Introduction

The Gilroy General Plan establishes a strategic direction for the City’s growth and development—a direction that will capitalize on the City’s strengths, address key planning issues, and create the type of community we want Gilroy to be in the future.

This chapter summarizes the strategic direction of the General Plan, developed by members of the Gilroy General Plan Update Committee as a reflection of the community’s values and a statement of our desires for the future. It includes:

- A Vision for Gilroy. A statement of our community values, presented as a description of the type of community we want Gilroy to be in the future.

- Guiding Principles for the General Plan. A summary of key strategies to guide the Gilroy General Plan towards achieving the community’s vision.

- Areas of Special Concern. Highlighting four areas of critical importance and special concern for the Gilroy General Plan: Neighborhood Districts, Campus Industrial Areas, Downtown, and Hecker Pass.

Together, these provide the framework and strategic direction for the goals, policies and implementing actions of the General Plan, presented in Chapters 4 through 9.
Vision for Gilroy

The “Vision for Gilroy” is a description of the type of community we would like Gilroy to be in the future—it is a statement of community values, and the end point towards which the General Plan’s goals, policies and implementing actions are directed. It describes the community in terms of what it “will be” in the future, highlighting its defining characteristics and most valued attributes.

In the General Plan’s vision for Gilroy’s future, Gilroy will be a community with…

Small Town Character

Gilroyans will enjoy living in a small city that has retained its small-town character. This means, among other things, that it will be a relatively compact city, surrounded by open space and agricultural lands; people will know their neighbors; it will be easy to get around; buildings will be relatively small in scale (typically one to two stories); and people will be involved in the decisions that affect them and their community’s future.

A Rural Setting, Surrounded by Open Space

Though it will continue to grow over the next twenty years, Gilroy will retain its rural identity. The Urban Growth Boundary, adopted by initiative in 2016, will ensure that the City’s boundaries will be defined by natural open space and working agricultural lands that separate it from adjacent communities.

A Compact, Integrated Development Pattern

Gilroy will be a well-planned, compact community. It will first grow inward through infill development, and then concentrically outward from its historic core. The Urban Growth Boundary, adopted by initiative in 2016, will protect the areas surrounding Gilroy from unnecessary development and urban sprawl. Old and new parts of the community will be integrated with one another through the city’s network of streets, bike lanes, and pedestrian pathways.
A Link Between Growth and Resources

New growth will be planned in light of resource capacity constraints and managed to ensure that it is properly coordinated with basic services and facilities such as streets, sewer, water, fire, police, and schools. An emphasis on infill development will ensure efficient use of the City’s existing infrastructure. Areas of new development will be closely coordinated with the funding and implementation of necessary infrastructure improvements, extensions, and expansions.

Attractive Residential Neighborhoods and Quality Housing for All

On the west side of Highway 101, high quality residential neighborhoods—old and new—will provide a diversity of housing opportunities for Gilroyans. Different types of housing will be integrated throughout the community and within each neighborhood to meet the needs of different household types, different income levels, and people with special needs. Homes will be attractively designed and within easy walking distance of a local park, open space, or recreational facility. In addition, neighborhood-serving facilities such as parks and schools will be integrated into neighborhood areas, and neighborhood-serving commercial establishments will be located within easy walking distance of to help meet residents’ daily shopping needs. These establishments will be sited housing and designed so that they are compatible with the local neighborhood.

Ample and Diverse Economic Opportunities

A mix of traditional and new industries will provide a vibrant local economy and a rich diversity of economic opportunities for Gilroyans. Agriculture, regional commercial businesses, industrial operations, support services, and businesses such as research and development firms will provide a wide variety of job opportunities. Gilroy’s historic Downtown, the attractions and scenic beauty of the Hecker Pass area, outlet shopping, and continued success of the summer Garlic Festival will support growth of the tourism economy, with certain areas along Highway 101 providing visitor-serving businesses such as hotels, motels and gas stations.
Vibrant Downtown at Its Core

A vibrant Downtown will be the pride of Gilroy’s residents and the focal point of activity in the City. Downtown Gilroy will showcase restored historic buildings, attractive new buildings, a bustling transit center, new housing, pedestrian-oriented public spaces and amenities, and a new town plaza or pedestrian mall. A wide mix of uses in or near Downtown will attract both residents and tourists, including a new Performing and Visual Arts Center, cinema, an expanded civic center, restaurants, shops, and offices.

A Thriving Arts Community

Gilroy’s arts community will be well known throughout California as a thriving and nurturing arts community. Residents and visitors will attend community performances and cultural activities at the Gilroy Performing and Visual Arts Center.

Lots of Trees and a Network of Parks, Paths, and Open Spaces

Gilroy’s streets, old and new, will be lined with trees that infuse greenery throughout the city. Trees will be selected and maintained to ensure minimal impacts on sidewalks and other infrastructure. Native species will be used wherever possible. An interconnected network of parks, open spaces, and bike and pedestrian pathways will add to the feeling of greenery and openness in the City, incorporating and preserving important natural features such as Uvas Creek. Preservation and conservation efforts will also help ensure that residents enjoy both clean air and clean water.

A Transportation Network That Makes It Easy to Get Around

Street and traffic control improvements will be designed to ensure the smooth flow of traffic throughout the city. Bicyclists and pedestrians will find it easy to move around, using the extensive network of bike and pedestrian pathways, and the bike parking facilities at employment centers and other destinations. Improved transit service will also help control traffic, supported by new transit-oriented development near the Caltrain Station for people who value easy access to local and regional transit services.
Quality Community Facilities and Excellent Schools

Gilroyans will enjoy high quality community facilities that serve the needs of all residents. An extensive network of parks and recreation facilities with a wide range of activities will be available, including a new aquatic facility, a multi-purpose facility, and a youth center. Recreational facilities will be shared with Gilroy’s schools, ensuring excellent facilities for all City residents. At the civic center, an expanded senior center and larger public library facility will provide needed community services.

A Diverse, Active, and Proud Citizenry

Gilroy will have a diverse population of different ages, ethnicities, economic backgrounds, and interests. It will be a city where people know and care about each other; where community participation and volunteerism are the norm, not the exception. It will be a city where social interaction and a sense of community are encouraged through quality neighborhood design and inviting, pedestrian-friendly public places. Most importantly, it will be a city in which all of its citizens can take pride.

An Active and Involved Seniors Population

Gilroy’s growing seniors population will enjoy a diversity of services and activities at the expanded senior center. Improved transit service; a more walkable, safe, and vibrant Downtown; and new housing opportunities within easy access of shopping and parks will enrich the daily lives of Gilroy’s seniors.

Young People Valued and Involved as Members of the Community

Gilroy’s greatest asset is its young people. The City’s extensive outreach efforts will involve a wide range of government, business and civic groups in creating a partnership with and for youth. Young people will be engaged in a wide variety of community activities and youth employment opportunities that teach important skills and benefit the community at-large.
Guiding Principles for the General Plan

The General Plan has been developed based on a core set of “guiding principles.” These principles—based upon the preceding vision statement—serve as overarching goals for the General Plan.

