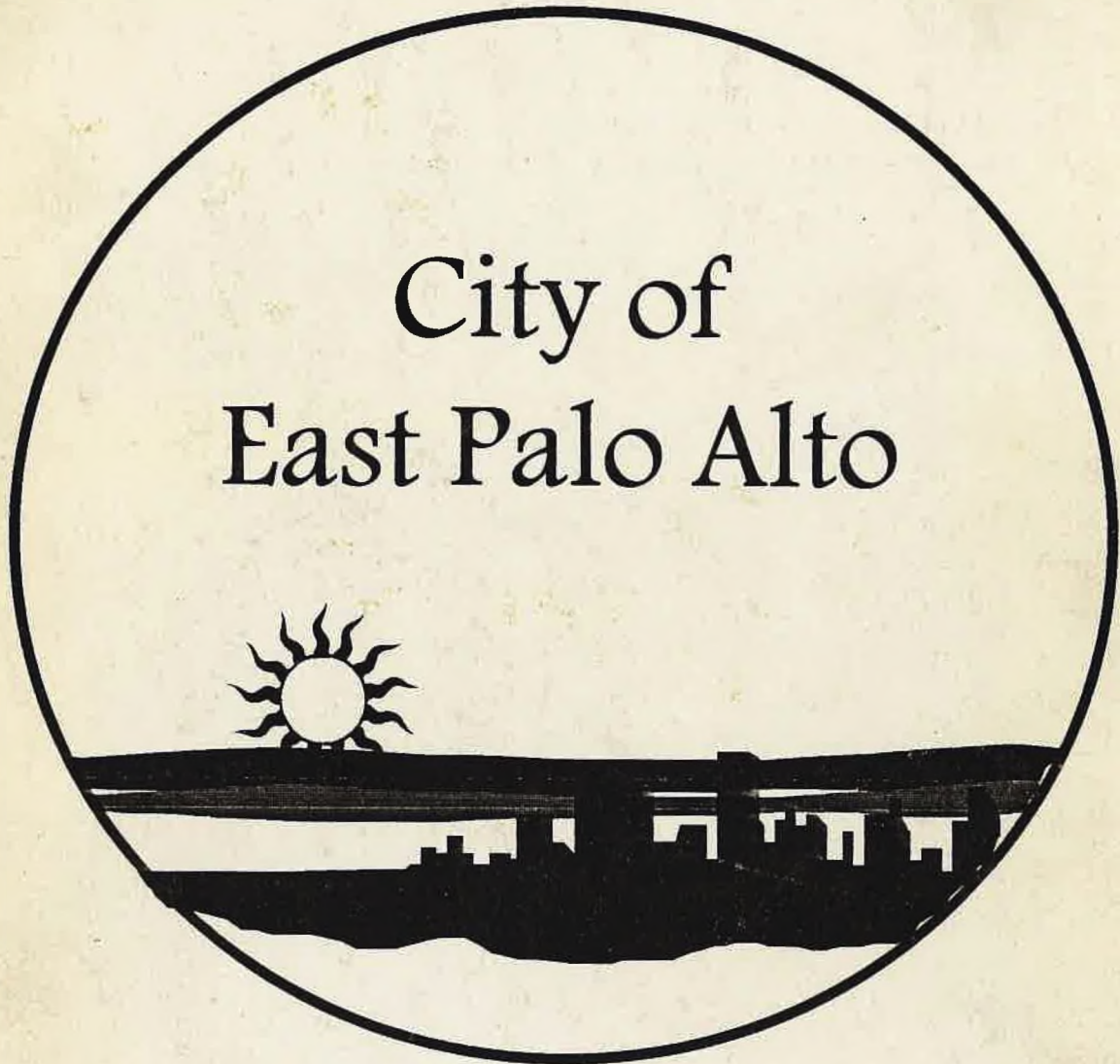


# City of East Palo Alto



## COMMUNITY PROFILE

CAL POLY ~ CRP DEPARTMENT ~ THIRD YEAR PLANNING IAB 1994-95



**CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA**

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**COMMUNITY PROFILE**

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January 1995

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## *Preface*

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This report was prepared by the students enrolled in the third year Community Planning Laboratory in the City and Regional Planning Department. It is the first phase in preparing an update of the general plan document for the City of East Palo Alto.

The students participate in a nine month long laboratory which attempts to simulate the professional planning work environment. Students gather information on the current conditions of a community during the Fall Quarter. The Winter Quarter is spent drafting a general plan proposal, which addresses all elements required by state law. Finally, during Spring Quarter, the students assess the legal, fiscal and environmental implications of implementing the proposed plan.

The laboratory experience is not, of course, a perfect simulation of a professional planning environment. The class does not have access to a broad range of information sources nor does it have the well defined management levels of a professional planning office. The end products are the result of student work and must be viewed in that context. This process has been, and continues to be, one of learning for the students.

We gratefully acknowledge the following people for their kind assistance with this report: Dr. William Howard and members of the community development staff; the Mayor and members of the East Palo Alto City Council; the San Mateo Planning Department staff, and the many organizations working to improve East Palo Alto who have already contributed vast amounts of research which were used extensively for this report.

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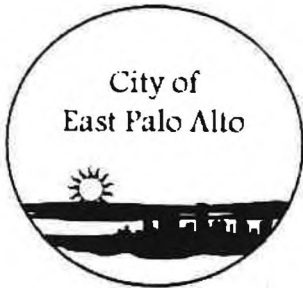
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## *Executive Summary*

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This report contains background information necessary for updating the General Plan of the City of East Palo Alto. It represents the results of the first phase of the general plan update process and contains the overview of the existing conditions pertaining to population, land use activities, community services, utilities, and the natural environment. The information contained in this report was collected, organized and analyzed during the Fall Quarter of 1994 by students in the Third Year Planning Lab (CRP 351). Data was collected from primary and secondary sources with limited research done in the field (the City itself) due to the lengthy distance from San Luis Obispo. Much information was gathered from the City staff, community organizations, as well as County and regional agencies. The report is divided into nine distinct, yet interrelated sections: (1) History and Government, (2) Population and Housing, (3) Economics, (4) Land Use, (5) Public Facilities, (6) Community Services, (7) Circulation, (8) Environment and Conservation, and (9) Noise and Safety.

### **History and Government**

East Palo Alto is a recently incorporated (1983) community in San Mateo County. It covers only two and a half square miles located between the cities of Menlo Park and Palo Alto. Like all cities in the Bay Area, it is part of a larger whole and must be viewed in that context. The City itself is bordered by the Bay on the southern end of the peninsula and enjoys fine views of the Bay and the surrounding mountains in the background. The City's location allows easy access to transportation routes. It is located very close to the Dumbarton Bridge, which crosses the Bay, and Highway 101 runs through the west side of town.

East Palo Alto has a rich and diverse history. A community founded by speculators and farmers, it has grown to one of political and ethnic diversity. East Palo Alto is a city run by a government that is deeply committed to the improvement of the City's socio-economic situations. A strong sense of pride exists within the community and several community advisory boards are actively involved in research, discussing issues, and helping in the search for funds.

At present, East Palo Alto faces many challenges. Crime rates recently were quite high and at the same time economic situations for residents and the City itself have not been prosperous. Fortunately, many organizations and individuals are interested in implementing changes in these areas. State and County governments are currently providing assistance while City leaders plan for the future. Grants received from various public and non profit organizations are applied to improvements in infrastructure and redevelopment projects. The City is currently planning redevelopment projects that will add to the City's coffers as well as provide needed jobs and additional housing for

residents. With success of these programs the future for the City appears to be that of growth and prosperity.

### **Population and Housing**

East Palo Alto's population is currently 23,451 and is projected to reach approximately 30,000 by the year 2010. Demographics show an ethnically diverse citizenry with an average household income lower than that of the County. A breakdown of population by age shows that a large proportion of the population is between the ages of 0 and 44, with a small percentage of seniors residing in the City. The distribution of residents in the child rearing ages heightens future demand for schools in the City.

Future projected growth throughout the Bay Area will put pressure on the City to house more people, which could cause a scramble to build multi-family housing. Approximately 1,600 new residential units could be built on currently vacant land, but this amount will prove sufficient for only a short time. The inability to accurately assess the true population due to the fast pace of net in-migration makes reliable projections difficult. This may affect future planning attempts such as determining actual numbers of school age children and classrooms they need.

### **Economics**

For several years East Palo Alto has endured more than its fair share of economic inequities. Prior to incorporation, parcels of land containing commercial and industrial businesses that would have increased tax revenues for the City were annexed by neighboring cities. Similar to many bedroom communities in California, East Palo Alto suffers from a lack of tax revenues because of a shortage of commercial operations in the City, therefore it has had difficulty providing adequate services and infrastructure for its citizens. A low median household income and high unemployment rate in comparison to the County contribute to the unfavorable economic climate of the City.

Future projections show only marginal improvement for the residents of the City, but hope lies in the success of the City government and various organizations committed to the improvement of the economic situation. One large mixed residential and commercial development is already planned and four others are being discussed. Job opportunities are projected to increase within the City and throughout the Bay Area. If training and placement programs are effective, the residents of East Palo Alto will begin to prosper and keep up with their surrounding neighbors.

### **Land Use**

Land Use deals with the extent, type, and distribution of the different activities carried out on parcels of land. In East Palo Alto the main land uses are residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural.

The majority of land in the City is used for residential purposes and pressure in the future for more housing will likely increase the use. Most of the commercial tracts in the City are fairly small and scattered. The largest portion of commercial activities are located along University Avenue and University Circle. The Ravenswood Industrial Park site contains most of the industrial uses. Some problems in this area exist however, as the site is awaiting toxic chemical cleanup and roadways are currently not designed to carry large trucks. There are a total of 80 agriculturally designated acres within the City. Many are in use and are protected by the Williamson Act which discourages their sale to speculators or developers. Some citizens of the community have organized a movement called HAS (Historic Agricultural Society) to preserve these agricultural lands and keep them in use.

### **Public Facilities**

The public facilities section reviews city concerns such as streets, sewers, water lines and sources, waste disposal, police and fire departments. Current areas that need attention are substandard streets and storm drains that lead to flooding, pollution of the Bay, leaching and traffic blocks. The City's Police force is not adequate to service the current population and must rely on help from surrounding police departments to control crime.

Future growth will stress the need for improvements in a few key areas. Those areas are: expansion of water and sewer lines, and the need for more police officers.

### **Community Services**

A variety of social welfare topics are covered in this chapter. The issues of education, parks, and health care are the three most important topics covered here. At the present time, health care in the City of East Palo Alto is inadequate to meet the needs of residents. All three City parks are in the process of long term renovation. Education within the City is limited to elementary and middle school levels since Ravenswood High School closed. Other topics of interest in the community services chapter are: child care, youth and senior services, and private community organizations.

Future growth in the City will bring more pressure on the already strained education, parks, and health care systems. New classrooms will need to be added to accommodate an influx of new students. More people will create a need for more parkland in a City with precious little open space and vacant land. Health care services already do not meet the needs of residents and more people can be expected to add pressure on these facilities.

### **Circulation**

The current circulation routes in the City need to be upgraded. Many residential streets are in need of repair, and key intersections lack adequate levels of service resulting in high accident rates. Problematic areas are along University Avenue which serves as a connecting link between Highway 101 and the Dumbarton Bridge. This route through town is used extensively by commuters from other communities and promises to become

more traveled as regional growth occurs. There are three bus routes running through the City, but levels of service are inadequate and inconvenient to riders, often taking a half hour or more to reach links with other transportation such as Cal Train.

Future development projects and population growth may bring increased traffic, parking problems, and air pollution. Economically beneficial development cannot be implemented unless roads are upgraded to handle increased traffic and large trucks.

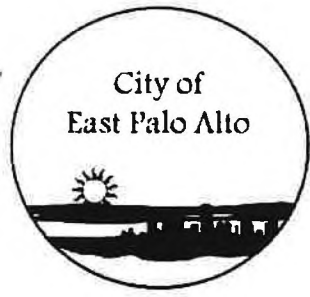
### **Environment and Conservation**

Environmental concerns in East Palo Alto are concentrated mainly around the Bay where a federally protected wetland exists. Most wildlife and natural vegetation in the City is in either the Palo Alto Bayland Nature Preserve or the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve. This area is important to the Bay Area because it is one of the few wetlands in the region that has not been dredged and filled.

### **Noise and Safety**

The safety section reviews natural hazards such as earthquakes, wildfires and floods as well as manmade dangers such as hazardous materials contamination. Natural disasters are not considered to be a concern at this time. Hazardous contamination is a concern because of the presence of a chemical recycling plant and the fact that one site in the City is designated a Superfund cleanup site.

Air and water quality levels are acceptable currently, but can become an issue with future growth. The nature of air and water pollution makes it difficult to separate from surrounding areas, and will most likely be dealt with on a regional basis.



# HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

# I



# *HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT*

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## **HISTORY**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

HISTORICAL TIMELINE

OVERVIEW OF EAST PALO ALTO HISTORY

HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS

### **REFERENCES**

## **GOVERNMENT**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

ORGANIZATION

COOPERATIVE AGENCIES

CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO GOVERNMENT

CURRENT CITY PROJECTS

### **FUTURE PROSPECTS**

CONCLUSION



## History

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This section of the chapter describes the progression of the City of East Palo Alto from the days of grand ranchos through its phase as an unincorporated area of San Mateo County and on to its attainment of cityhood. It also discusses historically significant areas. Due to a limitation of information and logistical constraints, historical sites are not located exactly, but general areas and descriptions are given.

This section is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the history of the area, including a timeline, followed by a discussion of events and the second part discusses the areas of historical significance.

East Palo Alto has a rich and interesting history. It is the home of the earliest known inhabitants of the greater San Francisco Bay Area and has ". . . been the site of human settlement for over two millennia." (*Historic Resources Inventory: Significant Historic Structures and Places*)

1500s to the 1700s - Native Americans belonging to the Ohlone tribe populated the area now known as East Palo Alto for some time before the 16th century. They were people who lived simply and peacefully, building grass huts for shelter and relying on hunting and gathering for their existence. In the 1700s, Europeans began to populate the western coast and their presence had devastating consequences on the Ohlones. Disease and major cultural changes nearly wiped the tribe out by the late 1700s.

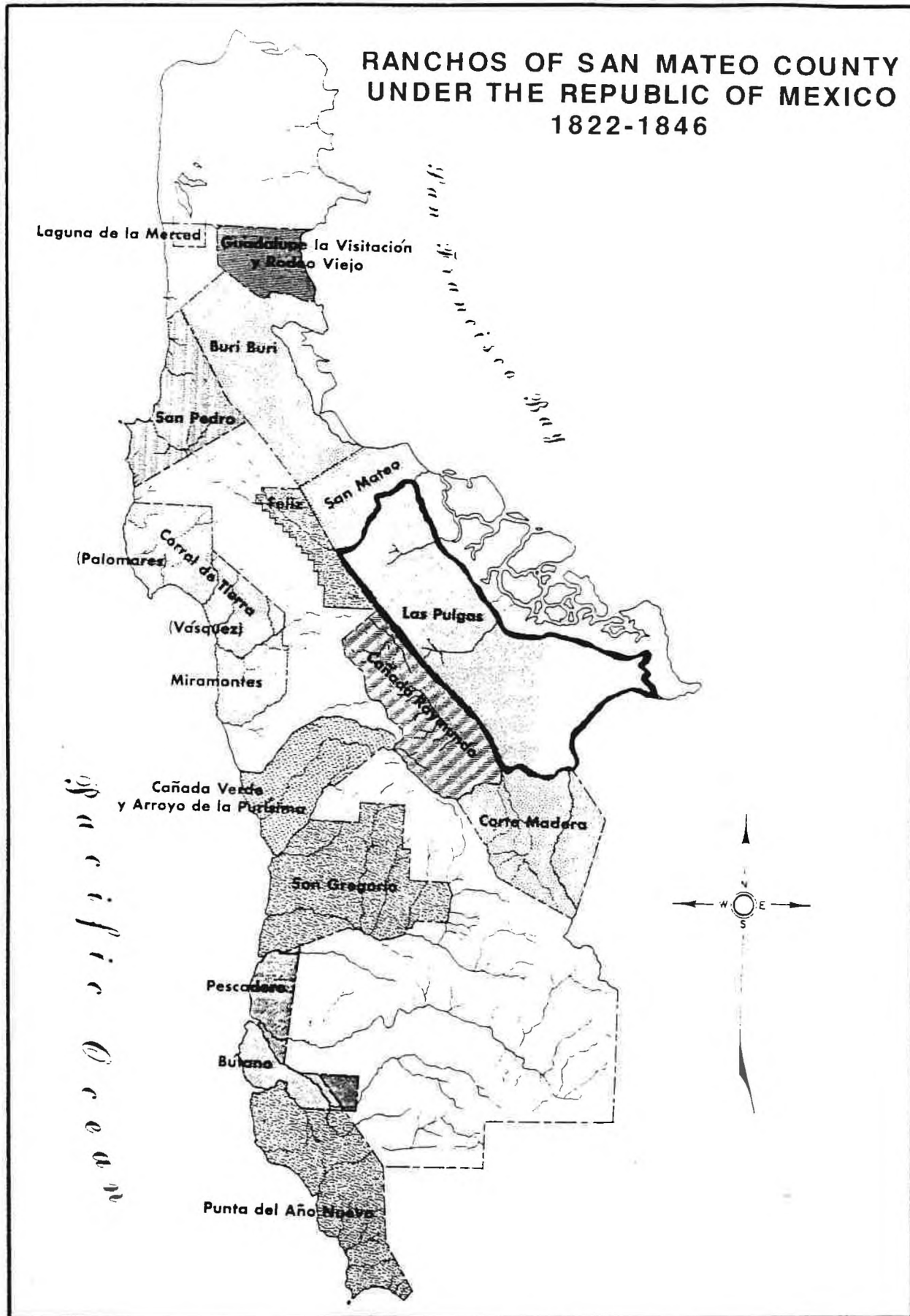
1800s - When what is now known as California came under Spanish rule, land was broken into large grants known as the "Spanish Ranchos." The area that is known as East Palo Alto became part of the Rancho de Las Pulgas, see Figure I-1 - Ranchos of San Mateo County. Las Pulgas means Flea Ranch and the name was given to the Rancho (according to legend) when Spanish soldiers attempted to camp in abandoned Ohlone huts and found they were full of fleas.

It was during this century that the area became involved in its first legal battle that ended in the U.S. Supreme Court. The land was originally granted to the Arguello family by the King of Spain when it became a part of the Republic of Mexico. When the United States began to develop the west coast, they laid claim to any land that an owner could not produce title to. This caused difficulties for holders of land grants because many grants were undocumented. In the case of Rancho de Las Pulgas, numerous people and entities including land squatters, the Catholic Church, Mexico and Spain tried to claim title to all or parts of the area. This legal battle spanned several years, but eventually the Arguello family won. However, the Arguello family ended up selling much of the land to pay for legal costs.

## HISTORICAL TIMELINE

- 1500-1700      Area inhabited by Ohlone Tribe
- 1800            Area known as Rancho de Las Pulgas. Owned by Arguello family. Ownership in question and decided by U.S. Supreme Court.
- 1849            California admitted to the Union. Isaiah Woods founded Ravenswood. Wharf at end of Bay Road built.
- 1868            Lester Cooley bought the wharf and 400 acres.
- 1874            Brick Company established.
- 1916            Charles Weeks founded Runnymede.
- 1918            Mr. Weeks donated four acres for a school building.
- 1922            Four hundred families living and farming in Runnymede.
- 1925            Election held to determine name of area. East Palo Alto was the compromise choice.
- 1927            Dumbarton toll bridge constructed.
- 1930s           East Palo Alto applied for incorporation. Measure failed.
- 1947            Hiller Aircraft Company located in East Palo Alto.
- 1951            East Palo Alto applied for incorporation. Measure defeated.
- 1966            Application for annexation to Palo Alto filed. Application denied. East Palo Alto Day School founded.
- 1978 & 1981   Application for annexation to Palo Alto filed. Application denied.
- 1981            Papers for incorporation filed.
- 1983            East Palo Alto incorporated.
- 1992            Socio-economic conditions of East Palo Alto reached crisis point. State and County lend assistance.
- 1993            City Council moves aggressively forward with planning for the future.

FIGURE I-1



In 1849, California was admitted to the Union and speculators began to arrive on the peninsula. One such speculator was Isaiah Woods, who convinced his partners in the Adams and Company Bank to invest in a town and wharf at the end of Bay Road. The town became known as Ravenswood, in honor of Mr. Woods and the ravens that inhabited the area. Ravenswood was the first planned community in what was to become San Mateo County.

It was anticipated that this area would become one of the busiest ports on the Bay Area coast. A wooden pier was built to facilitate trade in the area and hopes were high with the possibility of a rail station that would run up and down the coast to San Francisco. The railroad chose Oakland as its western terminus and established its line between San Francisco and San Jose, bypassing Ravenswood altogether. By 1870, only foundations and a wharf remained of Ravenswood.

In 1868, Lester Cooley bought the wharf and 400 acres of bay-front property. He established a dairy farm, refurbished the wharf and founded Cooley Landing. Mr. Cooley used the wharf to ship grain and products from his dairy farm to nearby markets. A brick making company leased five acres from Mr. Cooley in 1874. This brick factory relied on Chinese laborers to produce up to 50,000 bricks a day. The Palace Hotel in San Francisco was constructed of bricks from this factory and was the mainstay of the business. When the hotel was finished, so was the factory, closing after only 10 years in operation.

1900s - The 1900s saw much development in East Palo Alto. Mr. Charles Weeks came to Ravenswood and established the neighboring (and sometimes overlapping) community of Runnymede. Mr. Weeks had a dream and a motto. He believed that a family could be self sufficient with one acre of land and his motto was "One Acre and Independence." He began to sell one to five acre plots to families that agreed to use his methods of farming. Mr. Weeks began in 1916 and by 1922, 400 families had established small farms based on Mr. Weeks' philosophy. In 1918, Mr. Weeks donated four acres for a new school to accommodate children of his "farming families." The school was built in the Ravenswood School District and an example of the architectural style can be seen in Figure I-2 - San Mateo County Schools, circa 1900s.

SAN MATEO COUNTY SCHOOLS, circa 1900's



(Above) La Honda Elementary School.  
(Below) Tunis District School, still open. 1963.



1920s through the 1930s - All this growth resulted in encroachment upon the small community of Ravenswood and caused dissension between the two small communities (Ravenswood and Runnymede). An informal election was held in December of 1925 to determine the name of the area. Residents voted for the compromise choice of East Palo Alto so that neither community would have to take the name of the other. A common name however, did not mean a unified community. Ravenswood and Runnymede continued to operate as separate municipalities and maintained their own Chambers of Commerce.

The new school built in 1918-19 was expanded and served as the Community Hall. In the late 1920s the area was hit by a drought and new technology was becoming available for farming operations. The community of East Palo Alto began a downward slide. The wharf began to decay and was turned into a county dump. The school building could no longer be maintained and sections of it were declared unsound, resulting in children being bussed to outside communities in order to obtain an education.

Through all of this, there was still hope in the community. Private investors constructed the Dumbarton Toll Bridge in 1927 that brought heavy traffic to Willow Road. Gas stations, cafes and travel oriented businesses began to flourish and enjoyed success until the San Mateo Bridge was constructed, resulting in diversion of the traffic. In the 1930s, the Dumbarton bridge was sold to the State. Many of the businesses along the Bay Shore Highway, in the area now known as University Circle, began to cater to travelers and nearby residents living in "dry" communities, providing drinking and gambling opportunities. Soon the area became known as "Whiskey Gulch" and it is still trying to live down the name.

It was during this period that East Palo Alto first applied for incorporation. The measure failed.

1940s through the 1950s - The first major industry to arrive in East Palo Alto came in 1947. The Hiller Aircraft Company located just east of Willow Road was the only aircraft manufacturer in the State. At its peak, the company employed approximately 2,000 people. Along with major industry, the tract housing business began to flourish and flowers became the number one agricultural product. The late 1940s saw a boom in construction and growth.

In 1951, East Palo Alto applied for incorporation again and was voted down 38 to 29. In 1953, civic leaders formed a committee to study incorporation and nearly caused a riot. The issue was put aside in 1954.

Saint John the Baptist Church was established in 1955 by the Reverend James and Onedia Branch. This church became a mainstay of East Palo Alto's community.

During the 1950s, East Palo Alto became a major area for "block-busting" practices because housing costs were low and residents were more tolerant of racial diversity. Block-busting is described ". . . as an aggressive, targeted real estate promotion that

typically began after a black family moved into a white neighborhood. Real estate agents, either initiating the original sale or merely taking advantage of it, went door to door and convinced residents their property would be devalued by thousands of dollars if they didn't sell immediately." (*A History of East Palo Alto*) This practice continued for about ten years and by the 1960s, East Palo Alto's population was 60 percent African American.

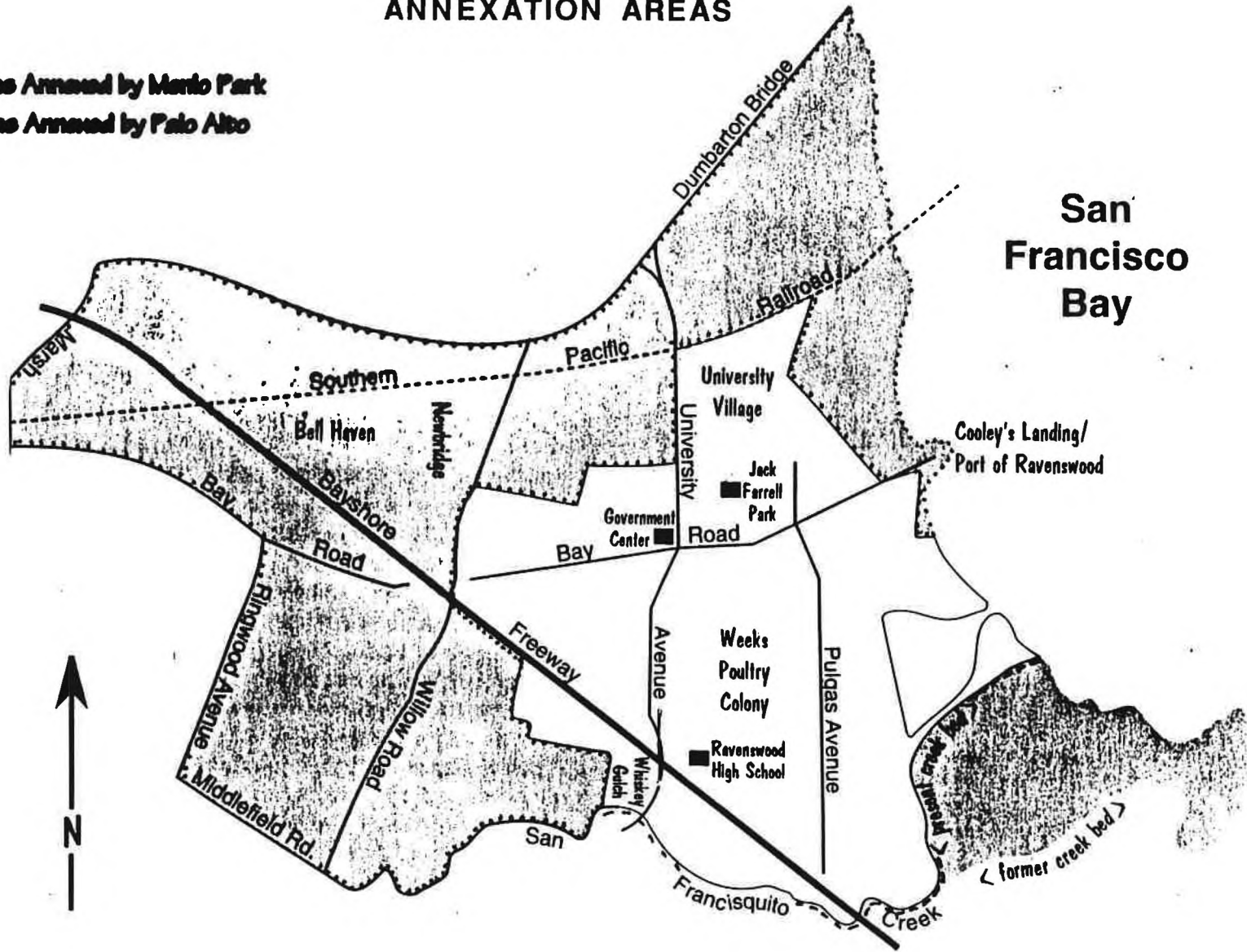
1960s through the 1970s - Annexation began to take a heavy toll on the community of East Palo Alto. The City of Menlo Park annexed "...Belle Haven, Newbridge Park, North Palo Alto, and part of Runnymede, as well as Cooley Landing, vast tracts of bay front open space and two industrial parks." (*A History of East Palo Alto*). The City of Palo Alto managed to have San Francisquito Creek diverted and East Palo Alto's southern boundary redrawn in order to annex the airport area and golf course. This annexation by neighboring communities left the City of East Palo Alto with little industrial or commercial land uses and had a direct impact on the City's ability to generate a revenue base large enough to provide services if the area decided to incorporate. (See Figure I-3) Consequently, East Palo Alto applied for annexation to the City of Palo Alto in 1966. The application was denied. Two other attempts at annexation (1978 and 1981) to the City of Palo Alto were made, and again, both applications were denied.

Community activity was at a very high point in 1966. San Mateo County established the East Palo Alto Municipal Council after residents complained about having no voice in political proceedings affecting their community. This council was advisory in nature and was one of the first minority governing bodies ever assembled. During the same year, fed up with "de-education" of black children, Gertrude Wilks launched an "alternative approach" for students in the area (*Day School E.P.A.*). The program initially developed involved a "sneakout" of high schoolers, who would stay with sponsors in other communities and attend schools there. Eventually, the program developed into the East Palo Alto Day School and began holding classes at Saint John the Baptist Church on Saturday mornings. The classes were designed to teach black children to read and learn about black culture. The response was so great that soon, Wednesday night classes were held in addition to the Saturday classes. East Palo Alto Day School endured until the 1980s, despite threats, bomb scares and a general attitude of fear from a white community coming face to face with the issues of civil rights.

1980s to Present - A consultant was hired to study the issue of incorporation in 1980 and found that incorporation was not economically feasible and recommended annexation to the City of Menlo Park. The East Palo Alto Municipal Council contested the report and the consultant came back with a final recommendation of incorporation, under certain conditions. Pro-City supporters filed papers in the Spring of 1981, seeking to put the issue on the November ballot. After two elections, East Palo Alto incorporated in 1983. Several lawsuits were filed and one suit went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. This was the second time that East Palo Alto was involved in a dispute serious enough to reach the U.S. Supreme Court. The High Court declined to hear the matter and East Palo Alto was successfully incorporated, becoming the first city in the nation to have a black woman mayor.

# ANNEXATION AREAS

- ... Areas Annexed by Menlo Park
- - Areas Annexed by Palo Alto



ANNEXATION AREAS

FIGURE 1-3



Today, East Palo Alto is an ethnically diverse community. While the percentage of African Americans has declined in recent years, the number of Hispanics, Pacific Islanders, Asians and other races has increased. Nearly one-third of the City's 23,451 residents were born outside the United States.

Attainment levels of education and the median income level are lower for residents of East Palo Alto than they are for the County. Seventeen percent of the population falls below the poverty level. The late 1980s and early 1990s saw difficult times for the City. With no economic base and a very small tax revenue base, the City fell upon hard economic times. In 1992, the socio-economic situation finally reached a crisis point and State and County governments began providing assistance to see the City through this difficult period.

## **HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS**

According to the *Historic Resources Inventory: Significant Historic Structures and Places* conducted by the City and County Historical Associations "Remnants of nearly every phase of East Palo Alto's history survive." These remnants provide proof of East Palo Alto's timeline and the community spirit that exists there. Several different types of historical resources located in East Palo Alto were identified by the Inventory which include Ohlone remains and artifacts, the sandstone Pulgas Monument erected for use in triangulating the Bay, remnants of Runnymede, vacation cottages predating World War II, suburban houses of the 1920s and 30s, early commercial structures and California tankhouses. A few of these sites are shown in Figure I-4. The following information comes from *Historic Resources Inventory: Significant Historic Structures and Places*.

Ohlone Remains and Artifacts - These artifacts were excavated from the University Village subdivision in the 1950s and removed from East Palo Alto. They are historically significant due to their ability to add to the picture of what life was like before the United States and California became densely populated by people from other countries.

Pulgas Monument - This is a sandstone monument, erected near the wharf for use in triangulating the bay during the U.S. Coastal Survey. The monument is located in Jack Farrell Park.

Runnymede - Runnymede was designed as a utopian community, where families could live and be self sufficient. The remaining structures provide testimony of architectural styles and technology methods used during early California development. The houses are modest one story rectangular boxes with gabled roofs and small front porches. Some structures support features such as pergolas, stout porch supports, windows grouped into horizontal units, exposed rafters and triangular knee braces. The majority of these structures are located in the Charles Weeks Poultry Colony area, shown as item three in Figure I-4.

**Runnymede Clubhouse** - The Runnymede Clubhouse, located at Clark and Weeks streets, still stands today, as a reminder of the ideology of "One Acre and Independence." (*A History of East Palo Alto*)

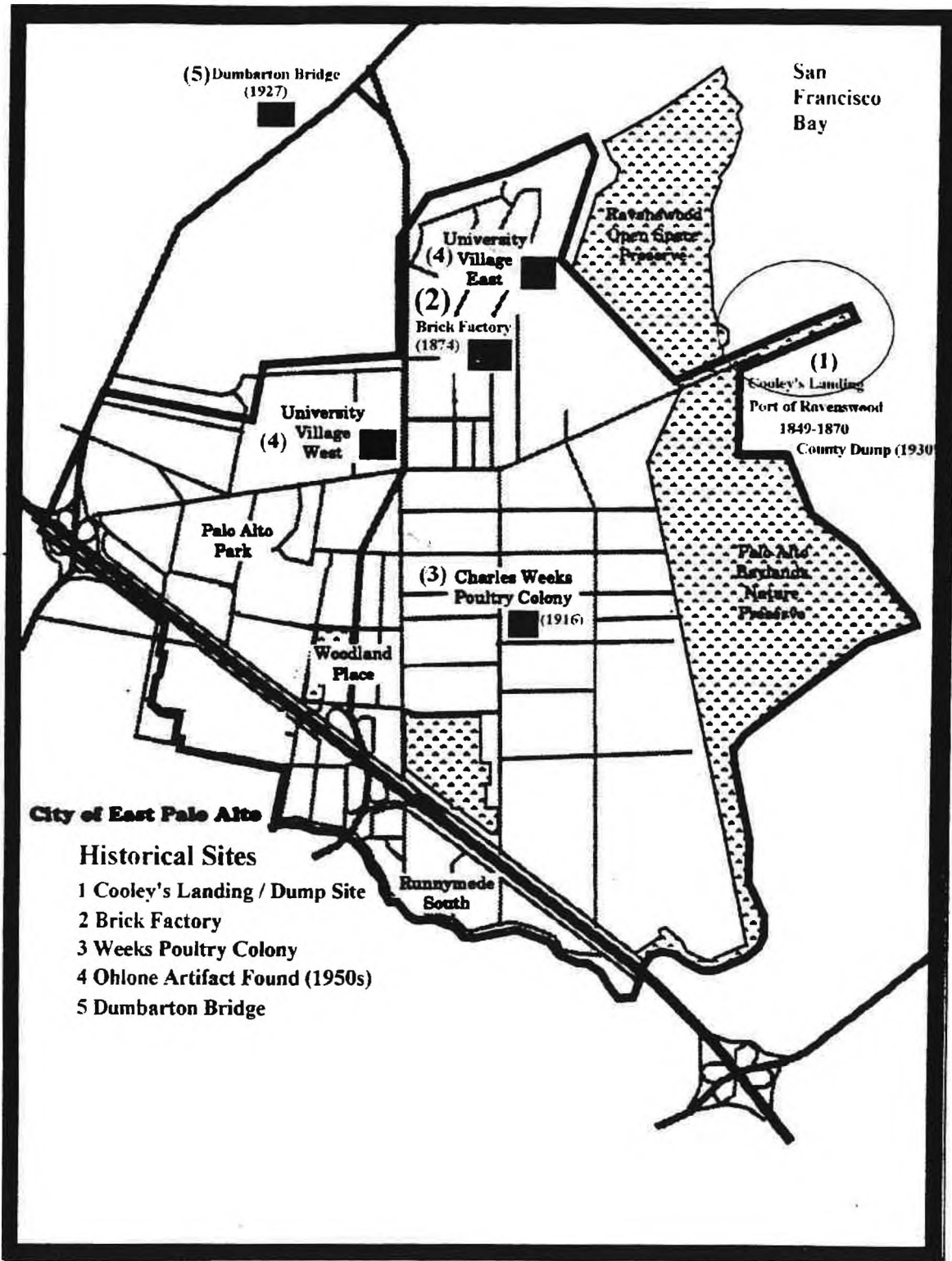
**Vacation Cottages** - These cottages provide a history of architectural styles and recreational pursuits during the 1920s and 30s when many people from the greater Bay Area would build or rent cottages near the water for weekend getaways.

**Suburban Houses and Early Commercial Structures** - These structures also provide architectural history of early California and a history of a way of life that is no longer available. Some commercial structures are located in the University Circle area.

**California Tankhouses** - The California Tankhouses provide a history of technology used in early California and give testimony to the importance of a good water supply. One of the most distinctive features of Runnymede, tankhouses ". . . consist of a support structure of heavy timbers enclosed with protective siding that contributes to structural stability." (*Historic Resources Inventory*). The water tanks are elevated to provide for a gravity induced pressure system. The majority of these structures are located in the Charles Weeks Poultry Colony area, shown as item three on Figure I-4.

# HISTORICAL SITES

FIGURE I-4



## EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

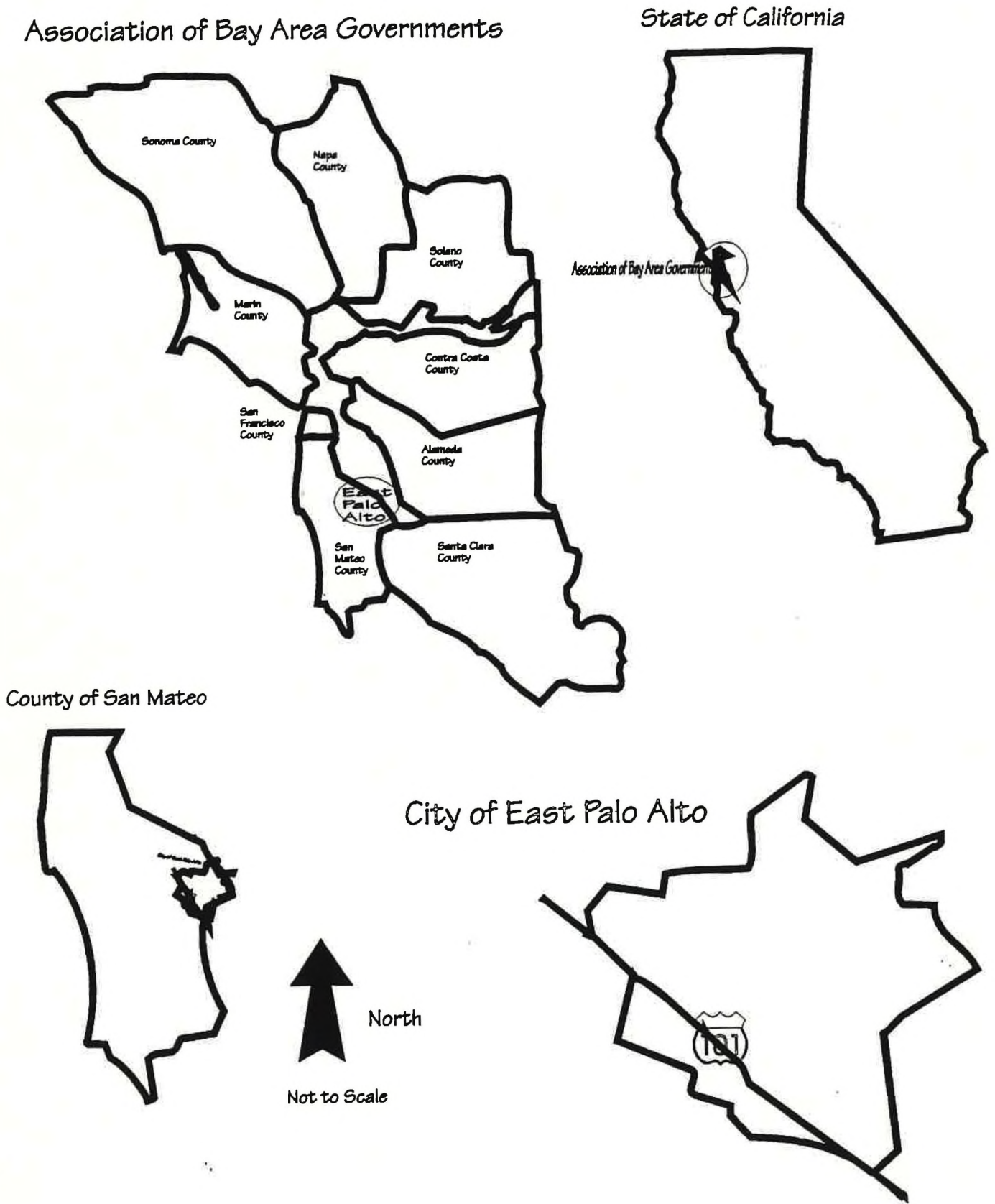
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo \* City and Regional Planning Department \* Profs. Z. Bilbija/D.F.G. Williams \* CRP 351 \* Fall 1994

## *Government*

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Located in the County of San Mateo, along the west side of the San Francisco Bay, lies the City of East Palo Alto (see Figure I-5). A community rarely heard from and generally ignored, until 1992, when it was given the unsavory title of "The Murder Capital of the Nation." East Palo Alto is no longer ignored. Since 1992 and the publishing of the article that brought the City such dubious fame, the City leaders, along with other concerned agencies, have set out to change the reputation of East Palo Alto through effective community development and planning within the context of local and state governments. This report addresses the structure of the government in the City and outlines programs that are being undertaken to address the important socio-economic issues that influenced East Palo Alto's path to such an unsavory reputation.

The Office of Planning and Research's *General Plan Guidelines* do not address Government as an element of the General Plan. However, it is important to understand the way city government works and to understand the goals of a community at the time a General Plan is prepared.



**EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

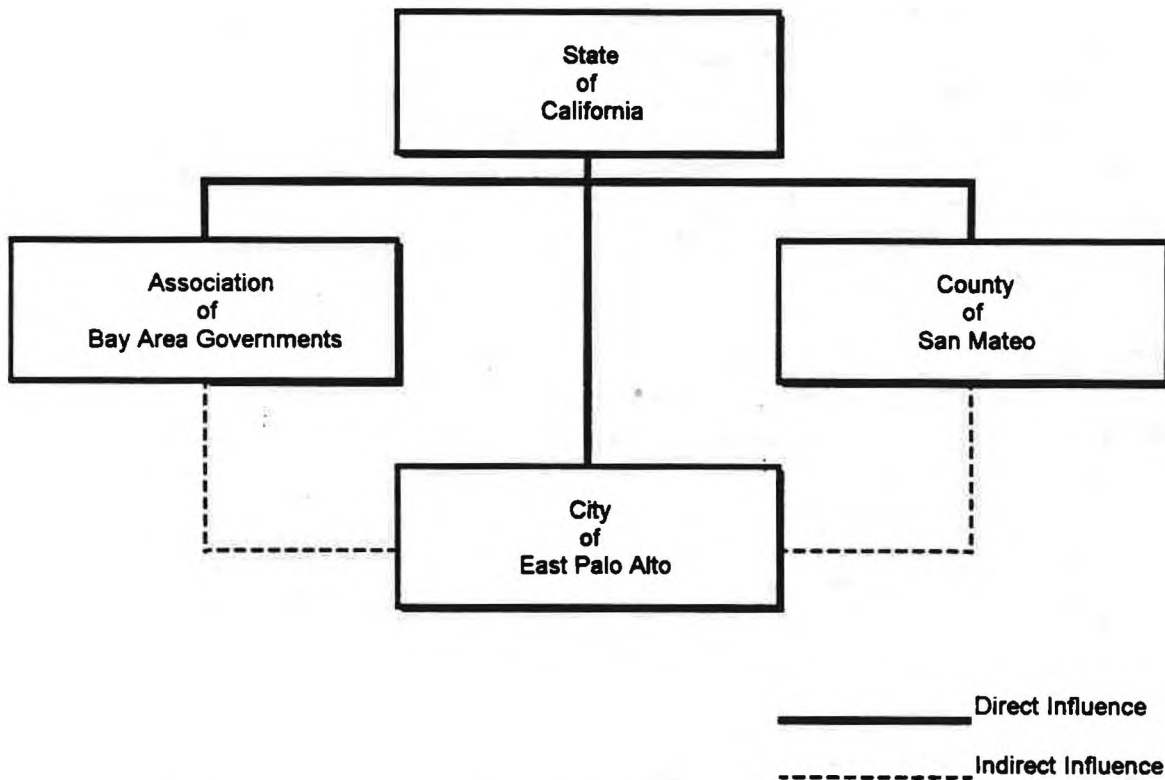
## EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section has two parts. The first part deals with cooperative or "umbrella" agencies such as the State of California (State) and its departments, and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), an advisory planning agency. These agencies work with the City on a cooperative basis. The second portion deals with the City government and specific programs of the City which are currently in progress.

### STATE AND REGIONAL AGENCIES

Regional agencies currently support the City of East Palo Alto in their public safety and planning endeavors. This cooperation between agencies has helped East Palo Alto in planning for the future. (See Figure I-6) A brief description of current programs that involve East Palo Alto or its general area are listed after Figure I-6.

Figure I-6 Flow Chart of Governments



State of California - As a municipality of the State of California, East Palo Alto is governed by the laws of the state and must work within those laws as they apply to general law cities. East Palo Alto also enjoys the benefits of some specific State programs, such as those listed below.

Governor's Office - Governor Wilson responded to East Palo Alto's situation in 1992 by creating the East Palo Alto High Crime Response Team. This team is in charge of coordination of state and local resources to combat the high murder rate in the area and to aid in lowering the crime rate in general.

State Department of Water Resources Control Board and the Regional Water Quality Control Board - The State Department of Water Resources (Dept. of Water Resources) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) are currently administering a *Bay Protection and Toxic Cleanup Program* for the entire state of California. The purpose of the Program is to "...protect existing and future beneficial uses of bay and estuarine waters; ...identify and characterize toxic hot spots; ...plan for the prevention of further pollution and remediation of existing toxic hot spots; and ...contribute to the development of effective strategies to control toxic pollutants." *Bay Protection and Toxic Cleanup Program Staff Report*)

Three known toxic hot spots near East Palo Alto are the Redwood Creek, the Dumbarton Bridge and the area South of the Dumbarton Bridge.

Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) - East Palo Alto falls within the realm of ABAG, a planning and services agency established in 1961 by cities and counties located in the Bay Area. ABAG is comprised of nine counties, 98 cities and 721 special districts. As an advisory agency, ABAG's area includes a population of approximately 6 million people. The major services of ABAG include: financing local government projects through a variety of financial services programs, providing publications, providing economic and demographic information, and offering training and workshops. ABAG also provides liability insurance through Pooled Liability Assurance Network and administers Workers' Compensation cases.

County of San Mateo - Located in the County of San Mateo, East Palo Alto must work within the rules and regulations established by the County. Also, due to East Palo Alto's small budget, the City has worked out agreements with the County for provision of extra police protection services.

Currently, the County is working on a Countywide Transportation Plan as authorized by Assembly Bill 3705. The Plan's goals are to identify County needs and coordinate planning efforts for all forms of transportation including roads, bicycle paths, and mass transit.

## **CITY OF EAST PALO ALTO GOVERNMENT**

Incorporated in 1983 under the general law dictates of the State of California, the City of East Palo Alto encompasses 2½ square miles and has a population of 23,451 persons according to the 1990 U.S. *Census of Population and Housing*. It is located in the 14th

Congressional District of the State of California, on the western shore of the San Francisco Bay.

City Council - East Palo Alto is governed by a city council made up of five members, elected by the community's population. Council members serve a term of 4 years. The city council is responsible for insuring that a wide variety of public and private services are provided to its residents. The Council is also responsible for administering the budget and coordination and approval of community development projects. Currently, the City is in the process of updating its General Plan, establishing redevelopment areas, and improving the self sufficiency of the City.

The City Attorney and the City Manager work directly for the City Council. The Police Department, City Administration Department and the Personnel Commission work under the City Manager as does the Community Development Director. The Community Development also works with the advice and guidance of the Planning Commission.

There are numerous advisory boards and commissions which work with the City Manager and the Community Planning Department. These advisory bodies include: the Economic Development Task Force, Rent Stabilization Board, Redevelopment Agency, Community Services Commission, Youth Commission, and the Fiscal Review Task Force.

In addition to the advisory boards listed above, the City benefits from other organizations committed to aiding the City's population in establishing small businesses and achieving higher levels of education (*Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community*).

City Police Department - The City Police Department consists of 35 sworn officers and 7 civilian officers resulting in one sworn officer per 688 City residents. According to the *Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community*, the Police Department has consumed over 50 percent of the City's budget for the past three years (1991 through 1993, figures for 1994 are not yet available). Approximately 30 percent of the crimes committed in the City are of a violent nature compared to 11 percent for the City of Menlo Park and 5 percent for Palo Alto.

