

## CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
STAFF REPORT  
AUGUST 18, 2021

## 5. PUBLIC HEARINGS

## 5.1 General Plan Amendment for 1555 Plymouth Street, North Bayshore Precise Plan Amendments, and Gateway Master Plan

## RECOMMENDATION

That the Environmental Planning Commission:

1. Recommend the City Council approve the Initial Study of Environmental Significance and Addendum for the General Plan Amendment at 1555 Plymouth Street, North Bayshore Precise Plan Amendments, and the North Bayshore Gateway Master Plan pursuant to Sections 15162 and 15164 of the California Environmental Quality Act, and find that the proposed project would not result in any new significant or substantially more severe environmental impacts beyond those previously evaluated and disclosed in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report, North Bayshore Precise Plan Environmental Impact Report (2014), and North Bayshore Precise Plan Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (2017) (Exhibit 1 to the EPC Staff Report); and
2. Recommend the City Council Adopt a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Mountain View to Amend the General Plan Land Use Designation at 1555 Plymouth Street from High-Intensity Office to Mixed-Use Center (North Bayshore) (Exhibit 2 to the EPC Staff Report).
3. Recommend the City Council Adopt a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Mountain View to Amend the P-39 (North Bayshore) Precise Plan to include the parcel at 1555 Plymouth Street within the North Bayshore Precise Plan Gateway Character Area, revise the Bonus FAR Guidelines and Master Plan provisions, and make minor text and graphic updates (Exhibit 3 to the EPC Staff Report).
4. Recommend the City Council Adopt a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Mountain View Adopting the North Bayshore Gateway Master Plan (Exhibit 4 to the EPC Staff Report).

## PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Meeting notices were mailed to all North Bayshore property owners; email notification to interested parties list; and agenda posting.

The Environmental Planning Commission's (EPC) agenda is advertised on Channel 26, and the agenda and this report appear on the City's website. All property owners within a 750' radius of the North Bayshore Precise Plan boundary and other interested stakeholders were notified of this meeting.

## BACKGROUND

In 2015, pursuant to a process set forth in the North Bayshore Precise Plan, the City Council allocated office Bonus Floor Area Ratio (FAR) office to a number of properties in the plan area, including 1.45 million square feet to the "Gateway" area at Shoreline Boulevard and U.S. 101, as shown below in Figure 1. A 2017 amendment to the North Bayshore Precise Plan added housing to the plan area, including the Gateway site, which allows the highest land use intensities in North Bayshore.

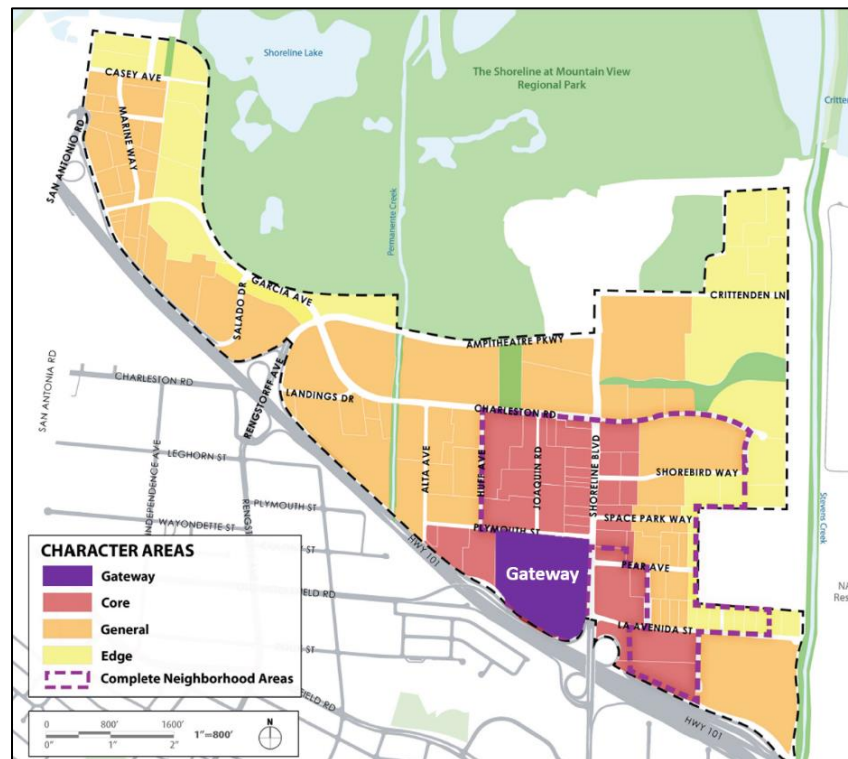


Figure 1: Gateway Character Area and North Bayshore Precise Plan Area

The redevelopment of the original Gateway area using the Bonus FAR allocation stalled, and the two property owners in the Gateway (Google and SyWest) applied to have this amount of Bonus FAR requalified. The City Council denied these Bonus FAR requalification requests and, on May 7, 2019, directed staff to begin a City-initiated Gateway Master Plan for this area.