- Manage Growth. Growth presents challenges as well as opportunities. The General Plan strives to manage growth so that benefits to the community are realized, and potentially negative impacts are minimized or eliminated. Growth management tools established in or supported by the General Plan include the Urban Growth Boundary adopted by initiative in 2016, 20-Year Growth Boundary, Urban Service Area, Residential Development Ordinance, Level of Service Standards, and policies that coordinate development approvals with infrastructure extensions and service provision.

- Minimize Costs. Growth carries costs, in the near term and long term. These include the costs of infrastructure and services extensions, as well as non-monetary costs such as the loss of open space and changes in community character. The General Plan strives to minimize costs by directing growth to areas that will be less expensive to service, and where potential impacts can be reduced.

- Focus Inward. A key strategy for managing growth and minimizing costs is to focus new development in areas that are already serviced by roads, sewers, and other infrastructure. In 1998, more than half of the incorporated lands in the City remained vacant or in agricultural use. The General Plan supports development on these lands before extending the City outward. It also supports intensification of development in the Downtown area to discourage sprawl and strengthen the Downtown core.

- Strengthen Downtown. Downtown is the historic center of Gilroy. Although that role has been weakened since development of the Outlets and the shopping centers on First Street, the community feels strongly about retaining Downtown's historic character and strengthening its role as the City’s center. The General Plan places a high priority on Downtown and sets forth a variety of policies to support that position, including development of a Downtown Specific Plan to coordinate and guide development efforts there.
Promote Jobs and Business Development. Gilroy’s economic health and vitality is of utmost importance, providing jobs for residents and revenues to support City services. The General Plan promotes a strong local economy by supporting the growth and expansion of existing local businesses; ensuring adequate land to attract noncommercial industrial businesses, including small- and medium-size businesses; creating a new “campus industrial” land use to specifically attract high-tech businesses; and establishing policies in support of economic development activities.

Create Quality, Diverse Neighborhoods. Our sense of community and quality of life are largely shaped by the residential neighborhoods in which we live. The physical design of these neighborhoods should support community interaction and provide a safe, attractive, and welcoming place to live. The General Plan supports development of quality, diverse neighborhoods that meet the needs of all Gilroyans, and establishes a new land use designation titled “Neighborhood District” to help achieve this goal.

Support Affordable Housing. Santa Clara County is one of the most expensive housing markets in the country. While Gilroy has not reached the level of housing rents and prices in the North County area, it has experienced significant increases, and housing affordability has become a critical issue. In the next twenty years, many people who currently live or work in Gilroy will find it increasingly difficult to afford the cost of housing here. The General Plan encourages a mix of housing types in new residential areas, ensures adequate land for medium and high density housing, and sets forth a number of policies and supporting programs to specifically address housing affordability.

Protect Resources. Gilroy is blessed with a number of natural resources, including beautiful hillside areas, creeks, abundant groundwater, open spaces, and prime agricultural lands. The General Plan strives to limit, direct and control new development so that these valuable resources are protected and maintained.

Ensure Public Safety. Development must be kept out of areas that pose significant natural hazards, and growth must be properly managed to ensure that it does not create new hazards or place undue strain on public safety services. The General Plan identifies areas prone to flooding and areas of seismic risk, and establishes restrictions for development in these areas. It sets forth policies to address man-made hazards such as noise, and
establishes level of service standards to ensure that public safety services are maintained at adequate levels to meet the demands of new growth.
Areas of Special Concern

The following section highlights four “areas of special concern” that have been a focus of discussions in development of the General Plan. These represent important new policy directions in the updated General Plan and/or issues on which the General Plan wishes to provide a more detailed description of its goals and intent. These areas are:

- Neighborhood District
- Campus Industrial Areas
- Downtown
- Hecker Pass

The text for each area bridges the general direction established in the vision with the more detailed directives established in the General Plan’s goals, policies, and implementing actions. The discussion of each area of special concern should be used to help guide interpretation and implementation of the General Plan and its policies, and as an information source for interested citizens, property owners, developers, and others.
Neighborhood Districts

The General Plan envisions neighborhoods that are attractive, safe, diverse, and healthy, containing housing that is affordable to a variety of income groups, thereby enhancing the quality of life for all Gilroy residents.

To help achieve this vision for Gilroy’s future, the General Plan establishes a new land use designation—the Neighborhood District. This is a new tool for implementing many of the housing and community design policies of the General Plan. Through the Neighborhood District, the City hopes to promote a more integrative, comprehensive, and creative approach to neighborhood planning.

Specifically, through the Neighborhood District, the General Plan aims to:

- Create neighborhoods that are predominantly single family in character, but which integrate different types and prices of housing to meet the full range of housing needs.
- Ensure that the City’s affordable housing goals and objectives are met.
- Encourage innovative site and building designs that contribute to the overall attractiveness and livability of Gilroy.
- Promote walking and biking as alternative modes of transportation.
- Integrate neighborhood-serving facilities and amenities such as schools, parks, and community gathering places to meet residents’ needs, promote a sense of community, and provide for a high quality of life.
- Encourage the creation of neighborhood-serving commercial centers that are within walking distance of residential neighborhoods and which are sited and designed to protect the neighborhood’s character and residential quality.
- Encourage residential neighborhood designs that reduce traffic speeds and volumes and control noise.

**Land Use Designation**

The General Plan establishes the new “Neighborhood District” land use designation to implement its goals for residential development. It also retains the four existing residential land use designations—Hillside Residential, Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and High Density Residential—for the City’s existing residential neighborhoods.

The Neighborhood District designation has been mapped on the Land Use Plan Map in areas of future residential development, predominantly in the southwest and northwest of the planning area. The other residential designations have been mapped in areas of existing residential development to retain the current overall pattern of development, with only minor site-specific modifications. This reflects another important priority for the General Plan—to protect, maintain, and enhance the quality of the City’s existing residential neighborhoods.

*The Neighborhood District land use designation is defined on page 4-8, along with the other land use designations of the General Plan. See also Policy 1.05, Existing Neighborhoods (page 4-21).*

**Housing Mix in New Neighborhoods**

A primary objective of the Neighborhood District is to ensure a mix of housing types and prices in new residential neighborhoods. Rather than mapping areas of “low,” “medium” and “high” density residential uses, which segregates different types and prices of housing into separate areas, the Neighborhood District establishes a more flexible planning tool that encourages greater innovation in achieving housing and community design goals.

To ensure that new residential development responds to the full range of housing need in the community, the Neighborhood District establishes both a minimum required housing mix (by zoning district), as well as a target mix—with incentives for achieving the target mix.
**Target Mix**

The target mix for residential land uses within a neighborhood area (excluding land required for streets, schools, parks, resource protection, neighborhood commercial, or other infrastructure and/or amenities) is to provide, in addition to single family uses (R1), at least:

- 10 percent of the residential land area for two-family (duplex) residential uses (R2)
- 15 percent of the residential land area for medium density residential uses (R3)
- 5 percent of the residential land area for high density residential uses (R4)

While the actual mix in any particular development will vary based on site constraints and opportunities, developers will be encouraged to achieve or exceed the target mix through an incentives program that might include priority ranking in the Residential Development Ordinance competition and/or density bonuses. The exact incentives to be used will be established as part of the Neighborhood Districts Implementation Strategy (see Action 1.C on page 4-41).

