

CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW**ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING COMMISSION****STAFF REPORT****WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2016****5. STUDY SESSION****5.1 East Whisman Precise Plan – Visioning and Land Use****RECOMMENDATION**

That the Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) provides policy direction and input on the East Whisman Precise Plan vision, land use locations, and intensities.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The Commission's agenda is advertised on Channel 26, and the agenda and this report appear on the City's website. All property owners within the plan area and within a 500' radius of the plan area were notified of this meeting by mailed notice. Other interested stakeholders were notified of this meeting via the project's e-mail notification system. Project and meeting information is posted on the project website: <http://www.mountainview.gov/eastwhisman>.

PURPOSE AND SUGGESTED MEETING PROCEDURE

The purpose of this meeting is to provide background information on the East Whisman Precise Plan area and summarize input from the July 16, 2016 Community Workshop and other public outreach conducted on the plan. Staff is seeking EPC input and policy direction on concepts for an updated vision and preferred land use locations and intensities. EPC comments will be presented at a City Council Study Session on September 6, 2016.

BACKGROUND**A New Precise Plan**

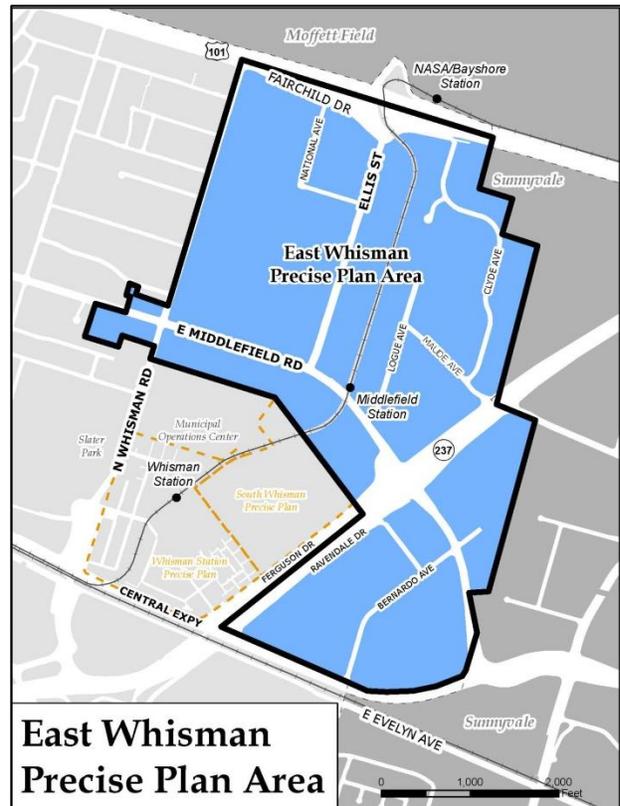
Development of a new East Whisman Precise Plan (EWPP) is a 2030 General Plan Action Item. The Precise Plan will also implement other General Plan goals and policies for the plan area, such as improved connectivity and pedestrian/bicycle amenities, incentivizing sustainable and transit-oriented development, and encouraging use of alternative transportation through public transit and

incorporation of transportation demand management (TDM) strategies (see Exhibit 1 for General Plan Action Items for East Whisman).

Precise Plan Boundary

The 368-acre plan area is bounded by the U.S. 101 freeway and NASA Ames/Moffett Field to the north, Sunnyvale city limits to the east, Central Expressway and South Whisman and Whisman Station Precise Plan areas to the south, and Whisman Road to the west. The plan boundary also includes the retail area and gas station at the intersection of North Whisman and East Middlefield Roads, referred to as a “Village Center” in the General Plan and in this report (see Exhibit 2—East Whisman Precise Plan Map).

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) light rail line travels north-south in the plan area with one station in the boundary—Middlefield Station—and two stations just outside the plan area—Whisman Station to the south and Bayshore/NASA Station to the north.



