

## CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 History and Context

Newhall is a community rich in history. Evolving from an Indian trading center to an important destination in the quest for gold and then oil, it soon became a railroad flag stop of general stores, saloons, and churches. As the film industry grew, Newhall became the home of early western silent screen movies. These strong roots are still very important to the residents of Newhall. Newhall was also the residence of silent film star Williams S. Hart, whose 300-acre ranch, now a County park and museum, is visited annually by thousands. The passion for history, love of the old film stars such as William S. Hart, the Oak of the Golden Dream (Jose Francisco de Garcia Lopez reached down after a nap and found gold), the distinction of Vasquez Canyon Rocks and the Saint Francis Dam break that marked the second largest natural disaster in California's history, help to identify the essence of Newhall.

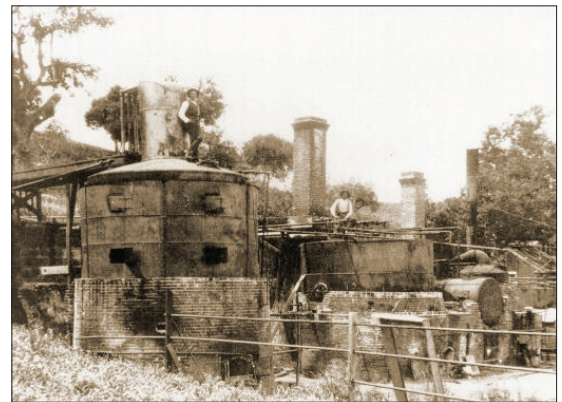
Newhall was the earliest permanent settlement in the Santa Clarita Valley, established in 1876 in conjunction with the construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad. This area was a western town founded on oil, mining and railroad workers. The community was a stop on the historic Butterfield-Overland Stage route through what is now the Newhall Pass. Newhall is also the site of the original ridge route, portions of which remain north of the City in the community of Castaic.

**Regional and Community Context** - Old Town Newhall is located within the 50-square mile City of Santa Clarita in north Los Angeles County. The City was incorporated in 1987 and comprises four individual communities previously under the jurisdiction of Los Angeles County. The City is within 3 miles of various regional destinations and transportation links, such as the I-5 and SR-14 freeways. Direct regional access to Newhall is provided by Newhall Avenue, Lyons Avenue and Metrolink's Antelope Valley line. This commuter rail line links the 256-square mile Santa Clarita Valley and its four communities with Downtown Los Angeles. Old Town Newhall is approximately 3 miles from Valencia Town Center, a pedestrian-oriented regional mall and Magic Mountain theme park.

**Neighborhood Context** - Old Town Newhall consists of 271 acres and is comprised of several parts: two flanking neighborhoods which are separated from one another by the railroad and Downtown; a 15-block Downtown and 3 existing commercial arterial corridors that each connects back to greater Santa Clarita. Within 1 mile of Old Town, there is the The Masters' College and historic William S.



*Newhall Depot*



*Pioneer Oil Refinery*



*Newhall Garage*



*Railroad Avenue*



*Oil Exchange Building*



*George Campton's General Store*



*American Theater*



*Chaix Grocery*

Hart Park. Newhall was originally platted in 1889 into approximately 50 blocks with much of that pattern intact.

**Circulation Network** - Old Town Newhall is accessed and defined by three commercial arterial corridors: a) Railroad Avenue (north of Lyons), b) Lyons Avenue and, c) Newhall Avenue (south of 3rd St). Within the Downtown is a traditional, orthogonal street grid of interconnected blocks.

**Open Space Network** - Old Town Newhall is bounded by the 265-acre William S. Hart Park on the west and Newhall Creek on the east. Such natural features immediately adjacent to a Old Town make the contrast between city and nature all the more interesting: each of the two environments offering rich possibilities for family life. Secondly, Veterans Historical Plaza is part of this network and offers a wonderful, urban type of open space which is lacking in Old Town. Each of these features is described in detail in Chapter 2.

**Streetscapes** - There is a rich variety of thoroughfare types and corresponding streetscapes, ranging from the former San Fernando Road - the least planted and poorly shaded in Old Town - to the relatively lush turf parkways and mature canopy trees of flanking streets, such as Walnut Street.

**Buildings** - Newhall's building stock is characterized by 1-3 story buildings with most being in the 2-story range. There is a serious number of historic buildings that should be preserved and adaptively re-used over time.

Many residents were first attracted to Newhall because of its rural environment and open space. Early rural/ranch style homes built on large lots, located south of Lyons Avenue, reflect the community's sporadic and intermittent growth. The architecture of Newhall homes reflects a diversity of architectural styles. The newer homes on smaller lots are designed in popular design styles from the 1950s to the present.

Much of the early commercial development in Old Town Newhall occupies single-story older buildings and serves neighborhoods along Newhall Avenue and Main Street. Commercial development along Lyons Avenue, with some exceptions, follows the commercial styles of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s and includes numerous small and mid-sized wood and stucco strip centers. There have been attempts made recently to improve the aesthetics of the commercial area by building offices and shopping centers that incorporate historic elements of the area.

