



DATE: FEBRUARY 7, 2018

TO: GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FROM: JOAN MALLOY, ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: GENERAL PLAN UPDATE: REVIEW OF DRAFT SPECIAL AREAS AND COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENTS

BACKGROUND

City staff and the consultant team are updating the 2002 General Plan policy document. You can view the City's current General Plan policy document on-line at <https://www.unioncity.org/356/General-Plan>. The City's current General Plan has ten elements including: Land Use Element; Economic Development Element; Transportation Element; Youth, Family, Seniors, and Health Element; Health and Safety Element; Public Facilities and Services Element; Community Design Element; Natural and Historical Resources Element; Environmental Sustainability Element, and Housing Element. All of the elements will be updated through this process except for the Housing Element, which is updated on its own timeline consistent with State requirements.

All of the draft elements will be reviewed by the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), the Planning Commission, and City Council. Other City Advisory bodies, such as the Economic Development Advisory Team (EDAT), Human Resources Commission (HRC), and Park and Recreation Commission (PRC), will be reviewing specific draft elements that are relevant to their purpose.

The draft Land Use Element was released in October 2017, which followed the release of the Economic Development Element in June 2017. The Land Use Element was reviewed by EDAT, GPAC, and the Planning Commission. All of the feedback received was incorporated into a final draft that was presented to the City Council in December. The document was well received by the Council with few additional comments. You can view the final draft of the Land Use Element along with a summary of all the feedback received on-line at <http://www.uc2040.com/documents/>.

DISCUSSION

Attached to this staff report are the draft Special Areas and Community Design Elements (Attachment 1 and 2).

Special Areas Element

The Special Areas Element is a new addition to the General Plan. This element includes policies focused on *economic development, land use, and community design* considerations for distinctive areas/districts within the City. In the current General Plan, these policies are included in their respective elements, which made it more difficult for the reader to understand the City's comprehensive vision for a specific area. With this new approach, the vision, goals, and policies for each distinctive area/district are brought together in one section to create a more user-friendly document. Goals and policies that apply citywide will continue to be found in the primary economic development, land use, and community design elements.

Some of the areas included in the Special Areas Element were identified as "Focus Areas" in the General Plan Land Use Alternatives process as they were seen as having the most potential to redevelop or transition over time. Other areas were included because they are a destination within the City or include some defining and unique characteristics that differentiate them from other areas, such as the Decoto neighborhood. This innovative approach provides a comprehensive framework and vision that will guide decision makers and staff when reviewing development proposals in these areas, preparing subsequent planning documents, or prioritizing capital improvements.

See below for list of the areas discussed in the element and see **Figure 1** for a map of these areas.

- **Greater Station District Area;**
 - Includes five sub-areas: the **Core Station District** (area directly around the BART Station); **Restoration Site** (Waste Containment Area located along 11th Street); **Station East** (industrial area located northeast of the Core Station District); **Gateway Site** (Cal-Trans property located adjacent to the City's southeasterly boundary that will accommodate future East-West Connector); and the **El Mercado/Safeway Marketplace Shopping Area**.
- **Union City Boulevard District;**
- **Horner-Veazy Area;**
- **Mission Boulevard Corridor;**
- **Decoto Neighborhood;**
- **Historic Alvarado District;**
- **Union Landing;**
- **Calaveras Landing; and**
- **Four Corners Shopping Area**

This element was informed by the Background Report and the Land Use Alternatives process that was part of a robust public outreach effort. This process wrapped up in late 2016 and resulted in preferred land use scenarios for several focus areas within the City including the Station East area, the Union City Boulevard District, and the Horner-Veazy area.

The element includes a brief overview and map for each area; policies that identify City priorities or that guide future development / redevelopment; and information on future programs that will implement the policies. Several of the implementation programs focus on updating the Zoning Ordinance for compliance with the new policy direction included in the document.

