



# pleasure point commercial corridor

community vision

commercial and mixed use design guidelines

portola drive streetscape



## existing conditions summary

December 2017

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# Part 1

## Introduction

# Project Overview

Pleasure Point has a unique character and strong community identity. In 2008, the community and the County developed the Pleasure Point Community Plan for the residential area of Pleasure Point that reflects the community vision and distinctive character of the Pleasure Point neighborhoods.

Starting in mid-2017, the County began a process to work with the community to develop a **Vision, Guiding Principles and Design Guidelines** for the commercial area along Portola Drive.



# Project Overview

The project will also result in a **Conceptual Streetscape Plan for Portola Drive**. This will include potential improvements to the public right-of-way that will benefit all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, local business owners and residents.

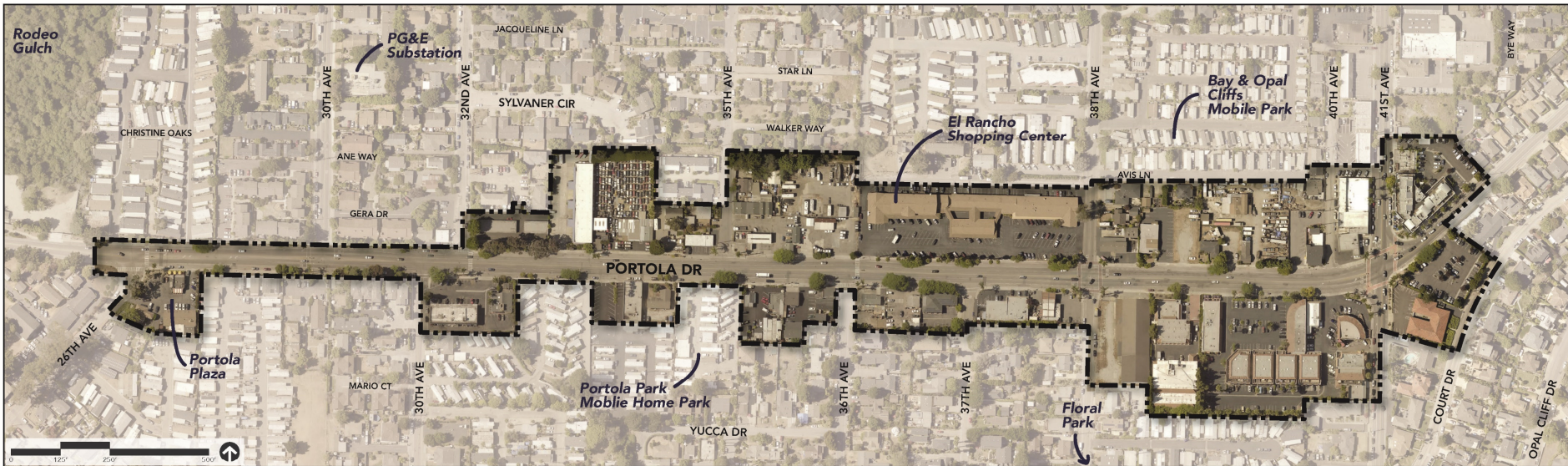


The diagram below shows the overall project schedule.



# Study Area

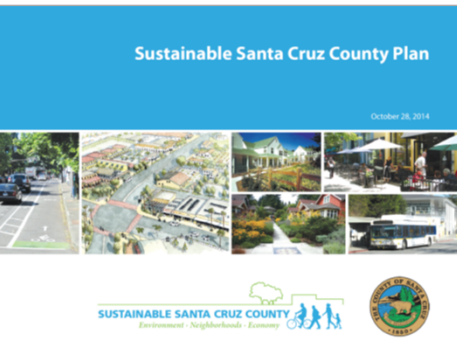
The project **Study Area** covers approximately 30 acres and includes properties fronting Portola Drive roughly between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue. This area is a key asset to the community and has seen increased interest by developers for new projects.



LEGEND  
Project Boundary

# Previous Plans and Studies

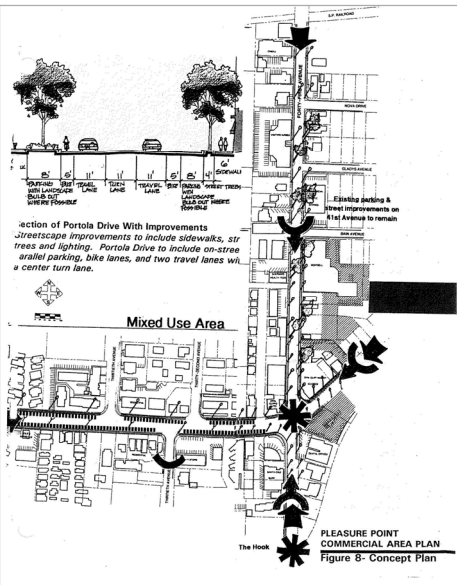
This project builds upon several previous Santa Cruz County planning efforts and adopted plans:



## Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan (2014)

This planning study articulates a community-based vision for a more sustainable way-of-life in the urban parts of the county. It includes a vision, guiding principles, and guidance on sustainable land use and transportation patterns.

