

Visitation Valley

SCHLAGE LOCK COMMUNITY PLANNING WORKSHOP



STRATEGIC
CONCEPT
PLAN
AND
WORKSHOP
SUMMARY

Community Planning Workshop

SF Planning Department



July 2002

EDAW

Visitacion Valley

SCHLAGE LOCK COMMUNITY PLANNING WORKSHOP



PREPARED FOR:

THE SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

IN COLLABORATION WITH:

- **OFFICE OF SUPERVISOR SOPHIE MAXWELL**
- **VISITACION VALLEY PLANNING ALLIANCE**
- **SAN FRANCISCO MUNICIPAL RAILWAY**
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Figure 1 - Visitation Valley



A - Introduction

This report presents the results of a community planning process to determine the future of the Schlage Lock site in San Francisco's Visitacion Valley neighborhood. The community planning process took place in February and March 2002 and was sponsored by the San Francisco Planning Department in conjunction with the office of San Francisco Supervisor Sophie Maxwell. The background studies, community outreach and "strategic concept plan" described in this report will guide the city in developing new permanent controls for this portion of Visitacion Valley.

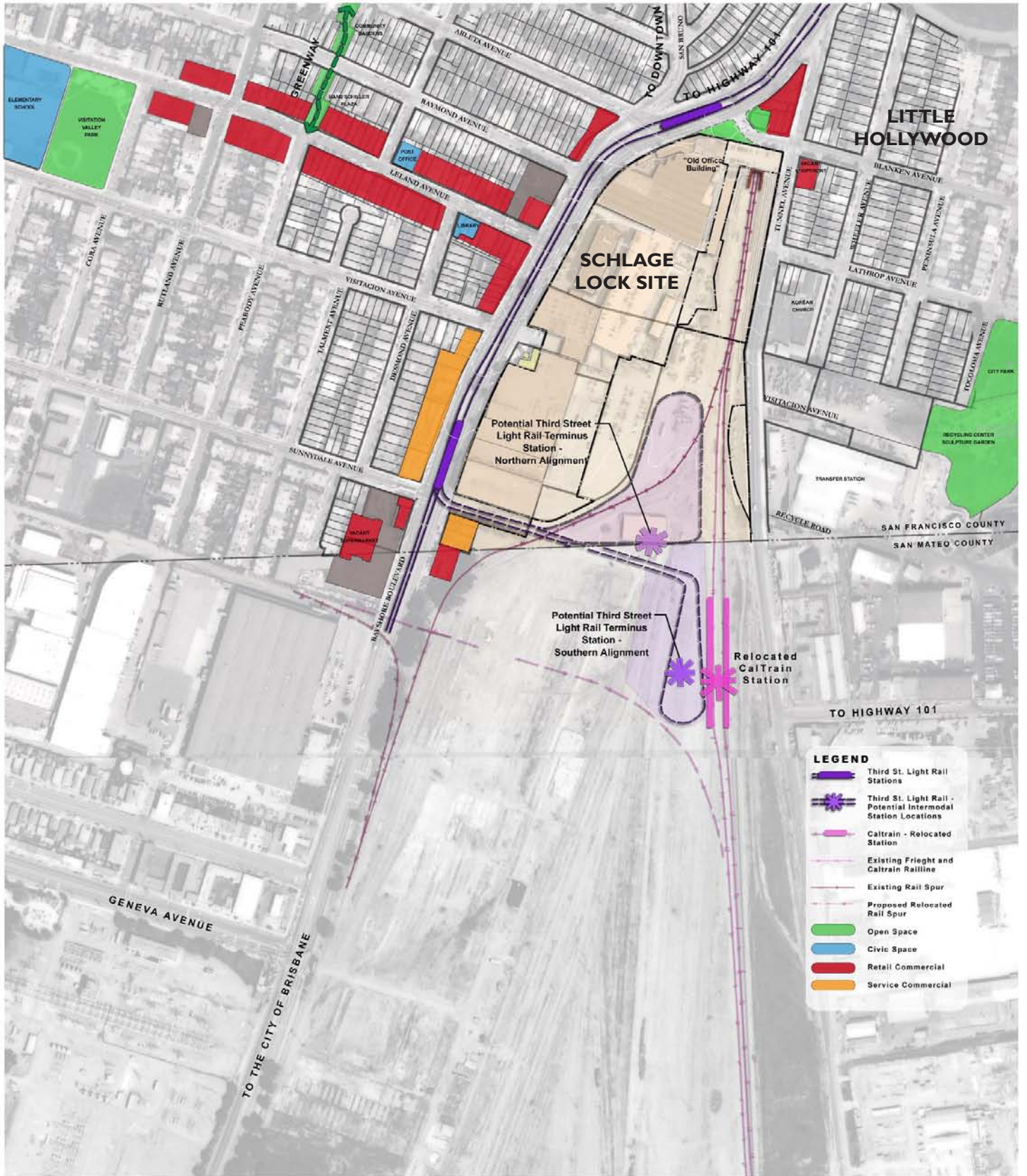
Visitacion Valley Planning Background

This planning effort in Visitacion Valley is taking place within the context of a major effort by the Planning Department to re-examine land use controls in the city's eastern neighborhoods. This larger process is described in detail in a separate report, entitled *Profiles of Community Planning Areas: San Francisco's Eastern Neighborhoods*, issued by the Planning Department in February 2002.

San Francisco prospered with the high-tech boom of the mid- to late 1990's as thousands of new jobs, especially well-paying ones, were created. The population grew back to its post-war level, which generated a housing demand that was barely met by new construction. The competition for office space and housing took hold of the city's eastern neighborhoods. From South of Market to Potrero Hill and the Central Waterfront, new buildings sprang up in previously open storage sites and warehouses. Many industrial buildings were converted to live/work units or demolished altogether. Skyrocketing rents were driving small industrial firms out of the city, or out of business. Long-time residents were also moving out. Industrial-zoned lands were especially vulnerable for these were relatively cheaper and appeared largely underused with open tracts or their seemingly functionally obsolete buildings. The boom went bust and many of these new live/work and office spaces were vacated. The former industrial spaces were lost forever.

The dramatic and controversial changes in the city's eastern flank prompted a demand for temporary zoning controls and a community planning process to ensure that future growth and development in San Francisco be directed where appropriate. Residents, business and property owners, and other stakeholders in five districts

Figure 2 - Site and Context



where housing and industry co-mingle – Mission, South of Market, Showplace Square-Potrero-Central Waterfront, South Bayshore, and Visitacion Valley – are currently taking part in community planning workshops to determine the future features of their neighborhoods.

An often-overlooked San Francisco neighborhood, Visitacion Valley hardly shared in the building boom of the mid-1990s, although the Geneva Towers public housing was demolished in 1998 and affordable low-rise townhouses were built in its place. While this may have saved the area from the wave of displacement that swept through many industrial and affordable residential neighborhoods in the city’s eastern section, Visitacion Valley nevertheless remains vulnerable to detrimental development. Visitacion Valley is about to realize two major infrastructure improvements in the neighborhood: the upgrade of the Caltrain Bayshore Station and construction of the southern terminus of the new Muni Third Street Light Rail system. These two important transit points will be located along the perimeter of a sizeable tract of currently unused industrial lands.

The Schlage Lock Site

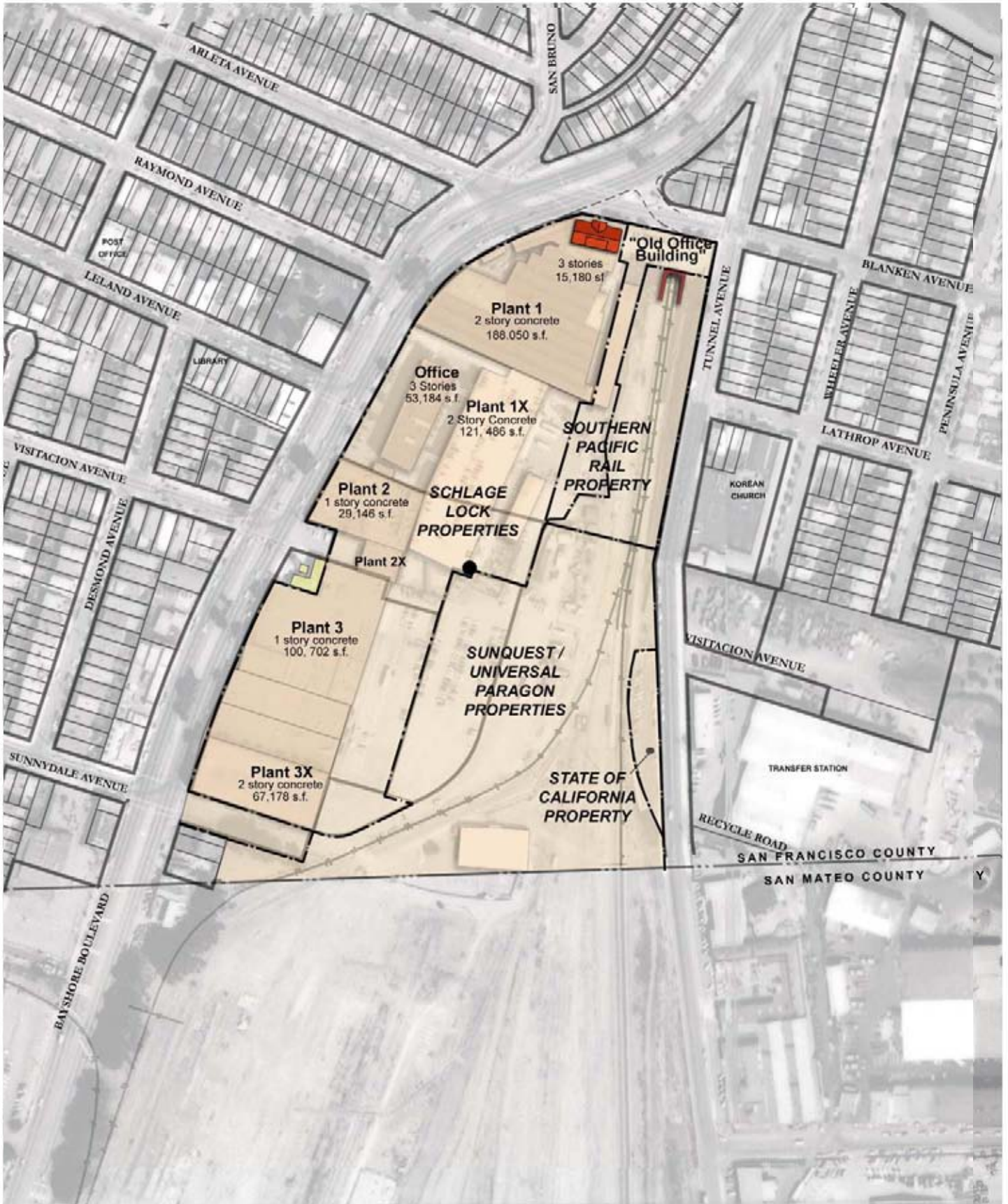
The scope of this study includes the Schlage Lock properties, as well as the neighboring parcels owned by Union Pacific and Universal Paragon north of the county line, all together totaling about 20 acres. (McGuire and Chefchik, 2001) For convenience in this document, the study area is referred to as the Schlage Lock site. This industrial site is wedged between the residential neighborhoods of Visitacion Valley and Little Hollywood. Along with the resource recovery facilities operated by three refuse companies immediately east of the site, the site comprises much of the industrial lands in Visitacion Valley. In operation for over 70 years, the Schlage Lock manufacturing plant was a dominant component of Visitacion Valley’s economy and employment base. Many who worked at the plant also lived in the surrounding neighborhoods. During the planning workshop, several community members shared their stories of the plant and the valley’s history as a “company town.”

In 1999, the Ingersoll Rand Company, the parent of Schlage Lock, decided to close the Visitacion Valley facilities, ending an era. Once an integral part of the local economy, the now closed industrial plant presents opportunities for new uses. The closure



Blanken / Arleta / Bayshore intersection. Historic Photo, 1950's.