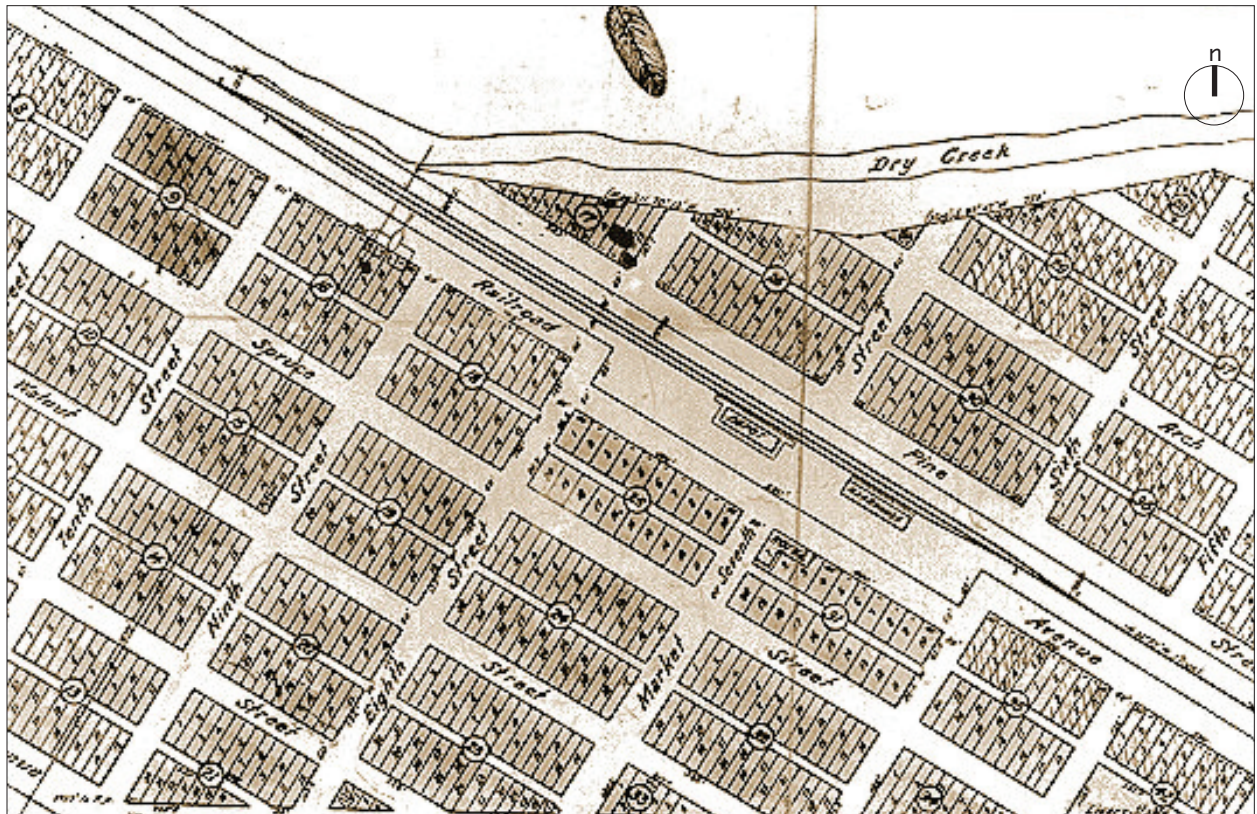
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Along the southern end of Newhall Avenue are several small, one-story, older neighborhood commercial uses. Further to the north, along Railroad Avenue adjoining the railroad tracks, are older industrial developments. Many of the industrial and commercial land uses along this section of Railroad Avenue are surrounded by vacant lots.

Commercial land uses are concentrated mainly in Old Town Newhall, on the south side of Lyons Avenue and along Newhall Avenue. Old Town Newhall is comprised of higher density residential, with a mix of both single-family and multiple-family residential uses. The area south of Lyons Avenue is characterized by lower density residential uses. Large stands of oak trees are scattered throughout the community. Prior to the completion of the interstate system, San Fernando Road (now Railroad Avenue, Main Street, and Newhall Avenue) was a principal link in the historic circulation system between the San Joaquin Valley and the Los Angeles Basin. The roadway still serves as one of the few arterial roads within the City.



*Railroad Avenue*



*Old Town Newhall, platting map, circa 1889 ('Spruce Street' is currently known as Main Street)*

## 1.2 - Overview of Existing Conditions

**Existing Economic Conditions** - Old Town has been evaluated in 3 market areas: Primary (census tracts within and adjacent to Old Town), Secondary (City of Santa Clarita), Tertiary (15-mile radius from Market and Railroad).

Within the Primary Market area, there are 12,399 people or about 8% of the City's total population. This population is very young with a median age of 25.9 and a median household income of \$43,546 (September 2004).

In general, while there are some very low income households within the primary market, the overall picture is one of income levels that are approximately in line, and in fact, slightly greater than Los Angeles County as a whole. However, the discrepancy between primary market household incomes and the rest of the City is quite large, and this differential has increased the perception of the low-income nature of the immediate (primary) market area. There are several very high income areas that are near or adjacent to Old Town and are potentially available as targets for any future redevelopment of Old Town.

**Retail Sales** - The Specific Plan area is home to 158 active retail businesses that generated \$58.1 million in retail sales in 2003. Of these businesses, 32 are specifically automobile repair related types of businesses. This cluster of such uses represents a very strong presence within Old Town and is in stark contrast to the types of businesses present in the communities studied during the preparation of this plan: Old Town La Verne, Old Town Monrovia, Claremont Village, and the Mission District in South Pasadena. Specifically, Old Town Newhall has more businesses than 3 of the 4 communities that were studied but it has the highest, by far, collection of automotive-related businesses: over 20%. This is of concern because in terms of retail sales efficiency, automotive service uses yield relatively low levels of retail sales and also blight pedestrian-intensive environments.



*Jan Heidt Metrolink Station anchors Old Town Newhall*



*Strip retail in Old Town*



*Parking lots fronting streetscape*



*"The Center of Old Town" at Market Street and Main Street (formerly San Fernando Road)*

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*324-Acre Hart Park part of Old Town*



*Impersonal housing*

As a result of the above, there is unmet retail market demand that is leaking out of Old Town as consumers who live both within the primary and secondary markets need to travel outside of Old Town to meet their retail needs. This being said, Old Town Newhall has the potential to capture over \$168.9 million in potential spending of which the \$110 million gap would support over 276,000 square feet of high quality retail space (assuming sales of \$400 per square foot).[1]

**Housing** - As with all of Southern California, Old Town is experiencing heavy demand for residential space. This is evidenced by low vacancy rates despite some substandard physical conditions and high median values for multi-family housing at \$253 per square foot (September 2004). Recently, multi-family housing has gained significantly on the same values for detached housing (\$261 per square foot). [2]

