

# **Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan**

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**Adopted March 2, 1999  
Amended February 12, 2008**

# SHERWOOD GATEWAY

## Specific Plan

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## Chapter I

# INTRODUCTION



### ***Purpose Of The Specific Plan***

The Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan is designed to help accomplish two important goals:

- ❖ Economic revitalization of the City's Sherwood Gateway; and
- ❖ Preservation of the surrounding neighborhood's residential character.

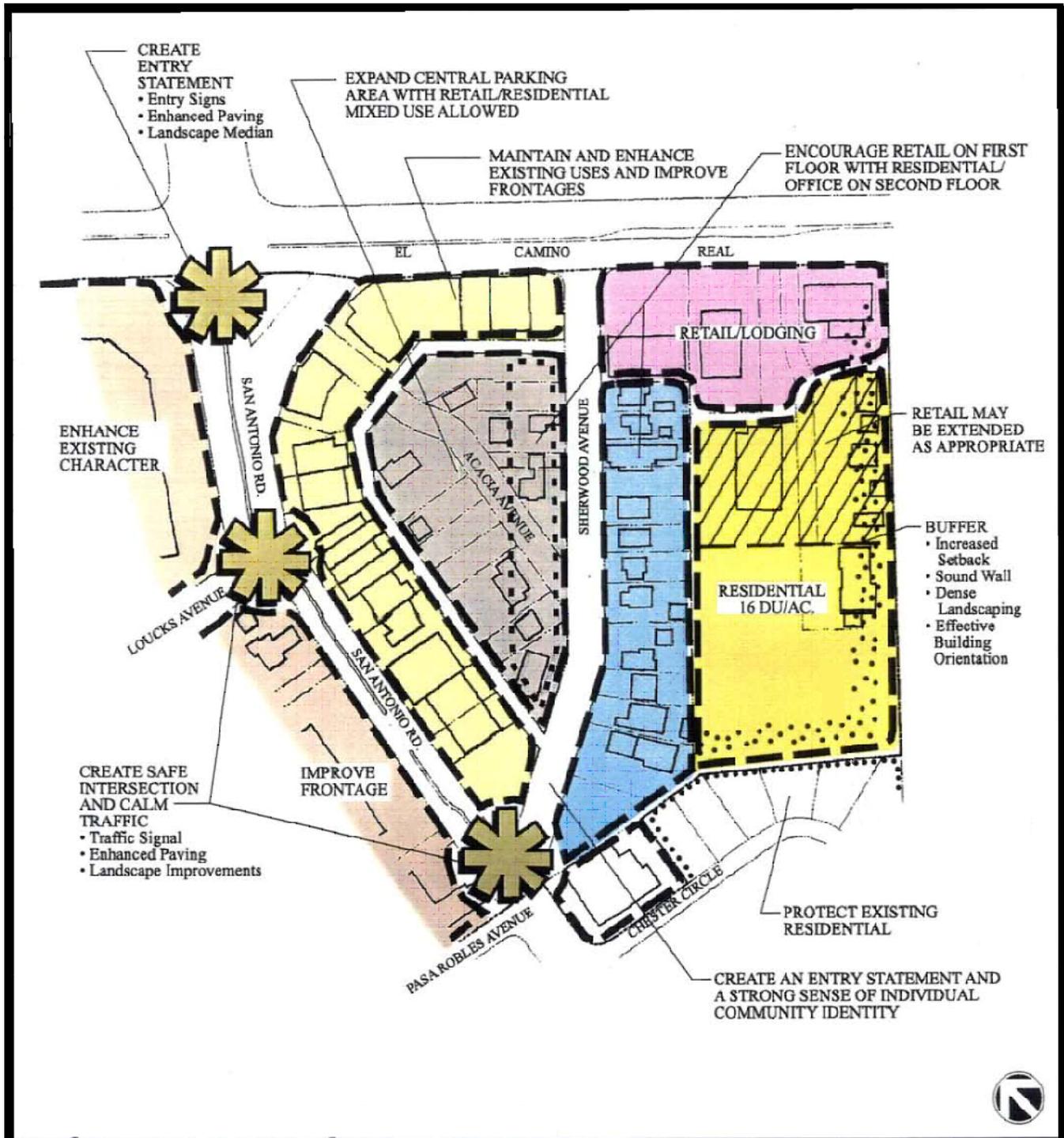
These goals reflect the policies and direction established for the neighborhood during the City's General Plan process and contained in the Land Use Element of the Los Altos General Plan. The Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan is a tool for implementing the goals and policies of the General Plan.

The intent of the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan is to provide a clear vision and direction for future development and improvements within the neighborhood with special emphasis on the maintenance of the residential character and quality of life of the area. The Specific Plan provides a set of ideas around which residents, property owners and business owners can coalesce to create a revitalized neighborhood to match their and the overall community aspirations.

The Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan provides a comprehensive planning policy and development guidelines to guide the continuing development and revitalization of the Sherwood Gateway area. The Plan provides the primary source document to guide land use decisions, improve the area's physical and economic environment, and establish the City's goals/expectations for quality development. Areas of land use and development regulation not specifically covered by this Specific Plan are provided in the Zoning Ordinance and other development regulations of the City (e.g. Municipal Code, Design Guidelines, etc.).

### ***Specific Plan Project Area***

The boundary of the Specific Plan Project Area is represented on the map on the following page. The Project Area includes the properties along the west side of San Antonio Road for frontage improvement consideration only, including landscaping and pedestrian and bicycle improvements.



# Project Area Map

## Los Altos, California



### ***The Planning Process***

The planning process began with a thorough review and evaluation of existing background information (e.g., General Plan, Capital Improvement Plan, Zoning Ordinance, etc.). This was followed by an interview process that included the City Council and Planning Commission, residents, and key property/business owners in the previously named The North Entry Area. These interviews provided a breadth of opinion, ideas and issues about Sherwood Gateway and helped provide direction for subsequent studies and recommendations.

During the early stages of the Specific Plan's preparation, an analysis of the generalized infrastructure, traffic and parking availability was completed. The economic and retail market analysis previously prepared for the City was reviewed to determine the most appropriate uses for the area. These studies provided background data and analysis used in formulating recommendations of the Plan.

### ***Public Participation***

A Neighborhood Meeting was held in April 1997 to introduce the community to the process and vision of preparing a Specific Plan for the neighborhood. At that meeting, residents, property owners, business owners and other interested citizens presented comments, issues and concerns that should be considered as part of any planning effort for the neighborhood.

In order to provide on-going input during preparation of key elements of the Specific Plan, the City appointed a thirteen member *Ad Hoc* Committee. The Committee met throughout the planning process to formulate goals and policies, discuss land use alternatives, and review development standards, design guidelines and implementation programs. The views, opinions and recommendations of the Committee have been utilized during preparation of the Specific Plan to provide an overall vision and direction.

Community input was also received at public hearings on the Specific Plan before the Planning Commission and City Council. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on September 3, 1998, followed by a work session on October 1. On November 5, 1998, the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Specific Plan. The City Council discussed the Plan and the Planning Commission's recommendations at a meeting held on December 15, 1998. On March 2, 1999, the City Council adopted a resolution approving the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan and the accompanying Mitigated Negative Declaration.

### ***Statutory Authority And Requirements***

The Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan is established through the authority granted to the City by California Government Code, Sections 65450 through 65457.

***Relationship To General Plan***

The Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan is a tool for implementing the City's General Plan. The Specific Plan must be consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan. In adopting this Specific Plan, the City Council included findings that the Plan is consistent with and provides for the orderly, systematic and specific implementation of the General Plan. In those areas where this Specific Plan may be inconsistent with the current General Plan, the regulations of the Zoning Ordinance shall prevail pending completion of a General Plan amendment (refer to page VI-2 for General Plan goals and policies for the Sherwood Gateway area).

***Relationship To Zoning Ordinance***

The Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan identifies land uses and development standards that apply within the Specific Plan area. Where the regulations of this Specific Plan differ from those of the Zoning Ordinance or other development regulations of the City, the provisions of the Specific Plan shall apply.

***California Environmental Quality Act Compliance***

In compliance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act, an environmental assessment (Initial Study) for the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan was completed. The Initial Study determined whether or not potential environmental impacts would be significant enough to require an Environmental Impact Report. It was determined that the implementation of the Specific Plan would have the same or less impacts than implementation of the General Plan Policies and zoning currently in effect. Therefore, a Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared and adopted by the City Council.

***Specific Plan Contents***

The Specific Plan contains six chapters as follows:

**I. Introduction**

Provides broad overview of the plan;

**II. Summary Of Existing Conditions**

Provides general background information about the Specific Plan area regarding its physical setting, condition of existing infrastructure (e.g., streets, utilities, parking), and potential locations of future retail development in the Sherwood Gateway area.

**III. Vision, Goals and Policies**

Describes planning area issues, opportunities and constraints and then identifies overall goals and implementation policies/programs which establish the "framework" for the land use plan, development standards, design guidelines, and implementation mechanisms;

**IV. Development Standards**

Translates framework goals and policies into specific land use plans and associated development standards.

**V. Design Guidelines**

Sets forth discretionary guidelines for the design of appropriate development including architectural characteristics, site planning, parking, landscaping and signs.

**VI. Implementation And Administration**

Provides a summary of public improvements, program incentives, funding mechanisms, and a review of the Plan's relationship to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

## Chapter II

# SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS



This chapter provides essential background information for the Specific Plan area regarding the condition of its physical components (buildings, streets, utilities, parking, etc.) and a summary of the Sherwood Gateway's retail development.

### *Project Setting*

#### *Land Use Pattern*

The Specific Plan Project Area is located southwest of El Camino Real, a regional commercial thoroughfare, and centered primarily around San Antonio Road and Sherwood Avenue (see Specific Plan Project Area Map, page I-2)

The project area is generally comprised of commercial land uses; however, a variety of land uses are found within the project area including service-commercial, retail, single-family residential, multiple-family residential, and administrative-office.

Commercial activity is primarily centered along El Camino Real, and on San Antonio Road between El Camino Real and Pasa Robles. El Camino Real and San Antonio Road provide the main commercial axes of the Sherwood Gateway, providing the majority of commercial space in the Project Area.

Several interspersed restaurants, service, mixed use and retail uses are located along either side of San Antonio Road and El Camino Real. Village Court, a local and regional serving shopping center, is located adjacent to the Specific Plan Project Area, on the west side of San Antonio Road between El Camino Real and Loucks Avenue.

Businesses along the east side of San Antonio Road between El Camino Real and Sherwood Avenue include restaurants, retail, service and office uses. A gas station with an appurtenant convenience and food store is located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Loucks Avenue and San Antonio Road. A garden center business is located in the eastern portion of the Project Area, on the south side of El Camino Real.

There are two areas of residential use within the Specific Plan boundaries; one located along the east side of Sherwood Avenue which is almost exclusively single-family (except for occasional office uses) and one other area located on the west side of Sherwood Avenue and on either side of Acacia Avenue. This area consists primarily of single-family houses, with some office uses and parking areas.

New Specific Plan land use designations should recognize this existing development pattern. Two additional single-family residences are located within the Project Area, south of El Camino Real on a private access road in the eastern portion of the Project Area. The project area is bordered by single-family and multi-family residential uses on the western, southern and eastern boundaries of the project area.

Several commercial/office uses are located along San Antonio Road, Sherwood Avenue and Acacia Avenue. The largest of these are the two-story office building on the west side of San Antonio Road (960 North San Antonio Road), and a two-story office building on the west side of Sherwood Avenue adjacent to the intersection of Sherwood Avenue and San Antonio Road.

### ***Gateways***

San Antonio Road provides the major access point into the Sherwood Gateway. To a lesser extent, Sherwood Avenue and Loucks Avenue also provide access to the Project Area.

Appropriate signs could be placed on these streets to make visitors aware that they are entering the City of Los Altos. Potential locations for these signs may include along San Antonio Road, just south of its intersection with El Camino Real, and along Loucks Avenue and Sherwood Avenue.

### ***Significant Trees***

The Specific Plan project area contains a variety of large trees that lend a special character to the area and sense of establishment. Two pepper trees with a trunk diameter of approximately 24 inches, two oak trees with an approximately 24-inch trunk diameter, and three additional oak trees with an approximately 36-inch trunk diameter are located on lots along Sherwood Avenue. Several tall trees are located adjacent to and outside Project Area boundaries, including a stand of 15 approximately 40-foot-tall evergreen trees located adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Project Area, and seven trees located adjacent to the western boundary of the Project Area.

As development and redevelopment occur, there will be pressure to remove trees to accommodate new projects. This practice should be evaluated carefully on a case-by-case basis so that mature trees that are making a contribution to the overall character of the Sherwood Gateway can be incorporated into the new project's design and, therefore, saved.

### ***Pattern Of Streets And Alleys***

Streets and alleys throughout the study area are laid out in a somewhat haphazard pattern. Several streets in the Project Area, including Acacia Avenue, are oriented in a north/south direction, approximately parallel to San Antonio Road. Loucks Road, Pasa Robles and several alleys on either side of San Antonio Road have an east/west alignment, approximately perpendicular to San Antonio Avenue. Portions of this alleyway are unpaved.

The study area also contains a series of existing, although mostly unimproved, mid-block alleys that can provide opportunities for improving pedestrian circulation and vehicle access to public and private parking lots. The predominant alley in the Plan Area is a semi-circular alleyway which intersects Sherwood Avenue twice, paralleling San Antonio Road, then paralleling Market Street, crossing Acacia Avenue, and paralleling El Camino Real.

### ***Core Area Compactness And Scale***

The Sherwood Gateway is that area generally defined as lying between El Camino Real to the north, the University Place Subdivision (Los Altos Square) to the east, Pasa Robles Avenue and Chester Circle to the south, and the western boundary of the Village Corners shopping center. The small scale and compactness of this core area are significant features that contribute to the pedestrian friendly atmosphere and rural character of the Sherwood Gateway.

The primary focal point of the area are the intersections of San Antonio Road with El Camino Real and Loucks Avenue. These intersections should be considered as the main destination points for the majority of visitors to the Sherwood Gateway. However, the central area of the Project Area, bounded by San Antonio Road, El Camino Real and Sherwood Avenue, is currently an under-utilized destination.

People do not generally like to walk more than 1,000 feet to reach their destination; therefore, for planning purposes, the 1,000 foot distance between parking and shopping should be used. The parking area within the Sherwood Gateway is currently within this 1,000 foot distance. When identifying potential locations for new parking facilities, the aforementioned intersections and the central area of the Project Area should continue to provide the main shopping destination point, while maintaining the 1,000 foot distance.

