

# INTRODUCTION

The City of Morgan Hill is located along the major north-south transportation corridor U.S. Highway 101, approximately 12 miles south of San Jose, 10 miles north of Gilroy, and 15 miles inland from the Pacific Coast. Downtown Morgan Hill consists of 18 blocks and approximately 110 acres of land bounded by Main Avenue, Butterfield Boulevard, Dunne Avenue, and Del Monte Avenue. In 2007, an update to the City's existing Downtown Plan was initiated to refine land use and development objectives within the Downtown Core. The Downtown Core is strategically developed along Monterey Road and generally defined by Main Avenue, the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, Dunne Avenue, and Del Monte Avenue.

In 2008, the City designated 180 acres of land in its Downtown as a Priority Development Area (PDA) under Plan Bay Area. Plan Bay Area is a state-mandated, integrated long-range transportation, land-use and housing plan which include locally identified infill development opportunity areas and multi-modal transportation improvements to create complete and connected communities through transit-oriented development. The PDA boundary in Morgan Hill overlays the downtown boundary, but extends further north to Central Avenue, and further south to Bisceglia Avenue (See Figure I-1).

Morgan Hill's City Council adopted the Downtown Specific Plan in 2009 and it continues to provide direction regarding the overall vision and specific goals for the development of the Downtown. The plan also includes design guidelines that define the desired design character of new development in the Downtown.

In 2016, the City received a grant from Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) to prepare a Station Area Master Plan to blend planning and circulation visions and goals with the desire to strengthen and grow the existing multi-modal transportation system in the Downtown and support existing and enhanced access to transit services utilizing Morgan Hill's Transit Center.

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## Station Area Master Plan Purpose and Context

As the South County Connection for all major transportation including the inter-county Monterey Salinas Transit (MST) Caltrain, and intra-county VTA Express and local services, it is very important to understand existing services, how to enhance those services, and how to plan for future transit needs. The Station Area Master Plan takes stock of the existing transportation context, provides tools to enhance current transit services and future transit

needs. The Plan also identifies considerations and opportunities for the further improvement of multi-modal connectivity and access to the Transit Center. Therefore, some of the tools and recommendations identify specific transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and streetscape improvements to further increase multi-modal connectivity and comfort of travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, bus riders and rail passengers in the Downtown and area surrounding the Morgan Hill Transit Center. (See Figure I-1.)

The planning and design tools and recommendations for improvements presented throughout the Station Area Master Plan are intended to support community efforts to implement improvements to the multi-modal transportation environment throughout the PDA and the Downtown. This may occur through the direct implementation of improvements recommended in this Plan as part of on-going capital improvement program and routine street maintenance projects (e.g. repaving projects) undertaken by the City, through the use of grant or other funding sources to construct improvements or to develop detailed construction plans or undertake needed further studies.

All tools and recommendations are supplemental to and compatible with already adopted plans, policies, and initiatives applicable in the area including those provided by the Morgan Hill 2035 General Plan, the 2009 Downtown Specific Plan, the 2008 Bikeways Master Plan, the Downtown Placemaking Strategy and Morgan Hill's Street Standards. While following the existing guidance and standards provided in these documents, careful consideration should be given to:

1. The Station Area Master Plan's planning and design tools and recommendations when advancing new planning or capital improvement projects; and
2. Understanding the recommendations shape the multi-modal transportation system and public realm of streets in the Station Area Master Plan area.

Development projects on private properties in the Downtown will continue to be primarily guided by the Downtown Specific Plan, applicable zoning requirements, and other guidance documents adopted by the City of Morgan Hill. However, where private investment can be leveraged to contribute to the multi-modal transportation and urban design goals outlined in the City's General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan, these improvements should be made consistent with recommendations included in the Station Area Master Plan.