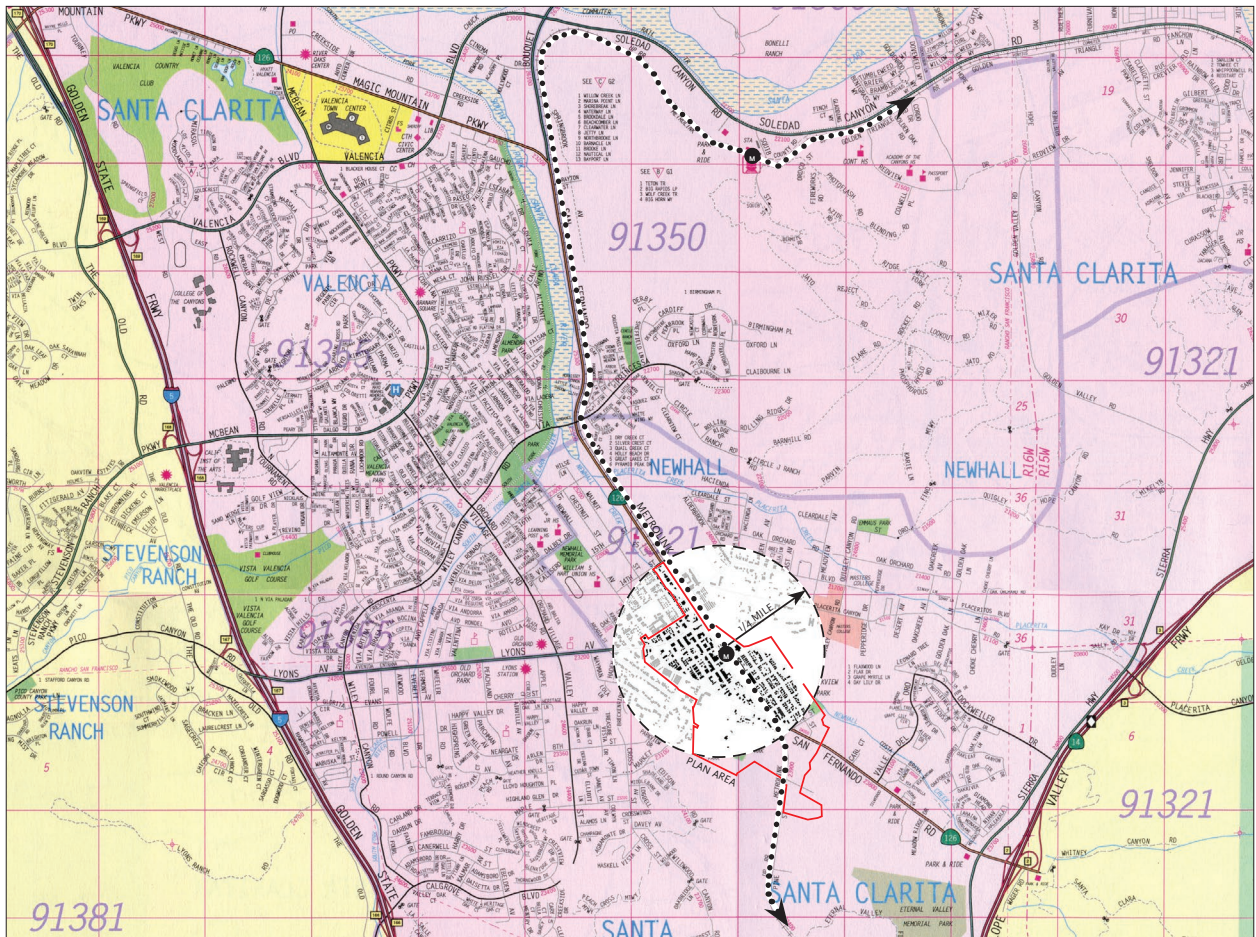
### 1.3 - Relationship to Santa Clarita General Plan

This draft specific plan directly responds to and implements a variety of significant policies of the Santa Clarita General Plan, and also highlights the necessity for some refining amendments to the General Plan, to be adopted simultaneously with the specific plan. In its discussion of Old Town Newhall, the Land Use Element (page L-34) notes that "This center is distinct from the rest in both its age and manner of development. Special standards and revitalization efforts for this area may be appropriate to preserve and enhance the "old town" atmosphere, foster a pedestrian orientation with quality shopping opportunities and to capitalize on the tourist and recreational opportunities of William S. Hart Park." The fact that a primary purpose of this Specific Plan is to transform the present strip commercial character of Old Town Newhall into an attractive, mixed use, pedestrian oriented, economically vital center, is the realization of the vision expressed in the General Plan. Although the specific plan will implement many goals and policies throughout the General Plan, the following discussion highlights some key linkages between the specific plan and General Plan.

The Specific Plan and its anticipated development will effectively implement Land Use Element goals and policies, including Policies 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.12, and 2.15, regarding encouraging a diversity of housing types, establishing commercial centers, providing for light industry, retaining open space, and avoiding strip commercial. The specific plan also addresses Land Use Element policies 3.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, and 4.13, regarding pedestrian oriented centers, the revitalization of San Fernando Road (now Newhall Avenue, Main Street, and Railroad Avenue) and Old Town Newhall, upgrading strip commercial, preventing unsightly and inefficient development, promoting architectural quality, and preserving cultural resources.

[1] Economics Research Associates (November 2004)

[2] Data Quick and Economics Research Associates (November 2004)



*Plan Area within the City of Santa Clarita*

The specific plan will implement Community Design Element neighborhood identity and design quality Policies 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 2.8, 2.9, regarding consideration of design elements, residential uses in proximity to business and commercial centers, pedestrian orientation, and design standards; and commercial district Policies 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.7, regarding improving the appearance and function of commercial centers, providing a sense of place, encouraging mixed use centers, providing pedestrian orientation, and discouraging small shopping centers.

Along with the adoption of this specific plan, certain specific provisions of the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the General Plan will need to be amended. The current floor area ratio (FAR) limitation in the Land Use Element for the Commercial Town Center designation of "between 0.25 to 0.50 to 1" (Land Use Element, page L-47) should be changed for Old Town Newhall to refer to the urban standards of this specific plan instead of establishing a FAR. And the Circulation Element should be changed to reflect the new role of the former San Fernando Road as the Old Town Newhall Main Street.

#### *Relationship to City Design Guidelines and Beautification Master Plan*

Beyond the General Plan, these two documents apply to the Specific Plan area. To the extent that the Specific Plan does not propose to change direction or requirements from these two documents, the existing provisions still apply. However, with the adoption of this Specific Plan, where different, provisions of this Plan supercede those of the City Design Guidelines and Beautification Master Plan.

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### 1.4 - Public Participation and Plan Preparation

This Plan is the result of an intense public process that involved the community of Newhall through a series of public meetings, a field trip to evaluate comparative places and two charrettes. The evolution of this plan was based on intelligence and confidence gained by the consultants and the community in cooperation as the process unfolded.

**Previous Plans and Documents** - Prior to the preparation of this Specific Plan, the City of Santa Clarita adopted the Downtown Newhall Improvement Program also known as the 'Freedman Plan' (1996). This plan promoted many of the same principles that form this Specific Plan but was focused more on public and streetscape types of projects and did not substantially address private property. Subsequent to the Freedman Plan, the City adopted the Newhall Special Standards District Design Guidelines. This document provided guidance to private property owners about using the features identified in the Freedman Plan. This document too, covered many of the appropriate subjects but not in a comprehensive manner that addressed the actual outcomes for the future of Old Town Newhall. Both of these documents, were used during and helped to inform the Charrettes for this Specific Plan.

