

BURBANK /  
DEL MONTE

NEIGHBORHOOD  
IMPROVEMENT PLAN

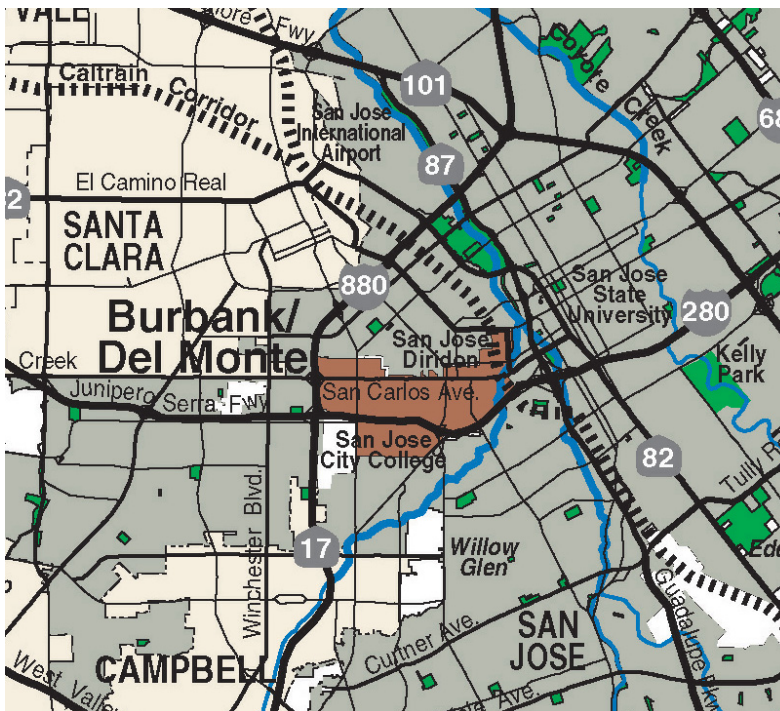
# Neighborhood Profile

## City Context<sup>1</sup>

Burbank is one San José's many culturally and ethnically diverse neighborhoods. San José was the site of California's first civilian settlements, founded in 1777. It's now the "capital of Silicon Valley"—third largest City in California and eleventh largest in the country. The City more than doubled its population between 1970 and 2000 and its diversity increased as well. The size of its Hispanic and Asian communities has increased considerably more rapidly than the overall population and the City is now home to many different ethnic groups.

San José is at the center of an expanding economy based on information technology and manufacturing. Its median income is ranked third highest in the country, while its crime rate is the lowest of any city with a population over 250,000.

<sup>1</sup> Strategic Economics. Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Benchmark Report. Berkeley, CA. October, 2001.



Burbank/Del Monte neighborhood Bay Area context



Commercial corridor:  
West San Carlos Street



Single family residential



Multi-family housing

## Burbank/Del Monte Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Area

Highway 17 delineates the western-most edge of the Burbank/Del Monte Strong Neighborhoods Initiative area, while the Los Gatos Creek roughly forms the eastern boundary of the study area. West San Carlos Street is a major commercial corridor along the north side of the planning area. The planning boundary extends farther north of West San Carlos Street, taking in portions of Forest Avenue, Park Avenue, and the Alameda. Fruitdale Avenue, Southwest Expressway, and Interstate-280 collectively form the southern border (see figure on facing page).