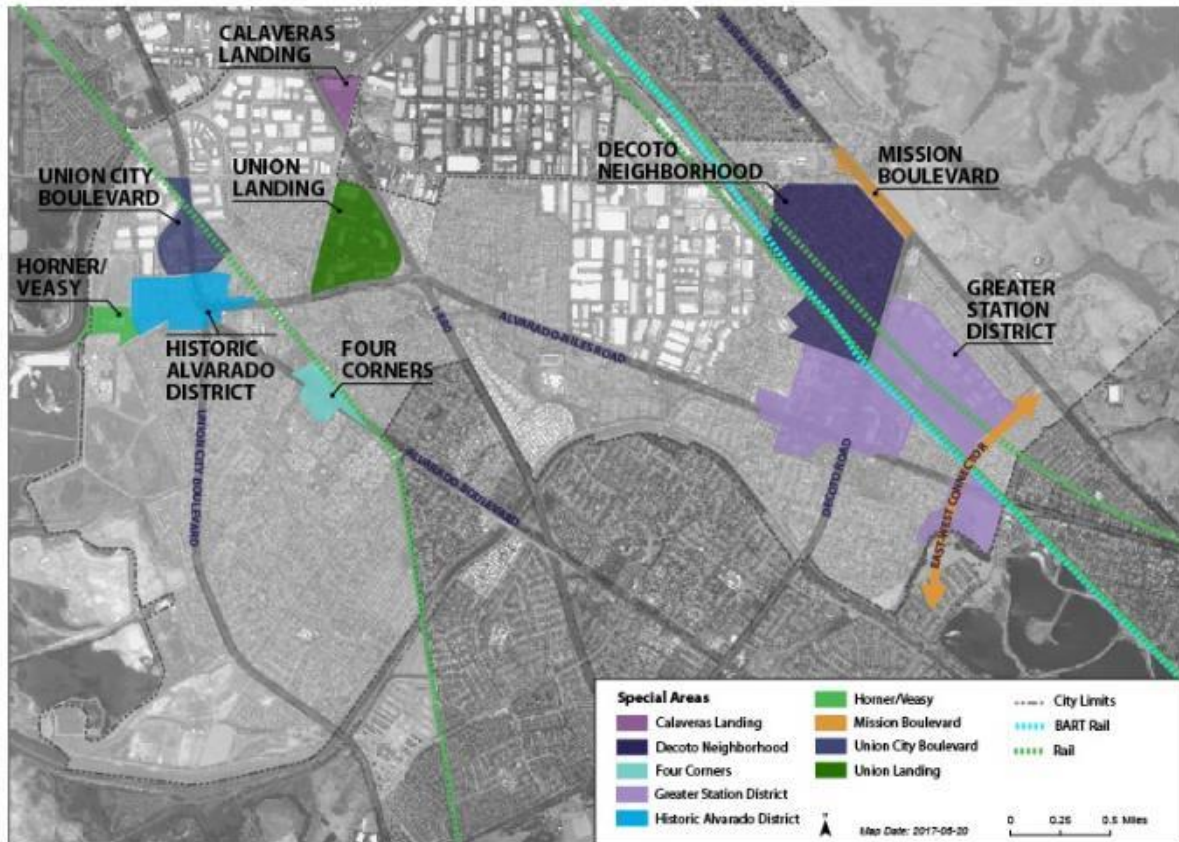


Figure 1: Map of Special Areas

Community Design Element

The draft Community Design Element addresses the City's built environment. The character of neighborhoods and centers, the design elements of buildings and public spaces, and role of scenic open space contribute to a sense of home for residents and a sense of place for visitors. The City's overarching community design goal is to strengthen Union City's identity by improving the quality of places and images throughout the city. Major topics addressed include:

- **City Form and Identity;**
- **Natural Setting;**
- **Corridors;**
- **Gateways;**
- **Public Realm; and**

- **Public Art.**

The Community Design Element is a citywide element that has more general applicability to the community. Unlike the Special Areas Element, it does not focus on specific districts.

Advisory Review and Outreach

This release includes two elements. A second GPAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 21 should there be a need for an additional time to review the large volume of work. The Special Areas Element will also be reviewed by EDAT at their February 7 meeting. Lastly, staff will be attending an upcoming Alvarado Historic District Merchant's Association meeting on February 12 to provide an overview of the Alvarado District policies and solicit feedback. It is anticipated that the Planning Commission and City Council will review the draft elements at their March meetings.

An email blast was sent out to the City's General Plan interest list announcing the release of the draft elements and upcoming meetings. Information was also provided on how to provide comments on the draft elements. This information also was distributed through the City's social media outlets to the greater community. Staff set a target date of February 26 for the general public to provide feedback on the initial drafts. This will allow staff time to assemble any comments received and provide them to the Planning Commission and City Council for their review. *Please note that the public may submit comments on the draft elements up until final approval of the draft document.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the GPAC review the draft Special Areas and Community Design Elements and provide feedback.

Prepared by

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Attachments

Attachment 1: Draft Special Areas Element
Attachment 2: Draft Community Design Element