



# Sonoma Developmental Center Walking Tour (Planning Agency)

Brian Oh  
Permit Sonoma  
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## 1.2 Vision and Guiding Principles

The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles represented a major milestone in the planning process, outlining an aspirational description of what the community would like to be in the future. Released in January 2021, the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles were informed by input from past community engagement, a community survey and workshop, Planning Advisory Team meetings, the State legislation, and technical analysis.

The former Sonoma Developmental Center is reinvigorated as a vibrant and sustainable community in the heart of Sonoma Valley. A mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented core provides a diverse array of housing choices, and serves as a magnet of innovation, research, education, and visitation. The surrounding open spaces flourish as natural habitats and as agricultural and recreational land linked to regional parks and open space systems. Development builds on the site's rich historic legacy while meeting contemporary needs, emphasizing resiliency and sustainable building practices. Civic uses, community gathering places, and events attract visitors from Glen Ellen, Eldridge, and the broader Sonoma region, making the center a hub of community life in Sonoma Valley.

## VISION STATEMENT

The former Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC) site has emerged as a culturally and ecologically vibrant and resilient community. A core 180-acre developed area is surrounded by a vast protected open space of oak woodlands, native grasslands, wetlands, forests, creeks, and lakes that provide habitats and wildlife movement corridors; agricultural land; and recreational open space integrated with the surrounding park systems.

The developed core area comprises a complementary mix of housing, commercial, and institutional uses. The SDC site is financially independent and supporting infrastructure is up to date and well maintained. A variety of housing—including affordable, workforce, mid-income, and market-rate housing; senior housing; housing for people with developmental disabilities; and in new and adaptively re-used buildings—will foster a diverse and inclusive community. New development complements the adjacent communities of Glen Ellen and Eldridge. Residents enjoy pedestrian access to essential services and parks, and seamless connections to surrounding open spaces. Employment opportunities reflect the site's legacy of care and emphasize innovation, research, education, environment, and ecology, together with supporting commercial and visitor-serving uses. Sonoma Valley's former largest employment hub is reinvigorated as a regional model for sustainable development.

The reinvigorated community builds upon the site's rich historic legacy while embracing the future. Key historic resources—including the Sonoma House and the Main Building—have been repurposed for contemporary uses, and elements of the historic landscape preserved. Site design patterns—streets layout, building/street relationship, streetscape character—maintain east-west views to the Sonoma and Mayacamas mountains and foster a harmonious sense of place. Contemporary buildings are intermixed with repurposed historic structures, creating a rich and visually cohesive development fabric.

A comprehensive network of pedestrian and bicycle paths connects residents to local and regional destinations, and to transit. Well-designed bus stops, crosswalks, and protected bike lanes create an inviting sense of safety for those of all ages and abilities and provide better walking and biking access to Glen Ellen and Eldridge, and to the regional bicycle network.

New land uses contribute positively to the site's financial feasibility, enabling efficient and sustainable construction of necessary infrastructure. Water is conserved and reused, and safety and fire protection built into the landscape, with defensible design, new fire-resistant buildings, and well-planned evacuation routes. Reuse of historic buildings has saved resources needed for new construction, and building designs reflect sustainable practices and wildfire resiliency. The surrounding open spaces, preserved in perpetuity, are home to countless





local species that use SDC's habitat corridors. Sightings of wildlife throughout the site and along Sonoma Creek enrich life for residents.

The SDC site has become a multilingual gathering place for the Sonoma Valley, with public spaces for lingering and enjoying a cup of coffee or a meal; community amenities, cultural spaces, and events; playfields and recreational spaces for soccer games or a game of fetch; and seamless connections to the extensive trail networks of the SDC property, Jack London State Park, Sonoma Valley Regional Park, and the surrounding mountains.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. **Promote a Vibrant, Mixed-Use Community.**  
Promote a diverse and integrated mix of residential development and employment uses, including research, education, office, retail, and small businesses, to promote optimal development patterns and site revitalization in the Core Campus, and provide economic opportunities for Sonoma Valley communities.
2. **Emphasize a Cohesive Sense of Place and Walkability.**  
Establish a cohesive visual landscape with consistent streetscapes and improved sidewalks within the Core Campus. Locate land uses and enhance the existing street network to encourage development of a walkable and pedestrian-friendly environment with gathering spaces, diverse activities, and connections within and to surrounding communities and regional trail systems. Ensure that new development complements the adjacent communities of Glen Ellen and Eldridge.
3. **Integrate Development with Open Space Conservation.** Promote a sustainable, climate-resilient community surrounded by preserved open space and parkland that protects natural resources, fosters environmental stewardship, and maintains and enhances the permeability of the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor for safe wildlife movement throughout the site. Support the responsible use of open space as a recreation resource for the community.





**4. Balance Redevelopment with Existing Land Uses.**

Use recognized principles of land use planning and sustainability to gauge how well proposed land uses protect public trust resources and fit the character and values of the site and surrounding area, as well as benefit local communities and residents.

**5. Promote Sustainability and Resiliency.** Promote sustainable development practices in building and landscape design. Plan infrastructure efficiently and sustainably, conserving water and creating opportunities for water reuse and recharge. Proactively plan for community safety in natural disasters, especially ensuring that emergency plans and egress routes are in place with adequate capacity, and landscapes and buildings are designed with fire defenses.

**6. Support Housing Development and Provide a Variety of Housing Types.** Promote housing to address Sonoma County's pressing housing needs and the State's key development objectives for the site. Support a range of housing opportunities, including affordable housing, workforce housing, mid-income housing, housing for individuals with developmental disabilities, senior housing, and market rate housing.

**7. Balance Development with Historic Resource Conservation.** Preserve and adaptively reuse the Main Building and the Sonoma House complex, conserve key elements of the site's historic landscape, and strive to maintain the integrity of the historic district to the west of Arnold Drive by adaptive reuse of contributing buildings where feasible. Support a cohesive community feel and character, while allowing a diversity of architectural styles.