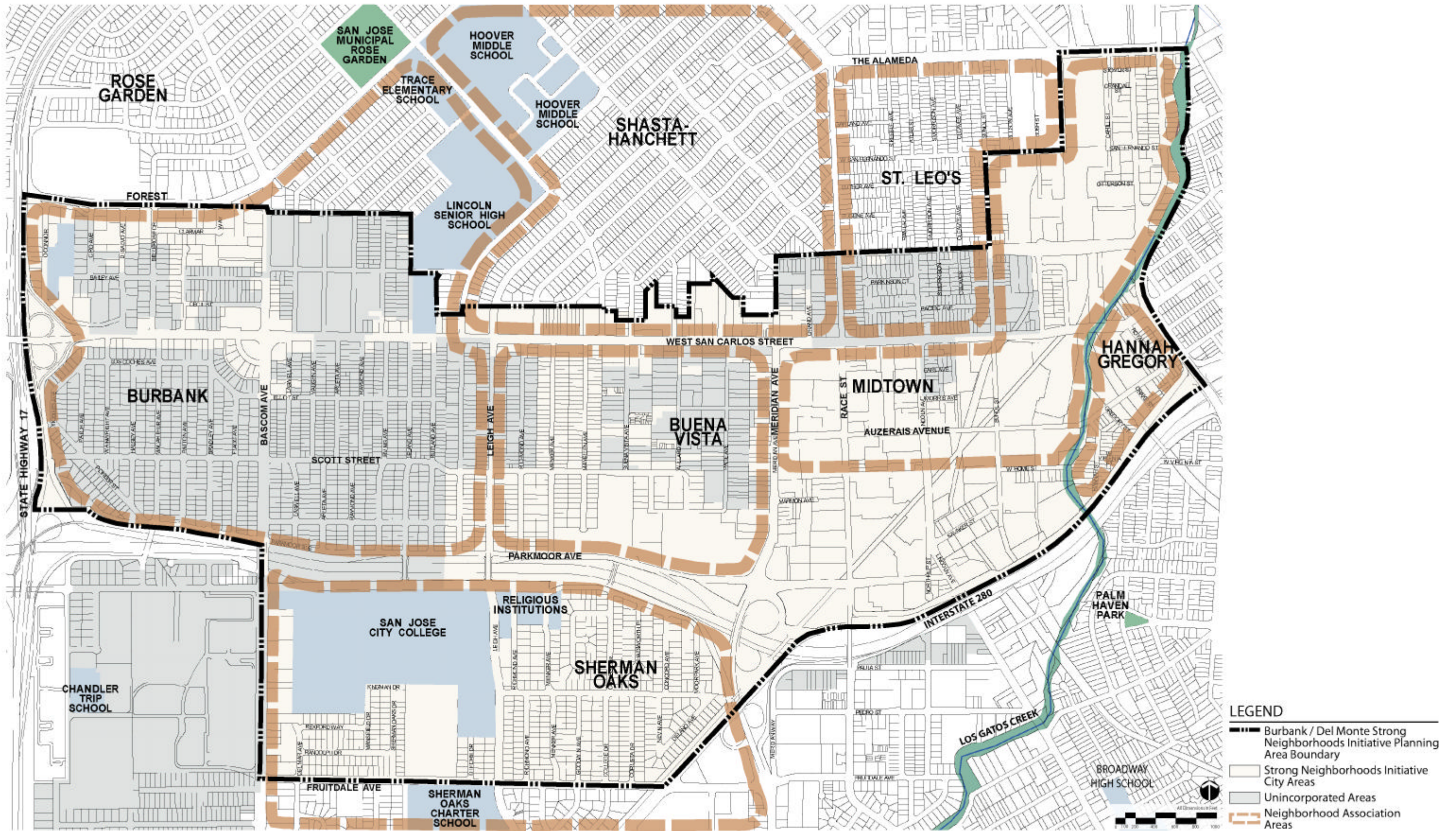
There is a sizeable amount of unincorporated areas within the Burbank/Del Monte planning area. These unincorporated “urban pockets” fall under the jurisdiction of Santa Clara County (see page 8 for further explanation).

The planning area encompasses a number of neighborhood areas and associations, including the Burbank neighborhood, the Buena Vista neighborhood, the Hannah Gregory neighborhood, and the Midtown area, as well as a significant portion of the Sherman Oaks neighborhood. In addition, the planning area overlaps several neighborhoods to the north, such as Shasta-Hanchett, St. Leo’s, and the Diridon Station area.

Throughout this *Neighborhood Improvement Plan* document, “Burbank/Del Monte” will refer to the entire Strong Neighborhoods Initiative planning area (outlined in the adjacent figure), not to be confused with the much smaller, Burbank Neighborhood Association area.

Located immediately west of downtown San José, the Burbank/Del Monte area was originally part of the Rancho de los Coches land grant along the historic Alameda. The area features a mix of residential, commercial (retail and offices) and industrial uses. San José City College is located in the planning area, and the County Hospital is just west of the planning area. Older residential neigh-