**July 28, 2004 - Consultant team tour of Specific Plan area with City Staff** - The entire team of consultants assembled for this project gathered with City staff at the Jan Heidt Metrolink Station for a walking tour of the Specific Plan area. Led by City staff, the consultant team walked through Old Town, the two neighborhoods that flank Old Town and then through William S. Hart Park and up to the William S. Hart Mansion. The very last stop on the tour was an overlook just south of William S. Hart Mansion where the team was able to view the entire Old Town from above.

**August 20, 2004 - Field trip to Monrovia, La Verne, Claremont and South Pasadena** - The City Council Redevelopment Subcommittee and the consultant team visited these four downtowns that were selected for comparison and observation of best practices that could be applied to Old Town Newhall. Two primary reasons were used in selecting these downtowns: a) they are of a scale and intensity that seem appropriate for Newhall and, b) they are within the Southern California region and, like Newhall, they do not have such a unique economic situation or location. At each Downtown, local City representatives familiar with the particulars of each place and the 'lessons learned' gave a personal tour to the group. Photographs and notes were taken of the salient characteristics, strategies and/or tools used to make each of the Downtowns.



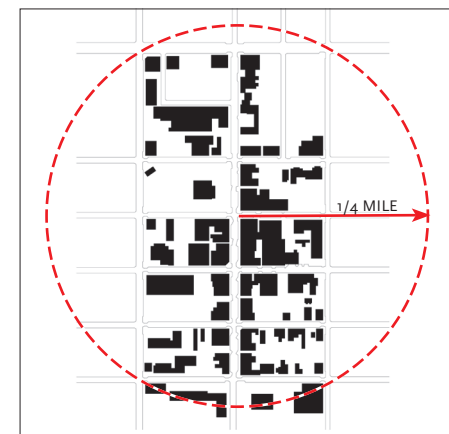
*Field Tour of Case Studies*



*Monrovia 'Main Street'*



*Monrovia 'Main Street'*



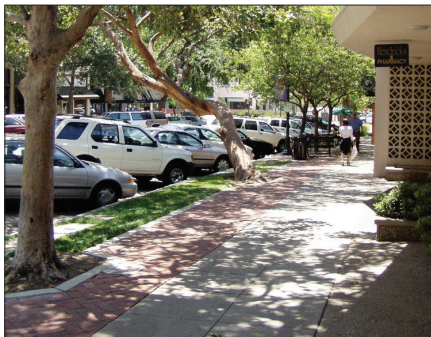
*Monrovia 'Building-Positive' Plan*



*Field Tour of Case Studies*



*Claremont Village 'Main Street'*



*Claremont Village 'Main Street'*



*Claremont Village  
'Building-Positive' Plan*

**August 23, 2004 - Stakeholder Meeting** - A meeting with downtown property owners, merchants, residents and all interested parties was held by the City and the consultant team to convey what had been learned so far about the Specific Plan area on subjects ranging from historic and cultural resources to traffic, circulation and parking. In addition, the consultant team conveyed what had been observed about the four 'comparison' Downtowns. This meeting saw the consultant team take the participants through all of the findings to date for review and comments.

**September 7, 2004 - Joint Study Session of the Santa Clarita City Council and Planning Commission** - Prior to the first of two Charrettes to be held on this project, the City held a Joint Study Session to review everything prepared, studied and communicated to date. At this meeting, City staff and the consultant team first presented the principles and practices that make Downtowns work and thrive over the long term. The team then presented its findings about the Specific Plan area, the Downtown comparisons, and the comments received at the Stakeholder meeting for review and direction. The City Council and Planning Commission provided direction to City staff and the consultant team with which to enter the first of two Charrettes.

**The Charrette Process** - This style of public participation brings all interested parties together for a series of days (in this case a series of two, three-day Charrettes) where everyone with a stake or interest of any kind participates directly with the consultant team to develop and review ideas, from their beginning to finalization. This process contrasts starkly with the typical 'workshop' process where ideas are presented, comments are received and the consultant team leaves to further work on the plans to return another day and repeat the process with official public comment occurring in 'public hearings'.

The Charrette process is completely interactive and sees each of the design components developed simultaneously in response to issues and needs posed by participants. City staff are involved throughout and help facilitate participation from a person or group that needs to provide input on a particular subject. In addition, focus sessions are held throughout the day with particular groups such as a Merchant's Association, Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce and sometimes private parties that have pending developments in the area that might be affected or benefit from the Plan. In this way, the 'feedback' loops are ongoing and immediate, keeping unproductive or inappropriate results from being developed. At the end of each 10-hour day, the consultant team summarizes what the consultant team, City staff and the participants studied, achieved and decided that day for the community's review and comment. Through this highly visual and interactive process, participants are completely aware of the direction and intent of the evolving Plan that is based on clear, physical and desired outcomes.

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**September 13-15, 2004 - Charrette 1 : Background, Vision and Design** - This three-day Charrette focused on verifying the base information and conditions on subjects ranging from economics, transit, circulation, parking, building form, historic and cultural resources, infrastructure, landscape and prior efforts at revitalizing Old Town Newhall. With the background information as a sound foundation upon which to build, the team worked with participants to strategize the vision for Newhall. The vision-work did not focus on platitudes but on physical outcomes that are appropriate for Old Town Newhall in terms of its scale and role and economic performance within the greater community. The later portions of this Charrette focused on transforming the physical vision into preliminary designs for all participants to see and help form. The results of this Charrette were: a) a physically-based vision map of intensity and activity called a Neighborhood, District and Corridor plan, b) a Catalytic Project map identifying specific projects that would move the Old Town through the stages of initial action to full revitalization, c) a Traffic and Circulation plan identifying the strategy for defining a Main Street while accommodating community-wide traffic demands and, d) a Plan-wide strategy for the open space, landscape and streetscape components of Old Town.

**October 26-28, 2004 - Charrette 2 : Design, Code and Implementation** - This three-day Charrette focused on further developing the four, primary components described before. The early portions of this Charrette dealt with the issues surrounding the Street and Parking Network needed to support the envisioned Old Town, the conceptual streetscape plan for Main Street and finalization of the Catalytic Projects. From this, the team and participants worked further in detail on the Economic and Development Strategies, Traffic/Streets/Parking, the conversion of a portion of San Fernando Road to "Main Street", Open space and landscape, Architectural Typologies to be used throughout the Old Town and the two flanking neighborhoods and, an orientation and review session with City staff on the 60% Administrative Draft Specific Plan for review and comment. The next two days focused on verifying all of the Plan components and resolving them against each other so that a Form-Based Code could be finalized.