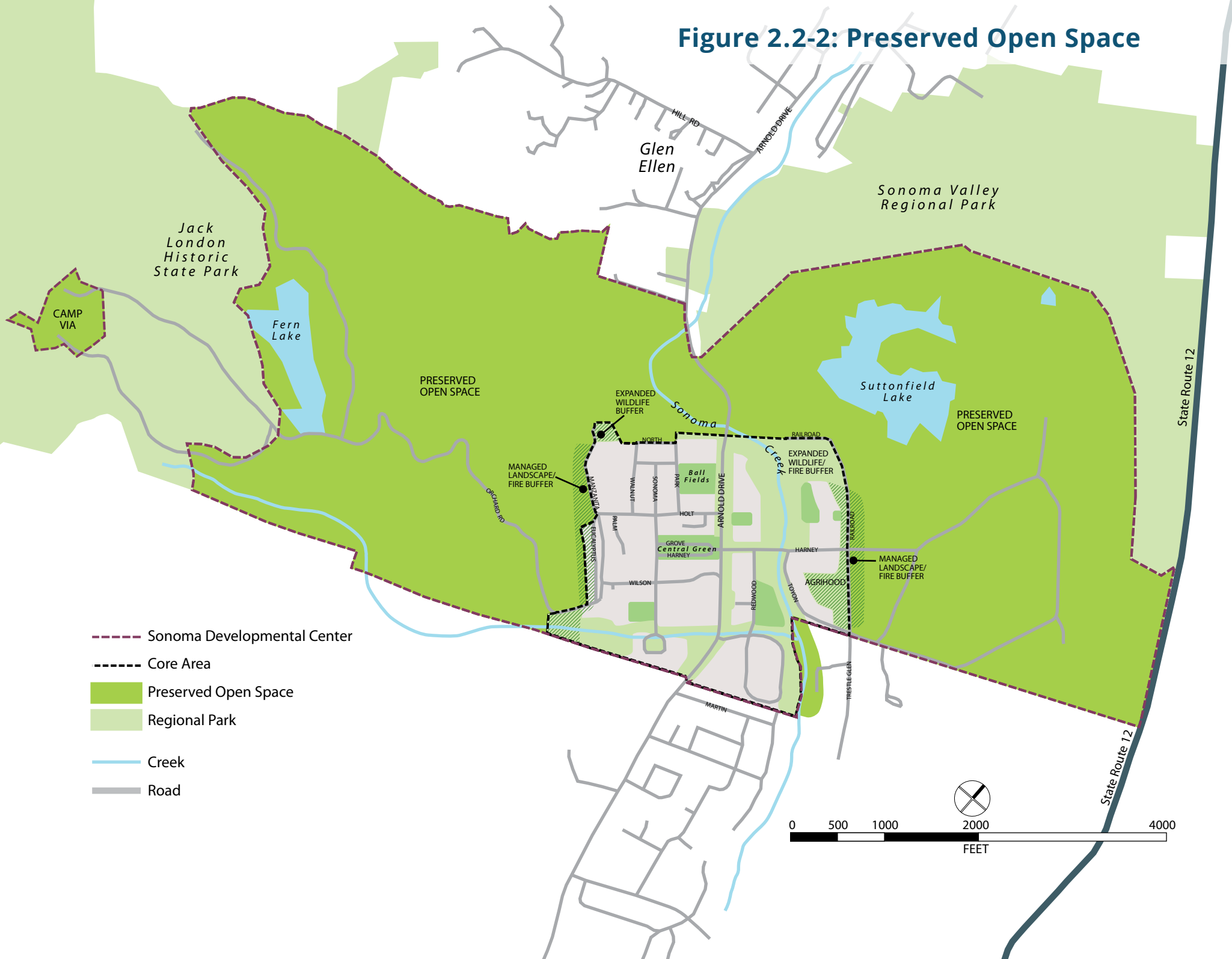




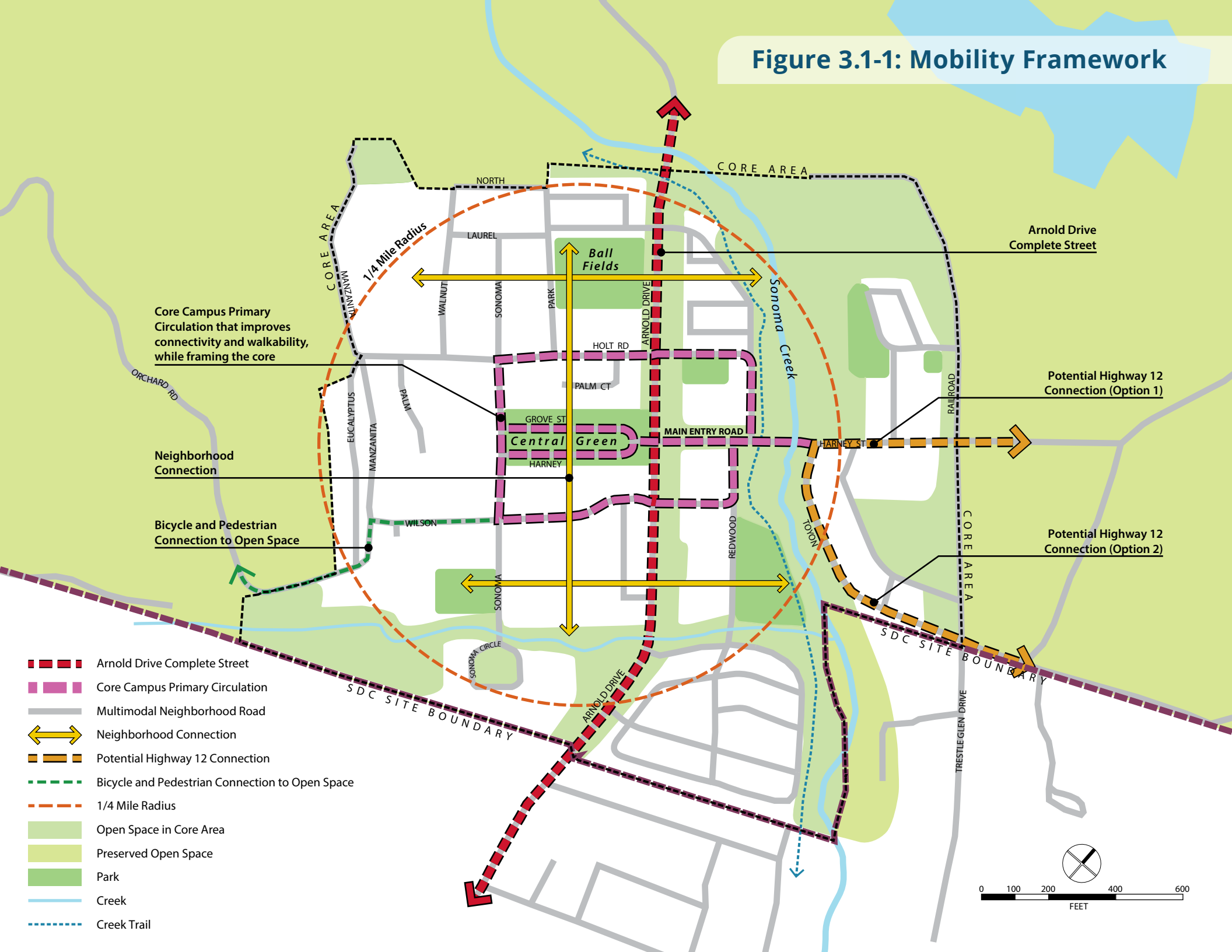
8. **Promote Multi-Modal Mobility.** Promote car-free circulation within the site and promote transportation connections between the SDC site and the larger Sonoma Valley and Bay Area, including through transit access, safe sidewalks and crossings, and regional bicycle routes. Ensure that new development takes into consideration resultant traffic and levels of transportation activity from when SDC was operational.
9. **Ensure Long-Term Fiscal Sustainability.** Ensure that the proposed plan is financially feasible and sustainable, as financial feasibility is essential to the long-term success of the project. Ensure that the proposed plan supports funding for necessary infrastructure improvements and historic preservation while supporting the Sonoma Valley community's needs and galvanizing regional economic growth.
10. **Embrace Diversity.** Accommodate the needs of people of diverse backgrounds, interests, and income levels, creating an inclusive, accessible, inviting, and safe place that preserves SDC's legacy of care and creates opportunities for marginalized communities.



