

weeks neighborhood plan



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and Agricultural Society**

**National Park Service—
Rivers, Trails and Conservation
Assistance Program**

Urban Ecology, Inc.

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Plan Summary

The Weeks Neighborhood in East Palo Alto is unique in the San Francisco Bay Area. It is a richly green place with many large trees and open views, in sharp contrast to the concrete and freeways of much of the nearby Bay Area. Many people come to the neighborhood and stay for a lifetime, creating a close-knit community. Historically it has been a farming place due to its rich soils, abundance of clean water and sunny climate outside the coastal fog zone. Communities like this were once common throughout the Bay Area, but today are rare.

However, change is happening in and around the Weeks Neighborhood. Land is being subdivided, houses are being built, new businesses and shopping centers are opening in surrounding cities, more people of all income levels are seeking houses to rent or buy, more people are driving their cars through East Palo Alto. Through the City's General Plan update and other community actions, East Palo Alto residents have an opportunity to respond to these outside pressures, to think about what they want East Palo Alto to look like five, ten or twenty years from now, and to define how they want growth to influence their community.

Over the next few years, a number of issues will directly affect the future of the Weeks Neighborhood. They include large-scale residential development near the Baylands, the Gateway 101 shopping center, replacement housing built for the Gateway 101 center, the City's General Plan update, Ravenswood Industrial Area, proposals for the University/Bay shopping center, and creating a Weeks Neighborhood Land Trust.

Weeks Neighborhood residents are realizing that they want to have a voice in the future of their neighborhood. They are becoming aware that they may not want it all to be developed, one lot at a time, for maximum profit. They are appreciating the importance of looking at the impacts on the neighborhood as a whole, and the city as a whole. They are looking at their neighborhood and thinking about what aspects of the neighborhood they like the way they are, and what aspects should change.

The Vision

The Weeks Neighborhood Plan is based on a positive vision of the Weeks Neighborhood as a thriving place to live and work. It is based on the fact that farming and horticulture are still some of the strongest economic assets of East Palo Alto.

The residents want to build a sense of community in a healthy and safe neighborhood. They would like to see a variety of housing types for both existing and new residents. They would also like to see new jobs, training and opportunities to earn a living.

In this vision, the Weeks Neighborhood will accommodate new housing and mixed-use development, especially near the University/Bay intersection, without sacrificing its existing and unique historic character. The Neighborhood Plan emphasizes economic, social, and educational activities focused on agriculture and open space. This plan envisions enhancing these assets to transform the Weeks Neighborhood into a friendly mixed-use residential/ farming community.

Community Based Planning

This Neighborhood Plan was prepared with extensive participation of neighborhood residents, as well as other East Palo Alto residents, City staff and community activists. This Plan represents the perspective of neighborhood residents. It makes specific planning proposals to carry out a concrete vision for the Weeks Neighborhood. We hope the community members will carefully consider the Weeks Neighborhood Plan and work to make their vision a reality.

This Neighborhood Plan has been prepared through the collaborative efforts of East Palo Alto Historical & Agricultural Society (EPA HAS), the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (NPS-RTCA), and Urban Ecology, Inc. These three project sponsors have come together over the last several years to work in East Palo Alto to prepare this plan. The professional planning and community organizing work has been generously funded by the Hewlett Foundation, the Columbia Foundation, NPS-RTCA, the National

VISION

Trust for Historic Preservation and a large amount of pro-bono work from members of Urban Ecology and East Palo Alto residents.

Elements of the Weeks Neighborhood Plan

The following pages provide an overview of the different elements of the Weeks Neighborhood Plan: Land Use and Urban Design; Circulation; Open Space and Conservation; Neighborhood Economic Development; and Historic Preservation.

Land Use and Urban Design

GOAL: To allow for an adequate amount of new housing and to enhance the neighborhoods quality of life and existing neighborhood character.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

The plan will allow for an additional 730 new residences in the neighborhood, while also preserving approximately 67 acres of open space, including the open areas of the Large-Lot Residential designation. This means allowing for well-designed housing that over the long-term could double the housing opportunities in the neighborhood, and still maintain the unique character of the neighborhood.

PROPOSED LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The plan recommends one of the following land use designations for each land parcel in the Weeks Neighborhood (see Figure 4). Existing development that does not conform to these designations would be “grandfathered,” or considered legally non-conforming.

Large-Lot Residential

This land use designation encourages houses and small scale agriculture following the existing building patterns in the area. Houses are allowed at the front of the lots, with agricultural development and open space at the back of the lots. The minimum lot size in this area is one acre, with a maximum of two residential buildings allowed on a typical lot with a maximum of two dwelling units per building.

Small Lot Residential

This land use designation maintains detached single-family housing on the existing small lots.



The houses should be of similar size and scale to the existing buildings on the block. The minimum lot size in this area is 5,000 square feet, with one unit allowed for every 4,000 square feet.

Avenue Residential

This land use designation enhances the existing detached single-family and attached duplex houses. “Granny flats”, garage apartments and second stories are encouraged as long as the building design is of similar size and scale to the existing residential buildings in the area. The minimum lot size is 5,000 square feet, with one dwelling unit allowed for every 2,500 square feet.

Multi-Family Residential

This land use designation allows for higher density, affordable multi-family housing that is concentrated within a quarter mile walking distance of the Four Corners area. This will allow residents to easily walk or bicycle to shopping and transit. One dwelling unit is allowed for every 1,200 square feet of lot area.

Industrial

This land use designation allows the existing industrial uses to remain in the northern portion of the neighborhood. The minimum lot size is 5,000 square feet.

Open Space and Conservation

This land use designation creates and preserves open space for the recreation and enjoyment of residents of both the neighborhood and the city as a whole. The minimum lot size is one-half acre. Permitted uses include agriculture, parks, playgrounds, and schools.

VISION

Circulation

GOAL: Reduce the amount of outside traffic cutting through the Weeks Neighborhood, slow down the traffic within the neighborhood, maintain adequate access for emergency vehicles and keep the existing mature street trees inside the public right-of-way.

PROPOSED STREET PLAN

Existing traffic volumes on University, Bay, Pulgas, Cooley and Clarke are already heavy during peak commute hours. Traffic from Gateway 101, Ravenswood Industrial Area and other new developments will significantly increase the amount of traffic within the neighborhood throughout the day. The intent of this plan is to enhance traffic flow on major streets and slow it down on neighborhood streets. There are four categories of streets and recommendations proposed in this plan:

Major Arterials (University Avenue)

Improve traffic flow on University to reduce traffic diversions through the Weeks Neighborhood.

Minor Arterials

(Bay Road, East Bayshore, Donohoe)

These streets should guide through traffic around the neighborhood core rather than through it, connecting different parts of the city.

Collectors

(North/South Avenues: Cooley, Clarke, Pulgas)

These streets should serve only local traffic to protect the safety of residents and the quiet residential character. These streets should: (a) not be widened, (b) keep the existing stop signs, (c) keep the current on-street parking, (d) reduce the speed limit to no more than 25 mph, (e) have trees planted in portions of the parking lanes, and (f) build traffic calming measures to reduce commuter traffic cutting through the neighborhood.

Local Streets (East/West Streets)

These streets should meet modern standards yet maintain their rustic character and existing fence lines. These streets should: (a) not be widened or cut into people's front yards, (b) keep mature street

trees, (c) be re-paved within existing widths with improvements for drainage and pedestrian access, (d) allow street parking on one side of the street and a sidewalk on other, (e) plant street trees in portions of the parking lane, and (f) reduce the speed limit to 20 mph.

Open Space and Conservation

GOAL: Enhance the significant natural features of the neighborhood and improve the quantity and quality of local recreational areas.

PROPOSED POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

The Weeks Neighborhood does not have adequate recreational areas to meet accepted standards. Much can be done to enhance and highlight its unique resources.

Expand Martin Luther King Park

Add the county-owned parcel at the end of Beech Street to M.L.K. Park. Create a new pedestrian-oriented entrance from Beech Street to enhance visibility and security.

Enhance Access to the Bay Trail and Baylands

The Bay Trail should be completed along the Baylands through East Palo Alto, making it possible to bike or walk to adjacent communities. Connections to the Weeks Neighborhood at the ends of the local east/west streets should be improved for local residents' access.

Develop a Neighborhood Park

The Weeks Neighborhood is the largest area in East Palo Alto that is unserved by existing city parks. A neighborhood park should be developed to provide opportunities for community gardens, an environmental or agricultural education center, and tot-lot and play area features.

Community Gardens

Non-profits and institutions should work together to establish additional community gardens in the neighborhood.

Tree Planting and Maintenance Program

Non-profit organizations and the City should work together to develop a tree planting and maintenance program.

VISION

Community Use of Schoolyards

Sharing schoolyards with the community-at-large in a manner that respects the needs and safety of school children would make significantly more open space available to the residents for community gardens, weekend and after school programs, sports programs, and trails or pathways.

Neighborhood Economic Development

GOAL: Enhance the property values within the Weeks Neighborhood and create high-quality well-paying jobs by supporting the Weeks Neighborhood as a vital place to live and using urban agriculture as an economic development tool.

This Plan enhances the city's overall economic development by supporting the Weeks Neighborhood as a vital place to live. Strong residential neighborhoods foster economic growth by allowing a viable workforce to live close to jobs. Enhancing the environmental and social quality of the neighborhood will attract new workers to live in the neighborhood. The large lot residential land use category also allows agriculture on the rear portions of private lots. This will allow for home food cultivation and crops for sale.

The Plan focuses on agriculture, as one of the four business sectors recognized by EPA CAN DO, because the Weeks Neighborhood contains significant open space and excellent soils, a sunny climate, a high water table and mature heritage trees. Agriculture in the Weeks Neighborhood is also supported by economic and quality-of-life factors, such as:

Job Creation

Urban farming could create the same number of jobs per acre as Gateway 101 (between 20-24 jobs per acre). Already 7% of all jobs in East Palo Alto are in agriculture. These jobs have been and continue to be controlled by local people who have an interest and commitment to East Palo Alto.

Job Training

Many programs use gardening and agriculture as the basis for developing job skills such as teamwork, responsibility and dealing with customers.

Supplements to Income

People can enhance their own income through food production in gardens. A \$20 investment can produce \$470 worth of food.

Increases in Property Values

The open space and greenery of a mixture of residential and agricultural land uses are amenities that are likely to increase property values.

Proximity to Lucrative Markets

East Palo Alto is close to Silicon Valley, a good market for high quality, fresh organic produce including fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs with a short shelf-life that must be brought quickly to market.

Highly Productive Agricultural Resources

The Weeks Neighborhood has some of the best soils, climate and water for agriculture in the Bay Area.

Local Control

Agricultural production is generally conducted at a small scale, controlled by local people, so the community's economic well-being remains in its own hands.

POTENTIAL ACTION

The City and non-profits can encourage agricultural activity that is compatible with the residential character of the Weeks Neighborhood, such as supporting market gardens and an East Palo Alto farmers' market, and hiring an agricultural development coordinator.

VISION

Historic Preservation Land Use and Urban Design

GOAL: Maintain the historic character of the Weeks Neighborhood by keeping the narrow, tree-lined streets, designing new houses within the existing architecture of the neighborhood, and allowing for agricultural use in the rear of the large-lots.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

Suggested actions that the City and local community groups could undertake to assist in the preservation of historic resources include:

Support Privately Funded Historic Preservation

The City could use available flexibility in permitting and inspection processes to encourage privately-sponsored historic preservation activities.

City Adopt the Historic Resources Inventory

Adopting the existing Historic Resources Inventory would allow property owners to use the less restrictive Historic Building Code to upgrade their historic structures.

Complete the Historic Resources Inventory

Many historic buildings are not included on the Historic Resources Inventory. The City or a non-profit could complete the inventory.

Enter into Mills Act Contracts

California's Mills Act contracts allow for a reduction in property taxes when a property owner agrees to restore a historic building, maintain its historic character, and use it in a manner compatible with its historic characteristics.

Adopt a Historic Preservation Element & Ordinance

A Historic Preservation Element in the General Plan would set goals and objectives for historic preservation in the City and recommend implementation mechanisms. A Historic Preservation Ordinance would require careful consideration before a historic building could be demolished or significantly altered, and it would set guidelines for the renovation and alteration of historic buildings.

Consider Creating a Historic Resources Board

A Historic Resources Board could maintain the City's Historic Resources Inventory, review requests for historic building demolition or alteration, and develop design guidelines for historic renovation.

Conclusion

The Weeks Neighborhood Plan provides guidelines for residential, infrastructure and economic development, and for the enhancement of human, historic, natural and recreational resources. It attempts to build a sense of community, family and safety by providing parks, open spaces, schools and views from housing onto community areas. The plan, if carried out, could offer neighborhood residents, especially the children, what all people deserve — fresh healthful food, open spaces, a caring community, and opportunities to learn skills, shoulder responsibilities and build character, confidence and self-esteem through hands-on activities.

The Weeks Neighborhood Plan outlines a way to achieve a vision that includes housing for all income levels, mixed-use development that is compatible with its surrounding residences, reduced traffic, easy walking and bicycling, economically viable agricultural activities, a sense of the uniqueness and specialness of the area, and the green, lush, country feeling that is so important to many residents.

The project sponsors hope that the Weeks Neighborhood Plan will continue to help generate political support to change the existing zoning ordinances in the Weeks Neighborhood, ultimately help to clarify what the future vision for the Neighborhood should be. This plan could also be a model for the development of other neighborhood plans in East Palo Alto.



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

East Palo Alto's Weeks Neighborhood is unique in the San Francisco Bay Area. It is a richly green place with many large trees and open views, in sharp contrast to the concrete and freeways of much of the nearby Bay Area. Many people come to the neighborhood and stay for a lifetime, creating a close-knit community. Historically it has been a farming place due to its rich soils, abundance of clean water and sunny climate outside the coastal fog zone. Communities like this were once common throughout the Bay Area, but today are rare.

This Neighborhood Plan seeks to maintain the Weeks Neighborhood as a thriving place to live and work. It will allow the Weeks Neighborhood to accommodate new housing and commercial development without sacrificing its unique historic character. It will give the Weeks Neighborhood and all of East Palo Alto a strong positive identity built on existing assets.

Through this vision, the Weeks Neighborhood will become more “sustainable.” A sustainable community is economically, socially and environmentally healthy, and it has the capacity to remain healthy over time. To achieve sustainability, a community must use its resources, including land, natural systems and people, in a way that does not exhaust them. To achieve sustainability, a community must balance human and natural needs with economic development.

The Plan's vision includes the following components, some of which are illustrated in the aerial view of the future Weeks Neighborhood shown in Figure 1:

- **Build a sense of community, family and safety** by providing parks, open spaces, schools, and views from housing onto community areas. Encourage local churches to make their buildings available for community meetings. Offer urban children what all children deserve—

FIGURE 1

The Vision for the Weeks Neighborhood



Paul Okamoto

ORGANIZATION

fresh healthful food, open spaces, a caring community, and opportunities to learn skills, shoulder responsibilities and build character, confidence and self-esteem through hands-on activities.

- **Preserve the Weeks Neighborhood’s landscape** by maintaining open space, trees, agriculture and gardening in the Weeks Neighborhood. Increase the level of care for the landscape.
- **Provide a variety of housing types** and integrate low income/affordable housing with higher income housing. Preserve single-family housing along the neighborhood’s narrower east-west streets. Increase the overall density of the neighborhood by clustering development on large lots, adding unobtrusive “granny suites” to existing structures along the north-south avenues, and building community-oriented townhouses and courtyard housing on the blocks nearest the old Nairobi Village site at Bay Road and University Avenue.
- **Support development at the intersection of Bay Road and University Avenue** by concentrating multi-family housing near this intersection. Residents living in this area will be in easy walking distance of new shops and transportation facilities at this intersection, so they will form a customer base to help ensure the future success of development at the “Four Corners.”
- **Maintain and enhance a network of streets and paths** that can accommodate people as well as cars. Preserve the current character of the streets and paths in the Weeks Neighborhood. Encourage walking and bicycling, and create interesting and safe routes for these alternative travel means throughout the city. Design streets to protect existing trees, provide adequate drainage, and ensure low-cost upkeep.
- **Restore and preserve the historic character** of the Weeks Neighborhood in terms of historic buildings and structures, lot layout, soil, trees and agricultural activities. Provide incentives to owners to adapt and restore poultry houses, water towers and other historic farm structures for new and modern uses. Preserve the Weeks Neighborhood so that residents can take pride in their neighborhood and put down roots in the community. Let the land and buildings of the Weeks Neighborhood tell their stories of the

past to future generations of residents, workers and visitors.

- **Create jobs and job training opportunities** through agriculture, gardening and related efforts. Urban agriculture has the potential to create jobs in comparable quantity and quality to those offered by the retailers currently being developed at the Gateway 101 project. A farmers’ market can provide an outlet for locally grown produce. Locally-owned agricultural businesses, the farmers’ market and training programs in an agricultural setting can teach job and business skills. All of these economic developments will also be under local control, so that the money they generate will stay in the community.
- **Enhance agriculture** by increasing use of existing farmlands and planting vacant lands. Promote small-scale farming (one to two acres), gardening and related cottage industries within the Weeks Neighborhood. Emphasize intensive (high-yield) organic cultivation, sustainable soil management, water conservation and labor-intensive methods.

How the Weeks Neighborhood Plan Is Organized

This Neighborhood Plan contains the basic building blocks to preserve and enhance the unique features of the Weeks Neighborhood within the larger context of East Palo Alto. It contains the following chapters:

This chapter explains the Plan’s vision for the Weeks Neighborhood. It uses words and pictures to explain what the Weeks Neighborhood will be like if the Neighborhood Plan is implemented. It also describes the contents of the Plan, and the way the Plan was created.

Chapter 2 contains the formal goals and objectives of the Neighborhood Plan.

Chapter 3 describes the Weeks Neighborhood as it exists today.

Chapter 4 includes land use and urban design guidelines for the Weeks Neighborhood. These guidelines could be added to the City of East Palo Alto’s General Plan and zoning code to make the vision of the Weeks Neighborhood a reality.

Chapter 5 describes the roadway, transit and trail network that is appropriate to support the vision



of the Weeks Neighborhood. Roadway standards in this chapter could be added to the City's General Plan Circulation Element.

Chapter 6 defines the open spaces that will result in the Weeks Neighborhood if the Neighborhood Plan is implemented, and it includes additional suggested actions to strengthen the open space network.

Chapter 7 outlines an economic development strategy that focuses on agriculture, gardening, small businesses, job training and education, and support for the Weeks Neighborhood as a vital place to live.

Chapter 8 describes the historic fabric of the Weeks Neighborhood. It also lists historic preservation measures that are included in the Plan, and it suggests further measures to preserve historic resources.

Chapter 9 relates the Weeks Neighborhood Plan to future projects that have been proposed in and around the neighborhood. This chapter creates a framework to allow residents and City decision-makers to address future projects within the context of the Weeks Neighborhood.

Chapter 10 is the conclusion.

Chapter 11 includes references and background material used in creating the Plan.

How the Weeks Neighborhood Plan Was Prepared

This Neighborhood Plan has been prepared through the collaborative efforts of three organizations that are concerned about the future of East Palo Alto and the Weeks Neighborhood:

- The locally-based East Palo Alto Historical and Agricultural Society (EPA HAS) has been the driving force behind this plan. EPA HAS is specifically concerned with maintaining the historic, agricultural character of East Palo Alto while increasing opportunities for economic development based on these resources.
- The National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (NPS-RTCA) has provided project management, organizational and financial support for the planning effort. NPS-RTCA is a federal program which assists communities in enhancing their local rivers, trails, open spaces and culturally significant resources.

PREPARATION

- Urban Ecology, Inc. has helped with urban design, fundraising, organizing, and neighborhood planning for this project. Urban Ecology is a non-profit organization with over 1,200 members nationwide that seeks to make our cities more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable and just.

These three organizations are independent entities that have cooperated on the preparation of this community plan, each bringing its own resources and expertise to the project. The organizations have worked together on this project for over five years, engaging in an extensive public review process that is described below. In 1993, the organizations published a vision for the Weeks Neighborhood, and began to seek funding for more formal planning. Professional planning and community organizing work was ultimately funded by the Hewlett Foundation, the Columbia Foundation, NPS-RTCA, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and a large amount of pro-bono work. These contributions have resulted in the preparation of this Neighborhood Plan.

The Neighborhood Plan and the ideas in it have been circulated among a large number of East Palo Alto residents; thus this Neighborhood Plan represents city planning from the neighborhood perspective.

While work on this Neighborhood Plan was underway, the City of East Palo Alto began planning for a large redevelopment project, the Gateway 101 Project adjacent to the Weeks Neighborhood. The City also began revising its General Plan, and this process is still on-going. Many items in the Neighborhood Plan are appropriate for inclusion in the City's new General Plan.

When work on this Neighborhood Plan began, local residents said they did not want a planning effort that would result in a collection of ideas without any specific proposals. Therefore, this Plan sets a concrete vision for the Weeks Neighborhood. We hope the community will study this vision, consider it carefully, and work to make it a reality.



Public Participation

Much of what is contained in this Neighborhood Plan is an outgrowth of ideas from residents of the Weeks Neighborhood. As this Plan was prepared, extensive efforts were made to maintain regular contact with Weeks Neighborhood residents and other East Palo Alto citizens, City staff and community activists.