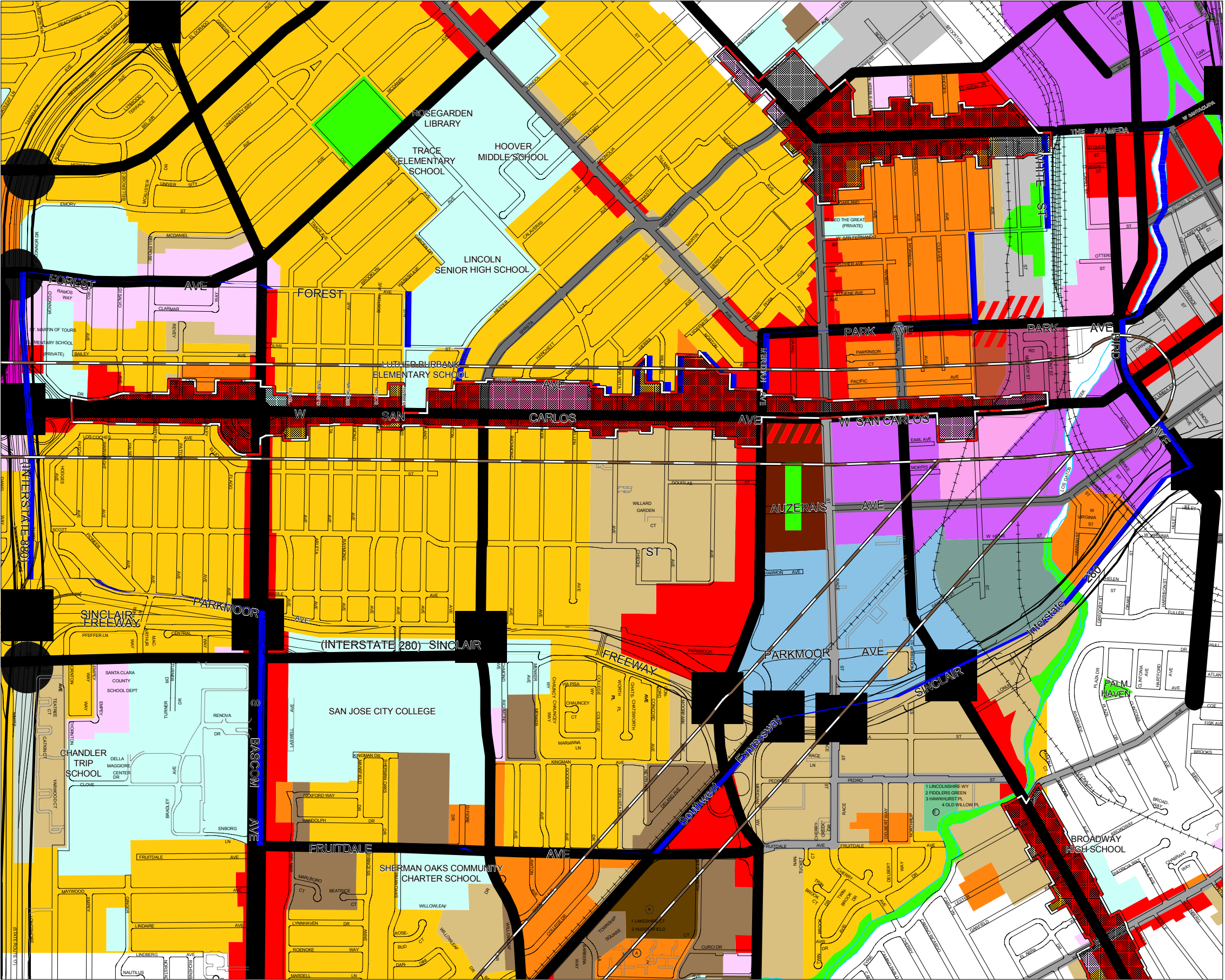




**BURBANK/DEL MONTE STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE AREA**

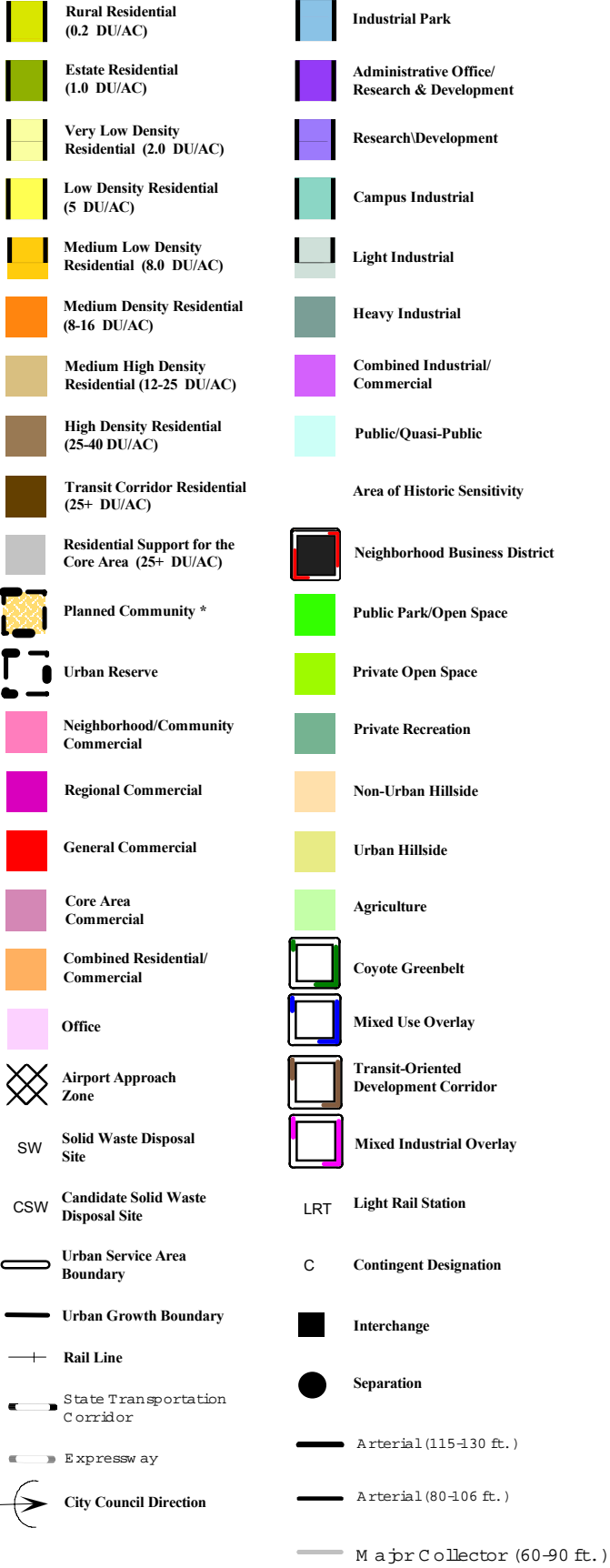
Figure 1





**SAN JOSE 2020 GENERAL PLAN - LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION DIAGRAM**

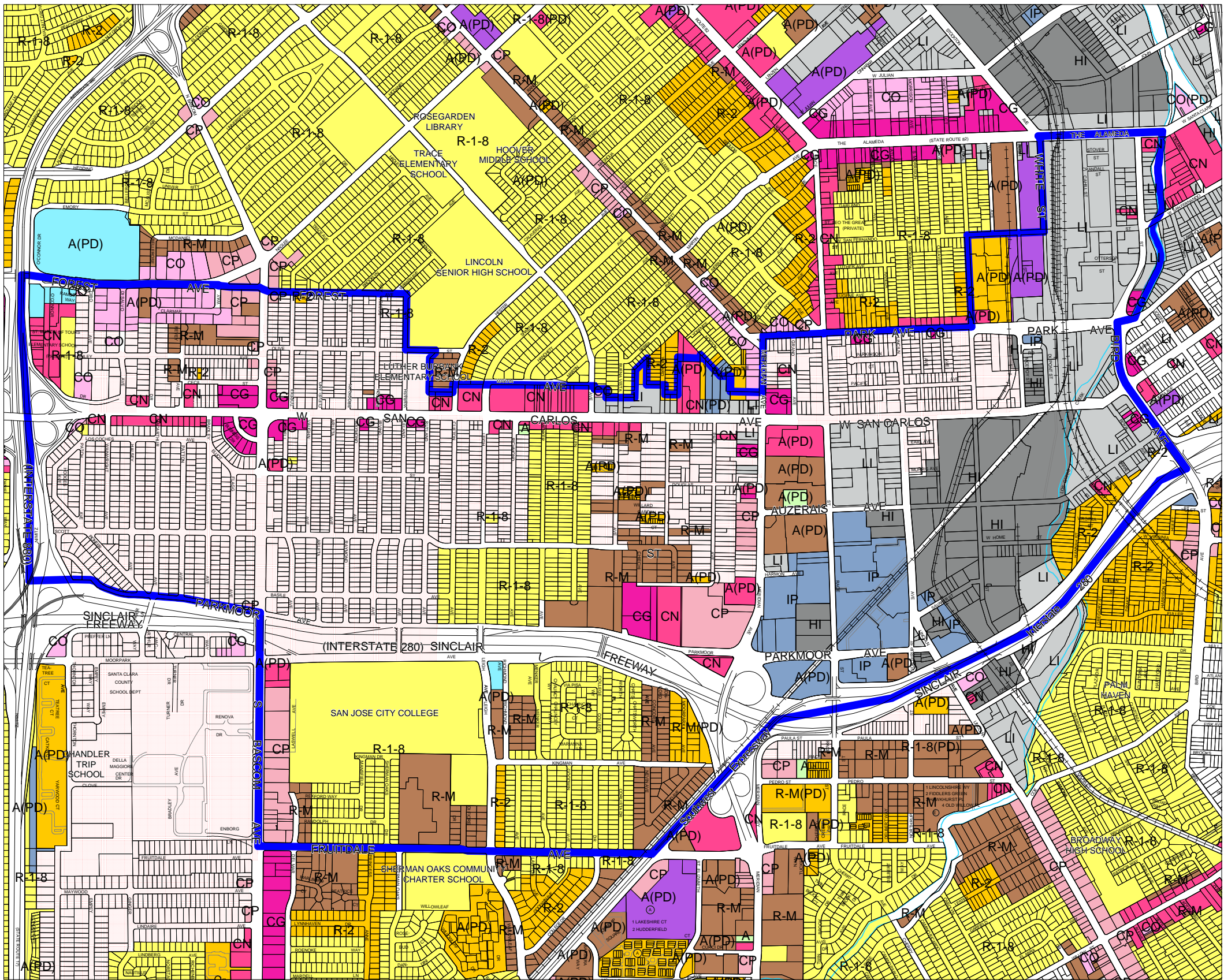
Figure 2 (Prepared by the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, April 10, 2001 - Scale 1 inch = 1000 feet)