Prior City Council Meetings

Residential Land Use—February 2015

At a February 3, 2015 Study Session, City Council directed staff to study residential land uses in the EWPP area as part of a larger discussion on potential new residential land use strategies in the City. Therefore, while the current General Plan and zoning regulations do not allow residential land uses in East Whisman, the project scope includes new residential land uses.

Planning Grant – June 2015

The City Council accepted a VTA Priority Development Area (PDA) Planning Grant in June 2015 to fund the new Precise Plan. The grant program supports planning efforts that encourage housing and employment growth near public transportation in the County. As part of the grant, the City will expand the existing Whisman Station PDA boundary to include the EWPP area.

The grant funds the following Precise Plan consultant team:

- Community Design + Architecture (CD+A) – Lead consultant, providing urban planning and design services;
- Raimi + Associates – Providing project management, public outreach assistance, and policy/plan development assistance;
- Strategic Economics – Providing market demand analysis, development feasibility, and implementation financing strategies; and
- Fehr + Peers – Providing transportation planning/policies and transportation demand management (TDM) strategies.

Environmental Review – March 2016

On March 22, 2016, City Council authorized City staff to enter into a contract with David J. Powers & Associates for preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Precise Plan. Work on the environmental review will begin after a preferred development alternative has been endorsed by the EPC and City Council, anticipated in early 2017.

PRECISE PLAN PROCESS

The purpose of the new EWPP is to update the 2030 General Plan vision, goals, and policies for East Whisman and create new development standards and guidelines to replace current zoning regulations in the area. The Precise Plan is expected to be completed in two years – by mid-2018. The major components of the process include:

- *Public Outreach* – Such as community workshops, public meetings, stakeholder interviews, meetings with outside agencies, a project web page on the City website, and use of Open City Hall online surveys. Two

community workshops are anticipated and will be focused on visioning, land use, urban design and character, and connectivity.

- *Background Analysis*—Background reports will analyze topic areas for development of the Precise Plan, such as land use and urban design, retail demand analysis, parking demand and TDM strategies, multi-modal analysis, and implementation funding analysis.
- *Development of Plan Alternatives*—Plan alternatives will be created regarding urban design, land use, and multi-modal transportation options. A preferred plan alternative will be endorsed by the EPC and City Council prior to preparation of the EIR for the project.
- *Environmental Review*—An EIR will be prepared to analyze potential environmental impacts of the plan’s preferred development alternative, in addition to a General Plan Amendment, to allow residential uses to the East Whisman area, and a Zoning Amendment to create a new Precise Plan.
- *Final Plan*—A final plan will include a vision, development standards and guidelines, a community benefit strategy, sustainability requirements, and maps and graphics.

A graphic representation of the Precise Plan process and schedule is provided as Exhibit 3 to this report.

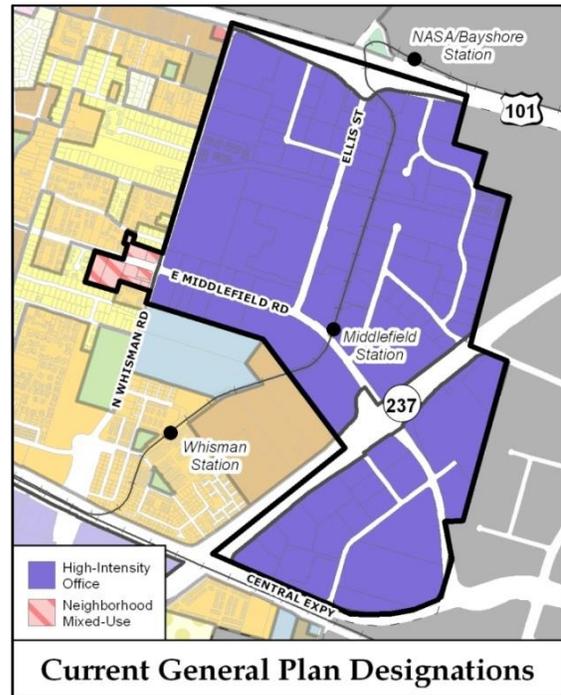
PLAN AREA CONTEXT

General Plan

The 2030 General Plan identifies East Whisman as a “Change Area” for future development and includes a vision for the area. The vision describes East Whisman as a transit-oriented employment center with greater commercial intensity, pedestrian and bicycle connections, highly sustainable development, and commercial services to support residents and workers in the area (see Exhibit 4).