**November 2004 through January 2005 - Specific Plan**



*Charrette 1 - Final Presentation*



*Charrette 1 - Public Comment*



*Charrette 2 - Final Presentation*



*Charrette 2 - Public Comment*



*Charrette 1 - Design Workshops*



*Charrette 1 - Public Comment*



*Charrette 2 - Final Presentation*



*Charrette 2 - Final Presentation*

**Preparation** - Upon completing the two Charrettes, the consultant team used the resulting information and direction to prepare the Draft Specific Plan. This document will be the comprehensive tool to be used for the revitalization of Old Town Newhall. Working with City staff, the consultant team prepared this document for presentation to the City Council and Planning Commission in February 2005.

**January 24, 2005 - Hispanic Outreach Meeting** - The City held an outreach meeting with the community and particularly its hispanic members to provide another opportunity to become more familiar with the proposed Specific Plan and to receive their comments. This meeting was conducted in spanish by the consultant team and city staff along with english translation.

**February 1, 2005 - Joint Study Session of the Santa Clarita City Council and Planning Commission** - The City held a Joint Study Session to review everything prepared, studied and communicated to date. At this meeting, City staff and the consultant team presented the Draft Specific Plan for public review and comment so that the Plan can be revised accordingly and finalized.

**May 4, 2005 - Progress-Update and Community Meeting** - The City held a Community Meeting to review the progress on the Draft Specific Plan, the forthcoming Draft Environmental Impact Report and to discuss specific comments and questions from the community. At this meeting, City staff and the consultant team reviewed the objectives of the Specific Plan and revitalization effort and responded to various questions about details of the Plan. These and other comments received since the publication of the Draft Specific Plan on February 1, 2005 will be addressed for review by the Planning Commission and City Council.

In addition to the above formal public meetings, City staff and the project team have had numerous meetings with individual property owners and stakeholders since August 2004.

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### 1.5 - Introduction to the Specific Plan

Conventional suburban development is the form of growth which has produced large-scale sprawl throughout Southern California over the last fifty years. Sprawl development is characterized by homogeneous single-use zones, with the housing tract, the shopping center and the business park as its basic elements. These segregated use areas are connected by a discontinuous system of wide thoroughfares designed for the rapid movement of cars.

Transit Oriented Districts is a method of planning that has emerged in the last decade as an alternative conventional suburban development. It stems from the realization that commuter lines and stations can be more than travel nodes, since proximity to transit reduces dependency on the automobile and enhances the value of surrounding buildings as a place to live, work and shop. The typical size of such a district is a quarter-mile radius from physical center to edge. This distance gathers the neighboring population within an average 5-minute walk at an easy pace of a commercial center. Thus the maximum size of a district is determined not by density but by a walkability shed.

The Specific Plan for Old Town Newhall is guided by the Design Principles for Transit Oriented Development (TODs) described on these pages.



*Public building*



*Plaza*



*Square*



*Great retail street*



*Great neighborhood street*



*Apartments over Main Street stores*

**Make Great Public Places** - The locus of a downtown's public life is its center. Its civic buildings enhance community identity and foster civic pride. Its shops and workplaces provide convenient access to goods and services without need for a car trip. A properly designed and developed transit district at Newhall will become a unique social and economic asset to City of Santa Clarita.

**Make Great Streets** - Street design dictates the form of blocks and buildings. Downtowns are structured on individual blocks and a network of skinny thoroughfares, which encourage pedestrian movement. This interconnecting pattern of thoroughfares provides multiple routes that diffuse traffic, and additionally increase the options emergency personnel have to reach a distressed location. Streets of varying types are detailed to provide equally for pedestrian comfort and for automobile movement. Street intersections have minimal curb radii to slow cars and minimize the crossing distance of pedestrians. Two-way streets also improve pedestrian crossing safety and minimize automotive speed. Where needed, streets have landscaped center medians, to reduce apparent street width. Finally, streets, where possible, have on-street parking in order to provide a buffer between the moving traffic and the pedestrian, thus diminishing perceived and actual danger.

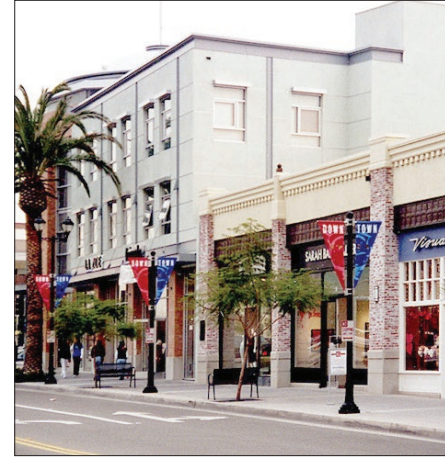
**Live Above Stores** - A downtown is a place defined by the same general qualities as a neighborhood, with one major exception: commercial activities predominate instead of residential. Yet, the quality and amount of housing in a downtown determine its particular character. Perhaps the most typical dwelling type in a downtown is the loft or house over retail. Such dwellings allow for a variety of families, typically without children, to live near diverse services, while providing a constant 24/7 rhythm of use for the downtown.

**Live Near Transit** - Further enhancing such living in Old Town Newhall is the presence of the Jan Heidt Metrolink Station. The opportunity to live near transit is increasing in its appeal as certain people want the option of riding the train to work combined with the vitality that tends to surround such transit-oriented districts. (See, for example, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Capturing the Demand for Housing Near Transit" produced by the Center for Transit Oriented Development at [www.reconnectingamerica.org](http://www.reconnectingamerica.org).) This type of development is proposed and beneficial to the revitalization of Old Town Newhall.

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*Traditional architecture*



*Mix of architecture types and styles*

**Build a Variety of Buildings** - The buildings, blocks and streets of a Downtown are interdependent. Each one contains in part the ingredients of all the others. Buildings of a particular quality can define the block that contains them and the street that surrounds them. Design is the matrix that helps either to create or destroy the quality and character of a place. Buildings are the smallest increment of growth. A variety of architectural types, including fabric buildings (those buildings which constitute the majority of our neighborhoods) and civic monuments, and their relationship to each other, determine the character of a downtown as they define the streets and open spaces they face.



*Contemporary architecture*

**Create a Variety of Housing Choices** - As a downtown matures, and its livability and economic value increases, a more diverse set of housing choices, attract an increasingly varied and prosperous resident population. It is not unusual to encounter lofts, live/work buildings, courtyard housing, row housing, even duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes in nearly completely developed downtowns. All of these dwelling types are also typically provided in rental or ownership configurations.



