



Via e-mail

January 13, 2017

Mayor Michael Tubbs and Members of the Stockton City Council

**Re: Expectations for Upcoming Land Use Alternative (Preferred Scenario) Workbook**

Mayor Tubbs and Council members:

We are writing on behalf of Campaign for Common Ground (CCG), a community-based organization that promoting smart growth policies and agricultural land preservation in San Joaquin County, and the Sierra Club. Our organizations are submitting this letter now in the hope that our concerns and suggestions will be incorporated by the City's General Plan Revision consultants who are in the process of developing a Land Use Alternative (Scenarios) document which is a critical step in determining how our city will grow for the next generation.

We would like to see a full range of growth scenarios developed that reflects the desires of Stocktonians to create an equitable, vibrant, and sustainable city. Each alternative should embrace smart growth planning principles, prioritize existing neighborhoods, and seek to reduce impacts related to climate change and global warming, primarily a reduction in the growth of carbon dioxide emissions.

**Background**

The City's current General Plan was adopted in 2007 at the peak of the real estate market and just before the economic collapse that led to the Great Recession. Assumptions made then are no longer supportable and are in excess of the growth projections of the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy adopted by the San Joaquin Council of Governments using State of California growth projections. These revised growth projections will necessitate a reduction in the amount of land designated for future growth in the General Plan, which should be reflected in all of the land use alternatives recommend in the Land Use Alternative (Scenarios) document.

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## **Stocktonians Prefer a Smart Growth General Plan**

To gauge community support for smart growth policies, CCG created and distributed an online survey in late 2016. The survey asks residents of Stockton about their preferences regarding the city's growth patterns, and the results to date are clear: A strong majority of Stocktonians prefer policies that encourage infill development in existing neighborhoods while discouraging growth outside of city limits. Residents also showed an appetite for policies that create more affordable housing, neighborhoods with access to transit, and complete streets. CCG will share the full results of this survey in February.

City held workshops have echoed the results of the CCG survey. At three workshops held by the City in September 2016 there was no expressed support for more low density suburban construction on agricultural land outside the existing City limits. Rather, the participants strongly favored future growth concentrated in South and downtown Stockton and supported higher intensity, mixed use, modern buildings, along with multi-family and attached housing types (see Summary of General Plan workshops, attached).

The clear support for infill development instead of sprawl is in line with the "Vision Statement" adopted by the City to guide the General Plan program. That statement reads:

"The edges of Stockton will be discrete and clear, agriculture will continue to thrive outside the urbanized city, and Stockton residents will enjoy scenic views of agricultural land. Development and redevelopment of vacant, underutilized, and blighted areas will be prioritized over development that extends into agricultural areas, strengthening the city's core and preserving the open space that surrounds it."

The Alternative Land Use scenarios developed by the City's consultants should reflect the input sought by the City, given by its residents and supported by the availability of usable land.

## **Sustainable Growth Projections**

The revised General Plan must set realistic growth targets that correspond with updated population and housing projections (see Table 1, Change in Stockton Population and Housing Projections, attached to this letter). It is clear that the growth projections used to inform the 2007 General Plan Update no longer apply, and more accurate data should be used when creating Land Use Alternatives.

The preliminary analysis prepared by City staff and the consultant indicate that the City has more than enough vacant or re-developable land to satisfy housing and economic growth over the planning period between now and the year 2040.

This available land includes several major development projects that have already been approved within the City limits (Sanctuary, Delta Cove, Cannery Park), which are planned for approximately 13,500 housing units (see Table 2 and the "Major Development Projects" map, attached). In addition, there are 2,000 acres of vacant land south of 8 Mile Road that are planned for a significant future housing growth (over 10,000 units) in the Bear Creek area (the

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Bear Creek East, West, and South projects). Finally, there are many infill lots in existing neighborhoods throughout the City that could be developed with homes and apartments.

### **Realistic General Plan Growth Areas**

The City must choose a growth pattern that is sustainable and does not overextend the capacity of the City's infrastructure (water supply and wastewater operations) and does not require financial expenditures that stress the City's capacity to provide police, fire, transportation support and other municipal services to existing and future residents.

