



# 1

## INTRODUCTION

### IN THIS CHAPTER

- 1.1 Plan Area: North Fair Oaks
- 1.2 North Fair Oaks History
- 1.3 Plan Background and Update Process
- 1.4 Plan Purpose and Objectives
- 1.5 Community Plan Document Overview



# *chapter 1* introduction

The North Fair Oaks Community Plan is a long-range policy document that establishes goals and policies for land use, housing, health and wellness, parks and recreation, circulation, and infrastructure for North Fair Oaks. The Plan supports the community's vision of North Fair Oaks as a complete, vital community with an appropriate mix of housing, employment, and services to meet the needs of North Fair Oaks residents. The Plan also envisions a community that is safe and accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists, has access to open space and recreational opportunities, is connected by transit within the community and to the greater region, and fosters healthy living for all community members. This Plan establishes the framework for future development and improvements to achieve this vision, meet the needs of current and future residents, and maintain and improve the livability of North Fair Oaks.





This Introduction describes North Fair Oaks and its history, describes the process of updating the Community Plan, and summarizes the key components, goals, and objectives of the Plan. This chapter contains the following sections:

- 1.1 **Plan Area: North Fair Oaks**
- 1.2 **North Fair Oaks History**
- 1.3 **Plan Background and Update Process**
- 1.4 **Plan Purpose and Objectives**
- 1.5 **Community Plan Document Overview**



## 1.1 PLAN AREA: NORTH FAIR OAKS

North Fair Oaks is an unincorporated portion of San Mateo County, bounded by the cities of Redwood City to the north, west and southwest; Atherton to the east; and Menlo Park to the northeast. The City of San Francisco is approximately 30 miles to the north and the City of San José is roughly 20 miles to the south (see Figure 1.1: Regional Location).

Highway 82/El Camino Real runs along the southwest boundary of North Fair Oaks, Highway 101 (Bayshore Freeway) runs just to the west of the area's western border, and Highway 84/Woodside Road runs just to the northeast of the community. Caltrain runs directly through North Fair Oaks, and the Southern Pacific Railroad Dumbarton Spur line also transects the community, running roughly northwest to southeast. However, there are no train stations or ready access to rail transit within the community; the closest Caltrain station, providing north-south service to San Francisco and San Jose, is located in Redwood City, more than a mile from North Fair Oaks (see Figure 1.2: North Fair Oaks)

As of 2010, North Fair Oaks was 798 acres in size, with approximately 15,000 residents and 4,000 housing units. The community has a diverse mix of land uses and is comprised of multiple areas of distinctly different character. While single, uniform land uses dominate some parts of North Fair Oaks, other areas have a variety of uses concentrated in the same location (see Figure 1.3: Existing General Plan Land Use Designations).