Urban Growth Boundary and Urban Service Area Boundary are coterminous unless otherwise depicted



# Burbank / Del Monte SNI Planning Area



## Zoning Districts

- OS.....Open Space  
A.....Agricultural  
  
R-1-8  
R-1-5  
R-1-2  
R-1-1  
}.....Single-Family Residential  
  
R-2.....Two-Family Residential  
  
R-M.....Multi-Family Residential  
R-1-RR.....Rural Residential  
R-MH.....Mobilehome Residential  
  
CO.....Commercial Office  
CP.....Commercial Pedestrian  
CN.....Commercial Neighborhood  
CG.....Commercial General  
IP.....Industrial Park  
LI.....Light Industrial  
HI.....Heavy Industrial  
  
(PD).....Planned Development  
(overlay district that is combined with one of the conventional zoning districts listed above, that allows any specifically approved use or uses)

## Zoning Labels (Sample)

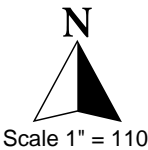
- A(PD).....Zoning District  
93050.....Zone Change File Number  
(e.g., PDC93-08-050)  
34.0 DU/A.....Approved Residential Density  
(dwelling units per acre)

## Map Legend

- .....Zone District Boundary  
  
.....Historic District Boundary  
(work requires Planning permit)  
  
★.....Historic City Landmark  
(work requires Planning permit)

Prepared by the Department of Planning,  
Building and Code Enforcement  
Planning Services Division

June 20, 2001





borhoods about the West San Carlos Street and Bascom Avenue commercial corridors, as well as the area south of Interstate 280, near San José City College. Old as well as new industrial areas are concentrated around the Midtown area between Meridian Avenue and Los Gatos Creek.

With the advent of rail transportation and the invention of the refrigerator rail car in the 1860s, the industrial area (between Meridian Avenue and Los Gatos Creek) became a thriving food processing, packaging and shipment center. Remnants of the old canneries, warehouses, cold storage facilities and related industrial uses and facilities still remain in the area.

Today, the role of the industrial area is in transition. Over the last 20 years, virtually all of the canning facilities in the Santa Clara valley have moved or closed completely. The once thriving Del Monte canning facility is now vacant. Warehousing and canning are giving way to new, high-tech industrial uses and facilities.

The old Cahill (now called Diridon) train station, built in the 1920s is, once again, becoming the region's principal connection to the region. The retrofitted multi-modal Diridon Station will provide regional and local transportation connections, including ACE Train, CalTrain, Amtrak, future BART, Vasona light rail, and VTA buses. In addition to having a stop at Diridon, the new VTA light rail line crosses through portions of the Burbank/Del Monte SNI area, as does the Caltrain line, connecting South Santa Clara County from Gilroy all the way to San Francisco. The area is also served by Highway 17 on the western border, Interstate-280 in the southern portion of the neighborhood, and State route 87 just three to four blocks to the east of the project area.

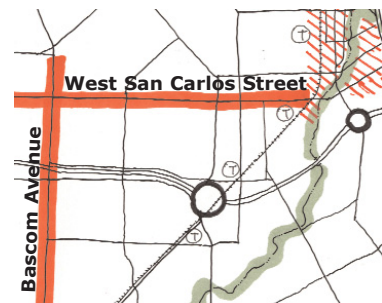
Two major retail corridors bisect the Burbank/Del Monte neighborhood: the West San Carlos/Stevens Creek Street commercial corridor and the Bascom Avenue corridor. Both of these commercial corridors consist of older retail and office strip commercial uses along major arterials. The "Business Circle," at the corner of West



The vacant Del Monte Cannery.



The historic Diridon Train Station (once called Cahill Train Station).



Two major retail corridors: West San Carlos Street and Bascom Avenue.



The successful "Antique Alley" along West San Carlos Street



W. San Carlos St. commercial corridor



Bascom Avenue commercial corridor

San Carlos Street and Bascom Avenue is one of the oldest commercial shopping centers in the Santa Clara Valley. A key feature of the West San Carlos Shopping corridor is "Antique Alley," a cluster of antique shops located near Leigh Avenue. Another interesting fact is that West San Carlos Street was also once home to a major Sears' department store.

Once thriving retail corridors for the City of San José, much of West San Carlos Street and Bascom Avenue are in transition. Many of the older commercial buildings and lot patterns along these corridors are inconsistent with today's more modern retail needs. Smaller buildings and lots have been replaced with more temporary uses such as used car lots, second-hand retail stores and adult businesses. Many of the older buildings lack maintenance and do not have street parking. Both streets lack landscaping improvements, and in many places curb, gutters and sidewalks are discontinuous or non-existent.