*Courtyard Housing*



*Apartments over retail*



*Pedestrian friendly sidewalks*



*Local retailers*



*National retailers*

**Get the Retail Right** - The retail industry has recently discovered that outdoor, Main Street type retail better fits the lifestyle of busy consumers, often yielding more regular trips and higher sales volumes than standard shopping centers. Retailers should, therefore, be concentrated to encourage and facilitate pedestrian storefront shopping. The retail core should be located around a pattern of streets accommodating cars and on-street parking. Long term parking should be located in shared Park Once lots or structures, convenient but compatible to the Main Street retail. The retail core should include at least one anchor tenant, and a mix of national and local vendors.

**Get the Parking Right** - The typical suburban, sequential pattern of "shop and park" requires two movements and a parking space to be dedicated for each visit to a shop, office, or civic institution. For three tasks, this requires six movements and three parking spaces. By contrast, the compactness and mixed-use nature and walkability of a downtown lend themselves to moving twice, parking just once, and completing multiple daily tasks on foot. The transformation of drivers into walkers is the immediate generator of pedestrian life: crowds of people that animate public life in the streets and generate the patrons of street friendly retail businesses. It is this "scene" created by pedestrians in appropriate numbers that provides the energy and attraction to sustain a thriving Main Street environment.



*Parking as urban building*



*Attractive and clear signage*

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### 1.6 - Revitalization Strategy

To revitalize Old Town Newhall it is necessary to provide both physical and policy initiatives. These set the tone for Newhall's future in a manner that compels activity from the widest variety of perspectives and interests. Revitalization is accomplished by identifying the plan components that establish synergy and profoundly reposition Old Town for all to see as a serious destination to be visited often. The following two-part strategy informs the execution of this Plan:

**Physical Initiatives** - Catalytic Projects: East Newhall, Main Street Streetscape, Transit, Housing and Preservation. These projects are absolutely crucial to building momentum and enough critical mass that allows others to 'fill in between' over the long-term. Following these 'initial' projects, a series of projects that are intended as more regional in appeal and nature will follow.

**Policy Initiatives** - Equally important are administrative and policy efforts that are necessary for short- and long-term revitalization success. These efforts are focused on three subjects: a) Redevelopment authority and powers, b) Historic Preservation, and c) Adoption of a Form-Based Development Code. Without these interventions, the desired outcomes identified in the Specific Plan will not be fully enabled.

#### **A Initial Catalytic Projects**

The first set of projects is aimed at transforming the Old Town in physical as well as perceivable terms. They are meant to gain early and positive momentum. They are listed below in the order of execution to achieve maximum effect:

1. **East Newhall** - Ownership opportunities are to be encouraged through focused use of the City's programs and resources, along with cooperation from private banks and federal mortgage corporations. The pursuit of housing opportunities that actively engage both market rate and affordable housing will improve and remediate residential conditions of blight in this neighborhood. Code enforcement will be critical in affecting change as will the establishment of ongoing communication with the neighborhood.
2. **Circulation Strategy** - Old Town Newhall is at the confluence of three corridors that provide community-wide access to the west, north and south. To enable the pedestrian-oriented downtown that is desired and envisioned by the community, it is first necessary to relieve the center portion of the former San Fernando Road through Old Town from being a supertruck route and 6-lane arterial as currently identified in the General Plan. This is accomplished by using the existing corridors in a manner that continues to provide community-wide access while enabling the Main Street with pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods on each side. Essentially, Lyons and Railroad Avenues will carry the majority of traffic while Newhall Avenue will carry somewhat lesser volumes and finally, Main Street will carry the lowest volume in Old Town's overall system of major streets. This strategy encompasses the following:
  - a. **Railroad Avenue** - To enable the pedestrian-oriented Main Street, Railroad Avenue should be extended to the segment of San Fernando Road from Lyons Avenue to Magic Mountain Parkway. In so far as this road will be reconfigured to be the principal downtown by-pass street for commuter traffic, it should have the same name both into and through Old Town.
  - b. **"Main Street" and Old Town Streetscape** - San Fernando Road from Pine Street to Lyons Avenue will be reclassified as a Commercial Main Street thoroughfare, which allows its transformation into a pedestrian-oriented environment. Traffic-calming and streetscape improvements and the enhancement of basic infrastructure will reestablish Old Town as a site for increased private investment and recapitalization. To further reinforce its status as a special and distinct place with a unique identity in the community, this segment of San Fernando Road is proposed to be renamed "Main Street."

c. **Newhall Avenue** - To further Old Town's identity, the segment of San Fernando Road between 3rd Street and State Route 14 will be renamed Newhall Avenue. This will announce Newhall's presence along this State Route, and is consistent with the City's 2001 Beautification Master Plan.

3. **Mixed-Use Development** - Along with Park Once garages, there are opportunities for appropriately-scaled retail development on these sites with second and third floor uses of residential and possibly some office uses fronting Main Street and/or Railroad Avenue.
4. **Transit-Oriented Development (T.O.D.)** - TOD represents the range of development intensities and activities that complement, and are complemented by, the presence of a transit station. Presently used as surface parking for Metrolink, these sites represent a profound development opportunity. Development of these surface parking lots into TOD will serve to appropriately densify and activate the area. Old Town as a whole will benefit by moving parking from the Metrolink station into Park-Once garages to the west across Railroad Avenue. This will create pedestrian activity and the potential for development of a consumer base for the adjacent retail, as well as providing low, market rate residential opportunities within Old Town that will, in turn, support ongoing cycles of Downtown activity.

## **B Projects of Community-Wide Significance**

In addition to the above projects, several initiatives that will enhance Old Town Newhall, as it relates to the greater community of Santa Clarita are proposed:

1. **Mercado and Plaza** - This proposed commercial building and civic space will appeal to the community at large in that no such feature exists elsewhere in the City. This building and civic space represent the collection of numerous merchants offering products such as fresh produce and specialty items ranging from food and produce to clothing and cafes. This combined with the flexible and public plaza provides a true 'center' to Old Town. The unique nature of this initiative provides additional visitors and patrons to Old Town Newhall. This project is expected to enhance the neighborhood to the west and stimulate further revitalization along Main Street.
2. **Library and/or Civic/Institutional Building** - The library will draw from beyond Newhall and strengthen the greater community's presence and awareness of Old Town. In addition to the local population attracted to such a feature, student-visitors and senior citizens from the entire valley will be added to the area, enriching Old Town Newhall with a wide range of age groups (The Old Town Newhall Library opened to the public in 2012).
3. **Museum** - This component of civic infrastructure is probably the most exciting and the most challenging to realize because it is regional in scope. However, this museum will serve to broaden the appeal of Old Town Newhall among the greater community of Santa Clarita. Possible types include a Children's or Science-oriented Museum.
4. **Hart Park Gateway and Entrance** - The physical relationship between Old Town and Hart Park is weak and proposed for enhancement by the Plan. This project will visually and mentally extend each place into the other. This is expected to have an overall positive effect on Old Town while enhancing Hart Park and the properties along Newhall Avenue. Specifically, Hart Park will realize an improvement in parking capacity while improving pedestrian and vehicular access and visibility into the Park. Properties along Newhall Avenue will be able to better physically relate to the street than they do today. UPDATE: In 2012, the County of Los Angeles upgraded the Hart Park gateway and entrance.