Figure 2.2-2: Preserved Open Space

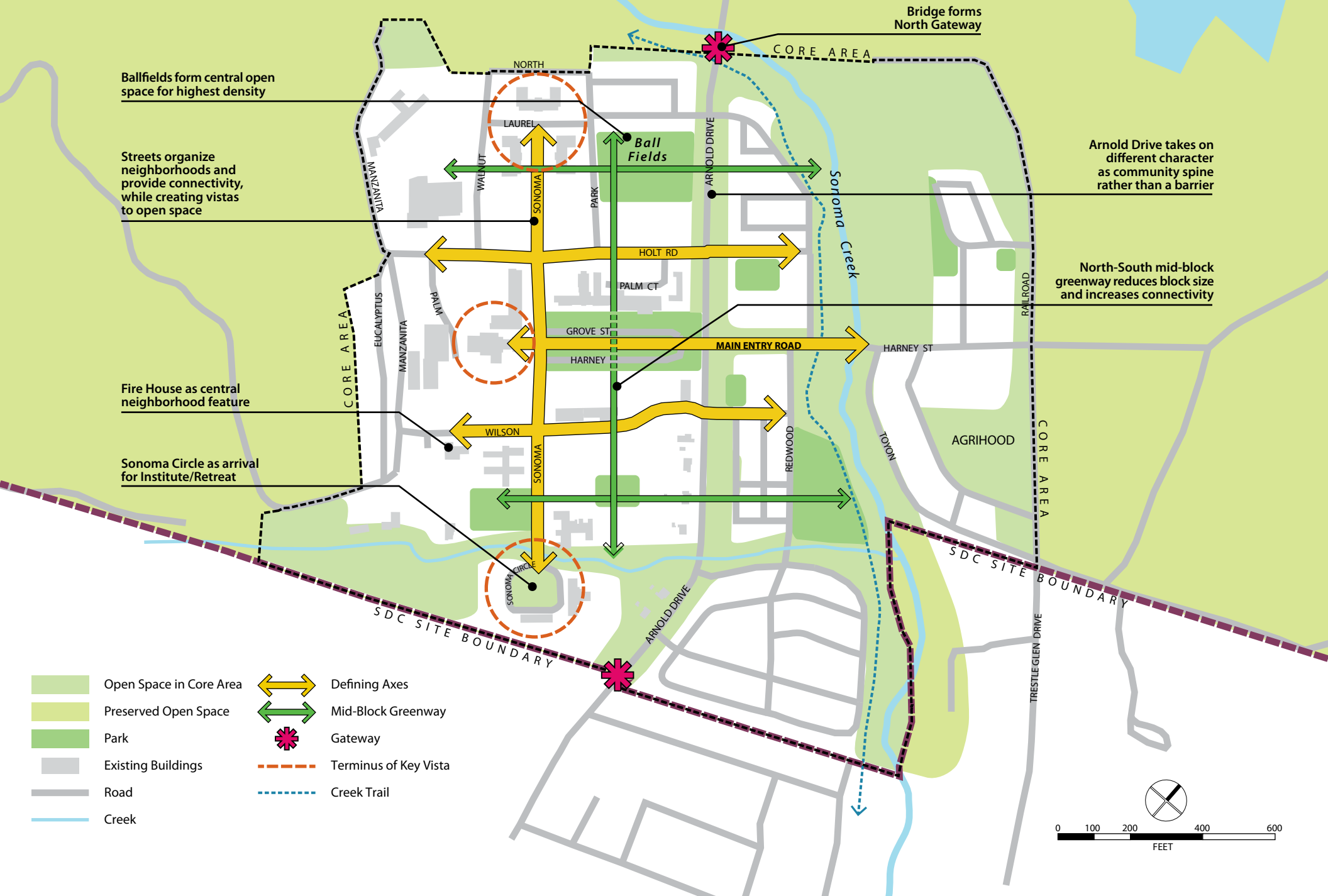


# Figure 3.1-1: Mobility Framework

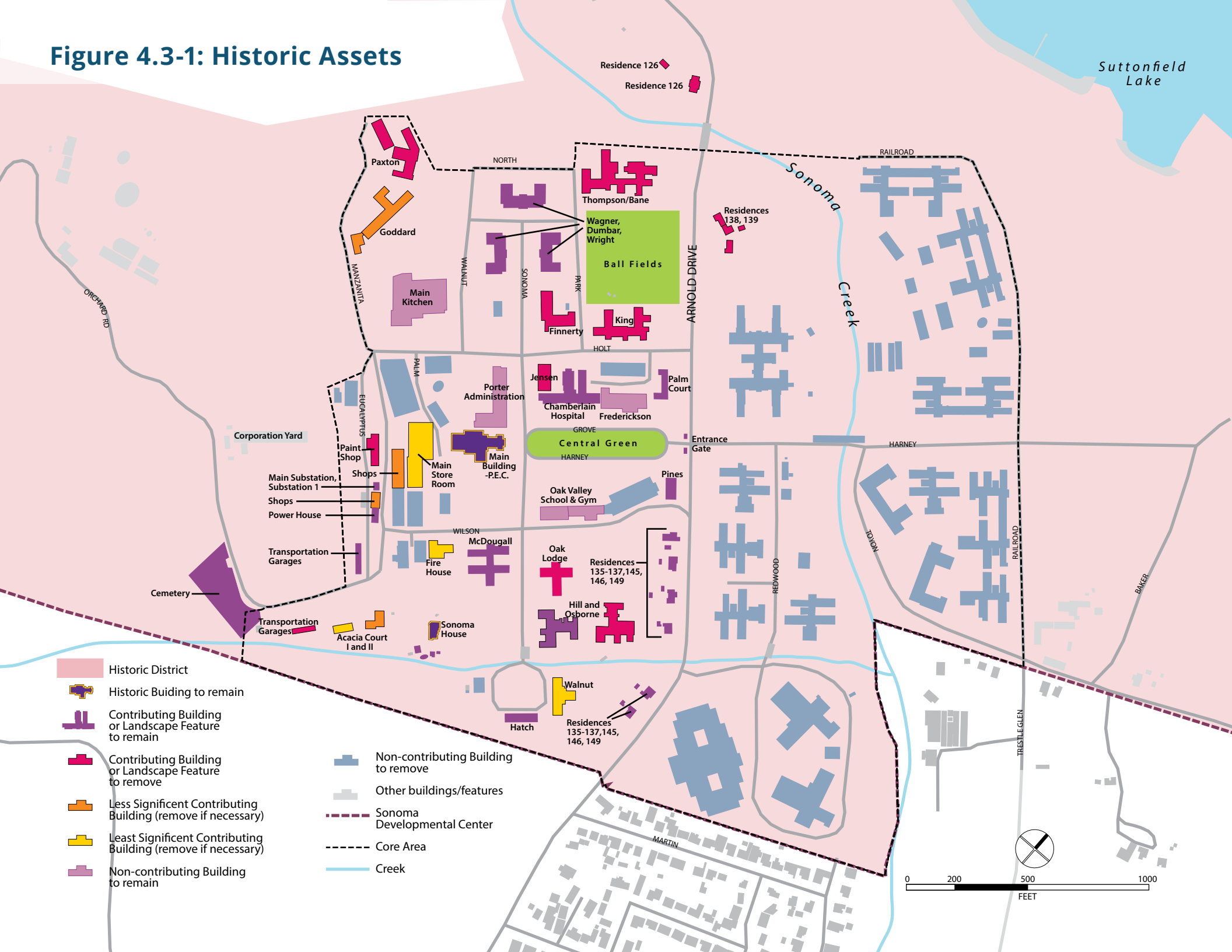




## Suttonfield Lake

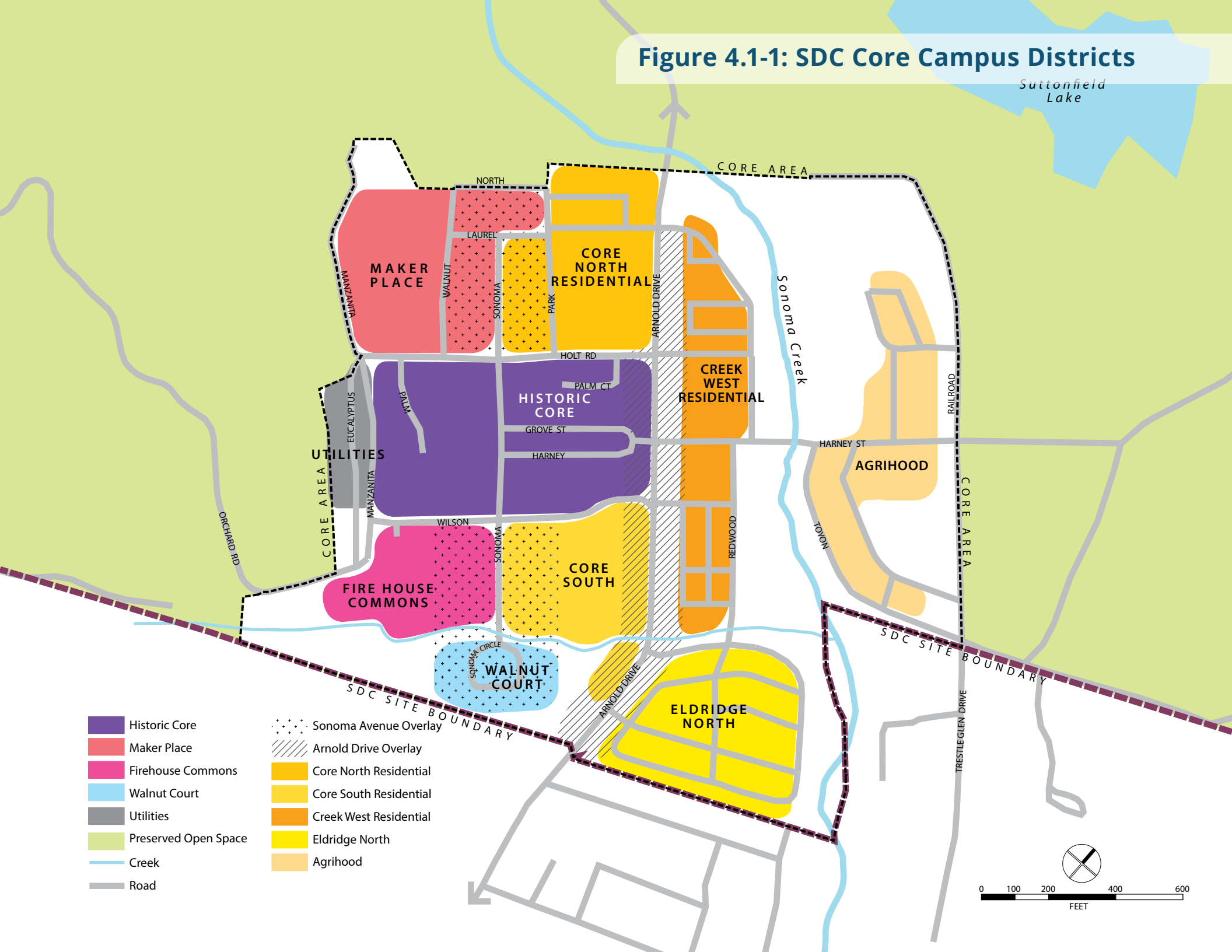


**Figure 4.3-1: Historic Assets**



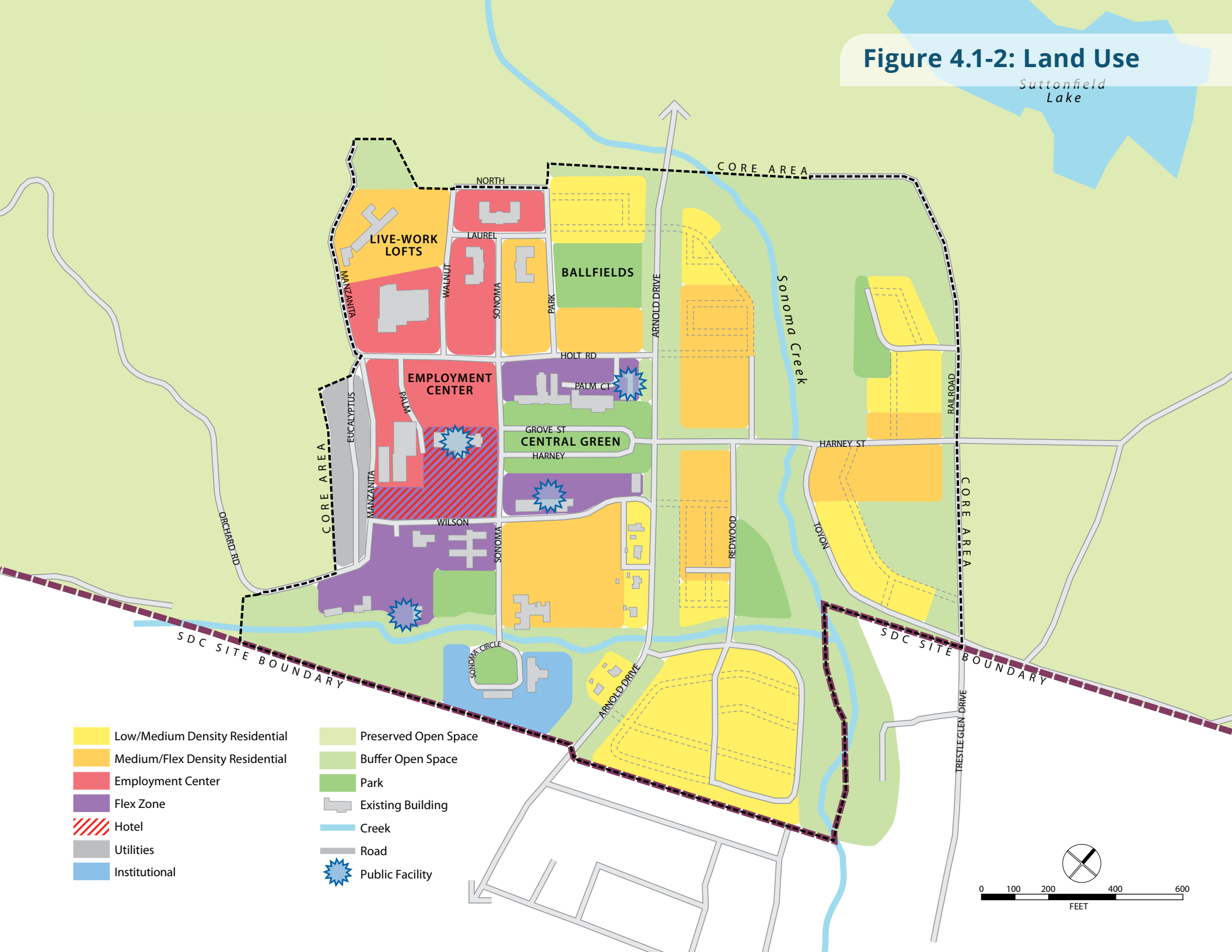