The City's General Plan and North Bayshore Precise Plan identify the Gateway area as significant to the City because of its location at the entry into North Bayshore and the diverse land uses envisioned for the site. These land uses include office, residential, hotel, entertainment, retail/services, fitness, and open space. These land uses will implement the City's vision of North Bayshore as one, including several "complete neighborhoods." The North Bayshore Precise Plan also includes guiding principles to help evaluate new development in the area.

A major constraint to development of the Gateway is the different property owners and parcel configurations. This makes it difficult to plan a fully integrated site given the different property owner objectives and diverse land uses being considered.

#### November 5, 2019 City Council Study Session

The EPC previously reviewed the Gateway Master Plan topic at their October 16, 2019 Study Session. EPC comments were then forwarded to the City Council. At their November 5, 2019 Study Session, the City Council provided direction on several key policy topics, including placemaking elements, land use locations and program, parking strategy, including the adjacent 1555 Plymouth Street parcel and the U.S. 101 bicycle/pedestrian bridge (which is a separate City capital improvement project). The input from the City Council on these topics was used to create and further refine the Gateway Master Plan as discussed later in this report.

#### North Bayshore Precise Plan Bonus FAR (Office) Background

Following their Bonus FAR denial in 2019, Google submitted a revised Bonus FAR requalification request. On March 23, 2021, the City Council authorized this request for 1.3 million square feet of Bonus FAR to be included as part of their North Bayshore Master Plan, which also includes approximately 7,000 residential units. Of this 1.3 million square feet of Bonus FAR, 250,000 square feet was allocated to Google-owned parcels within the Gateway Master Plan area. The remaining 1,050,000 square feet was allocated to Google holdings in the Joaquin and Shorebird complete neighborhood areas within North Bayshore. The process for allocating the remaining 250,000 square feet of Bonus FAR is discussed later in this report. At the

March meeting, Council also supported the staff recommendation to revise the Bonus FAR Guidelines according to the strategy described below.

1. Complete Neighborhood Area Requirement. The remaining 250,000 square feet of Bonus FAR (office) will be allocated within the Precise Plan’s complete neighborhood area (Joaquin, Shorebird, and Pear neighborhoods) as shown in Figure 2. This approach supports the Precise Plan’s sustainability vision to concentrate development in these areas, which are in close proximity to future transit service and commercial uses along the Shoreline Boulevard corridor. This helps advance the Precise Plan’s larger sustainability and transportation policy goals to create a more walkable and “car-light” neighborhood, where area employees and residents can easily access transit and walk or bike to nearby services. It also requires Bonus FAR applicants to include new residential uses within their proposals since residential uses are a key qualifying criterion in the Bonus FAR Guidelines and are only allowed within complete neighborhoods. This approach provides a “carrot” in the form of valuable office FAR that can be used to help offset the cost of any proposed residential development.