- The planning team sponsored a public meeting on circulation issues in January, 1995. This meeting raised awareness of the links between development in East Palo Alto and traffic impacts in the Weeks Neighborhood, and it provided a forum for residents to voice their concerns.
- Block meetings were held throughout the Weeks Neighborhood during the Spring of 1995 in order to follow up on the issues raised at the public meeting, work with neighbors on street design issues, and seek feedback on the Neighborhood Plan's initial concepts.
- Many individual meetings and conversations were held with neighborhood residents, community leaders and City staff in order to inform them about and seek input on various aspects of the Plan.
- Advance copies of this Plan were reviewed by a small number of residents and some individual members of various City commissions and councils.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- EPA HAS and EPA CAN DO sponsored an agricultural business luncheon to discuss the economics of urban agriculture in East Palo Alto in October, 1995.
- Copies of a draft Weeks Neighborhood Plan were distributed to community members beginning in October 1995, and community input was sought through October 1996.
- The planning team sponsored a public meeting on the public review draft of the neighborhood plan in February, 1996. This meeting explained the fundamental ideas of the plan to the residents and allowed for feedback.
- In April, 1996, EPA HAS sponsored a public meeting to discuss the Shore Breeze I development near the Baylands between Weeks and Runnymede streets. Residents voiced their concerns about the Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration for the development.
- The planning team continued to meet with individual residents during the summer of 1996. A summary of the plan was distributed during that time.
- Organizations interested in acquiring or managing land in the Weeks Neighborhood can use the land use guidelines in this plan to help them target appropriate pieces of land. The Trust for Public Land, Bay Area Action, EPA HAS, and organizations seeking replacement open space for the Gateway 101 projects are examples of these types of organizations.
- Other community organizations, both within and outside the community, can use the vision in this plan as one of the guidelines for their future work. Groups such as Free at Last, Christmas in April, Habitat for Humanity, Catholic Charities, EPA Environmental Law Clinic, schools and other educational groups all perform work that affects the environment, land use patterns and the economic base in the Weeks Neighborhood. This plan can help to create a framework for their decision-making.

What Happens Next

We hope that the Weeks Neighborhood Plan can serve as the basis for change in the Weeks Neighborhood. This plan can be implemented in several different ways:

- The land use, urban design, transportation and historic preservation concepts in this Neighborhood Plan can be adopted into the City of East Palo Alto's on-going General Plan update process, and can then be implemented through the zoning code.
- EPA HAS and Urban Ecology could assist the City in the formulation of specific design guidelines for the Weeks Neighborhood, which could be adopted by the City.
- The City of East Palo Alto, EPA HAS, Urban Ecology and the East Palo Alto Community Alliance Neighborhood Development Organization (EPA CAN DO) can work together to implement the economic development and housing ideas in this plan. The City Council's adoption or acceptance of this plan will help non-profit organizations to raise money to fund these programs.





Trevor Burrowes

Goals and Objectives

Every planning document should have a clear set of goals and objectives that guide the decisions shown in the plan. These are the goals and objectives for the Weeks Neighborhood Plan.

Goals

- **Quality of Life:** The Weeks Neighborhood should be a livable community that offers pleasant surroundings, neighborliness, safety, and a physically, emotionally and ecologically healthy environment to the adults and children who live there.
- **Sense of Place:** The Weeks Neighborhood should be identifiable as a unique and special place within the context of the city of East Palo Alto and the Bay Area. It should contribute to the civic pride and sense of community of East Palo Alto residents.
- **Economic Development:** The land use and development pattern of the Weeks Neighborhood should reflect East Palo Alto's economic interests, including the provision of affordable housing, quality jobs, job training, economic self-reliance and property value enhancement. It should reflect the contributions that agriculture and horticulture already make to the East Palo Alto economy.
- **Historic Resources:** The continuing development of the Weeks Neighborhood should respect the historic precedents of the area, in terms of built structures and the uses of the land, following in the tradition of the Nairobi School and existing floriculture businesses.
- **Cultural Inclusiveness:** The Weeks Neighborhood should be a place in which people of different cultures and lifestyles can live and work together.



Objectives

Land Use and Urban Design

- Maintain and enhance the east-west blocks of the Weeks Neighborhood as areas of predominantly single-family homes in a pattern that encourages economically-viable agricultural operations.
- Provide medium-density affordable housing along north-south collector streets and in an area of more intense development within a 1/4-mile walking distance of the old Nairobi Village site at Bay Road and University Avenue.
- Create a buffer and transition area between the industrial uses in the Ravenswood Industrial Area north of Weeks Street and the residences in the Weeks Neighborhood.
- Create a gradation of development intensity from east to west, with the least intensive development near the Baylands on the east and the most intensive development near University Avenue on the west.
- Create urban design guidelines for the Weeks Neighborhood that enhance property values and reflect the area's unique past and present.
- Make new development fit within the context of development that already exists in the neighborhood.
- Encourage new development to take advantage of available energy- and resource-saving technologies.
- Encourage enforcement of City land use regulations throughout the Weeks Neighborhood.

Circulation

- Enhance the local community's transportation access within the neighborhood and throughout the City.
- Protect the quiet residential character of the Weeks Neighborhood area by limiting the amount of through traffic in the neighborhood.
- Preserve and enhance the aesthetics

OBJECTIVES

and unique rural character of the Weeks Neighborhood through street layout, design and landscaping.

- Implement a range of innovative street designs that reflect the needs and desires of local residents and maintain the historic character of the neighborhood.
- Permit comfortable and safe movement of pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles in the neighborhood, and protect vulnerable users of the roadway system such as children, the disabled, and the elderly.
- Provide access to all properties in the neighborhood for residents, deliveries, maintenance and emergency vehicles (fire, police, ambulance).
- Reduce the traffic impacts of East Palo Alto's redevelopment projects that are occurring just outside the Weeks Neighborhood.
- Improve access to locations of high activity, such as the Nairobi Village site, Gateway 101, multi-family housing, schools, churches and stores.
- Improve access to regional transportation such as CalTrain and regional SamTrans buses.



Open Space & Conservation

- Develop a system of private and community gardens and agricultural open space in the backyards of large lots in the Weeks Neighborhood.
- Improve accessibility of the Baylands for residents of the Weeks Neighborhood.
- Save heritage trees in the Weeks Neighborhood.
- Plant and maintain street trees throughout the neighborhood.
- Increase the amount of public parkland in East Palo Alto.

- Improve access and facilities at existing parks.

Economic Development

- Support the creation of high-quality, well-paying jobs in the redevelopment areas adjacent to the Weeks Neighborhood.
- Create job- and work-training programs that teach economic self-sufficiency, entrepreneurialism and business skills.
- Enhance property values through the maintenance and enhancement of public open space, open agricultural lands in the centers of blocks, and the historic character of the neighborhood.
- Emphasize urban agriculture, market gardening, telecommuting and home-based businesses as economic development components in the Weeks Neighborhood.



Historic Preservation

- Preserve and maintain the structures and landscape patterns in the Weeks Neighborhood that serve as significant visible reminders of the area's social and architectural history.
- Respect the Weeks Neighborhood's historic development pattern of one acre lots oriented primarily along east/west streets.
- Re-use and rehabilitate existing structures.
- Integrate historic preservation into the neighborhood's planning framework.

Weeks Neighborhood Background

The Weeks Neighborhood is one of East Palo Alto's major residential neighborhoods. It has a long and interesting history, and today provides a home for diverse peoples. Residents enjoy the Weeks Neighborhood's narrow streets, heritage trees, large lots, and views across San Francisco Bay to the East Bay Hills. This Neighborhood Plan seeks to maintain the Weeks Neighborhood as a safe and peaceful environment for families, children and seniors. This Plan is also intended to increase housing and economic opportunities within the Weeks Neighborhood, while preserving the neighborhood's character as a historic area with large lots and gardens.

The Weeks Neighborhood

The Weeks Neighborhood is situated in East Palo Alto between University Avenue, Highway 101, the Baylands and Ravenswood Industrial Area. The developed portion of the neighborhood consists of about 17 blocks that cover about 300 acres, bounded by Cooley Avenue on the west, Donohoe and O'Connor Streets on the south, the Baylands on the east and Bay Road and the old railroad tracks on the north. The general location of the Weeks Neighborhood is shown in Figure 2.

Today, the Weeks Neighborhood is a mostly residential area, with approximately 770 lots and 910 residential units. Thus the Weeks Neighborhood accounts for approximately 13% of East Palo Alto's 7,000 homes. About 74% of the residences are single-family homes, and the other 26% are multi-family apartments, townhouses and attached units. Assuming East Palo Alto's average household size of 2.75 persons per household, the Weeks Neighborhood has a population of 2,500 persons, or 10% of East Palo Alto's population of about 24,000.

But the Weeks Neighborhood is more than a neighborhood of houses. It is home to a diverse population reflective of East Palo Alto as a whole: African-Americans, Latinos, Pacific Islanders, whites, Asians and others. The neighborhood

also has many churches, two schools and several childcare centers. On its northern edge, it includes industrial uses tied to the railroad and the Ravenswood Industrial Area. It has several shops serving the residents, including the Cooley Avenue Market, and it is adjacent to other shops and the post office in the Four Corners area on the northwest corner of the neighborhood at the intersection of Bay Road and University Avenue. Perhaps most significantly, the Weeks Neighborhood also still contains many remnants of its strong agricultural past.

The neighborhood was established as an "agricultural colony" in which homeowners could have their own small farms on their own properties, and many qualities that defined this type of development still exist today. In fact, there are still many functioning greenhouses in the area, and there are over ten active for-profit agricultural businesses in the neighborhood. In addition, many residents have their own large gardens, and a community garden on Weeks Street serves residents from adjacent apartment complexes. These features, together with the neighborhood's many remaining large lots, luxurious landscaping, narrow streets, soils (some of the most fertile in the metropolitan Bay Area's), and rich stock of historic buildings, all combine to give the Weeks Neighborhood an open, green, inviting character that is valued by many residents.

The Weeks Neighborhood's character is also determined by some of the physical characteristics of the neighborhood. The neighborhood is set up on a strongly rectangular grid, so that all the houses face streets that run exactly north-south or east-west. The north-south streets—Cooley



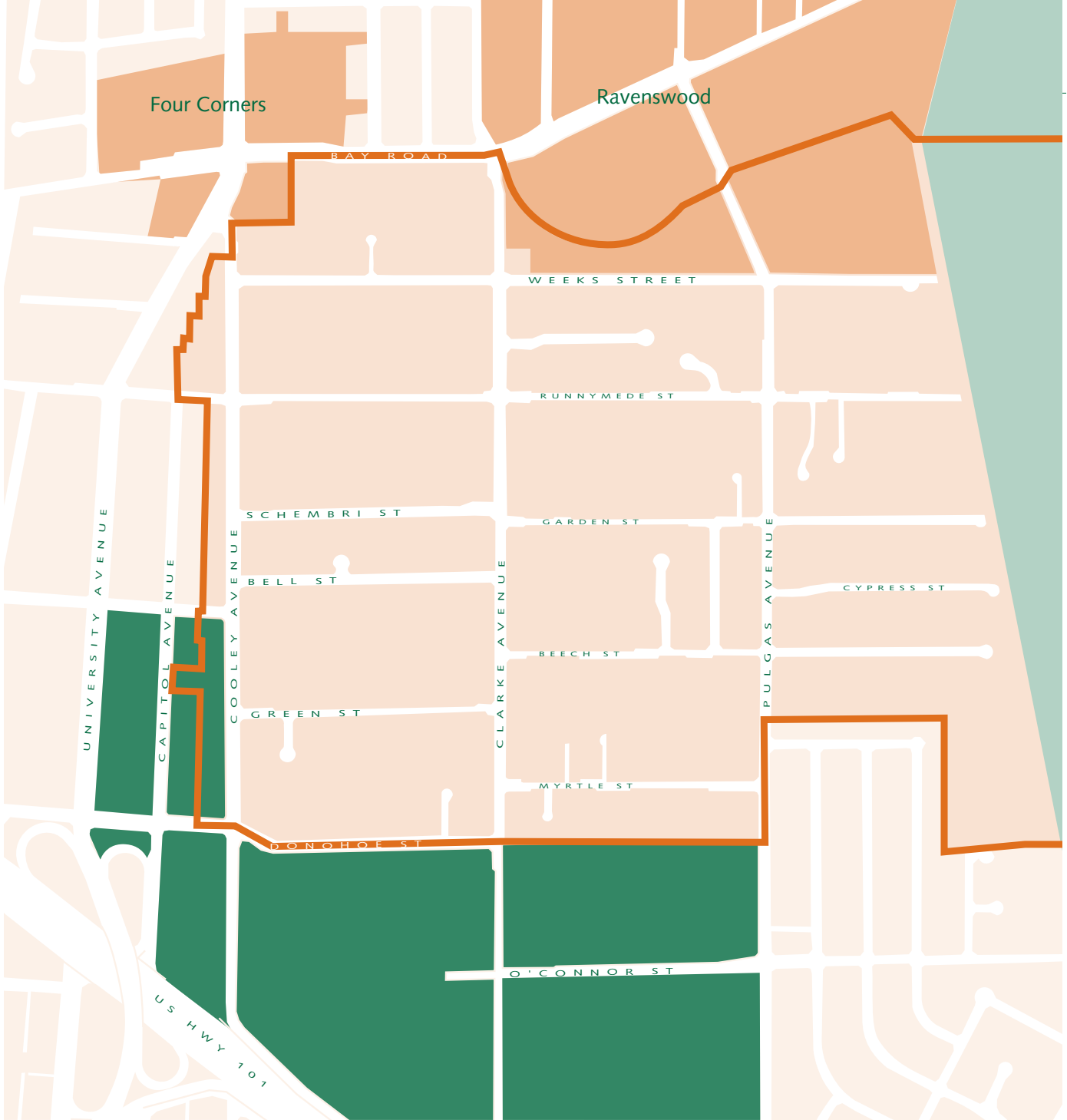


FIGURE 2
WEEKS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
Planning Context

-  Weeks Neighborhood Plan Boundary
-  Gateway 101 Specific Plan Area
-  Ravenswood Industrial Area
-  Baylands

NEIGHBORHOOD

Avenue, Clarke Avenue, and Pulgas Avenue—are relatively wide and are lined with small, single-family lots with individual houses along their short blocks. The east-west streets, on the other hand, are often narrower, and many have dense landscaping and no curbs or sidewalks, which gives them a rustic feeling appreciated by many residents. These streets are lined by many large lots of one-half to one acre, which were the historical agricultural lots of the neighborhood. Houses face the streets on these large lots. A small percentage of these lots have been subdivided into cul-de-sac residential development; in these areas, the Weeks Neighborhood's rustic character has been compromised. But in many areas these large lots still have agricultural operations or gardens on their rear portions, or they are undeveloped. These lots and their typical site layout along the east-west streets form the basic pattern of the Weeks Neighborhood.

Densities in the Weeks Neighborhood generally increase from east to west, with the lowest densities closest to the Baylands and the highest densities close to University Avenue. This Plan seeks to maintain lower densities near the Baylands. Reasons for maintaining a gradation in densities include existing flooding problems, inadequate drainage, the presence of endangered species in the Baylands, traffic and limited public transportation access.



Planning Context

The Weeks Neighborhood exists within a rapidly changing environment in East Palo Alto. It is important to understand the projects occurring around the Weeks Neighborhood in order to understand the neighborhood's current and future role in the community. The locations of these projects are shown in Figure 2.

The Gateway 101 retail project will soon be realized on the former site of Ravenswood High School immediately south of the Weeks Neighborhood. This redevelopment project is intended to bring a large regional shopping center to East Palo Alto. Phase I, located between Cooley and Clarke Avenues, will contain a mix of “big box” retailers such as Home Depot, CompuUSA, Office Depot and the Good Guys with a total square footage of about 400,000 square feet. Phase II is still under consideration, but may include more retailers, a multi-plex cinema, multi-family housing and a park.

While this project will create jobs and tax revenues for the City, it will also displace residents who need replacement housing, and it could also lead to increased traffic in the Weeks Neighborhood and the city as a whole.

The Nairobi Village Shopping Center site at the “Four Corners” of University Avenue and Bay Road is a potential site for future retail development. This site has long been eyed by the City as the best site for a community-serving retail center for the East Palo Alto community.

The East Palo Alto Redevelopment Agency would like to work with a developer to build a 70,000-square foot retail center on this site with a substantial, full-service supermarket. If a supermarket anchor is not found, the City may consider other retail or mixed uses on the site.



PLAN CONTEXT

New residential development in the Weeks Neighborhood will have a symbiotic relationship with new retail uses at the Nairobi Village site. It is critical that the Nairobi Village site be developed with community-serving retail uses to make the Weeks Neighborhood a more attractive and functional place to live. At the same time, the Weeks Neighborhood can supply new residents who will support commercial development on the Nairobi Village site.

Replacement housing and affordable housing are in significant demand in East Palo Alto, particularly due to the construction of the Gateway 101 Project. As East Palo Alto's Community Development Corporation, EPA CAN DO is taking a lead role in building and managing affordable housing in the area. EPA CAN DO, Mid-Peninsula Housing and Habitat for Humanity have built the 62-unit Gloria Way housing development next to City Hall in the Four Corners area.

Housing sites near University Avenue and Bay Road make sense because they are centrally located around the Four Corners area. This Neighborhood Plan identifies sites for additional replacement and affordable housing, particularly in the area nearest Four Corners and along the neighborhood's north-south avenues, with additional units scattered throughout the neighborhood.

The Ravenswood Industrial Redevelopment Area lies just to the north of the Weeks Neighborhood, and some industrial uses from this area actually spill into the Weeks Neighborhood along the north side of Weeks Street. Current uses in the Industrial Area tend to be dirty and noisy, and have been causes of hazardous materials contamination. Thus there are concerns about the interrelationships between the Industrial Area and the adjacent residences in the Weeks Neighborhood. The City is currently trying to attract new uses to the Industrial Area, and this could lead to further incompatibility problems.

The Weeks Neighborhood Plan must create a buffer and transition between the industrial uses in the Industrial Area and the residences in the Weeks Neighborhood.



CHAPTER 4

Land Use and Urban Design

This chapter explains existing land use and design patterns in the Weeks Neighborhood, and it suggests new land use and design regulations for the area. It concludes by calculating the development potential in the area based on the new proposed land use and design regulations.

Development History and Existing Land Uses

This section explains the history of the Weeks Neighborhood to the extent it has influenced land use patterns in the area. A fuller history of the neighborhood is included in Chapter 8.

Weeks Poultry Colony

Much of the Weeks Neighborhood was originally subdivided as the Weeks Poultry Colony, also known as Runnymede, between 1916 and 1925. Charles Weeks controlled 640 acres of East Palo Alto's best agricultural land, which he subdivided for agricultural and residential use. By 1922, there were over 200 families living in Runnymede. Each family had a small agricultural operation that produced poultry, fruits, berries, vegetables and/or dairy products.

The Weeks Poultry Colony was based on the ideas of William E. Smythe, who had originated the "Little Lands" movement around the turn of the century. Smythe and Weeks believed that agricultural technology and one- to two-acre parcels of land could "mak[e] it possible for multitudes to live in abundance far from the noise and grind of the city, close to Nature on a very small plot of land."¹ Weeks hoped that by subdividing his land, he could create a community in which each individual family would be able to supply its own needs and reach economic self-sufficiency through farming. Today, the basic pattern of large lots and agricultural parcels in the Weeks Neighborhood is testimony to Charles Weeks' vision.

1. *One Acre and Independence, a journal published by Charles Weeks in 1922 and 1923, quoted in East Palo Alto: The Dark Horse by Trevor Burrowes.*

Post-World War II Housing

There was little significant development in East Palo Alto between the 1920's and World War II. After the War, however, there was a stream of veterans and war workers searching for permanent housing in the Bay Area, and suburban subdivisions occurred throughout the region. Many subdivisions in East Palo Alto are representative of this period, including the Gardens (then called Palo Alto Gardens), Kavanaugh (now called Flood Park) and University Village. These subdivisions at the edges of the Weeks Neighborhood have much less architectural character than the Weeks Neighborhood itself, since subdividers emphasized flat land, small lots, and small, uniform, easy-to-build houses.



Modern Floriculture and the Agricultural Resurgence

Despite the subdivision of much of the area around the Weeks Neighborhood, the neighborhood itself, with its pattern of large agricultural lots, has remained largely intact up until today. From the 1930's to the 1950's, large portions of East Palo Alto were used for flower-growing. Cultivation of chrysanthemums, violets, carnations and lilies was one of San Mateo County's biggest industries. Flower growers in East Palo Alto, largely of Japanese and Italian descent, erected large numbers of greenhouses for floriculture in the Weeks Neighborhood and surrounding areas. Many of these greenhouses remain today, although floriculture began to decline in the 1970's.

EXISTING USES

The maintenance of the agricultural lotting pattern in the Weeks Neighborhood, made possible by the flower growing industry, has allowed for a resurgence of small scale agriculture in the area over the last decade. Today, the East Palo Alto Business Directory shows eight different agricultural businesses in the Weeks Neighborhood, which range from nurseries to flower growers to vegetable gardeners to beekeepers. There are several other agricultural operations that do not appear in the Directory.

While some of these businesses, such as the Nakanishi Nursery, have been in business since the 1940's, many others, such as Happy Quail Farms were started only recently. These new businesses exist because of the Bay Area's growing interest in health and locally grown produce. They could not exist in the Weeks Neighborhood if were not for the pattern of large lots and excellent soils in the area.

Recent Housing Development

High housing prices in the Bay Area have created a need for affordable and market-rate housing throughout the region, and the large lots in the Weeks Neighborhood have enticed developers to enter the area to develop new housing. The Weeks Neighborhood represents an attractive location for affordable single-family houses because it has large amounts of land available for subdivision at a relatively low cost. Unfortunately, this process has led to an increasing fragmentation of parcels in the area, and to the loss of valuable agricultural land. New subdivisions in the neighborhood are often developed along very short cul-de-sacs that bear no relation to each other; this is an inefficient system of design that leads to large amounts of pavement, poor connections between neighborhoods, and a sense of isolation between developments. Under East Palo Alto's current development standards, very large houses are being built in the neighborhood from repetitive and standardized designs on relatively small lots, which has led to crowding and aesthetically unpleasant developments in some areas. The result has been the creation of new housing with little or no sense of community and a decline in neighborhood character.