In order for the updated General Plan to be consistent with the new, lower growth projections published by the San Joaquin Council of Governments, the City must seriously consider re-designation of some or all of the "Village" lands outside the existing City limits, which are now included in the 2007 General Plan (see Table 3, 2007 Stockton General Plan "Villages" to be Eliminated and the 2007 General Plan Land Use Map, attached to this letter).

The updated General Plan map must cut back planned greenfield development at the fringes of the city and instead adopt incentives to meet the infill targets that the City agreed to in the Settlement Agreement (18,400 new units within the existing city limits, including 3,000 units in downtown). The updated plan must also include realistic policies and programs that prove the City is financially capable of extending infrastructure and services to the new growth.

### **Conclusion**

The City must adopt a new "constitution of growth" that looks optimistically into the future and plans for a realistic amount of growth that the City can afford. Campaign for Common Ground and the Sierra Club look forward to the revision process for the City's General Plan and are hopeful that realistic changes can and will be made that reflect the dramatic changes in realities from 2007 to 2016, and the strong preferences of the community to see an emphasis on existing neighborhoods and equitable housing. We see the City's Land Use Alternative report as the foundation for these needed revisions.

Thank you for considering our comments on these issues. We eagerly await the Land Use Alternatives report. We hope the report will be consistent with the concepts expressed in this letter.

Very truly yours,

ss/Eric Parfrey

Chair, CCG and  
Chair, Sierra Club California Executive Committee  
[parfrey@sbcglobal.net](mailto:parfrey@sbcglobal.net)

encl:

Tables 1 through 3  
Major Development Projects map  
2007 General Plan Land Use Diagram with proposed changes  
Settlement Agreement excerpt  
Summary of General Plan workshops

cc: Stockton Planning Commission

**Table 1****Change in Stockton Population and Housing Projections**

	<b><u>2035 Population</u></b>	<b><u>Growth Projected (2010 - 2035)</u></b>
<b>Stockton GP (2007)</b>		
Population	580,000	+ 290,000 people
Housing Needed		+ 93,500 units
<b>SJCOG (2009)</b>		
Population	416,400	+ 126,400 people
Housing Needed		+ 40,800 units
<b>SJCOG (2014)</b>	402,000	+ 31,300 units
<b>Decrease in Projected Housing Needed:</b>		<b>52,700 - 62,200 units (decrease of 56% - 66%)</b>

Sources: Projections in 2007 Stockton General Plan (interpolated);  
Projections by San Joaquin Council of Governments (interpolated)

Note: Assumes 3.1 persons per housing unit

**Table 2**

**Major Approved Development Projects  
Within the Stockton City Limits  
(status as of 2015)**

Westlake Villages (Spanos, west of Spanos Park West)

2,630 units (680 acres)

Status: 322 building permits issued so far, 2,380 vacant lots have not yet pulled building permits.

Crystal Bay (Spanos, west of Westlake Villages)

1,343 units (174 acres)

Status: As of April 2015, the developer estimates full project build-out in approximately 9-12 years.

Cannery Park (Arnaiz, 8 Mile Road/SR 99)

1,191 units (450 acres)

Status: 34 building permits issued so far, 947 SF and 210 MF units have not yet pulled building permits.

Sanctuary (Grupe, Shima Tract south of Westlake Villages)

7,070 units (2,000 acres)

Status: "Necessary approvals have been obtained in order to complete \$2,000,000 of levee improvements in 2015 to enhance the integrity and functionality of the existing levees."

Delta Cove (Spanos, Atlas Tract east of Sanctuary)

1,654 units (360 acres)

Status: As of April 2015, the project developer estimates full build out in 7-10 years.

TOTAL: 13,884 units (3,664 acres)