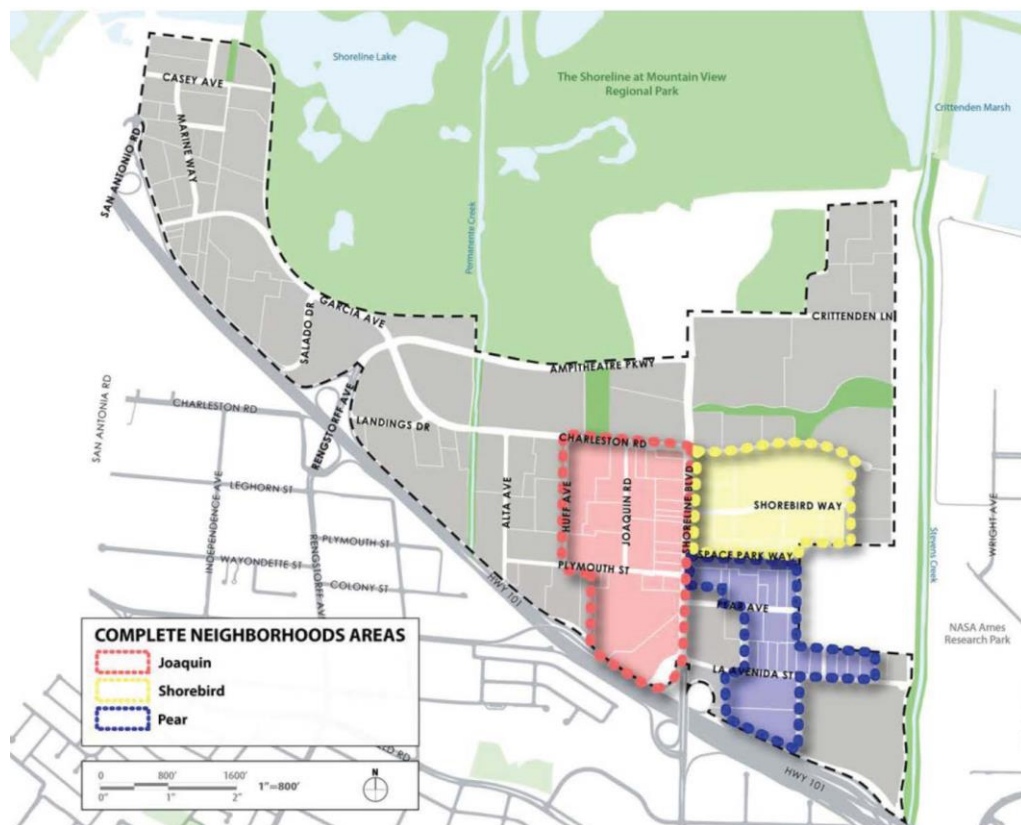


Figure 2: Complete Neighborhood Areas

2. Process. Staff plans to notify property owners within the complete neighborhood area of the process regarding the allocation of the remaining 250,000 square feet of office Bonus FAR. The notice would invite property owners to submit an application by a certain deadline, probably in fall 2021. Interested property owners within this area can submit a Bonus FAR request for some or all of the remaining 250,000 square feet of Bonus FAR. City staff would then review the applications against the Bonus FAR Guidelines (Attachment to Exhibit 3) and then bring forward a recommendation and options for City Council consideration in early 2022.
3. Key Elements. The proposed amendments limit Bonus FAR applications to properties within the complete neighborhood boundaries, as previously discussed, and requires that applications meet the Precise Plan's vision and guiding principles and include new residential uses. Any Bonus FAR application deemed eligible to apply shall also submit a complete application for a planning permit no later than one year from the date of City Council Bonus FAR authorization, with the possibility of a six-month extension if granted by the City Council.

## ANALYSIS

The following section first discusses the proposed Gateway Master Plan, including a discussion of a General Plan amendment for the parcel at 1555 Plymouth Street so it can be incorporated within the Gateway Master Plan area. The report then includes proposed amendments to the North Bayshore Precise Plan (Precise Plan) to support implementation of the Gateway Master Plan, including references to Master Plans, revisions to the Precise Plan's Bonus FAR guidelines, and other minor corrections.

### 1. Gateway Master Plan

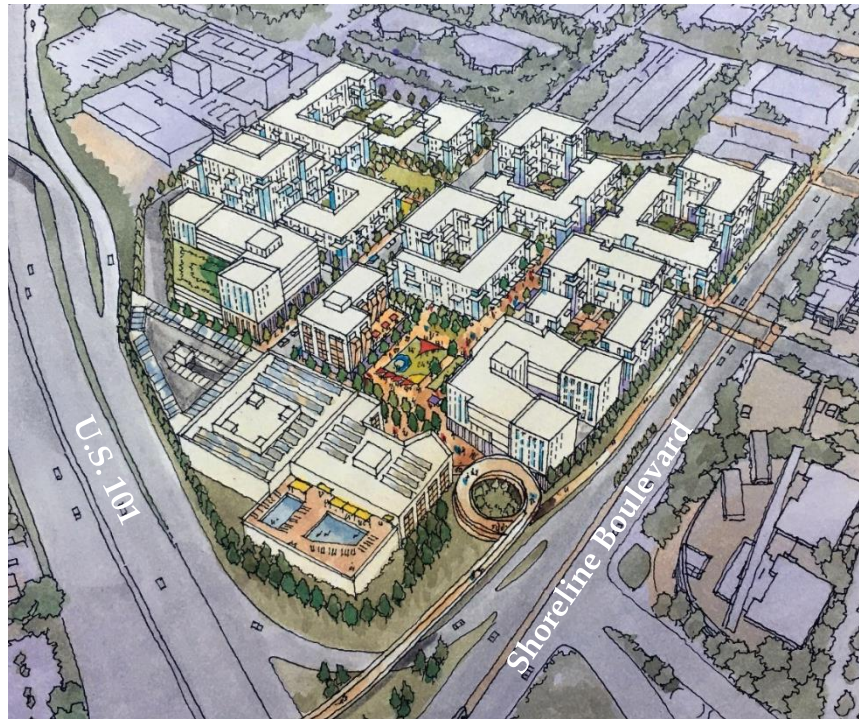
#### City Policy Foundation

The City's General Plan and Precise Plan goals and policies identify the Gateway area as significant because it provides a key, visual welcoming point into the North Bayshore district. This area is shown below in Figures 2 and 3. The redevelopment of this area will help shape visitor and community member impressions of North Bayshore as a distinct and unique area within the City.

