

## BACKGROUND REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every city and county in California must have a General Plan, which is the local government's long-term blueprint or "constitution" for future development. The General Plan represents the community's view of its future as it relates to a variety of quality of life issues and expresses the community's development goals. The General Plan contains the information and policies upon which the City Council and Planning Commission base their decisions and implementation programs that carryout the policies. Union City last updated its General Plan in 2002.

The General Plan is presented as a collection of "topical elements," of which seven are mandatory. The seven State-mandated elements are: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. State law also allows cities to add additional elements. In addition to the mandatory elements, Union City included in its 2002 General Plan an Economic Development Element; Youth, Family, Seniors, and Health Element; and Community Design Element.

The General Plan is a long-range planning document. Typically, a General Plan is designed to address the issues facing the city for the next 15 to 25 years. Union City last updated its General Plan in 2002 with a planning horizon of 2020. In June 2014 Union City initiated a two-year process to update the City's 2002 General Plan. The General Plan Update will look ahead to 2040.

The policy direction contained in the General Plan is based, in part, on data and information collected as part of the plan's preparation. This information and data is contained in a Background Report. The Background Report is one part of the General Plan and provides decision-makers context for making policy decisions. The second part of the General Plan is the Policy Document. Because it is only intended to provide context, the Background Report is purposely policy neutral. Policy direction is provided in the Policy Document. The Background Report also serves as the environmental setting section for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the General Plan.

As a first step in updating the General Plan, the City prepared a Background Report to capture a "snapshot" of current (2014) conditions and trends. The Background Report provides a detailed description of a wide range of topics about the city, such as demographics, economic conditions and projections, land use, community health, public facilities, environmental resources, and hazards. This Executive Summary summarizes the major findings from each chapter in the Background Report, including:

- Chapter 2: Demographic Trends
- Chapter 3: Fiscal and Economic Conditions
- Chapter 4: Community Health and Quality of Life
- Chapter 5: Land Use
- Chapter 6: Community Design
- Chapter 7: Transportation and Mobility
- Chapter 8: Public Facilities and Services
- Chapter 9: Natural and Cultural Resources
- Chapter 10: Hazards and Public Safety



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## CHAPTER 2: DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

This chapter summarizes the demographic conditions in Union City. Demographic information is used to identify changes and trends in the composition of the population, which can affect the future needs of the population.

### POPULATION

- Union City's population has grown rapidly since incorporation of the Alvarado and Decoto neighborhoods in 1959. Since 1990 Union City population has increased 32.7 percent, resulting in an estimated city population of 72,115 in 2014.
- The average annual growth rate (AAGR) for Union City was higher between 2005 and 2010 compared to Alameda County and California. Union City has a higher proportion of families (82.1 percent of total households) than Alameda County (65.2 percent of total households). In addition, 63.8 percent of households in Union City are married-couple families, much higher than 47.1 percent countywide.
- Between 2000 and 2010 Union City grew older, with an increasing percentage of residents over age 45 and a decreasing percentage of residents younger than 45.
- Union City is more ethnically diverse than Alameda County or California. Union City has about half the percentage of White Non-Hispanic (21.7 percent) residents compared to Alameda County as a whole (45.9 percent) and about a third compared to California (62.5 percent). In 2012 the largest population group in Union City was Asian Non-Hispanic (52.7 percent).
- Between 2000 and 2010, the percentage of Union City residents who identified as being of “Asian” descent increased by 21.8 percent. Within the same timeframe, the percentage of Union City residents who identified themselves as “White” decreased by 26.5 percent.
- The population of Union City has a high proportion of residents who graduated high school (85.9 percent) and who have a bachelor’s degree or higher (36.7 percent). This rate is similar to Alameda County and is higher than the statewide rate.

## HOUSING

- Union City has a high rate of homeownership. Union City's homeownership rate in 2012 (68.2 percent) is higher than the state (56.0 percent) and countywide (53.7 percent) averages.
- In 2012 Union City had a population per household of 3.42, higher than the countywide rate, (2.75) but similar to other nearby jurisdictions.
- The rate of overcrowding for renter-occupied households (14.6 percent) is higher than the countywide rate (8.5 percent) but only slightly higher than the state rate (13.3 percent.)
- In 2014 Union City had 21,431 housing units, with 16,491 single family units (77 percent) and 3,941 multifamily units (18 percent). Mobile homes accounted for 999 units (5 percent).
- From 2008 to 2013 there were very few building permits issued for new residential development primarily due to the recession.
- Union City's housing stock is generally in good condition. The majority of units in the city were built between 1970 and 1979.

## CHAPTER 3: FISCAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

This chapter summarizes the fiscal and economic conditions in Union City. It describes existing budgetary conditions and recent trends in Union City related to the public revenues and costs required to support municipal services. It discusses jobs in Union City and describes recent trends in employment by major business type. This section discusses the major industry trends in Union City, and the growth opportunities in both the region, which includes Alameda, Contra Costa, and Santa Clara counties, as well as the region from which Union City may attract new businesses, which includes the San Francisco/San Mateo County area. It describes recent and projected real estate market conditions for the office, industrial, and hospitality sectors in Union City and throughout the East Bay. This section concludes with a summary of population and employment projections for Union City through 2040.

### FISCAL SETTING

- Union City has relatively low General Fund revenue per capita compared to many other cities in the area.
- The voters of the City have adopted several measures to supplement City revenues, including sales tax Measure JJ and parcel tax Measure UU. Measure UU is set to expire in FY 2016-17 unless approved to continue by the voters. In addition, the City has approved several Community Facilities Districts to assess special taxes to fund police, fire, and recreation services for new residential development.
- Similar to most cities in California, Union City residential neighborhoods require more in City service expenditures than they generate in City revenues. The City's budget is balanced by sales and property tax revenues generated by commercial and industrial businesses and properties.

## EMPLOYMENT

- Union City's job growth and loss during the last decade resembles that of Alameda County, starting with an increase in employment in 2006 and a steep decline after the 2008 recession. While the county and Union City had comparable negative growth trends between 2008 and 2009, Union City continued to decline in 2010 and 2011 while the county showed a slight gain. However, Union City has recovered to its 2008 job levels by 2014, while Alameda County has not.
- Changes in economic conditions during the decade and the recent recession caused Union City's employed labor force to fluctuate. As a result, 1,670 Union City residents became unemployed between 2008 and 2009, and the city's employed labor force declined to 31,140. According to the State of California Employment Development Department the unemployment rate in Union City increased from 5.8 percent in 2008 to 10.6 percent in 2010, and then decreased to 6.9 percent in 2013.
- In 2002, Union City had a jobs/housing ratio of 1.2, but since then housing growth has outpaced job growth and the current ratio is about 1.1. The ideal ratio should reflect the number of workers per household, which in Union City is 1.6.
- In 2011, the most recent year for which detailed commute data is available, of 34,000 workers living in Union City, about 31,252 (91 percent) out commuted and 17,444 workers from other cities commuted into Union City. In 2014, Union City had an estimated 23,957 jobs and 35,300 employed residents, resulting in a net outflow of 11,343 commuters.
- The industrial sector, including manufacturing, construction, and distribution jobs, is the largest employment sector in Union City with about 42 percent of total jobs. The institutional sector, including health care, education and government, represents about 25 percent of jobs in Union City. The commercial and office sectors are both lower, at 13 percent and 11 percent, respectively, followed by visitor serving businesses with 8 percent of total city employment.

## TARGET INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

- The target industries in the three-county Alameda-Contra Costa-Santa Clara region are well represented by manufacturing industries.
- Motor vehicle manufacturing has rebounded from the loss of the NUMMI plant and is now among the fastest growing sectors in the region. Other leading growth industries include information services, natural gas distribution, freight trucking, outpatient care centers, management, wholesale trade, and hospitals.
- In Alameda County, potential target industries include construction, specialty health care, wholesale trade, and various sectors related to information technology.
- Projected growth in the three-county region and Alameda County between 2014 and 2024 will be centered on logistics, health care, information services, and construction. Specific types of

manufacturing, such as electronics, fabricated metal products and concrete products, will also show significant growth during this period.

- The leading target industries in the region will generate an estimated 2,000 new jobs in Union City through 2024.
- Substantial employment growth is projected for economic base industries (i.e., industries that are key to the local economy) in San Francisco and San Mateo counties, particularly in technology sectors. Union City has had some success attracting industries from the Peninsula that have been unable to find expansion space near their current facilities within other sectors such as food manufacturing.

