

See Land Use Map

## LAND USE DEFINITIONS

The following definitions correspond to the categories on the Land Use and Circulation Map. Each definition includes standards for density or intensity of use. For residential categories, densities are expressed in terms of persons per acre as well as housing units per acre. The number of persons per acre is based on the number of units multiplied by the 1990 average household size of 2.24 persons. The standards for population density are intended to be a planning guideline and are not intended to establish an absolute limit. In non-residential areas, intensity is expressed using “floor area ratios” or FAR. FAR is the ratio of building area to lot area on a site. The FAR standards are consistent with those contained in the City’s Zoning Ordinance. They were initially established to estimate daytime population and employment in different parts of the City. In the definitions below, FARs represent an expectation of the overall intensity of future development. Actual FARs on individual sites will vary.

### Open Space

**Publicly Owned Conservation Land:** Open lands whose primary purpose is the preservation and enhancement of the natural state of the land and its plants and animals. Only compatible resource management, recreation, and educational activities are allowed.

**Public Park:** Open lands whose primary purpose is active recreation and whose character is essentially urban. These areas have been planted with non-indigenous landscaping and require a concerted effort to maintain recreational facilities and landscaping.

**Streamside Open Space:** The corridor of riparian vegetation along a natural stream. Hiking, biking, and riding trails may be developed in the streamside open space. The corridor will generally vary in width up to 200 feet either side of the center line of the creek. However, along San Francisquito Creek between El Camino Real and the Sand Hill Road bridge over the creek, the open space corridor varies in width between approximately 80 and 310 feet from the center line of the creek. The aerial delineation of the open space in this segment of the corridor, as opposed to other segments of the corridor, is shown to approximate scale on the Proposed Land Use and Circulation Map.

**Open Space/Controlled Development:** Land having all the characteristics of open space but upon which some development may be allowed. Open space amenities must be retained in these areas. Residential densities range from 0.1 to 1 dwelling unit per acre but may rise to a maximum of 2 units per acre where second units are allowed, and population densities range from 1 to 4 persons per acre.

### Residential

**Single Family Residential:** Includes one dwelling unit on each lot as well as conditional uses requiring permits such as churches and schools. Specific areas may be zoned to allow second units or duplexes where they would be compatible with neighborhood character and not create traffic and parking problems. The net density in single family areas will range from 1 to 7 units per acre, but may rise to a maximum of 14 units in areas where second units or duplexes are allowed. Population densities will range from 1 to 30 persons per acre.

**Multiple Family Residential:** The permitted number of housing units will vary by area, depending on existing land use, proximity to major streets and public transit, distance to shopping, and environmental problems. Net densities will range from 8 to 40 units and 8 to



90 persons per acre. Density should be on the lower end of the scale next to single family residential areas. Densities higher than what is permitted by zoning may be allowed where measurable community benefits will be derived, services and facilities are available, and the net effect will be compatible with the overall Comprehensive Plan.

**Village Residential:** Allows residential dwellings that are designed to contribute to the harmony and pedestrian orientation of a street or neighborhood. Housing types include single family houses on small lots, second units, cottage clusters, courtyard housing, duplexes, fourplexes, and small apartment buildings. Design standards will be prepared for each housing type to ensure that development successfully contributes to the street and neighborhood and minimizes potential negative impacts. Net densities will range up to 20 units per acre.

**Transit-oriented Residential:** Allows higher density residential dwellings in the University Avenue/Downtown and California Avenue commercial centers within a walkable distance, approximately 2,000 feet, of the City's two multi-modal transit stations. The land use category is intended to generate residential densities that support substantial use of public transportation and especially the use of Caltrain. Design standards will be prepared to ensure that development successfully contributes to the street and minimizes potential negative impacts. Individual project performance standards will be developed, including parking, to ensure that a significant portion of the residents will use alternative modes of transportation. Net density will range up to 50 units per acre, with minimum densities to be considered during development of new City zoning regulations.

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## Commercial

**Neighborhood Commercial:** Includes shopping centers with off-street parking or a cluster of streetfront stores that serve the immediate neighborhood. Examples include Alma Plaza, Charleston Center, Edgewood Center, and Midtown. Typical uses include supermarkets, bakeries, drugstores, variety stores, barber shops, restaurants, self-service laundries, dry cleaners, and hardware stores. In some locations, residential and mixed use projects may also locate in this category. Non-residential floor area ratios will range up to 0.4.

**Regional/Community Commercial:** Larger shopping centers and districts that have wider variety goods and services than the neighborhood shopping areas. They rely on larger trade areas and include such uses as department stores, bookstores, furniture stores, toy stores, apparel shops, restaurants, theaters, and non-retail services such as offices and banks. Examples include Stanford Shopping Center, Town and Country Village, and University Avenue/Downtown. Non-residential floor area ratios range from 0.35 to 2.

**Service Commercial:** Facilities providing citywide and regional services and relying on customers arriving by car. These uses do not necessarily benefit from being in high volume pedestrian areas such as shopping centers or Downtown. Typical uses include auto services and dealerships, motels, lumberyards, appliance stores, and restaurants, including fast service types. In almost all cases, these uses require good automobile and service access so that customers can safely load and unload without impeding traffic. In some locations, residential and mixed use projects may be appropriate in this land use category. Examples of Service Commercial areas include San Antonio Road, El Camino Real, and Embarcadero Road northeast of the Bayshore Freeway. Non-residential floor area ratios will range up to 0.4.

