



Our Vision: Dreams to Actions

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

In Redwood City, we dare to take bold actions that allow us to achieve our Vision. In this General Plan, we identify the goals, policies, and implementation actions that will guide us toward our Vision for our Neighborhoods, Corridors, and Downtown and other business Centers. The vignettes on the following pages illustrate the possibilities and reflect the collective community Vision developed through extensive public engagement. Imagine it is the year 2030; imagine the possibilities for Redwood City.

A Downtown Resident's Perspective: 2030

Imagine. 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, 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, its variety of architectural styles, as well as its vitality.



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

After our quick breakfast 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. We can recall Downtown before the grade separations

were completed. The train tracks no longer divide the city. Pleasant, connected, walkable streets knit Downtown into a beautiful, cohesive whole. We love our urban lifestyle!

An El Camino Real Resident's Perspective: 2030

Imagine. I open the door of my townhouse and step out onto the front porch. I feel the sun's warmth 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 toward my stop, bicycles and cars pass smoothly beyond the trees. Most of the shops aren't open yet, but when I come home, the International Market will be. I'll pick up some groceries for dinner and then walk the two blocks home. Later, the kids and I are headed to the park. I had thought it was hard to believe residing on a big boulevard street like El Camino Real could be so enjoyable, but this is the best place I've ever lived.

Imagine El Camino Real as a Grand Boulevard, walkable and beautiful.



A Neighborhood Resident's Perspective: 2030

Imagine our neighborhoods are safe and active, with conveniences nearby.

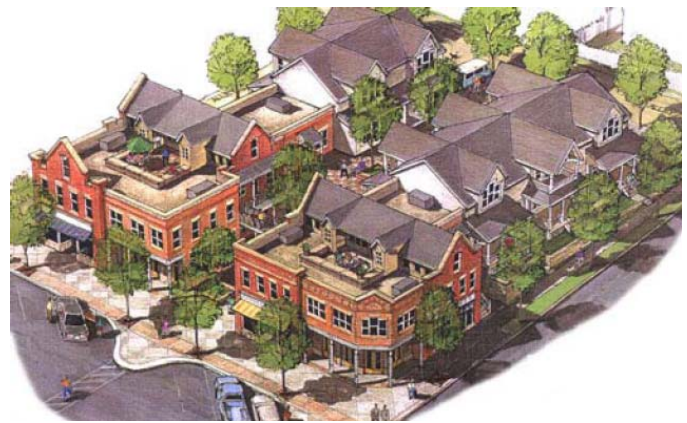
Imagine. We are lucky to live in a neighborhood that has the conveniences we need within walking distance. Since Redwood City recognizes the need for child care, and worked closely with providers to locate facilities sensitively throughout the community, we found a close and high-quality child care provider. And thanks to the City's ongoing support for infill and affordable housing, some of the rents, 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 rides his bike along Roosevelt Avenue on something known as a "bicycle boulevard."

The street is designed to give priority to bicycles, so it's great that he is safe as he rides his bike to school. Before coming home, he will stop at my parents' house, where they will make sure he finishes his homework. My parents still live in the same apartment where I grew up. I used to worry about the quality of their high-density neighborhood near Downtown. As retirees, my parents appreciate that their beloved older neighborhood is aging gracefully. The walking experience has been refreshed by the presence of thriving canopy trees and pretty front-yard gardens.

Neighborhoods have blossomed throughout Redwood City over the last 20 years, as higher-density housing has been built adjacent to retail centers and infrastructure has been enhanced. Shops offer excellent variety and quality of goods and services to support healthy lifestyles. The shopping centers are more accessible, with strong pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods, and the City continues important investment in local parks and services.



A Bayfront Visitor's Perspective: 2030

Imagine. *As an environmentalist, I'm 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 a stroll on the gravel path along Redwood Creek. Clapper rails, egrets, and other birds are gliding over the water. As I gaze across the Bay at Mount Diablo, it's amazing to think that the north boundary of my bustling city is shaped by waterways and is rich with wildlife.*



Imagine wildlife and plants flourishing 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 crossing the Blomquist Street Bridge. Local growth and the booming trade with foreign countries have energized the Port; 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. Redwood City sure did it right—finding a relationship that has preserved nature and our quality of life, while expanding development and economic opportunities.