Available at: [www.sustainablecantacruzcounty.org](http://www.sustainablecantacruzcounty.org)



## Pleasure Point Commercial Area Plan: A Plan for Revitalization (1995)

This Plan identifies specific opportunities for revitalization, streetscape enhancements, parking improvements, opportunity sites and implementation strategies for both the Portola Drive and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue corridors in Pleasure Point.

# Summary Purpose

The following is a summary of information related to existing conditions in the Pleasure Point Commercial Corridor area. This includes an initial listing of key challenges and opportunities to be addressed during the project.

For more information regarding the project, including community workshop notifications and summaries, please visit: [www.sccoplanning.com](http://www.sccoplanning.com)







# Part 2

## Community Character and Economics

# Social and Cultural Character

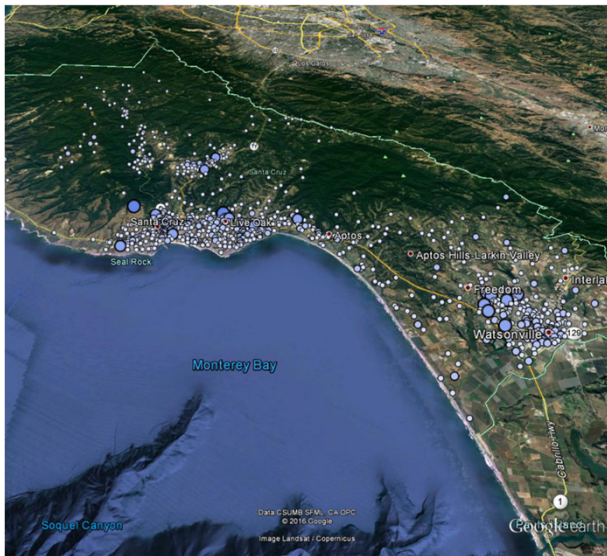
Pleasure Point is a distinct, world-famous coastal community with a rich surfing heritage. The diverse neighborhood is home to a **broad variety of businesses**, including retail, restaurants, offices, auto repair and personal services. It is also one of the county's most **family-friendly neighborhoods**.

In recent years there has been an increase in both home prices and commercial rents. This has led to increased interest in new projects from property owners and developers.



**Santa Cruz County** has historically had an economy strongly rooted in tourism, personal and professional services, health care and education. The county has seen relatively slow population growth in recent years (0.5% a year), while also experiencing a **higher than average unemployment rate** as compared to the State of California (even when seasonally adjusted).

The county has also experienced a growing population of daily commuters to the Silicon Valley and Bay Area, resulting in more commuter traffic and a strain on local transportation infrastructure.



## Population, 2010-2016

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>% Change</u>
Santa Cruz County	262,362	274,673	4%
Santa Cruz City	59,946	64,465	7%
Pleasure Point	5,846	5,973	2%

Source: US Census ACS, 2011-15; US Census QuickFacts

## Economic Conditions | Pleasure Point

The **Pleasure Point** community represents about two percent of the overall county population (5,973 in 2016). Similar to the broader county, Pleasure Point has seen relatively small population growth, around 2% between 2010 and 2016.

The area benefits from its **unique community character and high quality of life** that is strongly tied to the natural environment. There are many locally-owned and neighborhood-serving businesses already in the area.

Due to increased housing pressures facing the county and the entire state of California, there is a **high demand for new housing** in Pleasure Point (both rental and owner-occupied).



## Key Findings | Community Character and Economics

1. The **desirability of Pleasure Point** and steady regional population growth will continue to put pressure on local housing and land prices.
2. New **mixed-use development** on infill sites is often not economically feasible given the current market conditions and existing land use regulations and constraints.
3. Both the County and Pleasure Point have a tight housing market with limited inventory, and there is a strong demand for **new housing of all types** (including housing for families and seniors).
4. There is potential for expanding the local retail and office market through **horizontal mixed-use** (e.g., different uses in different buildings on one site).
5. There is also potential for **live-work** and other creative developments that provide space for residents and entrepreneurs.