Ravenswood City School District - The Ravenswood City School District is directed by one superintendent and five board members. There are two schools which serve kindergarten through fourth grade, two schools which serve grades five through eight, and four schools which serve kindergarten through eighth grades for a total of eight schools under the District's jurisdiction; however, only four of these schools are within the boundaries of East Palo Alto. Special programs administered by the District include Special Education, Bilingual Education and Child Welfare and Attendance. No high school exists in East Palo Alto, therefore, students grade nine through twelve are bussed to the Sequoia Union High School District.

The District published its first newsletter to students and parents in the Spring of 1994 in the "spirit of better communication between the District's Administration, teachers, staff,



parents, students and the community at-large." (*Ravenswood City School District Newsletter*).

## **CURRENT CITY PROJECTS**

The City of East Palo Alto, the Ravenswood City School District and various community groups are currently working on several different programs to increase the viability of the City, reduce crime and address the low educational levels of community residents. This section of the report will briefly describe some of the programs and projects that are underway in the City.

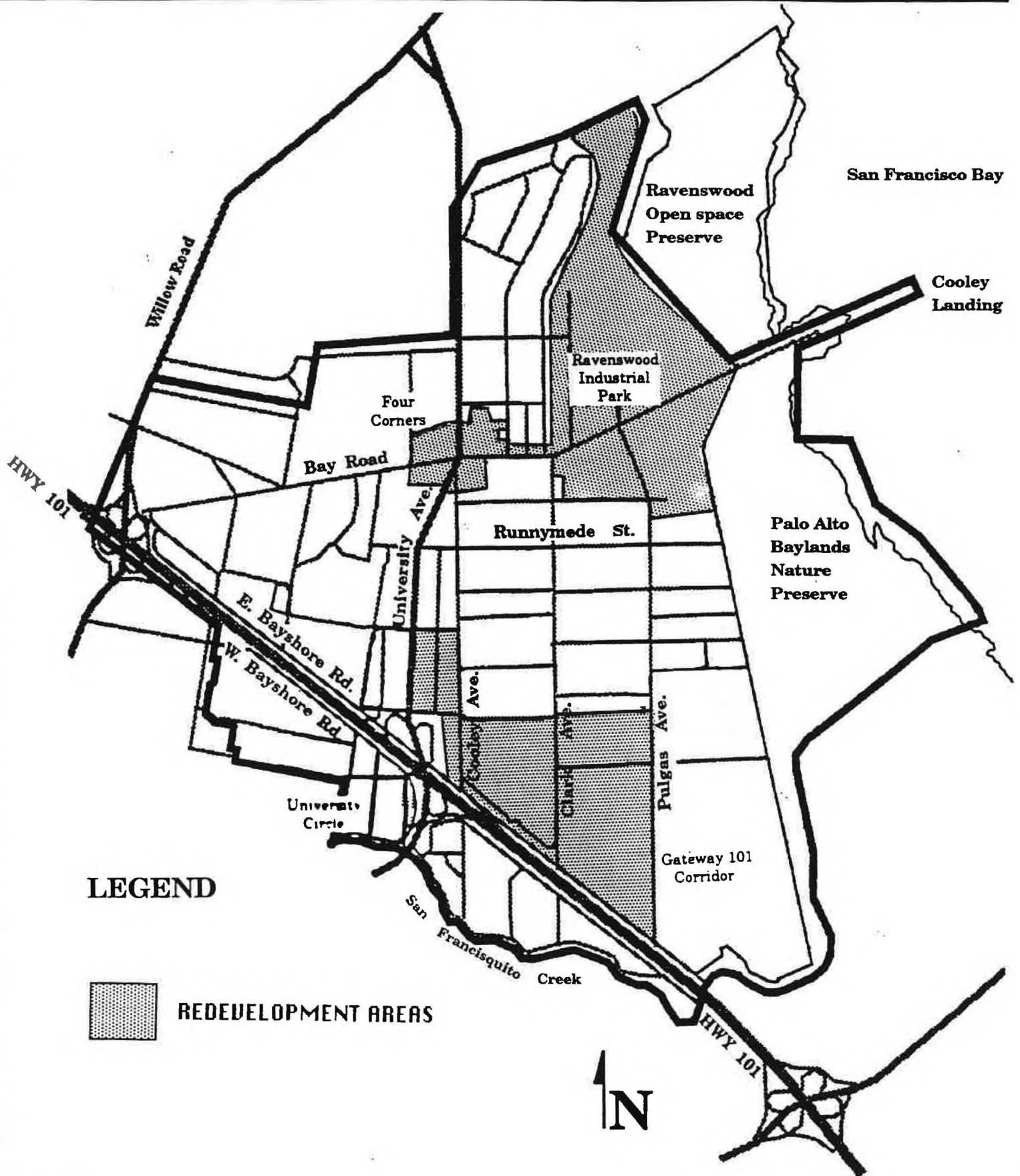
### **Redevelopment areas**

There are four designated redevelopment project areas including one redevelopment project in progress. Common goals for all four areas include: increasing the tax revenue base, provision of funds for updating of infrastructure, increasing employment opportunities and provision of basic services for the community such as markets, banks, open space and affordable housing. Achieving these goals will come about with future redevelopment projects. Figure I-7 shows the locations of the following projects within the City of East Palo Alto.

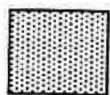
Gateway/101 Redevelopment Project. The Gateway 101 Redevelopment Project is currently in progress. It will consist of a mix of commercial retail and residential development at the south entrance to the City, just off the University Avenue/Highway 101 exit. Also planned within this project is increased recreational opportunity for the community consisting of a movie theater complex and a new park. Infrastructure components will be upgraded and additional affordable housing will be built. The City Redevelopment Agency is the coordinator for this project and is currently working with private developers. According to the *Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community*, this project will necessitate the relocation of approximately 1,000 to 1,200 people and will generate approximately two million dollars in tax revenues.

This additional income will make the City more self sufficient in the coming years. It will also provide additional low to moderate income housing for additional population growth. Although this is a long term project, which will not result in benefits for five to six years, it demonstrates the City's efforts to enhance the future viability of the community. Written into the conditions of this project is a "City First" clause which provides for the employment of City residents, if qualified, before hiring of people outside the City.

University Circle. University Circle is located adjacent to Highway 101 at the southern boundary of the City. This is the area that was once known as "Whiskey Gulch." A long range plan, spanning 35 years and three levels of development evolved for this area after much negotiation with neighboring communities that included a lawsuit over land use



**LEGEND**



**REDEVELOPMENT AREAS**

**EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

densities. Planning in this area "proposes to develop the area into a unified mixed-use commercial center" (*Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community*). The City Redevelopment Agency is the coordinator for this project.

The original University Circle Project was rejected by the City Council several years ago and the area is now only a designated redevelopment area. Merchants along University Avenue have organized and are currently working on improving the physical appearance of this area.

**Ravenswood Industrial Park.** Located in the northeasterly corner of the community, the industrial park area consists of approximately 143 acres of which 79 acres are already being used for industrial purposes. Specific development projects have not yet been outlined for this area, but the rapid loss of land within the greater Bay Area for industrial purposes should result in development opportunities in the future. The City Redevelopment Agency is the coordinator for this project.

This project will become more and more important to the City as available land for industrial purposes within the greater Bay Area becomes more and more scarce. At project buildout, the Industrial Park will provide employment opportunities for City residents and add to the revenue tax base. As of November 1994, there are no developers on line who have expressed an interest in purchasing property in this area. A possible drawback to this industrial park redevelopment plan is the Bay Area Toxic Cleanup Plan headed by the California Department of Water Resources. Currently, East Palo Alto is in the vicinity of three known toxic hot spots and this could cause strict limitations on the type of development allowed so close to the shores of the Bay.

**Four Corners Redevelopment Area.** The Four Corners area has been designated as a future neighborhood market center. It is located at the crossroads of University Avenue and Bay Road. This was previously the Nairobi Shopping Center. It is anticipated that this area will supply City residents with a major supermarket, a bank and other commercial/retail opportunities. The East Palo Alto Redevelopment Agency is working in conjunction with the Washingtonia Development Company on the implementation of this development project (*Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community*).

This project will not only add to the tax base, it will provide needed services to residents. Currently, East Palo Alto has neither a large grocery store or financial services within its boundaries. As of November 1994, there are no developers on line who have expressed an interest in purchasing property in this area.

Although physically separated, the Ravenswood Industrial Park and the Four Corners Shopping center are considered one redevelopment project, connected by a section of Bay Road.

Cooley Landing has potential for future development in East Palo Alto although it is not designated as a redevelopment project. A marina was proposed for this area in the past.

The proposal called for expansion of the boat yard to include a marina which would provide recreational opportunities for residents and a small segment of the tourist population. It would also provide open space and recreational opportunities for local residents. As with the Ravenswood Industrial Park, this redevelopment could be hindered by limitations on uses enforced by the State Department of Water Resources. Cooley Landing remains under private ownership within East Palo Alto and is bounded by Menlo Park and Palo Alto.

### **Crime reduction projects**

Crime rates in East Palo Alto are higher than for the County as a whole and higher than those for neighboring cities. East Palo Alto reached a crisis point in 1992 when it acquired national attention for murders per capita. Since that time, the City, with assistance from the State and neighboring agencies has incorporated a number of programs to lower its crime rate overall.

The Regional Enforcement Detail (Red Team). The Red Team is a multi-jurisdictional program designed to stem the high crime rate in the City and return some measure of safety to the community. It consists of officers-on-loan from the City of Palo Alto and Menlo Park, the California Highway Patrol, and the County of San Mateo Sheriff's Department. This cooperative effort has allowed the City's own police department to initiate community safety programs, bike and foot patrols, and foster closer community ties

The East Palo Alto High Crime Response Team. Created by Executive Order W-46-93, the High Crime Response Team program involves the U.S. Attorney General's Office and directors of numerous state agencies which deal with crime. The program's purpose is one of coordination and identification of resources available to the City in its fight against the excessively high crime rate. Issues being addressed by the program are socio-economic in scope and include: local economy, affordable housing, infrastructure, unemployment, job training, substance abuse prevention and mental health programs, recreational opportunities, youth programs, and support of law enforcement activities.

The Community Policing Project. This is a small pilot program designed for one of the highest crime areas in the City. It has encouraged face to face contact with police and community members through the use of bicycle patrols, aided in the establishment of Neighborhood Watch Programs for the area and allowed for a Community Mediation Program to solve conflicts in the neighborhood.

## **Educational projects**

East Palo Alto's population has generally lower education levels and higher drop out rates than the County as a whole as well as neighboring communities. It is believed that these statistics have been indirectly instrumental in the higher crime rates and the general poverty of the City. The local school district is implementing programs to address these issues.

Ravenswood City School District. The District has established the Technology Advisory Committee to address the administrative and instructional needs of incorporating information technology in the educational program. Along with this advisory program, the District is in the process of developing a multilingual/cross-cultural curriculum that will enable students to learn different languages and understand different cultures.

## **CONCLUSION**

East Palo Alto's most pressing problems include the lack of financial resources to fund public services and provide a measure of safety for residents. Lack of financial resources limits the City's ability to provide safety personnel, educational opportunities, and encourage investment within the City. Without investment in the City, financial resources will continue to be very limited.

The City will be able to fund additional law enforcement activities with the increased tax revenues from the proposed redevelopment projects and should be able to replace existing crime prevention programs as contracts with neighboring communities begin to expire.

There seems to be a strong sense of City leadership at the present time which is actively seeking solutions to the socio-economic situation within East Palo Alto. Community spirit also seems to be high, if the number of advisory commissions and boards which interact with the City is any indication.

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# *POPULATION AND HOUSING*

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METHODOLOGY

## **POPULATION**

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

FINDINGS

SUMMARY

FORECASTS

## **HOUSING**

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

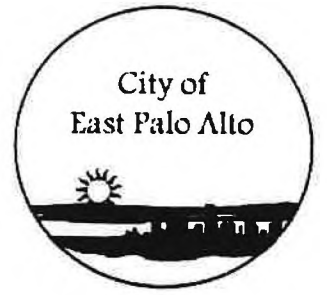
FINDINGS

SUMMARY

FORECASTS

**CONCLUSION**

**REFERENCES**



# POPULATION AND HOUSING

# II



This chapter is an analysis of the existing conditions and future prospects for the population and housing characteristics in the City of East Palo Alto (City), California (State). It also includes data and material of existing conditions of the City with regard to its demographics. The population section of this study includes information on age, gender, and ethnicity. It also discusses the economic and educational levels of the City's population. The housing section addresses the existing housing stock of the community.

According to the State of California, General Plan Guidelines:

“The housing element shall consist of identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. The housing element shall identify adequate sites for housing, including rental housing, factory-built housing, and mobile homes, and shall make adequate provision for the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.”

The element shall also contain an assessment of housing needs and an inventory of resources and constraints relevant to the meeting of these needs. Included in this assessment is an analysis of population and employment trends, and projections of population and housing needs.

The information regarding future prospects provides a look at East Palo Alto for the next 15 years. The population category includes forecasts of the total population, age distribution, gender, and race composition calculated through the year 2010. These population projections are the foundation for the housing projections of unit type and vacancy rate that follow in the second category of this section.

Because of East Palo Alto's interdependence with San Mateo County, all projections shown are a percentage of the County population. East Palo Alto represents only approximately 4 percent of the entire San Mateo County area. Whatever happens to San Mateo County directly affects East Palo Alto so that comparisons between the two become necessary. Without these estimates of how the population will grow and diversify, it would not be possible to determine future needs of the population.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Population and housing analysis began with a site review of the City of East Palo Alto. First a tour of the entire City was taken to get an overall perspective of the existing conditions. This was followed by a closer study of specific residential and commercial areas of the City. This analysis, combined with the Census data provided a more balanced picture of the City's housing stock and its distribution.

The bulk of the numerical information was taken from the *1970, 1980 and 1990 United States Censuses* (Census). In addition to the Census data, population and housing information was also taken from the *Application for Enterprise Community Strategic Plan* (1994); *East Palo Alto Housing Element Update* (1994); and, *The East Palo Alto General Plan Housing Element* (1986).

The analysis was broken into two major sections; existing conditions and future prospects. Information was compiled from the documents listed above, the City of East Palo Alto, San Mateo County, and the State of California.

The method used for the population projections is the Ratio Share Technique. This method assumes three things:

- 1) The population growth in the City of East Palo Alto is dependent on what happens to the population in San Mateo County.
- 2) Past population trends will remain valid in the future.
- 3) The ratio between the City and County will remain relatively constant.

The ratio share method is considered the most suitable way to project the population of East Palo Alto because the historic population statistics are available for San Mateo County and East Palo Alto, allowing a ratio to be derived. Calculating population growth by this method gives results closest to the projections provided by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).

# Population

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

This report begins with information regarding the population of East Palo Alto. Without an understanding of the population that currently resides in the City there would be no way to evaluate the other current conditions in the City.

### Total Population

Table II-1 shows the total population for East Palo Alto, San Mateo County, and the State of California between the years of 1950 and 1990. It also shows the percent change in the population from 1980 to 1990.

**Table II-1. Total Population**

	Total Population					
	EPA		San Mateo County		State	
1950 Population	7,123		235,659		10,586,233	
1960 Population	15,019		444,387		15,717,204	
1970 Population	17,837		551,027		19,779,156	
1980 Population	18,191		587,329		23,667,902	
1990 Population	23,451		649,623		29,760,021	
1980 - 1990 Change	5,260	28.92%	62,294	10.61%	6,092,119	25.74%

*Source: U.S. Census*

There were two significant population increases in East Palo Alto during this century. The first major increase happened between 1950 and 1960. The second major increase took place between 1980 and 1990. The increase in the 1950's was due to the overall population growth throughout the County. Between 1950 and 1960, East Palo Alto grew at a rate of 110 percent, whereas San Mateo County grew at a rate of 88 percent. The influx of people to East Palo Alto was consistent with that of the County until the decade of 1980 to 1990, when East Palo Alto had its second major population rise. The population increased at a rate of 29 percent to a total of 23,451, whereas the County only grew at a rate of 10 percent. This large increase in the City was due to general overall growth throughout the Bay Area and is comparable to the population growth State wide.

### Age Profile

Table II-2 shows a breakdown of the population by age and corresponding percentages for each age group for East Palo Alto, San Mateo County, and the State. This is useful for determining the age of the population and for predicting the future age of the population. From this, it can be seen that East Palo Alto has a relatively young population in comparison to the County and the State.

**Table II-2. Age Distributions**

<b>Age Distribution</b>				
<b>East Palo Alto</b>				
<b>AGE</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>	
0-4 YRS	1537	8.3 %	2592	11.1 %
5-17 YRS	3918	21.1 %	5107	21.8 %
18-20 YRS	1212	6.5 %	1264	5.4 %
21-44 YRS	7689	41.3 %	9867	42.1 %
45-54 YRS	1684	9.0 %	1824	7.8 %
55-59 YRS	810	4.4 %	746	3.2 %
60-64 YRS	628	3.4 %	737	3.1 %
65-74 YRS	765	4.1 %	882	3.8 %
75-84 YRS	295	1.6 %	352	1.5 %
85+	72	0.4 %	80	0.3 %
<b>total</b>	<b>18610</b>		<b>23451</b>	

<b>San Mateo County</b>				
<b>AGE</b>	<b>1980</b>		<b>1990</b>	
0-4 YRS	34615	6.2 %	44793	6.9 %
5-17 YRS	104200	18.8 %	97693	15.0 %
18-20 YRS	28622	5.2 %	24242	3.7 %
21-44 YRS	193245	34.8 %	270602	41.7 %
45-54 YRS	67823	12.2 %	74503	11.5 %
55-59 YRS	36238	6.5 %	29130	4.5 %
60-64 YRS	28740	5.2 %	28662	4.4 %
65-74 YRS	38972	7.0 %	47577	7.3 %
75-84 YRS	17743	3.2 %	24875	3.8 %
85 +	5333	1.0 %	7546	1.2 %
<b>total</b>	<b>555531</b>		<b>649623</b>	

Source: U.S. Census and CRP 351 Projections

East Palo Alto has a very large young population, with 46 percent of the population being between the ages of 0 and 25. The middle age population of East Palo Alto is consistent with the County and State percentages because all three have approximately 34 percent of the population being 25 to 44 years of age. The remaining 30 percent of East Palo Alto's population is 45 years of age or older. This value is slightly lower than that of both the State and the County. The age groups where East Palo Alto has a significantly higher percentage of people are 0 to 4, 18 to 20, and 21 to 24. East Palo Alto also has a much lower percentage of people between the ages of 65 to 74 than both the County and the State.

### School Enrollment

Table II-3 compares the reported school enrollment for East Palo Alto, San Mateo County, and the State with the reported number of children, ages 5 to 17.

**Table II-3. School Enrollment and School Age Children**

School enrollment versus schoolage children			
1990	East Palo Alto	County	State
Reported school enrollment (K - 12)	3,818	105,227	5,199,525
Reported children ages 5 - 17	5,107	97,693	5,353,010

Source: U.S. Census

The reported number of children enrolled in school for East Palo Alto was less than the number of total school age children. This can be attributed to a desegregation order which requires that East Palo Alto children be bussed to schools in both San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties and the fact that there is no high school in the City. According to County figures there are more children enrolled in school (105,227) than reported living in the County (97,693).

#### Gender Characteristics

Table II-4 shows the breakdown of the male and female population in East Palo Alto, San Mateo County, and the State. This is done for the years 1980 and 1990. The figures reflect a higher male population compared with the female population for the City in both 1980 and 1990. The County shows a higher female rate for both periods and the State shows a larger female population compared with the male population in 1980. In 1990 the State shows a higher male population than female population.

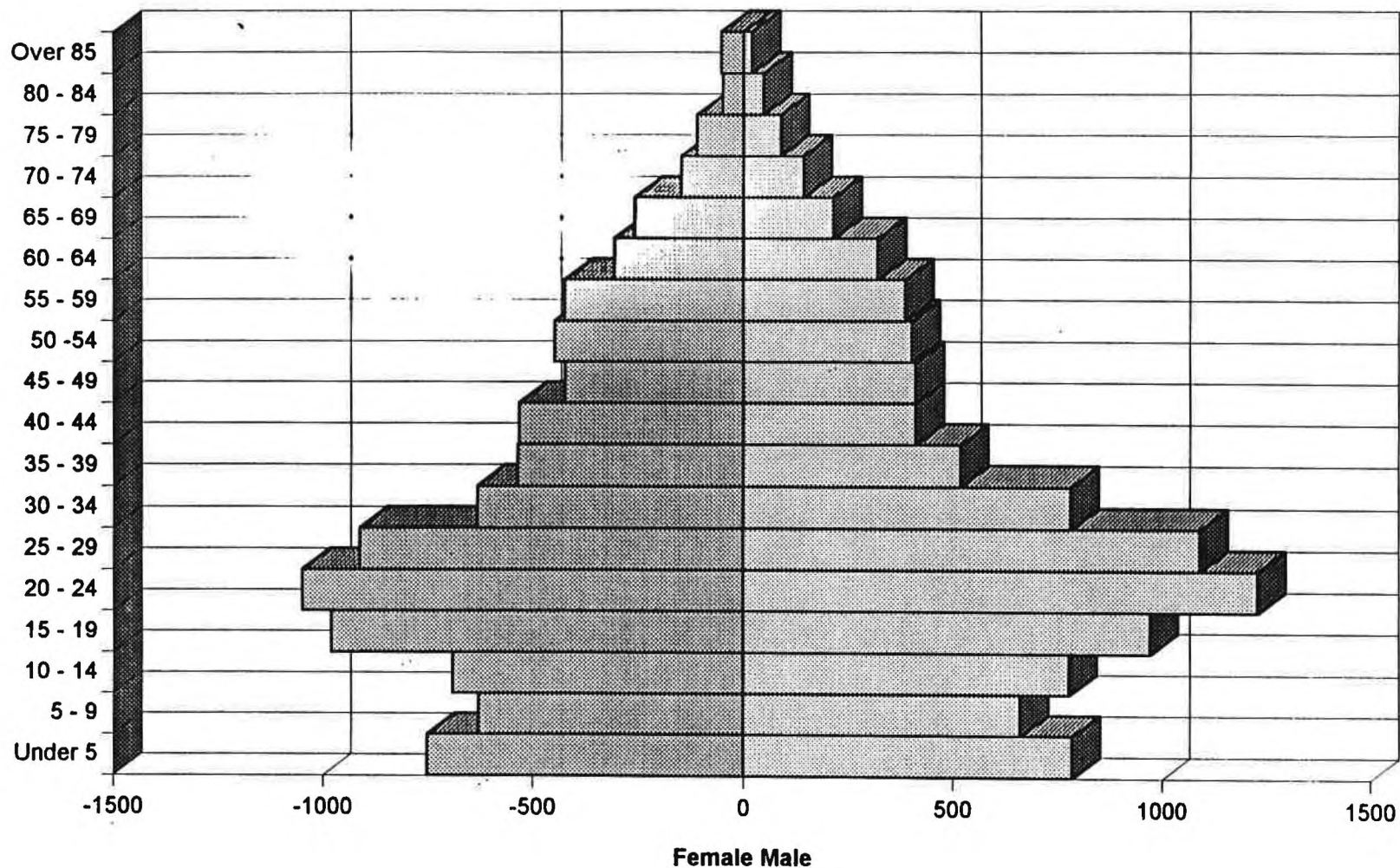
**Table II-4. Gender**

	EPA		GENDER San Mateo County		State	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>1980</b>	9,258	8,933	282,595	297,922	11,666,48	12,001,41
<b>1990</b>	11,830	11,621	321,109	328,514	1,488,155	14,878,47

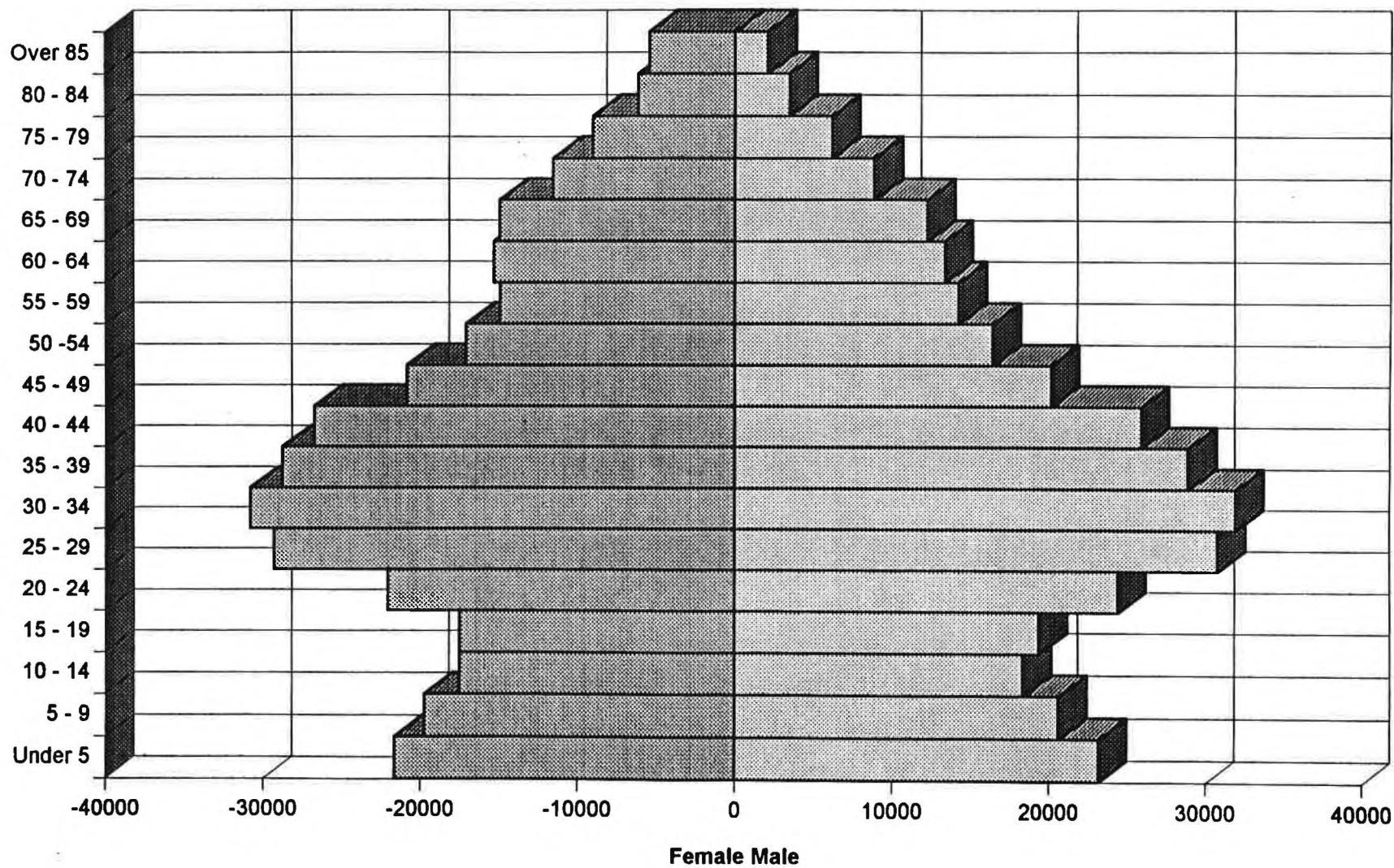
Source: U.S. Census

Figures II-7, II-8 and II-9 are population pyramids which show the breakdown by sex and age groups in 1990 for East Palo Alto, San Mateo County, and the State.

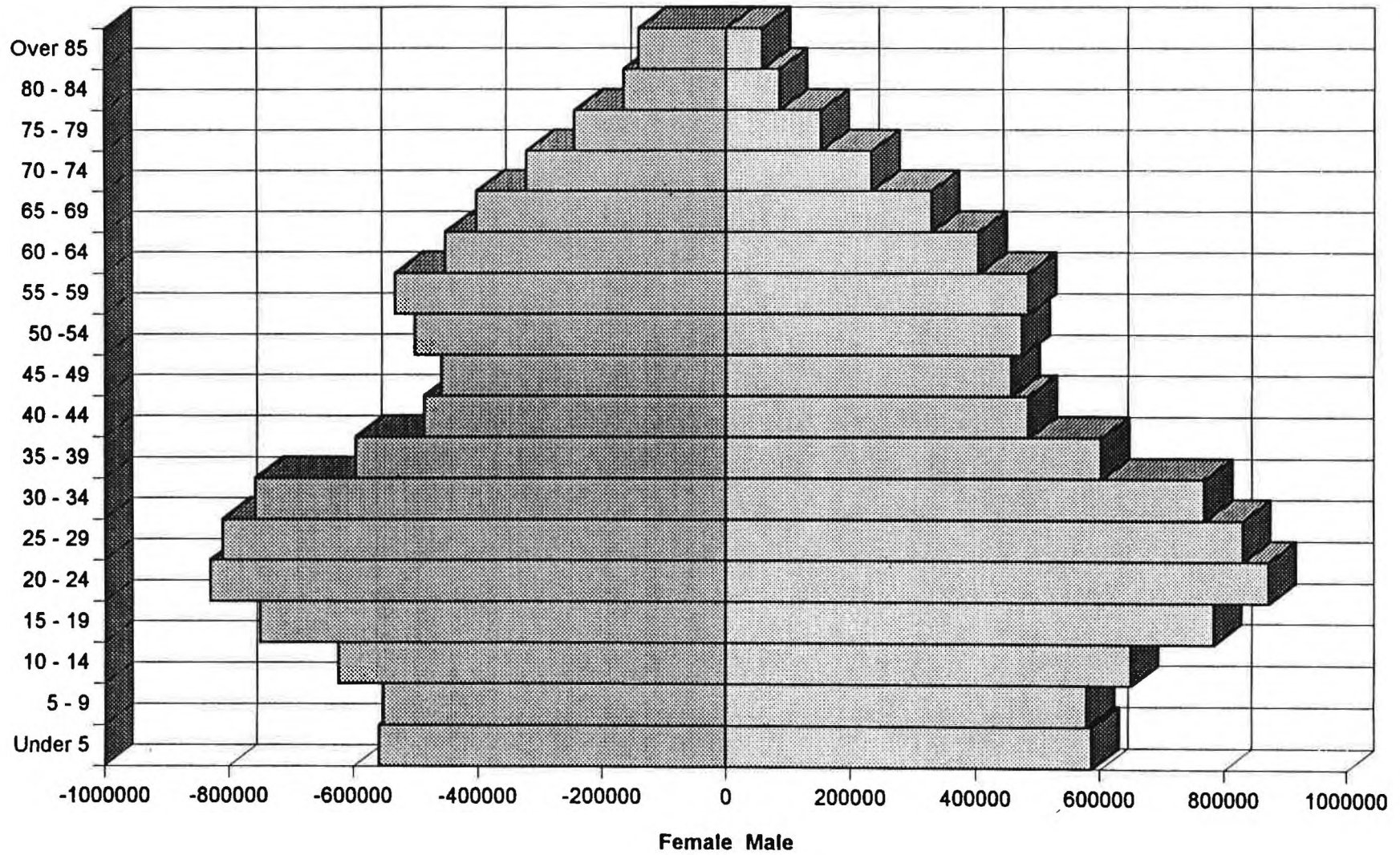
# Population Pyramid - East Palo Alto 1990



# Population Pyramid - San Mateo County 1990



# Population Pyramid - State 1990





## Ethnic Profile

Table II-5 shows the breakdown of ethnicity into two major categories, Hispanic and Non-Hispanic origin. These two categories are each divided into five other sections: Caucasian, African-American, Native American/Eskimo/Aleut, Asian/Pacific Islander, and other races.

**Table II-5. Ethnic Profile**

	ETHNIC PROFILE					
	EPA		San Mateo County		State	
<b>Non-Hispanic Origin:</b>						
- White	2,832	12.08%	393,652	60.60%	17,093,961	57.42%
- Black	9,727	41.48%	33,470	5.15%	2,110,700	7.09%
- American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	119	0.51%	2,485	0.38%	196,889	0.66%
- Asian of Pacific Islander	2,168	9.24%	105,970	16.31%	2,747,780	9.23%
- Other Races	78	0.33%	956	0.15%	53,141	0.18%
<b>Hispanic Origin:</b>						
- White	4,599	19.61%	74,201	11.42%	3,461,692	11.63%
- Black	344	1.47%	1,110	0.17%	88,066	0.30%
- American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	35	0.15%	632	0.10%	52,040	0.17%
- Asian of Pacific Islander	84	0.36%	3,339	0.51%	110,055	0.37%
- Other Races	3,465	14.78%	33,808	5.20%	3,855,697	12.95%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,451</b>		<b>649,623</b>		<b>29,770,021</b>	

Source: U.S. Census

East Palo Alto is a very ethnically diverse place. The relative proportion of various ethnic groups is significantly higher than either the County or the State. There is a very low Caucasian population of 12 percent compared with the County total of 60 percent. The African American population is the largest of the reported ethnic groups in the area, with 41 percent. This is extremely high in comparison to both the County and the State (5 percent and 7 percent respectively). East Palo Alto also has a large Hispanic population which is 36 percent of the total population. This is relatively high in comparison to the County, which is 17 percent and the State, which is 25 percent.

## Poverty Level

East Palo Alto has a higher than average number of people living below the poverty level. Table II-6 breaks down age groups into children (0 to 17 years), working population (18 to 64 years), and retired population (65 years and over) and shows the number of the population living below the poverty level in East Palo Alto, San Mateo County, and the State for each of these age groups in 1989.

**Table II-6. Persons Below Poverty Level in 1989**

	Persons in 1989 whose income is below poverty level					
	East Palo Alto	% of total population	County	% of total population	State	% of total population
0 to 17 years	1669	7.12%	11207	1.73%	1380275	4.64%
18 to 64	2174	9.27%	24179	3.72%	2018869	6.78%
65 years and over	199	0.85%	5019	0.77%	228441	0.77%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4042</b>	<b>17.24%</b>	<b>40405</b>	<b>6.22%</b>	<b>3627585</b>	<b>12.19%</b>

Source: U.S. Census

According to the 1990 Census, East Palo Alto has 17.24 percent of its total population below the poverty level. This compares to San Mateo County, which has only 6.22 percent below poverty, and the State, which has 12.19 percent

### Education Level

The 1980 and 1990 Census data shows that a large portion of the population of East Palo Alto has not attained higher levels of education. When compared with the County and State, East Palo Alto has the smallest percentage of High School Graduates and people who have gone on to higher levels of education. Table II-7 compares the education levels of residents in East Palo Alto, San Mateo County, and the State in 1980 and 1990.

**Table II-7. Education Level**

1990	Education Level					
	East Palo Alto		County		State	
No high school diploma	5,098	39.39%	71,343	15.89%	4,450,528	23.81%
High school diploma only	2,657	20.53%	95,754	21.33%	4,167,897	22.29%
1 - 3 year of college	3,170	24.49%	141,125	31.44%	5,710,400	30.54%
4 or more years of college	2,019	15.60%	140,631	31.33%	4,366,674	23.36%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,944</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>448,853</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>18,695,499</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

1980	Education Level					
	East Palo Alto		County		State	
No high school diploma	3,467	35.75%	69,840	18.42%	3,724,736	26.52%
High school diploma only	2,607	26.88%	119,239	31.46%	4,415,732	31.44%
1 - 3 years of college	2,123	21.89%	93,507	24.67%	3,150,653	22.43%
4 or more years of college	1,501	15.48%	96,491	25.45%	2,752,865	19.60%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,698</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>379,077</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>14,043,986</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: U.S. Census

According to the 1990 Census data, the largest portion of the population in East Palo Alto has no high school diploma (39.39 percent). The State and County's largest portions have had some college, but received no degree. Only 15.6 percent of the people in East Palo Alto have finished four or more years of college, thus making it the smallest portion of the City's population. The County's and State's smallest percentage of the population are those with, no high school diploma and those with a high school diploma only.

### Industry and Employment

Table II-8 gives a breakdown of employment by industry for residents of East Palo Alto, the County, and the State. It does not reflect the location of the industry, but only the type of industry in which employees work.

**Table II-8. Industry and Employment (People 16 Years and Older)**

Industry and Employment (people 16 years and older)						
1990	East Palo Alto		County		State	
Agriculture, forestry, fisheries	351	3.49%	5,934	1.68%	433,582	3.10%
Mining	-	0.00%	370	0.10%	39,542	0.28%
Construction	442	4.40%	20,978	5.94%	958,531	6.85%
Manufacturing of nondurables	583	5.81%	17,646	5.00%	752,144	5.37%
Manufacturing of durables	1,406	14.00%	26,443	7.49%	1,608,764	11.49%
Transportation	310	3.09%	27,302	7.74%	584,687	4.18%
Communication and Public Utilities	197	1.96%	10,583	3.00%	350,889	2.51%
Wholesale	377	3.75%	20,312	5.75%	639,725	4.57%
Retail	1,294	12.88%	55,988	15.86%	2,282,613	16.31%
Finance, insurance, real estate	252	2.51%	33,839	9.59%	1,061,880	7.59%
Business, and repair services	1,181	11.76%	24,308	6.89%	816,034	5.83%
Personal services	378	3.76%	14,210	4.03%	494,350	3.53%
Entertainment and recreational service	144	1.43%	5,131	1.45%	286,380	2.05%
Professional services, Health	1,111	11.06%	27,097	7.68%	1,021,681	7.30%
Professional services, Education	996	9.92%	21,225	6.01%	1,031,023	7.37%
Professional services, Other	684	6.81%	28,907	8.19%	1,013,521	7.24%
Public administration	337	3.36%	12,691	3.60%	620,963	4.44%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,043</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>352,964</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>13,996,309</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: U.S. Census

According to the 1990 Census, the largest portion of the people in East Palo Alto work in the manufacturing of durables segment of industry. This differs from the State and County because their largest portions of the population work in the retail industry. East Palo Alto also has larger concentrations of workers in industries such as business and repair services, professional health services, and retail. The State and County have a greater distributions of workers in all industries.

### Labor Force

In 1990, East Palo Alto and San Mateo County had approximately the same percentage of people in the labor force. Differences occurred in the unemployment rates between East Palo Alto and the County. Table II-9 shows a breakdown of people in the labor force for the City, County and State.

**Table II-9 Labor Force**

1990 Labor Force (16+ years)	Labor Force				
	East Palo Alto	County	State		
Males in labor force	6,087	200,634	8,640,866		
- Males in armed forces	22	600	246,877		
- Civilian males employed	5,323	191,298	7,832,601		
- Civilian males unemployed	742	8,736	561,088		
Males not in labor force	2,420	55,245	2,665,710		
Females in labor force	5,172	168,466	6,622,034		
- Females in armed forces	-	62	23,212		
- Civilian females employed	4,720	16,166	6,163,408		
- Civilian females unemployed	452	6,738	435,414		
Females not in labor force	2,796	98,347	4,857,671		
Total 1990 unemployment	1,194	10.60%	15,474	4.19%	6.52%
<b>1990 Percent of unemployment</b>					
Civilian males unemployed	12.2%		4.4%		6.7%
Civilian females unemployed	8.7%		4.0%		6.6%
<b>1980 Percent of unemployment</b>					
Civilian males unemployed	8.3%		3.7%		6.3%
Civilian females unemployed	5.9%		3.2%		6.5%

*Source: U.S. Census*

In 1990, the East Palo Alto percentage of unemployed males in the labor force was 12.2 percent, as opposed to only 4.4 percent for the County. The percentage of unemployed females in East Palo Alto was 8.7 percent while the County only showed 4.0 percent. The State had 6.7 percent males and 6.6 percent females unemployed which came in between the County's and East Palo Alto's figures. In 1980 the trends were approximately the same with the exception of East Palo Alto females (5.9 percent) having a lower unemployment rate than the State (6.5 percent). The unemployment rate for males in East Palo Alto was also considerably less in 1980 (only 8.3 percent) than it was in 1990.

### Place of Work

Most residents in East Palo Alto do not actually work in the community. Table II-10 shows where people in the areas of East Palo Alto, San Mateo County, and the State worked in 1980 and 1990.

**Table II-10 Place of Work**

1990	Place of Work					
	East Palo Alto		County		State	
Worked in place of residence	973	9.86%	63,096	18.81%	5,061,526	39.78%
Worked outside of place of residence	8,896	90.14%	272,327	81.19%	7,661,711	60.22%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,869</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>335,423</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>12,723,237</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>1980</b>						
	East Palo Alto		County		State	
Worked in place of residence	602	8.83%	158814	59.71%	7561661	99.23%
Worked outside of place of residence	6215	91.17%	107163	40.29%	58361	0.77%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6817</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>265977</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>7620022</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

*Source: U.S. Census*

According to the 1990 Census, only 9.86 percent of people living in East Palo Alto reported that they worked in the City. This represents a slight increase from 1980 when the percentage of people in East Palo Alto who worked in their own community was 8.83 percent. In San Mateo County, 18.81 percent worked in their city of residence and the State reported a larger figure of 39.78 percent worked in their city of residence. This dramatic difference could be due to the fact that large parts of California are still rural and commuting to work is not a viable option. Commuting to another city is much more feasible for residents of larger urban areas than for those who live in rural areas and cannot easily commute to the next city.

### Type of Worker

Approximately two thirds of the residents of East Palo Alto work as private wage workers. This is reflected in Table II-11, which gives breakdowns of classes for workers in East Palo Alto, San Mateo County and the State.

**Table II-11. Type of Worker**

Class of Worker	Type of Worker					
	East Palo Alto		County		State	
Private wage workers	7,882	78.48%	280,521	79.48%	10,735,303	76.70%
Self-employed	606	6.03%	28,874	8.18%	1,173,375	8.38%
Local government	747	7.44%	24,458	6.93%	1,078,146	7.70%
State government	150	1.49%	6,359	1.80%	499,399	3.57%
Federal government	611	6.08%	11,082	3.14%	449,373	3.21%
Unpaid family	47	0.47%	1,670	0.47%	60,713	0.43%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,043</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>352,964</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>13,996,309</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: U.S. Census

In 1990, the City of East Palo Alto, San Mateo County, and the State all had reasonably equal percentages of private wage workers; between 76.70 percent and 79.48 percent. One noticeable difference is that East Palo Alto has 6.08 percent of total workers in the Federal government, while the State and County have only 3.21 percent and 3.14 percent respectively.

### **SUMMARY**

With the information available, a rough assessment and evaluation of the current conditions in East Palo Alto is possible. By studying the historical changes in population, two major increases can be seen. The first increase was in the 1950's as the entire Bay Area experienced a change from rural to suburban land uses. The second increase was in the 1980's and was caused by the increased housing costs in the surrounding region.

There are two larger than normal populations in East Palo Alto. They are young children and young adults. In planning for such age groups, the City must consider the services

that are vital to each of these groups. The young children need schools and day care while the young adults need entry-level jobs and low cost housing.

East Palo Alto is an ethnically diverse community. Approximately 40 percent of the City's population is African American and another 36 percent is of Hispanic origin. The white, Non-Hispanic population is very low compared with County figures.

The median income for East Palo Alto in the past 20 years has been significantly lower in East Palo Alto than in the County and State. Median income in East Palo Alto for 1990 was \$29,206, while the County's was \$46,437, and the State's was \$35,798. The portion of East Palo Alto's population falling within the poverty level is three times as great as the County's or State's portion.

According to the 1990 Census, 39.39 percent of the population in East Palo Alto has no high school diploma. This percentage is significantly greater than the County's 15.89 percent and the State's 23.81 percent. This lack of education ties directly to the poverty level statistics stated above. Higher income relates to further academic achievement and greater opportunities.

The largest portion of the population in East Palo Alto work in industries such as manufacturing and retail, which relate directly to the lower income and education levels found in the area. East Palo Alto and San Mateo County have approximately the same percentages of people in the labor force. The difference occurs in the unemployment rates. East Palo Alto has a total of 10.60 percent of its population unemployed while the County has only 4.19 percent. This is due to the fact that 90 percent of the East Palo Alto population works outside of the community.

## FUTURE PROSPECTS

This section covers the projections for East Palo Alto's total population, gender composition, age distribution, and race composition. The projections for San Mateo County are also provided for comparison and identification of East Palo Alto's share of the total County population. All population projections through the year 2000 were taken from the *East Palo Alto Overall Economic Development Program, May, 1994, Annual OEDP Report and Program Projection*. CRP 351 Housing Team used the ratio share method to extend these figures to the year 2010.

### Total Population

Knowledge and understanding of East Palo Alto's past and current population is crucial in determining the City's future population. The population projections are a critical element in all facets of a General Plan.

Using the ratio share method for calculating the general population, Table II-12 shows that East Palo Alto and San Mateo County continue to grow at the same rate.

**Table II-12 Population Projections, Ratio Share Method**

POPULATION PROJECTIONS - RATIO SHARE METHOD			
	EPA	COUNTY	EPA'S SHARE OF COUNTY GROWTH
1980	18413	587329	3.14%
1990	23451	649623	3.61%
1995	25500	689600	3.70%
2000	27200	713000	3.81%
2005	28200	736529	3.83%
2010	29300	760098	3.85%

*Source: Projections '94" Association Of Bay Area Governments and CRP 351 Projections*

Both East Palo Alto and San Mateo County will experience consistent population growth well into the next century. By the year 2010, East Palo Alto will reach a population of 29,300 persons. This projection makes up 3.85 percent of the total population of San Mateo County in the year 2010.

### Gender Composition

Population projections for gender are useful for tracking the childbearing population group and planning for public safety, social services, education, and health care needs. The projected gender compositions for East Palo Alto (shown in Table II-13) are expected to increase at a constant rate. By the year 2010, East Palo Alto will be composed of approximately 51 percent males and 49 percent females.

**Table II-13 Gender Composition**

	Gender Composition				Total Population
	male	Percent of Population	female	Percent of Population	
<b>East Palo Alto</b>					
1990	11961	51%	11490	49%	23451
1995	13000	51%	12500	49%	25500
2000	13900	51%	13300	49%	27200
2005	14382	51%	13818	49%	28200
2010	14943	51%	14357	49%	29300
<b>County of San Mateo</b>					
1990	320188	49%	329435	51%	649623
1995	340000	49%	349600	51%	689600
2000	349370	49%	363630	51%	713000
2005	360899	49%	375630	51%	736529
2010	372448	49%	387650	51%	760098

Source: "Projections 94," Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and CRP 351 Projections

### Age Distribution

The annual increase in population by age category is a vital statistic to any community. Its most important use is in predicting the type of services a community will need to provide. For example, an increase in the number of school age children means that more schools and day care services will be needed. The age distribution was projected using the ratio share method. East Palo Alto can expect the bulk of the increase in population to be in the young adult category.

**Table II-14 Age Distribution**

East Palo Alto	Age Distribution											
	AGE	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010					
0-4YRS	1537	8.3%	2592	11.1%	2818	11.1%	3006	11.1%	3117	11.1%	3238	11.1%
5-17YRS	3918	21.1%	5107	21.8%	5553	21.8%	5923	21.8%	6141	21.8%	6381	21.8%
18-20 YR	1212	6.5%	1264	5.4%	1374	5.4%	1466	5.4%	1520	5.4%	1579	5.4%
21-44 YR	7689	41.3%	9867	42.1%	10729	42.1%	11444	42.1%	11865	42.1%	12328	42.1%
45-54 YR	1684	9.0%	1824	7.8%	1983	7.8%	2116	7.8%	2193	7.8%	2279	7.8%
55-59 YR	810	4.4%	746	3.2%	811	3.2%	865	3.2%	897	3.2%	932	3.2%
60-64 YR	628	3.4%	737	3.1%	801	3.1%	855	3.1%	886	3.1%	921	3.1%
65-74 YR	765	4.1%	882	3.8%	959	3.8%	1023	3.8%	1061	3.8%	1102	3.8%
75-84 YR	295	1.6%	352	1.5%	383	1.5%	408	1.5%	423	1.5%	440	1.5%
85+	72	0.4%	80	0.3%	87	0.3%	93	0.3%	96	0.3%	100	0.3%
total	18610		23451		26600		27200		28200		29300	

Source: "Projections 94," Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and CRP 351 Projections

As shown in Table II-14, East Palo Alto's largest population is the young adults aged 21 to 44 years old. This group represents 42 percent of the total population. This group will continue to be the largest with a total projected population of 12,328 in the year 2010. The second largest group is children 0 to 20 years old representing 38 percent of the population. It should be noted that there is a significant difference when this age group is compared to San Mateo County. The 0 to 20 year old population in the County was 26 percent compared to East Palo Alto's 38 percent.



## Race Profile Projections

The future projections of ethnic diversity in East Palo Alto are useful tools in deciding what services the community will need as well as what type of market it has. The following projections were obtained by using the ratio share method.

The City of East Palo Alto can expect a slow increase in the population of non-Hispanic Caucasians and African Americans as well as Hispanic Blacks, Native Americans, Eskimos, Aleuts, and Asians. The out-migration of this population will be replaced mostly by Hispanic origin Whites and other races and non-Hispanic origin Asians.