FIGURE 1.1: Regional Location

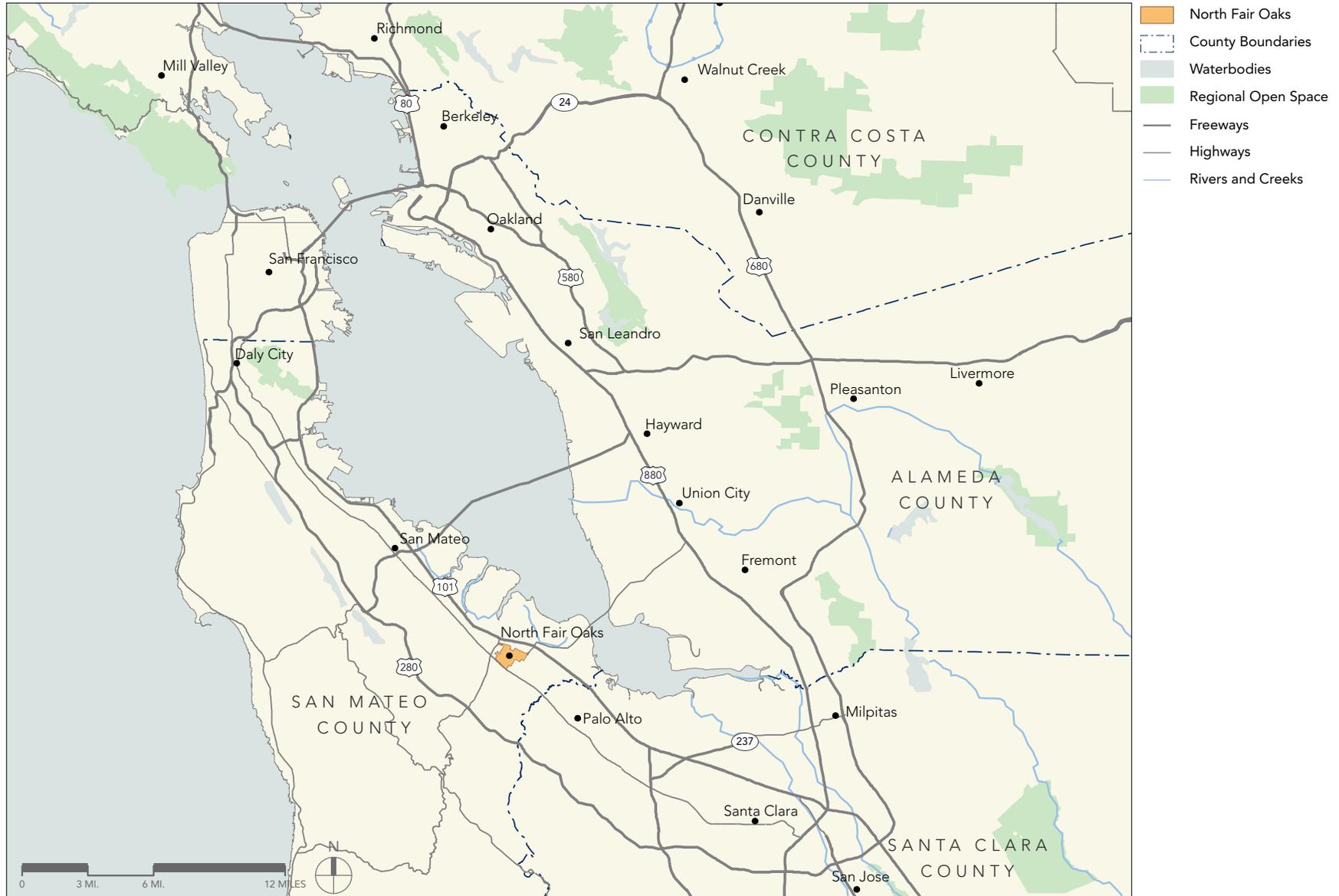
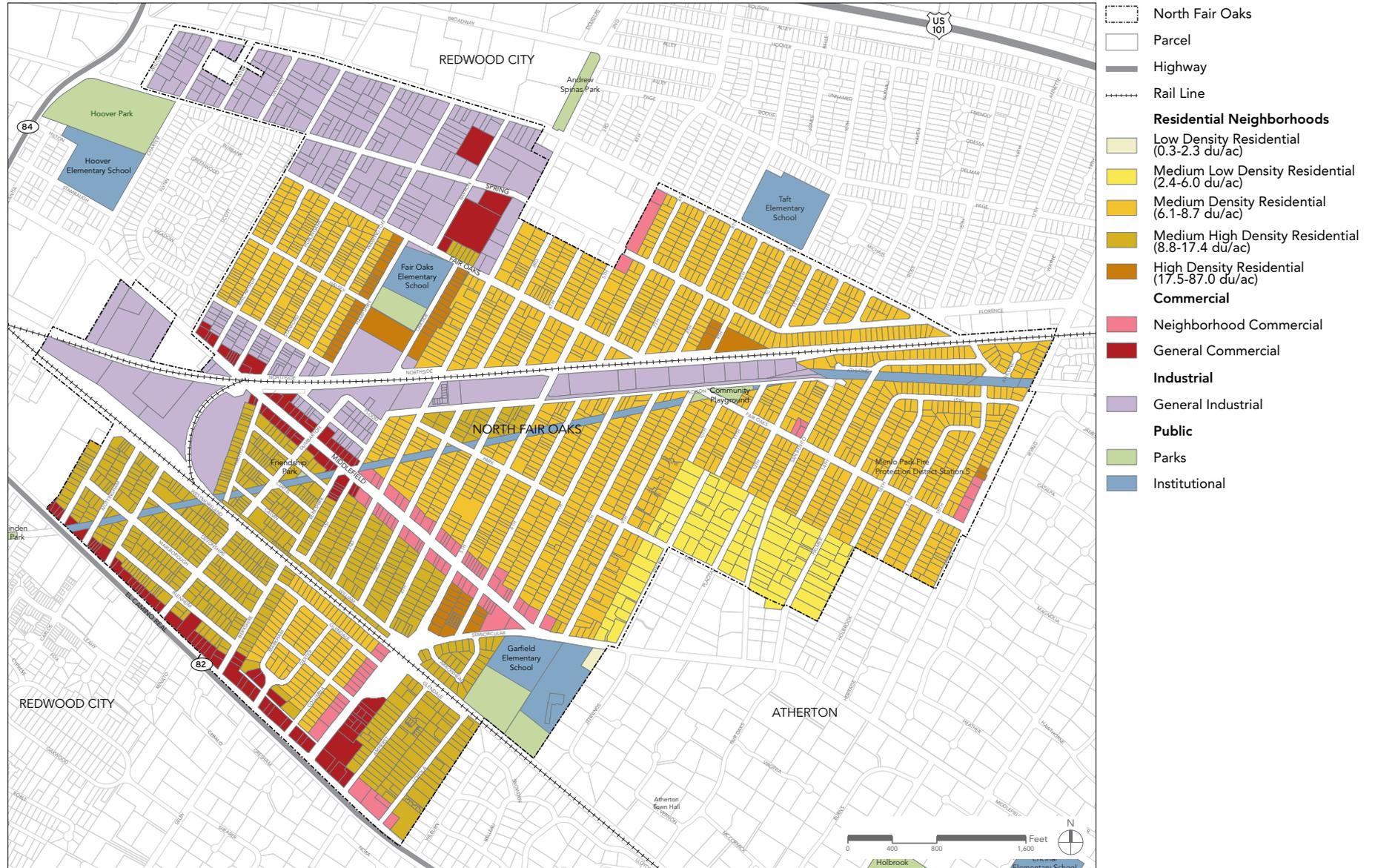


