



Introduction

- Our Guiding Principles and Vision
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- Realizing Our Vision

We believe in our vision for Redwood City. We believe that through effective policy development now, we can create a reality out of our vision, and continue to develop our amazing history. With bold and responsible planning to make that vision a reality, Redwood City will become the premier place to live, play, work, and build relationships on the Peninsula. Our vision is reflected in our *New General Plan*.

Our Guiding Principles and Vision

The following guiding principles determine how we will respond to future changes and pressures, and lay out the roadmap necessary to

achieve our Vision for Redwood City in 2030. These principles are the guiding light and the foundation for all Chapters in the General Plan.

Our New General Plan outlines the steps to achieve our Vision through goals, policies, and implementation programs developed consistent with these Guiding Principles:

Redwood City General Plan Guiding Principles

Plan for sustainability within our finite resources including but not limited to open space, water, energy, and air quality.

Ensure that change harmonizes with existing development to preserve our historic and neighborhood character.

Strengthen economic vitality to provide jobs, services, revenues, and opportunities.

Preserve and generate awareness of our cultural, educational, economic, recreational diversity, and historic heritage.

Partner with and embrace our neighborhoods to improve the health, safety, and well being for all in our community.

Continue to make community participation an important part of achieving a greater city.

Work to develop attractive, convenient transportation alternatives to the automobile, including a unique transportation hub and ferry system.

Design for active pedestrian and bicycle-friendly streets and public spaces.

Our Vision

*Vision for Redwood City:
The year is 2030.
Redwood City residents
start their day in the
Peninsula's most livable
community.*

Our vision for the future of Redwood City is described below; it is the basis for the guiding principles and ideas in the General Plan. This vision is a picture of the future that sprouted from the extensive public outreach related to issues today and our goals for tomorrow. We believe in this vision, as well as the policy implementation required to make our vision a reality. So let's get into our time machine and fly into the future. We'll land in the Redwood City of 2030, and imagine we are the lucky residents...

A Downtown Resident's Perspective: 2030

My spouse and I walk down the steps from our condo loft and head to a nearby neighborhood bakery to pick up breakfast. As we head toward the bakery amongst our Downtown neighbors, the aroma of fresh coffee wafts on the morning air and I cast an appealing eye at the new mixed use building around the corner. It fits in well with Downtown's restored historical structures. As Downtown residents we know and appreciate Redwood City's history and its variety of architectural styles.



Downtown Redwood City's Depot Circle will be a convenient transportation hub, surrounded by exciting uses and activities.

After our quick stop, I head to Depot Circle to catch the bullet train to work in San Francisco, and my spouse walks to work a few blocks away. I approach Depot Circle and experience the energy of this vibrant station. We can recall Downtown before the grade separations were completed. Because the City insisted, the project was handled with great sensitivity and vision. The train tracks no longer divide Downtown. Pleasant, connected, walkable streets knit Downtown into a beautiful, cohesive whole. I grew up in Redwood City and I recognize how the City has changed over the last 20 years -- from a sleepy suburb to a city of walkable neighborhoods with the liveliest Downtown around.

We are looking forward to this evening when we get home; we'll be headed to the Bayfront for a bike ride. We'll catch the streetcar from Downtown and meet up with some friends on the Bayfront Trail. The streetcar is a great, convenient service that goes between the Bayfront area of Redwood City (including the new Ferry Terminal), the Downtown Train Station, and destinations along Middlefield Road and Broadway. How cool is that? We love Redwood City.

An El Camino Real Resident's Perspective: 2030

I open the door of my townhouse and step out onto the front porch. I feel the sun's warmth glistening through the leaves and it reminds me how fortunate I am to live in such a wonderful climate -- "best by government test". To either side, a broad tree-lined walk is dotted with express bus stops. As I walk towards my stop, bicycles and cars pass smoothly beyond the trees. Neighbors come down their front stoops, picking up the morning paper or joining me en route to the express stop. A bus zips by in the express lane on the opposite side of the street. A group of kids on their way to school is waiting to cross the street at the next corner, and they call to a friend standing between the flowers in the traffic island to push the button and stop traffic so they can catch up.



El Camino Real will be a Grand Boulevard, walkable and beautiful.