Building permits issued: 356 SF units

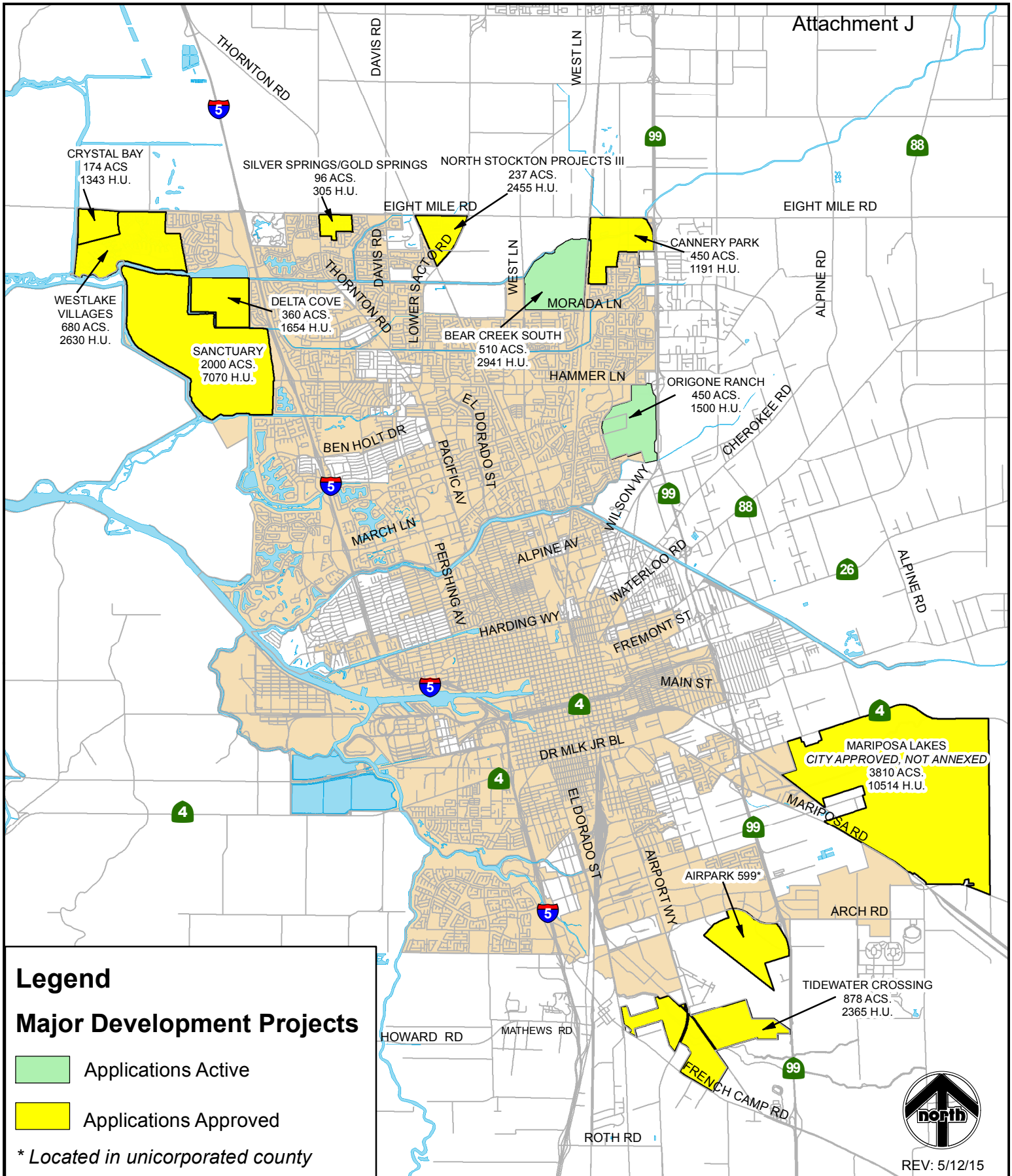
Building permits not yet issued: 13,528 units

Bear Creek East, West, South (West Lane, south of 8 Mile)

10,391 units (2,027 acres)

