



# Targeted Mixed-Use and Multi-Family Housing Study Recommendations

Folsom, CA

Presentation to  
Planning Commission

July 20, 2022



CITY OF  
**FOLSOM**  
DISTINCTIVE BY NATURE



**OPTICOS**



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# Introduction





# Project background

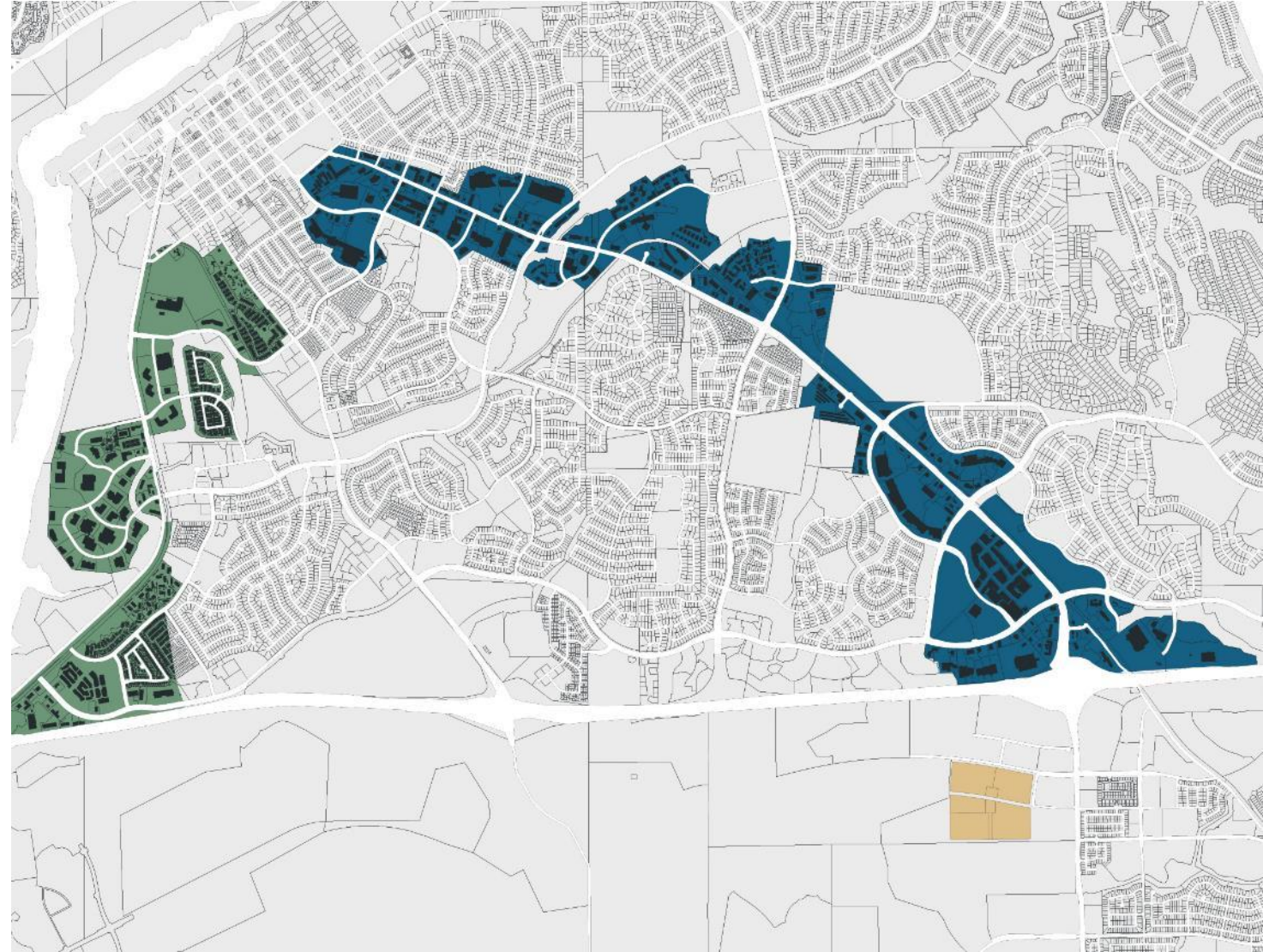
## Key Facts

Project will provide recommendations for targeted changes to zoning and to the General Plan and Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan

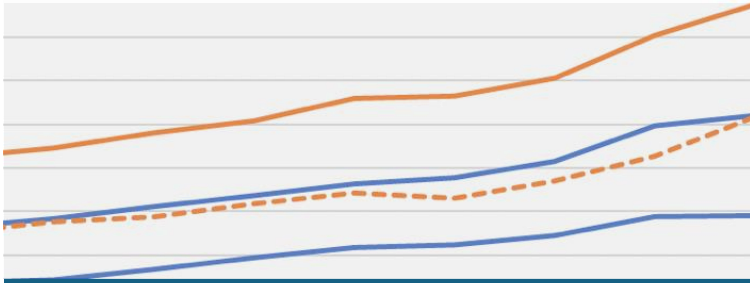
Recommendations will be tailored to:

- East Bidwell Mixed-Use Overlay Zone
- Folsom Boulevard Light Rail Station areas
- Folsom Plan Area's New Town Center

Study area excludes historic district and historic district station



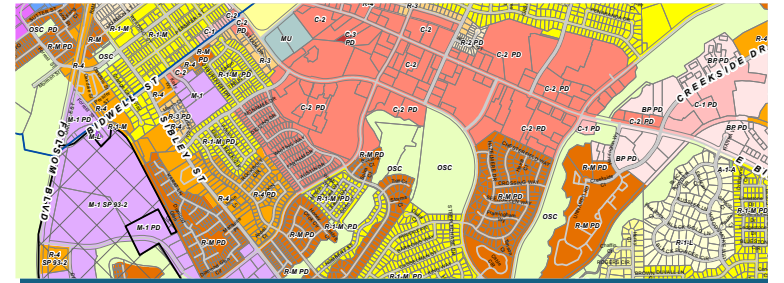
# The issues



**High housing demand with limited housing stock** results in unaffordability for children of longtime residents, seniors who want to downsize or who don't drive as often, and people who work in Folsom