**Table II-15 Race Profile**

<b>RACE PROFILE</b>					
	<b>1990</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>East Palo Alto</b>					
<b>Non-Hispanic Origin</b>					
White	2832	3079	3285	3406	3538
Black	9727	10577	11282	11697	12153
American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut	119	129	138	143	149
Asian or Pacific Islander	2168	2357	2515	2607	2709
Other Races	78	85	90	94	97
<b>Hispanic Origin</b>					
White	4599	5001	5334	5530	5746
Black	344	374	399	414	430
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	35	38	41	42	44
Asian or Pacific Islander	84	91	97	101	105
Other Races	3465	3768	4019	4167	4329
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23451</b>	<b>25500</b>	<b>27200</b>	<b>28200</b>	<b>29300</b>
<b>San Mateo County</b>					
<b>Non-Hispanic Origin</b>					
White	393652	417877	432057	446314	460597
Black	33470	35530	36735	37948	39162
American Indian, Eskimo, Or Aleut	2485	2638	2727	2817	2908
Asian Of Pacific Islander	105970	112491	116308	120147	123991
Other Races	956	1015	1049	1084	1119
<b>Hispanic Origin</b>					
White	74201	78767	81440	84128	86820
Black	1110	1178	1218	1258	1299
American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut	632	671	694	717	739
Asian of Pacific Islander	3339	3544	3665	3786	3907
Other Races	33808	35889	37106	38331	39557
<b>Total</b>	<b>649623</b>	<b>689600</b>	<b>713000</b>	<b>736529</b>	<b>760098</b>

Source: "Projections 94," Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and CRP 351 Projections

Table II-15 shows some similarities between the City and County. They both show slow increases in the non-Hispanic Caucasian and African American populations, as well as the

**Hispanic origin Asian and Pacific Islander populations. The County can also expect a very slow increase in the non-Hispanic origin Other Races category. The greatest increase in the population will occur in the non-Hispanic Asian and the Hispanic origin Whites and Other Races categories.**

# Housing

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section of the report discusses the current and past characteristics of the housing stock in East Palo Alto. The following information was derived from the updated housing element of East Palo Alto. Specifically, the following will be addressed: the composition of housing units by type, age, tenure and cost, housing affordability and potential for rehabilitation. Also, the special needs of the people in group quarters, the disabled, elderly, and homeless are discussed and the potential housing sites established.

### Housing Unit Types

According to the 1990 U.S. Census there are 7,351 housing units in East Palo Alto, most of which are detached single family homes.

**Table II-16 Housing Unit Type**

Type	Housing unit type					
	EPA		County		State	
1 unit, detached	3528	46.85%	144438	57.37%	6119265	54.72%
1 unit, attached	243	3.23%	20263	8.05%	811684	7.26%
2-4 units	215	2.85%	16669	6.62%	966355	8.64%
5-9 units	278	3.69%	16486	6.55%	705704	6.31%
10-or more units	2738	36.36%	47033	18.68%	1899934	16.99%
Mobilehomes or trailers, other	349	4.63%	6893	2.74%	679940	6.08%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7351</b>		<b>251782</b>		<b>11182882</b>	

Source: U.S. Census

As shown in Table II-16, 46.85 percent of all housing unit types in East Palo Alto are single family detached. San Mateo County and the State have 57.37 and 54.72 percent, respectively, of their total housing units as single family detached housing. The second largest category in East Palo Alto, containing 36.36 percent of the total housing units is the 10 or more multi-family units. The County and State also have the second largest amount of their total housing unit types as 10 or more multi-family housing units, but their percentages are much lower than East Palo Alto, at 18.68 and 16.99 percent respectively.

### Tenure of Housing and Vacancy Rate

East Palo Alto has more renter occupied units than it has owner occupied units.

**Table II-17 Housing Tenure**

Occupancy	Tenure of Housing				State	
	EPA		County			
Occupied by owners	2900	39.45%	n/a	n/a	5774999	51.64%
Occupied by renters	4053	55.14%	n/a	n/a	4606307	41.19%
Vacant: -total	398	5.41%	9814	n/a	801676	7.17%
- for rent	253	3.44%	4319	n/a	288886	2.58%
- for sale	65	0.88%	2417	n/a	91567	0.82%
- rented or sold	31	0.42%	946	n/a	n/a	n/a
- seasonal use	5	0.07%	760	n/a	n/a	n/a
- held for migrant workers	0	0.00%	25	n/a	n/a	n/a
- other vacant	44	0.60%	1347	n/a	421223	3.77%
Total	7351			n/a	11182982	

Source: U.S. Census

Table II-17 shows that East Palo Alto has 55.14 percent of its total housing stock occupied by renters and 39.45 percent occupied by owners. The State has 41.19 percent renter occupied and 51.64 percent owner occupied. In comparison to the State, East Palo Alto has considerably less owner occupied units. The vacancy rate is also a bit higher at 7.17 percent for the State. According to the 1990 Census, the percentage of vacant units is 5.41 percent in East Palo Alto. However, this vacancy rate cannot be maintained at the current growth rates.

Reasons for East Palo Alto's high vacancy rate are two-fold. First, a higher percentage of apartment units are found in East Palo Alto than in surrounding areas and apartments typically have higher turnover rates and longer vacant periods than single-family dwellings. Second, some units in the area require extensive rehabilitation due to deteriorated conditions before the units can be habitable. Demand for housing has been increasing in East Palo Alto and housing conditions have generally been improving, suggesting that vacancy rates will continue to decline.

Unit Size

East Palo Alto has a mix of housing sizes, though smaller units predominate. Most of the owner occupied units are two or three bedroom, while the renter occupied units are mostly studios and one bedroom. Table II-18 shows a breakdown of renter and owner occupied units by number of bedrooms per unit.

**Table II-18 Housing Unit Size**

East Palo Alto	Total Bedrooms Per Housing Unit					
	None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five or more
TOTAL	1,020.0	2173.0	1913.0	1,927.0	220.0	98.0
Percent of Total	13.9	29.6	26.0	26.2	3.0	1.3
- Owner occupied	42.0	444.0	957.0	1,410.0	147.0	98.0
Percent	1.4	14.3	30.9	45.5	4.7	3.2
- Renter occupied	905.0	1592.0	842.0	443.0	73.0	0.0
Percent	23.5	41.3	21.8	11.5	1.9	0.0

Source: U.S. Census

There is a definite shortage of larger housing units in the East Palo Alto area. In both categories of owner and renter occupied, the larger four and five bedroom units are the lowest percentages. The renter occupied units also make up a disproportionate amount of the studio, no bedroom units. There are a total of 905 no bedroom renter occupied units as opposed to only 42 owner occupied no bedroom units.

### Persons in Unit

East Palo Alto has a considerable number of people living in crowded conditions. In comparison to the County and State, East Palo Alto has approximately the same percentage of number of persons in a unit for the one through four persons category as shown in Table II-19.

**Table II-19 Persons In Unit**

Number of Persons	Persons in unit					
	EPA		County		State	
1 person	1751	25.18%	60654	25.07%	2428949	23.34%
2 persons	1538	22.12%	80601	33.32%	3230051	31.03%
3 persons	1089	15.66%	40250	16.64%	1726430	16.59%
4 persons	903	12.99%	33171	13.71%	1514854	14.55%
5 persons	587	8.44%	14615	6.04%	795504	7.64%
6 persons	373	5.36%	6285	2.60%	354143	3.40%
7 or more persons	712	10.24%	6338	2.62%	358110	3.44%

Source: U.S. Census

East Palo Alto has 10.24 percent of its total population living with seven or more persons. This number is considerably higher than the County or State which have only 2.62 and 3.44 percent respectively, living in such conditions.

### Overcrowding:

As shown in the above table, some residents of East Palo Alto live in overcrowded conditions. Overcrowded conditions were recorded for 1,948 units (28 percent of the City's occupied housing stock) in the 1990 U.S. Census, based on the federal standard that describes overcrowding as more than one person per room. Since most of the larger units are owner occupied, a large number of renter households are at risk of overcrowding due to this lack of availability.

### Households Characteristics

The following table, Table II-20, shows the number of households broken down by the type of family or persons living in them. It is based solely on 1990 Census data. From this, it can be seen that East Palo Alto has over one quarter of its total population living in households with 2 or more persons (family) married with children.

**Table II-20 Households by Type**

	Households by Type					
	EPA		San Mateo County		State	
1 person, male	959	13.79%	25,374	10.49%	1,070,030	10.31%
1 person, female	792	11.39%	35,280	14.58%	1,359,837	13.10%
2 or more persons (family):						
-married with children	1,761	25.33%	58,875	24.34%	271,452	2.61%
-married without children	987	14.20%	70,143	29.00%	2,678,070	25.80%
-male householder no wife w/ children	282	4.06%	4,318	1.78%	252,314	2.43%
-male householder no wife no children	221	3.18%	5,255	2.17%	225,378	2.17%
-female householder no husband w/ children	1,090	15.68%	13,247	5.48%	784,315	7.56%
-female householder no husband no children	356	5.12%	10,474	4.33%	407,855	3.93%
male householder (nonfamily)	325	4.67%	11,049	4.57%	498,912	4.81%
female householder (nonfamily)	180	2.59%	7,894	3.26%	313,033	3.02%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,953</b>		<b>241,914</b>		<b>10,381,206</b>	

Source: U.S. Census

There are four categories in which East Palo Alto is significantly different from the County and the State. The first two are the single person male and single person female categories. There is a slightly higher number of single males and a lower number of single females in East Palo Alto than the County and State. There are extreme differences in both the married without children and the female householder, no husband with children categories. East Palo Alto has a much lower percentage of families married without children than both the County and the State. East Palo Alto has a significantly higher percentage of female, no husband with children households, representing 15.6 percent of the City's total population. This is compared to 5.4 percent and 7.5 percent for the County and State respectively.

Household Income

Median household income in East Palo Alto has been consistently lower than the County and State. The following table (Table II-21) gives a breakdown of 1989 income for the residents of East Palo Alto, San Mateo County, and the State.

**Table II-21 Household Income**

Income in 1989	Household Income					
	East Palo Alto		County		State	
\$0 - \$9,999	995	14.60%	17,043	7.03%	1,197,503	11.51%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	1,143	16.78%	22,019	9.09%	1,546,076	14.87%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	1,379	20.24%	29,647	12.23%	1,564,369	15.04%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	974	14.30%	31,880	13.15%	1,449,975	13.94%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	754	11.07%	30,396	12.54%	1,206,235	11.60%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	1,248	18.32%	54,902	22.65%	1,909,072	18.36%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	203	2.98%	27,580	11.38%	792,419	7.62%
\$100,000 - \$124,999	73	1.07%	12,806	5.20%	335,271	3.22%
\$125,000 - \$149,999	44	0.65%	5,627	2.32%	140,613	1.35%
\$150,000 or more	-	0.00%	10,648	4.39%	258,167	2.48%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,813</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>242,348</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>10,399,700</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

	East Palo Alto		County		State	
	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean
1989 Household Income (dollars)	\$ 29,206	\$ 33,688	\$ 46,437	\$ 59,521	\$ 35,798	\$ 46,247
1979 Household Income (dollars)	*\$14,147	*\$16,621	*\$23,172	\$27,641	\$18,243	\$22,416
1969 Household Income (dollars)	*\$9,401	\$10,100	*\$13,222	\$15,138	\$9,302	\$10,771

Source: U.S. Census

In 1990 the median household income for East Palo Alto was \$29,206, while the largest portion of the population (20.24 percent) made between \$20,000 - \$29,999. The median household income for the State of California was \$35,798, while the County of San Mateo reported a \$46,437 median. No one in East Palo Alto reported a household income of over \$150,000. One of the smallest portions of the population of the State reported an income over \$150,000 (2.48 percent). In an overall comparison, East Palo Alto's highest household incomes were consistently lower than those of the County and State.

Comparison of the past household income levels from 1989, 1979, and 1969, brings to light several important findings. First, the median and mean incomes for the City of East Palo Alto in the past twenty years have always been lower than the County's and the State's. Second, in 1969, East Palo Alto and the State were almost equal in the median household income, with East Palo Alto even being a little bit ahead of the State. Third, these figures indicate that the City's median income has not increased as quickly as the County's and the State's. For example, in 1989, East Palo Alto showed a \$15,059 increase in median income from 1979 as compared with the County which showed an increase of \$23,265 in median income and the State which showed an increase of \$17,555 in median income.

#### Cost of Housing

As of May 1990, the range of East Palo Alto housing prices appearing in the multiple listing service was from \$128,000 to \$270,000. Eight homes were listed at below \$150,000, and 35 units were listed between \$150,000 and \$200,00. Prices for raw land have also increased, with single-family lots selling for as much as \$70,000. Rising housing prices are a result of economic forces that are well beyond the capacity of the local government to influence or control. These conditions, combined with the reduced levels of State and federal support, make it extremely difficult to continue to provide affordable housing, despite the City's expressed desire to do so. These figures are below the cost of comparable housing in nearby cities. The main factors depressing housing costs in East Palo Alto are public perceptions of high crime and poor services and, in some cases, the condition of the housing stock.

Due to the low median income found in East Palo Alto, residents are very unlikely to qualify for a mortgage to buy a house. This is illustrated by the following example from the *Overall Economic Analysis Report*. The monthly income required to qualify for a \$60,000 loan is \$2,433 a month. Since the median monthly income established in the above section of \$2,242.83 is only \$191.83 more than the required minimum amount for a loan, almost 50 percent of East Palo Alto's population will not qualify for such loans.

### Contract Rent

The median rent price per unit in East Palo Alto is \$532. Almost half of the units have rent prices between \$500 and \$749 and approximately one third have prices between \$250 and \$499 as can be seen in Table II-22.

**Table II-22 Contract Rent**

	Contract Rent					
	EPA		County		State	
Less than \$250	328	8.24%	2625	2.80%	330342	7.51%
\$250 to \$499	1261	31.67%	9350	9.99%	1385013	31.48%
\$500 to \$749	1865	46.84%	41360	44.18%	1892456	38.46%
\$750 to \$999	428	10.75%	24449	26.12%	668470	15.19%
\$1,000 or more	100	2.51%	15827	16.91%	323824	7.36%
Median rent	532		711		561	

Source: U.S. Census

According to the 1990 Census, the statistics for both East Palo Alto and the State are relatively the same with both having their largest portion of the population paying between \$50 to \$749 in rent per unit. The County statistics differ greatly from those of East Palo Alto and the State because a much larger portion of the population pays higher rents. For East Palo Alto and the State, 40 percent of all contract rent falls below the \$500 mark, while the County has only 13 percent below the \$500 mark. The median rent for the County (\$711) is much higher than both East Palo Alto and the State (\$532 and \$561 respectively).

### Affordability:

The 1989 median income in East Palo Alto was \$29,206, which breaks down to \$2,433.83 per month. It is widely accepted that 30 percent of total monthly income can reasonably be expected to be spent on housing costs. In East Palo Alto this figure would be \$730.15 of the median monthly income. According to ABAG figures, none of the 2,572 low and very low income households in East Palo Alto can afford the median rental price in the City. This category constitutes 37.1 percent of East Palo Alto's renting population.

### Age of Housing Structures

Most of the housing units in East Palo Alto were built in the 1950's and 1960's, which is shown in Table II-23. Development in recent years has declined greatly in comparison to the development occurring in the County and State.



**Table II-23 Year Housing Built**

Year Built	Year housing built					
	EPA		County		State	
1989-March 1990	119	1.62%	3902	1.55%	343081	3.07%
1985-1988	106	1.44%	12644	5.02%	1194925	10.69%
1980-1984	282	3.84%	12203	4.85%	1017889	9.10%
1970-1979	929	12.64%	45449	18.05%	2424359	21.68%
1960-1969	1719	23.38%	50095	19.90%	2059742	18.42%
1950-1959	2847	38.73%	66961	26.59%	1931706	17.27%
1940-1949	895	12.18%	35465	14.09%	1017342	9.10%
1939 or earlier	454	6.18%	25063	9.95%	1193901	10.68%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7351</b>		<b>251782</b>		<b>11182945</b>	

Source: U.S. Census

According to the 1990 Census, there has been very little to no housing built in East Palo Alto since 1984. The heaviest concentration of building (38.73 percent) occurred between 1950-1959. This is because the majority of single-family units were constructed in the "tract" building development pattern which was very typical of this era. The County also experienced a great deal of growth during this time due to the rapid expansion of the San Francisco Bay Area. The State's development boom came much later with 21.68 percent of it's development occurring in the 1970's.

### Rehabilitation

A random survey of 600 dwelling units conducted in June of 1990 by the Housing and Community Development Department revealed that 19 percent of the existing housing stock was in need of rehabilitation and another 2 percent were dilapidated. If these percentages are applied to the total existing housing stock, there would be an estimated 1,295 units in need of rehabilitation and 132 dilapidated units.

Housing rehabilitation has occurred much more rapidly in the past five years. During this time, 191 rehabilitation permits have been approved with a total approximate cost of \$10,000 dollars or more. This indicates that efforts have been made to conserve existing affordable housing, but despite these efforts a large number of homes remain in substandard condition.

### Special Needs

Every community has groups that need special attention when considering housing facilities. The groups that are most critical in East Palo Alto include: people living in group quarters, the physically disabled, the elderly, and the homeless. Table II-24 shows the number of persons and corresponding percentages of the population living in group quarters. The following sections were adapted from the 1994 East Palo Alto Housing Element Update.

**Table II-24 Group Quarters**

Group Quarters					
	Total	Percent		Total	Percent
Institutionalized Persons	78	18.50%	Noninstitutionalized Persons	343	81.50%
Correctional Institutions	0	0%	College Dormitories	0	0%
Nursing Homes	69	16%	Military Quarters	0	0%
Psychiatric Hospitals	0	0%	Homeless in Emergency Shelters	57	13.50%
Juvenile Institutions	0	0%	Homeless Visible Near Streets	64	15.20%
Other Institutions	9	2%	Other Noninstitutionalized	222	52.70%

Source: U.S. Census

**Physically Disabled:**

Roughly four percent of the City's population (an estimated 795 persons) are prevented from working due to disability. Although not all persons with work disabilities require special housing, those with severe mobility constraints need specially designed units located near transportation, shopping, and services. Currently the City is working on improving access to transportation for the disabled, which until now has not been provided.

**Elderly:**

East Palo Alto has 846 households comprised of residents 65 or older, representing 12.4 percent of total households in the City. These elderly residents may have special housing needs in terms of affordability (due to their often fixed incomes) and design (due to their physical limitations).

While 20 percent of all adults in East Palo Alto are considered to live below the poverty level, 15 percent of the City's senior population are considered poor by this standard. The City has a 73-unit subsidized senior apartment project. Discussions with the onsite manager at Runnymede Gardens indicated that there are rarely vacancies for any sustained period of time for the project, but most persons on the waiting list can be accommodated within six months to one year. There are also several board-and-care homes targeted to seniors.

**Homeless**

The 1990 Census counted 57 homeless in emergency shelters and 64 homeless visible near streets for a total of 121 persons. Currently, assistance to the homeless is provided by the County. However, most of the County's shelters and assistance programs are temporary in nature and are not designed to address ongoing housing affordability problems. Moreover, it is believed that some of the homeless benefit from more than one program, while others receive no assistance at all. This means that most of the City's estimated homeless residents probably receive some form of assistance, but that it may not be fully adequate.

**Potential Housing Sites in East Palo Alto**

Twenty-three potential housing sites on 100 acres have been identified in East Palo Alto. The smallest is 12,000 square feet. The two largest sites are 28 and 28.6 acres. Nine of

the sites, totaling 62.4 acres, are dotted with greenhouses. The greenhouses are in various condition, from derelict to excellent. The nursery enterprises likewise seem to vary in financial condition and productivity. Some of the greenhouse sites may be good for residential development, while others may not. Together, these nine sites could accommodate from 250 to 800 housing units. The remaining 14 sites are vacant, except for a total of three houses on two sites totaling 8.3 acres. These 23 sites could accommodate 490 to 1,260 dwelling units on 48 acres. In total, the 23 sites can hold 740 to 2,060 housing units. Potentially, any one of the 23 sites can be developed for housing in the next five years. All 23 sites are in areas now zoned for residential development or areas which are expected to become residential. Nineteen of the 23 sites are within the area bounded by Highway 101 on the south, University avenue on the west, Bay Road on the north, and the levees and Palo Alto-owned marshlands on the east.

## **SUMMARY**

The predominate housing type in East Palo Alto is the single-family detached unit. Even though these are called single-family, it does not mean that these units are occupied by single families. It is typical of residents in East Palo Alto to live two or three families per residence for cultural and economic reasons.

There is a definite shortage of larger housing units in East Palo Alto. The owner occupied units are mostly three bedroom, while the renter occupied units are mostly studios and one bedroom units.

The overcrowding conditions that exist in East Palo Alto have been accumulating since the 1950's when a large migration to the City occurred and nearly doubled the population. It was at this time that the standard of 1.01 persons per room was surpassed and reached 2.94 persons per room in 1990.

The big migration of the 1950's was due to the move toward suburban living. After the 1960's, both the County and East Palo Alto continued to grow for the next decade. After 1980, growth within East Palo Alto stopped because there was little land left for development. Since there has been little development, the housing stock has simply continued to age without being replaced.

The 1990 Census reported that there were a total of 7,351 housing units in East Palo Alto and of those 398 units were vacant. Renters also occupied an unusually large portion of the housing stock, with 4,053 being occupied by renters and 2,900 being occupied by owners.

The cost of housing in East Palo Alto continues to be out of reach to a substantial number of its residents. The reasons for this are two-fold. The City's median rent is too high for it's low and very low income residents, which make up 37.1 percent of the total

population. The second reason is that almost 50 percent of the City's residents do not qualify for the minimum loan of \$60,000 which is needed to purchase their own homes.

The City has a number of special needs groups such as the physically disabled, the elderly, and the homeless. These groups may need special access to transportation, location of services, and assistance programs to help them become more independent and productive members of society.

## FUTURE PROSPECTS

This section covers the projections for East Palo Alto's housing demand. It addresses the projected housing unit type and vacancy rate. These projections will go out to the year 2010 and assume that East Palo Alto's share of the County's population increase remains at 3.9 percent.

### Projected Housing Needs

In order to derive the number of units needed to accommodate the population in the year 2010 the following formulas were used:

*Future Population - Population in Group Quarters = Number of People Living in Housing Units*

*Number Living in Housing Units/by Household size = Number of Households*

*Number of Households / 95 percent = Number of Units Adjusted to Reflect a 5 Percent Vacancy Rate*

*Projected Units Needed = Projected Occupied Units - 1990 Occupied Housing Units (minus 132 units declared dilapidated per the East Palo Alto Housing Element Update dated April, 1994).*

By using population projections, the housing needs of East Palo Alto were determined. When East Palo Alto reaches the projected population of 29,300 for the year 2010, there will be a housing supply gap of 451 units. This number was obtained by using the following formula:

### *Need-Gap Analysis Formula*

<i>total existing units</i>	7,351
<i>lost units due to dilapidation</i>	- 132
<i>units lost from Gateway Redevelopment Project</i>	- 239
<i>new units from the Gateway Redevelopment Project</i>	469
<i>potential units identified by Land Use Team (vacant land)</i>	<u>752</u>
<i>potential future housing supply</i>	8,201

<i>Projected population in 2010</i>	29,300
<i>persons in group quarters</i>	<u>- 527</u>
<i>subtotal</i>	28,773

<i>persons per unit</i>	÷ 3.4
<i>number of occupied units</i>	8,463
<i>plus 5 percent vacancy rate</i>	<u>423</u>
<i>Total Units Needed</i>	8886

<i>potential future housing supply</i>	8,201
<i>number of units needed</i>	<u>-8,886</u>
<i>housing supply gap</i>	- 685

Household size for the City of East Palo Alto, as reported by the 1990 Census, is 3.37. These projections round household size to 3.4 and assume that this size will hold steady, neither increasing or decreasing.

**Table II-25. Housing Projections**

	Housing Projections				
	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Households-East Palo Alto					
Occupied Units	7351	7240	7730	8037	8356
Vacant Units	398	248	124	128	128
Total Units	7749	7488	7854	8165	8484
Household Size	3.37	3.37	3.37	3.37	3.37
Population Living in Group Quarters	421	459	490	508	527
1990 Occupied Units (less 132 dilapidated)	7219				
Projected Units Needed		21	511	818	1137

Source: "Projections 94," Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and CRP 351 Projections

Table II-25 shows that at the present rate of growth, East Palo Alto will not be able to accommodate the housing needs of its growing population. The future projected housing supply of 8,435 units falls 451 units short of what will be needed to satisfy the projected population.

## SUMMARY

The male to female ratio will continue to stay the same as the City's population grows. The Hispanic and African American population will continue to dominate the population well through the turn of the century. East Palo Alto will also experience a lot of growth due to a very large young population. This will in turn have a great impact on school enrollment and will also effect future housing needs.

## CONCLUSION

As the City of East Palo Alto grows, it faces many changes. There are many young adults, approximately 34 percent of the population is between the ages of 25-44. The specific needs of these residents, such as housing and employment must be addressed. There is very little affordable housing based on the median income of the City. East Palo Alto's median income is significantly lower than both the County's and the State's. The largest portion of the population of East Palo Alto made between \$20,000 and \$29,000 according

to the 1990 Census. This fact needs to be considered as housing is being developed. In conjunction with this, is the fact that East Palo Alto carries a disproportionate share of low income housing for the region.

As the demographics change, the needs of the population change with it. East Palo Alto must address the changing needs of these residents. The City is hampered in addressing these issues because of an inability to accurately assess the true population of the City.

Although it is surrounded by areas of much wealth, East Palo Alto lacks wealth itself. The economic base of East Palo Alto must be expanded so that the residents basic needs can be provided within the City. Employment within the City should be a priority.

This information indicates that if the population continues to grow and the housing supply remains limited, the residents of East Palo Alto will face even more overcrowding and increased density.

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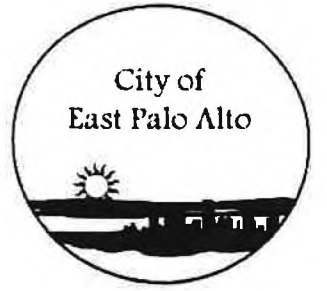
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# ECONOMICS

# III

# *ECONOMICS*

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This section of the report contains an assessment of the past and present economic trends and conditions of the City of East Palo Alto, and an analysis of the future prospects of the City in the light of these present conditions. Although not mandated by the State of California to be included in a general plan, such an assessment is important in developing of the general plan as economics provides the basis for many planning decisions in land use, capital facilities and new development. The economic activity in a city provides a large portion of the revenues needed to pay for the services the city must provide.

This report closely follows the *State of California General Plan Guidelines* (OPR Guidelines), as outlined in Chapter 3, Housing Element, Ideas for Data and Analysis as they relate to population and income characteristics. Specifically, the OPR Guidelines list the following categories of information needed to prepare an economic assessment: growth trends in the U.S. and California by industrial sector, unemployment rates, labor force participation rates, regional and local per-capita income, employment by industry basic and local-serving industries and employment, and number of people commuting to jobs

This report examines types of growth and changes that are likely to effect the City's economy up to the year 2010. The study considers the demographic characteristics of the population and the expected future distribution of income and income levels, the labor market conditions and future needs, and any differences in the level of commercial activity up to the year 2010.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology used in this report is primarily a comparative regional socioeconomic analysis, accomplished by collecting various socioeconomic data and comparing the incidence of phenomena in the City of East Palo Alto with the incidence of phenomena in the related local cities and the County as a whole. Sources used to compile the majority of the data are as follows: Population, incomes and housing information came from the *1990 U.S. Census*, the *East Palo Alto Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community (1994)*, and from the *East Palo Alto General Plan (1986)*. The data on business activity, City revenues, and jobs came from the California State Board of Equalization Bureau of Labor and Statistics, the *East Palo Alto Overall Economic Development Program (May, 1994)*, and from the City Finance Department of East Palo Alto.

Other sources include *U.S. Census 1991 County Business Patterns* and *1987 U.S. Economic Census*. There are some comparisons made to the City of Palo Alto and the City of Menlo Park, affluent cities that are geographically close to East Palo Alto but are economically distant. These comparisons illustrate the economic disparity between East Palo Alto and its neighbors.

Future projections are based on the *East Palo Alto Overall Economic Development Program* (EPA OEDP) published by the City of East Palo Alto Redevelopment Agency in

May, 1994, and *Projections '94*, published by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). The Association of Bay Area Governments makes job forecasts up to the year 2010 for the County and for the residents of the City, but the methodology used in making these projections is not known.

The outcomes of the forecasts in this report are predicated on the assumption that the main areas of development/redevelopment currently under study will be realized. These areas, including the Gateway 101 Project, the Ravenswood Industrial Park, and the Four Corners and University Circle development projects are currently in the planning stages. If any or all of these projects do not materialize, the jobs and economic projections will be negatively affected.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Analysis of the existing conditions of the City of East Palo Alto examines the current income levels, employment and labor statistics, and business and job opportunities of the residents. Past trends and influences that led to the present conditions are also considered.

### PERSONAL INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

The personal income characteristics give an overview of the population's financial state. They indicate the overall earning (and spending) potential, source of the earnings, and the ability to pay for such necessities as housing, transportation, and education. At present, the population of East Palo Alto has a lower mean income than the San Mateo County average, and a higher percentage of families on public assistance.

#### Income Levels and Poverty:

This information, shown in Table III-1, describes the average and mean income level of the population, and illustrates the percentage of population receiving unearned income.

- East Palo Alto has a population of 23,451 with a per-capita income of \$9968.00. The County, with a population of 649,623, has a per-capita income of \$22,430.00. The median household income is \$29,206.00 in the City and \$46,437.00 in the County.
- The percent of the City population which falls below the poverty level (below 80 percent of the median County income) is 17.2 percent, compared to 6.3 percent for the County.
- The portion of the population receiving public assistance, Social Security, and retirement income have lower mean incomes compared to the same segment of the County population.
- 16.4 percent of the City's population receives Public Assistance, much higher than the County's 4.9 percent.

**Table III-1 Personal Income Characteristics****Personal Income Characteristics of East Palo Alto and San Mateo County**

	East Palo Alto	San Mateo County
Total Population	23,451	649,623
Per Capita Income	\$9,968.00	\$22,430.00
Median Income Per Household	\$29,206.00	\$46,437.00
Percent of Population below Poverty Level	17.50%	6.30%
Percent of Population Receiving Public Assistance	16.40%	4.90%
Percent of Population with Social Security Income	18.10%	22.60%
Percent of Population with Retirement Income	11.00%	15.60%
Median Income of Households on Public Assistance	\$4,649.00	\$5,276.00
Median Income of Households with Social Security	\$6,269.00	\$8,493.00
Median Income of HH with Retirement Income	\$8,193.00	\$11,521

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

### Income by Race:

A breakout of the population by race shows that African Americans make up the majority of the population in East Palo Alto, but they have the lowest per-household median income. This ethnic group makes up 5.1 percent of the San Mateo County population and also has the lowest per-household median income in the County. Persons of Asian or Pacific Island descent in the City have the highest per-household median, slightly above that of the City population as a whole. A comparison of City and County, based on information found in Tables III-3 and III-4 of this chapter reveals the following facts:

- The majority of City household incomes is in the \$15,000.00 to \$24,999.00 range, with less than 2 percent of the households in the City earning \$100,000.00 or more. Almost 12 percent of the County's households are in this upper income category.
- African Americans make up 45 percent of the City's households. This group has the lowest median household income of \$26,758.00. This group also has the lowest mean household income at \$31,563.00.
- Asians and Pacific Islanders make up 7.5 percent of the City's households. With a median income at \$33,750.00, this is the only group with a median above the City's total median household income. This group has the highest mean household income at \$45,157.00.
- Hispanics comprise 22 percent of the households in the City, with median household income of \$30,888.00 and a mean household income of \$35,002.00. This group represents 12 percent of the County households.
- White non-Hispanic households make up 23.5 percent of the City total, with median household income at \$30,565.00 and mean household income at \$33,335.00. The County has 71 percent white non-Hispanic households.

- Median incomes for all ethnic groups in the City are lower than median incomes for the same groups in the County. This has been true since 1970.

Table III-2 shows the median household incomes for the City and County for the last three decades:

**Table III-2 Comparison of Household Incomes**

C o m p a r i s o n o f M e d i a n H o u s e h o l d I n c o m e s			
	1 9 6 9	1 9 7 9	1 9 8 9
East Palo Alto	\$ 9,401.00	\$ 14,147.00	\$ 29,206.00
San Mateo County	\$ 13,222.00	\$ 23,172.00	\$ 46,437.00

Source: 1990 U.S. Census and 1986 East Palo Alto General Plan

The following two tables illustrate the income distribution for the City and the County from which the preceding observations were made.

**Table III-3 Income Distribution**

1990 Income Distribution by Household and Race, City of East Palo Alto					
	Total	African American	Asian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic Origin of Any Race	White, Not of Hispanic Origin
No. of Households	6,813	3,087	506	1,516	1,604
Less Than \$5,000	392	250	10	62	70
\$5,000 to \$9,999	603	357	0	111	120
\$10,000 to \$14,999	504	183	11	116	183
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,315	641	106	280	273
\$25,000 to \$34,999	1,286	496	126	355	271
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1,145	508	47	248	321
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,248	537	143	261	307
\$75,000 to \$99,999	203	93	43	28	39
\$100,000 or More	117	22	20	55	20
Median (Dollars)	\$29,206	\$26,758	\$33,750	\$30,888	\$30,565
Mean (Dollars)	\$33,688	\$31,563	\$45,157	\$35,002	\$33,335

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

**Table III-4 Income Distribution**

1990 Income Distribution by Household and Race, San Mateo County					
	Total	African American	Asian or Pacific Islander	Hispanic Origin of Any Race	White, not of Hispanic Origin
No. Of Households	242,348	11,573	28,888	29,029	171,640
Less Than \$5,000	7,146	652	1,065	879	4,541
\$5,000 to \$9,999	9,807	955	502	1,258	7,119
\$10,000 to \$14,999	10,401	687	832	1,634	7,225
\$15,000 to \$24,999	25,775	1,814	2,755	4,170	17,043
\$25,000 to \$34,999	32,029	1,815	3,480	4,972	21,857
\$35,000 to \$49,999	45,737	2,228	5,434	6,346	31,854
\$50,000 to \$74,999	54,902	2,188	8,380	6,167	38,157
\$75,000 to \$99,999	27,580	707	4010	2196	20,702
\$100,000 or More	28,881	497	3,450	1,407	23,542
Median (Dollars)	\$48,437	\$33,891	\$52,074	\$38,348	\$48,040
Mean (Dollars)	\$59,521	\$39,969	\$59,293	\$44,194	\$63,528

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

## EMPLOYMENT/LABOR MARKET CONDITIONS

Employment and labor market conditions describe the number and deployment of the labor force, the unemployment rates, and the training and education levels attained by the citizens of East Palo Alto and compares these numbers to the conditions in the County. This comparison will show where the City's labor force stands in relation to the region, and indicates the current job market in the City and the opportunities available to the

citizens. It is important to understand the past and present trends of the labor market in order to determine how current policy is affecting those trends. Employment information was obtained from the *1990 U.S. Census* and the *East Palo Alto Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community*. East Palo Alto has higher unemployment rates and fewer job opportunities than does San Mateo County.

There are very few jobs in establishments available within the City limits; the exact number of jobs was difficult to determine from the data available. The *Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community* indicates that there are 1,410 jobs within the City and cited the *U.S. 1990 Census*. This study was unable to verify that figure independently in the *U.S. Census*, and there is some confusion as to where the figure for the number of jobs in the City actually came from. The *Application for Designation* also states that there were 920 jobs within the City in 1990. Table 182 of the *1990 U.S. Census* shows the number of employed residents of East Palo Alto who also worked in their area of residence to be 1,295. The *East Palo Alto Overall Economic Development Program* cites *ABAG Projections 94* and lists 1,410 as the number of jobs within the County held by City residents. This document states at the bottom of the tables that, "These are job totals for residents of particular areas or cities. However, there is no way to determine how many of these jobs exist in a certain city or area".

Other facts about the workforce and employment opportunities of the City, derived from Table III-5, are as follows:

- There are 16,475 persons over the age of 16 in East Palo Alto. Of these, 68.3 percent, or 11,259 persons are in the labor force. This represents the number of people over the age of 16 who are either gainfully employed or are actively seeking work. The County has 71 percent of persons in this age group counted in the labor force.
- According to the *1990 U.S. Census* the City has 89.4 percent of its labor force employed, or 10,043 persons. The County percentage of employed is 96 percent. This gives an unemployment rate of 10.6 percent for the City, as compared to 4.2 for the County.
- A 1993 update from the Department of Labor indicates a 13.5 percent unemployment rate for the City and 5.4 percent for the County.
- The number of commuters who work outside their place of residence is the same for City and County, about 90 percent. Average commuting time for both City and County is around 22 minutes each way.

Table III-5 shows the comparison of labor force statistics in summary form.



**Table III-5 Employment Statistics**

<b>Comparative Employment Statistics, East Palo Alto and San Mateo County</b>		
	<b>East Palo Alto</b>	<b>San Mateo County</b>
Total Persons 16 years & Over	16,475	522,692
Persons in Labor Force	11,259	369,100
Percentage in Labor Force	68.30%	70.60%
Not in Labor Force	5,216	153,592
Civilian Labor Force	11,237	368,438
Total Employed	10,043	352,964
Unemployed in Labor Force	1,194	15,474
Percent of Unemployed in Labor Force	10.60%	4.20%
Number Commuting to Work	9,869	346,559

*Source: 1990 U.S. Census*

East Palo Alto residents are employed in a variety of fields, with the majority working in the area of technical, sales and administrative support or in service occupations. An examination of the deployment by industry shows that the largest category represented is the area of manufacturing of durable goods. The details are as follows:

**Labor Force Deployment By Occupation:**

The following facts illustrate types of occupations which employ the City's labor force, using the information shown on Table III-6.

- Jobs in sales, technical and administrative support occupy the largest portion of the labor force of East Palo Alto, with a total of 28.8 percent. Of these, more than half work in administrative support, including clerical workers.
- The second highest percentage of residents are in service occupations, collectively representing 21.7 percent of the employed labor force. Of these, 14.2 percent are in private household or protective services.
- Approximately 19.7 percent work in managerial or professional occupations, making this the third highest percentage of residents.

**Labor Force Deployment By Industry:**

Using Table III-7, the following facts show the types of industry in which the labor force of the City is currently employed, and the percentage working in each type of industry.

- Deployment by industry shows that the largest percentage of the East Palo Alto labor force is employed in the manufacture of durable goods, with 14.0 percent in that category.
- There are 12.8 percent employed in retail trade; this is the second largest group.
- About 11.8 percent of the labor force are employed in business and repair services.

The following tables illustrate the categories and number of persons in the City's labor force who work in each category of occupation, and their deployment by industry.

**Table III-6 Labor Force Deployment**

<b>1990 Labor Force Deployment by Occupation, East Palo Alto</b>		
<b>Labor Force Deployment by Occupations</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Managerial &amp; Professional Specialty Occupations</b>		<b>19.7</b>
-Executive, Administrative, & Managerial	767	
-Professional Specialty	1,216	
<b>Technical, Sales, &amp; Administrative Support</b>		<b>28.8</b>
-Technicians & Related Support	528	
-Sales	708	
-Administrative Support, Including Clerical	1,653	
<b>Service Occupations</b>		<b>21.7</b>
-Private Household	213	
-Protective Service	98	
-Service, Except Protective & Household	1,873	
<b>Farming, Forestry, &amp; Fishing Occupations</b>	430	4.3
<b>Precision Production, Craft, &amp; Repair Occupations</b>	1,038	10.3
<b>Operators, Fabricators, &amp; Laborers</b>		<b>15.2</b>
-Machine Operators, Assemblers & Inspectors	718	
-Transportation & Material Moving	300	
-Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers & Laborers	501	
<b>TOTAL EMPLOYED</b>	<b>10,043</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: U.S. 1990 Census

**Table III-7 Labor Force Deployment**

<b>1990 Deployment of Labor Force by Industry, East Palo Alto</b>		
<b>Labor Force Deployment By Industry</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fisheries	351	3.5
Mining	0	0
Construction	442	4.4
Manufacturing, Nondurable Goods	583	5.8
Manufacturing, Durable Goods	1,406	14
Transportation	310	3.1
Communication and Other Public Utilities	197	2
Wholesale Trade	377	3.7
Retail Trade	1,294	12.9
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	252	2.5
Business & Repair Services	1,181	11.8
Personal Services	378	3.8
Entertainment & Recreation	144	1.4
Health Services	1,111	11
Educational Services	996	9.9
Other Professional Services	684	6.8
Public Administration	337	3.4
<b>TOTAL EMPLOYED</b>	<b>10,043</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

### Unemployment:

Findings related to the labor force indicate that the high levels of unemployment in the City of East Palo Alto have been the norm for over a decade. *Association of Bay Area Governments* reports that for the last eleven years the City has had the highest unemployment rate for any of the 17 municipalities within the San Mateo County.

Unemployment rates are twice as high in East Palo Alto (11.5 percent) as in the County (5.4 percent). This gap becomes even larger when only males are considered. The City's male unemployment rate is four times that of the County.

There are fewer local jobs available to the City residents than there are local jobs for the County residents generally. East Palo Alto has 0.2 local jobs per household, as compared to the County ratio of 1.32 local jobs per household.

### ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The volume and nature of business activity is an important provider of the majority of the City's revenues. The following analysis also helps to indicate the types of jobs available to the local population.

East Palo Alto has a large number of businesses that are operated out of the homes and garages of residents, and it is believed that many of these are not included in the official State business surveys. In 1993, The East Palo Alto Community Alliance and Neighborhood Development Organization conducted a thorough private sector business survey, and many of these small businesses are now identified. A list of the types and number of retail, service, wholesale, and manufacturing operations, grouped by Standard Industrial Codes, is shown in Table III-8.

**Table III-8 Business Currently Operating****Business Currently Operating in East Palo Alto**

Category	SI Code	General Description	Number in City	
Construction	15	Gen. Contractors	1	
Manufacturing	23	Apparel & Textile Products	1	
	27	Printing & Publishing	16	
	35	Industrial Machinery & Equip.	4	
	36	Electronic Equipment	1	
	37	Transportation Equipment	1	
Transportation & Public Utilities	47	Transportation Services	1	
Wholesale Trade	50	Wholesale Durable Goods	7	
Retail Trade	52	Building & Garden Supplies	10	
	53	Gen. Merchandise Stores	3	
	54	Food Stores	15	
	55	Auto Dealers & Gas Stations	13	
	56	Apparel Stores	3	
	57	Furniture & Home Furnishings	3	
	58	Eating & Drinking Places	21	
	59	Miscellaneous Retail	35	
	Services	72	Personal Services	11
		73	Business Services	16
		75	Auto Repair Service	13
		76	Misc. Repair Services	6
78		Motion Pictures	1	
79		Amusement & Rec. Services	1	
	80	Health Services	1	
Retail	Unknown	Part-Time Permittees	75	
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>258</b>	

Source: *East Palo Alto Overall Economic Development Program*

There is no indication that this list includes any nurseries currently in operation (which would have a SI code of 07), nor the auto salvage yards or Romek Chemical Corporation which are currently operating in the Ravenswood Industrial area. However, the list is consistent with State data, as the California State Board of Equalization lists 258 permits issued to all outlets in East Palo Alto as of January 1, 1994.

Leakage/Limitations in Tax Capacity:

The amount of consumer dollars spent by City residents outside of the City is referred to as leakage. An excessive amount of leakage results in a reduction of taxable sales revenues for the City. There are several areas that are limiting to the City's tax capacity. Among them are the following:

- Current estimates of consumer leakage exceed \$76 million annually for the City. Of local consumption expenditures for neighborhood-type goods and services, approximately \$60 million are made outside East Palo Alto.

- East Palo Alto has 80 acres of land currently in agricultural use, of which around 46 acres are in agricultural preserves under the Williamson Act. Contracts executed under the terms of this act restrict the land to agricultural use and reduce the tax rate, with a ten-year termination period.
- There are no financial institutions located in East Palo Alto. The only financial services remaining in the City are several check-cashing operations.
- There is evidence that the City has never had a very strong economic base. In 1987, East Palo Alto ranked 356 out of all California cities (approximately 400) in volume of revenues in the service industry. The City ranked 360 for volume of retail revenues, and 295 for wholesale revenues.

Table III-9 illustrates the ranking of East Palo Alto and its adjacent neighbors by volume of revenues for the year 1986, as compiled by the *1987 U.S. Economic Census*.

**Table III-9 Ranking of Cities**

<b>Ranking of Cities by Volume of Sales Revenues</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Receipts</b>
Service Industry	East Palo Alto	356	\$5,423,000
	Menlo Park	91	\$231,527,000
	Palo Alto	21	\$1,070,485,000
Retail Trade	East Palo Alto	360	\$17,681,000
	Menlo Park	120	\$337,935,000
	Palo Alto	49	\$758,462,000
Wholesale Trade	East Palo Alto	295	\$18,111,000
	Menlo Park	96	\$458,688,000
	Palo Alto	75	\$671,490,000

*Source: 1987 U.S. Economic Census*

East Palo Alto, geographically, is adjacent to Palo Alto and Menlo Park, but economically there is great distance between them. The tax capacity of East Palo Alto is much lower than that of its neighbors, which affects this City's ability to "keep up" with its neighbors. The most recent attempts to re-develop the largest commercial area in East Palo Alto, the University Circle area, were blocked by legal action initiated by these two neighboring cities.

Revenues and Tax Capacity:

The following information shows the City's income capacity, as well as some comparisons between past and present City budgets.

- East Palo Alto has a per-capita taxable sales revenue base of \$1,014.00, compared to the County of San Mateo which is \$12,497.00.

Table III-10 shows how the revenues and permits issued for the City and County compare.

**Table III-10 Comparison of Taxable Revenues**

Comparison of 1992 Taxable Revenues, East Palo Alto and San Mateo County				
Area	Retail Permits	All Outlet Permits	Total Taxable Revenues	Taxable Dollars per Capita
East Palo Alto	88	261	\$23,779,000	\$1,014
San Mateo County	6,287	22,835	\$8,118,279,000	\$12,497

Source: California State Board of Equalization 1992 Taxable Sales Annual Report

- Total funds available for the City budget of East Palo Alto was \$6,373,935.00 for the Fiscal Year 1993-94 and \$12,406,007.00 for FY 1994-95. This increase of \$6,032,072.00 is largely due to an increase of special grants made available to the City.
- Revenues to the City from taxes, licenses, fees and subventions increased between Fiscal Year 93-94 and FY 94-95 by \$476,776.00, from \$4,051,556.00 to \$4,528,332.00.
- The *Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community* (1994) estimates the City sales tax base at \$240,000.00 per year in retail sales only. However, the State Board of Equalization shows total sales tax revenues for the City to be \$23,779,000.00. This discrepancy is most likely due to a printing error on the part of the editors of the *Application*.
- The City has a history of a low tax revenue base which was evident at the time of incorporation in 1983. This is due in part to the early annexation of its commercial and industrial areas by the neighboring cities of Palo Alto and Menlo Park. Prior to its incorporation, East Palo Alto lost the industrial park in the northwest corner to Menlo Park, and the area southeast of the San Francisquito Creek to Palo Alto.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The City has a population that is generally employed in lower income brackets, and this has been true for several decades. It is interesting to note that even the population that is receiving public assistance, Social Security and retirement income has a lower median income than the same segment of the County population. This may indicate, in the case of Social Security and retirement income, that, when these persons were earning their income prior to retirement, they had lower incomes than the County averages. It is not clear why the median income for persons on public assistance is lower for the City than the County. This may have to do with family size, since the amount of aid is determined by the number of persons in the family and is the same statewide.

The City has a very high percentage of persons below the poverty level (17.5 percent) as compared to the County (6.3 percent), and a high percentage of minorities. These two facts may be related, especially when it is noted that both African-Americans and Hispanics earn less than the total household median within the City and within the County. This may be due to a variety of factors. Minorities may experience ethnic, cultural and racial discrimination that may affect their ability to compete in the job market or to get an education. Poverty levels are quite high for female head of householders, indicating hardship for single mothers and the children they are raising.

Since the time of its incorporation, the City has shown consistently high unemployment rates in comparison to the County. These rates, which do not reflect the number of discouraged unemployed who have given up looking, may be an underlying factor in the high crime rates the City has experienced as people who cannot find legitimate employment may turn to illegal economic activities in order to survive. The high rate of persons on public assistance also may be due to the lack of job opportunities available. Inadequate affordable childcare may prevent single parents from earning enough to get off of the welfare system.

The lack of jobs is a hardship on the labor force, who must leave the City to find work, and on the City, which must provide services to residents who are not recirculating their earnings into taxable sales. This sets up a cycle wherein the City lacks adequate resources to maintain infrastructure and services, and as the services deteriorate, the climate for business activity also deteriorates and businesses leave or choose not to locate there, further reducing the City tax base. The City's tax capacity relative to County totals has remained the same since 1987, indicating that the situation has not improved since incorporation.

The lack of a financial institution in East Palo Alto is a serious problem and indicates a credibility gap. There are no ATM machines in the City, so residents must either leave town or pay higher fees at a check-cashing operation. There is a lack of investment funds available for business and other development, making it difficult for existing businesses to expand or upgrade. This is also a deterrent for new businesses who might locate in the City. There is no re-investment into the community of City or community funds, as even the City must do its banking outside of town.

There are some positive aspects to the economic picture in the City. The proximity to all forms of transport, as well as the City's location in the middle of the Bay Area make East Palo Alto a favorable location for many types of manufacturing and industry. The City has a quantity of undeveloped land available, and real estate prices are among the lowest to be found in the Bay Area. The under-employed workforce is a strong potential resource. There is strong community pride and interest in making the City a viable economic entity. The City government is committed to economic growth and is actively planning and working toward making that growth occur in a way that benefits the community as a whole.

## FUTURE PROSPECTS

This portion of the report assesses the economic prospects of the City of East Palo Alto in the context of the present conditions. A projection of the probable future economy of the City is necessary, as it will provide the basis for many planning decisions including land use changes, capital facilities and new development. This area examines the types of growth and changes that are likely to effect the City's economy, and forecast the possible outcomes of these changes, up to the year 2010. The study considers the demographic characteristics of the population and the changes that can be expected in income levels and future needs, the labor market conditions over the next fifteen years, and the commercial activity and development impacts of the projects currently in the planning process.

### PERSONAL INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

The population growth and income levels for the City of East Palo Alto are estimated by the Association of Bay Area Governments up through the year 2010 in the ABAG publication *Projections 94*. The City is listed in this source as having no sphere of influence. Estimates are in constant 1990 dollars; the method used to obtain future estimates is not known.