### ***Infrastructure, Circulation,***

Existing infrastructure, road system, and parking conditions were assessed

## ***And Parking Conditions***

in order to identify constraints to development in the Specific Plan area and to determine the need to upgrade or develop new facilities. The assessment includes a qualitative analysis of the area's existing water, sanitary sewer, storm water drainage, road system, traffic operations and parking.

### ***Water***

Water mains within the Specific Plan area are primarily 4 inches and 8 inches in diameter and are typically routed along major roadways. An 8 inch AC water main is routed down San Antonio Road from its connection to a main located on El Camino Real. Similarly, an 8 inch AC main is routed down Sherwood Avenue. Four inch mains are located along Loucks Avenue, and the semi-circular alley which connects with Sherwood Avenue twice. Six inch lines are located along Pasa Robles Avenue and Chester Circle.

### ***Sanitary Sewer***

The sanitary sewers in the Plan area are typically 6 inch or 8 inch diameter vitrified clay pipe, and are routed down major arterial roadways and alleys. A section of 27 inch diameter reinforced concrete pipe (RCP) is located along El Camino Real in the project vicinity. An 8 inch asbestos concrete pipe (ACP) sewer lateral is routed down San Antonio Road to Market Street to El Camino Real.

A 6 inch ACP sewer lateral is in place along Sherwood Avenue and the semi-circular alley that intersects Sherwood Avenue. An existing sewer line is also in place along Loucks Avenue. The two-story office building on the west side on San Antonio Road (960 North San Antonio Road) and the garden supply center located south of El Camino real in the eastern portion of the Plan Area are served by private sewer lines.

### ***Storm Sewer***

The storm sewer system in the Plan area consists of reinforced concrete pipes which generally range from 12 to 18 inches in diameter, with the majority of the lines within the plan area being constructed in the mid to late 1960's.

Storm drains are located at the northwest corner of the intersection of San Antonio Road and Loucks Avenue, and along Sherwood Avenue and El Camino Real, and are aligned to convey storm water flows toward El Camino Real. Additional storm drains in the Plan Area include a series of drains located on the eastern portion of the two-story office building property located at the southeast corner of the intersection of San Antonio Road and Sherwood Avenue.

A 54 inch RCP storm drain conveys drainage along El Camino Real. A 15 inch RCP storm drain is located along the north side of Loucks Avenue and continues on the west side of San Antonio Road before joining the 54 inch storm drain located along El Camino Real. A 12 inch RCP traverses

Sherwood Avenue. An 18 inch RCP located between Chester Circle and Sherwood Avenue, east of San Antonio Road, was constructed in 1994.

### ***Dry Utilities***

Dry utilities include electricity, telephone, gas, and cable television. Because these types of systems typically have a greater ability to grow and expand than wet utilities, they generally do not provide a constraint on development. Older systems mesh with new, and the overhead electrical and telephone lines combine with the new buried conduits and wires to provide all the needed services.

Existing electrical lines in the Plan Area include lines on the east side of Sherwood Avenue, the east side of Loucks Avenue, the west side of Acacia Avenue, the median of San Antonio Road between Loucks Avenue and the southern boundary of the Plan Area and the west side of San Antonio Road between Loucks Avenue and the northern boundary of the Plan Area.

The existing utilities provide adequate service to the present development. Infill development may require line extensions for service connections. The only concern is for the negative visual impact of overhead utilities. Future development may provide an opportunity to eliminate overhead lines for aesthetic improvement.

### ***Road System***

The study area consists of three north-south roadways and one east-west roadway. The main north-south roadway is San Antonio Road, which consists of six lanes (three lanes in each direction) between Loucks Avenue and El Camino Real and four lanes (two lanes in each direction) between Loucks Avenue and the southern boundary of the Plan Area.

Other north-south roadways in the Plan Area include Sherwood Avenue and Acacia Avenue, both two-lane roadways with one lane in each direction. The only east-west roadway in the Plan Area is Loucks Avenue.

The legal speed limit on San Antonio Road is 35 miles per hour. The legal speed limit on all other roadways in the Plan Area is 25 miles per hour. One abandoned roadway, Market Street, is located in the Plan Area between San Antonio Road and El Camino Real. This roadway is currently used as an access point and parking for existing commercial uses located at the southeast corner of the intersection of San Antonio Road and El Camino Real.

### ***Main North-South Streets***

**San Antonio Road** connects the Sherwood Gateway with El Camino Real to the north and residential uses and Downtown Los Altos to the south. The San Antonio Road right-of-way is 85 feet wide between Loucks Avenue and El Camino Real, 80 feet wide between Loucks Avenue and Sherwood Avenue, and 85 feet wide between Sherwood Avenue and the southern boundary of the Plan Area, and contains a narrow median. A curb/gutter/sidewalk system traverses the west side of San Antonio Road and a portion of the east side of the roadway near its intersection with El Camino Real.

No on-street parking is allowed on either side of San Antonio Road in the Plan Area. There is a four-way signalized control at the intersection of San Antonio Road and El Camino Real, north of the Plan area. Left turn lanes are provided from northbound San Antonio Road at Loucks Avenue and from southbound San Antonio Road at Sherwood Avenue.

The northbound approach of San Antonio Road to the signalized four-way stop at its intersection with El Camino Real is striped for three lanes: a left-turn lane and two through-lanes. Southbound San Antonio Road between El Camino Real and Loucks Avenue has a right-turn lane at Loucks Avenue and two left through-lanes.

A stop sign is provided for eastbound Loucks Avenue and its intersection with San Antonio Road. Stop signs in the project area are also located at northbound Sherwood Avenue at its intersection with El Camino Real and at southbound Sherwood Avenue at its intersection with San Antonio Road.

**Sherwood Avenue** is a 50-foot wide right-of-way and runs from San Antonio Road to El Camino Real. Parallel parking is allowed on both sides; however, there is no curb/gutter/sidewalk system on either side of Sherwood Avenue, with the exception of brief segments of sidewalk on the east side of the street near El Camino Real and San Antonio Road. There are stop signs on Sherwood Avenue at its intersection with El Camino Real and San Antonio Road; traffic on Sherwood Avenue is otherwise uncontrolled.

**Acacia Avenue** is a 40-foot wide right-of-way street which connects Sherwood Avenue and Market Street. Acacia Avenue includes no curb/gutter/sidewalk on either side of the street. The unpaved margins of Acacia Avenue contain overflow parking from commercial uses located along El Camino Real and San Antonio Road during peak hours. Traffic on Acacia Avenue is uncontrolled.

### ***Main East-West Streets***

**Loucks Avenue** has a 60 foot curb-to-curb width and runs from the western boundary of the Plan Area to San Antonio Road. The street contains two lanes (one lane in each direction) and is paved on both sides. Parallel parking is allowed on the portion of Loucks Avenue within the Plan Area. Loucks Avenue has a stop sign at San Antonio Road.

## ***Traffic Operations***

Existing traffic operations are consistent with current medium-density land use patterns in the study area. Traffic flows smoothly for the most part, with some delays at the signalized intersection of San Antonio Road and El Camino Real and at stop signs. San Antonio Road between El Camino Real and Loucks Avenue carries the greatest volumes of traffic in the study area. Traffic volume data were collected in May 1997 in the Plan area. Analysis of the volumes indicates that current operations are at Level of Service D during the evening peak hour at the intersection of El Camino Real/San Antonio Road, and LOS F with overflow due to excess vehicle delay for the northbound left on San Antonio and eastbound through-left on Loucks Avenue at the intersection of San Antonio Road/Loucks Avenue during the evening peak hour.

The eastbound right turning movement from Loucks Avenue experiences LOS B during the evening peak hour. A signal warrant analysis conducted in May 1997 determined that the intersection of San Antonio Road/Loucks Avenue would have a level of service of LOS D during the evening peak hour if the intersection were signalized.

Level of Service (LOS) is a grading system that ranks, by letter grade, an intersection according to the congestion and delay experienced by the average driver. LOS A indicates the best operations, with minimal delay. LOS F indicates the worst operations, with long delays and congested operations.

LOS D is considered the cutoff of acceptable operations for both signalized and unsignalized non-Congestion Management Plan (CMP) intersections in Los Altos, where queues may develop but dissipate rapidly, without excessive delays. The CMP guidelines establish an acceptable level of service of LOS E at the intersection of El Camino Real/San Antonio Road, where volumes are at or near capacity, and long queues form upstream from the intersection.

## ***Parking***

Existing parking spaces located in front of some commercial uses fronting on San Antonio Road have inadequate backing distances which cause vehicles to back out directly into traffic on San Antonio Road, resulting in a potentially hazardous situation. Additionally, left turn movements from Loucks Avenue onto San Antonio Road present potential traffic safety hazards given traffic speeds and the relatively high volume of traffic on San Antonio Road.

Existing traffic data collected between 1994 and June 1997 suggests that traffic accidents in the Sherwood Gateway Area have generally decreased in recent years. The number of accidents at the intersection of El Camino Real/San Antonio Road has decreased from 25 in 1994 to only 7 from January 1997 through June 1997.

The number of accidents at the intersection of El Camino Real/Sherwood Avenue has increased slightly since 1994, while the number of accidents at

the intersection of San Antonio Road/Loucks Avenue has fluctuated from a maximum of 5 in 1994 to a minimum of 1 in 1995 and from January 1997 to June 1997. Nevertheless, reduction of the magnitude of these potential traffic safety hazards will be necessary to create a safe, pedestrian-oriented environment in the Plan Area.

On-street parking in the Sherwood Gateway Area is unmetered and is supplemented by off-street parking at some business sites. There are no public off-street parking lots in the study area. However, private parking is provided throughout the Village Court shopping center and at an adjacent Village Court lot on the south side of Loucks Avenue (total of 331 spaces), in front and in back of commercial uses fronting on San Antonio Road and El Camino Real (430 spaces), on the garden supply property (75 spaces), and in small lots adjacent to Acacia Avenue (26 spaces) and Sherwood Avenue (84 spaces).

Field studies conducted for this analysis indicate the parking supply is often exceeded by demand, especially during peak hours [mid-morning (9 a.m. - 11 a.m.), lunch time (12 p.m. - 1 p.m.), and mid-afternoon (2 p.m. - 4 p.m.) on weekdays]. Visitors and residents often cannot park close to their destinations.

Non-dining hours generally have moderate parking demand in relation to the amount of parking available. However, some of the smaller office buildings along Sherwood Avenue may exceed their available on-site parking. On-street parking spaces in the study area are not well defined; therefore, the quantity of on-street spaces has not been determined.

In the Sherwood Gateway, the provision of off-street parking on each developed site is not realistic because of small lots and existing development; and it is not desired because it could stifle economic development by discouraging new commercial uses and would create an undesirable development pattern with many small parking lots on individual sites.

Incentives to economic development through reduced parking ratios and centralized public parking lots can go a long way towards making the Sherwood Gateway a more economically viable place.

## ***Conclusions***

In general, the water and sewer (sanitary and storm) pipelines in the Specific Plan area are of a sufficient capacity to satisfy the demand requirements of the Plan area. Overhead electrical and telephone lines present a negative impact from an aesthetic standpoint but do not constrain future development. However, since upgrading the appearance of the physical environment is one of the key components of the revitalization of the Sherwood Gateway, measures to locate utilities underground should be given a high priority.

With the exception of the intersection of San Antonio Road/Loucks Avenue, the road system and traffic operations are generally adequate to

meet current demand and should not constrain potential development in the near future.

Parking supply is insufficient to meet current demand during peak hours. As the Sherwood Gateway reaches its full potential, improvements to the San Antonio Road/Loucks Avenue intersection will be necessary, and additional parking will be needed since most of the older developments in the area do not provide sufficient off-street parking. Even new development will have difficulty providing off-street parking because existing parcel sizes are small.

If revitalization of the Sherwood Gateway is to be successful, additional public off-street parking will be necessary within the core commercial area of the Plan Area. To encourage new commercial uses to locate in the Sherwood Gateway, reduced parking ratios should also be considered. Solutions to these parking issues should be sought through a cooperative effort of the City, property owners, and business owners.

## Chapter III

# VISION, GOALS AND POLICIES



### ***Introduction***

The purpose of this Chapter of the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan is to provide the policy direction that will guide the preparation of subsequent, more detailed sections of the Plan (i.e. land use provisions, development regulations, design guidelines, streetscape design, etc.)

The importance of this Chapter is two-fold. First, it presents the City's essential ideas and long-term vision about how the Sherwood Gateway should develop in the future. Secondly, the goals (and their implementing policies/actions) provide more detailed direction and a means of testing new ideas, proposals and suggestions to ensure that they support the overall "vision" of the Plan.

Used in conjunction with the Land Use Plan, the goals will help to provide a basis for judging whether a project will be a contributor or a detriment to the Sherwood Gateway's future.

### ***The Vision***

The "vision" for the Sherwood Gateway is a type of place that accommodates a variety of businesses and residences in an attractive environment that creates a strong sense of individual community identity in terms of character and scale. It is a place that provides a strong entry statement and sense of arrival into the community of Los Altos.

The opportunity exists to strengthen the character through the reasonable expansion and revitalization of land uses, creation of a unified community identity and the reinforcement of a strong pedestrian character, especially within the retail core along San Antonio Road.

The Specific Plan builds on the present strengths the Sherwood Gateway, taking advantage of the existing building stock, planning for new buildings on key development sites, reinforcing the existing urban form and providing development incentives to help achieve the physical and economic revitalization of the area.

### ***Goals And Policies***

Many of the following goals and policies for the Sherwood Gateway are derived from the Los Altos General Plan. Some General Plan policies have been amended slightly or added to provide a finer level of detail or provide

clearer direction. In several cases, new policies have been developed to provide direction in areas not previously addressed by the General Plan.

## 1. Land Use

**Goal** Achieve the revitalization of the Sherwood Gateway as a primary business district in the City.

**Policy 1** Promote the Sherwood Gateway as a principal shopping and business center in the Los Altos community.

**Actions**

1. Create a business association to promote the Sherwood area and to help oversee implementation of the Specific Plan.
2. Develop a marketing campaign, in conjunction with local newspapers and other media sources, to build local awareness, and support patronage for Sherwood Gateway businesses.
3. Encourage businesses to participate in joint advertising.
4. Create a retail guide for existing and potential Sherwood Gateway businesses to include details on: attracting and retaining target markets; facade improvements; City permits, regulations, and procedures; landscaping; customer service; window displays; and, signage.