**Minimum Mix**

While incentives will encourage developers to achieve the “target” housing mix in Neighborhood Districts, all new residential developments will be required to provide at least:

- 5 percent of the residential land area for two-family (duplex) residential uses (R2)
- 10 percent of the residential land area for medium density residential uses (R3)
- 3 percent of the residential land area for high density residential uses (R4)

Exceptions to this requirement will be considered for smaller parcels that are not able to achieve the full range of densities. The criteria for granting such exemptions will be considered and established in the Neighborhood Districts Implementation Strategy (Action 1.C, page 4-41).
The target and minimum mix of housing densities is established in the definition of the Neighborhood District land use designation (page 4-8), with supporting language in the Neighborhood Districts Implementation Strategy (Action 1.C, page 4-41).

**Non-Residential Neighborhood Uses**

In addition to residential uses, the Neighborhood District designation encourages the incorporation of resident-serving uses such as parks, schools, daycare facilities, and religious facilities. Additionally, neighborhood-serving commercial and professional office uses are encouraged so long as they are:

- sited at the “entry” to the neighborhood;
- adequately buffered from adjacent residential uses;
- limited in size;
- controlled to prohibit inappropriate uses;
- designed and landscaped to be compatible with the residential neighborhood; and
- sited with adequate distance from competing commercial uses to ensure a suitable neighborhood market area.

The creation of “neighborhood centers” is also encouraged, clustering uses such as a neighborhood or community park, school, daycare facilities, and neighborhood serving retail uses such as a small bank branch, café, bakery, postal service, or small grocery store. While the mix of uses needs to be carefully controlled, they can have a synergistic effect and result in a highly-valued community amenity. Such centers might even incorporate mixed use buildings, with retail or office uses on the ground floor, and residential apartments above. Like the criteria for neighborhood commercial developments, neighborhood centers would also need to be sited at the “entry” to the neighborhood.
Neighborhood-serving, non-residential uses can also be incorporated in existing residential neighborhoods through infill development projects. However, such sites are likely to have more issues in terms of adjacent uses and design requirements. Proposals for establishing neighborhood commercial uses in existing residential areas must be developed and reviewed within a community planning process that involves area residents.

See Policy 3.19, Neighborhood Commercial Uses (page 4-32) and Action 3-E, Use Controls and Design Guidelines for Neighborhood Commercial Developments (page 4-46).

Site Planning and Design

The General Plan sets forth a number of policies to help guide the planning and design of new residential neighborhoods, including but not limited to:

- **Neighborhood Open Space.** Incorporate open spaces into residential neighborhoods, ideally in conjunction with a pedestrian and bicycle circulation system (Policy 1.09, Clustered Development; Policy 20.01, Open Space Areas; Policy 16.12, Pathway Network and Facility Connections).

- **Community Gathering Places.** Provide community gathering places, such as mini-parks or tot lots, neighborhood parks, small picnic areas, or a “neighborhood center” type of development (incorporating neighborhood facilities and neighborhood-serving retail uses) (Policy 16.06, Facility Distribution; Park and Recreation Definition and Facility Classification System, page 7-9; and related policies in the City’s Parks and Recreation System Master Plan).

- **Street Trees.** Residential streets should include street trees to (eventually) provide a canopy of shade over the sidewalk and street. Tree species should be selected that will (a) provide a canopy of shade; (b) have root systems that will not cause sidewalk buckling and other damage; and (c) make use of native species (Policy 1.12, Street Trees).

- **Creek Protection.** Ensure protection of creeks (including small canyons and seasonal creeks) that flow through the area, preserving their natural drainage function through adequate setbacks and easements (Policy 20.01, Open Space Areas; Policy 20.02, Creek Protection).
Strategic Direction

Resource and Habitat Protection. Ensure protection of natural resource and wildlife habitat areas (Policy 1.09, Clustered Development; Policy 20.01, Open Space Areas; Policy 20.03, Plant and Wildlife Habitats; Policy 20.04, Rare and Endangered Species).

Natural Features. Respect the natural topography to the greatest extent possible, retaining significant natural features such as hillsides, trees, and heavily vegetated areas (Policy 1.09, Clustered Development; Policy 20.01, Open Space Areas).

Hazardous Areas. Keep residential development away from hazardous areas such as fault zones, floodways, and steep hillsides (Policy 20.01, Open Space Areas; Policy 25.01, Location of Future Development; Policy 25.07, Development in Seismic Risk Areas; Policy 25.12, Slope Restrictions; Policy 25.14, Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone; Policy 25.20, Development Restrictions in Flood Areas).

Neighborhood Circulation

The General Plan encourages street designs and circulation systems in new neighborhoods that manage traffic flow; encourage biking and walking; encourage transit; and protect neighborhood quality. Specifically, the Plan establishes the following policies:

Traffic Management. Provide a residential street system that minimizes traffic impacts on neighborhood areas (Policy 12.02, System Function and Neighborhood Protection; Policy 12.03, Residential Street Design).

Bike and Pedestrian Circulation. Make it easy to walk or bike from residences to local destinations such as a school, park, bus stop, or local store, as well as to major destinations such as employment centers, shopping centers, transit centers, and community facilities (Policies 14.01 through 14.06 regarding Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation).

Inter-Neighborhood Access. Provide direct links between adjacent residential developments, neighborhoods, and/or commercial areas, via shared parks or open spaces, pedestrian/bicycle paths should connect residential neighborhoods with employment centers, shopping areas, and community facilities.
pathways, or roadway connections (Policy 12.03, Residential Street System Design).

- **Transit.** Support transit use by clustering higher density residential uses, public facilities, and commercial uses next to transit stops (Policy 13.01, Transit and Development; Policy 13.03, Transit-Oriented Development).

**Architectural Design**

Successful integration of different housing types in a single neighborhood require careful attention to architectural design. The Neighborhood Districts Implementation Strategy (Action 1.C) calls for the development of “design guidelines and design review procedures to ensure that Neighborhood Districts meet the vision, goals, and policies of the General Plan.” These guidelines should address issues such as:

- **Building Mass and Scales.** Large building masses should be broken up, and designed in scale with their surroundings. This might involve breaking one large building into several smaller buildings; providing variation in the roofline; creating a three-dimensional façade rather than a massive, flat façade; and using landscaping to soften building edges.
- **Consistent Style and Materials.** The architectural style and materials of duplexes, townhouses, and apartments should be similar if not identical to those used for single family homes, ensuring that they reflect the scale and character of the neighborhood as a whole.

- **Architectural Variety and Interest.**
  Consistency in the design treatment between single family homes and multi-family buildings does not mean that all buildings should look identical. Residential architecture should ensure variety and visual interest, avoiding a repetitious “cookie cutter” look.

