



City Council
June 24, 2025

Item #6 RTC 25-737
Study Session: Draft
Revisions to the El Camino
Real Specific Plan

Community Development Department
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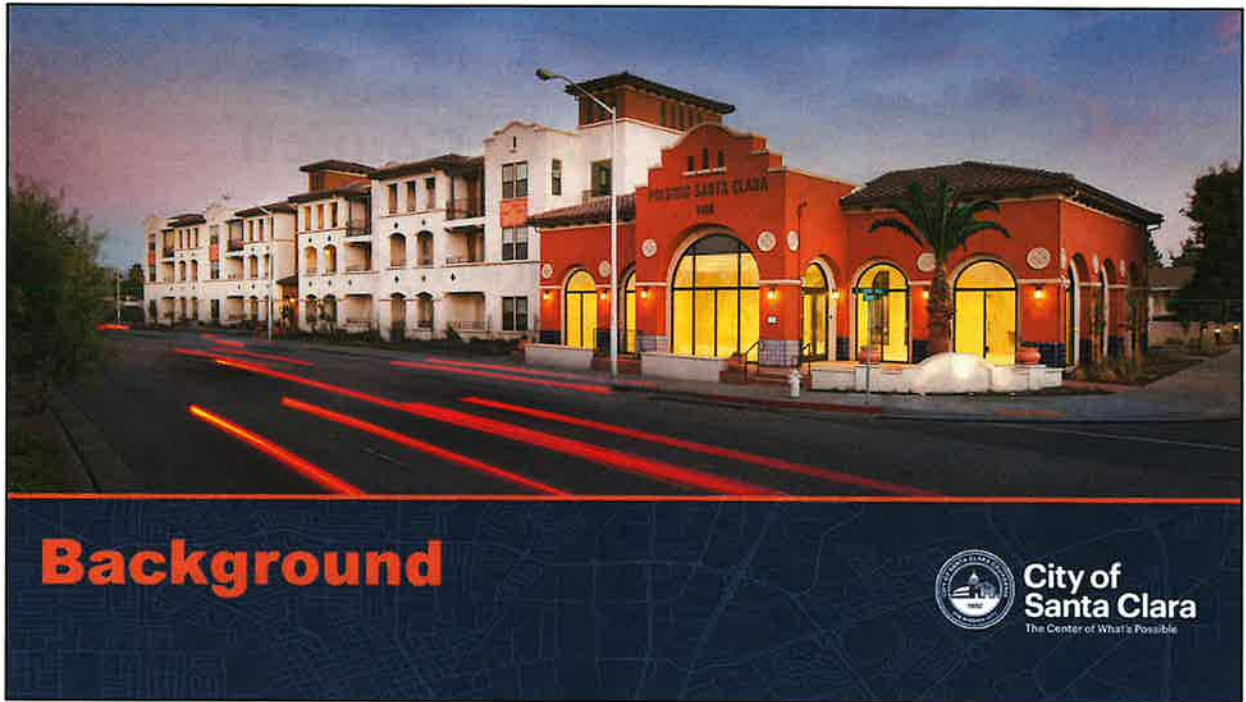


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Agenda

- Project Background
- Overview of the Specific Plan
- Key Revisions
- Public Comments
- Council Feedback
- Next Steps
- Q&A

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What is the project?

- A **Specific Plan** for El Camino Real in Santa Clara
 - Refine and implement the 2035 General Plan vision for the El Camino Real Focus Area
 - Focus Area – area identified in General Plan to accommodate growth
 - Priority Development Area – area designated with State for higher density, transit-oriented growth
- An **Environmental Impact Report (EIR)** to assess potential environmental impacts