**Figure 4.1-1: SDC Core Campus Districts**



# Figure 4.1-2: Land Use

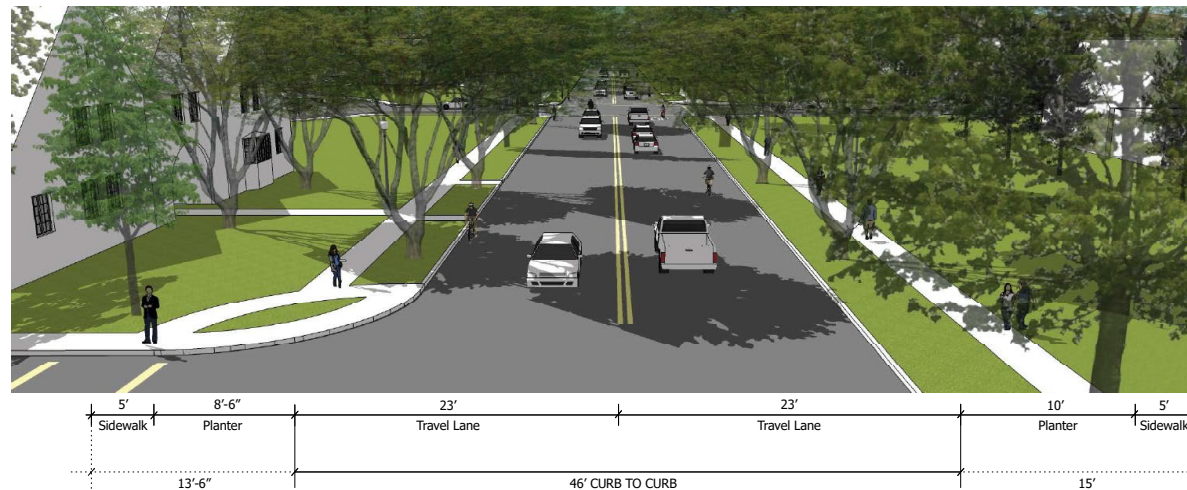
Suttonfield Lake



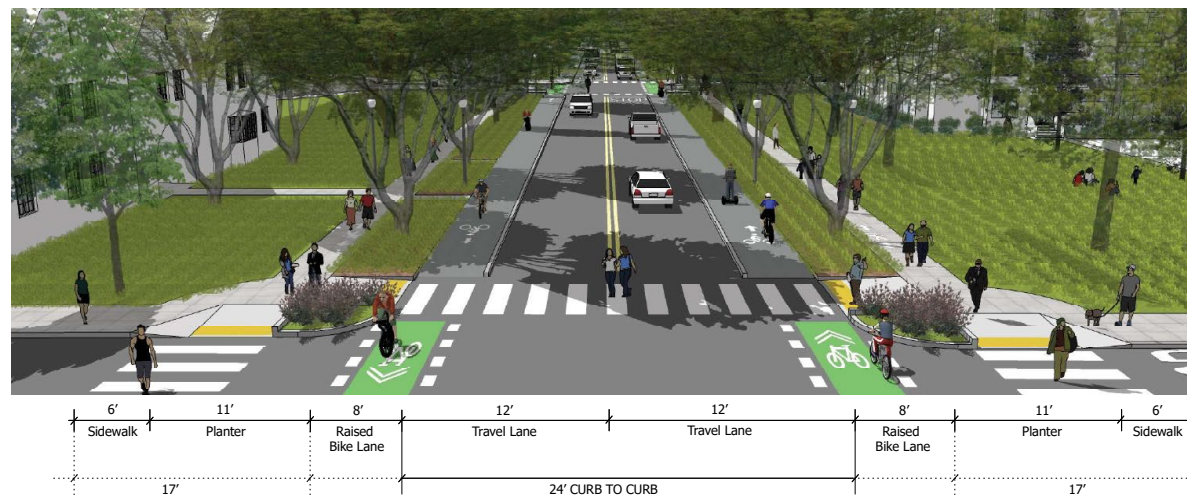




**Figure 5.1-3: Arnold Drive - Existing Conditions looking North of Harney**



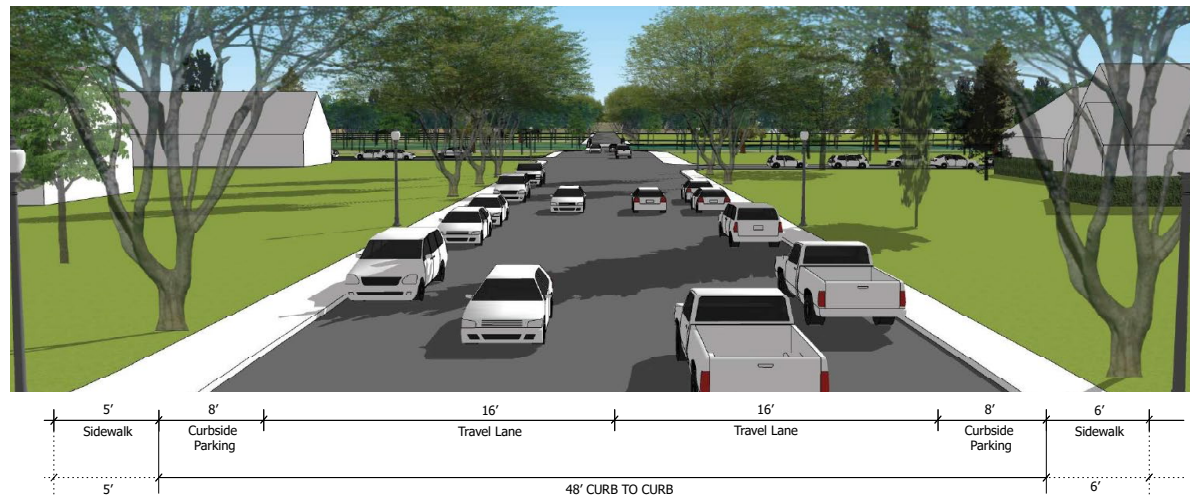