Status: None of the three projects are yet approved

Source: City of Stockton, General Plan Baseline Report, August 2015



CITY OF STOCKTON

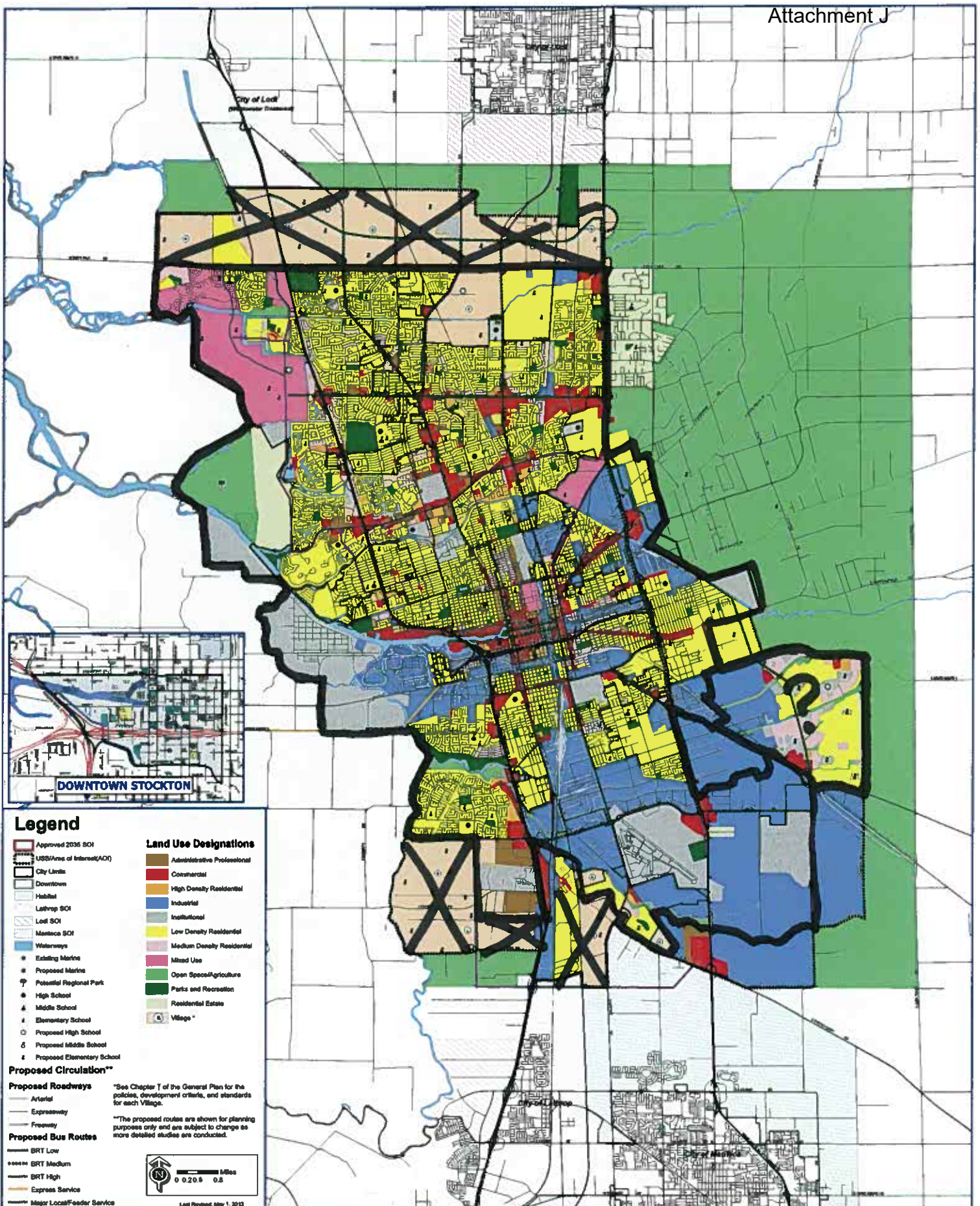
# MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

**Table 3**

**2007 Stockton General Plan “Villages”  
to be Eliminated**

<u>2007 General Plan Growth Area</u>	<u>Potential Housing to be Cut</u>
2,800 acres south of Weston Ranch (Villages “L” and “M”)	approx. 10,500 units
500 acres in French Camp (Village “K”)	approx. 2,000 units
6,700 acres north of 8 Mile Road (Villages “B,” “C,” “D,” “E,” “F,” and “G”)	approx. 25,000+ units
Sub-total:	approx. 37,500 units
Mariposa Lakes (3,800 acres east of Highway 99) (Villages “I” and “J,” development agreement signed)	approx. 10,000 units
TOTAL	approx. 47,500 units





## Excerpt from the Settlement Agreement:

6. To ensure that the City's development does not undermine the policies that support infill and downtown development, within 12 months of the Effective Date, the City staff shall submit for City Council adoption policies or programs in its General Plan that:

- a. Require at least 4400 units of Stockton's new housing growth to be located in Greater Downtown Stockton (defined as land generally bordered by Harding Way, Charter Way (MLK), Pershing Avenue, and Wilson Way), with the goal of approving 3,000 of these units by 2020.
- b. Require at least an additional 14,000 of Stockton's new housing units to be located within the City limits as they exist on the Effective Date ("existing City limits").
- c. Provide incentives to promote infill development in Greater Downtown Stockton, including but not limited to the following for proposed infill developments: reduced impact fees, including any fees referenced in paragraph 7 below; lower permit fees; less restrictive height limits; less restrictive setback requirements; less restrictive parking requirements; subsidies; and a streamlined permitting process.
- d. Provide incentives for infill development within the existing City limits but outside Greater Downtown Stockton and excluding projects of significance. These incentives may be less aggressive than those referenced in paragraph 6.c., above.

7. Within 12 months of the Effective Date, the City staff shall submit for City Council adoption amendments to the General Plan to ensure that development at the City's outskirts, particularly residential, village or mixed use development, does not grow in a manner that is out of balance with development of infill. These proposed amendments shall include, but not be limited to, measures limiting the granting of entitlements for development projects outside the existing City limits and which are (1) subject to an SP or MDP, or (2) projects of significance, until certain criteria are met. These criteria shall include, at a minimum:

- a. Minimum levels of transportation efficiency, transit availability (including BRT) and Level of Service, as defined by the San Joaquin Council of Government regulations, City service capacity, water availability, and other urban services performance measures;
- b. Firm, effective milestones that will assure that specified levels of infill development, jobs-housing balance goals, and GHG and VMT reduction goals, once established, are met before new entitlements can be granted;
- c. Impact fees on new development, or alternative financing mechanisms identified in a project's Fiscal Impact Analysis and/or Public Facilities Financing Plan, that will ensure that the levels and milestones referenced in paragraphs 7.a. and 7.b., above, are met. Any such fees:
  - (1) shall be structured, in accordance with controlling law, to ensure that all development outside the infill areas within existing City limits is revenue-neutral to the City (which may necessitate higher fees for development outside this area, depending upon the costs of extending infrastructure);
  - (2) may be in addition to mitigation measures required under CEQA;
  - (3) shall be based upon a Fiscal Impact Analysis and a Public Facilities Financing Plan.
- d. The City shall explore the feasibility of enhancing the financial viability of infill development in Greater Downtown Stockton, through the use of such mechanisms as an infill mitigation bank.

## **Envision Stockton – General Plan Update Visioning Workshops Summary**

In September 2016, the City of Stockton hosted a series of workshops for community members to learn about the General Plan update process, review existing conditions, discuss their visions for the future of Stockton, identify areas of the city where positive change might be most likely to occur, and discuss key land use and related issues that should be addressed through the General Plan update. Each workshop began with a presentation by City staff and consultants describing the update process, existing conditions in Stockton, and opportunities for public involvement.

Participants offered input through small group discussions, responding to questions geared at identifying a community vision to guide the 2040 General Plan. The input received at each workshop is summarized below. The detailed notes and comment cards from the workshops are provided as Attachments A, B, and C. Participants were also asked to choose desirable and undesirable building designs from photographs, and the results of these visual preference surveys are provided at the end of this summary. Both that survey and the small group questions have also been available to the community via the City's website as of September 19, 2016.

### ***Workshop #1: Merlo Gym Tuesday, September 20, 2016***

The first workshop was held at the Merlo Gym in South Stockton. Approximately 55 people signed in, and there were nine groups during the small group discussion. A summary of the group responses organized by question is provided below.

#### **1. What do you like most about Stockton?**

Participants like that the city is centrally located with access to educational institutions such as Delta College, University of the Pacific (UOP), and California State University (CSU) Stanislaus. Groups also mentioned enjoying attractions such as the civic auditorium, the waterfront, the Stockton arena, and community events like movie nights, concerts in the park, and waterfront Fridays. In addition, participants like the diversity of Stockton residents, family-owned businesses, affordable housing, and living in close proximity to agricultural lands.

#### **2. What would you like to see changed in Stockton in order to make it a better place to live and work?**

Participants identified the need for increased safety, more grocery stores, health equity, jobs, housing, infill development, and multi-modal transit opportunities. Groups also mentioned the need for more youth-focused recreation opportunities, homeless outreach services, and a new university (i.e., CSU Stockton). In addition, participants mentioned that they would really enjoy increased entertainment opportunities such as community events, a more active Downtown, a Riverwalk with restaurants, and more open space.