FIGURE 1.2: North Fair Oaks



FIGURE 1.3: Existing General Plan Land Use Designations



North Fair Oaks is characterized by the following general land uses:

- Three parts of the community have a high concentration of **industrial** uses: the area centered around Middlefield Road at the crossing of the Caltrain and Dumbarton spur rail lines; the area at the northeast corner of North Fair Oaks, roughly bounded by Bay Road, Fair Oaks Avenue, 2nd Avenue, and Willow Street; and the industrial mixed-use corridor extending north-south along Edison Way.
- The majority of the southern and southeastern portions of the community, south of 2nd Avenue and east of Middlefield, is comprised primarily **low-density single-family residential** uses, with some duplexes and low-density multifamily housing.
- The northern and northwestern parts of North Fair Oaks, particularly west of Middlefield Road, have areas of **higher density multifamily residential** development, with duplexes, triplexes, and smaller multifamily apartments, as well as some areas with larger multifamily structures. There are also pockets of higher density development in other parts of the community, particularly along Oakside and Hampshire Avenues north of Edison Way and on 9th Avenue just north of Edison Way.
- Middlefield Road, the main commercial corridor and functional core of the community, is typified by **higher-density commercial** uses—primarily locally-oriented **retail**—with some scattered **residential** uses.

- El Camino Real, the western border of North Fair Oaks, has a **mix of higher-intensity commercial and retail** uses similar to those along Middlefield Road, but also has larger retail establishments that are less locally-oriented in nature.

North Fair Oaks is almost entirely developed, with only a few scattered undeveloped lots throughout the area.

Appendix A: Existing Conditions Analysis provides a detailed assessment of economic, demographic, physical and other conditions in North Fair Oaks as of 2011.