## NON-RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE MARKET CONDITIONS

- The East Bay (i.e., Alameda and Contra Costa County) market's proximity to nearby employment centers, including cities along the bay shore in both counties, along with strong transportation and distribution infrastructure and supply of industrial facilities, has historically attracted high value-added businesses (i.e., those that generate greater revenue from a product than the cost to produce a product). While job growth is slightly behind San Francisco and San Jose, the East Bay has strong employment growth in the transportation and trade sector due to the presence of the Port of Oakland, Oakland Airport, and several rail lines. The market affordability compared to other parts of the Bay Area, coupled with industry growth, continues to position the East Bay as an attractive investment market for development opportunities.
- Since the Great Recession, the East Bay's office market has recovered at a steady pace. Trailing behind San Francisco and San Jose, where active leasing is attracting a significant amount of construction activities, the East Bay real estate market has limited office supply with a slightly volatile rental market. While the market is relatively attractive for both core and value added office investment and development, there is a stronger demand in Class B/C offices compared to Class A/B office products, which typically appeal to high end markets, such as technology sector businesses and professional tenants. Recently, most of the expansion the technology sector has been focused in areas south of San Francisco or San Jose, while the East Bay's Class B/C demand has steadily increased due to more demand for mid-tiered assets serving regional businesses.
- The East Bay has a strong industrial market that supports high tech industrial facilities and distribution infrastructure. It is also home to the Port of Oakland, which ranks among the top 10 ports in the nation for container shipping. Additionally, the Oakland International Airport and the Union Pacific rail lines, along with the nearby robust tech market in Silicon Valley, have positioned the East Bay as the Bay Area's main distribution hub. The East Bay accommodates a large presence of manufacturing and R&D facilities, including the manufacturing and operations of Tesla Motors. Overall industrial market vacancies continue to decrease in the East Bay, primarily due to large warehouse absorption. As a result, the East Bay industrial market has had one of the strongest vacancy recoveries in the nation since the recession in 2008.

## RETAIL MARKET ANALYSIS

- Union City has an aggregated household income of \$1.9 billion, which creates local demand for over \$528 million in retail services.
- Union City generated a total of \$823.4 million in taxable sales in 2013/14, of which 29.3 percent came from non-retail categories. Construction materials also made up 17.9 percent of taxable sales.
- Non-retail sales have driven recent (2012-14) growth in Union City's taxable sales, while general retail sales have been flat.
- Per capita taxable sales (\$10,749) rank Union City 11th out of 14 among incorporated cities in Alameda County.
- Union Landing makes up 29 percent of total taxable sales in Union City. Its sales have been flat over the last two years. Other shopping areas in Union City showed modest growth.
- Other communities along the I-880 corridor, including Fremont, Newark, and Milpitas, have recently planned renovations and expansions of their shopping areas, which puts competitive pressure on Union City.
- The total retail sales (\$604.3 million) in Union City show a slight net capture of regional sales.
- Union City's biggest net capture occurs in building materials sales. Other strong performers include grocery stores, eating places, household appliances/electronics, and specialty retail.
- Much of Union City's retail leakage occurs due to the absence of automobile and other vehicle dealerships.
- Potential retail attraction opportunities in Union City include apparel stores, florists, jewelry, furniture and home furnishings, gasoline service stations, other general merchandise stores (e.g., food prep and service, healthcare support, arts and design).

## POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

- Union City's population is expected to grow at an average annual growth rate (AAGR) of 0.6 percent between 2010 and 2040. Alameda County has a higher AAGR (1.1 percent). The city is expected to comprise 4.2 percent of the total county population by 2040, compared to 4.6 percent in 2010.
- ABAG projects that Union City will add 3,710 jobs between 2015 and 2040, while increasing its employed labor force by 4,340. In 2015, Union City accounted for 2.7 percent of countywide jobs, but will only capture 1.9 percent of projected county job growth through 2040.
- The largest job growth for Union City is expected to occur in the Health, Education and Recreation (including Hospitality) sectors, with 1,360 new jobs. The financial and professional services sectors are expected to add 940 projected jobs, while the retail and industrial

(manufacturing, wholesale, and transportation) sectors are expected to add 290 and 220 new jobs, respectively.

- In the short term between 2014 and 2024, Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc. (EMSI) projects Union City will add more than 4,300 jobs, including 1,600 industrial jobs, mostly in wholesale trade. EMSI projections differ from other government generated projections because they use different, proprietary methodology for determining projections that incorporates national-, state-, and regionally-published projections. For planning purposes, the City may consider these alternative projections as a potential low and high range of possible employment growth scenarios.
- The Union City Station District Area, which is designated as a Priority Development Area (PDA), is projected to add about 2,500 jobs (2010-2040), or about half of its total job growth under the ABAG projections.

## CHAPTER 4: COMMUNITY HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

This chapter summarizes statistics on overall health indicators such as mortality and life expectancy in Union City and describes issues related to improving community health and wellness. It provides an overview of several public health indicators for Union City residents including statistics on mortality and life expectancy, the prevalence of disease (including obesity, diabetes, and asthma), and data on the physical fitness of public school children.

### OVERALL HEALTH INDICATORS

- The mortality rate in Union City (561.1 people per 100,000) was lower than the countywide average (612 people per 100,000).
- Life expectancy in Union City (83.2 years) was higher than both the countywide average of 81.9 years and the national average of 78.7 years.
- Since 2000 life expectancy in Alameda County has increased among all racial/ethnic groups. Within the County, the racial group with the highest life expectancy is Asian (87.4 years) and the racial group with the lowest life expectancy is African American (74.7 years).
- In Union City's New Haven Unified School District, 17.4 percent of 5th, 7th, and 9th graders were overweight and 19.4 percent were obese during the 2011-2012 academic school year. Both of these figures are higher than the countywide average (17.2 percent and 17.5 percent, respectively).
- In Alameda County more than half (54.6 percent) of adults and a third (34.7 percent) of school-aged children are overweight or obese. Heart disease and diabetes, both of which are tied to obesity, are among the top ten leading causes of death in Alameda County in 2010.
- The three most common causes of death in Union City from 2010 to 2012 were cancer (135.3 per 100,000), heart disease (123.8 per 100,000), and stroke (35.6 per 100,000). These three causes of death are also the three most common causes of death in Alameda County.



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND MOBILITY

- Less than 40 percent of adults in Alameda County reported being physically active on a regular basis. Regular physical activity is defined as those who reported at least 30 minutes of moderate activity (excluding walking) for 5 or more days in the last week or at least 20 minutes of vigorous activity for 3 or more days in the last week.
- Student in the New Haven Unified School District performed better on several measures of fitness compared to the statewide average, but performed poorer than the statewide average on body composition and trunk extension strength.
- Almost all of the residential neighborhoods in Union City are within a walkable distance of a park; however, poor connectivity in the street network can hinder accessibility.
- According to a 2010 report by the Alameda County Public Health Department, about 74.2 percent of adolescents and adults in the county had visited a park, playground, or open space in the past month.
- Union City residents have access to a range of public transit options including: Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), Union City Transit (UC Transit), Alameda-Contra Costa Transit (AC Transit), and the Dumbarton Express. Capital Corridor stations can be found in Hayward and Fremont. Only the edges of the city are not within a half mile of a transit stop.
- Since schools tend to be located along major arterials, many schools in Union City are served by bicycle lanes, providing opportunities for students to bike to school. Over 87 percent of elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools in the city (or 14 out of 16 schools) are within one half-mile of a bike path. Most schools in Union City are also well served by transit, with all 16 schools located within a one-half mile radius of a local transit stop.
- About 8.9 percent of Union City residents use public transit to travel to work, compared to 11.9 percent of Alameda County residents. An estimated 2.5 percent of Union City households do not have access to an automobile and are entirely dependent on public transit, compared to 4.6 percent in Alameda County.
- Less than 2 percent of Union City residents walked to work and less than 0.2 percent rode a bicycle to work. These figures are much lower than walking and bicycling rates for Alameda County, with 3.8 percent and 1.7 percent of county residents walking or bicycling to work, respectively.
- There are nearly 24 miles of bike paths and dedicated bike lanes in Union City, including approximately 7 miles of Class I bike paths and 17 miles of Class II and Class III bike lanes / routes.
- Between 2005 and 2010, 78 collisions involving bicycles and 73 collisions involving pedestrians were reported in Union City.



### ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOODS

- Certain areas of Union City are underserved by grocery stores. These include areas in the southwest, Decoto Neighborhood, the area east of Interstate 880, and much of the sparsely populated Hillside area.
- There are three farmers' markets that operate in Union City including two operated by the Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association and one operated by Kaiser Permanente at their Union City facility. Farmers' markets provide healthy and local food options to Union City residents. All of the markets are served by public transit and accept EBT and WIC.
- There is one city-managed community garden operating in Union City. This garden, located on Veneto Avenue in the Seven Hills neighborhood off Mission Boulevard, accepts applications on a rolling basis. An individual can apply for one of the 17 plots; however, Union City residents have priority membership.

### HEALTH CARE ACCESS

- There are 12 healthcare facilities in Union City. All are served by public transit.
- Eleven percent of Union City adults were uninsured compared to 12.6 percent countywide and 17.7 percent statewide. For those under 18 years of age, 3.9 percent had no health insurance coverage, which is lower than the countywide average of 4.7 percent and the statewide average of 7.8 percent.

### YOUTH, FAMILY, AND SENIORS

- Union City places a high priority on providing programs and facilities that serve the City's youth, families, and senior population.
- Almost half (49.5 percent) of all children under the age of 18 living in Union City are Asian, followed by Hispanic children (26 percent) and White children (17.7 percent).
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and African American female-headed households with no husband present are the two household types with the highest percent of families living below the poverty level, with 63.8 and 31.9 percent, respectively.
- The median age for seniors living in Union City is 73.4 years.
- The Leisure Services Department publishes an Activity Guide three times per year that details and describes the various City programs for toddlers, children, youth, adults, seniors, and families.
- The City collaborates with the New Haven Unified School District, as well as local non-profit organizations, to provide programs, services, and facilities for the city's youth, families, and senior population.
- The Youth Commission and Senior Commission work closely with Union City staff and officials and communicates the needs, interests, and concerns of their peers.

- Sixteen licensed childcare facilities with a total capacity of over 550, and three licensed adult daycare facilities with a total capacity of over 280 are located in Union City.
- Union City operates two day care facilities at the Holly and Kennedy community centers. The Union City Mark Green Sports Center also offers childcare for people utilizing the facility.
- The New Haven Unified School District offers before and after school childcare at all elementary school sites through its Kids First Program.
- Union City Transit provides paratransit services for qualifying individuals.
- Community nonprofits, such as Centro de Servicios, partner with the City to provide continual support and services to families and individuals in need.

## **ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES**

- 37.5 percent of Union City residents earned a bachelor's degree or higher, which is lower than the countywide average of 41.1 percent. When compared to the rest of the incorporated cities in Alameda County, Union City has the fourth lowest percent of residents who earned a bachelor's degree or higher. 24.1 percent of Union City residents earned a high school degree, but did not attend college. That figure is higher than both the countywide average of 19.5 percent and the state average of 20.7 percent.
- New Haven Unified School District has a median high school dropout rate of 9.2 percent, which means nearly one in every ten students does not complete high school.
- In September 2014 the unemployment rate in Union City was 5.3 percent, which was lower than both the countywide rate (5.7 percent) and the statewide rate (6.9 percent).
- Even as the annual pay for Union City residents increased by 13 percent between 2008 and 2013, the income a family of four needs to live a secure, yet modest living has increased 19 percent during the same time period.
- The neighborhoods with the highest rates of high-cost mortgages were neighborhoods where 50 percent or more of the households were considered low-income.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY**

- Union City had a moderate rate of crime compared to other jurisdictions in the county in 2008. With 3,024 property crimes per 100,000 people, Union City was higher than the countywide average of 2,303 crimes, but much lower than several other cities in the county including Berkeley, Emeryville, and Oakland.
- With 573 violent crimes per 100,000 people in 2008, Union City had a much lower violent crime rate than the countywide average of 825.
- The number of crimes in Union City has decreased from 2,524 in 2009 to 1,811 in 2014.

- The overall crime rate in Union City has decreased between 2009 and 2014, from 36.5 to 25.1 crimes per 1,000 residents. This 2014 crime rate in the city is lower than the crime rate compared to the city of Hayward (36.5 per 1,000), but higher compared to the city of Fremont (18.8 per 1,000).
- In 2009 the City initiated a Youth Family Services and Youth Violence Prevention and Intervention Program to connect youth and young adults 14-24 years of age with services and support. The number of violent crimes has decreased since 2009 in Union City, for both youth violence and general violence. The funding for these programs will end in 2016.
- In Union City no correlation exists between the location of liquor stores and the location of a reported violent crime.

## CHAPTER 5: LAND USE

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of local land use patterns in Union City and plans, policies, and ordinances used to regulate land resources within the city. It summarizes potential long-term growth and development under existing plans, policies, and regulations. It also summarizes regional plans and those of adjacent communities and analyzes how these plans and policies regulate or influence land use within Union City. Finally, this chapter addresses State general plan requirements related to military installations and disadvantaged unincorporated communities.

### PLANNING BOUNDARIES

- The city limits contains 12,413 acres, or 19.4 square miles, and is bordered by Hayward to the north and west, Fremont to the south, and Alameda County to the east.
- The Union City Sphere of Influence, Planning Area, and city limits are geographically synonymous. This boundary is referred to in the Background Report as the city limits with the understanding that it refers to all three boundaries.
- Union City is comparable in size to such Alameda County cities as Berkeley (18.1 square miles) and Alameda (22.9 square miles). Fremont (89 square miles) and Hayward (78.0 square miles) are the first and third largest cities by geographic size in the county, respectively.
- Union City officially incorporated on January 13, 1959.
- In 1962 and 1974 Union City annexed the hills to the east of Union City, bringing the total city acreage to approximately 19 square miles and 6,103 residents. In 1997 Union City annexed an additional 384 acres (0.6 square miles) in the southwest corner of the city.
- Union City is constrained from further expansion of its boundaries by the adjacent incorporated cities to the north, south and west. Steep topography to the east and the lack of infrastructure in this area to provide services make it unlikely that Union City will pursue any further annexations.

### EXISTING LAND USE

- The largest parcels of vacant land in Union City are near the Union City BART Station, in the Station District Planning Area.

- Open space/agricultural land uses make up over half of the total existing land use categories in Union City, with 57.6 percent, or 7,147.3 acres. Most of this land, approximately 83.4 percent or 5,695 out of 7,150 acres, are located east of Mission Boulevard in the hillside area. Additional open space and agricultural lands are located along the westerly boundary of the city adjacent to San Francisco Bay.
- Single family residential land uses comprise 16.4 percent (2,035.8 acres), while multifamily residential makes up only 2.5 percent of the total existing land use. This translates to 21,431 housing units, with 16,491 single family units (77 percent) and 3,941 multifamily units (18 percent). The remaining five percent is other types of housing, including mobile homes.
- Commercial areas make up 1.9 percent (238.7 acres) of the total land use in Union City. The two largest commercial areas in the city are the subregional Union Landing Shopping Center along Interstate 880 and the shopping area located at the corner of Alvarado-Niles Road and Decoto Road near the BART station.
- Industrial land uses comprise 7.3 percent (901.1 acres) of the total land use categories in the city.
- Public/quasi-public land uses comprise 3.5 percent (429 acres) of the land in Union City.

## GENERAL PLAN LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

- The current Union City General Plan was adopted in 2002.
- Due to the large hillside area on the eastern side of the city, nearly 55 percent of the city is designated Open Space or Agriculture.
- About 21 percent of the city is designated Residential.

## OTHER CITY PLANS

- The Decoto Industrial Park Study Area (DIPSA) Specific Plan provides for the coordinated development and reuse of approximately 440 acres of land generally located between Mission Boulevard, Decoto Road, Alvarado-Niles Road and the Fremont-Union City boundary.
- The Intermodal Station District and Transit Area Plan encompasses 50 acres around the Union City BART station. The plan provides for mixed-use, transit-oriented development.
- The Station District Strategic Action Plan outlines the policy framework of development in the District, the roles and responsibilities of the implementation partners, the implementation schedule, and descriptions of projects.
- The 511 Area Specific Plan includes a conceptual framework to guide development of over 900 acres of land generally located east of Union City Boulevard from Marsten Avenue to the city's southerly boundary line. The plan provides for high-quality residential development.

- The Hillside Area Plan recognizes the unique character of the study area and serves to guide and regulate development in a manner that protects and enhances the area's natural resources, while also allowing for an appropriate level of development in the area.

## ZONING

- The Union City Zoning Ordinance includes 26 zoning districts.
- Agriculture and Open Space zoning districts are distributed over half of the city, encompassing 35.5 percent and 14.7 percent of the city's land area, respectively.
- Residential is the next largest category encompassing 19.4 percent of the city's land area, including 14.8 percent Single Family Residential and 3.1 percent Multifamily Residential.