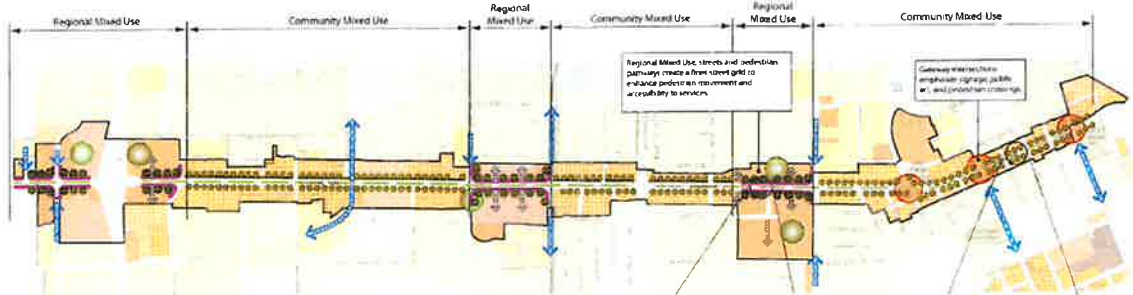
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Background

2010 General Plan El Camino Real Focus Area

“The General Plan vision for El Camino Real is to transform this Focus Area from a series of automobile- oriented strip-malls to a tree-lined, pedestrian- and transit-oriented corridor with a mix of residential and retail uses.”



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Background

How did we get here?

- **2010** General Plan Update changed corridor to residential / mixed-use
- **2017** – City Council direction to prepare Specific Plan to provide more detailed policies for new development
- **2017 – 2021** staff worked with consultant and CAC to prepare a draft Specific Plan
- **June/Sept 2021** – City Council direction to modify Specific Plan
- **March 2023**– Start of Phase 2 to revise the Specific Plan per Council direction
- **August 29, 2023** – City Council direction on the draft revised Land Use Plan

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Background

2021 City Council Direction on Plan Revisions

- Prepare a **reduced density** Specific Plan to address community concerns over residential adjacency and the **impacts of higher-density development** (e.g. shadows).
- Retain enough development capacity (**4,400 residential units**) and elements of the prior Specific Plan to support mixed-use development

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Specific Plan

Overview and Council Direction



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El Camino Real Specific Plan

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Vision + Framework

Chapter 3: Land Use

Chapter 4: Development + Design Standards – *PROPOSED REVISIONS*

Chapter 5: Transportation + Public Spaces

Chapter 6: Implementation

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Chapter 3: Land Use

- Land Use policies
- Land Use Plan (zoning map)
- Development growth potential
- Open Space Plan (existing and proposed open spaces)



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Land Use Plan Revisions

Key Changes – Direction Provided by Council

1. Adds a new, lower density land use designation for townhomes
2. Reduced density along sensitive interfaces (proximity to single-family, particularly on the north side of ECR)
3. Revised Land Use Plan to be consistent with existing/recent entitlements
4. Reduced development potential - 4,400 residential unit capacity (from 6,200 units in the original plan)

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Chapter 3: Land Use

Revised Plan – 4 Mixed-Use / Residential Designations

Regional Corridor Mixed-Use

- (Activity Center)
- 55-100 DU/AC
- Minimum FAR 0.2



Corridor Mixed-Use

- 45-65 DU/AC
- Commercial frontage required at some locations



Corridor Residential

- 26-45 DU/AC (4-story)



Corridor Residential - Low

- 12-25 DU/AC (3-story)



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Regional Commercial Mixed Use

Residential Density: 55-100 dwelling units/acre

Min Commercial FAR: 0.2

Allowed Height: 5-6 stories

- Retail (1-story or ground floor)
- Ground floor commercial required along ECR
- Pedestrian-oriented frontages and facades
- 5-6-story multifamily housing
- Mostly structured parking
- Large publicly-accessible open space
- Significant public streetscape and pedestrian improvements



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Activity Center Conceptual Diagrams

Moonlite Center

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Corridor Mixed Use

Residential Density: 45-65
dwelling units/acre

Allowed Height: 4-5 stories

- Retail (1-story or ground floor)
- Commercial required in specific locations along ECR
- Medium-to-high density residential at smaller cross-streets
- Parking behind buildings, below-grade, or in structures
- Some shared open space



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Corridor Residential

Residential Density: 26-45
dwelling units/acre

Allowed Height: 3-4 stories

- Low- to mid-rise residential building types (e.g. garden apartments)
- Commercial ground floor uses allowed and encouraged, but not required
- Garages, tuck-under, or below grade parking
- Applies to small- to moderate-sized parcels