Most of the shops scattered along the frontage aren't open yet, but when I come home the International Market will be. I'll ride the express bus an extra stop to pick up some quick groceries for dinner, and then walk the two blocks back home. Later, the kids and I are headed to the park. On these nights it's so nice to be out and about, with the trees in bloom and the street lights sparkling through the leaves. In the past, I would have thought it was hard to believe living on a big boulevard street like El Camino Real could be so enjoyable, but this is the best place I've ever lived.

A Neighborhood Resident's Perspective: 2030

We sure feel lucky that we live in a neighborhood that has the conveniences we need within walking distance. Even the child care for our youngest is only just a few blocks away. Since Redwood City has always recognized the need for quality child care, and worked closely

with providers to locate facilities sensitively throughout the community, we were able to find a close and high quality child care provider. And thanks to the City's ongoing support for infill and affordable housing, some of the rents in Redwood City, like ours, are still relatively affordable. What a relief not to have to choose between child care and a nice place to live.

Our older son's elementary school is close enough that he can ride his bike to school with his friends along Roosevelt Avenue. Known as a Bicycle Boulevard, the street is designed to give priority to bicycles, making our son's route to school safe. And it's great to see the kids getting exercise on their way to school. He can also stop at my parents' before coming home where they will make sure his homework gets done. My parents continue to live in the same apartment where I grew up near Downtown. I used to worry about the quality of their high density neighborhood. As retirees, my parents are delighted now that they have more time to spend with their grandchildren and their many other interests, and they appreciate that their beloved older neighborhood is aging gracefully, just like they are. The sidewalk experience has been refreshed by the presence of thriving canopy trees and pretty front yard gardens; the area has become a comfortable place for an evening stroll.

Our neighborhoods will be safe and active, with conveniences nearby.



Neighborhoods like my parents' and ours have blossomed throughout the City over the last 20 years, as higher density housing was built adjacent to retail centers and infrastructure has been enhanced. This trend followed the City's goal of making shopping centers more accessible with strong linkages to adjacent neighborhoods. Links are also strong with street improvements as well as an on-going investment in local parks. The closest park to both my folks' place and our house is Red Morton Park and Community Center. At Red Morton there are activities for children of all ages, including sports, games, and arts and crafts. My parents are beginning to explore the new offerings for seniors

at the City’s new wellness center. The boys love going to Red Morton. Maybe we’ll go there tonight after dinner...

A Bayfront Visitor’s Perspective: 2030

As an environmentalist, I can’t help but be in awe of Redwood City’s Bayfront area, the area fronting the various creeks and sloughs near the Bay. I take my binoculars with me for an early morning stroll on the gravel path along Redwood Creek. Clapper rails, egrets, and other waterfowl are gliding over the water. As I gaze across the Bay at Mount Diablo and the East Bay Hills, it’s amazing to think that the north boundary of my bustling community is shaped by waterways and wildlife-rich wetlands, and that I walked here from home.



Wildlife and plants will flourish on our sanctuaries near the Bay.

I sit on a nearby bench and look back at the Santa Cruz Mountains and then at the bicycles coursing across the Blomquist Street Bridge. A heron floats overhead and I raise my binoculars to watch it touchdown elegantly and glide across the creek to the reeds on the opposite side. Even as local growth and the booming trade with China, Mexico, and Latin America over the last decade has energized the Port of Redwood City, and the industrial enterprises along Seaport Boulevard continue to provide commerce and jobs that diversify the City’s economy and support the region’s international competitiveness, natural areas have been preserved. Redwood City sure did it right—finding a relationship that has preserved nature and our quality of life, while expanding economic opportunities.

A Waterfront Neighborhood Resident’s Perspective: 2030

We just finished moving in, and boy are we tired. But we can’t wait to start enjoying our new home—we are now living in a beautiful new apartment with a great view of the Bay. What a great place, and it’s not just the apartment. We now live in a lively waterfront neighborhood, with ample destinations within walking distance as well as the trails that we love so much. And the best part is that we found a permanent and convenient slip for our new catamaran, which we will finally get to use as much as we want!

Our waterfront neighborhoods are wonderful places to live and are also exciting destinations. Public access to the Bay is the cornerstone of our Waterfront Neighborhoods, and trail connections tie the recreation in this area to other bicycle and pedestrian routes.