**Policy 2** Improve the appearance of the area through landscape design and pedestrian amenities.

**Actions**

1. Create entry monumentation (signs) with unique landscape features at intersection of El Camino Real/San Antonio.
2. Improve median at San Antonio/El Camino Real with special accent plantings.
3. Provide right-of-way landscaping along San Antonio.
4. Provide enhanced crosswalks at locations such as San Antonio/El Camino Real, San Antonio/Loucks, and San Antonio/ Sherwood.
5. Consider establishing a non-profit Sherwood Gateway Community Design Center, comprised of volunteer architects, landscape architects, urban planners, historians, contractors, etc., who can provide free or very low cost design services to building owners desiring to rehabilitate their structures and landscaping.

**Policy 3** Implement design guidelines that will ensure high quality development that:

	⇒	provides consistency with the community's scale and character
	⇒	creates compatibility with adjacent residential uses
	⇒	recognizes differences in location and marketing exposure between El Camino/San Antonio and interior development sites.
Actions	1.	Provide design guidelines for new construction keeping in mind the scale and character of the Sherwood Gateway area.
	2.	Provide design guidelines for additions and renovations.
	3.	Consider developing special guidelines for signs.
	4.	Create a collage of pictures that communicates the types of buildings, architectural styles, and landscape elements desired for the Sherwood Gateway area. Use this collage as an example for new development.
Policy 4		Provide for a variety of housing opportunities including medium density housing as part of mixed residential and retail or office uses, especially opportunities for affordable housing.
Actions	1.	Create a zoning plan that allows different housing types and encourages mixed residential/commercial/office projects.
	2.	Provide incentives for the provision of affordable housing.
	3.	Protect existing neighborhoods adjacent to the Sherwood commercial area through appropriate buffering and screening techniques.

## 2. Circulation And Parking

**Goal** Provide the Sherwood Gateway with a system of streets, pedestrian paths and parking areas sufficient to meet the needs of the proposed uses, merchants, residents, employees and visitors.

**Policy 1** Create a safe intersection at San Antonio Road and Loucks Avenue accommodating both vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

**Actions**

1. As the initial action item, a comprehensive traffic study shall be prepared to evaluate both existing conditions and planned land uses, and address issues such as traffic circulation, traffic safety, pedestrian safety, bicycle safety and enhancements to the appearance of the streetscape landscaping.

2. Business and property owner meetings shall be conducted to review, evaluate, and recommend potential solutions to parking issues.
  3. Provide traffic calming design features (e.g., wide median, enhanced paving, neck down at curb line, traffic signal, etc.).
  4. Provide pedestrian safety devices (e.g., pedestrian lighting, crosswalk with built-in lighting, reflectors, striping, enhanced paving, etc.).
  5. Work with City police to more regularly enforce traffic violations.
  6. Develop a signage program that reminds motorists of pedestrians: "Slow down! This is our town."
- Policy 2                      Improve driveway access on San Antonio Road to maintain a desired quality of traffic flow.
- Actions                      1. Develop a signage program to alert San Antonio Road motorists of upcoming business access points.
2. Work with businesses to identify opportunities for shared access and for converting driveways to one-way in or one-way out.
3. Develop guidelines for the proper spacing of driveways.
- Policy 3                      Provide for adequate and convenient parking areas. When appropriate, encourage the provision of shared parking facilities between adjacent uses serving businesses fronting on San Antonio Road and El Camino Real.
- Actions                      1. Provide incentives for the provision of shared parking and access driveways.
2. Continue limited on-street parking along El Camino Real.
3. Encourage the development of a centrally located parking facility to serve many adjacent uses.
- Policy 4                      Provide a safe pedestrian environment which reduces conflict between pedestrian and vehicular movements.
- Actions                      1. Provide a network of convenient pedestrian pathways throughout the Sherwood Gateway area.
2. Provide safe pedestrian crossings at intersections.
3. Consider implementation of speed reduction measures (e.g., speed tables) in internal circulation and parking areas.
4. Review the appropriateness of guidance strips (paving blocks with raised tactile surfaces) at all crossings.
5. Require minimum sidewalk width of 5 feet.

- 6. Restrict right-turns-on-red during peak pedestrian times.
  - 7. Maintain safe line of sight between pedestrian ways and streets.
  - 8. Encourage bicycle use throughout the Sherwood Gateway area.
- Policy 5 Discourage through traffic and parking in the surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- Actions
- 1. Ensure that adequate parking is provided for all uses in the Sherwood Gateway area, including employee parking.
  - 2. Investigate the feasibility of a parking permit program for residents and employees in the Sherwood Gateway area.
  - 3. Post signs discouraging cut-through traffic.
- Policy 6 Provide for adequate traffic flow along San Antonio Road to accommodate projected traffic volumes while limiting speeds that are conducive to a safe pedestrian environment.
- Actions
- 1. Use traffic calming features where appropriate to increase pedestrian safety.

### 3. Urban Design

Goal Develop the Sherwood Gateway as a unified and improved neighborhood of retail shopping and services, restaurants, offices and residential components.

- Policy 1 Improve San Antonio Road as an attractive entrance to the City.
- Actions
- 1. Improve median (e.g., incorporate plantings and other landscape features).
  - 2. Incorporate design element to signify entrance into City (e.g., consider a monument entry at San Antonio Road and El Camino Real).
  - 3. Enhance streetscape (e.g., plant street trees and add new streetscape elements).
  - 4. Enhance intersections (e.g., introduce unique paving patterns at intersections and crossings).
- Policy 2 Ensure that new development and rehabilitation of existing structures is of high quality and makes a positive contribution to the overall appearance of the Sherwood Gateway through appropriate building setbacks, landscaping, architecture and signage.

- |          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Actions  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review design changes through the A&amp;S (Architecture and Site) Committee review process to ensure the proper interpretation of design guidelines for the area.</li> <li>2. Prepare before and after photo-realistic visual simulations for building rehabilitations to ensure consistency with desired image.</li> <li>3. Require new development to submit photo-realistic visual simulations of proposed structures and landscaping.</li> </ol> |
| Policy 3 | Maintain a safe neighborhood by reducing any disruptive and negative impact of traffic movements and high traffic speeds through the Sherwood Gateway.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Actions  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Post penalties for neighborhood speeding and other traffic violations.</li> <li>2. Install signage indicating “Children at Play.”</li> <li>3. Use traffic calming measures where appropriate.</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Policy 4 | Create an attractive pedestrian environment within the Sherwood Gateway.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Actions  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Install dedicated pedestrian ways throughout the Sherwood Gateway area.</li> <li>2. Introduce pedestrian amenities, such as street trees, wide sidewalks, benches, and lighting to encourage more pedestrian activity.</li> <li>3. Allow for outside dining, cottage-scale restaurants, and other pedestrian-oriented uses that attract pedestrians.</li> <li>4. Investigate the creation of small community gardens.</li> </ol>                     |
| Policy 5 | Provide for design compatibility and appropriate transition between commercial and residential uses.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Actions  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Require appropriate building setbacks, buffer walls, and landscaping to mitigate potential land use conflicts.</li> <li>2. Ensure that commercial uses adjacent or contiguous to existing residences step-back or otherwise appropriately scale development to promote design compatibility between structures.</li> </ol>                                                                                                                           |

#### **4. Economic Development**

Goal Enhance and improve the economic vitality of the Sherwood Gateway.

Policy 1	Encourage a balance in the development of local serving and regional serving commercial uses.
Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emphasize retention of existing businesses.</li> <li>2. Undertake a retail sales market analysis for the local community that identifies opportunities for the Sherwood Gateway area - identify the area's niche.</li> </ol>
Policy 2	Encourage and assist in the preparation of sites suitable for commercial and office development.
Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide clear list of procedures and development requirements that facilitate new development.</li> <li>2. Consider submitting a grant application to the California Center for Land Recycling to assist in the remediation and cleanup of any environmentally contaminated sites.</li> </ol>
Policy 3	Provide incentives for consolidation of small lots, shared parking/access, pedestrian amenities, mixed-use development and facade improvements.
Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Allow for the consideration of exceptions to City zoning requirements for the provision of identified development objectives for Sherwood Gateway.</li> </ol>

### ***Development Master Plan***

The Development Master Plan indicates the overall development direction for the Sherwood Gateway; it is not intended to specify actual projects that will be built in the area and does not bind either the City or private property owners to build any specific projects. However, the Master Plan will serve as the basis for the land use plan and for traffic and parking projections in this Specific Plan.

# Chapter IV

## LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES



### *Purpose And Organization*

This chapter establishes the land use and development guidelines that apply within Sherwood Gateway.

The development guidelines, together with the design guidelines (following chapter) implement the goals and policies of the Specific Plan. They are consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan and the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

**Development Guidelines**, unlike the Design Guidelines found in Chapter V, are general development standards that address those aspects of site development and building design that are essential to achieve the goals and policies of the Specific Plan. They include suggestions for such things as uses, building height, setbacks, etc.

The **Design Guidelines** in the next chapter are used in conjunction with the development guidelines during the project design and review phases in order to help ensure quality development and implement the goals and policies of the Specific Plan.

### *General Provisions*

#### **1. Relationship To Zoning Code**

Development guidelines contained in this chapter will supplement or replace those of the City of Los Altos Zoning Code. Any standards or land uses not specifically covered herein shall be subject to the requirements of the City of Los Altos Zoning Code.

#### **2. Interpretation**

The Planning Director shall have the responsibility to interpret the provisions of this Specific Plan. All such interpretations shall be in written form and shall be permanently maintained.

### 3. Enforcement

The Planning Director shall enforce the provisions of this Specific Plan. In addition, the Director shall have the responsibility to ensure that the applicable codes of all governmental agencies and jurisdictions are being met prior to the issuance of any permit or approval requested pursuant to this Specific Plan.

### 4. Severability

If any regulation, condition, program or portion of this Specific Plan is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, such portion shall be deemed a separate, distinct and independent provision and the invalidity of the provision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions.

### 5. Definitions And Terminology

Words, phrases and terms not specifically defined herein shall have the same definition as provided for in the City of Los Altos Zoning Code.

When used in this Specific Plan, the term "Director" shall mean the Planning Director or an appointed representative.

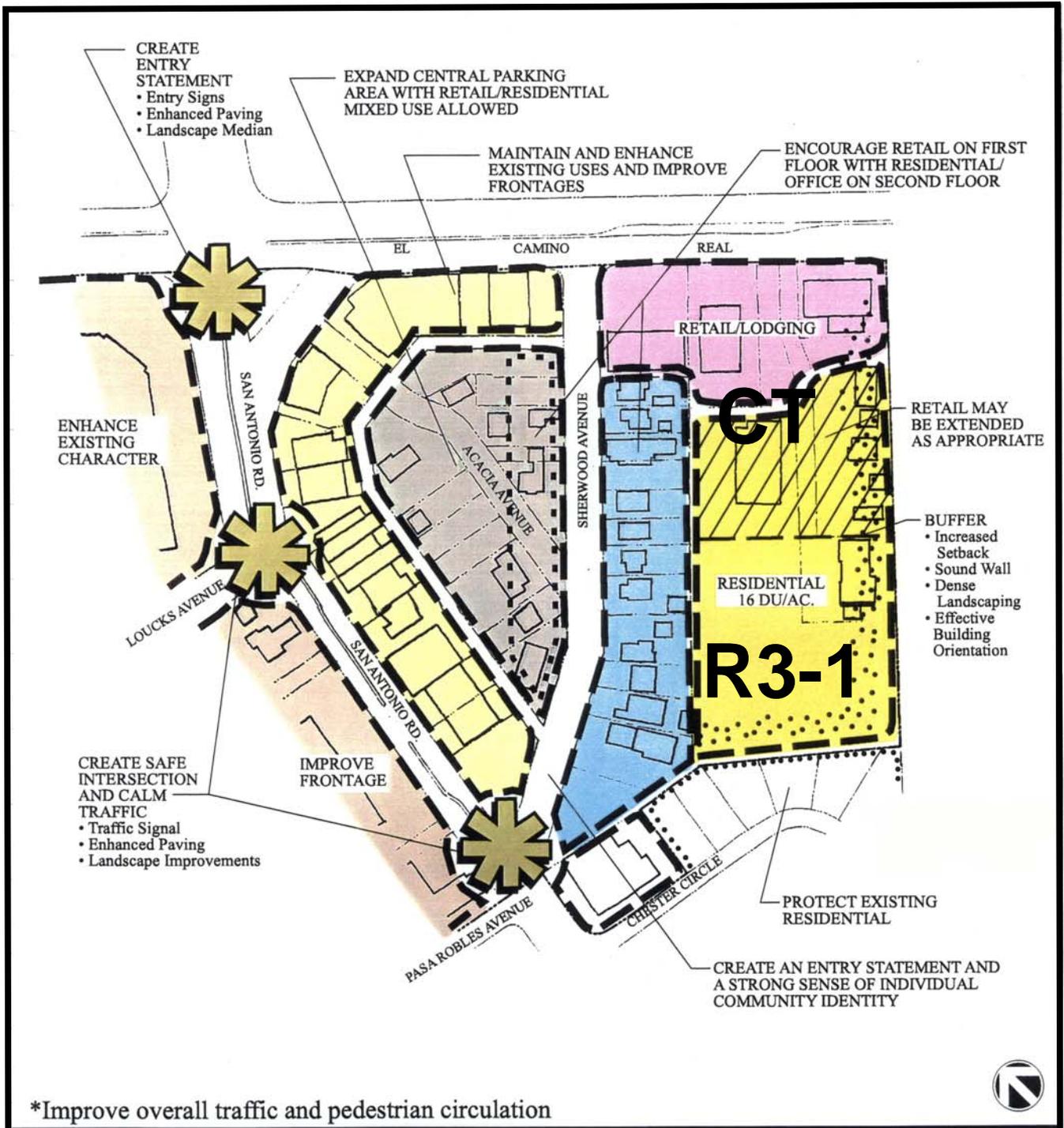
When used in this Specific Plan, the term "Commission" shall mean the City of Los Altos Planning Commission.

## *Development Guidelines*

### *Land Uses*

The land uses and development guidelines for the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan area are indicated on the Land Use Plan on the following page. The following land use patterns and mix of uses are proposed for Sherwood Gateway:

***San Antonio Road and El Camino Real Frontage:*** Existing uses and the general character of the streets are to be maintained with improvements encouraged as necessary to meet the objectives of the Specific Plan including signing, structural and parking improvements. It is not intended to significantly alter the land use character or the type of uses along these two major street frontages. The Land Use Plan specifically indicates that the existing uses should be maintained and enhanced with frontages improved.



\*Improve overall traffic and pedestrian circulation

# Land Use Plan

## Los Altos, California



***El Camino Real Frontage:*** The existing retail uses generally east of Sherwood Avenue should be maintained because of the high traffic volume along El Camino Real. The Los Altos General Plan recognizes the opportunity for “high-end quality” lodging in the area. The Land Use Plan identifies the El Camino Real frontage as an appropriate site for lodging while maintaining the retail character of the area.