## REGIONAL PLANS

- Union City has one designated Priority Development Area (PDA), the Union City Intermodal Station District PDA, and is forecasted to accommodate a 14 percent increase in housing units and 25 percent increase in employment from 2010 to 2040.

## MILITARY INSTALLATION

- Union City is not located near any military air space or flight path necessary for military operations.

## DISADVANTAGED UNINCORPORATED COMMUNITIES

- Union City's Sphere of Influence is coterminous with its city limits and is entirely surrounded by incorporated communities. Union City does not have any disadvantaged unincorporated communities.

## CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITY DESIGN

This chapter summarizes the community design of Union City, including the historic development and urban framework of the city. It describes specific neighborhood design elements and discusses the corridors and gateways found in Union City. This section also describes the various districts, including commercial centers, industrial districts, and business parks.

## HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

- The physical form of Union City has been shaped by various factors over the last 150 years, including land use and settlement patterns, as well as transportation infrastructure.
- First established in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, Union City grew where there was access to transportation, specifically water access to San Francisco Bay and rail access north and south along the East Bay.

- Unlike most communities that grew around a central train station or downtown main street, Union City evolved from two early settlements on opposite sides of town: Alvarado, along the Bay shoreline, and Decoto along the rail lines on the east side of town.
- Union City is named after the Sacramento Steamer “The Union” which was purchased by John Horner to transport crops and passengers to San Francisco from the area now known as the Historic Alvarado District.
- The Decoto’s interconnected grid of alphabet and numbered streets, which was first laid out in the 1860s, is still a distinctive feature of the city’s built form.
- Unlike most cities that have grown outward from a central core, Union City’s growth was focused on the area between its two nodes of early settlement, with single-family residential subdivisions and industrial/office parks replacing farmland.
- In the century between the establishment of the Alvarado and Decoto communities and City incorporation in 1959, the city grew slowly. The majority of the city’s existing development pattern was established in the four decades after incorporation, growing from a population of 6,000 in 1959 to nearly 67,000 by 2000. As a result, the community’s design has been strongly influenced by the social, economic, and aesthetic trends of that era.

## COMMUNITY DESIGN FRAMEWORK ELEMENTS

- The majority of Union City’s urbanized area is located on relatively flat terrain.
- The urbanized area is bounded to the east and west by natural open space: the sinuous forms of the grass-covered foothills to the east, and the marshlands of San Francisco Bay to the west. Both contribute to clearly delineated urban edges while also serving as important scenic resources.
- Union City is traversed north/south by three active railroad lines and the BART line. Two parallel lines run through the Decoto neighborhood, on the east side of town, known as the Oakland Subdivision and the Niles Subdivision. The third line, the Coast Subdivision, runs north/south east of Historic Alvarado on the west side of town.
- The BART tracks, which are both at-grade and elevated, parallel the Oakland Subdivision railroad tracks on the east side of town. The Union City BART station is located just south of Decoto Road and west of Alvarado-Niles Road.
- The City has a long-term vision to transform the BART station into a regional multi-modal transit station that is accessible from both sides of the station. The station redesign, which broke ground in the Fall 2014, will provide direct access to and from recent and planned development to the east of the station.
- I-880, an eight-lane freeway that runs north-south through the city, provides regional access. The only east/west access within the city is via the interchanges at Whipple Road, Alvarado-Niles Road, and Fremont Boulevard/Alvarado Boulevard just south of Union City.

- From a community design perspective, the rail lines, BART line, and I-880 freeway serve as barriers that constrain circulation within the community because of the limited number of street crossings provided. In addition to constraining circulation, these major infrastructure corridors, physically and visually divide the community, undermining the city's sense of place.
- The city has a handful of key development landmarks that due to their size, character, location or other characteristic are both distinctive and memorable, and contribute to community character. Some of these key landmarks include the Masonic Home, the BART station, the Civic Center complex, and James Logan High School.

## NEIGHBORHOODS

- With the exception of the Alvarado and Decoto neighborhoods, the majority of Union City's residential neighborhoods are predominantly low-density subdivisions developed between 1960 and 2000.
- These neighborhoods typically were designed to discourage through traffic by employing loop roads and cul-de-sacs, and limiting the number of streets that provide access into and out of subdivisions.
- In order to reduce the impact of traffic on neighborhood character, development adjacent to the city's major roadways typically is oriented away from the street with walls or fences to screen residences from the adjoining thoroughfares.
- The development strategies in the city create a series of residential neighborhoods that tend to be inwardly focused and largely disconnected from each other.
- Major traffic corridors have limited pedestrian activity and engagement as they are separated from adjoining development.
- Neighborhood streets seem wide, given the relatively low traffic volumes and traffic speeds they are intended to support. The practice of planting of street trees behind the sidewalk limits the ability of tree canopies to visually mitigate this width.
- Typical residential frontages are characterized by five- and six-foot wide sidewalks adjacent to the street, with frequent curb cuts for driveways and street-fronting garages.
- One- and two-story single-family detached houses are the predominant building type in the city's residential neighborhoods, although more recent development has included higher-density multifamily development, particularly in the vicinity of the BART station.
- The Alvarado and Decoto neighborhoods reflect more traditional neighborhood development patterns, including traditional grid street patterns, although Alvarado's street pattern has largely given way to a more disconnected street pattern.
- The Historic Alvarado District still retains ground-level, street-oriented neighborhood retail that varies significantly from the pattern of strip commercial and commercial center development elsewhere in the city.



## DISTRICTS

- Union City evolved without the benefit of having a clear central core or “downtown” that serves as the primary location for the community’s civic and commercial activities.
- Over the years, historic commercial areas in the Decoto and Alvarado neighborhoods have dwindled to a handful of neighborhood-serving commercial uses. Shopping centers of various sizes have been developed to address the community’s retail needs.
- Union City has three primary commercial areas, the largest of which is Union Landing, a regional shopping center located just west of I-880, where it can take advantage of freeway access.
- The other two prominent commercial areas—the International Marketplace (also known as the Four Corners shopping area), located at the intersection of Alvarado Boulevard and Dyer Street and the El Mercado/Marketplace centers, located at the Alvarado-Niles Road and Decoto Road intersection, are both important community-serving commercial areas serving the west and east sides of town respectively.
- A number of smaller neighborhood-serving commercial centers are located near residential neighborhoods. These include centers located at Whipple Road and Medallion Way, Decoto Road south of Alvarado-Niles Road, and Mission Boulevard and Appian Way.
- Whether serving the region, the city, or a neighborhood, Union City’s retail centers are predominantly automobile oriented in their design, typically located on busy streets, with surface parking located between sidewalks and storefronts, and limited pedestrian connections to adjoining neighborhoods.
- The predominant commercial development pattern consists of a row of stores and restaurants typically in one-story buildings fronting onto a surface parking lot and backing up to adjoining neighborhoods. In larger centers, a limited number of freestanding development pads may be located at the street edge near intersections or entry drives, and small pedestrian plazas provided. Surface parking comprises 50-70 percent of the buildable area.
- The Intermodal Station District and Transit Facility Plan calls for a more intensely developed, transit-oriented and walkable district that includes a mix of office, light industrial, commercial, and residential uses, with ground floor commercial uses along both sides of 11th Street and the perpendicular street that extends east and west from the BART station. Implementation of the plan represents the best, opportunity to create a dynamic town center.
- The Alvarado and Mission Boulevard focus areas represent important opportunities to create active neighborhood nodes that will enhance and reinvigorate these historic neighborhoods.
- Industrial districts comprise a significant portion of land area in Union City, with most development concentrated in four major industrial parks including the Decoto Industrial Park, the Central Bay Industrial Park, the Alvarado Business Park, and the Lincoln-Alvarado Business Park.

- Land uses in these areas are a mix of warehouse and distribution uses, with some manufacturing. They are characterized by very large blocks and large one- to two-story buildings surrounded by surface parking lots.
- Streets are wide but typically well-landscaped with trees planted along adjacent property lines to screen parking.
- The City has located industrial districts to minimize their interface with surrounding neighborhoods. The majority of the City's industrial areas are separated from residential neighborhoods by major arterials.