Folsom's housing supply doesn't provide enough **options for diverse lifestyles**, including for residents who want to live a **compact, walkable and transit-oriented lifestyle**



One of the barriers to the production of diverse housing options is **regulatory standards** that end up making a site **infeasible to develop as housing** or that result in **unattractive development**



# The Issues (continued)

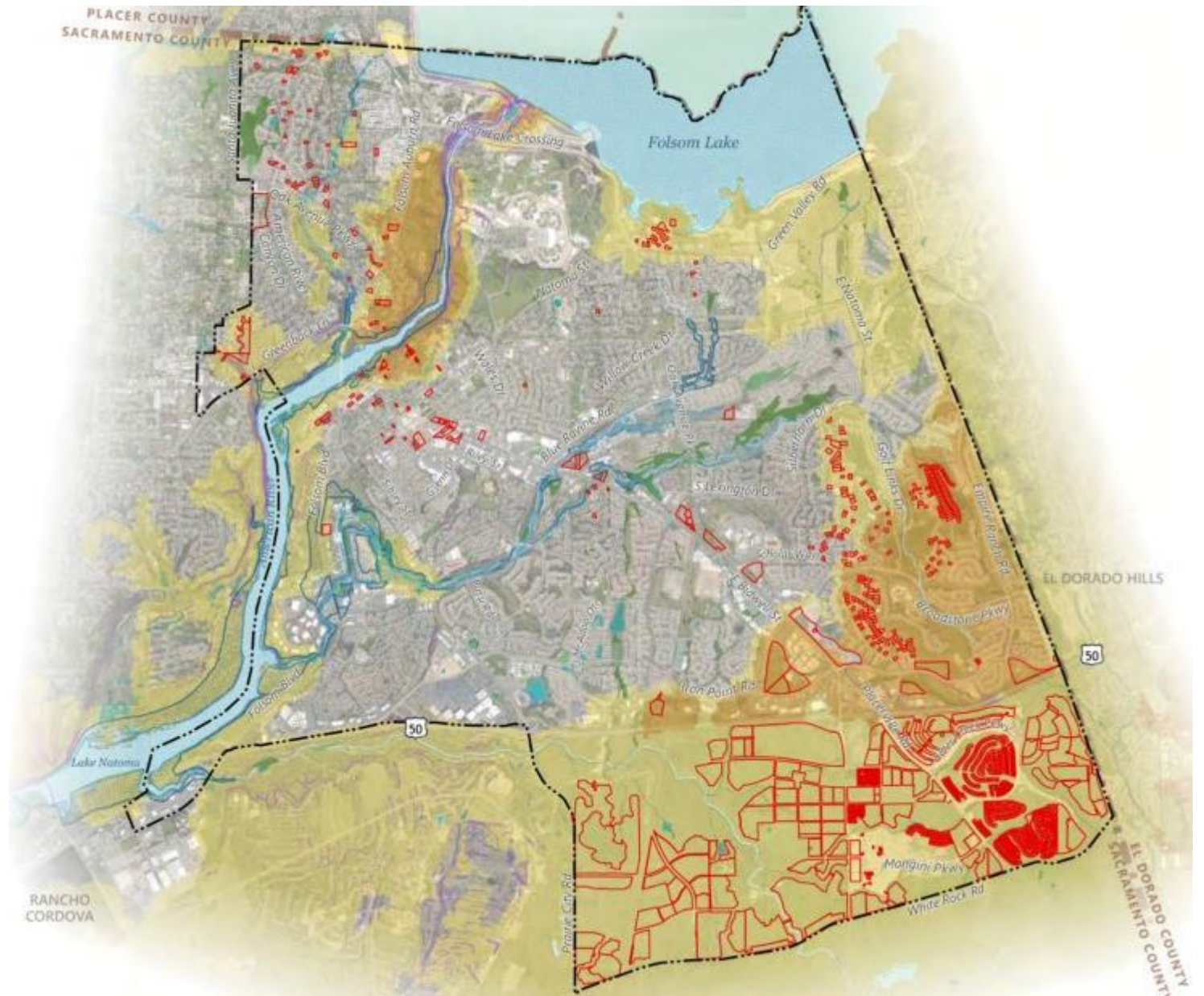
## Issues

### City's Share of Regional Housing Need

- 6,383 housing units
- Of those, 3,567 must be affordable units

### State "No Net Loss" Requirement

- Must have enough sites zoned for 30 du/ac for affordable development
- If market-rate development, City must rezone additional sites
- City has extra capacity now
- By end of the year that extra capacity may be gone





# Opportunities







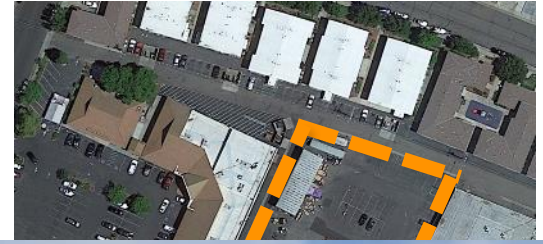
# Opportunity site

1

East Bidwell Corridor:  
**Snowline Hospice  
Thrift Store**



# Existing conditions





# What we heard from the community

**Height:** 3 to 4 stories feels about right. Could consider allowing taller buildings, such as 5 stories, at corners

**Massing:** Small to medium width and bulk





# Site design concept

## Two courtyard buildings

Courtyard building form creates a semi-private open space as a buffer from the corridor environment

A new pedestrian pathway provides access to rear courtyard



Above: Conceptual site plan. Arrow indicates vantage point for perspective rendering.