The current General Plan land use designation for the plan area is High-Intensity Office (shown in purple) with Neighborhood Mixed-Use at the Middlefield Village Center (shown hatched in red-pink).

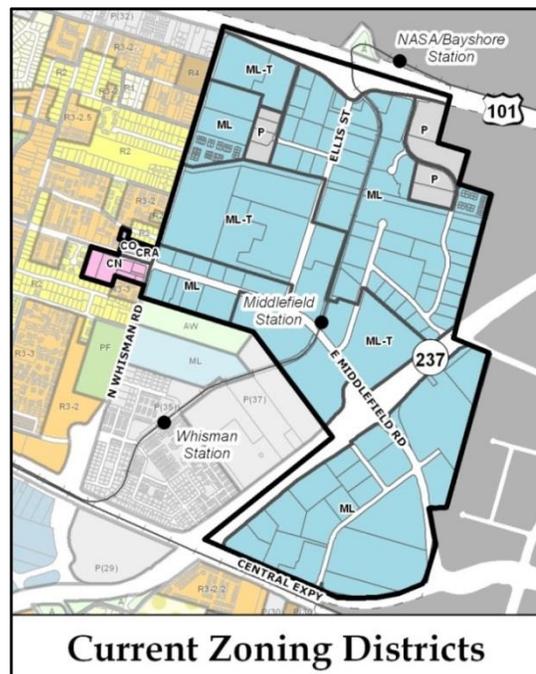
The High-Intensity Office designation permits office, light industrial, and research and development (R&D) uses with floor area ratios (FARs) ranging from 0.35 to 1.0 and up to eight stories in height for highly sustainable development. The Neighborhood Mixed-Use designation supports mixed-use centers that provide a range of goods and services in convenient locations to residential areas at FARs up to 1.05 and heights up to three stories, for projects with appropriate transitions to surrounding properties.



Current General Plan Designations

Zoning

Most of the EWPP area has a zoning designation of Limited Industrial (ML) (shown in blue) with a transit-overlay (ML-T) designation for those properties meeting the following requirements: located within 2,000' of a VTA light rail station, three to five acres in size, and inclusion of transit-oriented design elements or amenities, and pedestrian/bicycle improvements. The T-overlay designation permits an FAR range of 0.5 to 0.65, exceeding the ML District maximum of 0.35 FAR. Three parcels are shown as Planned Community (P) designations in gray, which are higher-intensity office developments consistent with the General Plan High-Intensity Office FAR allowances (between 0.65 and 1.0 FAR).



Current Zoning Districts

The Middlefield Village Center area has three zoning designations, including:

- *Commercial-Neighborhood (CN) District*—This district permits retail and commercial service uses in convenient shopping locations for surrounding residential neighborhoods and permits a two-story height limit with an FAR up to 1.05. Properties with this designation are currently occupied by restaurants, retail, and child-care facilities south of Middlefield Road.
- *Commercial/Residential-Arterial (CRA) District*—This district permits a range of commercial, office, and residential uses along the City’s major roadways and permits a three-story height limit with FARs ranging from 0.35 (for office) up to 1.35 (for mixed-use). The property with this designation is currently occupied by a gas service station (Rotten Robbie) located at the northwest corner of Middlefield and Whisman Roads.
- *Commercial-Office (CO) District*—This district permits professional, medical, and financial office uses with a two-story height limit at an FAR up to 0.35. The property with this designation is currently a vacant parcel on the north side of Middlefield Road adjacent to the gas station.