***Central Parking Area:*** The triangle-shaped area in the middle of Sherwood Gateway has been identified as an appropriate location for a consolidation of parking to serve the uses within the neighborhood. The parking area generally is located on both sides of Acacia Avenue.

While parking is the primary land use objective, the Specific Plan identifies alternative and supplemental land uses including retail and residential/office mix. If development other than parking is proposed for this area, the Specific Plan encourages retail on the first floor with residential/office on the second floor with building placement at the street frontage allowing parking to be located at the rear thereby maintaining a more centralized parking configuration and the “commercial character” of Sherwood Avenue.

***“Garden Supply” Site:*** The rear half of the “Garden Supply” property – the uncross-hatched area on the Land Use Plan – has been identified for residential development at a density of 16 dwelling units per acre. The density proposed reduces the current zoning and General Plan designation but would maintain the multiple residential development potential.

### ***Building Heights***

The building heights within the area are permitted at two and three stories, dependent on the underlying zoning designations, with the exception of the rear half of the “Garden Supply” property – the uncross-hatched area on the Land Use Plan. This portion of the “Garden Supply” property, which is designated Multiple Family and has been identified for housing in this Specific Plan at no more than 16 units per acre, shall be limited to no more than two stories and 30 feet in height.

### ***Frontage Improvements***

Improvement of street frontages is encouraged throughout the Specific Plan area with an emphasis on both frontages along San Antonio Road. While there are no significant land use changes anticipated along the “easterly” side of San Antonio Road, improvements such as landscaping, signing, etc. are encouraged to enhance the visual character of the area.

### ***Entry Statements***

The creation of entry statements is an integral part of the improvement of the Sherwood Gateway area. Two specific sites are proposed for entry statements:

- ❖ Intersection of San Antonio Road and El Camino Real: This intersection serves as a primary entrance into the City of Los Altos

as well as Sherwood Gateway. Improvements such as signs, enhanced pavement materials, widening and landscaping of the median will provide a feeling more in keeping with the character of Los Altos.

- ❖ Intersection of San Antonio Road and Sherwood Avenue: This intersection serves as the general entrance to Sherwood Gateway from the south. Improvements such as a Sherwood Gateway identification sign and/or enhanced crosswalk pavement (e.g. as part of Traffic Calming improvements) could serve to create an entry statement into the neighborhood.

### ***Traffic Calming***

Traffic calming improvements are proposed for two intersections with Sherwood Gateway. Traffic calming is used where both pedestrian and vehicular safety issues have been identified. The two intersections in Sherwood Gateway are located at San Antonio Road/Loucks Road and San Antonio Road/Sherwood Avenue. These two intersections have potential pedestrian-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-vehicle points of conflict.

Creating safe intersections is a priority objective within Sherwood Gateway. Examples of traffic calming improvements include installation of traffic signals, enhanced pedestrian crosswalk pavement, warning signals and lights, signing, median island “safety zones”, etc. Any traffic calming improvements at the Sherwood Avenue intersection could be combined with entry statement improvements.

### ***Buffers and Transitions***

Protection of existing residential neighborhoods and development is a priority in the Sherwood Gateway community. The Land Use Plan specifically identifies areas where any new or improvement to existing development should provide appropriate buffers to protect the integrity and character of the existing residential development.

The use of sound walls, increased setbacks, landscaping, building orientation, building height, architectural features, etc. all provide buffering and an appropriate means of transition between existing residential development and any new development or activity.

## Chapter V

# DESIGN GUIDELINES



### *INTRODUCTION*

#### *Purpose*

The Design Guidelines included as part of this Specific Plan are intended to promote a desired level of future development quality that will:

- ❖ Contribute to implementing the concepts and recommendations provided for the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan;
- ❖ Stimulate investment in and strengthen the economic vitality of Sherwood Gateway; and,
- ❖ Renew a positive physical image and identity of Sherwood Gateway as a gateway into the City of Los Altos.

These guidelines do not seek to impose an overriding style, a limited color palette, or an artificial theme. They do seek to assist in promoting the positive design characteristics existing throughout Los Altos today, while ensuring a high quality and unique image for Sherwood Gateway.

It is not the intent of these guidelines to eliminate design freedom or discourage innovative design. The design guidelines complement the mandatory development standards contained in the Zoning Ordinance **by providing good examples of appropriate design solutions** and by providing design interpretations of the various mandatory regulations. The guidelines are, however, less quantitative than the mandatory development standards and may be interpreted with some flexibility in the application to specific projects.

## ***Organization***

The design guidelines are organized into the following sections:

- A. Introduction** provides an overview of the purpose, organization, applicability, and other aspects of the design guidelines.
- B. Context and Compatibility** establishes basic “rules of thumb” for integrating new development into the existing urban fabric of the Specific Plan area.
- C. General Commercial/Mixed Use** sets forth design guidelines for retail, office, service, other commercial uses, and mixed use development within Sherwood Gateway. Infill development guidelines are also included.
- D. Signs** sets forth general and specific guidelines which intend to enhance the image of Sherwood Gateway and improve the effectiveness of signage for businesses.
- E. Landscaping** provides a basic landscape design framework which is to be used in conjunction with new development.

## ***Interpretation***

To aid in the interpretation of these guidelines, a development applicant should understand the meaning of “*should*,” “*encouraged*,” and “*discouraged*.”

Guidelines which employ the word “*should*” are intended to be applied as stated. An alternative measure may be considered, however, if it meets or exceeds the intent of the guideline.

Guidelines using the words “*encouraged*” or “*discouraged*” are not mandatory, but express a more or less desirable design solution.

## ***Applicability***

The provisions of this section are applicable to all development within the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan area.

Any new building, additions, exterior alterations, change in use, or landscaping, and any modification to an approved landscaping plan or parking lot design should adhere to these Design Guidelines as applicable. It is important to note, however, that **these Guidelines do not affect existing buildings** which are not proposed for new construction, exterior alterations, change in use, landscaping or changes in the parking lot layout.

The Design Guidelines will be utilized during the City’s Design Review process, to encourage the highest level of design quality and at the same time provide the flexibility necessary to encourage creativity on the part of project designers in response to existing site conditions.

## ***Exemptions***

When in compliance with all other City ordinances, and with the standards and provisions of this Specific Plan, the following projects are exempted from all provisions of Design Review:

- a. Construction underground, which will not leave any significant, permanent marks on the surface after completion. Utility boxes, pipes, and poles shall be considered “significant permanent marks.”
- b. Maintenance work on buildings, landscaping, or grounds (including parking lots) which does not significantly alter the appearance or function of the building, landscaping, or grounds.
- c. Interior remodeling work.
- d. Landscape maintenance and upkeep, including relatively minor replacement of plants other than trees.
- e. Temporary uses and structures as defined by the Los Altos Municipal Code.
- f. Roof maintenance and repair. Roof reconstruction or use of different materials is subject to Design Review as determined by the Planning Director.

## ***CONTEXT AND COMPATIBILITY***

Enhancement of existing buildings and landscaping should establish the frame of reference for new development in Sherwood Gateway. All new structures, additions and uses should enhance the prevailing character of the surrounding area. In addition, attractive site amenities should be preserved and should become part of any new project or addition, and structures and activities should be located and designed to avoid creating nuisances and hazards for adjoining properties, particularly residential properties. “Rules of Thumb” pertaining to contextualism and compatibility include:

1. All new construction and development should incorporate appealing characteristics of the surrounding area when the area exhibits a positive distinctive architectural style and/or established functional or landscape patterns.
2. New buildings and additions should be sited in a manner that will complement rather than conflict with existing adjacent buildings, landscape, parking and access.
3. Transitions between existing and new buildings or additions should be gradual. The height and mass of new projects or construction should not create abrupt changes from those of existing buildings.
4. Natural amenities such as mature trees should be preserved and incorporated in the design of a project.
5. Buildings should not turn their backs to existing or potential amenities. Buildings should be oriented to connect with high

activity areas, such as restaurant dining areas or major pedestrian areas in order to create a connection between the amenity and the building.

6. Noise or odor generating activities in general, and loading areas, trash and storage areas and rooftop equipment in particular should be located as far as possible from adjacent residences and should never be located next to residential properties without fully mitigating their negative effects.
7. Commercial and other non-residential buildings and associated activity areas should be oriented so to avoid significant shading of adjacent residences and compromising residents' privacy.
8. At residential edges, commercial and other non-residential buildings should maintain low profiles and building heights should be stepped down to the height of adjacent residential zones, utilizing architectural elements such as gables or hip roofs to reduce building mass.
9. Windows in commercial and other non-residential buildings should be oriented to preclude a direct line of sight into adjacent residential buildings, or property.
10. A ten (10) foot landscaped buffer should be provided along any shared property line, utilizing plant materials that visually combine with the open space of residential or other sensitive uses.

## **GENERAL COMMERCIAL/MIXED USE**

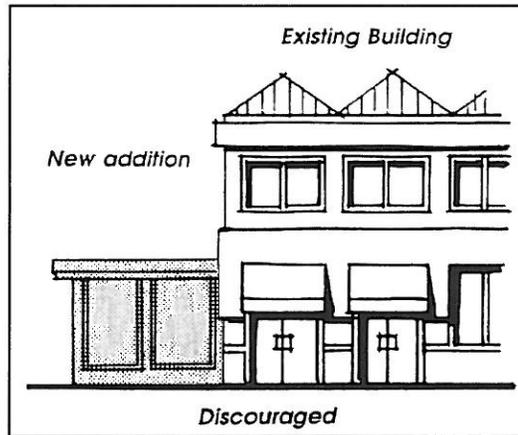
Like many older cities in Northern California, Los Altos has a major gateway opportunity through Sherwood Gateway that can affect the way Los Altos residents and visitors feel about the City and that can serve as an indication of the community's economic vitality. The design guidelines presented herein intend to foster good design in order to create a quality image for the City, encourage reinvestment and improve the City's economic vitality in general.

The following general commercial/mixed use design principles are applicable to commercial and mixed use projects found within the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan area.

### ***Building Scale***

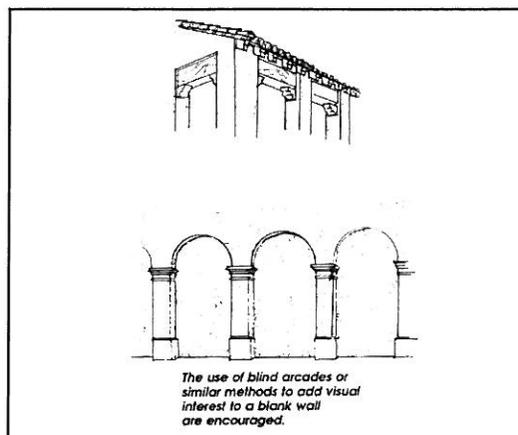
- a. Scale is the relationship between a proposed building's size and the size of adjoining buildings. The scale of new buildings should be consistent with existing buildings in the area.
- b. Building heights should relate to adjacent sites to allow maximum sun and ventilation, protection from prevailing winds, enhance public views and minimize obstruction of view from adjoining structures.

- c. Vary the height of the building so that it appears to be divided into distinct components.
- d. Ground-level landscaping and architectural detailing should be used to soften the impact of large buildings.

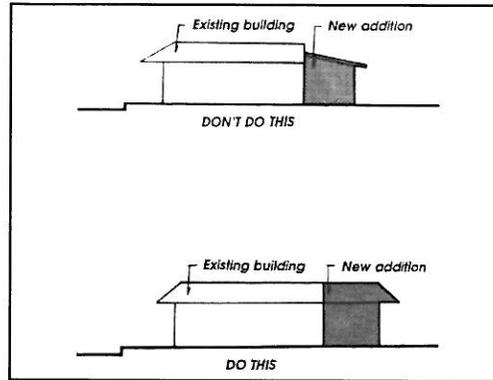


### *Exterior Walls*

- a. Buildings should be designed to avoid a "boxlike" appearance. Horizontal and vertical wall articulation (recession, reveals, insets, pop-outs) should be expressed through the use of recessed windows and entries, awnings, roof overhangs, second floor setbacks, covered arcades, etc.
- b. Vary the planes of exterior walls in depth and/or direction to create visual interest.
- c. Avoid blank walls at the ground floor level by utilizing windows, recesses, reveals, changes in materials and canopies to create visual interest.



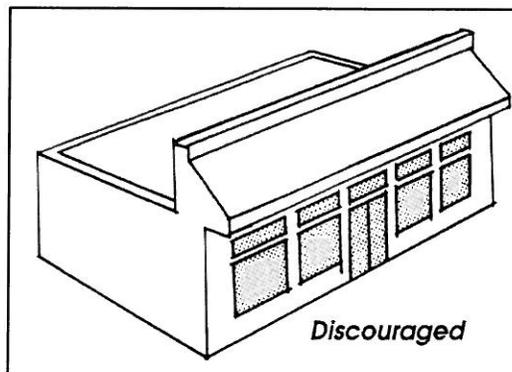
- d. Additions to existing buildings should be integrated with the existing structure. The new additions should match the original structure in terms of scale, window and door styles and openings, roof line, materials and color.



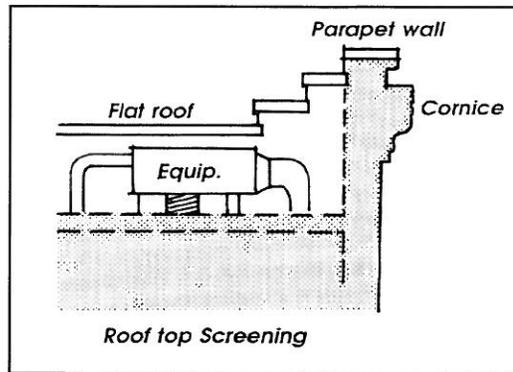
- e. Undesirable wall materials include the following:
- plywood;
  - reflective mirrored windows; and,
  - corrugated metal or fiberglass siding.
- f. The use of roof overhangs, colonnades, trellises and arcades is strongly encouraged to add variety and visual interest.

## Roofs

- a. The design of a structure's roof contributes strongly to its image as a quality, permanent structure. Mansard roofs are discouraged on freestanding buildings unless they wrap completely around the building. Mansards should maintain the same roof pitch as surrounding structures and should be both high and deep enough to create the illusion of being a true roof. Small, steeply-pitched mansard "eyebrows" that appear "tacked" onto a building are discouraged.



- b. Mechanical equipment should be screened with a solid material that matches the architectural style and materials of the building without giving the appearance of being added on.



