Another prominent land use in the city is land for institutional/government purposes, which accounts for 11.2 percent (187.3 acres). This is mostly constituted by land for schools, including Contra Costa College, which is the largest single land use in the City. Commercial land uses account for 9.7 percent of the City land area and are generally confined to the City's major corridors. The largest concentration of commercial uses is at the intersection of San Pablo Avenue and San Pablo Dam Road, where San Pablo Lytton Casino and the City's major regional commercial center are located. Additional shopping centers are located further north on San Pablo Avenue and San Pablo Dam Road. Along both 23rd Street and Rumrill Boulevard, smaller commercial uses are mixed with single-family and smaller multifamily residential uses as well as some vacant lots. Some lots on these two streets are also mixed-use, where residential and commercial uses are co-located. Overall, mixed-use accounts for only 0.2 percent (3.5 acres) of City land.¹

Only 2.0 percent (34.1 acres) of land within the City limit is currently in industrial use. These are concentrated along Rumrill Boulevard and Giant Road on the City's western border, along the BNSF railroad tracks, and along San Pablo Dam Road close to the City's eastern border. While open space accounts for 6.7 percent (111.4 acres) of land within the City, almost half of this land is actually located in the St. Joseph Cemetery. San Pablo has 26.9 acres of land (1.6 percent) currently used for parks and recreation. Only 2.2 percent (37.2 acres) of land within the City is vacant, and many of the larger vacant lots are found on the sloped hills toward Hillcrest Road. Lastly, land designated to street rights-of-way constitutes 22.4 percent (373.9 acres) of land within the City of San Pablo.

As depicted in Figure 3-1, unincorporated land in the Sphere of Influence (SOI) is primarily in residential use. Single-family residential uses account for 66.6 percent (151.6 acres) of land in the SOI, while multifamily residential account for 1.0 percent (2.4 acres). The SOI has no commercial, mixed-use, industrial, or open space uses. Only 1.0 percent of land (2.2 acres) is dedicated to public/government purposes. There are 10.8 acres (4.7 percent) of vacant land in the SOI and 26.6 percent of its land area is dedicated to street rights-of-way.

¹ Land use is based on information from the County Tax Assessor's parcel database for 2021 in addition to geographic information systems (GIS) analysis; however, this assessment may not necessarily reflect accurate on-the-ground conditions for all locations, and certain uses may be under- or over-represented.

Figure 3-1: Existing Land Use



SOURCE: City of San Pablo, 2021; Contra Costa County GIS, 2021; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

Table 3-1: Existing Land Use

Land Use Category	City of San Pablo		Sphere of Influence		Total Planning Area	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
Residential	758.7	45.5%	154.0	67.7%	912.7	48.2%
Single-Family Residential	595.4	35.7%	151.6	66.6%	747.0	39.4%
Multifamily Residential	140.1	8.4%	2.4	1.0%	142.4	7.5%
Mobile Homes	23.2	1.4%	0	0.0%	23.2	1.2%
Commercial	161.2	9.7%	0.0	0.0%	161.2	8.5%
General Commercial	140.0	8.4%	0.0	0.0%	140.0	7.4%
Office	13.3	0.8%	0.0	0.0%	13.3	0.7%
Hotel, Motel, Lodging	4.0	0.2%	0.0	0.0%	4.0	0.2%
Service Station	3.9	0.2%	0.0	0.0%	3.9	0.2%
Mixed-Use	3.5	0.2%	0.0	0.0%	3.5	0.2%
Mixed-Use	3.5	0.2%	0.0	0.0%	3.5	0.2%
Industrial	34.1	2.0%	0.0	0.0%	34.1	1.8%
General Industrial	19.6	1.2%	0.0	0.0%	19.6	1.0%
Light Industrial	14.6	0.9%	0.0	0.0%	14.6	0.8%
Public/Institutional	187.3	11.2%	2.2	1.0%	189.5	10.0%
School/Educational Facility	116.8	7.0%	0.0	0.0%	116.8	6.2%
Public/Government	48.9	2.9%	0.2	0.1%	49.1	2.6%
Church/Religious Facility	15.4	0.9%	0.2	0.1%	15.6	0.8%
Hospital	3.8	0.2%	0.0	0.0%	3.8	0.2%
Open Space	111.4	6.7%	0.0	0%	111.4	5.9%
Cemetery/Mortuary	51.5	3.1%	0.0	0.0%	51.5	2.7%
Open Space/Natural Areas	33.0	2.0%	0.0	0.0%	33.0	1.7%
Parks/Recreation	26.9	1.6%	0.0	0.0%	26.9	1.4%
Other	411.2	24.7%	71.4	31.4%	482.6	25.5%
Vacant	37.2	2.2%	10.8	4.7%	48.0	2.5%
Roads/Rights-of-Way	373.9	22.4%	60.6	26.6%	434.6	22.9%
TOTAL	1,667.3	100%	227.6	100%	1894.9	100%

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

Source: City of San Pablo, 2021; County of Contra Costa Assessor, 2021; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021.

DENSITIES AND INTENSITIES

Non-residential development intensity is defined by floor area ratio (FAR), which refers to the ratio between a building's total floor area and the total area of the site. For instance, a one-story building occupying half a parcel has a FAR of 50 percent (0.5), while a three-story building occupying the same half of a parcel has a FAR of 150 percent (1.5). Figure 3-2 illustrates the concept of FAR. As seen in Figure 3-3, the majority of commercial buildings in San Pablo have an FAR less than 1.0. This suggests a predominance of buildings less than two stories in height with a significant amount of land devoted to parking or unbuilt areas. For example, all of the parcels surrounding San Pablo Lytton Casino—on the southwest side of San Pablo Avenue at its intersection with San Pablo Dam Road—have a FAR of less than 0.15. The casino building itself is a one-story albeit tall building that occupies a relatively small footprint, while the majority of the land is devoted to parking – including the site of the former Doctors Medical Center. Low-profile strip mall developments located throughout San Pablo along its commercial corridors of San Pablo Avenue, San Pablo Dam Road, and 23rd Street contribute to an often auto-centric land use pattern where parking lots are typically prioritized over pedestrian accessibility. Most commercial uses have a FAR that is well below their maximum permitted FAR under the City's existing General Plan Land Use designation (see Figure 3-4 and Table 3-2). This suggests that many of these commercial sites with low FARs may present opportunities for redevelopment into more intense uses, including mixed-use and residential development.