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Corridor Residential - Low

Residential Density: 12-25
dwelling units/acre

Allowed Height: 2-3 stories

- Townhomes
- Transition to adjacent single-family neighborhoods
- Applies to small, shallow parcels
- Commercial ground floor uses allowed, but not required

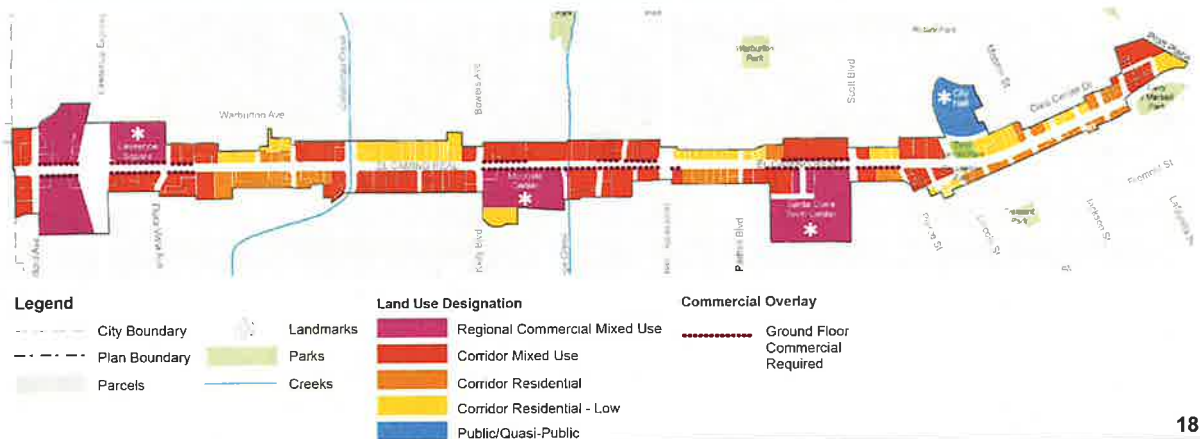


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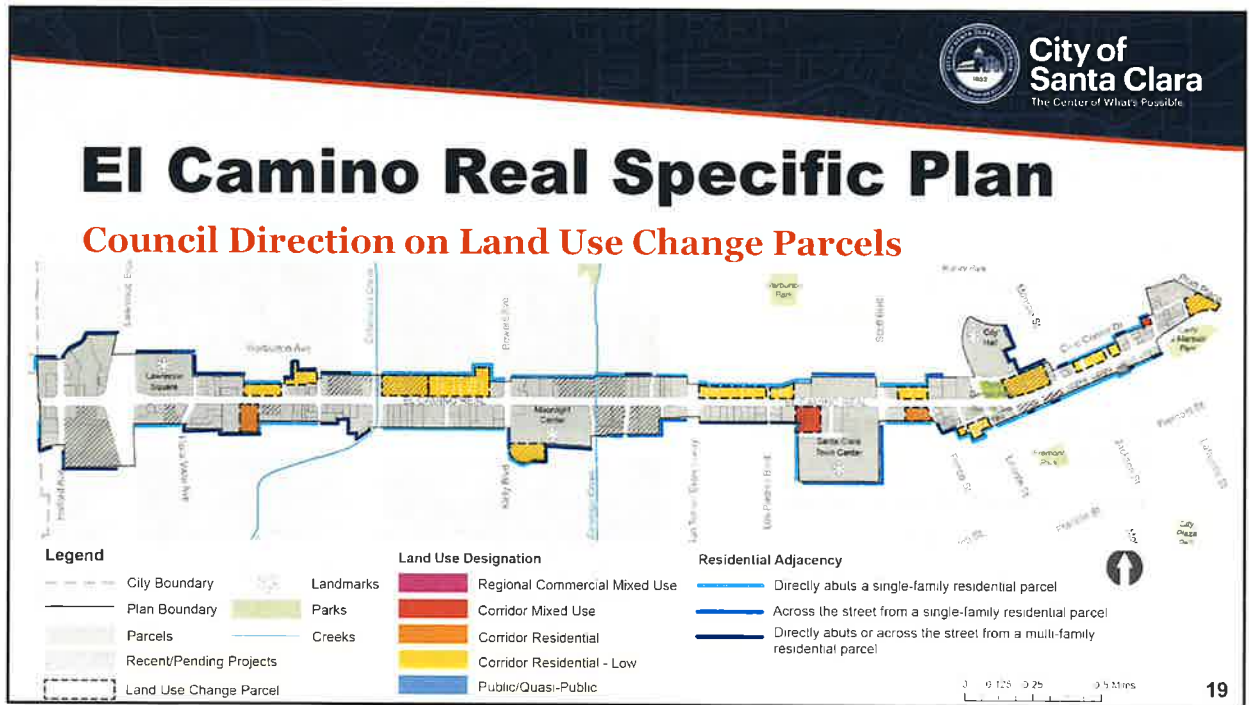
El Camino Real Specific Plan