## CORRIDORS

- The design of the city's street system has influenced the scale and character of development, the connectivity between neighborhoods, and the community's walkability.
- The historic paths of travel originally developed to connect the small towns of southern Alameda County have become Union City's major through streets, including Mission Boulevard, Alvarado-Niles Road, Whipple Road, Dyer Street, Union City Boulevard, Decoto Road, and Alvarado Boulevard.
- These corridors function as arterial and collector streets that have wide right-of-ways, multiple travel lanes, high traffic volumes, and relatively high travel speeds. In order to discourage cut-through traffic in the neighborhoods, they also have limited connections to and from adjoining neighborhoods.
- The limited number of through-streets in the city that can get across I-880, the BART line, and railroad tracks, further concentrates vehicular traffic onto a few major arterials and through a limited number of intersections. As a result, facilitating efficient automobile movement on these corridors has tended to take primacy over other design considerations.
- While these main collector and arterial streets are generally attractively landscaped, with mature trees and context-appropriate plantings, the size and function of these streets still affects surrounding community character. Most land uses do not address these corridors directly. Residential development generally focuses inward, away from the corridor. Commercial and industrial development is typically separated from the street by surface parking. As a result, Union City's main corridors are heavily auto-oriented, and lack the characteristics that attract or support pedestrian activity.
- The limited pedestrian orientation of Union City's major streets is somewhat compensated for by a network of Class I trails and pedestrian pathways (i.e., separated from vehicular traffic), many of which follow the creeks, that help facilitate safe pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

## GATEWAYS

- The primary gateways into Union City are from I-880 and key arterial streets including Union City Boulevard, Mission Boulevard, Decoto Road, Alvarado-Niles Road, and Alvarado Boulevard.

- From I-880, the primary gateway is deep inside the city limits at the Alvarado-Niles Road interchange. Although well-landscaped, the absence of distinguishing features at the interchange results in a relatively anonymous sense of entry, except for views of the Coastal Range hills provided from the northbound off-ramp.
- Entering from Hayward, the two primary arterial entrances to Union City are Mission Boulevard at the Chapel of the Chimes just north of Whipple Road and Union City Boulevard at the northerly branch of Alameda Creek.
- Mission Boulevard provides a dramatic entry where the open space on the east side of Mission Boulevard opens up to highly scenic views of the natural foothills.
- The northerly branch of Alameda Creek marks the entry from Hayward along Union City Boulevard with an attractive natural landscape feature. However, once across the creek, the industrial/office park development provides a visually unremarkable entry experience.
- Entering from Fremont, the primary arterial entrances to Union City are Mission Boulevard near Veneto Avenue, Alvarado-Niles Road at the BART overpass, Decoto Road at Alameda Creek, Alvarado Boulevard at the railroad crossing just north of Lake Arrowhead Avenue in Fremont, and Union City Boulevard at Alameda Creek.
- With the exception of the Alvarado-Niles Road gateway from Fremont, the city's southern gateways are flanked by residential development. As is common throughout Union City, these residential neighborhoods are oriented away from the street landscaping and fencing buffering the development.
- At the Decoto Road and Union City Boulevard gateways from Fremont, Alameda Creek provides an attractive natural element, and at Alvarado-Niles Road gateway landscaping along the roadway contributes to an attractive entry statement.

## NATURAL SETTING

- Union City is framed by a unique set of natural open space resources: the foothills of the Coastal Range to the east, the marshlands of San Francisco Bay to the west, and Alameda Creek to the south.
- The 5,040-acre Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, adjoining the city's western boundary, represents potentially valuable visual open space and nature appreciation area. At present, the former industrial salt ponds have limited scenic and recreational value, but this is likely to change as efforts progress to restore the ponds to salt marsh habitat. With the exception of the Alameda Creek Trail, accessibility to the area is limited by adjacent development patterns and the limited number of street and trail connections.
- The city also has a number of creek corridors that flow through it. Past development has not always taken advantage of the creeks as either visual amenities or recreational open space due to their function as flood control channels. Since the channels are owned and managed by the

Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the City has limited capacity to optimize their value for the community.

- All of the creek channels have been engineered to enhance flood control, so their scenic characteristics have been compromised (e.g., limited vegetation, lack of natural meanders).
- Union City has over 30 parks that range in size from mini-parks to community parks, and contain an array of amenities from playgrounds and open lawns to community centers.
- Many of these parks are centrally located within residential subdivisions and contribute to the character and quality of the neighborhood.
- Other parks, such as the historic Cesar Chavez Park in Old Alvarado, the recently constructed East Plaza east of the BART station on 11th Street, Kennedy Park on Decoto Road, and the parkland around the civic center, serve as important community landmarks and civic gathering spaces that also contribute to a unique sense of place.
- Union City also benefits from the proximity of major regional parks, including the Eden Landing Ecological Reserve, Coyote Hills Regional Park, Quarry Lakes Regional Recreation Area, and Garin/Dry Creek Pioneer Regional Park.

## CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY

This chapter describes the transportation and circulation systems that move residents and goods throughout the city. It describes the major streets and highways serving Union City, the network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities and regional recreational trails, and the transit services in and near Union City, including local and regional bus services, paratransit services, and rapid transit and regional rail services. This section also describes the goods movements in Union City, including freight transport, rail facilities and railroads within the city, and aviation facilities located near Union City.

### OVERVIEW

- Caltrans is responsible for the State highway system that influences local and regional travel patterns. One interstate highway and one State highway affect travel patterns within and around the city.
- The Measure B program, administered by the Alameda County Transportation Commission, is a major source of funding for regional and local transportation improvements and has contributed to significant improvements in and around Union City that have influenced travel patterns in the city. The half-cent sales tax will continue to be collected until 2022. In 2014, voters approved Measure BB. Measure BB renewed the 0.5 percent transportation sales tax approved in 2000 under Measure B and increased the tax by 0.5 percent. This has resulted in a one percent sales tax in the county that is dedicated to transportation expenses alone. The tax is set to expire in 2045.
- According to the 2012 American Community Survey for journey to work mode choice, approximately 74.3 percent of Union City residents drive alone, 11.8 percent carpool, 8.9 percent use public transportation, 0.2 percent bicycle, and 1.2 percent walk to work.

- Between 2001 and 2011 the daily vehicle miles of travel (DVMT) on City-maintained roadway network increased from 439,740 miles to 445,050 miles, an increase of 1.2 percent. For comparison, VMT increased by 4 percent for Alameda County and 6.8 percent statewide.

## ROADWAYS

- All of the 28 existing roadway segments studied are currently (2015) operating at Level of Service (LOS) D or better, which complies with the City's LOS standard.
- The average daily traffic volumes on city streets varies from 4,700 to 43,600 vehicles per day indicating the range of functions from low-volume streets providing local access to high-volume regional through routes.
- SB 743 was passed into law in 2013. Under SB 743, CEQA is to revise the guidelines for conducting transportation analyses. The primary change is to reduce reliance on roadway capacity, level of service, and delay, and replace these performance measures with analysis based on vehicle miles travelled (VMT) or similar performance measures. The City may continue to use LOS as a means to assess motor-vehicle mobility or use other means such as vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

## BIKEWAYS

- The 2012 Union City Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan sets the goals and objectives for providing the opportunity to travel by bicycle as an alternative mode of transportation and recreation for physical, environmental, and social benefits.
- The existing (2012) Union City bikeways network includes 6.9 miles of paved and unpaved off-street shared Class I Bike paths and pedestrian trails, 12.3 miles of Class II Bike Lanes, and 0.5 miles of Class III Bike Routes.
- The type of bicycle activity tends to vary by geographic area in Union City, with more utilitarian bicycle trips occurring on the city's roadways and recreational bicycle trips occurring on off-street trails the majority of which are located along the area's flood control levees.
- Bicycle trips account for less than one-half percent of all commute trips in Union City, which is lower than both the countywide and the statewide rate.

## PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

- The Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan (2012) specifically addresses the issue of pedestrian travel in the city.
- The type and condition of sidewalks, crosswalks, and curb ramps vary throughout the city.
- The Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan recommends several different types of pedestrian improvements including projects located within pedestrian improvement corridors, and

neighborhood pedestrian safety improvement areas as well as projects that address sidewalk gap closures and community trail connection projects.

- The City has installed several pedestrian improvements over the last several years to address safety concerns, implement its Safe Routes to School program, increase Americans with Disabilities Act handicap facilities, and improve the pedestrian environment.
- The walk mode share for commute trips (1.2 percent) in Union City is below that of Alameda County and California; however, a portion of the public transit mode share may include walk access to bus stops, therefore, when all walk modes are combined, the walk share for the city could be comparable to that for statewide.
- The Alameda Countywide Pedestrian Plan, prepared by the Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC), identifies and prioritizes pedestrian projects, programs, and planning efforts of countywide significance. The projects planned in Union City include the following facilities.
  - Bay Trail (Class I multi-use trail);
  - Proposed sidewalk along Union City Boulevard from Smith Street to Lowry Road; and
  - East Bay Greenway trail along Mission Boulevard and the future East-West Connector.
  - Regarding the Bay Trail and East Bay Greenway Trail, the final alignments have not been determined and are shown as conceptual in the Alameda County Pedestrian Plan.