**3. Rank the following issues in order of importance for the General Plan Update to address: vibrant and active Downtown; safe residential neighborhoods; traffic congestion; safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian circulation; improved community services (e.g., police, fire); and job creation.**

Groups ranked the issues in order of importance and presented their results to the larger group at the end of the small group discussion. For this summary, the results from each group were compiled, resulting in the following overall workshop rankings listed below in order of importance:

- 1) Safe Residential Neighborhoods
- 2) Job Creation
- 3) Vibrant and Active Downtown
- 4) Improved Community Services
- 5) Safe and Convenient Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation
- 6) Traffic Congestion

These rankings mirror the common responses to question 2 above, with the need for safety and job creation ranking the highest overall. In addition, groups suggested that the General Plan prioritize the following additional issues: public health, social and equitable approaches to General Plan implementation, youth investment, and arts/culture.

**4. Rank the following areas to show where you would most like to see new development, growth, or change happen: Downtown; Midtown; North Stockton; South Stockton; West Stockton; and East Stockton.**

Groups ranked the areas where they would most like to see new development, growth, or change happen in order of importance and presented their results to the larger group at the end of the small group discussion. For this summary, the results from each group were compiled, resulting in the following overall workshop rankings listed below in order of importance:

- 1) South Stockton
- 2) East Stockton
- 3) Downtown
- 4) West Stockton
- 5) Midtown
- 6) North Stockton

Overall, participants prioritized South Stockton, East Stockton, and Downtown for development, growth, and change.

***Workshop #2: Seifert Community Center  
Wednesday, September 21, 2016***

The second workshop was held at the Seifert Community Center in North Stockton. Approximately 60 people signed in, and there were nine groups during the small group discussion. A summary of the group responses organized by question is provided below.

### **1. What do you like most about Stockton?**

Participants like local attractions such as Victory Park, the waterfront, Miracle Mile, the historic buildings in Downtown, and the inland deep-water port. Groups also like that the city is centrally located because it provides easy access to outdoor recreation areas and neighboring points of interest. In addition, participants like the diversity of Stockton residents, cultural and community events, farmers markets, sports fields, and living in close proximity to agricultural lands.

### **2. What would you like to see changed in Stockton in order to make it a better place to live and work?**

Participants identified the need for increased safety, decreased blight, health equity, increased job opportunities, affordable housing, multi-modal transit opportunities, and the preservation of agricultural lands. Groups also mentioned the need for more youth-focused recreational opportunities, career development opportunities, vocational training, homeless outreach services, mental health services, and a new university (i.e., CSU Stockton). Participants also mentioned that they would really enjoy increased outdoor recreational opportunities such as walking, jogging, and biking trails, as well as gardens and open space. In addition, participants expressed interest in promoting tourism and revitalizing South Stockton and the Downtown area.

### **3. Rank the following issues in order of importance for the General Plan Update to address: vibrant and active Downtown; safe residential neighborhoods; traffic congestion; safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian circulation; improved community services (e.g., police, fire); and job creation.**

Groups ranked the areas where they would most like to see new development, growth, or change happen in order of importance and presented their results to the larger group at the end of the small group discussion. For this summary, the results from each group were compiled, resulting in the following overall workshop rankings listed below in order of importance:

- 1) Safe Residential Neighborhoods
- 2) Job Creation
- 3) Vibrant and Active Downtown
- 4) Improved Community Services
- 5) Safe and Convenient Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation
- 6) Traffic Congestion

These rankings are consistent with responses received at the first workshop and mirror the common responses to question 2 above, with the need for safety and job creation ranking the highest overall.

### **4. Rank the following areas to show where you would most like to see new development, growth, or change happen: Downtown; Midtown; North Stockton; South Stockton; West Stockton; and East Stockton.**

Groups ranked the areas where they would most like to see new development, growth, or change happen in order of importance and presented their results to the larger group at the end of the small group discussion. For this summary, the results from each group were compiled, resulting in the following overall workshop rankings listed below in order of importance:

- 1) South Stockton
- 2) Downtown
- 3) East Stockton



- 4) Midtown
- 5) West Stockton
- 6) North Stockton

These rankings are also generally consistent with the responses received at the first workshop, prioritizing South Stockton, Downtown, and East Stockton overall. However, participants at this workshop ranked Downtown higher than East Stockton and Midtown higher than West Stockton.