Despite these conditions, the City of San José, the County of Santa Clara and the local West San Carlos Business Association have made significant improvements over the past six years. The old Sears' site has been redeveloped into a new modern neighborhood shopping center and residential area. Median landscape improvements have been installed along portions of West San Carlos.

Another effort is the County's recent grant award to help fund landscape improvements on Bascom Avenue. In addition, a major shopping center renovation is nearing completion at the corner of Shasta Avenue and West San Carlos Street.

Another major improvement project is underway for the Midtown area. The Midtown Specific Plan was adopted by the San José City Council on December 8, 1992 to serve as a land use and planning guide for a 210-acre industrial and commercial area between Meridian Avenue and Los Gatos creek, extending north to The Alameda. The goal of the Midtown Specific Plan is to, over time, encourage the creation of a new mixed-use community that includes high-density commercial and residential uses oriented to the new light rail transit lines, while maintaining some existing industrial and service uses in the area.



## Demographics<sup>2</sup>

The Burbank/Del Monte area did not grow as fast as the rest of San José during the past decade. The population increased 8.8% from 12,471 to 13,572 during 1990-2000, while Citywide the population increased by 14.7% to 896,850.

Burbank/Del Monte's Hispanic community grew faster than anywhere else in San José; significantly faster than the City as a whole. Residents of Hispanic origin (which can include white, black and Asian races) make up 51.6% of the neighborhood, up from 34.9% in 1990. That compares with 32.8% of the City, up from 26.6% in 1990.

Residents of Burbank/Del Monte are slightly older than the rest of the City, with a median age of 34.7, compared with 33.7 in San José. Of those 25 years and older, 28.1% have some college education, with 16.4% completing a B.A. or higher degree, compared with 25.3% with degrees Citywide.

The predominant residential designation is medium-density, which allows 8 dwelling units per acre of land. There are some high-density residential areas, mainly in the eastern part of the neighborhood, which support duplexes and apartment buildings and a major cluster of industry at the far east end.

Burbank/Del Monte's median household income has not kept pace with San José. Income in Burbank/Del Monte increased just 5.9% from 1990 to 2000, rising from \$45,770 to \$48,454. By contrast, median income rose 17.5% during the same period in San José, from \$63,030 to \$73,804.



<sup>2</sup> Strategic Economics. Strong Neighborhoods Initiative Benchmark Report. Berkeley, CA. October, 2001.

Home ownership, critical to the long-term strength of a neighborhood, is only 30.8% in Burbank/Del Monte. That's significantly lower than San José's 61.6% rate. Burbank/Del Monte's median home sales price of \$326 per square foot in 2000 is much higher than the Citywide rate of \$295. That, combined with lower median incomes, has resulted in a very high mismatch between housing sales prices and income/supportable mortgage (160% of income).



# Assets & Challenges

## Assets

### THE BURBANK/DEL MONTE COMMUNITY

The Burbank/Del Monte neighborhood draws on the strong ties residents have to their community. Culturally and ethnically diverse, the residents have united to work on enhancing their neighborhood and addressing community concerns. They are proud of their active neighborhood groups, including the Burbank, Buena Vista, St. Leo, and Sherman Oaks neighborhood associations; the Richmond-Menker property owners' association; the newly formed Del Oro tenants' association; the West San Carlos Business Association; local religious organizations; as well as many strong community-based organizations, such as People Acting in Community Together (PACT).

### LOCATION

Residents in the Burbank/Del Monte neighborhood enjoy many benefits from their location in the San Francisco Bay Area and as part of the City of San José, the heart of Silicon Valley. They are close to the downtown, which offers a variety of cultural, recreational, educational, and entertainment opportunities. They're also within minutes of the San José Arena and close to many employment centers and commercial destinations. The temperate climate allows outdoor social and recreational activities throughout most of the year.

### TRANSPORTATION

The area has exceptional transportation connections. It's home to the multimodal Diridon Station, which will ultimately provide local and regional transportation connections, via ACE Train, Caltrain, Amtrak, BART and Vasona light rails, and VTA buses.



The Burbank/Del Monte neighborhood is only minutes from the S.J. Arena.



Caltrain is one of the many public transportation connections available out of Burbank/Del Monte.



The Burbank Theater marquis is a unique neighborhood landmark.



Residents rely on religious institutions to share the facilities with the public.



The Los Gatos Creek Trail is a major asset to the neighborhood.

### **HISTORIC CHARACTER**

The rich history of the area is reflected throughout the neighborhood. The area was once characterized by orchards, where farmers worked to produce fruit for the canneries. Today, the Del Monte tower, where the cannery once operated, still stands as an icon, recalling the agricultural history of the area. The Burbank Theater marquis and the Diridon Station are also unique landmarks, linking the neighborhood to its past. Architectural styles in the neighborhood are varied, including bungalow, Craftsman, Colonial Revival, Tudor, and Victorian, and many early 20th century masonry buildings.