## **C Plan-Area Policies**

Finally, in addition to fixed capital investments, there are several public policy initiatives that can also be undertaken in support of meeting Specific Plan objectives:

1. **Expansion of the Redevelopment Agency's Authority Related to Housing** - It is critical for the Redevelopment Agency to be an active and engaged partner in the revitalization of East Newhall. The full array of tools and approaches allowable under California Redevelopment Law may be used to engage the remediation of blighted residential conditions. In addition, the Redevelopment Agency's Housing Trust Fund will be deployed to assist in improving conditions in East Newhall and provide affordable housing to the community.

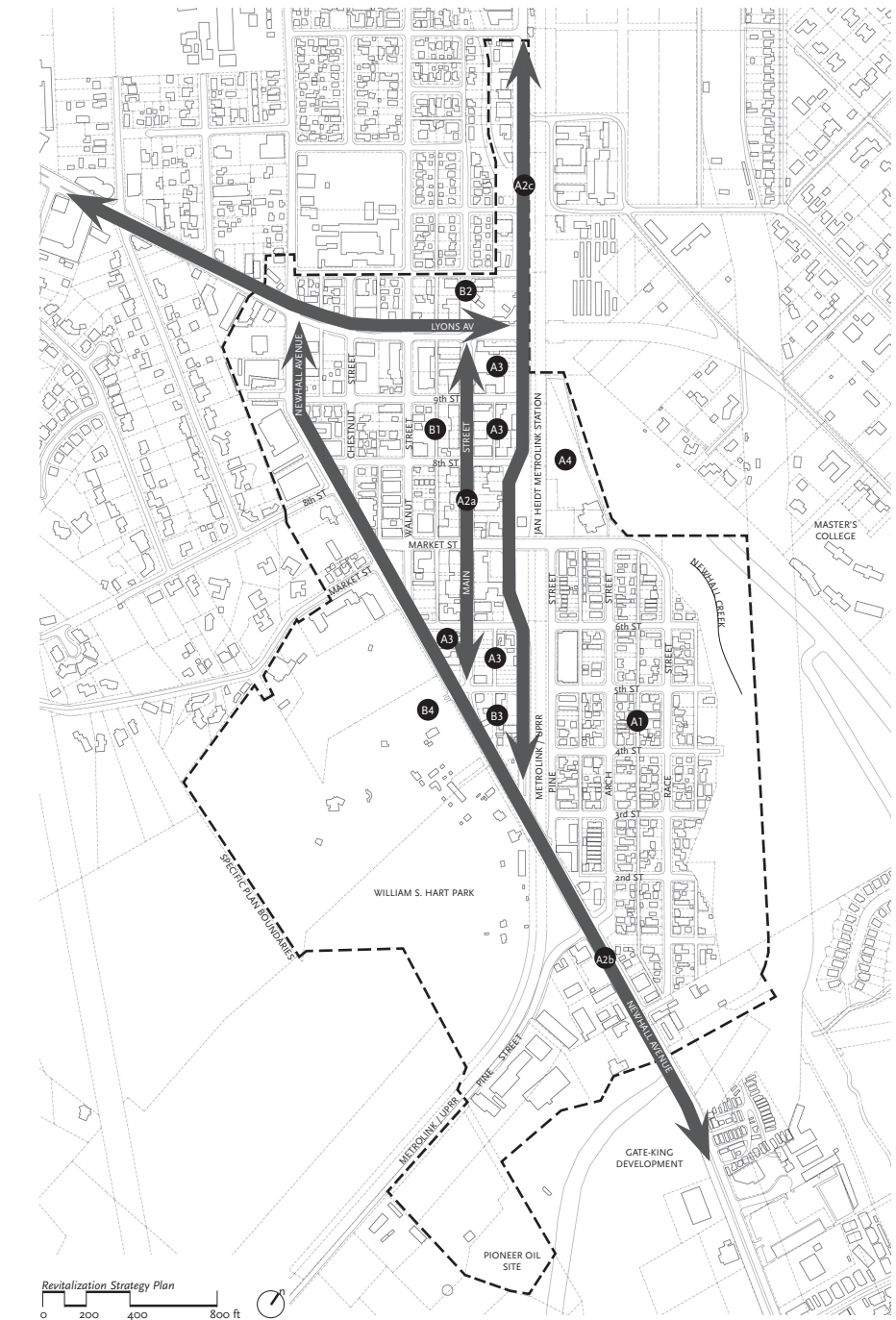
## CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

2. **Historic Preservation** - The issue of preserving and reinforcing the historic and pedestrian nature of Old Town is fundamental to the success of the revitalization effort. To accomplish this, it will be useful for the City to act on the results of the Historic Resources Survey prepared for this Plan to appropriately inform decisions and actions about future public and private development.

UPDATE: Historic preservation was adopted.

3. **Adoption of a Form-Based Development Code** - The desired outcomes expressed in this Specific Plan are largely meaningless without the appropriate implementation tool to accompany it over the short- and long-term: a Form-Based Code. Such a code needs to replace the existing conventional 'use-based' zoning code that currently regulates the land within the Specific Plan boundaries. The Form-Based Code differs from the current Zoning Code as follows:

A Form-Based Code focuses on the desired outcomes from several perspectives not only land use, such as the design and manner in which streets, streetscapes, lots, buildings and land use intensities act in a coordinated way according to their location in the particular place. Such a code is explicit about what it is trying to achieve and, therefore, is clear to understand and execute. This, in and of itself, is an incentive to pursuing 'desired outcomes' as identified by the community instead of imposing solutions that are not 'desired'. Such a code actually has more flexibility than current codes because it identifies ranges for the various subjects covered instead of harsh, non-negotiable limits.



4. **Transportation Improvement District** - As shown in the peer reviews of great places such as Boulder, Colorado and Downtown Pasadena, the direct relationship between the management of parking and the maintenance of such places is a critical strategy in their success. To this end, a T.I.D. is proposed to produce similar results for Old Town Newhall. With the attitude toward creating a market for parking and not simply dismissing land as available for parking at the expense of making a great place, a T.I.D. represents profound opportunity for Old Town Newhall.