## Site Test Assumptions + Yields

# of Units (du)	82
# of Buildings	2
Bldg type	Courtyard
Height (stories)	3-4
Bldg width (ft)	140
Bldg depth (ft)	100
Density (du/ac)	59
FAR	1.0
Parking (sp/du)	1.0
Parking type	Surface + tuck-under
Front setback (ft)	15
Lot width (ft)	170
Lot depth (ft)	350
Lot area (ac)	1.4



# Potential built form (style example A)





# Design elements

Open space

Pedestrian entries

Shopfront frontages

Upper story within roof form

Building height steps down towards street





# Potential built form (style example B)





# Design elements

Open space

Pedestrian entries

Shopfront frontages

Building height steps down towards street





# Current regulatory barriers to development

## Parking requirements

Minimum required: 1.5 sp/unit

Shown: 0.7 sp/unit

## Density

Maximum allowed: 30 du/acre

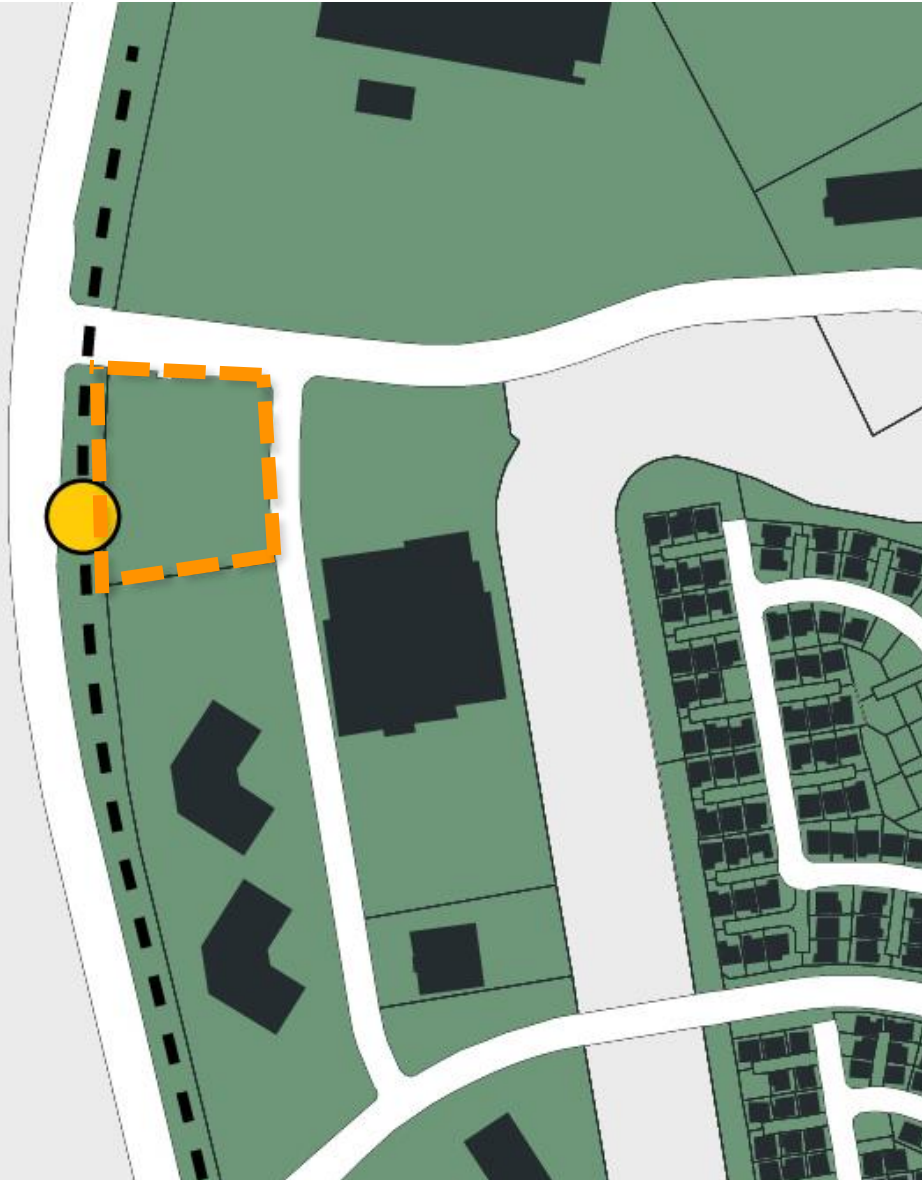
Shown: 59 du/acre





# Opportunity site 2

Glenn Station:  
**Park-and-Ride parking lot**





# Existing conditions





# What we heard from the community

**Height:** 5 stories feels about right

**Massing:** Medium or large building width

**Other:** Important to support light rail with higher intensity development at this location; consider design guidelines to help ensure attractive design; maintain parking for station





# Site design concept

## Three buildings framing a public green and paseo

Two 5-story podium residential buildings

One 4-story stick-frame mixed-use building



Above: Conceptual site plan. Arrow indicates vantage point for perspective rendering.