Churches and Schools

The Weeks Neighborhood's large lot pattern has also allowed the development of many institutional uses. The neighborhood has three schools, two childcare centers, and a large number of churches. Many new churches have been built in the last decade, and have probably selected the Weeks Neighborhood as their locations because large parcels are plentiful and there is convenient access to the freeway.

Public Open Space and Private Yards

The Weeks Neighborhood has a large supply of undeveloped open space, both in private backyards in the interiors of blocks and in several publicly-owned and institutional parcels. The private large lot backyards include a large amount of open land that is or was used for agriculture, gardening and/or open space. In addition, there are institutional open space uses at the Ravenswood Childrens' Center and at Brentwood and McNair Schools on O'Connor Street.

At the edge of the developed portion of the Weeks Neighborhood are the Baylands, which are an important regional open space resource. This area offers habitat to endangered species such as the California Clapper Rail and the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse. Weeks Street, Runnymede Street, Garden Street, Cypress Street and Beech Street all dead-end at the Baylands, and they provide some access to this area.





Existing General Plan, Zoning and Redevelopment

General Plan and Zoning

The City of East Palo Alto has land use jurisdiction in the Weeks Neighborhood, and land use is controlled by the City's General Plan and its zoning map.

The City's General Plan contains a land use map that dictates allowed land uses in the Weeks Neighborhood and the rest of the city. Within the Weeks Neighborhood, the following designations apply:

Medium Density Residential, which allows single family homes with 2 to 8 units per acre. This is the designation found in most of the Weeks Neighborhood.

Medium High Density Residential, which allows multi-family residential units such as townhouses and condominiums with 9 to 17 units per acre. This designation applies on and around lands owned by San Mateo County on Beech Street.

High Density Residential, which allows multi-family residential units such as apartments and condominiums with 18 to 35 units per acre. This designation applies to the south side of Bay Road, to the existing apartment complex at the intersection of Runnymede Street and Cooley Avenue, and to the undeveloped land at the end of Weeks and Runnymede Streets.

General Industrial, which allows most manufacturing. This designation applies on the north side of Weeks Street east of Clarke Avenue.

The neighborhood is predominantly zoned R1-5000, which allows one single-family residence per lot with a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet. Some City leaders have suggested changing

this designation to allow for a minimum lot size of 7,500 square feet. This would mandate larger lots, but would also lower the development potential in the area.

Small pockets of property are zoned RM-2000, RM-1000 and RM-500, which allow multi-family residences with densities of one unit per 2,000, 1,000 and 500 square feet respectively. These parcels are along Cooley Avenue, where multi-family housing already exists, and on Weeks Street and near the Baylands on vacant properties. Many of the areas with these designations have "spot zoning," which means that zoning is applied to a single parcel or set of parcels that is different from surrounding parcels. Spot zoning is often considered undesirable, since it can lead to incompatibilities between adjacent parcels. The reason for these small multi-family zones was to meet County affordable housing requirements. But since the majority of East Palo Alto's housing stock is already affordable, the rationale of multi-family in these areas makes little sense.

The areas east of Clarke Avenue and north of Weeks Street are zoned MB, M1 and M2, which allow for manufacturing and industrial uses. This designation is consistent with the Ravenswood Industrial Area farther to the north, and it is representative of the majority of the uses in that area.

Martin Luther King Park, adjacent to the Baylands, is designated COSC, for Community Open Space and Conservation, while the Baylands themselves are designated RM, for Resource Management.

Although agriculture is currently an important land use in the Weeks Neighborhood, it is not allowed under any of the existing General Plan or zoning categories.

Redevelopment Areas

As shown in Figure 2, the Weeks Neighborhood is bounded by Redevelopment Areas to the north and south which protrude slightly into the area.

Redevelopment Area #1 is East Palo Alto's Ravenswood Industrial Redevelopment Area. This Redevelopment Area also includes the Four Corners around Bay Road and University Avenue. In the Weeks Neighborhood, it includes the vacant lands on the northern half of the block between the Baylands, Weeks Street, Pulgas Avenue and

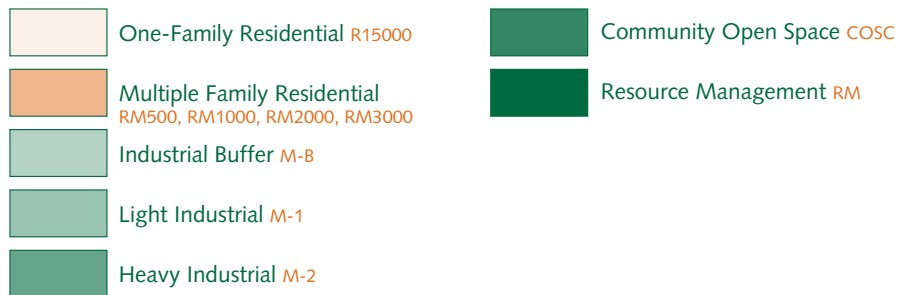
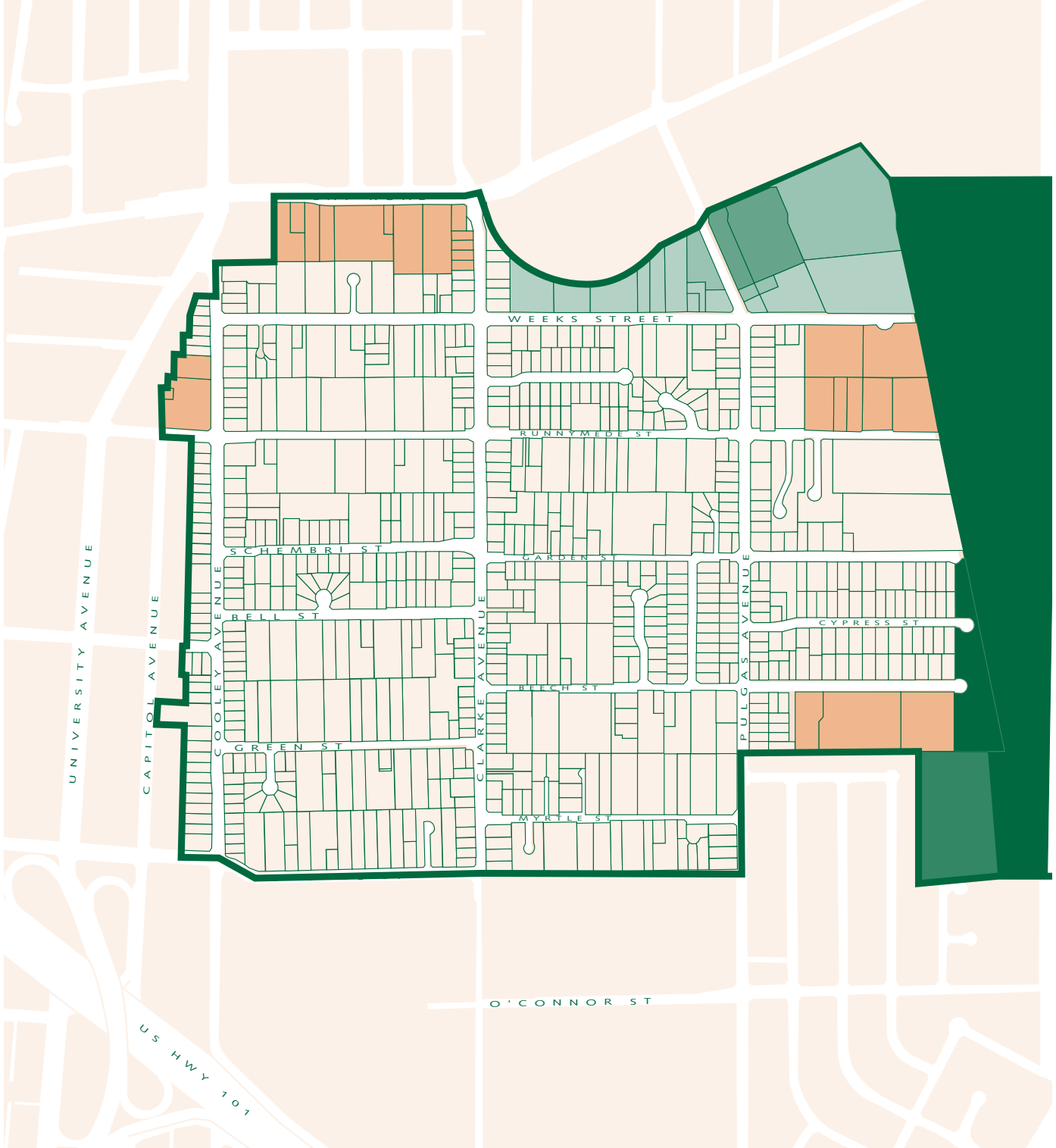


FIGURE 3
 WEEKS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
Existing Zoning

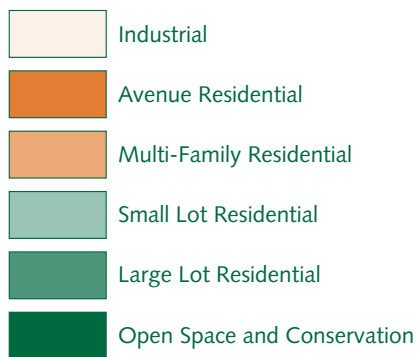
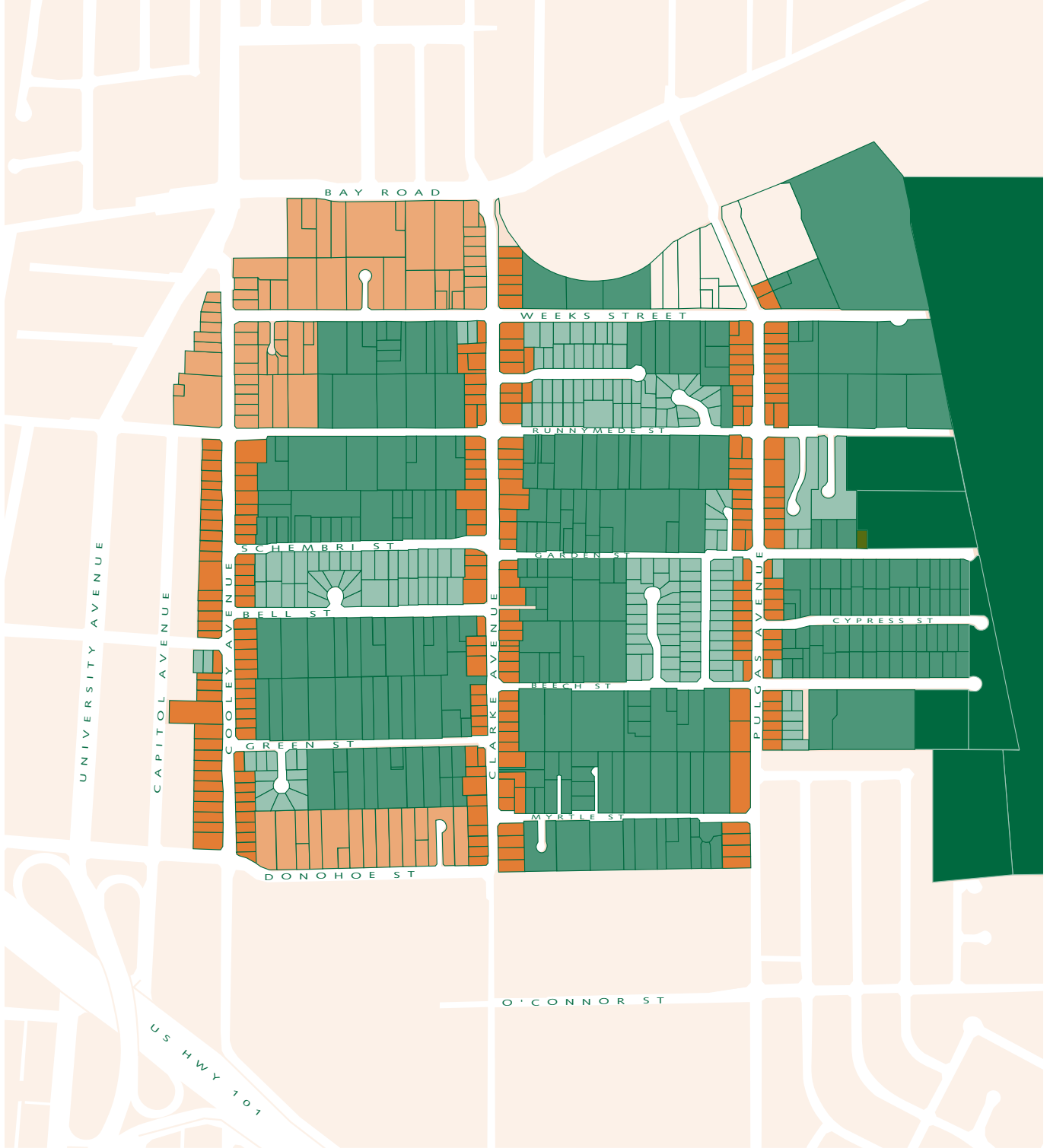


FIGURE 4
WEEKS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
**Proposed
Land Use Designations**

EXISTING PLAN

Runnymede Street, as well as the industrial parcels north of Weeks Street and several of the parcels closest to the Four Corners.

Redevelopment Area #3 is the Gateway 101 Redevelopment Area. In the Weeks Neighborhood, it includes parcels along Cooley Avenue between Donohoe and Bell Streets, as well as the school sites between Clarke and Pulgas Avenues.

Proposed Neighborhood Land Use Plan

This Neighborhood Plan contains a set of new proposed land use designations that would be applied to the Weeks Neighborhood to maintain and enhance the neighborhood's quality of life and community character, preserve agriculture and gardening, and provide new housing. A map showing proposed designations in the neighborhood is shown in Figure 4.

The City of East Palo Alto could adapt these designations for inclusion in both the General Plan update and the zoning code. EPA HAS and Urban Ecology could assist the City with the drafting of more extensive and detailed design guidelines. It is very important that the ideas in these designations and in existing City regulations be enforced consistently in order to preserve the Weeks Neighborhood's quality of life and community character. The City could also establish a design review board to oversee the implementation of these ideas and the maintenance of the historic character of the Weeks Neighborhood.

Large Lot Residential

Note: The regulations for this designation are illustrated in Figure 5 and the resulting development pattern is shown in Figure 6. Setbacks are described as being from the centerline of a public street, rather than from the property line, because street widths vary widely in the area.

a. **Intent:** This designation is intended to provide and encourage the development of residences, open space and small scale agriculture that take advantage of the natural environment and outdoor use potential of East Palo Alto. Residential development will occur at the fronts of lots along the streets, while agricultural development is allowed at the backs of lots

at the center of each block. Relatively wide side setbacks in the area will allow for access from the street to the agricultural areas. Agricultural uses will preserve valuable open space in the Weeks Neighborhood while also providing for economic development. This designation is applied primarily in the existing large lot areas on the Weeks Neighborhood's east-west streets.

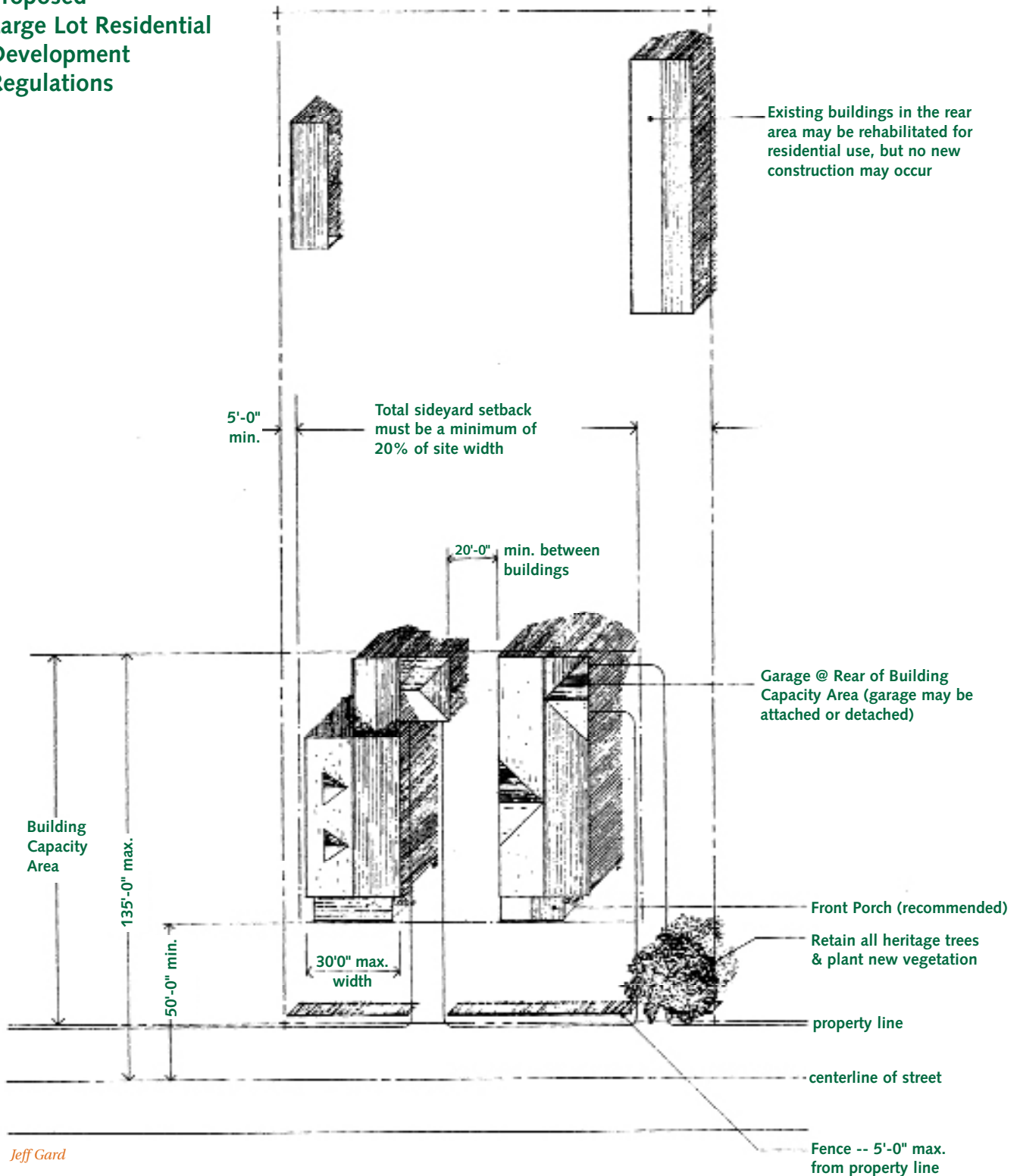
- b. **Permitted Uses:** Detached and attached residences. Agricultural uses, which include vegetable, flower & herb gardening, orchards, aviaries, apiaries, field & tree crops, berry and bush crops, nurseries, greenhouses, keeping and maintaining of animals.
- c. **Conditionally Permitted Uses:** The following uses are conditionally acceptable provided that they are in keeping with the visual character of the neighborhood:
 - Processing fruits and vegetables in conjunction with farming operation
 - Home-based commercial and retail activities
 - Schools
 - Churches
 - Non-profit educational organizations
- d. **Maximum Intensity:**

Residences: One unit per 4,000 square feet of "building capacity area," rounded down to the nearest whole number for any remainder less than 0.8. The building capacity area is defined as the portion of the lot that is less than 135 feet from the centerline of a public street. (This will generally result in four units on a typical one-acre lot.)
- e. **Minimum Lot Size:** One acre. (for future subdivision)
- f. **Required Setbacks:**

Front: 50 feet from the street centerline.
 Side Yard: Minimum of 20% of the lot width. Setback may be on either side of the site. Minimum setback on either side is 5 feet. All new building must occur within the building capacity area.
- g. **Minimum Setback Between Buildings:** 20 feet.
- h. **Maximum Dwellings per Building:** 2
- i. **Maximum Height:** 2½ stories (a half story is possible if a half basement is built).
- j. **Maximum Building Width:** 30 feet.

FIGURE 5

Proposed Large Lot Residential Development Regulations



Jeff Gard

PROPOSED PLAN

- k. **Design Guidelines:** Residential development in this area should retain the rustic, open space character of the Weeks Neighborhood, and it should follow existing building patterns in the area. Specific guidelines to achieve these goals are:
- Build only within the building capacity area, leaving most of the back of each lot unbuilt.
 - Maintain the centers of blocks as open as possible, with quasi-public access through the centers of blocks where feasible.
 - Re-use existing structures, both residential and agricultural, where feasible, particularly tank houses. These structures may be rehabilitated for residential use, even if they are outside the “building capacity area,” provided that they are counted toward the allowed maximum density on the site.
 - Construct all new houses to directly face the street, when possible.
 - Set back second stories from the ground floor at the front of the structure to minimize visual impacts.
 - Design new construction to be consistent with the scale, styles and materials found on existing historic houses in the area. Appropriate materials include horizontal or vertical wood siding, wood shingles, and smooth stucco. Windows should be oriented vertically, and should be broken into small panes or lites. Front porches shall face the street.
 - Encourage sloped roofs visible from the street. Discourage parapet roofs and flat roofs .
 - Landscape front yards with trees, shrubs, hedges and perennial and annual flowers. Discourage turf, both for water conservation and because it is atypical in the area.
 - Build new buildings around natural and scenic features such as existing heritage trees.
 - Do not include parking in required front yard setbacks.
 - Place garages at the rear of units.
 - Delimit each lot from the street by a low fence or hedgerow between 2 and 6 feet tall and within 5 feet of the property line. These types of hedges and fences are already common in the neighborhood, and they help to define the public and private spaces. Landscaping in front of the hedge or fence is encouraged.
- l. **Relationship to Existing City Designations:** This is a new designation that does not currently exist in City zoning. It is critical to the vision for the Weeks Neighborhood, since it allows continuing agricultural operations and preserves existing agricultural land and open space as new development occurs.