Figure 3 - Ownership and Parcel Lines



not only meant the loss of a major employment center, but it also resulted in empty buildings creating a void in the neighborhood.

Initial Redevelopment Proposal

Ingersoll Rand began discussions with the Home Depot Company, which was proposing to develop a store on the Schlage Lock site. However, during the planning review process, the Home Depot proposal was met with opposition from some nearby residents and business owners, who cited traffic and other concerns, as well as the incompatibility of the “big-box” use with the transit-friendly nature of the site.

Establishment of Interim Zoning Controls

In August 2000, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors imposed interim zoning controls on the Schlage Lock parcels, which had the effect of changing the existing “M-1” industrial zoning to “NC-3” neighborhood commercial zoning, and included a maximum use size of 50,000 square feet. Interim zoning controls in San Francisco expire within a specified period of time. In the case of the Schlage Lock site, the interim controls will expire in March 2003. In its resolution, the Board expressed its desire that the city move forward to complete a process to identify and implement new permanent controls.

Early Efforts Toward Developing New Permanent Controls

In November 2001, the office of Supervisor Sophie Maxwell, working with Urban Ecology, a community advocacy group, held two workshops in Visitacion Valley designed to begin a conversation about the future of the Schlage Lock site. These workshops produced a set of ten Community Goals:

1. **ENSURE A MIX OF USES:** Incorporate a mix of uses into the new development, including different types of housing above retail, community facilities, city services and open space.
2. **BRING NEW STORES:** Attract a full-service grocery store and provide a variety of retail options to serve the multi-cultural, multi-generational community at a range of incomes.
3. **BUILD AFFORDABLE HOUSING:** Increase the local supply of well-designed affordable housing for low income and working individuals, families and seniors, and make the amount of new housing proportional to retail and city services.

4. **EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL EMPLOYMENT:** Take advantage of new construction jobs for community members. Use new retail as a tool to provide opportunities for permanent local employment and enterprise.
5. **CREATE A DESTINATION:** Create a place, not just a shopping center or housing. Development should be family-oriented and include pedestrian walkways and destination points, such as small plazas.
6. **USE GOOD DESIGN:** Use thoughtful design that considers existing architectural styles and character and incorporates local historical and cultural elements.
7. **IMPROVE BAYSHORE:** Improve the safety, pedestrian-orientation and look of Bayshore Boulevard through new stores, traffic calming and a new community-policing substation.
8. **REVITALIZE THE LELAND SHOPPING DISTRICT:** Ensure a relationship between new stores on the Schlage Lock site and the existing retail corridor on Leland Avenue, revitalizing the central shopping area.
9. **CONNECT THE NEIGHBORHOOD:** Bridge Little Hollywood and Visitacion Valley through the creation of new streets and foot and bike paths throughout the site.
10. **BRING NEW COMMUNITY RESOURCES:** Convert the old Schlage Lock office building at the top of Bayshore Boulevard to a civic use such as a library or education center and consider new buildings for public, city and community services. Bring new programming such as a City College extension with job training and ESL classes, and other multi-lingual and multi-cultural resources.

Strategic Concept Plan

At about the same time as the interim controls were put in place, the Planning Department in partnership with the Visitacion Valley Planning Alliance, San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni), and the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR), applied for and received a “Transportation for Livable Communities” grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Matching funds for the grant were supplied by the Ingersoll Rand Company and the Universal Paragon Company, the two major affected property owners. The purpose of the grant was to support a one-week intensive community planning “charrette,”* to

* Charrette is a planning/architecture term referring to an intensive workshop or meeting where design solutions are developed in a short period of time by a group of people working collaboratively.

develop a concept for redevelopment of the site which would form the basis of new zoning controls.

The grant funds were used to hire a team of planning consultants, who would work with the community and city staff to develop the concept plan. The consultant team consisted of EDAW (urban design and land use planning specialists), Nelson/Nygaard (transportation planners) and Strategic Economics (real estate economists). The consultants were charged with a three-part work plan: 1) produce a brief existing conditions study of the site and its immediate environs; 2) conduct a week-long intensive community design workshop aimed at producing a concept plan for the site and 3) produce a final report and presentation summarizing the process and the resulting concept plan.

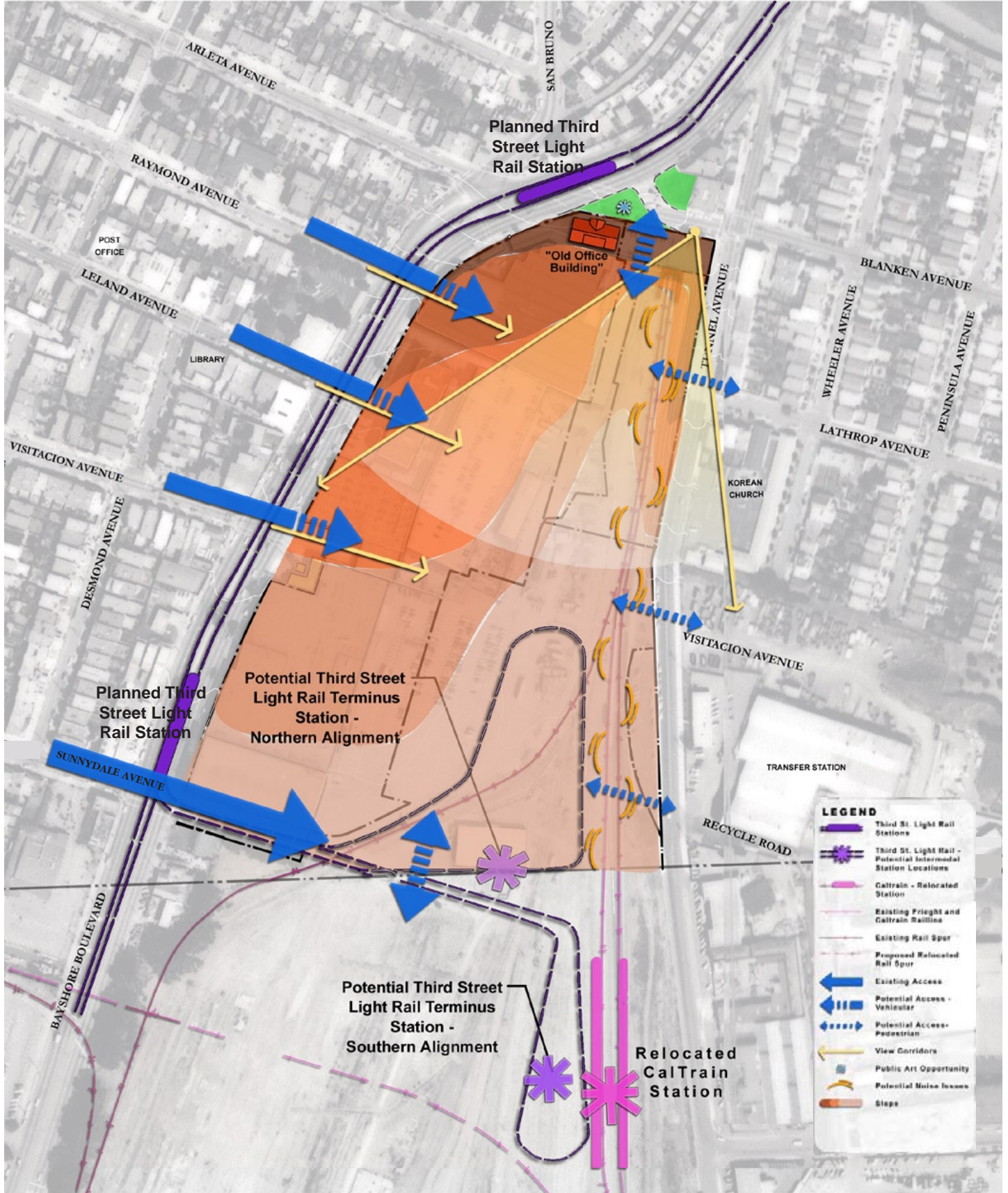
B - Site Opportunities and Constraints

In preparation for the workshop, the planning team studied the site and neighborhood, as well as previous reports and plans, for indications of the opportunities and constraints for implementing the community vision. Team members participated in site visits, walks in adjacent neighborhoods, tours of the vacant Schlage Lock facilities, meetings with the owners and potential developers, interviews with potential retail, commercial or other tenants, as well as meetings with the City of Brisbane, Muni, Caltrain, Urban Ecology and others. This was done to ensure a complete understanding of the site, transit services, market conditions and the neighborhoods that surround the site. This research was compiled into a separate Existing Conditions Memorandum, which is summarized below.

Urban Design

- *Topography:* There is a significant grade change across the site. Existing buildings are stepped up an embankment that has approximately 40 feet of change in elevation across the site. Site slopes are steepest south of Blanken Avenue, on either side of the tunnel, and along Bayshore Boulevard. However, the portion of the site that is adjacent to the train tracks is essentially flat.
- *Terminus of Leland Avenue:* The Visitacion Valley Playground and School are located near the western end of the Leland Avenue Neighborhood

Figure 4 - Site Considerations



Commercial District. There is an opportunity for the Schlage Lock site to create an eastern terminus to Leland Avenue that could include civic space, retail uses, residences or a combination thereof.

- *Access to Public Transportation:* There is an existing Caltrain station immediately adjacent to the site. Muni plans to construct two stops for the Third Street Light Rail on Bayshore Boulevard by 2005 (see Figure 5), connecting to the Caltrain station at a later date. Several bus lines serve the site as well, connecting to downtown San Francisco, Chinatown, Balboa Park BART, and City College, as well as San Francisco International Airport (see Figure 6).
- *Access and Circulation:* Raymond, Leland, and Visitacion Avenues currently terminate at the site. There are no formal pedestrian or vehicular paths across the site to Tunnel Avenue and the Caltrain station. The site effectively divides Little Hollywood from the greater Visitacion Valley neighborhood (see Figure 5).
- *Existing Building Stock:* Some of the existing buildings, or portions of buildings, may be suitable for reuse, particularly the “Old” Schlage Lock Office Building (see Figure 3).
- *Blanken Avenue Realignment:* Blanken Avenue is being realigned so that it meets Bayshore Boulevard at a perpendicular intersection, creating a small plaza area in front of the “Old” Schlage Lock Office Building (see Figure 5).