## Site Test Assumptions + Yields

# of Units (du)	305
# of Buildings	3
Bldg type	Podium and corridor
Height (stories)	4-5
Bldg width (ft)	Range from 90-200
Bldg depth (ft)	Range from 60-280
Density (du/ac)	112
FAR	2.0
Parking (sp/du)	1.1
Parking type	Podium and tuck-under
Front setback (ft)	10
Lot width (ft)	315
Lot depth (ft)	370
Lot area (ac)	2.7



# Potential built form





# Design elements

 Corner element

 Open space

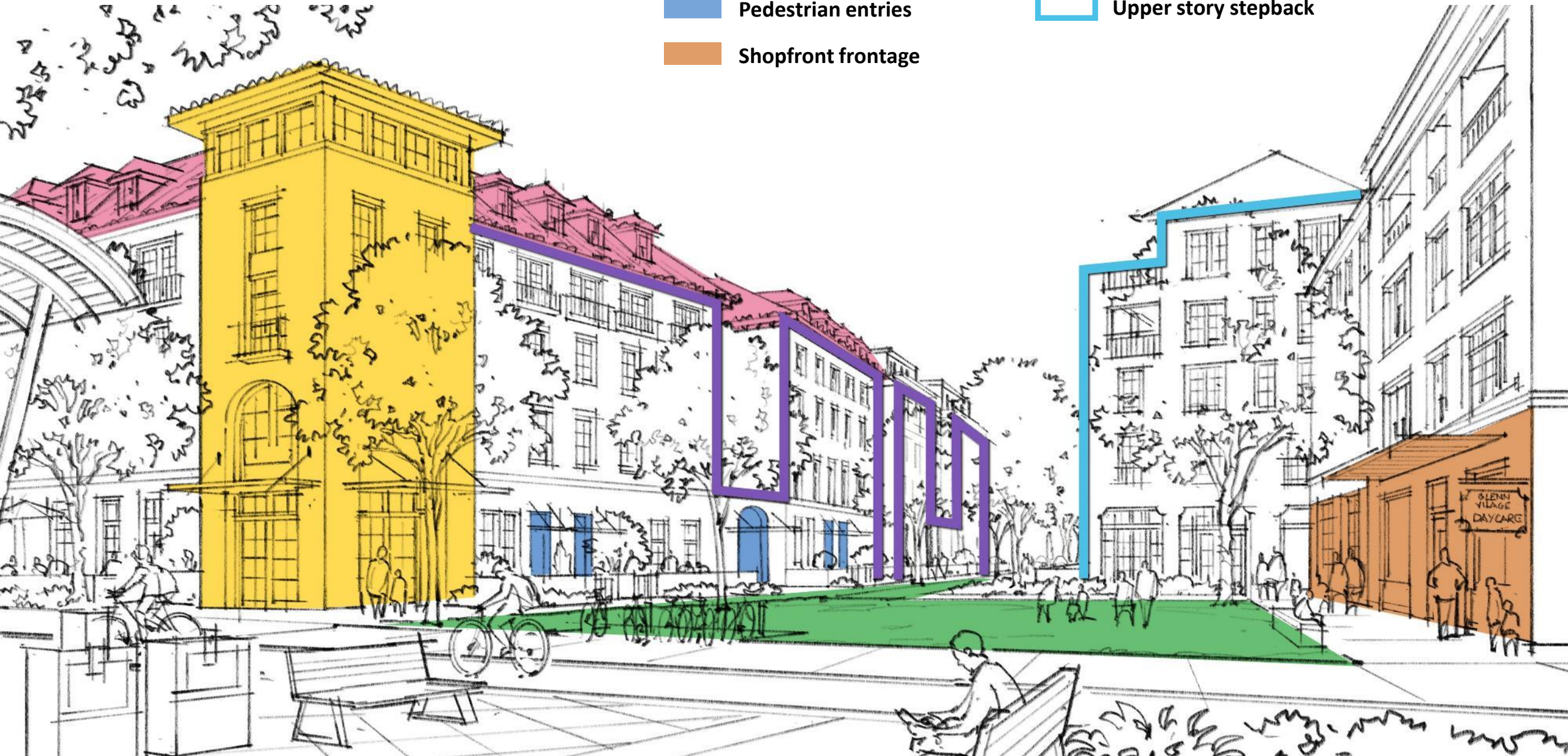