- **Street Orientation.** Residential buildings, including single family homes, should be oriented towards the street, with garages and parking areas located on the side or in the back. This, along with home designs that incorporate balconies, porches, and similar architectural features can encourage “eyes on the street,” thereby creating a safer street environment as well as a more pleasant and attractive neighborhood.

*This new housing development in an older neighborhood orients the homes towards the street (top photo), with the garages and parking accessible from a rear alleyway (bottom photo).*
Implementation

Successful implementation of the Neighborhood Districts will require an integrated, comprehensive, and creative approach to neighborhood planning.

Currently, the City’s primary tool for controlling residential development is the Residential Development Ordinance (RDO). The RDO sets an annual limit on the number of housing units that are permitted, and establishes a “Project Rating Scale” used to evaluate and prioritize projects in the annual RDO competition. To ensure integration of the RDO process with implementation of the Neighborhood Districts, the General Plan recommends development of a “Neighborhood Districts Implementation Strategy” (Action 1.C). This strategy would help ensure that the RDO and other planning tools are tailored to support implementation of the Neighborhood Districts. Using the General Plan as a statement of what the community hopes to achieve, it will develop an integrated, comprehensive, and creative strategy for getting there.

Specifically, the implementation strategy will:

- Define and Recommend Appropriate Planning Tools, taking into consideration the possible need for different implementation tools in different parts of the City. Examples of implementation tools include:

  - **Planned Unit Development (PUD) Zoning.** The City’s Zoning Ordinance provides for a PUD Combining District “to promote unified planning and development, economical and efficient land use, a higher standard of amenities, appropriate and harmonious variety in physical development, creative design, and an upgrading of the urban environment.” This could be a useful tool for areas of the City with large parcels or groupings of parcels under coordinated ownership or control. Modifications to the PUD Zoning criteria and procedures may be desirable (perhaps establishing a Neighborhood District PUD zoning district) to make it an effective tool for achieving the goals and criteria set forth in the General Plan.

  - **Specific Plan Process.** Due to parcelization issues and fragmented property ownership in some areas of future development, the City may require preparation of a Specific Plan to ensure orderly development in keeping with the goals and criteria of the Neighborhood District designation. The costs for preparation of the Specific Plan should be borne by the property owners.
Consider Establishing a Development Phasing Program to integrate facilities planning, the RDO, and implementation of the Neighborhood Districts. Through a phasing program, the City would use the Urban Service Area to designate areas for near-term (five year) development and use a Specific Plan (or PUD) process to proactively guide the planning and design of those areas. RDO allocations would then be targeted to the designated areas (with first priority given to infill projects). This would also be a useful tool for ensuring coordination between new residential development and the facility planning of the Gilroy Unified School District.

Integrate Affordable Housing Strategies to ensure that affordable housing goals are achieved through the Neighborhood Districts development process.

Define Design Guidelines and Review Procedures for Neighborhood Districts, including use controls and design standards for Neighborhood Commercial areas.

Address Potential Exemptions and Variances, recognizing that some small parcels may not be able to accommodate the established “minimum mix” of housing types. In addition to defining exemption criteria, the strategy could define site-specific review procedures to enable City planning staff to determine a desired housing density and mix based on a review of the surrounding neighborhood area and site-specific considerations such as road access and environmental constraints.
**Strategic Direction**

**Campus Industrial Areas**

The General Plan promotes economic development to provide quality jobs for Gilroy residents and essential revenues to support City services. Given that a large and growing portion of the City’s work force commutes to the North County area for the well-paid, high-tech jobs there, the Plan places particular emphasis on promoting high-tech business development in Gilroy.

To help achieve this vision for Gilroy’s future, the General Plan establishes a new industrial land use designation—Campus Industrial. This is an important new tool for encouraging high-tech industrial development and achieving the community’s economic development goals.

Specifically, through the Campus Industrial designation, the General Plan aims to:

- Create high-paying jobs for Gilroy residents by encouraging the development of high-tech industries in Gilroy, including businesses such as software developers, research and development companies, customer service centers, and high-tech or information-based industries, including high tech manufacturing.

- Promote economic diversification to help make the local area less susceptible to the economic fluctuations in any one industry, thereby promoting a more sustainable and stable tax base for the City.

- Encourage the development of employment centers that are compatible with the residential environment in some areas west of Highway 101, making it easier for people to walk or bike to work, while maintaining the City’s historic emphasis on industrial and commercial development in the area east of Highway 101.

**Industrial Land Use Designations and Acreage**

The new Campus Industrial land use designation will help meet the community’s economic development goals. However, the Plan also retains the
two other industrial land use designations—Industrial Park and General Industrial—for the City’s existing industrial areas, which will continue to play a key role in supporting future economic growth.

The Campus Industrial designation has been mapped in an area located east of Highway 101 in the vicinity of the proposed Buena Vista interchange (approximately 40 acres).

The General Industrial and Industrial Park designations have been retained in areas of existing or planned industrial development. This provides for:

- Approximately 1,105 acres of general industrial lands in the City’s southeast industrial area and the Southpoint Business Park (of which approximately 790 acres are undeveloped);

- Approximately 339 acres of industrial park lands (approximately 182 undeveloped) in the area bounded by Leavesley Road, Monterey Street, Buena Vista Avenue and Highway 101; and

- Approximately 25 acres of industrial park lands (all undeveloped) in the area along San Ysidro Road, just north of the new Home Depot development (redesignated from General Commercial due to traffic generation concerns).

**Figure 3-4** summarizes the industrial land use acreage in the Land Use Plan Map by area of the City, industrial use category, and development status. See the Land Use Plan Map as well as the industrial land use designations in Chapter 4 (pages 4-15 through 4-16).
Planning and Design Guidelines

The General Plan sets forth a number of policies to help guide the physical planning and design of new developments. Many of these—especially as they relate to natural resource protection (e.g., creeks, habitat areas, etc.) and hazardous areas (e.g., seismic risks, steep slopes, etc.)—are outlined in the preceding discussion of “Neighborhood Districts,” and apply to industrial as well as residential development.

Additional guidelines should be considered in the planning, design and development of campus industrial areas to ensure that they achieve the vision of the General Plan:

- **Integrated Site Design.** Create an aesthetically and functionally coordinated site plan that integrates roadways, pedestrian and bike paths, parking areas, buildings, landscaping and open space, and support facilities. Ensure coordination between individual campus industrial developments, such that the overall effect is that of an integrated campus environment (even though it may contain a variety of large and small developments).

- **Use Controls.** Ensure that the uses located in designated areas are in keeping with the campus industrial environment. While operations may be classified as “industrial,” they should not create excessive noise, dust and other nuisances that might impact adjacent properties and uses. The general feel should be that of an office park, though specific uses might include...
some types of light manufacturing (e.g., “high tech” manufacturing). Less visible impacts such as gaseous emissions or effluent discharges must also be controlled, in compliance with environmental and public safety laws, to protect adjacent residences and the local environment.

**Commercial Uses.** While retail commercial uses are generally discouraged in campus industrial areas, some nodes of appropriate retail uses are appropriate and should be encouraged. Appropriate retail uses include restaurants and business support services such as photocopying, printing, etc. These should be located at the entrances to campus industrial areas, with pedestrian and bike pathways connecting them to campus developments.