Figure 3-2: Determining Floor Area Ratio

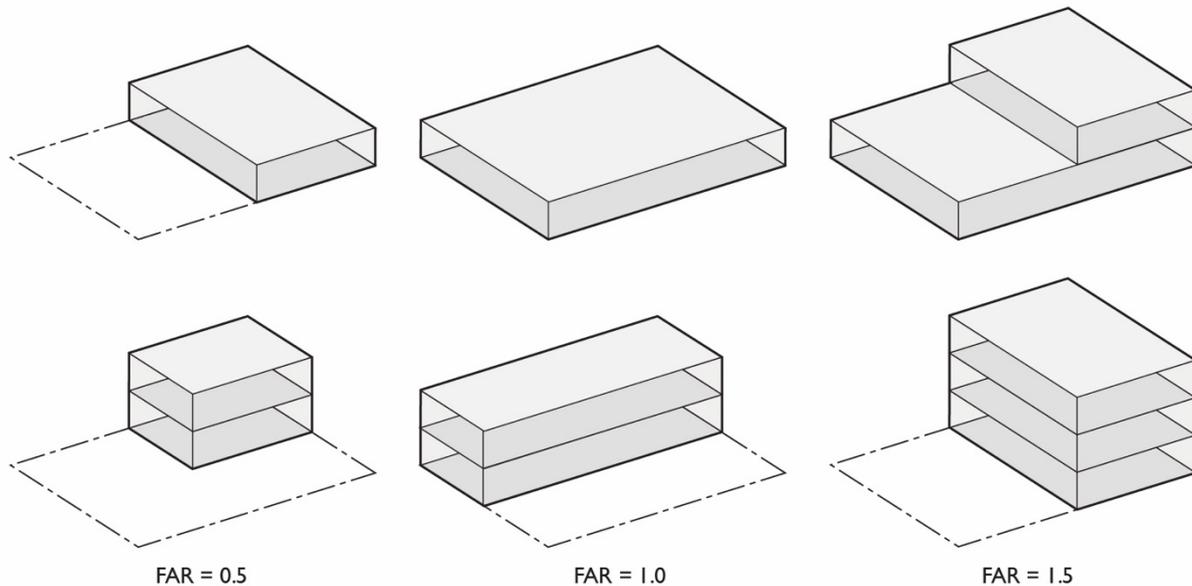
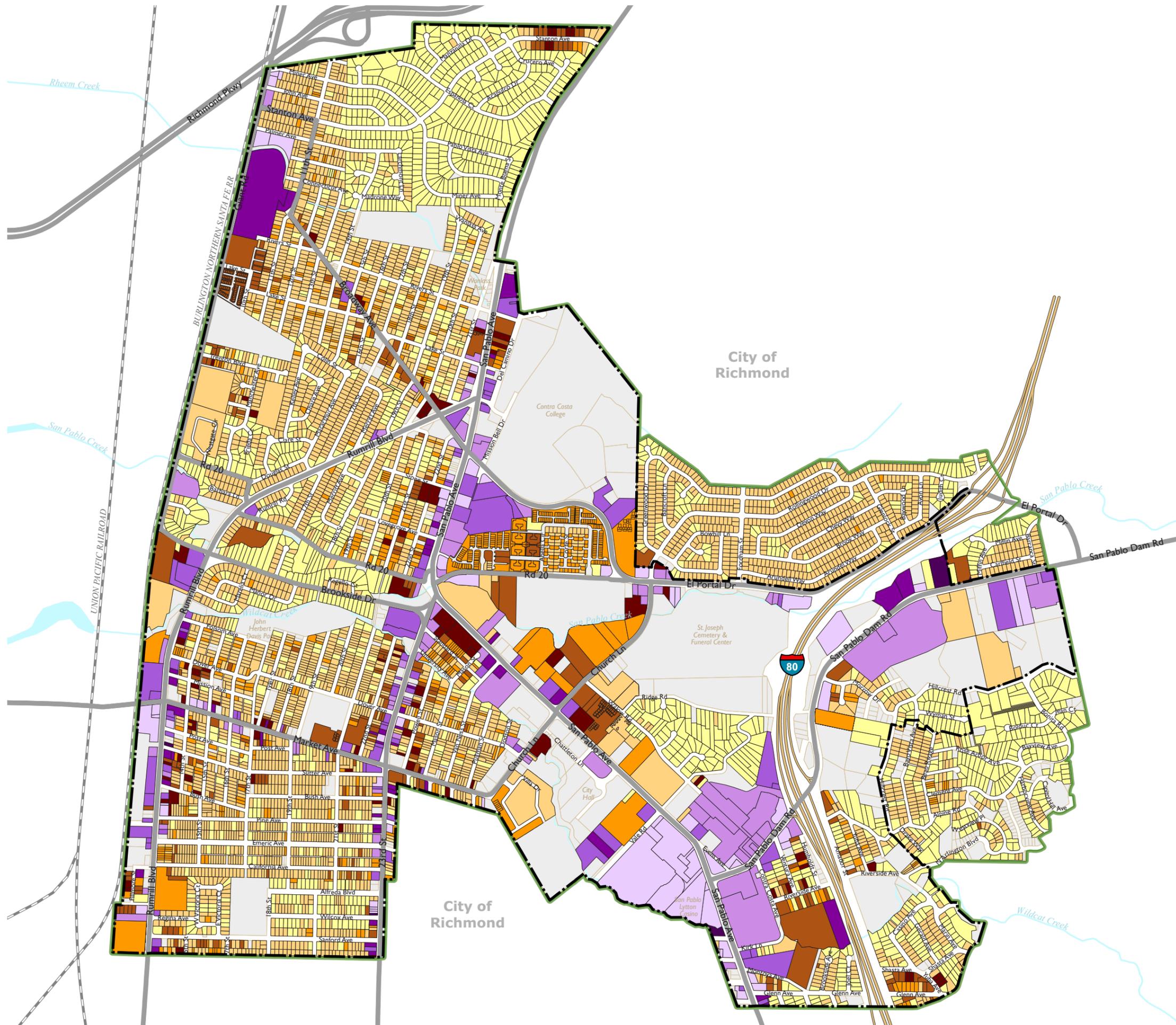


Figure 3-3: Residential Density and Non-Residential Intensity (FAR)



Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

- 0 - 0.15 FAR
- 0.15 - 0.30 FAR
- 0.30 - 0.50 FAR
- 0.50 - 1.00 FAR
- > 1.00 FAR

Residential Density (dwelling unit/acre)

- <= 8 du/ac
- 9 - 16 du/ac
- 17 - 24 du/ac
- 24 - 40 du/ac
- > 40 du/ac

- City Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Major Highway
- Major Roads
- Railroads



SOURCE: City of San Pablo, 2021; Contra Costa County GIS, 2021; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

Residential density is defined by dwelling units per acre (du/acre). As seen in Figure 3-3, most neighborhoods across San Pablo have densities ranging from eight or fewer units per acre to between nine and 16 du/acre. Due to their small lot sizes, San Pablo's single-family neighborhoods still have many lots that fall in the density ranges of nine to 16 and 17 to 24 du/acre. Additionally, within areas designated under the City's current General Plan as Low Density Residential and intended for single-family detached residential development (see Figure 3-4 and Table 3-2), non-conforming multifamily uses frequently fall into the higher density ranges of 24 to 40 and over 40 du/acre. Examples include the fourplexes along Sutter Avenue at its intersection with 17th Street and along 15th Street south of Broadway Avenue. Many of the City's higher density areas are concentrated close to commercial corridors near San Pablo Avenue, 23rd Street, and Rumrill Boulevard, where densities range from eight to over 40 du/acre. Examples include the El Portal Apartment Homes at the intersection of San Pablo Avenue and 23rd Street, the Montevista Senior Apartment complex on San Pablo Avenue, and the Kona Apartments on Church Lane, which all have a density of over 40 du/acre. In 2023, the City approved plans for high density apartments on the former City Hall site at 13831 San Pablo Ave and at 1820 Rumrill Boulevard. Both sites are located along primary transit corridors in San Pablo.

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

Adopted in 2011, the current General Plan includes seven elements that correspond to the requirements of California State law in force at the time it was prepared, including Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Noise, Safety, and Housing. For San Pablo's General Plan, the State requirements are met through the following six Elements: Land Use and Physical Design; Circulation; Parks, Schools, Community Facilities, and Utilities; Open Space and Conservation; and Safety and Noise. The Plan also includes three elements that were optional at the time of its preparation: an Economic Development Element, a Growth Management Element, and a Health Element. The Housing Element is the only element required to be updated on an eight-year cycle. The current Housing Element addresses the years 2015-2023 and will be updated as a part of this targeted General Plan Update process.

At the time of its preparation, the Health Element of the existing General Plan was a cutting-edge approach that addressed the intersection of long-range planning with public health issues. Since the current General Plan's adoption in 2011, the State has passed several bills addressing this intersection and established mechanisms and requirements for cities to formally address it through their General Plans. In response, the General Plan Update will build on the work of the existing Health Element to produce an Environmental Justice and Public Health Element for San Pablo. This Element will be responsive to the requirements established through Senate Bill 1000 and other pertinent legislation and will include goals, policies, and programs to address environmental justice issues present in San Pablo, many of which are already discussed in the existing Health Element.

For further discussion and information on environmental justice, disadvantaged communities, and relevant State legislation, see Chapter 7: Environmental Justice and Public Health.

General Plan Land Use

The Land Use Element of the General Plan contains goals and policies related to future development, as well as a diagram depicting the desired distribution of future land uses. The Land Use Element represents a strategy for land use development and does not necessarily reflect land uses that exist on the ground as of 2021-22. General Plan land use designations are mapped in Figure 3-4 and described in Table 3-2. In general, neighborhood commercial or mixed-use commercial are designated for areas along corridors such as 23rd Street, Rumrill Boulevard, and some portions of San Pablo Avenue, with a regional commercial center designated for the area near San Pablo Avenue and San Pablo Dam Road adjacent to the exit from I-

80. Multifamily residential uses are similarly located primarily along major corridors and, in some areas, create a buffer between major corridors or land designated for commercial uses and land designated for low-density residential, such as adjacent to Interstate 80 or abutting commercially designated land along Rumrill Boulevard or 23rd Street. Single-family residential land uses make up the majority of the City’s neighborhoods between these corridors. Significant area within the City is also designated for public/institutional use, such as at Contra Costa College and several local elementary and middle schools as well as a private high school.

Existing industrial uses are generally concentrated near the western limit of the City boundary adjacent to the BNSF railway tracks and along Rumrill Boulevard south of Brookside. The General Plan envisioned the expansion of light industrial employment-oriented uses in the southwestern part of the city along Rumrill Boulevard and designates parcels on the west side of Rumrill south of Market as Industrial Mixed Use, where light manufacturing, distribution, sales and services are permitted with ancillary commercial and office spaces. However, the majority of parcels with the Industrial Mixed Use designation do not currently have an existing industrial use on them; most are developed with mobile homes, multifamily residential, or general commercial uses, with some larger vacant parcels also located in this zone. As part of the General Plan Update, there is an opportunity to re-evaluate the Industrial Mixed Use designation in this part of the City and explore other options that may better suit community needs and market demands. The City has recently been awarded a Priority Development Area (PDA) grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) that will allow for development of a vision and policy tools to guide the evolution of this area.