### 2.1 - The Plan for Old Town Newhall

This illustrative version of the Old Town Newhall Plan indicates a possible future pattern of development specific to the existing conditions and opportunities available in Old Town Newhall. The terms and conditions underlying this particular design are presented in Chapter 4 (The Code). Eventually, carrying out these projects incrementally and over a long period of time, will change many of the specific details of this particular Illustrative Plan. But its fundamental character, qualities and intentions will remain intact.

The plan consists of a 20-block downtown served by Metrolink commuter rail, the repair and reconnecting of corridor segments into the downtown, two flanking neighborhoods, and an industrial district. Upon buildout this Specific Plan produces up to 1,092 new dwellings for a total of 1,402, and up to 1.017 million square feet of new commercial space for a total of approximately 1.254 million square feet. Some of this will occur in the form of new development and some as revitalized buildings.

This illustrative plan was designed by incorporating the following constituent elements of a traditional neighborhood:

- A seamless connection to the suburban and natural surroundings of the site;
- A five-minute walk from center to edge;
- An interconnected network of multi-modal thoroughfares;
- A rich set of public spaces, both thoroughfares that range from lively streetscapes to passages;
- A mix of residential, retail and office uses;
- A set of civic and community facilities that enable the public life of all people living there;
- Educational facilities that promote life-long learning;



*Main Street*



*Civic Building*



*Park Once Structure*

## CHAPTER 2 : FORM AND CHARACTER

- Immediate pedestrian access to nature;
- Places for recreational activity in plazas and pocket parks;
- Housing types for people of a variety of incomes and ages;
- A landscape in character with the climate and culture of Newhall;
- Sustainability measures that advance the long-term value and viability of the neighborhood.

The plan for the revitalization of Old Town Newhall consists of 50 main blocks for residential, commercial and office development and civic buildings. These blocks are formed by six different types of streets and four distinct plazas that provide a varied, interesting and interconnected public realm throughout. The majority of blocks are served by alleys which provide vehicle access (with the exception of several corner lots). Those blocks without alley-access are served by side-street access to maintain the continuity of the streetscape and associated parking along the major streets. In terms of buildings, those along Main Street are more intense, mixed-use and up to three stories, providing a transition to the primarily residential areas to the east and west of one and two story buildings.

The Charrette resulted in the identification of eight critical catalytic projects for the Old Town Newhall Specific Plan. In order to implement the Specific Plan objectives, a combination of public and private investments must be undertaken to provide the economic basis for all other components to contribute effectively. For a variety of economic reasons, the plan must be primarily driven by private capital for new real estate development. That being said, important public commitments must be undertaken as well.



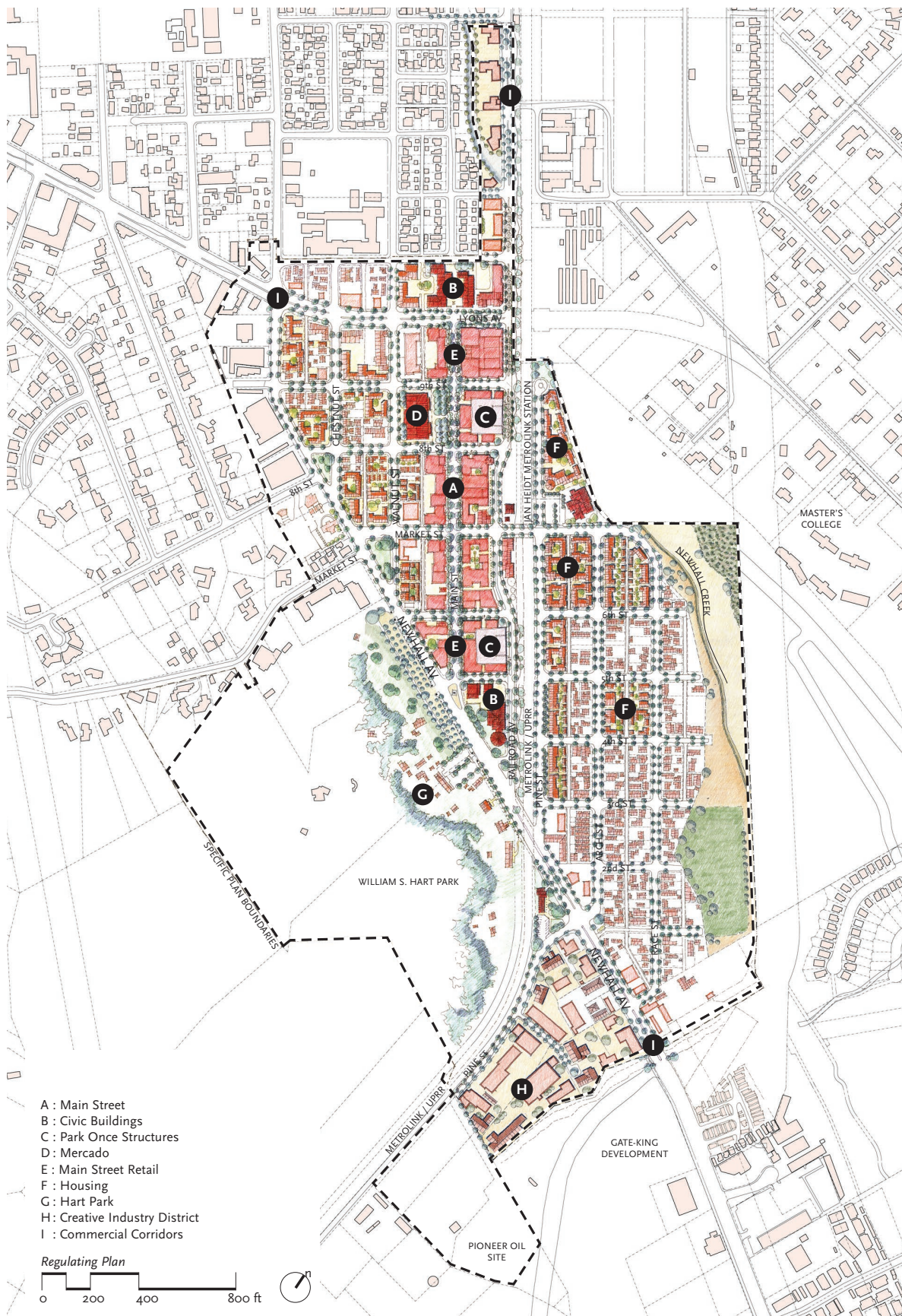
*Mercado*



*Infill and Transit-Oriented Housing*



*Hart Park*



NOTE: Locations of civic buildings, parking structures, the mercado, and museum are conceptual and are not binding or mandatory at the locations depicted.