View from Above the Tunnel
photo: EDAW

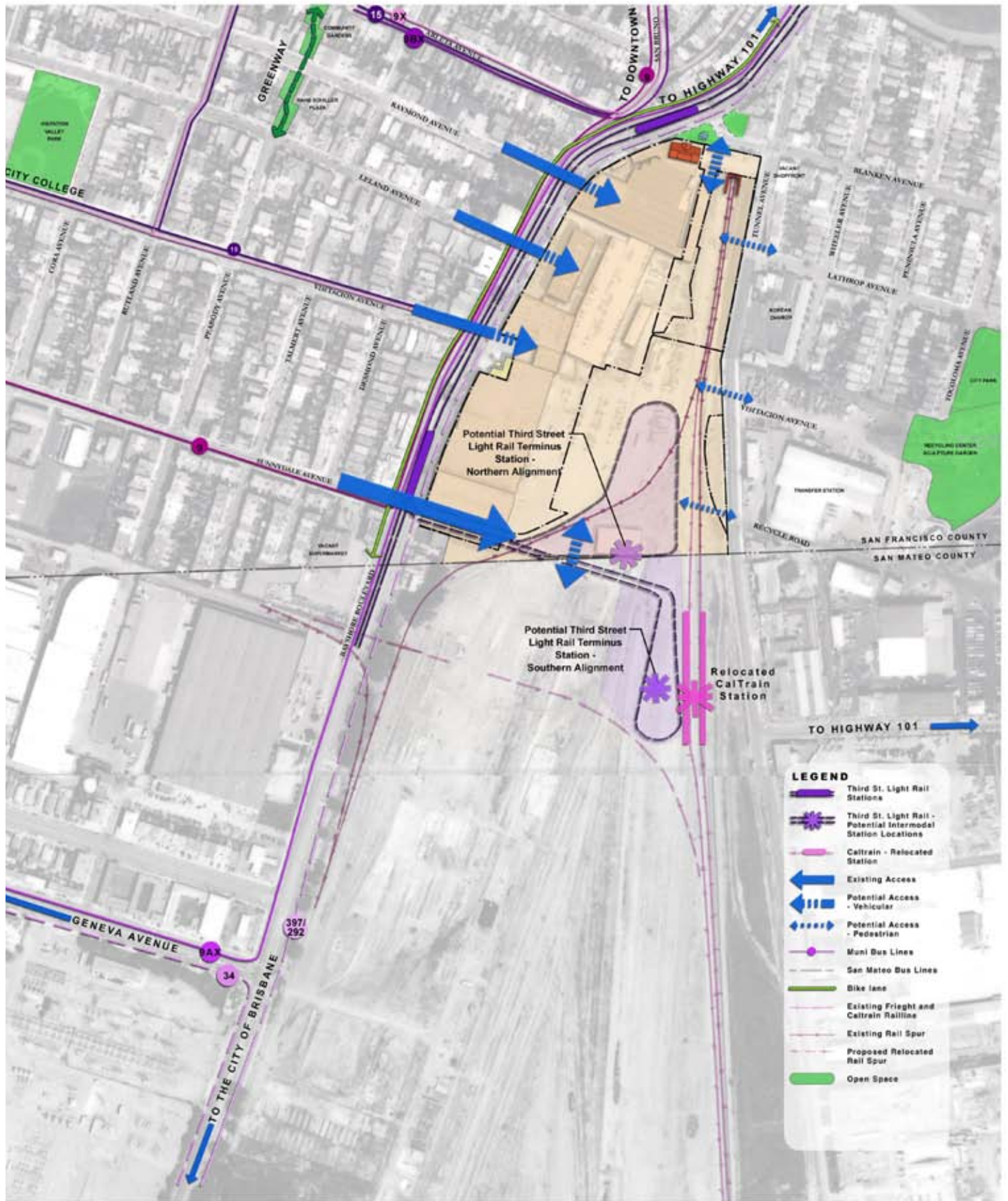


Termination of Visitacion Avenue at Schlage Lock Site
photo: Nelson/Nygaard

Toxics

- The Schlage Lock site is known to be affected by soil and groundwater toxics (McGuire and Chefchik, 2001). The extent and character of contamination, as well as the clean-up strategy, will affect the location and timing of new development on the site. The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), a division of the California Environmental Protection Agency, is the lead agency for determination of clean-up requirements and permissible types of new development on the site. The clean-up levels are determined by the DTSC based on the designated land use and feasibility, so that if an area is zoned to permit residential, for example and can feasibly be cleaned up to residential standards, those cleanup levels would be chosen. The city and consulting team worked closely with DTSC during the planning process and will continue to do so as development plans advance.

Figure 5 - Transportation



Transportation

- The existing freight corridor will need to be reconfigured to accommodate Muni's Third Street Light Rail Terminus Station, create a more efficient freight track, and allow for housing on the Schlage Lock site.
- Topography and the rail tracks complicate the layout of the street grid across the site.
- The configuration of the Third Street Light Rail terminal will affect the layout of development on the study site, depending on whether the northern alignment or southern alignment is selected.
- Sunnydale Avenue may need to be widened to accommodate sidewalks, auto travel lanes, and the LRT line.
- All functions need to be accommodated on Bayshore Boulevard – parking, bicycle lanes, travel lanes, turn lanes, and the Third Street Light Rail line. Detailed plans are required to determine whether adequate space is provided for these functions.
- The intersections of Bayshore, San Pablo, Blanken/Arleta, and Tunnel Avenues are complicated, and the layout and functioning of the intersections needs to be carefully planned.
- Bus routing in the area will be affected after completion of the Third Street Light Rail extension. A trade off exists between serving neighborhood areas and serving the intermodal station.
- Long-term routing of the light rail line if it is extended on Geneva Avenue to the Balboa Park Station may affect the layout of the intermodal station (i.e.: using the turnaround point at the planned intermodal station, versus stopping only on Bayshore Boulevard.)



Restricted Pedestrian Crossings
photo: Nelson/Nygaard



Existing Caltrain Station
photo: EDAW

Real Estate Economics

- New housing is supported by existing residents and would help strengthen the residential character of the neighborhood.
- New housing would help address San Francisco's housing shortage, and is supported by the market.
- New housing would help support and benefit from the existing and future transit infrastructure (Caltrain's Bayshore station and the future MUNI Third Street Light Rail).
- New housing would increase the neighborhood's ability to sustain a wider range of retail offerings (e.g., a full-service supermarket).
- There is widespread support for new retail in Visitation Valley, particularly a full-service grocery store. Interviews with three major grocery stores'



Displays at the Storefront
photo: San Francisco Planning Department



The Storefront Office
photo: EDAW



The Evening Critique
photo: EDAW



A Collaborative Sketching Session
photo: EDAW

real estate departments indicated interest in the site and a desire to be kept appraised of the site's status.

- While the site's historic use is industrial, Visitacion Valley is otherwise primarily residential. Redeveloping the site as industrial use could raise compatibility problems with the residential character of the neighborhood. The site is also separated from the city's primary industrial districts and does not offer a significant concentration of buildings suitable for industrial employment.

C - Community Participation

The Storefront Studio

In order to ensure that plans for the site support the community goals, the week-long workshop was planned to incorporate as much community input as possible. A temporary office was set up a few hundred feet away from the Schlage Lock site at 36 Leland Avenue, a storefront space donated by a community member. All meetings, consultant discussions, and sketching were done here. Site analysis drawings, the community goals, and historic maps were posted in the windows for passersby to examine. The goals and public meeting information brochures were available in English, Spanish and Cantonese – reflecting the multi-cultural make-up of the valley and ensuring information was available to all. The doors were always open to the public to view and discuss the drawings and sketches that soon covered the walls. In addition, every evening at around 5:30 p.m. there was an informal critique and update of the work that had been done that day.

The storefront workshop is a useful tool for community planning. For the consultants and city staff, it was invaluable to be able to look out the window to view the site or to take a few steps to investigate a question. Spending the week in the neighborhood also enabled the consultants to come to know it better. Being able to talk with community members throughout the day kept the plans on track and helped to forge important relationships with community members.

For the community, there was a strong feeling of involvement and an open process. Being present throughout the week meant that they understood who was involved in the process, why decisions were being made and how their comments were

incorporated into the plan. It was a mutually exciting experience and helped to build momentum and interest in the fast-paced process.

Community Events

Three special community events were also held during the week at different locations throughout the neighborhood. These were larger public meetings with formal presentations by Supervisor Maxwell, city staff, consultants, technical advisors, urban ecology and others. There were also facilitated community breakout sessions for smaller groups to discuss and brainstorm about various issues. Cantonese, Tagalog and Spanish translators were present at each event.

Community Event # 1: Kick-off

The kick-off community event was held at the Visitacion Valley Middle School on February 28, 2002. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce the consultants to the community, provide information about the important issues affecting the use of the site, and allow the community to begin drawing their ideas on a site plan. These ideas were compiled into three drawings that were posted on the walls in the storefront office for the consultants to refer to. Comment forms were also distributed for those who wished to take more time to write or sketch ideas.

Community Event # 2: Saturday Workshop

The Saturday event was held on March 2, 2002, at the Schlage Lock site in the Office Building on Bayshore Boulevard at Leland Avenue. Presentations were given by city planning staff, geotechnical consultants, Treadwell and Rollo, and by the California Department of Toxics Substances Control (DTSC).

Following a question-and-answer period, the consultant team presented their findings and conclusions to date, and introduced a “framework plan”. This plan illustrated general concepts that were based on the site’s opportunities and constraints, and input from the previous workshop while avoiding any definitive layouts. After lunch, the community split into break-out groups, working with facilitators and building cut-outs and markers to create their own plans. A member of each team was then invited to present team’s plans to the larger group. These were colored and annotated and hung on the storefront walls for comparison and reference by the consulting team.



Breakout Groups at the Kick-off Event
photo: San Francisco Planning Department



Translation Headsets
photo: San Francisco Planning Department



Using Building Cut-outs at the Saturday Workshop
photo: San Francisco Planning Department



Cantonese Break-out Group at the Saturday Workshop
photo: San Francisco Planning Department



San Francisco Supervisor Sophie Maxwell
photo: EDAW



The Final Presentation
photo: EDAW

Community Event # 3: The Final Presentation

The final community event was held at the Church of the Visitation on Wednesday, March 6, 2002. During this well-attended event, the team presented the community consensus points or elements most agreed should be included in the plan, as well as a series of diagrams illustrating key design considerations, proposed sub-districts on the site and two representative concept plans. The framework elements and conceptual plans are composite diagrams informed by the plans prepared by community members during the Saturday workshop.

Toxic issues were and will continue to be pivotal in determining the type, locations and phasing of new land uses on the site. Karen Toth from the California Department of Toxic Substances Control gave a presentation describing the State's position on the matter and clarifying key points regarding reuse.

The evening was concluded with a question-and-answer period and informal discussions between the community and team.

D - Community Consensus Points

A key success of this planning process was the establishment of community consensus points. These points established the boundaries to be used to ensure the realization of the community goals, as well as to create a concept plan that is responsive to the site's opportunities and constraints.

The identification of community consensus points began with a review of the community goals formulated during previous workshops in November 2001, and detailed earlier in this document. These goals were further refined throughout the week-long workshop. During the workshops, community members had the opportunity to participate in breakout groups and put their ideas for the site on paper, outlining what and where key land uses should be located and how access should be provided to the site. Once the plans prepared by breakout groups on the Thursday and Saturday events were posted on the storefront wall and studied, common elements and similar layouts began to emerge. These common elements were identified and used to establish community consensus points and to direct the development of a strategic concept plan. The following is a list of the consensus points and includes a brief summary of each.

Protect People’s Health

No matter how strongly community members felt about the inclusion of a certain element in the plan, public health and safety came first. It was a general consensus that toxicity and clean-up strategies on this site must be a primary consideration in the arrangement and phasing of new development, and that the DTSC will play a pivotal role determining the future of the site.

Provide Housing



Community plans also clearly reflected the desire for more housing opportunities in the valley. In particular, people wanted affordable housing accessible to low-income individuals, families and seniors. People were responsive to the need for higher density housing appropriate for a transit node and necessary to make the project financially viable. The community plans also indicated a desire for the housing to be interspersed with other land uses, often showing retail or educational uses on the lower floors and residential uses on upper floors in a mixed-use development.

Provide Neighborhood Serving Retail



While many in the community clearly opposed “big-box” type retailers, people strongly supported more neighborhood serving retail, particularly a full-service grocery store.



Figure 6 - Composites of Kick-off Event Community Drawings



Figure 7 - Community Drawings from the Saturday Workshop

Currently, there are only a few small grocery stores in the area, with a minimal selection of fresh food, and residents must travel a significant distance to reach a major grocery. They felt new retail needed to be a critical component of the project, especially if new housing was to be included. Residents also supported the idea of more small local businesses and cafes, particularly those serving the multi-cultural community, and connecting to Leland Avenue, the area’s traditional “main street.”

Provide Community Services



New community services was also a strong theme in all of the plans the community created. Ideas ranged from educational institutions, English-as-a-second-language classroom space, library, daycare, and community meeting rooms. Very commonly, these were shown centralized in a renovated “Old Office Building,” at the northern end of the site. Located at the gateway to the valley, the “Old Office Building” is an important local landmark. Its renovation would contribute greatly to creating a sense of place and a new neighborhood heart, and hence the building is seen as ideal for community space.