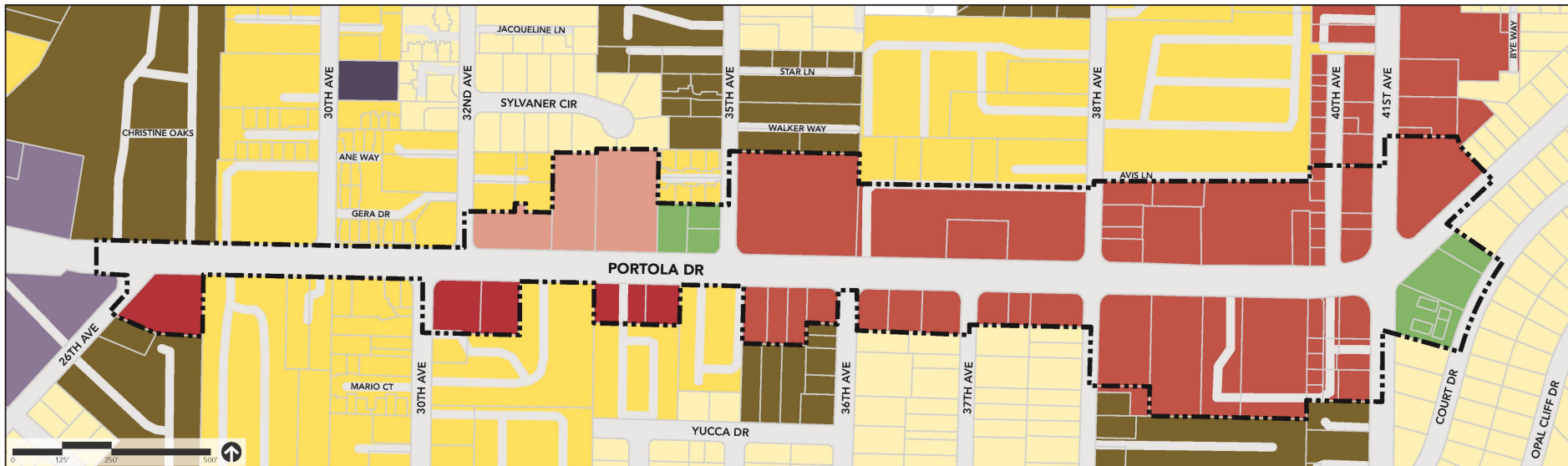
# Part 3

## Buildings and Parcels

# Current Zoning

The Study Area contains a variety of parcels zoned as one of **four** commercial or mixed-use categories:

- Neighborhood Commercial (C-1)
- Community Commercial (C-2)
- Commercial Services District (C-4)
- Professional-Administrative Office (PA)



LEGEND		ZONING	
	Project Boundary		C-1
	Parcel		C-2
	Street		PA
			PF
			VA, VA-D
			R-1-S, R-1-S-L-PP, R-1-S-PP, R-1-6, R-1-6-L
			RM-2-S, RM-2-S-MH-PP, RM-2-S-PP, RM-3, RM-3-PP, RM-3-MH
			RM-4, RM-4-PP, RM-4-MH-PP, RM-4-MH, RM-5-PP, RM-5-MH

Existing Zoning

# Current Zoning

While each zoning category has different specific site and building development standards, each **supports local and community serving uses**. The table below identifies the intent, maximum allowable height and mixed-use components allowed by existing regulations for each zoning category.

Zone	Intent	Maximum Height*	Mixed Use**
<b>C-1</b> Neighborhood Commercial	Compact and conveniently located shopping and services within walking distance of individual neighborhoods	3 Stories Maximum of 35 feet	Allowed Maximum 50% of project square footage as residential
<b>C-2</b> Community Commercial	Concentrated commercial uses accommodating a broad range and mixture of activities	3 Stories Maximum of 35 feet	Allowed Maximum 50% of project square footage as residential
<b>C-4</b> Commercial Services District	Non-retail in nature, such as building material suppliers, auto repair, or freight terminals	3 Stories Maximum of 35 feet	Not Allowed
<b>PA</b> Professional-Administrative Office	Where office uses can provide a buffer use between residential areas and the more intensive commercial activities.	3 Stories Maximum of 35 feet	Allowed Maximum 50% of project square footage as residential

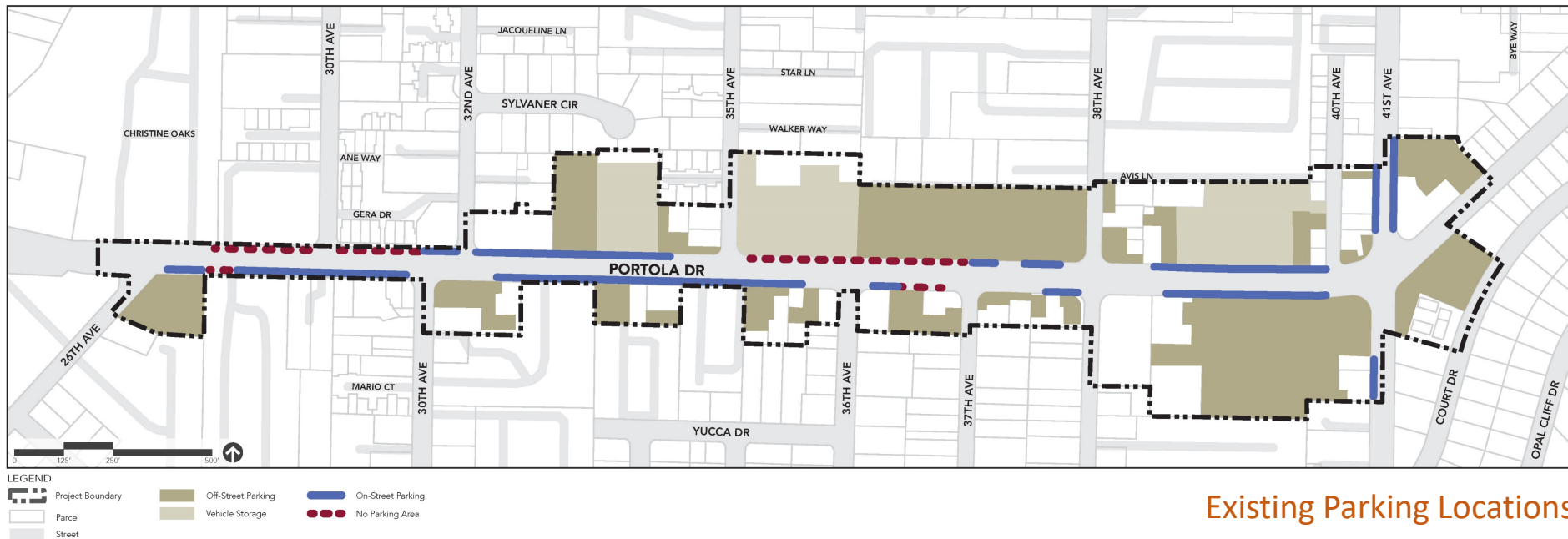
\* Height may be increased to 40 feet with Design Review and Zoning Administrator approval