- c. The following roof materials are *strongly* encouraged:
- standing seam metal roofs
  - tile roofs
  - shake shingle roofs
  - thick composition roofs
- d. The following roof materials are *strongly* discouraged:
- corrugated metal or fiberglass
  - high contrast or brightly colored (blue, orange) glazed tile
  - crushed rock

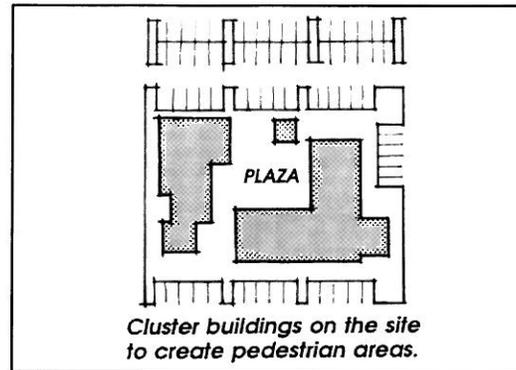
## Color

Color can dramatically affect the appearance of buildings and should be carefully considered in relation to the overall design of the building. Color can also affect the apparent scale and proportion of buildings by highlighting architectural elements such as doors and windows.

- a. Minimize the number of colors on the building's exterior in order to maintain a cohesive appearance with minimum visual distraction. Commercial buildings should use no more than three colors.
- b. The color palette chosen for a building should be compatible with the colors of adjacent buildings in Sherwood Gateway.
- c. Subdued colors are recommended for the overall color scheme. A bright trim color may be appropriate if it can be shown to enhance the general appearance of the building.
- d. Bright neon paint colors and large areas of intense white color should be avoided.

## Site Planning

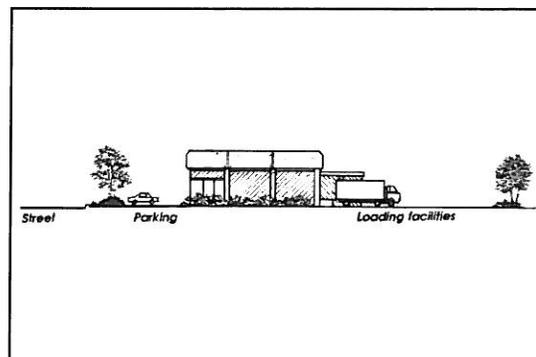
- a. Whenever possible, new buildings should be clustered. This creates opportunities for courtyards, plazas and pedestrian areas and prevents long "barracks-like" rows of buildings. When clustering is impractical, a visual link should be established between buildings. This link can be accomplished through the use of an arcade, colonnade or trellis system.



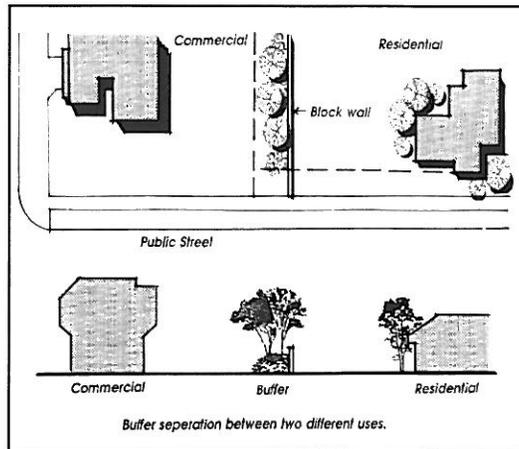
- b. Open space areas and public plazas should be clustered into larger, prominent landscape/hardscape areas.
- c. Loading facilities should be located to allow for productive front and rear use of buildings and should be adequately screened from public view or otherwise treated to minimize negative visual impacts.
- d. Utility equipment and facilities should be combined and adequately screened in order to promote efficiency and increased visual quality.

## Land Use Buffering

Commercial development adjoining residential zones should incorporate the following design features:



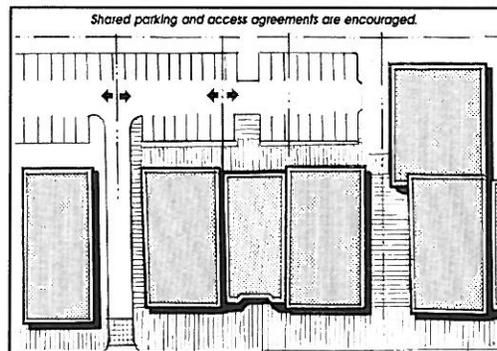
- a. Additional setback areas are *encouraged* when a commercial project adjoins a residential district.



- b. Evergreen trees or shrubs should be planted to screen parking lots and large building walls, providing a visual barrier between commercial and residential uses.

**Parking And Circulation**

- a. Common shared access driveways which provide access to more than one site are encouraged in order to reduce the number of driveway entries within Sherwood Gateway.

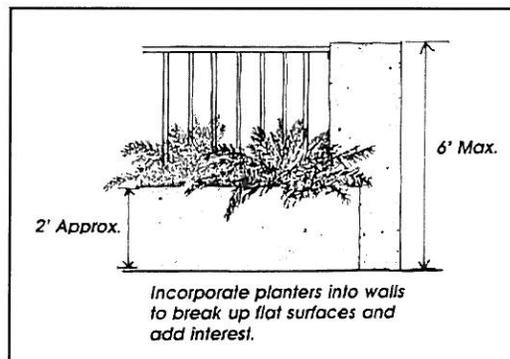


- b. Parking areas should be separated from buildings by either a raised concrete walkway or landscaped strip. Situations where parking stalls directly abut buildings should be avoided.
- c. Whenever possible, locate parking lot entries on side streets in order to minimize pedestrian/vehicular conflicts along the primary boulevard. When this is not possible, differentiate the primary site entry from the sidewalk through means such as the use of patterned concrete or pavers.

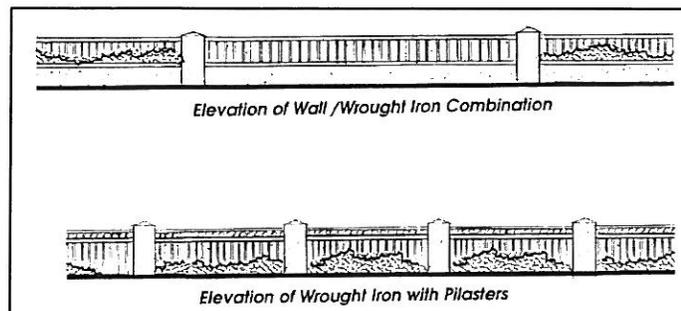
- d. Design parking areas so that pedestrians walk parallel to moving cars. Minimize the need for the pedestrian to cross parking aisles and landscape areas.
- e. Where practical, lowering the grade of the parking lot from existing street elevations may aid in obscuring views of automobiles from the street while promoting views of architectural elements.
- f. Design pedestrian lanes as a separate pathway from bicycle lanes.

### ***Walls And Fences***

- a. Walls and fences are generally used for security purposes and to screen unsightly areas from public view. If they are not required for a specific purpose they should *not* be utilized.
- b. Screen walls should be kept as low as possible while performing their screening and security functions.
- c. Walls viewed from the street or parking lot should be designed to blend with the site's architecture. Landscaping should be used in combination with walls/fences, whenever possible, to conceal their flatness, add greenery and discourage graffiti.



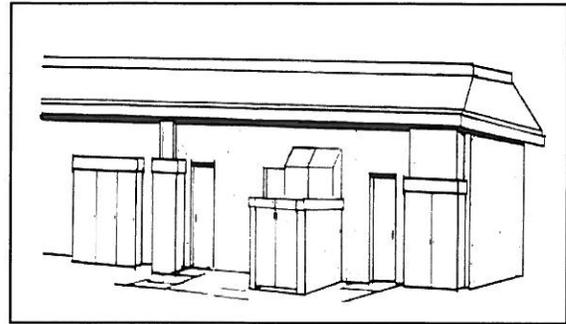
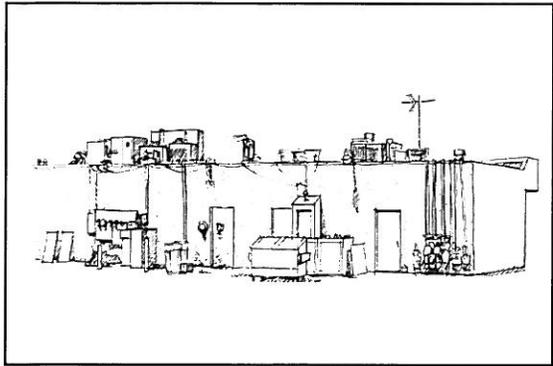
- d. When security fencing is required, it should be a combination of solid walls with pillars and decorative view ports, or short solid wall segments and open wrought iron grille work.



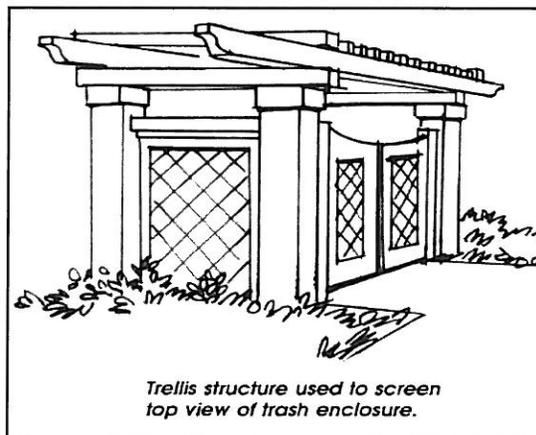
- e. Plain concrete block and chainlink fencing is prohibited as these lack visual interest.

**Screening Of Storage  
And Equipment Areas**

- a. Exterior loading and trash receptacle areas should be screened and confined to portions of the site least visible to public view. Screening should consist of a combination of elements including solid masonry walls and landscaping.



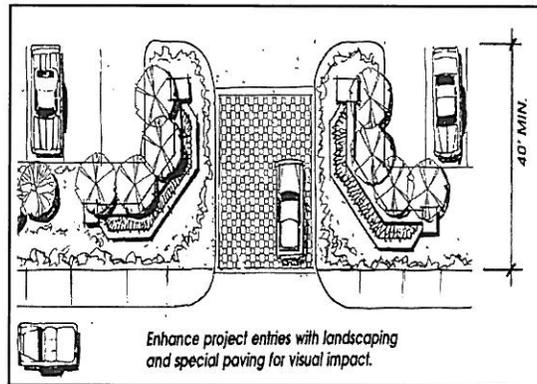
- b. Trash enclosures should be screened from public view by a solid concrete masonry enclosure with solid metal doors. Use landscaping (shrubs and vines) to screen walls and help deter graffiti.



## Landscaping

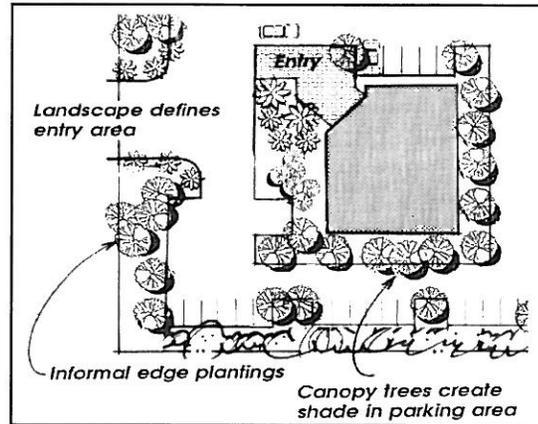
Landscaping guidelines for uses in Sherwood Gateway help define and focus plantings and open space areas on building entrances and parking lots, define the edges of various land uses, provide transition between neighboring properties (buffering), and screen loading and storage areas. Landscaping should also be used as a unifying element within a project designed to promote a cohesive appearance and to help achieve compatibility with existing adjacent uses.

- a. The following are common planting design concepts that should be used whenever possible:
  - Edge-defining plantings used in informal groupings and rows contiguous to the street and at major focal points, such as site entrances;

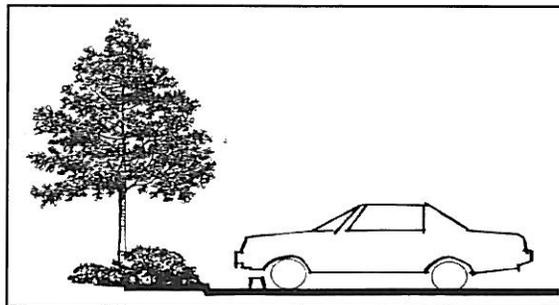


- Use of flowering vines both on walls and arbors not only looks good, but discourages graffiti;
- Use of planting to create shadow patterns against wall surfaces;
- Trees to create canopy and shade, especially in parking areas; and,
- Plantings and walls to screen outdoor open space areas from the wind.

- b. Landscaping should be in scale with adjacent buildings and be of appropriate size at maturity to accomplish its intended goals.



- c. Landscaping around the entire base of buildings is encouraged between the parking lot and the structure. Unique and colorful plantings such as the use of specimen trees (i.e. 24" box or larger) should be used at entrances to provide accent.
- d. Landscaping should be protected from vehicular and pedestrian encroachment by raised planting surfaces, depressed walks or through the use of curbs.



- e. It is *strongly* recommended that inorganic groundcover (gravel or crushed rock) not be used.
- f. Plants in containers are especially encouraged for walkway areas adjacent to storefronts, plazas, patios and arcades.

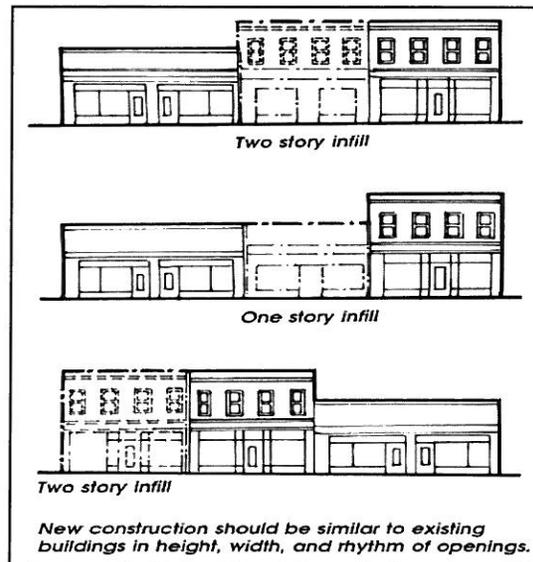
## INFILL

Since the buildings in Sherwood Gateway will be constructed on vacant lots, or lots that contain buildings now but will be demolished in the future, development will likely occur incrementally in the specific plan area by filling a **"hole"** in the urban fabric, which is termed **"infill"** construction.