### **PROXIMITY TO SCHOOLS, RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS AND OPEN SPACE**

Residents rely on their schools and churches as places for education, recreation and community gathering. School and church facilities are often shared with the public to accommodate after-school activities, or to host community meetings. Sports fields and playgrounds that are tied to educational institutions are frequently used for recreation. San José City College, Luther Burbank Elementary School, Sherman Oaks Community/Charter School, and other nearby schools are especially valued resources, as are the many religious institutions in the area.

The Los Gatos Creek trail, part of a regional trails network, is a major asset to the neighborhood, providing connections to larger open space resources and destinations in the vicinity.

Community members enjoy nearby parks, such as Rosegarden and Palm Haven, and several parks are planned in the neighborhood, including O'Connor Park, Midtown Park, Buena Vista Tot Lot, and St. Elizabeth/Curci Park.

### **COMMERCIAL USE**

Burbank/Del Monte has greatly diversified since its early agricultural days. Commercial corridors, West San Carlos Street and Bascom Avenue, offer a mix of professional offices, restaurants, small



family-owned businesses, and larger franchises. There is also convenient access to Downtown commercial uses, as well as to nearby regional malls, such as the Valley Fair Shopping Center.

### PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The City of San José offers a variety of programs and services in the Burbank/Del Monte area. Residents especially appreciate adult literacy programs, such as English as a Second Language; after-school recreation programs for youth; and services for seniors.

### PROJECTS UNDERWAY

City staff and community members are working diligently to facilitate positive changes in the neighborhood.

A few improvement projects and organizing efforts already underway include:

- A joint-use agreement for developing a 17,000 square foot shared recreational facility at San José City College;
- New park development near St. Elizabeth and Curci;
- Completion of the Los Gatos Creek Trail from Lincoln to downtown;
- High visibility crosswalks along Meridian Avenue;
- Curb, gutter, and sidewalk improvements on Scott Street (County working jointly with the City);
- The accelerated paving program for sealing or resurfacing Burbank/Del Monte neighborhood streets;
- Bascom Avenue streetscape master plan implementation;
- Formation of the Adult Business Action Team;
- Formation of the Richmond-Menker Action Task Force;
- Business improvement strategy update by the W. San Carlos Business Association; and
- Redevelopment Agency Economic Development Strategy for West San Carlos Street.
- Installation of antique-style lights on Arleta, Raymond and Bascom Avenues.



Zanatto's is a popular neighborhood-serving grocery/deli in the area.



Residents especially appreciate recreation programs for youth.

## Challenges

### **CIRCULATION/TRANSPORTATION**

#### *Cut-through Traffic and Speeding*

West San Carlos Street and the Sherman Oaks neighborhood around San José City College suffer from traffic congestion, exacerbating cut-through and speeding issues on nearby residential streets.

Residents are concerned about what they feel is a high volume of traffic and excessive speeds on some residential streets. Residents report that motorists seeking to avoid congestion and stoplights on major thoroughfares often cut through residential neighborhoods, creating an uncomfortable pedestrian environment.

The area around San José City College is reported to be especially subject to cut-through traffic and speeding because of frequent access between Interstate-280 and the College. The Burbank and Buena Vista neighborhoods between Bascom and Interstate-280 also report high levels of cut-through traffic and perceived speeding.

#### *Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety*

Residents believe that the typical heavy volume of traffic can make many intersections difficult for pedestrian crossing. This is especially true at major intersections frequently used by students, such as at San José City College and near neighborhood schools. Many intersections could benefit from crosswalk improvements, and the addition of more stop signs or traffic signals.

In general, the area lacks friendly connections for bicyclists and pedestrians. There are very few bike lanes, walkways, or pedestrian-friendly streets, and many sidewalks could benefit from installation or repair activity. The neighborhood could benefit from better pedestrian and bicycle links to the regional Los Gatos Creek trail network, to nearby open space resources, and to community facilities, such as the City College and local schools.



Proximity to interstate-280 exacerbates traffic congestion in the neighborhood.



The area needs friendly connections for pedestrians and cyclists.



## PARKING

The most significant parking problems are reported on neighborhood streets where multi-family housing is located, such as near the Richmond-Menker apartments. At the time many of these multi-family units were built, there were minimal established standards for parking, and people's reliance on automobiles was not as strong as it is today. In addition, a higher than average number of occupants living in apartment units also contributes significantly to parking congestion in the neighborhood. This situation is tied to a much larger economic issue in the Bay Area: high housing costs require many low-income families to share dwelling units and the increased number of residents exceeds the available parking spaces allocated for each unit. With a shortage of parking spaces in apartment complexes, the overflow automobiles park on adjacent streets, after creating an on-street parking shortage.