Small Lot Residential

- a. **Intent:** This designation is intended to create single-family and low density multi-family residential opportunities on existing small lots in the Weeks Neighborhood that are not on the major north-south avenues. This designation is applied to areas in the Weeks Neighborhood on the interior of blocks that have already been subdivided and that have no opportunity to be returned to agricultural use. It is not intended that this designation be applied to other existing large lots that are adjacent to subdivided lots.
- b. **Permitted Uses:** Detached single family homes.
- c. **Conditionally Permitted Uses:** The following uses are conditionally acceptable provided that they are in keeping with the visual character of the neighborhood:
- Multi-family residences.
 - Schools
 - Churches
- d. **Maximum Intensity:**
- Residences: 1 unit per 4,000 square feet of lot area.
 - Commercial and institutional uses: Site coverage of no more than 50%
- e. **Minimum Lot Size:** 5,000 square feet.
(for future subdivision)
- f. **Required Setbacks:**
- Front: 20 feet.
 - Side Yard: 5 feet.
 - Corner Side Yard: 10 feet.
 - Rear: 20 feet.
- g. **Maximum Height:** 2½ stories (a half story is possible if a half basement is built).
- h. **Design Guidelines:** Development is encouraged to be of a similar size and scale to the historical development in the area. In particular:
- Homes are encouraged to be built on half-basements or pony walls that raise them 2 to 4 feet above grade.



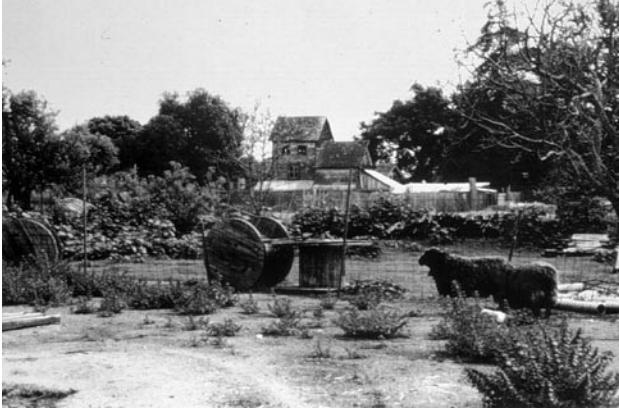
FIGURE 6

Proposed Large Lot Residential Development Regulations Illustration

Paul Okamoto

- Set back second stories from the ground floor at the front of the structure to minimize visual impacts.
- i. **Relationship to Existing City Designations:** This designation is similar to the City's existing R1-5000 zoning. It allows one unit per 4,000 square feet, but the minimum lot size is 5,000 square feet, so in most cases there would be one single family house per 5,000 square feet as occurs in the R1-5000 zone. However, this designation allows more flexibility than the R1-5000 zone since there can be a slightly higher density on larger lots.
- Avenue Residential**
- a. **Intent:** This designation is intended to create single-family and medium- to low-density attached residential opportunities, with a few neighborhood businesses as well, along the major north-south avenues in the Weeks Neighborhood. The addition of "granny flats", garage apartments, and second stories on existing units is particularly appropriate in this designation as a means of increasing residential density while maintaining neighborhood character. This designation is applied to the Weeks Neighborhood's north-south streets,
- where smaller lots have existed historically. It is not intended that this designation be applied to other existing large lots that are adjacent to subdivided lots.
- b. **Permitted Uses:** Attached and detached residences.
- c. **Conditionally Permitted Uses:** The following uses are conditionally acceptable provided that they are in keeping with the visual character of the neighborhood:
- Neighborhood serving retail uses such as convenience stores, dry cleaners, restaurants, cafes.
 - Schools
 - Churches
 - Institutional uses and government offices
- d. **Maximum Intensity:**
Residences: 1 unit per 2,500 square feet of lot area.
Commercial and institutional uses: Site coverage of no more than 50%

PROPOSED PLAN



- e. **Minimum Lot Size:** 5,000 square feet.
(for future subdivision)
- f. **Required Setbacks:**
Front: 20 feet.
Side Yard: 3 feet.
Corner Side Yard: 10 feet.
Rear: 20 feet.
- g. **Maximum Height:** 2½ stories (a half story is possible if a half basement is built).
- h. **Design Guidelines:** Development is encouraged to be of a similar size and scale to the historical development in the area. In particular:
- Encourage sloped roofs visible from the street. Discourage parapet roofs and flat roofs.
 - Encourage homes to be built on half-basements or pony walls that raise them 2 to 4 feet above grade.
 - Serve all units on a lot with vehicular access through a single curb cut.
- i. **Relationship to Existing City Designations:**
As with the Small Lot Residential designation, this designation is similar to the R1-5000 zone, but it is much more flexible. This designation allows both single family and multi-family homes as a matter of right, and there can be up to two units on an average 5,000-square foot lot. This designation also allows for mixtures of commercial uses along the north-south avenues in the Weeks Neighborhood.
This designation implements ideas similar to those in the City's existing Second Dwelling Unit Ordinance, which allows second units on single-family lots with a use permit. However, this designation is more flexible since it allows one unit per 2,500 square feet; the Second Dwelling Unit Ordinance only allows two units

if a lot is 6,500 square feet. Under the current Second Dwelling Unit Ordinance, second units are not allowed on most lots in the Avenue Residential area. The Second Dwelling Unit Ordinance also requires two attached units on a lot to share a common entrance, which would not be required in this proposed designation.

Multi-Family Residential

- a. **Intent:** This designation is intended to allow higher-density multi-family housing to meet East Palo Alto's clear needs for affordable housing. The designation is concentrated within ¼-mile of the Four Corners commercial area and adjacent to Gateway 101 to allow residents to walk or bicycle to shopping and transit.
- b. **Permitted Uses:** Attached and detached residences.
- c. **Conditionally Permitted Uses:** The following uses are conditionally acceptable provided that they are in keeping with the visual character of the neighborhood:
- Neighborhood serving retail uses such as convenience stores, dry cleaners, restaurants, cafes.
 - Schools
 - Churches
- d. **Maximum Intensity:**
Residences: 1 unit per 1,200 square feet of lot area.
Commercial and institutional uses: Site coverage of no more than 80%.
- e. **Minimum Lot Size:** 5,000 square feet.
(for future subdivision)
- f. **Required Setbacks:**
Front: 5 feet minimum, with 10 feet average on each lot.
Side Yard: 3 feet.
Corner Side Yard: 10 feet.
Rear: 10 feet.
- g. **Maximum Height:** 3 stories.
- h. **Design Guidelines:**
Development is encouraged to be of a similar size and scale to the historical development in the area.
Landscaping is required in setback areas.

PROPOSED PLAN

- i. **Relationship to Existing City Designations:** This designation is similar to the City's RM-1000 zone, but it has a slightly higher maximum density.

Industrial

- a. **Intent:** This designation is intended to allow continued industrial uses in the northern portion of the Weeks Neighborhood along Weeks Street and Pulgas Avenue. Industrial uses in this area are related to both the railroad line on the northern edge of the area and the Ravenswood Industrial Area farther north.
- b. **Permitted Uses:** Industrial manufacturing, fabrication, warehousing, shipping and receiving.
- c. **Conditionally Permitted Uses:** All uses should be subject to City approval to ensure that they do present an unacceptable hazard or annoyance to nearby residences.
- d. **Maximum Intensity:** Site coverage of no more than 80%.
- e. **Minimum Lot Size:** 5,000 square feet. (for future subdivision)
- f. **Required Setbacks:**
 Front: 10 feet.
 Side Yard: 10 feet.
 Corner Side Yard: 10 feet.
 Rear: 10 feet.
- g. **Maximum Height:** 3 stories.
- h. **Design Guidelines:** Landscaping is required in setback areas.
- i. **Relationship to Existing City Designations:** This designation is similar to the City's MB, M1 and M2 zones.

Open Space & Conservation

- a. **Intent:** This designation is intended to preserve and create much needed open space for recreation and enjoyment of residents of the Weeks Neighborhood and the rest of East Palo Alto. It applies to publicly owned park, open space and conservation areas. It also includes existing schools, which provide important open space for the community.
- b. **Permitted Uses:** Agricultural uses (as described in the Large Lot Residential designation), parks, playgrounds, schools.
- c. **Maximum Intensity:** 20% lot coverage.

- d. **Minimum Lot Size:** ½ acre. (for future subdivision)
- e. **Required Setbacks:** 50 feet on all sides.
- f. **Relationship to Existing City Designations:** This designation is similar to the City's COSC and RM zones, but it also incorporates schools and other recreation areas.

**Area-Wide Guidelines**

In addition to the regulations suggested for the individual land use categories above, the following guidelines are suggested for the Weeks Neighborhood as a whole.

Non-Conforming Lots and Uses

There are several lots in the Weeks Neighborhood that have already been developed in ways that do not conform to the regulations suggested in this chapter. These lots, if already developed with appropriate City approvals at the time these regulations are adopted, would be considered as legally non-conforming. If the uses on them were ever destroyed, the owners would have the right to rebuild to match the existing development.

PROPOSED PLAN

New Streets

The proliferation of small private and public streets and cul-de-sacs in the Weeks Neighborhood has begun to erode the character of the area. For this reason, no new public or private streets should be allowed in the area. All lots should be developed in relationship to existing streets, and in accordance with the regulations above. Existing private streets and small public streets may be maintained, but no new ones should be allowed.

Heritage Tree Retention

Since landscaping is one of the defining characteristics of the Weeks Neighborhood, the City should require retention of all heritage trees in the area. Heritage trees are defined as those having a main stem or trunk that measures 40 inches or greater in circumference at a height of 24 inches above grade.² The City currently requires people who want to remove heritage trees to obtain a permit from the City. The City needs to vigorously enforce this ordinance. This ordinance should also be revised to prohibit removal of heritage trees except for reasons of health and safety.

Energy and Resource Conservation

To make the Weeks Neighborhood a more sustainable community, all new construction should use solar design for energy conservation, grey water and rain water collection for landscape irrigation, and drought tolerant landscaping to the greatest extent possible.

Drainage

Drainage in the Weeks Neighborhood should be designed to follow natural contours and allow for natural groundwater recharge wherever possible. In many parts of the area, lots naturally slope to the centers of the blocks, which will be left undeveloped under this Plan. In these areas, drainage should be retained in its natural configuration, and new grading should create additional drainage to the centers of the lots wherever feasible. This will allow water to move to undeveloped areas and then percolate into the soil and the groundwater table below. This will promote aquifer recharge and reduce saltwater intrusion from the San Francisco Bay.

² This is the same definition as that used in the City's Tree Preservation Ordinance No. 105.

TABLE 1

Plan Development Capacity³

LAND USE DESIGNATION	EXISTING UNITS ⁴	TOTAL POTENTIAL UNITS	POTENTIAL NET INCREASE
Large Lot Residential	270	210	480 ⁵
Small Lot Residential	190	0	190 ⁶
Avenue Residential	210	150	360 ⁷
Multi-Family Residential	240	370	610 ⁸
TOTAL	910	730	1,640

To avoid flood dangers in this type of scheme, the amount of paved and impermeable surfaces on any parcel should be minimized. Instead of paving with asphalt, concrete or other impervious materials, site designs should emphasize permeable materials such as turfblock and landscaping.

To facilitate this type of drainage, it is important that “Best Management Practices” be employed to maintain water quality in runoff coming from urban areas. Vegetative and soil filters can be used to filter out pollutants from runoff and preserve water quality.

Street Lighting

New street lighting should be installed in the Weeks Neighborhood to provide safety and adequate light levels while maintaining low light levels on surrounding properties. “Pedestrian-scaled” lamps approximately 12 to 15 feet tall are more appropriate for this type of lighting than standard tall street lamps.

³ All unit counts rounded to the nearest 10.

⁴ Based on counts completed from aerial photos.

⁵ Based on one unit per 4,000 square feet within the “building capacity area,” plus 50 existing units between Beech and Garden Streets east of Pulgas Avenue. Total building capacity area is approximately 49 acres. Assumes 80% build-out.

⁶ Assumes no new construction, since all lots in this designation are already developed.

⁷ Assumes construction of a total of two units on each of 225 lots in the designation, at 80% build-out.

⁸ Assumes one unit per 1,200 square feet within this designation, built at 80% efficiency. Total acreage in the designation is approximately 21 acres.

PLAN CAPACITY

TABLE 2

Existing Zoning Development Capacity

ZONING DESIGNATION	NUMBER OF UNITS
R1- 5000: Existing Units to Remain	460
R1-5000: Potential second units on lots over 6,500 square feet	180 ⁹
R1-5000: New Subdivisions (88 acres)	430 ¹⁰
RM-500 (existing)	84
RM-1000 (Bay Road)	270
RM-1000 (Weeks Street) (as per 1996 proposal)	83
RM-2000 (Beech Street) (as per 1996 proposal)	60
TOTAL	1,567

Plan Development Capacity

As shown in Table 1, the land use designations in this plan will allow the construction of upwards of 730 new residential units in the Weeks Neighborhood, for a total of 1,640 units in the area. This would represent almost a doubling of the housing opportunities in the Weeks Neighborhood. New housing provided in the area could help the City to offset housing being lost through the Gateway 101 project.

New housing opportunities afforded by this Plan would be provided while also preserving roughly 67 acres of open space land under the Large Lot Residential land use designation, which would not be preserved under existing zoning. This land would preserve the character of the neighborhood, provide much needed open space, and allow opportunities for agricultural economic development.

The Plan's capacity to provide housing compares favorably to existing zoning and proposed projects in the area. As shown in Table 2, existing R-1 zon-

ing would allow for approximately 610 units to be added to 460 single-family units that currently exist in the neighborhood. The four additional multi-family sites in the neighborhood have a capacity to provide a total of 497 additional units based on existing and recently proposed projects. Thus existing zoning and recent development proposals would create about 1,567 housing units in the area, which is less than the amount that would be allowed under this Plan.

Moreover, it is important to note that the existing development capacity of the Weeks Neighborhood will be reduced substantially if the R1-5000 zoning is changed to require 7,500 square foot lots. This new zoning would reduce the number of allowed units in the area to about 1,425. In this case, the proposed Neighborhood Plan would represent an even larger increase over the allowed units in the area, which would greatly assist the City in its need to replace housing lost through the Gateway 101 project.



⁹ Assumes 80% build-out.

¹⁰ Assumes 5,000 foot lots and 70% efficiency, with 30% of land used for roads and other public facilities. Also assumes 80% build-out.

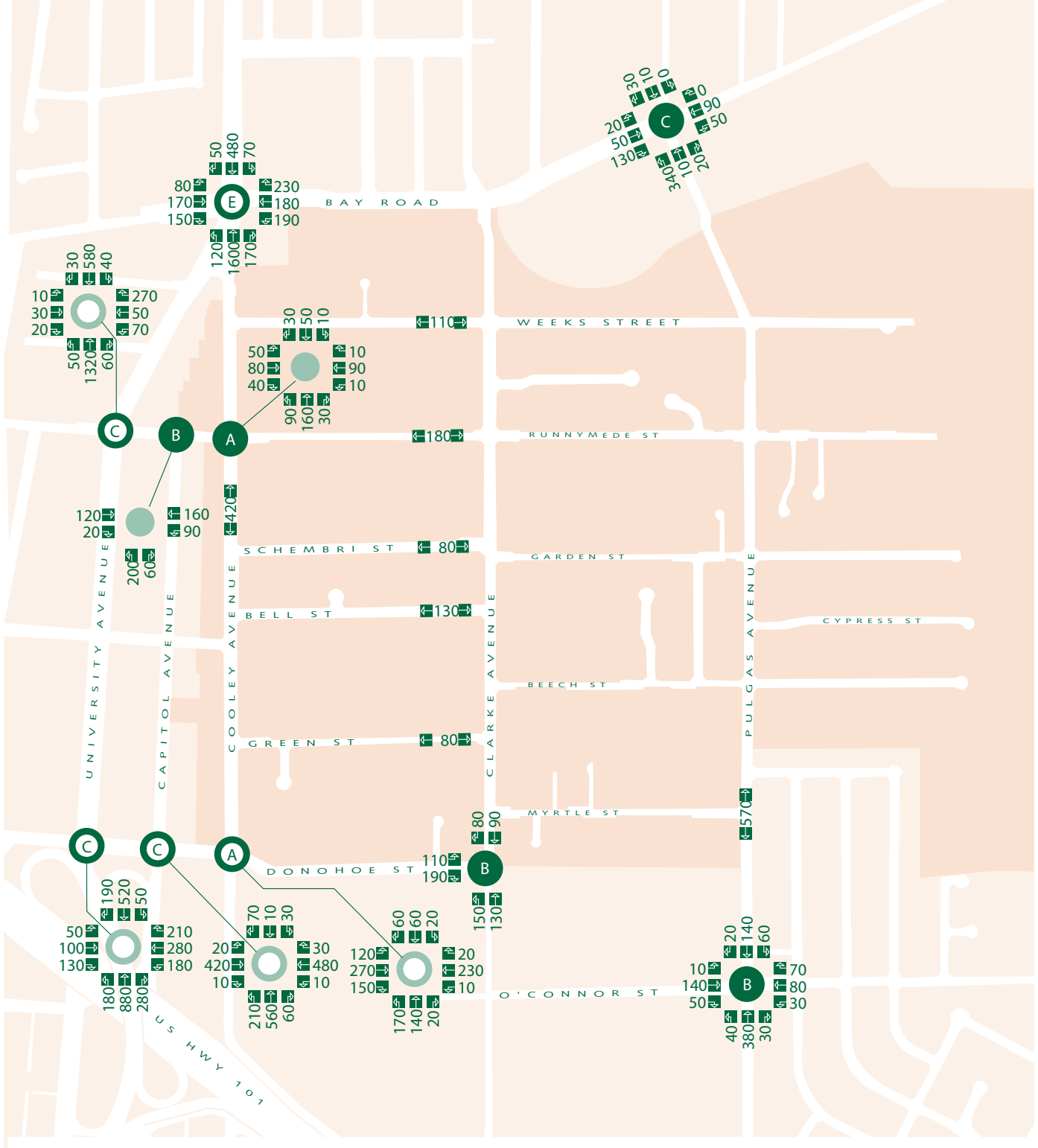


FIGURE 7
WEEKS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

Existing Traffic Volumes

Source: Emmanuel LeColletier

Traffic Signal

Stop Sign

A PM Peak Level of Service

Circulation

Increased traffic is one of the factors placing the Weeks Neighborhood in danger of losing its unique character. The ideas in this chapter will help to preserve the neighborhood's character and to meet the Plan's circulation objectives.

This chapter characterizes existing and future traffic patterns in the area and then defines a hierarchy of streets that reflects existing patterns. Under this hierarchy, streets will be redesigned so that through traffic from outside the neighborhood would be unlikely to flow through the neighborhood. At the same time, emergency vehicle access will be maintained. The hierarchy allows a gradual trade-off between the two main circulation functions of streets: the provision of mobility for through traffic and the provision of access to adjacent properties. It will also support a City shuttle system connecting to regional public transit facilities such as CalTrain, the Santa Clara County Light Rail system and any future BART extension.



Existing Traffic Patterns

Current traffic patterns in the Weeks Neighborhood have been documented in a number of reports. For this Plan, traffic data was obtained from five sources: the Gateway 101 Specific Plan EIR, the Gloria Way Multifamily Housing Development Traffic Study, the Ravenwood Industrial Area Draft EIR, the Shore Breeze Estates II Traffic Impact Report, and additional traffic counts and vehicle speed measurements conducted by the City of East Palo Alto on some residential streets of the neighborhood.

Traffic Volumes

Figure 7 presents traffic volumes around the Weeks Neighborhood during the PM peak hour, which is the time of day when traffic is heaviest. The main direction of travel in the afternoon is from Highway 101 to the Dumbarton Bridge, mostly because of the large amount of commuters returning to the East Bay from employment centers in Silicon Valley. Large traffic flows of about 1,800 vehicles per hour (vph) occur on northbound University Avenue, while the southbound direction has much lower volumes (600 vph). According to the Gateway 101 EIR, the other north-south

streets, Pulgas, Cooley, and Clarke Avenues, carry 370, 280 and 240 vph respectively in the northbound direction during the PM peak hour. However, the Shore Breeze II Traffic Study shows 750 trips on Pulgas Avenue. Many of these trips are through trips from outside the area; motorists headed from the South Bay to Highway 84 sometimes

exit Highway 101 at Embarcadero and travel along East Bayshore Road and then through the neighborhood before getting on to University Avenue. East-west traffic in the study area, on the other hand, is generally much lighter and consists mostly of local traffic.

This pattern is reversed in the AM peak hour, where the largest flows occur on southbound University Avenue.

EXISTING TRAFFIC

Levels of Service

The level of service (LOS) at an intersection is a measure of average delay incurred by drivers while traveling through the intersection. Levels of service range from A (no delay, free-flow conditions) to F (long delays, intersection volume over capacity). According to the Gateway 101 Specific Plan EIR, the City generally considers LOS D to be the threshold for an acceptable level of service.

Figure 7 presents the levels of service at the major intersections in the Weeks Neighborhood. Most intersections currently operate at acceptable levels of service during the PM peak hour; the only location with severe congestion is the intersection of University Avenue and Bay Road, which operates at LOS E. This intersection is currently at capacity and could not handle additional traffic without forcing diversion to local streets in the neighborhood.