\*\* Mixed Use can be 67% Residential if it includes affordable housing



# Parking

Public on street parking is provided on most blocks in the study area, with more limited parking in front of the El Rancho Shopping center and adjacent to residential neighborhoods in the western part of the Study Area. Off street private parking is provided on surface lots throughout the corridor. In addition, there are several large **vehicle storage areas** associated with auto repair businesses and salvage yards.



Existing Parking Locations

# Architectural Variety

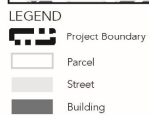
The Pleasure Point community benefits from a **unique and eclectic mix of different building types and sizes**, with the blocks between 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue reflecting more of a local village retail and service focus. This variety allows for a diverse mix of tenant spaces and rental rates. As a result, many different types of small businesses are able to locate and be successful in the area.

Since there is **no dominant architectural style**, the area has developed in an unique and organic way, often integrating artistic and beach-oriented features. Each individual building has had the opportunity to create a unique style and character.



# Building Sizes and Lot Coverage

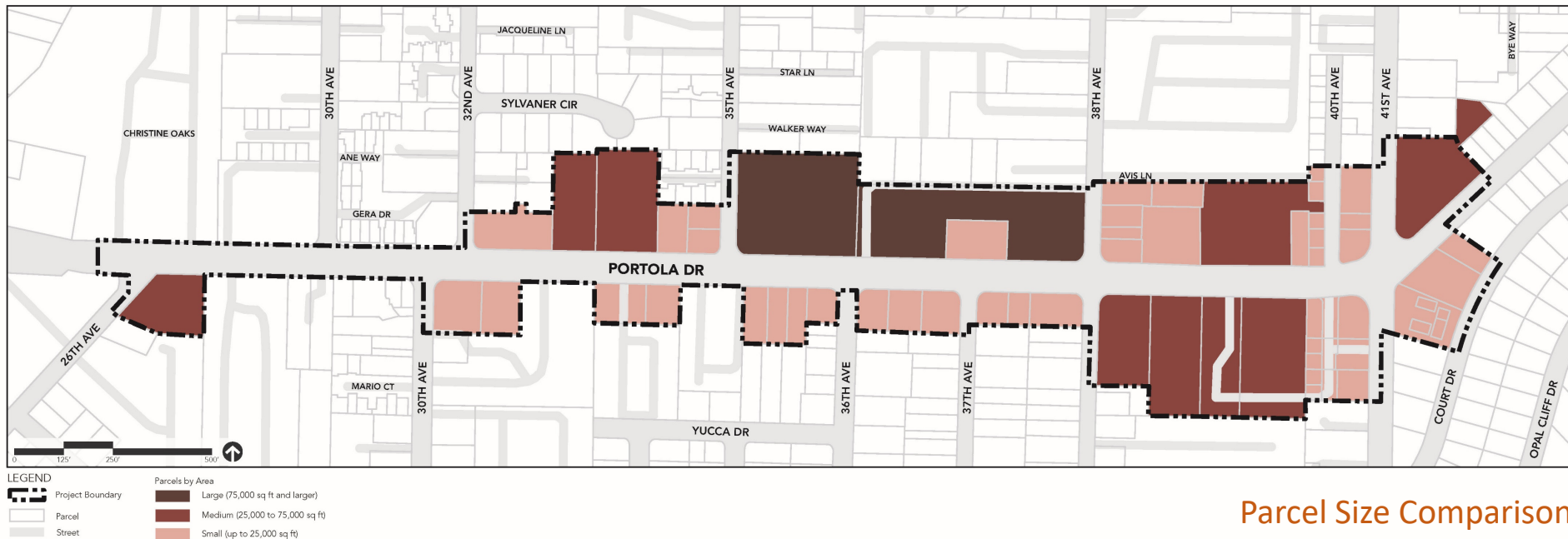
There is large **variation in building sizes** as well as lot coverage and setbacks. The diagram below shows individual building footprints in dark grey. The areas in white highlight the spaces between buildings, often reserved for parking or landscaping. As shown in the diagram, some buildings are located **very close** to Portola Drive and others are **set back** from the roadway.