Provide an Appropriate Amount of Open Space



All of the community plans included areas of open space, either as community gathering areas or as linear connections. These were illustrated as small parks,

Figure 8 - Approximate Location of Contaminated Groundwater



* These contours were provided by Treadwell and Rollo, at the DTSC's request, for illustrative purposes at the public meetings. They were extrapolated from data collected at over 110 soil borings and monitoring wells. The actual location of these contours may vary from what is illustrated as further data is collected and clean-up efforts proceed. (DTSC, 2002)

greenway paths, landscaped boulevards, and plazas. The Visitacion Valley community has worked to create a small greenway connection from Leland Avenue to McLaren Park, and many mentioned extending the greenway through the Schlage Lock site to the Caltrain station. Other greenway paths were shown along the west side of the train tracks, as a pedestrian-only north-south corridor. Most of the traditional parks were shown somewhat centralized on the site, as focal areas for the surrounding development. Commonly, a plaza or small park was shown in conjunction with a renovated ‘Old Office Building’. Both in the plans and in public comments, open space was desired to help create a sense of place, and a new neighborhood ‘heart’ for Visitacion Valley.

Help Stabilize and Revitalize Leland Avenue

While Leland Avenue is beyond the Schlage Lock site boundaries, many community members stressed that new development on the site should help to stabilize and revitalize the neighborhood’s traditional “main street.” They were supportive of its local businesses, but also recognized that the street needed some storefront improvements, and a wider range of more contemporary retail, restaurant, and service options. The consensus was that it was important for new retail on the Schlage Lock site to have strong links to Leland Avenue, both to support the existing commercial strip as well as to stimulate revitalization.

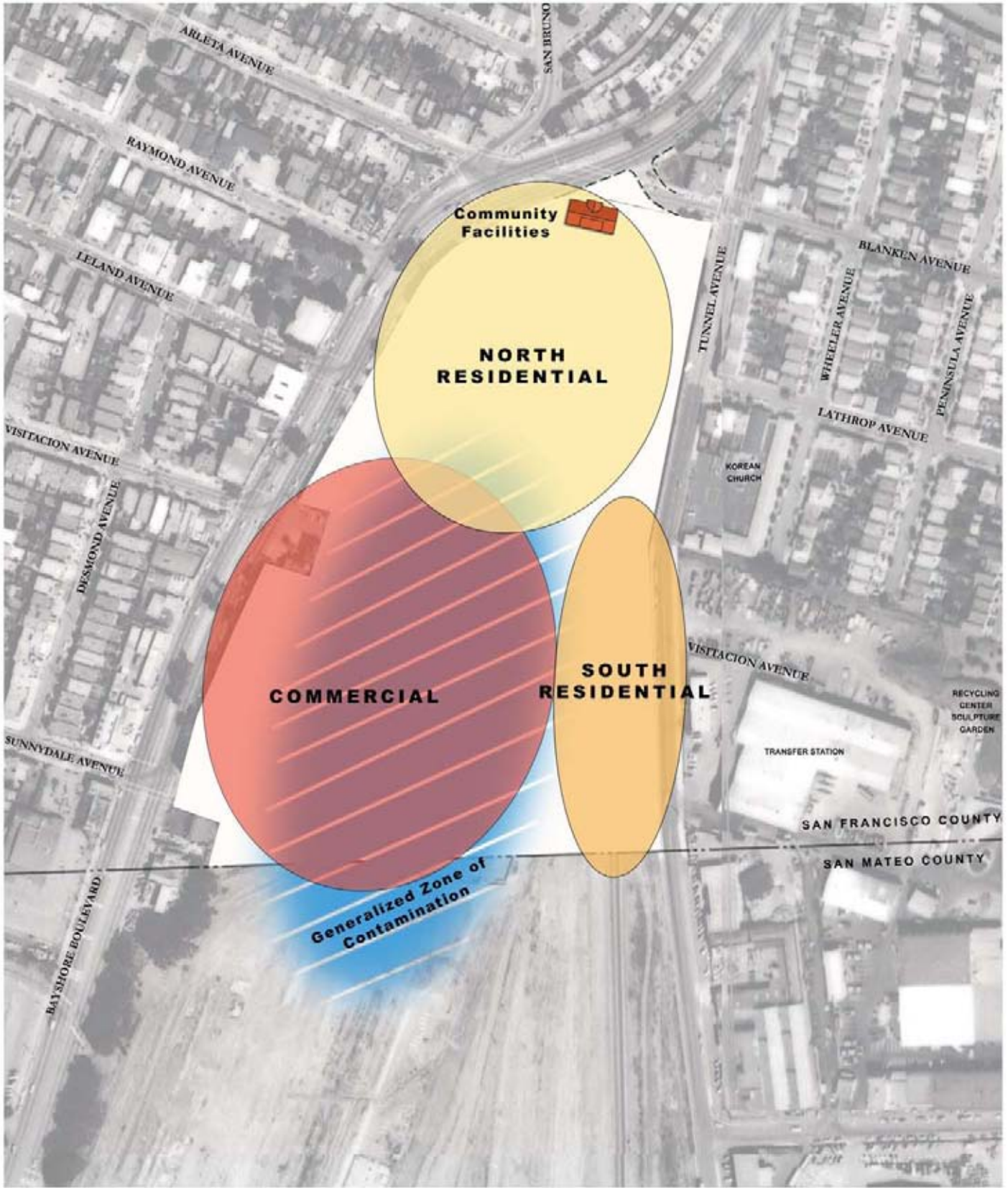
E - The Strategic Concept Plan

The product of the week-long workshop was a Strategic Concept Plan to guide the city in re-zoning the site. The following summarizes the key elements that make up or influence the plan. The common thread that weaves these elements together is the community’s strong desire to see that the void created by the vacant and underutilized Schlage Lock site is reinvented as the heart of the community. The plan envisions a transit-and-pedestrian-friendly place with housing, shops, open space and public services that are accessible to all members of the community.

Soil and Groundwater Contamination

While the community consensus points gave the team clear direction on desired

Figure 9 - Generalized Land Use Areas



*The generalized location of the contamination is based upon information provided by Treadwell and Rollo, published in DTSC's Fact Sheet on the Schlage Lock Site (DTSC, 2002) (see Appendix A).

land uses, the presence of soil and groundwater contamination on site (McGuire and Chefchik, 2001) is a critical factor in determining how land uses are arranged and phased on the site. Generalized areas of soil and groundwater contamination on the site are well documented (McGuire and Chefchik), and replicated in Figure 8. While it is understood that the exact extent of the groundwater contamination is not defined, the contours provided by Treadwell and Rollo reflect the current understanding of the contamination status. Further detailed study will be required, however, before the city and the state Department of Toxic Substances Control can approve a clean-up and reuse plan for the site.

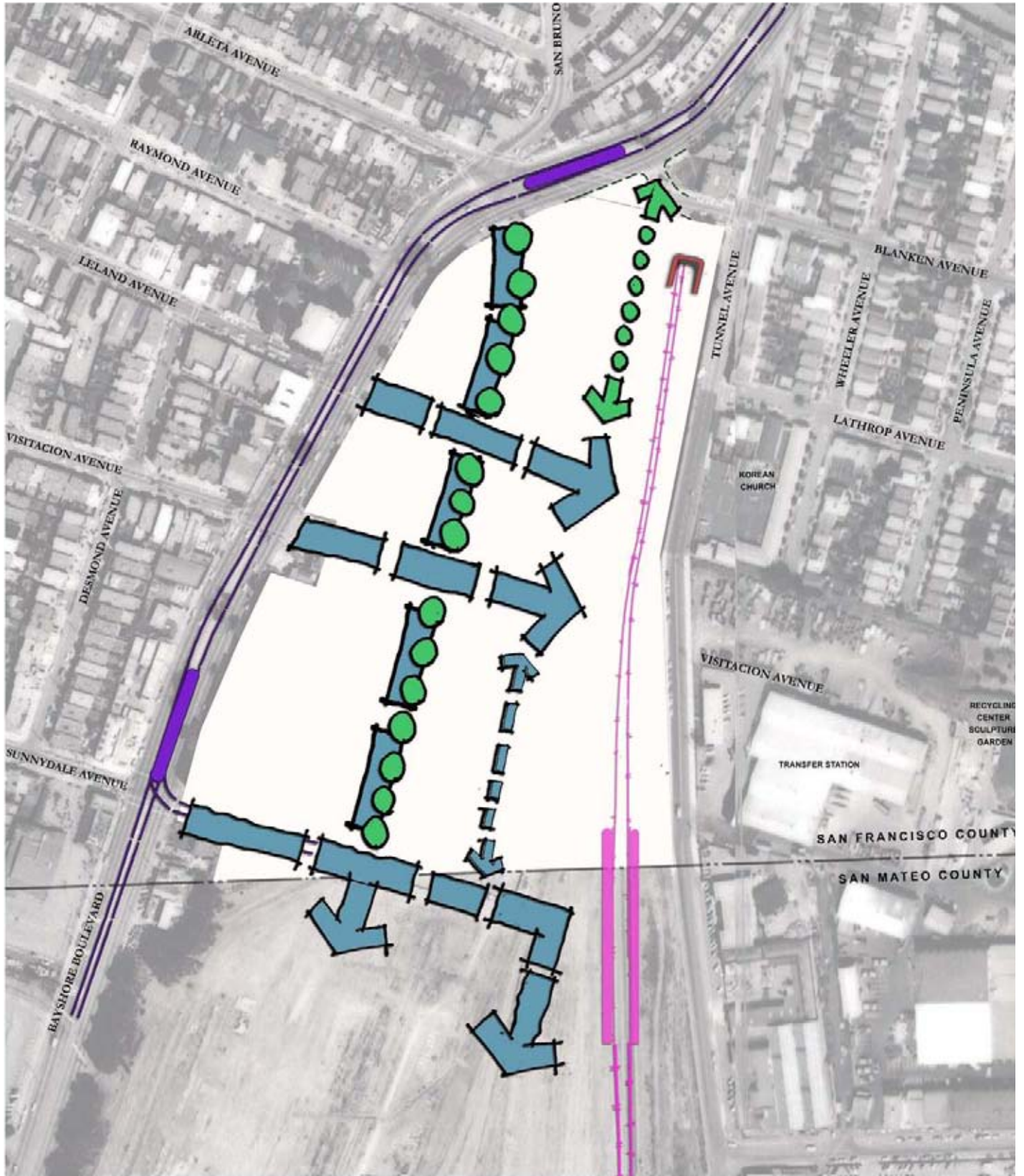
For the purposes of this planning effort, DTSC also used the contours replicated in Figure 8 to provide a clear position on what portions of the site were most suitable for housing, specifically indicating that housing should not be placed over contaminated groundwater (levels equal to or greater than 5 parts per billion). Consequently, this groundwater contamination contour map became a formative element of the Strategic Concept Plan. However, as data collection and remedial investigation is incomplete and ongoing, the land use areas outlined in Strategic Concept Plan should be regarded as generalized. Phasing also became a key consideration of the plan, which may allow for land uses over the currently contaminated areas to change as the contamination is mitigated.

Generalized Land Use Areas

In response to the community's desire to see a mix of uses, rather than a single use for the site, three generalized land use areas were identified, two primarily residential and one primarily commercial. In addition to reflecting the community's vision, these districts were also informed by the toxic conditions on the site.

Housing is clearly a priority in both the community goals and the community consensus points. The Strategic Concept Plan therefore designates the cleaner areas of the site for housing, based on current knowledge of the location and levels of contamination, and on the DTSC's accepted environmental standards for residential land use. Two initial areas for housing are shown. It is important to note that the ultimate size and shape of these districts may change, dependent upon ongoing data collection as to the extent and location of the contamination and clean-up efforts. For the purposes of this study, however, the contour map provided by Treadwell and Rollo was used to determine generalized land use areas.

Figure 10 - Proposed Circulation System



The “North Residential” district is at the top of the site. Groundwater contamination is least present here. The “Southern Residential” district is mostly on Sunquest / Universal Paragon property, generally east of the illustrated groundwater contamination contours and west of the rail tracks.