**Figure 5.1-4: Arnold Drive - Streetscape Concept with Raised Bike Lane looking North of Harney**



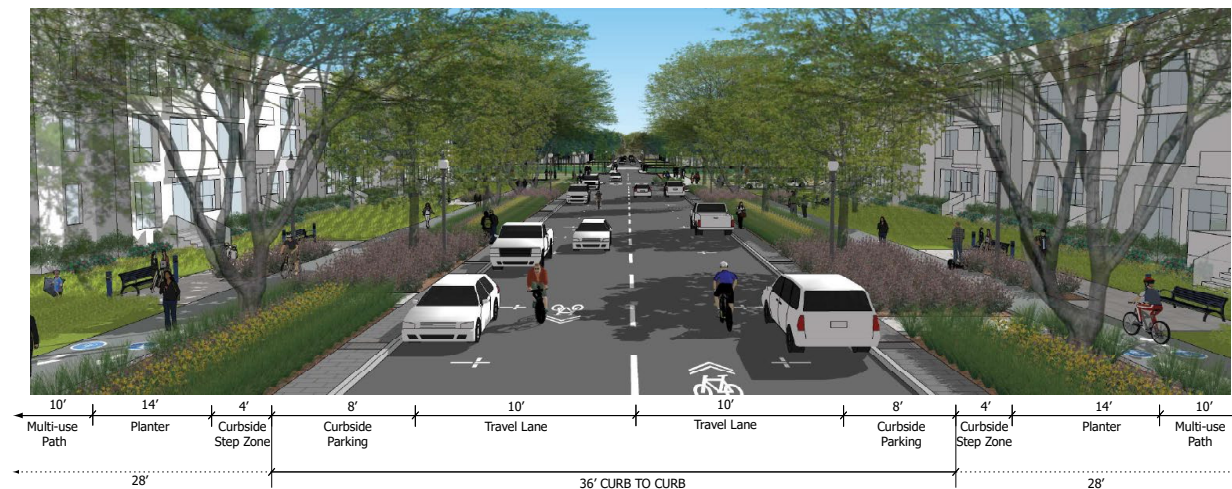




**Figure 5.1-5: Harney - Existing Condition looking East towards the Creek**



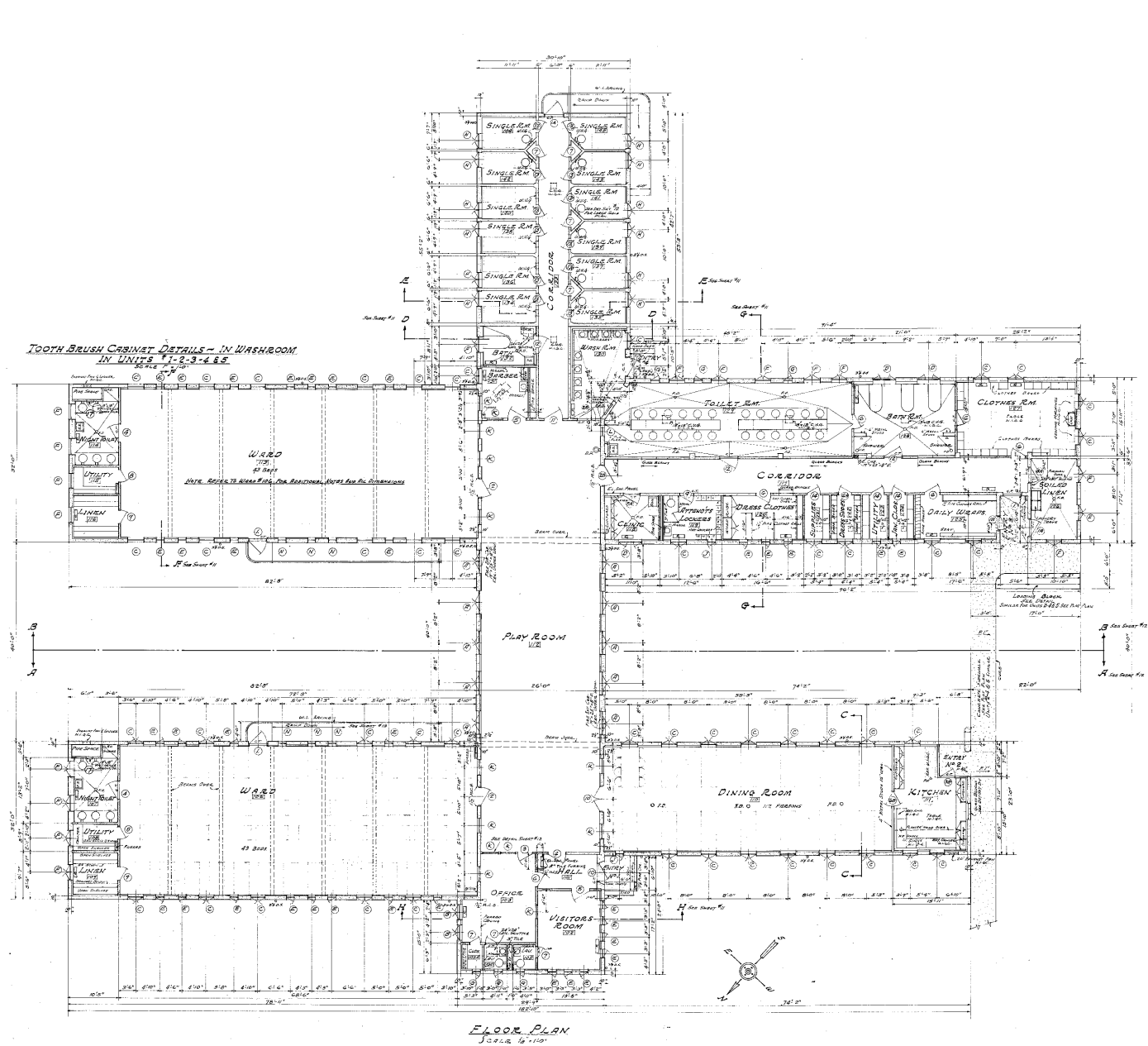
**Figure 5.1-6: Harney - Streetscape Concept with Wider Sidewalks looking East towards the Creek**