***Workshop #3 (Young Adult and Youth Workshop): Danner Hall, San Joaquin Delta Community College  
Wednesday, September 28, 2016***

The third workshop, geared for young adults and youth in Stockton, was held in Danner Hall at Delta College. Approximately 80 people signed in, and there were ten groups during the small group discussion. A summary of the group responses organized by question is provided below.

**1. What do you like most about Stockton?**

Participants like that the city is centrally located with access to educational institutions such as Delta and UOP. Groups also mentioned enjoying attractions such as the Civic Auditorium, the waterfront, the Stockton arena, Miracle Mile, Victory Park, the civic theater, retail shops, the movie theaters, soccer complex, and restaurants. Participants also enjoy community events like the Asparagus Festival, Tamale Festival, and 99 Speedway. In addition, participants like the diversity of Stockton residents, family-owned businesses, affordable housing, parks and open space, the YMCA, teen center, and libraries.

**2. What would you like to see changed in Stockton in order to make it a better place to live and work?**

Participants identified the need for job creation, increased safety, improved infrastructure, redevelopment, high density infill, bike/pedestrian access, and better lighting of public spaces, especially in the Downtown. Groups also mentioned the need for more youth-focused recreation opportunities, programs that prepare youth and young adults for a post-secondary education, homeless outreach services, parks and open space, gyms, health equity, and a new university (again, CSU Stockton). In addition, participants would like more entertainment opportunities such as community events and cultural museums.

**3. Rank the following issues in order of importance for the General Plan Update to address: vibrant and active Downtown; safe residential neighborhoods; traffic congestion; safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian circulation; improved community services (e.g., police, fire); and job creation.**

Groups ranked the issues in order of importance and presented their results to the larger group at the end of the small group discussion. For this summary, the results from each group were compiled, resulting in the following overall workshop rankings listed below in order of importance:

- 1) Job Creation
- 2) Safe Residential Neighborhoods
- 3) Improved Community Services
- 4) Vibrant and Active Downtown

- 5) Safe and Convenient Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation
- 6) Traffic Congestion

These rankings generally mirror the input from Workshops 1 and 2 and the common responses to question 2, with the need for job creation and safety ranking the highest overall. Participants at this workshop ranked community services higher than did participants at Workshops 1 and 2. Groups at this workshop also suggested that the General Plan prioritize the following additional issues: housing availability for all incomes and improved education.

**4. Rank the following areas to show where you would most like to see new development, growth, or change happen: Downtown; Midtown; North Stockton; South Stockton; West Stockton; and East Stockton.**

Groups ranked the areas where they would most like to see new development, growth, or change happen in order of importance and presented their results to the larger group at the end of the small group discussion. For this summary, the results from each group were compiled, resulting in the following overall workshop rankings listed below in order of importance:

- 1) South Stockton & Downtown (tie)
- 2) East Stockton
- 3) Midtown
- 4) West Stockton
- 5) North Stockton

As with the previous workshops, participants prioritized South Stockton, Downtown, and East Stockton. However, they ranked Downtown higher than at the other workshops, and some people suggested that the southern part of West Stockton (west of I-5) should be ranked as highly as South Stockton.

**Two additional questions were asked at the Delta College Workshop:**

**5. Do you envision staying and working in Stockton after you are out of school? If not, what would need to change in order for you to want to stay?**

Many of the participants are planning to or would like to stay and work in Stockton after graduating from school. However, some worried that they would need to move out of the Stockton area if they were unable to find a job. Others already plan to move, often because they don't expect to find job opportunities in their chosen field. In order to remain in Stockton, participants would like to see increased job growth, career opportunities, competitive wages, decreased crime, affordable housing, better services to support community needs, improved healthcare, and affordable options for higher education.

**6. What type of job do you hope to have when you are out of school? Do you think that there will be adequate job opportunities for you in Stockton?**

Most of the participants do not anticipate having adequate job opportunities after graduating from school. After graduation, many participants are interested in pursuing careers in fields like engineering, biological sciences, environmental science, and medicine/health. In addition, participants expressed interest in pursuing careers in education, counseling, psychology, criminal justice, financial services, and government.