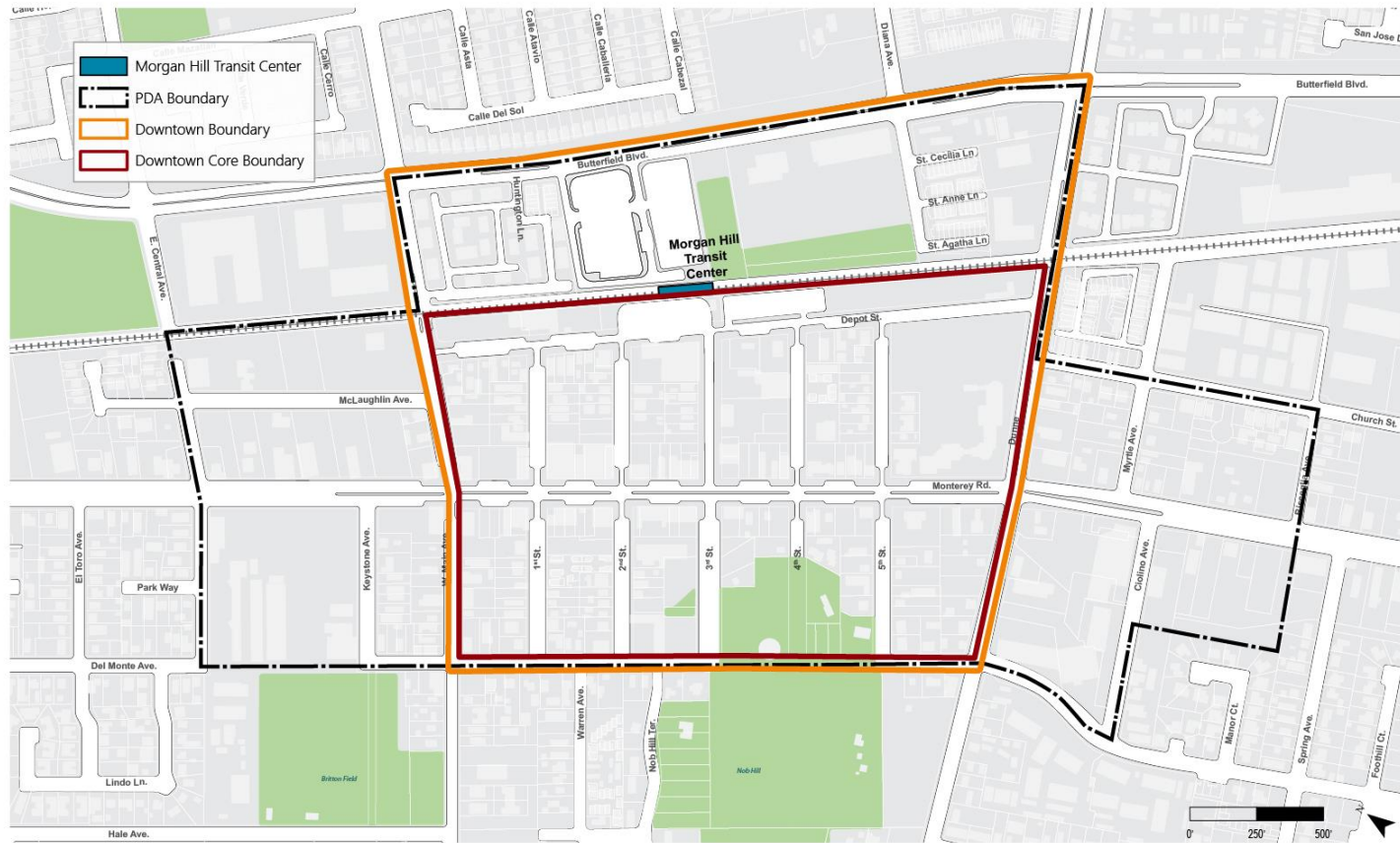
The Station Area Master Plan is organized into three main chapters:

**Chapter 1: Transportation Context** – This chapter presents the existing transportation services and facilities in the Station Area, identifies planned improvements, and discusses how to plan for and design better bus and rail transit service, bicycle and pedestrian circulation, street connectivity, parking, and use emerging technologies to enhance mobility to the Transit Center and throughout the Downtown for all members of the community.

**Chapter 2: Streetscape and Placemaking Toolkit** – This chapter describes the different types of streets near the Transit Center and throughout Downtown Morgan Hill. The Chapter provides tools for enhancing the pedestrian realm within the public rights of way of Downtown streets and includes improvements to increase clarity on location of pedestrian realm improvements improve Downtown identity, and support walkability through wayfinding for visitors, residents, and employees alike. The chapter also presents public space and placemaking tools that provide opportunities for private business to expand their square footage into the sidewalk and parallel parking stalls by accommodating flexible public open spaces, such as temporary parklets or permanent improvements like parklets installed for the long-term or landscaped bulb-outs. Pedestrian-scale lighting is discussed as well.

**Chapter 3: Priority Improvements** – This chapter summarizes gaps within the transportation system and identifies improvements to achieve an increase in multi-modal connectivity, safety, and comfort for pedestrians, bicyclists, and rail passengers utilizing the Transit Center and within the Downtown. With an emphasis on supporting the existing Transit Center, enhancing transit services, and planning for future transit needs. In addition, the chapter includes improving pedestrian and bicycle connections.

Figure I-1: Morgan Hill Station Area Plan Area



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## Community Participation

The Morgan Hill community participated in the development of this Plan through a Downtown Summit that included a community survey and open house related to the Station Area Master Plan.

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### Downtown Visioning Summit

On June 30th, 2016, the City of Morgan Hill conducted a Downtown Visioning Summit. This event brought together private investors actively investing in the Downtown, as well as public leaders, to start an open discussion about a Vision for Downtown Morgan Hill. The goal was to engage the community as well as spark interest and ideas from the audience on the future of Downtown Morgan Hill. Over 150 people attended either the afternoon or evening sessions, between which optional walking tours and a hosted reception were held.