The General Plan and Precise Plan permit a diverse set of high-intensity land uses envisioned for the Gateway area. These land uses include office, residential, hotel, entertainment, retail/services, fitness, and open space. These land uses will complement each other by providing services and activity during the day and evenings. The mix of residential and commercial uses will also help implement the City's vision of North Bayshore redeveloping with several "complete neighborhoods," where employees and residents can walk or bike to work or nearby services.



**Figure 2: Existing Gateway Master Plan Area**



**Figure 3: Conceptual Gateway Master Plan Build-Out  
(from Draft Gateway Master Plan)**

### Strategy

The Gateway Master Plan is, therefore, a City-initiated guiding policy document to implement General Plan and Precise Plan goals, policies, and development standards. Master Plans are not common regulatory tools used within the City as development permits are typically submitted based on the development regulations within a zoning or Precise Plan designation. The North Bayshore Precise Plan requires Master Plans in the complete neighborhood areas to plan and develop areas that span multiple parcels that require special coordination and phasing of key infrastructure, such as new streets, utilities, and open space.

This Gateway Master Plan establishes the strategies and development standards unique to the Gateway area so it can redevelop as an integrated and vibrant mixed-use center. As noted, this is a City-initiated Master Plan due to the complexities involved with the area's two major property owners. The City's role is to develop a guiding document that meets City goals and objectives while providing development opportunities and flexibility to the property owners. Future Planned Community (PC) permits within this area will then be submitted consistent with the Gateway Master Plan document.

### Key Gateway Master Plan Elements

The Gateway Master Plan is consistent with most Precise development standards, such as building height, setbacks, parking requirements, etc., for the area. This is to avoid unnecessary duplication of requirements. However, the Gateway Master Plan also includes special guidance that responds to the Gateway area's unique opportunities and constraints.

The following are a few examples of the Gateway Master Plan's general strategies or key elements, which may include Gateway Master Plan-specific expectations. These elements are consistent with previous EPC and subsequent City Council direction from previous Study Sessions. Please see the attachment to Exhibit 4 for the complete Gateway Master Plan.

#### *Gateway Vision*

The images in Figure 4 below from the Gateway Master Plan represent the City's development expectations, or vision, at a high level for key areas within the Plan area. These images are intended to help guide future development proposals to ensure they meet City goals and objectives.



### Central Plaza



### Retail "Main Street"



### Neighborhood Park



**Figure 4: Gateway Master Plan Vision**

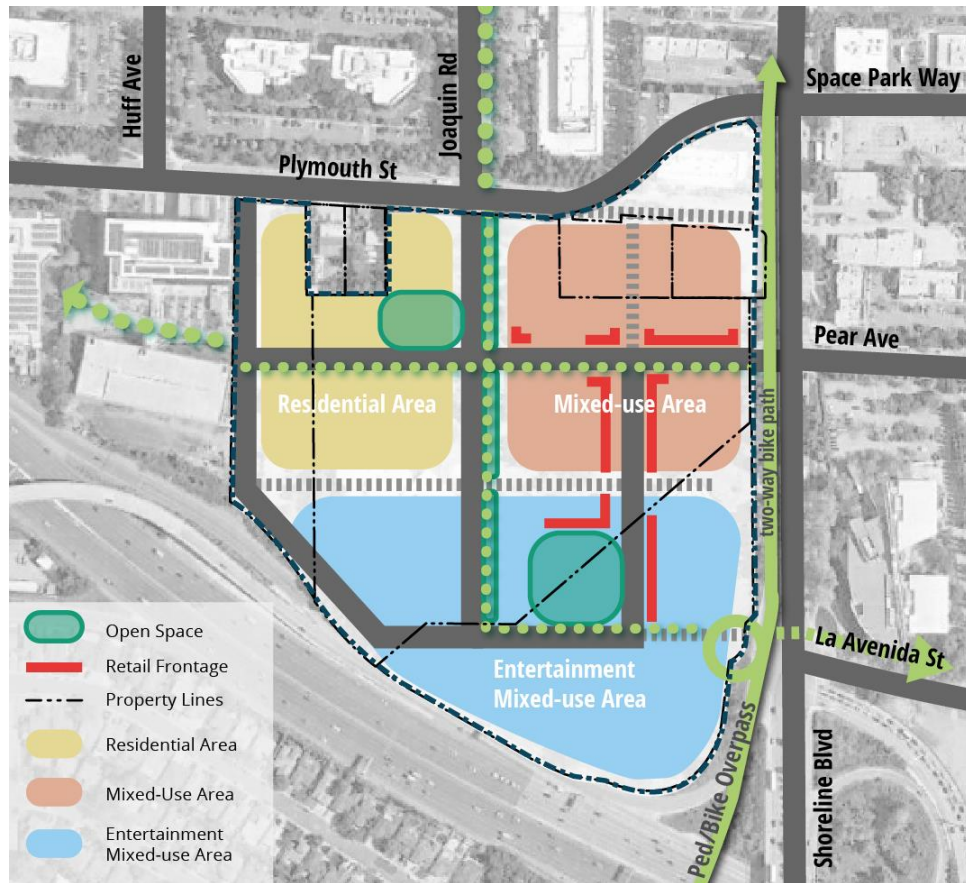
#### *Coordinated and Integrated Development*