A Waterfront Neighborhood Resident's Perspective: 2030

Imagine. *We just finished moving, and we can't wait to start enjoying our new home. We now live in a beautiful new condominium with a great view of the Bay. We live in a lively neighborhood, within walking distance of the destinations and the trails that we love. The best part is that we found a permanent and convenient slip for our catamaran.*

Imagine our waterfront neighborhoods are wonderful places to live and are also exciting destinations. Imagine 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 favorite waterfront restaurant. As we walk along the boardwalk, we appreciate the public access and great gathering spaces that have been incorporated into our neighborhood!

A Redwood City Hills Resident's Perspective: 2030

Imagine. I appreciate the open space and Bay views living in the hills of Redwood City. My neighbors and I like the hills' low density, with its hillside homes and wealth of surrounding green space. I have lived here for over 30 years, and there has been little change to the area. Some infill development of vacant and larger home sites has occurred, but the size and character of new homes have blended in with the surroundings well. Getting in and out is much easier and safer since the traffic on Farm Hill Boulevard was slowed, and it seems like there are more bicycles climbing the hill on weekends. As a senior citizen, I can walk to the bus stop and catch a shuttle just about any time I want, which gets me some exercise and saves energy too. Maybe I'll stop at the hardware shop on El Camino Real 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.



Imagine our neighborhoods are beautiful and accessible to other areas.

A Redwood Shores Resident's Perspective: 2030

Imagine. I've lived in Redwood Shores for 10 years. The bike lanes throughout the neighborhood make getting around so easy. Whether I'm going to work or the playground with my daughter, everything is a convenient bike ride away. My daughter loves her new school, especially when they visit the library on Belmont Slough. We also love all the parks and waterfront open space that the Shores offers residents.



Imagine Redwood Shores, which continues to be home to high-quality neighborhoods and supports innovative businesses.

Some of my neighbors have lived here for 30 years. They often remark 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

Imagine. *The clock turns 12:00 noon, time for lunch. Where to today? 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 message to my cousin who works on Seaport Boulevard.*

We both work in green technology, which is an exciting and continuously evolving industry. Since Redwood City has become a hub for green technology, many of my Sequoia High School classmates now work here, including my cousin. He's with a start-up company developing new means of generating energy. He will meet me Downtown; he's heading for the streetcar now. His company 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.

Imagine it is the year 2030; imagine the possibilities for Redwood City.

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Taking Action: A User's Guide

Redwood City's General Plan



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

The General Plan reflects the community's shared values of what Redwood City is today and plans to be in future years. Often referred to as the community's "blueprint," the General Plan establishes the basis for zoning regulations and provides guidance in the evaluation of development proposals. Additionally, it creates the framework for economic development, transportation improvements, and balancing residents' desires with regard to sustainability, City services, parks, and cultural and historic preservation. The Redwood City General Plan will lead our community toward a more healthy and sustainable future. The 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 jurisdiction 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 General Plan is formatted into five Elements 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 Chapters within the Elements treat specific issues (see Table V-1).

Table V-1: General Plan Elements and State-Mandated Elements

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

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

The **Housing Element** 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 Element.

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

The **Public Safety Element** 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 Element** 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 Focus

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 because it represents potential. It is one of the smallest seed cones yet grows into the tallest of trees.

Sustainability

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 that focuses 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 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 General Plan sustainability symbol is the Sequoia sempervirens seed cone. This symbol indicates that a 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 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.

Redwood City's location with respect to the Peninsula and U.S. 101 is unique. Through Redwood City, U.S. 101 runs east/west, rather than north/south as it does through the rest of the Peninsula. Because of U.S. 101's prominence throughout the region, most residents and local businesses refer to directions (north, south, east, and west) relative to U.S. 101, rather than true north/south/east/west directions. As such, we often refer to "west of El Camino Real" (technically south) or north of Woodside (technically west). The General Plan document combines local vernacular and true direction together ("southwest of El Camino Real") or uses the local vernacular rather than true direction.

