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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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### **1.1 PURPOSE AND LEGAL AUTHORITY**

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The purpose of this specific plan is to provide the City of Belmont with a revitalization strategy and urban design plan for Downtown development which balances future land use growth within local limits of traffic circulation capacity. It represents a major community effort involving numerous public meetings and workshops, the dedicated work of a 15-member citizens downtown task force and the coordination of various city departments and other public agencies. This process has helped to identify the many issues and community attitudes regarding:

1. What should be the focus of the city's efforts to revitalize and redevelop downtown?
2. What are the most important and appropriate urban design elements which can enhance the Downtown's physical character and commercial attraction?
3. How can the existing pattern of fragmented land uses evolve into a mix of complimentary uses, each serving a vital role in the Downtown?
4. What short-term improvements can be made, and long-term options preserved to improve on the existing and anticipated future traffic congestion problems?
5. What strategies can be used by the City to effectively implement the goals and objectives of downtown revitalization?

#### **Planning Area**

The Planning Area includes approximately 23 blocks and is generally bounded by Elmer Street, Harbor Boulevard to Broadway, Sixth Avenue to Twin Pines Park, and Hill Street to the Belmont Iceland Recreational Skating Rink. The Planning Area is bisected northwest-to-southeast by El Camino Real and northeast-to-southwest by Ralston Avenue. The Southern Pacific Railroad tracks parallel El Camino Real through the study area. Figure 1.1 shows the Planning Area in relationship to the surrounding region.

#### **Range of Issues**

Through the guidance of the Citizens Downtown Task Force, this Specific Plan has been developed to provide objectives, policies and guidelines for the following: 1) the type and intensity of land use, 2) the transportation and circulation improvements necessary to accommodate the proposed land use, 3) the parking which should be provided suitable for the proposed land use, 4) the building design theme and streetscape character which conveys the

desired image for downtown, 5) the types of public improvements (i.e., sewer, water, storm drainage) needed, and perhaps most importantly, 6) an implementation strategy necessary to finance and implement the Plan, including both public and private actions.

### **The Plan as a Policy Document**

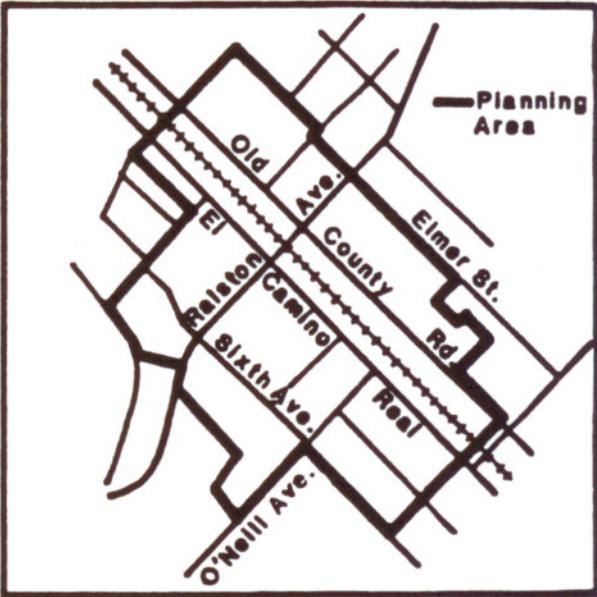
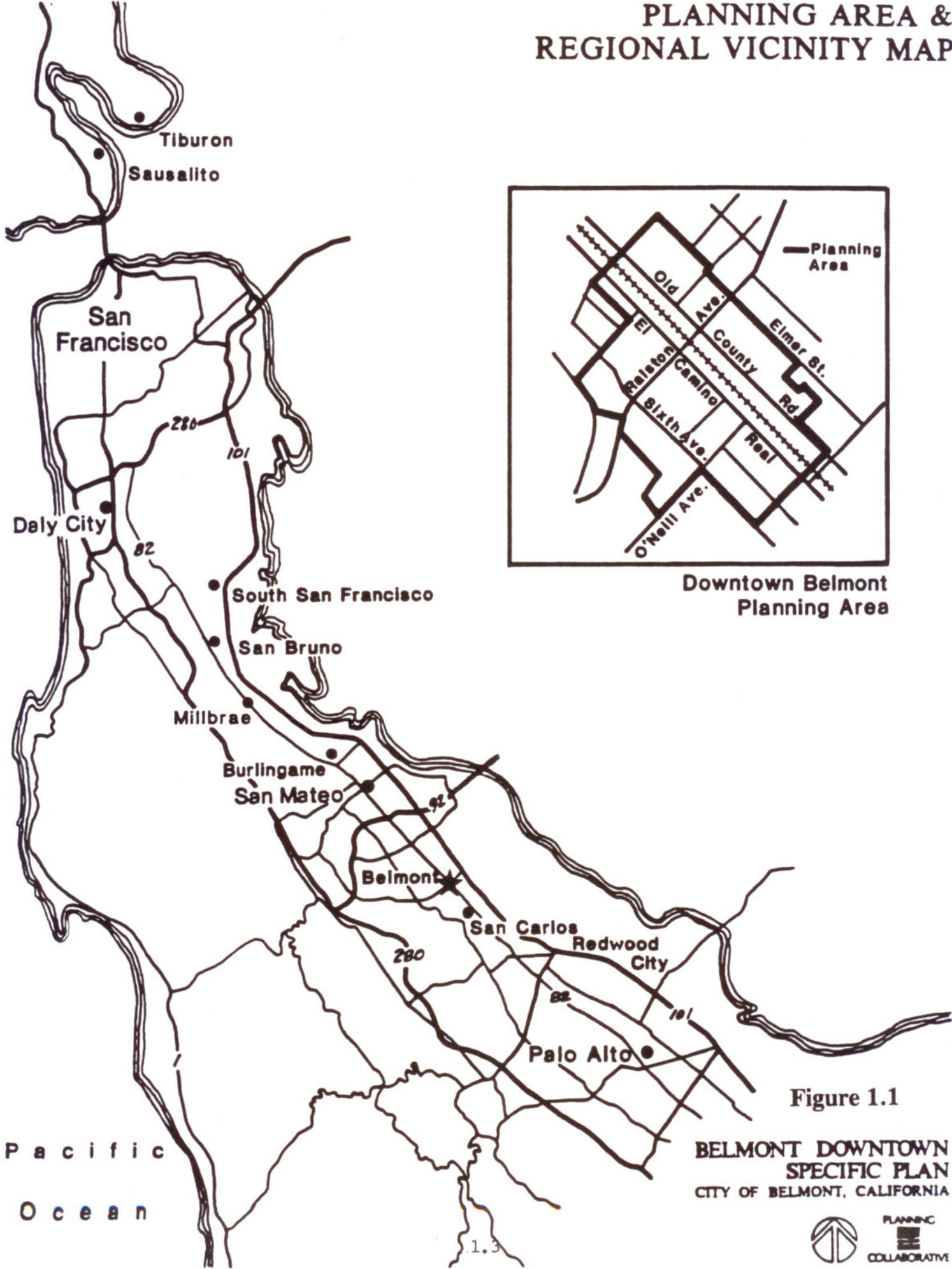
The Downtown Belmont Specific Plan is intended to guide and direct the revitalization of Downtown Belmont over a period of approximately 10 to 15 years. It provides goals, objectives, and policies to guide public and private actions. The Plan includes design guidelines by which private development proposals shall be reviewed by the City. It sets priorities for certain capital improvements within the Downtown. As a policy document, the Specific Plan is intended to be adopted by resolution as an amendment to the General Plan. The Plan differentiates goals, objectives and policies, which are to be formally incorporated in the General Plan, through the use of the proscriptive verb "shall" and are shown in bold type. Recommended guidelines, actions and procedures, which are more discretionary in their application, make use of the verb "should" and are not shown in bold type.