### Employment Opportunities:

A comparison of the current employment rate and the projected employment rate for the year 2010 brings to light the following facts:

- The population in East Palo Alto has been projected to increase from 23,451 in 1990 to 29,300 by the year 2010. Yet the number of employed residents in the City in the year 2010 is projected at 12,300. This translates to an increase of 2,257 employed residents compared to a population increase of 5,849 people for the same period.
- Given the currently anticipated future job opportunities within the City, the percentage of the total population that will be employed in the year 2010 is about 42 percent, compared to the 43 percent employed in 1990.

These facts are shown in Table III-11 below.

**Table III-11 Comparison of Employment Statistics**

Comparison of East Palo Alto Employment Statistics for 1990 and 2010				
Area	Population 1990	Population 2010	Employed Residents in 1990	Employed Residents in 2010
East Palo Alto	23,451	29,300	10,043	12,300

Source: ABAG Projections 1994



Household Income Levels:

The information shown here compares household income averages in 1990 and 2010.

- The yearly income of the average household in East Palo Alto is projected to rise to \$48,500.00 by the year 2010. This compares to a County household mean income in 2010 of about \$84,900.00.
- In the year 1990 East Palo Alto's mean household income level was 60 percent of the County. In the year 2010, the mean household income is projected to drop to 57 percent of that in the County.

Table III-12 illustrates these disparities.

**Table III-12 Projected Income Mean**

Comparative Projected Income Mean, East Palo Alto & San Mateo County			
Area	Mean Household Income in 1990	Mean Household Income in 2010	Percent Increase
East Palo Alto	\$38,388	\$48,500	21%
San Mateo County	\$63,684	\$84,900	25%

Source: ABAG Projections 1994

EMPLOYMENT /LABOR MARKET CONDITIONS

According to the East Palo Alto Overall Economic Development Program, ABAG anticipates the San Mateo County to benefit from its location between downtown San Francisco and the Silicon Valley in terms of jobs and anticipates that East Palo Alto will experience a 311 percent increase in employment by 2010. Job growth for the City is expected to increase by 4,400 jobs between 1990 and 2010, with more than 50 percent of these jobs occurring in transportation and business services. This projection is predicated on the assumption that the redevelopment projects currently undergoing planning will occur, so in effect job creation within the City is directly linked to the infrastructure improvements that must be made prior to private development.

The job projections in *Projections 94*, from which the following information was taken for San Mateo County, assigns a percentage of County jobs to the labor force residing in East Palo Alto. These projections do not determine how many jobs will exist within the city limits of East Palo Alto or any other particular area.

Table III-13 shows the changes in the number of County jobs held by East Palo Alto residents, by industry, from 1980 to 2010.

**Table III-13 Job Projections**

<b>Comparative Job Projections, East Palo Alto and San Mateo County</b>					
	1980	1990	1995	2000	2010
<b>Agriculture &amp; Mining</b>					
County total	4,558	3,880	3,550	3,370	3,230
City share	47	40	40	40	30
<b>Manufacturing and Wholesale</b>					
County total	59,510	59,560	57,860	60,840	64,850
City share	133	160	240	880	1,320
<b>Retail</b>					
County total	42,875	54,170	52,380	57,140	62,540
City share	132	400	530	630	1,010
<b>Service</b>					
County total	67,822	101,290	112,330	126,560	140,850
City share	190	520	580	610	1,640
<b>Other</b>					
County total	85,030	102,820	104,070	119,270	112,070
City share	250	290	310	420	1,790
<b>TOTALS</b>					
County	259,795	321,720	330,190	367,180	383,540
City	752	1410	1700	2580	5,790

Source: Projections '94

#### Job Growth:

There were 1410 jobs assigned to residents in the City in 1990, and the City can expect an increase in residents holding jobs in the County by 2010. A breakout of the jobs by industry shows the increases in the City's share of County jobs in Table III-14.

**Table III-14 Job Projections**

CATEGORY	Jobs Projections for Jobs in San Mateo County Held by East Palo Alto Residents			
	Jobs for EPA Residents		Share of County	
	1990	2010	1990	2010
Agriculture & Mining	40	30	1.00%	0.90%
Manufacturing & Wholesale	160	1320	0.30%	2.00%
Retail	400	1010	0.70%	1.60%
Service	520	1640	0.50%	1.00%
Other	290	1790	0.30%	1.60%

Source: Projections '94

Jobs for the City are expected to grow in all categories with the exception of agriculture and mining. That drop is most likely due to the expected loss of a significant amount of agricultural land in the Gateway 101 redevelopment project, and the conversion of other agricultural uses within the City due to development pressures. The greatest increase will be in the manufacturing and wholesaling sectors; this anticipated gain in jobs is largely based on the Ravenswood Industrial Park development. The City has established the

“City’s First Source Hiring Policy” which attempts to ensure that East Palo Alto residents will benefit from the upcoming development and increases in jobs by having developers sign contracts stating they will make an effort to use the City’s residents when hiring for construction of the projects as well as permanent jobs working in the new businesses.

### ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

The volume of economic activity within the boundaries of East Palo Alto provides the basis for City revenues, and an estimate of future business activity and revenues is directly related to the City's anticipated ability to provide services. East Palo Alto has a history of low tax capacity, and this combined with a decline in State and Federal resources has led to the inability to maintain the existing infrastructure or make necessary capital improvements.

#### Future Development:

According to the Application for Development as an Enterprise Community, the new development projects are intended to act as economic catalysts. The Gateway 101 Project is projected to generate 1,172 permanent new jobs within the city limits. Once they are in operation they will provide needed capital to finance city facilities and infrastructure improvements. However, they will not by themselves insure the community’s economic well-being. The overall economic climate must be improved to a point where additional commercial activity will be attracted to the area. These improvements include providing adequate job training to the local labor force, reducing crime in the business districts and increased child care availability.

Nearly half the City's sales tax revenues are generated by the University Circle area, which is comprised of small retail enterprises and restaurants. Most of these businesses will be displaced if the redevelopment project for this area proceeds, and many will simply close due to the lack of available assistance for small business enterprise. A number of small businesses in the City are operated out of homes and garages, and consequently do not appear in the State census data. A complete inventory businesses currently operating in East Palo Alto including these home-based enterprises appears in Table III-8 of this chapter.

#### Financial Services:

The lack of a financial institution in the City imposes severe constraints on development and growth of local business enterprise, as it is difficult for existing businesses to get investment funds for expansion or relocation. The Gateway 101 Retail Center is planned to have 18,500 square feet of available space for “local” business enterprises. According to the EPA OEDP Report, some of these might have to be subsidized units through the use of low interest loans or “written-down” rent arrangements. This subsidy program would essentially act as a substitute for a local lending institution. Ideally, a bank will move in to fill the City’s need as the business climate improves and the economy of the

City begins to gather momentum. The community is actively working to bring a bank to the City at this time.

Infrastructure Constraints:

The current state of deterioration of many streets in East Palo Alto poses a significant factor in future development because new businesses are unwilling to locate in an area with poorly maintained streets or where parking is a problem. The current capacity of the streets is also inadequate for the heavy truck traffic which attends any industrial activity; the need for infrastructure improvements should to be addressed before any large-scale development can be implemented. There are also drainage problems that are a constraint on future developments. These inadequacies must be addressed and remedied in order to attract the volume and variety of enterprises that are needed to stop the leakage that is presently occurring. Recently the City received large grants and other "special revenues" that will allow it to increase capital improvements expenditures by 500 percent in the fiscal year 1994-95.

**SUMMARY**

Exact predictions are difficult to make about the future. Job opportunities within the City limits are, however, expected to grow by 311 percent over the next 15 years, largely due to the anticipated development projects and increases in transportation and business services. Because of the already high rate of unemployment and the projected 25 percent increase in the City's population, the growth of jobs in the City may not keep pace with the growth of the labor force. Although the City is taking steps to solve this dilemma with its "First Source" hiring policy and other development policies, it remains a fact that labor force is highly mobile and there will be substantial competition from in-migrating commuters for jobs in East Palo Alto.

Several areas can be addressed or improved to make the local labor force more competitive, in order to offset the effects of this in-migration. The labor force needs greater access to skills training and educational opportunities than is currently available. Childcare needs must be addressed, in order to provide the opportunity for single parents to get an education or to work their way off of public assistance. Every effort must be made to keep the City's youth in school, to get them off the streets and ready for employment in the future.

In spite of the large jump in local jobs, the average household income of East Palo Alto is not projected to rise to the County level in the next 15 years. East Palo Alto households will still have an average income that is half that of the average for all of San Mateo County households. This is not surprising, given that the City is surrounded by some of the priciest real estate and wealthiest residents in the State. Median income for City households will remain the lowest of all cities in the County. However, City households will experience an average increase in income of 21 percent over the next 15 years.

The climate for business in East Palo Alto needs to be enhanced in order to attract the number and volume of business activity the City requires to support its government and service requirements. There are a number of things the City is doing that will help the situation, including redeveloping blighted areas, improving infrastructure and making capital improvements. The City is taking steps to reduce the crime rate and make the commercial districts more accessible, and these factors will help to improve conditions by reducing the costs of operation to business.

## **CONCLUSION**

After careful investigation into the current economic conditions and the forces that may affect the future economy of the City of East Palo Alto, several issues have been identified as areas that need to be addressed. The lack of jobs in the City, the lack of job skills training available to the labor force, and the high number of persons on public assistance all contribute to the high overall poverty level in the City. The commercial environment needs to be made more attractive to induce more business to locate in the City, which will improve the City's ability to finance City services. Also, the City government and the community groups that are working to make East Palo Alto a better place need to work together on these problems in order to resolve them.

In order to bring up the median household income, educational and training opportunities and support must be made available to all residents, but especially to those in minority groups who may be less able to compete in the job market due to cultural differences or ethnic discrimination. Providing employment opportunities for single parents by setting up affordable or possibly subsidized childcare may help to reduce the high number of people on public assistance.

There are several issues related to the business environment that are important. The lack of adequately maintained streets and circulation patterns that will not accommodate heavy truck traffic need to be remedied prior to any major commercial development. Crime is a major deterrent to legitimate business activity as the operating costs increase if a business must install private security. Enticing a financial institution to the City should be a major priority, as this will confer a level of credibility to the City that is now lacking.

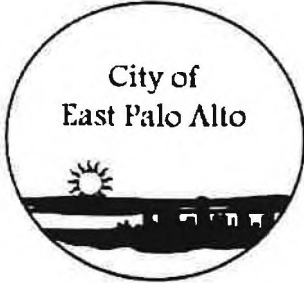
There is some concern over the statistical findings which show that the median household income ratio of the City is going to remain the same relative to the County household median. This indicates that although the City households will experience an overall average increase in income, this will not exceed the increase expected countywide and East Palo Alto will still have the lowest median income of all cities in the San Mateo County. The City will still be surrounded by wealthy neighbors which raises concern that as the City's economy improves, rising property values will cause speculation and gentrification of the City neighborhoods, possibly displacing current residents. This points

out the need for residents to upgrade work skills and bolster incomes in order to continue to afford to live in the area.

The City has potential that can be maximized. There is a lot of undeveloped land available, and a ready supply of underemployed labor. Land values are still quite low relative to the Bay Area, and the City has access to all major transit routes. There are a number of community groups that are a valuable resource because they are well organized and actively working to improve conditions in their city. The City government is committed to bringing about change and growth.

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# LAND USE

# IV



# *LAND USE*

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- METHODOLOGY
- EXISTING CONDITIONS**
  - RESIDENTIAL LAND USE
  - COMMERCIAL LAND USE
  - INDUSTRIAL LAND USE
  - AGRICULTURAL LAND USE
  - OPEN SPACE
  - PUBLIC RECREATION
  - INSTITUTIONS
  - HOUSING DEMAND
  - COMMERCIAL NEED
  - INDUSTRIAL PARKS
  - CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS
  - FLOODS
- SUMMARY
- FUTURE PROSPECTS**
  - PROPOSED PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENT
  - RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS
  - NEED GAP
- SUMMARY
- CONCLUSION**
- REFERENCES**

According to the *General Plan Guidelines*, the purpose of the Land Use Element is to determine the existing general distribution, location, and extent of land uses within the planning area of East Palo Alto, as well as provide standards for population density and building intensity. Included in this analysis are housing, business, industry, open space, agriculture, recreation, education, as well as other public and private uses of the land. Therefore, the General Plan plays an important role in correlating all land use issues into a coherent set of developmental policies. East Palo Alto's land use goals, objectives, policies, and programs will relate directly to other elements of the General Plan, making it the most visible and often used element in planning.

The focus of this chapter is to analyze the present trends in the use, capacity, and potential of land in East Palo Alto. Projects specifically dealing with future housing, commercial, and industrial demand will also be addressed. These projects include and are not limited to vacant land development, the Gateway 101 Redevelopment Project, the Ravenswood Industrial/Four Corners Development area as well as 20 sites suitable for future residential development. Limitations concerning these projects, will also be addressed in addition to an analysis of the need gap or adequacy of existing services and facilities for the year 2010.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Primary information for the land use analysis was obtained during a field trip to the City of East Palo Alto where the students met with city staff, visited redevelopment areas and drove throughout the City neighborhoods.

The information obtained from the field trip was instrumental in obtaining an understanding of the City character and the distribution of land uses and activities. Secondary information was gathered from appropriate documents prepared by the City, State, and San Mateo County. Furthermore, phone interviews and visits with various professionals from the San Mateo County Planning Division, County Assessor's Office, the Western Regional Headquarters of the United States Geological Survey, and the East Palo Alto Planning Department served to clarify any background information pertaining to the City. In addition to these informative visits a thorough inventory was taken of all vacant parcels within the City. This survey served to update the 1980 vacant land inventory map indicated by the East Palo Alto Community Planning Program.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## LAND USE CHARACTERISTICS

The primary land use category in the City of East Palo Alto is residential use. This category occupies 824 acres. Currently 44 percent of land area is occupied by low density residential uses followed by open space (20 percent) and institutional uses (9 percent). The relative distribution of existing land uses are illustrated on Table IV-1 complimented by a land use map on Figure IV-1. The general condition of developed land in the City is fair, however many areas need improvement.

For the purposes of this analysis, the City was divided into seven basic districts. These districts are not to be confused with designated planning areas in many City documents and/or maps.

To be able to further understand the existing conditions surrounding East Palo Alto, it is important to understand how the different land use activities affect and interact with one another.

**Table IV-1 Summary of Existing Land Uses**

Summary of Existing Land Uses East Palo Alto - 1980		
Land Uses	Acres	Percent/Total
Low Density Residential (2 - 8.7 u/ac.)	715	41
Medium Density residential (8.8 - 17.4 u/ac.)	16	1.2
High Density Residential (17.5 - 34.9 u/ac.)	93	6.9
Institutional	121	8.9
Commercial	39	2.9
General Industrial	43	3.2
Heavy Industrial	36	2.6
Public Recreation	11	0.8
Open Space	270	19.9
Agricultural	78	5.7
Vacant	93	6.9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1515</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: San Mateo County Planning and Development Division*

### East Palo Alto's Seven Districts

The seven districts are comprised of the following; The Gateway/Weeks Poultry Colony, Palo Alto Gardens, Runnymede, University East, Bayshore Park/University West, Ravenswood Industrial Park/The Landing and University Circle. Please refer to the District Map (Figure IV-2) for a geographic illustration of these areas.

The Gateway/Weeks Poultry District (District 6) is comprised of two entities, the area surrounding the abandoned Ravenswood High School and the former Charles Weeks

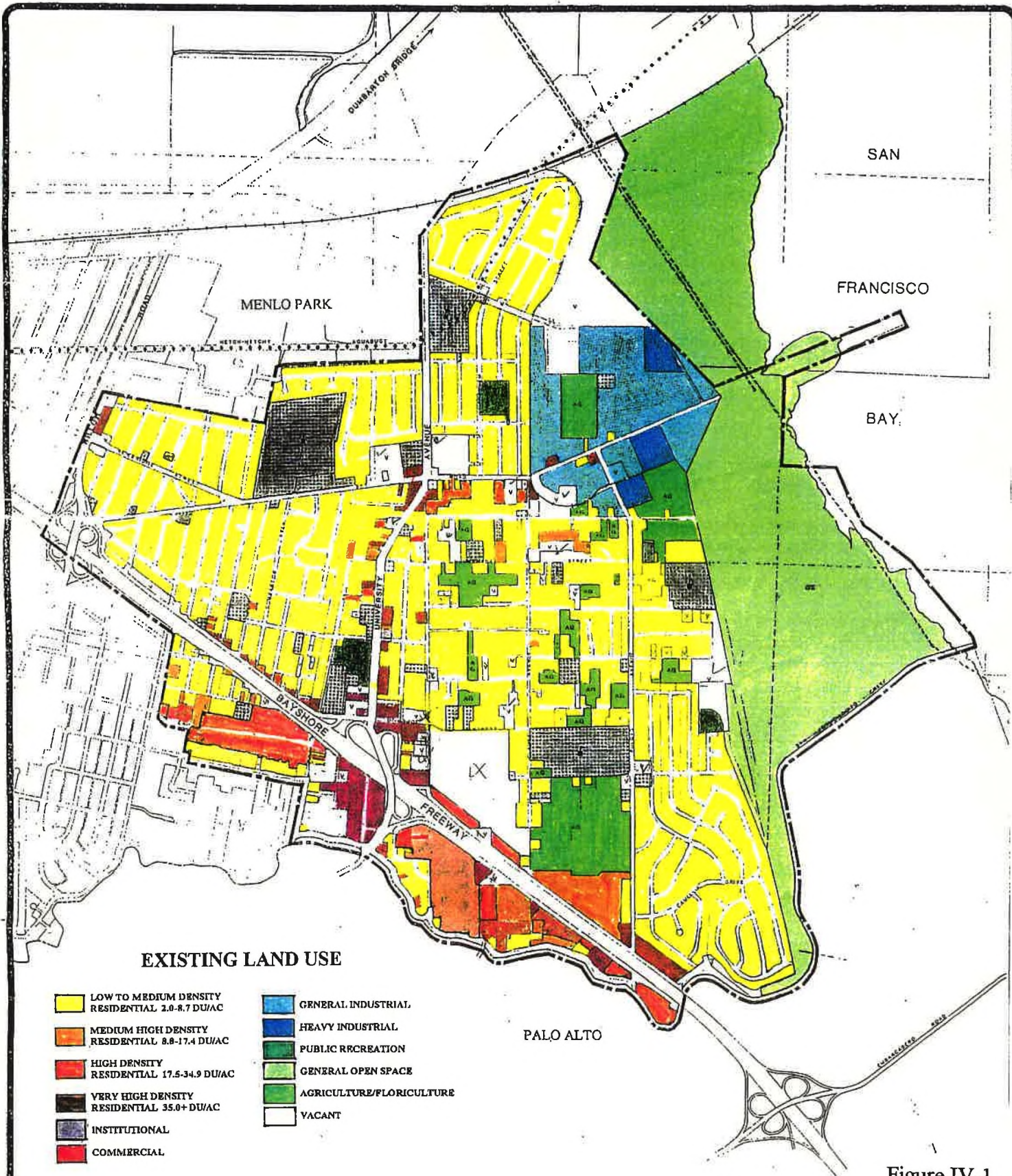


Figure IV-1

EAST PALO ALTO COMMUNITY PLANNING PROGRAM

November 3, 1994



Poultry Colony. Most of these lots have remained the one acre parcels they were in the 1920's, when originally divided. The current weaknesses in this district include; overcrowded schools, inadequate community facilities (i.e. recreational), poor structural conditions and lack of incentives for home improvement efforts. Strengths include mature landscaping, open space and easy freeway access favoring new construction and future development.

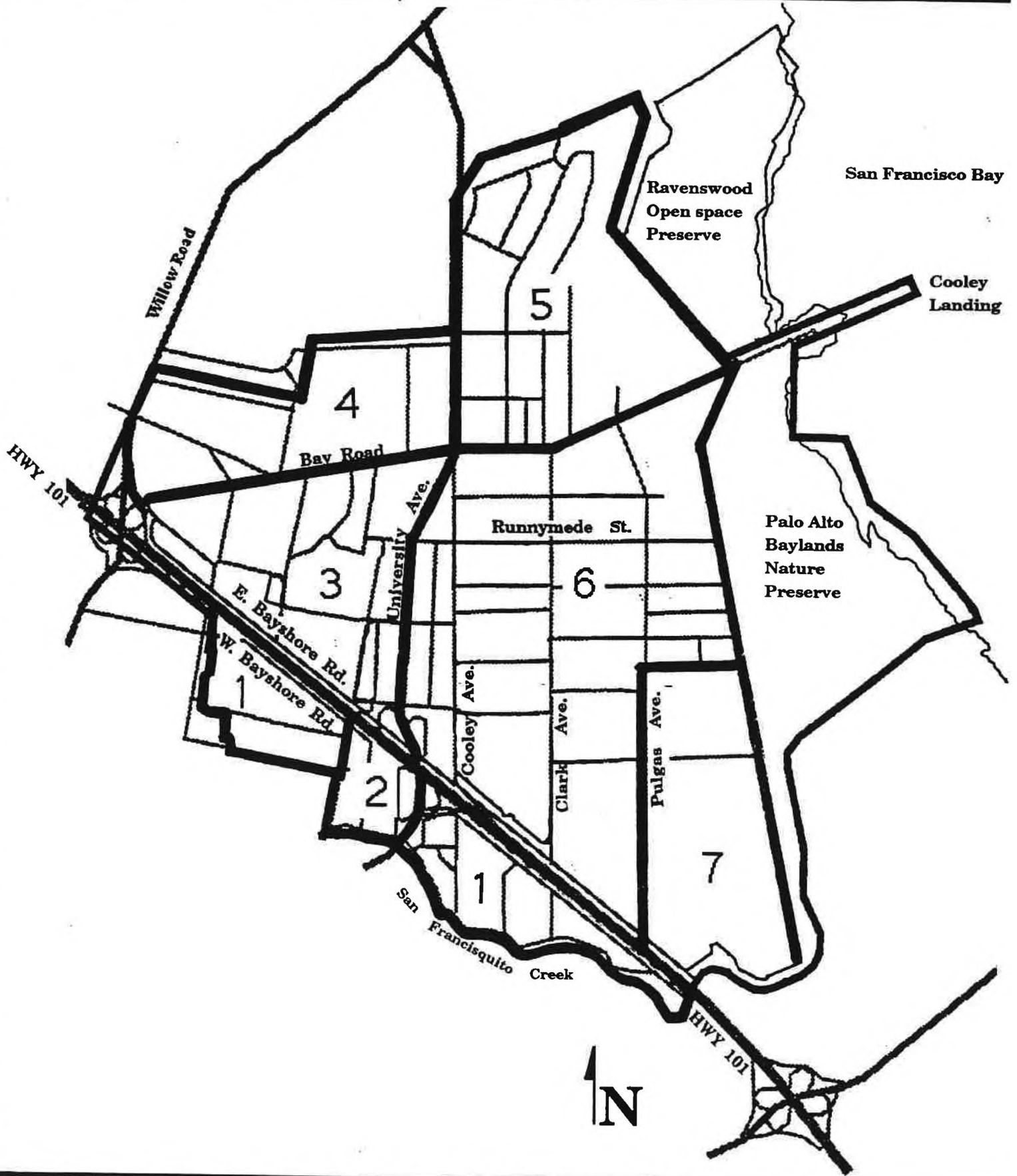
Palo Alto Gardens (District 7) are the most recent tract homes built for single family residential purposes. Palo Alto Gardens is situated on the southern section of the City. This district has good access to public transportation, exhibits mild traffic conditions, contains well maintained infrastructure and is within close proximity to surrounding schools. Its negative attributes include abandoned homes, a pumping station, Martin Luther King Park which is in need of landscaping, and lack of commercial services nearby.

The Runnymede District (District 1) is primarily built of single family residential structures. This area has excellent accessibility to and from the 101 Bayshore Freeway with streets exhibiting minimal vehicular traffic while leading into neighboring communities. Some areas in need of improvement contain poor to dilapidated structures, inadequate street lighting, unpleasant sound barriers, and poor access to outlying sections of the City.

University East (District 4) is located on the north western edge of the City predominately consisting of single family residential units. Its weaknesses include the appearance of the school from University Avenue, the present condition of Jack Farrell Park as well as the presence of criminal activity. However, this district does contain well maintained infrastructure where a majority of its homes and yards are kept in good condition.

Bayshore Park and University West (District 3) are two residential districts tied together by proximity. Although they are separate areas, they encompass the same positive and negative attributes. Their streets, infrastructure, and great majority of homes are in fairly good condition. The school and community center are well maintained and seem to be utilized. There is open land available for development as well as space in the neighboring commercial center. Weaknesses include the lack of public parks, urban landscaping, visible utility lines, industrial noise at the north end, and visibility of criminal activity.

Ravenswood Industrial Park and Cooley Landing (District 5) are located in the north west section of the City. Both these areas are plagued with poor infrastructure (i.e. roads), contaminated soils, visual abandonment of railroad tracks, and visible power lines. Accessibility from Dumbarton Bridge and the possible use of railroads lines are strong positive influences in this area. Also the possibility of converting Cooley Landing into a harbor and recreational facility could become an economic force for these two areas.



## EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

University Circle (District 2) is a commercial district located on the eastern side of the Bayshore freeway. It is positioned on the main entrance leading into the City. This location increases business potential due to its easy access to and from Palo Alto and Highway 101. Its negative aspects include poor infrastructure, maintenance, and lighting, lack of open space and landscaping, illegal activity as well as inadequate vertical store front parking.

## **RESIDENTIAL LAND USE**

There are three classifications of land use designations for residential densities identified by East Palo Alto's 1986 General Plan: low to medium density are comprised of 2 to 8 units per acre, medium to high density with 9 to 17 units per acre include multi-family units such as townhouses or condominiums, while medium to high density include apartments ranging from 18 to 35 units per acre.

### Existing Conditions

Housing densities have steadily grown in East Palo Alto. Land acreage for these different types of residential units range from one to 40 dwelling units. The total number of housing units in 1980 as identified by the 1980 US Census was 6,848 and has since then grown to 7,351 by 1990. This suggests a net increase of 503 or average of 50.3 units per year during the decade of the 1980's. In 1980 housing distribution by type was 54 percent single family and 46 percent multi-family. Currently 93 percent of these single-family homes are located east of Bayshore while 76 percent of the multiple-family units are located west of Bayshore.

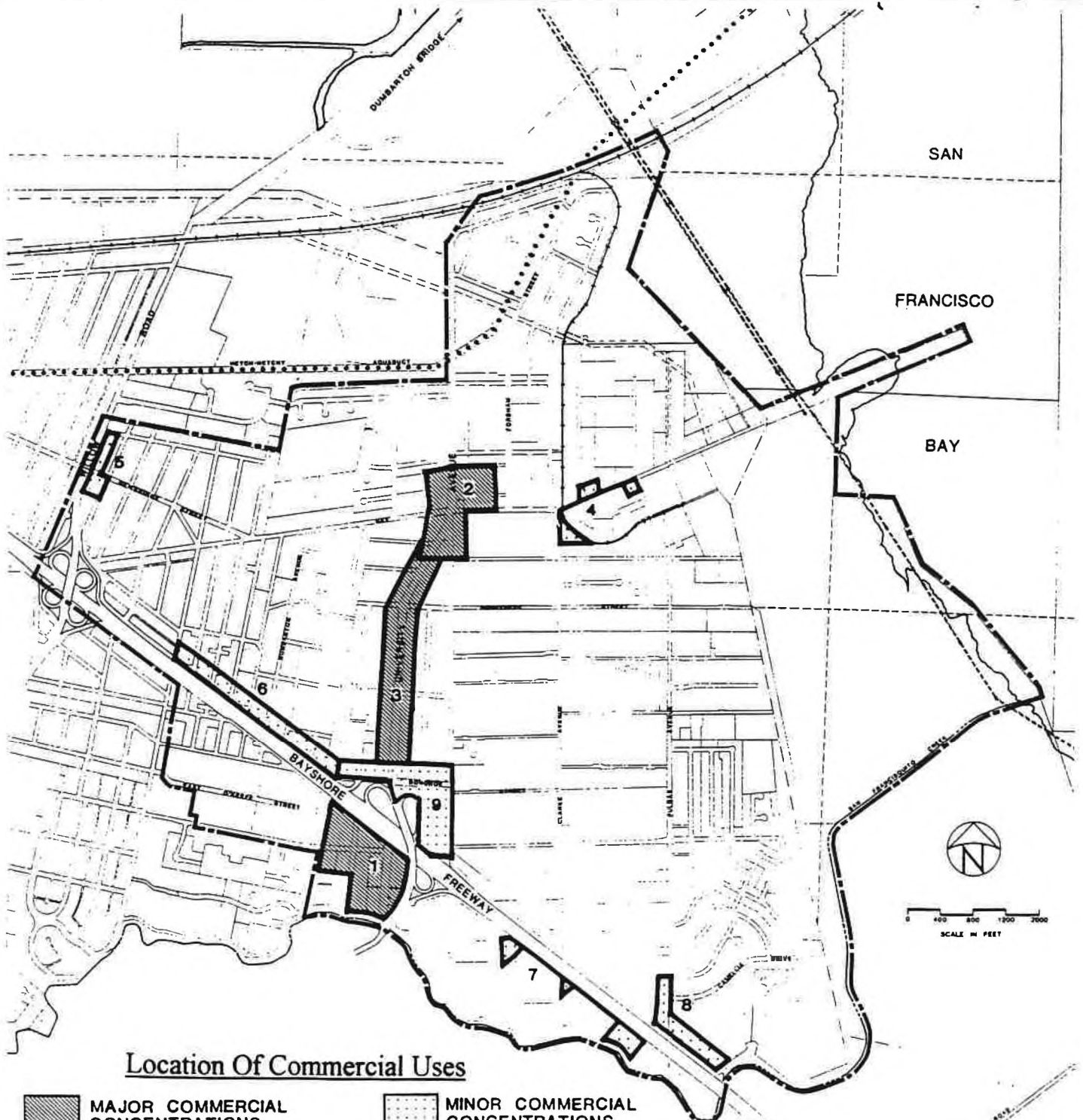
Modern apartments and condominiums are presently found west of Bayshore compared with the eastern side of Bayshore which contains a variation in housing types. These types include some of the oldest subdivisions in the County, as well as modern subdivisions with 5,000 sq. ft lots on cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets. (1993 Updated Housing Element)

## **COMMERCIAL LAND USE**

There are two commercial land use categories. The first is general commercial including, but not limited to, uses such as retail outlets, automobile-related businesses, storage facilities, and service businesses (i.e. indoor carpenter, plumbing shops, etc.). The second is neighborhood commercial which is characterized by uses such as groceries, drug stores, beauty shops, banks and clothing stores.

### Distribution of Commercial Facilities

Currently there are 79 acres of land designated for commercial uses in East Palo Alto, whereby 39 acres are in current use. Commercial establishments in East Palo Alto are

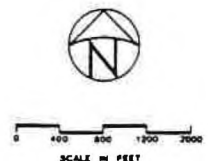


### Location Of Commercial Uses

 MAJOR COMMERCIAL CONCENTRATIONS

 MINOR COMMERCIAL CONCENTRATIONS

- |                              |                                  |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 "WHISKEY GULCH" AREA       | 4 BAY ROAD INDUSTRIAL AREA       |
| 2 BAY ROAD/UNIVERSITY AVENUE | 5 WILLOW ROAD                    |
| 3 UNIVERSITY AVENUE STRIP    | 6 FRONTAGE ROAD EAST OF BAYSHORE |
|                              | 7 FRONTAGE ROAD WEST OF BAYSHORE |
|                              | 8 PULGAS/BAYSHORE FREEWAY        |
|                              | 9 UNIVERSITY AVENUE INTERCHANGE  |



## EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

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distributed into nine distinct areas. Three of the areas are considered major shopping concentrations in East Palo Alto and are as follows:(1) The Bayshore Freeway/University Ave. or Circle interchange, located south of the Bayshore 101 Freeway. (2) The University Ave./Bay Road area and (3) a three block strip along University Ave. between Weeks and Donohoe Streets. The other six commercial designations, illustrated on Figure IV-3, are smaller and scattered throughout the community of East Palo Alto..

## **INDUSTRIAL LAND USE**

General industrial land use is inclusive of most manufacturing, assembling processing, and storing, where heavy industry such as smelting and refining is not permitted. Heavy industry includes chemical plants, petroleum refining, stockyards, junkyards and auto wrecking yards.

### Ravenswood Industrial Park/Four Corners

Situated in the northeastern corner of the East Palo Alto is Ravenswood Industrial Park. It lies in the community's industrial zoning district, bounded generally by Southern Pacific's spur right-of-way and Clarke Ave. to the east, the baylands to the north and west, and a line 110 ft. north of Weeks Street on the south. Ravenswood M-1 (Light Industrial) separates M-2 (Heavy Industrial) from the adjacent residential community. At the present time, 79 acres of Ravenswood are being occupied by a chemical plant, a steel fabrication shop, two recycling operations and a couple of auto wrecking yards. This is the only land in East Palo Alto allocated for industrial uses.

The Four Corners area is located at the intersection of University Avenue and Bay Road, previously known as the Nairobi Shopping Center. This redevelopment area is headed by East Palo Alto's Redevelopment Agency in conjunction with the Washingtonia Development Company and is anticipated to supply the community with a major supermarket, a bank, as well as other commercial and retail opportunities

## **AGRICULTURAL LAND USE**

There are approximately 80 acres of land in East Palo Alto labeled under agricultural use. Twenty-five acres of this total are being used for floriculture purposes, whose primary products are cut flowers and potted plants. Even though the majority of this land is zoned for single-family residential use, the zoning ordinance permits agricultural uses to exist.

### Williamson Act Contracts

Under the California Land Concentration Act (Williamson Act) approximated 30 acres of agricultural land in East Palo Alto are under preserve (San Mateo County Assessor). Contracts between the County and present land owners exist, and have restricted the land

to agricultural use. These contracts are renewed annually throughout ten-year periods. The Supreme Court ruled that such contracts would only be canceled under extraordinary circumstances where a non-renewal of the contract would be issued. However, this would still require a ten-year waiting period for either the County or landowner, depending on who initiated the proposal which would formally result in a land use conversion.

## **OPEN SPACE**

General open space is described as areas where low intensity development is allowed to protect the visual and open characteristics of the land.

### The Wetlands

Currently there are Federally protected wetlands located on the southern edge of the City. They provide a pleasurable natural landscape for its surrounding neighborhoods.

### San Francisquito Creek

San Francisquito Creek forms a southeastern edge between East Palo Alto and the City of Palo Alto. West of Bayshore, the Creek is channeled for flood purposes and greatest commodity is its visual attractiveness with its adjacent vegetation. East of Bayshore the channel is less improved and is bordered by levees which are used for informal recreation by neighboring children.

## **PARKS AND PUBLIC RECREATION**

Public Recreation is defined as publicly owned or managed parks and recreational areas.

### Existing Parks

There are three parks with recreational areas in East Palo Alto; Martin Luther King Park, Bell Park, and Jack Farrell Park. Martin Luther King Park is the largest of the three, containing 5.62 acres and is located in the southeastern section of East Palo Alto. Because of its size and capacity for accommodating large playing fields it could be labeled a community park even though it is largely undeveloped and poorly maintained. Bell Street Park is the community's main recreational facility. It consists of 5.08 acres and is located on Bell Street and University Avenue. A gymnasium, swimming pool, and portions of open space are examples of the park's main features. Lastly, Jack Farrell Park is in the northeastern portion of the City and is comprised of 3.62 acres. It provides basketball, baseball, tot lots, and picnic facilities for its immediate neighborhood.

### Other Open Space

Vacant land is comprised of approximately 93 acres and is currently used for recreational play areas for surrounding children and youth. This is in part due to the scattered parcels dispersed between existing residences.

### **INSTITUTIONAL USE**

Institutional uses include public and private uses of the land where establishments such as churches, schools, and government offices exist.

### Existing Conditions

The government offices are located in two buildings: a municipal building on the corner of Bay Road and University Avenue and a second building on the corner of Bell Street and University Avenue. This small building serves as an extension of the latter. There are four schools accommodating students grades K-8. The largest is Ronald McNair at 14.84 acres, followed by Brentwood Oaks school at 10.78 acres, Costano School at 7.92 acres, with Cesar E. Chavez, the smallest institution, at 3.79 acres. There are also learning institutions for children such as Ravenswood Children's Center and Creative Learning Montessori School. However, there are no high schools in East Palo Alto since the abandonment of Ravenswood High School. Students are accommodated by surrounding communities such as Palo Alto and Menlo Park, where they are bussed to daily.

### **DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

#### Residential

According to the existing residential land uses (Table IV-1), there has been a gradual increase in the demand for housing units in East Palo Alto. Today the City is predominately residential and contains underutilized vacant and agricultural lands which have possibilities for residential conversion. Examples of these possible conversions include a large development of single family residences located on University Drive and East Bayshore between Donohoe and the 101 freeway. This area is a prime example of the possibility of lands which have potential for conversion into higher multi-family densities to aid in alleviating the City's housing needs. In addition, small scattered lots found in various single family one acre lots could be infilled with residential development to be compatible with already existing environment. These developments can serve as a positive force for the community by upgrading the existing neighborhood, raising its tax base, and increasing housing opportunities.

## **COMMERCIAL**

There is an identified need for commercial development in East Palo Alto due to the current absence of facilities providing goods and services to adequately meet the need of its current population. With the population projected to increase by the year 2010 this demand is also expected to rise. The East Bayshore Community Comprehensive Planning Program estimated in 1973 that 57 percent of the total income was spent in outlying communities which can be attributed to the lack of services within the City's boundary. For instance, the combined services of all commercial establishments east of the Bayshore Freeway do not provide the mix of stores, services and offices considered necessary to sustain one neighborhood shopping center. This situation is similar west of the Bayshore Freeway although not as severe. East Palo Alto's commercial area is the need for basic improvements through landscaping, urban design, and expansion of park facilities. An ideal scenario for the future of the commercial district would be to concentrate the majority of any new commercial facilities toward the vicinity of University Avenue and Bay Road and form a strong central shopping district for surrounding neighborhoods. See the Commercial Development Map, Figure IV-3, for a geographical representation of the latter.

## **CONVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL LANDS**

The future of the floriculture industry is doubtful because of the demand for developable land in the mid-peninsula area. Designating agricultural lands into medium high densities would be ideal for the City of East Palo Alto. Certain blocks in the City, while predominately residential, contain vacant lots or agricultural uses which could be converted into residential use. This would be an effective force for East Palo Alto. With this taken into consideration, multi-family units could be developed on vacant parcels without obstructing already established single family neighborhoods.

## **SUMMARY**

Currently there is a need for a greater distribution of recreational, commercial, industrial, and residential uses in the City of East Palo Alto. There is a lack of goods and services to adequately meet the current needs of the community, in addition to parks, schools, public buildings and affordable housing. Also, the condition of most infrastructure, including street lighting, paving, drainage, sidewalks and curbs are poorly maintained and are in need of renovation. This results in a focus towards the future development of underutilized, vacant, and agricultural land.

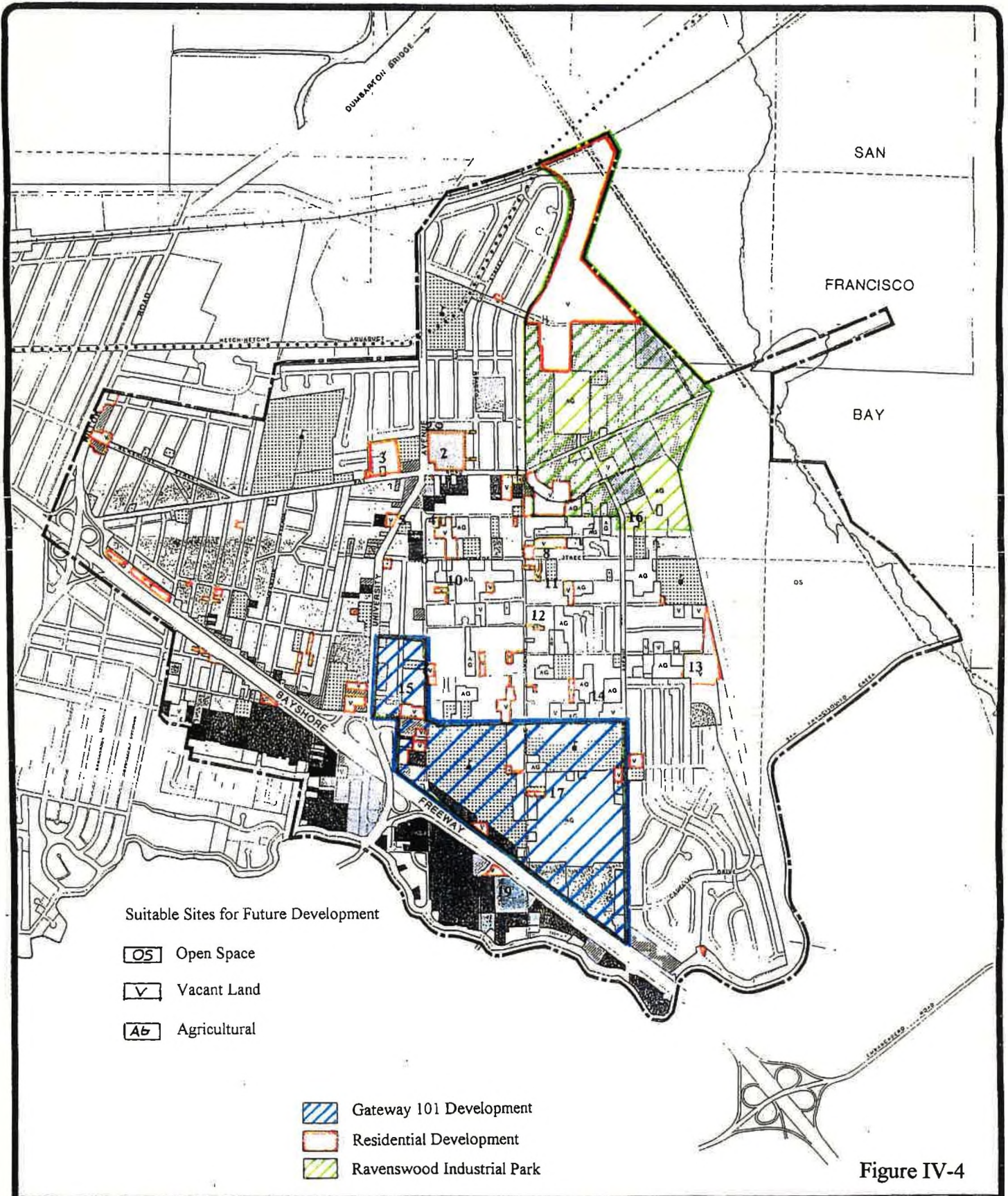


Figure IV-4

SUITABLE SITES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

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## FUTURE PROSPECTS

There are four project areas considered for potential development in the City of East Palo Alto. They are the Gateway 101 Redevelopment Project, Ravenswood Industrial Park/Four Corners Project, and 20 sites suitable for residential development. The City will rely upon these areas to alleviate the need gap in residential, commercial, and industrial areas while increasing the City's tax base through private investment.

The Gateway 101 Corridor will be an important development to the future stability of East Palo Alto. This district is located adjacent to the University Avenue exit from the Bayshore Freeway. This is a good location for commercial development, for it is highly visible and possesses easy access to and from the freeway. Furthermore, this area will be a primary site to enhance the image of East Palo Alto. This district is approximately 145 acres and includes a mixture of residential, commercial, institutional and agricultural uses. Altogether, there are approximately 475 existing residential units, including multi-family apartment complexes, a mobile home park in the southern section, and single-family homes in the west and central portions (Weeks Poultry Unit) of the project.

To accommodate the large scale commercial development, the project will need to demolish 239 existing residential units. This includes 187 apartments and 52 single-family homes. Even though a substantial number of these units need rehabilitation and reconstruction, the City will provide adequate relocation housing for displaced residents. The California Redevelopment Law requires 30 percent of new housing built by the redevelopment agency and 15 percent of housing developed by private organizations to be affordable to low income families. The Gateway Project Specific Plan designates 35.57 acres for a wide range of residential classifications and densities, resulting in the potential for 703 replacement dwelling units. The majority of the new units will be multi-family. The following is the distribution of these densities:

	Percentage	Feasible Units
Low Density (2-8 u/ac)	37%	260 units
High Density (18-35 u/ac)	47%	332 units
Medium Density (9-17 u/ac)	16%	111 units

The proposed Gateway 101 Corridor Redevelopment Project is projected to be under construction within two years. When this development is complete, the impact of employment generation will be beneficial to the citizens of East Palo Alto. The estimated increase in revenue base, and the projected 1,172 new jobs, will help the City advance into economic stability.

The second district which is important to the future of East Palo Alto is the Ravenswood Industrial Park and Four Corners project area. It is located in the northeasterly section of the City and it contains approximately 143 acres of the land, of which 98 are currently zoned M-1 (Light Industrial) and 45 acres are zoned M-2 (Heavy Industrial).

Approximately 79 acres are currently being used for industrial purposes. Although the remaining land is planned for industrial use, projected developments may be postponed due to detoxification of soil pollutants. Once this criterion is met, the district will be under high pressure for development due to the shortage of industrial land available for development within the mid-peninsula area.

A number of assumptions were made in order to make projections on the viability of prospective developments. They will insure the consistency of data collected in support of our analysis.

Assumptions:

- The population is large enough to support a demand for services needed to sustain substantial future commercial development.
- The existing community will not hinder the proposed development of high density residential units to meet an increase of 5,759 people by the year 2010.
- Minimum standards for open space, lot size, and parking will be developed, modified, implemented, and enforced.
- City staff limitations are resolved through a greater allocation of government funding.

If this land is not developed soon, it will be converted to residential use due to the high pressure and demand for housing. Therefore, success in attracting industrial developers to this area is important not only to the economy, but to the community as a whole. Steps must be taken to plan a sound strategy to ensure vacant land will be used to its utmost potential.

## RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CONSTRAINTS

According to the 1993 Housing Element Update, the City of East Palo Alto has approximately 50 acres of the total vacant land that is being considered for future residential development. Table IV-2 identifies these 20 sites by location, size, current zoning and possible alternative zoning. Figure IV-4 graphically displays the locations of these sites by site number. A significant portion of these lots are located in or within a one mile radius of the Weeks Poultry Colony. Site 17 contains 22.2 acres and is notably the largest area for redevelopment; it will include a combination of R-1 and R-3 zoned units as well as the future Gateway 101 Redevelopment Project.

It is clear that land does not constitute a significant constraint on the growth of housing in East Palo Alto. Based on the inventory of sites suitable for residential development, 20 potential areas could be developed. Using an average of 3.37 persons per unit, maximum buildout for these sites is a total of 1600 additional units given zoning constraints. Therefore, a population growth of 5,046 people will be accommodated. However, because the population is projected to grow by approximately 5,759 people by the year 2010 roughly 250 people will be unable to be accommodated.

The inventory of sites suitable for residential development rates each site's constraints to building the maximum units under existing zoning from "A", the least restrictive, to "C", the most restrictive. Constraint "A" does not require a zoning change to the specified number of units, "B" applies to sites which would require a zoning change but have no apparent land use conflicts, while "C" includes sites requiring a zoning change with possible land use conflicts. Currently 138 units or 21 percent of the total have been categorized as "C", while 1,077 units or 67 percent have been rated "A" (See Table IV-2).

Due to the fact that most, if not all, of the vacant land available will be used for residential development, a summary of possible constraints will be addressed. These include governmental policies such as East Palo Alto's General Plan, growth policies, the zoning ordinance, permit application procedures, as well as general constraints related to economics and psychological barriers.

The current General Plan for East Palo Alto, prepared in 1986, does not pose any significant restrictions to housing development, since all land development regulations allow for development of maximum densities specified:

Single Family/Duplex	5-8 units/acre
Multiplexed/3-4 Units	9-16 units/acre
Garden Apartment/Townhouses	17-25 units/acre
High Density Apartments	25-43 units/acre

The General Plan also allows conventional zoning standards to be waived for individual projects through the approval of Planned Unit Development (PUD) whereby minimum



**Inventory of Sites Suitable for Residential Development**

Site No.	Location	Size	Current Zoning(1)	Possible Alternative Zoning	Max. Units Under Existing Zoning(2)	Maximum Feasible Units	Development Capability Rating(3)
1	S. side of Bay between Gonzaga and Illinois	1 ac	R-S	--	34	34	A
2	S. side of Bay between University and Fordham	13,000 sf	R-S	--	10	10	A
3	S/E. corner of Bay/Gloria	3.3 ac	C-1	R-3	112	80	B
4	N. side of Weeks between Cooley and Clarke	2.4 ac	R-1	R-3	19	81	C
5	University/Sacramento	19,000 sf	R-1	R-3	4	15	B
6	N. side of Runnymede, S. side Weeks near Cooley	2.3 ac	R-1	--	20	20	A
7	S. side Weeks, between Pulgan and Clarke	1.9 ac	R-1	--	16	16	A
8	N/E corner Clarke and Runnymede	16,900 sf	R-1	--	3	3	A
9	N. side Runnymede, S. side Weeks, E. of Pulgas	5.3 ac	R-3	--	180	180	A
10	S. side Runnymede between Cooley & Clarke to Schenbu	7.7 ac	R-1	--	67	67	A
11	N. side Garden between Clarke and Pulgas	1.8 ac	R-1	--	15	15	A
12	Beech/Garden/Clarke	2.5 ac	R-1	--	20	20	A
13	End of Beech	1.85 ac	R-3	R-1	63	15	A
14	N. side Myrtle between Clarke and Pulgas	2.6 ac	R-1	--	20	20	A
15	N. side Donahoe, Capital to Cooley	37,250 sf	CC-1	R-3	29	29	C
16	S. side Weeks, E. of Pulgas	3.8 ac	RM	R-3	0	129	B
17	O'Connor/Clarke/Pulgas	22.2 ac	R-3	R-3 & R-1	972	481	A
18	W. side Newell Road	12,000 sf	C-1	R-3	9	9	C
19	Newell/ W. Bayshore	24,400 sf	C-1	R-3	19	19	C
20	N/E corner University and Bay	6 ac	C-1	Mixed Use	0	100	C
Total Maximum Feasible Units						1455	
Maximum Units Under Existing Zoning					1612		
Total Units of Sites with "A" Development Capability Rating					1343		

Source: City of East Palo Alto Planning Development & City of East Palo Alto Redevelopment Agency, 1993

(1) All R-3 zoning districts are automatically converted to R-M Multi-family zoning pursuant to the 1989 zoning district amendment

(2) Based on maximum densities allowed exclusive of density bonuses

(3) If no zoning change is needed to produce the specified number of units, a rating of "A" is assigned. "B" applies to sites that would require a zoning change but have no apparent land conflicts

Sites requiring a zoning change with possible land use conflicts are assigned a development constraint rating of "C"

standards for open space, lot size, and parking are upheld. This is a key factor influencing the growth of East Palo Alto's housing stock since 218 units depend upon zoning changes.