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 Elements 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 land use designation change for a particular property, or policy/text changes applicable to larger areas or the entire city. All proposed amendments will be publicly reviewed to ensure consistency with all Elements of the General Plan and the General Plan EIR. Per State law, General Plans may be amended up to four times per year. To facilitate a larger number of amendment requests, a jurisdiction may group together a number of amendment requests to process together as one General Plan

amendment. However, the City is under no obligation to process General Plan amendments, as this constitutes a legislative act.

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 & related matrices are included for ease in referencing the actions related to the Redwood City General Plan. Implementation Programs are intended to be reviewed and updated periodically to allow decision-makers to adjust to current community priorities and funding resources. Updating an Implementation Program will not constitute a General Plan amendment.

A Note Regarding the Cargill Salt Crystallizer Ponds

Appendix A presents and explains the General Plan's treatment of the Cargill property, an approximately 1,450-acre land area in the northeastern portion of Redwood City. The General Plan does not establish any new goals, policies, implementation programs, or other types of regulations for these lands. In January 2009, the City Council determined that, in order to allow for more in-depth study, changes to the 1990 General Plan policies applicable to these lands should be considered and implemented in a separate process to be completed after the completion of the General Plan process. Consequently, the applicable policies, designations, programs, and other regulations from the 1990 General Plan will remain in effect for the Cargill property. Selected chapters of the 1990 General Plan, intended to summarize the 1990 General Plan provisions applicable to the Cargill property, are attached as an appendix to this General Plan. In addition, the complete 1990 General Plan continues to be available from Redwood City Community Development and on the City's website at:

www.redwoodcity.org/cds/planning/generalplan/generalplan1990.html

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 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. This fundamental belief in community outreach is furthered in the goals, policies, and programs in Building Community's Governance Chapter.

The outreach program for the General Plan 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 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 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 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, healthcare 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 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.

Redwood City General Plan
Community Festival
September 2008

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 General Plan development, meetings were held with the City Council to explore a range of issues related to the General Plan. Discussions about Redwood City's potential land use changes were a critical element in all discussions.

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

- Planning Commission
- Civic Cultural Commission
- Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Commission
- Port Commission
- Senior Affairs Commission
- Architectural Review Committee
- Historic Resources Advisory Committee
- Housing and Human Concerns Committee
- Pride and Beautification Committee
- Library Board
- The Redwood City - San Mateo County Chamber of Commerce

The Planning Commission was instrumental to the development of the General Plan, holding extra meetings and devoting their time to develop this guiding document. Many Elements and Chapters of this General Plan were developed through collaborative work of the Planning Commission and other committees. For example, the Housing Element 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 Element, and revisions to the Housing Element after State agency review.

In 2009 and 2010, several study sessions and public hearings were conducted with the Planning Commission to review the Draft General Plan. The Study Sessions were open to the public, and the community was invited to provide feedback on all Elements of the Draft General Plan.

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

General Plan Website

The City used its website to provide current information on the 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. The website included a website survey for the public to respond to land use alternatives, and provide comment on General Plan Elements.

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.

Geographical Context

Redwood City is located in the San Francisco Bay Area on the San Francisco Peninsula in south-eastern San Mateo County. It is bounded by portions of the cities of San Carlos, Belmont, Foster City, Atherton, Menlo Park, and Woodside, and unincorporated areas of San Mateo County. Major transportation facilities in and near the city include US Highway 101 (U.S. 101), Interstate 280 (I-280), Caltrain, State Route 84 (Woodside Road within the City), and State Route 82 (El Camino Real). Figure V-1 indicates Redwood City's location within the region.

In the Bay Area, many directional references are related to U.S. Highway 101, which runs roughly north-south through the western part of the region. In Redwood City, however, U.S. 101 actually runs northwest to southeast. Even so, most community members recognize that west of U.S. 101 refers to areas away from the Bay, and toward the hills. Similarly, "east of U.S. 101" refers to the lands closest to the Bay. In this General Plan, we generally use the terms southwest and northeast reflect accuracy as well as regional nomenclature.