The “Commercial” area encompasses the southwestern portion of the site adjacent to Bayshore Boulevard, where the groundwater contamination is believed to be most concentrated (McGuire and Chefchik, 2001). The Strategic Concept Plan envisions a phased development approach for this area. In the initial phases, the existing buildings should be kept in place as a cap, avoiding disturbances of the contaminants, and reused for neighborhood-serving commercial uses. Once the soil and groundwater contaminants have been remediated to DTSC acceptable levels, expanded commercial or mixed-use commercial / residential redevelopment can occur.

Circulation Framework

The Strategic Concept Plan includes a new circulation pattern across the site. The vision for the circulation network is to connect the site as much as possible to the surrounding street grid, creating a pedestrian-oriented, understandable, and interconnected street system. As part of the background work for the project, existing and potential access points to the site were identified and mapped (Figure 4) for consideration during the week’s workshop.

North-South Route, Blanken Avenue Access. This was considered as potential vehicular and pedestrian access on a north-south route through the site. However, it was eliminated as an option for a vehicular access point due to landform and slope, the awkward left turn onto Blanken Avenue (particularly due to its proximity to the Blanken Avenue and Bayshore Boulevard intersection), and the restricted width between the “Old Office Building” and the Caltrain right-of-way. However, it is considered an important access point for a north-south pedestrian route into the site.

North-South Route, Arleta Avenue Access: Arleta Avenue is designated as the main access point to the main internal north-south road through the site. Traffic would be able to cross Bayshore Boulevard from Arleta Avenue into the project site, as

well as make right-in, right-out turns into the project site at Arleta Avenue. It may be possible to create a southbound left turn lane from Bayshore Boulevard into the site as well, by removing parking on southbound Bayshore north of Arleta Avenue, but this will require further investigation. The main north-south road will form the central spine for the site, connecting to Bayshore Boulevard and the “Old Office Building”/ community facilities in the north, open space within the site, and eventually to future development in the Sunquest / Universal Paragon properties across the county line. This road is visualized to become a link in Visitacion Valley’s greenway corridor with a well-designed and landscaped pedestrian-friendly character.

East-West Route, Raymond Avenue Access: Currently there is no access into the site from Bayshore Boulevard at the Raymond Avenue intersection. While it is possible to create a right-in, right-out intersection here, the Strategic Concept Plan illustrates a vehicular access point to the main internal north-south at Arleta Avenue instead, which allows for more movement to/from and across Bayshore Boulevard. Creating a vehicular road at Raymond Avenue would reduce the north housing site, leaving an awkwardly shaped and insufficiently sized development parcel. However, an east-west pedestrian passageway should be incorporated into the design of the north housing parcel at Raymond Avenue.

East-West Route, Leland Avenue Access: While it may not happen in the initial stages of the project (see initial phases section), an extension of Leland Avenue into the site is seen as an important circulation and neighborhood connection. There is no southbound left turn from Bayshore Boulevard planned as part of the Muni Third Street Light Rail corridor renovations, but vehicles will be able to continue on Leland Avenue crossing Bayshore Boulevard.

It is not possible to extend Leland Avenue or any other of the east-west streets across the Caltrain tracks to Little Hollywood. The length of ramp required to get up and over the railroad tracks at an allowable slope would require the demolition of several homes in Little Hollywood and would take up a considerable amount of land on the Schlage Lock Site. The cost of this would also be prohibitive.

East-West Route, Sunnydale Avenue Access: Currently, Sunnydale Avenue is the only access into the site. It will continue to be both an important pedestrian and vehicular access route, as the Third Street Light Rail is planned to turn off Bayshore Boulevard here to terminate at an intermodal station next to Caltrain, and as Sunnydale Avenue will be one of the limited left-turn options into the site.

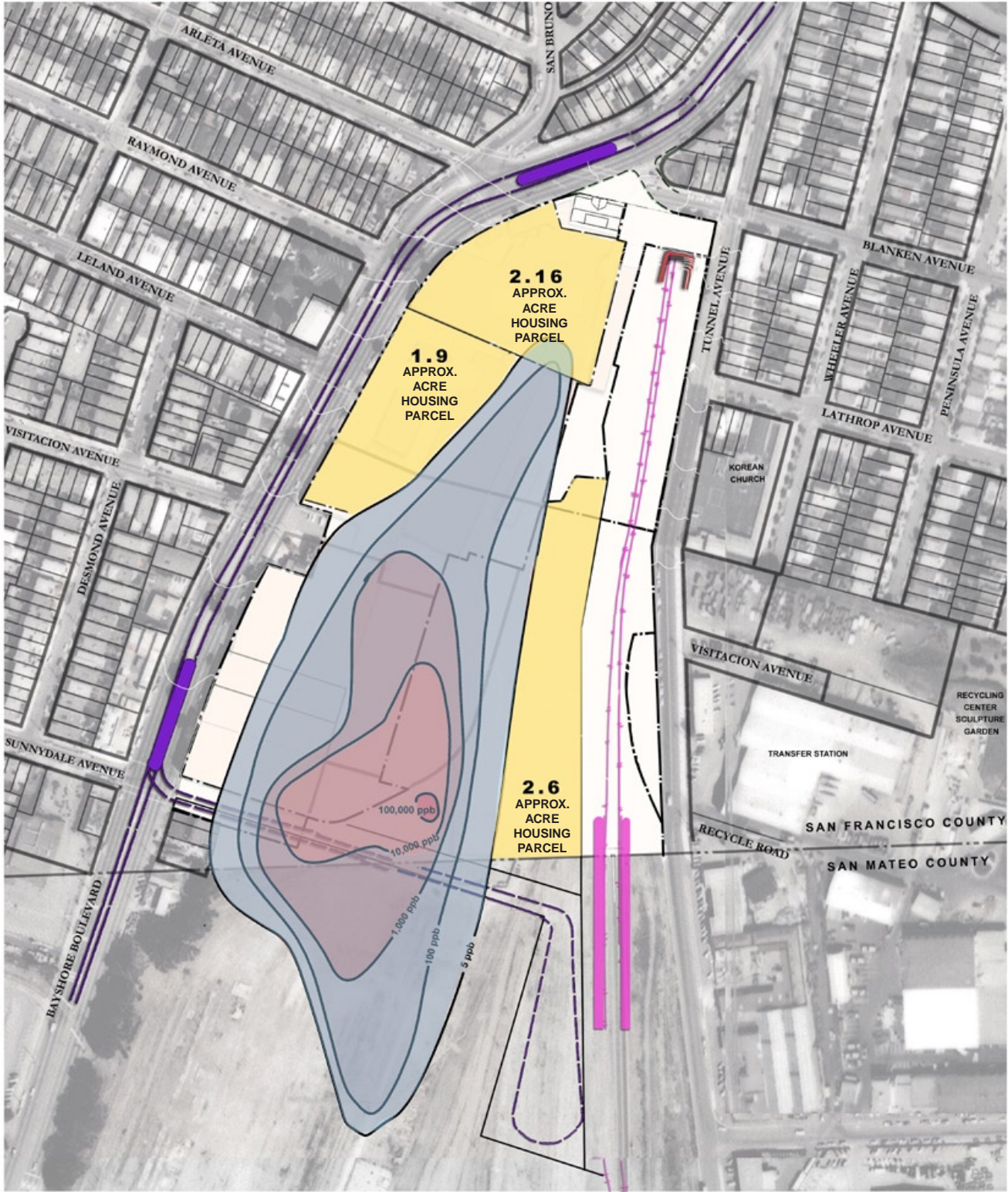
Sunnydale's existing right-of-way, however, is too narrow to make this the comfortable pedestrian environment envisioned in the Strategic Concept Plan. The current 66-foot right-of-way allows for two light rail lanes, two driving lanes and one 12-foot sidewalk. The plan envisions this as a somewhat wider street which ideally would accommodate sidewalks on both sides as well as bike lanes and curb parking. The precise configuration of this important roadway will need to be investigated further in later planning and design studies.

North-South Route, East Side of Site: The Strategic Concept Plan also envisions a secondary north-south route through the site, south of Visitacion Avenue. Vehicles would need a way to access the south residential units here, and it would connect to the pedestrian-only route up to Blanken Avenue.

Access to/from Little Hollywood: One of the early community goals for this project was to try to create better connections between the neighborhoods of Little Hollywood and the greater Visitacion Valley. Unfortunately, providing better physical connections proved to be very difficult. Already a barrier, with no streets crossing the tracks within the site, the rail tracks are likely to be fenced off in the next several years, eliminating even pedestrian crossings at grade. Vehicular ramps to get up and over the track clearance required by Caltrain would have required the acquisition and demolition of homes and property in Little Hollywood and thus was not further considered. Pedestrian bridges were considered, specifically for Lathrop Avenue, the southernmost street that connects into Little Hollywood. However, the length of ramp required to clear the track would be longer than simply walking north and around the tracks at Blanken Avenue, or down to the Caltrain station elevator (traditionally open to the general public 24 hours a day) via Tunnel Avenue. The infrastructure would also be extremely expensive, and thus pedestrian bridges are not incorporated into the Strategic Concept Plan.

Visually, however, connectivity between Little Hollywood and the greater Visitacion Valley will be improved by opening sight lines at Leland and Visitacion Avenues. In addition, the mixed use development recommended for the site will be an attractive and complimentary neighbor to both communities.

Figure 11 - Housing Sites Outside of the Approximate Location of Contaminated Groundwater



HOUSING SITES OUTSIDE OF THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF CONTAMINATED GROUNDWATER

* These contours were provided by Treadwell and Rollo, at the direction of the DTSC, for the purposes of the workshop. They were extrapolated from data collected at over 110 soil borings and monitoring wells (See Appendix A). The actual location of these contours may vary from what is illustrated as further data is collected and clean-up efforts proceed. (Toth, 2002). Hence, the ultimate size and shape of these parcels may well change.

Built Form Framework

Ultimately, the site is envisioned as a pedestrian and transit-friendly mixed-use area serving as the heart of the larger community. As such, the area should complement rather than compete with its context. Although it should have a distinct identity, it should also be harmoniously integrated with its environs. Fundamental to this integration is scale and connectivity. New development on the site should “feel” like it belongs, new buildings should not be imposing and the site should be accessible by pedestrians, autos and transit.

The following provides an overview of the key recommendations for urban design within each of the three sub-districts outlined by the concept plan. These recommendations are conceptual in nature and are intended to define overarching principles for redevelopment. A more specific study should be conducted to determine the actual development yield potential for the site, and to establish the viability of building and street design.

North Residential:

The northern residential area is generally bounded by Visitacion Avenue, Bayshore Boulevard, Blanken Avenue and the railroad tracks, and includes the “Old Office Building”. Based upon the current groundwater contamination contour map, it was concluded that the northern half of this sub-district would be immediately suitable for reuse with housing. Site conditions, context, and preliminary real estate analysis suggested that three to four story podium-type residential buildings would be most appropriate for most of this location, specifically adjacent to Bayshore Boulevard and the “Old Office Building.” In general, these buildings would include parking, and in key locations retail space, on the ground floor with residences above. Because the site slopes, the ground floor of each building would have to be cut into the slope, with the upper side of the site bounded with a retaining wall, and the lower side by a full height wall.