Building Footprints

# Parcel Sizes and Depths

There is also variation in the size of parcels in the study area. This variation has resulted in shopping centers being located next to car repair shops, corner coffee shops, etc. **Larger lots tend to be more economically feasible** to redevelop than smaller lots due to their ability to accommodate new developments that respond to current market conditions and their ability to attract financing.

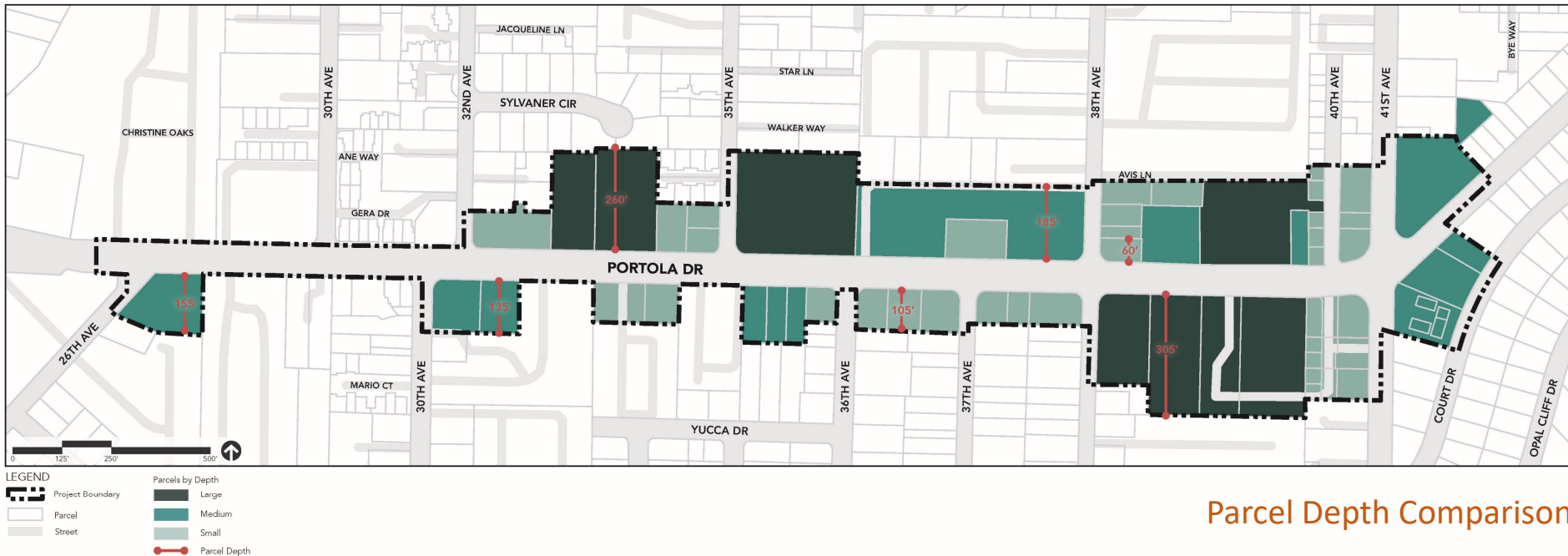


Parcel Size Comparison

# Parcel Sizes and Depths

There is significant variation in the depth of parcels. As shown below, parcel depths range from 60 to over 300 feet.

**Deep parcels** allow for parking and deliveries to be located behind buildings, or more landscaping and plaza space to be added onsite. **Shallow parcels** create more of a challenge when designing vehicle ingress/egress points and onsite parking.



Parcel Depth Comparison

# Key Findings | Buildings and Parcels

1. Current zoning requirements **allow three story buildings**, even though there are few three story buildings currently in the study area.
2. The existing **50/50 Mixed-Use** limitation (e.g., no more than 50 percent of the square footage can be residential, or 67 percent if it is affordable housing) creates a site and building design challenges that reduce a project's economic feasibility.
3. The **unique and “funky” mix of uses and architectural styles** in Pleasure Point strengthens the area's character and creates a commercial and visitor destination.
4. The variation in building layouts, parcel sizes, parcel depths and setbacks creates **the need to identify different types of projects** (new or rehab) that would be feasible at different scales.





# Part 4

## Portola Drive

# Streetscape Character

Portola Drive is currently a **four lane street** with continuous bicycle lanes and limited on-street parking on both sides. There are a series of **intermittent landscaping islands** and bulbouts integrated into the streetscape. The street does not currently have dedicated left turn lanes in the project area, except where the commercial area ends at 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue.