Table 3-2: General Plan Land Use Designations

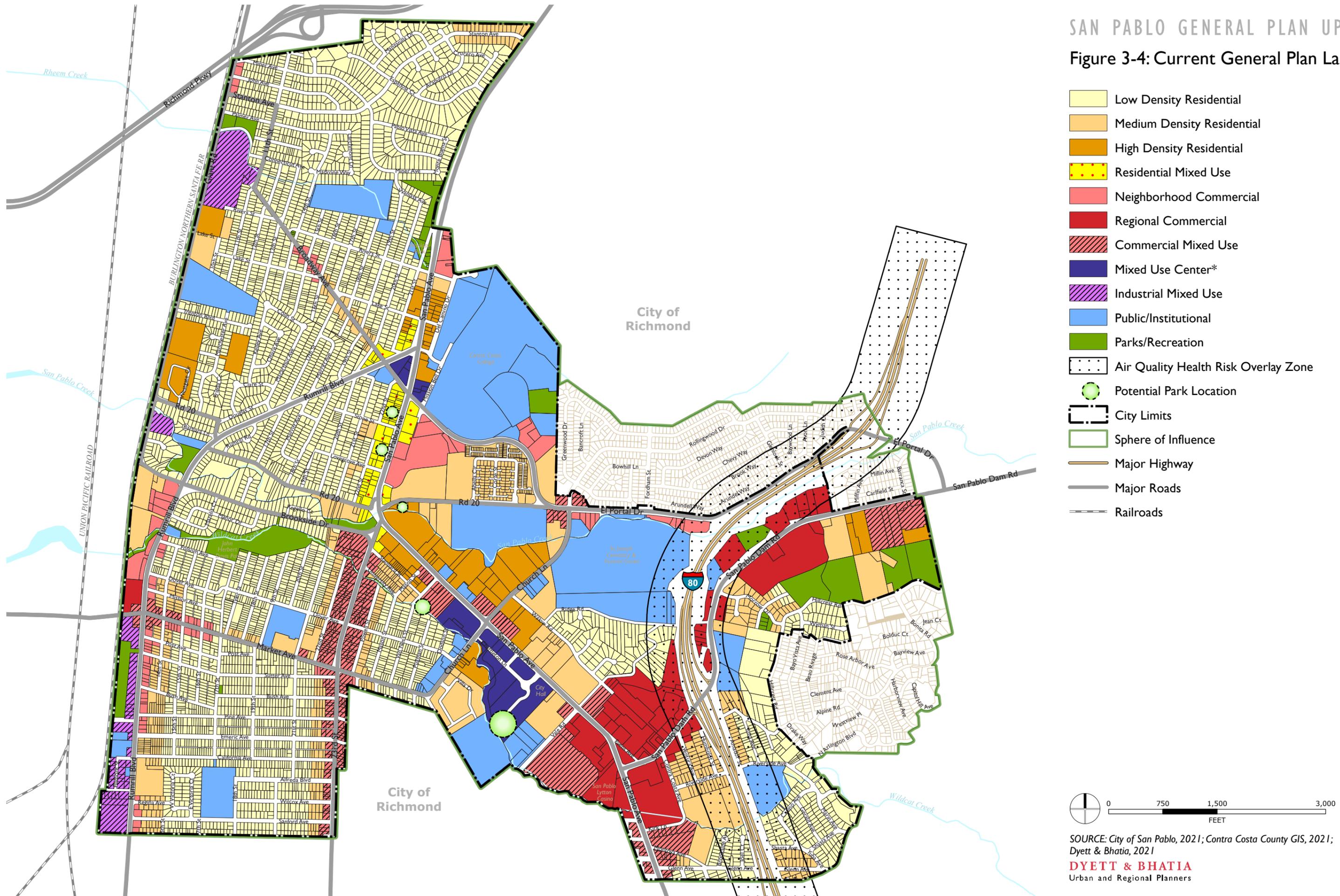
<i>General Plan Land Use</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Maximum Density</i>
Residential		
Low Density Residential	Single-family detached residential development. Minimum lot size is 5,000 sq ft.	Up to 12 units/acre
Medium Density Residential	Mix of housing types including small lot single family, attached single family and apartments, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, or townhomes. Minimum lot size is 7,000 sq ft.	12.1-24 units/acre
High Density Residential	Multifamily apartments and townhomes. Typically, two to four stories high and located along major roads. Common area open space and shared amenities required. Minimum lot size is 10,000 sq ft.	24.1-60 units/acre
Mixed Use		
Mixed Use Center North	Mixed Use development on Mission Plaza, at the junction of Rumrill Blvd, San Pablo Ave, and Broadway Ave. Primarily residential with retail at the ground floor. Caters to students of the College. Typically, four stories.	2.5 FAR, Up to 80 units/acre
Mixed Use Center South	Mixed use development at the former Circle S site, bounded by San Pablo Ave, Church Lane, and Wildcat Creek. Includes retail, commercial, office, residential, public/institutional, and hotel development. Typically, three to five stories.	2.5 FAR, Up to 60 units/acre
Commercial Mixed Use	Office, retail, commercial, and public uses. Typically, two to three stories. Residential uses allowed only when commercial FAR is 0.50 or greater.	1.5 FAR, Up to 50 units/acre

<i>General Plan Land Use</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Maximum Density</i>
Residential Mixed Use	Residential, office, and retail. Those fronting San Pablo Ave must have active commercial at the ground floor. Ground floor residential permitted elsewhere. Typically, two to three stories.	1.5 FAR, Up to 50 units/acre
Commercial		
Neighborhood Commercial	Small-scale commercial uses that primarily provide convenience, personal services, and social services. Designed to foster a pedestrian atmosphere along public streets. Residential not permitted.	1.0 FAR
Regional Commercial	Large-scale commercial development that services local and regional needs. Easily accessible by freeways and regional roadways, and contains a range of goods and services. Residential not permitted.	0.75 FAR
Entertainment District Overlay	Allows for intensification of an underlying commercial or mixed-use designation. Easily accessed by freeways and regional roadways, and services community and regional needs with a focus on entertainment, retail, health/medical, and recreation uses. Typically, three to five stories. Currently applied to area within San Pablo Specific Plan centered on Lytton Casino.	0.5 FAR above FAR of base district
Industrial		
Industrial Mixed Use	Light manufacturing, distribution, sales, and services with ancillary commercial and office space. Retail not permitted.	0.60 FAR
Public		
Public/Institutional	Uses that serve a public purpose, including public/private schools, administrative offices, corporation yards, and public facilities such as hospital and medical centers, police stations, and fire stations.	N/A
Parks/Recreation	Improved and unimproved park facilities, including neighborhood, community, and regional parks; and recreational facilities that provide visual and open space and serve the outdoor recreational needs of the community.	N/A
Proposed Parks	This symbol is intended to show the general location of proposed mini-parks and other parks in San Pablo Ave. Not site-specific designations, and the future park may be at a different location in the vicinity.	N/A

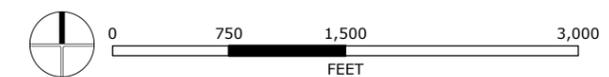
Source: *City of San Pablo General Plan, 2011*; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021.

SAN PABLO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Figure 3-4: Current General Plan Land Use



- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Residential Mixed Use
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Regional Commercial
- Commercial Mixed Use
- Mixed Use Center*
- Industrial Mixed Use
- Public/Institutional
- Parks/Recreation
- Air Quality Health Risk Overlay Zone
- Potential Park Location
- City Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Major Highway
- Major Roads
- Railroads



SOURCE: City of San Pablo, 2021; Contra Costa County GIS, 2021; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

Housing Element

The Housing Element is one of eight required elements of the General Plan. It provides an analysis of a community's housing needs for all income levels and includes strategies to address those housing needs. Pursuant to State law, it is updated every eight years and must be approved by the State's Department of Housing and Community Development. The City of San Pablo's Housing Element for the period from 2023 through 2031 was adopted by the City Council in March 2024 and certified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development in May 2024.

A critical input for the Housing Element is the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA), a process required under State housing law to determine existing and projected housing need for all jurisdictions in California. RHNA quantifies the "fair share" of regional housing need for a jurisdiction, breaking it out into four household income level categories utilized in federal and State programming. San Pablo's share of the RHNA is determined by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) in consultation with jurisdictions throughout the region. For the 2015-2023 planning period, the City of San Pablo's "fair share" allocation was to produce 449 units, broken down by income level categories as follows:

- Very Low-Income: 56 units
- Low-Income: 53 units
- Moderate-Income: 75 units
- Above Moderate-Income: 265 units.