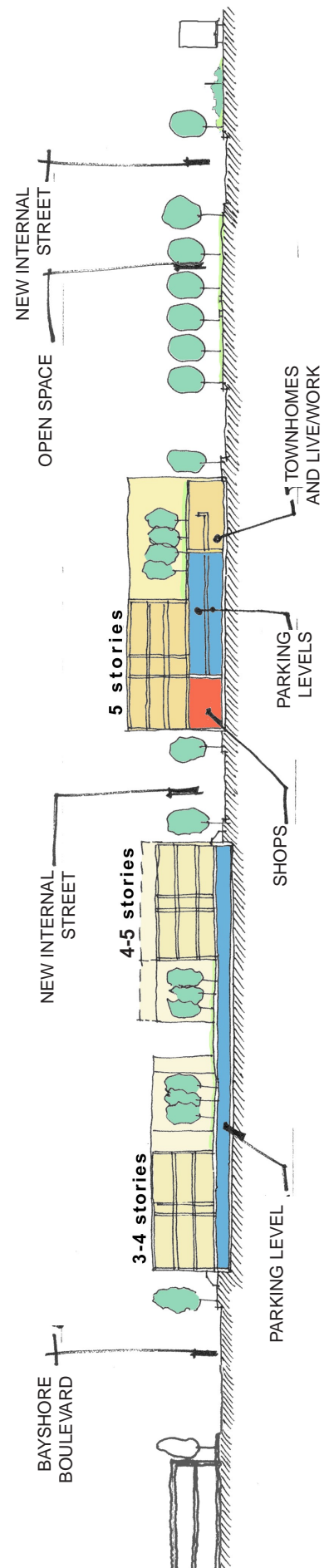
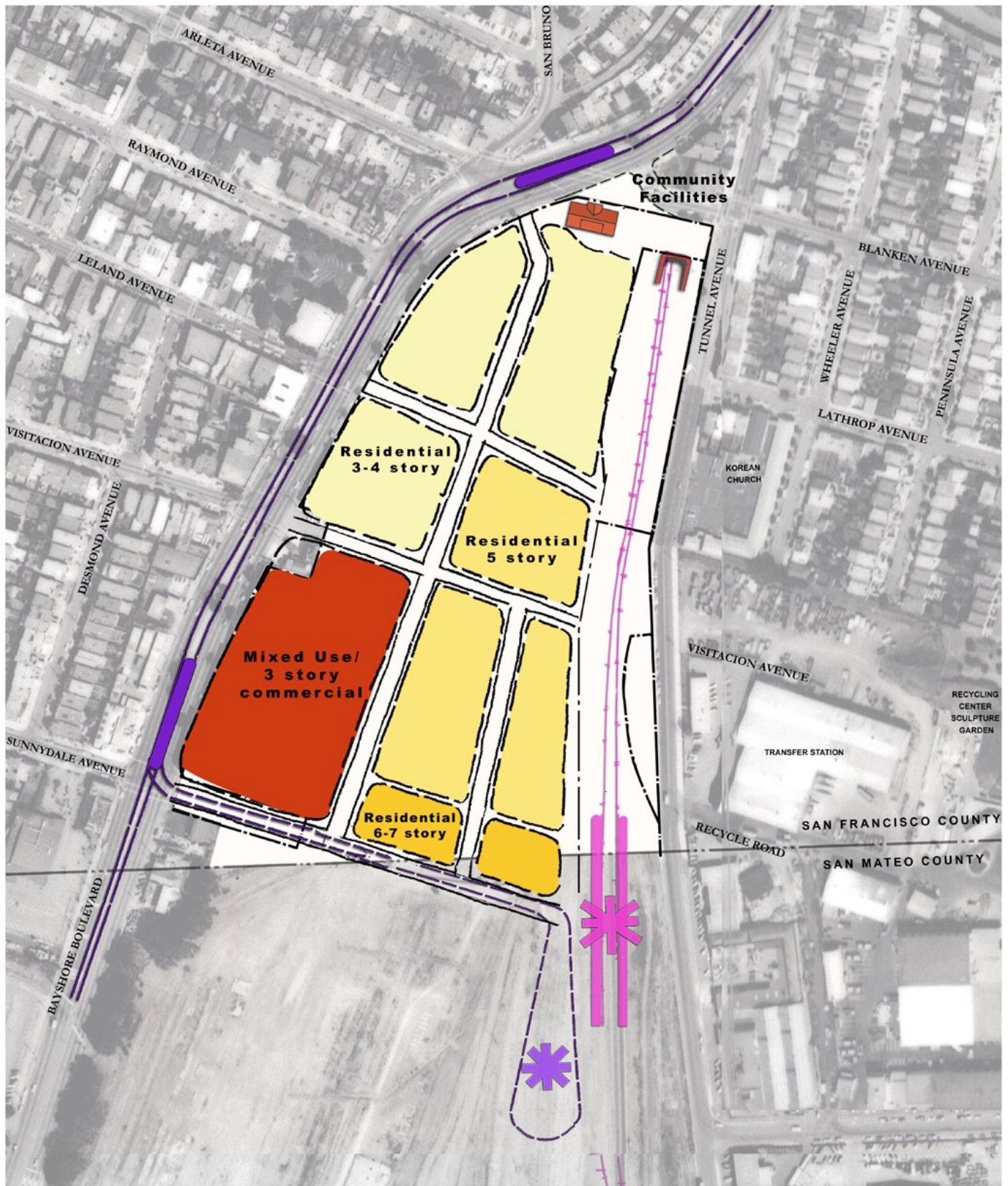


Figure 12 - Section Through Site Between Leland and Visitacion Avenues at Full Buildout.

Figure 13 - Building Heights



Slightly taller five story buildings could be developed one block in from Bayshore Boulevard, in the southern portion of the sub area where the site's topography is flatter and ground water levels are higher. In this area, the building type could be a modified podium with two internal floors of parking lined with commercial uses on one side and town houses on the other (screening most views of parking). Up to three levels of residences could be built atop the podium, organized around a courtyard (see Figure 12).

The Strategic Concept Plan suggests that the northern portion of the sub-district would likely be developed with residential, rather than mixed-use buildings. However, ground floor retail is strongly encouraged at key locations in the southern half of the sub-district, specifically along the north side of the Leland and Visitacion Avenue extensions. This is intended to ensure that the project works to better strengthen the link between the existing commercial corridors and the plan area. The north side of the street is recommended specifically for retail development for two reasons: first, this would likely be the parking level of new buildings, and ground floor shops will contribute more to the neighborhood's character than would a parking garage wall; second, the southern side of the streets would likely be closer to the habitable level of buildings, where shop space would take away from the number of possible residences in each building.

Additional shops could be placed on the ground floor of the new building facing the east side of the proposed north-south road. Shops are not recommended for the west side facing buildings because of the previously described topographic considerations.

Residences built above the ground floor podium should generally include a grouping of smaller buildings organized around an interior courtyard, rather than a single large building. This is particularly important along Bayshore Boulevard, which currently suffers from the large scale of existing warehouse buildings. New residential buildings should reflect the fine grained scale of the buildings that line the west side of Bayshore Boulevard. Blank, unarticulated walls are to be avoided and should instead include interesting detail and pedestrian access points, in effect bringing the east and west sides together. Ideally each building grouping would include a variety of residential units ranging from studio to three bedroom apartments and possibly town

Table 1 - Summary Table of Uses

	Approximate Acreage	Representative Gross Density	Approximate Total Units
North Residential Parcels	8 acre	approx. 60 dwellings/acre	480
South Residential Parcels	3.25 acre	approx. 80 dwellings/acre	260

In addition to housing development, the Strategic Concept Plan envisions up to about 100,000 square feet of retail / commercial development in the existing Plant 3 building (or at that location), as well as up to 15,000 square feet of community institutional space in a restored “Old Office Building.”

homes over flats. These buildings should be designed to include well defined entry and window modules that reflect neighborhood scale and San Francisco traditional architectural vernacular.

Several physical constraints will ultimately influence the development of the site. The following provides a summary of key considerations:

- “Old Office Building” – this local landmark should be rehabilitated to serve as a prominent civic building. As such, new development should not detract from its presence; new buildings should not loom over it or diminish its role as a gateway element.
- View Corridor - the view corridor from above the tunnel and along the railroad tracks, which can be clearly seen while traveling south on Bayshore Boulevard near Blanken Avenue, should not be blocked by new buildings.
- Topography – the site’s landform has been significantly altered over the years to accommodate the large buildings developed on it. Consequently, the site is composed of a somewhat irregular collection of flat pads and steep and mildly sloping banks. During this analysis, it was not possible to develop a complete understanding of these conditions. However, it is likely that large portions of the site will need to be re-graded to accommodate new development. As previously described, it is anticipated that new buildings would be “cut into” the site, with the uphill sides of podiums nearly at grade, and the downhill sides being a full level above grade.
- Streets – the Strategic Concept Plan proposes the introduction of a new north-south street, running generally parallel to Bayshore Boulevard, providing site access and linking the Caltrain station to neighborhoods to the north. This street is proposed to intersect with Bayshore Boulevard near Arleta Avenue. This intersection already suffers from the unusual roadway alignments that define it, and adding one more could add to this confusion. A more complete discussion of this intersection is found in the transportation section of this Report. Another key consideration affecting this intersection is topography. The new roadway would have to be “built-up” from the existing elevation on site to meet the elevation of the existing street. Because of the complexity of this design challenge, it should be addressed in conjunction with an overall site plan taking into account the creation of viable development pads on the parcels that surround it.

South Residential:

The southern residential sub-district is faced with a different collection of challenges than is the north residential sub-district, and could play a slightly different role in the area's reinvention. This portion of the site is close to the Caltrain station and proposed terminus of the Third Street Light Rail corridor. It could function as the gateway to Visitacion Valley via transit and recognized as such with a landmark architectural element.

The south district would be predominantly residential with limited amounts of neighborhood and transit-serving retail. As is also the case of the north district, only about half of the south residential district would be immediately suitable for residential uses, according to the current knowledge of the groundwater contamination contours (see Figure 11), and recommendations made by DTSC. Consequently, residential development in this area would likely be phased, starting with a new residential neighborhood in the eastern portion of the site, next to the railroad tracks.

Because of this area's prominence as a gateway into the valley, the Strategic Concept Plan proposes mid-rise buildings (six stories of residential units above two levels of parking) in close proximity to the Caltrain station, facing onto the Sunnydale Avenue extension. Lower buildings (up to four floors of residences above one level of parking) could then be developed throughout the rest of the site. The property owner's (Sunquest / Universal Paragon Corporation) shared several density studies for the site with the consultant team. This Strategic Concept Plan recommends that taller buildings near the train station would serve a meaningful role in celebrating arrival to the valley, but buildings further to the north should be designed to be more in keeping with the scale of the rest of the site and nearby residential neighborhoods.

Several physical constraints will ultimately influence the development of the site. The following provides a summary of key considerations:

- **View** – Although not directly adjacent to or visible from Bayshore Boulevard, the south residential area will be the visual terminus of Sunnydale Avenue and the suggested mid-rise buildings would affect the skyline of the plan area. Consequently, these two buildings should fulfill their role as landmarks, while remaining harmonious with the lower buildings that surround them and contributing to the overall built form of the plan area.

- Topography – The topography of the south residential district is generally flatter than the rest of the site. However, the water table in this area is higher than other parts of the site. Consequently it may be very difficult to accommodate 100 percent below street grade parking. Therefore, most parking for buildings in this area would be at grade, but still within the footprint of each building. Parking should be screened from the view of public streets and rights-of-way with active ground floor uses such as shops or cafes. Particular attention should be paid where this condition would exist along the Sunnydale Avenue extension across from the Caltrain station, and in the long term, along the proposed north-south running street.
- Streets – Although only conceptual in nature, Sunquest / Universal Paragon Corporation’s studies for their site all include a central, north-south public street that would be connected to an area-wide street system; this solution is highly encouraged. As is the case with the north residential district, the Strategic Concept Plan recommends that new development reflect the fine grained nature of the area’s urban fabric, and does not support the creation of disconnected streets lined with large monolithic building masses or super blocks. Efforts should be made to create an interesting and inviting ground floor street wall.

Commercial District:

Bounded by Bayshore Boulevard, Sunnydale and Visitacion Avenues, the Commercial District occupies most of the site’s southwestern corner, and is faced with the greatest number of challenges. Based on information provided by DTSC, it is likely that full remediation of this portion of the site’s toxic contamination will not occur in the short term, and may in fact take many years to complete. However, DTSC was equally clear in indicating that this area is suitable for reuse immediately for a variety of non-residential uses.

A key community goal and consensus point is the introduction of a full-service grocery store and other neighborhood-serving shops and services. The commercial district is intended to accommodate these uses in the short and long run.

In the short run, two existing vacant warehouse buildings and the adjacent parking lot can be reused for a grocery store and other neighborhood-serving shops and services. Several local retailers were contacted to discuss the viability of this solution and a

high degree of interest was expressed. One small warehouse building would need to be demolished to allow for the extension of Visitacion Avenue onto the site.