In 1990, the City passed an ordinance granting the Planning Commission the authority to modify standards for maximum lot coverage and minimum setbacks without having to provide a variance for affordable housing. A second ordinance, also approved in 1990, liberalized parking standards in developments that provided affordable units. These provisions served to encourage housing development through its interpretation of land use controls.

Presently a variety of residential use designations with densities ranging from 2-43 dwelling units per acre with density bonuses exist. Because of the City's abundance of vacant land in every zoning category zoning does not pose any major constraint on future housing.

According to the City's 1993 Housing Element, building permits must be secured before commencement of any construction, reconstruction, conversion, alteration, or addition. These permit applications are based on their conformity to the City's zoning ordinance. The permit fees are similar to, or lower than, those in surrounding communities and therefore do not impose any significant problems to possible developments, whereas, the logistics related to processing these permits do. Time becomes a limiting factor due to the staff limitations imposed upon the Planning Commission. For instance, simple design reviews take 6-8 weeks to reach the department. As a result, major subdivision applications usually require the maximum processing time permitted by law.

There are also economic and psychological barriers which impede future residential development. An example of an economic constraint is the reluctance of private investors to finance large scale residential construction in East Palo Alto. This is due in part to their fear of an amendment to the ordinance which could exempt all new construction from property rent controls. According to the 1993 Housing Element Update, a lack of private investment capital was the most significant constraint in housing production throughout the 1990-1995 period. Other impediments arise from psychological barriers stemming from the public's general perception characterizing East Palo Alto as an unsafe community.

## **NEED GAP**

The population in the City of East Palo Alto is estimated to be 23,541 according to projections from the 1990 US Census. It is expected to rise by approximately 5,759 people by the year 2010, for a total population of 29,300 people. This will affect a wide variety of public services, whether they be for elementary and secondary education, police services, fire protection, transportation services, water services, waste water services, solid waste service, parks, recreation and open space, library services, or general government.

This section will address only the services that are relevant to land use. They are, fire protection, parks, recreation, open space and general government.

The evaluation of new fire protection is not based solely on population, but also on other factors such as the availability of personnel, existing fire fighting equipment, and water supply (fire hydrants). Also, response time, intensity of land use and special hazards (particularly hazardous projects, such as industrial areas) are considered. These factors determine whether or not the existing fire departments can function at optimum level without reducing the level of service to the community. At this time it is not feasible to determine the new demands until all redevelopment occurs.

Almost every kind of new development will have an impact on parks, recreation, and open space programs. The combined category of parks, recreation and open space include a broad range of activities; Parks range from land areas of thousands of acres serving an entire region to "tot lots" that are less than an acre and serve a single neighborhood. There are two approaches used to determine the demand of recreational areas. The first approach establishes demand based on the natural resources within the jurisdiction. The second approach uses standards based on classification and population ratios and standards for special facilities. Due to constraints of available land the second approach will be used.

Considering the projected increase of 5,759 people, a demand for additional acres for recreation and open space will occur. The projected population increase is not expected to have a big impact on the general government. However, poverty related programs such as welfare and public health may increase due to the poor economic conditions of the City.

## **SUMMARY**

Housing constraints in East Palo Alto do not pose any unforeseeable obstacles. The City's General Plan, growth policies and zoning ordinance do not hinder potential vacant land development, although obtaining building permits requires an ample amount of time.

The two redevelopment areas are expected to generate revenue for the City, as well as employment for members of the community. The new commercial and industrial developments will help ease the demand for goods and services required to support the City. Limitations that may affect services are the availability of land to meet the demand, and whether or not the City has monetary fortitude.

The City needs to access its current fire service to determine whether or not adequate protection will be maintained, given future development projections. Also, the adequacy of parks and government services to sustain the projected population growth must be analyzed to establish proper levels of service.

## **CONCLUSION**

The City faces many land use decisions which will guide its future decision-making process in the next century. It must be concerned with the general distribution, location, and extent of land uses within the planning area, as well as provide standards for population density

and building intensity. This report provided an analysis of the distribution of housing, business, industry, open space, agriculture, recreation and education, as well as other public and private uses of the land. These activities were previously addressed whereby concerns such as maintenance, lack of basic services, and aesthetically unattractive buildings were stated as impeding the appeal for future development in East Palo Alto. The Williamson Act contracts must be dealt with immediately if the City expects to use agricultural land for other uses in the near future. The lack of a solid economic foundation must also be addressed and dealt with accordingly, in order for the City to become a viable part of the Bay Area economic sector.

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V

**PUBLIC FACILITIES  
AND SERVICES**



# PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

## METHODOLOGY EXISTING CONDITIONS

### **PUBLIC FACILITIES**

SEWAGE  
WATER  
POWER  
STREETS  
STORM DRAINS  
LIGHTING

### **PUBLIC SERVICES**

PUBLIC SAFETY  
TRASH  
RECYCLING

### **SUMMARY**

## FUTURE PROJECTIONS

### **PUBLIC FACILITIES**

SEWAGE  
WATER  
STREETS  
STORM DRAINS  
LIGHTING

### **PUBLIC SERVICES**

PUBLIC SAFETY  
TRASH

### **SUMMARY**

## **CONCLUSION** **REFERENCES**



The purpose of the chapter is twofold: First, to identify and determine existing conditions and their impacts affecting East Palo Alto's infrastructure and public services. Second, to determine future demand on infrastructure and public services and their impact on the City of East Palo Alto through the year 2010.

Estimates of future growth indicate that if current trends continue, population growth in the City of East Palo Alto will increase from 23,451 in 1990 to 29,300 by the year 2010. The impacts of this growth on infrastructure and public facilities must be addressed in order to mitigate the impacts that will occur.

In this study the depth and scope of the analysis and findings are limited by: time, distance, and dated materials and resources. Because of the scarcity of current data and qualitative information from reliable sources, there are a number of questions surrounding the accuracy of some of the findings. Many of those questions will be answered when the results related to the next phase of the planning process are analyzed and interpreted.

The following topics will be discussed as they relate to public facilities and service needs:

**Facilities:**

- Sewer, Water and Power
- Streets and Storm Drains
- Lighting

**Services:**

- Police and Fire
- Trash and Recycling

## **METHODOLOGY**

Data pertaining to areas of investigation was collected using two techniques: (1) Interviewing authorities working within the City of East Palo Alto and (2) Researching documents that contain information about the City, such as: *The Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community* and *The 1986 East Palo Alto General Plan*. This report will include summaries of data collected, as well as graphic representation, to help illustrate a clear picture of East Palo Alto's public facilities and services.

Methods used to project future demand impacting infrastructure and public facilities were straight line projections. Police service needs were also determined by using the straight line population projection as well as analyzing the level of service criteria per capita. The single indicator method was used for projection of water and sewer capacity requirements.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## *Public Facilities*

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### **SEWAGE**

Sewer service in the City of East Palo Alto is divided into two sanitary districts. They are the East Palo Alto Sanitary District, and the West Bay Sanitary District. (See Figure V-1)

#### East Palo Alto Sanitary District

The East Palo Alto Sanitary District is the main jurisdiction for sanitary sewer in East Palo Alto. The jurisdiction for this sanitary district includes the entire community, excluding a small area on the northernmost part of the City. The capacity of the sewer lines in this district are quite adequate for service currently and also have enough capacity to serve development in the future. "The total capacity for this system is 3.8 million gallons per day and the current average rate of discharge is only 1.6 million gallons per day", (Leroy Hawkins, East Palo Alto Sanitary District Supervisor). The sewer lines that make up this system are currently in poor condition due to age. Replacement of these fifty year old pipes is currently underway.

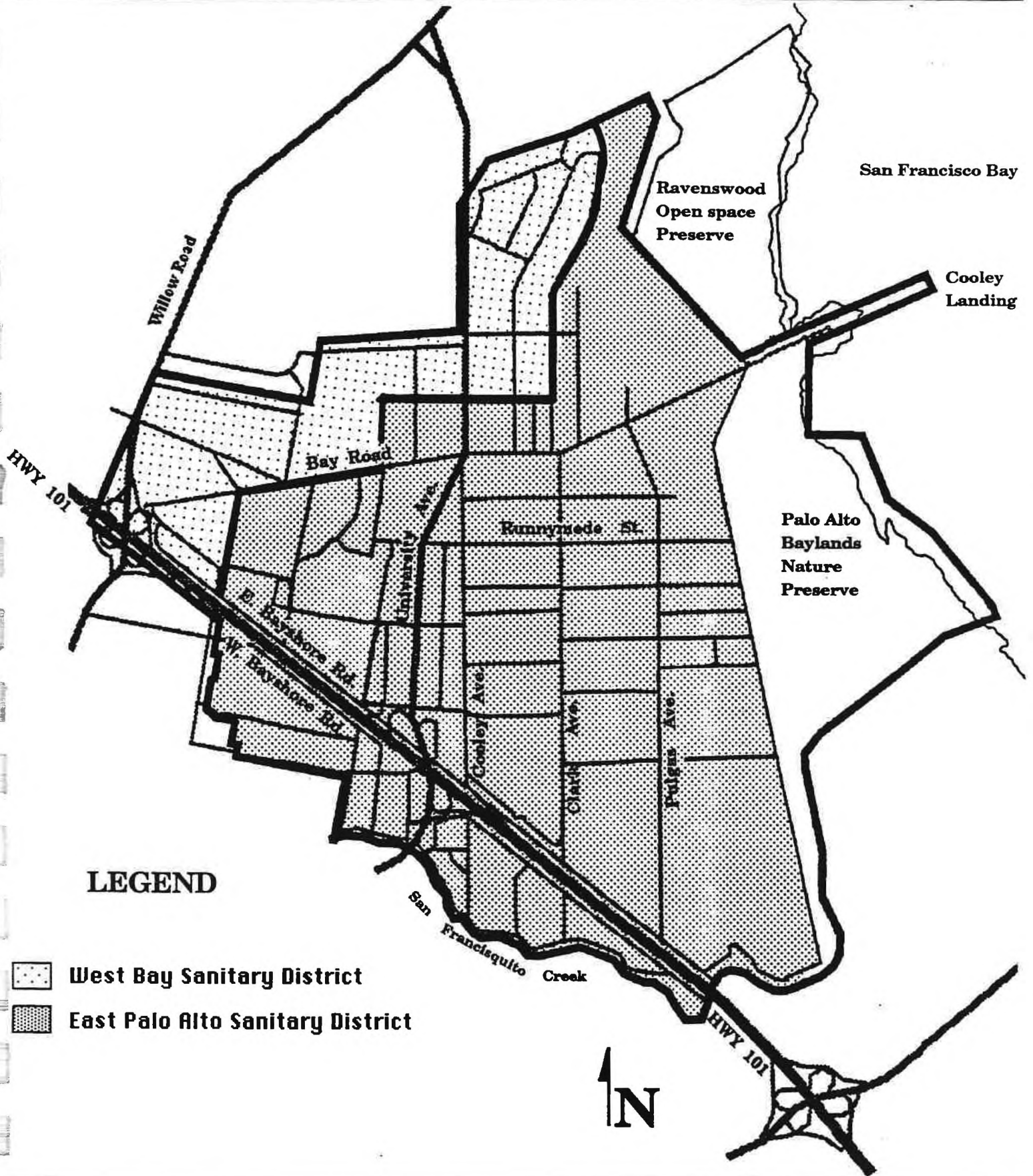
#### West Bay Sanitary District

The West Bay Sanitary District is the other jurisdiction that services East Palo Alto. This sanitary district resides on the northern tip of town and covers only a small triangle of the City with sewer service. This sewer system uses the South Baysick System waste treatment facility for disposal. This system has ample capacity for existing needs. The sewer lines in this sanitary system are aged and are currently being replaced by capital improvements. These pipes consist of six inch cast iron piping and run under the middle of the streets.

There are problems arising from the sewer lines running through the "Superfund sites" in the Ravenswood Industrial Park area in which the soils are contaminated by arsenic metal. A "Superfund site" is a sight designated by the Environmental Protection Agency for which funds have been set aside for cleanup of toxics. This contamination is leaking from this site and carried straight into San Francisco Bay. There are current efforts and funding to free the facility of this blight and free the Bay from any further contamination. The sewer lines have begun to crack and leak and are currently being repaired. (Javad Ghabari, Palo Alto Director of Waste Management)

### **WATER**

Water service in the City of East Palo Alto is provided by three sources. These sources are: the East Palo Alto County Waterworks District, Palo Alto Park Mutual Water Company, and O'Connor Tract Mutual Water Company (See Figure V-2). Together,



## LEGEND

-  West Bay Sanitary District
-  East Palo Alto Sanitary District

## EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

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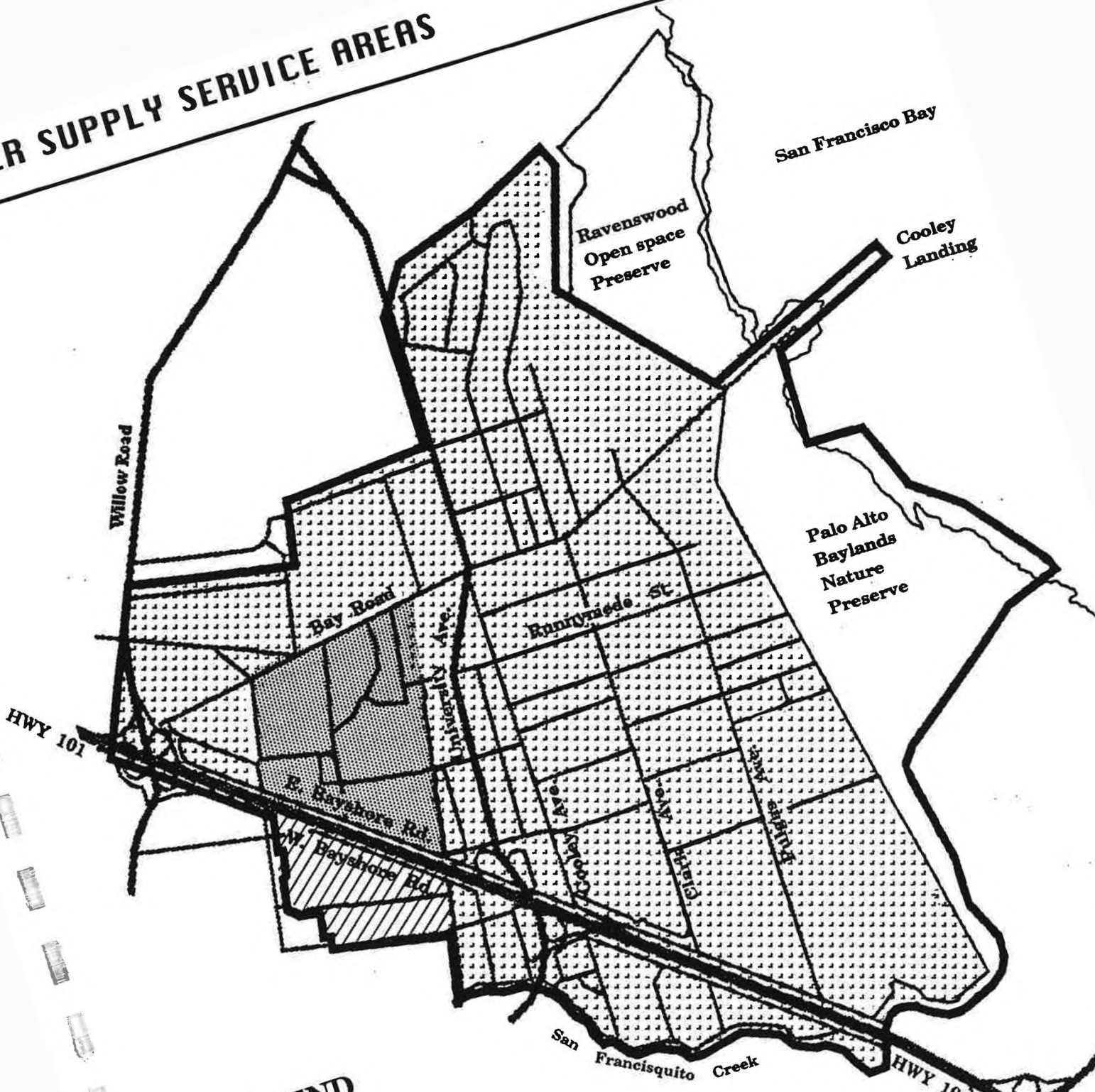
these service districts supply water to commercial, residential, and industrial users throughout the City.

#### East Palo Alto County Waterworks District

The main supplier of water to this City is the East Palo Alto County Waterworks District. Service is provided to 4,000 customers within its jurisdiction which accounts for 90 percent of East Palo Alto's total water service. Unlike the mutual water districts that supply water to only residential dwellings, this waterworks district provides commercial, industrial, and residential districts with water service. Most of the water distributed through this district is purchased from the Hetch Hetchy aqueduct. A small portion of the water supply is provided by a nearby delta, which has been tapped by a well. "Water lines throughout the district consist of ductyl iron with concrete coating on the inside and a lacquer coating on the outer walls (to prevent corrosion and leakage), along with standard asbestos cement piping, and PVC line", (Robert Frame, East Palo Alto Public Works Engineer). Some lines are old and corroded, their useful life is limited and they should be replaced.

Service provided by the district is at or above standard. Standard efficiency for water systems is known to be at least 90 percent, and East Palo Alto County Waterworks runs with approximately 95 percent efficiency after any leakage or loss of water. The second point of interest is water quality. The water is mainly taken from the chlorinated Hetch Hetchy aqueduct which supplies water to all of San Francisco Bay area cities. "The only problem with the quality of water in this district is that the water from the well and delta that mixes with the Hetch Hetchy supply and contains iron and manganese", (Robert Frame, East Palo Alto Public Works Engineer). With piping, the lines that need improvement are not a significant issue at this time because the system still runs efficiently even with the current leakage through the corroded pipes. In the past when groups of pipes become deteriorated they were replaced. Many of the lines in this system have already been replaced (mainly by asbestos cement pipes) leaving most of the pipes in good condition. Capital improvements will replace the remaining dilapidated pipes in the near future. "One last point to mention about this water district is that water pressure from gravitational flow running from the aqueduct is purposely reduced from 135 psi to 90 psi to prevent the lines from deteriorating and/or bursting", (Robert Frame, East Palo Alto Public Works Engineer).

# WATER SUPPLY SERVICE AREAS



## LEGEND

-  East Palo Alto County Waterworks District
-  East Palo Alto Park Mutual Water Company
-  O'Conner Tract Mutual Water Company



### Palo Alto Park Mutual Water Company

The larger of the two mutual water providers is the Palo Alto Park Mutual Water Company. This company provides water service only to residential areas in its jurisdiction, which is on the southwest side of town. It provides services to approximately 600-650 households. This system, built in 1924, runs from five wells which are all currently in good condition. The wells working for this company are its only source of water besides an emergency generator tied to the county waterworks in case service in the given area is halted for some reason. "Pipes in this region are all six inches in diameter, most have been replaced by new cast iron piping where aging has taken place" (Katherine Loudd, Palo Alto Mutual Water Company District Supervisor).

### O'Connor Tract Mutual Water Company

O'Connor Tract Mutual Water Company is the second mutual water company in East Palo Alto. This company provided water to the Charles Weeks Poultry Colony, which is no longer operating. The company has approximately 280-300 connections today, including 21 contracts with apartment buildings. With the poultry colony no longer in use, service from this company has shifted from mainly agricultural concentration to residential. Two existing wells account for the company's only water source. They are both in good working condition and provide adequate service to those who live in this water service district.

## **POWER**

Gas and electric service is provided by Pacific Gas and Electric in East Palo Alto. They supply both commercial and residential areas with gas and electric service.

## **STREETS**

Local streets provide direct access to adjoining properties and usually discourage "thru traffic." Collectors carry traffic from local streets to arterials and freeways, and Arterials provide a thru traffic way between major points of interchange.

The existing condition of streets in East Palo Alto are generally acceptable, however certain areas of the City contain substandard streets, (See Figure V-3). Many local streets in the East Palo Alto Park and University Circle areas do not conform to City standards. These streets lack paved shoulders, sidewalks, curbing and/or storm drains. The East Palo Alto Park area may be characterized as semi-rural with older homes and many trees, some of which are located in the right-of-way of streets.

Most of the major streets in the large lot area east of University Ave. have been improved by the County Public Works Department. These streets have been widened, with curbs and sidewalks installed to conform to County standards.

# SUBSTANDARD STREETS

FIGURE V-3



## EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

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The County Public Works Department has undertaken the widening and improvements of Newbridge Street-Bay Road from Willow Road to Cooley Landing. Plans call for a 93-foot right-of-way providing four traffic lanes, a median with left turn lanes, a bike lane, parking lane, and sidewalk for the entire 1.9 mile distance. Widening and paving improvements have been completed. The second phase; parking lane, bike lane and left turn medians, for which funding has been allocated, extends from Pulgas Ave. to Cooley Landing. Some right-of-way has been acquired, and design drawings for phases 3 and 4, between Willow Road and University Ave. have not been prepared, nor have construction funds been allocated, according to the County Public Works Department. Figure V-3 (map on preceding page) shows the City's substandard streets and the Newbridge Street Project.

U.S. Route 101 passes through East Palo Alto and is maintained by Caltrans, District 4. There is currently a proposal for a safe pedestrian passage, in the form of sidewalks at the University Ave. overpass of Highway 101.

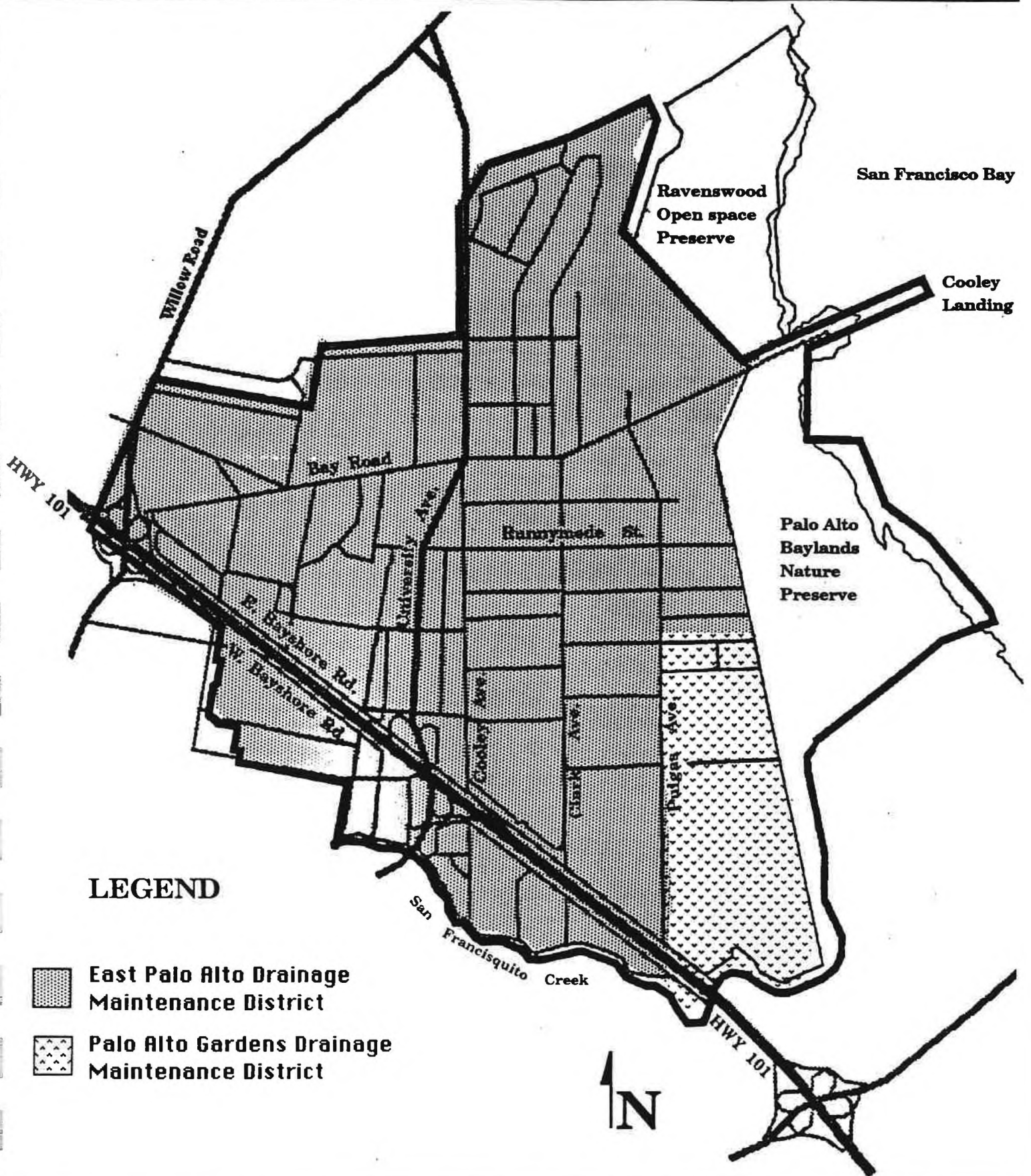
## **STORM DRAINS**

The City Public Works Department is responsible for drainage facilities within public rights of way, however many local streets lack curbs, gutters, or storm drains. The existing storm drains are currently being serviced by the City of East Palo Alto. The City has been divided into two storm drain districts, East Palo Alto Drainage Maintenance District and the Palo Alto Gardens Drainage Maintenance District (See Figure V-4).

The East Palo Alto Drainage Maintenance District was formed in 1963 and has the fewest drainage problems in East Palo Alto. The Palo Alto Gardens Maintenance District was formed in 1950 to maintain drainage facilities installed by the developer of the Palo Alto Gardens. In 1968, San Mateo County applied to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for a grant to build a comprehensive drainage system in East Palo Alto and portions of East Menlo Park. The Ravenswood Slough Flood Control Zone and San Francisquito Creek Flood Control Subzone were formed to establish a taxing mechanism in areas not included in other districts. However, the public rejected special assessment for these districts, and no new facilities have been constructed.

The existing storm drains and flood control facilities are inadequate and need improvement. Although a master plan for a storm drainage system has been adopted, implementation of the first phase will be carried out in conjunction with the planned Bay Road improvements. "Additional storm drainage improvements will be completed when the development of the Ravenswood Industrial Park moves forward", (Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community). Certain storm drains in the City are currently clogged by the dumping of oil, toxics and other debris into them. These clogged storm





**LEGEND**

-  East Palo Alto Drainage Maintenance District
-  Palo Alto Gardens Drainage Maintenance District

**EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

drains can lead to flooding on the streets they serve when heavy rains occur. Funds from a recently received Oil Recycling Grant will be used to clean these drains.

**LIGHTING**

There are presently 763 street lights in East Palo Alto under the jurisdiction of the Ravenswood Highway Lighting District. According to the San Mateo County Public Works Department, the maintenance and energy costs necessary to operate the street lights are about \$7,300 per month.

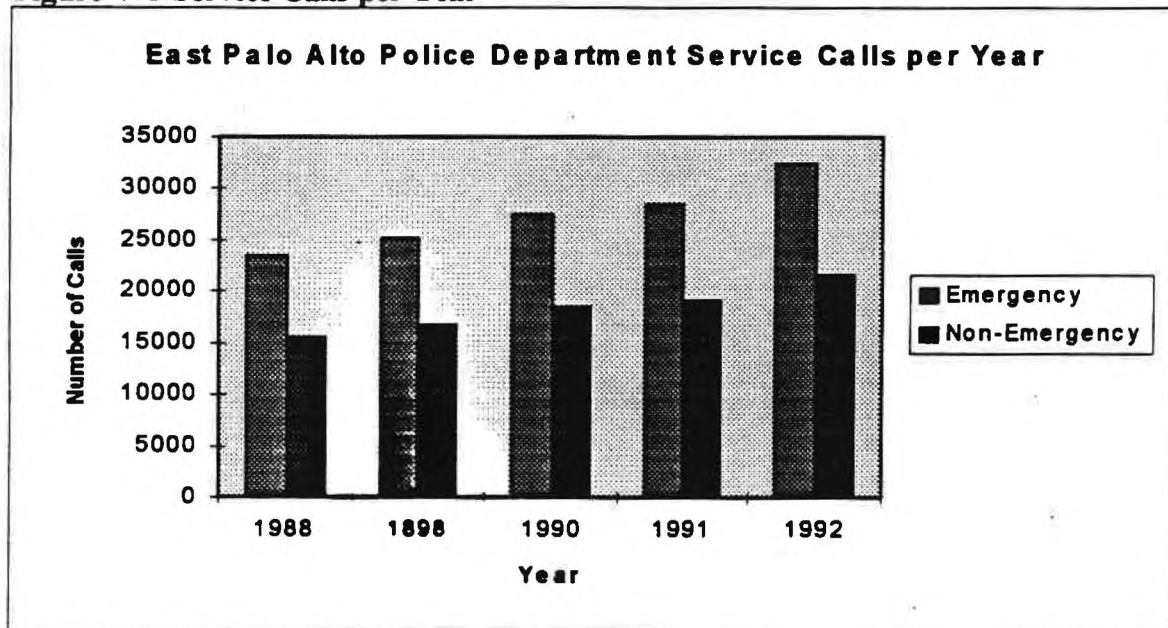
## Public Services

### SAFETY

#### Police

In 1993 the East Palo Alto Police Department had a staff of 35 sworn officers and 7 civilian officers, according to the Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community. This equals 1 sworn officer per 688 residents. The breakdown of the 35 sworn officers is: 26 patrol, 5 investigation, 3 administration, and 1 special officer. In recent years, the service demand on East Palo Alto Police Department has increased due to the growing number of crimes in the community. Figure V-5 shows the increased number of service calls from 1988 to 1992.

Figure V-5 Service Calls per Year

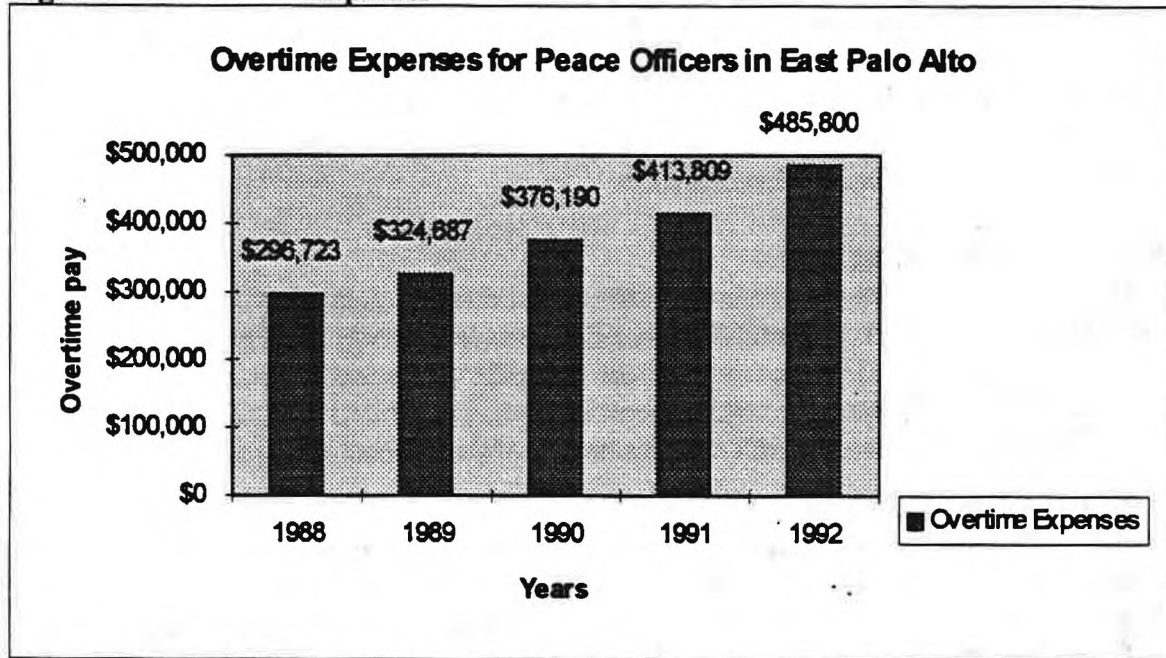


Source: Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community

The number of service calls have risen in the past years, yet the staffing for the police department has not kept pace. This has lead to an increase in the number of overtime hours for the officers of East Palo Alto's Police Department.

Figure V-6 shows the cost of police overtime hours over the past five years.

**Figure V-6 Overtime Expenses**



Source: Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community

East Palo Alto's crime rate steadily increased in the years between 1988 and 1992. Having the highest per capita homicide rate in the nation and one of the highest violent crime rates per sworn officer, suggests a need for more staff for the East Palo Alto Police Department. The police department not only needs officers for patrol, but also for special investigation and administration.

### Crime and Population

In 1992 East Palo Alto was dubbed "Per Capita Homicide Capital of the Nation," with 42 homicides in a population just over 23,000. This represented a 110 percent increase over the 1991 homicide rate. In 1992 East Palo Alto accounted for 3.9 percent of San Mateo County's population, but its residents accounted for 6.8 percent of all jail bookings in the county. This was a booking rate almost twice that of the rest of the County (120 bookings per 10,000 residents versus 67 bookings per 10,000 residents for the rest of the County).

### Juvenile Crime

East Palo Alto has a serious crime problem among their youth. In the surrounding area there are ten organized gangs which take part in such illegal activities as graffiti, auto

theft, drug dealing, burglary, drive-by shootings, and homicide. According to police department estimates, approximately 120-150 members of East Palo Alto's homeless population are between ages 15 and 18, most of whom are involved in drugs (Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community). East Palo Alto's youth have the highest county probation rate at 2.9 percent compared to the County at 1 percent.

#### Actions by the City

The high crime rate threatens the public safety in East Palo Alto, the City has initiated a number of programs to deter crime in their community. Programs such as the Regional Enforcement Detail (R.E.D. Team), East Palo Alto High Crime Response Team, and the Community Policing Project have been implemented, with some success in reducing the number of crimes in the city of East Palo Alto.

#### The Regional Enforcement Detail

The R.E.D. team is a multi-jurisdictional effort aimed at stopping the high crime rate in East Palo Alto. The cities of Menlo Park and Palo Alto are two of the communities involved in this project. This team was formed in an effort to assist the understaffed East Palo Alto Police department. Two other agencies also joining efforts with East Palo Alto are the County of San Mateo Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol.

#### East Palo Alto High Crime Response Team

East Palo Alto's High Crime Response Team was created in response to an executive order by Governor Pete Wilson. "It is comprised of: the Executive Director of the Office of Criminal Justice Planning, the Governor's Liaison to Law Enforcement and Public Safety, the Secretary of the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency, the Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol, the Director of the Department of Social Services and Alcohol Beverage Control, the Director of the Office of Traffic Safety, and the Director of the Attorney General's Division of Law Enforcement (Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community). This program was implemented to provide ways for agencies to be systematically brought together to help East Palo Alto's "Operation Safe Streets." This plan is based on the assumptions inherent in the Law Enforcement Incident Command System. This program helps facilitate ways in which the City of East Palo Alto can obtain resources from federal, state, local, and private agencies in a time of need.

#### The Community Policing Project

In 1993 the East Palo Alto Police Department was able to start a small community policing program. This was made possible by a grant from the Guggenheim Foundation of \$95,000. The resources were limited in this program, so the police department naturally focused on the most troubled sections of East Palo Alto.

#### **FIRE**

The City of East Palo Alto is served by the Menlo Park Fire Protection District which is located at the corner of University and Runnymede. (See Figure V-7) East Palo Alto has no immediate threat of wild fire, but is subject to structural and industrial fire. The main problem for the fire department is substandard water lines. Throughout the City there are areas in which the pipes are 6 inches in diameter and cannot hold the required flow of

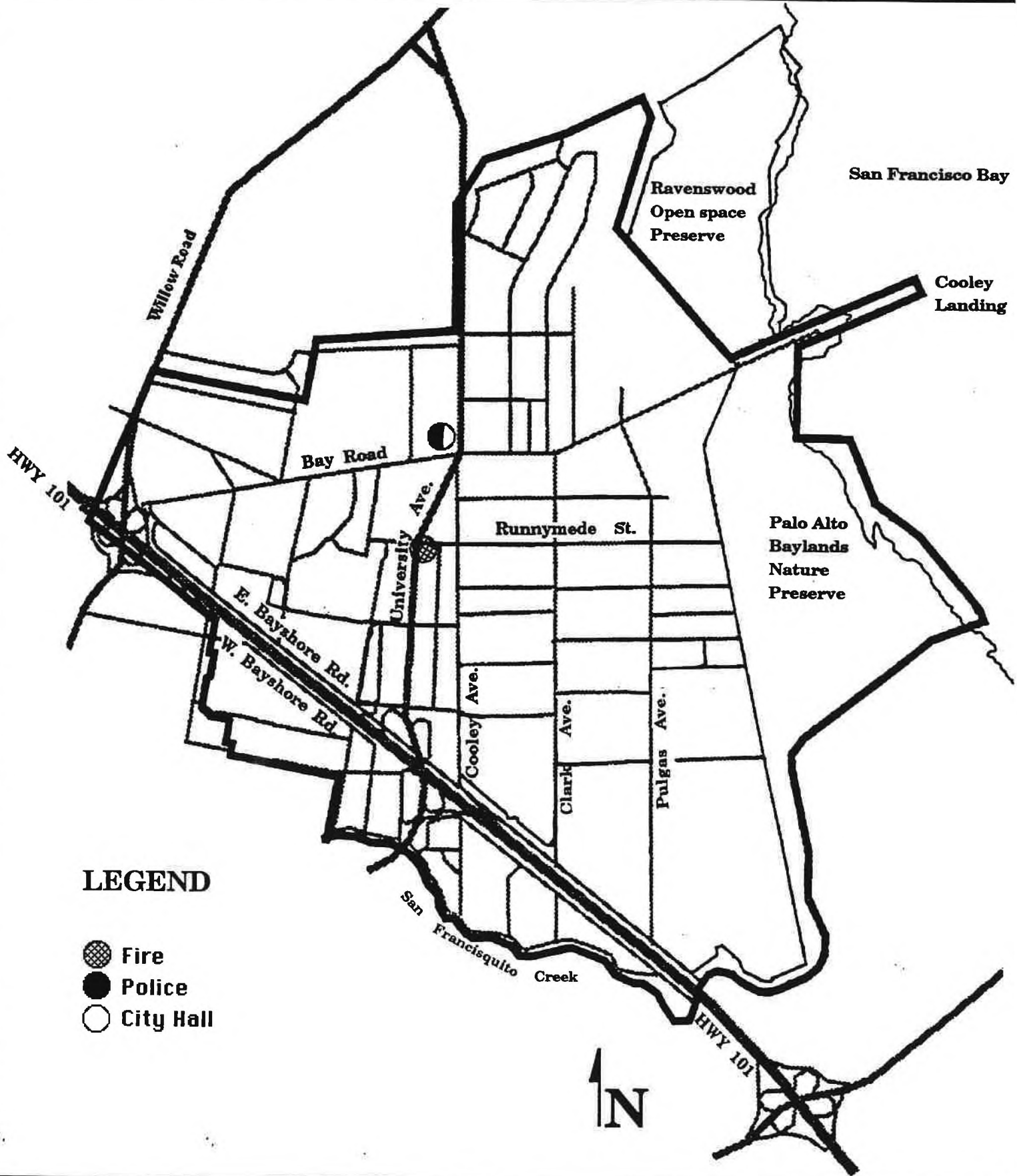
water. "In a community of 22,000 to 27,000 people the required fire flow for the city, by state standards, would be 4,500 gallons for a duration of 10 hours", (ICM Manual).

### **TRASH**

Trash service in East Palo Alto consists of two types. The first type is general waste collection and the second type is a recycling program. All trash service is provided by Browning Ferris Industry, a private company. The company collects trash throughout the City on a daily basis. Trash is transported to a dumpsite in Half Moon Bay. Browning Ferris Industries also provide special service under specific services, such as size and nature of trash to be collected. The company also conducts a semi-annual (spring and fall) pick up of large items such as mattresses or refrigerators.

### **RECYCLING**

The recycling service consists of pickup for business and commercial uses as well as a newly instated residential curbside pick up program. The recycling pickup occurs daily throughout the City. Browning Ferris Industries collects the following materials: aluminum, glass, plastic containers ( clear and translucent only ) and corrugated cardboard. Paper and motor oil are not collected, but can be dropped off at the recycling center. Recycling customers receive their bill along with their gas and electric bill.



**LEGEND**

- Fire
- Police
- City Hall

**EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo • City and Regional Planning Department • Profs. Z. Bilbija/D.F.G. Williams • CRP 351 • Fall 1994

## **SUMMARY**

East Palo Alto has learned, whether by necessity or desire, to work in cooperation with many other agencies. Having very little commercial, retail or industrial development, East Palo Alto has not been able to generate the revenue base needed to supply its citizens with an efficient level of service

Most of the problems with public facilities in East Palo Alto stem from lack of funds for upkeep and capital improvements or isolated potential water pollution problems. With little money available in the City's budget for expensive improvements such as street maintenance, or replacement of sewer pipes, the City is behind schedule in its capital improvement program. With the help of surrounding communities, crime rates have been decreasing in the City, but crime remains a deterrent to new businesses which could add to the City's tax base and could be used for capital improvements.

In general, the water service in East Palo Alto is good. The only problems that arise are associated with the two mutual water companies, which are relatively small in size and service potential. One of the major problems with the service from these two companies is the use of wells for their primary source of water. Pollution is the main problem with the use of these wells because they become contaminated by surface runoff, due to poor drainage in the City. East Palo Alto has a poor drainage and flood control system, thus, problems arise with the inflow of surface runoff carrying pollutants such as oils, trash, pesticides, etc. to wells and the natural environment. This debris is responsible for substandard water quality on some occasions. Aside from the problems with water quality, these companies provide more than adequate service to the residents in their districts. Water lines that were in poor condition due to age and earthquake damage have been replaced.

The lack of street improvements in the East Palo Alto Park area could be the result of ownership problems. According to the City of East Palo Alto, the section of land encompassing the unapproved streets on the substandard streets map (Figure V-3) is owned by the Palo Alto Park Mutual Water Company. Some local residents have shown interest in improving pavement conditions and storm drainage as well as adding curbs, sidewalks and gutters where needed. The concern of the citizens is directed toward the City, whom does not own the land, and is therefore not responsible to pay for improvements. The water company wants the City to take control of the street improvements, and is unwilling to pay for them. East Palo Alto is lacking funds needed to provide upgrades and improvements. San Mateo County Public Works (which maintains certain roads in the City) has directed and completed some street improvements on University Avenue such as the Newbridge Widening Project, however more projects such as these are needed.

There are many problems with the existing storm drains. The main problem is flooding. Streets in the low lying areas near the Runnymede Street outlet structure as well as the



streets in the Whiskey Gulch area of O'Connor Street are consistently flooded when it rains. "As part of the Gateway 101 Corridor Project's Specific Plan, 1,250 feet of 12-inch diameter pipe and 15-inch diameter pipe would be constructed to serve the area developments" (Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community). However, storm drain cleanup funded by an Oil Recycling Grant may alleviate some of these problems. Another problem associated with the inadequate storm drain system is water quality. Some of the effects are increased pollutants in the streets and Bay, unsightly debris and litter in streets and recreational facilities, odors in the drinking water, leaching of polluted water into the wells, and toxins flowing into sensitive open space in the surrounding bay land.

Street lighting and signals are said to be sufficient for the City's needs and safety. The available Lighting Map suggests that there are no areas lacking adequate service. However, additional street lighting and security lighting will be required in the Gateway 101 Corridor Area once that project is completed.

Crime ranked highest in East Palo Alto, compared to adjoining cities. In 1991, 30 percent of the crimes in East Palo Alto were violent crimes compared to 12 percent in Menlo Park and 5 percent in Palo Alto. This trend, however has been consistently decreasing for the last few years and shows the extent to which East Palo Alto and its police department have been working to deter crime in their community.

The coalition of agencies called The R.E.D. team (law enforcers from East Palo Alto, Palo Alto, Menlo Park, San Mateo County Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol) has allowed the East Palo Alto Police department to develop closer relations with the community and its population. The Police Department has been able to set up programs and lectures that better inform the City of crime and ways of protection, insuring a safer community.

The Community Policing Project has proven to be a great asset to the City of East Palo Alto. Through lectures, presentations, and personal contact with community members, the police have been able to establish pride in the community. The peace officers are not only called on to settle minor disputes, such as quarrels among families, but have been successful in clearing drug dealers off Bell Street as well. The Community Policing Project has shown a dramatic improvement in reducing crime. This will aid the police in fighting crime and reclaiming the streets for the people of the community. With the success of this project, the Federal Attorney's General's Office awarded East Palo Alto \$900,000 in 1993, which has allowed the continuation of this project.

The East Palo Alto fire station is in good condition. The threat of large fires still exists due to substandard water pipes. The only area restricting the fire department in responding to calls would be the poor condition of some of the streets in East Palo Alto.

# FUTURE PROSPECTS

## *Public Services*

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### **SEWAGE**

Changes in sewer service by the year 2010 will be related to the need gap. New development will increase population. This will require more service from the East Palo Alto and West Bay Sanitary Districts.

The East Palo Alto Sanitary District will provide the majority of service to potential redevelopment areas by the year 2010. This district will accommodate all redevelopment, except a small portion of the Ravenswood Industrial Park. The Gateway 101 Redevelopment is a major factor of change in the sanitary system in East Palo Alto. It will require wider sewer lines on Cooley Avenue from Bell Street to Green St. (8 in. to 10 in.), O'Connor Street from Pulgas Avenue (8 in. to 12 in.), and on Pulgas Avenue (8 in. to 12 in.). This district will also accommodate the Four Corners Project and portions of the Ravenswood Industrial Development area.

A future issue surrounding sewers for future discharge projections is residential capacity. The estimated per capita discharge is 68.2 gallons per day. This figure was used to estimate the need gap for discharge capacity of 491,381 gallons per day by multiplying it by the additional projected population in 2010.

The West Bay Sanitary district covers only a small portion of the Ravenswood Industrial area. This is a minor sewage service sub-area and has not been identified for industrial development.

### **WATER**

Water supply is a major concern for future water service in East Palo Alto. As projected by the Bay Area Users Association, the current water supply of 2.25 million gallons per day from the Hetch Hetchy Aqueduct will be nearly sufficient for the rate of consumption in the year 2010, which is projected to be approximately 2.3 million gallons per day. The water supply from San Francisco's Hetch Hetchy Aqueduct is difficult to project for the future. The possible supply of water in the entire Bay Area is dependent on the amount of rainfall at the given time of service. This creates difficulty in estimating the amount of water that will be available for this small part of Hetch Hetchy's distribution system. Only 66 percent of the total supply to East Palo Alto is currently being consumed. This leaves a large amount available for use by further development. The total supply to East Palo Alto in 2010 will be unknown because it is impossible to predict rainfall amounts and water demands of neighboring cities serviced by the Hetch Hetchy Aqueduct.

The East Palo Alto County Waterworks District is the only service area that will accommodate new development throughout the City. According to the Annual

Membership Survey conducted by the Bay Area Users Association (1993), water consumption in East Palo Alto will increase from 1.63 million gallons per day (present figure) to 2.3 millions gallons per day (projected figure) by the year 2010. This increase in consumption will create a need gap of 670,000 gallons per day. These increases will mainly come from new residential, industrial, and miscellaneous uses included in the Gateway 101 and the Ravenswood / Four Corners redevelopment projects. Commercial businesses in these regions are not considered major users of water because they are mainly retail.

To accommodate new development in 2010 there will be a need for new water lines surrounding the Gateway 101 Redevelopment Project. On the West side of the project area there will be new 12 inch diameter lines along East Bayshore Road, Capitol Avenue, and Donohoe Street. The eastern side of the project area will require 12 inch lines running through East Bayshore Road, Pulgas Avenue, and O'Connor Street. All new piping to support services to this area will be tied to the existing water line in Clark Avenue. Plans for new lines in the Ravenswood Industrial Development area have not been formulated. There is uncertainty as to what type of industrial activity will take place in that area.

Some of the piping for water service in all three water districts (East Palo Alto County Waterworks, O'Connor Tract Mutual Water Company, and Palo Alto Park Mutual Water Company) will need to be replaced or repaired before 2010 due to aging and corrosion.

## **STREETS**

A small portion of University Circle contains substandard streets. The East Palo Alto Mutual Water Co. service area, encompassing the Palo Alto Park area, is currently in dispute with the City over maintenance costs and responsibilities to improve the streets to San Mateo County standards. According to the City of East Palo Alto Public Works Dept., the City plans to provide service and improve the streets in the area by converting it to an Assessment District. If designated an Assessment District, the City will collect funds from citizens of the area in order to pay for improvement costs. The time of implementation is estimated within the next five years.