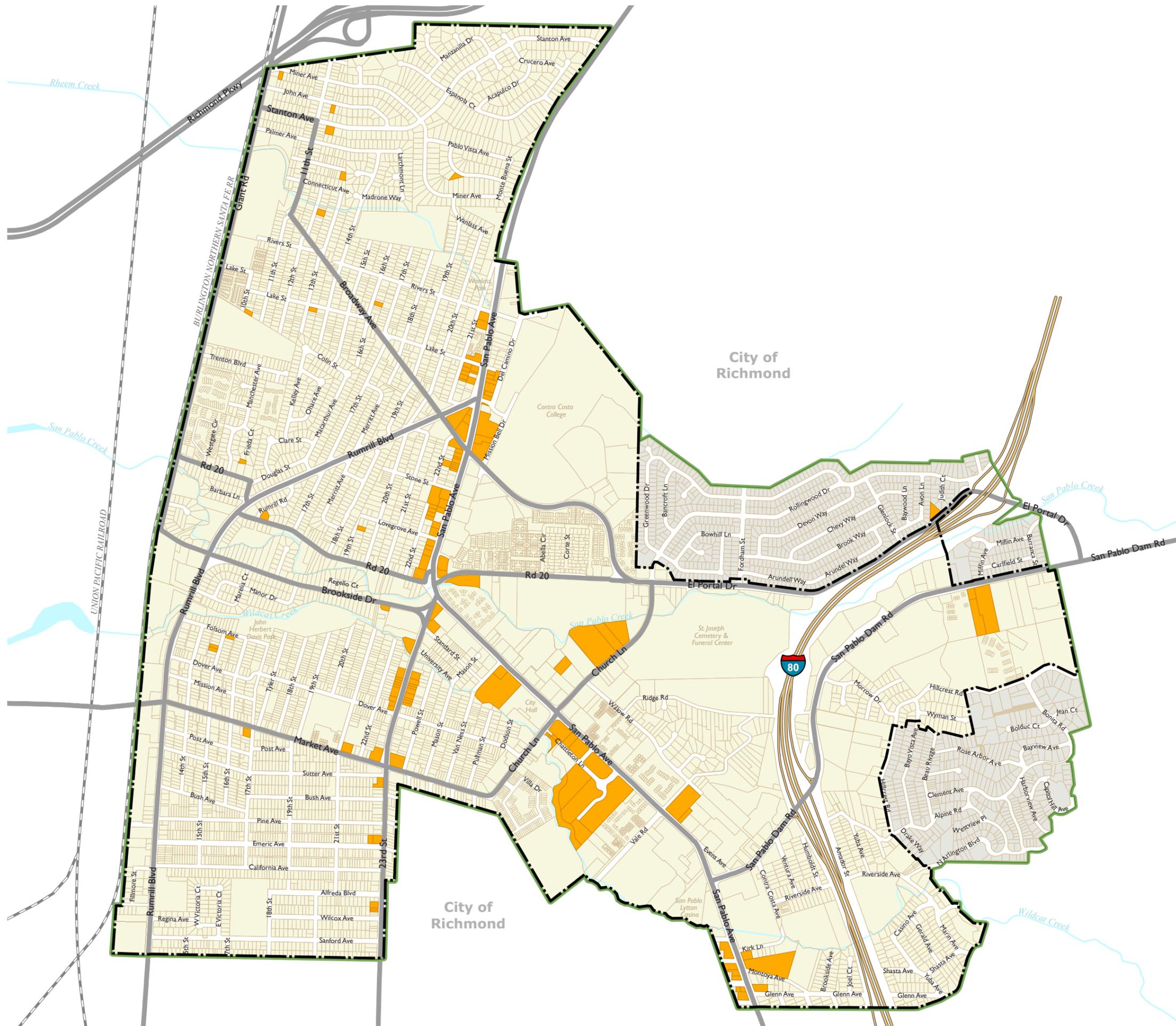
Every jurisdiction must plan for its RHNA allocation in the Housing Element of its General Plan by ensuring there are enough sites and adequate zoning in place to accommodate the allocation. To meet the RHNA allocation, the 2015-23 Housing Element identifies 129 potential housing opportunity sites with a combined capacity for 793 units. As depicted in Figure 3-5, the majority of housing opportunity sites are located along San Pablo Avenue and 23rd Street in the central portion of the City. Table 3-3 shows the City of San Pablo's RHNA progress by income level through 2022.

Table 3-3: RHNA Progress by Income Level Through 2022

Income Level	RHNA Allocation	Year								Total Units to Date	Total Remaining RHNA
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022		
Very Low	56	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	65	65	0
Low	53	0	2	0	2	0	3	5	2	12	41
Moderate	75	1	5	7	0	6	12	14	7	52	23
Above Moderate	265	29	0	0	2	1	4	6	2	44	221
Total RHNA	449	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	285
Total Units	-	30	7	7	4	7	19	25	65	164	-

Source: City of San Pablo, 2020; California Department of Housing and Community Development, 2023; Dyett & Bhatia, 2023

Figure 3-5: Housing Element Inventory Sites, 2015-2023



-  Housing Opportunity Sites
-  City Limits
-  Sphere of Influence
-  Major Highway
-  Major Roads
-  Railroads



SOURCE: City of San Pablo, 2021; Contra Costa County GIS, 2021; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

Recent changes in Housing Element law at the State level have introduced more stringent criteria for the adequacy of sites included on the inventory of opportunity sites in the Housing Element, particularly for Lower Income RHNA allocations. As such, the City will likely need to identify new sites and/or adjust permitted densities in order to accommodate its Sixth Cycle RHNA allocation in 2023-2031. An analysis of the suitability of sites currently zoned for residential uses in San Pablo is currently underway and will be documented in a separate report. Some or all of the potential development opportunity sites presented later in this chapter may be appropriate for inclusion in the 2023-31 inventory of housing opportunity sites.

EXISTING ZONING

The Zoning Ordinance is an important implementation tool for the General Plan and provides permitted land uses and development standards for each land use category. In addition to zoning designations, specific plan and overlay areas are governed by unique detailed land use regulations. As with the General Plan, zoning designations do not always coincide with existing land uses and development intensities as they are built. It should also be noted that San Pablo's Zoning Ordinance only applies within City limits, whereas the SOI is under Contra Costa County zoning regulations. Figure 3-6 maps the existing zoning districts within the City of San Pablo.

Zoning Overlays

Overlay districts are created to supplement the development standards of underlying districts to protect unique site features or implement location-specific regulations. The City has five zoning overlay districts, discussed in Table 3-4.

Table 3-4: Zoning Overlays

<i>Overlay District</i>	<i>District Purpose</i>
Hillside Area Overlay District (D1)	Applied to selected parcels in the eastern portion of the City east of I-80. Protects public safety in this generally unstable geologic area. All structures more than one story in height require zoning administrator review. All development requires preparation of a geotechnical report.
Priority Development Area (PDA) Overlay District (D2)	Applied to PDA districts: Rumrill Boulevard, 23rd Street Specific Plan, and San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. Promotes and provides for higher density and pedestrian-oriented uses as part of, or in proximity to, transit stations in line with the Plan Bay Area's Sustainable Community Strategy. Requires densities between 20-60 du/acre or FAR between 0.5-2.5.
Air Quality Health Risk Overlay District (D3)	Applied to a zone extending five hundred feet from I-80 on both sides of the freeway. Protects sensitive receptors from toxic air emissions. Prohibits the building of residential development, parks and other open spaces, schools, childcare facilities, senior centers, hospitals, and medical facilities. New development must provide mitigation measures to reduce vulnerability to toxic air emissions.

Multifamily Overlay District (MF)

Protects existing multifamily development located on parcels with an underlying zoning district that no longer allows multifamily development. These parcels are recognized as multifamily in the City's General Plan Land Use and Housing Elements and contribute to the City's ability to meet regional housing needs.

Creek Protection Overlay District (CP)

Protects creeks for playing an important role in groundwater recharge, surface water distribution, and flood management. Prohibits the development of any structure in a floodway. Any structure in a floodplain must have its finished floor at or above the one-hundred-foot floodline. Current zoning does not designate any areas for Creek Protection but does require a Conditional Use Permit for development within 50 feet of a creek with creek protection criteria identified.

Source: City of San Pablo, 2021; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021.