A small amount of diversion is currently observed on Cooley, Clarke and Pulgas Avenues. The latter serves as a connection between Embarcadero Expressway and Dumbarton Bridge and consequently receives a significant proportion of through traffic. Diversion onto east-west local streets is currently limited.

Traffic Speeds

Day-time vehicle speed measurements taken on local streets in the Weeks Neighborhood show that the average and 85th percentile speeds are very close to the 25 mph posted speed limit on all east-west local streets spanning between Cooley and Clarke (Weeks, Runnymede, Schembri, Bell, and Green Streets).

However, interviews with local residents indicate a general impression that vehicles are speeding on local streets. This may be due to a small percentage (15%) of offenders, some of whom may travel as fast as 50 mph. Such a small proportion of high speed vehicles is often sufficient to generate a feeling of insecurity among street residents, even though most vehicles travel within the speed limit. It is also possible that people drive faster in the area at night, when the speed measurements were not taken, and it may be that people slowed down when driving past the speed measurement device.

Future Traffic Volumes and Potential Impacts on the Neighborhood

Several major development projects are in the planning stages around the Weeks Neighborhood. These projects, which are described in Chapter 3, will generate levels of traffic much beyond what is observed now and could have significant negative impacts on traffic conditions in the Weeks Neighborhood.

Gateway 101 Shopping Center

The Gateway 101 site is located just south of the Weeks Neighborhood, between Donohoe Street and Highway 101, and between University and Pulgas Avenues. The project is located on the freeway frontage and emphasizes access by automobile. Phase 1 will generate 15,400 net daily new trips, 1,400 of them occurring during the PM peak hour. Buildout of Phase II will generate another 5,200 daily trips and 570 PM peak hour trips.¹ The project is associated with extensive mitigation measures, including signalization of two intersections and lane additions around the site.

Given the large number of trips generated and the very close proximity to the study area, this project could have serious disruptive impacts on the residential character of the Weeks Neighborhood. The traffic impact study for the environmental impact report of the project assumes that only 3% of the new retail trips and none of the residential trips will use Clarke Street and go through the Weeks Neighborhood. However, it is possible that these numbers will be much higher, since there is limited traffic capacity on University Avenue and since shortcuts through the neighborhood are currently very easy.

Ravenswood Industrial Redevelopment Area

This ambitious project, as originally proposed, included 154,000 square feet of industrial use, 278,000 square feet of office space, 130,000 square feet of retail, 102 new apartments and a 40-acre park. As presented in the environmental impact report, the total trip generation of the project was much beyond what could be accommodated by the surrounding roadway network. The buildout of the project would have resulted in gridlock at the University Avenue/Bay Road intersection and in

¹ These figures account for a correction for pass-by trips and for the elimination of the existing apartment buildings on the site.

EXISTING TRAFFIC

major traffic diversion to Weeks Street and Clarke Avenue, which would have more than tripled the traffic volumes through the Weeks Neighborhood. The project was dropped, partly because the traffic impacts could not be mitigated .

Any scaled down version of the Ravenswood Industrial Park would create intense pressure for through traffic in the Weeks Neighborhood, because of the limited additional capacity of the University Avenue/Bay Road intersection. The left turn capacity from westbound Bay Road to southbound University Avenue is a constraint that limits the development potential of the site.

Proposed Street Hierarchy

In order to provide adequate public access while limiting through traffic in the Weeks Neighborhood, the following hierarchy of streets is proposed:

- Major arterials
- Minor arterials
- Collectors
- Local streets

Each of these street types is associated with a range of acceptable traffic volumes, desirable operating conditions, roadway design features and compatible adjacent land uses. Figure 8 presents the proposed street classification for the Weeks Neighborhood.

Major Arterials

Major arterials are high-capacity roadways that emphasize mobility for intercity traffic over access to local properties. They are intended to carry large amounts of traffic volumes with minimal delays.

The only roadway in East Palo Alto serving this function is University Avenue. It connects Highway 101 to the Dumbarton Bridge and consequently constitutes a critical link between the East Bay and the Peninsula. University Avenue currently receives a large amount of through traffic during commute hours, and also carries a significant proportion of local traffic. University Avenue is not inside the Weeks Neighborhood study area, so it is not the subject of policies in this Plan. However, the Plan would be supported by any geometric or operational improvements which would improve traffic conditions on University Avenue, thereby eliminating the need for traffic diversions through the neighborhood.

Minor Arterials

Minor arterials are similar to major arterials in that they prioritize the mobility of through traffic over access to adjacent properties. They typically connect different parts of a city, have lower capacity and fewer access restrictions than major arterials. In the Weeks Neighborhood, Bay Road, East Bayshore Road along Highway 101 and Donohoe Street fall into the minor arterial category. These high-volume streets are at the periphery of the Weeks Neighborhood, and are intended to route through traffic around the neighborhood rather than allowing it to move through.

Collectors

Collector streets, as indicated by their name, are intended to collect traffic from local residential streets and to distribute it to minor arterials. Three streets clearly perform this function in the Weeks Neighborhood: Cooley, Clarke and Pulgas Avenues, which collect traffic from all east-west local streets and distribute it to Bay Road on the north and Donohoe and O'Connor Streets on the south.

These streets currently carry a mixture of local and through traffic but, as mentioned earlier, will be used by increasing amounts of through traffic if nothing is done to mitigate the impacts of the new development in the area. The designation of these streets as collectors indicates a clear intention to limit their use to local traffic in order to protect the safety of their residents and the quiet residential character of the neighborhood.

To preserve these streets as locally-oriented collectors, the following policies should be followed:

- None of them should be widened beyond their current paved widths.
- Stop signs should be maintained; there should be no new traffic signals.
- The current on-street parking configuration should be maintained.
- The posted speed limit should be 25 mph.
- Tree planting in the parking lanes should be encouraged to reduce the noise and air quality impacts of traffic.
- Traffic calming measures should be installed as described later in this chapter.

CIRCULATION

30

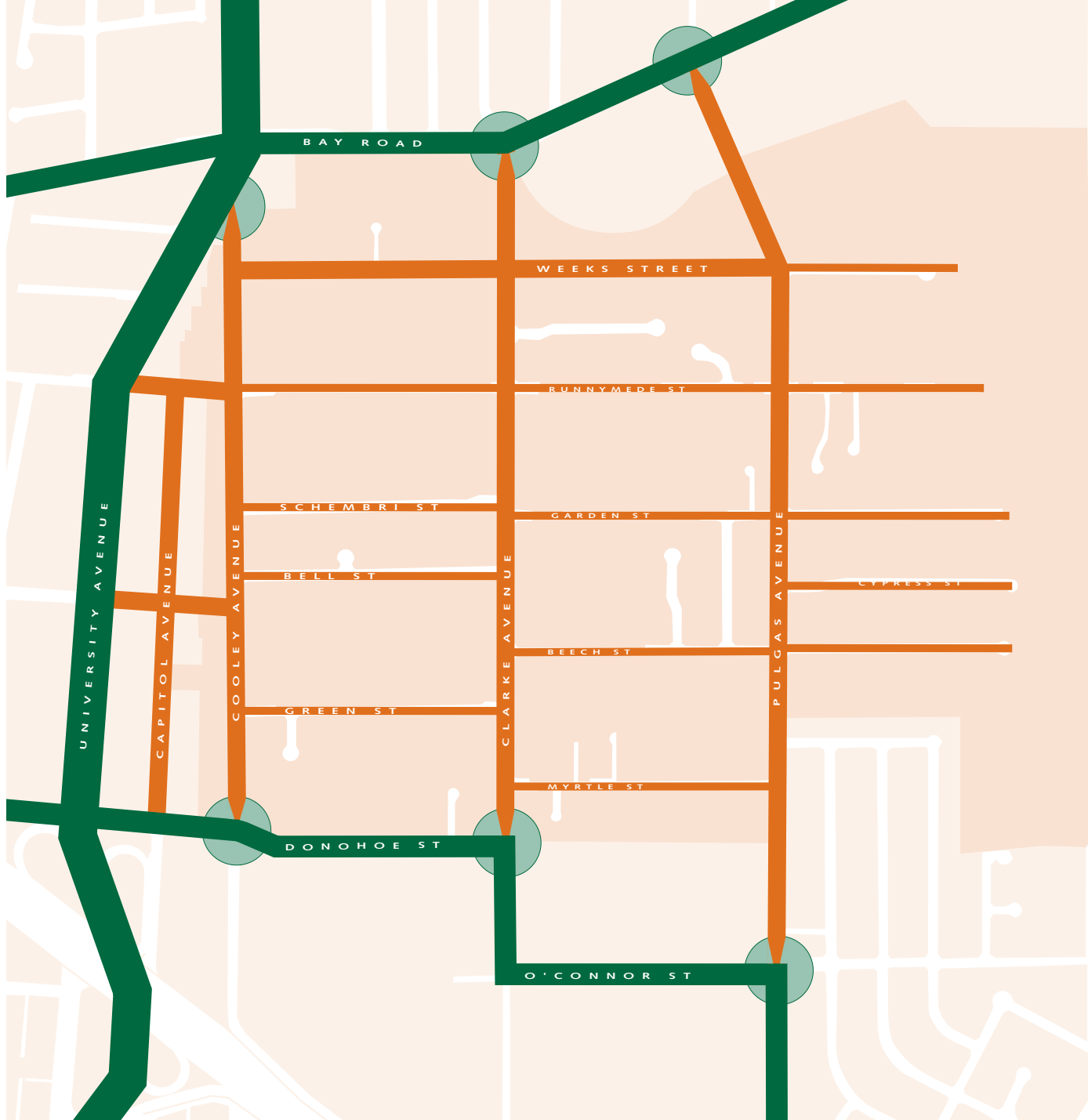


FIGURE 8
WEEKS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

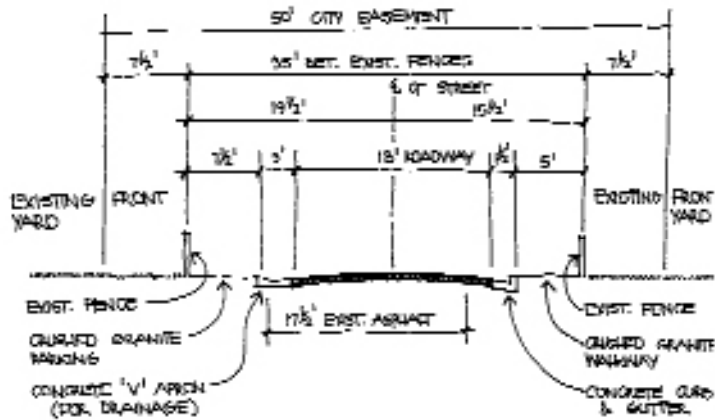
Proposed Street Classifications

-  Major Arterial
-  Minor Arterial
-  Collector
-  Local Street
-  Traffic Calming

FUTURE TRAFFIC

FIGURE 9

Proposed Local Street Design



Paul Okamoto

Local Streets

Local streets' only circulation function is to provide access to abutting properties. Local streets in the Weeks Neighborhood are the historic streets of the Weeks Neighborhood. These streets each have one of two different characters:

Some local streets have maintained their rustic character in spite of the growing pressure for urbanization; streets such as Runnymede, Garden, Beech, Green and Myrtle have narrow paved widths of only about 18 feet, heritage trees, dense vegetation, and no curbs, gutters or sidewalks. These characteristics make these streets some of the most charming in the Weeks Neighborhood.

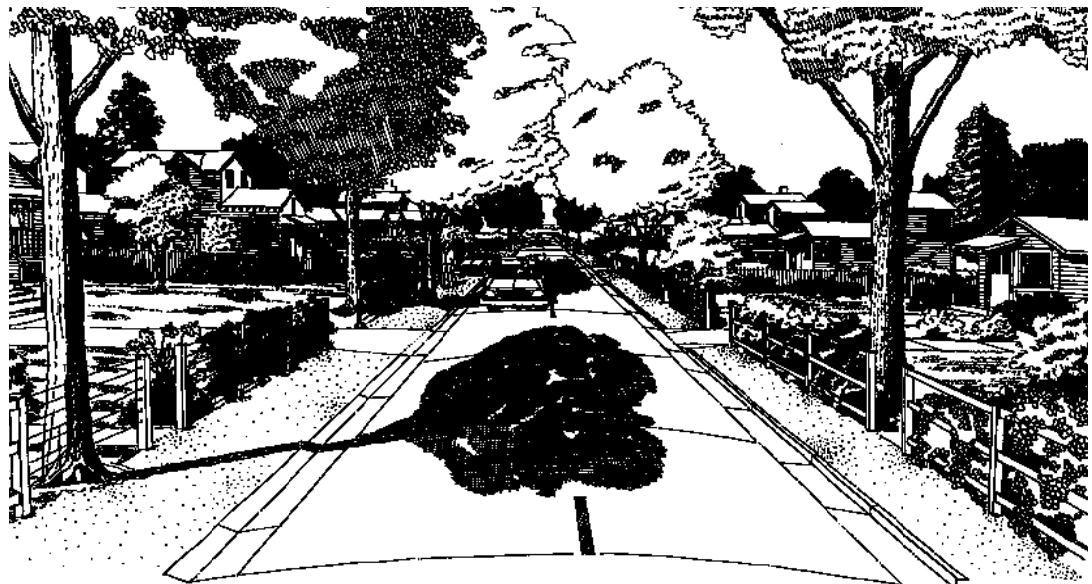
Schembri, Bell, and parts of Weeks, Garden and Beech Streets have been widened to have curbs, gutters and sidewalks and paved widths of 35 feet. Most of the mature trees on these streets have been removed to

allow widening. These characteristics make these streets somewhat less attractive.

This Neighborhood Plan calls for setting new general standards for local streets in the Weeks Neighborhood that will allow the existing narrow streets to maintain their character, while still being improved to meet modern standards. The standards will allow the streets to be kept purposely narrow and retain existing mature trees and fence lines. The narrow width will also help to keep travel speeds low. Residents on each individual street block could refine the details for their street to maintain the varied character of the Weeks Neighborhood.

FIGURE 10

Local Street Illustration



Paul Okamoto

PROPOSED HIERARCHY

To preserve the character of these local streets, the following policies should be followed:

- Existing widths should be maintained; no widening should occur.
- The posted speed should be 20 mph.
- Mature street trees should be maintained and replaced as needed.
- Streets should provide pedestrian access.
- Streets should be repaved within existing widths to provide adequate drainage and conform with the City's overall storm drainage plan.

Specifically, this Plan also envisions the following design for local streets, which is illustrated in Figure 9:

- Improvements should include a concrete curb with a decomposed granite sidewalk on one side and a concrete drainage swale with a decomposed granite parking lane on the other side.
- As described above, there should be on street parking on only one side of each local street. Parking counts conducted for this Plan on Green Street at various times of day indicate that the amount of parking supplied on one side of the street will be adequate to serve the neighborhood.
- Street trees should be installed within the parking lane to further narrow the appearance of the street and slow down traffic.

Figure 10 shows the street character that will result from these street design concepts.



Traffic Calming

The following improvements will help to alleviate existing and future heavy traffic in the Weeks Neighborhood. With the construction of Gateway 101 and possible additional development in the Ravenswood Industrial Area, the Weeks Neighborhood will potentially be subject to even more through traffic than already moves through the neighborhood. To avoid the problems associated with this traffic, this Plan proposes installation of traffic calming measures throughout the neighborhood. "Traffic calming" is the installation of barriers, speed humps, chokers and other devices that reduce traffic volumes and speeds on a street. The intent of traffic calming is to preserve tranquility in a residential neighborhood.

This strategy is appropriate in the Weeks Neighborhood, where through traffic threatens neighborhood character, quality of life and safety on several streets. This plan suggests the following specific traffic calming measures:

- Chokers that narrow the section of the street at the intersection should be installed at the following locations:
 - Pulgas Avenue/O'Connor Street
 - Clarke Avenue/Donohoe Street
 - Cooley Avenue/Donohoe Street
 - Cooley Avenue/University Avenue (left turns are already prohibited at this intersection).
 - Clarke Avenue/Bay Road
 - Pulgas Avenue/Bay Road ²
- Street trees should be planted in parking lane areas on local and collector streets, as described above. This will have the effect of visually narrowing the street and slowing traffic, without actually narrowing the right-of-way.
- Additional four-way stop signs should be installed wherever warranted throughout the neighborhood.
- The City should consider neighborhood requests for the installation of speed humps to further slow speeding traffic.

² An additional choker could be considered at the intersection of Capitol Avenue and Donohoe Street, but this is outside the Weeks Neighborhood so it is not specified in this plan.

TRANSIT**Transit**

Transit service is very important to residents of the Weeks Neighborhood and East Palo Alto in general. It needs to be improved greatly to better serve local residents.

Why Is Transit Important?

Public transit is critical in East Palo Alto because East Palo Alto is a community where a higher than average percentage of people do not own cars. Residents need to use transit to get to jobs at a variety of times, including early morning, evening, night and weekends. Moreover, there is no high school in the area, so many local students need to use transit to get to school. According to SamTrans, the local bus service provider, East Palo Alto residents make 5,000 SamTrans trips per day (out of a total of 70,000 trips in the entire County), which means that East Palo Alto has bus ridership per capita that is at least twice as high as the County as whole.

Good public transit is also important in general because it is a means to reduce reliance on automobiles, which results in reductions in congestion, parking and air quality problems. Better public transit service will help to improve traffic and air quality conditions in East Palo Alto and throughout the Bay Area.

Existing Transit In East Palo Alto

Despite its high reliance on transit, East Palo Alto is currently served by only three bus lines, only one of which runs into the Weeks Neighborhood.

Line 50C runs a circuitous route through the Weeks Neighborhood, on Donohoe, Beech, Pulgas, Clarke and Runnymede streets, among others. It makes a loop in the Weeks Neighborhood, and then runs on University Avenue to the Palo Alto CalTrain station.

Line 50V runs from the northern portion of East Palo Alto on University Avenue to the Palo Alto CalTrain station.

Line 6A runs from the Ravenswood Industrial Park area past East Palo Alto City Hall, then runs on Willow and Middlefield through Menlo Park to downtown Redwood City.

Because of the circuitous routes, large buses travel through the Weeks Neighborhood and other East Palo Alto neighborhoods. Although this helps to create bus access, it is time-consuming, brings

noise, soot and air pollution into the neighborhood's quiet residential streets and is dangerous for children, pedestrians and bicyclists.

There is no express bus service from the Weeks Neighborhood or East Palo Alto on Highway 101 either north or south, despite the fact that the freeway runs through the city. In order to travel north or south along the Peninsula, riders must either take the 6A on surface streets, or must travel to El Camino Real and then change buses at an additional charge.

In addition, the schedule of the existing bus service is infrequent. The buses only run every half hour on weekdays, and service stops as early as 5:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday service is hourly, and one of the lines does not run at all on Sundays. There is very little service in the evening or at night.

Because buses run infrequently, they are also overcrowded during peak hours. Riders who need to use buses at these times face uncomfortable trips or must wait for the next bus, making them late for school, jobs or appointments.

Finally, another problem with existing transit service is that SamTrans does not offer free transfers. Buses from East Palo Alto go to relatively few destinations, and riders who want to reach other destinations not only have to change buses but also have to pay two or more bus fares.

This level of transit service, in terms of both routes and frequency, is unacceptable for a community that relies on transit like East Palo Alto does. The following section outlines proposed changes that could be made to improve transit service.

Transit Recommendations

The following recommended actions would improve bus service in the Weeks Neighborhood and in East Palo Alto. Specific routes and schedules should be determined in consultation with the East Palo Alto Public Works and Transportation Commission.

- Bus service frequency should be increased, especially during peak hours, to provide better service and relieve crowding. Buses should operate once every 15 minutes during peak hours, and once every 30 minutes at other times.
- Evening, weekend and night-time service should be provided on all bus routes. Service should occur on all routes once every 30 min-

TRANSIT

utes until at least 10 p.m. Service on the major routes such as those on University Avenue and Highway 101 should run all night at least once an hour to enable night-time workers to reach their jobs.

- SamTrans should offer free or low-cost transfers so riders can reach their destinations more economically. Such transfers are standard on most other bus systems, and would make the system more usable for people with destinations that are not near transit hubs.
- Bus service in the area should be revised so that large buses travel on arterial and collector-streets such as University Avenue and on freeways like US 101 and coordinate with shuttle routes. Large buses should be reduced from routes that travel through residential neighborhoods, where they cause unnecessary noise and air pollution.
- New SamTrans express bus service should be added on US 101 between San Jose, Redwood City and San Francisco. (Such service currently runs only between Redwood City and San Francisco.) There should be a bus stop at the University Avenue/Highway 101 interchange. This service would allow East Palo Alto residents to travel up and down the Peninsula more easily.
- SamTrans or the City of East Palo Alto should institute shuttle service using vans or small buses in East Palo Alto's neighborhoods,

including the Weeks Neighborhood. This service should connect to regional SamTrans buses, the Highway 101 corridor, El Camino Real and CalTrain. Funding for this service should be available through State AB 434 funds, provided that SamTrans supports the City in an application for funding.

- SamTrans should provide bike racks on buses to allow people to bicycle to and from bus stops. This would increase the effectiveness of the bus system for many riders.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation

The Weeks Neighborhood was settled as a pedestrian-oriented community, and has great potential to return to those qualities. With just 17 blocks, the neighborhood is small, and it is located close to centers of commercial activity, schools, churches, and civic buildings. This Neighborhood Plan encourages pedestrian activity within the neighborhood through provision of mid-block pedestrian paths and sidewalks on one side of each local streets. There are already sidewalks on both sides of the wider, busier avenues. Bicycle activity will also be accommodated by the quiet east-west streets as well as bike lanes on the north-south avenues. Equestrian activity could take place on the streets, the open space in the centers of the blocks, and the surrounding trails.