## **STORM DRAINS**

Surface drainage from new industrial development projects with their intensive site coverage could worsen the existing drainage problem unless corrected as part of the redevelopment effort. Until this problem is corrected, the lack of adequate drainage may tend to discourage prospective industrial tenants. Streets in the low lying areas near the Runnymede Street outlet structure, as well as the streets in the University Circle area of O'Connor Street, are consistently flooded when it rains. According to the Specific Plan of East Palo Alto, the Gateway 101 Corridor Project 1,250 feet of O'Connor Street is to be fitted with 12-inch and 15-inch diameter pipe which will serve the area developments. This should be adequate for the redevelopment of the University Circle and Gateway 101 Project.

Surface drainage in the projected development area of the Ravenswood Industrial Park will increase demand on the already insufficient drainage facility near the Runnymede Street outlet structure. This area will need to be serviced if the land use projections for the year 2010 are implemented.

### **LIGHTING**

According to the County of San Mateo all street lighting and signals under supervision of the Ravenswood Lighting District are sufficient and will not be impacted by an increase in population through the year 2010.

## *Public Services*

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### **SAFETY**

#### Police

The current level of service for East Palo Alto's Police Department is 1.49 officers per 1,000 residents. This falls just short of the California state wide average of 1.56 officers per 1,000 residents. The City is serviced by only one police station.

#### Fire

The East Palo Alto Fire Department currently has one fire station located on the corner of University and Runnymede. The fire department is under the jurisdiction of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District. The fire protection district essentially leaves control and administration of the fire department to San Mateo County. East Palo Alto's Fire Department is comprised of 91 full time employees, including administrative personnel. Although the City does not have a history of a high incidence of fires, there is always a threat of structural fire. Currently most of the emergency calls in the City are primarily medical. National standards for fire hydrants are 300 feet apart for industrial and 500 feet for residential. East Palo Alto's quantity of fire hydrants is equal to the national standard level and in some cases it is exceeded.

### **TRASH**

Currently, there is no threat to the existence or capacity of the landfill in Half Moon Bay. To further the life of all State-wide landfills, a measure (AB 1600) has been passed which will require all counties to reduce total trash intake by 50 percent by the year 2010.

## **SUMMARY**

The facilities and services for water in East Palo Alto are adequate for present conditions but will need to undergo some changes in the future. The main concern for future water service in East Palo Alto is the capacity and condition of the existing water distribution system and its ability to accommodate the increased demand for water services.

Changes in water service by the year 2010 is inevitable. New development and redevelopment proposed for the future will bring new groups of residential, commercial, and industrial users to East Palo Alto. This development will demand an increase in service as well as the expansion of water pipe diameter and reconstruction in these areas. Street improvements in the Palo Alto Park area are contingent upon the success of the Assessment District.

According to Lee Hawkins (District Supervisor for East Palo Alto Sanitary District), the capacity of the sewer system is adequate for total development in East Palo Alto. The changes in pipe capacity for Gateway 101 are the only major changes that will have to be made to implement the system. Pipe decay and age are the only problems that are likely to cause future breakdowns in the system.

East Palo Alto currently has a fund of 38 million dollars allocated to street improvement based on priority in the next five years. The Newbridge Street-Bay Road has been widened and repaved. Other phases of this improvement project such as the addition of bike Lanes, left turn medians, parking spaces and sidewalks, will be postponed until funds are allocated

For the projected population in East Palo Alto for the year 2010, 48 officers will be needed to meet the state wide averages. Presently East Palo Alto employs 35 officers. An additional 13 officers will be required to close the need gap for the year 2010. East Palo Alto's Police Department is assisted by five outside agencies (Menlo Park, San Mateo County Sheriff, C.H.P., Cal. State Police, F.B.I.). These agencies are assisting East Palo Alto and it is uncertain how long the City expects the assistance to continue, therefore East Palo Alto can not depend on these services in the future. Along with the 48 officers needed to meet the need gap, there may be a need for additional officers if there is a vacancy in any of these agencies.

In the future the only new threat of structural fire for the East Palo Alto Fire Department will be the Gateway 101 and Ravenswood Redevelopment Projects. These areas will represent the highest structural threat for the East Palo Alto Fire Department. Although there will be new structures and an increase in population, East Palo Alto's Fire Department will be able to meet the new demand. The East Palo Alto Fire Department is a Fire Protection District and is not under the direct control of the City, therefore it will not have to rely on the City for funding.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings related to public facilities and services imply the need for improvement in two major areas. First, public safety. Second, streets and storm drains as related to flooding, runoff and pollution of water resources. If left alone, these problem areas will continue to hinder East Palo Alto in its attempts to grow and improve as a city. East Palo Alto must address these problems in order to promote the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens.

Public safety problems need to be addressed. Although East Palo Alto was once dubbed per capita murder capital of the United States, the East Palo Alto Police, with help from other agencies have made great strides towards lowering the crime rate. While progress has been made, more is needed. East Palo Alto still has a crime problem.

The next major problem area is the street and storm drain system. Much of East Palo Alto's streets and storm drains are substandard which leads to a list of problems. Problems include: flooding, pollution (S.F. Bay), leaching and difficult transportation. Improvements to the current systems are under way and must continue in order to promote a desirable environment for business and residential uses.

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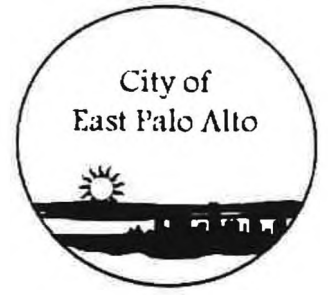
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# COMMUNITY SERVICES

# VI

## *COMMUNITY SERVICES*

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**METHODOLOGY**  
**EXISTING CONDITIONS**  
    **EDUCATION**  
    **HEALTH**  
    **PARKS**  
    **POSTAL SERVICE**  
    **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**  
**FUTURE PROSPECTS**  
    **PARKS**  
    **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**  
**REFERENCES**

This chapter covers the topics that fall under the heading of community services. Those topics include: education, parks, recreation, health care, child care, and community organizations. Community services is not a State mandated element of a general plan, however, the topics covered in this chapter are of importance to the community. Community services exist to meet the needs of local residents. In order for these services to be fully utilized, residents must be informed as to the location and extent of services available.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The information related to this chapter was collected mostly via secondary sources such as *The Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community* and *The East Palo Alto General Plan*. The remainder of the information was gathered through interviews with experts in East Palo Alto.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### EDUCATION

The Ravenswood School District jurisdiction includes all schools in East Palo Alto. The five schools in East Palo Alto are: Caesar Chavez Academy, Ronald McNair, Castano, and Brentwood Oaks. (See Figure VI-1) There is no high school in East Palo Alto, and the students are bussed to three schools in Sequoia Union High School District. The high schools serving East Palo Alto are: Claremont, Menlo-Atherton, and Woodside.

State law sets class capacity at 29 students per class and all schools in East Palo Alto have reached maximum capacity even after adding four classrooms in 1993. Physical structures of the schools are in good condition, after being renovated in 1985. The grounds are in poor condition; landscaping and paint are needed.

The American Society of Planning Officials report school site standards to be a minimum of 5 acres per 100 students enrolled. East Palo Alto's total school acreage is 57.8, which equates to 2.2 per 100 students enrolled. East Palo Alto would need to set aside 104.2 acres in order to meet these minimum standards.

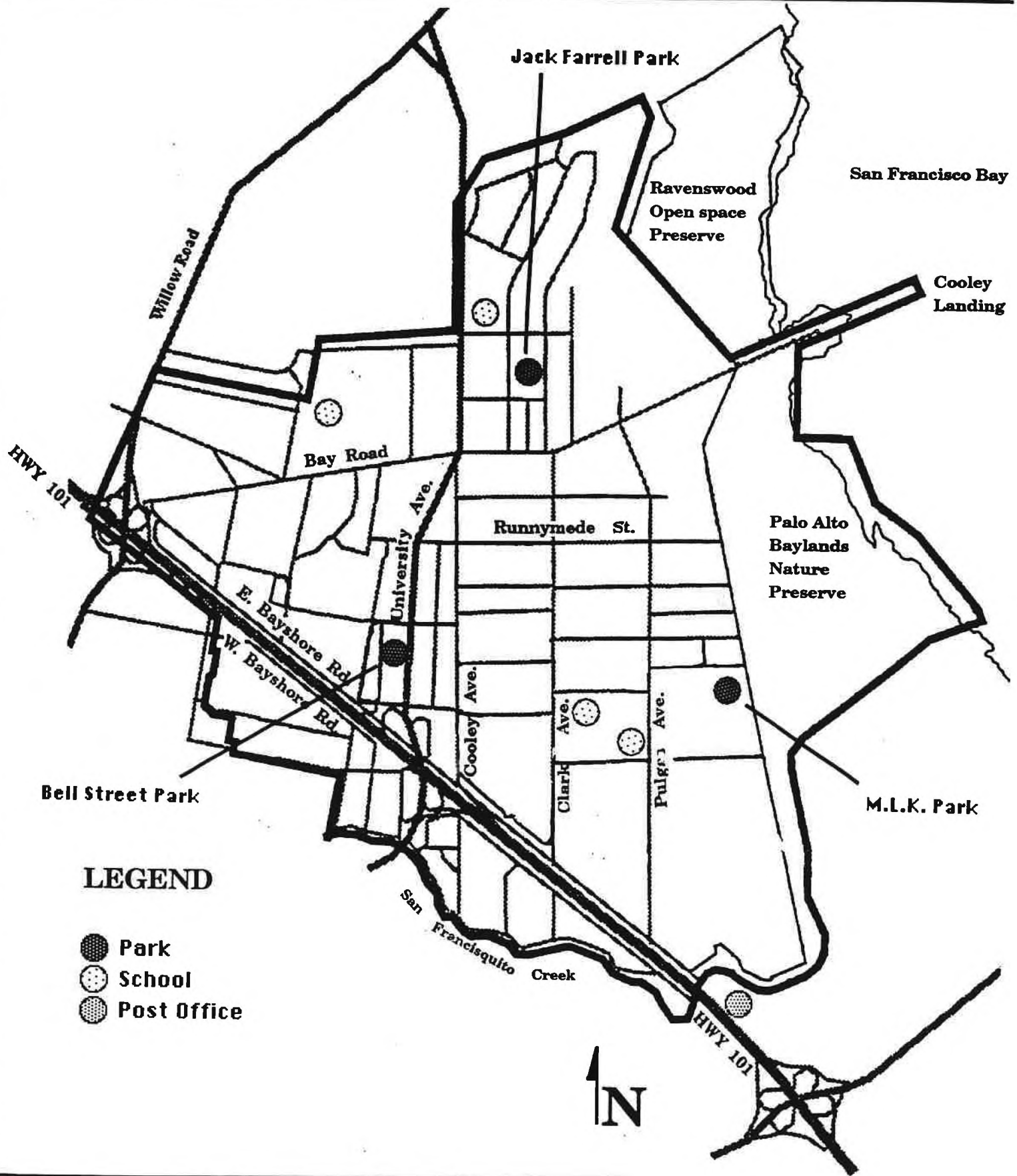
East Palo Alto is served by a branch of the San Mateo County Library. This branch is located in the municipal building. The library appears to be well used, especially by children.

### HEALTH

The main provider of health care in East Palo Alto is the Drew Health Foundation (D.H.F.), which is a private non-profit organization. The clinic is located on University Ave., across from the Gateway 101 Redevelopment Project. D.H.F. provides a full range of inpatient services and a more specialized outpatient service. Most of D.H.F.'s services are associated with Stanford University Medical Center, which include Stanford University Hospital (S.U.H.), and the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital (L.P.C.H.), its primary clinic being Packard Primary Care Clinic. D.H.F. has been the primary health care provider for 27 years in what is called a medically under-served community.

Lucile Packard Children's Hospital provides a full range of inpatient and outpatient services, and is associated with Stanford University Medical Center which is located in Palo Alto. L.P.C.H. is of extreme importance to East Palo Alto due to its inpatient services for children, including trauma and intensive care units.

"Although East Palo Alto has many health care providers there is still a need for 15,000 additional visits per year" (*Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community*). This reflects the lack of preventive pediatric services. Insufficient prenatal care for Medi-Cal and uninsured residents is another problem. In



1990 there were 1,200 uninsured births from East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Redwood City. Of the 1,200 uninsured births, 15 percent of the women entered prenatal care between seven and nine months, some with no care at all. The State of California's standards are for only 7 percent of women to seek prenatal care at such a late stage.

## **PARKS**

The City has three neighborhood parks that provide playgrounds and recreational facilities for sports, youth and family activities. Together they comprise about 1 percent of the City's land. East Palo Alto's redevelopment plans include major upgrades to the facilities provided by these parks. The existing condition of most of the parks is poor, although there is evidence that repairs have started.

For recreational purposes City residents also have access to the playing fields of the elementary schools located within the City's boundaries. The Ravenswood Elementary School District charges for use of these fields by organized groups. These facilities include: Cesar Chavez Academy, Brentwood Oaks, Ronald McNair, and Costano.

In addition, City residents currently have access to the playing fields of the old Ravenswood High School. When the Gateway 101 Redevelopment Project is implemented, approximately 11 acres of the 29.6 acres of land once occupied by the school will be earmarked for open space uses.

### Bell Street Park

Consisting of 5.08 acres, this facility provides an abundance of open space and recreational activities to East Palo Alto residents. Centrally located on the southwest corner of University Ave. and Bell St., it contains the school district headquarters, gymnasium, swimming pool, and playing fields. It currently serves as the community's main recreational facility. The condition of the park is not good, however, improvements are being made. At the present time, the City is working on a master plan for this park.

### Jack Farrell Park

Located at Fordham St. between Notre Dame and Michigan Ave., consisting of 3.62 acres, this park contains a baseball field, basketball courts, open space for various field sports, picnic areas, and a tot lot. This facility primarily serves the surrounding neighborhoods.

### Martin Luther King Jr. Park

Consisting of 5.62 acres, this park is located on Daisy Lane near the eastern terminus of O'Connor St. The park has been improved for public use and linked with the proposed shoreline trail system. Currently, there is a baseball field and public restrooms on the site. The restrooms do not meet the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act and will be replaced.

## **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

East Palo Alto has several community organizations that are currently working to provide needed services and empower the citizens. The East Palo Alto Community Alliance and Neighborhood Development Organization, EPA CAN DO, has initiated or plans to initiate several programs to assist and support small business, including:

- A small business loan program, with management/technical assistance
- Establishment of specific training programs for entrepreneurial residents
- A pilot program to grow and market organic vegetables for local restaurants and retail outlets
- A pilot "mentoring" program between Stanford MBA candidate students and East Palo Alto women
- Entrepreneurship classes for interested residents

Other functions of this group include ensuring that development occurs in concurrence with community residents' wishes and seeking opportunities to increase capital investment in areas where development financing is severely limited. EPA CAN DO has seven committees: Housing, Small Business, Development Team, Master Planning, Community Coalition to Bring a Bank To EPA, Banking, and Site Selection.

Other community resources and organizations that will influence the direction of economic growth in the City include:

- EPA Community Law Project (EPACLP) is a community assistance project staffed by Stanford law students and supported by faculty to facilitate community organizational and leadership development. This organization organizes workshops to help the community's residents understand the legal aspects of housing and redevelopment issues.
- EPA Historical and Agricultural Society (EPA HAS) is working to protect the cultural diversity and historic legacy of the community, and to promote appreciation of the City's rural and wildlife resources. The organization believes that the City's rural heritage can be aggressively marketed and preserved.
- Opportunities Industrialization Center West (OICW) provides vocational training and job placement services for the economically disadvantaged, and

works with local employers for a successful job match. The organization also helps troubled teens to graduate from high school and provides low income families with quality child care.

- Bayshore Employment Service provides counseling and placement services, job listings, and a resource library. They also offer Job Preparedness workshops in interview techniques and resume writing, among other things, and offer career guidance and training services.
- East Palo Alto Council of Tenants works on behalf of tenants to defend renter's rights and to inform tenants of their legal rights. This organization has worked to promote quality affordable housing and the preservation of older rental housing stock.
- Community Development Institute (CDI) works to combat the causes of racism and poverty and to promote political, economic, and social empowerment of the community. The organization offers technical assistance and professional services to community groups and public agencies, and aims toward strengthening the network of local institutions.

The extent to which these groups differ in their vision of the future of East Palo Alto, and the degree of control over the decision process, will influence the outcome of future development and the overall form the City will take.

## **CHILD CARE**

East Palo Alto has many private child care providers, however, no publicly subsidized child care is available within the City. Although there are many spaces available in private child care facilities, this is not indicative of a child care surplus. Given the economic characteristics of the population, not all members of the labor force in East Palo Alto can afford child care without some sort of public or private subsidy.

## **YOUTH PROGRAMS**

Youth programs exist only on paper, as the City is requesting funds for the following programs: sports camp, arts camp and midnight basketball. There is a demand for youth programs, plans have been made and costs have been identified.

## **SENIOR SERVICES**

East Palo Alto is currently involved in providing services to seniors. The East Palo Alto Senior Center offers programs, which consist of discussions on topics such as: nutrition (lunches), transportation, health, education, leisure, and recreation.



## **BIKEWAYS**

Bicycle paths are pathways for exclusive bicycle use, spatially or physically separated from motor vehicles. Although bicycle paths are the safest type of bikeway, they are the most expensive to construct and maintain.

Located along the open bay near Cooley Landing, is the Baylands Bicycle Trail. It is a network of bike trails along the open bay, developed by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and San Mateo County. According to Bob Emerett of the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation department, the Baylands Bicycle Trail will, in the future, cover 400 miles near and around San Francisco Bay. At the moment, bicycle access from East Palo Alto to the Baylands Bicycle trail is less than desirable. A bicycle path is proposed that will eventually connect East Palo Alto with Palo Alto. The path runs North along the Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve and will tie into the Baylands Bicycle Trail network.

Pedestrian and bicycle paths presently do not encourage use. In order for these paths to be utilized they need to be improved and they need to be connected to each other and the rest of the city.

## **POSTAL SERVICE**

The post office that serves East Palo Alto is located in Palo Alto. The 16 carriers assigned to East Palo Alto efficiently maintain the mail flow. According to Federal standards, 4 additional postal workers will be required to fill the need gap for the projected population by the year 2010.

## **SUMMARY**

Many of the community services in East Palo Alto are overused and underfunded. Education in East Palo Alto is substandard. It is substandard in two ways. The first being that the City has no high school and contains a large population of high school aged children. The second way that education is substandard is that the total school acreage is less than half of what is considered to be minimum standard (Society of Planning Officials). Health care services in East Palo Alto are not adequate to meet the needs of residents. Youth and senior services are both underfunded. Private community service organizations provide important services to the community. There is in East Palo Alto a strong commitment to making all of these programs work.

## **FUTURE PROSPECTS**

Many of the issues covered in this chapter will change dramatically during the next twenty years. The topics in this chapter are of relevance and importance on a daily basis, they cannot remain stagnant, but must undergo change to keep pace with the needs of the community.

### **EDUCATION**

There are currently 2585 students enrolled in East Palo Alto schools. The projected enrollment for 2010 is 3240 students. These figures suggest an increase of approximately 655 additional school age children by the year 2010. To provide for the increased demand East Palo Alto's need gap is 23 more classrooms (K-8).

### **PARKS**

The City of East Palo Alto is currently in the process of upgrading all of its park facilities. Bell Street Park improvements include construction of: a new swimming pool, tennis courts, amphitheater, and a community center. These improvements are scheduled to be complete by the year 2004. The existing gymnasium at Bell Street Park is scheduled to be rehabilitated by mid 1996. Jack Farrell Park improvements will include new recreational equipment, baseball fields, restrooms, and snack bar; these improvements will be complete by mid 1996. Martin Luther King Jr. Park will also undergo renovation to be completed by mid 1996. Renovation will include new restrooms, new snack bar, and improved facilities.

#### Parks Need Gap

According to the Quimby Act accepted standards for urban parks and recreation facilities are between 3 and 5 acres of parks per 1,000 population. These standards indicate a need for 63.5 to 115 acres of neighborhood and community parks for a community the size of East Palo Alto (1990 population 23,451). The existing parks East Palo Alto total 14.3 acres, leaving a deficit of 49.2 to 110.7 acres. The City also includes school acreage when figuring out the available area for parks and recreation. With the schools included East Palo Alto presently has 51.7 acres of park land, still leaving a deficit of 11.8 to 63.3 acres.

If the population of East Palo Alto in 2010 is expected to be 29,300, then 90 to 150 acres of park land will be needed in the City to sufficiently provide for the new population. With the development of the Gateway 101 project 11 acres of park land and open space will be added. The total park area in the year 2010 will be 62.7 acres, leaving a deficit of 27.3 to 87.3 acres. Additional park lands are needed to meet standards for neighborhood and community parks. Because of this shortage, existing facilities are being overused, which destroys the value of the facilities for their respective neighborhood. Increases in

population would compound the problems in the future if additional facilities are not provided.

## **CHILD CARE**

With 3,500 children needing daily care, and 992 slots being supplied (although not completely utilized), the need gap is approximately 2,500 child care slots. When the Gateway Project is complete, the demand for child care will increase as local employment increases. The need gap will then rise to approximately 3,000 slots.

## **SENIOR SERVICES**

By the year 2010, there will be an additional 350 seniors requiring the service of the East Palo Alto Senior Center. Although services are currently limited, the expansion of Senior Services to accommodate growth are planned for the future.

## **BIKEWAYS**

Presently, and in the future, bikeways will be a low priority for East Palo Alto residents. Construction and maintenance of bikeways are too costly, and East Palo Alto does not have a budget to support such an amenity. Bikeways are not considered in the five-year projections of East Palo Alto's Capitol Improvement Program. The City will be using the funds allocated to the Capitol Improvement Program for street improvement projects, City park upgrades, sewage system upgrades and the construction and maintenance of public facilities.

## **CONCLUSION**

All of the topics covered in this chapter are of vital importance to the future of East Palo. Parks and outdoor recreation will have the most visible improvements. Private community service organizations will continue to be a strong presence in the City. Funding will need to be found somewhere for child care, youth and senior services, as well as health care. More classrooms will need to be created in order to meet the needs of future students.

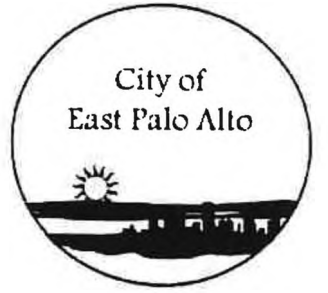
The two most important community service issues for the future of East Palo Alto are: education and health care. The City is described as "medically underserved", in order for residents to be adequately served there would need to be greater access to health care. Education is a vital issue to any community. The City will need to look into the importance of having a high school in the community and a need for additional classrooms. The community service organizations are a strong community asset.

## **REFERENCES**

City of East Palo Alto. East Palo Alto Community Plan and EIR San Mateo County 1982.

City of East Palo Alto. General Plan 1986.

City of East Palo Alto. Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community 1994.



# CIRCULATION

# VII

# *CIRCULATION*

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- METHODOLOGY**
- EXISTING CONDITIONS**
  - CIRCULATION ROUTES
  - ALTERNATE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION
  - SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
- FUTURE PROSPECTS**
  - CIRCULATION ROUTES
  - ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION
  - SUMMARY
- CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the existing circulation system within East Palo Alto. A well balanced circulation system provides the means for moving people and goods in a safe and efficient manner. California state law requires that the General Plan include a Circulation Element. The items that must be covered by mandate in the Circulation Element include major thoroughfares, transportation routes, and terminals. The scope of this chapter is to first provide an overview of the existing circulation conditions of East Palo Alto and secondly, to access of the findings.

This chapter will investigate two major topics: Circulation issues and transportation modes.

Issues addressed under circulation include:

- The existing conditions of the circulation routes in and through East Palo Alto (State Highways, County and City streets)
- Street classification including arterial, collector, and local streets
- Trip generation; trips to and from different land uses and future projects
- Trip distribution
- Existing and future traffic volumes for State highways and local streets
- Capacity of streets
- Dangerous intersections
- Traffic improvements

Transportation mode issues include:

- Present and future mass transit routes
- Paratransit services
- Private bus services
- Air travel
- Harbors

The routes of the public transportation system are examined to find the location of stops, destinations, and the convenience to the user. Additional issues include pedestrian walkways and their access to facilities, bikeways and parking issues.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter contains some information gathered from secondary sources. The following sources were used to analyze and comprehend the existing circulation conditions of East Palo Alto: Census data from 1980 to 1990; the General Plan of San Mateo County; studies performed by Caltrans, District 4; OPR General Plan Guidelines; the General Plan of East Palo Alto (1986); the Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community (1994).

In addition, phone interviews were conducted in order to collect unavailable information as well as clarify any discrepancies found in the data researched. Names of the contacts interviewed for the purpose of collecting and verifying circulation information are provided in the Reference section of this chapter

# **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

## **CIRCULATION ROUTES**

The following data is an accumulation of the research gathered regarding the circulation routes of East Palo Alto. The information is divided into seven areas to better demonstrate the findings. These areas include:

- Existing conditions
- Trip generation
- Trip distribution and traffic assignment
- Traffic volumes
- Traffic accidents
- Capacity analysis
- Traffic improvements

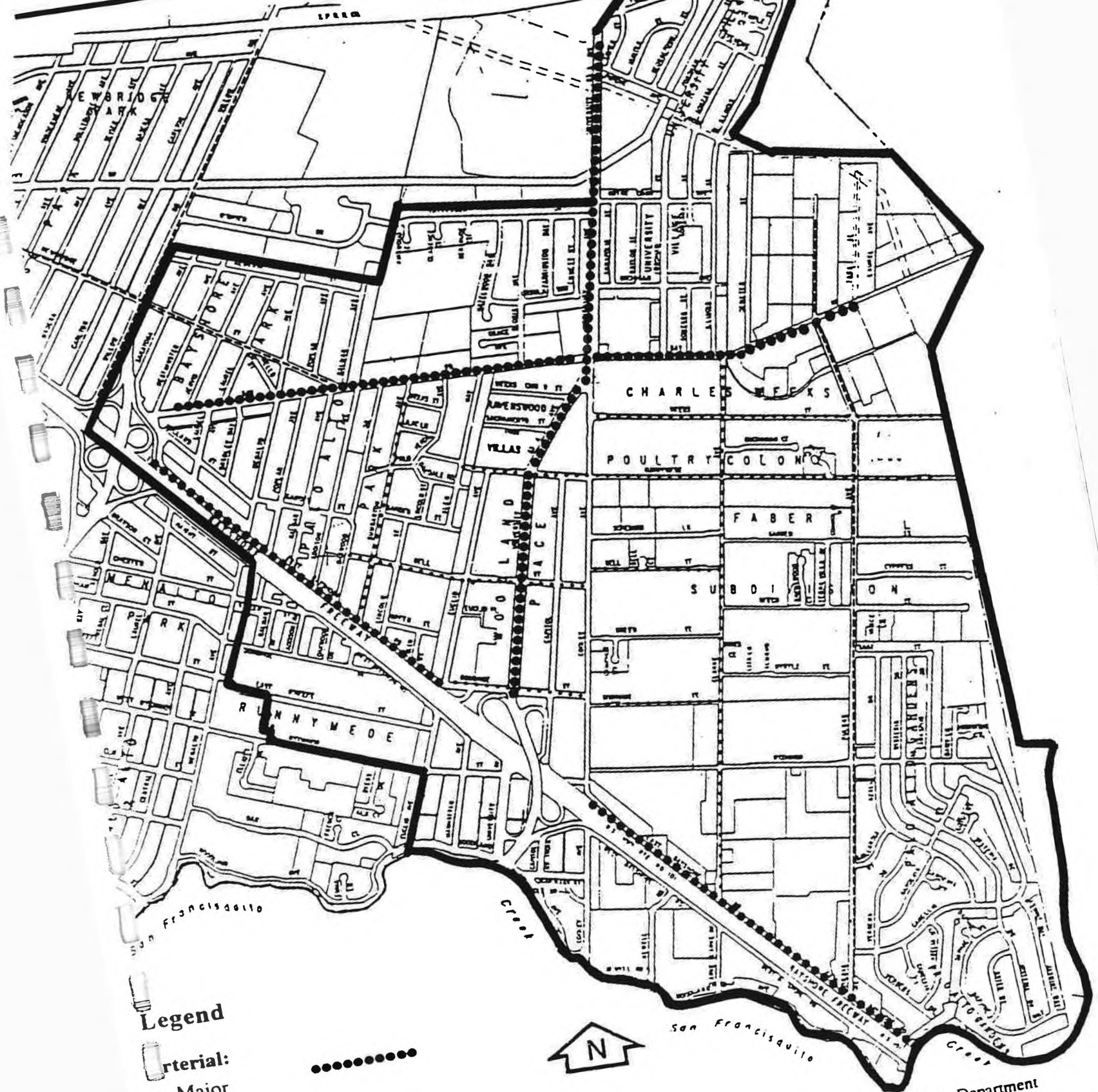
There are two major highways serving East Palo Alto; Highway 101 and California Route 84. The only transportation routes under the jurisdiction of San Mateo County are Willow Road and University Avenue. All other streets are controlled and maintained by the City of East Palo Alto.

Information obtained through the traffic division of the East Palo Alto Public Works Department specified the existing hierarchy of streets in the City (See Table VII-1 and Figure VII-1).






FIGURE VII-1

# STREET HIERARCHY



### Legend

-  Arterial: Major
-  Minor
-  Collector:

Source: EPA Public Works Department

Table VII-1 Street Hierarchy

Arterial Streets:

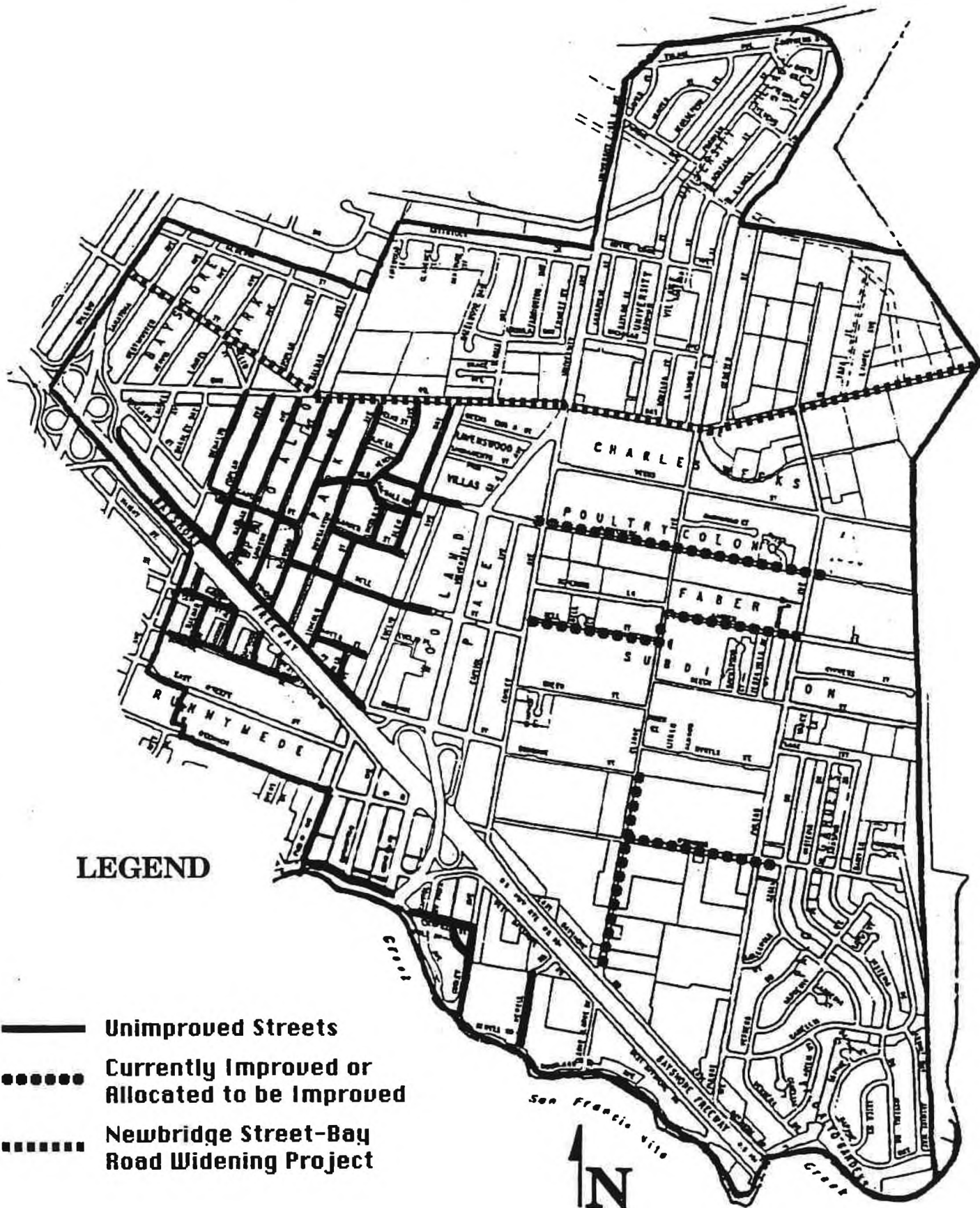
University Ave.  
Pulgas Ave.  
Weeks  
Belle  
Willow Rd.  
*West of University Ave.:*  
Dumbarton

Collector Streets:

*East of University Ave.:*  
Runnymede  
Bay Rd./Newbridge St.  
Donohoe  
Clark  
*\*All other streets local*

University Avenue is the only four lane thoroughfare in the City except for a small stretch of Bay Rd. between Willow Rd. and University Ave.

Many of the streets are in poor condition. Field observations and information provided by the county demonstrate the need for street improvements. A number of the streets in East Palo alto are at sub-standard according to the San Mateo County Public Works Department. See Figure VII-2 for locations of unimproved streets. The Infrastructure section of this report provides more detailed explanation of the sub-standard streets within the City.



**EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

### Trip Generation

The characteristics of trips generated by a development vary with the type of land use and the intensity of the activity. According to the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE), five primary characteristics are significant in the analysis of site-generated traffic:

1. The total number of trips generated, commonly calculated as the product of the appropriate trip-generation rate per unit of activity and the amount of activity.
2. The number of trips to and from the site during the peak hours of the adjacent street.
3. The number of trips to and from the site during the peak(s) of the generator.
4. Daily variation.
5. Monthly variation.

### Trip Distribution and Traffic Assignment

Trip distribution refers to the type of traffic flowing through the community and where each trip destination is located. A great deal of traffic is attributed to trucks traveling to and from Ravenswood Industrial Park. The City has a designated set of truck routes to control these trips. See Figure VII-3 on the following page. The roads leading to the industrial park have been paved, but have not been widened to accommodate two way traffic with large trucks.

University Avenue is a major regional highway artery. Vehicles traveling between Highway 101 and Dumbarton Bridge must pass directly through the center of East Palo Alto to reach their destination.

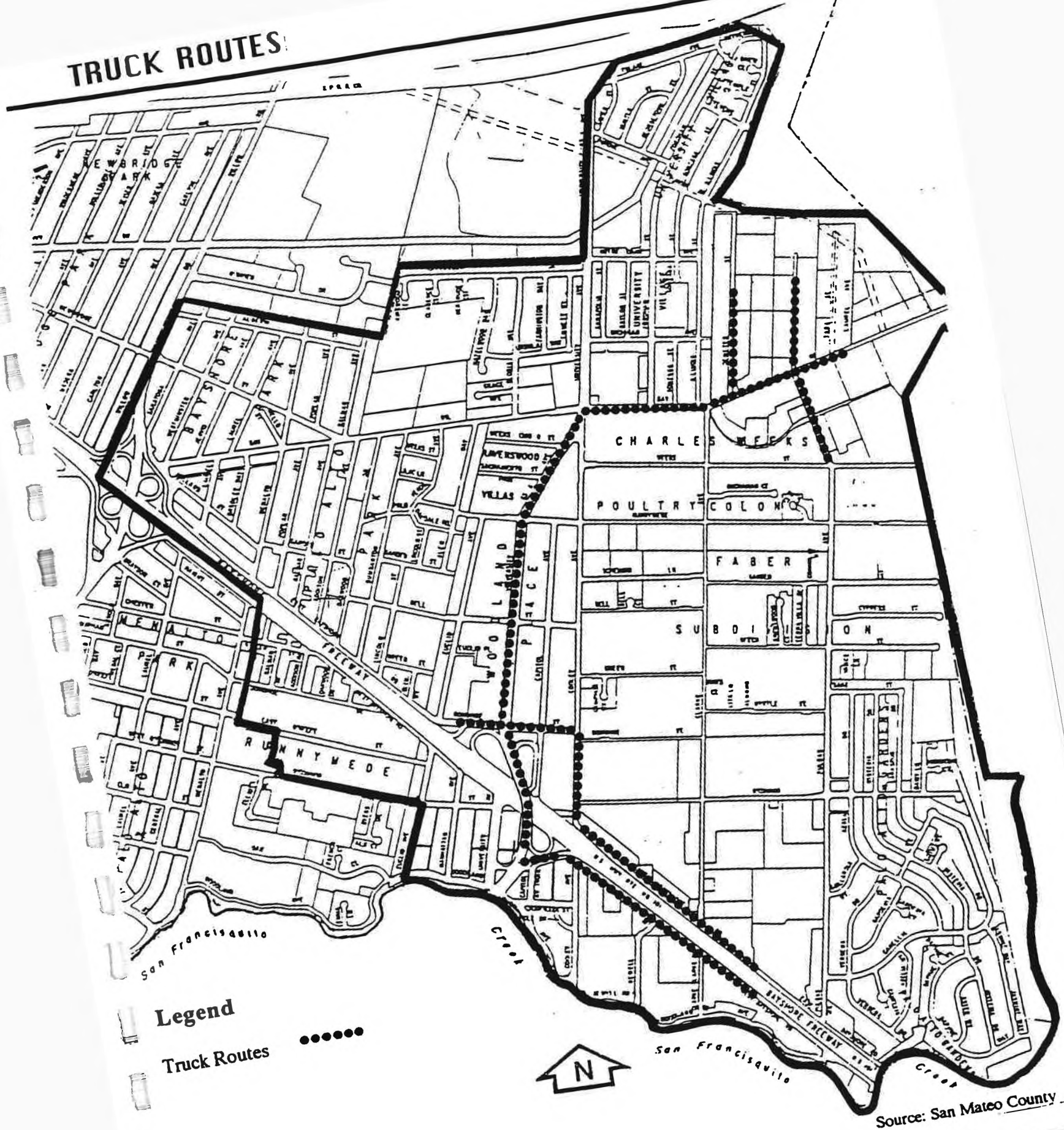
### Existing Traffic Volumes

Traffic volume can be defined as the number of vehicles that travel on a street each day. According to information provided by the City of East Palo Alto, the average daily traffic volume on University Avenue is approximately 30,000 vehicles daily. This can be compared to 1980, when the daily traffic volume was 12,500 according to information provided by the County of San Mateo. Other traffic counts in the City are unavailable at this time.

Caltrans provided a listing of the 1993 traffic volumes at certain points on Highways 101 and 84. This information is portrayed in Table VII-2 and in Figure VII-4. These figures represent the average annual number of vehicles traveling in each direction each day.

FIGURE VII-3

# TRUCK ROUTES



## Legend

Truck Routes



Source: San Mateo County

# EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo • City and Regional Planning Department • Prof. Z. Bilbija/D.F.G. Williams • CRP 351 • Fall 1994

Table VII-2 Traffic Volumes

<u>Highway 101</u>		<u>Highway 84</u>	
Willow Rd.	165,000	Willow Rd.	40,000
University Ave.	168,000	University Ave.	52,000

According to traffic counts conducted by the County of San Mateo, traffic volumes were considerably lower in 1980. These figures represent the average annual number of vehicles each direction each day.

Table VII-3 Traffic Volumes

<u>Highway 101</u>		<u>Highway 84</u>	
Willow Rd.	128,000	Willow Rd.	30,000
University Ave.	121,000		

Traffic Accidents

The traffic division of the East Palo Alto Police department has supplied data regarding dangerous intersections in the City.

Highest Rate of Accidents (injury-fatality):

1. University Ave. at Donohoe St.
2. University Ave. at Runnymede St.
3. Willow Rd. at Newbridge St.

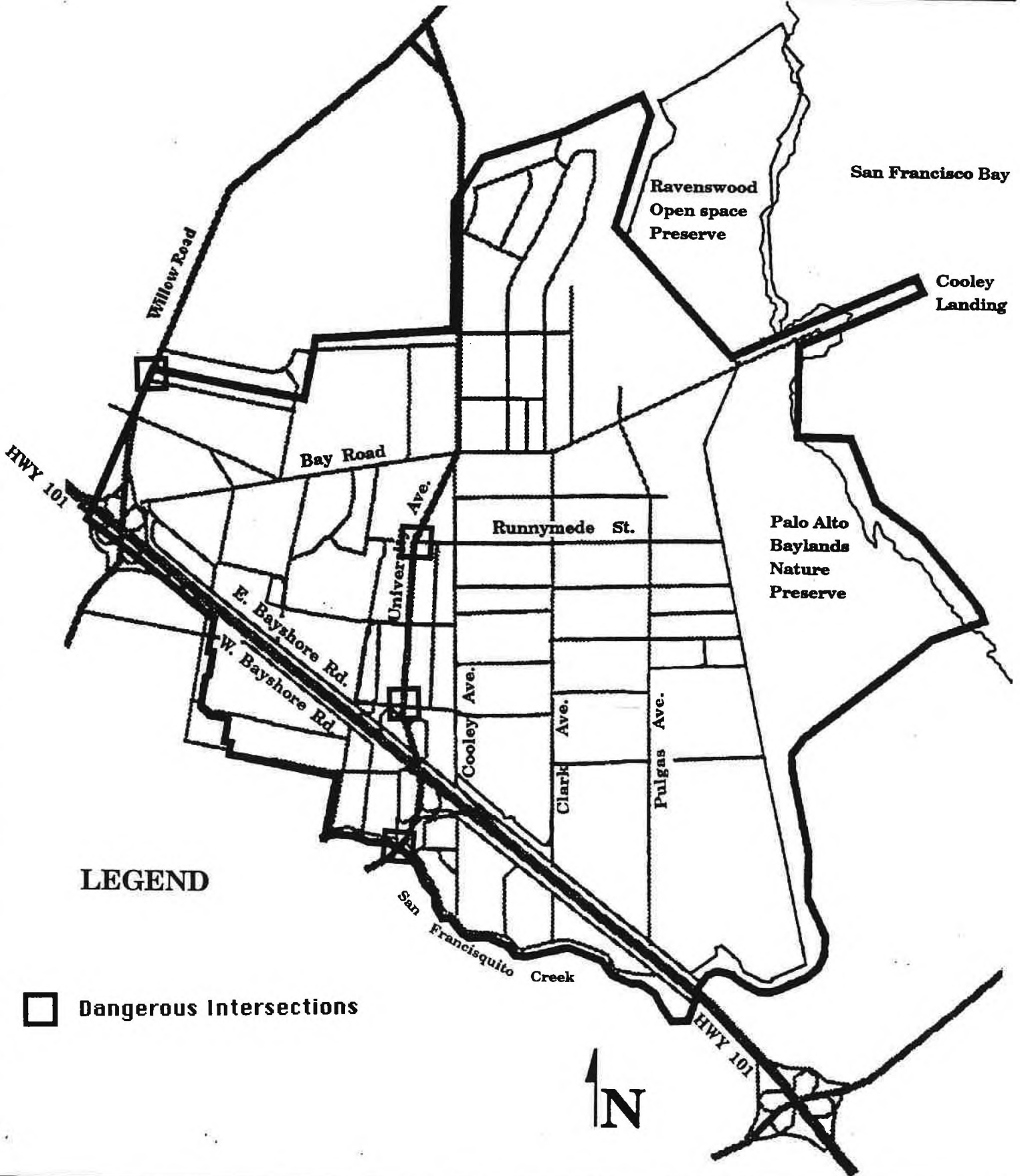
Hit and Run Accidents:

University Ave. at Woodland Ave.

D.U.I.:

1. University Ave between Bay Rd. and Highway 101
2. Cooley Ave. between East Bayshore Rd. and Weeks St.

These intersections are the scene of the most accidents in East Palo Alto and where most of the traffic in East Palo Alto travels. (See Figure VII-4)



LEGEND

□ Dangerous Intersections

EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

### Traffic Improvements

Figure VII-2, presented earlier, provides a listing of the streets in East Palo Alto that have been improved recently. Many are still below standard levels of service, but will be improved when funding is available.

Specifically, there are proposals to widen Bay Rd. and improve the streets leading to Ravenswood Industrial Park and the future commercial redevelopment project. According to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, a number of improvement projects have been planned for the University Avenue interchange at Highway 101.

## **ALTERNATE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION**

### Ridership and Commuting

Ridership is a means to gauge which citizens are using public transportation. Based on assumptions and research, the typical users of public transportation systems are people with low income, the elderly, disabled, households with no car and in some cases school children. In East Palo Alto, according to the 1994 Housing Element Update, 22.3 percent of the households are categorized as very low income and 14.7 percent are low income. The elderly make up 5.6 percent of East Palo Alto's population, while 13.3 percent of the population have a mobility or self-care limitation disability. In addition, 9.4 percent of the housing units have no car and 41.8 percent have only one car.

Commuting patterns also reflect what forms of transportation East Palo Alto residents use to travel to work. Table VII-4 below shows the commute patterns of East Palo Alto and San Mateo County.

**Table VII-4 Commuting Patterns**

Commuting Patterns for East Palo Alto and San Mateo County		
Method	East Palo Alto	San Mateo County
Automobile (Drove Alone)	67.10%	72.49%
Carpool	18.84%	13.01%
Motorcycle	0.18%	0.38%
Public Transit Bus	7.02%	3.83%
Public Train	1.17%	1.64%
Bicycle	1.49%	0.75%
Walk	1.94%	2.56%

Source: U S Census, 1990

According to the 1990 Census report, 90 percent of the East Palo Alto's workforce commute outside the City limits. Of these commuters, 86 percent use automobiles, 7 percent use the transit bus, 1.2 percent ride the train, 1.5 percent ride bicycles and 1.9



percent walk. San Mateo County has a higher percentage of the population that use automobiles, ride motorcycles, ride public trains and walk. East Palo Alto has a higher percentage of its population who carpool, ride the County transit system and ride bicycles.

### Transit Routes

Existing public transit routes in East Palo Alto have not changed since 1986. They are shown in Figure VII-5 on the following page. There are a total of three transit routes, Route 6A, 50C and 50V. Route 50V travels from the Onetta Harris Community Center in Menlo Park to the City Government Center in East Palo Alto via Newbridge Street and Bay Road. From the Government Center, Route 50V continues south, down University Avenue to the Palo Alto CalTrain Station with a final destination at Stanford Shopping Center. Route 50C begins at the City Government City Center located at University Avenue and Bay Road. The route travels on various streets through the Weeks Poultry District and Palo Alto Gardens before crossing the Bayshore Freeway. The route then passes through the University Circle commercial district and continues on to Palo Alto via University Avenue. The destination of Route 50C is the Palo Alto CalTrain Station and Stanford Shopping Center. Route 6A begins in the neighborhoods near the Government Center. It travels on Bay Road and Newbridge before leaving East Palo Alto Bus Map on Willow Road. Route 6A stops at the Redwood City CalTrain Station with a final destination of Canada College in Woodside.

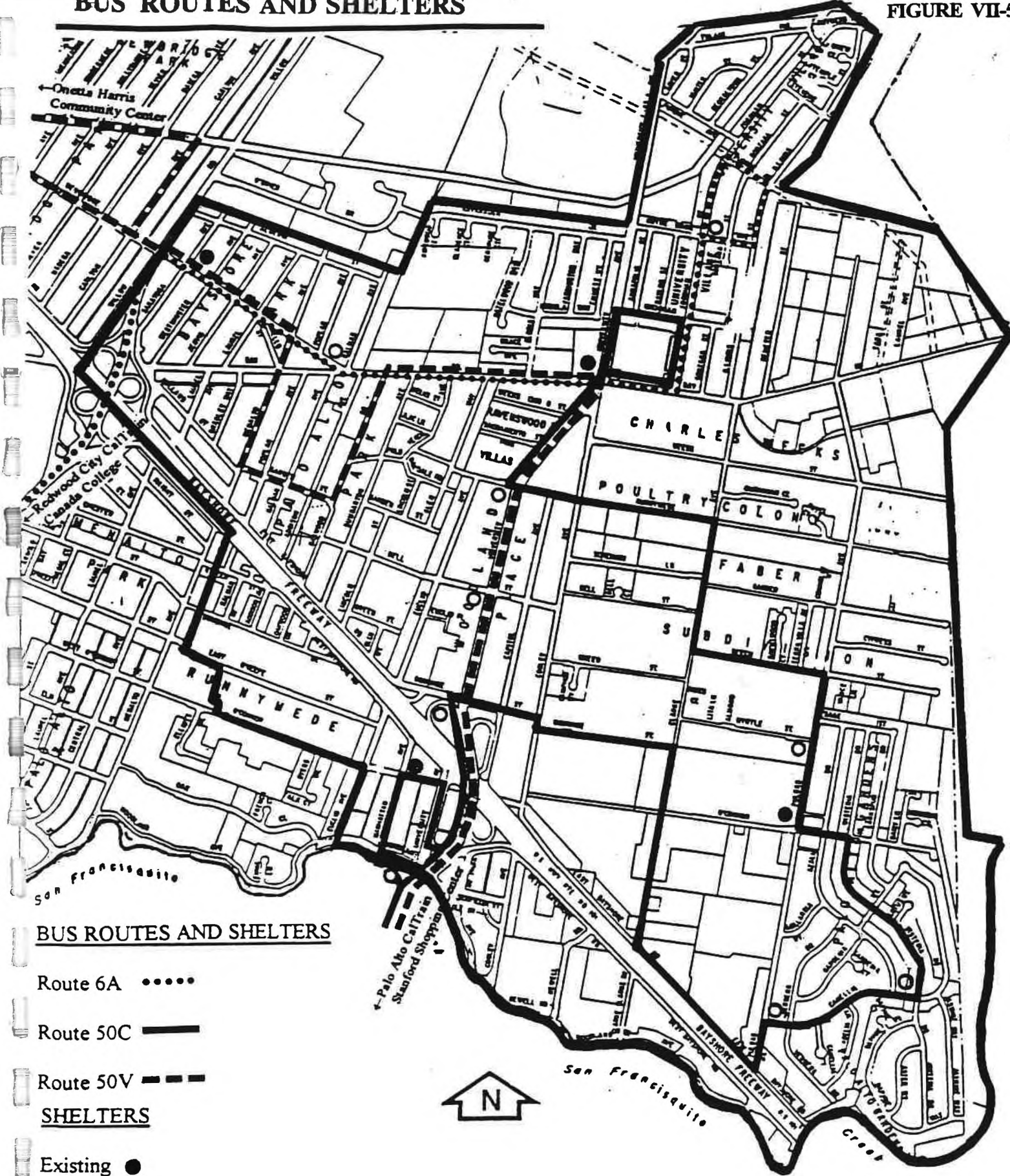
Based on the information available, specific transit stops within East Palo Alto cannot be determined. SamTrans only provides time checks at various locations. Specific transit stop times are not provided. Busses run every 30 minutes Monday through Saturday and every 60 minutes on Sundays and holidays.