In the longer term, these buildings would be demolished and replaced with a mixed-use commercial center that could include a grocery store, neighborhood shops, and office space, served by internal parking.

Several physical constraints and design considerations will ultimately influence the development of the site. The following provides a summary of key considerations:

- **Building Reuse** – The existing warehouse buildings are believed to have structural integrity and be large enough to accommodate the needs of a modern full-service grocery store and several smaller shops, possibly organized like a market hall. Both include large flat concrete floor plates and relatively few internal walls, a layout that should offer a high degree of flexibility for reuse. Similarly, the buildings' exterior walls generally consist of long uninterrupted wall planes that could be redesigned to accommodate the desired reuse. It will be the decision of future tenants to determine the best layout for the internal spaces of these buildings. However, considerable effort should be placed on redesigning their exteriors to blend more harmoniously with surrounding neighborhoods. The existing walls are long, monotonous and uninviting, particularly along Bayshore Boulevard and Sunnydale Avenue. These wall planes should be redesigned to include frequent door and window openings, and include canopies and overhangs. The buildings' apparent mass should be reduced by introducing clear building separations and structural bays – reducing the buildings' monolithic appearance. The buildings' east facing elevation should be redesigned to create an inviting presence. Care should also be taken in establishing service areas – these should not be visually prominent or disruptive to pedestrian or auto movement.

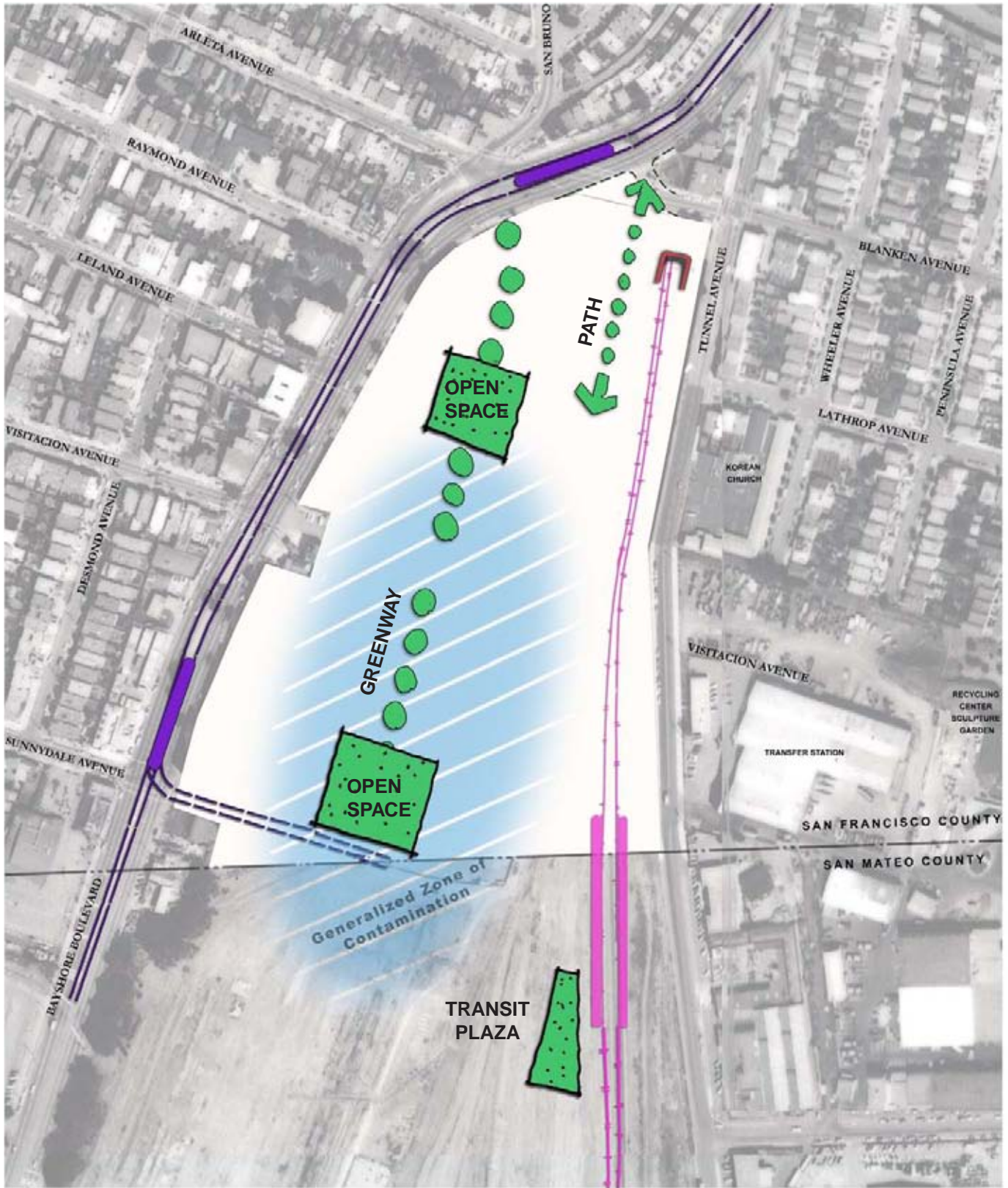
A key element of the site's reuse includes the demolition of the small warehouse at the end of Visitacion Avenue. When removed, this space should be redeveloped as the extension of Visitacion Avenue. Preliminary analysis suggests that this space should be wide enough to allow for two travel lanes with parallel parking and sidewalks on both sides. In addition to providing access to the grocery store, this could also link the south residential district to Bayshore Boulevard.

- New Development – A long-term vision for the commercial district could include the complete demolition of existing buildings and replacement with a commercial mixed-use center. A conceptual analysis of this suggests the creation of a modern grocery store, in-line retail shops and possibly two small office buildings. In order to maintain the scale and character of adjacent neighborhoods, the buildings should not be more than four stories in height. This height is based on the consideration that grocery stores tend to have taller ceilings (generally can be considered two stories) than other commercial uses, parking garage decks are generally 10 feet tall, and office space ceiling heights vary between 10 and 12 feet in height, resulting in a total building height between 35 and 45 feet. Finally, considerable effort should be placed on designing the edges of this center to reduce its monolithic character. The building walls facing onto the Sunnydale and Visitacion Avenue extensions and the new north-south running streets should reflect of a traditional neighborhood commercial corridor, with wide sidewalks, many streetfront uses and building entries, large visually permeable windows, awnings and canopies. Similar efforts should be made to create a strong presence along Bayshore Boulevard, particularly working to avoid long blank walls.
- Parking and Service Areas - A primary challenge will be accommodating appropriate levels of parking. In general terms, most of the ground floor of the site would be used for commercial uses, and a two story parking structure would be located within the central portion of the site, covering the grocery store and about one-quarter of the rest of the site. The parking structure should be lined with retail and office space to help reduce its visual prominence. Another challenge would be in locating the grocery store’s service bay. Conceptually this could be addressed by creating an internal alley, running generally perpendicularly to Bayshore Boulevard, linking to the north-south running street.

Open Space Framework

The ultimate size, type, and location of open space within the site will depend upon future phases of build-out and design study. However, a general vision for open space has been developed. Appropriate amounts of open space should be incorporated into the plan at full project build-out. It should be well integrated into the development

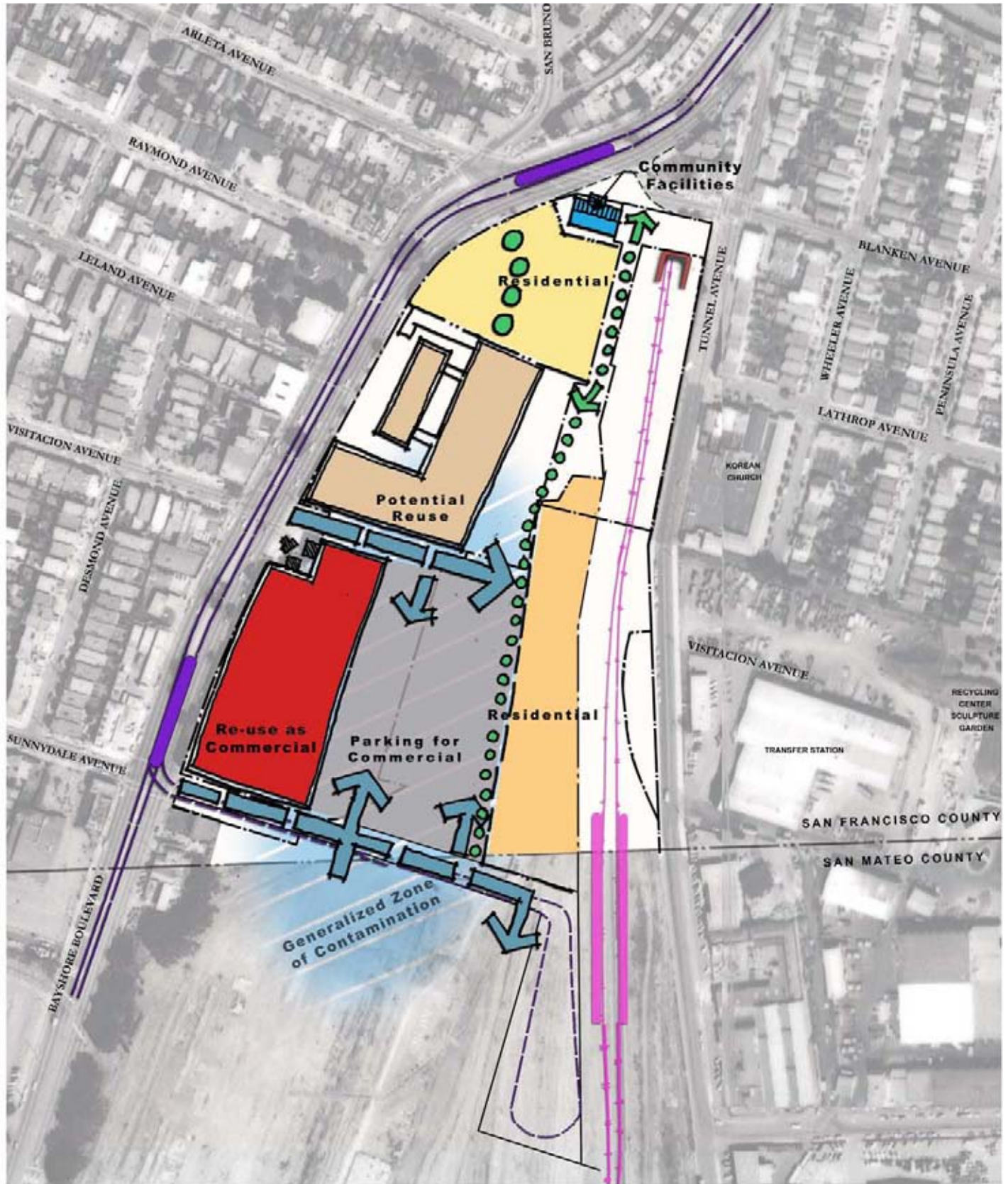
Figure 14 - Open Space



and comfortably sized for passive recreation, creating central areas for gathering and focal points for the community. Open space could also be a potentially appropriate land use for some of the more contaminated areas of the site, contingent to DTSC approval.

The area in front of the “Old Office Building,” created by the planned Blanken Avenue realignment, should be designed as an important community space that marks the gateway to the valley, integrating the street and light rail station with the building by means of an entrance plaza. Open space in the vicinity of the “Old Office Building” should also take advantage of the impressive views to the south afforded by the topography. In addition, the north-south spine should be a green corridor and a safe, well-marked and well-designed pedestrian route to/from the Caltrain station and the rest of Visitacion Valley. There should also be a safe, well-lit north-south pedestrian pathway adjacent to the rail right-of-way, from Blanken Avenue to Leland Avenue at the minimum, and preferably all the way to the Caltrain station.