## 1.2 NORTH FAIR OAKS HISTORY

North Fair Oaks is one of the oldest communities in San Mateo County, with settlement dating to the 1850s. Much of the area was developed during two boom eras, one following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and another occurring just before and after World War II. North Fair Oaks was originally part of a larger area known as Fair Oaks that included much of present-day Atherton, but when Menlo Park and Atherton incorporated in 1923, the area between the two communities that is now North Fair Oaks remained unincorporated.

North Fair Oaks initially developed as a largely suburban, low-density single-family residential community, not unlike adjacent parts of Atherton and Menlo Park, with transportation based primarily around the automobile. Over time, the area developed the more diverse range of land uses described above, resulting in the current mix of lower and higher density housing, commercial establishments, small- and large-scale industrial establishments, and various other uses.

### 1.3 PLAN BACKGROUND AND UPDATE PROCESS

The North Fair Oaks Community Plan was first adopted in 1979; the Plan, with some modifications, has remained in force since then. At the time of the 1979 Plan's adoption, North Fair Oaks was primarily a lower density residential community with some significant pockets of commercial and industrial uses, and the Plan envisioned that this land use pattern would continue in perpetuity. As described above and in Appendix A: Existing Conditions Analysis, however, the community has experienced significant changes since the adoption of the first Community Plan, and the land uses, demographics, and needs and desires of area residents have changed substantially, necessitating new policies and programs to meet the community's goals and vision for North Fair Oaks.

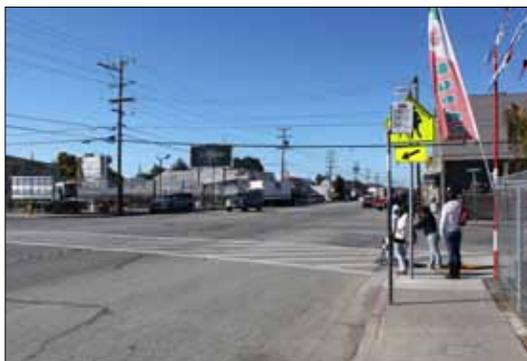
The Community Plan update, which began in late 2009, was funded by a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and by funds from the San Mateo County Housing Department. The County engaged a consultant team to update the Plan. The project was guided by a Steering Committee made up of members with local commitment, experience, and involvement in North Fair Oaks. A Technical Advisory Committee also offered ongoing guidance on various technical issues.

The Plan update was completed with broad community participation and input, including multiple large public workshops; various smaller

community forums; the ongoing participation of the Steering Committee; outreach to neighborhood groups and other stakeholders; public outreach through mailings, newspaper notices, and project websites; and public hearings at the San Mateo County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. A full Environmental Impact Report for the Community Plan update was also prepared, circulated for comment, and adopted by the Board of Supervisors. More information on the update process and public participation in the update is included in Appendix B: Additional Information on Public Outreach and Public Participation.



### 1.4 PLAN PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES



The North Fair Oaks Community Plan is the primary document guiding land use and development in North Fair Oaks. The Community Plan establishes policies and programs intended to guide the amount, type, location, and design of future development and future improvements to infrastructure, public space, and other uses in ways that reflect the community's desired vision for future growth, help meet current and future needs, and reflect current conditions and anticipated changes and trends over the next 20 to 30 years. The new policies, programs, and land use designations in the Plan provide specific, detailed guidance to regulators, developers, policymakers, and others, while still allowing sufficient flexibility to address changing or unanticipated conditions.

The Community Plan specifies goals, policies, and implementation strategies for physical development, urban design, circulation and mobility, housing, economic development, health and wellness, and infrastructure. The Plan complements and is consistent with the goals and policies incorporated in the San Mateo County General Plan and San Mateo County Zoning Code, but the land uses, zoning designations, policies, and implementation programs described in the Plan are specific to North Fair Oaks, and supercede those in the existing 1979 Community Plan.

While the Community Plan is primarily a land use document, the Plan's purpose also includes a broader range of measures that do not focus exclusively on land use issues. These measures reflect the fact that land use and development issues and other community needs and concerns are interconnected, and goals for development and future growth require solutions that span multiple areas of focus.