The event included two panels of speakers – one made up of the developers of current downtown projects, and another discussing the City’s ongoing public realm investments, including parks and trails, public art, streetscapes and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

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### Open House and Survey

Following the panels, an open house portion of the Downtown Summit engaged many summit participants to provide their opinions about various topics related to transportation and urban design. During the open house, community members talked with the Station Area Master Plan team, provided feedback on “post-its” on a range of topical boards, and completed an online preference survey on transportation-related topics in Downtown Morgan Hill. The survey was also made available to the public at large on the City’s website. Two-thirds of the 39 total survey respondents were Morgan Hill residents, with the remainder comprised of visitors, employees and business owners. Dining, festivals and shopping were identified by respondents as the top three activities for visits to Downtown. (See Figure 0-2.)

Eighty-five percent of survey respondents said they felt “very comfortable” walking around within Downtown, indicating that by encouraging a “park once and walk” environment and by providing pleasing streetscapes as well as well-lit parking facilities and sidewalks, the City is already doing much to encourage walking within Downtown. However, about 85% of respondents indicated they typically drove to Downtown, primarily due to distance, but in some cases also due to not feeling comfortable with the current level of pedestrian and bicycle conditions between their homes and the Downtown.

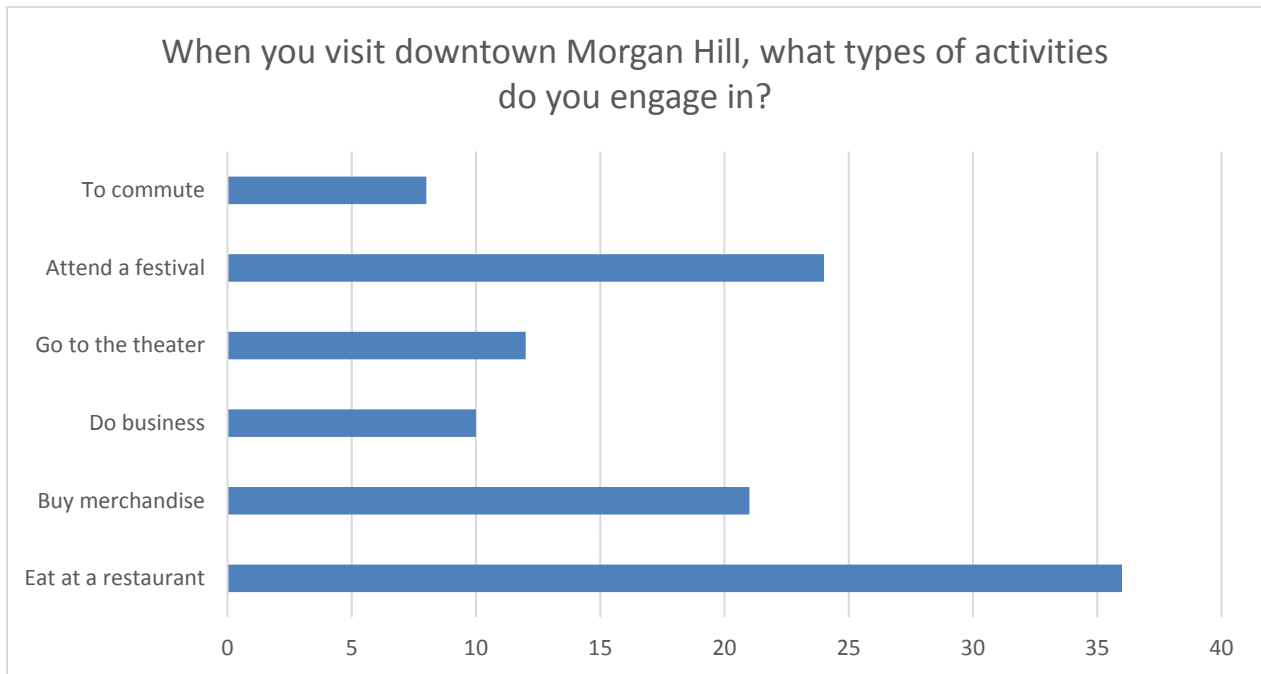


Figure 0-2: Survey results for activities engaged in Downtown

Among community members' suggestions for further pedestrian and bicycle improvements were improved pedestrian crossings, particularly at high-traffic intersections such as Monterey Road at 1st Street and Depot Street at 2nd Street; wider sidewalks, primarily near restaurants to accommodate both people walking and outside café seating; additional separated mixed-use trails; and additional small shops to visit. Suggested improvements for bicycles included green bike lanes, bike share stations and additional bicycle parking.