Figure 15 - Initial Phases



Initial Phases

Phasing is a critical component of the Strategic Concept Plan, and a way to balance both the immediate needs of the community and the reality of the long-term contamination clean-up schedule. For the initial phases of the project, a combination of existing building reuse and new construction is probably the best solution.

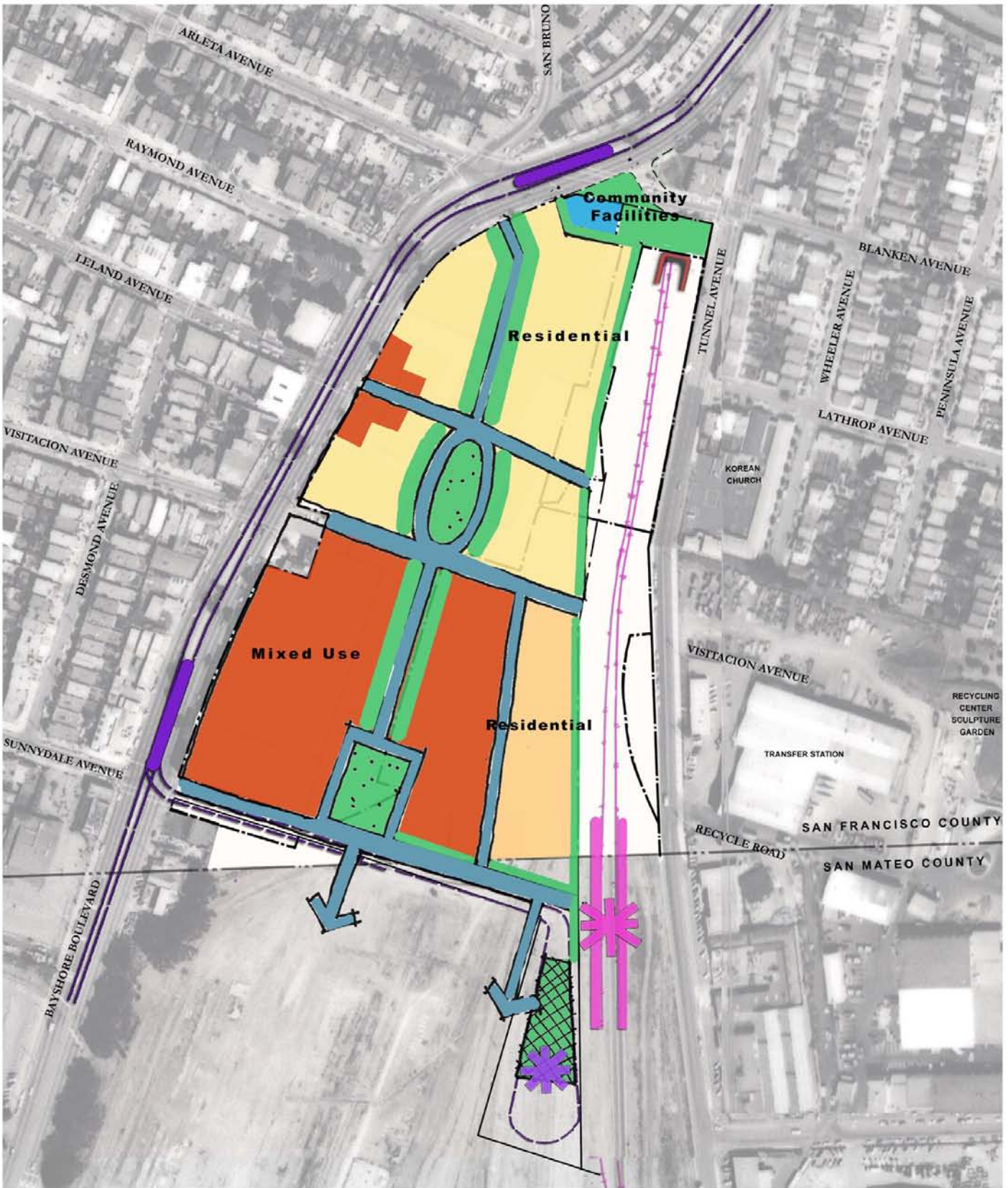
Two areas of new housing in the clean portions (per the current understanding of the contaminated groundwater contour locations, see Figure 11) of the north and south residential districts are designated as a priority for the initial stages (please refer to the Urban Design section of this plan for additional information). For the north parcel, study sketches produced during the workshop illustrated approximately 130 housing units, in a combination of three to four story apartments and town homes over flats, on an approximate 2.16 acre site. This parcel will roughly consist of the area between the “Old Office Building” to the north, the rail right-of-way to the east, the existing Plant IX and the “New Office Building” to the south and Bayshore Boulevard to the west (see Figure 15). The addition of some taller residential buildings are visualized for the south residential parcel (please refer to the Urban Design section of this plan for additional information).

Also as part of the initial phases of development, the “Old Office Building” is renovated and reused for community services. Plans are already underway for the design of a triangular plaza in front of the building. These plans envisage an entrance plaza, created by the realignment of Blanken Avenue as part of the Muni Third Street Light Rail project, creating a community space that links the building with the street and light rail station.

The rest of the north residential district is currently occupied by vacant Schlage Lock buildings, the “New Office Building,” and Plant IX. While the plan designates this area as ultimately being rebuilt for housing, currently the soil and groundwater below Plant IX is affected by contamination (see Figure 8). Designating this area as being ultimately residential helps to direct DTSC’s remedial action plan to focus attention here and make this area a priority. In the meantime, the 121,586 square foot Plant IX building would be appropriate for reuse for a non-residential purpose.

The “New Office Building” is also recommended for reuse as part of the initial phase

Figure 16 - Potential Buildout Example 1

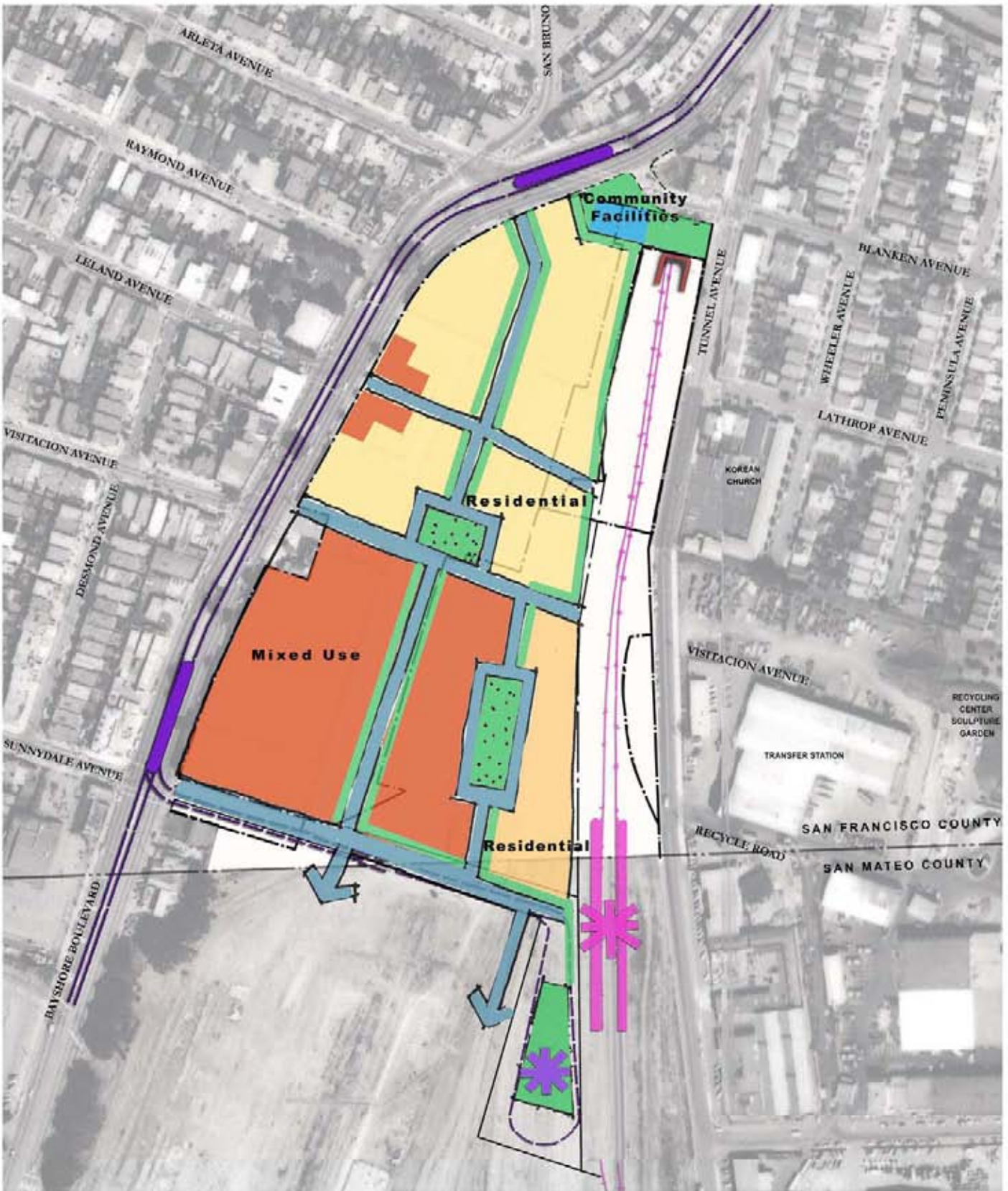


plan. Although the soil and groundwater below this building are considered clean (see figure 8) it might be easier to lease Plant IX for reuse if the “New Office Building” is also available. As its nickname suggests, this is one of the newer buildings on site, built in 1976. It contains offices, conference rooms, an auditorium, and a landscaped courtyard, and could be very easily renovated for immediate occupation. Even these short-term renovations should be responsive to the community goals by including improvements to the Bayshore Boulevard street frontage – creating a better terminus for Leland Avenue by removing the fences and enhancing the landscaping. Parking for both buildings is already built on top of the Plant IX building roof, accessed from Bayshore Boulevard. Together, these two buildings – office and warehouse – could be an attractive package for short-term use. In addition, it will be more efficient to design and develop both building sites at once, when the Plant IX site is ready for residential development.

The southwest portion of the site is designated by the Strategic Concept Plan as the commercial district, to accommodate the community’s need for a full-service grocery store and other neighborhood-serving commercial uses (please refer to Urban Design section for additional information). Plant 3 (100,702 square feet), the adjoining Plant 3X and the parking lot behind them sit on the more contaminated areas of the site. It might be possible to reuse the existing buildings and parking areas for commercial uses such as a grocery store. This would require investigation to ensure that the existing building structures are acting as an effective barrier to the contamination. Alternatively, or if reuse proves infeasible, the existing structures could be demolished and replaced with new commercial or possibly mixed-use commercial-residential buildings, requiring full remediation of the soil contamination.

The circulation / street system throughout the site will also have to be phased. The start of the central north-south street should be incorporated into the development of the north housing parcel, although in the short-term it will end as a turn-around at Plant IX. Plant 2X should be removed and Visitacion Avenue extended to allow access into the center of the site, the south housing parcel, and parking for the grocery store. Any expansions to the Sunnydale Avenue right-of-way necessitated by the future Third Street Light Rail and improved pedestrian connections to Caltrain should be made during the initial phases. A well-lit and safe north-south pedestrian pathway along the eastern side of the site should also be constructed early in the site development to provide a connection to/from the Caltrain station.

Figure 17 - Potential Buildout Example 2



Conceptual Plans

Two conceptual plans were drawn up as part of the week’s workshop to demonstrate different ways that the site could ultimately be developed. These were diagrammatic and illustrated with basic land use and circulation patterns, as well as concepts for open space layouts. The actual eventual build-out will need to be designed over time, in response to factors such as tenant agreements in the short-term building reuse areas (Plant IX and the “New Office Building”), changing economic conditions, and rate of remediation success. A common element of both conceptual plans is that they accommodate community goals and consensus points and provide long range visions for the site’s reinvention as an important community core area that is pedestrian and transit friendly, attractive to live at and inviting to visit.

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