We head downstairs to meet a friend at her new favorite restaurant, which just happens to be in our neighborhood. How convenient! As we walk along the waters-edge, we really appreciate the public access and great gathering spaces that have been incorporated into our neighborhood. As we walk toward the restaurant, we think we might not even need to use our car most days, since everything we need is within walking or biking distance. We are really going to like it here.

A Redwood City Hills Resident’s Perspective: 2030

As a retired resident, I have come to appreciate the open space and Bay views living in the hills of Redwood City. I especially like the low density of Emerald Hills, with its hillside homes and wealth of surrounding green space. I have lived up here for over 30 years, and there has been little change to the area and that is the way I like it. There has been some “infill development” of vacant and “underutilized” sites, but the size and character of new homes has blended in with the surroundings surprisingly well. Getting in and out is much easier and safer than it used to be since the traffic on Farm Hill Road was slowed down, and it seems like there are more bicycles than cars climbing the hill on weekends.



Our neighborhoods are beautiful and accessible to other areas.

Downtown is certainly nicer to visit than it used to be, and it's still great to get together with the old crowd at the Courthouse Square and see what's new. In fact, I can forget the car and walk over to the bus stop and catch a shuttle down just about any time I want, which gets me some exercise and saves energy too. Twenty minutes to the next bus. Maybe I'll stop at the hardware shop on El Camino for some jigsaw blades. I grab my sun hat and walk down the front walk looking at the green hills rolling away to the south. It's too nice to stay inside today.

A Redwood Shores Resident’s Perspective: 2030

I’ve lived in Redwood Shores for 10 years now. I first moved here not just because of the overwhelming beauty of the lagoons, views, and homes, but because my office is located in Redwood Shores too. The bike lanes

throughout the neighborhood make getting around so easy. Whether I'm going to work, to the library, or the playground with my daughter, everything is a convenient bike ride away. My daughter loves her new school, especially when they take field trips to the lovely library on Belmont Slough. They have a great interactive curriculum that always keeps her interested. We also love all the parks and waterfront open space that the Shores offers its residents.



Another reason I love my neighborhood is that I'm really close with my neighbors. We have barbeques and get together all the time. Some of my neighbors have lived here for 30 years. They have often remarked that they are pleased that Redwood Shores is maturing gracefully, and is as strong and healthy as it was when they moved in. We really do have a unique home on the Peninsula, and I couldn't imagine a better place to live.

A Redwood City Office Worker's Perspective: 2030

The clock turns 12:00 noon, time for lunch. Where to today? There are so many choices! My office building is on Broadway, which has been transformed into a lively corridor since the streetcar system was built. I could stop at one of the local sandwich shops, or hop on the streetcar into Downtown for even more variety. I decide on Downtown, and send a text message to my cousin who works up on Seaport Boulevard. It's great he's working nearby and I get to see him all the time.

We both work in green technology, which is an exciting and continuously evolving industry. Since Redwood City has become a new hub for green technology, many of our former classmates and colleagues are now working here, including my cousin. He's working for a start-up green technology company developing new means of generating energy. He texts back he'll meet me Downtown, he's heading for the streetcar now. His new business is really getting off the ground fast; he has immediate access to the Port of Redwood City to receive and ship materials, and his new technology is doing very well in preliminary tests. Customers enjoy staying at the new hotel and conference center on Broadway and Woodside. Hard to believe that the City's corporation yard was ever a part of this bustling business district. Here comes the streetcar now...

Redwood Shores continues to be home to high quality neighborhoods and supports innovative businesses.

Our economy has flourished and evolved to meet changing needs and be at the cutting edge for new technologies and industries. And our streetcar system is a huge success!



Redwood City's *New* General Plan

The General Plan reflects the community's shared values of what Redwood City is today. The Plan is also a "blueprint for the future," directing how our City will look and feel in future years.

