



Saranap Area & Boulevard Way Policies

COUNTY FILE #GP19-0004

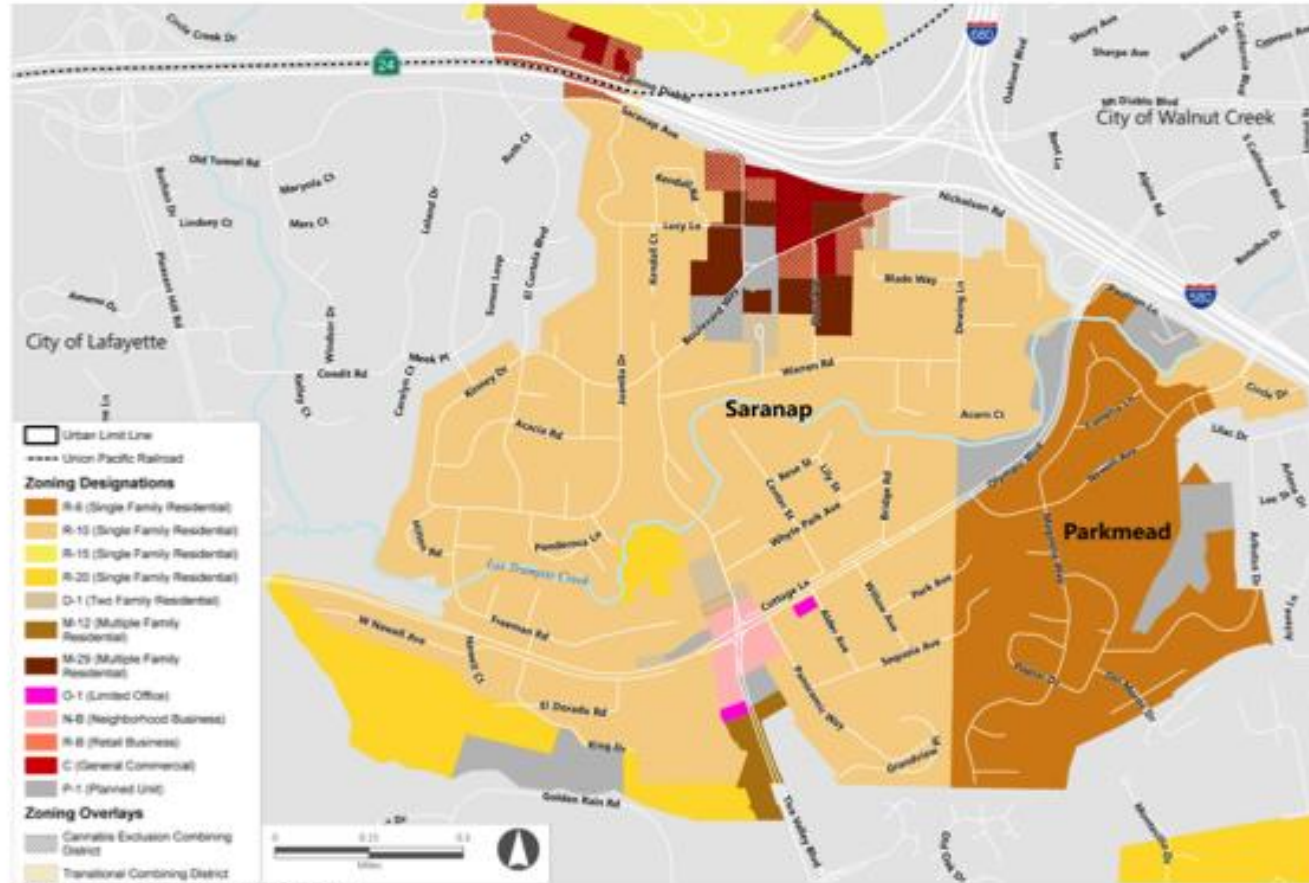
DECEMBER 8, 2020 COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

General Plan Land Use Map



General Plan Land Use Designations for Saranap/Parkmead

Zoning Map



Zoning Designations for Saranap/Parkmead

Background

- ▶ County-initiated planning/zoning study in response to community concerns related to Saranap Village Project
- ▶ Goals of study:
 - ▶ Define a vision for the future of Saranap
 - ▶ Determine appropriate levels of future development along Boulevard Way
 - ▶ Provide assurances to residents regarding the design, scale, and impacts of future projects
- ▶ District 2 and DCD staff organized five community outreach meetings, a survey, and an online comment submittal process

Project Description

The proposed project includes the following changes to the Land Use Element of the County General Plan:

- ▶ Text amendment adding a formal vision statement for the Saranap area;
- ▶ Text amendment adding four new community-specific policies for the Saranap area as a whole and five new policies related to a newly designated subarea identified as the Boulevard Way Mixed-Use Corridor (3-115 through 3-123);
- ▶ Text amendment adding a new implementation measure; and
- ▶ A new map identifying the Saranap area and the Boulevard Way Mixed-Use Corridor.