Existing Character and Conditions

The EWPP area is made up of 110 parcels, totaling approximately 368 acres, and is located in the easternmost area of the City. Historically, the area housed industrial and manufacturing businesses through the 1970s, which contributed to soil and groundwater contamination in the northwest quadrant of the plan area. This contaminated area, known as the Middlefield-Ellis-Whisman (MEW) Superfund Site, has ongoing clean-up overseen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). Starting in the 1980s and 1990s, the area predominately converted to office and technology R&D uses, which account for 90 percent of the current businesses in the area.

The majority of properties (58 percent) are built below 0.35 FAR with an average FAR of 0.44 in the plan area, and the majority of parcels (63 percent) are between 1 and 5 acres in size. The area has older building stock with the majority of buildings constructed in the 1960s and 1970s. A summary describing existing characteristics and conditions of the plan area, including maps, is provided in Exhibit 5 – Existing Conditions Summary.

Also contributing to the character of the area are 11 development projects that have been approved in the EWPP area, or immediately adjacent to the area, over the last 15 years. A map of these project locations and brief descriptions of the projects are available in Exhibit 6.

ANALYSIS

Public Outreach

July 2016 Community Workshop

On July 16, 2016, the first community workshop was held at the German International School with approximately 60 members of the public in attendance. The workshop included: (1) an overview of the Precise Plan process and area; (2) a visioning discussion in small groups; (3) a live-polling visual preference survey with questions on development scale, land use, urban design, and pedestrian/bicycle amenities; and (4) an individual map exercise where participants placed stickers where they envision new or expanded land uses (i.e., residential, commercial, retail, open space, community facilities) and bicycle/pedestrian connections, along with a small group discussion on development transitions. The workshop presentation, visual preference survey, and additional materials are available on the project web page.

Overall, workshop participants supported adding residential uses in the plan area and locating higher-intensity office away from existing residential neighborhoods. There was a strong desire for more open space adjacent to residential areas, and more pedestrian/bicycle connections throughout the plan area and into adjacent areas. A summary of the workshop outcomes are attached as Exhibit 7.

Online Survey

In addition to the community workshop, an online survey was conducted through Open City Hall on the City's website to gather additional input. Of the 31 participants, many supported residential uses in the plan area, and were undecided on increasing office intensity in the area. However, the preferred locations for office were along Middlefield Road and around Middlefield Station. A summary of survey results is included as an Appendix to Exhibit 7.

Visioning Concepts

Residential and Office Land Uses

The Precise Plan team is seeking input from the EPC on preferences for residential and office land uses to help establish the vision for the plan area and to provide direction on the approach to land use location and intensity as part of the next phase of the process.

Currently, the EWPP area includes approximately 5.6 million square feet of predominately office and industrial-to-office conversions. No residential land uses exist in the plan area. Therefore, any conversion of land from office/industrial to residential will result in the loss of potential land area for office uses. While the amount of potential land area conversion is unknown at this time, the residential plan concepts discussed later in this report show a preliminary range between approximately 20 to 110 acres (out of a total plan area of 368 acres). This loss of office land area can create challenges in implementing desired land use change as property owners may not be incentivized to convert to residential uses with the strong local office market. However, there are strategies and/or incentives to encourage residential development over office development through development standards (i.e., greater height, FAR) or policies (i.e., tying office square footage to residential unit creation, transfer development rights). At the same time, the strong community interest for creating new residential land uses may outweigh retaining or expanding office uses in the area.

Recognizing there is a relationship between office and residential land uses, staff is seeking the EPC's direction on land use preferences for the EWPP. The interest at this time is not on a specific amount or number of square feet, but on how to consider these land uses relative to the area's current condition. A more detailed discussion on the location and intensity of potential EWPP land uses is discussed later in this report.