Parking is also tight around San José City College with the influx of students, faculty and visitors to the College. This situation should be somewhat improved by the new parking garage that the College is in the process of building.

Businesses along West San Carlos Street could also benefit from additional parking to make retail use more convenient. Many commercial use lots along West San Carlos Street are individually owned, and several provide minimal on-site parking.

## PARKS & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Although there are a number of parks planned for the area (O'Connor Park, Midtown Park, and Buena Vista Tot Lot), there are currently no parks within the Burbank/Del Monte Strong Neighborhoods Initiative area. The neighborhood also does not have a dedicated publicly-run neighborhood center. There are no indoor places specifically designed to accommodate public programs



Residents rely on local schools, such as San José City College, to share recreational space.



Residents would like to explore options for expanding programs at Sherman Oaks Community Center.

and services and to hold community meetings. Residents rely on local schools and religious institutions to share their recreational and gathering spaces with the public.

### **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

Residents appreciate the ESL courses and after-school programs that are hosted by local schools. But many believe that programs hosted by the Sherman Oaks Community Center do not adequately serve the needs of the immediate community. Overall, programs and services offered in the neighborhood could better reflect the needs of the diverse population, in terms of ethnicity, language, income level, and age.

Community members would like to establish new programs and services and improve existing ones, especially in early childhood education, adult education/literacy, affordable childcare, diverse after-school recreation programs for youth and teens, as well as programs and services that serve the elderly.

In addition to expanding and improving on existing programs, potential barriers to program participation also need to be addressed. Several barriers identified by residents include, lack of transportation, lack of affordable childcare services (especially in conjunction with ESL classes), and ineffective outreach about programs and services offered in the neighborhood.

### **MAINTENANCE**

Residents are concerned about a lack of overall maintenance for aesthetic, environmental and safety reasons. Lack of maintenance creates a perception that residents are disinterested in their neighborhood, which may attract crime to the area.

Multi-family housing areas in particular, suffer from many maintenance issues. This may be due to overcrowding and lack of on-site



property management. As a result, there are often visible accumulations of trash, overflowing dumpsters, illegal dumping, stray shopping carts and graffiti at these locations.

Many seemingly unattended sites in the neighborhood are used as dumping grounds, attracting illegal dumping of large bulky waste and unwanted household items.

Some street surfacing in the neighborhood could use attention to address any potholes that may need filling or sidewalk improvements that may be beneficial to an area.

## **HOUSING**

Burbank/Del Monte is one of the oldest residential neighborhoods in San José and many of the older homes are now visibly deteriorating.

There are many absentee landlords of multi-family units and most have no professional, on-site property management. This can result in substandard living conditions. The appearance and function of multi-family housing needs great improvement: overcrowding may be prevalent, private open space is often scarce, parking is sometimes inadequate and many site amenities are minimal.

The poor condition of the Richmond-Menker apartment complex is of particular concern to Burbank/Del Monte residents. The 31 eight-plex units have 12 different property owners. The residents feel that the blighted condition of this complex reflects poorly on the neighborhood as a whole.

The neighborhood needs a mix of affordable rental and owner-occupied units, as well as market-rate housing. There is a critical need for more affordable housing options in the area located near transit so new residents will not necessarily aggravate the current parking and traffic congestion situations.



West San Carlos Street is home to many used car lots.



Residents would like to improve unattractive facades and signage on commercial corridors.

## COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

Burbank/Del Monte residents want to strengthen family-friendly, neighborhood-serving commercial services. However, some commercial uses along W. San Carlos Street and Bascom Avenue, such as the used car lots and adult businesses, are inconsistent with that vision. Lot sizes and configurations along these thoroughfares make it difficult to construct new buildings to meet optimum retail requirements. There is minimal parking adjacent to stores, which also makes retail use inconvenient. The area also could benefit from sidewalk and crosswalk improvements to attract pedestrians to the commercial corridors.

In addition, these major arterials are not very visually appealing. There is only limited landscaping and there are many older deteriorating buildings. Many facades and awnings are outdated, and the area features unattractive billboards and pole signs. Because of the City-County interface in the neighborhood, there is also inconsistency in the application of design and development standards.

## NEIGHBORHOOD AMBIANCE

The Burbank/Del Monte area can become a much more enjoyable place to live with some beautification projects. Many parts of the neighborhood could benefit from landscaping and streetscape enhancements.

Some residential neighborhoods already enjoy mature street trees, while other areas could benefit from new plantings or infill plantings to create attractive, canopy-lined streets.

The commercial street environment along West San Carlos Street and Bascom Avenue could also be improved with landscaping, lighting improvements, façade improvements, attractive signage, and public art.