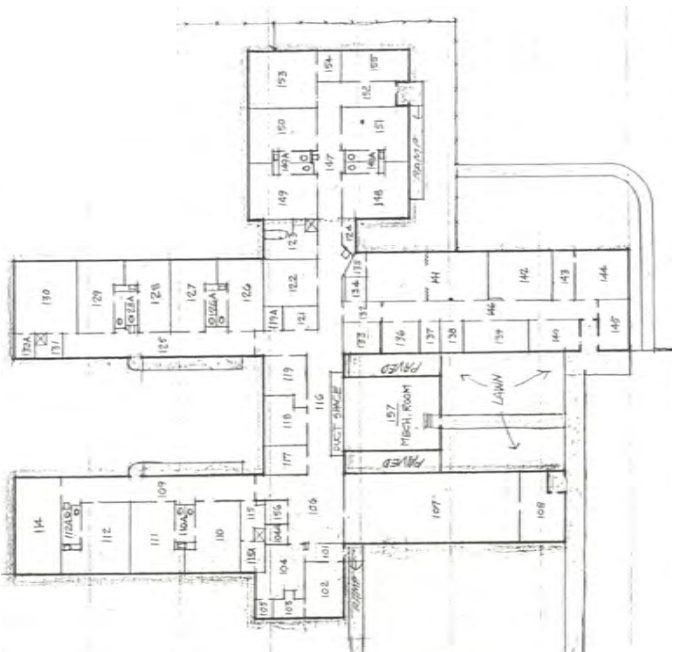
Client Residential Wards | Postwar H-Plan 1, 2 (similar) and 3 (similar)  
Cromwell, Poppe, Stoneman, Lux, Lathrop; Bentley, Roadruck, Brent, Smith, Bemis, Judah; and Cohen, Malone, Corcoran

Original Plan

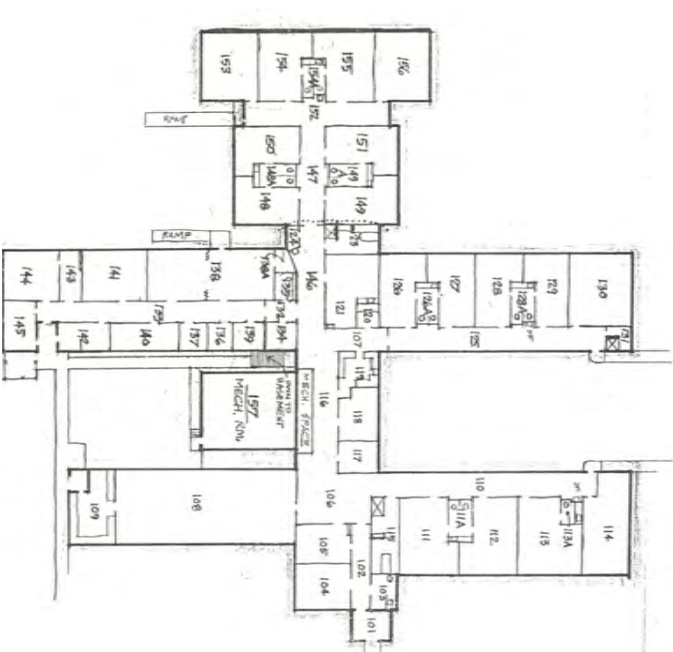


Original H-Plan 1 | Lux 1/32"=1'-0"

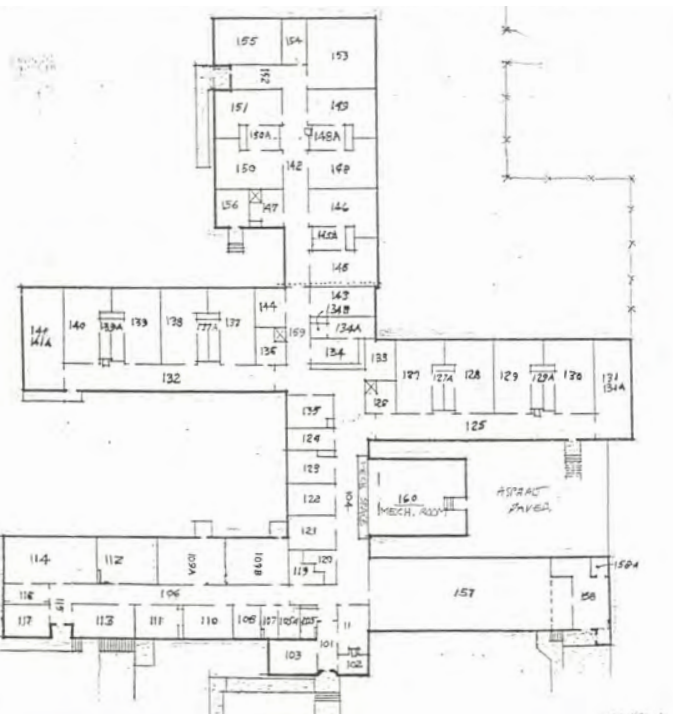
Remodeled 1970s and 1980s



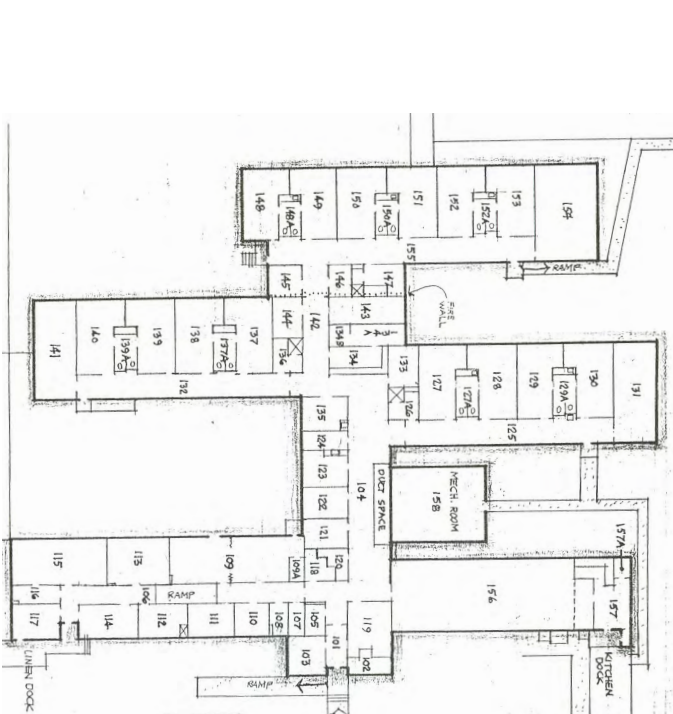
H-Plan 1 | Lux 1/64"=1'-0"



H-Plan 1 | Stoneman 1/64"=1'-0"



H-Plan 2 | Judah 1/64"=1'-0"



H-Plan 3 | Corcoran 1/64"=1'-0"

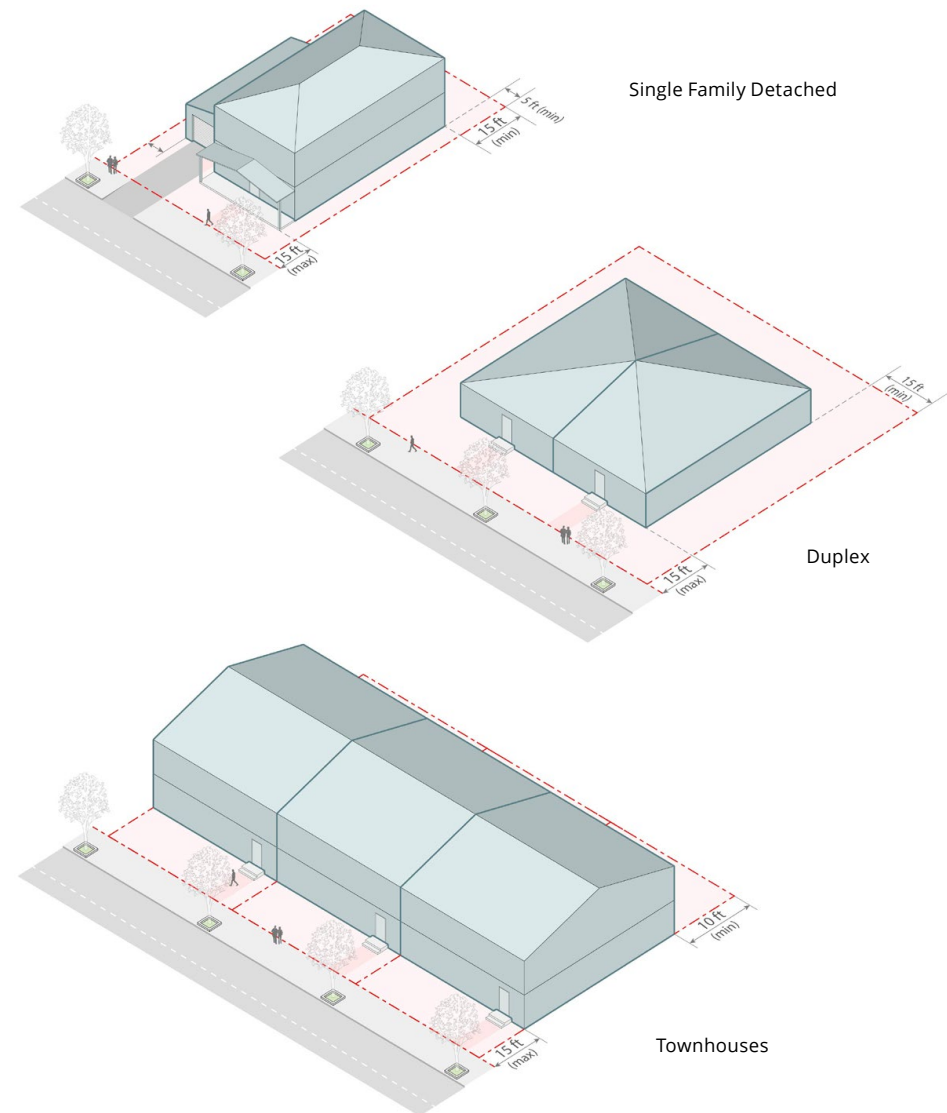
## LOW/MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