Connections and transfers to other transportation service providers are possible. Inter-agency transfers allow a SamTrans rider access to the following providers:

- AC Transit
- BART
- CalTrain
- Dumbarton Express
- Golden Gate Transit
- San Francisco Muni
- Santa Clara County Transit Agency

Although many transfer connections are possible, it requires a minimum of a 20-30 minute local bus trip to arrive at a transfer point.

Some existing transit stops are sheltered. Based on available information, additional sheltered stops are proposed. Refer to Figure VII-5 to see locations of existing and proposed sheltered transit stops.



Source: San Mateo Transit District, 1994  
East Palo Alto General Plan, 1986

**EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

Fares for SamTrans service are as follows:

- Adult                 \$.85
- Senior               \$.25
- Disabled             \$.25
- Youth                 \$.35

As of January 1, 1995, SamTrans will be raising its fare rates. Adult and youth rates will increase by fifteen cents. Senior and disability fares will increase by ten cents. There are also various transit passes depending on the users' frequency of use. The passes can save the rider money, making public transit more economical.

#### Paratransit

Paratransit are transportation systems, such as jitneys, carpooling, vanpooling, taxi service and dial-a-ride arrangements. Redi-wheels is a San Mateo County Paratransit service available to those people who are unable, due to a physical or mental disability (including mobility or cognitive impairment) to independently use the regular public fixed-route transportation (bus, BART, train, etc.). Of East Palo Alto's population, 13.3 percent have a mobility or selfcare limitation. Although disabled, anyone who desires the service of Redi-Wheels must fill out a prospective rider application and be approved by Redi-Wheels before the service can be used. According to Mark Whitefield of Redi-Wheels, there are 251 East Palo Alto residents enrolled in the Redi-Wheels program. One hundred seventeen of those people are listed as active. "Active" means the services have been used by that individual in the last 14 months. The remaining 134 residents are listed as "inactive" and have not used Redi-Wheels in the last 14 months.

Redi-Wheels serves the entire San Mateo County and the City of Palo Alto. Redi-Wheels uses small buses, mini-vans and taxis to cover its service area. The hours of operation are 6 AM to 8 PM, seven days a week. A one-way fare is \$.85. Users are allowed eight one-way trips per month, scheduled in advance. Additional rides may be scheduled but only if space is available. Like SamTrans, Redi-Wheels will also be raising their fares: As of January 1, 1995, One-way trips will be \$1.00. Hours of operation will increase from 6 AM to 12 midnight, seven days a week.

Additional Paratransit services are available to East Palo Alto residents. RIDES is a free Bay Area service assisting people who want to carpool or vanpooling contacts. RIDES can provide a match list with names, phone numbers and commute schedules of neighbors who want to share a ride.

#### Private Rail and Bus Service

CalTrain terminals are located in surrounding municipalities. The closest CalTrain stations for East Palo Alto are located in Palo Alto approximately 2 miles away and in Menlo Park approximately 3 miles away. The Menlo Park and Palo Alto terminals are easily accessible by a twenty minute SamTrans bus ride. Routes 50C and 50V stop at the Palo Alto terminal, while Route 6A stops at the Menlo Park terminal.

The closest Amtrak terminals are in San Jose approximately 18 miles away to the southeast or in Fremont approximately 11 miles away, depending on the destination. East Palo Alto residents would have to drive or use the public transportation system to access Amtrak terminals. Use of the inter-agency transfer agreement makes access possible for those who do not have an automobile and require public transportation .

A spur of Southern Pacific Railroad's Dumbarton Line exists in East Palo Alto. From the Dumbarton Line, the spur runs south, parallel to Illinois Street. The spur serves as the dividing line between University Village East and Ravenswood Industrial Park. According to Larry Lyberger of Southern Pacific Railroad, the spur is not in use at this time but has not been abandoned.

The closest Greyhound Bus terminal is in Mountain View just about 9 miles south. East Palo Alto residents would have to drive or ride the bus to Mountain View. Traveling via transit bus would require an inter-agency transfer using the Santa Clara Transportation Agency.

#### Airports

The two major airports nearest to East Palo Alto are San Jose International located approximately 15 miles south of East Palo Alto and San Francisco International, located roughly 20 miles north of East Palo Alto. The Palo Alto/Santa Clara County airport, located just south of East Palo Alto offers access to small aircraft. To access San Francisco International, East Palo Alto residents would need to drive or travel via SamTrans. To access San Jose International, residents would need to drive or use Santa Clara County Transit Agency. Private airport shuttles and taxis also provide services to San Jose and San Francisco Airports.

#### Harbors

East Palo Alto does not have a harbor. Cooley Landing has been investigated for small craft harbor possibilities. Currently, the landing is surrounded by mud flats. Mayfield Slough, which serves as an access channel to the Palo Alto Yacht Club flows close to Cooley Landing. The depths of the slough vary between 6 and 14 feet.

#### Bicycle Routes

There are various types of bikeways: bike paths, bike lanes, and bike routes.

Bicycle paths are pathways for exclusive bicycle use, spatially or physically separated from motor vehicles. Although bicycle paths are the safest type of bikeway, they are the most expensive to construct and maintain.

Bicycle lanes are situated on the edge of the paved area of an existing road. Lanes are identified by signs, painted lines, and pavement markings. Bicycle lanes are 7 to 12 feet from the curb and vehicular and pedestrian cross-traffic is permitted. Parking may also be permitted on the curb side of the bike lane if desired.

Bicycle routes are designated as joint motor vehicle/bicycle facilities and are identified by signs only. There are no special lane markings or pavement markings. Routes are the least expensive type of bikeway but the least desirable from a safety perspective.

Bikeways in East Palo Alto appear to be a very low priority. The road surfaces in East Palo Alto are in need of repair and maintenance. Bikeway construction will not be an issue until the City's budget will allow such amenities and the required road repairs are made. Based on the information available, there are existing bikeways. Refer to Figure VII-6 on the following page for bikeways designated by the 1986 East Palo Alto General Plan. The majority of East Palo Alto's bikeways are bicycle routes. See Appendix C-1 Bicycle Routes for streets serving as bicycle routes. Bicycle lanes exist in two locations, Pulgas Avenue and on Bay Road between University Avenue and Pulgas Avenue. Although Pulgas Avenue is shown as having a bicycle lane, it is technically too narrow to accommodate a bicycle lane. The remaining sections of Bay Road and Newbridge Street will have bicycle lanes after the roads have been widened. A bicycle path is proposed that will eventually connect East Palo Alto with Palo Alto. The path runs north along the Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve and will tie into the Baylands Bicycle Trail network.

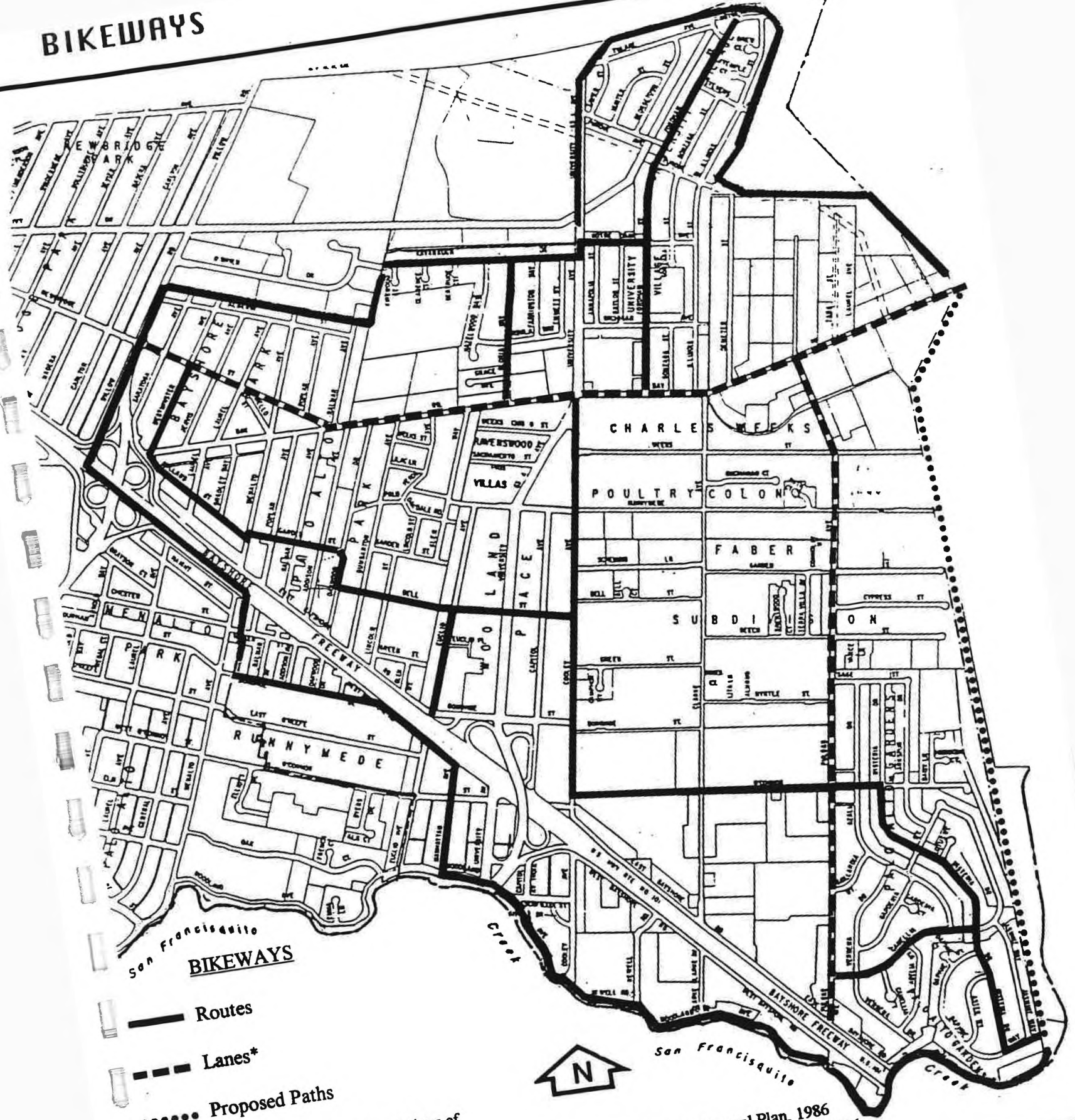
Also located along the open bay near Cooley Landing, is the Baylands Bicycle Trail. It is a network of bike trails along the open bay, developed by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and San Mateo County. According to Bob Emerett of the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation department, the Baylands Bicycle Trail will, in the future, cover 400 miles near and around San Francisco Bay. At the moment, bicycle access from East Palo Alto to the Baylands Bicycle trail is less than desirable. Based on observations, Bay Road, which runs through Ravenswood Industrial Park towards Cooley Landing, is narrow with poor surface quality. The current conditions do not encourage bicycle use.




#### Pedestrian Walkways

From class observations, an interconnected system of pedestrian walkways does not exist in East Palo Alto. In many neighborhoods, the sidewalks that do exist are in bad condition. The *Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community* states that many of the City's sidewalks are in urgent need of maintenance and repair.

Pedestrian access to University Circle and surrounding neighborhoods is inadequate. Currently, the only walkway connecting the districts south of the Bayshore Freeway with the rest of East Palo Alto proper is the University Avenue overpass. This forces pedestrians to be exposed to the vehicular traffic of University Avenue, as well as the automobiles entering and exiting the Bayshore Freeway.

# BIKEWAYS



-  Routes
-  Lanes\*
-  Proposed Paths

\* Lanes are proposed for portions of Bay Road and Newbridge Street

Source: East Palo Alto General Plan, 1986  
San Mateo County General Plan, 1986

### Parking

The information on parking for East Palo Alto is limited. East Palo Alto's primary commercial district is University Circle. Parking in this area is primarily on-street, angled parking. The possibilities of off-street parking in the University Circle area will be challenging. According to the Land Use chapter, the land surrounding University Circle is zoned for residential use and does not appear to be suitable for parking facilities.

Based on observation, many of the local neighborhoods have a high degree of on-street parking. Observed neighborhoods had narrow streets with cars occupying every on-street parking space. With the addition of on-street parking, these narrow two way streets have the appearance of a one lane street. Palo Alto Gardens, like many other neighborhoods in East Palo Alto, has narrow streets. The curb and gutter system is constructed in such a way that allows vehicles to easily park on the sidewalks. Drivers parking their cars in such a manner occupy a portion of the sidewalk, thus infringing upon pedestrian walkways.

## **SUMMARY**

### Circulation Routes

Currently there is an annual budget of \$987,201 for street upkeep. This is not enough for the proper maintenance and construction for the City, which is experiencing a constant increase in the amount of traffic on its streets.

The roads under the County's jurisdiction, University Avenue and Willow Road, are two of the major arterials through East Palo Alto, connecting the City with neighboring communities and major highways in the area. These two streets are also among the most congested in the City.

The whole street system in East Palo Alto feeds into University Avenue. If any part of University Avenue were ever to be out of service there would be a total breakdown of circulation in East Palo Alto. There are only a few additional arterial and connector streets, the majority of streets are local and are unable to carry a large amount of traffic.

There are designated truck routes through East Palo Alto leading to Ravenswood Industrial Park, but they are not adequate for the service they are supposed to provide. The roads leading to the industrial park are not wide enough for large trucks and two way traffic.

Between 1980 and 1993 there was a sharp increase in the amount of traffic on University Avenue from 12,500 to 30,000. The amount of traffic on Highway 101 at Willow Road has increased from 128,000 to 165,000 and at University Avenue from 121,000 to 168,000. Highway 84 has also had an increase in traffic from 30,000 to 40,000 at the Willow Road interchange. The sharp increase in traffic has caused a lot of congestion through East Palo Alto and on the on and off ramps located in the City.

Due to the fact that University Avenue is the main thoroughfare and holds the majority of traffic, it is the scene of the majority of the accidents in the City.

### Transportation Modes

Approximately 37 percent of East Palo Alto households have a low or very low income level. This population, combined with the number of elderly, disabled and households without a car in East Palo Alto, comprise the potential number of residents who might require alternate modes of transportation that are economical and efficient. The operation and maintenance of an automobile are very expensive, and many of these residents cannot afford the cost. Regardless of this fact, 86 percent of the workforce of East Palo Alto drive a car to work and 19 percent carpool. East Palo Alto's percentage of residents carpooling is considerably higher than the county average of 13 percent. Public transit also has a higher percentage of workforce commuting participants, 7 percent of the East Palo Alto workforce commute via public transit compared to 4 percent of San Mateo County residents.

The ridership statistics for East Palo Alto appear encouraging. With a high percentage of the population in need of public transportation and the participant rates higher than the county averages, one would not expect to see ridership numbers dropping, but they are. Table VII-5 below, shows a decline in East Palo Alto residents' use of the public transit system. Figures for 1993 for the estimated weekday ridership for the entire year, have significantly dropped for all three routes.

**Table VII-5 Average Weekday Ridership**

Year	Bus Route		
	6A	50C	50V
1976 (Oct./Dec.)	1415	659	570
1977	810	732	N/A
1978	1101	927	N/A
1979	1098	1045	N/A
1980 (Jan./Feb.)	2343	1109	1055
1993 (May)	2568	890	1033
1993 Est./Year	1717	728	803

*Source: San Mateo Transit District 1993, East Palo Alto General Plan 1986*

Reasons for this decline can be attributed to the route destination. According to the report, Transportation for Urban Communities, the gross utility (the interest offered by destination) is a key factor in user behavior. Both Routes 50C and 50V end at Stanford Shopping Center. A high percentage of East Palo Alto residents do not have the disposable income required to shop at this center. East Palo Alto residents would benefit from having a route that stopped at K-Mart, grocery stores, and banks.

The Inter-Agency Transfer Agreement makes it possible to connect with other Bay Area Transportation systems. To get to a transfer point, East Palo Alto residents must travel



20 to 30 minutes on a local bus. Travel time is also a major factor in choosing a mode of transportation. If it takes too long and requires too many stops and transfers, people may find it too burdensome to use. Travel time may also contribute to the decline in public transit ridership for East Palo Alto.

The Paratransit service for East Palo Alto, Redi-Wheels, is also limited. With 13.3 percent of the residents of East Palo Alto having a mobility or self-care limitation, only 134 residents currently use this service. Redi-Wheels only accepts applicants who cannot independently use public transportation. Redi-Wheels also limits the number of trips a user can schedule. Only eight scheduled one-way trips per month are allowed. This seems inadequate and unrealistic considering the number of times a person with no disability must leave their home for groceries, appointments, social activities or other errands. Additional trips are available, but only on a stand-by basis. Redi-Wheels' policies discourage people from using this stand-by option.

Accessibility to private bus, rail and airport terminals vary. Airport terminal locations are not as crucial as the location of bus and rail terminals. Many citizens in East Palo Alto may not be able to afford air travel and would opt for a cheaper mode of travel such as the bus or train. Therefore the bus and train terminals should be more accessible. Currently, only CalTrain terminals are easily accessible. Citizens of East Palo Alto can only access the Greyhound Bus and Amtrak terminals if they drive or use public transit system.

Bikeways in East Palo Alto are low in priority. Currently, East Palo Alto does not have the budget to support or construct amenities such as bikeways. As a result, bicyclists are forced to ride on poor road surfaces and compete with vehicular traffic. They are denied proper access to bicycle trail networks because of the poor conditions of Bay Road. The road conditions between Pulgas Avenue and Cooley Landing are narrow, unpaved and unsuitable for bicycle riding.

East Palo Alto does not have an interconnected network of pedestrian walkways. Most of the walkways that do exist are in urgent need of repair and maintenance. If there was a safe network of walkways, citizens may consider walking as a means in which to move around the City. Currently, pedestrians and children are forced to walk on dirt or muddy shoulders, over uneven surfaces and in the streets. Unsafe walking conditions and exposure to vehicular activity serves as an obstacle and reduces the desirability of walking as a means of transportation.

University Circle is currently East Palo Alto's only commercial district. Parking in this district is primarily an angled, on-street parking scheme and is inadequate. The result of inadequate parking will discourage citizens from visiting the businesses because there will be no place to park. Inadequate parking may cause vehicles to start searching for parking in the surrounding neighborhoods. This would cause congestion, and the increased vehicle activity could endanger children who routinely play near the street. Similarly, many residential neighborhoods already face on-street parking problems. The increased volume of automobile traffic makes the streets narrow, causing vehicle congestion and

increasing the chances of vehicle accidents. In some neighborhoods, cars park on the sidewalks and discourage the use of the sidewalks.

## **FUTURE PROSPECTS**

### **CIRCULATION ROUTES**

The population is projected to be 29,300 in East Palo Alto by the year 2010. This influx of people will have a great impact on the transportation system, as traffic volumes and service demands increase. New development planned within East Palo Alto will also generate a greater number of trips within the City, and create the need for an efficient and accessible transportation system. The City will have to accommodate for this growth by modifying and improving the existing circulation system.

The Gateway Project is planned to be developed adjacent to Highway 101, east of University Avenue in East Palo Alto. Circulation patterns will be altered once this project is developed. Improvements to road conditions, such as repavement, street widening, and general maintenance, must be made to accommodate increases in traffic. According to the Caltrans General Guide on Trip End Generation Rates by Land Use, an average of 5,567 trip ends will be generated by this regional shopping center per day. Signal coordination will be used to provide smoother traffic flow to the shopping center and along University Avenue. These transportation improvements are proposed to be finished before the opening of the new Gateway Project. Access to the area will be improved, but traffic volumes are still likely to increase.

A local shopping center is planned to be built where University Avenue and Bay Road meet. This project, referred to as the Four Corners Area, will generate more trips within the City. Residents currently travel to neighboring communities to do their shopping. The average neighborhood shopping center generates 1,000 trip ends per acre. Currently University Avenue is a commuting thoroughfare through East Palo Alto and does not have to accommodate this type of inner-city traffic. Sufficient street improvements will have to be made in order for the intersection to provide residents with easy access to the shopping center.

Local merchants are looking into ways to improve the University Circle area to make it a more viable commercial and business center. For this to occur, certain road improvements must be completed to accommodate the increase in vehicular activity. The University Circle area is relatively cut off from the greater part of East Palo Alto. The majority of residents live north of Highway 101, with the only access to University Circle being the University Avenue overpass. Better customer and service truck access must be provided to this area if it is going to be a successful commercial and business center.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission has provided a list of projects that are programmed to be built over the next seven years. These improvements will affect the future circulation system in East Palo Alto. Most of East Palo Alto's residents commute out of the City to work. Many of these workers use Highway 101 and Route 84, causing increased traffic volumes in this area. A traffic management system will be installed from the Highway 101/84 Interchange to the Dumbarton Bridge. The project will regulate

traffic and relieve congestion on this stretch of the highway. There are also plans to improve the Highway 101/University Avenue Interchange. These improvements should be completed by the end of 1995. The interchange improvements should help to reduce congestion and provide greater accessibility to the Gateway Project and University Circle. The Route 101/Willow Road Interchange will be seismically retrofitted by the middle of 1995. This interchange will then be capable of withstanding possible future earthquakes.

## **ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION**

Existing ridership patterns within East Palo Alto suggest that users of the public transportation system are people with low incomes, the elderly, disabled and households without automobiles. While it is projected that the average household income within East Palo Alto will rise, many residents will still depend upon public transportation. According to the *East Palo Alto Overall Economic Development Report*, in 1994, 20 percent of East Palo Alto households are below the poverty level. It is projected that the percentage of East Palo Alto households below the poverty level could rise. In addition, the population with a mobility or self-care limitation disability is projected to increase as well. Overall, it is projected that East Palo Alto will see an increase in the population dependent on alternate modes of transportation. The public transit system will, in the future, continue to be the sole means of transportation for many East Palo Alto residents.

Similar to the increase in population, employment within East Palo Alto will also increase. The *East Palo Alto Overall Economic Development Report* projects that the number of East Palo Alto Residents employed within San Mateo County will increase in the next fifteen years. This increase will change East Palo Alto's commuting patterns. Although there is no way to predict the location of these future jobs, alternative transportation modes will have to accommodate future needs. With more East Palo Alto residents employed, there will be an increase in demand on the public bus system, paratransit service, bikeways, pedestrian walkways and parking facilities.

### Public Transit Routes

Changes need to be made to the existing transit routes in order to accommodate for the increase in demand for transportation services. Future commercial development within East Palo Alto will dictate this change. The *Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community* outlines four future development projects for East Palo Alto. They are: The Gateway/101 Redevelopment Project, the Four Corners Shopping Center, the Redevelopment of University Circle, and the Development of Ravenswood Industrial Park.

The SamTrans public transit routes within East Palo Alto will not have to be drastically altered in order to service the new commercial development. Public transit route 50C travels Northwest on East Bayshore Road, then North on Clarke Avenue and the West on Donohoe Street before intersecting with University Avenue. Route 50C travels directly through the future site of the Gateway/101 Redevelopment Project and will provide

adequate access for those for whom the public bus system is the only choice. Similarly, transit routes 6A., 50C and 50V all travel near the future site of the Four Corners Shopping Center, located at the intersection of University Avenue and Bay Road. Routes 6A, 50C and 50V will provide excellent service to the Four Corners Development. The University Circle commercial district is serviced only by route 50C. To increase service to University Circle, route 50V could be altered to travel through the district before continuing to Palo Alto. At the present time, East Palo Alto does not have stores such as a Lucky Supermarket, Wal-Mart or Thrifty Drug Stores. Residents must travel outside the City limits to find these kinds of stores. As commercial sites are developed to accommodate shopping centers and grocery stores, it will be necessary for all transit routes to service these new developments.

The increase in public transit service not only targets commercial districts but industrial ones as well. Plans to develop Ravenswood Industrial Park must also include accessible public transportation. The industrial park will create jobs and many of the employees may require use of public transportation. The San Mateo Transit District will need to expand bus routes to service the industrial park. Routes 6A, 50C and 50V could easily be expanded to serve the industrial park. According to Monica Bartlette of the San Mateo Transit District, upon Development of the Ravenswood Industrial Park, SamTrans will extend service to the park and may provide shuttle services to CalTrain terminals.

In addition to redesigning public transit within East Palo Alto, the City has assessed the implementation of an intra-city shuttle service. Although information is limited, the intra-city shuttle would increase the service to commercial and service districts within the City making public transit more convenient in East Palo Alto. Also proposed, according to David Miller of the East Palo Alto Community Development Department, is the construction of a light rail system. Proposed plans call for light rail to travel down the middle of University Avenue and continue on over the Dumbarton Bridge using Southern Pacific Railroad rights-of-way. The proposed light rail system may be the first step in establishing East Palo Alto as a mid-peninsula transportation hub. East Palo Alto's location is excellent, situated within the proximity of San Francisco, San Jose and the East Bay. The city of East Palo Alto would like to capitalize on their location by competing for the opportunity to become a major terminal for regional transportation.

Implementing the required future changes to accommodate new commercial development will benefit the residents of East Palo Alto as well as the local economy. Along with desired route destinations, convenient, efficient transit routes will reduce travel times. This could lead to an increase in ridership on the San Mateo County transit routes within East Palo Alto. Increased ridership could also help reduce traffic congestion within the City and contribute to a reduction in air pollution levels.

#### Paratransit

The increase in possible users will not alter the service area of Redi-Wheels. Based on available information, Redi-Wheels will not be expanding service beyond their existing service area of San Mateo County. As of January 1, 1995, Redi-Wheels will expand their

service hours from 6 AM to 8 PM to a more accommodating 6 AM to 12 midnight. Although hours have been increased, the number of scheduled rides available to the user have not. Currently, eight one-way trips are allowed per month per rider. These trips must be scheduled in advance. Additional trips are available on a stand-by basis but are not guaranteed. The number of allowable scheduled rides needs to be increased in order to enhance this paratransit system for its users. Citizens who cannot use regular public fixed-route transportation need equal opportunities for access to grocery stores, appointments and social activities.

### Rail and Bus Service

No changes are likely to occur with private rail service. Rail lines for CalTrain and Amtrak are fixed and future expansion is not likely. Although expansion is not a possibility, improving accessibility to existing terminals is. Decreasing the travel time to rail terminal via public busses may encourage ridership on the private rail systems. In addition, the future development of East Palo Alto's intra-city shuttle may also improve access to CalTrain by dedicating routes to serve local rail terminals.

The Southern Pacific rail spur in East Palo Alto has many possible uses. If the Ravenswood Industrial park is developed, the rail line could serve as a method of transporting goods to and from business located within the park. If the rail spur is abandoned by Southern Pacific, the rail rights-of-way could be used for two possible projects. One possibility is to use the abandoned rail rights-of-way for the beginning of the proposed light-rail project. The second possibility, based on the *Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community*, is to use the rights-of-way for hiking and bike trails. Regardless of the future proposals, the Southern Pacific rail spur is a valuable right-of-way and its use must be maximized for the benefit of the community.

In terms of cost, Greyhound Bus service provides the most economical means of travel in comparison to rail and air travel. In order to establish Greyhound as a viable option for travel, East Palo Alto needs to develop a scenario that will increase the accessibility to Greyhound Bus terminals. Based on the projected economic status of many East Palo Alto residents, it can be assumed that many residents would use Greyhound Bus service because of the relatively inexpensive fares.

### Airports

No changes are likely to occur with respect to airports. Their locations are fixed and air travel will still remain uneconomical for many East Palo Alto residents. Therefore, location and access to air terminals will not be as crucial as bus and train terminal locations.

### Harbors

East Palo Alto does have a memo stating a proposal to develop Cooley Landing as a small craft marina. The project has a proposed completion date of 2015. In order to develop such a marina, the Bay would have to be dredged so the waters surrounding Cooley Landing could accommodate small water craft. The proposed marina is a perfect

target for opposition by environmental groups. Much of the open Bay has already been developed and as a result, East Palo Alto will be expected to keep their portion of the open Bay protected and free from development. Widespread opposition to open Bay development by environmental groups may ruin East Palo Alto's chances of developing a small-craft harbor.

### Bikeways

Presently, and in the future, bikeways will be a low priority for East Palo Alto residents. Construction and maintenance of bikeways are too costly, and East Palo Alto does not have a budget to support such an amenity. Bikeways are not considered in the five-year projections of East Palo Alto's Capitol Improvement Program. The City will be using the funds allocated to the Capitol Improvement Program for street improvement projects, City park upgrades, sewage system upgrades and the construction and maintenance of public facilities.

Baylands Bicycle Trail, which runs along to the open Bay, is accessible to East Palo Alto residents via Bay Road. In order to provide a safe and desirable method for bicyclists to access the Baylands Bicycle Trail, Bay Road needs to be widened and bicycle lanes need to be extended from Pulgas Avenue to Cooley Landing. The Bay Road Expansion Project has already been begun but project completion dates are unknown.

Improving road surfaces and extending Bay Road to Cooley Landing will encourage bicycle riding on this street as will provide access to the Baylands Bicycle Trail. The trail will connect East Palo Alto with neighboring communities and to additional Bay Area trail networks. The Baylands Bicycle Trail will provide East Palo Alto residents with excellent recreational facilities and a safe, efficient means of commuting via bicycle.

### Pedestrian Walkways

In order to provide the residents of East Palo Alto with a safe network of walkways, improvements and maintenance to existing sidewalks must be made. Over the next 15 years, in addition to repair and maintenance, the City must construct walkways in neighborhoods that do not have sidewalks, as the budget allows. East Palo Alto must also improve the walkways that connect University Circle with East Palo Alto Proper. Pedestrians cannot continue to compete with vehicular traffic in order to cross the Bayshore Freeway. Traffic volumes are expected to increase on the Bayshore/University Avenue overpass and this could lead to more vehicle accidents involving pedestrians..

Improving pedestrian walkways will have a positive impact on East Palo Alto. The city is only 2.5 square miles and a safe, interconnected network will encourage walking as a means of inter-city transportation. Pedestrians would be segregated from vehicular traffic, resulting in a reduction of pedestrian related vehicle accidents. Walking is a viable means of moving about the City and walkways would reduce the dependency on automobiles and buses.

### Parking

University Circle, East Palo Alto's commercial district desperately needs additional parking. In order to attract people into the commercial district, the City must provide adequate and convenient parking. Parking scenarios for University Circle involve maintaining the angled on-street parking or providing an off-street parking facility in the form of a parking lot or structure. The problem facing the University Circle district is the availability and suitability of land for parking. The District does not have an adequate surplus of vacant land to accommodate an off-street parking structure. In order to construct a parking structure, land parcels with existing residential or commercial development would have to be cleared, displacing families and businesses.

Along with University Circle, parking is a problem in many neighborhoods. In order to control the increasing amount of on-street parking in densely populated areas, East Palo Alto needs to develop residential parking policies. Future East Palo Alto parking policies may forbid on-street parking on narrow streets or restrict parking between the hours of 9 AM and 5 PM. The City may also require future high density development to provide additional off-street parking which exceeds normal standards.

## **SUMMARY**

### Circulation Routes

Existing conditions of the transportation system in East Palo Alto cannot handle the future demands transportation will have on the City's streets. Current street capacities and circulation routes will not be able to service the influx of traffic that will result from future projects and regional growth. Streets will have to be widened, repaved, and altered to furnish better access to new developments. It is important for East Palo Alto to make these improvements and keep up with the growing and changing needs of its residents and the surrounding area.

### Alternative Modes of Transportation

As population grows, there will be an increase in East Palo Alto residents that are dependent upon an inadequate public transportation system. If present conditions persist, residents will be discouraged from using the public bus system and ridership will decline. Improvements must be made so that public transportation will be more convenient and accessible to residents. Accessibility for private rail and bus services need to be improved upon in order for there to be an increase in use.

Pedestrian and bicycle paths presently do not encourage use. In order for these paths to be utilized they need to be improved and they need to be connected to each other and the rest of the City.

Improvements to the mass transportation systems and alternative transportation routes will have to be done in order to serve the growing community and help reduce traffic on the city streets.



## **CONCLUSION**

Given the existing conditions within East Palo Alto, the following issues face the community:

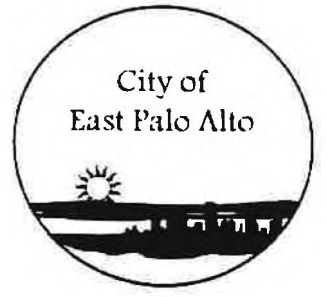
- **Major traffic generators -**  
Ravenswood Industrial Park, Gateway 101 Project, Four Corners, and University Circle will increase traffic volumes within East Palo Alto . As a result, the East Palo Alto transportation system will have to be improved to accommodate future commercial and industrial growth.
- **Dangerous intersections -**  
University Avenue and Woodland Avenue, University and Donahoe, University and Runnymede, University and Bay Road, and Newbridge and Willow Road are considered dangerous intersections in East Palo Alto. University Avenue and Donahoe, University and Runnymede, and University and Bay Road are intersections that have an unacceptable level of service. Improvements are needed to increase traffic flow.
- **Public transit routes -**  
Public transit routes will require expansion to service transit needs upon development of Ravenswood Industrial Park.
- **Bikeways -**  
Bike routes need to be constructed on Bay Road to improve accessibility to Baylands Bicycle Trails.

Future issues that East Palo Alto faces in the areas of transportation are major traffic generators, dangerous intersections, future public transit routes, and bikeways. If these issues are analyzed and proper improvements are made, East Palo Alto can potentially have an effective transportation system that will serve the community and benefit the entire region.

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# ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

# VIII

# *ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION*

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- METHODOLOGY
- EXISTING CONDITIONS**
  - NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
  - OPEN SPACE
  - SUMMARY
- FUTURE PROSPECTS**
  - NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
  - OPEN SPACE
  - SUMMARY
- CONCLUSION**
- REFERENCES**

This chapter covers two main topics. Those areas are: conservation as it applies to open space, and the natural environment. Open space issues include both nature preserves and vacant land within the City. The natural environment covers regional issues such as: soils, topography, climate, vegetation, wildlife, and air and water quality.

The natural environment section addresses conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources as specified by the *General Plan Guidelines*. For the City of East Palo Alto, these resources include water and its hydraulic forces ( San Francisco Bay, San Francisquito Creek, and nearby estuaries), soils, wildlife, and minerals. The intent of the natural environment section is to describe the existing conditions of, and future projections for natural and non-renewable or scarce resources of East Palo Alto.

The *General Plan Guidelines* define open space as any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to open space use. Open space includes the resources and outdoor areas used for recreation as well as land set aside for preservation. The purpose of the open space section is to inventory existing privately and publicly owned open space, parks, and schools that can be used for recreation and designate what land must be conserved and protected. This report will concentrate on the open space in East Palo Alto which has been set aside for the purpose of conservation and passive use only. Chapter V discusses open space in the City used for recreation.

When projecting future trends and conditions, we must examine population projections and the extent and location of new development. Due to the anticipated growth of East Palo Alto, the loss of open space land through development and rezoning is inevitable. Agricultural open space has already been lost to development and will continue to be in the future. The vacant land that exists today will soon be fully developed.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The following environment and open space projections are based on projections of the future population of East Palo Alto for the year 2010. These projections indicate that East Palo Alto will have 29,300 residents by the year 2010. Calculations show that East Palo Alto will reach complete buildout by the year 2002, leaving no more land for new development. The projections made in this report use these figures and available secondary information sources. Major materials used include: *Community Plan and EIR for East Palo Alto 1982*, *Investigation and Cleanup of Soil and Groundwater at South Bay Superfund Sites*, and information received from the County of San Mateo.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing conditions section will examine the current conditions of the natural environment and open space in East Palo Alto.

### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

This section includes all elements that are part of the natural environment in East Palo Alto. These topics include: climate, air quality, water quality, topography, soils, minerals, vegetation, and wildlife.

#### Climate

East Palo Alto has cool summers and wet, mild winters. Annual mean temperature is 58.9 degrees. January is the coldest month with the average temperature at 48.1 degrees. July is the warmest 68.2 degrees. The average rain fall is 19.7 inches, mainly falling from October through April. Wind form is mostly west and north-west winds although south-east winds are not uncommon. High pressure systems are found over the Pacific Ocean in the summer months.

#### Air Quality

East Palo Alto is located in the southern half of the San Francisco Air Basin. The Pacific Ocean and the San Francisco Bay act as a trap for air pollution. Local air quality is strongly influenced by global weather patterns. When strong jet stream winds or storm tracks dominate the air basin, air pollution concentrations are low. Conversely, when high pressure systems dominate, pollution concentrations are high. The conditions which make for the mild climate in this area also make East Palo Alto susceptible to air contamination and smog.

The poor air circulation during the summer months create the smog season and air pollution becomes very apparent. Five pollutants are measured by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District at the monitoring station located in Redwood City. Ozone, carbon monoxide, and suspended particles all reached levels high enough to violate air quality standards. Ozone concentrations have exceeded the standards over a dozen times a year during the recent past. Carbon monoxide also has exceeded the 8 hour standard levels a few days per year. Ozone and carbon monoxide reach their highest levels in late fall and winter.

#### Hydrology

##### *Water Quality*

There are two main issues that fall under the category of water quality. They include: local bodies of water, and ground water from local aquifers.

There are two bodies of water that are of importance to East Palo Alto. The first is San Francisco Bay and the second is San Francisquito Creek, which forms East Palo Alto's border with Palo Alto and empties into the Bay.

Water quality survey stations are located just north of the City at Dumbarton Bridge and just south of the City in an area known as the extreme South Bay. This area contains two known toxic hot spots. A toxic hot spot is defined as a "location in an enclosed bay... where hazardous substances have accumulated... to levels which may pose a substantial hazard to aquatic life, wildlife, or human health...". (*Bay Protection and Toxic Cleanup Program*, see Appendix E) The area around Dumbarton Bridge is one toxic hot spot, the other is south of Dumbarton Bridge in the area known as the extreme South Bay. More than twelve hazardous pollutants have been identified in these areas. The pollutants include all the heavy metals such as silver, copper, nickel, and lead as well as PCBs and DDTs. The San Francisco Bay Area Regional Water Quality Control Board handles monitoring of water quality and the appropriate cleanup measures.

San Francisquito Creek forms part of the southern border of East Palo Alto. The Creek is channeled for flood control west of Highway 101. East of Highway 101 the Creek is bounded by levees as it winds through Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve. San Francisquito Creek flows through an urban area and while it may not be as polluted as the Bay it empties into, the water quality is not high.

There are approximately 600 private wells in use at the present time in East Palo Alto. The quality of local ground water is generally considered to be poor because of contaminants from local industries. Many factors are contributing to the dropping ground water level. Those factors include: stream bed pollution and channelization, increased water usage, and low rainfall levels. Lower ground water levels are allowing water from the San Francisco Bay to filter into the aquifers under East Palo Alto.

### *Flooding*

There are two areas of East Palo Alto that are subject to serious flooding. The eastern edge of the City, including the wetlands area, is subject to 100 year floods. Flood insurance is required in these areas. A 100 year flood is defined as a flood having an average frequency of once every 100 years. There is a 1 percent chance that this average will be equaled or exceeded in any year. It is based on statistical analysis as well as rainfall and runoff characteristics in the general region of the watershed. The western most portion of East Palo Alto, above Highway 101, is also subject to flooding. This area of the City is subject to 500 year floods. See Figure IX-2 Flood Map.

### Topography

East Palo Alto is located on relatively flat land. The elevation ranges from two feet below sea level to 25 five feet above sea level. The slopes are very slight, most being under 5 percent. There are no cliffs or slopes greater than 15 percent. The following topographic map is an approximation based on the US Department of the Interior's Geological Survey, Palo Alto Quadrangle, 7.5 minute series. See Figure VIII-1.

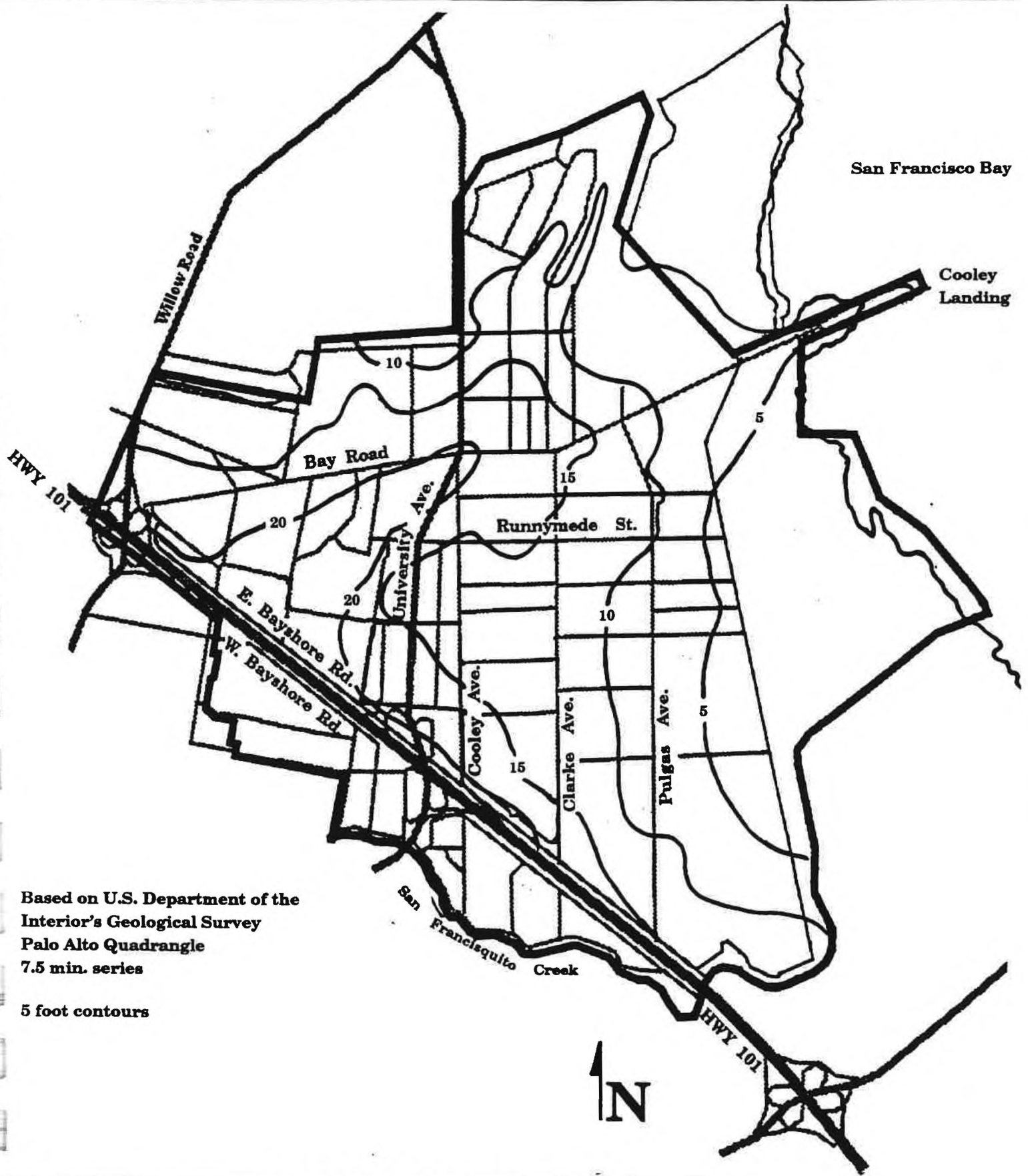


## Soils

The US Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service uses a uniform system of two levels of soil management. These are land capability classifications and capability sub classifications that are uniform for all soil mapping units in the United States. Soil management land capability classes are numbered from one to eight. Classes I through IV can be used for cultivation; classes V through VIII cannot be cultivated in their present state under normal management. Soil management land capability subclasses are soil groups within the eight classes that explain the reasons for the limitations of intensive crop production. Subclasses are designated by lowercase letters that follow the Roman numeral of the soil class. The soil capability subclasses recognized are e (erosion hazard), w (wetness), s (shallow, droughty, or stony), c (climate).

Nearly all of East Palo Alto has the land capability classification VIII. Class VIII is characterized as soils that have severe limitations (steep slopes, rock lands, swamps, delicate plant cover) that can be wisely used only for wildlife, recreation, watersheds, and esthetic appreciation. The remaining area in East Palo Alto has a land capability classes of VII and III. VII is characterized as soils that have very severe limitations and require extreme care to protect the soil, even with low intensity use for grazing, wildlife, or timber. Class III is characterized as soils that have severe limitations and require more special conservation practices to keep them continuously productive. They have shallow soil, steep slopes of 6-10 percent or shallow water tables.

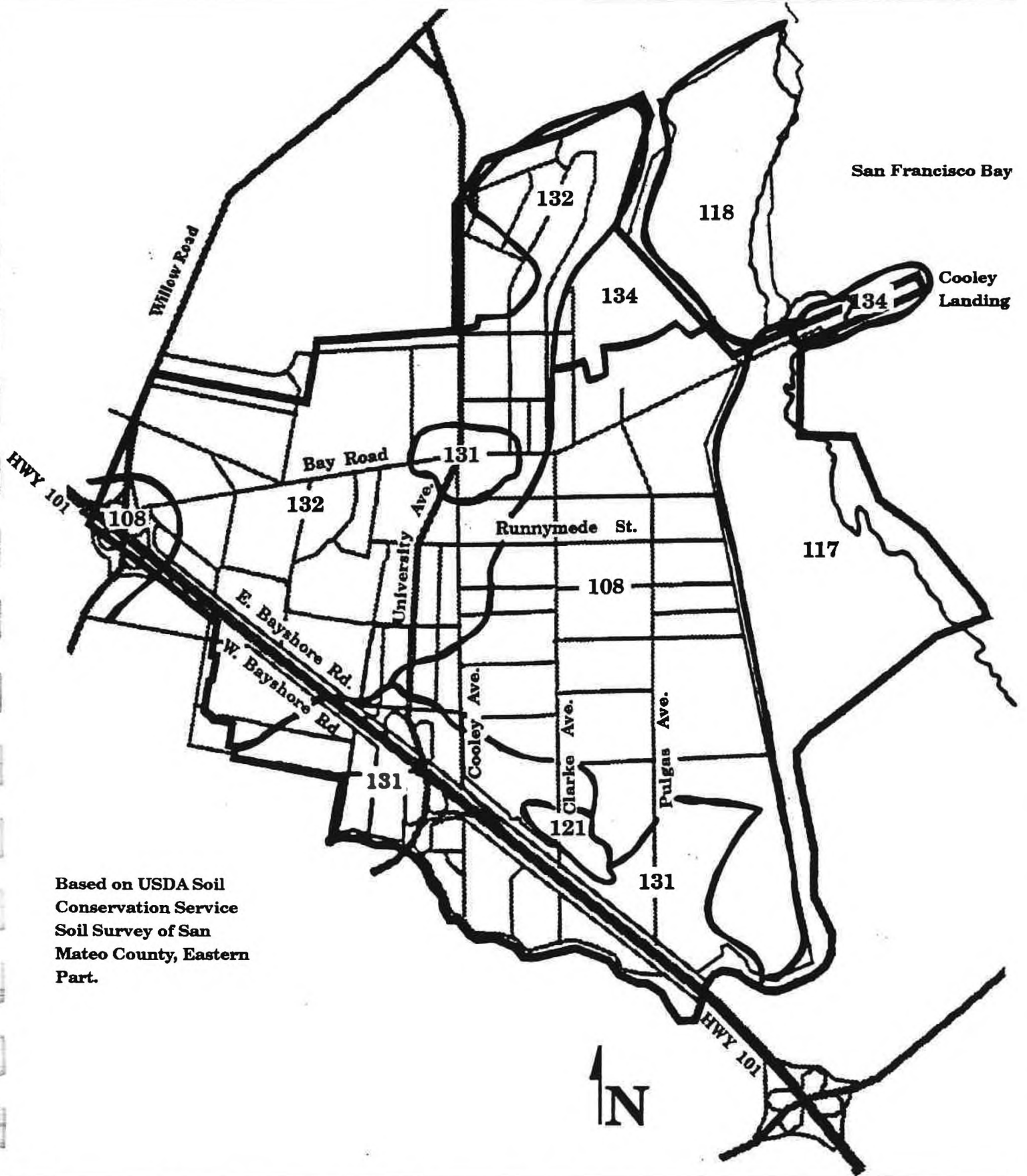
The US Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service's soil survey of San Mateo County, Eastern part, and San Francisco County, California, shows that the City of East Palo Alto is composed of seven groups of soil classifications. See Figure VIII-2.