SPECIFIC PLANS

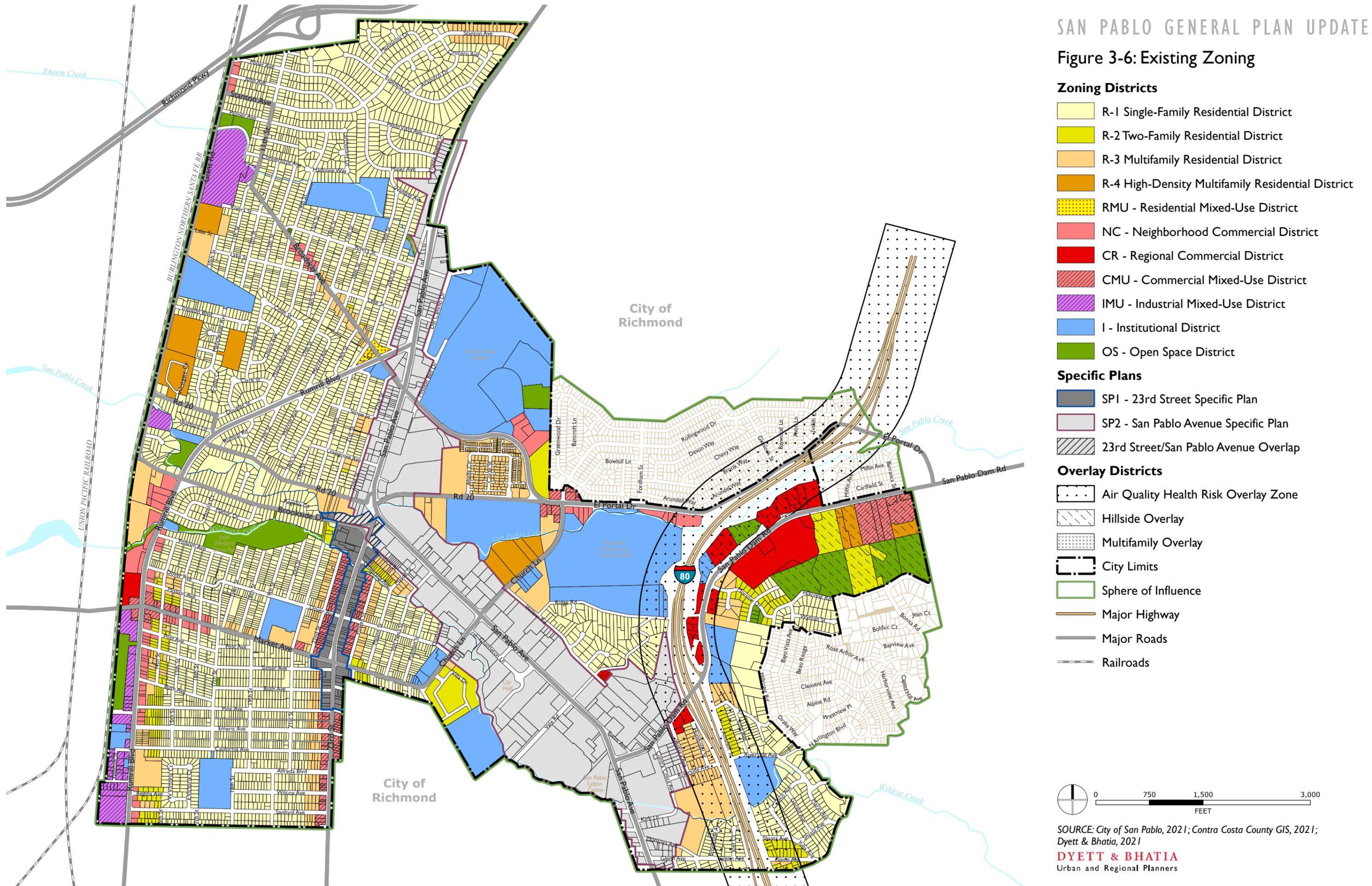
The City of San Pablo has adopted two specific plans pertaining to focused geographic areas in the City. Specific Plans implement the General Plan through the establishment of more detailed policies, regulations, and actions specifically focused on their areas of concern. The boundaries of San Pablo's Specific Plans are shown in Figure 3-7 and details of plan content and objectives are described below.

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan (2011)

The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan was adopted in September 2011 following a community-based process to develop a vision for the revitalization and transformation of San Pablo Avenue into a pedestrian- and transit-oriented boulevard with amenities that attract residents from the entire city and surrounding region. The Plan covers approximately 261 acres, or 0.41 square miles, which account for approximately 15 percent of total area in the City. The total length of the corridor included in the Specific Plan is 2.25 linear miles. The Specific Plan area includes several major destinations and areas of consideration, including City Hall, San Pablo Lytton Casino, and several shopping centers.

At the time of the Specific Plan's creation, the Doctors Medical Center on Vale Road was still active and considered a major regional destination. Following its closure in 2015, the City re-designated the 12.5-acre site from Public/Institutional to Commercial Mixed-Use. Following this, the site was purchased by and developed into a surface parking lot for use by the adjoining Lytton Casino. Additionally, following the decision on the part of the City to proceed with the sale of the old City Hall site at 13831 San Pablo Avenue in 2015, the City re-designated the 4.46-acre site from Public/Institutional to Mixed Use Center City Hall Site to allow for the redevelopment of the site with a mixture of housing and walkable retail space. Currently, the site is in development for a project with up to 100 affordable multifamily units and approximately 7,500 square feet of new commercial space.

Figure 3-6: Existing Zoning



SOURCE: City of San Pablo, 2021; Contra Costa County GIS, 2021; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

The Specific Plan proposed several new mixed-use districts centered around key community amenities and regional destinations like Contra Costa College and Lytton Casino. Mixed residential and commercial centers in the northern and central portion of the Specific Plan area are intended to attract a range of residential uses connected to services and transit. Mixed-use designations in the southern portion of the Specific Plan area are intended to maximize entertainment and regionally oriented retail opportunities. The Plan focuses on walkability by grouping retail, restaurants, and entertainment uses and encouraging a vertical mix of uses in several areas. The Plan also establishes the Entertainment Overlay District to encourage the development of a recognizable destination for families and visitors centered around and building upon the success of the Lytton Casino. Lastly, the Specific Plan also emphasizes community facilities and open space by providing a new community plaza at the former Circle-S site, a public open space site along Wildcat Creek, and a number of smaller open spaces (e.g., pocket parks, trails, exercise stations, and playgrounds) along the corridor. The Wildcat Creek Restoration and Greenway Trail project extending from Vale Road to Church Lane was completed in 2020-21 and is heavily used by residents and visitors.

23rd Street Specific Plan (2007)

The 23rd Street Specific Plan was adopted by the City of San Pablo in October 2007. The purpose of the Specific Plan is to provide a long-term strategy for the revitalization of 23rd Street as a major commercial corridor in the City. The Specific Plan area includes roughly a half-mile stretch of 23rd Street from San Pablo Avenue at the north to Pine Avenue at the south. It contains a total of 22 acres, or about 0.03 square miles. The Plan envisions 23rd Street as a vibrant community hub for residents and businesses alike, with improved access to parks and public open space, a safe environment for walking and biking, and an active street life with cultural amenities.

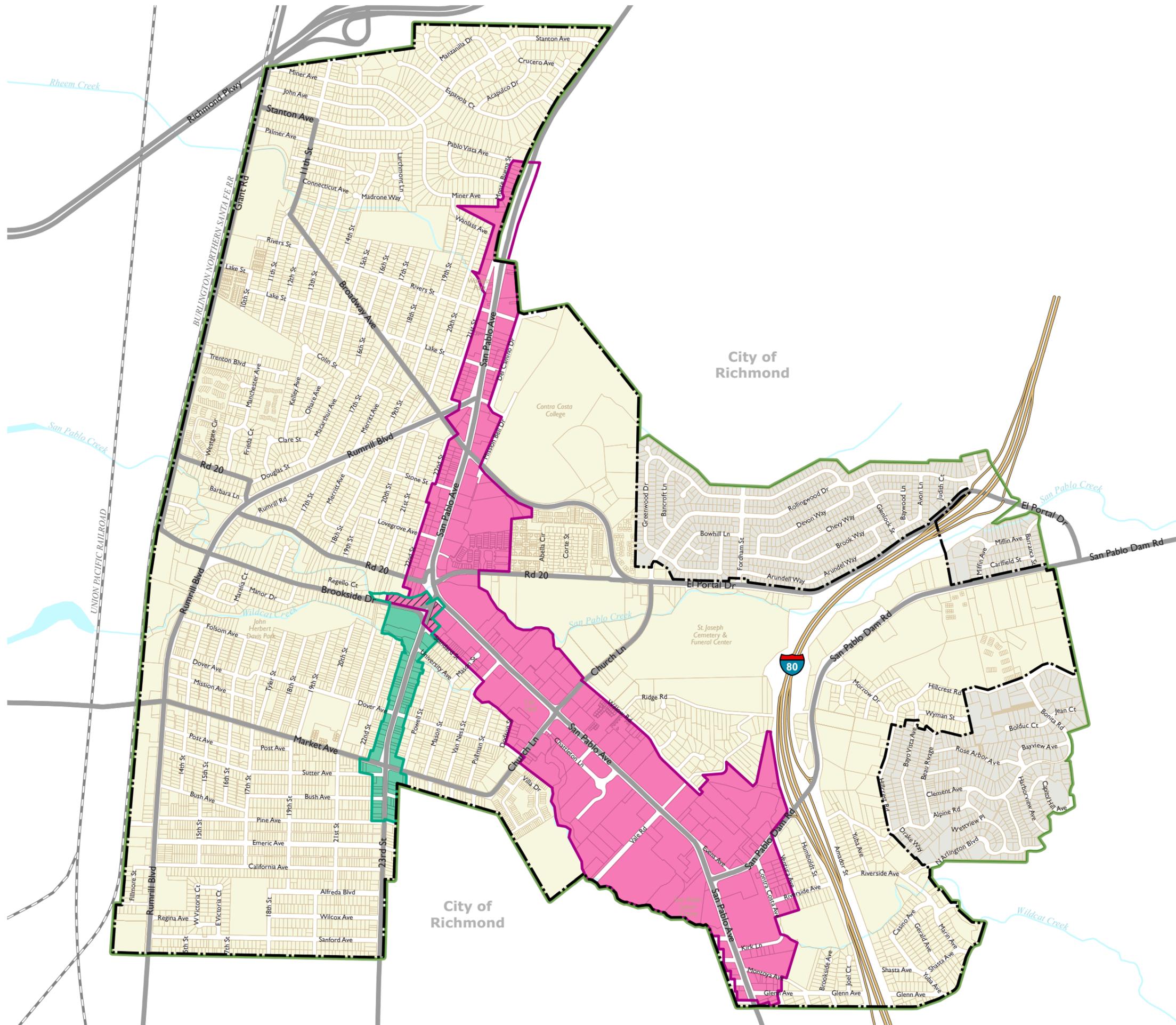
The Specific Plan intended to address the presence of many vacant and underutilized parcels along the corridor by removing barriers to pedestrian-oriented development, implementing design standards and guidelines, and facilitating mixed-use development. Plan goals included the creation of a safe and pedestrian-friendly streetscape, the identification of opportunities for infill development, the provision of parking for neighborhood businesses, and the creation of an economically viable and healthy corridor. However, the plan regulations have not matched local development demand, and there have been limited new development and redevelopment projects within the area covered by the Specific Plan. The General Plan update will look at allowing greater flexibility for this area in allowing additional multifamily development without the need to incorporate mixed use in all cases.

OTHER PLANS

Mixed-Use Center South Regulatory Code

Building on the work of the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, in 2012 the City adopted the Mixed-Use Center South Regulatory Code to promote the development of a walkable, mixed-use destination containing a blend of residential, office, civic, and cultural uses that will attract residents, workers, and visitors. The Mixed-Use Center South comprises approximately 16 acres of land located southwest of the intersection of San Pablo Avenue, and Church Lane. The site, which was commonly known as Circle S, was previously home to two mobile home parks and two businesses, which were relocated as part of the planning process.

Figure 3-7: Specific Plan Areas



- SPI - 23rd Street Specific Plan
- SP2 - San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan
- 23rd Street/San Pablo Avenue Overlap
- City Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Major Highway
- Major Roads
- Railroads



SOURCE: City of San Pablo, 2021; Contra Costa County GIS, 2021; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

The Regulatory Code provides regulations to guide transformation in the area designated as Mixed-Use Center South by the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. Rather than limiting each parcel within the area to a single land use, the Code provides flexibility with regard to land use, parking, and site development regulations to enable a range of possible outcomes. Key elements of the concept for the area include: a walkable street network, a central public plaza, civic and cultural anchors, a mix of land uses, support for transit, a mix of housing types, workplace development, a new trail along Wildcat Creek, efficient parking accommodations, and community amenities such as a community garden and recreational facilities. Since its implementation, several portions of the planned area have been built. These include the new San Pablo City Hall at 1000 Gateway Avenue, the County-run West County Health Center, the County Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) health facility, the San Pablo Library, and a standalone Walgreens. Two projects are currently underway for the remaining portions of the site. One, on the west side of Chattleton Lane, will be a subdivision of 20 single-family townhouse-style homes with one designated affordable home and eight incorporated accessory dwelling units. The other, located at 13717 San Pablo Avenue adjacent to the library, will be a mixed-use development with 91 condominium/rental multifamily units, 19 of which would be deed restricted for affordability, and three ground-floor retail spaces.

Priority Development Areas

The City of San Pablo has established two Priority Development Areas (PDAs) to provide opportunities for compact, infill development in proximity to transit, jobs, schools, shopping and services (see Figure 3-8). The first of these is contiguous with the boundaries of the two Specific Plans, the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan and the 23rd Street Specific Plan. The other PDA runs along Rumrill Boulevard from Costa Avenue at its southern edge to Brookside Drive at its northern edge.

PDAs are an integral part of Plan Bay Area, the regional sustainable growth strategy that coordinates housing plans, open space conservation efforts, economic development strategies, and transportation investments. With the collaboration of local governments throughout the Bay Area, the MTC estimates that about 80 percent of the region's future housing needs can be met within PDAs. By promoting compact, mixed-use residential and commercial neighborhoods in areas well-served by transit in this way, Plan Bay Area seeks to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution and further statewide goals for climate action. PDAs are eligible for capital infrastructure funding, planning grants, and technical assistance from MTC.

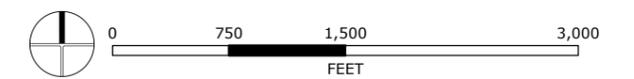
In San Pablo, the PDA Overlay District within the Zoning Code applies to both PDAs and allows for additional density (see Table 3-4). The San Pablo Avenue and 23rd Street PDA is identified as a Mixed-Use Corridor in the regional planning framework. Plan Bay Area 2040 forecasts 552 new households and 1,015 new jobs to this PDA by 2040. The 2017 Contra Costa PDA Investment and Growth Strategy noted that public investments that improve these corridors by making them more accessible to transit, walking, and biking will be an important part of attracting the needed private investment to achieve the envisioned land use pattern and growth. The Rumrill Boulevard PDA, currently developed mostly in low intensity industrial, warehouse, and storage uses, is identified as an Employment Focus Area, and Plan Bay Area 2040 forecasts 22 new households and 194 jobs to this PDA by 2040. This PDA was noted for having substantial development potential due to the presence of vacant and underutilized sites in the area. The General Plan Update will incorporate a Master Plan for the Rumrill PDA that will further explore its potential for job growth and housing production.

SAN PABLO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Figure 3-8: Priority Development Areas and Priority Conservation Areas



- Priority Development Area (PDA)
- Priority Conservation Area (PCA)
- City Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Major Highway
- Major Roads
- Railroads



SOURCE: Plan Bay Area 2040, MTC, ABAG; Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), July 2017; City of San Pablo, 2021; Contra Costa County GIS, 2021; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021