## ***Visual Preference Survey Results***

At each workshop, participants were asked to complete a visual preference survey identifying the types of development that they would like to see more of in Stockton. The photos used in the survey are shown on the following pages. Participant responses to these surveys are summarized below.

### **Workshops #1 and 2 (Merlo Gym and Seifert Center)**

The commercial/office/mixed use images that were most desired (i.e., circled the most) were:

- D (3+ story residential/retail mixed use; sidewalk restaurant seating)
- G (downtown Pleasanton)
- C (urban mixed use residential/retail)

The residential images that were most desired (i.e., circled the most) were:

- M (motor-court housing)
- L (townhomes)
- O (live-work spaces)

In general, there were far fewer instances of crossing out photos, indicating that the respondent does not like the development type, than there were of circling them as desirable. Of the photos that were crossed out, most were images A, H, and I, which show a small shopping center and two campus-style office buildings. Image J, the single family residential image, was crossed out the most among the residential photos.

Based on these results, it appears that the survey participants at Workshops #1 and 2 generally favor higher intensity, mixed use, modern buildings, along with multi-family and attached housing types.

### **Workshop #3 (Young Adult and Youth: Delta College)**

The commercial/office/mixed use images that were most desired (i.e., circled the most) were:

- C (urban mixed use residential/retail)
- D (3+ story residential/retail mixed use; sidewalk restaurant seating)
- B (shopping center)
- E (urban mixed use residential/retail)
- G (downtown Pleasanton)

The residential images that were most desired (i.e., circled the most) were:

- J (single family residential)
- M (motor-court housing)
- O (live-work spaces)
- P (high density apartments with open space)

As with the previous workshops, there were far fewer instances of crossing out photos than there were of circling them. Of the photos that were crossed out, most were images A, F, H, and I, which show a



small shopping center, small free-standing shops, and two campus-style office buildings. Image K, showing small home/small lot detached housing with no garages, was crossed out the most among the residential photos; however, this photo was circled more than it was crossed out (ten circles versus six cross outs).

Based on these results, it appears that the young adults and youth at Workshop #3 generally favor higher intensity, mixed use, modern buildings, as well as lower intensity shopping centers. Participants at this workshop also like both high-density and attached housing as well as detached single-family homes.



## HELP ENVISION STOCKTON'S FUTURE!

What type of development would you like to see more of in your city?

Review the images below and identify the type of **commercial, office, and mixed use development** that appeals to you by drawing a circle around the image; indicate development types that you don't like by crossing them out. Please feel free to write comments next to the images and tell us what you like, don't like, or identify anything that we missed!

A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



I





## HELP ENVISION STOCKTON'S FUTURE!

What type of development would you like to see more of in your city?

Review the images below and identify the type of **residential development** that appeals to you by drawing a circle around the image; indicate development types that you don't like by crossing them out. Please feel free to write comments next to the images and tell us what you like, don't like, or identify anything that we missed!

J



K



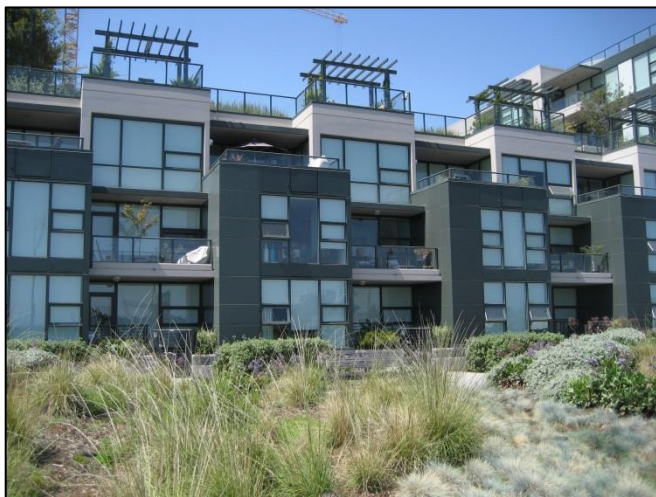
L



M



N



O



P



Thank you for participating!