**Access and Circulation.** Because campus industrial uses can generate large numbers of automobile trips, access and circulation issues must be adequately addressed. In addition to efficient roadway systems that provide convenient and direct access to major roadways (e.g., arterials, expressways and freeways), the circulation system should promote bicycle and pedestrian access (especially to nearby commercial and residential areas) and transit access (bus and rail).

**Parking.** Parking areas should be sited and designed to be both functional and attractive. Parking should be located to the sides and backs of buildings, and broken up by landscaping to avoid creating a “sea of parking” in front of buildings.

**Landscaping.** An integrated landscape design helps create a pleasing environment and provides a buffer between campus industrial developments and adjacent non-industrial uses. Roadways and parking areas should be landscaped and maintained to create a park-like feeling, and individual developments should include some landscaped outdoor public areas for use by employees and visitors.

**Architectural Design.** Buildings in campus industrial areas should be attractive and high quality. Large building masses should be broken up and designed in scale with their surroundings. This might involve breaking one large building into several smaller buildings; “stepping back” the upper floors of the building; providing variation in the roofline; creating a three-dimensional façade rather than a massive, flat façade; and using landscaping to soften building edges. Building materials and architectural styles should provide for variety and visual interest, but should ensure an overall consistency in terms of design and construction quality.
Implementation

There are a variety of tools that can help guide implementation of campus industrial areas. These include:

- **New Campus Industrial Zoning District.** At a minimum, a new zoning district should be established to guide development in Campus Industrial areas. This would establish appropriate use controls and development standards, including lot size requirements, setback and height requirements, and regulations regarding landscaping, parking, signage, and performance standards.

- **Planned Unit Development (PUD) Zoning.** The City’s Zoning Ordinance provides for a PUD Combining District “to promote unified planning and development, economical and efficient land use, a higher standard of amenities, appropriate and harmonious variety in physical development, creative design, and an upgrading of the urban environment.” This could be a useful tool for the implementation of campus industrial areas, especially for large parcels or groupings of parcels under coordinated ownership or control. Modifications to the PUD Zoning criteria and procedures may be desirable (perhaps establishing a Campus Industrial PUD zoning district) to make it an effective tool for achieving the goals and criteria set forth in the General Plan.

- **Specific Plan Process.** To facilitate development in the large campus industrial area east of Highway 101, the City will require the land owners to work with the City to develop a Specific Plan for the area. The City may also wish to encourage or require a Specific Plan for the campus industrial area adjacent to the proposed Buena Vista interchange as well. The Specific Plans will ensure a coordinated development plan for these areas, and make them more attractive for potential users. It would also help ensure that development in each area is in keeping with the goals and criteria of the General Plan.
**Downtown**

The Vision and Guiding Principles of the General Plan place a high priority on Downtown, stating that “Downtown will be the pride of Gilroy’s residents and the focal point of activity in the city….” It envisions an active, attractive, and economically vibrant Downtown of “restored historic buildings, attractive new buildings, a bustling transit center, new housing, pedestrian-oriented public spaces and amenities, and a new town plaza or pedestrian mall.”

While Downtown has experienced a period of decline due to competition from the Outlets and shopping centers on First and Tenth Streets, it remains a valued community resource and an important small business center, with restaurants, antique stores, and other specialty shops and service operations. Recent steps towards revitalization have produced valuable results, but many more challenges remain.

There are a number of promising opportunities for continued revitalization of Downtown, including a major redevelopment site; an expanding transit center with regional rail service; and a growing public-private partnership dedicated to improving and enhancing the Downtown’s physical environment. The General Plan hopes to focus attention on these opportunities and provide an overall framework for revitalizing Downtown within the larger context of the City’s growth and development. Specifically, the General Plan aims to:

- Define an overall vision for Downtown’s future.
- Provide comprehensive direction for the area’s physical design and development, addressing issues such as land use, circulation, parking, economic development, urban design, historic preservation, and public facilities.
- Establish a framework for coordinating development efforts in the Downtown area with development decision making elsewhere in the City (recognizing that decisions to support development in other parts of the City can sometimes undermine development efforts in the Downtown).
Establish an implementation strategy for achieving the community’s vision and goals for Downtown’s future.

**Downtown Boundary**

The Gilroy General Plan expands the boundaries of “Downtown” from what was in the previous General Plan. It envisions the future development of Downtown continuing to focus on Monterey Street, extending from Leavesley/Welburn to Tenth Street, with related commercial development extending southward to the Monterey/101 interchange. Railroad Street will continue to serve as the primary boundary on the east side of Downtown, and the alley between Eigleberry and Church Streets will continue as the primary boundary on the west (extending westward in the area between Sixth and Seventh Streets to include the Civic Center area). *Policy 3.23, Downtown Boundaries, and the Land Use Plan Map define the area considered as “Downtown” by the General Plan.*

*Figure 3-5. Downtown Boundary and Use Districts*
Land Use Designation and Use Districts

The entire Downtown area is designated as “Downtown Commercial” on the Land Use Plan Map. However, it is recommended that the area be approached as three sub-districts with differing uses, design character and planning requirements. The three proposed sub-designations for Downtown land use are:

- **Downtown Historic District.** This would encourage pedestrian-oriented uses that are compatible with the unique historic character and small scale of the City’s historic Downtown core. Use controls would encourage specialty shops, cafes, restaurants, small hotels, professional offices, and similar uses and activities. Mixed use developments with retail uses on the ground floor and residential or office uses above would be especially encouraged. Restoration and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, compatibility of architectural styles, and enhancement of the area’s overall visual character would be important goals in this area.

- **Downtown Mixed Use District.** This would apply in the area surrounding the historic Downtown core to encourage mixed use development and create a vibrant, active Downtown. A wide mix of pedestrian-oriented uses would be encouraged, with second, third and fourth stories used for residential units, offices, artists’ lofts and other compatible uses. Public/quasi-public facilities and civic uses such as parks, playgrounds, cultural and arts facilities, cinemas, community centers, and day care facilities would also be encouraged. Design standards would establish some uniformity in building massing, setbacks and basic design requirements to create an integrated design throughout the Downtown area. Density bonuses might be considered as an incentive to encourage features such as structured parking, public open space, or other community amenities.

- **Downtown Office District** This designation would apply in the “northern gateway” to the Downtown area (Monterey from Leavesley to Third Street) to encourage development of larger scale office buildings. It could also be applied in the “southern gateway,” in the area along Monterey Street between Seventh and Tenth Streets. While consistent with the Downtown area in design (buildings would front on the street to create an integrated streetscape), these uses tend to be larger in scale and more auto-oriented than those in the other two Downtown use designations. In addition to office uses, compatible uses include civic facilities, hotels, theaters, restaurants, and financial institutions. Higher density residential uses can
also be compatible if developed as part of a mixed use project. Design requirements would ensure continuous sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities, consistent with the Downtown area as a whole, to promote pedestrian access to the historic Downtown core. Density bonuses might be considered for features such as structured parking, public open space, or other community amenities. For buildings higher than two stories, a “stepped-back” design should be encouraged to create a pleasant pedestrian environment (with the bottom two stories fronting on the street, and upper stories set back).

These designations for the Downtown area are presented in Chapter 4 under “Land Use Designations” (pages 4-12 through 4-14) and in Policy 3.24, Downtown Use Districts. It is expected that the Downtown Specific Plan will further refine these definitions and their boundaries on the Land Use Plan Map.

Economic Development Opportunities

The General Plan recognizes that Downtown will not be able to compete with the Outlets and large shopping centers in terms of sheer volume of retail activity, and that it is unlikely that large retailers will choose to locate in the Downtown area. However, it also recognizes that there are some areas in which Downtown currently holds a strategic advantage. No other commercial area in the City can compare to Downtown in terms of character and charm, pedestrian orientation, and transit access—characteristics that make Downtown an ideal location for restaurants, cultural and arts activities, entertainment, small and medium size businesses, and specialty retailing.

As Gilroy’s population continues to grow in the coming years, there will be increasing demand for these types of services and activities. The long-term economic vitality of the Downtown will largely hinge on the extent to which the City can encourage these uses and activities to locate Downtown rather than elsewhere in the City. While large companies may require land areas and building sizes that would be difficult to accommodate Downtown, many small and medium sized businesses (the real economic engines in most communities) could be accommodated Downtown—especially professional office-based businesses.

There are a number of strategies that, in combination, could help strengthen Downtown and ensure its long-term economic viability:
• **Improve the Look and Function of Downtown’s Physical Environment.** The physical attractiveness and functionality of Downtown is critical to its long-term success. Issues that need to be addressed include sidewalk improvements, pedestrian lighting, infrastructure service improvements (including placing overhead utilities underground), traffic circulation, and parking. The following discussions of “Access, Circulation and Parking” and “Urban Design and Historic Preservation” provide an overview of some of these issues. A key function of the Downtown Specific Plan will be to provide a detailed, comprehensive strategy improving the Downtown’s physical environment.

• **Direct Office Development to the Downtown.** While physical improvements are important for Downtown’s future, the key to economic vitality is people. The mix of uses and activities in the Downtown must attract and keep people there. One strategy is to encourage new office developments in the City to locate in the Downtown area. The General Plan supports this strategy by limiting “professional office” land uses in other parts of the City, concentrating such developments in the Downtown area.

• **Direct Cultural, Arts and Entertainment Uses to the Downtown.** Cultural, arts, and entertainment activities can also support economic development goals—attracting people to the Downtown on evenings and weekends, to support businesses such as cafes, restaurants and specialty retailers. It is a strategy that has been used successfully in many other cities, small and large. The City is currently considering potential development of a new Performing and Visual Arts Center, and there is considerable debate over the ideal location. Such a facility can provide a “magnet” for attracting people Downtown, with significant potential for supporting Downtown development goals. If a non-Downtown site is selected, it is unlikely that Downtown will be considered the City’s cultural and entertainment center, and increasingly difficult for Downtown to become the “vibrant city center” envisioned in the General Plan. A performance facility located within or in close proximity to the Downtown (as is the City’s new cinema complex, under construction on Monterey just south of Tenth Street) could provide a considerable boost for Downtown’s ongoing revitalization. It is recommended that the Specific Plan process be
used as an opportunity to explore potential sites for Gilroy’s Performing and Visual Arts Facility in or near the Downtown area.

- **Promote Mixed Use Development.** Mixed use developments help integrate new businesses into the Downtown area as well as the people to support them. They are a traditional form of development that can help reinforce Downtown’s historic character and pedestrian orientation. City use controls and development standards should not only allow but encourage mixed use development in the Downtown area.

- **Promote Transit-Oriented Development.** With increasing regional highway congestion, access to convenient, safe and reliable transit service will be an increasingly important consideration for many residents and businesses. As a result, the CalTrain station and proposed VTA transit center will become increasingly important assets for Downtown. With projections showing significant ridership increases, plans by CalTrain to increase the frequency and quality of service, and proposals to extend commuter train service to communities south of Gilroy, the station will be an increasingly important hub of activity. Developments within walking distance of the train station will be attractive for residents who commute to the North County area for work, as well as for businesses that could benefit from having convenient transit access for their employees. Retail businesses in the station area could also benefit from commuter traffic, especially if combined with cultural and entertainment facilities that give commuters a reason to remain Downtown after their evening commute.

- **Capitalize on Development Opportunity Site.** There is a large site in the Downtown that offers a unique development opportunity—the vacant parcel and building previously occupied by Garden Valley Foods. The City is initiating a process to explore potential uses for this site, conducting a market assessment and technical evaluation for potential developments. Uses being considered include retail, office, live/work, high tech research and development, light manufacturing, business incubator and/or training facilities.

- **Link the Downtown and Civic Center.** The Gilroy Civic Center is home to Wheeler Auditorium, City Hall, the Library, the Senior Center, and the Police and Fire Departments. As Downtown development proceeds, opportunities for linking these important activity centers could help to strengthen the Downtown. The Land Use Plan Map encourages this
strategy by extending the Downtown land use designation to connect with the Civic Center’s “Public Facility” designation.

**Access, Circulation and Parking**

Downtown’s economic development relies on having convenient and safe access to the area—by car, foot or bike. It must also consider access for delivery trucks, emergency vehicles, and other service vehicles. The circulation system should:

- Provide convenient automobile access into and through the Downtown area, with special attention given to parking availability and access;

- Provide safe, convenient, and pleasant pedestrian access; and

- Incorporate bicycle circulation and support facilities (such as bike racks and/or lockers);

Design of the circulation system should reduce potential conflicts between the automobile, pedestrians and bicyclists, controlling traffic speeds and minimizing the number of driveways that cut across sidewalks in pedestrian-oriented areas (e.g., along Monterey Street).

*See Policy 3.27, Downtown Pedestrian Environment; Policy 3.28, Downtown Traffic Circulation / Monterey Street Improvements; and Policy 3.29, Downtown Parking.*

**Urban Design and Historic Preservation**

The design of buildings and public spaces in the Downtown area can contribute to the economic success of Downtown, making it an attractive, pleasant and unique place to visit. Basic pedestrian amenities such as lighting and seating help make the area feel inviting and safe. Other improvements can support specific types of activities. For example, widening the sidewalk in selected areas can create opportunities for outdoor cafes and restaurants, making the street into a more active, friendly place. Similar sidewalk extensions can be used at pedestrian crossings to reduce the distance pedestrians must cross and enhance pedestrian safety.
Community residents have voiced strong support for development of a large community gathering place in the Downtown area—a **Downtown park or plaza** that could serve as a focal point for community events and activities. An important role for the Downtown Specific Plan will be to identify potential locations for creating such a space in the Downtown, and exploring strategies for its implementation.

Lastly, **historic preservation** is an important concern in the Downtown core, with the area’s historic character providing a valuable asset for economic development. Urban design or “streetscape” improvements can draw upon historic design themes and enhance the area’s charm and appeal, and re-use of historic structures can create unique office and retail spaces. However, strategies will be needed to address the high costs that can be associated with preservation, re-use and/or retrofitting of historic structures, especially given the number of unreinforced masonry buildings in the Downtown area.

See Policy 1.06, Downtown; Policy 3.27, Downtown Pedestrian Environment; Policy 3.30, Historic Preservation, Restoration, and Re-Use in the Downtown Area; and Policy 3.31, Downtown Park or Plaza.

**Implementation**

The most effective means for achieving the General Plan’s goals for Downtown is through development of a Specific Plan. Using the General Plan’s goals and intent as a starting point, the Specific Plan will:

- Confirm the boundaries of the “Downtown” area;
- Involve Downtown businesses, property owners, and residents in evaluating potential policies and development strategies;
- Develop a more detailed land use and circulation plan for the area, including refinement and mapping of the three “sub-designations” of Historic District, Mixed Use District, and Office District;
- Establish more specific use controls and development standards for each land use designation;

- Develop design guidelines for buildings and streetscape improvements;

- Explore potential sites for a Downtown park/plaza and the proposed Performing and Visual Arts Center;

- Explore opportunities for promoting transit-oriented development;

- Set forth a realistic implementation program, including funding strategies, that is supported by Downtown businesses and the community at-large.

*See Policy 1.06, Downtown; and Action 1.D, Downtown Specific Plan.*
NOTE: The area to which this discussion applies is designated “Hecker Pass Special Use District” on the Land Use Plan Map.

The Hecker Pass area is the jewel of Gilroy. It is valued for its rural qualities and scenic views, containing working agricultural lands, open spaces, and very limited residential and commercial development. It serves as the City’s western gateway, and is a highly valued scenic resource for residents and visitors.

The next twenty years are sure to bring changes to the Hecker Pass area, especially in light of its annexation to the City. However, community residents do not want to see these changes undermine the very qualities that make the Hecker Pass area special. While some development should be allowed, care must be taken to protect the scenic qualities and rural, agricultural character of the Hecker Pass area. Thus, Hecker Pass is an area of special concern for the General Plan.

Following is a summary of the goals established by the General Plan for the Hecker Pass area, and related policies and implementing programs to achieve those goals.

**Goals**

- Protect the area’s rural and agricultural character and scenic qualities, including its view corridors and natural features.
- Provide for an economically viable use of land for property owners.
- Capitalize on the area’s unique potential as a year-round tourist draw.
- Ensure that the design of new developments respects and reflects the rural character of the area.
- Pursue designation of Highway 152/Hecker Pass as a State Scenic Highway, and establish roadside development controls to protect its scenic qualities.
- Extend the Uvas Creek Park Preserve and trail to connect with the Bay Ridge Trail.

**Land Use Designations**

The Land Use Plan Map has designated a special land use district for the Hecker Pass area, called “Hecker Pass Special Use District.”

The intent of the Hecker Pass Special Use District is to establish a special set of use controls and development parameters for the Hecker Pass area in recognition of its special status within the City and in response to its unique planning context.

The Hecker Pass Special Use District designation has primarily been applied to the area that was previously designated as “Rural Residential.” It also has been applied to some areas north of Hecker Pass that were previously designated as Hillside Residential, helping ensure that development that is visible from the Hecker Pass Highway will conform to the same set of development controls, whether it is north or south of the highway.

The Uvas Creek area is designated “Park and Recreation Facility,” reflecting the desire to extend the existing Uvas Creek Park Preserve from Santa Teresa Boulevard up to and through the Bonfante Gardens property to Highway 152. It was previously designated as Open Space. The Bonfante Gardens properties continue to be designated for Visitor-Serving Commercial south of Uvas Creek and the Gilroy Municipal Golf Course retains its Park and Recreation Facility designation.

The Hecker Pass Land Use Diagram provides a conceptual graphic representation of the land use distribution considered to be in keeping with the goals of the Hecker Pass Special Use District.

The proposed distribution of land uses calls for the clustering of residential development in the southern part of the area designated as the Hecker Pass Special Use District, and in some of the designated areas north of Highway 152. The remainder of the site is kept in agricultural uses, with some “agri-tourism” development allowed to capitalize on the area’s tourism potential (see the discussion of “Agri-Tourism” Development that follows).

The exact distribution and configuration of land uses will need to be determined through the Specific Plan process (see the Implementation
discussion at the end of this section), taking into consideration the development and design guidelines presented on page 3-23.

**Zoning Districts and Use Controls**

The Hecker Pass Special Use District provides guidance for establishing more specific zoning and development controls in the Hecker Pass area. These will be defined in the City’s Zoning Ordinance—one of the most important tools for implementing the General Plan.

Specifically, the General Plan’s land use designation in the Hecker Pass area would allow for use of the following existing zoning districts:

- Agriculture (A1)
- Open Space (OS)
- Park/Public Facility (PF)

It also allows for some limited residential development in the area, as well as development of “agri-tourism.” However, the City does not currently have any zoning districts that could be used to implement the desired use controls, densities, and development standards for these uses. Therefore, new implementation tools will need to be developed through the Specific Plan process. Examples of potential tools include:

![Hecker Pass Land Use Diagram](image_url)

**Figure 3-6. Hecker Pass Land Use Diagram**
- A new residential zoning district tailored to the specific requirements of the area, establishing use controls, density limits, and basic development standards.

- A new “agri-tourism” zoning district to establish the special use controls and other development standards appropriate for this type of development (which would differ from the allowed uses under the existing A1/Agriculture zoning district).

- A Hecker Pass Overlay District, in combination with the base zoning designations, that would designate areas suitable for clustered development and appropriate densities for each cluster, in keeping with the overall density parameters and development standards established in the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

**Residential Densities**

The Hecker Pass Special Use District maintains a similar level of density as was allowed under the previous “Rural Residential” designation in the area between Hecker Pass Highway and Uvas Creek. However, it clusters the allowed units into the southern part of the area in order to retain large areas of agricultural lands and open spaces along the northern part of the area, adjacent to the highway (as shown in the Hecker Pass Land Use Diagram). The exact location and design of clustered developments will need to be determined in the Specific Plan process, ensuring protection of views from both the highway and the creek area, and an adequate buffer area between the proposed extension of the Uvas Creek Park Preserve and areas of new homes.

The suggested target density for the area, in keeping with the existing Rural Residential density, will be 0.4 units per acre. However, a density bonus program is also proposed to provide an incentive for permanent dedications of open space as part of the development process. Given the suggested target density of 0.4 units per acre and the proposed 25 percent density bonus, this could increase the residential density in the area to 0.5 units per acre. In the area between Hecker Pass Highway and Uvas Creek (an area of approximately 248 acres), the suggested target density would allow development of approximately 99 housing units, with the density bonus increasing the potential development to approximately 124 units. The exact acreage figures and unit calculations will need to be reviewed and confirmed through the Specific Plan process.
In the area north of Hecker Pass Highway, application of the Hecker Pass Special Use District designation will reduce the maximum allowed density in the area previously designated as “Hillside Residential.” However, entitled projects (i.e., projects that have received initial approvals, such as the Country Estates development in this area) will be exempt from the new requirements and will be allowed to proceed based on the densities and development patterns previously agreed upon.