- Low/Medium Density Residential category accommodates a mix of housing types on smaller lots, either as detached (no walls shared with other properties), semi-detached (wall shared along one property line) or as attached units (walls shared with two+ adjacent properties), with density ranging from six to 14 units per gross acre. Housing types at the lower density range may include small lot single-family detached or semi-detached units. Housing types at the higher density range may include single-family attached units or small multiplex (multifamily) buildings (triplexes to eight-plexes). Closer to the Central Green, multifamily units with shared parking are also permitted, provided they are not more than 25 percent of the total housing units within an area designation for Low/Medium Density Residential.
- Development Standards. Table 5.5-1 prescribes the development standards for the Low/Medium Density Residential Land Use. Additional regulations are denoted below.

### LOW/MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL: HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

Low/Medium Density Residential housing typologies includes single family detached, duplexes and townhouses, among others.

**Figure 5.5-1 Low/Medium Density Residential: Housing Typologies**





## MEDIUM/FLEX DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

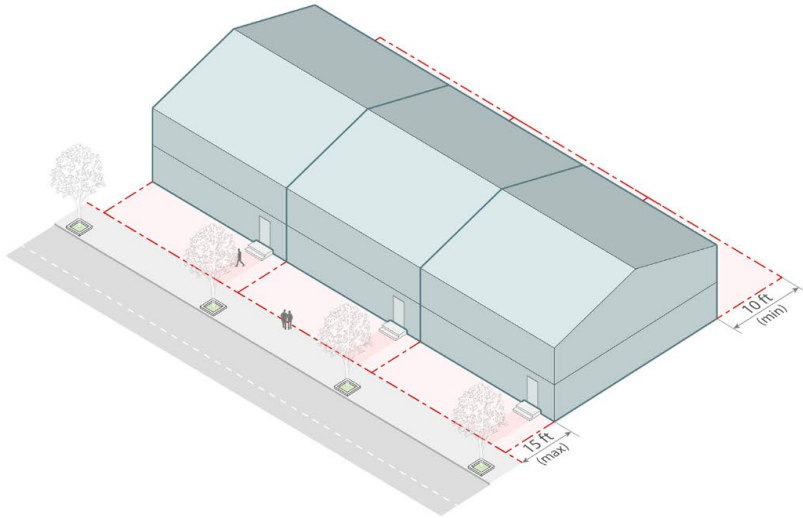
- Medium/Flex Density Residential category accommodates a mix of housing types, with density ranging from eight to 30 units per gross acre. Housing types at the lower end of this density range may include single-family attached dwellings; housing types at the higher end of this density range may include multiplex and multifamily buildings. Medium Density Residential is encouraged in a variety of locations throughout the site plan to provide a more diversity in neighborhoods and create more complete individual neighborhoods while avoiding concentrations of singular product types in any one given area.
- Development Standards. **Table 5.5-1** prescribes the development standards for the Medium/Flex Density Residential Land Use. Additional regulations are denoted below.

### MEDIUM/FLEX DENSITY RESIDENTIAL HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

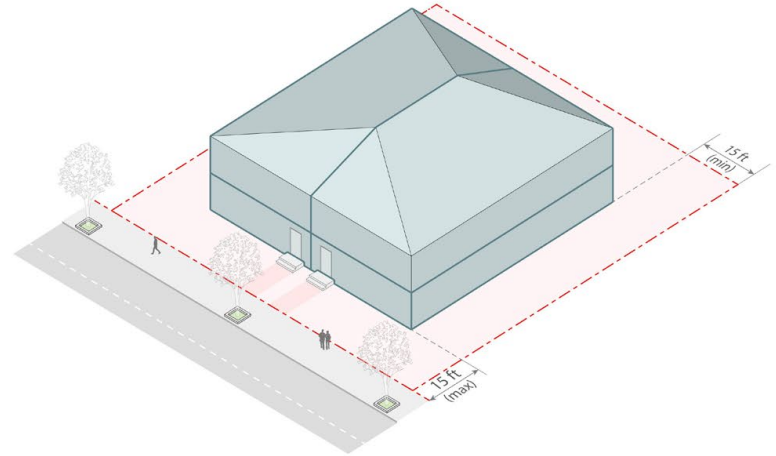
Medium/Flex Density Residential housing typologies includes townhouses, fourplexes and multiplexes, among others.



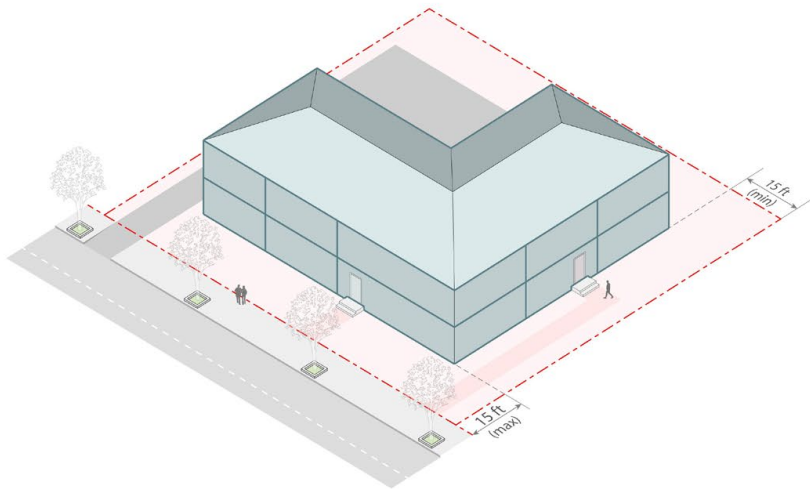
**Figure 5.5-2 Medium/Flex Density Residential: Housing Typologies**