Based on U.S. Department of the Interior's Geological Survey  
Palo Alto Quadrangle  
7.5 min. series  
5 foot contours

**EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

Cal Poly San Luis Obispo • City and Regional Planning Department • Profs. Z. Bilbija/D.F.G. Williams • CRP 351 • Fall 1994



Based on USDA Soil Conservation Service Soil Survey of San Mateo County, Eastern Part.

### Minerals

The four primary minerals in the vicinity of East Palo Alto are sand, salt, rock, and gravel. The mineral deposits under the City are insignificant except in the area of Cooley Landing. This area will not be mined since it is much more valuable as open space. There are currently four mining operations in San Mateo County and none of them are located in East Palo Alto.

### Vegetation

The majority of land in the City of East Palo Alto has been developed. Aside from the parks, there is little open space at all in the City. The only remaining natural habitat in East Palo Alto is the Baylands Nature Preserve and the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve.

The San Francisco Bay is the largest estuarine ecosystem in the California. Approximately 80 percent of the original wetlands of the San Francisco Bay have been dredged, filled, and diked for conversion to harbors, industrial, commercial, residential, and other uses. The Baylands Nature Preserve and the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve are part of the estuarine ecosystem of San Francisco Bay. The vegetation and wildlife found on the Preserve are typically found in a wetlands area.

There are four plant types found in the Baylands Nature Preserve and the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve. These are *Cordylanthus maritimus* (cordgrass), *Salicornia pacifica* (pickleweed), *Distichlis spicata* (salt grass), and *Atriplex coulteri* (salt bush). These plants will remain the only native vegetation in East Palo Alto in the future. They will exist in roughly the same quantity and form as they do now since land in which they are found is a preserve and thus the plantlife will remain untouched.

### Wildlife

Despite urbanization, the East Palo Alto area still possesses a considerable variety of wildlife. In order to maintain this wildlife, it is necessary to preserve those areas critical to the natural habitats of the species.

There are 14 birds found in the Baylands Nature Preserve and the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve. These birds are *Ardea herodias* (Great Blue Heron), *Nycticorax* (Black-crowned Night Heron), *Rallus longirostris* (Clapper Rail), *Aeckmophorus occidentalis* (Western Grebe), *Podilymbus podiceps* (Pied-billed Grebe), *Fulica americana* (American Coot), *Recurvirostra americana* (American Avocet), *Himantopus mexicanus* (Black-necked Stilt), *Charadrius vociferus* (Killdeer), *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus* (Willet), *Totanus melanoleucus* (Greater Yellowlegs), *Erolia alpina* (Dunlin), *Erolia minutilla* (Least Sandpiper), and *Phalaropus fulicarius* (Red Phalarope).

The California Clapper Rail and the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse are both protected by state and federal legislation. The Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse is known to inhabit the salt marshes of East Palo Alto. Its endangered status is due to the loss of habitat through

diking and filling of the tidal marsh on which the mouse is dependent for cover. This animal has federal "endangered" designation and a state "rare and endangered" designation. The California Clapper Rail inhabits the tidal salt marshes of East Palo Alto. Like the Harvest Mouse, its endangered status is due to loss of habitat throughout the Bay. The California Clapper Rail has both federal and state "endangered" status.

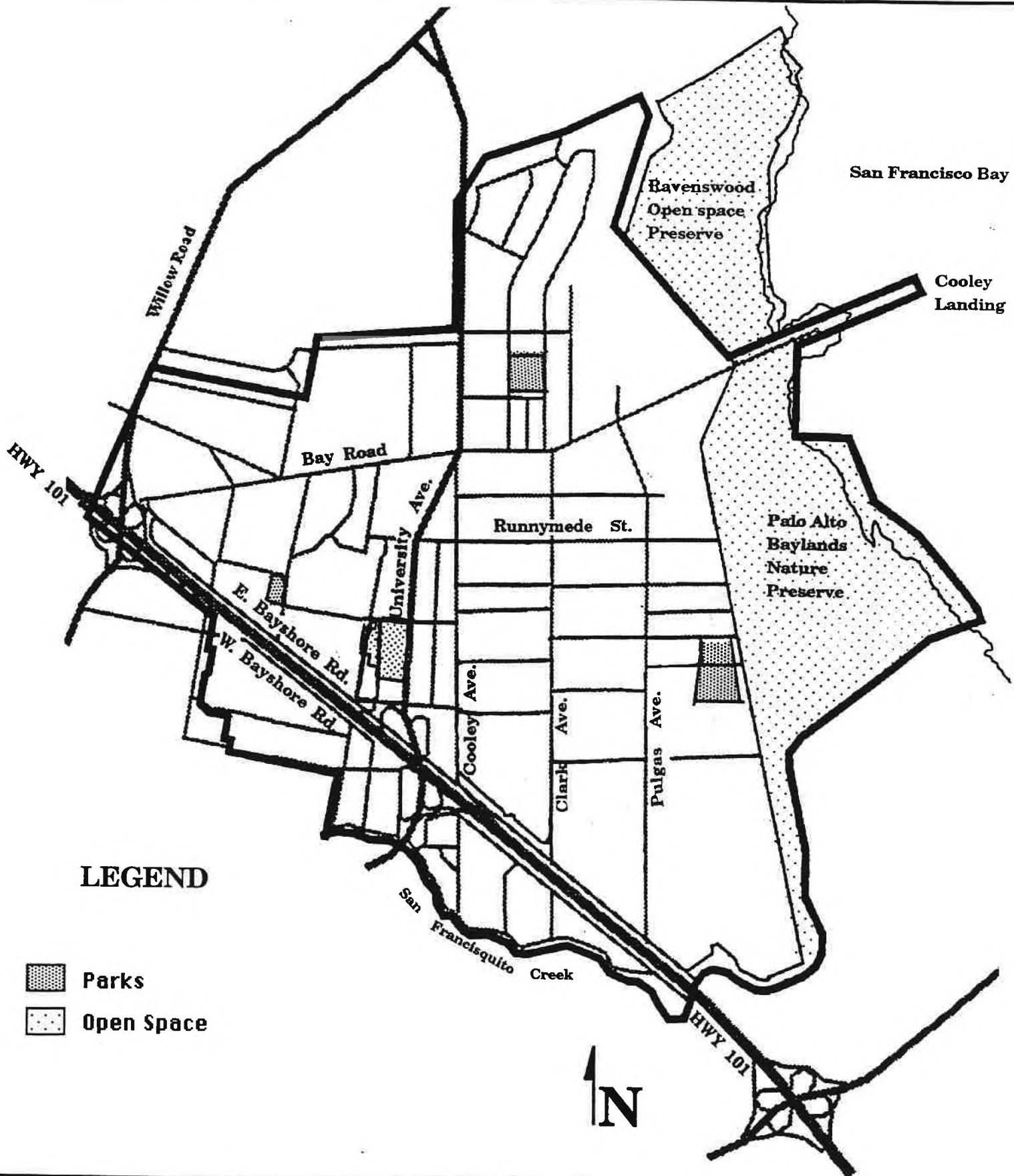
Of particular importance is the maintenance of the Baylands and open space corridors which allow wildlife a means of entering and leaving the area. Isolated islands of open space do not allow the various species of wildlife to replenish their numbers when decimated by domestic animals, hunters, cars, and people. A number of natural corridors exist where development and roads have not be allowed to penetrate. These include San Francisquito Creek, the Hetch-Hetchy right-of- way, the Pacific Gas & Electric right-of- way, and the Baylands, including Cooley Landing. Also important to the maintenance of wildlife is the preservation of the salt ponds and natural streams which provide water supply critically needed to sustain certain species. Development should not be allowed to destroy these water sources nor isolate them from wildlife corridors.

## **OPEN SPACE**

The availability of local open space is of great interest to many of the East Palo Alto's residents. Many families have chosen to live there for the community's rural environment as well as its central location within a major urban area. The City has approximately 321 total acres designated as open space. This includes land used for recreation as well as conservation. In the Baylands Nature Preserve and San Francisquito Creek areas there are 273 acres of natural open space. Natural open space includes the wetlands, aqueducts, agricultural land, public utility easements and baylands, but does not encompass parks and school sites. See Figure VIII-3.

### Cooley Landing

A six acre strip of land, which extends down the center of the Cooley Landing peninsula, is privately owned. Located at the end of Bay Road, this land represents one of the most ecologically valuable unimproved open space resources in the community. The area contains baylands, marshes, salt ponds and tidal zones and is home to a variety of plants and wildlife. It provides natural scenic beauty along the northeastern boundary of the City.



**LEGEND**

-  Parks
-  Open Space

**EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

### Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve

This is the largest natural open space area in the City, and has considerable value as a nature preserve. It runs alongside the eastern edge of the City from US 101 north to Bay Road. The area consists of baylands, marshes, salt ponds, and portions of San Francisquito Creek. The Nature Preserve is home to a significant amount of vegetation and wildlife. It is the City's desire to designate this area as part of a future shoreline park, including provisions for an improved trail system and a marshland study area. The City also wishes to connect this area to Martin Luther King Park, located west of the area at the end of Daisy Lane.

### Ravenswood Open Space Preserve

Located outside of the City limits on the edge of the Bay, the salt pond in the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve supports a variety of wildlife species. Birds use the ponds as a resting and breeding area. Various rodents may be found in the area, along with substantial vegetation on the bayside of the marsh. Although not located within the City's boundaries, it is valuable open space to the area.

### Hetch Hetchy Aqueduct

This artificial waterway is located underground and runs through the northern corner of the City. The land above the aqueduct is owned by the City and County of San Francisco and is required to be maintained in open space to facilitate access for repairs. This easement, not accessible to the public, has potential value as a linear park, as proposed in Redwood City's Master Plan for the same aqueduct. The potential value may be as a component in a trail system to connect school with parks and other open space areas, or simply as a preserved greenbelt. A portion of the Hetch-Hetchy right-of-way near Rutgers Street was once used as a Community Garden.

### Pacific Gas & Electric Company Easements

Located in the eastern portion of the City, the PG&E easement contains large transformer towers and power lines along its entire length. Although inaccessible to the public for safety reasons, the easement provides a significant open space within the City.

PG&E owns about three acres of land north of the Martin Luther King Jr. park on Daisy Lane. This utility company property, and adjacent County owned land and Martin Luther King Jr. Park, form a continuous open space which links San Francisquito Creek, the Baylands, and the Ravenswood Children's Center. They also provide access to the Baylands at the ends of Garden, Cypress and Beech Streets, and at the end of Daisy Lane.

PG&E also has a right-of-way which intersects the Hetch-Hetchy right-of-way at the northeast corner of Costano School and terminates at the PG&E substation on the south side of Bay Road. This right-of-way along with Hetch-Hetchy aqueduct has the potential of a sort of linear park or part of a trail system.

### San Francisquito Creek

San Francisquito Creek borders the City's southern end from Euclid Ave. to the Pulgas Ave./West Bayshore intersection. From this point it flows in a northeasterly direction toward the San Francisco Bay. The Creek is channeled for flood control purposes and its greatest open space value is visual attractiveness and adjacent vegetation. East of Bayshore, the channel is less fully improved, but the Creek is bordered by levees which are used for informal recreation by neighborhood children. The City intends to maintain the Creek in its natural state.

### Bell Street Water Tower Site

Owned by the Palo Alto Park Mutual Water Association, the 1.6 acre Bell Street water tower site, is located in the western part of the City at the west end of Bell Street between Oakwood Drive and Addison Avenue. The site contains mature, visually attractive landscaping. Although this site is not open to the public, it provides significant open space in a part of the City that has few open areas.

### Agricultural Open Space

There are many sites in the City, particularly in the Week's Poultry area, where the land is used for agricultural purposes. The City has expressed a desire to use these sites, along with vacant sites, to make a trail system or park that will provide more open space in the City. There is also a great possibility that many of these sites will be developed, as the need for housing in the future increases, if the City does not provide new conservation regulations.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Many of the environmental issues facing East Palo Alto are regional in nature. The air quality is difficult, if not impossible, to separate from that of the whole region. Water quality also is a regional issue. San Francisco Bay may be heavily polluted near East Palo Alto, but the entire Bay is polluted to some degree. San Francisquito Creek flows through many other urban areas and is already polluted by the time it reaches East Palo Alto. East Palo Alto would need to coordinate efforts with other area governments to clean up the Creek. Ground water is more of a local issue, with pollution occurring from local industry. This situation may improve since the City intends to reclaim the land under Ravenswood Industrial Site. The minerals located in East Palo Alto are found in abundance other places in San Mateo County and are therefore not of significance to the City. Flooding is an issue in East Palo Alto due to the City's location at the edge of San Francisco Bay. Local wildlife is concentrated in the wetlands area and along San Francisquito Creek. The wetlands area contains two animals on both federal and state endangered species lists. The wetlands are federally protected, and will not be disturbed by development. The City is actively trying to protect and plan for the environmental future of the East Palo Alto area.



## **FUTURE PROSPECTS**

Many of the issues covered in this chapter will remain virtually unchanged during the next twenty years. Most of the conditions of the natural environment are beyond human control, therefore open space is the issue that remains of prime importance in East Palo Alto.

### **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

Some of the natural environment issues are regional issues that East Palo Alto must contend with on a local level. The remaining issues are those that are beyond the control of human beings. Because East Palo Alto is an urban area already close to buildout, issues from the natural environment are not going to have an impact on future development. In the same way, future development will not affect the natural environment.

### **OPEN SPACE**

There is only one large tract of open space left within the City of East Palo Alto - Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve. These wetlands are federally protected and will remain untouched for the foreseeable future. The remaining tracts of open space are small and scattered throughout the City. The easements will remain easements, however, there is the possibility they will be part of a trail system. San Francisquito Creek will remain a riparian corridor.

## **SUMMARY**

The main environmental issues facing East Palo Alto in the future are the condition of the natural environment and conservation of open space. Many of the geological factors are not relevant for a fifteen year projection, considering that it takes thousands of years for landforms to change. Air quality is not likely to change much, if at all. Water quality contains two issues; ground water and local water bodies. Based on the information available, the quality of local ground water meets current state and federal regulations and is unlikely to change significantly. Both San Francisco Bay and San Francisquito Creek are regional bodies of water outside the jurisdiction of East Palo Alto. The City must coordinate efforts with surrounding governments to deal with the environmental issues of the area.

## **CONCLUSION**

The topics of natural environment and open space contain many issues. Some of these issues, such as soil conditions, topography, and climate are beyond the control of people. Other issues are completely within human control, these issues include: preservation, open space, wildlife, and vegetation. It is important to realize which issues can be dealt with and which cannot. The issue of prime importance that East Palo Alto can control is open space. It will be vital to preserve a proper amount of open space within the community for future appreciation.

## REFERENCES

- City of East Palo Alto. East Palo Alto Community Plan and EIR 1982 San Mateo County 1982.
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**IX**

**NOISE AND SAFETY**



## *NOISE AND SAFETY*

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### **NOISE**

METHODOLOGY

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

NOISE SOURCES

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### **FUTURE PROSPECTS**

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### **REFERENCES**

### **SAFETY**

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NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

NATURAL HAZARDS

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## *Noise*

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The purpose of this section of the chapter is to examine the existing noise conditions within East Palo Alto. The noise element is mandated by the State of California Government Code Section 65302(f), which states: “[The general plan shall include] a noise element which shall identify and appraise noise problems in the community ... shall analyze and quantify ... current and projected noise level for all of the following sources:

- Highways and freeways.
- Primary arterials and major local streets.
- Passenger and freight on-line railroad operations and ground rapid transit systems.
- General aviation and all other ground facilities and maintenance facilities related to airport operations.
- Local industrial plants.
- Other ground stationary noise sources.

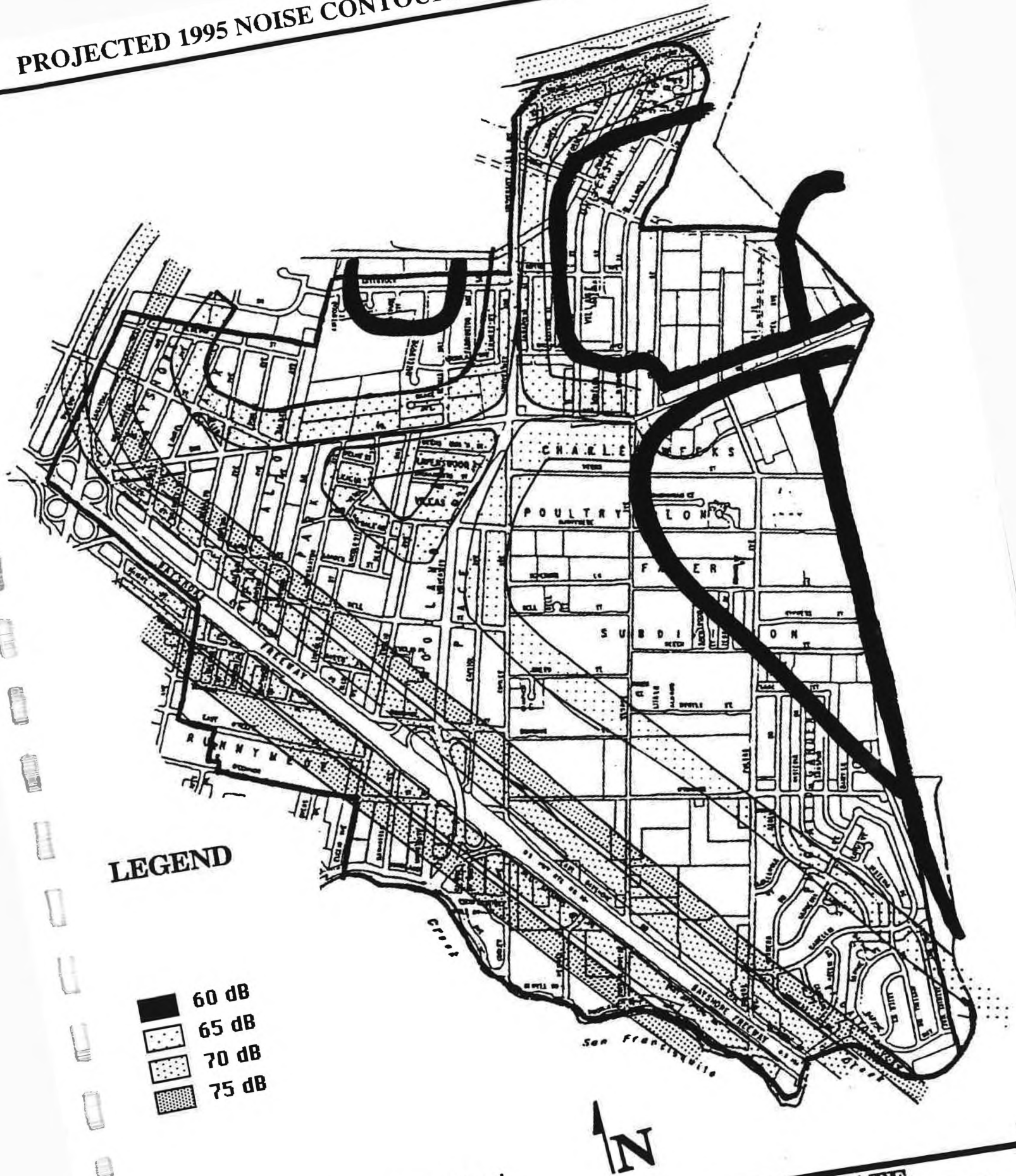
Noise contours must be shown for all of the above noise sources and measured in terms of community noise equivalent level (CNEL) or day-night average level (Ldn) see the Figure IX-1 on the following page. The noise contours are developed by the use of noise monitoring techniques and are intended to be used as a guide for establishing a pattern of land uses...that minimizes the exposure of community residents to excessive noise.”

Noise exposure contours are lines drawn around a noise source connecting points of equal noise level. Sound which generates noise has three basic physical characteristics: intensity (loudness), frequency (pitch), and duration. The intensity is a measure of sound energy technically expressed as sound pressure level and is measured in decibels (db). The decibel measure is based upon the mathematical system of logarithms. Frequency is the number of sound pulses or waves per second emanating from a sound source. The frequency is measured in hertz (Hz) and determines the pitch of sound.

The sources of noise are **divided** into two categories. Point sources are where sound emanates from a single point, moving or stationary. Line sources are where sound emanates in a steady stream like traffic on a roadway. The sources of noise are measured by different techniques. The method most used for single event noise sources are decibels. For determining the total impact of all single noise events which occur at a given location, the community noise equivalent level (CNEL) is used. Level day-night (Ldn) is used to average noise levels for a 24-hour period.

# PROJECTED 1995 NOISE CONTOURS - CNEL

FIGURE IX-1



## LEGEND

- 60 dB
- 65 dB
- 70 dB
- 75 dB

\*CNEL - Community Noise Equivalent Level

The purpose of having a noise element is to limit community exposure to excessive noise levels. The noise element should accurately reflect the noise statistics in the environment, the stationary sources of noise, and the impacts of noise on the local residents. The effects of noise on the community include being detrimental to residents' health, interfering with human activity, and reducing economic potential of land. Information pertinent to the noise element is often missing, lacking, or dated. In the case of East Palo Alto, most data identifying noise sources and relative levels of noise is dated 1977 and displayed in the 1978 General Plan for San Mateo County. The County simply re-used the information for the 1986 General Plan and passed it down to the City of East Palo Alto to use in their General Plan for 1986. However some information was obtained from the 1990 City of East Palo Alto Environmental Impact Report. Telephone interviews and research have strongly suggested that a minimal amount of new information has been collected in the last few years. Data is not necessarily missing in the case of East Palo Alto, most of it is old and lacks detail pertaining to the City since much of the data used today was generated for the County almost twenty years ago.

The Department of Health requires noise levels to be shown on a noise contour map. The level of noise is measured in decibels at either a point source or a linear source. Various land-uses generate and tolerate different noise levels. Standards levels and acceptable levels, if they are known, help determine the placement of land-use and related activities. Land-use and noise compatibility are desirable objectives for every community. The problem areas of noise in a city are where people are exposed to noise levels that affect their health, activities, and financial potential. Noise sensitive land uses require mitigation measures to control noise and its effects.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The information for this section of the report was conducted through various methods. First hand observations provided an orientation of East Palo Alto and facilitated in the development of community strengths and weaknesses. Library research and personal interviews with representatives of various government agencies were conducted in order to further examine the existing noise conditions within East Palo Alto. This section contains information gathered from secondary sources. The following sources were used to analyze and comprehend the existing noise conditions of East Palo Alto:

- The General Plan of San Mateo County
- Studies performed by Caltrans, District 4
- OPR General Plan Guidelines
- The General Plan of East Palo Alto
- The Application for Designation as an Enterprise Community.
- The City of East Palo Alto Environmental Impact Report, 1990.
- Bradly and Associates - Palo Alto Municipal Airport



In addition, phone interviews were conducted in order to collect unavailable information as well as clarify any discrepancies found in the data researched. The following are contacts interviewed for the purpose of collecting and verifying noise information:

- Andy Gustuvson - San Mateo Planning Department
- Phil Bascom - East Palo Alto Public Works Department
- Nick Haskell - Brady and Associates
- Greg Bayol - Caltrans Public Information Division
- Rod Beckman - City of San Francisco, Noise Abatement Department
- Russ Dupree - Department of Health Services, Noise Control Program

From these sources, the data was used to illustrate and describe the existing noise conditions in East Palo Alto, and how it effects the community, the purpose of noise control, and the need for and methods of eliminating noise levels for land-use compatibility.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Sources of noise required to be identified and measured include vehicular noise, railway noise, aircraft noise, and stationary points of noise.

### NOISE SOURCES

Vehicular traffic noise is generated throughout the City of East Palo Alto including noise generated by Highway 101, major arterials such as University Ave., Pulgas Ave. and Bay Road, and local and collector streets through out the City. No noise metering and collection information regarding the streets of East Palo Alto has been located. However, the standard measurement of vehicular traffic was found in the San Mateo General Plan 1986 and is shown below:

**Table IX-1 Measurement of Noise**  
Measurement of Noise for Typical Vehicular Traffic

<u>Speed</u>	<u>dB</u>
30 mph -	61 dB
40 mph -	66 dB
50 mph -	70 dB
60 mph -	73 dB
70 mph -	75 dB

This chart can be used to measure the noise levels surrounding these vehicular traffic routes by looking at the mph designated for the streets and giving them a decibel rating accordingly.

Rail lines are not used within the City limits. Therefore, there is no current noise generated from railway use. There is an abandoned Southern Pacific Railway easement which has the potential for future use and would then have to be studied to determine the noise generated by its use and the effect on the surrounding land-uses.

Aircraft noise sources are seriously dealt with because the noise generated by aircraft is loud and has the potential to effect numerous people and surrounding uses. The only known source of noise generated by aircraft is the Palo Alto Municipal Airport. The Airport is located south of East Palo Alto and has a northwest orientation which directs the flight pattern over the wetlands area. There are volumes of information regarding airport noise regulations and the placement of air travel facilities. There are contour lines developed by Brady and Associates for Palo Alto Municipal Airport. There are measures mandated by the State regarding insulation of residences located within a zone of detrimental noise levels. No information has been received as to whether these mitigation measures have been met within this flight pattern noise zone which, in actuality, does not have levels of noise detrimental to the surrounding residential uses. The airport is used for

general aviation purposes and is limited to an aircraft weight of under 12,500 lb. As of 1986, there were 265,000 flights per year generated from this airport.

Stationary sources of noise include industrial, commercial, institutional, and residential uses. Industrial uses can produce noise by various activities. Possible noise sources within an industrial use might be operating machinery, increased traffic by large vehicles and yard equipment, loading and unloading of goods, fabrication of goods and materials, and the handling of materials and equipment. There is currently an industrial park located within the City, however, noise studies on this location are non-existent to date.

Commercial uses are not prevalent in East Palo Alto so the noise generated by this type of land-use is relatively small compared to its surrounding noise sources. Institutional uses generate substantial noise due mostly to the congregation of people. The churches, the public schools, and other institutional uses within the community are responsible for this source of noise. Residential uses generate moderate noise levels caused by power equipment, appliances, and loud children.

The level of noise produced by the sources mentioned above can be illustrated by Table IX-2 on the next page, which shows typical noise levels created by various sources in the community and reactions to the noise levels. Noise level standards set in the 1986 East Palo Alto General Plan are displayed on Table IX-3. The table shows standards set by the County pertaining to the different land-uses and is broken down into indoor and outdoor noise levels, as well as daytime and nighttime levels. Acceptable noise levels are illustrated in a chart produced by the Department of Health Services, Noise Control Program and are shown as Table IX-4.

**Table IX-2 Noise Levels of Typical Sources**

<b>Noise Levels of Typical Sources</b>			
<b>East Palo Alto</b>			
<b>Loudness</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Decibels</b>	<b>Community Reaction</b>
<b>Deafening</b>	jet aircraft	140	<b>Vigorous Action</b>
	threshold of feeling	130	
<b>Painfully Loud</b>	chipping hammer	110	
	heavy industrial	100	
<b>Very Loud</b>	aircraft low fly-over	90	
	loud street noise		
	park area		
	noisy office	80	
<b>Loud</b>	vacuum cleaner		<b>Threats</b>
	freeway traffic	70	
	average street	60	
<b>Moderate</b>	average office		<b>Widespread Complaints</b>
	light traffic	50	
	average residence		
	two-person conversation		
<b>Faint</b>	private office	40	<b>Occasional Complaints</b>
	school classroom		
	inside house	30	
<b>Very faint</b>	quiet suburb		<b>No Noticable Action</b>
	rustling leaves	20	
	normal breathing	10	
	threshold of audibility	0	

*Source: East Palo Alto General Plan 1986*

Land-use compatibility and noise are related in numerous ways. Noise level contours are required to be mapped and the conclusions generated by the map used as a basis for land-use decision making.

The ideal for land use and noise compatibility is the complete separation of noise sensitive use and noise generating sources. Residential and institutional uses along Highway 101 would not be compatible and would require mitigation measures to control the noise levels experienced by the sensitive land uses. As of 1986 in San Mateo County, 27 percent of the population resides within a 60-80 dB range. Approximately 50 percent of the population lives within a 60-65 dB range which is classified as loud by the standards set by the General Plan 1986. No information for East Palo Alto concerning percent of population affected by detrimental noise levels was found, but according to the noise contour map, projected to 1995 CNEL for East Palo Alto (Figure IX-1), there are possible problem spots within the City. The noise contours are said to not change drastically, therefore the existing projected CNEL contours for 1995 have the possibility of being relatively accurate. The increase of noise over time is due to increase in population and the related effects of increased traffic and need for transportation of goods by all modes of transportation.

**Table IX-3 Standard Noise Levels**

Standard Noise Levels Per Land-Use in dBA				
Land Use	East Palo Alto			
	Daytime 7am to 10pm		Nighttime 10 pm to 7 am	
	Inside	Outside	Inside	Outside
Residential	45	55	35	45
Commercial	45	60	45	60
Industrial	55	65	65	65
Openspace				
-intensive	45	60	45	60
-passive	45	55	35	45
Transportation				
-freeways and arterials		70		
-arterials and collectors		65		
-minor streets		60		

Source: East Palo Alto General Plan 1986

**Table IX-4 Land Use Compatibility**

Land-Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments

Land Use Category	Community Noise Exposure Ldn or CNEL, dB					
	55	60	65	70	75	80
Residential - Low Density Single Family, Duplex, Mobile Homes						
Residential - Multi Family						
Transient Lodging - Motels, Hotels						
Schools, Libraries Churches, Hospitals Nursing Homes						
Auditoriums, Concert Halls Amphitheatres						
Sports Arena Outdoor Spectator Sport						
Playgrounds Neighborhood Parks						
Golf Courses, Riding Stables Water Recreation, Cemeteries						
Office Buildings: Business, Commercial and Industrial						
Industrial, Manufacturing, Utilities Agriculture						

Source: California Office of Noise Control, Department of Health Services

**INTERPRETATION**

**NORMALLY ACCEPTABLE**  
Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements

**CONDITIONALLY ACCEPTABLE**  
New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning will normally suffice.

**NORMALLY UNACCEPTABLE**  
New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the

**CLEARLY UNACCEPTABLE**  
New construction or development should generally not be undertaken

## **SUMMARY**

Noise issues researched for this report include sources of noise, levels of noise, and land-use compatibility with noise within the City of East Palo Alto. Noise is generated by vehicular traffic, trains, aircraft, and stationary ground noise sources. The measurement of noise is required and a noise contour map is generated from those measurements. The levels of noise generated by vehicular traffic is directly related to the speed of travel. Highway 101 is the major noise source of vehicular traffic in East Palo Alto followed by traffic along the major arterials, local, and collector streets. Railway noise is irrelevant due to non-operation of rail lines within the City. Aircraft noise is generated by the Palo Alto Municipal Airport, which has a flight pattern that causes excess noise in the wetlands open space. This airport, which is used for general aviation purposes, is the source of 265,000 flights per year.

Stationary sources of noise located within the City include industrial, commercial, institutional, and residential uses. The industrial park area located off of Bay Road is the sole source of industrial noise which might include heavy machinery, handling of goods and materials, and increased traffic of large transport vehicles. Commercial uses in East Palo Alto are slight, thus retail service noise generated at commercial establishments is relatively small. Institutional uses such as churches, government buildings, schools, and community centers produce sound all over the City, primarily caused by the congregation of people. Residential noise is generated throughout the City with possible sources being power equipment, appliances, industrial equipment, machinery, traffic and people.

## **FUTURE PROSPECTS**

The population increase in East Palo Alto will affect the sources of noise in varying ways. The current major noise sources in East Palo Alto are traffic, airport, and industrial use. These sources are likely to remain unchanged. Future development such as the Gateway 101 Commercial Center and Four-Corners are likely to increase the level of noise due to activities related to commercial use.

The Ravenswood Industrial Park is likely to increase the noise levels and, unless mitigated, will cause problems with the residential uses located in close proximity to the future redevelopment site. As the population increases, the number of vehicles and trips taken will increase, therefore raising the level of traffic noise. The major sources of traffic noise are from arterials like University Avenue, Pulgas Avenue, and Bay Road. Highway 101 traffic volumes are likely to increase and therefore generate more noise. The street system leading to the new developments listed above will have a higher demand, therefore causing an increase in noise levels in the neighborhoods surrounding the developments. Airport use at the Palo Alto Municipal Airport is expected to continue and the noise generated from that is dependent on the amount of flights per year.

### **SUMMARY**

The increase in noise levels generated by various sources in East Palo Alto will cause higher percentages of people to be located in substandard noise level areas. The goal of lower noise levels can be accomplished through mitigation measures and control of land-use. The existing noise levels in East Palo Alto incorporate a large percent of people in hazardous noise areas. Increased population will raise the level and occurrence of noise. This escalation, if not controlled, will create undesirable conditions and alter the path of growth set for the City.

Using the data available and looking at the noise sources, noise levels at those sources, and the compatibility of the surrounding land-uses, it appears that East Palo Alto is experiencing noise levels that are typical of a city that has a major freeway, airport, and a mixture of land-uses.

The major source of noise in East Palo Alto is Highway 101. With population and related traffic increases, noise levels will rise and exceed the state standards of acceptable noise levels for residential areas. New commercial and industrial development will also increase noise levels, thus incorporating a larger percentage of residents living in a area that is subject to loud noise levels. In the future East Palo Alto will have to deal with these unacceptable levels of noise and find ways to minimize the affects.

## *Safety*

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The purpose of the safety section is to look at fire safety, flooding, geologic hazards, and seismic safety. The safety section may also include other hazards such as hazardous waste. The safety section aims to identify current conditions for fires, floods, and earthquakes as well as to examine possible future conditions.

When projecting future trends and conditions, we must examine population projections and the extent and location of new development. Due to the certainty of growth in East Palo Alto, the loss of open space land through development and rezoning is inevitable. Agricultural open space has already been lost to development and will continue to be in the future. The vacant land that exists today will soon be fully developed. Projections of open space and recreation are based on the year 2010 with a predicted population of 29,300.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The following safety forecasts are based on projections for the future population of East Palo Alto for 2010. There will be 29,300 people in East Palo Alto by the year 2010. Calculations show that East Palo Alto will reach complete buildout by the year 2002, leaving no more land for new development. The projections made in this report use these figures and available secondary information sources. Some of the materials used include: *Community Plan and EIR for East Palo Alto 1982*, *Investigation and Cleanup of Soil and Groundwater at South Bay Superfund Sites*, and information received from the County of San Mateo. The Parkland need gap was derived from standards in the *Community Plan and EIR for East Palo Alto 1982*.



## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The existing conditions section will examine the current conditions and hazards of the natural environment and safety in East Palo Alto.

### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

This section includes three topics which are part of the safety of the natural environment: climate, air quality and water quality.

#### Climate

East Palo Alto has cool summers and wet, mild winters. Annual mean temperature is 58.9 degrees. January is the coldest month with the average temperature at 48.1 degrees. July is the warmest 68.2 degrees. The average rain fall is 19.7 inches, mainly falling from October through April. Wind form is mostly west and north-west winds although south-east winds are not uncommon. High pressure systems are found over the Pacific Ocean in the summer months.

#### Air Quality

East Palo Alto is located in the southern half of the San Francisco Air Basin. The Pacific Ocean and the San Francisco Bay act as a trap for air pollution. Local air quality is strongly influenced by global weather patterns. When strong jet stream winds or storm tracks dominate the air basin, air pollution concentrations are low. Conversely, when high pressure systems dominate, pollution concentrations are high. The conditions which make for the mild climate in this area are what make East Palo Alto susceptible to air contamination and smog.

The poor air circulation during the summer months create the smog season and air pollution becomes very apparent. Five pollutants are measured by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District at the monitoring station located in Redwood City. Ozone, carbon monoxide, and suspended particles have reached levels high enough to violate air quality standards. Ozone concentrations have exceeded the standards over a dozen times a year during the recent past. Carbon monoxide also has exceeded the 8 hour standard levels a few days per year. Ozone and carbon monoxide reach their highest levels in late fall and winter.

#### Water Quality

There are two main issues that fall under the category of water quality: ground water from aquifers and local water bodies. There are two bodies of water that are of importance to East Palo Alto. The first is San Francisco Bay and the second is San Francisquito Creek, which forms East Palo Alto's border with Palo Alto and empties into the Bay.

East Palo Alto is located at the southwestern part of San Francisco Bay. Water quality survey stations are located just north of the City at Dumbarton Bridge and just south of the City in an area known as the extreme south bay. This area contains two known toxic

hot spots. A toxic hot spot is defined as a "location in an enclosed bay... where hazardous substances have accumulated... to levels which may pose a substantial hazard to aquatic life, wildlife, or human health..." (Appendix E *Bay Protection and Toxic Cleanup Program*). The area around Dumbarton Bridge is one toxic hot spot, the other is south of Dumbarton Bridge in the area known as the extreme south bay. More than twelve hazardous pollutants have been identified in these areas. The pollutants include all the heavy metals such as silver, copper, nickel, and lead as well as PCBs and DDTs. The San Francisco Bay Area Regional Water Quality Control Board handles monitoring of water quality and the appropriate cleanup measures.

San Francisquito creek forms part of the southern border of East Palo Alto. The creek is channeled for flood control west of Highway 101. East of Highway 101, the Creek is bounded by levees as it winds through Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve. San Francisquito Creek flows through an urban area and while it may not be as polluted as the bay it empties into, the water quality is not high.

There are approximately 600 private wells in use at the present time in East Palo Alto. The quality of local ground water is generally considered to be poor because of contaminants from local industries. Many factors are contributing to the dropping ground water level. Those factors include: stream bed pollution and channelization, increased water usage, and low rainfall levels. Lower ground water levels are allowing water from the San Francisco Bay to filter into the aquifers under East Palo Alto.

## **NATURAL HAZARDS**

East Palo Alto is one of the few cities in the Bay Area that has fortunately not had a history of natural disasters, yet it is still important to identify the potential hazards and consider any changes the future might bring.

### **Fire Safety**

In an urban-industrial area, danger due to fires, chemicals mishaps, major accidents and natural disasters is always present. Responsibility for preventing these problems, and reacting adequately to them falls on the City, particularly on the public safety departments. However, fire protection service in East Palo Alto is provided by the Menlo Park Fire Protection District. The City and District work cooperatively to develop programs to prevent damage due to emergencies or disasters. This involves fire codes for built-in fire suppression, automatic alarms, and a diligent inspection of buildings. An adequate and well-trained firefighting force is also maintained.

East Palo Alto is fortunate to be a relatively safe community in terms of danger from major fires. Essentially, there are three categories of fires that are of primary concern to the City: structural, chemical, and grassland fires. This section describes the problems and relative dangers of each type of hazard and identifies areas of deficiency.

**Structural Fires.** The threat of a major fire disaster occurring in East Palo Alto is minimal. Generally, structures are in fairly good condition, fire fighting equipment is adequate, hydrants are sufficiently located, and reasonable access for fire fighting equipment is available. Water pressure is not sufficient because many of the water lines are only 6 inches in diameter, where as they need to be 12 inches to be adequate. Yet conditions are such that it is unlikely that structural fires will ever constitute a disaster.

The only major structural fire that has occurred since incorporation involved the vacant portions of the former Nairobi Shopping Center. There was no major property loss because the buildings were vacant. The work of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District on this fire prevented any damage to adjacent residents. Thus, this major structural fire was not classified as a disaster.

**Chemical Fires.** The City has two major chemical plants located within its boundaries: Romic Chemical Corporation, the largest solvent reclamation operation in the western United States, and Sandoz Corporation, manufacturers of bio-rational pesticides and a wholly owned subsidiary of one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world, Rhone-Poulenc. Both are first-class facilities that operate in full compliance with applicable federal, state, county, and local regulations, however, their very nature holds the potential for an explosion or chemical fire of major proportion. There have been no fires at either facility since their operations began. It is believed that the City's proposed Hazardous Materials Ordinance and implementation of related State legislation (AB2185

and AB2187) will provide an additional measure of protection for East Palo Alto residents from the threat of chemical fires.

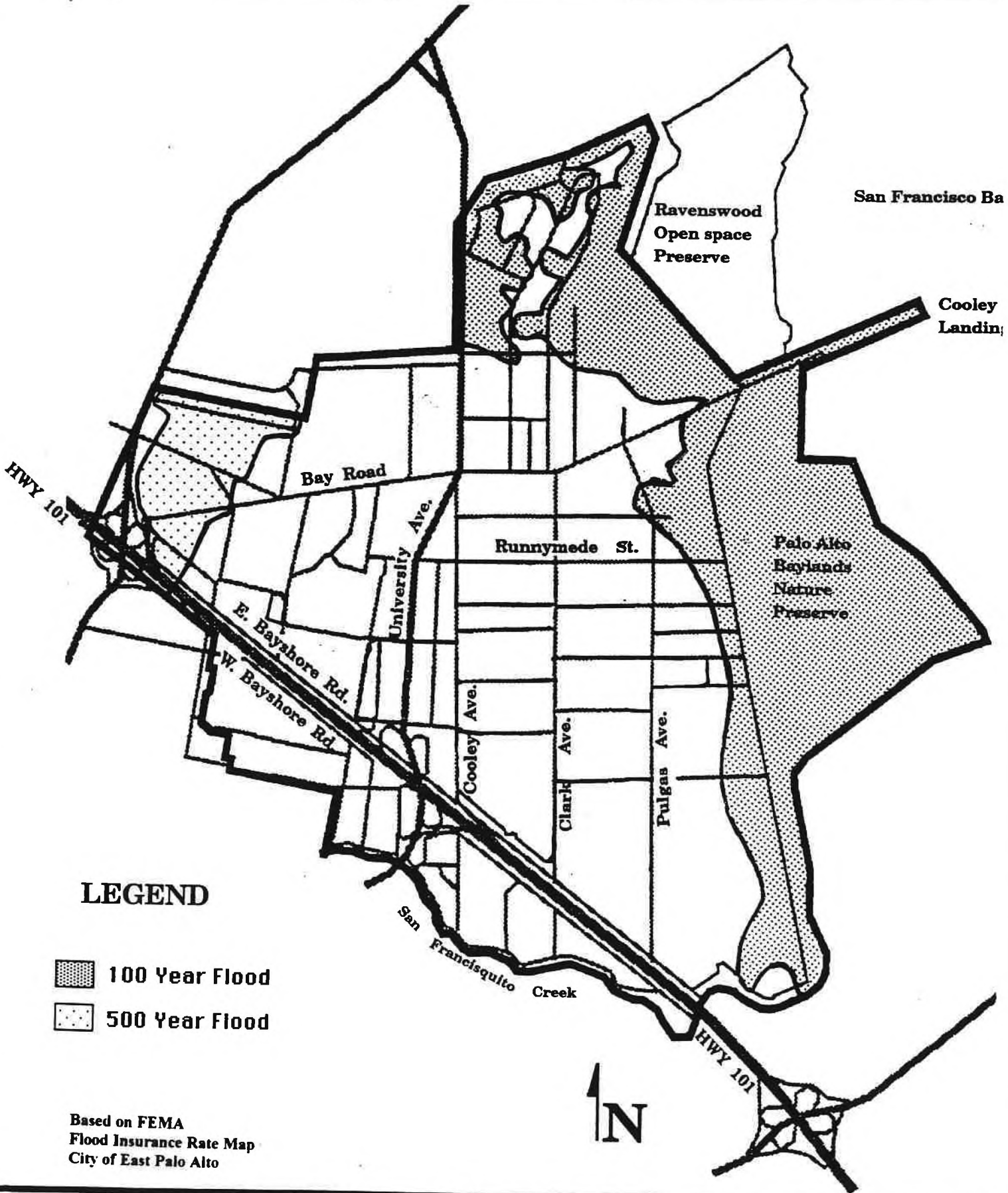
Grassland Fires. The largest areas of undeveloped grassland in East Palo Alto is the Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve. This area is subject to tidal action and, therefore, an unlikely location for grassland fires. The only other possibility within the City for this type of fire are large, undeveloped lots which have historically been sites of small brush fire generally caused by human carelessness and usually extinguished within minutes by the Fire Protection District. Current regulations and practice provide for the rototilling of these sites during late spring to reduce the amount of vegetation available for combustion.

#### Hazardous Materials



Numerous public safety concerns are raised by the possible presence of hazardous materials associated with the diverse industrial activities which take place in East Palo Alto. In fact, one location, the Sandoz Corporation site, has been included on the Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund list. The State Water Quality Control Board has approved a program for monitoring ground water in the surrounding area. It is known that the soil in the Ravenswood Industrial Park is in need of reclamation.

#### Floods

There are two areas of East Palo Alto that are subject to serious flooding. The eastern edge of the City, including the wetlands area, is subject to 100 year floods. Flood insurance is required in these areas. A 100 year flood is defined as a flood having an average frequency of occurrence of once in 100 years. It has a 1 percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any year, and it may occur in any year. It is based on statistical analysis as well as rainfall and runoff characteristics in the general region of the watershed. The other area subject to flooding is the western most portion of the City north of highway 101. This portion of the City is subject to 500 year floods. See Figure IX-2: Flood Map on next page.



**LEGEND**

-  100 Year Flood
-  500 Year Flood

Based on FEMA  
Flood Insurance Rate Map  
City of East Palo Alto

**EAST PALO ALTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

### Earthquakes

Nearly every city in California is at risk for earthquakes, and East Palo Alto is no exception. The San Andreas Fault runs the length of the peninsula to the west of East Palo Alto. The Hayward Fault runs along the east side of the Bay. Both of these faults are major, active faults. According to the Seismic Safety Commission there is a 67 percent chance of a major earthquake in the Bay Area in the next 30 years. A major earthquake anywhere in the Bay Area would result in moderate to severe ground shaking in East Palo Alto. Damage to buildings and infrastructure is a very real possibility. If an earthquake such as the 1906 San Francisco quake were to take place today in San Mateo County, most of East Palo Alto would experience an intensity of 9.0 on the Mercalli Modified Scale. This intensity results in severe ground shaking and structural damage.

### Liquifaction.

Damages from an earthquake are most often a result of liquefaction. Liquefaction is defined as the transformation of a granular soil from a solid state to a liquefied state. In the process the soil undergoes transient loss of strength, which commonly allows ground displacement or ground failure to occur. The Department of the Interior U.S. Geological Survey's Miscellaneous Investigation Series, "Map Showing Liquefaction Susceptibility of San Mateo County, California", shows liquefaction probabilities for East Palo Alto. The purpose of this map is to delineate areas where liquefiable sediment is likely to occur. The map shows that East Palo Alto to the West of University Avenue and to the South of Highway 101 is in the low to high range, that is, there is a 1 to 10 percent probability of liquefiable sediments in these areas. The area of East Palo Alto to the East of University Avenue and to the North of Highway 101 is in the moderate to low range, that is, there is a .1 to 1 percent probability of liquefiable sediments in this area.

### **SUMMARY**

Many of the safety issues are facing East Palo Alto relate to the natural environment. The air quality is difficult if not impossible to separate from that of the whole region. Water quality again is a regional issue San Francisco Bay may be heavily polluted near East Palo Alto, but the entire Bay is polluted to some degree. San Francisquito Creek flows through many other urban areas and is already polluted by the time it reaches East Palo Alto. East Palo Alto would need to work with other area governments to clean up the creek.

Ground water is more of a local issue with pollution occurring from local industry. This situation may improve since, according to Dr. Shelia Love, the City intends to reclaim the land under Ravenswood Industrial Site. Flooding is an issue in East Palo Alto due to the City's location at the edge of San Francisco Bay. A small section of the City directly northwest of Hwy. 101 at the edge of Menlo Park is subject to 500 year floods, but the biggest flood zone is in the portion of East Palo Alto adjacent to the wetlands and Bay. There are no faults in East Palo Alto, the closest ones are ten miles away and any earthquakes on either of these faults would have severe impacts on the entire region. Structural and chemical fires are the two fire safety issues in the City. The two chemical

plants in East Palo Alto are cause for extra fire prevention measures. Information on hazardous materials has been hard to find, however, the Sandoz Corporation is on the Superfund list of the Environmental Protection Agency.

## **FUTURE PROSPECTS**

Many of the issues covered in this chapter will remain virtually unchanged during the next twenty years. Most of the conditions of the natural environment are beyond human control, therefore safety and preparation for natural hazards are future issues of prime importance.

### **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

Some of the natural environment issues are regional issues that East Palo Alto must contend with on a local level. The remaining issues are those that are beyond the control of human beings. Because East Palo Alto is an urban area already close to buildout, issues from the natural environment are not going to have an impact on future development. In the same way, future development will not affect the natural environment.

### **NATURAL HAZARDS**

Conditions in the category of safety will not change much in the future. The possibility of a major earthquake will still exist. Areas subject to flood will not change. The possibility of structural fires may increase with more structures built. These issues will not affect future development.

### **SUMMARY**

Many of the geological factors are not relevant for a fifteen year projection, considering that it takes thousands of years for landforms to change. Air Quality is not likely to change much, if at all. Water Quality contains two issues, ground water as well as local water bodies. Based on the information available, the quality of local ground water meets current state and federal regulations and is unlikely to change significantly. Both San Francisco Bay and San Francisquito Creek are regional bodies of water outside the jurisdiction of East Palo Alto.



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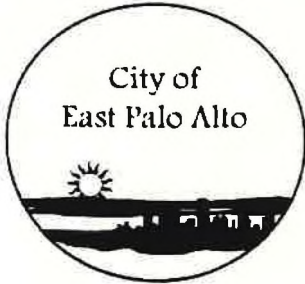
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