The design of an infill building, particularly its front facade, should be *influenced* by the other facades in the area but should not attempt to copy them or replicate a past architectural style. The infill structure should be *sympathetic* and *compatible* with surrounding buildings in terms of mass, scale, height, facade rhythm, placement of doors and windows, color and use of materials. *Since good infill design responds directly to its surroundings, it is not possible to develop specific guidelines which apply in every case. There are, however, several general design principles which should govern the visual ties between a new infill building and its neighboring structures.*

### Facade Proportion

- 1) The characteristic proportion (relationship of height to width) of existing facades should be respected in relation to *new* infill development.
- 2) Whenever an infill building is proposed which is much **"wider"** than the existing characteristic facades on the street, the infill facades should be broken down into a series of appropriately proportioned **"structural bays"** or components typically segmented by a series of columns or masonry piers which frame window, door and bulkhead components.



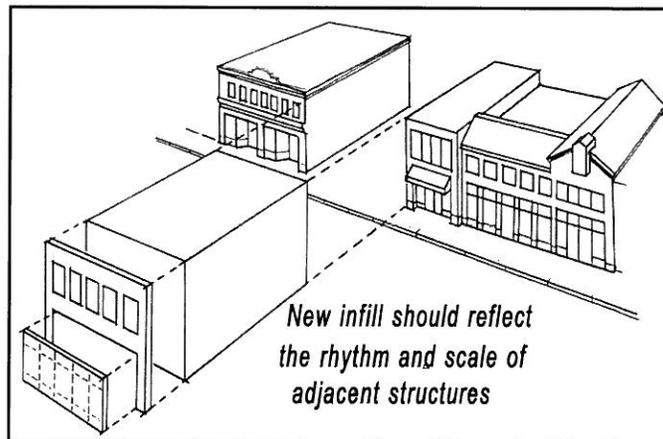
- 3) An infill building should not be much higher or lower than the height of surrounding structures.

### ***Proportion Of Openings***

- 1) Maintain the predominant *difference* between upper story openings and street level storefront openings (windows and doors). Usually, there is a much *greater* window area at the *storefront* level for pedestrians to have a better view of the merchandise displayed behind as opposed to upper stories which have smaller window openings.
- 2) Whenever an infill building is proposed which has two adjacent commercial structures, attempt to maintain the characteristic rhythm, proportion and spacing of existing door and window openings.

### ***Horizontal Rhythms***

- 1) Whenever an infill building is proposed, identify the common *horizontal* elements (e.g. cornice line, window height/width and spacing) found among neighboring structures and develop the infill design utilizing a similar rhythm or alignment.
- 2) If maintaining a horizontal rhythm or alignment in an infill building is very difficult or otherwise impossible, the use of fabric canopies or awnings is strongly encouraged to establish a shared horizontal storefront rhythm.



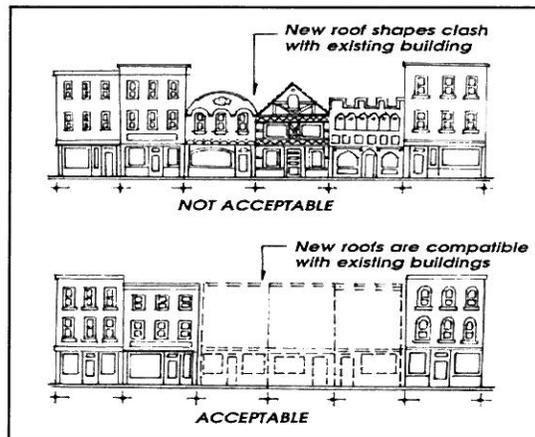
### ***Wall Articulation***

- 1) Long, blank, unarticulated street wall facades are strongly discouraged and should be divided into a series of *structural bays* (e.g. characterized by masonry piers which frame window and door elements).
- 2) Monolithic street wall facades should be "**broken**" by vertical and horizontal articulation (e.g. sculpted, carved or penetrated wall surface defined by recesses and reveals) characterized by: (a) breaks (reveals, recesses) in the surface of the wall itself; (b) placement of window and door openings; or (c) the placement of balconies, awnings and canopies.

- 3) Avoid large unbroken facade surfaces at the storefront level. This can be achieved in a number of ways including: (a) dividing the facade into a *series* of display windows with *smaller* panes of glass; (b) constructing the facade with small human scale materials such as brick or decorative tile along bulkheads; (c) providing traditional recessed entries; (d) careful sizing, placement and overall design of signage; and (e) providing consistent door and window reveals.

## Roofs

- 1) Roofs may be flat or sloped consistent with surrounding buildings. The visible portion of sloped roofs should be sheathed with a roofing material *complementary* to the architectural style of the building and other surrounding buildings.
- 2) Cornice lines of new buildings (horizontal rhythm element) should be aligned with buildings on adjacent properties to avoid clashes in building height.



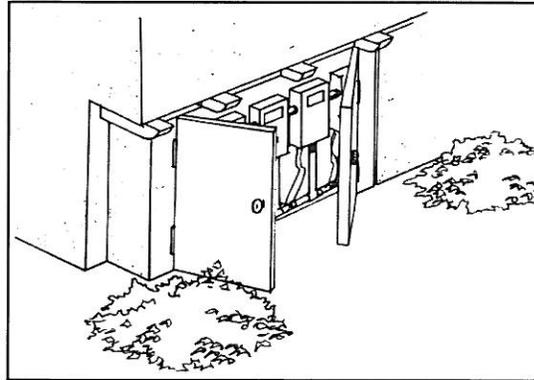
- 3) Radical roof pitches which create overly prominent or out-of-character buildings such as A-frames, geodesic domes, or chalet style buildings are strongly discouraged.

## Building Material Palette

- 1) Building materials to be used on infill buildings are to be consistent with the materials used on significant adjacent buildings. Proposed building materials are subject to review and approval during the design review process.

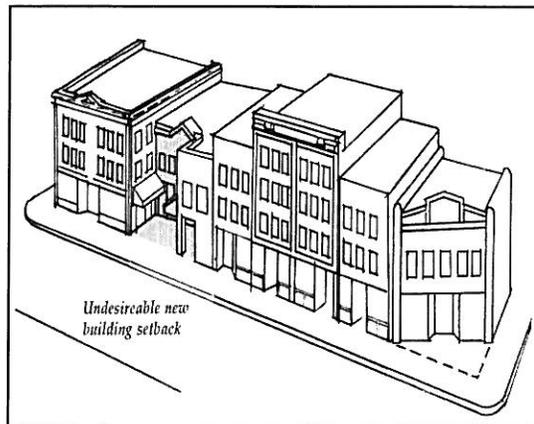
### ***Mechanical Equipment Screening***

- 1) It is strongly encouraged that any mechanical or utility equipment, whether on the roof, side of building, or ground be screened. The method of screening shall be architecturally integrated with the structure in terms of materials, color, shape and size. Where freestanding mechanical equipment is provided, a continuous solid screen is desirable. On-roof mechanical equipment should be screened by solid building elements (e.g. parapet wall) instead of after-the-fact add-on screening (e.g. wood or metal slats).



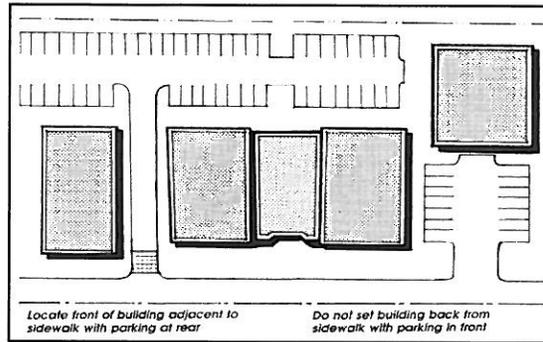
### ***Setbacks And "Build To" Lines***

- 1) The first floor of any new infill building should be built at the front property line, especially along El Camino Real and San Antonio, as appropriate to provide for pedestrian sidewalks.
- 2) Where appropriate, consider adjacent buildings to provide transition between infill buildings and existing structures.
- 3) Canopies, trellises and other accessory structures which are relatively open and do not restrict pedestrian or vehicular movement may project over the right-of-way with City approval.



### Street Orientation

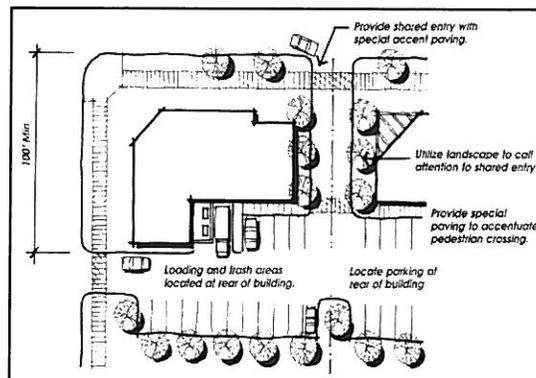
- 1) It is strongly encouraged that the front building facade be oriented parallel to the street.



- 2) Storefronts should be designed to orient to the major street frontage and to major pedestrian access. While side or rear entries may be desirable, the predominant *major* building entry shall be oriented toward the *major* street.
- 3) Attractive building facade treatment should be incorporated into front and rear entry facades.

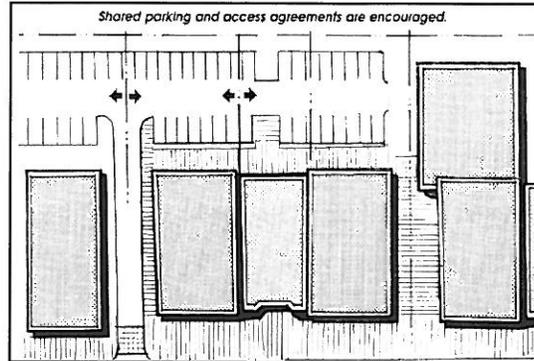
### Parking Orientation

- 1) Parking lots and any future parking structures should be located to the rear of buildings, or locations which best promote compatibility with surroundings.
- 2) Locating parking lots between the front property line and the building storefront is *strongly* discouraged.
- 3) Rear parking lots should be designed and located contiguous to each other so that vehicles can travel from one private parking lot to the other (reciprocal access) without having to enter the street.



- 4) Private parking lots with street frontage should be attractively landscaped with trees and shrubs in order to continue the linear street frontage created by the existing flanking buildings and to screen parked vehicles. Low masonry garden walls or landscaping (3 feet maximum height) at the setback line are also encouraged to screen parking from the street.

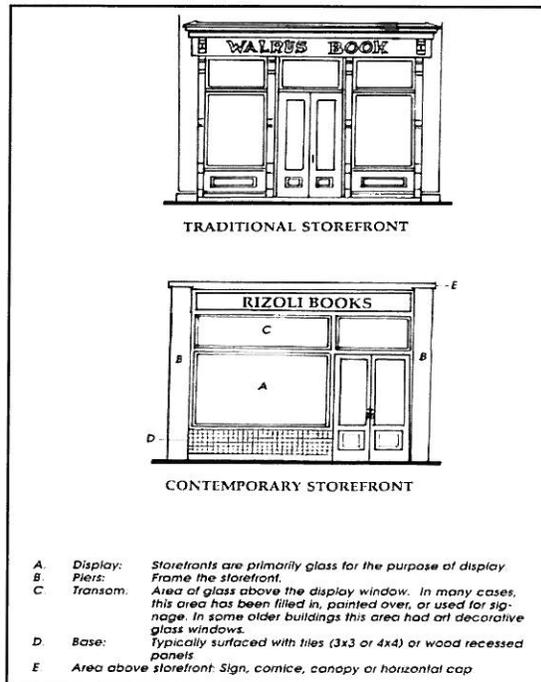
- 5) Common reciprocal access driveways which provide vehicular access to adjacent parcels are *strongly* encouraged. Shared parking and circulation aisles coordinated between adjacent businesses and/or developments are also encouraged.



- 6) Whenever possible, locate parking lot entries on side streets or alleys in order to minimize pedestrian/vehicular conflicts along the primary street frontage.

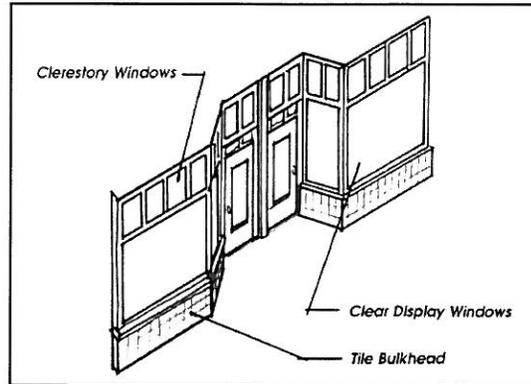
### Storefront Design

Building facades, including the storefront, are the most important visual elements of commercial structures. Facades also experience significant change during a building's life and hold the most potential for creative alterations affecting both the character of the building and the streetscape. In an effort to promote quality design for new infill buildings, and the rehabilitation of existing buildings, the following specific storefront and facade guidelines are presented.



**Entries/Doorways**

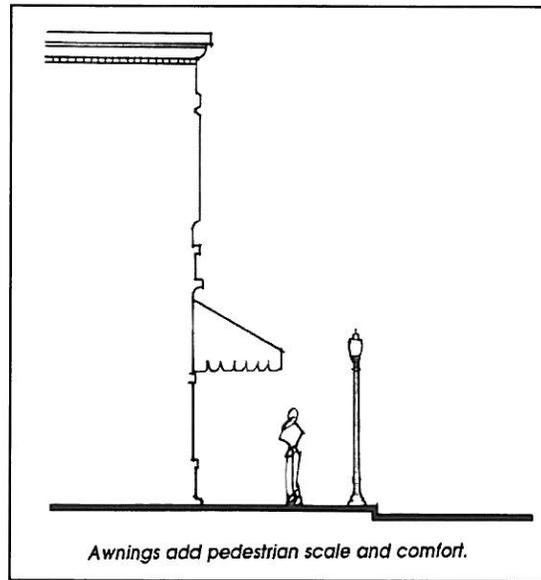
- 1) Commercial storefront entries are typically recessed and/or sheltered by a covered arcade structure, canopy or awning. This provides more area for display space, a sheltered transition area to the interior of the store and emphasizes the entrance. Recessed entries should be retained and are *strongly* encouraged in *new* storefront construction.