The Plan's overarching purpose is to support a vision of a future North Fair Oaks that: is a complete, vital, vibrant community; has adequate services, sufficient housing, recreational opportunities, access to jobs, and access to healthy foods; is pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly and connected by transit within the community and to the greater region; is safe and healthy, and; provides opportunities for all residents to have a high quality of life. The Plan is intended to foster a healthy mix of land uses and densities, with additional housing and employment-generating land uses at greater densities in designated areas and with additional open space, park and recreational space, pedestrian and bicycle routes, safer streets, and other improvements to meet the needs of current and future residents and maintain and improve the livability of North Fair Oaks.

The primary goals of the Plan are:

- Improve connectivity and reduce mobility barriers throughout North Fair Oaks for all types of travel, including pedestrian, bicycle, automobile, and public transit.
- Improve area health and safety by increasing walkability and bikeability within North Fair Oaks, increasing access to healthy food sources, increasing access to open space and recreational opportunities, adding trees and other greenery, and promoting land uses and urban design patterns that mitigate health and safety issues.
- Improve travel and transit connections between North Fair Oaks and surrounding communities and the region.
- Provide safe and affordable housing of all types to meet the needs of current and future residents.
- Maintain and enhance a vital and viable mix of land uses, including commercial, industrial, residential, public, and other land uses to create a vibrant, livable environment for area residents, with ready access to local goods and services, recreational opportunities, employment, and transportation access.
- Provide adequate infrastructure to support current uses and facilitate future development.
- Promote development and redevelopment of unused and underutilized land with appropriate types of uses to serve the needs of the community.
- Maintain local employment opportunities and facilitate new job-generating development by preserving and encouraging a mix of uses in designated parts of North Fair Oaks, including preservation of key areas of existing industrial and commercial uses.
- Require and encourage appropriate development densities to support housing and employment-generating land uses to meet the needs of North Fair Oaks residents.
- Improve access to park and recreational facilities for all area residents.
- Support the creation of new public transit routes and stations and promote appropriate development to facilitate creation of new transit facilities.



## 1.5 DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

The Community Plan is organized as follows:

### **Chapter 1. Introduction.**

**Chapter 2. Land Use Designations.** The Land Use chapter describes allowed land uses and densities in the various parts of North Fair Oaks, and establishes policies and programs to support desired land use patterns and appropriate amounts and types of development. The Land Use chapter provides the framework for future development in North Fair Oaks and for improvements to the urban design of the community as a whole.

**Chapter 3. Circulation and Parking.** The Circulation and Parking chapter includes policies to improve circulation and connectivity throughout North Fair Oaks for all modes of transportation, including automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit. This chapter also addresses pedestrian and bicycle access and safety. This chapter also establishes policies related to the potential for a transit station or other multimodal transit facility in North Fair Oaks, in addition to comprehensive public transit improvements area-wide, and also includes policies to address current parking deficiencies and parking issues that could result from future development.

**Chapter 4. Infrastructure.** The Infrastructure chapter includes policies to address existing infrastructure issues and to support new infrastructure capacity needed to facilitate new development in North Fair Oaks. The chapter discusses water, sanitary sewer, dry utilities, and stormwater infrastructure.

**Chapter 5. Health and Wellness.** The Health and Wellness chapter describes policies to promote health and wellness for all North Fair Oaks residents, including policies to increase access to healthy foods, local schools, community facilities and medical services; increase access to parks, open space, and recreational opportunities; support creation of comprehensive, interconnected, and safe public transit and active transportation (bicycle/pedestrian) systems; and address environmental hazards.

**Chapter 6. Housing.** The Housing chapter identifies strategies to provide sufficient safe, affordable housing to meet the needs of current and future North Fair Oaks residents.

**Chapter 7. Design Guidelines.** The Design Guidelines chapter includes guidelines and standards for design in the private and public realms in North Fair Oaks. Private realm design refers primarily to the design of individual structures and the interrelation between buildings, and includes details such as the scale, mass, form and architectural quality and character of new development. Design guidelines for the public realm address streetscape elements including street trees, sidewalk furniture, pedestrian and street lighting, and the treatment of sidewalks, crosswalks, and intersections, and address the design of parks and other recreational and open spaces.

**Chapter 8. Economic Development.** The Economic Development chapter describes policies to support job creation and business development in North Fair Oaks, particularly along key commercial corridors and in industrial areas.