## TRANSIT SERVICES

- Union City is served by a number of transit services providing viable transit options to residents and visitors through a network of bus and rail systems.
- Union City is directly served by BART and the Dumbarton Express via the Union City BART Station connecting Union City to four Bay Area counties (Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo).
- AC Transit operates 11 bus routes connecting Union City to Oakland, San Francisco, and Fremont through direct and connecting services.
- UC Transit provides nine local bus routes in Union City that connect neighborhoods to the Union City BART station, Union Landing, and other city centers.
- Regional ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) paratransit service is provided by East Bay Paratransit. East Bay Paratransit is a consortium of BART and AC Transit. Union City Paratransit provides ADA service within the City limits of Union City. Union City Paratransit also provides non-ADA service to nearby jurisdictions.
- Union City has access to rail service via the Fremont Amtrak station located just south of Union City. Amtrak provides access to intercity train service via the Capitol Corridor route, which runs between Sacramento and San Jose, and provides connection to the national Amtrak network. The Altamont Commuter Express (ACE) also provides a rail connection at the Fremont Amtrak station.

- AC Transit provides multiple bus connections to Amtrak and the ACE train via the Fremont Amtrak station.
- Google bus service is a private service that provides employee buses between the Union City BART station and the Google campus in Mountain View.
- The future Union City Intermodal Station is planned to serve as a regional rail intermodal station, providing access to BART, the Capitol Corridor, ACE, and future Dumbarton Rail.

## GOODS MOVEMENT

- The city has designated truck routes, which include freeways, State Routes, and other major city roadways.
- I-880 is a National Network truck route per the STAA (Surface Transportation Assistance Act) and SR 238 is a Terminal Access truck route, per the STAA, within Union City.

## RAILWAYS

- Union City has three rail lines that pass through the city: the Coast Subdivision, the Niles Subdivision and the Oakland Subdivision. All are operated by Union Pacific.
- Bay Area Rapid Transit District operates the Bay Area Rapid Transit railway that is fully grade separated through Union City.
- The rail lines that intersect Union City generally run north to south and are located on both the east and west sides of the city.
- Streets in Union City with the highest volume of daily train crossings include: Decoto Road, Union City Boulevard, Whipple Road, Smith Street, Alvarado Boulevard, and several lettered streets near the Decoto neighborhood including E, F, H, and I.

## AVIATION FACILITIES

- Union City is serviced by several nearby airports including: the San Francisco International Airport (distance: 25 miles); Oakland International Airport (distance: 15 miles); San Jose International Airport (distance: 22 miles), and the Hayward Executive Airport (distance: 7 miles).
- Hayward Executive Airport is a general aviation airport owned and operated by the City of Hayward, which is classified as a reliever airport for the surrounding international airports. The Hayward airport serves smaller jets and general aviation operations with FAA-reported average aircraft operations of 284 aircraft per day for a twelve-month period ending August 2014.
- San Francisco International Airport is one of the top 25 busiest airports in the world with over 44 million passengers annually. Oakland International Airport served over 10 million passengers in 2014 and San Jose International Airport served over 9.4 million.



- In 2013 San Francisco International Airport had 21,704,626 enplanements, Oakland International Airport had 4,770,716, and San Jose International Airport had 4,315,839.

## CHAPTER 8: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

This chapter presents an overview of public and community services provided by Union City and other agencies within the city limits. It describes the sources of water supply in Union City, water treatment and distribution system facilities, wastewater and stormwater collection, treatment, and disposal facilities, electrical and natural gas systems, and communications systems. It summarizes solid waste and recycling services provided in Union City and waste management and recycling initiatives in the region. This section describes structural and urban fire protection services, law enforcement facilities and services, and emergency response forces and resources. It summarizes park facilities and recreational opportunities within Union City, community facilities and programs, and schools and other educational facilities that serve Union City.

### WATER SUPPLY AND DELIVERY

- Water in Union City is provided by the Alameda County Water District (ACWD). The district service area also includes the neighboring cities of Fremont and Newark. ACWD provides services to over 330,000 residents in the tri-city area.
- The main sources of water supply for the ACWD are the California State Water Project (SWP) (40 percent), the San Francisco Public Utilities' Regional Water System (20 percent), and runoff from the Alameda Creek Watershed, which contributes to surface water supplies at Lake Del Valle as well as local groundwater recharge (40 percent).
- The State Water Project (SWP) and San Francisco Regional Water supplies are imported into the ACWD service area through the South Bay Aqueduct and Hetch Hetchy Aqueduct, respectively. Local supplies include fresh groundwater from the Niles Cone Groundwater Basin (underlying the ACWD service area), desalinated brackish groundwater from portions of the groundwater basin previously impacted by seawater intrusion, and surface water from the Del Valle Reservoir. The primary source of recharge for the Niles Cone Groundwater Basin is from percolation of runoff from the Alameda Creek watershed. To a lesser degree, a portion of the SWP supplies for ACWD are also used for local groundwater percolation. Infiltration of rainfall and applied water also contributes to local groundwater recharge.
- Alameda County Water District operates four treatment facilities: Mission San Jose Water Treatment Plant (3.2 million gallons per day (MGD) capacity), Water Treatment Plant Number Two (22 MGD capacity), Newark Desalination Facility (12.5 MGD capacity), and the Blending Facility (45 MGD capacity).
- Over two-thirds of the water used by ACWD water is used by residential development. For fiscal year 2011-12, ACWD's water use by category was residential (70.4 percent of total use), business (14.1 percent of total use), industrial (8.8 percent of total use), and miscellaneous (6.7 percent of total use).

## SEWER/STORM DRAINAGE

- Wastewater and sewer services in Union City are maintained and managed by the Union Sanitary District (USD).
- USD is an independent special district that provides wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal services to the residents and businesses of the cities of Fremont, Newark, and Union City for a total service area of 60.2 square miles.
- USD serves a total population of over 334,000. Union City residents make up over 20 percent (71,329) of the total customer base for USD.
- In 2013 over 95 percent of customers served by USD were residential customers, making up 108,074 connections out of a total of 111,184 connections.
- Storm drains in Union City flow directly to nearby creeks, wetlands, and the Bay. The public storm drain system is owned and managed by the City.

## SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

- Union City provides weekly garbage collection and disposal services through an exclusive franchise agreement with Republic Services of Alameda County (Republic), the second largest provider of solid waste collection, transfer, recycling, and disposal services in the nation.
- Republic and Tri-CED Community Recycling (Tri-CED) provide recycling and organics services in Union City.
- Municipal solid waste transfer and disposal services are provided by the Fremont Recycling and Transfer Station and Altamont Landfill, respectively.

## GAS AND ELECTRICITY

- The Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) provides electrical and natural gas service to Union City.
- Alameda County is home to 34 wind, 9 oil/gas, 5 waste-to-energy, 1 hydroelectric, and 2 solar power generation facilities. Almost all of these facilities are located in the northeastern portion of the county.
- In 2013 Union City adopted the 2013 California Building Code including Part 11, Green Building Standards, which address energy efficiency standards for new buildings.
- Since 2011 the number of building permit applications for residential solar photovoltaic installations has increased approximately 800 percent and the number of kilowatts installed associated with these systems increased approximately 400 percent.

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- No Union City resident is without access to wireline or wireless service providers.
- About 98.5 percent of residents in Union City have access to five wireless internet providers at speeds above 3 megabytes per second (Mbps) compared to the national average of 25.5percent. These are AT&T, Hughes Communications, T-Mobile, Verizon, and ViaSat Inc.
- Only 1.2 percent of Union City residents have access to six wireless internet providers, versus the national average of 21.5 percent.
- Union City residents generally have better access to DSL, cable, and wireless technology types compared to the nation. However, in terms of fiber optic cable technology, only 0.5 percent of people in the city have access to fiber optic cable technology, compared to 24.3 percent nationally.

## FIRE PROTECTION

- In July 2010 Union City officials voted affirmatively to select the Alameda County Fire Department to provide emergency fire and medical services to Union City residents through a contractual agreement.
- The contract between Union City and the Alameda County Fire Department, which took effect on July 1, 2010, states that Alameda County Fire would maintain the then current service levels, and that all four fire stations in Union City would remain open. In addition, firefighters are expected to respond to a scene within five minutes in 90 percent of cases, and within 10 minutes, 99 percent of the time.
- The Alameda County Fire Department operates four fire stations within the city limits of Union City: Station #30, #31, #32, and #33.
- The Alameda County Fire Department, along with its staff of over 450 personnel and 35 fire stations, provide emergency services to a population of 394,000 encompassing an area of roughly 508 square miles.
- In 2010 the Alameda County Fire Department adopted a Fire & Emergency Services Strategic Business Plan for 2010-2017.