The General Plan is a long-range plan that provides a basis for developing zoning regulations and evaluating development proposals. Additionally, it is an opportunity for the City to sharpen its economic outlook, improve transportation, and balance residents' wishes for sustainability, new development, and cultural and historic preservation. The Redwood City *New* General Plan will help lead our community toward a more healthy and sustainable future. The *New* General Plan guides:

- What the City will **look and feel** like
- Where and how we **live**
- How we will **get around**
- What we do for **enlightenment, entertainment, and fun**
- How we will live with and preserve **natural resources**
- Ways we will improve our **quality of life**

Every city in California is required by State law to have a general plan that covers at least seven topics: land use, circulation/transportation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. In addition, cities may include optional elements that address issues of local importance. Redwood City's *New* General Plan is formatted into five chapters that cover the seven required topics as well as other issues that are important to us, including water supply, economic development, and a variety of issues that affect our quality of life. Separate sections within the chapters treat specific issues.

The **Built Environment Chapter** focuses on balancing new opportunities and development with conservation and preservation in Redwood City.

The **Housing Chapter** specifies ways in which the housing needs of existing and future resident populations in Redwood City can be met. Unlike other sections of the General Plan, State law sets forth very specific regulations regarding the content of the Housing Chapter.

Table I-1: General Plan Chapters and State-Mandated Elements

Redwood City General Plan Chapters/Sections	State Mandated Elements							Optional
	Land Use	Circulation	Housing	Open Space	Conservation	Safety	Noise	
Chapter 2: Built Environment								
Land Use and Urban Form	●							
Circulation		●						
Economic Development								●
Historic Resources								●
Infrastructure		●						
Chapter 3: Housing								
Housing			●					
Chapter 4: Building Community								
Gathering Places and Parks				●				
Trails and Other Connections		●						
Community & Recreational Services and Facilities				●				●
Lifelong Learning								●
Child Care								●
Culture and Arts								●
Governance								●
Chapter 5: Public Safety								
Atmosphere and Climate					●			
Hazards Management						●		
Noise							●	
Chapter 6: Natural Resources								
Water Resources					●			
Energy Conservation					●			
Natural Habitat and Open Space				●	●			
Urban Forest					●			●
Agricultural					●			

The **Building Community Chapter** focuses on physical and social factors that allow the community to interact, socialize, play, learn, care, vote, and feel more connected with to their families, friends, neighborhood, and city.

The **Public Safety Chapter** identifies, evaluates, and addresses safety issues, including air quality and climate changes, geologic and seismic

hazards, flooding (including that associated with sea level rise), wild fires, hazards associated with the use and transport of hazardous materials, noise, and aviation hazards.

The **Natural Resources Chapter** focuses on conservation of the lands, minerals and fossil fuels, wildlife, plants and trees, air, water, groundwater, drinking water, and other resources in Redwood City.

Sustainability

Sequoia sempervirens is the sole living species of the genus Sequoia in the cypress family Cupressaceae. Common names include *Coast Redwood* and *California Redwood*. It is an evergreen, long-lived tree that lives for up to 2,200 years, and includes the tallest trees on Earth, reaching almost 400 feet in height and 26 feet in diameter. It is native to coastal California and the southwestern corner of Oregon.

The *Sequoia sempervirens* seed cone is the Redwood City General Plan sustainability icon.



Sustainability
Focus

Sustainability is achieved through careful planning to meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. American land use patterns and transportation systems have become unsustainable, and they cannot be continued indefinitely without major changes. The carbon dioxide emitted from electricity generation and the cars that we drive are some of the primary sources contributing to changes in the Earth’s climate. Good urban planning, focusing on alternative transportation policies and land use strategies, offers some of the most effective solutions available as we seek a more sustainable future.

Implementation of the *New General Plan* will be achieved through sustainable means on every level. Instead of drafting a separate sustainability element or chapter, Redwood City’s policy makers determined that to have the best outcome, sustainability should be incorporated into every element of the plan. The *New General Plan* sustainability symbol is the *Sequoia sempervirens* seed cone. This symbol indicates that a goal, policy, or program includes specific attention to best practices from the perspective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and conserving natural resources. Sustainability, through conservation and the development of innovative land use and transportation policies, is a cornerstone of the *New General Plan*.

Using the General Plan

The General Plan is a community document intended for use by all residents, business owners, decision-makers, and workers in Redwood City. As such, the Plan has been written and organized for ease of use. Tables, diagrams, and maps help readers understand planning concepts, and sidebar notes define terms and direct users to chapters addressing related topics or policies. A glossary provides further guidance and support to encourage a deeper understanding of all topic areas.

The organization of the General Plan allows users to turn to the section that interests them and quickly obtain a perspective of City policies on the subject. However, General Plan users should realize that the goals, policies, and programs throughout all chapters are interrelated and should be examined comprehensively. All of these policy components must be considered together when making planning decisions.

The General Plan is intended to be both a long-term and a dynamic document and must be periodically updated to respond to changing community needs. Requests for amendments may be submitted by individuals or initiated by the City itself. Amendments may involve a change in the land use designation for a particular property, policy or text changes. Any proposed amendment will be reviewed publicly to ensure consistency with all elements of the General Plan and the General Plan EIR.

Key Terms Used

Goals and policies represent the General Plan's foundation. A **goal** is an overall statement of community desires and consists of a broad statement of purpose or direction. For each goal in this General Plan, associated and more definitive policy statements follow. A **policy** provides guidance to the City Council, other City commissions and boards, and City staff in their review of development proposals and other actions taken. Implementation **programs** provide further articulation regarding how the City will achieve its goals and policies. Goals, policies, and programs are listed at the end of each topic discussion to keep these important components with the context backgrounds for better understanding of intent. The Implementation Plan is also included as a matrix for ease in referencing the actions related to the Redwood City *New* General Plan. The Implementation Programs are intended to be reviewed and updated periodically to allow decision-makers to adjust to current community priorities and funding resources.

A Community Effort

In Redwood City, we understand that community building and public participation is the cornerstone of a thriving City. As we developed the *New* General Plan, we relied on public input, which is the key to effective policy development. As part of the General Plan program, the City undertook a significant public outreach effort to understand

community values and to establish a foundation based on those values. The outreach effort arose from Redwood City's fundamental belief that an active citizenry must be integrally involved in important policy discussions. The outreach program was multi-faceted and included the components described below.

General Plan Committee

The General Plan Committee was formulated in 2005, composed of three City Council members and three Planning Commission members. This group has led the General Plan program, including the outreach efforts, and guided the development of the *New General Plan*. The Committee usually met monthly between 2005 and 2008. Meetings were open to any interested residents to attend.

Guiding Principles and Vision

In 2004, Redwood City and the General Plan Committee reached out to the community to develop a vision and guiding principles for the *New General Plan*. Nine neighborhood workshops were held to solicit information and ideas from community members. The resulting guiding principles, as adopted by the City Council, are the cornerstone for the *New General Plan*. These guiding principles indicate how Redwood City will respond to change in the future. Redwood City's vision reflects how we imagine our City in 2030, as the premier place to live, play, work, and build relationships on the Peninsula.

Affinity Groups and Neighborhood Outreach

During 2008, a series of "affinity group" meetings was convened. These meetings were intended to bring together members of groups sharing one or more "affinities" to discuss issues and opportunities facing Redwood City. These groups were diverse and included environmentalists, developers, health care providers, local religious leaders, and bicycle enthusiasts among others. In addition, the City conducted a number of outreach meetings with local English as a Second Language (ESL) class attendees. More than 100 people participated in the eight affinity group meetings and the ESL class sessions.

In addition to affinity group meetings, the City reached out to three additional neighborhood groups throughout the City to meet for a dialogue in 2008. The groups of neighborhoods were invited in because they were identified as having higher density conditions with

infrastructure needs that the City wanted to learn more about. They are also located near downtown and other corridors that were seen as most likely to experience change. Discussions at these meetings focused on a variety of General Plan topics, and centered on ideas for creating healthy, complete neighborhoods.

Community Workshops

Three large-scale Community Workshops were conducted in 2007 and 2008 as part of the *New General Plan* program. The first event was held as part of the 2007 Our Town, Downtown festival. Participants mapped Redwood City’s well loved places, streets, and trails and mapped those areas that need love and attention. The next workshop, held in January 2008, reviewed and confirmed previously approved General Plan guiding principles and vision statements, and solicited major concerns, issues, and ideas from the public.



In September 2008, a Community Festival was held to solicit feedback on citywide issues. Participants had the opportunity to comment on such issues as sustainability, mobility, neighborhoods and urban design, and land use alternatives for four focus areas: the Bayfront, Woodside Road, El Camino Real, and the Veterans/Broadway corridor. Over 250 residents, business people, and other interested individuals participated in this hands-on workshop.



City Council, Commissions, and Committees

Redwood City has an active elected and appointed leadership, participating in the City Council, Planning and other Commissions, and a number of appointed committees. Throughout the *New General Plan* development, meetings were held with the City Council to explore a range of issues related to the *New General Plan*. Discussions about Redwood City’s potential land use changes were a critical element in all discussions.



Specific issues related to the *New General Plan* were also discussed extensively with Commissions and Committees during 2008 and 2009. The following commissions and committees were actively involved with the development of the *New General Plan*:

- Planning Commission
- Civic Cultural Commission
- Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Commission
- Port Commission
- Senior Affairs Commission

Redwood City General Plan
Community Festival
September 2008

- Architectural Review Committee
- Historic Resources Advisory Committee
- Housing and Human Concerns Committee
- Pride and Beautification Committee
- Library Board
- Redwood City Chamber of Commerce

The Planning Commission was instrumental to the development of the *New General Plan*, holding extra meetings and devoting their time to develop this guiding document. Many sections of this General Plan were developed through collaborative work of the Planning Commission and other committees. For example, the Housing Chapter was developed with guidance from four separate joint meetings with the Planning Commission and Housing and Human Concerns Committee. The meetings were held to discuss housing issues, implementation programs, the draft Housing Chapter, and revisions to the Housing Chapter after State agency review.

In summer 2009, six study sessions and two public hearings will be held with the Planning Commission to review the Draft General Plan. The Study Sessions are open to the public, and the community is invited to provide feedback on all Chapters of the Draft General Plan.

With the guidance of an active elected and appointed leadership and an interested and informed community, the Redwood City *New General Plan* was developed.

General Plan Website

The City utilized its website to provide current information on the *New General Plan*. Summaries of the public meetings and information on program progress were posted for review. The public was asked to comment on various aspects of the program during its formation.

Our Context for Planning

Our guiding principles set the framework for planning in Redwood City. At the same time, we are constantly influenced by our location within the region and our surrounding environment.

Similarly, “east of U.S. 101” refers to the lands closest to the Bay. In this General Plan, we use the terms south-west and north-east reflect accuracy as well as regional nomenclature.

Planning Area

This General Plan addresses all lands within the City’s corporate limits, as well as some unincorporated San Mateo County properties near Redwood City, within its Sphere of Influence. In this General Plan, the combined City area and Sphere of Influence are termed the “planning area,” as illustrated in Figure I-2. While properties within the Sphere of Influence are under the jurisdiction of San Mateo County agencies, these properties bear a critical relationship to Redwood City’s planning activities. Many of these areas already receive some sort of service from Redwood City, and one day, some of these properties may become part of the City proper. Planning for service extensions, integrated infrastructure, and high design quality is timely and prudent.