BIKES & PEDESTRIANS**On-Street Bikeways**

The City has a Bikeways Plan that was created by the Bicycle Planning Committee in the 1980's. It recommends a number of on-street bikeways, but few of the improvements in this plan have been implemented.

Bicycle circulation through the Weeks Neighborhood will be relatively safe and simple with the implementation of the traffic diversions and calming measures outlined above. Especially on the east-west streets, there will be relatively low traffic volumes, so bicycling will be pleasant. Thus no improvements for bicycles on the neighborhood's east-west streets will be needed.

On north-south streets, traffic volumes are likely to remain high enough that the installation of bike lanes should be considered. This Plan recommends the following bicycle improvements in the area:

- Stripe a bicycle lane on Pulgas Avenue, as suggested in the Bicycle Plan.
- Stripe an additional bicycle lane on Clarke Avenue, since it will be the street with the lowest traffic volumes among the three north-south collectors.
- Consider eliminating the proposed bike route designation of Cooley Avenue, since it will be redundant with the bike lane on Clarke Avenue.

**Thru-Block Pedestrian Connections**

The large backyard spaces in the centers of the large lot blocks in the Weeks Neighborhood have the potential for mid-block pedestrian paths. These paths should be planned and constructed wherever possible to shorten walking distances and allow school children and other pedestrians to pass safely through the neighborhood without walking on streets, particularly in the north-south direction where on-street vehicle travel will be relatively heavy.

If mid-block pedestrian paths are built, crosswalks should be striped on streets where the paths cross them.

Trails

Trail opportunities in the neighborhood include connections to the rest of East Palo Alto and other Bay Area communities via the Bay Trail, and other potential future trail improvements.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY TRAIL

The Weeks Neighborhood's primary trail resource is a segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail. The Bay Trail is a long-distance trail which is intended to encircle the San Francisco and San Pablo Bay shorelines, a distance of approximately 400 miles. Communities throughout the Bay Area have found the Bay Trail to be a tremendous regional asset, and a significant enhancement of their shorelines. Bay Trail development is coordinated by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG); however, local jurisdictions manage each section. The East Palo Alto section of the trail is managed and maintained by the City of East Palo Alto.

In East Palo Alto, the Bay Trail is to be located on top of the levee which separates the Baylands from the rest of the city. At present, the section through the Weeks Neighborhood is paved as far north as Runnymede Street. Trail users connect along Runnymede to University Avenue (which has a bike lane in the Menlo Park section), to connect to a bicycle/pedestrian

path over the Dumbarton Bridge to Fremont and to a path extending north along Marsh Road. On the south end of the Weeks Neighborhood, the Bay Trail extends through East Palo Alto, Palo Alto, and Mountain View to the Sunnyvale Baylands.

The Bay Trail can be enhanced in the Weeks Neighborhood in a number of ways:

- Negotiate with the City of Palo Alto to allow access across that City's lot at the foot of Beech, Cypress and Garden Streets, and formalize and improve the unofficial entrances to the trail at these locations.
- Improve access to the Bay Trail at the end of Runnymede and Weeks Streets.
- Consider additional stop signs and crosswalks on Pulgas, Clark and Cooley Avenues to

TRAILS

improve pedestrian connections, particularly during the afternoon rush hour.

- Complete the Bay Trail segment north of Runnymede Street to connect to the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve, the Dumbarton Bridge, and through Menlo Park.
- Repave the trail segment through East Palo Alto, or consider removing pavement and replacing with a softer multi-use material such as decomposed granite.

NEARBY TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES AND NEEDS

Other trail opportunities outside of the neighborhood could contribute to the trails opportunities for Weeks Neighborhood residents:

- San Francisquito Creek could provide a future trail route.
- The 1.2 mile railroad right-of-way east of Illinois St. could provide an important link in the Bay Trail.
- A safe trail route across Highway 101 would improve access for pedestrians, bicyclists, children, adults, elderly and would connect the two sides of East Palo Alto.

Parking

This section shows suggested requirements for off street parking in the Weeks Neighborhood. Requirements are purposely set somewhat lower than they are in some other communities, for a number of reasons:

Much of the housing in the Weeks Neighborhood is affordable for low- and moderate-income residents. Studies have shown that low- and moderate-income people have lower ratios of auto ownership than the public as a whole.³

Lowering required parking ratios improves housing affordability and aesthetics.

It should be possible for people living near the Four Corners development to utilize commercial parking in that development for guest parking when businesses are closed.

Provision of small numbers of off-street parking lots can encourage residents and commuters to utilize transit for some trips rather than owning multiple vehicles for a single household.

There are ample opportunities for on-street parking in the Weeks Neighborhood, which can augment off-street parking.

The suggested off-street parking requirements for parking in the area are:

- **Multi-Family Residential:** 1 space per unit.
- **All Other Residential:** 1.25 spaces per unit, rounded down to the nearest whole number.
- **Churches:** 1 per 10 seats (for churches seating 75 or more). None (for churches seating less than 75 people).
- **Commercial Uses:** None. (Commercial uses in the Weeks Neighborhood will be locally oriented, so they should be accessible by walking and bicycle.)
- **Industrial & Institutional:** 1 per 2,000 square feet of building.

Besides these revised parking requirements, the following parking policies and actions are encouraged:

- Parking on front lawns of residences should not be allowed since it detracts from the character of the neighborhood.
- In order to maintain the supply of on-street parking, the City should consider an ordinance limiting on-street parking to 72 hours. This would force abandoned and little-used vehicles off the streets.
- Many parking lots in the Weeks Neighborhood are very large and unsightly. Parking lot owners should be encouraged to unpave parts of these lots and to replant them with landscaping or gardens. Church parking lots in central locations might also be used as park & ride lots for commuters on weekdays.
- Wherever possible, parking facilities should be designed to be shared between uses that need parking at different times of day. For example, churches might be able to share parking with commercial or industrial uses. Residences' guest parking might also occur in church or commercial parking lots. Some overflow parking for Multi-Family Residential uses near the Four Corners area might be shared with that area's commercial parking lots.

³ See, for example, a study conducted by Santa Cruz County of the County Redevelopment Agency's "The Farm" affordable housing project.

CHAPTER 6

Open Space and Conservation

This chapter of the Neighborhood Plan describes how open space and natural resources can be conserved within the Weeks Neighborhood.

The Weeks Neighborhood's Natural Resources

The Weeks Neighborhood has a number of natural resources that make it unique as a place for agriculture and open space.

Soil

The Weeks Neighborhood's long history of agricultural use has been possible because of the excellent soil in the neighborhood. Even in the early part of the 20th century, during the time of the Weeks Poultry Colony, the soil was described as "a rich sedimentary loam, very deep with a trace of hardpan or alkali."¹

Climate

Much of the San Francisco Bay Area is affected by coastal fog that enters the area through the Golden Gate. East Palo Alto, however, together with other areas around it, is sheltered from the fog and cold by the Santa Cruz Mountains on the San Francisco Peninsula. Thus the climate in East Palo Alto is relatively warm and sunny, which results in favorable growing conditions.

Groundwater

The Weeks Neighborhood is immediately adjacent to San Francisco Bay and the Baylands. This creates a high water table, which has historically made water available for wells and irrigation. Today, groundwater could still be a source of irrigation for local growers. This means that water quality must be carefully preserved, and that impervious surfaces should be minimized to allow for groundwater recharge.

¹ From *One Acre and Independence, 1922-23*, quoted in *The Dark Horse*, page 7.

Street Trees and Heritage Trees

The Weeks Neighborhood has a large amount of mature vegetation, which includes large street trees, other heritage trees, and hedges along the streets. This landscape contributes considerably to the character of the neighborhood, giving it a unique "country" character within an urban area.

Depending on the type, extent and location of this vegetation, it has the potential to clean the air of dust, pollen and pollution; reduce carbon dioxide levels; produce oxygen; reduce soil erosion, stormwater runoff and residential water use; reduce noise levels and mask offensive sounds by producing more pleasant sounds (e.g. wind in trees, bird song); reduce wind levels; and hide unsightly views. Trees can also contribute to improved property values, a positive and distinctive community identity, and overall enhancement of the quality of life of a community's residents.²



Lax enforcement of the City's heritage tree ordinance has allowed the destruction of numerous trees that were meant to be protected. The City should work with non-profit partners to educate community members, City staff and elected/appointed officials about the values of trees and about the provisions of the City's heritage trees ordinance.

² Duerkson, Christopher J, with Suzanne Richman, "Tree Conservation Ordinances; Land Use Regulations Go Green," *American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service*, 1994.

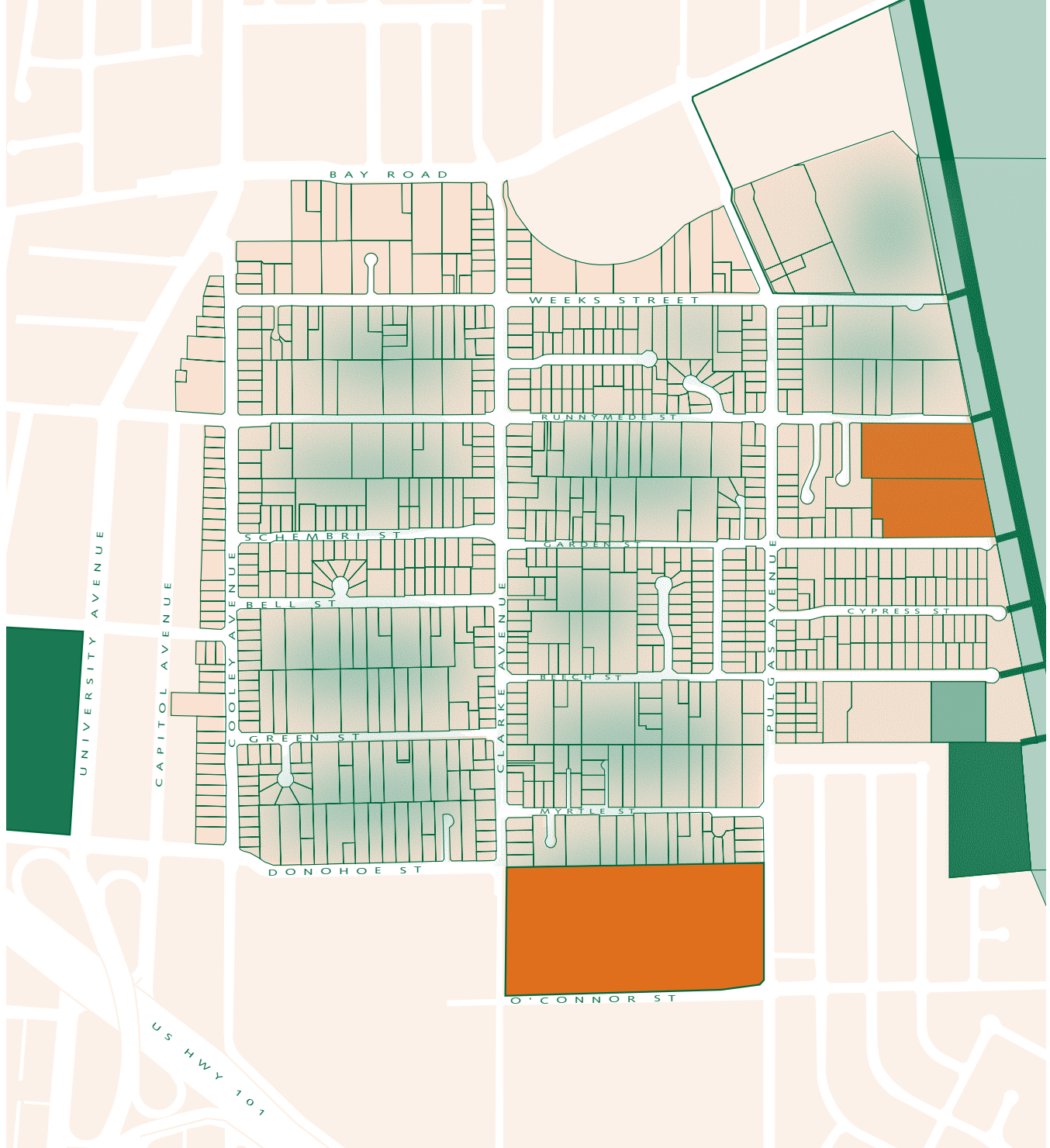








FIGURE 11
WEEKS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
**Proposed
Open Space Network**

-  Existing Parks
-  Proposed Park Areas
-  Baylands
-  Existing Schoolyards
Proposed for Additional Public Use
-  Private Large Lot Backyards
-  Trail Enhancements

NATURAL RESOURCES

Special Plants and Animals

The Baylands are home to a number of endangered, threatened or otherwise special plant and animal species. Endangered species such as the Salt-Marsh Harvest Mouse and the California Clapper Rail are known to exist in the Baylands. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the East Palo Alto/ Palo Alto Marsh has the highest density of California Clapper Rails in the South Bay, with 200 of the South Bay's 600 birds. The Baylands are also important by themselves as one of the last examples of the natural Bay estuary that once ringed San Francisco Bay. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the natural diversity that occurs in the Baylands also overlaps into the developed portions of the Weeks Neighborhood, resulting in a higher density of wild animal life than would normally occur in an urbanized area.

Land Use Designations and Design Guidelines

Land use designations and design guidelines suggested in this Neighborhood Plan will help to preserve the natural features of the neighborhood. They include:

- The Open Space and Conservation Designation is applied to Martin Luther King Park, the Bay Trail, Ravenswood Open Space Preserve, the Baylands, and the local schoolyards. These areas will be available to local residents as areas for recreation and enjoyment.
- The Large Lot Residential designation will encourage owners of privately-owned backyards to make their lands a part of an informal open space system in the centers of many of the blocks in the Weeks Neighborhood.
- Within the rear yards of the Large Lot Residential areas, the definition of “building capacity areas” and required rear setbacks and design guidelines will encourage shared use and informal access or pathways for the local residents of each block.
- The Circulation Element calls for maintaining narrow streets, and the Design Guidelines suggest saving existing mature trees wherever possible.
- Design Guidelines suggest grading to allow natural drainage, with stormwater flowing

downhill to the centers of each large block in the Large Lot Residential area. The Guidelines also call for vegetative and soil filters to preserve and enhance water quality.

- Design Guidelines call for minimization of impermeable surface coverage in development areas in order to promote aquifer recharge and reduce saltwater intrusion.

Proposed City Policies and Programs

The City of East Palo Alto could adopt a number of policies and programs to support open space and conservation in the Weeks Neighborhood. Figure 11 illustrates the existing open space network in the Weeks Neighborhood, as well as potential changes.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has worked closely with City staff, residents and recreation and open space professionals to develop a set of city-wide recommendations for the Open Space Element of the General Plan. The Open Space Element could be written to include the following policies and programs within the Weeks Neighborhood.

Martin Luther King Park Expansion

Martin Luther King Park, near Beech Street and the Baylands, is a publicly owned open space, but it is currently both under-developed and isolated from public streets in the Weeks Neighborhood. The City could do the following to improve the park:

- Work with the County, which owns the lot near the end of Beech Street and adjacent to the park, to address toxic soil problems and add this lot to the park. Develop a pedestrian-oriented entrance to the park on Beech Street in order to enhance park visibility, access and security.
- Link the park to the neighborhood through trails along the Baylands.
- Organize community groups to improve the park with play equipment, ball courts or fields, a tot lot and picnic areas.
- Organize programs at the park that create enough activity to enhance the safety and desirability of the area.
- Work with the City of Palo Alto, which owns the triangle of land at the end of Beech,

PROPOSED POLICIES

Cypress and Garden Streets, to integrate this area with the plans for Martin Luther King Park.

Bay Trail and Baylands Enhancements

The Bay Trail already runs through the Weeks Neighborhood along the edge of the Baylands. Suggested Bay Trail improvements are listed in Chapter 5.

Neighborhood Park Development

The Trust for Public Land's East Palo Alto Park, Recreation and Open Space Recommendations include development of a new neighborhood park within the Weeks Neighborhood. TPL's recommendation is based on the following findings:

- The Weeks Neighborhood is the largest area “unserved” by existing city parks and schoolyards.
- The neighborhood's large lots may make it possible to find land sufficient to develop a neighborhood park.
- A Weeks Neighborhood park could provide an opportunity to develop an environmental education center and interpret the agricultural history of East Palo Alto.
- A park in the Weeks Neighborhood could also incorporate community gardens or demonstration gardens.

The TPL report suggests using funds for park development that will be generated by the Gateway 101 project in the Weeks Neighborhood. In the Gateway 101 Specific Plan, a park site is targeted for the Phase II Gateway 101 development. But such a site may be surrounded primarily by commercial uses, so the TPL report suggests shifting this site to the Weeks Neighborhood instead. This notion would be consistent with the ideas in this Neighborhood Plan.

Institutional and Non-Profit Programs

As the community comes together to improve the Weeks Neighborhood, there will also be a number of activities to conserve open space and natural resources that institutions and non-profit organizations could spearhead.

Community Gardens

Agriculture and gardening are important landscape and economic components of this Neighborhood Plan. One way to encourage gardening is to identify appropriate sites for community gardens, and to facilitate community garden development. There is currently one community garden in the Weeks Neighborhood, on Weeks Street, but it is on a site designated in this Plan for Multi-Family Residential development. Therefore, the community should take steps to find additional sites for new community gardens.

Options for ownership and management of community gardens include:

- City ownership and management, as part of the City park system.
- Land trust ownership and management.
- Non-profit organization ownership and management.
- City ownership with non-profit organization management.
- Institutional ownership with non-profit organization management.
- Private ownership on existing Large Lot Residential area parcels, with management by the City or a non-profit organization.
- In order to facilitate community garden development, the City could encourage residential and commercial developers in the Weeks Neighborhood to set aside sites for community gardens within their projects.





Interpretation of the Baylands

The Baylands are an interesting and important biotic resource in the Weeks Neighborhood. Owned by the City of Palo Alto, this area has the potential for boardwalks, trails, educational programs and passive recreation, similar to the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve and the Palo Alto Baylands. At present, an informal trail extends into the Baylands at Runnymede Street. It is important that any future trail development does not jeopardize the habitat values of the Baylands.

Interpretation of the Baylands would help local residents appreciate this resource more. Interpretation programs could include information on natural resources in the Baylands, Ohlone Indian use of the Bay, and the maritime history of Cooley Landing. The City of Palo Alto already runs interpretive programs regarding San Francisco Bay in its part of the Baylands. It may be possible to work with Palo Alto to hold some of these programs in areas that would be accessible to Weeks Neighborhood residents as well.

Schools and childcare centers in the Weeks Neighborhood are particularly well-positioned to take advantage of the Baylands. The School District and the childcare centers could organize programs in these areas.

Tree Planting and Maintenance Program

Land use and design regulations proposed in this Plan will help to preserve street trees and heritage trees. Of course, trees have a natural life-cycle, and they eventually die or must be removed. Therefore, a program of inventorying, monitoring, replacing and planting new trees is desirable.

This program could be conducted by volunteers or a non-profit organization with limited City

funds. Several non-profit organizations already exist in the Bay Area that make street trees and/or fruit trees available to any resident who is willing to plant and take care of them. The City could publicize and encourage participation in such programs, and it could also help to organize volunteers to engage in necessary tree inventories and maintenance.

Community Use of School Yards

There are approximately 12 acres of school yard property in the Weeks Neighborhood, including school yards at Brentwood Oaks Elementary School, Ronald McNair Middle School, and the Ravenswood Children's Center. These school yards are significant open space and recreational facilities.

Schoolyards should be shared with the community at large in a manner that respects the needs and safety of school children. School yards could be used for:

- Community gardens
- Weekend and after school programs
- Sports programs
- Trail and pathway access



CHAPTER 7

Neighborhood Economic Development

EPA CAN DO recently developed an Economic Development Plan for East Palo Alto. The Plan's major goal is to create well-paying jobs for local residents. This goal was reflected in the community input process for the Weeks Neighborhood, in which residents stated that there should be more jobs available for local residents. In fact, officially reported unemployment in East Palo Alto is three times as high as in San Mateo County as whole.¹ East Palo Alto has only 2,300 jobs for about 7,000 households.² This translates to roughly 0.3 jobs per household. Assuming that most households desire to have one or two workers in them, a city probably should have more on the order of 1.25 to 1.75 jobs per household. East Palo Alto must add jobs to create income potential for its residents.

The Economic Development Plan lists agriculture as one of four business sectors to support and expand in East Palo Alto, along with construction, child care and retail. In East Palo Alto today, over 7% of all jobs are already in agriculture.³ This is a much higher percentage than in almost any community in the urbanized Bay Area, and it is also higher than the national average, where only about 3% of the population is employed in agriculture. Agriculture also is the fourth largest employment industry in East Palo Alto, after retail trade, education and professional services. Thus it outranks construction; manufacturing; finance, insurance and real estate; health services and many other important sectors of the American economy. It

¹ *City of East Palo Alto Enterprise Community Application, page 11.*

² *This figure is taken from the US Census, as cited by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's "Transportation Facts by Place of Work." This is a high estimate of the number of jobs in East Palo Alto compared to others; the Association of Bay Area Governments estimates that there were only 1,410 jobs in East Palo Alto in 1990, and the East Palo Alto Enterprise Community Application states that there were only 920 jobs.*

³ *1990 US Census.*

makes sense for East Palo Alto to continue to support its economic sectors that are already strong, and to look for further job growth in them.