DYETT & BHATIA
Urban and Regional Planners

Current Development Projects and Development Potential

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

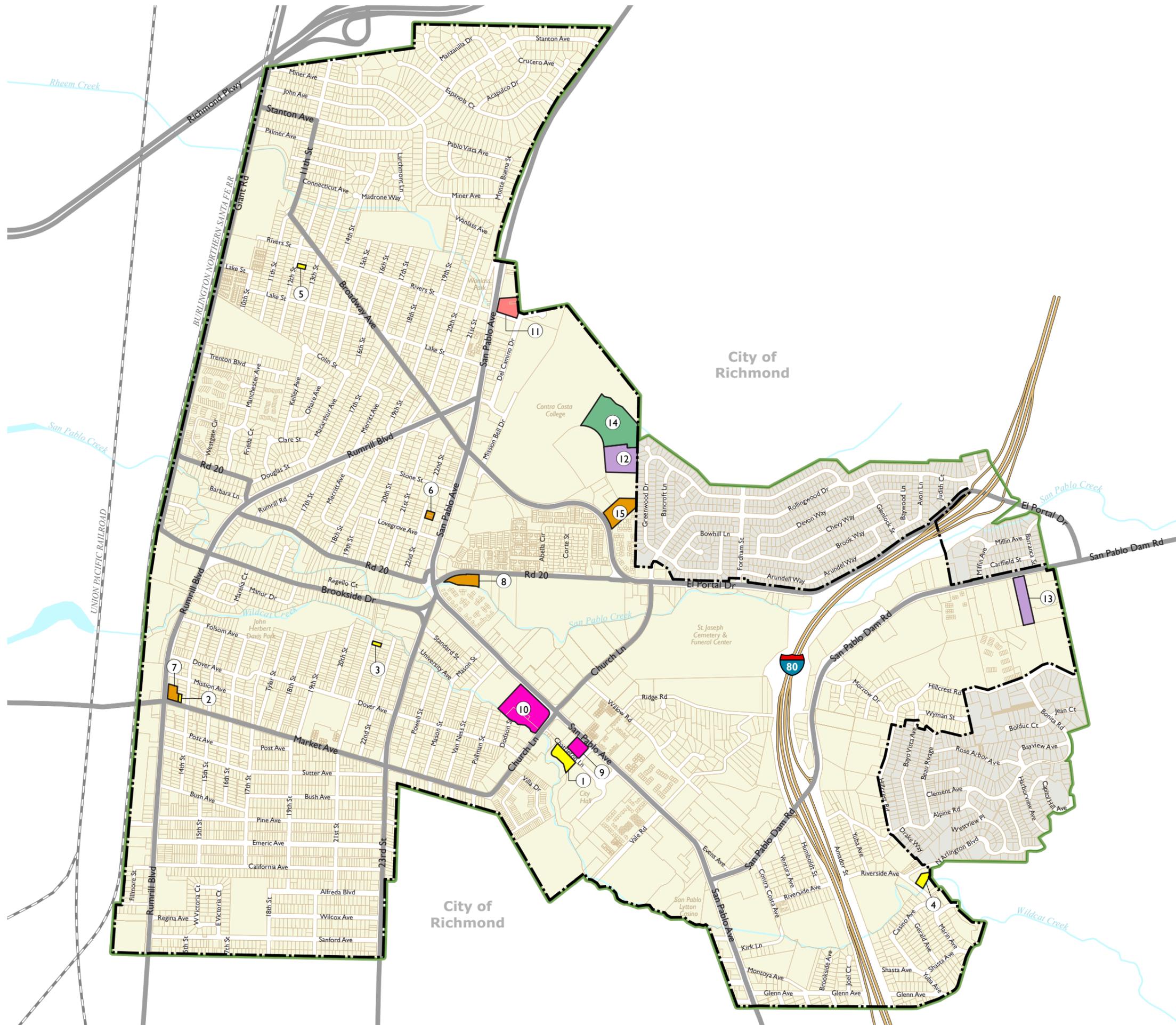
As of June 2021, there were five single-family residential development projects and five potential multifamily residential development projects underway in the City of San Pablo, accounting for a total of 294 new housing units. Two of these projects, 13831 San Pablo Avenue (located at the former City Hall site), and a property known as Block C at 13717 San Pablo Avenue are mixed-use projects. This former City Hall site is planned for 100 units of multifamily affordable housing with residential services, which will constitute a major addition to San Pablo's housing stock, in particular its affordable housing supply. One commercial space in the project's planned 7,500 square feet of ground floor retail is reserved for a San Pablo local business. Additionally, at 2812 Chattleton Lane, Block E, there is a proposed development of 20 single-family homes with at least one home planned to be income-restricted for sale to a lower-income household, and eight of the homes including accessory dwelling units. This site will also include a public lot to be located adjacent to the City's new Wildcat Creek Restoration and Greenway Trail project.

There are also five non-residential development projects underway in the City, accounting for 236,287 square feet of new building area and 21 hotel rooms. The self-storage project at 2600 Moraga is part of a City project known as the San Pablo Area for Recreation and Community (SPARC). The lot will be split, and the property will be transferred so that the planned storage facility development will be located on the southern portion of the site, while the City will develop a larger, multi-purpose park on the northern portion of the site. The City will continue to pursue grant funding for the planned park project. Table 3-5 lists each of these development projects and Figure 3-9 shows their location within the City.

Potential Opportunity Sites

Opportunity sites are those that have the greatest potential for land use or intensity change over the long term. The purpose of mapping opportunity sites is to understand where the greatest reuse or intensification possibilities exist, so that public policy can be used to affect desired change at those locations. These sites are shown in Figure 3-10. A multi-step process has been undertaken to map potential opportunity sites in the planning area. As an initial step, sites were identified by mapping vacant and underutilized land using Contra Costa County Assessor's data. The County Assessor's data was used to preliminarily determine underutilized land by identifying parcels with a low assessed value ratio, or AV ratio. AV ratio is defined as the ratio of the value of existing permanent improvements (i.e., buildings and other structures) to the value of the land. Where this ratio is less than one, a parcel may be considered underutilized. A ratio of less than 0.5 indicates even greater potential for redevelopment. In other words, the lower the value of permanent structures on a site relative to land value, the greater the propensity for change, especially if market conditions and zoning regulations allow higher development values to be realized.

Figure 3-9: Current Development Projects



Development Projects by Project Type

- Single Family Residential
- Multifamily Residential
- Hotel
- Mixed Use (Retail/Residential)
- Light Industrial
- Park Improvement
- City Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Major Highway
- Major Roads
- Railroads

List of Projects

- ① 2812 Chattleton Block E
- ② 1331 Market Ave
- ③ 2036 21st Street
- ④ 1354 Marin Ave
- ⑤ 2846 12th Street
- ⑥ 2432-2442 22nd
- ⑦ 1820 Rumrill Blvd
- ⑧ 2364 Road 20
- ⑨ 13717 San Pablo Avenue
- ⑩ Mixed Use @ Old San Pablo City Hall Site
- ⑪ 14800 San Pablo Ave
- ⑫ 2600 Moraga
- ⑬ 3516 San Pablo Dam
- ⑭ San Pablo Area for Recreation and Community
- ⑮ 2555 El Portal Dr



SOURCE: City of San Pablo, 2021; Contra Costa County GIS, 2021; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021

Table 3-5: Pipeline Development Projects

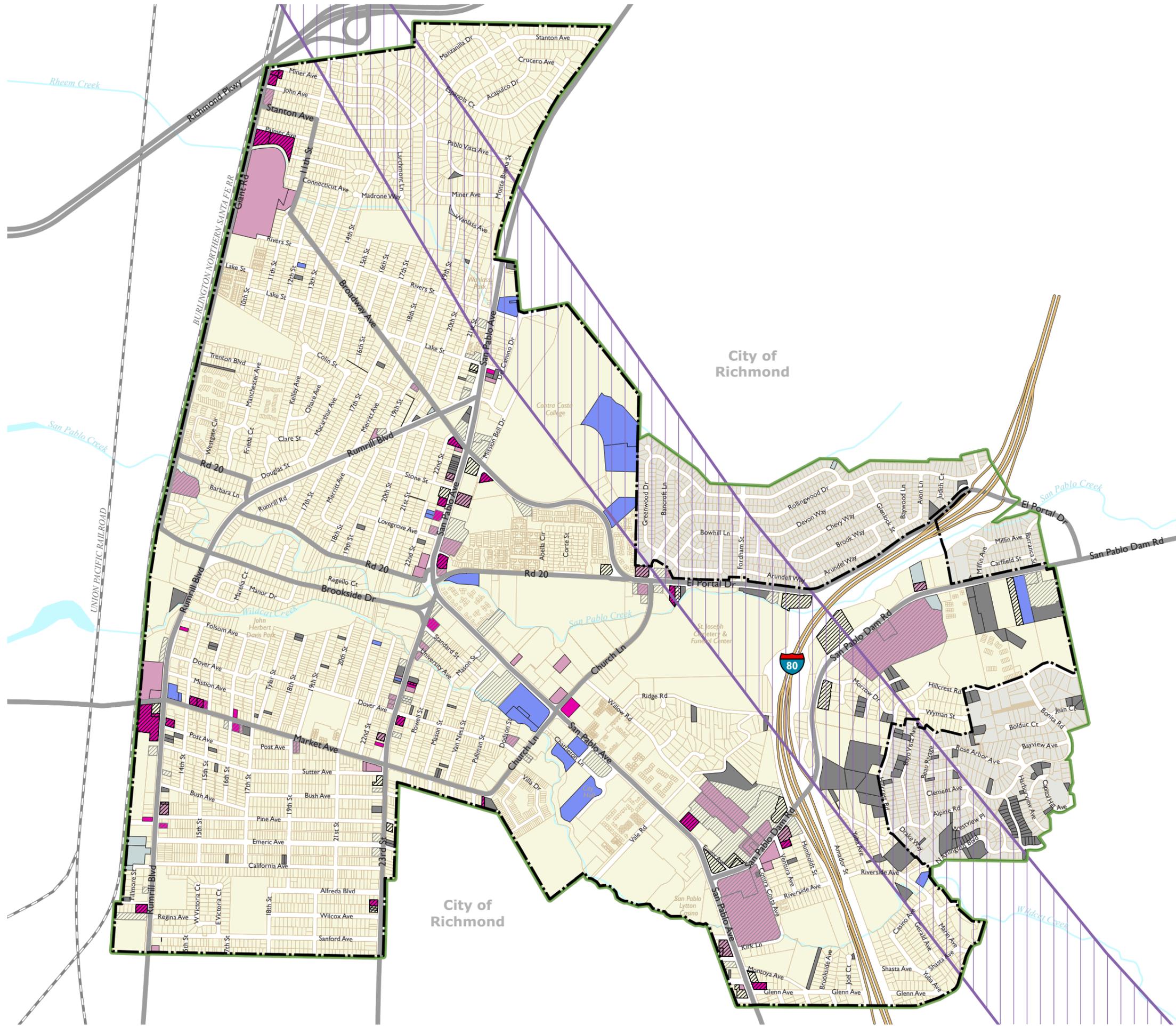
Residential		
<i>Project Address</i>	<i>Development Type</i>	<i>Housing Units</i>
2812 Chattleton Lane, Block E	Single-family residential	20 + 8 ADUs
1331 Market Avenue	Single-family residential	1
2036 21st Street	Single-family residential	1
1354 Marin Avenue	Single-family residential	1
2846 12th Street	Single-family residential	1
2432-2442 22 nd Street	Multifamily residential	8
13717 San Pablo Avenue, Block C	Multifamily residential	91
1820 Rumrill Boulevard	Multifamily residential	40
2364 Road 20	Multifamily residential	64
13831 San Pablo Avenue ¹	Mixed-use, multifamily residential	100
TOTAL		335
Non-Residential		
<i>Project Address</i>	<i>Development Type</i>	<i>Building Area (square feet)</i>
2600 Moraga	Storage	124,620
3516 San Pablo Dam	Storage	92,495
13717 San Pablo Avenue	Retail	11,672
13831 San Pablo Avenue ¹	Mixed-use, retail	7,500
14800 San Pablo Avenue ²	Hotel	-
TOTAL		236,287