EPC Question 1: What is the EPC's preference for how residential and office land uses are integrated in the EWPP area?

- a. ***Minimal Changes* – Do not add residential land use and maintain existing land area for office uses.**
- b. ***Increase Office Intensity* – Do not add residential land use and increase office intensity.**

- c. ***Increase Residential***—Add residential land use and maintain existing office intensity (potentially allowing transfer of square footage in key locations).
- d. ***Increase Office and Residential Intensity***—Add residential land use and increase office intensity.

Policy Concepts

The existing East Whisman vision is on Page 1 of Exhibit 4. From public input received from the workshop and online survey, the following visioning concepts were identified for East Whisman (see Exhibit 7):

- Include housing with varying styles, intensities, and affordability to support jobs in the area, creating livable neighborhoods.
- Focus new development around the VTA light rail station.
- Locate new and higher-intensity office development along major corridors and freeways in East Whisman.
- Encourage a job-housing balance in the area.
- Create a modern, urban neighborhood with a balance of commercial, residential, retail, educational, open space, and transportation amenities.
- Establish a transportation hub for shuttles and buses that reroutes traffic away from North Whisman Road.
- Incorporate mixed-use development throughout the plan area.
- Provide greater neighborhood services and amenities, including a grocery store, restaurants, and shops.
- Improve connectivity and walkability into and within the plan area, with separated pathways, high-quality landscaping, and clear signage.
- Increase the amount of parks, open spaces, and plazas.

- Incorporate urban design features to support safety and safe places.
- Encourage parking off-street and underground.

EPC Question 2: Does the EPC have any comments or additional direction on the preliminary visioning policy concepts identified by the community?

Visual Preference

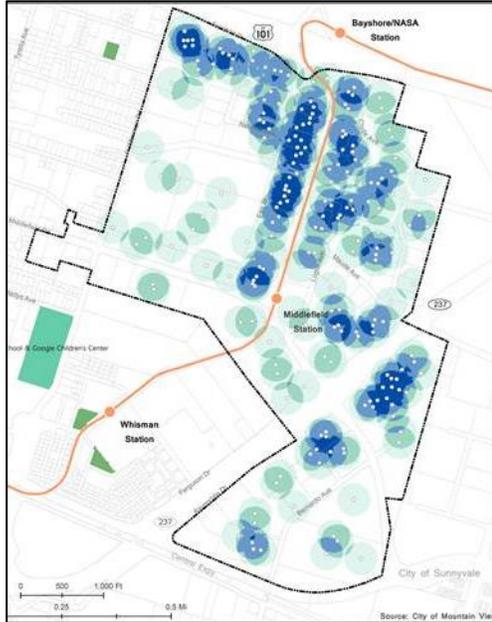
For the workshop, a visual preference survey was used to gather input on participants' preferred look and feel of East Whisman to further define their vision. The survey included questions regarding scale and design of residential, office, and mixed-use buildings. Staff requests the EPC review the attached six survey slides regarding scale and design for residential, office, and mixed-use buildings in the plan area (see Exhibit 8—Excerpt from Visual Preference Survey).



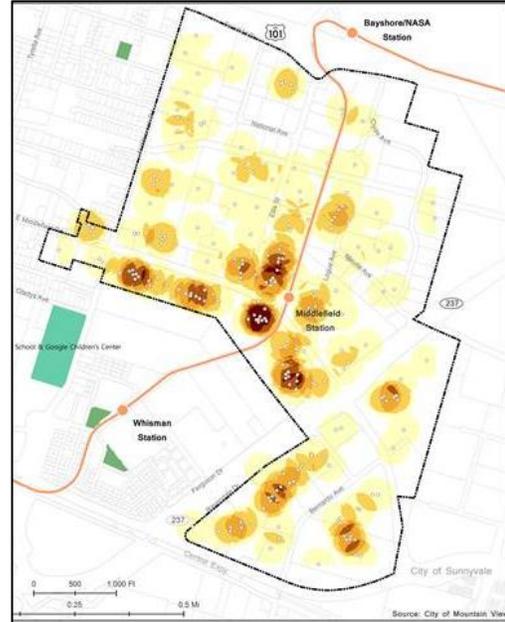
EPC Question 3: Using the attached Visual Preference Survey slides for reference, what scale and design features does the EPC prefer for residential, office, and mixed-use buildings in the plan area?