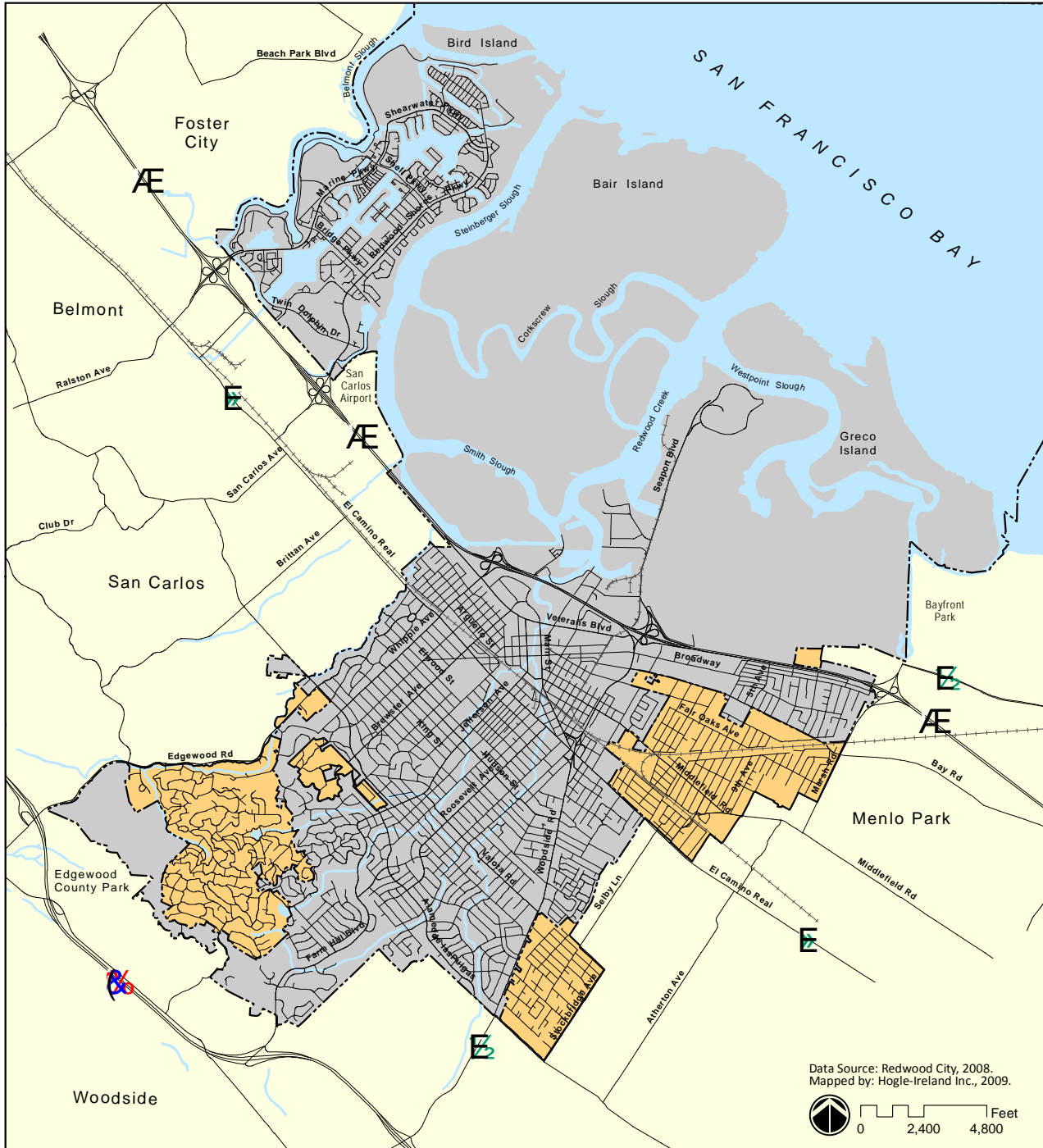
General Plan Reference Documents

The General Plan is the result of thousands of hours of research and technical studies, the collective efforts of the diversity of elected decision-makers, individuals, and agencies who cumulatively guide and shape land use development and natural resource conservation, and the engagement of numerous individuals throughout the community who have articulated their hopes and expectations for the City’s future.

Through the process, a number of related documents have been produced, that will provide resource material for years to come. These include:

- General Plan Technical Background Reports
- Affinity Group Summary
- Community Festival Outreach Summary
- General Plan Environmental Impact Report

INTRODUCTION



Data Source: Redwood City, 2008.
 Mapped by: Hogle-Ireland Inc., 2009.

Legend







-  Redwood City Boundary
-  Sphere of Influence Boundary
-  Freeway/Highway
-  Major Roads
-  Railroad
-  Waterways

Figure I-2
Planning Area

Realizing Our Vision

The *New* General Plan provides the policy guidance to create the future we believe in, to implement our Vision as outlined in this Introduction. The Redwood City *New* General Plan is intended to provide an enlightened strategy for the future development of our City – a strategy that values our history, unique character, and future potential. The plan will enhance the quality of life for current and future generations, and strives for sustainable use of resources now and in the future. The *New* General Plan relies upon the Implementation Actions to provide the specific guidance that will lead to implementation of the goals and policies listed throughout the document. Through implementation of the *New* General Plan and the continued involvement of an engaged community, we will create a reality out of the future we imagine, the future we believe in, for Redwood City.