 Pedestrian entries

 Shopfront frontage

 Upper story within roof form

 Massing breaks down perceived bulk

 Upper story setback





# Current regulatory barriers to development

## Building height

Maximum allowed: 4 stories  
Shown: 5+ stories

## Density

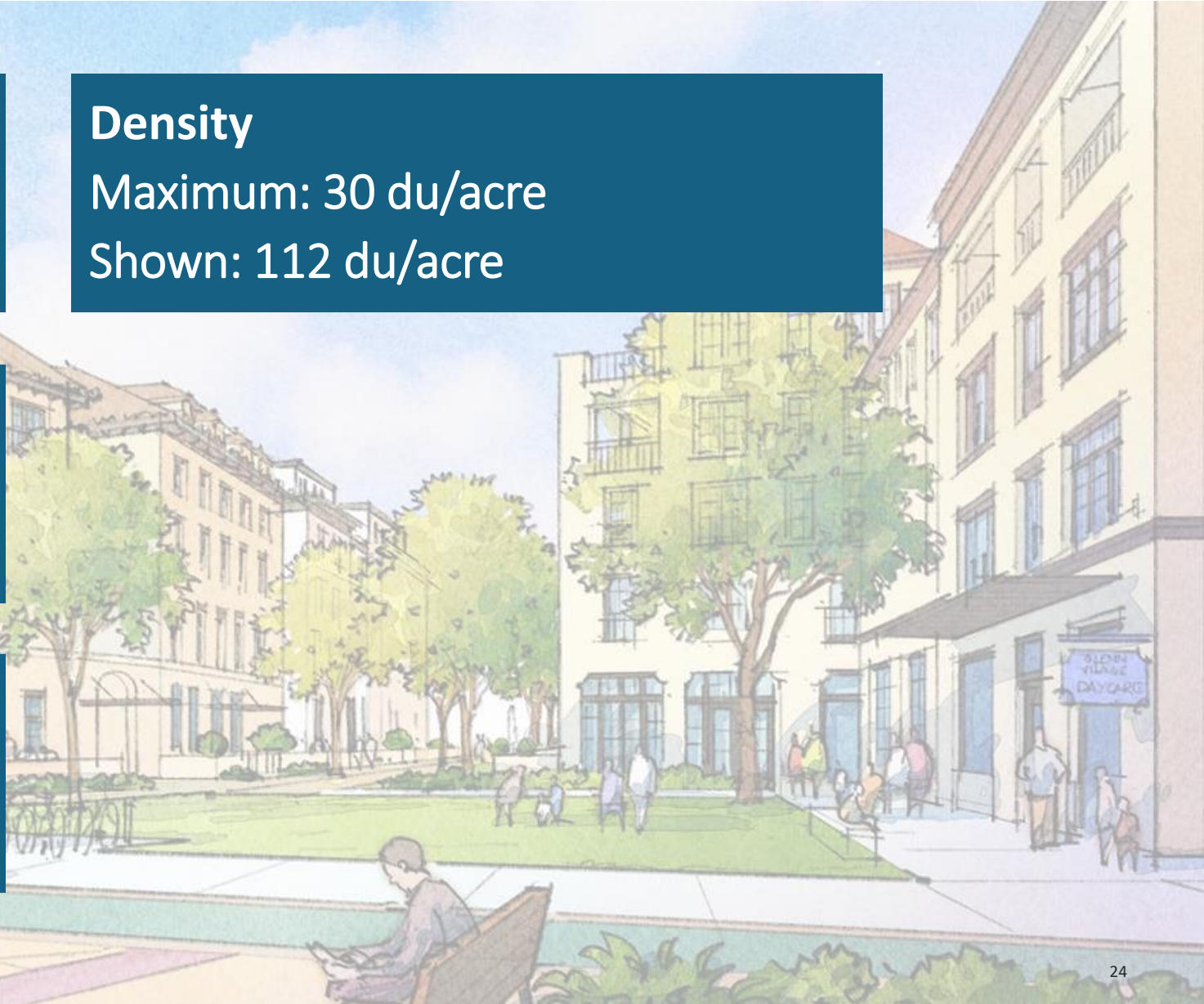
Maximum: 30 du/acre  
Shown: 112 du/acre

## Setbacks

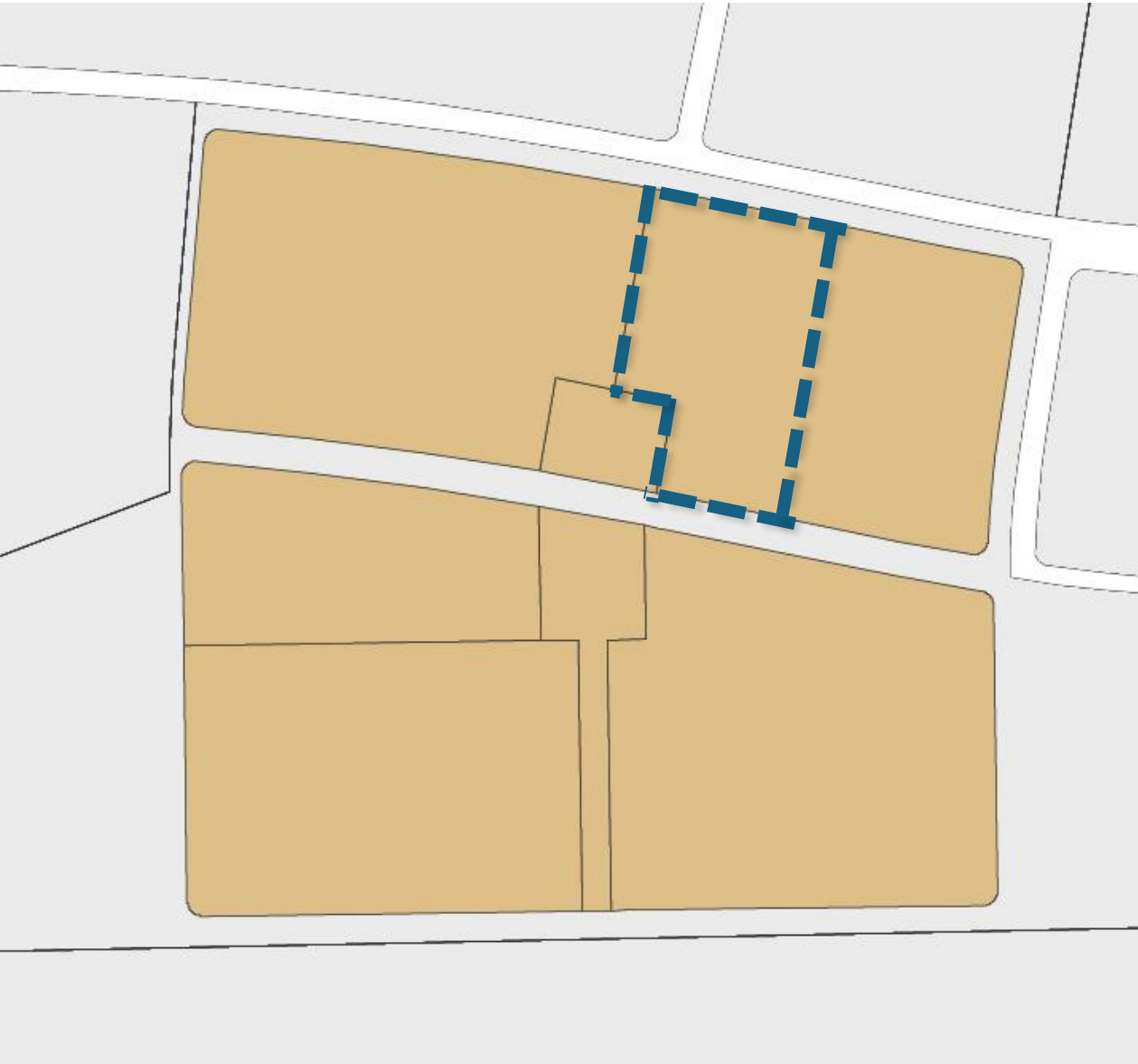
Minimum: 20 ft front, 15 ft side  
Shown: 10 ft front and side