## POLICE PROTECTION

- The Union City Police Department (UCPD), formed in 1966, provides police protection services in Union City through two divisions: the Fields Operations Division and the Support Services Division.
- In 2014 UCPD employed 77 sworn officers and 28 non-sworn personnel.
- In 2014 UCPD maintained a ratio of 1.08 sworn officers per 1,000 residents, which is an increase from 2013 when UCPD maintained a ratio of 1.01 sworn officers per 1,000 residents.

- In 2013 UCPD's ratio of sworn officers per 1,000 residents (1.01) was lower than neighboring Hayward (1.31 per 1,000 residents), but higher than neighboring Fremont (0.85 per 1,000).
- UCPD includes a COPPS unit, which is a proactive initiative directed at street crime, gangs, and narcotic enforcement.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

- In late 2012 Union City, in cooperation with the Alameda County Fire Department and the Alameda County Sheriff's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, prepared the Union City Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) to ensure the most effective and economical allocation of resources for the protection of human health, property and the environment in the event of an emergency or disaster.
- The Union City Disaster Council, comprised of a select group of Union City management and staff, as well as executives and managers representing civic, business, medical and other organizations having official emergency responsibilities, appointed by the City Manager with the advice and consent of the City Council, is empowered, to develop and recommend for adoption by the City Council, emergency and mutual aid plans and agreements and such ordinances, resolutions, rules and regulations as are necessary to implement such plans and agreements. The Mayor is the Chairperson of the Disaster Council, and the City Manager, as Director of Emergency Services, is the Vice-Chairperson.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

- Although Union City is characterized by mostly urban development, the city contains a variety of parks, sports fields, community facilities, trails, and open space areas.
- Union City operates over 30 parks within the city limits and provides over 135 acres of local parkland.
- Union City parks range from small mini-parks to larger community parks. The smaller mini-parks are used to address limited or unique recreational needs and provide low-use recreational facilities such as picnic sites and play equipment. The larger community parks provide recreational opportunities for more active uses and include court areas, multi-use sports fields, and performance areas.
- Union City Department of Leisure Services offers recreational activities; age group activities; cultural programs; environmental, educational, and interpretive programs; day camps; and several seasonal events.
- The City's Subdivision Ordinance (Title 17 of the Union City Municipal Code) established a standard of three acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents, which new development must provide or pay an in-lieu fee. This standard ensures that new development provides adequate parkland to serve the present and future needs of the residents of the subdivision.

- Within Union City there are currently (2015) about 136 acres of local parkland, which is below the standard listed in the Subdivision Ordinance (3.0 acres per 1,000 residents).
- Between 2014 and 2040 the city will need an over 100 acres of additional parkland to serve the projected population.

### **CIVIC AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES**

- Community facilities serving the residents of Union City include the Union City Library, Holly Community Center, Mark Green Sports Center, Kennedy Community Center, Ruggieri Senior Center, William May Jr. Teen Center, and the Dan Oden Swim Complex.
- With the exception of the City library and the Dan Oden Swim Complex, community facilities in Union City are managed by the City's Leisure Services Department.
- Union City has numerous high quality community facilities and a variety of recreation programs for citizens of all ages.

### **SCHOOLS**

- Union City is served by the New Haven Unified School District (NHUSD), which includes Union City and part of neighboring south Hayward.
- NHUSD had an enrollment of more than 12,000 students during the 2013-2014 school year.
- NHUSD has seven elementary schools (grades K-5), two middle schools (grades 6-8), two high schools (grades 9-12), one Independent Study (grades K-12)/Adult School, one Alternative Learning Academy, and one District Non-Public Non-Sectarian school.
- The student enrollment for the 2013-2014 school year is the lowest total enrollment number in the past decade for the NHUSD.
- There are five private schools in Union City: three serving grades K-8 schools and two serving grades K-12 schools.

## **CHAPTER 9: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

This chapter summarizes the natural and cultural resource issues for Union City including, the water, energy, mineral, and agricultural, forestry, and biological resources.

### **AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY RESOURCES**

- According to the California Department of Conservation, there are 19.7 acres of Prime Farmland and 6,069.6 acres of Grazing Land within Union City. Grazing Land comprises about 48.9 percent of the city. This is the largest category of land use, followed by Urban and Built-Up Land (5,652.7 acres, or 45.5 percent).
- Alameda County has 2,487 acres of prime agricultural land and 132,947 acres of non-prime agricultural land enrolled in Williamson Act contracts for a total of 135,434 acres. A few of these

parcels are located to the east of the city limits. No Williamson Act lands are located within Union City.

- According to the Alameda County Crop Report (2012), crops were harvested from 192,258 acres in the county. The total value of crops harvested in Alameda County in 2012 was \$40,059,000, representing a decrease of 2.7 percent from 2011.
- There are no designated forestry resources in Union City.

## **BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

- The California Natural Diversity Database identified five special status reptile species, 21 special status bird species, eight special status mammal species, one special status invertebrate species, two special status fish species, 15 special status plant species, and two critical habitat areas known to occur within five miles of Union City.
- Critical habitat within or immediately adjacent to Union City includes areas suitable for California red-legged frog, Alameda whipsnake, and Western snowy plover.
- Union City contains several habitat areas of major importance including California mixed evergreen, western oak woodland, redwood forest, chaparral, grassland, pacific coast marsh, pacific coast scrub, western riparian woodland, and open water that are home to most of the special status plant and animal species.
- Numerous waterways and wetland areas within and surrounding Union City provide habitat for special status species including Alameda Creek, Dry Creek, freshwater ponds, and estuarine and marine wetlands of the San Francisco Bay.

## **HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY**

- The Alameda County Water District (AWCD) is the water supplier for Union City.
- The Niles Cone Groundwater Basin is managed and protected by the AWCD.
- Under normal year conditions, AWCD has sufficient water supply to meet all of its projected customer demand. However, under drought conditions for both a single year and multiple years, AWCD would encounter a shortage of supply in meeting its projected customer demand.
- The water quality in the groundwater system is characterized by fresh groundwater in the eastern portion of the groundwater basin transitioning into brackish (salty) groundwater in the western portion of the basin. Before being supplied to ACWD's customers, the source water supplies are treated to meet and surpass all State and Federal drinking water standards.

## **GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

- The city's soil distribution is divided by the Hayward Fault Zone, located just east of Mission Boulevard. Soils located west of the Hayward Fault Zone, within the populated area of Union

City, are very deep and are generally finer textured and less well drained than soils in the uplands are located east of the Hayward fault zone.

- The city's susceptibility to various soil hazards is dependent on the type of soils and geology in the two distinct soil regions of Union City. The portion of the City located west of the Hayward Fault Zone is composed of soils with higher clay content, therefore increasing the likelihood of expansive soils and subsidence. The eastern hills are composed of soils that are more likely subject to soil erosion, increasing the chance for landslides as well.

## MINERAL RESOURCES

- A sizable part of important aggregate (mineral) resources used in construction is located in Union City's hillside area near O'Connell Lane.

## SCENIC RESOURCES

- While the city is comprised primarily of an urbanized landscape, natural geographic features have strongly influenced the evolution of Union City's appearance. These features – primarily the dramatic hills of the Coastal Range rising east of the city, the San Francisco Bay floodplain and wetlands areas, and creeks meandering through the city lining hills and bay – play an important role in shaping the pattern of city growth and development.
- State Route (SR) 84 (Niles Canyon Road) between Interstate (I) 680 and I-880 is an officially designated State scenic highway. A portion of this highway abuts the southeastern edge of Union City. The Alameda County Countywide Scenic Route Element designates several roadways within Union City as scenic, including: I-880 Mission Boulevard, Palomares Road.
- Union City has several gateways into the city including: Mission Boulevard at Tamarack Drive, I-880, and Union City Boulevard in the north; Mission Boulevard, Decoto Road, I-880, and Union City Boulevard in the south; and Alvarado Boulevard and Alvarado-Niles Road in the east.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Portions of Union City include geologic formations that may contain fossils. There is the possibility that paleontological resources may be unearthed during future ground-disturbing activities.
- Three cultural resources within Union City are listed as either Points of Interest or as California Historical Landmarks. These include: Alvarado School (Point of Interest), the site of the first County courthouse (California Historical Landmark), and the site of the nation's first successful sugar beet factory (California Historical Landmark).
- There are several additional older buildings within Union City that have been preserved which are located in the Alvarado and Decoto neighborhoods.
- Additional significant or important cultural resources may also exist within the limits of Union City. Buildings, structures, or objects within Union City that are over 45 years of age may be considered significant cultural resources. Prehistoric or historic archaeological resources could



also be identified on the surface or subsurface of undeveloped areas or in the subsurface of developed areas.