Land Use and Intensity Locations

The Precise Plan team created summary land use maps by consolidating results of the community workshop mapping exercise. Four summary maps have been created representing office, housing, open space, and retail locations. The concentration of a particular land use is shown in gradient colors (light to dark) with the highest concentration appearing as the darkest color. The four summary maps are provided in Exhibit 7.



Workshop Summary Map – Office Locations



Workshop Summary Map – Housing Locations

Overall, the majority of workshop participants supported:

- **Housing** in the plan area at locations on the south side of Middlefield Road, around the Middlefield station, at the intersection of Middlefield Road and Ellis Street, and in the south part of the plan area (along Bernardo Avenue);
- **Additional and/or higher-intensity office** along the freeways (U.S. 101 and SR-237), the northeast quadrant of the plan area (along Clyde Avenue), along Ellis Street, and on the east side of SR-237 at Middlefield Road;
- **More open space** throughout the plan area, particularly adjacent to new housing locations;
- **Intensifying existing retail** on Middlefield Road at the Village Center with new retail on Ellis Street at Middlefield Road near the VTA station. Some additional retail locations were shown at the intersections of Bernardo Avenue and Middlefield Road, and Ellis Street and Fairchild Drive; and
- **New pedestrian/bicycle connections** throughout the plan area, including east-west through the plan area connecting the Hetch Hetchy Trail to Maude Avenue, connections into Sunnyvale along the east side of the plan area, and a new crossing over/under Central Expressway.

Land Use Concepts

Based on workshop input, the Precise Plan team created land use concepts for the plan area. These concepts are not intended to designate individual parcels with a specific land use, but instead aid discussion on where general land uses could be located within the plan area. Land uses shown can be “mixed-and-matched” (or rejected) by the EPC. Additionally, these concepts display a “higher-intensity” option for residential and office (shown in darker colors), which are intended to start discussion on where greater intensity could be located in the plan area. Lastly, the open space locations are shown for general reference to reflect comments received at the workshop, but are not intended to be tied to specific locations.

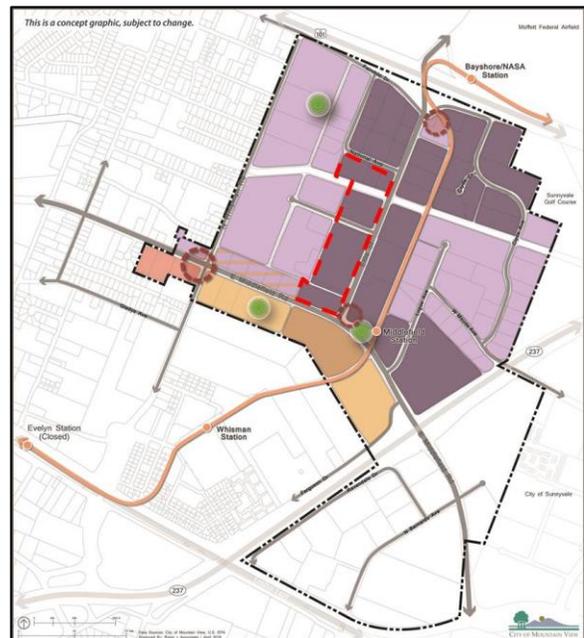
Planning Sub-Areas

The plan area has been divided into North and South sub-areas, divided by the SR-237 freeway, with two concepts for each area—an office-focused and a residential-focused concept. All four concepts are included as Exhibit 9 to this report.