Within the Weeks Neighborhood, this Neighborhood Plan puts the focus especially on gardening agriculture, as a source of home food production, as an economic sector, and as a means to economic and job training. Agriculture is a part of East Palo Alto's existing diverse economy, particularly in the Weeks Neighborhood with its variety of single-family homes, duplexes, apartments, private open space in rear yards, and community and private gardens.

This Plan will also foster economic growth by supporting the Weeks Neighborhood as a vital place to live. Strong residential neighborhoods foster economic growth by allowing a viable workforce to live close to jobs.

How the Neighborhood Plan Supports Economic Development

This Neighborhood Plan supports City official's efforts to expand the economic health of East Palo Alto in the following ways:

Jobs/Housing Balance

The Weeks Neighborhood is primarily a residential neighborhood, which makes it an obvious home for workers in the Ravenswood Industrial Park and Gateway 101 areas. Some City leaders have suggested that as many as one-third of East Palo Alto's jobs will ultimately be located in the Ravenswood and Gateway 101 areas. This Neighborhood Plan allows for the addition of approximately 800 new homes in the area to augment the existing 900 homes. Enhancing the environmental and social quality of the neighborhood, as outlined in this Plan, will attract new workers to live in the neighborhood. The close proximity of workers will be an attractive amenity for businesses locating in the redevelopment areas.

NEIGHBORHOOD ECONOMICS

Support for Businesses

The Plan allows businesses that are compatible with the character of the Weeks Neighborhood to be located in the neighborhood. Such businesses could include home offices, telecommuting, office support businesses like photocopy shops and office supply shops, restaurants and cafes and delivery services. They could support both agricultural businesses in the Weeks Neighborhood and additional businesses developed in the Gateway 101 and Ravenswood areas.

Agriculture and Gardening

The Large Lot Residential land use category in this Neighborhood Plan supports agriculture on the rear portions of private lots on most blocks in the Weeks Neighborhood. This would allow for both home food production and production of crops for sale.

Agriculture and gardening in the Weeks Neighborhood could occur on scales from as small as 1/2 acre to five or more acres. Small gardens could be run from individual backyards typically found in the Weeks Neighborhood. These businesses would not be designed to compete against large farms in the Central Valley and other primary agriculture areas; instead, they would serve “boutique” or “niche” markets with high-quality produce.

It would not be necessary for owners of the agricultural areas to cultivate them themselves. Owners could allow community gardens, shared cultivation, or cultivation by businesses that lease the rear portions of one or several properties. This already occurs in the Weeks Neighborhood. For example, Happy Quail Farms already uses the rear of the owners’ lot and the rear of an adjacent lot leased from neighbors for agricultural production.

Agricultural Business and Industry

The Large Lot Residential land use category allows agricultural businesses and agriculturally-related industry, provided that they are compatible with adjacent residential uses. Examples of these businesses would be nurseries, floral and produce wholesaling, canning, and large-scale composting. These types of enterprises should be especially encouraged, since they would result in diversification of the local economy beyond the single agricultural sector.



Two attractive examples of this type of business are the following:

- **Composting:** There is a market need for the collection and composting of organic wastes from restaurants and landscape businesses. The rising costs of waste disposal and state laws requiring reductions in landfill use are forcing restaurant owners and landscapers to look for disposal alternatives for their high volumes of organic wastes. Many are willing to give away the waste in exchange for lower trash collection bills. At the same time, there is strong demand for good quality compost as a soil amendment. A composting operation within the Weeks Neighborhood could capitalize on this opportunity.

Composting could occur within existing greenhouses in the Weeks Neighborhood. This would create an incentive to rehabilitate the greenhouses, and the greenhouses would provide containment for odors associated with composting. With proper controls, compost operations would be compatible with residential development, and could also serve as a catalyst for revitalization of greenhouses in the neighborhood.

- **Aquaculture:** Growing fish in tanks for local consumption could also be an important agriculture-oriented business in the Weeks Neighborhood. Fresh fish is in high demand in the Bay Area, particularly because of the decline of local fisheries and the increases in Southeast Asian populations whose diets traditionally include large amounts of seafood. Moreover, the by-products of aquaculture (water and fish waste) are valuable resources

WHY AGRICULTURE

for agricultural operations, so there is a good compatibility between aquaculture and agriculture.

Why Agriculture in the Weeks Neighborhood?

This Neighborhood Plan stresses agriculture and related fields as a part of the City's economic development strategy. Agriculture is already an important economic sector in East Palo Alto, and is identified in the Economic Development Plan as one of the four business sectors to support and expand in East Palo Alto. If properly planned, agriculture can make an important contribution to East Palo Alto's overall economy. Agriculture certainly isn't the only economic sector that is important to East Palo Alto, but it is the economic sector that is most important in the Weeks Neighborhood.

There are many important reasons that agriculture makes sense in the Weeks Neighborhood:

- Job Creation:** Although agriculture is not always viewed as a job generator, urban farming in East Palo Alto might create the same number of jobs per acre as a typical retail facility. For example, an average Home Depot on a site of approximately 8 acres employs 162 people full-time. This amounts to about 20 employees per acre. Wages in similar stores generally start at \$5.50 per hour.⁴ By comparison, the income stream from Kona Kai Farms, a small urban farm in Berkeley, averaged about \$375,000 per acre per year.⁵ This income stream would be able to support about 24 workers per acre at the same wage.⁶
- Job Training:** Many employment training programs already exist in low income communities that use gardening and agriculture as the basis for developing job skills. People in these
- Supplements to Income:** Individuals and families can supplement their own incomes through food production in backyard and community gardens. A \$20 investment can produce \$470 worth of food. A family of four can produce two-thirds of its vegetables on a 600 square foot plot working just five hours per week;⁷ this amounts to an equivalent of an hourly wage of about \$4.00 per hour.⁸ Working at a slightly larger scale, a backyard garden oriented at produce sales can produce about \$40,000 per acre per year.⁹
- Increases in Property Values:** Creating a neighborhood with a mixture of residential and agricultural land uses is likely to increase property values in the Weeks Neighborhood, due to the amenity of open space and greenery supplied by the agriculture. High property values in agricultural areas such as Napa Valley and Sonoma Valley attest to people's willingness to pay a premium to live close to agriculture and open space.
- Proximity to Lucrative Markets:** East Palo Alto is ideally situated to serve affluent and health-conscious South Bay/Peninsula communities with high quality organic produce. There is a strong demand in the region for high quality produce, including fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs, which form the backbone of the popular "California cuisine," and which are also sold in local health food stores and supermarkets. This type of produce has a short shelf life, so it must generally be grown in locations close to the point of consumption. The Weeks

4 Data courtesy of Bay Area Economics, Berkeley, California.

5 "City Farm Grosses \$238,000 on 1/2 Acre", by G. DeVault. In *The New Farm*, July/August, 1991, pp. 12-15. This article relates how Kona Kai grossed \$238,000 one year and \$150,000 the next year on a site of 0.4 acres.

6 This assumes debt service on land and other expenses of \$50,000, leaving \$325,000 per year to pay salary and benefits. Assuming hourly wages of \$5.50 per hour; benefit costs of 20% and 52 work weeks each year, this income stream could pay for 947 hours of work each week. Assuming a 40 hour work week, this would amount to 23.7 full-time workers per acre of agricultural land. At \$8.00 per hour, the same income stream would support 16.2 full-time workers.

7 Laura Lawson, Berkeley Youth Alternatives Garden Patch, personal communication.

8 Assuming that a family of four eats about \$30 worth of vegetables per week.

9 Andrew Lee, Backyard Market Gardening, Good Earth Publications, Burlington, Vermont, 1993.

WHY AGRICULTURE

Neighborhood can become a source for locally grown produce for the South Bay/Peninsula community.

- **Highly Productive Agricultural Resources:** As outlined in Chapter 6, the Weeks Neighborhood is known for its rich soils, excellent climate and high water table, all of which create an excellent environment for agriculture.
- **Local Control:** Most potential retail or office employers are large corporations that are controlled from outside of East Palo Alto, and even from outside of the Bay Area. Agricultural production, on the other hand, is generally conducted at small scales that can be controlled by local people, so the community's economic well-being remains in its own hands.

Proposed Agricultural Programs

This section outlines programs that the City of East Palo Alto and other entities could take on to help to encourage agriculture in the Weeks Neighborhood as an economic development tool.

Farmers' Market

In the past, East Palo Alto's attempts to start a farmers' market have been frustrated by the limited numbers of both buyers and sellers. At some time in the future, new supplies of produce grown in the Weeks Neighborhood will increase supply. At that time, institution of a farmers' market on a highly visible site such as the Four Corners or Gateway 101 would generate the demand needed to make a farmers' market successful.

A farmers' market would also have the benefit of making good quality produce available to local residents, who may have a difficulty accessing quality supermarkets and fresh produce. A farmers' market would also teach the sellers about marketing and business, which would have an added job training benefit.

To start a new farmers' market, the City or some other organization will need to hire or appoint a coordinator to arrange for a space, advertise, and coordinate sellers. The Chamber of Commerce, Merchants' Association and other local businesses might also be encouraged to participate. The City could encourage owners and developers of the Gateway 101 project or the Four Corners site could allow use of their lands for the farmers' market.

First Source Buying Program

As agricultural produce from the Weeks Neighborhood increases, the City could work with retailers in the Gateway 101 development and other parts of East Palo Alto to develop a first source buying program for agricultural products. In such a program, retailers such as Home Depot would offer to buy all locally-produced products for sale in their stores before they acquired products from outside the city.

Employment Training Programs

Both agricultural operations and the farmers' market have the potential to serve as employment and job skills training programs. They can teach participants the following skills that are important in any workplace:

- Work skills, such as punctuality, teamwork, and responsibility;
- Business skills, such as selling, budgeting, working with money, and making change; and
- Entrepreneurial skills, such as managing a business, budgeting, and making a business plan.

Ideally, the programs should work with local residents in the agricultural sector, and then provide opportunities for placement in jobs in other sectors within the community.

Gardening and Agricultural Education

Since gardening and agriculture are key components of the vision for the Weeks Neighborhood, it is important that members of the community learn about them. Non-profit groups, service organizations and schools could begin to teach the fundamentals of gardening and agriculture, so that residents may produce food for themselves and for sale.

These programs should particularly stress organic gardening, which results in higher quality produce that is healthier to eat and fetches premium prices, and which is also safer for gardeners and children who might play in the area. Programs should also teach how to maintain and enhance soil quality through composting of garden organics and organic growing methods.

PROPOSED PROGRAMS



Agricultural and Economic Development Coordinator

In order to jumpstart the projects listed above, the City of East Palo Alto, EPA CAN DO or another non-profit organization could hire a coordinator to help in the development of agriculture as a business sector and as a supplement to income in the Weeks Neighborhood. This person would give technical advice to gardeners and farmers, help to manage the farmers' market, and help gardeners and farmers with business and marketing questions. In addition, the coordinator could help East Palo Alto growers to find wholesale buyers and retail outlets for their produce throughout the Bay Area.

Other Similar Programs

There are many examples of programs in urban areas that are using gardening and agriculture as economic development tools. These other programs help to show how agriculture could help to create jobs and economic stability in East Palo Alto.

Happy Quail Farms

Happy Quail Farms, owned by David Winsberg,¹⁰ is one of the most successful agricultural enterprises in the Weeks Neighborhood today. Happy Quail Farms grows “no spray” bell peppers, eggplants and cucumbers in about 26,000 square feet of greenhouses, with an additional 7,000 square feet in outdoor beds. The growing season lasts virtually all year, with a slow down only in December and January. Produce is sold directly at farmers markets, at premium prices that average \$4.00 per pound.

¹⁰ All information in this section comes from personal communication with David Winsberg.

Happy Quail Farms employs several part-time workers at \$7.00 per hour, which is higher than starting wages for unskilled workers at local retail stores. The business creates a gross income of about \$50,000 per year on less than an acre of farmed land.

Mr. Winsberg notes that he would like to expand his production and make improvements to his existing greenhouses, which would also allow him to grow for twelve months each year and hire more workers. However, such improvements are not allowed under existing City zoning. His proposed improvements, and the economic growth they would bring with them, would be allowed under this Neighborhood Plan.

Kona Kai Farms

Kona Kai Farms is considered one of the most successful urban farming projects in the country. Kona Kai is a specialty producer of a variety of salad greens and ingredients which are sold to restaurants throughout the Bay Area and around the world. The farm was located on a $\frac{2}{5}$ -acre plot in Berkeley for nearly 10 years. On this site, with 69 permanent raised beds, the farm was able to generate nearly \$250,000 in one year.¹¹ Kona Kai has recently moved to a new 1-acre site, also in Berkeley.

Other “Boutique” Growers

Northern California has many examples of small scale growers who cater to the market for up-scale produce. Warren Weber of Star Route Farms grows eight varieties of lettuce on 35 acres in Sonoma County. Forni-Brown Gardens near Calistoga, has a total of five cultivated acres, with sales revenues of about \$250,000 in 1992. Stu Corwin, another North Bay farmer, grows three acres of baby lettuce, grossing \$62,000 in 1989.

Food from the ‘Hood

Food from the ‘Hood, organized by Crenshaw High School in Los Angeles, is an excellent example of a successful urban farming program. The program’s 1/4 acre plot has become a focal point of the community and a financial success. The farm grows herbs all year long and has two seasonal crops. The hardy winter crop consists mostly of cabbage, collards and other greens. The summer

¹¹ Kraus, Sibella, “Kona Kai Farms,” San Francisco Chronicle, August 18, 1993

SIMILAR PROGRAMS



crop yields a variety of 16 or 17 fruits and vegetables, all chosen by the students, including: jalapenos, eggplant, melons, and cucumber. Twenty-five per cent of the harvest goes directly to local AIDS hospices, while some of the remaining crop is sold to people

in the neighborhood and some is used to feed their animals (they have a traveling zoo).

The farm project has no paid employees but a team of volunteers, of which approximately 90% are students. The project provides students with valuable skills in business and marketing, basic financial understanding, and computer training. In addition, students have learned the value of entrepreneurship and all of its associated benefits, such as self-esteem, interpersonal relationships and responsibility.

Food from the 'Hood has recently diversified its work to include a line of salad dressings that uses herbs grown on the farm. With sales to over 2,000 grocery stores, the salad dressing business has become a significant source of income for the program. This is the type of diversification that could also occur in the Weeks Neighborhood.

Casa de la Dignidad Community Garden Project

Casa de la Dignidad Community Garden Project in Livingston, California has developed into a unique cultural gathering point in its Central Valley community. At this project, Latino and Hmong families have learned to work together and unite as a community through gardening projects. The 7-acre site is used by 35 families to grow vegetables such as beans, cucumbers, corn and other vegetables indigenous to the Hmong people. The food grown on the farm is used by the families for sustenance; many of the families involved have little income since they have lack job skills and English language abilities. Thus the program provides an important economic contribution to the families involved. Participants in the project have also learned to take responsibility for the land and how to work with one another.

St. Mary's Urban Youth Farm

St. Mary's Urban Youth Farm is run by the San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners (SLUG) and is another example of an urban farm providing valuable job training while enhancing its surrounding community. The project was started in 1995 and has two vegetable crop fields, a hillside orchard and an adjacent herb garden. All 50 youth who work on the farm are paid minimum wage and are supervised by six paid crew leaders. Community members also participate on organized work days. The goal of the project is to provide specific job skills in gardening and landscaping, as well as general work skills such as responsibility and punctuality.



CHAPTER 8

Historic Preservation

The Weeks Neighborhood and all of East Palo Alto have a long and colorful history that has shaped the community we see today. This section gives a brief overview of the history of East Palo Alto and the Weeks Neighborhood.¹ Understanding this history can help us to appreciate and interpret the historic resources that remain today.

As with much of the Bay Area, the original inhabitants of East Palo Alto were Ohlone Indians; the tribal groups who lived around East Palo Alto were known as the Puichon. Puichon territory stretched from the lower San Francisquito Creek into the lower foothills.

During Spanish colonial times, much of East Palo Alto was part of the Rancho de las Pulgas, which was owned by the Arguello family. The Arguellos, who had massive landholdings in the area, sold the area that is now East Palo Alto in 1852. The land was then sold to a series of Anglo landholders, who subdivided it and reassembled it in various configurations. The settlement of Ravenswood was founded around the Woodside Dairy by Isiah Woods and William Rowe of San Francisco in the early 1850s. Cooley's Landing became a commercial port for the shipment of local agricultural products in the 1870s. Around the turn of the century, speculators published plans for Woodland Place, which was to be a community of factories, wharves, residences and civic institutions. However, urban development came slowly, and East Palo Alto maintained its rural, agricultural character throughout this period.

Beginning in 1916, people began to be drawn to East Palo Alto, and the Weeks Neighborhood in particular, from all over the United States. They came at the urging of Charles Weeks, who founded his settlement of Runnymede, also known as the Weeks Poultry Colony, on the fertile soils of East Palo Alto. Weeks drew settlers to the area with the motto of "One Acre and Independence in

California;" he created a community of independently-owned farms whose owners could be economically self-sufficient through the poultry, eggs and vegetables produced on their one-acre plots. To achieve his vision, he laid out his settlement on the pattern that is still visible today, with a grid of streets surrounding narrow, deep one-acre parcels. In its heyday, Runnymede had over 1,200 residents, and was one of the largest poultry producers in the United States. Runnymede once covered the entire area from Bay Road to San Francisquito Creek, and from Cooley's Landing to Menalto. Today the lotting pattern and cultural landscape of the Weeks Neighborhood are clear reminders of Charles Weeks' legacy.

The Weeks Poultry Colony as an institution disappeared by the 1930s. It was pressured out of existence by increasing land values and the construction of the Bayshore Highway (now the 101 Freeway) nearby, which made more typical suburban development on small lots profitable. However, the development patterns in the Weeks Neighborhood were maintained, largely because of the rise of floriculture as an industry in San Mateo County from the 1930's onward. Flower growers maintained the Weeks Neighborhood's lotting pattern, and built greenhouses to support the cultivation of many types of flowers for a national market. Since many of the flower growers were of Japanese descent, the industry received a setback during World War II, when Japanese Americans



¹ Information in this section comes from the introduction to the East Palo Alto Historic Resources Inventory Report, which is summarized in *The Californian*, volume 16, number 3 (March 1995), pages 6-10.

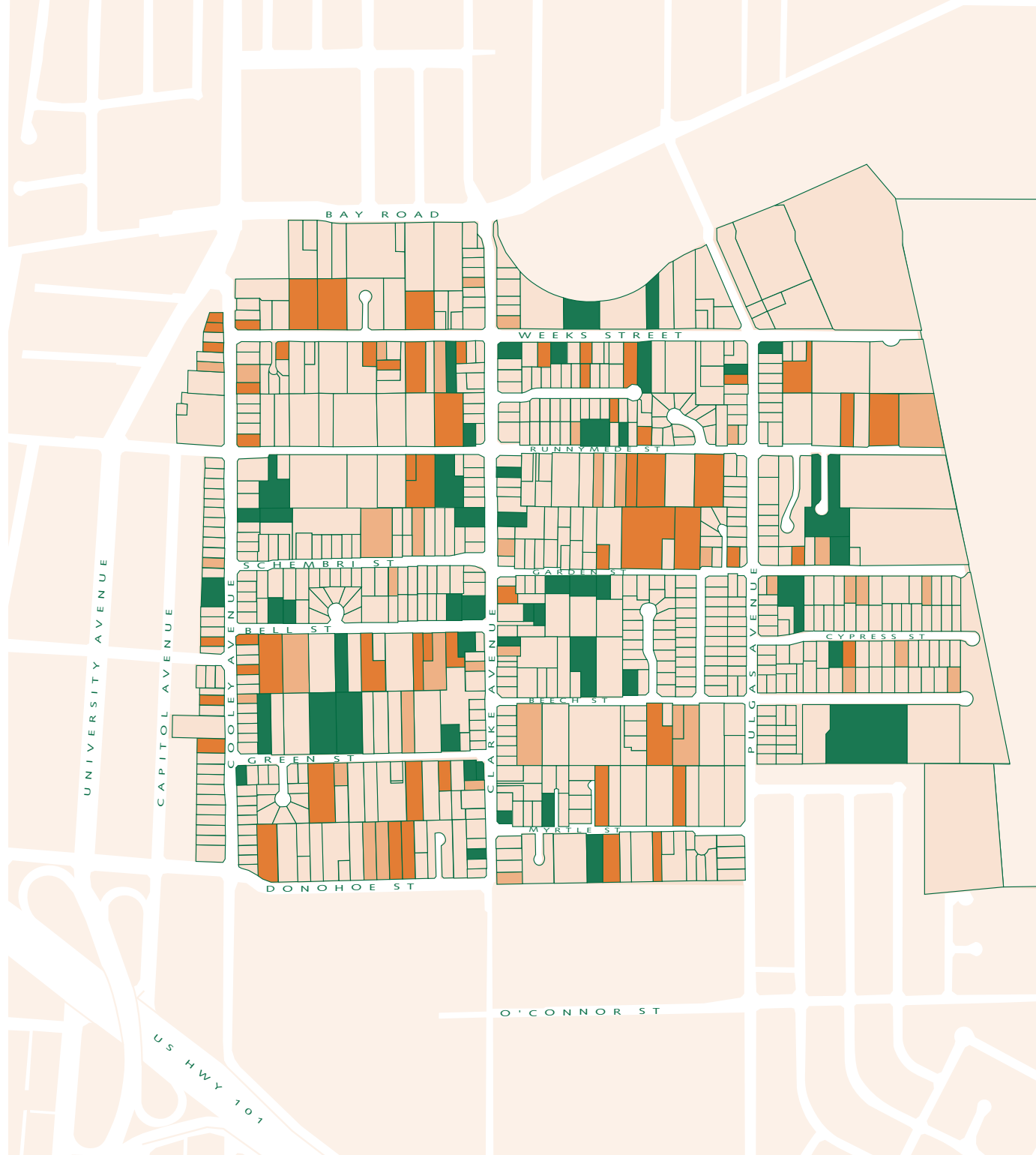
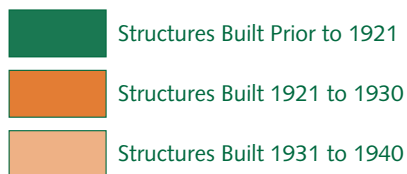


FIGURE 12
WEEKS NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
Historic Structures



HISTORIC RESOURCES

were sent to internment camps. However, the industry came back in the late 1940s and 1950s, and did not begin to decline until the 1970s. Even since the 1970s, there has been a renewed interest in small scale agriculture and organic gardening, and some new agricultural operations have been set up in the Weeks Neighborhood.