## AIR QUALITY

- Union City is within the San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin (SFBAAB) and is under the jurisdiction of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). SFBAAB does not currently (2014) meet the State and Federal ozone standards, the State and Federal fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) standards, or the State respirable particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) standard.
- Within Alameda County motor vehicles are the largest contributor of ozone precursor emissions, which include reactive organic gases (ROG) and nitrogen oxides (NOX). Area wide sources (e.g., paved road dust, construction, and demolition activities) in Alameda County are the largest contributor of PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>.
- Emissions data collected between 2011 and 2013 show one exceedance of the State 8-hour ozone standard in 2013, three exceedances of the Federal PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard in 2011, and two exceedances of the PM<sub>2.5</sub> standard in 2013. No other Federal and State standards were violated during this time.
- There are 36 facilities in Union City that emit toxic substances and are subject to the Air Toxics Hot Spots reporting requirements under Assembly Bill (AB) 2588. Half (18) of these are for diesel engine exhaust particles associated with emergency diesel generators, which only run when the primary power source fails.

## CHAPTER 10: HAZARDS AND PUBLIC SAFETY

This chapter describes geologic, seismic, flood, fire, airport safety, human-made hazards, and noise. This chapter also describes Union City’s greenhouse gas emissions and the impact of climate change in Union City.

### GEOLOGIC AND SEISMIC HAZARDS

- Two major active faults cross Alameda County: the Hayward and Calaveras. Both of these faults have generated earthquakes throughout recorded history (200 years). The Hayward Fault, which is a designated earthquake fault zone pursuant to the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, crosses Union City and runs parallel to the San Andreas Fault to the west.
- The city’s geology is divided by the Hayward Fault, located just east of Mission Boulevard. Generally speaking, the portion of the City located to the west of the fault is level and contains the populated area of the city, while the portion of the City located east of the fault is undeveloped and characterized by its higher elevation, slopes, and hills.
- The city is susceptible to very strong earthquake shaking. In the central area of the city, especially around the Greater Station District Area, earthquake shaking potential can be violent. The urbanized area of the city west of the Hayward Fault is susceptible to liquefaction, while the eastern, mostly undeveloped half of the city is susceptible to earthquake-induced landslides.

### FLOOD HAZARDS

- Union City is part of the Alameda Creek watershed, which is managed by the City and County of San Francisco in the north and the Alameda County Water District in the south.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) prepared a Flood Insurance Study (FIS) for Alameda County to identify, assess, and map the flood hazard areas in the county. An estimated 10.3 percent of city urban land is located within the 100-year floodplain, and an estimated 1.5 percent is located within the 500-year floodplain, both located at the southwestern boundary of the city.
- According to the MJ-LHMP, seven miles of city roadways are within a 100-year floodplain and four miles are within the 500-year floodplain. One mile of railroad infrastructure is within the 100-year and the 500-year floodplain.
- According to the MJ-LHMP, Alameda Creek, a major flood control facility, includes several upstream dams that could cause flooding in Union City if one or more of the dams fail. An estimated 69.2 percent of the city’s urban land is located in the dam inundation zone. An estimated 145 miles of roadway, one mile of transit (the Altamont Commuter Express), and 10 miles of railroad infrastructure are also located within the dam inundation zone.

### FIRE HAZARDS

- Union City is served by the Alameda County Fire Department. The Fire Department service area covers approximately 508 square miles (including about 19 square miles in Union City).

- ACFD currently (2014) operates four fire stations within Union City including: Fire Station No. 30 on Eastin Court in the southwest corner of Union City, Fire Station No. 31 in central Union City, Fire Station No. 32 in the westerly portion of the City, and Fire Station No. 33 located along 7th Street across from the Decoto District.
- As designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (2004), approximately 8,381 acres of Union City have a moderate fire threat, 2,939 acres have a high fire threat, and 1,074 acres have a very high fire threat.

## AVIATION HAZARDS

- Hayward Executive Airport (HWD) is a general aviation airport owned and operated by the City of Hayward. It is located about four miles north of Union City and is the closest airport located near Union City.
- Classified as a reliever airport for Oakland International Airport, San Francisco International Airport, and San Jose International Airport, HWD serves smaller jets and general aviation operations with 83,275 aircraft operations reported in 2012.
- No aviation hazards exist in Union City.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

- The Union City Environmental Programs Division, part of the Economic & Community Development Department, is the designated Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) in Union City. The primary goal of the Environmental Programs Division is to protect public health and the environment by promoting and enforcing compliance with federal, state and local hazardous materials, emergency reporting, and Clean Water requirements.
- The Alameda County Water District (ACWD) and the State Water Resources Control Board are the agencies with responsibility for characterizing and overseeing clean-up of contaminated soil and groundwater. Property owners are financially responsible for the costs of investigation and remediation.
- As of December 2014, 40 open contamination cases were located in Union City. These include 20 leaking underground storage tank sites, 17 cases resulting from spills or discharges associated with a source other than a leaking fuel tank, one landfill site, and several that have not yet been fully characterized as to the sources and extent of contamination.

## NOISE

- Roadway traffic is the most significant source of noise affecting residents in Union City. Interstate 880, Mission Boulevard, Decoto Road, Alvarado-Niles Road, Whipple Road, Union City Boulevard, Dyer Street, Central Avenue, and Alvarado Boulevard are the most significant sources of traffic noise.

- The Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) operates a station in Union City. BART provides service transit on an elevated track through a portion of the city that exposes nearby residential neighborhoods to elevated noise levels.

## GREENHOUSE GASES

- In 2011 Alameda County emitted approximately 13.2 million metric tons (MMT) of carbon dioxide equivalent GHG emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>e), or about 15 percent of total regional emissions within the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD).
- Union City has an adopted Climate Action Plan (CAP) that includes a 2005 baseline GHG emission inventory, 2020 emissions forecast, and GHG reduction target for the year 2020. The City's GHG target is to reduce GHG emissions to 20 percent below 2005 baseline emission levels by the year 2020. The CAP includes GHG reduction measures organized into six "Action Areas", which include land use, transportation, energy, water, waste, and green infrastructure.
- Total GHG emissions in Union City were approximately 342,297 metric tons (MT) of CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2005. The largest source of GHG emissions in Union City were residential and commercial building energy (54 percent), while transportation emissions comprised approximately 37 percent of local emissions. Emissions from solid waste comprised 7 percent of emissions and emissions from water consumption comprised 2 percent of emissions.
- An update to the 2005 GHG emissions inventory was prepared for the year 2010, which concluded that city-wide emissions decreased by 4 percent. This reduction is partially attributable to the cleaner mix of electricity utilized by PG&E in 2010 as well as a 23 percent decrease in local government operations, which was largely driven by an 80 percent decrease in transit fleet emissions.
- The Bay Area Air Quality Management District's 2011 regional GHG emissions inventory includes a list of the "Top 200" major GHG emitting point source facilities in the region. Three of the facilities on the list are located within Union City.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

- Temperatures in Union City have historically averaged about 58°F and are projected to rise between 3.2 and 5.5°F by 2090. Additionally, Union City is projected to experience nearly 50 extreme heat days per year by 2090 compared to a historical average of four extreme heat days per year.
- Union City could experience a decrease in annual rainfall from an average of 17 inches in 2010 to 14 inches in 2100.
- The spring snowpack in the Sierra Nevada, which provides 80 percent of the state's water, has decreased by 10 percent in the last century and may decrease up to 80 percent by 2100. For each 1.8°F increase in earth's average temperature, the Sierra snowpack is expected to retreat 500 feet in elevation.
- California sea level rose by about seven inches during the 20th century and is predicted to rise between 19 and 55 inches by the end of the 21st century, depending on the emissions scenario.



This increases the amount of land within Union City, generally located west of 1-880 and along the city's northerly boundary with Hayward, at risk of a 100-year flood caused by sea level rise.

- By 2100 a larger amount of land area in Alameda County could be vulnerable to a 100-year flood caused by sea level rise. This includes 66,000 Alameda County residents (an increase of 450 percent), 73,000 employees (an increase of 300 percent), 468 miles of transportation infrastructure, and \$3.3 billion worth of buildings.