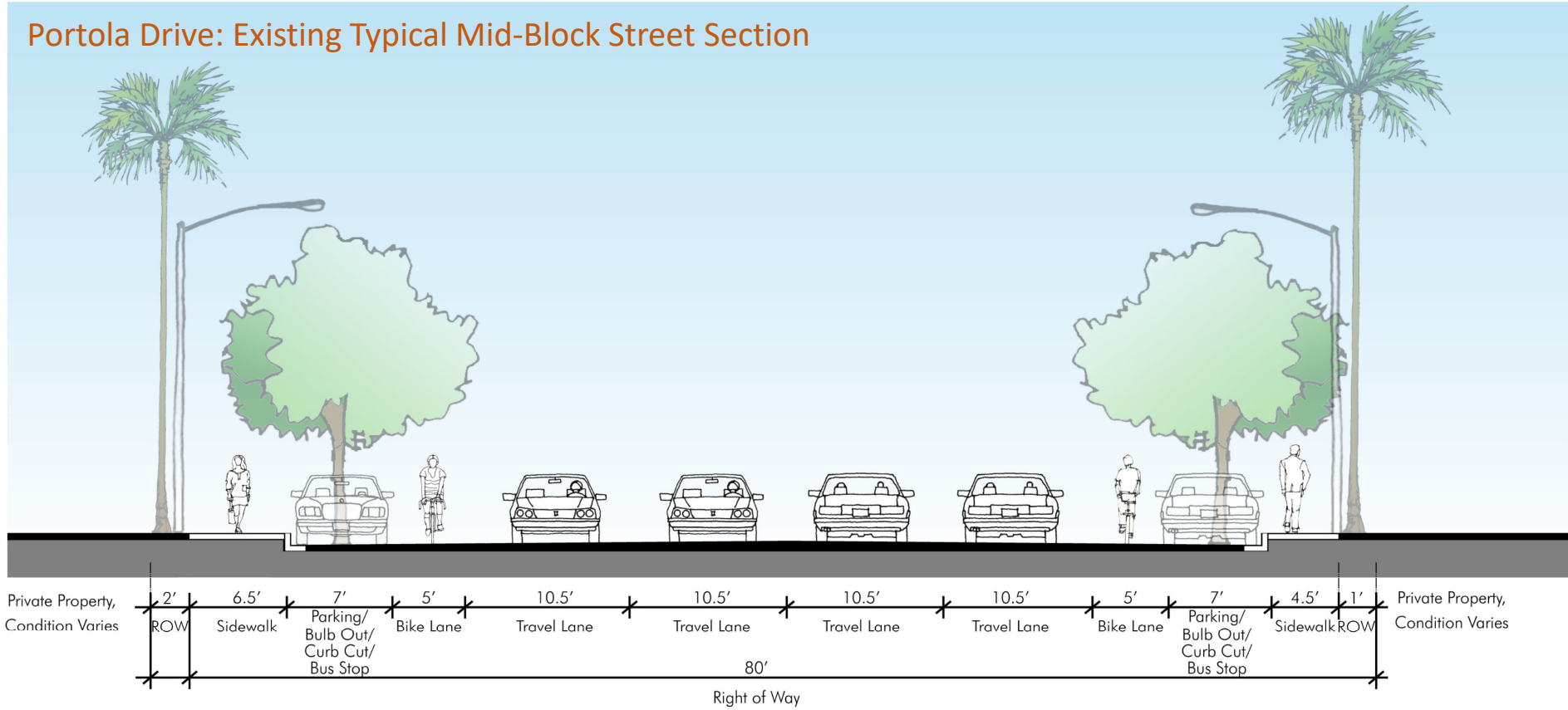


# Existing Street Right-of-Way

The existing right-of-way for Portola Drive is **80 feet**. Currently, the distance between the back of each sidewalk is 77 feet, due to the fact that **three feet of County right-of-way** currently extends into parking areas or building frontages.