Notes:

1. 13831 San Pablo Avenue is a mixed-use residential/retail development located at the former City Hall site.
2. 14800 San Pablo Avenue is a 21-room hotel development. Building square footage is unavailable.

Source: *City of San Pablo, 2021; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021*

Figure 3-10: Potential Opportunity Sites



Current Development Projects

Undeveloped Land

Vacant

Vacant - Public

Underutilized (based on AV Ratio*)

AV Ratio Less than 0.5

AV Ratio between 0.5 to 0.99

Underutilized (based on FAR)**

FAR less than 0.15

FAR 0.15 - 0.30

City Limits

Sphere of Influence

Alquist Priolo Zones

Major Highway

Major Roads

Railroads

* AV Ratio is the ratio of improvement value over land value.
 ** FAR is the ratio of building square foot over lot square foot.

Note: Opportunity Sites in the Alquist Priolo Fault Zone are not available for housing development.



SOURCE: City of San Pablo, 2021; Contra Costa County GIS, 2021; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021

DYETT & BHATIA
 Urban and Regional Planners

Next, sites with low intensity existing uses were identified, as this provides another indication of potential for intensification in the future. Building intensity is measured in terms of FAR, which is the ratio of building floor area to overall site area. A low intensity means that buildings are small in floor area compared to the overall site. Sites with FAR values of 0.3 or less were identified as having significant potential for redevelopment or expansion. Acreage of sites with a low AV ratio, medium and low FAR, or both, are shown in Table 3-6.

As shown on Figure 3-10, many of the larger vacant and underutilized sites fall within a State-designated Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone, which was established to mitigate the hazard of surface faulting to structures built for human occupancy. New residential uses are not permitted within this zone, although other uses may be constructed provided that seismic safety standards are observed. Outside of the Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone, opportunity sites are concentrated along San Pablo Avenue and 23rd Street, within the boundaries of the respective Specific Plans. Many of these parcels are small or odd shaped lots, which can pose challenges for redevelopment. A focus on lot consolidation strategies where adjacent opportunity sites are under separate ownership can help to address this constraint.

Table 3-6: Potential Opportunity Sites

Opportunity Category	Acres		
	Within City Limits	Within SOI	Total
Current Development Projects			
Recent Major Projects	20.7	-	20.7
Undeveloped/Vacant			
Vacant	29.9	10.7	40.5
Vacant – Public land	4.3	0.1	4.4
Underutilized			
<i>Based on Land and Improvement Values¹</i>			
AV Ratio 0.0 – 0.5 (Low)	12.9	-	12.9
AV Ratio 0.5 – 0.99 (Medium)	59.1	0.02	59.1
<i>Based on Floor Area Ratio¹</i>			
FAR 0.0 – 0.15 (Low)	23.4	-	23.4
FAR 0.14 – 0.30 (Medium)	68.4	-	68.4
Underutilized Total	114.1	0.02	114.1
GRAND TOTAL	218.5	10.8	229.4

Notes:

1. Some sites fall under both underutilized categories; there is some overlap of acreages (49.6 acres) and thus total will not match.

Source: City of San Pablo, 2021; Contra Costa County Office of the Assessor, 2021; Dyett & Bhatia, 2021.

The General Plan and Housing Element Update will draw on the recommendations of the City's 2020 Affordable Housing Strategy, and additional stakeholder interviews with affordable housing developers and advocates to be performed as part of the Housing Element Update, to craft strategies to promote housing development on appropriate opportunity sites. Outside of these areas, the analysis indicates that there may be opportunities to introduce housing on sites currently designated for non-residential uses, including along the southern portion of Rumrill Boulevard, in regional commercial areas along the southern strip of

San Pablo Dam Road, and in sites designated as Neighborhood Commercial along San Pablo Avenue. These opportunities are discussed further in the Key Findings section at the end of this chapter.

It is important to note that sites identified in this analysis as potential opportunity sites are just that – potential opportunities. These sites are likely to have greater propensity for change if the right set of land use designations and/or development incentives are provided. However, because development decisions will ultimately be made by the individual property owners, it is possible that some of these potential sites may not experience change over the next 20 years. Conversely, some sites not identified in this analysis may undergo redevelopment. This analysis is merely a tool to identify and quantify areas in San Pablo where future development is most likely to occur in the next 20 years. Possibilities for the future will be examined in further detail as part of the alternatives process.

Key Findings

1. **San Pablo is a largely built out city with relatively few vacant parcels available for development.** While there are several larger vacant parcels clustered east of I-80, these are located within an Alquist-Priolo Fault Zone where residential development is prohibited for reasons of seismic safety. Hillside slope constraints are also prevalent in this area. As a result, strategies for promoting and facilitating infill development in the more developable portions of the City will continue to be a priority for the City's long range planning efforts.
2. **Housing opportunity sites identified in the City's 2015-23 Housing Element are generally clustered along San Pablo Avenue and 23rd Street in the central part of the City.** These are locations that are well-served by transit, shops, and services. Several of these larger sites along San Pablo Avenue are currently in the development pipeline; however, many of the housing opportunity sites have not developed as envisioned even though they retain characteristics such as low AV ratio and low FAR, which indicates redevelopment potential. Barriers to housing development will be explored further through interviews with affordable housing developers and advocates later in the General Plan/Housing Element Update process.
3. **New State law has introduced more stringent requirements for the suitability of sites identified for housing affordable for lower income households in the Housing Element Sites inventory,** including requirements for parcel size and other potential development constraints. Given that the 2015-23 Housing Element inventory relied heavily on smaller sites, the City will need to identify additional opportunity sites for housing to satisfy the new requirements. Figure 3-10 identifies some potential new locations for housing development, including along the southern portion of Rumrill Boulevard and in regional commercial areas along the southern strip of San Pablo Dam Road.
4. **The southern portion of the Rumrill Boulevard corridor contains an eclectic mix of residential, commercial and industrial uses together with some larger vacant parcels.** The 2030 General Plan envisions the long-term transformation of this corridor segment into an employment area with a mix of light manufacturing, distribution, sales and service uses; however, as part of the General Plan and Housing Element Update process, there is an opportunity to re-evaluate the vision in view of community needs and priorities as well as the new Housing Element requirements.
5. **The cluster of larger parcels designated Regional Commercial located east of San Pablo Avenue along both sides of San Pablo Dam Road also represent a potential development opportunity.** Given the large surface parking lots, such as the one located at the San Pablo Towne Center, these parcels generally have low FARs and AV ratios, indicating an opportunity to redevelop with additional supportive uses that can command higher rents or sales prices.

6. **There are also several larger parcels currently designated as Neighborhood Commercial that may present opportunities for intensification and diversification of uses** (e.g., east side of San Pablo Avenue, north of Road 20). The Neighborhood Commercial designation does not allow for residential uses and also prohibits many types of commercial and mixed uses. The addition of housing on underutilized Neighborhood Commercial sites could provide rooftops to support retail vitality and contribute toward other community objectives.
7. **San Pablo is home to Contra Costa College and the Lytton Casino, both of which are notable regional destinations.** These destinations attract students and visitors from across the region and provide jobs and activities for San Pablo residents. The prevalence of medical and social service-related uses along San Pablo Avenue, Church Lane, and Vale Road also supports one of the principal employment sectors in the City. San Pablo has the opportunity to capitalize on these activity, employment, and service centers by integrating them more fully into the fabric of the City and promoting development that is synergistic with these uses in close proximity. The Entertainment Overlay Zone established by the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan provides an example of the type of efforts that may be able to capitalize on these destinations in the long run.