**Facade Color**

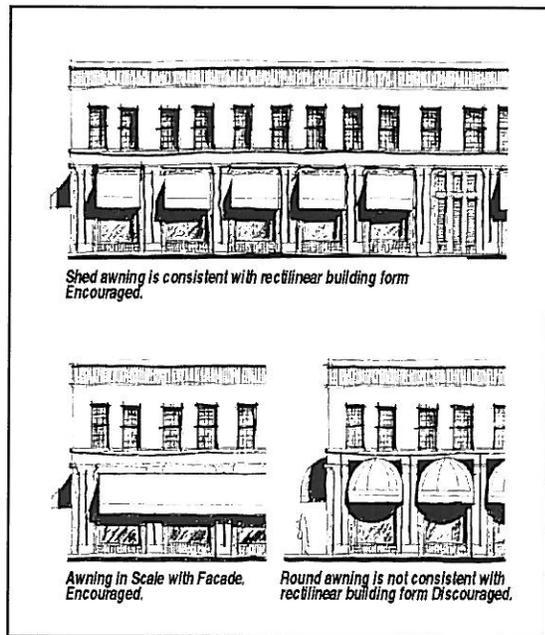
- 1) The use of non-reflective colors and natural building materials are encouraged.
- 2) Adjacent buildings should be painted different, but complementary, colors.
- 3) One base color should be used for the entire facade. Different trim colors are encouraged, but should not exceed three different colors.
- 4) Different window frame and sash colors are encouraged but should complement the main color of the building.

### Awnings And Canopies

- 1) Awnings are encouraged and should have a single color or two-color stripes. Lettering and trim, utilizing other colors is allowed but will be considered as sign area.



- 2) Awning shape should relate to the window or door opening. Barrel shaped awnings should be used to complement *arched* windows while square awnings should be used on *rectangular* windows.



- 3) All awnings should be well-maintained, washed regularly and replaced when faded or torn.
- 4) When there are several businesses in one building, awnings of the same color should be used with simple signs on the valance flap that may vary in type style and color to differentiate the individual businesses within the building.

### ***Door And Window Design***

- 1) Doors to retail shops should contain a high percentage of glass in order to view the retail contents.
- 2) When considering new window fenestration (window size, size of window panes, mullion type, window materials), it is important that the new design be sympathetic and compatible with the facade theme of the whole block (streetscape).
- 3) Use of clear glass (88% light transmission) on the first floor is *strongly* recommended.
- 4) Storefront windows should be as large as possible and no closer than 18" from the ground (bulkhead height). By limiting the bulkhead height, the visibility to the storefront displays and retail *interior* is maximized. *Maximum* bulkhead heights for new construction should be 36".
- 5) Discourage introducing or changing the location or size of windows or other openings that alter the architectural rhythm, alignment or character of the original building.
- 6) Air conditioning units placed in individual windows and window transom areas are *strongly* discouraged.
- 7) Permanent, fixed security grates or grilles in front of windows are *strongly* discouraged. If security grilles are necessary, they should be placed inside the building behind the window display area.

### ***Rear Entrances***

- 1) Signs should be appropriately scaled to fit the casual visual character of the alley or rear parking area.
- 2) An awning can soften rear facades and provide a pleasant protected space.
- 3) The rear entry door should be wood and glass similar to the front door. Special security glass (i.e. wire imbedded) is allowed.

- 4) Rear entrances should incorporate attractive design features to provide a visually appealing appearance.
- 5) Security lighting should be modest and should focus on the rear entry door.
- 6) Selective use of tree plantings, potted plants and other landscaping can subtly improve a rear facade.
- 7) Refuse containers and service facilities should be screened from view by solid masonry walls with metal doors. Use landscaping (shrubs and vines) to screen walls and help deter graffiti.

### ***Window Replacement***

- 1) If a window has deteriorated beyond repair or is missing, the replacement should match the original window in terms of design and materials. Replacement windows should always fill the *entire* existing opening and duplicate the original window pattern. For example, a double hung sash window should not be replaced by a single fixed pane of glass.
- 2) Avoid the use of windows and shutters that are not in keeping with the original style of the building.

### ***Removal Of Existing Canopies And Metal Awnings***

- 1) Metal aluminum canopies have a thin, unsubstantial and "**tacked on**" appearance which is inconsistent with the desirable design concept for Sherwood Gateway. Existing metal canopies should be removed and, if appropriate, replaced with fabric awnings, consistent with the architectural style of the building.

### ***Removal Of Elements Inconsistent With Original Facade***

- 1) Existing building elements incompatible with the original facade design of the building should be removed. These include: overdone exterior embellishments and "**modernized**" elements such as metal grilles or rusticated materials.

## ***SIGNS***

Signs within the Sherwood Gateway area shall be subject to compliance with existing Sign Code regulations and Design Review for the City of Los Altos. In addition, it is recommended that the merchants of Sherwood Gateway form an overall Master Sign Program to govern the use of signs in the area.

## **LANDSCAPE**

### **Introduction**

Landscaping in the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan area shall achieve three specific ends: 1) to beautify the local area and create a gateway to the City; 2) to soften commercial development; and 3) to unify the area as a pleasant environment for residents and visitors alike. These three ends will be accomplished by a recognizable use of repeated planting treatments. Consistency and continuity within the street right-of-way and building setback areas is extremely important.

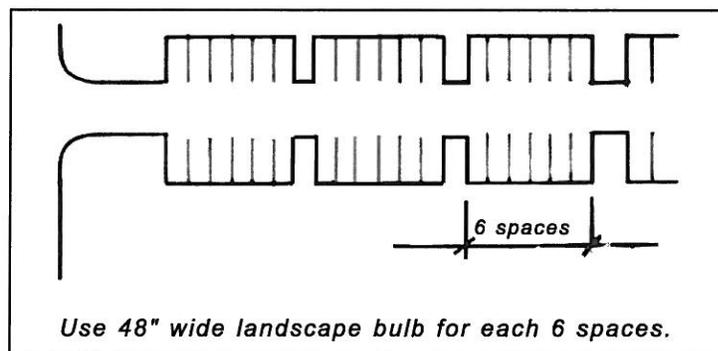
New development in Sherwood Gateway should refer to the following landscape guidelines and the regulations of this Specific Plan.

### **General Design Guidelines**

All development is encouraged to follow these general landscape guidelines:

- a. Save existing mature trees where possible.
- b. Use specimen trees (boxed trees) for immediate effect and accent.
- c. Give consideration to rapidly growing trees, where appropriate.
- d. Emphasize use of varieties which require low maintenance and drought tolerant species in public and commercial areas, especially in large landscape areas.
- e. Use boxed and potted plants in clay or wood containers, especially for enhancement of sidewalk shops.
- f. Give preference to ground covers which require little maintenance.
- g. Vines and climbing plants integrated upon building and perimeter garden and building walls are strongly encouraged.
- h. The use of materials such as crushed rock, redwood bark chips, pebbles, and stone or masonry slabs should not be used in place of live plant materials in landscape areas.
- i. Use color plantings at the base of a building, in planter boxes, and focal points.
- j. Trees should be planted using industry accepted methods.
- k. Landscaping should not obstruct the sightliness of motorists or pedestrians, especially at pedestrian crosswalks.
- l. Trees and shrubbery should not be located so that they interfere with the effectiveness of parking lot and street lighting.

- m. Landscaping material, so long as it is properly maintained, is the preferred method used to obscure the view of any parking or storage area adjacent from a public street or pedestrian area.
- n. Landscape screen plant materials should be large enough at planting to provide effective screening, and be capable of growing to the height and density desired within a reasonable period of time.
- o. All commercial projects should provide complete automatic sprinkler or drip irrigation systems, including a complete automatic watering system for large container plants.
- p. Keep all plantings healthy and growing with all planting areas free of weeds and debris.
- q. Trees should be 15-gallon size at time of planting.
- r. Shrubs should be a minimum of 5-gallon size at time of planting.
- s. Trees, shrubs, and vines should have body and fullness that is typical of the species.
- t. Landscaping in the Specific Plan Area, including private property, should be consistent with the City's approved street tree and landscape materials list.
- u. Parking lots should be developed as "car parks," broken up by extending landscaped planters four (4) feet in width, spanning the depth of the adjacent parking spaces. One (1) landscaped finger should be provided for each six (6) parking spaces wherever possible.



## Chapter VI

# IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION



### *Introduction*

This chapter provides the administrative, financing and regulatory approaches necessary to implement the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan. In addition, this chapter contains the required analysis to determine consistency between the Specific Plan, City of Los Altos General Plan, and other land use regulatory/policy documents.

This chapter contains the following sections:

- ❖ **Regulatory Framework And Consistency** provides the background of regulatory actions that have preceded the preparation of this Specific Plan (i.e., General Plan and Zoning Ordinance) and provides an analysis for determining consistency between the Specific Plan and other policy and regulatory documents.
- ❖ **Specific Plan Administration** outlines the administrative procedures that are necessary to implement the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan.
- ❖ **Potential Funding Mechanisms** provide summary information on a variety of funding sources and mechanisms to help finance the recommended improvements.

### *Regulatory Framework And Consistency*

#### *General Plan Consistency*

California State Law requires a specific plan to be consistent with the General Plan of the adopting locality. In order to ensure consistency with the City of Los Altos General Plan, a review of the existing General Plan goals and policies that are relevant to the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan was made.

The existing General Plan Land Use Designations for the Sherwood Gateway area are Thoroughfare Commercial (which encompasses approximately 23.4 acres of the Specific Plan area) and Medium Density Residential (approximately 2.3 acres).

Existing Zoning Districts within the Sherwood Gateway area provide consistency with and implementation of the General Plan include CT (Commercial Thoroughfare), CN (Neighborhood Commercial), OA-1

(Administrative Office) and R3-1 (Multiple-family Residential, maximum of 38 du/ac, maximum 3 stories).

The City has discussed the need to address commercial development and housing opportunities in the North Entry Area (Sherwood Gateway) for many years.

When the City updated the General Plan in 1987, the need for a specific plan to guide future development in the North Entry Area (Sherwood Gateway) was identified. The ultimate goal of preparing a specific plan is to produce a set of written goals and policies to guide the future, long-term development of the area. The following items were to be considered as part of the specific plan process:

- A safe and convenient circulation system, including pedestrian circulation;
  - Improved vehicular access to and from San Antonio Road;
  - Reduced number of driveways and parking conflicts on San Antonio Road;
  - An evaluation of, and decision whether to, orient a single driveway in line with Loucks Avenue and signalize the intersection;
  - Visual enhancement of the area;
- An architectural style and site amenities of this entrance to the City which reflect the character of Los Altos;
- An attractive orientation of buildings to a central landscaped parking plaza with pedestrian amenities;
  - Mitigation of adverse impacts on the adjacent neighborhood;
  - Multi-family/commercial mixed uses; and
  - Developments in excess of two stories in Sherwood Triangle.

In addition, one General Plan goal and several General Plan policies are directly applicable to the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan area:

Goal:

- ❖ Increase the economic potential and visually upgrade the North Entry Area (Sherwood Gateway)

### Policy Summaries:

- Recognize that the accessibility and visibility of the area are important to the overall business environment, and that the area functions as a visual and commercial entrance to Los Altos
- Encourage architectural unification and architectural harmony for commercial development within the Sherwood Triangle area
- Promote destination-oriented uses, but less intense than those permitted along El Camino Real
- Encourage high-revenue generating businesses
- Encourage the participation of the City, business owners and property owners in revitalization
- Support and encourage mixed-use projects in the area
- Promote the compatibility of commercial land uses with adjacent land uses and enforce regulations
- Maintain flexibility of standards to accommodate changing trends in retail, housing and office uses
- Establish land use designations which recognize existing development patterns and expected future conditions
- Consider a General Plan Amendment when Specific Plan conflicts with existing City policies

### ***Conflict With Other Regulations***

Whenever the provisions of this Specific Plan impose regulations upon buildings or structures, or on the use of lands, yards or setbacks, or otherwise establish more restrictive regulations than are imposed or required by the other law, title, ordinance, code or regulation, the provisions of this Zoning Code shall govern.

### ***Statutory Authority In Case Of Conflicting Provisions***

Nothing in this Specific Plan shall be deemed to affect, annul or abrogate any ordinances pertaining or applicable to the properties and areas affected by this Specific Plan. In the event that a conflict does arise, the more restrictive requirements shall control.

### ***Findings Regarding The Specific Plan***

No division of land, use permit, site plan review application or other entitlement for use, and no public improvement shall be authorized in the Specific Plan area unless a finding has been made that the proposed project is in substantial compliance with the Specific Plan. Approval of final development plans and use permits shall be contingent upon a determination of substantial compliance with the applicable provisions of this Specific Plan and the City of Los Altos General Plan.

### ***Site Plan Review***

To ensure compliance with all applicable requirements of this Specific Plan, all development projects (unless specifically exempt) shall be subject to all Site Plan Review procedures required by applicable City ordinances.

### ***Amendments To The Specific Plan***

This Specific Plan, or any part thereof, may be amended or replaced by the same procedure as the Plan was adopted.

### ***Specific Plan Review/Update***

The Specific Plan should be the subject of a review by the City at least every five years. The first review should occur five years from the date of Plan adoption and should occur at intervals of five years thereafter.

## ***PROGRAM***

### ***INCENTIVES***

#### ***Mid-Block Paseo and Public Plaza Incentive***

In order to achieve the type and quality of development and revitalization

envisioned for the Specific Plan area, certain development incentive bonuses have been established to encourage developers and property owners to participate in the various programs described below. Incentive bonuses may be granted at the discretion of the City Council and nothing contained herein shall obligate the City to provide any of the following bonuses.

#### ***Purpose***

Within Sherwood Gateway, it is desirable to encourage the provision of pedestrian paseos at mid-block locations to provide convenient pedestrian access to the street from public parking lots at the rear of buildings; it is also desirable to create public plazas to encourage interaction and passive outdoor activities.

#### ***Requirements***

In order to qualify for the mid-block paseo incentive bonus, a proposed project must meet the following requirements:

- ❖ The minimum width of any paseo provided under this program shall not be less than 10 feet at any point. Paseos longer than 50 feet shall be an average of 20 feet wide.
- ❖ The paseo shall be designed to be an integral part of the overall project and shall be configured to provide straight forward access from an alley or rear parking area to the street. The incorporation of plazas into the design is highly encouraged. Business entrances are encouraged to front onto a paseo. If it is deemed that a business entrance cannot front onto a paseo, minimum of one (1) display window per business shall be provided facing onto the paseo.
- ❖ The paseo shall incorporate landscape features, lighting, shade, textured paving, and other design elements to enhance the overall pedestrian environment and provide a high level of security, natural surveillance, and convenience.
- ❖ Mid-block pedestrian paseos shall only be provided within the middle one-third of any block.
- ❖ A development agreement between the City and the property owner shall be entered into describing responsibilities for maintenance and other liabilities of the paseo.