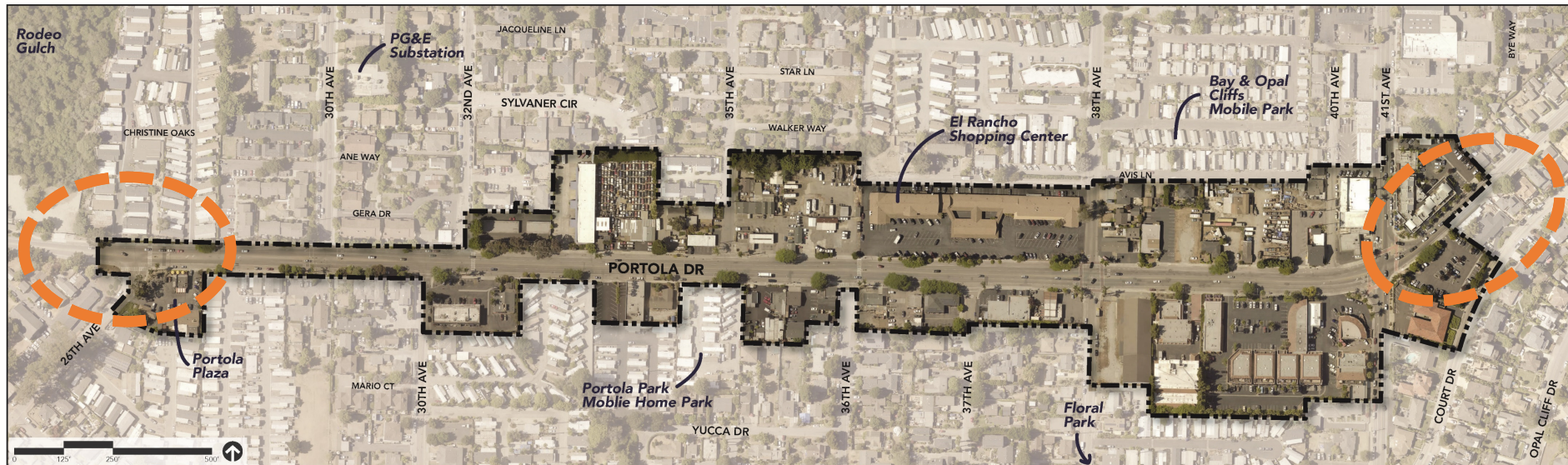
The street currently has 10.5 foot travel lanes, 5 foot bike lanes, and 7 foot parking and landscaping areas. Sidewalks in Pleasure Point are generally between 4.5 and 6.5 feet wide.

## Portola Drive: Existing Typical Mid-Block Street Section



# Existing Right-of-Way

The portion of Portola Drive that is within the Study Area varies from the typical configuration at each end of the commercial district. These transitions are unique in both their width and number of travel lanes. At both ends of the Study Area the **right-of-way narrows as the street transitions to two travel lanes with bicycle lanes** (and generally no on-street parking). These “book ends” of the corridor help to frame the commercial corridor and the neighborhoods beyond.



LEGEND  
Project Boundary

Portola Drive: Four Lane to Two Lane Transition Areas

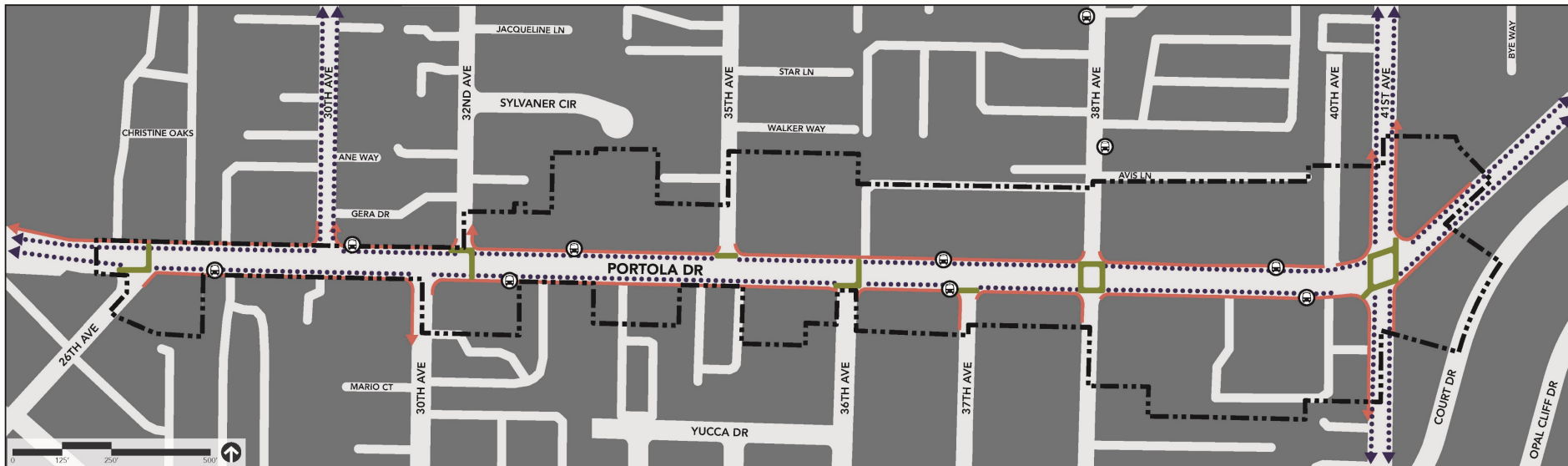
## Current Traffic Demands

Efficiently moving both current and projected vehicle traffic through the Study Area is a key objective of this project. Based on recent traffic counts (October 2016), the corridor experiences between **12,000 and 17,000 vehicles per day**. Four lane roadways without a dedicated left turn lane, such as this portion of Portola Drive, can generally function well (e.g., have acceptable levels of traffic) with a volume of 25,000+ vehicles per day.



# Pedestrian Amenities

Most of the sidewalks in the Study Area are narrow and lack shade trees for pedestrians. This can create an environment that is not pleasant for pedestrians. A larger concern is the **overall lack of safe, clearly marked pedestrian crossings**. As shown in the diagram below, there are large gaps between pedestrian crossings that pose both an inconvenience and a safety issue for pedestrians traveling along the corridor.