North Plan Area



North Plan Area Concept 1—More Residential



North Plan Area Concept 2—More Office

The North Plan Area is bordered by two freeways—U.S. 101 to the north and SR-237 to the east—with existing residential neighborhoods to the west and south.

Middlefield Road and Fairchild Drive provide major east-west access to this sub-area, while Ellis Street and Whisman Road provide primary north-south access. The plan area abuts the South Whisman and Whisman Station residential communities to the south. Additionally, the MEW Superfund area is located on the western half of the plan sub-area, west of Ellis Street. All of the recent development and current bike and pedestrian improvements are located in, or adjacent to, this sub-area (refer to Exhibits 5 and 6).

North Plan Area Concept 1 shows a higher amount of residential uses throughout the plan area along the south side of Middlefield Road and in proximity to the Middlefield Station, with higher-intensity residential closest to the station area. While few participants indicated housing on both sides of the VTA light rail line and further east along Maude and Clyde Avenues, the Precise Plan team has added these areas for discussion as they are equally accessible to the station and have older building stock. The hatched areas represent where residential or office uses could be located, providing potential residential opportunities on both sides of Maude Avenue and Middlefield Road. Office uses are maintained along Whisman Road with higher-intensity office along U.S. 101 and SR-237 freeways and immediately east of the Middlefield Station.

North Plan Area Concept 2 shows a higher amount of office uses in the plan area, with higher-intensity office around Middlefield Station, along the freeways, and on both sides of Ellis Street. While workshop maps did not indicate as much office along the west side of Ellis Street as shown here, the Precise Plan team has included it as discussion for a “balanced” street environment along Ellis Street.

Both North Plan Area Concepts – For both concepts, higher-intensity residential is shown along the south side of Middlefield Road nearest the station as a transition to the higher-intensity residential development in South Whisman (500 Ferguson Drive) immediately south of the plan boundary. Additionally, ground-floor retail locations are shown at the Middlefield Village Center, Ellis Street and Middlefield Road intersection/VTA Station, and Ellis Street and Fairchild Drive to reflect preferred locations identified by workshop participants.

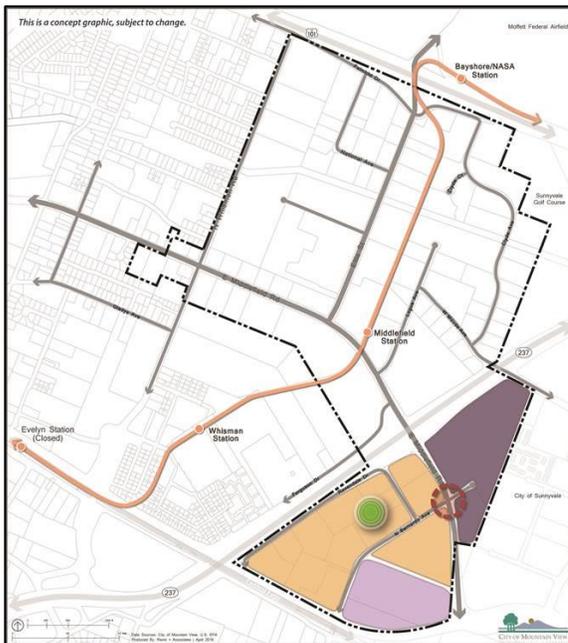
Lastly, the concepts do not show major land use changes along Whisman Road in the northwest quadrant of the plan area as workshop participants identified the area as an important perimeter between the plan area and existing residential neighborhoods where appropriate building height and intensity transitions are desired. Buildings along Whisman Road are some of the newest in the plan area, so redevelopment of these properties may be less likely. However, some participants commented that adding housing along Whisman Road could be a

desired land use transition toward Ellis Street, where office uses could be concentrated.