As noted, the Gateway area presents challenges in coordinating the development objectives and plans of different property owners. While the City's preference is that development between both major property owners occur in the same general time frame, the Gateway Master Plan allows each property owner to proceed with their own plans along their own existing property lines to provide maximum flexibility. However, to address the issue of coordinated and integrated development, Section 4 of the Gateway Master Plan lists several requirements for future development, such as the requirement that any proposed development must submit information indicating how the development will be integrated with adjacent parcels in the

future (i.e., street locations, access, open space, block configurations, infrastructure improvements, etc.), including the phasing of development.

### Land Use

Figure 5 below shows the Gateway Master Plan land use subdistricts (residential, mixed-use, and entertainment mixed-use) and the general circulation and open space strategy for the area.



**Figure 5: Land Use Strategy**

Each subdistrict allows a mix of land uses as described on Table 3.A of the Gateway Master Plan. The intent of each subdistrict is to facilitate development with a diverse mix of land uses and a strategy for locating and developing new streets, blocks, pedestrian/bike connections, and open space.

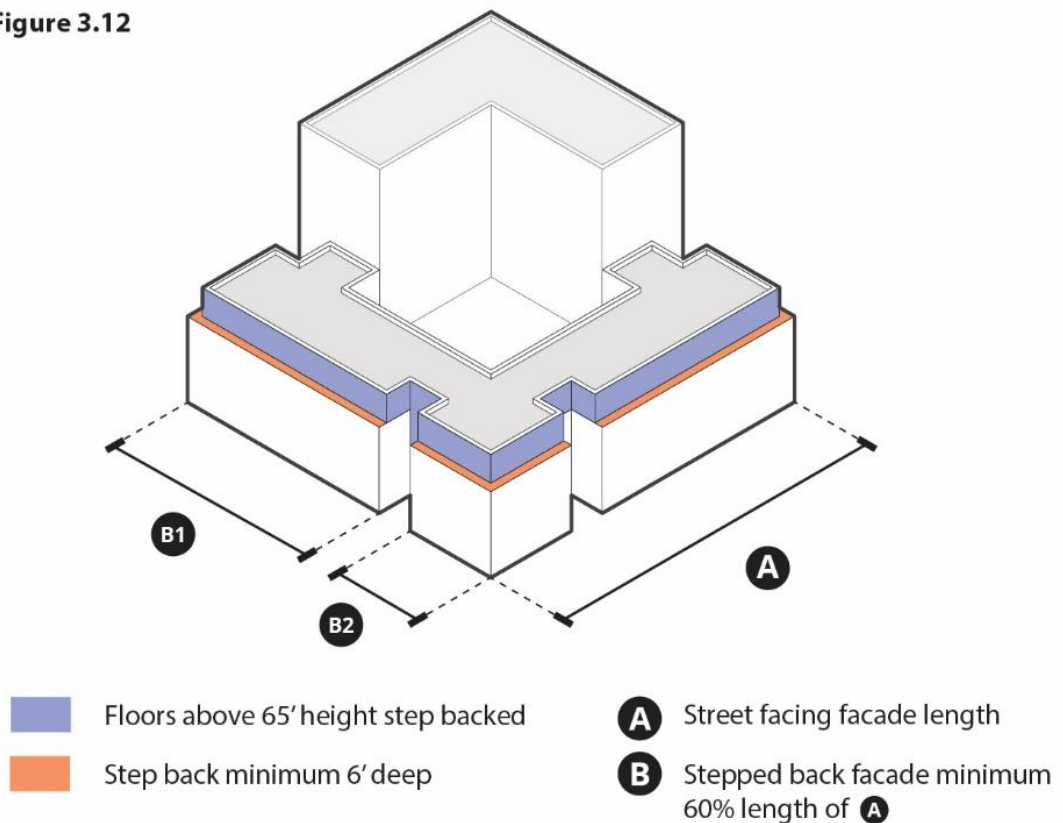
The Master Plan allows flexibility for land uses but requires a minimum amount of residential units, open space area, and ground-floor retail/personal service square footage as well as maximum allowed square footage for office