Plan implementation will require modifications and amendments to existing City ordinances and commitments to public improvements. It is intended to enlist the willingness of private property owners, developers, merchants and residents to use this plan as a blueprint to the revitalization of Downtown Belmont. Specific actions recommended by this Plan, such as zoning amendments, would be the subject of separate actions by City staff, the Planning Commission, the City Council and the Redevelopment Agency at a later date.

### **Relationship to Existing General Plan and Zoning Ordinances**

This Plan has been prepared in accordance with Section 65450 through 65457 of the California Government Code. Accordingly, this Specific Plan is intended to be adopted for the purpose of systematically implementing the General Plan. Therefore, the Specific Plan must be consistent with the adopted General Plan and all zoning, subdivision, and public works approved within the Specific Plan Area must be consistent with the Specific Plan. Consistency with the City General Plan is maintained through the incorporation of goals and policies from the General Plan into this document. Where inconsistencies with existing General Plan policies occur, the implementation actions of this Plan identify specific General Plan amendments which are recommended to maintain this consistency. Where a subject addressed in the General Plan is not addressed in this Specific Plan, the policies of the General Plan will continue to apply. Additionally, the policies, guidelines and standards of this Specific Plan should be incorporated into the existing City Zoning Ordinance such that the City Zoning Code is consistent with this Plan.

# PLANNING AREA & REGIONAL VICINITY MAP



Downtown Belmont Planning Area

Figure 1.1

**BELMONT DOWNTOWN  
SPECIFIC PLAN**  
CITY OF BELMONT, CALIFORNIA



## **Severability**

In the event that any policy or standard of this Specific Plan is held invalid by a California or Federal Court of competent jurisdiction, such portions shall be deemed separate, distinct and independent provisions. The invalidity of such provisions shall not affect the validity of the remaining provision thereof.

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## **1.2 PLAN ORGANIZATION**

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This Plan is organized into seven separate chapters. This Introduction chapter contains the purpose and legal authority of the Plan according to Specific Plan guidelines for the State of California. The following Chapter 2.0, Downtown Plan Overview, is an introduction and overview of the Plan describing history, basic principles and summary of the Plan goals. Chapter 3.0 Village Center Element, contains the goals, objectives and guidelines for the development of a Village Center, or core commercial project within the Downtown. Chapter 4.0, Urban Design Element consists of the goals, objectives, policies and guidelines to direct future Urban Design Elements which can effect the form and appearance of Downtown. Chapter 5.0 is the Land Use Element, containing goals, objectives and policies to guide future land use development within the Planning Area. Chapter 6.0 is the Circulation Element, providing goals, objectives and policies to formulate interim transportation improvements and long-term transportation improvement options. The final chapter, Chapter 7.0 Implementation Element, contains the regulative, fiscal and administrative implementation actions necessary to systematically implement the goals, objectives, policies and guidelines of this Plan.

Each of the five major policy elements of the plan - Village Center, Urban Design, Land Use, Circulation and Transportation, and Implementation - is the focus of a single goal which states the broad intent and underlying philosophy of the element. Each element is organized into several subsections which provide the policy content for each objective. The goal and objectives are presented at the beginning of each element, and then repeated with the policies which support them. Following each policy are supporting guidelines, actions or explanations. The latter comprise the informal content of the Plan, whereas goals, objectives and policies comprise the legal language of the Plan.