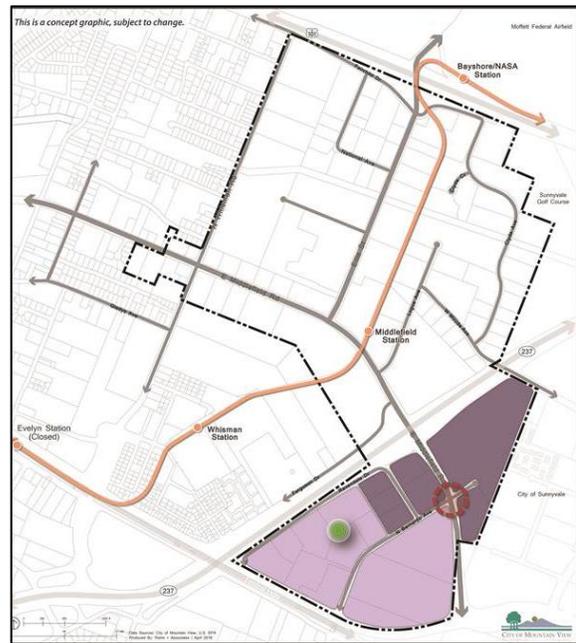
EPC Question 4: What elements of the North Plan Area concepts support the EPC’s vision for East Whisman?

EPC Question 5: Where in the North Plan Area does the EPC support higher and lower residential and office land use intensities?

South Plan Area



South Plan Area Concept 1 – Residential



South Plan Area Concept 2 – Office

The South Plan Area is bordered by SR-237 to the west, Sunnyvale Municipal Golf Course and Maude Avenue to the north, a Sunnyvale residential neighborhood to the east, and Central Expressway to the south. Office and light industrial buildings are located along Maude Avenue in Sunnyvale, adjacent to the golf course. This plan area is accessed from the North Plan Area via Middlefield Road and Maude Avenue under SR-237 and, from outside the plan area, from Middlefield Road, and Maude, Bernardo, and Ravendale Avenues via Central Expressway. The South Plan Area has the most significant barrier (SR-237) separating it from the North Plan Area and Middlefield Station.

South Plan Area Concept 1 shows residential uses south of Middlefield Road, while maintaining office uses along Central Expressway. Higher-intensity office is shown north of Middlefield Road.

South Plan Area Concept 2 shows office uses throughout the plan area with higher-intensity office along Middlefield Road and the freeway.

Both South Plan Area Concepts—For both concepts, higher-intensity office is maintained along SR-237 north of Middlefield Road. Potential ground-floor retail is shown at the intersection of Bernardo Avenue and Middlefield Road, in response to some participants' interest for retail in this sub-area.

EPC Question 6: What elements of the South Plan Area concepts support the EPC's vision for East Whisman?

EPC Question 7: Where in the South Plan Area does the EPC support higher and lower residential and/or office land use intensities?

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

An EIR will be completed once the Precise Plan preferred development alternative is endorsed by the EPC and City Council, which is anticipated in 2017. The EIR and draft plan will be presented to the EPC for consideration at a later date.

NEXT STEPS

Following EPC and City Council Study Sessions, staff will prepare for the second community workshop in November. The workshop will focus on getting input on development scenarios through land use intensities, urban form and character, and new pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle connections.

After the second community workshop, staff will return to EPC and City Council Study Sessions with workshop outcomes, seeking direction on refinement and selection of a preferred development alternative. These meetings are targeted for December 2016 and January 2017, respectively.

CONCLUSION

Staff recommends the EPC provide direction to Council based on the questions in this report.

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- Exhibits:
1. General Plan Action Items for East Whisman
 2. East Whisman Precise Plan Map
 3. East Whisman Precise Plan Project Schedule
 4. General Plan Vision for East Whisman
 5. Existing Conditions Summary
 6. Current and Recent Development Projects
 7. Community Workshop #1 Summary
 8. Excerpt from Visual Preference Survey
 9. Plan Area Concepts