and retail/entertainment/hospitality land uses to support the vision for the area. To ensure the timely inclusion of new residential units, the Gateway Master Plan requires that a minimum of 500 units receive an occupancy permit before any office uses are occupied. The overall land use strategy is intended to address the City Council desire for land use flexibility while also meeting the goals and objectives of the General Plan and Precise Plan for the area.

*Building Height*

Consistent with the Precise Plan, the allowed maximum building heights for the area include eight stories (140') for nonresidential buildings and 15 stories (160') for residential buildings. The Precise Plan also includes standards to limit how close high-rise buildings can be located in relation to each other to help reduce the visual massing of the area, preserve views, and limit shadow impacts. Additionally, the Gateway Master Plan includes several strategies to ensure building massing includes breaks in facades, stepped-back upper floors, and special architectural elements. Figure 6 below (Figure 3.12 in the Gateway Master Plan) provides an example of one of these strategies.

**Figure 3.12**



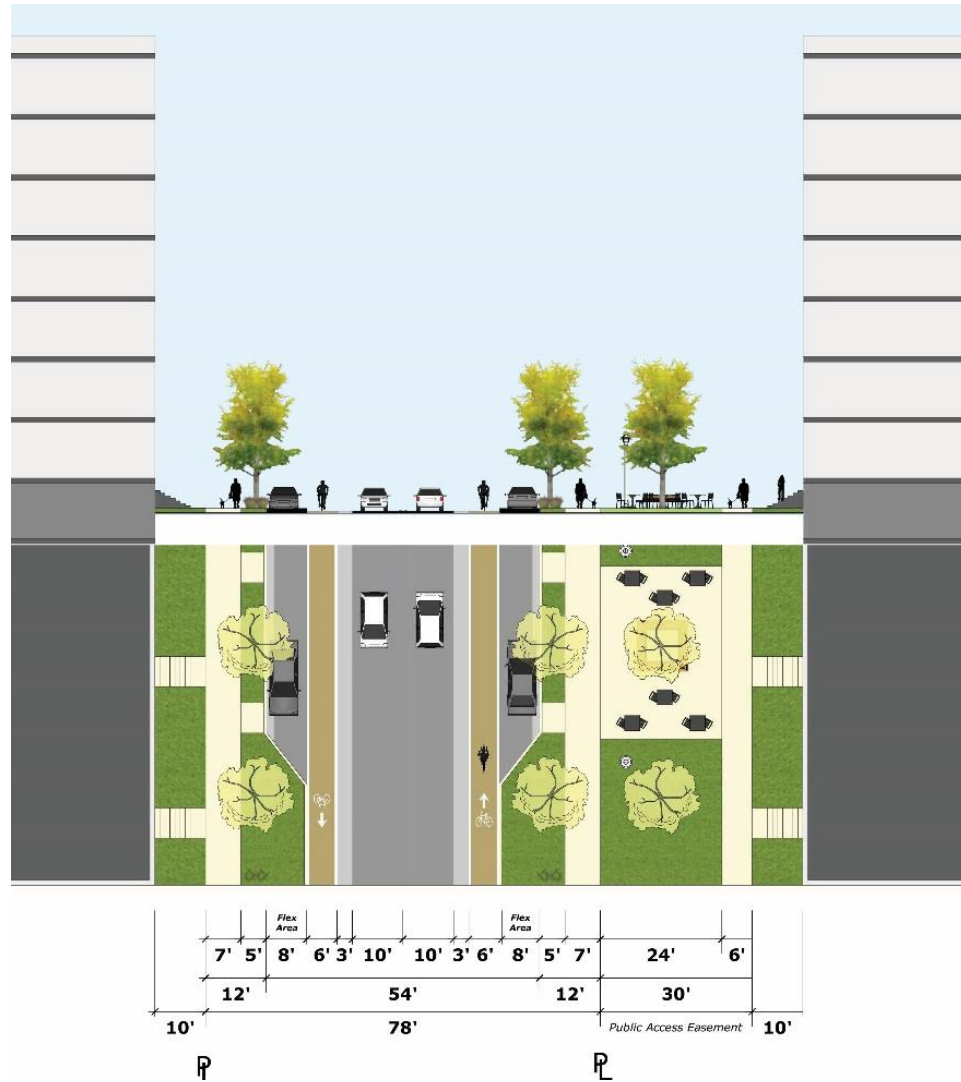
**Figure 6: Gateway Master Plan Massing Strategy**

### *New Streets*

As shown earlier, Figure 5 shows how new, smaller blocks will be created to make it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to circulate in the area and help contribute to a vibrant streetscape close to publicly accessible open space and ground-floor retail locations.