Council Direction on New Land Use Plan



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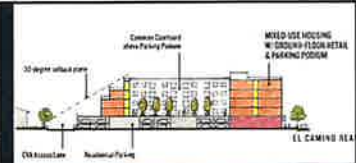
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Chapter 4: Development and Design Standards

- Land Use Table of permitted uses
- Development Standards (density, heights, setbacks, open space)
- Objective Design Standards



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Chapter 4 Proposed Revisions

Key Changes

1. Added development and design standards for the new Corridor Residential – Low land use designation
2. Revised neighborhood transition standards for North side of ECR-30-degree daylight plane
3. Minor revisions to development and objective design standards to align with recently adopted Zoning Code and best practices
4. Replaced site plan for Corridor Mixed Use (Morse Lane site)

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Townhome Standards

Minimum Distance Between Buildings:

When townhomes face each other onto a landscaped central path/open space there shall be a **minimum width of 30 feet from building face to building face**. Balconies may project up to five feet from either building face into the central path/open space.

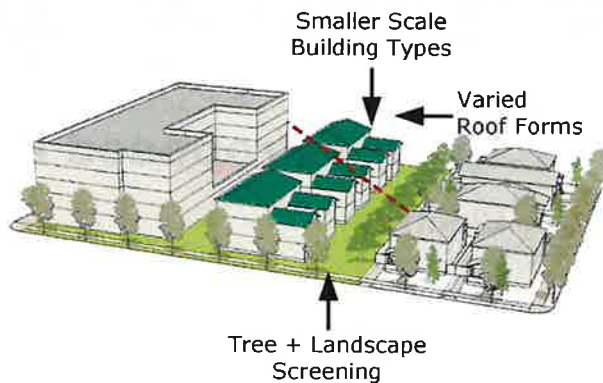


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Neighborhood Transition Strategies

- Daylight Plane
- Building setbacks
- Upper-story step backs
- Smaller scale/house-form building types and varied roof lines
- To the extent feasible, orient windows and balconies away from existing homes
- Landscape buffers



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Landscape Screening Between Uses

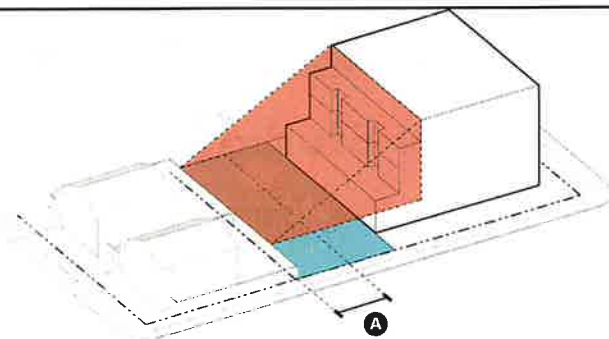
A landscape buffer shall be provided between residential and mixed-use/nonresidential uses, and between single-family uses and multi-family uses containing three or more units. Buffer areas shall include a **minimum 5-foot-wide planter strip** with a **minimum of one tree per 20 to 40 linear feet on center** depending on trees species and canopy at maturity. Buffer areas shall also be planted with ground cover and shrubs.



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Daylight Plane

- **30-Degrees** on N side of ECR
- **45-degrees** on S side



A Minimum Interior Setback

--- Property Line

30° setback plane measured at 6 ft above grade from property line



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Shadow Studies

Test Site – Morse Lane/ECR



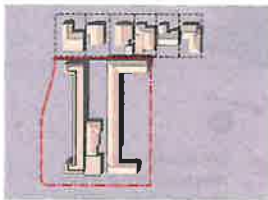
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Shadow Studies

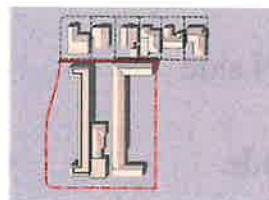
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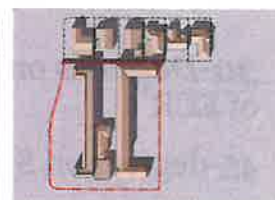
March 20 - Spring Equinox - 2:00pm



June 20 - Summer Solstice - 2:00pm



September 22 - Fall Equinox - 2:00pm



December 21 - Winter Solstice - 2:00pm



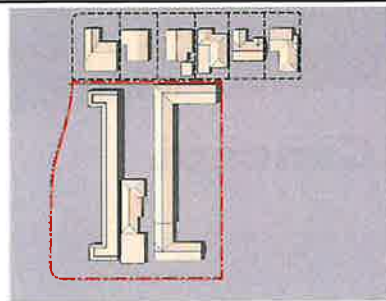
FUTURE



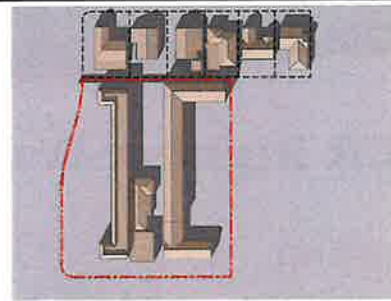
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Shadow Studies



June 20 - Summer Solstice - 2:00pm



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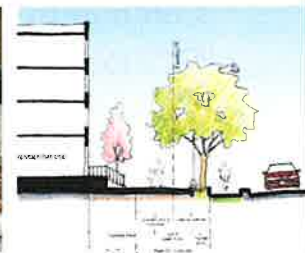
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Chapter 5: Transportation + Public Spaces

- Mobility Framework
- Proposed Bike Network
- Proposed Pedestrian Network
- Sidewalk and public realm standards
- ROW Concept for ECR
- Parking and curbside management

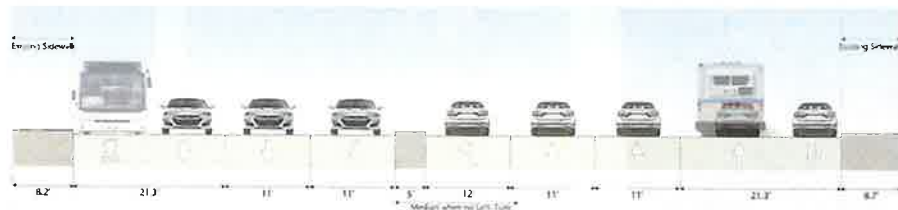


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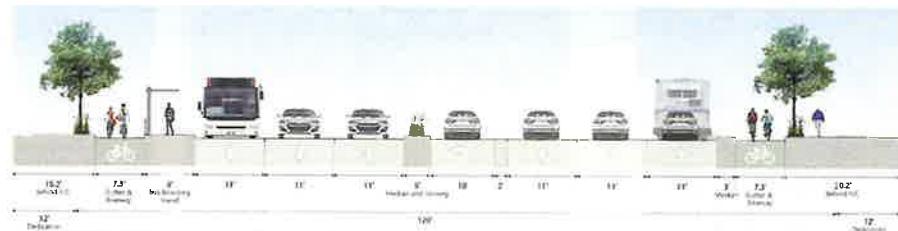


ECR Right-of-Way Concept

Existing Condition



Future



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Recent Meetings and Engagement

- CAC Meeting – *December 16, 2024*
- Community Open House Workshop - *Feb. 24, 2025*
- Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce – *Mar. 25, 2025*
- Community Meeting – *April 2, 2025*
- PC Study Session – *June 11, 2025*
- Social Media Posts (Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor) – *June 10 and June 22, 2025*

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El Camino Real Specific Plan



Public Feedback

■ Land Use

- Concerns regarding vacant retail and current market conditions to implement the Plan
- Encourage active residential uses on ECR (e.g., lobbies, community spaces)
- Questions regarding loss of original Plan residential capacity (6,200 units in original Plan, 4,400 units under revised Plan)

■ Mobility

- Appreciation for bike lanes and other multi-modal improvements in the Plan
- Concerns over loss of on-street parking
- San Tomas intersection needs safety improvements
- More reliable transit needed

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El Camino Real Specific Plan



Next Steps

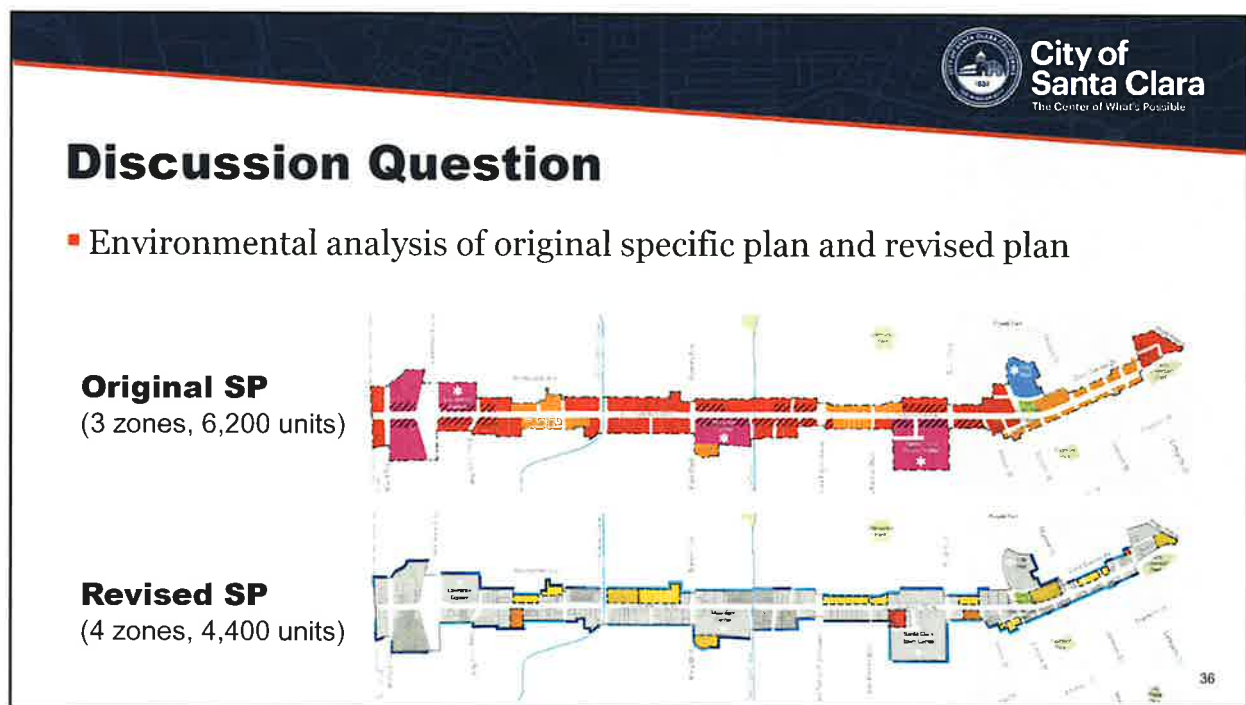
- Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
- Adoption Hearings – Fall 2025

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The seal of the City of Santa Clara, California, is circular. It features a central illustration of a mission-style building with a red roof and a bell tower, set against a blue sky with clouds and a green field. The year "1852" is written in green at the bottom of the central image. The outer ring of the seal contains the text "CITY OF SANTA CLARA CALIFORNIA" at the top and "THE MISSION CITY" at the bottom, separated by small dots.

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