Existing Pedestrian and Bicycle Amenities

# Bicycle Amenities

Pleasure Point's flat topography and beach-oriented lifestyle with nearby neighborhoods creates an ideal place for bicyclists. While Portola Drive currently has continuous bicycle lanes on both sides of the street, it is **not a pleasant or safe bicycle environment**. The lack of dedicated left turn lanes or center medians makes it challenging for bicyclists to make left turns onto the Avenues.

Many businesses along the corridor have bicycle racks and other amenities for cyclists incorporated into their overall site design. This provides convenience for cyclists and helps promote ridership.



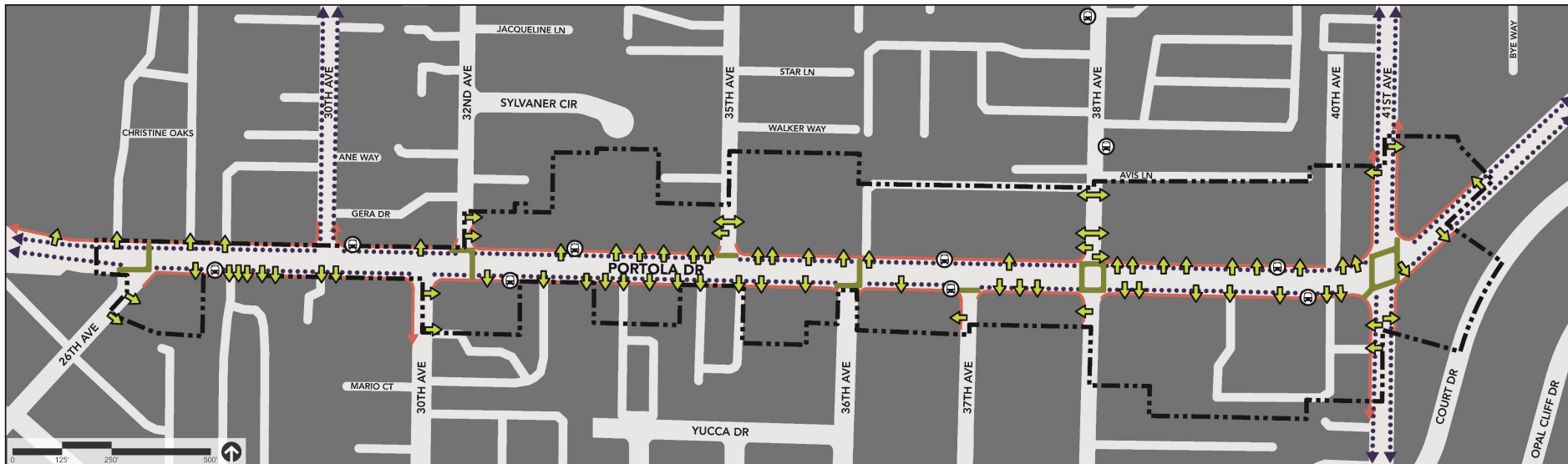
# Transit

The Study Area is generally well served with two bus routes between 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue, with stops about every 30 minutes, that connect Pleasure Point to other key destinations throughout the county. Bus stops are located at **regular intervals on both sides of the street** near major intersections and shopping areas. Most bus stops also include shelters that provide seating, shade and protection from rain and wind.



# Driveways and Site Access

A key challenge for the Study Area are the large number of driveways and access points to properties from Portola Drive. Each **access point creates a potential area where pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles can be in conflict.** In addition, there are also several areas where parking backs directly into the street, creating potential safety and traffic flow conflicts.



Existing Driveway Access Points

# Truck Deliveries

Since the Study Area is a commercial district, businesses rely on frequent deliveries of supplies and goods from trucks. Currently, many deliveries are made by **trucks parking next to the curb within parking spaces and bike lanes**. This poses a safety concern for bicycles (since they are forced into vehicle travel lanes) as well as motorists trying to turn onto Portola Drive (since trucks can block views of oncoming traffic). It also diminishes the overall pedestrian experience along the corridor.





# Art and Wayfinding

Public art helps to create a unique sense of place and identity for an area. The Study Area has a **mix of public art and murals** that supports the eclectic character of Pleasure Point. However, the Study Area also currently lacks a clear set of wayfinding signage to help people navigate the area and easily find stores and destinations.



## Key Findings | Portola Drive

1. The existing 80-foot **Portola Drive right-of-way** is wide enough to add improved pedestrian amenities, bicycle facilities and parking.
2. Recent traffic counts suggest that **reducing the number of vehicle travel lanes** on Portola Drive is feasible.
3. Bicycle and pedestrian amenities are minimal, and **new crossings and improved bicycle facilities** can help improve safety and convenience.
4. Access and drop off locations for **delivery vehicles** create conflicts that result in blocked bicycle lanes and reduced visibility for drivers.
5. Unique **public art and wayfinding features** along the corridor can add to Pleasure Point's unique character and identity.