The Gateway Master Plan also includes street design standards to ensure new streets are designed as “complete streets” intended for all users while ensuring safe and functional circulation and access and a vibrant streetscape. Figure 7 below is an example of a new street within the area (extension of Joaquin Road).

Additionally, the Gateway Master Plan includes a requirement for shared access between properties. This will ensure initial and subsequent phases of development are integrated to allow full vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian access across the Gateway Master Plan area.



**Figure 7: Gateway Master Plan Street Design Standards**

*Development Review Process*

The Precise Plan establishes the development review process for new development within the Gateway Master Plan area. New, nonresidential developments up to 0.45 FAR require Development Review Committee (DRC) and Zoning Administrator (ZA) approval, while developments above 0.45 FAR also require City Council approval. For residential or mixed-use residential development up to 1.0 FAR, DRC and ZA approval is required, while development above 1.0 FAR also requires City Council approval. It is expected that development in the Gateway area would utilize Bonus FAR (office). If so, the Precise Plan requires a minimum nonresidential development of 1.0 FAR to ensure the City receives a high-density project to fulfill the City's

expectations for the area, including receiving public benefits as required by the Bonus FAR process.

### *Heritage Trees and Landscaping*

The existing Gateway area includes a number of Heritage trees in a suburban setting, including a very large surface parking lot. Future redevelopment of the area will result in a much more urban development pattern, with new high-intensity buildings and new streets that will require replacing, relocating, or including existing Heritage trees within any new development. Future redevelopment will need to comply with the City's Heritage Tree Ordinance, the North Bayshore Plant Palette recommendations, and the North Bayshore Street Tree list.

## 2. General Plan Amendment – 1555 Plymouth Street

Staff is also recommending a General Plan Amendment for the parcel at 1555 Plymouth Street to be incorporated within the Gateway Master Plan area.

This parcel is approximately three acres, and its existing and proposed General Plan land use designation is shown in Figure 8.

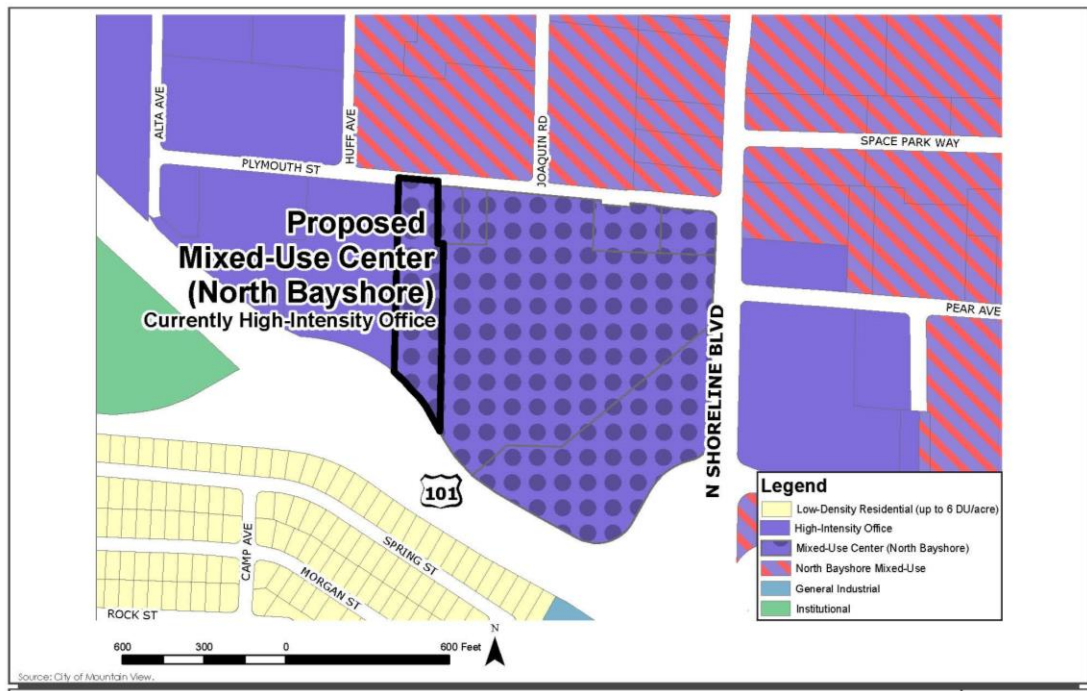


Figure 8: Existing and Proposed General Plan Land Use Designation

The proposed General Plan Mixed-Use Center (North Bayshore) land use designation promotes a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use center with integrated, complementary uses, such as entertainment, restaurants, residential, and other retail, office, hotels and public spaces. The General Plan land use intensities for this designation defer to the intensities allowed within Precise Plans; for this area in North Bayshore, a maximum of 4.50 FAR for mixed use development is permitted. Allowed building heights for this General Plan designation is a maximum of eight stories for office and 15 stories for residential, which is the same as allowed under the North Bayshore Precise Plan for this area.