Vision Statement

Saranap traces its origins to 1911, when it became a stop on the Oakland, Antioch & Eastern Railroad line between Pittsburg and Oakland. The railroad ran along what is now Olympic Boulevard, with the station located at the current intersection with Tice Valley Boulevard. The community is named for Sara Naphthaly, mother of railroad vice president Samuel Naphthaly. While bordered by the cities of Walnut Creek and Lafayette and located in the metropolitan Bay Area, Saranap, with its views of Mt. Diablo, has retained a unique identity long valued by its residents. Saranap today is a harmonious, collaborative community of diverse neighborhoods and people, including single-family dwellings, multiple-family dwellings, offices, and commercial properties.

Understanding that development pressure will exist throughout the Bay Area for the foreseeable future and can create great contention among neighbors, Saranap's residents have expressed a desire for thoughtfully planned development that enhances their community without sacrificing its ambience. While maintaining the single-family neighborhoods as they are, there is an opportunity to revitalize the commercial area along Boulevard Way through development of mixed-use projects offering neighborhood-serving businesses and a wider variety of living options. Further community enhancements could include select infrastructure improvements such as expanded pedestrian and bicycle facilities to connect the residential and commercial areas, and development of a neighborhood park or community meeting space.

Policies

The following policies for the Saranap area reflect the long-term vision of its residents and are intended to guide future decision-making in the community.

- ▶ 3-114 The undeveloped hillside south of Olympic Boulevard and west of Tice Valley Boulevard is designated for Single-Family Residential-Medium Density development along the base of the hill along Olympic, with the remainder of the site designated as Agricultural Lands and Open Space, to reflect the steep, unbuildable slopes. *(Existing policy to remain unchanged.)*
- ▶ 3-115 Existing single-family residential land use designations shall not be changed. The five properties fronting the east side of Palana Court, currently designated Single-Family Residential-High Density, are exempt from this policy.

Policies

Saranap Area Policies Continued

- ▶ 3-116 Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure shall be evaluated and improved where feasible, particularly along the full length of Boulevard Way.
- ▶ 3-117 A location shall be designated for a neighborhood park or other community facility/space that may include a playground, lawn areas, dog run/park, picnic area, exercise equipment, and community garden. Future development projects shall contribute their fair share towards its establishment.
- ▶ 3-118 In general, public views of Mt. Diablo and surrounding scenic ridges shall be maintained. This policy shall not restrict development that complies with existing General Plan and zoning designations.

Policies

Boulevard Way Mixed-Use Corridor

- ▶ The following policies are applicable to the area designated on Figure 3-4:
- ▶ 3-119 Mixed-use projects, particularly those including affordable housing, are encouraged over single-use (i.e., commercial or residential) projects, and should consist of neighborhood-serving commercial uses and multiple-family dwellings.
- ▶ 3-120 Roof heights exceeding 40 feet, or architectural features (such as parapets) exceeding 45 feet, shall be discouraged. Exceptions will be considered to allow building heights over 45 feet for mixed-use (residential and commercial) projects that also qualify for a density bonus pursuant to State law.
- ▶ 3-121 Projects with a density exceeding 35 units per net acre shall be discouraged. This threshold does not include density bonuses awarded pursuant to State law.

Boulevard Way Mixed-Use Corridor Continued

- ▶ 3-122 Each building's scale, massing, architectural style, materials, and signage shall be harmonious with its surroundings and contribute to a visually pleasing streetscape, including protecting public views and the open appearance of Boulevard Way and Saranap Avenue.
- ▶ 3-123 The Boulevard Way right-of-way, from its intersection with Saranap Avenue east to the City of Walnut Creek border, shall be reconfigured and enhanced as follows:
 - ▶ Reduce width to two lanes;
 - ▶ Install diagonal parking and Class II or Class III bicycle facilities along
 - ▶ both sides;
 - ▶ Install traffic-calming devices and crosswalks where appropriate;
 - ▶ Install parklets;
 - ▶ Widen sidewalks;
 - ▶ Install street trees, landscaping, decorative streetlights, street furniture, water features, public artwork, and other appropriate amenities.

Implementation Measure

- ▶ 3-ap Adopt an ordinance or other appropriate instrument to guide future development in a manner consistent with the vision of the Saranap community.