**Mixed Use:** This category includes Live/Work, Retail/Office, Residential/Retail and Residential/Office development. Its purpose is to increase the types of spaces available for living and working to encourage a mix of compatible uses in certain areas, and to encourage the upgrading of certain areas with buildings designed to provide a high quality pedestrian-oriented street environment. Mixed Use may include permitted activities mixed within the same building or within separate buildings on the same site or on nearby sites. Live/Work refers to one or more individuals living in the same building where they earn their livelihood, usually in professional or light industrial activities. Retail/Office, Residential/Retail, and Residential/Office provide other variations to Mixed Use with Retail typically on the ground floor and Residential on upper floors. Design standards will be developed to ensure that development is compatible and contributes to the character of the street and neighborhood. Floor area ratios will range up to 1.15, although Residential/Retail and Residential/Office development located along transit corridors or near multi-modal centers will range up to 2.0 FAR with up to 3.0 FAR possible in areas resistant to revitalization. The FAR above 1.15 will be used for residential purposes.

**Commercial Hotel:** This category allows facilities for use by temporary overnight occupants on a transient basis, such as hotels and motels, with associated conference centers and similar uses. Restaurants and other eating facilities, meeting rooms, small retail shops, personal services, and other services ancillary to the hotel are also allowed. This category can be applied in combination with another land use category. Floor area ratio will range up to 1.5 for the hotel portion of the site.

**Research/Office Park:** Office, research, and manufacturing establishments whose operations are buffered from adjacent residential uses. Stanford Research Park is an example. Other uses that may be included are educational institutions and child care facilities. Compatible commercial service uses such as banks and restaurants, and residential or mixed uses that would benefit from the proximity to employment centers, will also be allowed. Additional uses, including retail services, restaurants, commercial recreation, churches, and private clubs may also be located in Research/Office Park areas, but only if they are found to be compatible with the surrounding area through the conditional use permit process. Maximum allowable floor area ratio ranges from 0.3 to 0.5, depending on site conditions.

**Light Industrial:** Wholesale and storage warehouses and the manufacturing, processing, repairing, and packaging of goods. Emission of fumes, noise, smoke, or other pollutants is strictly controlled. Examples include portions of the area south of Oregon Avenue between El Camino Real and Alma Street that historically have included these land uses, and the San Antonio Road industrial area. Compatible residential and mixed use projects may also be located in this category. Floor area ratio will range up to 0.5.

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## Institutional

**School District Lands:** Properties owned or leased by public school districts and used for educational, recreational, or other non-commercial, non-industrial purposes. Floor area ratio may not exceed 1.0.

**Major Institution/Special Facilities:** Institutional, academic, governmental, and community service uses and lands that are either publicly owned or operated as non-profit organizations. Examples are hospitals and City facilities.



**Major Institution/University Lands:** Academic and academic reserve areas of Stanford University. Population density and building intensity limits are established by conditional use permit with Santa Clara County. These lands are further designated by the following sub-categories of land use:

- **Major Institution/University Lands/Campus Single Family Residential:** Single family areas where the occupancy of the units is significantly or totally limited to individuals or families affiliated with the institution.
- **Major Institution/University Lands/Campus Multiple Family Residential:** Multiple family areas where the occupancy of the units is significantly or totally limited to individuals or families affiliated with the institution.
- **Major Institution/University Lands/Campus Educational Facilities:** Academic lands with a full complement of activities and densities that give them an urban character. Allowable uses are academic institutions and research facilities, student and faculty housing, and support services. Increases in student enrollment and faculty/staff size must be accompanied by measures that mitigate traffic and housing impacts.
- **Major Institution/University Lands/Academic Reserve and Open Space:** Academic lands having all the characteristics of open space but upon which some academic development may be allowed provided that open space amenities are retained. These lands are important for their aesthetic and ecological value as well as their potential for new academic uses.

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## CITY STRUCTURE

### Fostering a Sense of Community

#### **GOAL L-2: An Enhanced Sense of “Community” with Development Designed to Foster Public Life and Meet Citywide Needs.**

One of the first steps towards achieving this goal will be to recognize the physical elements that create “community” in Palo Alto. The traditional land use diagram is supplemented by a conceptual diagram (Map L-5) that defines how different parts of the community function and relate to one another. In essence, the diagram describes the “structure” of the City. Areas are classified as Residential Neighborhoods, Centers, or Employment Districts. Understanding the linkages and connections between these areas and within the region is critical to integrating land use and transportation planning. By recognizing and building on this structure, Palo Alto will remain a community where social contact and public life are encouraged and quality urban design is maintained.

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#### **POLICY L-10:**

**Maintain a citywide structure of Residential Neighborhoods, Centers, and Employment Districts. Integrate these areas with the City’s and the region’s transit and street system.**

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#### **POLICY L-11:**

**Promote increased compatibility, interdependence, and support between commercial and mixed use centers and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.**

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See Map L-5 showing City Structure, including Residential Neighborhoods, Centers, and Employment Districts

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Goals and policies in the Transportation and Business and Economics Element reinforce the City structure described here

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Embracing the New Century