The proposed General Plan amendment is recommended because it allows a more diverse mix of land uses on the parcel as envisioned by the Gateway Master Plan. The existing High-Intensity Office designation for the subject parcel only allows office uses (i.e., no residential or mixed-use residential uses are allowed on the parcel). The parcel is relatively narrow, and by including it within the Gateway area, the parcel's utility can be maximized by not only increasing the types of allowed land uses on the site, but by also improving access and circulation to the Gateway site and integrating it with other parts of the Plan (i.e., greenways, bike circulation, open space, etc.).

On October 16, 2019 and November 5, 2019, the EPC and City Council, respectively, supported the approach to include the 1555 Plymouth Street parcel within the Mixed-Use Center (North Bayshore) designation (see Exhibits 6 and 7 for links to these reports).

### 3. North Bayshore Precise Plan Amendments

The recommended Precise Plan amendments includes additional Master Plan implementation language; revises the Bonus FAR Guidelines; updates several maps that include the parcel at 1555 Plymouth Street within the complete neighborhood area and several transportation-related maps; and miscellaneous supporting edits. Exhibit 5 summarizes the list of amendments and their associated Precise Plan page numbers.

#### a. Master Plans

Proposed language (see attachment to Exhibit 3) clarifies that Master Plans may include standards and guidelines more unique or specific to a smaller area but shall still be consistent with the larger Precise Plan. Any

flexibility regarding Precise Plan regulations will be determined through PC permits, subject to required findings.

b. Bonus FAR (Office) Review Guidelines

Proposed changes to the Bonus FAR (office) Review Guidelines include new qualifying thresholds and a revised Bonus FAR process. Qualifying thresholds would limit Bonus FAR applications to properties within the complete neighborhood boundaries, for the reasons previously discussed, and require that the applications meet the Precise Plan's vision and guiding principles and include new residential uses. The amendments also require that any Bonus FAR application deemed eligible to apply shall submit a complete application for a planning permit no later than one year from the date of City Council Bonus FAR authorization, with the possibility of a six-month extension if granted by the City Council.

c. North Bayshore Precise Plan Map Edits

The Precise Plan includes maps and graphics that describe and support the Precise Plan's overall policies and strategies. Amended maps are included to support the proposed General Plan amendment of the 1555 Plymouth Street parcel and also update several transportation-related maps. The existing maps and their proposed changes are included as attachments in Exhibit 3.

## **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT**

The proposed project is in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as documented in the addendum prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15164 which found that, with implementation of the North Bayshore Precise Plan standards and guidelines, standard City conditions of approval, State regulations, and mitigation measures identified in the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR), North Bayshore Precise Plan (NBPP) EIR, and NBPP Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR), the implementation of the proposed project would not result in any new significant or substantially more severe environmental impacts beyond those previously evaluated and disclosed in the General Plan EIR, NBPP EIR, and NBPP SEIR.



## **PUBLIC NOTICING**

Postcards were sent to all North Bayshore property owners, including properties within 750' of the Precise Plan boundary. Interested stakeholders were also sent an email notification of this meeting.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, staff recommends the EPC recommend to the City Council the adoption of the proposed Gateway Master Plan, General Plan amendment for the property at 1555 Plymouth Street, and North Bayshore Precise Plan edits.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Recommend Council approve the Gateway Master Plan and/or the North Bayshore Precise Plan amendments, with modifications.
2. Recommend Council deny the Gateway Master Plan, General Plan amendment for the property at 1555 Plymouth Street, and/or North Bayshore Precise Plan amendments.

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MA/6/CDD  
891-08-18-21SR

- Exhibits:
1. Initial Study of Environmental Significance and Addendum
  2. Draft City Council Resolution – General Plan Amendment
  3. Draft City Council Resolution – Precise Plan Amendment
  4. Draft City Council Resolution – North Bayshore Gateway Master Plan
  5. Summary Table of Precise Plan Amendments
  6. [October 16, 2019 EPC Staff Report](#)
  7. [November 5, 2019 City Council Report](#)