As in the area south of Hecker Pass Highway, developments north of the highway will be encouraged to adopt clustered designs to protect the scenic quality of Hecker Pass Highway and to preserve the steeper hillside areas on the north side of the highway as open space. Areas for residential clustering could include the valley area leading up through the Hoey Ranch site towards the Country Estates development (with adequate setbacks from the highway), and on lands on the other side of the ridgeline from the highway (out of sight from the highway). “Agri-Tourism” Development

The only commercial uses allowed in the Hecker Pass Special Use District are those defined as “agri-tourism” uses. These are small-scale establishments serving tourists along Hecker Pass Highway and reflective of the area’s agricultural heritage. They should be built only in conjunction with on-site, ongoing agricultural operations, and should be ancillary to the ongoing agricultural use of the site.

Specific uses that would be allowed under this definition include:

- Bed and breakfast inns
- Small restaurants or cafes
- Small-scale retail operations that primarily sell agricultural and related products, with an emphasis on products grown and processed in Santa Clara and nearby counties
- Wine-tasting rooms
- Recreation-related tourism uses, such as bike or roller-blade rental shops

The number and scale of agri-tourism establishments would be strictly limited to ensure preservation of the area’s semi-rural character and scenic quality.
Fast-food and convenience store franchises and similar “chain” operations are strictly prohibited.

**Circulation**

Several circulation-related issues will need to be addressed in any planning for the future of the Hecker Pass area:

- **Limit Access Points on Highway 152 and Santa Teresa.** Both Highway 152 west of First Street and Santa Teresa Boulevard are designated as “expressways” on the General Plan Circulation Map. This does not necessarily mean that traffic here is traveling at high speeds, but rather that the number of intersections is limited (spaced 0.25 miles apart or more) and direct-access driveways are prohibited or extremely limited.

- **Plan for the Widening of Highway 152.** Over the next twenty years, it is likely that traffic along Highway 152 will increase significantly due to the Bonfante Gardens development, reaching the point where the existing two lane highway will require widening. While widening to four lanes will certainly change the character of the roadway, the General Plan directs the City to work closely with Caltrans to ensure that the widening project respects the scenic qualities of the area and preserves natural features such as the deodar cedar trees. This could potentially be achieved through a split roadway configuration (with the trees retained in the median).

- **Provide for Vehicle Circulation.** Because of the limited access requirements of both Highway 152 and Santa Teresa, an internal roadway system will be required to accommodate vehicle circulation in the area concerned. The roadway should be designed in keeping with the natural topography to minimize cut-and-fill and be landscaped with native species in keeping with the area’s scenic qualities.

- **Provide an Integrated Network of Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation.** Because of its scenic beauty and plans for extending the Uvas Creek Park Preserve, the Hecker Pass area will become increasingly popular with walkers, joggers, and bikers. Any development in the area must provide for bike and pedestrian circulation, connecting residential and “agri-tourism” developments with the Uvas Creek trail, and to any potential trail links leading to the north (through the Country Estates area) or south (through the Shappel project). A bicycle/recreation “staging area” should be provided near the planned extension of Third street and Uvas Creek to accommodate future recreational use.
Development Controls and Design Standards

To ensure preservation of its rural character and scenic qualities, special design and development controls will need to be defined and enacted for the Hecker Pass area.

- **Ensure Adequate Setbacks.** Development along Highway 152 will need to be set back from the highway to protect views and preserve the roadway’s scenic qualities. This is particularly important in light of the potential future designation of Highway 152 as a State Scenic Highway. Setbacks will also be required in areas adjacent to Uvas Creek to protect development from possible flood hazards and to protect views from the proposed extension of Uvas Creek Park Preserve. The setback may need to be more substantial than in other creekside areas due to the potential erosion of the stream bank along this segment of the creek and to ensure an adequate buffer between recreational uses in the park preserve and residential developments.

- **Follow State Scenic Highway Standards.** In addition to setback requirements, development along Highway 152 should comply with State requirements for development along designated Scenic Highway routes.

- **Establish Site Design Guidelines for Clustered Development.** In addition to setback requirements, site design guidelines should promote clustered development; maximize open space preservation; ensure protection of viewsheds, natural features, and habitat areas, including Uvas Creek; and keep development away from hazards such as floodways, seismic hazards (e.g., fault zones and areas of potential liquefaction), and steep hillsides. The siting and design of clustered developments will be critical to achieving the Plan’s goals—ensuring that cluster densities and designs preserve the semi-rural character, including the preservation of agricultural properties that are large enough to support ongoing agricultural operations.

- **Preserve Open Space.** A variety of open space areas should be created through the design and development process, including active recreation areas, habitat protection areas, agricultural areas, scenic open spaces, and neighborhood open spaces (interspersed between clusters of residential development). For all open spaces, the Specific Plan should ensure (a) that open space dedications are permanent, and (b) that appropriate mechanisms are in place to address ongoing maintenance and management
issues. The proposed density bonus is one possible incentive approach for achieving these goals. Another option might include a Transfer of Development Rights program. For lands accepted by the City as dedicated open space, consideration should be given to establishing long-term lease agreements with farmers or wine producers who would continue cultivation of the land.

- **Limit Building Heights.** Building heights will need to be limited to preserve the area’s rural character and protect views. Most buildings should be two stories, maximum, with taller buildings allowed only if for agricultural use.

- **Establish Architectural Guidelines.** Design guidelines can help ensure that new development enhances the area’s rural charm. Guidelines should promote the use of appropriate architectural styles, varied rooflines, natural colors and materials, and landscaping with native, drought-tolerant plants.

- **Limit and Control Signage.** The amount of signage along Highway 152 should be strictly limited, and controls established for the size, location, and design of signs (encouraging natural materials and colors). Neon signs should be strictly prohibited and advertisements should be limited to businesses in the Hecker Pass area.

**Implementation**

The most effective means for achieving the General Plan’s goals for the Hecker Pass area is through the Specific Plan process. Using the General Plan’s goals and intent as a starting point, the Specific Plan will:

- Develop a more detailed land use and circulation plan for the area;

- Consider economic development concerns to strengthen the area’s potential for tourism;

- Clearly define allowable densities and a desired pattern of development;

- Ensure permanent dedication of open space areas, including agricultural lands, and mechanisms for their ongoing management;
Strategic Direction

- Address seismic, soils, flooding, erosion and other public safety issues;
- Establish detailed use controls;
- Define development standards and design guidelines, incorporating State Scenic Highway Standards, and
- Set forth a realistic implementation program that is supported by the community at-large and area property owners.

The Specific Plan should cover all of the area designated as “Hecker Pass Special Use District” on the Land Use Plan Map, as well as the Bonfante Gardens development, the municipal golf course, and properties adjoining Santa Teresa Boulevard.

The Specific Plan process will provide an opportunity to involve property owners and other citizen representatives in evaluating the area’s unique constraints and opportunities, and developing a workable plan that is in keeping with the General Plan, and supported by the community.