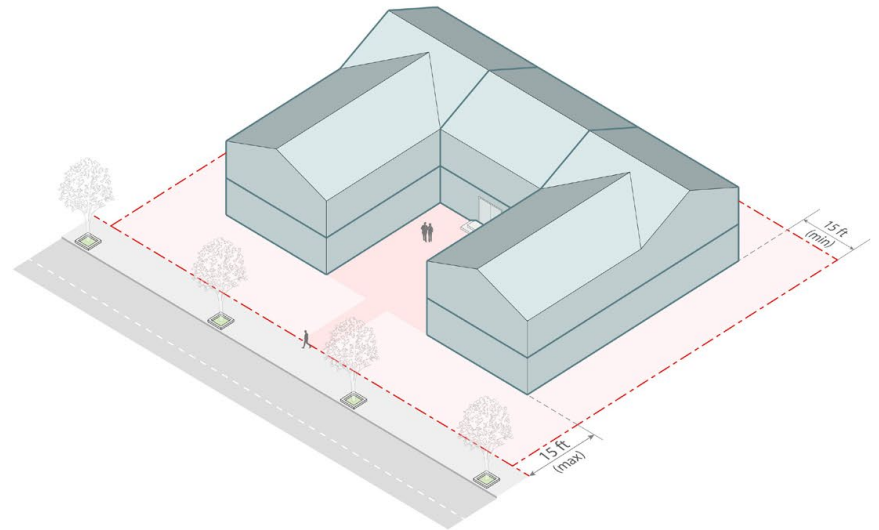
Townhouses



Fourplex



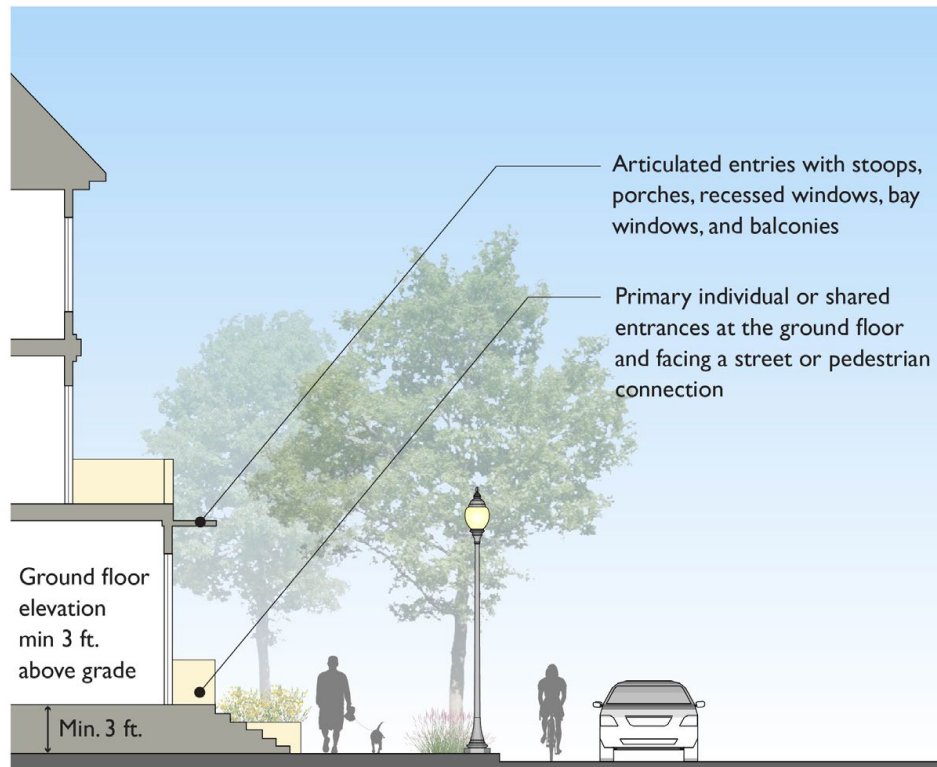
Multiplex



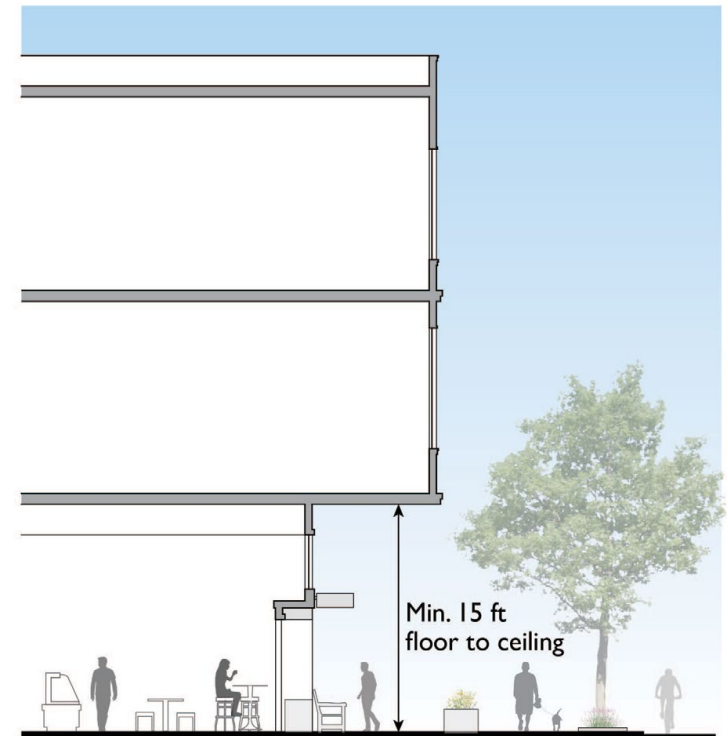
Multiplex - Courtyard Building



**Figure 5.5-6: Ground Floor Residential**



**Figure 5.5-7: Ground Level Design - Ground Floor Commercial**



*Table 3.10-1: Proposed Land Use Summary*

| <i>Land Use</i>  | <i>Acres</i> | <i>Percent</i> |
|--|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Non-Residential</b>   | <b>9.5</b>   | <b>1.1%</b>    |
| Commercial   | 0.9          |                |
| Hotel  | 2.1          |                |
| Office   | 4.4          |                |
| Public   | 0.7          |                |
| Institutional  | 0.9          |                |
| Utility  | 0.5          |                |
| <b>Residential</b>   | <b>28.9</b>  | <b>3.3%</b>    |
| Single-Family Detached   | 11.4         |                |
| Single-Family Attached   | 6.0          |                |
| Multi-Family   | 11.5         |                |
| <b>Open Space</b>  | <b>846.5</b> | <b>95.7%</b>   |
| Active Open Space (parks, paseos)                                  | 12.1         |                |
| Buffer Zones (riparian corridors, fire breaks, wildlife corridors) | 42.6         |                |
| Other Open Space (landscaped areas)                                | 41.8         |                |
| Preserved Open Space   | 750          |                |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>884.9</b> | <b>100%</b>    |

Notes:

1. Acreage is approximate and does not include transportation/roads/ROW.
2. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest tenth.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2022.



## 1 – 5 YEAR HORIZON

Within the first five years after adoption:

### State

- Resolve development/ execution approach (I.e. master developer or sponsor); Coordinate transfer of preserved open space to Sonoma County;
- Coordinate with local infrastructure agencies for future uses of water infrastructure located within preserved public parkland and open space.

### County

- Study Highway 12 connector alignment and design;
- Arnold Drive Complete Street / Shared-Use Path improvements;
- Design and construction of new fire station;
- Work with non-profit Affordable Housing partners and project sponsor to 1) locate and 2) begin design/financing/ construction of first Affordable Housing project.

### Project Sponsor

- West Side demolition / infrastructure improvements;
- Prepare a historic preservation plan (see Section 4.3: Historic Preservation);
- Break ground for first housing units west of Arnold Drive;

- Establish hospitality strategy including programming, potential operator, adaptive reuse and new construction approach;
- Define strategy and approach for institutional user in Walnut Circle and funding/ redevelopment strategy;
- Establish market strategy to attract employment clusters;
- Undertake low risk adaptive reuse of properties for employment/ services to test market;
- Establish catalyst projects to drive/ seed economic development of employment core with focus on maker, incubator and creative services;
- Create regulating plan to articulate lot/block/ street goals and illustrate target density and product mix on the west side;
- Identify first phase for development and product mix;
- Construct public realm improvements for the full Historic Core ;
- Begin long term preparation and remediation for implementing regenerative agricultural practices east of Sonoma Creek
- Outline Utility/ Roadway Upgrade and New Construction Phasing and Approach and required Funding strategy

## 5 – 10 YEAR HORIZON

Between five and 10 years after adoption:

### County:

- Construct Highway 12 connector;
- Partner with local organizations to design and build / adaptively reuse community facilities and other features (e.g. community center, gym, and museum);
- Ongoing management and partnerships with local agencies and non-profits for preserved public parkland and open space outside of the Core Campus, including trail system, lakes and watershed, and agricultural area.

### Project Sponsor

- Ongoing Historic Core adaptive reuse and construction of new buildings with emphasis on delivering ‘complete’ neighborhoods before starting new development;
- Additional development of West Side to create complete neighborhoods;
- Establish product typologies for new residential products to be included on the east side of Arnold Drive;
- Create regulating plan to articulate lot/block/ street goals and illustrate target density and product mix on the east side;
- Continue implementation of regenerative agricultural practices in advance of development of agrihood residential program.

## 10 – 20 YEAR HORIZON

Between 10 and 20 years after adoption:

### County:

- Ongoing management and partnerships with local agencies and non-profits for preserved public parkland and open space outside of the Core Campus, including trail system, lakes and watershed, and agricultural area.

### Master Developer:

- East Side demolition / infrastructure improvements;
- Development of east side neighborhoods;
- Development of agrihood neighborhood ;
- Full build-out of campus.





# Walking Tour Map and Stops

Figure 4.1-2: Land Use