Figure V-1: Regional Location

Planning Area

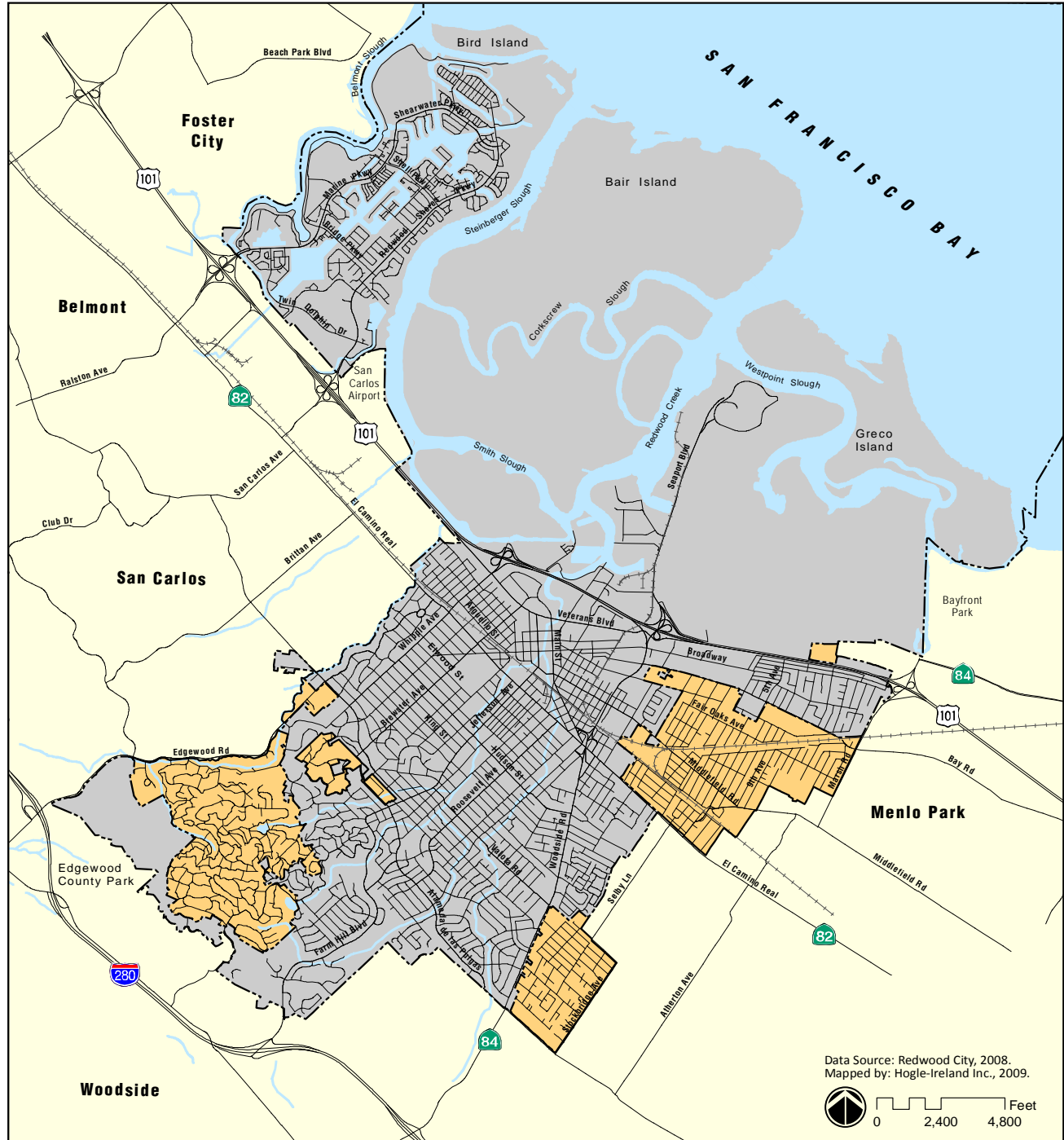
This General Plan addresses all lands within the City's corporate limits, as well as some unincorporated San Mateo County properties near Redwood City, within the City's Sphere of Influence. In this General Plan, the combined City area and Sphere of Influence are termed the "planning area," as illustrated in Figure V-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



Legend







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

Figure V-2: Planning Area

Realizing Our Vision

The General Plan provides the policy guidance to create the future we believe in, to implement our Vision as outlined in the Introduction. The Redwood City General Plan is intended to provide an enlightened strategy for the future development of our community – 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 General Plan relies upon the Implementation Programs to provide the specific guidance that will lead to implementation of the goals and policies listed throughout the document. Through implementation of the 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.

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