## Parking requirements

Minimum: 1.5-2.5 spaces/unit  
Shown: 1.1 spaces/unit







# Opportunity site ■ 3

Folsom Plan Area:  
**New Town Center**



# Existing conditions





# What we heard from the community

**Height:** 3 stories up to 6 stories

**Massing:** Medium scale and bulk

**Other:** Transition in scale from highest intensity at the mixed-use center to lower intensity at residential edges





# Site design concept

## Range of building scales

5-6 story podium  
buildings facing the public  
open space at the heart of  
the town center

4 story apartments

3 story multiplexes



*Above: Conceptual site plan developed for site testing*

## Site Test Assumptions + Yields

<b># of Units (du)</b>	439
<b>Retail area (sf)</b>	78,000
<b># of Buildings</b>	12
<b>Bldg type</b>	Podium, corridor, multiplex
<b>Height (stories)</b>	3 to 6
<b>Bldg width (ft)</b>	Ranges from 40 to 250
<b>Bldg depth (ft)</b>	Ranges from 60 to 240
<b>Density (du/ac)</b>	90
<b>FAR</b>	1.8
<b>Parking (sp/du)</b>	1.1 + 1 per 1,000 sf retail
<b>Parking type</b>	Podium and surface
<b>Front setback (ft)</b>	5-15
<b>Lot width (ft)</b>	380
<b>Lot depth (ft)</b>	620
<b>Lot area (ac)</b>	4.9



# Potential built form

## Envisioned in Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan





# Design elements

## Envisioned in Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan

- Architectural projections
- Breaks in wall plane to reduce perceived bulk
- Façade articulation wraps building corners
- Pedestrian entries to residential units





# Current regulatory barriers to development

## Building height

Maximum allowed: 50 feet

Shown: 70 feet

## Parking requirements

Minimum required: 1.5-2.5 sp/unit + 3 sp/1000 sf retail

Evaluated for feasibility: 1.1 sp/unit + 1 sp/1000 sf retail

## Density

Maximum: 30 du/acre

Evaluated for feasibility: 90 du/acre



# Analysis







Recommendations for  
the  
**East Bidwell Study  
Area**





# Targeted changes to existing standards

Regulation	Existing Standard	Proposed Adjustment	Rationale
Building height	4 stories (50 ft) max.	5 stories max. on corner sites	Create nodes of intensity
Front setback	None required	Build-to line of 5-10 ft min. to 15-20 ft max.	Ensure building meets the street and allows room for building frontage
Parking for Multi-Unit Dwellings	1.5 spaces per unit min.	0.7-0.9 space per unit min.	Improve development feasibility
Parking for Retail	1 space per 200 sf min.	Allow small retail spaces in mixed-use buildings to pool parking space with adjacent parcels rather than providing them onsite	Enable mixed-use development and improve development feasibility
Density	20-30 du/acre	60-80 du/acre max., or eliminate density standard	Higher density improves feasibility and attainability; eliminating density standards can enable more predictable built outcomes





Recommendations for  
the  
**Folsom Blvd. TOD  
Study Area**

2





# Targeted changes to existing standards

Regulation	Existing Standard	Proposed Adjustment	Rationale
Building height	4 stories (50 ft) max.	Up to 5 stories max., and up to 7 stories max. at TOD sites	Maximize potential for new housing in prime transit-oriented area
Front setback	20' min.	Build-to line of 5-10 ft min. to 15-20 ft max.	Ensure building meets the street and allows room for building frontage
Side street setback	15' min.	Build-to line of 5-10 ft min. to 15 ft max.	Ensure building meets the street and allows room for building frontage
Parking for Multi-Unit Dwellings	1.5-2.5 spaces per unit min. (varies by unit size)	0.5-0.75 spaces per unit min. at TOD sites; 1 space/unit min. elsewhere	Improve development feasibility
Density	20-30 du/acre	100-120 du/acre max., or eliminate density standard	Higher density improves feasibility and attainability; eliminating density standards can enable more predictable built outcomes





Recommendations for  
the  
**New Town Center  
Study Area**

3





# Targeted changes to existing standards

Regulation	Existing Standard	Proposed Adjustment	Rationale
Building height	50 ft max.	70 ft max.	Align with vision of Specific Plan and create intensity at town center
Parking for Multi-Unit Dwellings	1.5 spaces per unit min.	1 space per unit min.	Improve development feasibility
Density	9-30 du/acre	80-100 du/acre max., or eliminate density standard	Higher density improves feasibility and attainability; eliminating density standards can enable more predictable built outcomes



# Additional standards for the projects

Frontage types

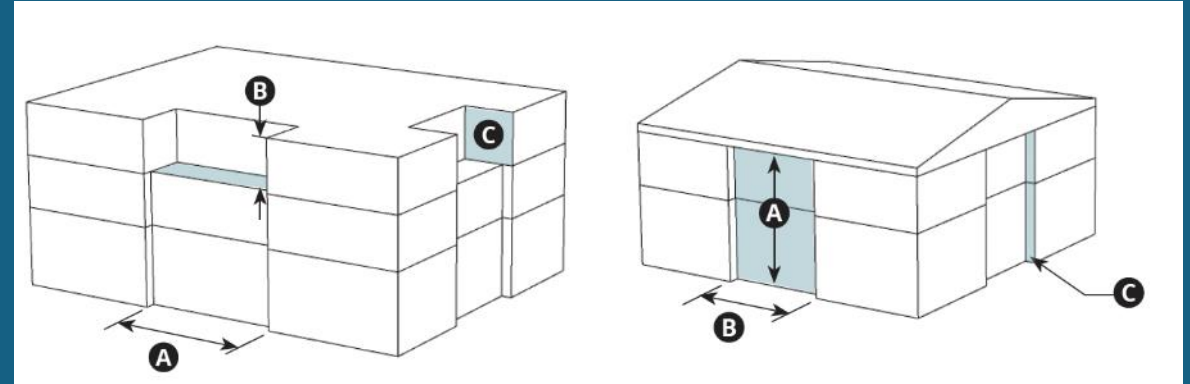
Building types

Massing and articulation

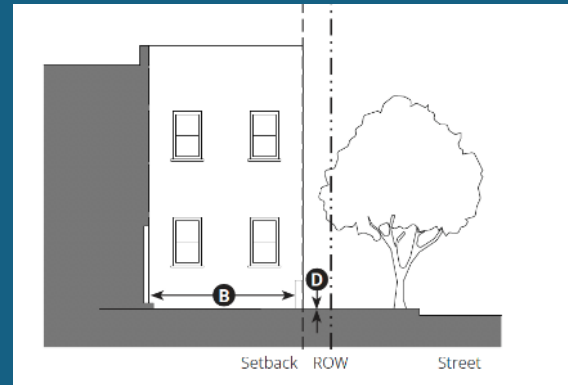
Standards for large sites

Unbundling parking

Alternative mobility provisions



Massing and articulation standards



Frontage standards



Standards for large sites





# Emerging Best Practices on **Density and FAR**



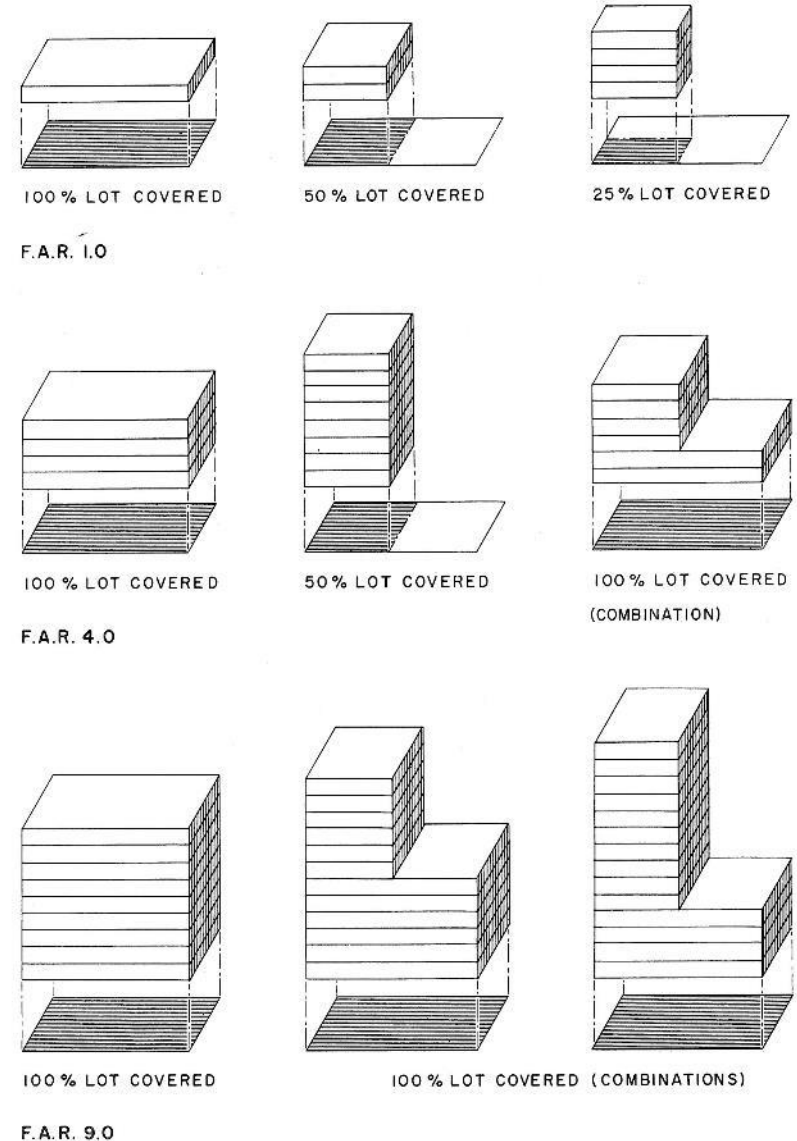


# Regulating with FAR instead of density

**Density** alone as a regulatory tool does not always result in predictable built form. The type and sizes of dwelling units can result in buildings with similar densities and different built outcomes.

**FAR (floor area ratio)** can result in more predictable buildings especially when used with other, form-based regulations to guide the outcome of the zoning envelope.

Given density's inability to deliver predictable built form, an emerging best practice is **to replace density with FAR as a regulatory tool.**





# Examples from other communities

**Roseville** allows projects to meet either density or FAR, whichever is more permissive. High allowed FAR means that FAR will replace density as applicable standard for new projects.

**San Rafael** eliminated density standards for downtown in its General Plan and now relies on FAR and form-based zoning.

**El Cerrito** eliminated density standards in a Specific Plan area and established legal precedent for state density bonus projects to receive additional FAR rather than additional density.