In order to qualify for the public plaza incentive bonus, a proposed project must meet the following requirements:

- ❖ Where inconsistent setbacks occur along the street, plazas should be considered to compensate for the broken building edge.
- ❖ Plazas should be designed with unimpeded line-of-sights to and from the public sidewalk; and physical access should be provided from the public sidewalk to plazas.
- ❖ Visual features, such as public art or a fountain, should be incorporated in plazas to attract pedestrians.
- ❖ Shade trees or other elements providing relief from the sun should be incorporated within plazas, in a manner that does not impair pedestrian movement. Landscaping for the plazas should provide special interest through plant materials with integral interest such as special foliage color, seasonal changes in plant habit, scent, or floral display.
- ❖ Paving and furniture used in private plazas should complement streetscape elements used in the public right-of-way.
- ❖ Plazas, including all entrances and exits, should be fully illuminated ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise to facilitate natural surveillance opportunities and to discourage illegitimate activities.

Lighting should be designed to help define, order and further develop the design concept of the space in a manner that appears welcoming to pedestrians.

- ❖ A development agreement between the City and the property owner shall be entered into describing responsibilities for maintenance and other liabilities of the public plazas.

### ***Incentive bonuses***

For projects meeting the above requirements, the following development bonuses may be available:

- ❖ Maximum floor area ratio (FAR) may be increased.
- ❖ Required parking may be reduced, provided that a finding can be made that adequate parking will be available to the project.
- ❖ Through such things as the development agreement process, the City may consider other incentive bonuses including, but not limited to, reductions in processing fees, in-lieu fees, or utility connection fees. The extent of such bonuses may vary on a case-by-case basis between the project applicant and the City.

### ***Removal of Nonconforming Signs Incentive***

#### ***Purpose***

In order to enhance the image and develop a unified theme for Sherwood Gateway, it is desirable to encourage the removal of nonconforming signs at a rapid pace. Therefore, in order to encourage the removal of nonconforming signs, the City may offer owners of nonconforming signs the following incentives to hasten their removal.

#### ***Requirements***

- ❖ In order to qualify for the nonconforming sign removal incentive, a sign proposed to be removed must meet the following requirements:
  - The sign must have been a legal conforming sign at the time of its placement. (In other words, the sign cannot be illegal).
  - The sign shall not be an abandoned sign at the time of application.
  - The owner of the sign must have previously applied for and received a sign permit to allow the continuance of a nonconforming sign unless this removal incentive is applied for within one hundred and eighty (180) days of the effective date of this Specific Plan.

### ***Incentive Program***

Numerous incentive programs for the removal of nonconforming signs are available for the City to consider. One such incentive program is described below.

Owners of nonconforming signs may at their discretion choose to participate in the following sign removal incentive program. The City would select a number of applicants each year to participate in the program based on the priority list of signs provided above and the availability of funds.

The nonconforming sign removal incentive program is a four (4) year program commencing on the effective date of this Specific Plan. The program is designed to encourage the rapid removal of the least desirable types of signs by providing larger incentives in the early years and tapering off to no incentives in the fifth year.

The incentives which may be provided are as follows:

#### **Year one**

- ❖ Free removal of nonconforming sign.
- ❖ Payment of an incentive bonus of \$1,000 for pole signs, \$500 for all others.
- ❖ Free design service to provide conforming, attractive sign sketches.\*

#### **Year two**

- ❖ Free removal of nonconforming sign.
- ❖ Free design service to provide conforming, attractive sign sketches\*

#### **Years three and four**

- ❖ Free removal of nonconforming sign.

*\*Those participants availing themselves of the free design service must agree to utilize one of the alternative sketches provided and to erect a new sign within three (3) months of receiving the sketch designs. If said new sign is not erected, the participant will be required to reimburse the City for the cost of the sign design service.*

### ***Lot Consolidation Incentives***

#### ***Purpose***

The intent of this section is to: 1) provide for the owner-initiated merger of contiguous parcels, within Sherwood Gateway, under common ownership without reversion to acreage, pursuant to Section 66499.20 3/4 of the Government Code; and 2) provide incentives for owner-initiated mergers within Sherwood Gateway that serve to achieve orderly development, improve level of pedestrianism, and implement this Specific Plan.

### ***Initiation by Property Owner***

Proceedings to merge contiguous parcels may be initiated by petition of the owner of record of the parcels. The petition shall be in a form and contain the information prescribed by the Planning Director.

### ***Review Procedure***

The Planning Director has the authority to approve a voluntary merger. A voluntary merger may be approved if it is found that all of the properties involved in the merger are in common ownership.

### ***Development Requirements***

Mergers approved under the provisions of this section shall be subject only to those conditions which insure that the proposal meets the development standards and requirements for Sherwood Gateway. All mergers shall be recorded with a Notice of Merger, pursuant to Government Code Section 66451.12.

### ***Incentive Bonuses***

The following incentives may be provided at the discretion of the City Council for the voluntary merger of contiguous parcels within Sherwood Gateway:

- ❖ Required parking may be reduced, provided that a finding can be made that adequate parking will be available to serve the subject project;
- ❖ Area of permitted signs may be increased (NOTE: ten percent is a standard amount), provided a finding can be made that the increased area does not detract from the beautification and pedestrian-oriented objectives set forth in this Specific Plan for Sherwood Gateway; and
- ❖ Floor area ratio (FAR) may be increased, provided that a finding can be made that the increased intensity will not negatively impact adjacent land uses or detract from the beautification and pedestrian-oriented objectives set forth in this Specific Plan for Sherwood Gateway.

## ***POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES***

In order for the Specific Plan area to develop consistent with the goals and objectives of this plan, the envisioned improvements will need to be funded. This section summarizes a variety of potential methods for funding improvements identified in the Sherwood Gateway Specific Plan. This listing is not intended to exclude any other available funding source nor does it require the use of any source listed.

### ***Conditions of Approval for Individual Projects***

Under this method of financing, individual developers are required to construct infrastructure and other facilities as part of their project approval when such improvements are directly related to their project.

Construction of facilities by individual developers is the easiest financing method to implement and should be employed whenever possible. This method allows developers to move ahead with their projects subject to their own timing without the potential delays which might accrue in the creation of more elaborate financing schemes. However, issues of equity preclude developer construction for features of area wide or general benefit unless reimbursement is involved.

In requiring construction of facilities by developers, even if there is to be reimbursement, care must be taken to avoid overloading front-end development costs to the point that on-site project amenities be sacrificed in favor of up-front costs for off-site facilities/ improvements.

### ***Special Districts and Fees***

Special fee districts are frequently established by local agencies to address specific infrastructure needs such as sewer, water or drainage. In most instances fees are collected upon the development of land within the fee district, based on a master plan for the specific facility. Fees are usually collected on per acre or per unit basis.

Impact fees are monetary exactions (other than taxes or special assessments) that are charged by local agencies in conjunction with approval of a development project. Impact fees are levied for the purpose of defraying all or a portion of the costs of any public improvements or amenities which benefit the project. The collection of impact fees does not require formation of a special district.

Impact fees are paid by builders or developers, typically at the time a building permit is issued. The public facilities funded by impact fees must be specifically identified. There must be a reasonable relationship, pursuant to Assembly Bill 1600, between the type of development project, the need for the facilities, the cost of the facilities and the need to impose a fee.

While developer fees cannot typically be leveraged (i.e. provide security for bonds or other debt instruments), fees can be used in conjunction with debt financing to help retire bonds secured by other means (e.g. land). In this case, developer fees can generate supplemental revenues to reduce future special taxes or assessments, or free up tax increment or other revenues for alternative uses. Developer fees can also be used to generate reimbursement revenues to property owners or public agencies who have previously paid more than their fair share of public improvement costs.

***Special Assessment  
Districts  
(1911, 1913, 1915 Act)***

California law provides procedures to levy assessments against benefiting properties and issue tax exempt bonds to finance public facilities and infrastructure improvements. Assessment districts, also known as improvement districts, are initiated by the legislative body (e.g. city), subject to majority protest of property owners or registered voters. Assessments are distributed in proportion to the benefits received by each property, and represent a lien against property. The assessments are fixed dollar amounts and may be prepaid. Only improvements with property-specific benefits (e.g. roads, sewer and water improvements) may be financed with assessments.

***Area of Benefit Fees***

Area of benefit fees may be enacted by the legislative body (i.e. city) through adoption of an ordinance, without voter approval. The fee must be directly related to benefit received. It does not create a lien against property, but must be paid in full as a condition of approval. Its principle use is for encumbering properties that will not voluntarily enter into an assessment of CFD, so that they pay their fair share at the time they are ready to be developed.

Proceeds may be used to reimburse property owners who pay up-front cost for facilities benefiting other properties. Benefiting properties may be given the option to finance the fees by entering into an assessment district (1913/1911 Act) or Mello-Roos (CFD).

***Infrastructure Financing  
Districts***

Senate Bill (SB) 308 authorizes cities to form infrastructure financing districts, in accordance with a prescribed procedure, to finance public capital facilities (including, but not limited to, arterial streets, transit facilities, drainage and sewer facilities, child care facilities, libraries, and parks/ recreational facilities) utilizing a method of tax increment financing. However, tax revenues of county offices of education, school districts or community college districts would be subject to diversion under this bill.

SB 308 permits a district to only finance the purchase of facilities for which construction has been completed and provides that these facilities need not be physically located within the boundaries of the district. The bill prohibits infrastructure financing districts from overlapping redevelopment project areas.

The bill would require any district that constructs dwelling units to set aside not less than 20 percent of these units to increase and improve the city's supply of low- and moderate-income housing available at an affordable housing cost, as defined, to persons of low and moderate income, as defined.

The bill would require approval by the district's landowners or voters, as specified, of district formation and of bonds to be issued by the district to finance public capital facilities that provide significant benefits to an area larger than the area of the district.

***Business Improvement******Districts***

State law (SB 1424), Parking and Business Improvement Area Law of 1989,

provides for the establishment of a funding mechanism known as a Business Improvement District (BID). The BID allows business and property owners within a self-designated downtown area to impose a self-assessment, and utilize the revenues for the improvement of physical amenities such as parking facilities, benches, lighting and decorations, and for activities and promotions which benefit businesses located in the area.

The assessments are administered by the business associations elected to best utilize these funds for overall business improvement projects for the area. The BID allows downtown areas to utilize methods of promotion and image improvement that have been developed and used effectively by shopping centers over the last 30 years.

***Mello-Roos Community******Facilities Districts***

The Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982 allows for the creation of

special districts authorized to levy a special tax and issue tax exempt bonds to finance public facilities and services. A Community Facilities District (CFD) may be initiated by the legislative body or by property owner petition and must be approved by a 2/3 majority of either property owners or registered voters (if there are more than 12 registered voters living in the area).

***Landscaping and******Lighting Districts***

Landscaping and Lighting Districts (LLD) may be used for installation,

maintenance and servicing of landscaping and lighting, through annual assessments on benefiting properties. LLD's also may provide for construction and maintenance of appurtenant features, including curbs, gutters, walls, sidewalks or paving, and irrigation or drainage facilities. They also may be used to fund and maintain parks above normal park standards maintained from general fund revenues.

***Community Development  
(CDBG) Block Grant Funds***

emphasis for  
benefiting groups and

The federal government provides limited funding for local community development programs under the CDBG program. Funds have historically been made available for housing and business improvement and

revitalization, job training and economic development. The targeting of CDBG funds is generally towards individuals of low and moderate income.

Subject to the availability of funds, CDBG could be utilized to develop minor public improvements (i.e. curbs, gutters, sidewalks) to rehabilitate housing, and to make cosmetic improvements to business facades in low-income areas. Like several of the other programs described, CDBG funds likely will not provide a significant basis for implementing the project's objectives, but can combine with other measures as part of the overall program.

***Adopt-a-Light Program***

As a unique method for paying for street lighting fixtures, a small projected plaque sign could be affixed to the light pole with the name or logo of the local merchant/business/ person/entity who purchased the fixtures. First preference should be given to those donors located in Sherwood Gateway. This program can be applied to light poles/fixtures and banners.

***Economic Development Administration (EDA) Loans and Grants***

Grants are available to communities for site preparation and construction of public works projects that will help spur economic development. Projects vary widely, including among others, building construction, roads, water and sewer facilities, railroad spurs, etc.

The program is restricted to projects that can demonstrate job creation potential. Loan guarantees of 80% are available for loans equal to or greater than \$600,000 for individual enterprises.

Individual enterprises must demonstrate they are unable to obtain financing through conventional means. Frequently, EDA loans & grants are combined with other funding sources (CDBG). Matching funds of varying proportions are required, and grants are provided to governmental entities.

***Urban Development Through Tourism*** The Economic Development Administration (EDA) provides strategy grants to perform regional and local studies for assessing the feasibility of tourism activities. EDA has also provided public works grants for local public infrastructure necessary to accommodate tourism activity.

***Public Works and Development Facilities***

to industrial facilities, vocational

The EDA provides grants for funding of public works and development facilities that contribute to the creation or retention of private sector jobs.

Eligible activities include water and sewer systems, access roads areas, port facilities, railroad siding/spurs, public tourism schools, and site improvements for industrial parks.

***Urban Forestry Grant Program***

This program provides grants up to \$30,000 for local governments to purchase to purchase trees which are environmentally tolerant and high quality. Trees must be on public property, and projects must be completed within 18 months of project award. The City of Los Altos can apply and receive awards for up to four years in a row. This program is administered by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Urban Forestry Program.

***Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program******Grants (Prop 111)***

Three categories of projects are eligible, among them highway landscaping and urban forestry." Projects must be designed to mitigate the environmental mitigate the environmental impacts of modified or new public transportation

facilities, but do not have to be within the road right-of-way. A \$500,000 maximum grant amount is available to local, state and federal government agencies and 101(C)(3) nonprofit entities.

***California ReLeaf/  
California Department of  
Forestry and Fire Protection***

The program is overseen by the EEMP Coordinator, State of California Resources Agency. The City of Los Altos can pursue this for the purchase, installation, and maintenance of street trees.

Up to \$5,000 is available to projects that plant large-crowning, environmentally tolerant trees on public property to provide shade and volunteer entities other benefits. The grants can be awarded to citizen groups and city affiliated

***National Small Business  
Administration Tree  
Planting Program***

Up to \$200,000 is available for tree planting projects on land owned by the applicant agency. Trees must be purchased from small business nurseries and planted by small business contractors. The SBA Tree Planting Program is administered through the California Department of Forestry.

***Water and Sewer Rates,  
Fees, and Charges***

water

The revenue generated by new rates, fees, and charges for repair, replacement and regulatory improvements and for expansion to serve new development will be used to fund operation, maintenance, and capital improvements in the water and sewer system including infrastructure for and sewer pipeline replacements.