Continuing agricultural use in East Palo Alto, and in the Weeks Neighborhood in particular, have made the area unusual because so many elements of Charles Weeks' original utopian vision survive. This gives the Weeks Neighborhood a significant position not only in the history of the Bay Area, but in the history of the West. It is important that planning for the Weeks Neighborhood recognize and preserve this history.

Historic Resources in the Weeks Neighborhood

Historic Properties

East Palo Alto has over 450² properties that are over 50 years old, which means that they would potentially qualify as "historic." Figure 12 shows a map of properties with old structures within the Weeks Neighborhood, categorized by the decade in which they were built. The San Mateo County Historical Association and the San Mateo County Historic Resources Advisory Board completed a Historic Resources Inventory of 51 of these properties in 1994. Only 51 properties were inventoried due to budgetary constraints. Inventoried properties were chosen to obtain a good representation of the styles, themes and ages of historic properties in East Palo Alto. Properties that were not surveyed are also potentially historic.³

Of the 51 inventoried properties, 28 were located in the Weeks Neighborhood. One of the inventoried properties in the Weeks Neighborhood—the Cooley Avenue Market—was found to appear eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. It was found that eight others could become eligible if additional research were undertaken on them or if their integrity were restored. The rest of the inventoried properties were determined to be of local significance. A list of the inventoried proper-

² This count is based on data collected by the San Mateo County Historical Association.

³ Katherine Solomonson, personal communication, October 5, 1995.

ties and the status assigned to each is included in the Appendix.

Historic properties in the Weeks Neighborhood generally fit into three historic themes:

Ravenswood and Early East Palo Alto: Two properties identified in the Inventory pre-date Charles Weeks' Runnymede development. One of these is the unusually shaped tankhouse/barn at the corner of Green Street and Clarke Avenue; the other is a house on Clarke Avenue possibly used for farmworker housing on the estate of Peter Faber in the early 20th Century.

Charles Weeks Poultry Colony: Most of the inventoried properties in the Weeks Neighborhood are related to the development of Charles Weeks' Runnymede. These properties, primarily residences, have several distinctive features:

- The main houses are generally small, one-story bungalows built at the front of the lots. These houses use distinctive architectural features that were popular in the 1920s, such as small front porches and gabled roofs.
- Many properties include "tankhouses," which were a distinctive feature of the Weeks Poultry Colony. These structures, placed either above houses or in detached buildings, held water tanks for domestic and agricultural water supply.
- Long, narrow chicken houses sometimes run perpendicular to the street at the rear of the large lots. Many remnants of chicken houses remain in the Weeks Neighborhood, and there are at least five that are intact. These structures might be rehabilitated for new uses and to preserve a remnant of the Poultry Colony.
- Agricultural out buildings exist on many lots. Ensembles of agricultural buildings are testimony to the history of agricultural use in the area.

Early Suburbanization: Some of the houses in the Weeks Neighborhood are examples of the early suburbanization of the neighborhood in the 1920s and 1930s. During this period, the Weeks Poultry Colony was already waning, and some owners were subdividing their property for suburban residences. Houses from this period follow several styles that were popular at the time, including Craftsman bungalow, Mission Revival, and California ranch styles.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Although the results of the Inventory give a good idea of the types of historic resources located in the Weeks Neighborhood, the list of architectural and historic resources should not be considered a final product. Instead, it is a valuable tool in the on-going process of identifying, evaluating and preserving the Weeks Neighborhood's architectural and historical resources. A survey is never complete, and as time passes, additional research will reveal previously unknown information about the community. Additional information may change the status of particular properties, which may take on new significance within the community. Also, properties may become more important as similar examples of an architectural style, a use, the work of a builder, or a type of construction disappear. For these reasons, the Inventory should be updated on a regular basis, and it should also be augmented to look at properties that are known to be old but were not previously addressed.

Cultural Landscape

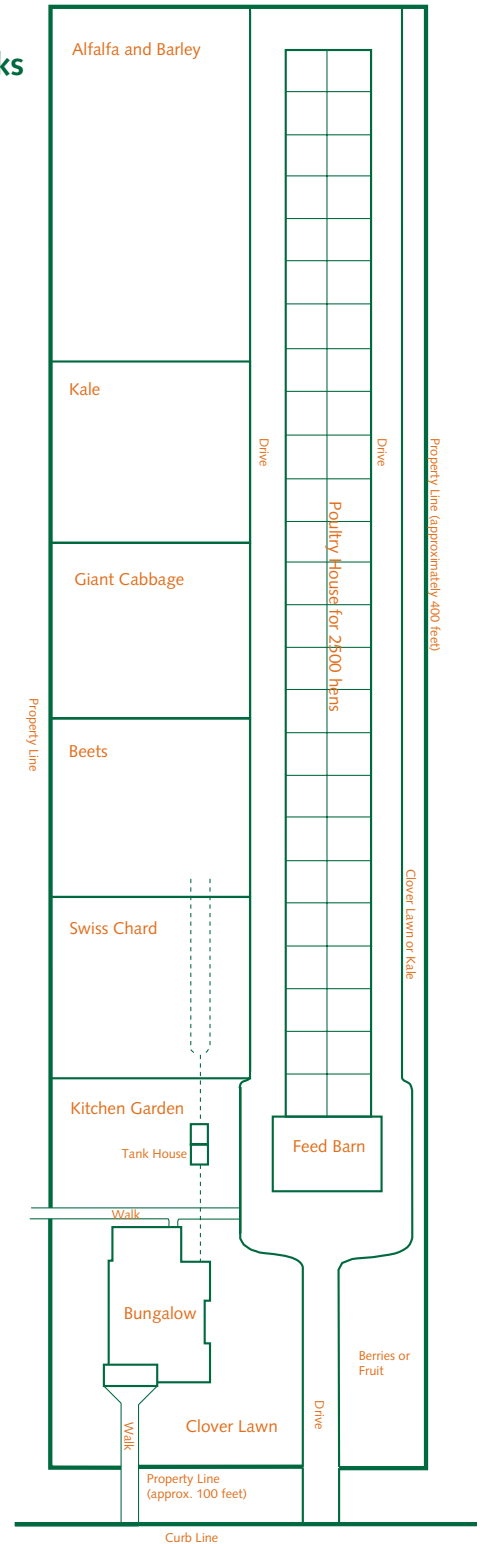
“Cultural landscape” refers to the patterns made on the land as a result of human settlement and transportation. A cultural landscape is generally a geographic area associated with a historic event, activity or person. Elements of a cultural landscape might include buildings, (houses, barns, garages, etc.), structures (walls, terraces, greenhouses, steps, bridges, water tanks, etc), circulation elements (roads, pathways, drives, canals), and vegetation (trees, hedges, agricultural fields, garden beds etc.). The styles of these elements and the ways in which they are arranged on the land can communicate significant information about the cultural values, social behavior and individual actions of the people who lived in the area.

Many important landscape features remain in the Weeks Neighborhood from the time of the Weeks Poultry Colony; these features define the cultural landscape of the neighborhood. Typical cultural landscape elements in the Weeks Neighborhood include:

- The grid pattern of straight streets at right angles to one another.
- The non-urbanized character of some of the east-west streets. Streets such as Myrtle, Green, Beech and Runnymede have no curbs,

FIGURE 13

Typical Weeks Poultry Colony Lot Layout



Anna Sayre, National Park Service, from One Acre and Independence, Oct. 1922

HISTORIC RESOURCES

gutters or sidewalks. Instead, they are narrow streets with dirt or grass shoulders.

- The deep and relatively narrow lots, which were designed to allow each family to have a house along the street and agricultural lands in the back. Figure 13 is an illustration of a typical lot arrangement from the Weeks Poultry Colony.
- The abundance of trees and shrubbery.
- Detached garages, separated from the houses because of the danger of explosions from early automobiles.
- Greenhouses, which are testimony to the floriculture industry that flourished in the Weeks Neighborhood from the 1930s through the 1970s.

Land Use Designations and Design Guidelines

Land use designations and design guidelines suggested in this Neighborhood Plan will help to preserve the historic features of the neighborhood. They include:

- Land use regulations that allow for agricultural use in the Large Lot Residential areas.
- Setbacks that will preserve the back portions of Large Lot Residential lots, in the interior of each block, as undeveloped agricultural and gardening uses.
- Design guidelines that require houses to be set back from the street, with landscaping and fencing in the front yards.
- Design guidelines that require new buildings to incorporate the general architectural character of existing historic development.
- Roadway standards for local streets that will preserve the narrow street widths along east-west streets.
- Tree maintenance and planting programs, suggested in the Open Space and Conservation chapter, that will preserve and add to the existing stock of mature vegetation.

Additional Potential Actions

This section describes actions that the City of East Palo Alto and private entities can take to further preserve the historic character of the Weeks Neighborhood.

City Actions

The City of East Palo Alto can take several measures to assist in the preservation of historic resources, at very little expense to the City. These potential actions are listed here in order of priority.

- **Support Privately-Funded Historic Preservation:** The City of East Palo Alto should encourage privately-sponsored historic preservation activities by exercising all of its options for flexibility in any of its permitting and inspection processes which impact on the preservation, restoration, maintenance and retention of historic resources. Such support of property owners and preservation-oriented individuals and organizations would provide a low-cost means of encouraging historic preservation.
- **Adopt the Historic Resources Inventory:** Under State law, private landowners can reap several benefits if the City of East Palo Alto adopts the Historic Resources Inventory that has already been prepared. If the City adopts the Inventory, property owners would be able to use the Historic Building Code (rather than the more restrictive Uniform Building Code) as the standard for building upgrades, and they could qualify for Mills Act contracts, as described below. Adoption of the Inventory would not create any additional burdens on owners of inventoried properties; it would



POTENTIAL ACTIONS

only help owners who chose to take advantage of available programs.

- **Update and Augment the Historic Resources Inventory:** As stated above, there are many old buildings in the Weeks Neighborhood that have not been subjected to a full historic resources inventory. Moreover, the historical significance of older properties is constantly changing over time. For these reasons, the City could update and augment the existing Historic Resources Inventory to include more properties. This work could also be undertaken by a non-profit organization.
- **Enter into Mills Act Contracts:** The State's Mills Act provides for a reduction in property taxes on a historic property when its owner enters into agreement with the City government to restore the historic building, maintain its historic character, and use it in a manner compatible with its historic characteristics. Even if a property under a Mills Act Contract is significantly improved or changes hands, it cannot be reassessed for property taxes, so the benefits to property owners can be great. Entering into Mills Act Contracts with owners of local historic properties would encourage owners to restore and maintain historic structures.
- **Adopt a Historic Preservation Element:** The City of East Palo Alto could adopt a Historic Preservation Element as a part of its current General Plan Update. The element would set goals and objectives for historic preservation throughout the city, recommend implementation mechanisms, and provide an overall foundation for historic preservation in the community.
- **Adopt a Historic Preservation Ordinance:** The City of East Palo Alto could adopt a Historic Preservation Ordinance that would apply to historic resources in the Weeks Neighborhood and the rest of East Palo Alto. An Historic Preservation Ordinance would generally require careful consideration before a historic building could be demolished or significantly altered, and it would set guidelines for the renovation and alteration of historic buildings.
- **Consider Creating a Historic Resources Board:** Many cities have boards or commissions charged with ensuring that local historic resources are preserved to the greatest extent feasible. If the City of East Palo Alto established



such a board, it could maintain the City's Historic Resources Inventory, review requests for historic building demolition or alteration, and develop design guidelines for historic renovation. To be effective, a Historic Resources Board would have to be vested with the power to enforce historic preservation regulations.

- **Consider Becoming a "Certified Local Government:"** A Certified Local Government is a government which acts as the implementing agency for national historic preservation law in a community. In most communities, this role is filled by the State of California's Office of Historic Preservation, but Certified Local Governments (CLGs) fulfill the role themselves within their city limits. CLGs can qualify for matching grants from the United States Department of the Interior for surveys, completion of National Register nominations, training and interpretation. To become a CLG, a city must have a historic preservation ordinance and a qualified historic resources board.

POTENTIAL ACTIONS

Historic Resource Improvement Program

The City of East Palo Alto, in partnership with a local non-profit organization, could establish a historic resource improvement program to assist owners in the rehabilitation of historic properties. Government agencies make some tools available for such programs, such as historic preservation tax credits, and non-profit funding may be available for other efforts. The program could include the following specific items:

- **Historic Renovation Guidelines:** The City of Oakland has met with great success in its publication of a booklet entitled *Rehab Right*, which gives property owners tips on how to rehabilitate their structures in keeping with their historic designs. The City of East Palo Alto or another organization might publish a similar book for the Weeks Neighborhood and the rest of the city.
- **Revolving Loan Fund:** The City or another organization could set up a fund to loan money to property owners for use in historic renovations. Such a fund would provide money for home improvements at a below-market interest rate, contingent on improvements being done in keeping with a structure's history.

Education Programs

Education programs can provide an important way to help local residents gain greater appreciation for the history of their community. The City of East Palo Alto, the schools, and non-profit organizations could work together to educate residents about local history in the following ways:

- Organizations could develop a brochure or pamphlet with a walking tour of historic properties in the Weeks Neighborhood and East Palo Alto as a whole.
- Local schools could have a curriculum on East Palo Alto history.
- The City could establish a City museum, detailing both historical and more recent events.
- The City could establish an archive for historic documents.





CHAPTER 9

Future Issues Facing the Weeks Neighborhood

Over the next few years, there will be a number of issues that emerge in planning for East Palo Alto that will directly affect the future of the Weeks Neighborhood. This chapter outlines a vision regarding these issues that is consistent with the overall intent of the Neighborhood Plan.

Replacement Housing

Due to the construction of the Gateway 101 Retail Project and its displacement of a large number of residents, there will be a significant need for replacement housing in East Palo Alto. Many sites within the Weeks Neighborhood have been considered for this replacement housing.

There are many opportunities for replacement housing in the Weeks Neighborhood under this Neighborhood Plan. High densities of housing can be constructed on the 1½ blocks closest to the Nairobi Village site at Bay Road and University Avenue; these blocks are designated for multi-family housing in this plan. Infill development can occur along the north-south avenues, and some new housing can be constructed in the Large Lot Residential designation.

However, it would be inappropriate to designate mid-block portions of the Weeks Neighborhood for more multi-family housing or suburban-style single-family homes. These types of development would disrupt the existing pattern of the neighborhood, and reduce the feeling of openness if they continued.

Development Near the Baylands

One of the basic premises of this Neighborhood Plan is that development in the Weeks Neighborhood should be graduated from the east to the west, with relatively low densities near the undeveloped open spaces at the Baylands, and higher densities closer to areas with urban amenities along University Avenue. The land use designations and policies in this Plan will result in this graduated pattern of development.

However, several under-developed parcels near the Baylands are currently designated in the City's General Plan and zoning for higher densities of development, and there have been some suggestions of higher density development on these sites. These sites, on Weeks and Beech Streets, would be inappropriate places for high density development because they are far from services such as shopping and transit. They are also subject to flooding during the 100-year storm and at high tides, and they are adjacent to habitat for endangered species such as the Clapper Rail and the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse. Development should be concentrated in the western part of the Weeks Neighborhood, and the eastern portion of the neighborhood should be retained for large lot residential development, agriculture and open space.



Community Gardens

As more intensive development occurs in the Weeks Neighborhood, it will be important to maintain sites for community gardens that are accessible to residents of apartments and townhouses. There is currently a single heavily used community garden in the neighborhood, on Weeks Street, and this garden could be lost if planned multi-family residential development occurs. The City and local non-profit organizations should work with individual land owners and developers to identify sites for community gardens in the future.

ISSUES

Land Trusts

Successful implementation of this Plan may require acquisition of land or land use rights for community gardens, mid-block trail easements, and additional open space. In a context of limited City funds for any of these purposes, it may be advisable to consider establishing a City-affiliated community land trust to raise capital to buy land and to hold for publicly beneficial uses. This idea has been suggested by several members of the community, and could be of great assistance in the Weeks Neighborhood.

Transfer of Development Rights

This Plan presumes a specified level of development on the interior portions of the large blocks in the Large Lot Residential Area. Residential development would be clustered on these lots at their fronts, leaving the backs of the lots available for economically-important agriculture and gardening.

In some cases, it may be beneficial to implement this concept through a “transfer of development rights” program, in which owners of agricultural parcels could sell their rights to build housing in mid-block areas within the Large Lot designation to landowners in the Multi-Family Residential designation. Such a program can be complicated to implement, and it would only work if the City could identify an area that is appropriate to receive the extra development rights. However, the City could consider such a program if it feels that it would make the agricultural, gardening and open space provisions of this Plan more feasible.



Recently, the City and potential developers for the Nairobi Village site in the Four Corners area have had difficulties finding a supermarket to become a tenant in the project. While this Plan is not necessarily based on providing a traditional supermarket, it is important that the Four Corners area provide some local shopping opportunities for food and other daily needs goods. The City should insist that any development in this area provide these types of stores.

Expressway 109

In the past, CalTrans has suggested a connection between the Dumbarton Bridge and Highway 101 southbound through the construction of a four-lane expressway along the Bay shore. The intent of this project would be to eliminate all through traffic in East Palo Alto by providing a direct bypass. The project is currently unfunded, and will probably not be pursued in the near future, but it is still an important issue for the Weeks Neighborhood.

This project, although it would relieve most local traffic problems, has a high monetary cost and a great potential to cause negative environmental impacts. The project would infringe on protected bay shore land, isolate the Weeks Neighborhood from the Bay and its surrounding open space, and increase noise and air pollution. For these reasons, the Expressway 109 project does not appear to be a good solution for the Weeks Neighborhood.

Ravenswood Industrial Area

The City of East Palo Alto seeks to attract major new industrial development to the Ravenswood Industrial Area just north of the Weeks Neighborhood. This development would bring new jobs and tax revenues to East Palo Alto.

However, intensive industrial development in this area, particularly south of Bay Road, would be likely to bring intense traffic conflicts to the Weeks Neighborhood as well. The City should therefore concentrate new industrial development on the north side of the railroad tracks, and should look at the installation of traffic diverters at the edge of the Weeks Neighborhood before Ravenswood industrial development occurs.

Conclusion

The Weeks Neighborhood Plan provides guidelines for residential, infrastructure and economic development, and for the enhancement of human, historic, natural and recreational resources. It attempts to build a sense of community, family and safety by providing parks, open spaces, schools and views from housing onto community areas. The plan, if carried out, could offer neighborhood residents, especially the children, what all people deserve — fresh healthful food, open spaces, a caring community, and opportunities to learn skills, shoulder responsibilities and build character, confidence and self-esteem through hands-on activities.

The Weeks Neighborhood Plan outlines a way to achieve a vision that includes housing for all income levels, commercial development that is compatible with surrounding residences, reduced traffic, easy walking and bicycling, economically viable agricultural activities, a sense of the uniqueness and specialness of the area, and the green, lush, country feeling that is so important to many residents.



The project sponsors hope that the Weeks Neighborhood Plan will continue to help generate political support to change the existing zoning ordinances in the Weeks Neighborhood, and ultimately help to clarify what the future vision for the Neighborhood should be. This plan could also be a model for the development of other neighborhood plans in East Palo Alto.

CHAPTER 11

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Appendix

Inventoried Historic Buildings in the Weeks Neighborhood

Inventory Number	Address	National Register Status
3.	1007 Beech	5S3
4.	1036 Beech	5S2
5.	736 Bell	4S2
6.	763 Bell	Not listed
7.	882 Bell A & B	5S2
10.	2012 Clarke	4S2
11.	2190 Clarke	5S2
12.	2260 Clarke	5S2
13.	892 Green	4S2
14.	2261 Clarke	4S2
15.	2235 Cooley (Cooley Market)	3S
16.	2360 Cooley	5S2
20.	809 Donohoe	5S2
21.	841 Donohoe	5S2
23.	962 Garden	4S7
24.	1039 Garden	5S2
27.	781 Green	5S2
28.	794 Green	5S2
29.	881 Green	4S2
30.	971 Runnymede	5S2
31.	1275 Runnymede	5S2
37.	761 Weeks	5S2
38.	820 Weeks	5S2
39.	906 Weeks	4S7
40.	965 Weeks	5S2
42.	992 Myrtle	4S2 Tower 5S3 House
50.	868 Runnymede	5S2
51.	872 Runnymede	5S2

Status codes in inventory:

- 3S. Appears eligible for listing in the National Register as a separate structure.
- 4S. May become eligible for listing in the National Register as a separate structure, when one of the following occurs:
 - 4S2: More historical or architectural research is performed on the property.
 - 4S7: The architectural integrity of the property is restored.
- 5S Not eligible for the National Register but of local interest:
 - 5S2: Is likely to become eligible for separate listing or designation under a local ordinance that has not yet been written.
 - 5S3: Is not eligible for separate listing or designation under an existing or likely local ordinance, but is eligible for special consideration in local planning.

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