# Recommendations





# Recommendations summary

1. Increase density in these target areas up to 40 du/ac and establish minimum density of 30 du/ac
2. Allow use of FAR for projects exceeding density
  - a. East Bidwell Corridor: FAR 1.5
  - b. TOD Station Areas (Glenn and Iron Point): FAR 2.0 to 4.0
  - c. Folsom Town Center Area: FAR 2.0 to 4.0
3. Height increases
  - a. East Bidwell Corridor: 4 stories
  - b. TOD Station Areas (Glenn / Iron Point): Up to 6 stories
  - c. Folsom Town Center Area: 3 to 6 stories





# Recommendations summary (continued)

## 4. Changes to Development Standards

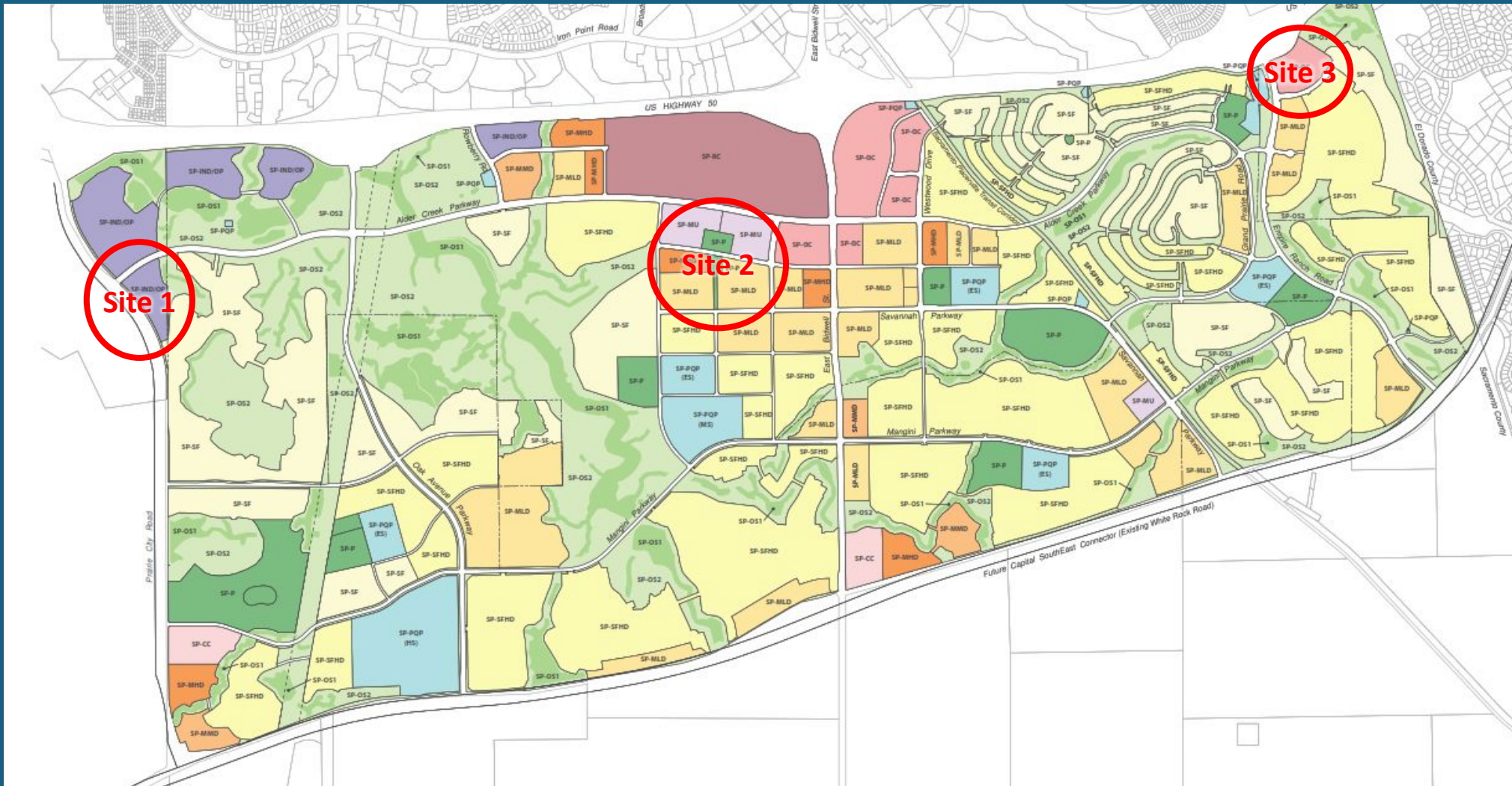
- a. Use of build-to lines instead of setbacks
- b. Parking reductions down to 1 space per unit if development includes:
  - i. Shared parking agreement; or
  - ii. Car-share vehicle and space on-site; or
  - iii. Transit passes; or
  - iv. Micro-transit (SmaRT Ride)' or
  - v. Additional bicycling spaces/facilities

## 5. Increase in multi-family housing units in Folsom Plan Area

- a. Contingent on availability of water and infrastructure
- b. Focused on three areas: Prairie City site, Folsom Town Center and Empire Ranch Interchange site



# Folsom Plan Area





# Q&A







# Key Questions

1. Modest increase in density – up to 40 du/ac and use of minimum density?
2. Use of FAR instead of density?
3. Height increases for each area?
4. Changes to development standards?
  - a. Use of build-to line instead of setbacks
  - b. Parking reductions
5. Objective design standards?
  - a. What are key design concerns? (Massing, scale, transitions, etc.)
6. Increase to multi-family housing units in Folsom Plan Area?





# Next Steps

- Presentation to City Council on July 26
- Direction from Council on recommendations
- Technical and environmental studies over next 12 months
- Amendments to:
  - General Plan
  - Folsom Plan Area Specific Plan