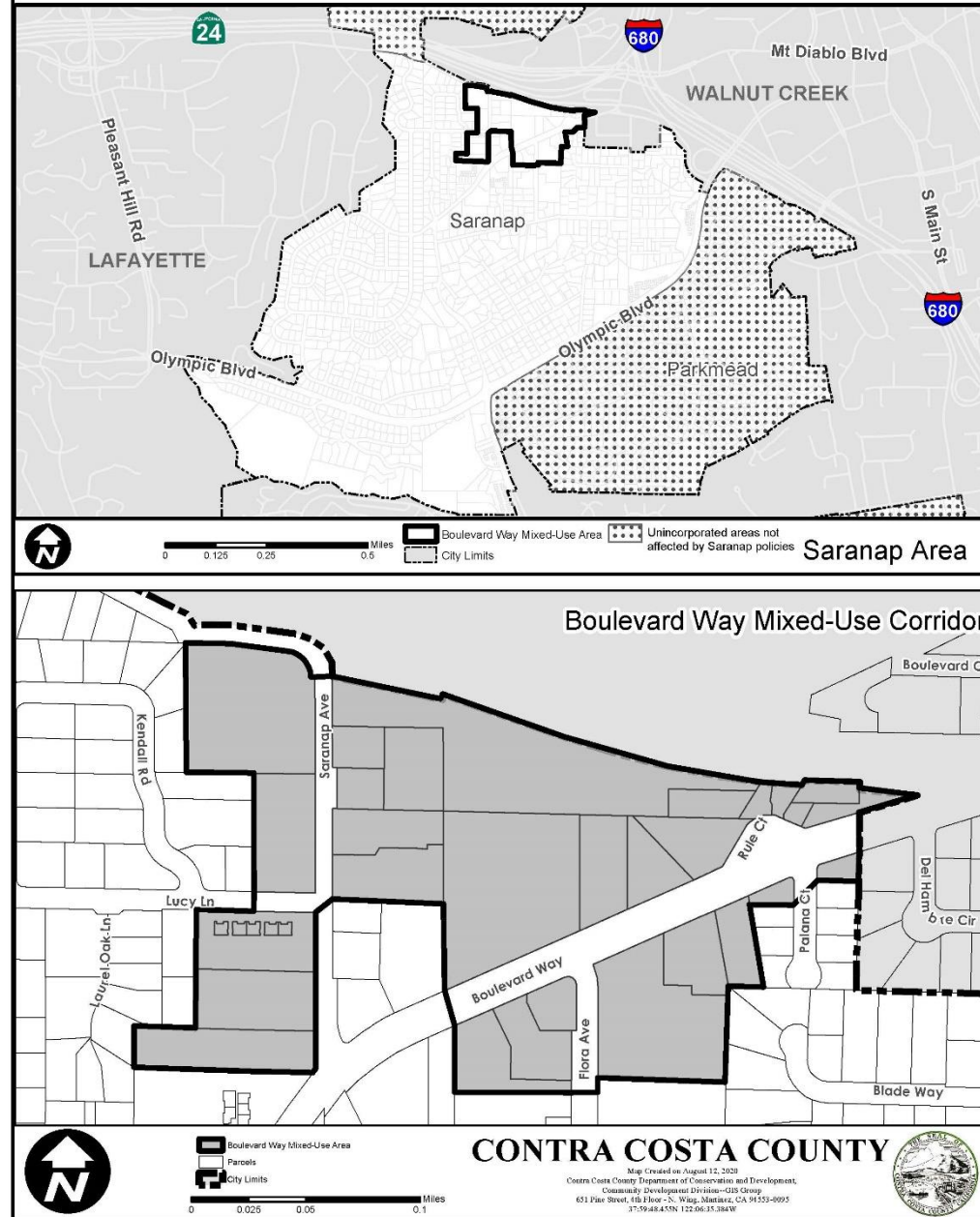
The adopted zoning instrument shall at minimum include the following:

- (a) Provisions to encourage landscape buffers and setbacks from Boulevard Way and Saranap Avenue.
- (b) Provisions to avoid the creation of an urban canyon environment, such as standardized “step back” requirements for the upper floors (third story and above) of multi-story buildings along Boulevard Way and Saranap Avenue.
- (c) Provisions to encourage construction of street and sidewalk amenities of a consistent character that fosters a cohesive “district” look, including, but not limited to, the improvements described in Policy 3-123;
- (d) Incentives to encourage developments proposing on-site affordable units.

Figure 3-4

To be added to the
Land Use Element

Figure 3-4 DRAFT Saranap Area and Boulevard Way Mixed-Use Corridor



Conclusion

- ▶ Staff recommends that the County Board of Supervisors:
 - ▶ OPEN the public hearing on the proposed Saranap Area General Plan Amendment (GPA), RECEIVE testimony, and CLOSE the public hearing.
 - ▶ DETERMINE that adoption of the proposed GPA is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 (b) (3).
 - ▶ ADOPT Resolution No. 2020/318, amending the Land Use Element of the 2005-2020 Contra Costa County General Plan to include new text and graphics related to future development and infrastructure improvements in the unincorporated Saranap area (County File No. GP19-0004).
 - ▶ DIRECT the Department of Conservation and Development (DCD) to file a CEQA Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk.