

# THRIVE DOWNTOWN

## Downtown Stockton Master Plan and Vision

Existing Conditions Report

March 30, 2026

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01

INTRODUCTION

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Why the Thrive Downtown Plan for Stockton?

Downtown Stockton is the center of a storied and diverse city of 325,000 people. Downtown has great potential to become a thriving destination and a hub of community life. Underutilized sites and civic assets represent opportunities for new development and adaptive reuse for housing, retail, entertainment, and culture. Previous planning work and community engagement have helped inform what downtown Stockton should be, and the Thrive Downtown plan will build on this to create a comprehensive vision and master plan. Just as importantly, the Plan will support that vision with a targeted program of implementation actions to create change on the ground.

## 1.2 Stockton in Context

Stockton is located on the northern edge of the San Joaquin Valley. Founded in 1849 during the California Gold Rush, Stockton became a critical transportation hub, booming in the decades around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many people migrated to Stockton to participate in the city’s growing economy, including immigrants from China, Filipinos, Japanese, and Sikhs. <sup>1</sup>

Stockton has remained a hub for agriculture and manufacturing and developed in tandem with a developing region. Increasingly, the northern San Joaquin Valley has become a major logistical hub, attracting large warehousing operations that benefit from the area’s proximity to major transportation routes and population centers. Figure 1.1 shows Stockton’s location in the region.

Interstate 5 and Highway 99 run north-south and Highway 4 runs east-west through Stockton, providing connections up and down the valley and to the Bay Area and the Sierras (see Figure 1.2). As shown in Figure 1.3, the Downtown Study Area is bounded on the west by Interstate 5, on the north by Park Street, on the east by Airport Way, and on the south by Taylor Street and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail line. The Study Area includes the stations that serve the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) and Amtrak rail lines. Downtown is situated at the head of McLeod Lake, which extends from the San Joaquin River and other navigable channels that connect Stockton to the Sacramento River Delta. A smaller Focus Area, encompassing the historic core of Downtown and the areas on the north and south shores of McLeod Lake, is also defined. This report will address the larger Study Area; more detailed analysis and conceptual design will be done for the Focus Area.

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<sup>1</sup> Visit Stockton. “Stockton History.” Visit Stockton, accessed January 26, 2026. <https://www.visitstockton.org/plan-your-trip/about-stockton/stockton-history>

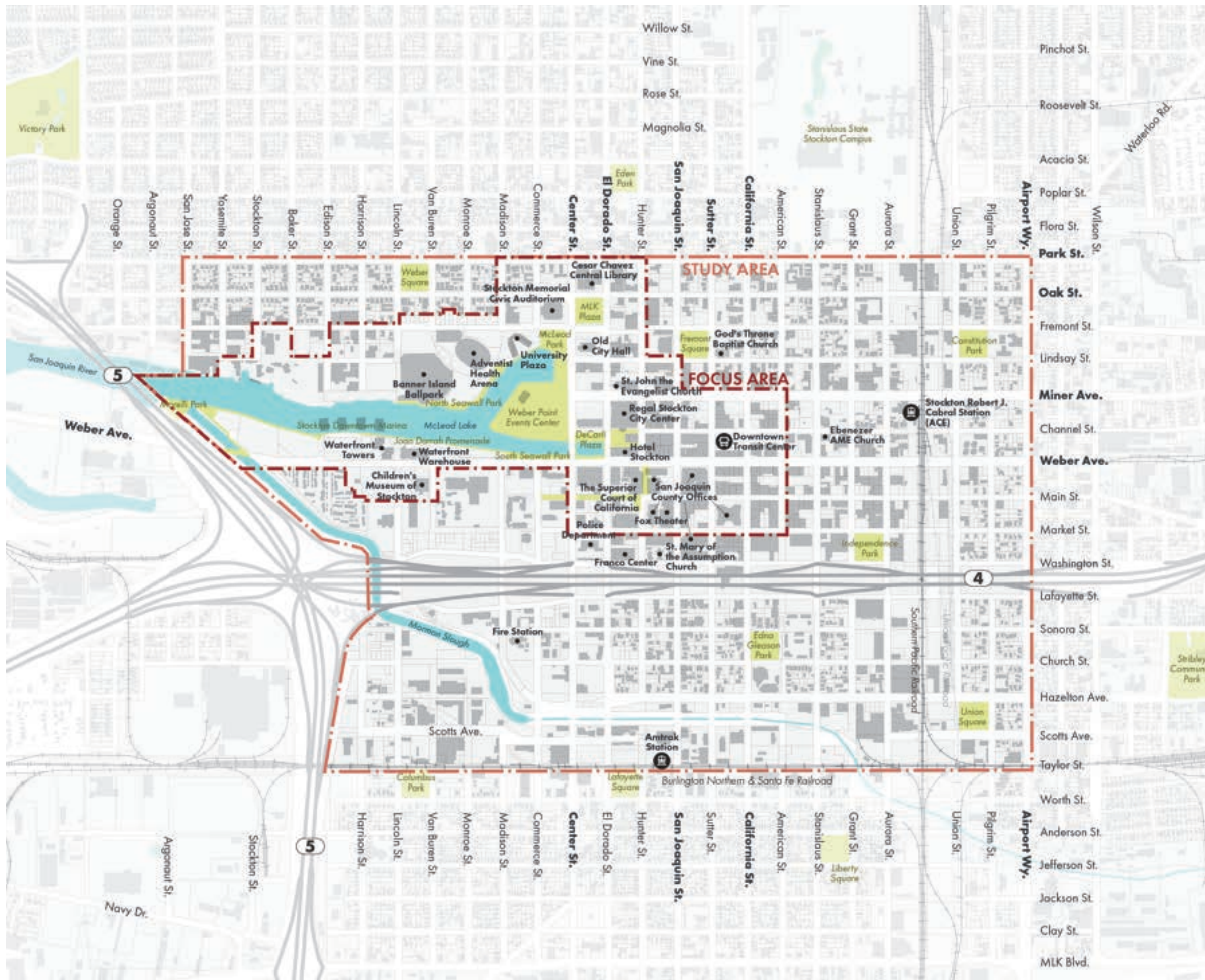


Figure 1.1: Regional Setting



Figure 1.2: City of Stockton Context

Figure 1.3: Downtown Stockton Study Area



## 1.3 Stockton's People & Economy

The city's population has steadily grown over the last two and a half decades. According to State of California population projections, Stockton's population is projected to reach 432,627 by 2040<sup>2</sup>, though this projection assumed a larger 2020 population than was actually recorded in the US Census. Based on the estimated 2024 population of approximately 324,000, this would amount to a 33% increase over sixteen years.

Compared to San Joaquin County and the State, Stockton's median age (33.7) is slightly lower, and its population is more racially diverse. Hispanic or Latinos make up the largest racial and ethnic group in Stockton (43%), followed by Asians (20%), and whites (17%), respectively.<sup>3</sup> The citywide median household income is \$76,850 compared to \$38,010 Downtown, where about one-fifth of households earn under \$15,000. Both areas experienced real gains from 2013 to 2023, with median incomes rising 64% citywide and 75% Downtown and average incomes increasing 57% and 64% respectively.<sup>4</sup>

In 2025, Stockton had 127,840 jobs citywide, with 66,507 located in the Downtown Study Area—just over half of total employment. Employment is led by Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail and Food Services, and Industrial sectors. Average wages are higher Downtown (\$71,007) than citywide (\$64,791). From 2015 to 2025, Downtown captured 58% of the City's job growth, adding 11,154 of the 19,148 new jobs, with the largest overall gains occurring in Industrial, Health Care, Educational Services, and Public Administration sectors.<sup>5</sup> Citywide educational attainment exceeds that of Downtown Stockton. However, Downtown has experienced notable improvement over the past decade. In 2013, more than half of Downtown residents over age 25 lacked a high school diploma; by 2023, that share declined significantly, and bachelor's degree attainment nearly doubled.

The entire Study Area is designated as a disadvantaged community per California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) using data from the CalEnviroScreen tool. The Study Area ranks among the most disadvantaged census tracts in the State. This designation is based on high pollution burden indicators, such as exposure to diesel particulate matter, hazardous waste, and traffic density, combined with socioeconomic vulnerabilities including high poverty rates, low educational attainment, and high rates of asthma and cardiovascular disease. These findings highlight the cumulative challenges faced by residents in and around the Study Area.<sup>6</sup>

## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Stockton's cultural history reflects the convergence of diverse communities shaped by geography, migration, and economic opportunities. Prior to European settlement, the area that is now Stockton was home to the Yokuts, native Americans who lived along the waterways of the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta and relied on

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<sup>2</sup> City of Stockton, Housing Element of the General Plan: 2023–2031 (Stockton, CA: City of Stockton Community Development Department, 2023), BR-12

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2023. Accessed January 26, 2026. [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B01002?g=040XX00US06\\_050XX00US06077\\_160XX00US0675000&d=ACS+5-Year+Estimates+Detailed+Tables](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B01002?g=040XX00US06_050XX00US06077_160XX00US0675000&d=ACS+5-Year+Estimates+Detailed+Tables).

<sup>4</sup> EPS, Downtown Stockton Market Assessment, February 2026. There was 10% cumulative inflation from 2013 to 2023, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for the West Region, All Urban Consumers.

<sup>5</sup> EPS, Downtown Stockton Market Assessment, February 2026. There was 10% cumulative inflation from 2013 to 2023, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for the West Region, All Urban Consumers.

<sup>6</sup> EPS, Downtown Stockton Market Assessment, February 2026.

fishing, hunting, and seasonal gathering. In the mid-19th century, the establishment of Stockton as a supply hub during the California Gold Rush transformed the settlement into an important regional port and agricultural center. Its location along major waterways and rail corridors helped the city grow rapidly as a transportation and trade hub for the Central Valley.

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and European immigrants arrived to work in farming, canneries, railroads, and shipping industries. These communities established distinct neighborhoods, cultural institutions, and commercial districts that reflected their heritage and supported newly arrived residents<sup>7</sup>. Stockton became known for its ethnic neighborhoods and vibrant immigrant communities, including the historic Filipino district.

Today, Stockton is widely recognized as one of the most diverse cities in the United States, with no single racial or ethnic group representing a majority of the population. This diversity is reflected in Stockton’s neighborhoods, community institutions, cultural events, and commercial corridors, where traditions from many cultures shape everyday life and civic identity. The city’s cultural history continues to evolve as new generations of residents contribute to Stockton’s identity as a dynamic and multicultural community.



*Little Manila, circa 1920s. Source: FANHS (L), Mexican Heritage Center and Gallery (R)*

## 1.4 Study Area and Focus Area

As shown in Figure 1.3, the Study Area for the Thrive Downtown plan is bounded by Airport Way on the east, Interstate 5 and San Jose Street on the West, Park Street on the north, and the BNSF line on the South, an area of approximately 1.6 square miles.

The Focus Area (Figure 1.4) where more detailed analysis will be conducted includes McLeod Lake and public spaces along the waterfront, the traditional downtown core, and various institutional, civic, and entertainment destinations such as the Banner Island Ballpark, Adventist Health Area, Hotel Stockton, Regal Stockton City Center, and the Superior Court of California.

## 1.5 What’s in this Report, and What Comes Next

The Existing Conditions Report describes the current landscape of Downtown and the critical plans that will continue to shape Downtown in the future. It summarizes key policy documents such as the Envision Stockton 2040 General Plan, the 2023 Housing Element, the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan and the Move Downtown plan. The Report describes the existing physical environment, including its circulation network, public spaces,

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<sup>7</sup> Visit Stockton, “Culture,” accessed March 12, 2026, <https://www.visitstockton.org/things-to-do/culture/>

land use patterns, and recent and planned development. It summarizes community feedback from past engagements and from recent conversations with Downtown stakeholders. Finally, it introduces a framework for revitalization in Downtown Stockton.

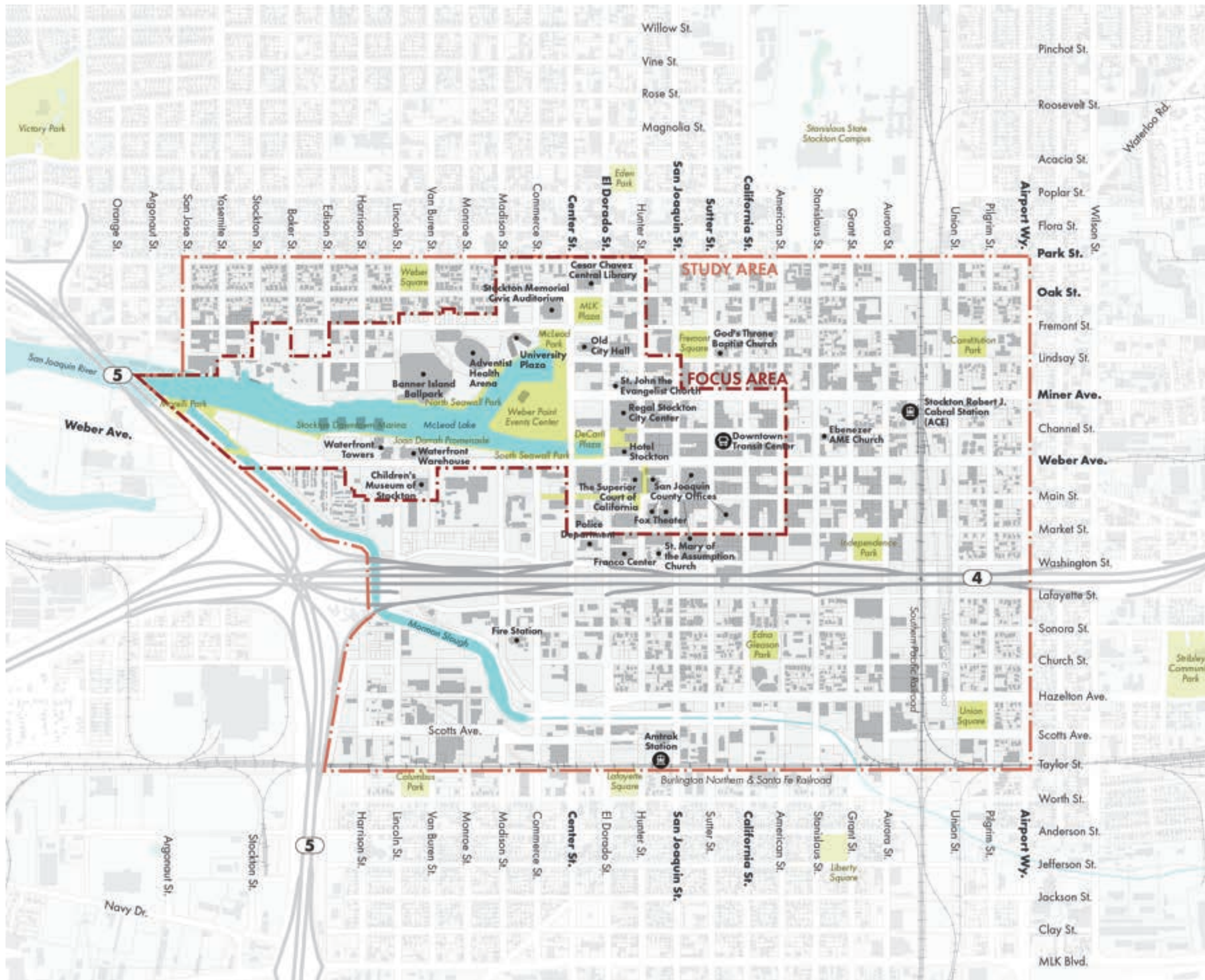


Figure 1.3: Study Area Map





02

PRECEDING PLANS

## 2. Preceding Plans

This section provides an overview of selected plans and policy documents that are foundational to understanding Downtown’s physical, economic, and cultural landscape. Each summary contains key takeaways that will influence Downtown Stockton’s vitality.

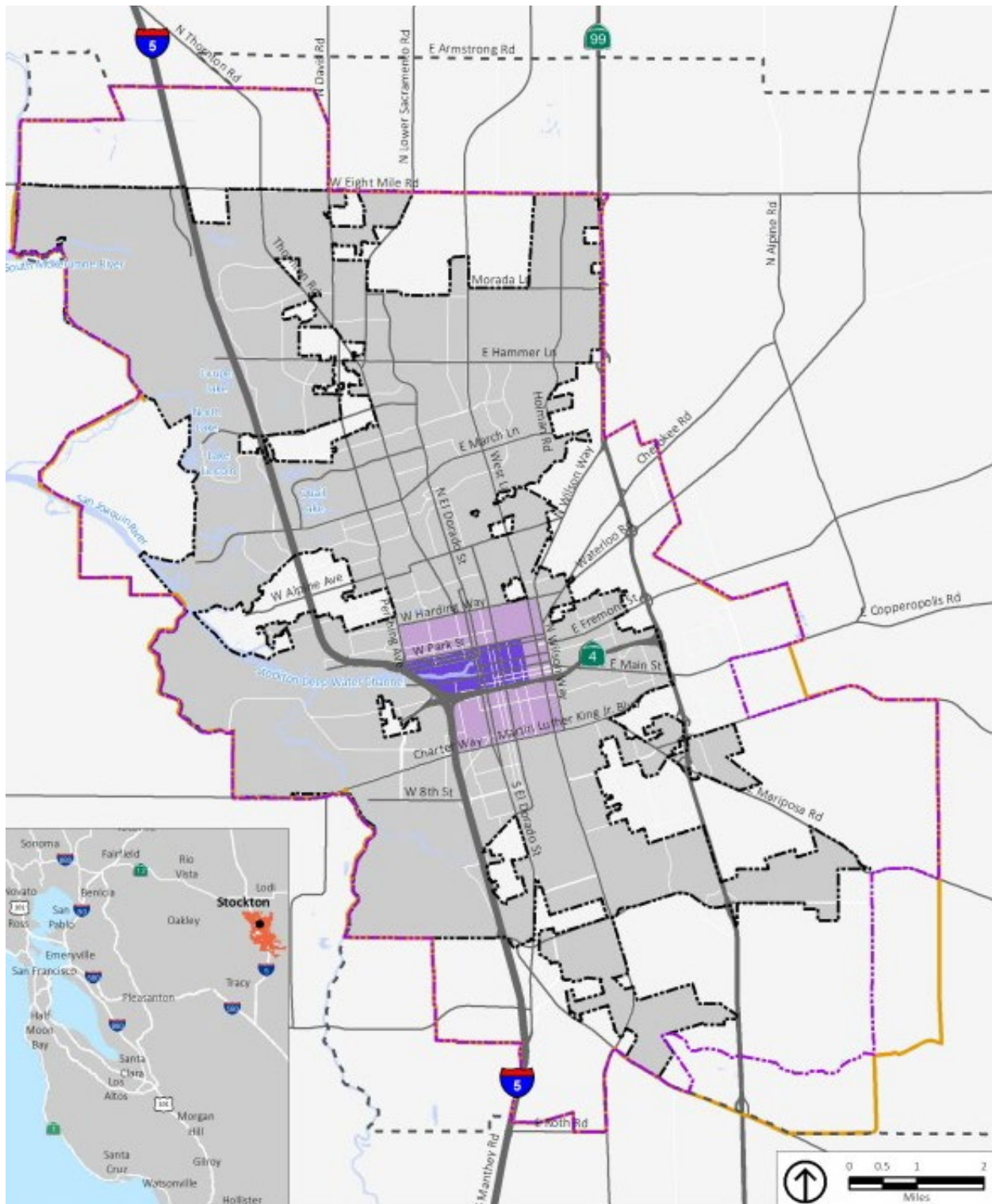
### 2.1 Stockton General Plan and Development Code

Adopted by City Council in 2018, the Envision Stockton 2040 General Plan provides a long-range plan to guide public investment and private development in the coming years. The Plan features chapters on Land Use, Transportation, Safety, and Community Health, and calls out specific goals and policies that address five major topic areas: Downtown, Public Health, Environmental Justice, Air Quality, and Climate Change.

#### DOWNTOWN POLICIES AND ACTIONS

Downtown Stockton is a major focus of the General Plan. In the Land Use Element, Goal LU-2 calls for a “strong Downtown”, a place where government, business, finance, arts, and entertainment are supported through the neighborhood's high density land uses, street network, and historic buildings.

The General Plan establishes two geographic boundaries for Downtown: Greater Downtown, and the Downtown Core (see Figure 2.1). Policy direction, allowed land uses, and density and intensity of future development are tied to these boundaries. As shown in Table 2.1, the policies and actions that address Downtown are multifaceted. Policies 2.1, 2.3, and 2.4 and the actions associated with them focus on ensuring Downtown has vibrant commercial and entertainment activity. Policy 2.2 focuses on creating opportunities to build more housing Downtown, especially transit-oriented development. Policy 2.5 focuses on creating transit nodes Downtown. Together, the policies position Downtown as a catalyst for growth and redevelopment that reverberates across Stockton.



Source: City of Stockton, 2016; Placeworks, 2017.

- City Limit
- Urban Service Area Boundary
- Downtown Core
- General Plan Planning Area
- Greater Downtown
- Sphere of Influence

Figure 2.1: Greater Downtown and Downtown Core Boundaries in the Stockton General Plan

*Table 2.1: General Plan Policies and Actions for Study Area*

<b>Policy or Action</b>	<b>Statement</b>
<b>Policy LU-2.1</b>	<b>Promote the Downtown and waterfront as a hub for regional commerce and entertainment, with high-quality housing to complement commercial activity and to infuse the area with daytime, evening, and weekend activity.</b>
<b>Action LU-2.1A</b>	<b>Work with other public agencies and organizations to develop and utilize all available financing tools and incentives to stimulate investment in the Downtown</b>
<b>Action LU-2.1B</b>	<b>Amend the Development Code to provide flexibility for redevelopment of historic structures in the Downtown to meet the needs of modern users while maintaining the overall historic value.</b>
<b>Action LU-2.1C</b>	<b>Improve Downtown wayfinding for vehicles and pedestrians to direct visitors to key destinations throughout Downtown.</b>
<b>Action LU-2.1D</b>	<b>Improve sidewalk maintenance in the Downtown and widen key sidewalks to provide space for outdoor seating and tree plantings.</b>
<b>Action LU-2.1E</b>	<b>Develop and implement a public/private strategy for mixed-use high-end development along both sides of the Stockton Channel/San Joaquin River Corridor, including the following:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A public promenade along the North Channel to Louis Park and the South Channel to Mormon Slough.</b></li> <li>• <b>Mixed-use development and re-use of historic structures.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Policy LU-2.2</b>	<b>Facilitate the development of at least 4,400 new housing units in the Greater Downtown by 2040.</b>
<b>Action LU-2.2A</b>	<b>Amend the Development Code to provide more flexibility for residential development to be feasible, including through a streamlined residential development permit process, and to contribute to the “charm” of the Downtown.</b>
<b>Action LU-2.2B</b>	<b>Establish Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay Zones around the Robert J. Cabral ACE Train Station and the San Joaquin Street Amtrak Station to promote high-density residential, including affordable and mixed-income housing, and other TOD.</b>
<b>Action LU-2.2C</b>	<b>Evaluate and implement adjustments to the Public Facilities Fee structure to promote development in the Downtown.</b>
<b>Action LU-2.2D</b>	<b>Discourage urban development at the edges of the city that would detract from or compete with the housing goals of the Greater Downtown.</b>
<b>Policy LU-2.3</b>	<b>Encourage more Downtown community and regional entertainment venues</b>
<b>Action LU-2.3A</b>	<b>Establish an entertainment district in the Downtown with a discrete boundary and strategies to promote entertainment uses, such as:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reducing permit requirements;</b></li> <li>• <b>Eliminating the requirement to sell food at bars;</b></li> <li>• <b>Providing incentives for clubs and restaurants;</b></li> <li>• <b>Allowing for reduced or shared parking; and</b></li> <li>• <b>Delineating an area in which to facilitate food trucks and pop-up businesses.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Action LU-2.3B</b>	<b>Partner with ride-sharing companies to facilitate safe nightlife in the Downtown.</b>

<b>Policy or Action</b>	<b>Statement</b>
<b>Action LU-2.3C</b>	Develop curbside management policies that are flexible to accommodate the evolving nature of ride-sharing programs and future reliance on autonomous vehicles in the Downtown.
<b>Action LU-2.3D</b>	Promote events that bring residents and visitors to the Downtown.
<b>Policy LU-2.4</b>	Encourage more resident- and visitor-serving restaurants, retail, and consumer services to locate in the Downtown.
<b>Action LU-2.4A</b>	Implement strategies to promote new Downtown restaurant, retail, and consumer service businesses that primarily serve the needs of Downtown residents, but also add value for visitors, such as by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing permit requirements;</li> <li>• Allowing for reduced or shared parking;</li> <li>• Providing incentives; and</li> <li>• Facilitating planning and permitting for building renovations.</li> </ul>
<b>Action LU-2.4B</b>	Partner with the Downtown Stockton Alliance to market the Downtown to existing Stockton businesses that would benefit from relocating to a centralized location
<b>Action LU-2.4C</b>	Partner with the Downtown Stockton Alliance to market the Downtown to attract businesses that complement the Downtown's multi-modal connectivity by appealing to the needs of travelers and providing shopping and recreation opportunities for visitors and commuters alike.
<b>Policy LU-2.5</b>	Promote Downtown Stockton as a primary transit node that provides multi-modal connections throughout the city and region.
<b>Action LU-2.5A</b>	Improve transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity between the Downtown and local colleges and universities.
<b>Action LU-2.5B</b>	Study the possible one-way to two-way conversions of streets in the Downtown (e.g., El Dorado/Center, Park/Oak, and Main/Market) in order to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, slow traffic speeds, and support local businesses.
<b>Action LU-2.5C</b>	Continue to develop an active transportation plan for Downtown Stockton, and implement complete streets projects to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety that are identified in the plan
<b>Policy LU-6.2</b>	Prioritize development and redevelopment of vacant, underutilized, and blighted infill areas.
<b>Action LU-6.2A</b>	Develop and implement an infill incentive program that encourages infill development through expedited permitting, changes in fee structures, prioritizing infrastructure improvements in infill areas, property owner and/or landlord incentives to maintain property and reduce blight, and/or other strategies. As part of this program, define and prioritize categories of infill types based on land use, and residential density or non-residential intensity.
<b>Action CH 2.2B</b>	Establish Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay Zones around the Robert J. Cabral ACE Train Station and the San Joaquin Street Amtrak Station to promote high-density residential, including affordable and mixed income, and other TOD.
<b>Action CH-2.2C</b>	Evaluate and implement adjustments to the Public Facilities Fee structure to promote development in the Downtown

The General Plan provides broad land use designations to describe the desired prevailing land use character in districts and neighborhoods and along corridors. Table 2.2 summarizes the General Plan land use designations in the Study Area. These land use designations are consistent with one or more zoning districts which provide more detailed land use requirements and development standards.

*Table 2.2: General Plan Land Use Designations*

<b>General Plan Land Use Designation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Corresponding Zoning Districts in Downtown Study Area</b>
<b>Low Density Residential</b>	This designation allows for single-family residential units, duplexes, triplexes, town homes, public and quasi-public uses, second units, and other similar and compatible uses. The maximum density is 8.7 units per acre based on net acreage. <sup>8</sup>	Residential, Low Density (RL)
<b>Medium Density Residential</b>	This designation allows for single-family residential units, duplexes, triplexes, town homes, public and quasi-public uses, second units, and other similar and compatible uses. The maximum density is 17.4 units per acre (net).	Residential, Medium Density (RM)
<b>High Density Residential</b>	This designation allows for multi-family residential units, apartments, dormitories, group homes, guest homes, public and quasi-public uses, and other similar and compatible uses. This designation also allows neighborhood-serving retail, commercial service, and mixed uses in appropriate locations. The maximum density is up to 90 units per acre (net) in the Greater Downtown or up to 136 units per acre (net) in the Downtown Core. Maximum FAR for neighborhood-serving retail is 3.0 (Greater Downtown) or 5.0 (Downtown Core).	Residential, High Density (RH)
<b>Commercial</b>	This designation allows for a wide variety of retail, service, and commercial recreational uses; business, medical, and professional offices; residential uses; public and quasi-public uses; and other similar and compatible uses. The maximum FAR for commercial uses is 3.0 in the Greater Downtown area (translating to up to 90 units of residential) and 5.0 in the Downtown Core (up to 136 units per acre).	RH, Commercial, Neighborhood (CN), Commercial, General (CG), Commercial, Downtown (CD)
<b>Industrial</b>	This designation allows for a wide variety of industrial uses, including uses with nuisance or hazardous characteristics, warehousing, construction contractors, light manufacturing, offices, retail sales, service businesses, public and quasi-public uses, and other similar and compatible uses. Residential uses are prohibited. The maximum FAR for industrial uses is 0.6.	Industrial, Limited (IL), Industrial, General (IG)
<b>Institutional</b>	This designation allows for public and quasi-public uses such as schools, libraries, colleges, water treatment facilities, airports, some governmental offices, federal installations, and other similar and compatible uses. The maximum FAR for institutional uses is 5.0 within the Downtown area.\	Public Facilities (PF)
<b>Parks and Recreation</b>	This designation allows for City and County parks, golf courses, marinas, community centers, public and quasi-public uses, and other similar and compatible uses. The maximum FAR for parks and recreation uses is 0.2.	Public Facilities (PF)

**Source:** Stockton Municipal Code, Title 17, 16.16.020

Commercial and High Density Residential are the most flexible and intense categories, where floor area ratio (FAR) may reach 5.0 and densities may reach 136 units per acre in the Downtown Core, far exceeding any residential designation outside Downtown. Low and Medium Density Residential designations allow smaller-scale housing at up to 8.7 and 17.4 units per acre (net), respectively. Industrial prohibits housing entirely and

<sup>8</sup> A net acreage calculation does not account for any required land set aside for street or public spaces.

allows a range of industrial uses. Institutional designation is applied to public services. As shown in Figure 2.2, most of the Downtown Study Area in the General Plan is designated Commercial, with pockets of Industrial, High-, Medium- and Low-Density Residential, Public Facilities, and Parks and Recreation.

## DEVELOPMENT CODE

The Stockton Zoning Code (Title 16 of the Municipal Code) is an important tool to implement the land use element. Zoning regulates land use and design: where buildings can be located, as well as height, setbacks, and other specific building design requirements. Typically, more than one zoning district may correspond to a general plan designation, providing more nuance in terms of allowed uses and urban form. Zoning districts that are present in the Study Area are shown in Table 2.2. Selected land use regulations and development standards for each are shown in Table 2.3. The City is currently undertaking a comprehensive zoning code update, known as Shape Stockton, with the most recent updates taking place in 2024 and 2025.

As shown in Figure 2.3, the Downtown Study Area is primarily zoned Commercial, Downtown (CD). Outside of its central core, portions of the Study Area are zoned Commercial, General (CG), as along some blocks between Oak and Park streets and portions of the Study Area south of Highway 4, and Commercial, Neighborhood (CN), east of Cabral Station. Industrial, Limited (IL) prevails along the Southern Pacific railroad and Industrial, General (IG) applies to a portion of that corridor as well as in the southwest corner of the Study Area along Mormon Slough. Residential, High-Density (RH) zoning is present in the Gleason Park neighborhood and between the Southern Pacific Railroad and Airport Way, and a mix of Residential, High-, Medium- and Low-Density zoning is mapped in the northwest corner of the Study Area. Parks, schools, and public buildings are designated as Public Facilities (PF).

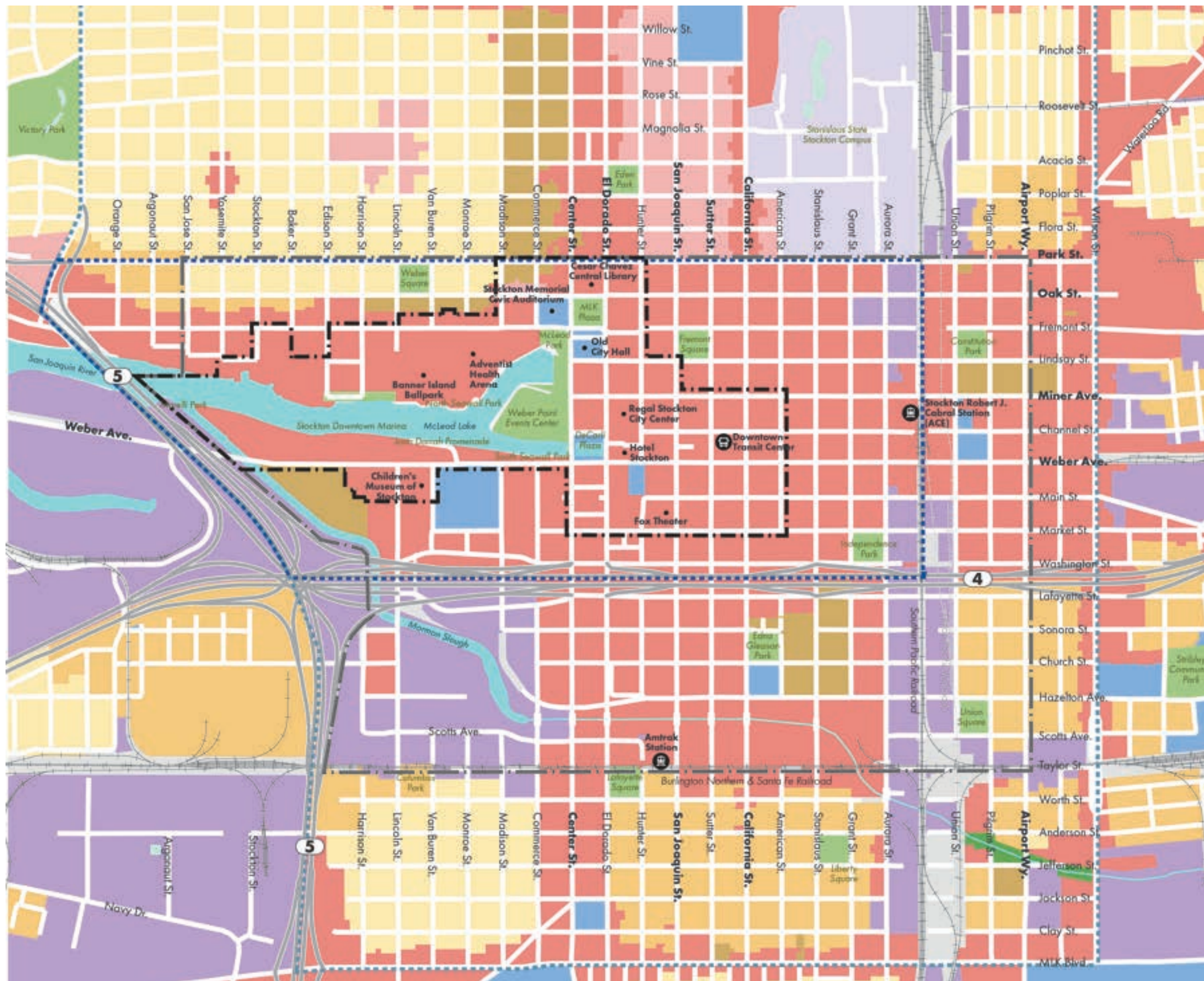
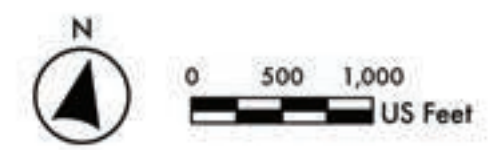


Figure 2.2: General Plan Land Use

- Residential Estate
  - Low Density Residential
  - Medium Density Residential
  - High Density Residential
  - Mixed Use
  - Commercial
  - Administrative Professional
  - Industrial
  - Economic and Education Enterprise
  - Institutional
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Open Space/Agriculture
  - Utility
- Focus Area Boundary
  - Study Area Boundary
  - Downtown Core Area Boundary
  - Greater Downtown Area Boundary



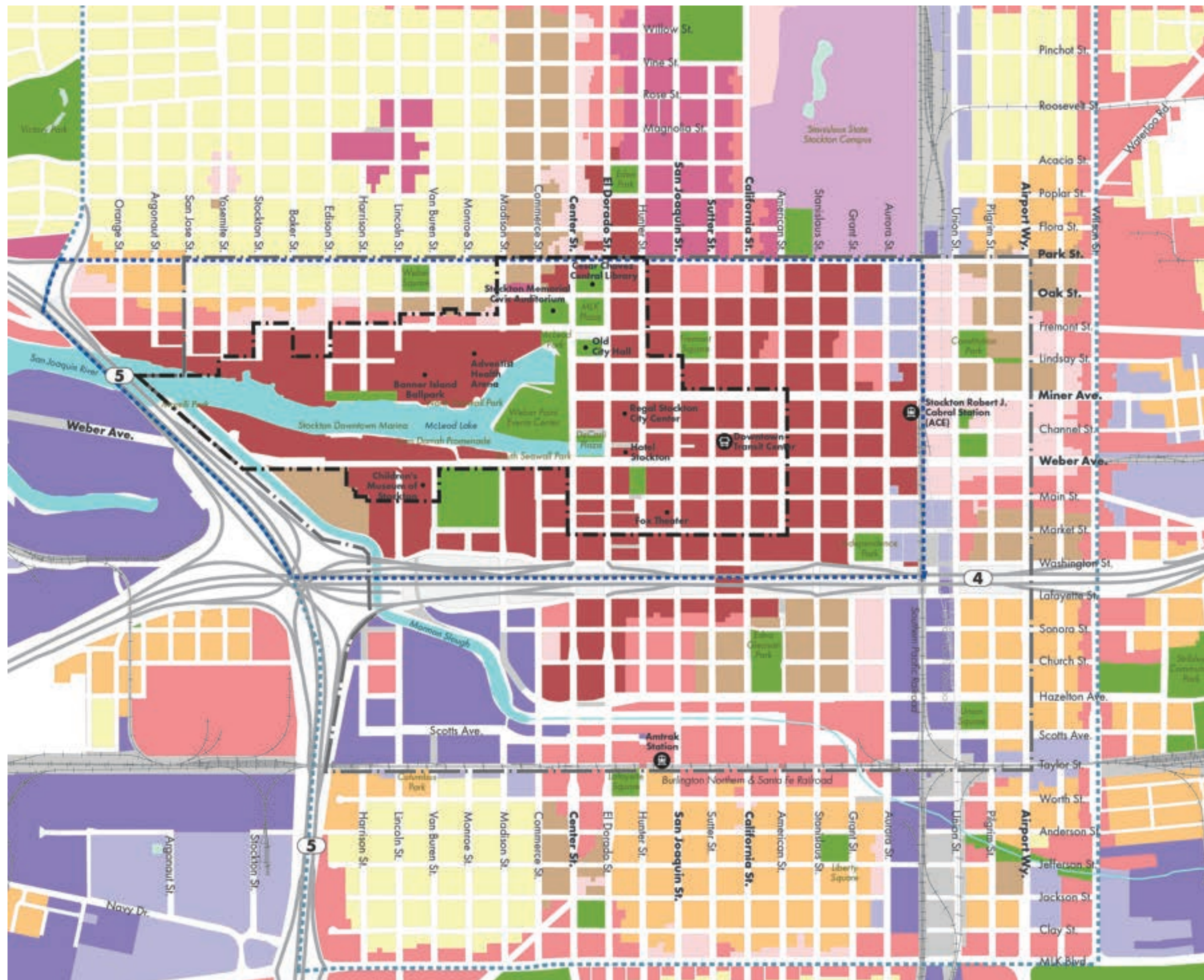


Figure 2.3: General Plan Zoning Districts

- Low Density Residential (RL/P)
  - Medium Density Residential (RM/P)
  - High Density Residential (RH/P)
  - Neighborhood Commercial (CN)
  - Office Commercial (CO)
  - General Commercial (CG)
  - Downtown Commercial (CD)
  - Mixed Use (MX)
  - Limited Industrial (IL)
  - General Industrial (IG)
  - Public Facilities (PF)
  - Right Of Way (ROW)
- 
- Focus Area Boundary
  - Study Area Boundary
  - Downtown Core Area Boundary
  - Greater Downtown Area Boundary

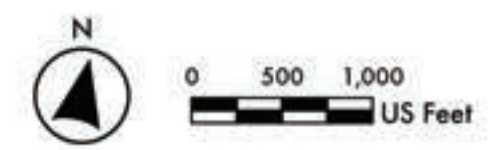


Table 2.3: Land Use and Development Standards in Downtown Core Area

Zoning District	Max. Height (ft.)	Maximum Residential Density, Downtown Core (net units/acre)	Maximum Residential Density, Greater Downtown (net units/acre)	Minimum Residential Density, Downtown Core (net units/acre)	Minimum Residential Density, Greater Downtown (net units/acre)	Max Floor Area Ratio (FAR), D'town Core	Max FAR, Greater D'town
Commercial, Downtown (CD)	Not Specified	136	90	20	20	5.0	3.0
Commercial, General (CG)	75	136	90	20	20	5.0	3.0
Commercial, Neighborhood (CN)	45	136	90	20	20	5.0	3.0
Residential, Low Density (RL)	35	8.7	8.7	-	-	-	-
Residential, Medium Density (RM)	35	17.4	17.4	-	-	-	-
Residential, High Density (RH)	Not specified	136	90	20	20	5.0	3.0
Industrial, General (IG)	Not Specified	-	-	-	-	0.6	0.6
Industrial, Limited (IL)	60	-	-	-	-	0.6	0.6
Public Facilities (PF)	75	-	-	-	-	5.0	0.5

Source: City of Stockton Municipal Code 16.24.200 Table 2-3 Zoning District Development Standards

Note: Zoning districts are also each distinguished by other development standards, such as setbacks, lot coverage, parking and landscaping requirements.

### Evaluation of Zoning Districts and Development Standards

The residential districts are distinguished primarily by allowed height and density, where the Residential, Low Density (RL) and Residential, Medium Density (RM) districts are limited to 35 and 45 feet in height and 8.7 and 17.4 units per net acre, respectively. The Residential, High Density (RH) district aligns closely with Commercial, Downtown (CD), allowing buildings of unlimited height and up to 90 units per acre (Greater Downtown) and 136 units per acre (Downtown Core). The RH district also allows compatible neighborhood-serving commercial uses.

All three commercial districts share identical density and FAR limits across the Downtown Core and Greater Downtown. They differ by maximum building height, most notably with Commercial, Downtown (CD) where there is no maximum height limit. They also differ in their composition of allowed uses. Industrial and Public Facilities districts operate outside of the density and FAR framework, reinforcing their role as use-driven zones rather than intensity-driven zones.

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK: PREFERRED SCENARIO, STOCKTON GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan’s community-preferred community design concept is illustrated in the adjoining figure. It shows how land use patterns in Stockton’s neighborhoods and corridors can work together to create a cohesive outcome for the built environment in Stockton.

In this concept, Downtown becomes a unifying place where a live-work-play atmosphere is created, and the waterfront is a regional attraction. Transit-oriented development links the waterfront with Cabral Station to the east along Miner and Weber avenues, while El Dorado and Center streets develop with transitional mixed-use character, and high-density housing.

The City of Stockton hosted two community workshops for stakeholders in July 2018 to review the Draft Envision Stockton 2040 General Plan and provide feedback. Each topic within the general plan received targeted feedback, from Land Use and Transportation to Housing, Safety, and Community Health. Across all topics, there were comments related directly to Downtown; these were translated into the preferred vision shown here.

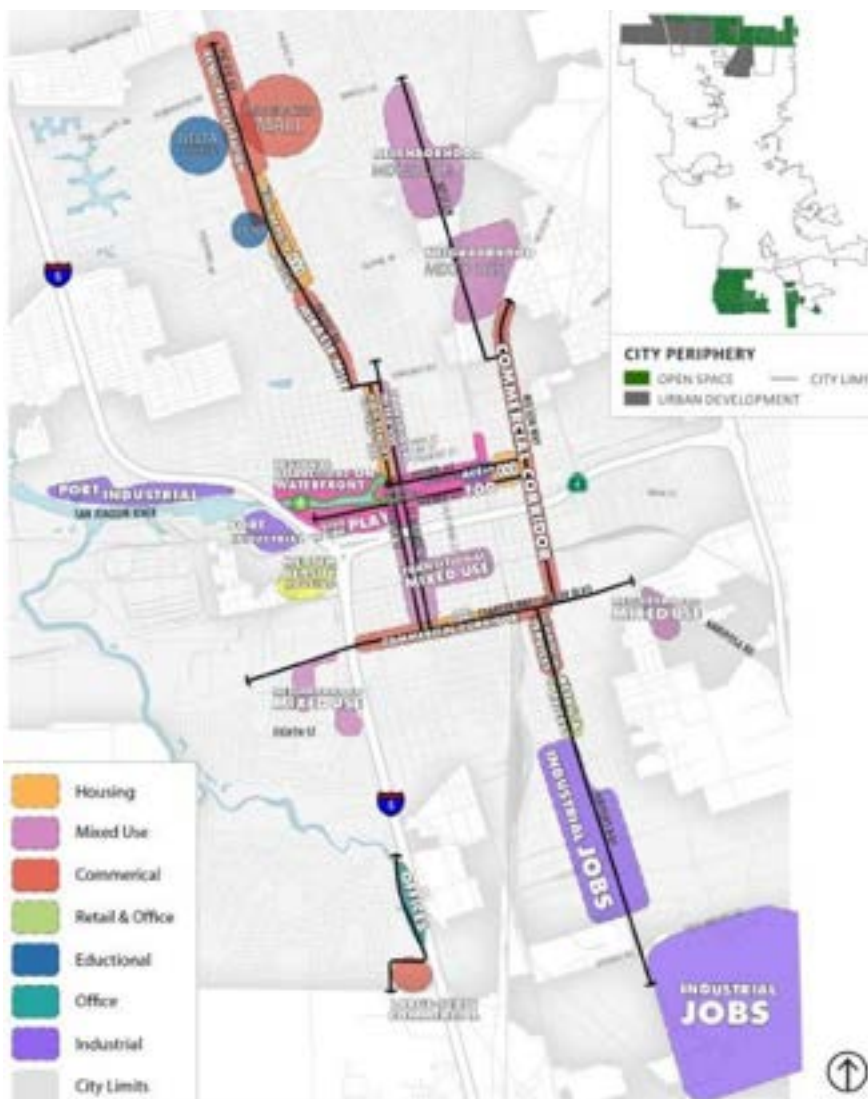


Figure 2.4: General Plan 2040 – Preferred Scenario

## 2.2 Housing Action Plan and Housing Element

### HOUSING ELEMENT

Adopted in 2023, the Housing Element outlines how Stockton can meet its California State Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for the 2023-31 period. Stockton must show capacity for 12,673 units, 41% of which must be made available for lower-income households. To support this the Housing Element aims to enable development of 4,400 residential units in the Greater Downtown area by 2040.

#### Opportunity Sites

The Housing Element identifies vacant parcels where housing development could take place. As of 2023, there were 200 parcels identified as opportunity sites for housing development in the Study Area. As shown in Table 2.4, the Housing Element estimates that these 200 sites have a realistic capacity for 3,127 housing units, representing about 71% of residential units desired in the Greater Downtown area by 2040. Housing Element Opportunity sites are shown in Figure 3.12, later in this report, as part of an analysis of vacant and underutilized land.

The Housing Element defines numerous strategies to meet Stockton’s housing goals, many of which are especially applicable in the Downtown Study Area, including adaptive reuse of historic buildings, increased density through zoning flexibility, and Transit Oriented development (TOD) upzoning.

*Table 2.4: Housing Element Opportunity Sites and Estimated Capacity*

Zoning District	Downtown Core (housing units)	Greater Downtown (housing units)	Total Downtown (housing units)
Downtown Commercial (CD)	1,558	69	1,627
General Commercial (CG)	51	824	898
Neighborhood Commercial (CN)	15	236	263
Office Commercial (CO)	19	0	19
Residential High Density (RH)	18	251	269
Residential Medium Density (RM)	-	-	51
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,661</b>	<b>1,380</b>	<b>3,127</b>

Source: City of Stockton Housing Element, 2023-31.

### HOUSING ACTION PLAN

The Housing Action Plan (HAP), adopted in 2024, acts as a toolkit to encourage housing development in Stockton. The HAP recommends numerous actions for the City to take, in the broader categories of collaboration with property owners and others; financial resources to incentivize development and preservation of housing; ways to foster housing ownership; and supportive services. Downtown is a major area

of interest within the Housing Action Plan. The HAP identifies Downtown as a “Transformative Area,” where the City sees opportunities for incentivizing redevelopment, adaptive reuse, and infill development to increase community vibrancy. The Downtown Core area is estimated to have the capacity for 6,000 to 10,000 housing units, on vacant and under-utilized land. Notably, this is substantially more than the capacity of just the sites identified in the Housing Element.

### Neighborhood Action Plans

The HAP includes a set of “Neighborhood Action Plans,” including plans for two areas within the Study Area that is the subject of Thrive Downtown: Little Manila/Gleason Park, and Cabral/East Cabral Station Area.

#### *Little Manila/Gleason Park*

Little Manila/Gleason Park, located south of Highway 4 near the Mormon Slough corridor and Amtrak station, is a historically significant neighborhood for Filipino, Chinese, and Japanese communities and today is over 70% Latino. The Housing Action Plan identifies it as well suited for rehabilitation and compatible infill housing, though development is constrained by infrastructure costs, small parcel sizes, contamination, limited funding, and market barriers. Recommended strategies include site assembly or land banking, rezoning aligned with neighborhood character, pursuing transit-oriented funding, improving Downtown connections, supporting environmental assessments, establishing a cultural district, repairing sidewalks, and preserving historic resources.

#### *Cabral/East Cabral Station Area*

The Cabral/East Cabral Station Study Area, located in central Stockton between the Crosstown Freeway and University Park and centered on Cabral Station, contains a mix of small-scale housing, storefronts, industrial uses, and vacant land. The Housing Action Plan identifies it as well suited for transit-accessible new housing but constrained by infrastructure gaps, contamination, abandoned buildings, and limited funding and market support. Recommended actions include permit streamlining, land banking, down-payment assistance, transit-oriented development planning, improved Downtown wayfinding, pedestrian-oriented streetscape and sidewalk improvements, and financing tools.

## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK ON HOUSING ACTION PLAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLANS

*People want to see more housing choices. They supported a mix of small-scale multifamily housing types. Housing affordability was high-priority.*

*Grocery stores or neighborhood markets, community centers, retail stores, and social services are desired. Participants also mentioned the need for bike lanes, bus shelters, improved sidewalks, streetlights, and new crosswalks.*

*Neighborhood safety and appearance were important in both areas. Community members had ideas for more activities for youth, code enforcement, cameras on traffic lights, and outreach and social services for unhoused people, including moving them away from schools and parks.*

Three neighborhood action plans were conducted as part of Shape Stockton initiative to retool Stockton's Development Code and stimulate the creation of more housing all around Stockton.

Two of these neighborhoods are within the Downtown Study Area: Little Manila/Gleason Park, and Cabral/East Cabral Station Area. For each of these action plans, community engagement took place, including pop-up events, open houses, paper surveys and online activities.



## 2.3 North Shore Areawide Plan

Sites with known or perceived site contaminants, hazardous building materials, or past intensive land use activities are known as brownfields. Vacant or underutilized brownfield sites typically require additional environmental study and could result in cleanup as part of any future redevelopment project. Brownfields add a layer of complexity to redevelopment projects, and overcoming this barrier can restore vibrancy and activity to neighborhoods.

The neighborhood on the north shore of McLeod Lake has potential to become a destination and complement activity Downtown. The North Shore Areawide Plan (2023), supported through the EPA's Brownfields Program, sought to harness this potential with a vision to "revitalize the North Shore / Marina District into a distinct urban neighborhood with diverse housing, commercial services, and water-oriented industries that celebrate its history and reconnects the community to the waterfront." The Plan identified opportunity sites using a comprehensive scoring system that included criteria such as environmental contaminants, building age, site size, and blight indicators. Addressing the specific cleanup needs of these sites would satisfy a major community priority: reconnecting the neighborhood to the waterfront.

A concluding Action Plan features initiatives for land use & reactivation, transportation & mobility, and placemaking.

Community engagement was conducted to understand priorities and concerns of nearby stakeholders and residents. Workshops, surveys, a working group, and a staff listening session were conducted. Six key priorities emerged from the engagement:

- Priority A: Reconnect to the waterfront and enhance its shoreline.
- Priority B: Capitalize on the existing assets, businesses, and the ballpark/arena
- Priority C: Celebrate the area's history and industry roots
- Priority D: Revive abandoned properties with new community-serving uses
- Priority E: Improve walking and mobility-options
- Priority F: Enhance community appearance and aesthetics

Figure A, the Residential Focus scenario, includes multiple subareas, including a Marina District focused on retail and waterfront experiences, a Historic District with event space and Ballpark hotel, and recreation and shoreline restoration on the waterfront. The scenario emphasizes amenities that would serve residents, such as a community garden and community center.

Figure B shows the Retail Focus, where the waterfront is the core attraction, drawing residents and visitors to McLeod Lake through public plazas, a pedestrian promenade along the lake, a waterfront pier, waterfront dining, and a food hall. Both scenarios implement the community's priorities, but they represent different outcomes for the North Shore.

# NORTH SHORE AREAWIDE PLAN COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



Figure A: Residential Focus



Figure B: Retail Focus

Figure 2.5: North Shore Areawide Plan Concepts

## 2.4 Downtown and South Shore Infrastructure Analysis

In 2023, the City of Stockton commissioned Stantec to prepare a planning-level infrastructure analysis of the Downtown and South Shore subareas (see Figure 2.6) to assess the capacity of existing utilities to support near-term redevelopment. The study evaluated water, sanitary sewer, stormwater drainage, and broadband systems, relying on utility provider coordination and available mapping to determine whether existing infrastructure could accommodate projected development intensity,<sup>9</sup> and recommending upgrades to address deficiencies and support development.

The study finds that while broadband infrastructure is relatively robust and capable of expansion through coordination with private providers, portions of the water, sewer, and storm drainage systems include undersized segments or localized constraints that could limit higher-density infill without proactive improvements. The report concludes with location-specific recommendations for utility upgrades and additional design-level analysis to ensure adequate service capacity for future redevelopment.

### WATER SERVICE

Potable water service for the City of Stockton is provided by California Water Service (Cal Water), a private utility company overseen by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). Cal Water prepares an Infrastructure Improvement Plan every three years. For the 2025-2027 cycle, no water main replacements are indicated for downtown Stockton. The water utility maps do show some 4-inch mains and 6-inch mains with fire hydrants that need to be upsized. Cal Water also notes that there are smaller water mains, old cast iron pipes, and meters in basements that are hard to access, and these need to be replaced. The Downtown and South Shore Infrastructure Analysis recommends specific water main replacements to support potential development, and recommends that the City conduct a system capacity analysis to more accurately identify needs.

### SANITARY SEWER SERVICE

Sanitary sewer service is provided by the City of Stockton. Most of the existing sewer collection system within the Focus Area does not meet the City's standard drawings for 8-inch minimum pipeline size or minimum slope. The City's Sewer Master Plan recommends replacement of the South Lincoln Street sewer and the Mormon Slough Siphon, and recommends a downtown sewer collection system project to evaluate and replace undersized pipes. However, the City has made the decision to instead rely on individual future development projects to upsize infrastructure as needed. The Downtown and South Shore Infrastructure Analysis recommends conducting a system capacity study, and undertaking numerous sewer main replacements.

### STORMWATER DRAINAGE

The existing storm drainage network is comprised of surface drainage and collection using storm inlet structures, and underground storm sewer pipes with varying capacity. The existing system size gets incrementally larger as the drainage flows to the Deep Water Channel. The 72" storm water main line that

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<sup>9</sup> The analysis involved an estimation of the development potential that could be expected on 93 identified development sites, with development intensity assumptions drawn from zoning, resulting in estimates for a total of approximately 7.7 million square feet of non-residential development and 3,613 housing units.

conveys much of the drainage of this area lies beneath Fremont Street before discharging into the channel near Weber Point. According to the Stormwater Master Plan (SWMP) Final Report (2023), the 72-inch storm drain is surcharged during 10-year storm events, and the storm drain outfall location is tidally influenced. Additional information is needed to determine if an increase in capacity is warranted. Based on the number of existing utilities and their potential conflicts, a new outfall may be the best solution if upsizing is warranted. The SWMP recommends adding several small underground storage locations to help alleviate nuisance flooding in the watershed upstream of the Study Area. The Downtown and South Shore Infrastructure Analysis recommends conducting a detailed system capacity analysis, and making storm drain capacity upgrades in conjunction with specific redevelopment projects, as needed.



Figure 2.6: Downtown and South Shore Infrastructure Analysis Focus Area

## 2.5 Stormwater Master Plan

In 2023, the City of Stockton’s Municipal Utilities Department, with Hazen and Sawyer, developed the Stormwater Master Plan (SWMP) to consider detailed hydrologic and hydraulic evaluations at a large scale throughout the city. The modeling efforts focused on the 10-year, 24-hour design storm event. Management of flooding for larger events are typically provided by improvements to levees, larger channels and infrastructure managed by partner agencies. Modeling accounted for existing development as well as development projected based on the General Plan.

The SWMP highlights Downtown’s flat topography, reliance on levees and pump stations, and proximity to the Deep Water Channel and Mormon Slough, which influence flood risk and drainage performance. Known flooding concerns exist near the outfall to the Deep Water Channel and along Fremont Street upstream of

Downtown. Storm drains are generally designed for the 10-year storm event, meaning future Downtown redevelopment must verify capacity through site-specific studies and may require onsite detention to maintain pre-development peak flows.

The SWMP identifies an array of capital investments needed to achieve the desired level of service and accommodate future growth, and ranks these projects as high, medium, or low priorities. The estimated cost of the Master Plan CIP would range from approximately \$256 million to \$285 million, or between \$193 million and \$223 million for just high and medium priority projects.

## 2.6 Greater Downtown Active Transportation Plan

The Greater Downtown Stockton Active Transportation Plan (ATP) (2020) establishes a strategy to improve walking, bicycling, and transit access within a 4.25-square-mile area centered on downtown Stockton. The plan aims to create a safer and more accessible transportation network that supports public health, air quality, and overall livability. Community engagement identified barriers to walking and biking and prioritized improvements such as rectangular rapid flash beacons (RRFBs), wider sidewalks, secure bicycle parking, and protected bike lanes.

The ATP proposes a series of near-term projects, including separated and buffered bike lanes along key corridors such as Center Street, El Dorado Street, Weber Avenue, and Airport Way, along with crossing improvements at major intersections. Longer-term projects include additional bike lanes on corridors such as San Joaquin Street and Stanislaus Street, a shared-use path along Mormon Slough, and a potential bicycle and pedestrian bridge near Interstate 5. In addition to physical infrastructure, the plan emphasizes supportive strategies, such as Vision Zero initiatives, wayfinding, transit stop management, and Complete Streets policies, to strengthen the overall active transportation network. The existing and planned active transportation network is mapped in Chapter 3.

## 2.7 Move Downtown

The Move Downtown plan aims to study the multimodal transportation network and land use compatibility to improve safety, mobility, economic vitality, and sustainability and create a unified vision for Downtown Stockton. The plan will explore opportunities to align transit improvements with housing development. Move Downtown is estimated to be completed in early 2026.

### MOVE DOWNTOWN ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

*To create a unified vision that is based on the community's perspective, a robust community engagement process was conducted as part of the Move Downtown planning process. Engagement occurred in two phases, as summarized here.*

#### Phase 1: May 2025– April 2025

Phase 1 engagement gathered input from stakeholders and residents to understand land use and mobility needs in Downtown Stockton through working groups, site walks, workshops, meetings, canvassing, and a survey. Key findings included a strong desire to **activate public spaces with retail, and events**; better **balance housing with commercial** uses; and **address safety** concerns. Participants also noted poor signage and travel information, the need for improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure (sidewalks, lighting, and connections), and identified Hazelton Avenue as the least comfortable corridor for walking or biking.

#### Phase 2: May 2025 – August 2025

In Phase 2, stakeholders and residents reviewed proposed policies and infrastructure ideas through a workshop, canvassing events, a working group meeting, and a survey. Key takeaways included strong support for **repairing sidewalks** and adding **shade, seating, and safer crossings**; continued investment in **protected bike lanes** and **parking**; **more reliable and connected transit** with better stop amenities and real-time information; and strategies to improve **safety, cleanliness, and affordability** to support businesses. Participants also favored activating vacant lots, reusing underutilized buildings, and expanding housing and community amenities to strengthen a lively mixed-use core.

## 2.8 Key Takeaways from Preceding Plans

The following themes synthesize key direction from the City’s adopted and ongoing planning efforts, including the General Plan, Development Code, Housing Element and Housing Action Plan, the North Shore Areawide Plan, the Downtown and South Shore Infrastructure Analysis, the Stormwater Master Plan, and Move Downtown.

- **Downtown as the City’s Core and Activity Hub.** Downtown is envisioned as Stockton’s unifying center, supported by transit corridors and a live-work-play land use mix. Policies emphasize vibrancy through improved walkability, wayfinding, waterfront activation, historic reuse, and programming such as entertainment, nightlife, and events.
- **Infill Growth, Housing, and Redevelopment.** The City prioritizes concentrating growth in Downtown through high-density mixed-use housing and redevelopment of underutilized sites, supported by incentives and infrastructure investment. The Housing Element reinforces Downtown as a major housing growth area, with neighborhood-specific opportunities including reinvestment areas and transit-oriented districts.
- **Land Use Framework and Implementation Tools.** Existing zoning broadly supports flexibility and urban intensity but lacks fine-grained guidance to shape desired activity patterns. Development Code updates based on the Shape Stockton effort as well as this master plan will be critical to align regulations with the Downtown vision.
- **Waterfront Revitalization and Environmental Reuse.** Brownfield remediation and shoreline planning aim to reconnect neighborhoods to the waterfront and create a walkable mixed-use district that balances legacy industry with new housing, businesses, and public spaces, supported by coordinated mobility and placemaking strategies.
- **Balanced Transportation System.** The Greater Downtown Stockton Active Transportation Plan (2020) and the Move Downtown project (ongoing) are both helping to chart a course for Downtown Stockton to become a safer, more comfortable and more attractive environment for people to get around by foot, bike or transit. ATP projects have already been programmed into the City’s CIP and some have been completed (see Chapter 3). Thrive Downtown has the opportunity to present a multimodal circulation framework in the context of a larger vision for Downtown.
- **Infrastructure Needs.** Downtown Stockton has aging water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure. While the system is largely functional today, deficiencies have been identified that affect current conditions, and portions of the water, sewer, and storm drainage systems include undersized segments or localized constraints that could limit higher-density infill without proactive improvements.



03

**DOWNTOWN  
ENVIRONMENT**

## 3. The Downtown Environment

This section provides an overview of the physical landscape of the downtown neighborhood. It covers multiple focus areas, including parks and open space, streets and circulation, existing land use and ownership, historic resources, flood hazards, and recently completed and active projects. Finally, it explores opportunity sites and development potential within the Downtown neighborhood.

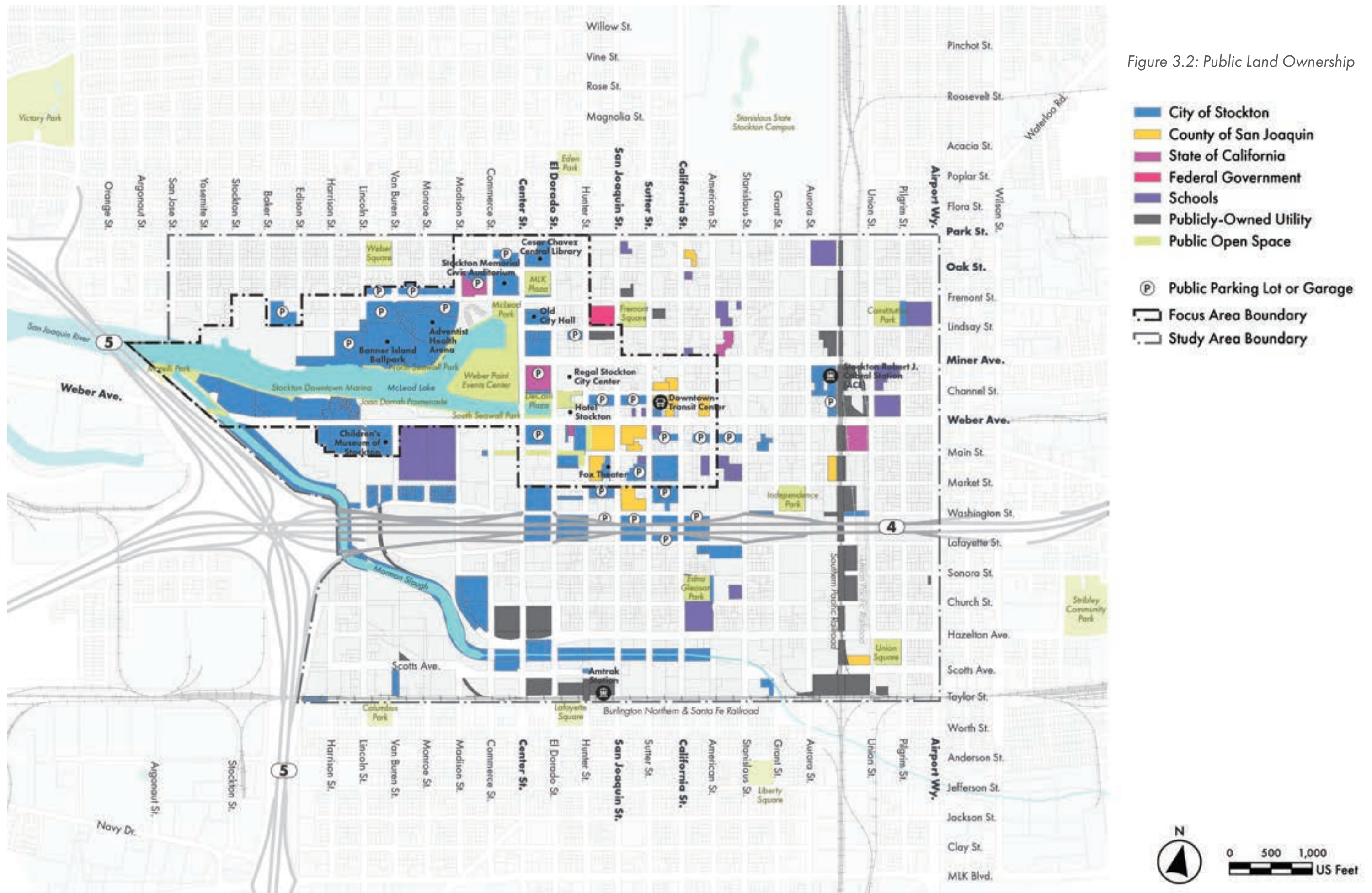
### 3.1 Existing Land Use and Ownership

The existing land use map reflects a fine-grained, highly mixed urban fabric, with a patchwork of commercial, office, public and quasi-public uses concentrated in the downtown core, interspersed with surface parking lots, parking structures, and vacant parcels. As shown in Figure 3.1, civic and cultural anchors such as City Hall, the Civic Auditorium, the Fox Theater, and the Downtown Transit Center are prominent, while industrial and utility uses are largely located along the periphery near rail corridors, highways, and the waterfront. Primarily residential neighborhoods are present to the north, east, and south of the core area.

Public agencies play a major role in shaping the Downtown environment. As shown in Figure 3.2, City of Stockton–owned parcels are the most prevalent public ownership type and are concentrated along the waterfront, around key civic facilities, and along McLeod Lake and Mormon Slough. These holdings include major civic buildings, public parking lots and structures, and the arena and ballpark. San Joaquin County’s land holdings downtown are clustered in the very center, where County courts and offices are located. Schools and publicly owned utilities are dispersed throughout the study area but are often clustered near major transportation alignments or at the edges of the downtown core. Public open space parcels are concentrated along the waterfront and near civic destinations.



Figure 3.2: Public Land Ownership



## 3.2 Transportation Analysis

### TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

From an operations standpoint, roadway and intersection performance meets traffic demand. El Dorado Street is the main exception, where traffic becomes more congested during the evening rush hour. The freeway ramp intersections generally operate acceptably, though traffic backups regularly form on El Dorado and Center Streets and sometimes extend onto the freeway ramps during peak periods. Importantly, these queues typically clear within each signal cycle, indicating congestion that is present but manageable.

#### Railways

Downtown Stockton is a major regional rail hub, served by ACE, Amtrak, and two major freight rail corridors. The Robert J. Cabral Station functions as the eastern terminus for the ACE commuter rail service, providing weekday connectivity to the Bay Area. The San Joaquin Street Amtrak Station offers intercity passenger service linking Stockton to major destinations such as Bakersfield, Oakland, and Sacramento. Freight rail passes through Downtown, with BNSF tracks running east-west along the southern boundary of the Study Area and UPRR tracks traversing north-south between Aurora Street and Union Street. While rail infrastructure strengthens regional access and economic connectivity, the fact that passenger service is not consolidated at one station is a challenge, and rail lines and at-grade crossings create physical barriers that disrupt local street connections and pedestrian and bicycle movement, especially in the southern Study Area. Grade separation is planned for the “Stockton Diamond” where BNSF and UPRR tracks intersect; this project represents a key opportunity to reduce conflicts and improve safety, reliability, and local connectivity.

#### Roadways

Downtown includes a largely intact street grid, with streets spaced at roughly 300-foot intervals. These streets are classified as major and minor arterials and local streets, a functional classification system that doesn’t express the potential of these streets for multimodal access. Two Downtown’s roadway network strongly supports regional travel, with I-5 and SR-4 providing high-capacity access to and through the area. Wide streets, long blocks, and elevated freeways contribute to fragmentation of the street grid. While the street hierarchy functions well for vehicles, existing designs limit walkability and comfort for pedestrians and non-auto users. The roadway network is shown in Figure 3.3.

#### Existing and Planned Bicycle Facilities

Currently, the Study Area has relatively sparse bicycle infrastructure, particularly along its north-south corridors. California Street is the only continuous north-south bikeway that traverses the entire Study Area. East-west bike connectivity is somewhat more developed, with bikeways located on Oak Street, Miner and Weber avenues, and planned facilities on Main and Market streets.. As shown in Figure 3.4, planned bikeway projects present a major opportunity to close gaps, reduce stress for riders, and improve access to transit and rail stations, including future connections to the Amtrak station. Data is lacking on the type of bicycle facilities provided and planned. In general, the more vehicle traffic a roadway carries, the more protected the bicycle facilities should be. Stockton’s future bike network must go further to match facility and roadway types, and create a low-stress active transportation environment.

#### Transit Network

Downtown Stockton is served by San Joaquin Regional Transit District (RTD) bus service. The Downtown Transit Center (DTC) on Weber Avenue facilitates transfers between multiple bus lines and serves as a key node in the

regional transit system. Transit service is strongest in the northern downtown core, anchored by the Downtown Transit Center and the Cabral ACE Station. The southern portion of downtown has fewer routes, wider stop spacing, and weaker first-/last-mile connections, limiting transit access.

### One-Way Streets

Three pairs of one-way streets influence traffic operations and the Downtown street environment: Center and El Dorado streets are a heavily-travelled north-south one-way couplet; Main and Market and Oak and Park streets are east-west couplets downtown. While effective for moving traffic, one-way operations tend to increase vehicle speeds and complicate pedestrian and bicycle crossings. Planned streetscape improvements along Main and Market will reduce travel lanes from two to one while enriching the pedestrian realm. El Dorado and Center have been identified as major barriers to Downtown walkability and sense of place; their one-way design contributes to this and will be evaluated as part of this plan.

### The Importance of an Accessible, Multi-modal Downtown

Downtown contains a high concentration of civic, cultural, recreational, and transit destinations within a compact area. Many major destinations are located near transit facilities, reinforcing downtown's potential as a walkable, transit-oriented center. Improving connections between destinations is critical to supporting daily activity, events, and regional visitors.

Figure 3.3: Roadway Network

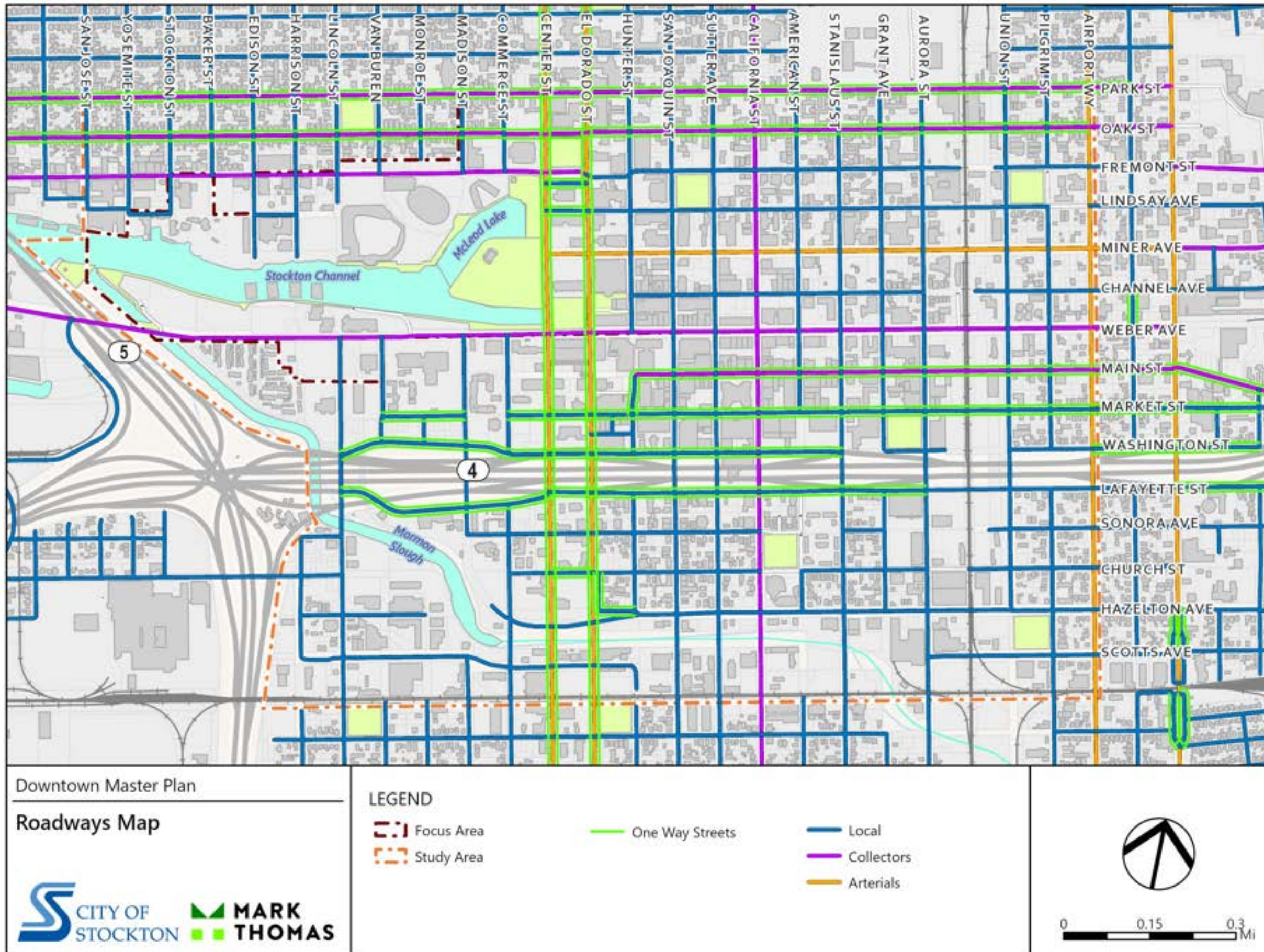
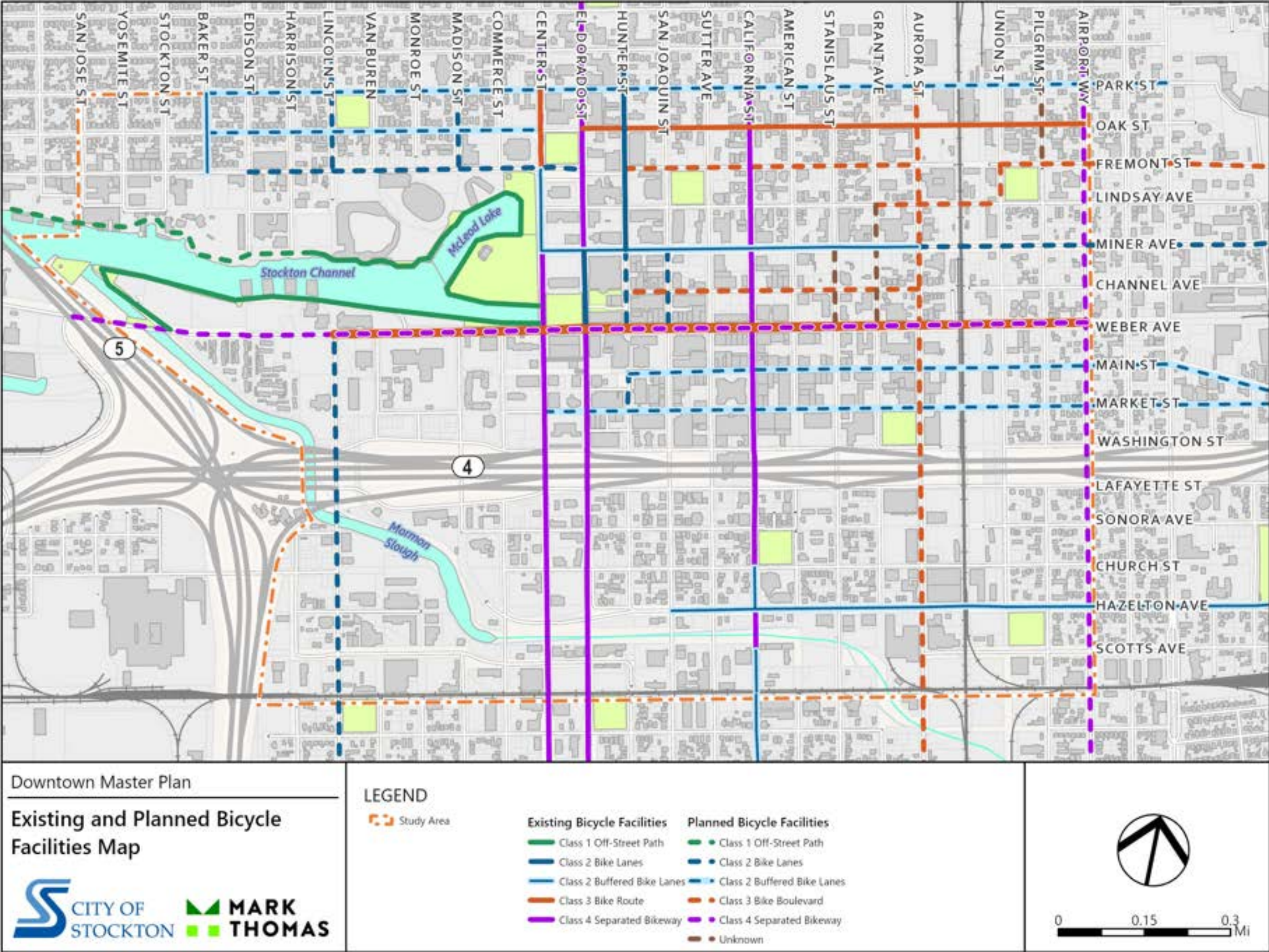


Figure 3.4: Existing & Planned Bikeways in the Study Area



## DOWNTOWN TRAVEL PATTERNS

Existing travel behavior was observed using Replica, an anonymized mobility dataset, focusing on typical weekdays in spring 2025. The analysis examined mode split, trip length, and trip types within and around the Study and Focus Areas. Private vehicles account for about 55–59% of trips and carpools about 33%, while transit (1.5%), walking (~5%), and biking (<1%) make up a very small share. Average trip lengths are roughly 12 miles, indicating that most trips extend well beyond the Downtown area.

Only a small share of trips both begin and end within the Study Area (0.7–3.3%), while most trips either enter/leave the area or pass through entirely—up to 80% in the focus area. This highlights Downtown’s strong regional connectivity but limited internal circulation, suggesting opportunities to increase local activity and short-distance travel.

Mode split characteristics and travel patterns are summarized in Tables 3.1 and 3.2, while Figure 3.5 provides a bandwidth plot showing the daily trip distribution and typical routing for trips generated within the study area.

*Table 3.1: Daily Mode Split – Existing (2025) Conditions*

Mode	Study Area
<b>Private Auto</b>	54.9%
<b>Carpool</b>	33.8%
<b>Commercial Vehicle (Trucks)</b>	3.6%
<b>Public Transit</b>	1.5%
<b>Biking</b>	0.4%
<b>Walking</b>	4.9%
<b>Taxi/Rideshare</b>	0.2%
<b>Other</b>	0.6%

Source: Replica, Fehr & Peers, 2026.

*Table 3.2: Daily Travel Patterns – Existing (2025) Conditions*

Travel Characteristic	Study Area
<b>Average Trip Length</b>	11.9 miles
<b>I-I Trip Percentage</b>	3.3%
<b>I-X/X-I Trip Percentage</b>	36.7%
<b>X-X Trip Percentage</b>	60.0%

Source: Replica, Fehr & Peers, 2026.



Figure 3.5: Existing (2025) Study Area Daily Trip Distribution

# TRAFFIC OPERATIONS

## Analysis Methodology & Standards

Traffic operations were evaluated using Level of Service (LOS) based on Highway Capacity Manual (HCM 2000) methods, consistent with the Stockton General Plan EIR. The City targets LOS D or better citywide but allows LOS E (and sometimes F) in Greater Downtown to balance urban, environmental, and economic goals — indicating Downtown is expected to function as a more urban, multimodal environment rather than a high-speed traffic corridor.

## Roadway Segment Operations

Level of service along roadway segments is measured based on the ratio of traffic volume to capacity (V/C), with low ratios corresponding to high level of service, and vice versa. Roadway segment V/C ratios and LOS are summarized in Table 3.4 for AM peak hour, PM peak hour and daily volumes.

As shown in Table 3.4, most roadway segments operate efficiently at LOS C or better, meaning traffic flow is generally stable with acceptable delays. El Dorado Street experiences the highest congestion, operating at LOS E during the PM peak and LOS D daily, identifying it as the primary traffic pressure point. Despite localized congestion, all segments meet the City’s Downtown LOS E standard, suggesting the network has capacity but includes emerging bottlenecks on key corridors.

*Table 3.3: Roadway Segment Level of Service – Existing (2025) Conditions*

Roadway Segment	Classification	Direction	Lanes	Volume			V/C Ratio (LOS) <sup>1</sup>		
				AM	PM	Daily <sup>2</sup>	AM	PM	Daily <sup>2</sup>
<b>1. Center St – Weber Ave to Park St</b>	Arterial	SB	4	2,015	1,630	22,230	0.63 (C)	0.51 (B)	0.63 (C)
<b>2. El Dorado St – Park St to Weber Ave</b>	Arterial	NB	3	1,445	2,098	19,940	0.60 (C)	0.87 (E)	0.75 (D)
<b>3. Fremont St – El Dorado St to Stockton St</b>	Collector	EB	2	724	410	8,650	0.60 (C)	0.34 (A)	0.32 (A)
		WB	2	180	424		0.15 (A)	0.35 (A)	
<b>4. Weber Ave – El Dorado St to Mormon Slough</b>	Arterial	EB	1	524	503	10,660	0.65 (C)	0.63 (C)	0.60 (C)
		WB	1	510	352		0.64 (C)	0.44 (A)	

Notes:

1. Arterial capacity assumptions: 800 vehicles per hour per lane and 8,888 vehicles per day per lane. Collector capacity assumptions: 600 vehicles per hour per lane and 6,666 vehicles per day per lane. These capacity assumptions were obtained from the City of Stockton General Plan travel demand model network.
2. Daily roadway volumes and V/C ratio are reported for both directions combined.

Source: Fehr & Peers, 2026.

## INTERSECTION OPERATIONS



*Eastbound SR 4 Off-Ramp at Center Street During Weekday AM Peak Hour*

All four study intersections included in Table 3.5 operate at LOS D or better during AM and PM peak periods, meeting both City of Stockton and Caltrans standards. Peak congestion occurs but is temporary: Queues regularly spill back on northbound El Dorado Street and southbound Center Street, and SR-4 off-ramps occasionally extend onto the freeway in the AM peak, but queues clear each signal cycle. Gateway intersections function under commuter pressure: the defined commute peaks (7:30–8:30 AM, 4:15–5:15 PM) indicate that the intersections primarily experience commuter-driven congestion rather than persistent gridlock.

*Table 3.4: Intersection Level of Service – Existing (2025) Conditions*

ID	Intersection	Control Type <sup>1</sup>	Peak Hour	Delay (s) <sup>2</sup>	LOS <sup>2</sup>
1.	Center Street/Washington Street/ Westbound SR 4 On-Ramp	Signal	AM	26.7	C
			PM	17.5	B
2.	Center Street/Lafayette Street/ Eastbound SR 4 Off-Ramp	Signal	AM	36.2	D
			PM	24.6	C
3.	El Dorado Street/Washington Street/ Westbound SR 4 Off-Ramp	Signal	AM	40.7	D
			PM	27.5	C
4.	El Dorado Street/Lafayette Street/ Eastbound SR 4 On-Ramp	Signal	AM	13.6	B
			PM	15.6	B

Notes:

1. Signal = Signal Control.
2. All intersections analyzed using Synchro 12, which applies the methodologies in the *Highway Capacity Manual 2000* (TRB). For signalized intersections, average delay (in seconds per vehicle) is the weighted average of all approaches.

**Source:** Fehr & Peers, 2026

## Overall Traffic Operations Implications

- Downtown traffic conditions are acceptable from a motorist perspective and not systemwide constrained.
- Congestion is corridor-specific rather than widespread, pointing toward targeted improvements instead of major roadway expansion.
- The policy framework supports reallocating street space toward multimodal improvements (walking, biking, transit) without violating City performance standards.

## SAFETY

Transportation safety conditions in Downtown Stockton reflect the area's role as both a regional gateway and a local activity center. Collision patterns are not isolated to individual intersections but instead occur repeatedly along major corridors that carry higher traffic volumes and serve multiple travel modes. The data indicates that safety challenges are systemic and tied to roadway design, traffic speeds, and multimodal interactions. These conditions highlight the need for coordinated corridor-based safety strategies rather than spot improvements alone.

### Collision Location Trends

Collision data shows that traffic incidents are concentrated along key north-south and east-west corridors, including Airport Way, Center Street, El Dorado Street, Park Street, and Weber Avenue. These streets function as primary downtown connectors and regional access routes, which increases exposure to conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

### Pedestrian Collision Locations

Pedestrian-involved collisions occur throughout the downtown street network but are most concentrated near Highway 4, freeway ramps, and major arterial streets such as Airport Way. These areas combine higher traffic volumes, complex turning movements, and significant pedestrian activity, increasing the potential for conflicts. Pedestrian collisions are not limited to the busiest streets, suggesting that design features, speeds, and crossing conditions also play a critical role.

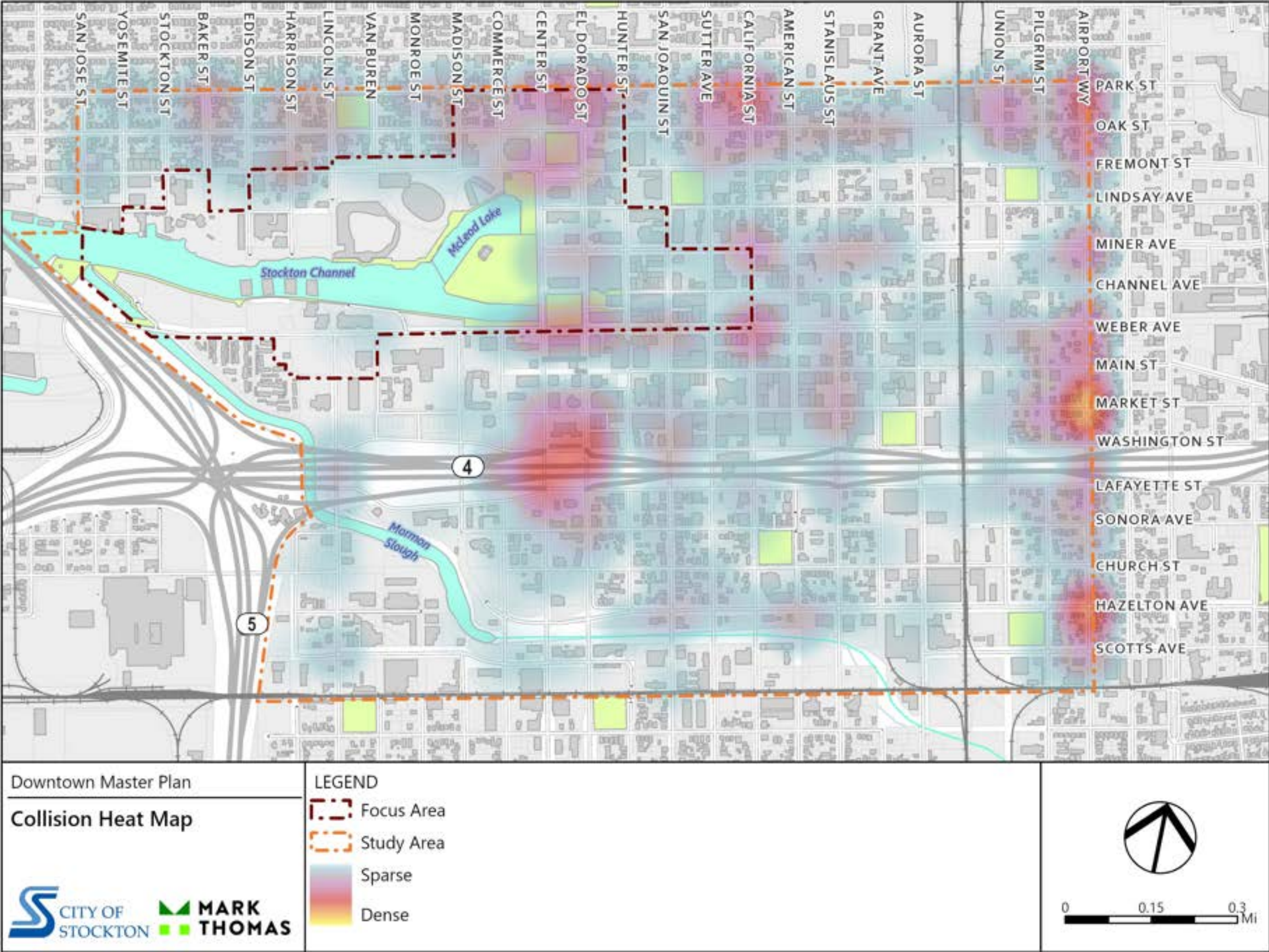
### Bicycle Network and Bicycle Collision Locations

As shown in Figure 3.6, bicycle-involved collisions are primarily concentrated at intersections, particularly along corridors such as Weber Avenue, El Dorado Street, Miner Avenue, and Airport Way. As noted earlier, these corridors often lack continuous or protected bicycle facilities, requiring bicyclists to travel alongside higher-speed vehicle traffic. The clustering of bicycle collisions reflects recurring conflict points rather than isolated problem locations.

### Transit Network and Pedestrian and Bicycle Collision Locations

Pedestrian and bicycle collisions frequently occur near major transit hubs, including the Downtown Transit Center, the Cabral ACE Station, and the San Joaquin Street Amtrak Station. These locations attract higher levels of foot and bicycle traffic due to transfers and first- and last-mile travel. While this pattern reflects increased activity rather than poor performance alone, it underscores the need for safer access to transit.

Figure 3.6: Collision Heat Map



## PARKING

Downtown Stockton’s parking system is extensive and complex, relying on a mix of on-street regulations, publicly owned garages and surface lots, and shared parking policies. There are 6,100 publicly owned off-street parking spaces, many of which are reserved for specific users or special events. As shown in Figure 3.7, on-street parking is available through parking meters, but the presence of off-street facilities absorbs employees, residents, and events demand. The relocation of City Hall offices to the waterfront is expected to ease weekday parking pressure Downtown.

### Existing Parking Controls

Downtown Stockton provides a wide range of on-street parking types that support businesses, civic destinations, and residents, though regulations and availability vary across streets. Residential streets generally allow free, unrestricted parking except during street sweeping, while commercial and high-activity areas use time limits (30 minutes to 10 hours, enforced weekdays 9 AM–6 PM) to encourage turnover. Select blocks include metered parking. Curbside spaces also include loading zones (yellow freight, white passenger, red bus, green short-term), limited ADA spaces near key destinations, and permit-only areas near government uses.

Recent protected bikeway installations shifted parking lanes to act as buffers between traffic and bike lanes. However, some drivers continue to park at the curb and block bikeways, indicating confusion with the new curb layout and the need for user adjustment and clearer guidance.

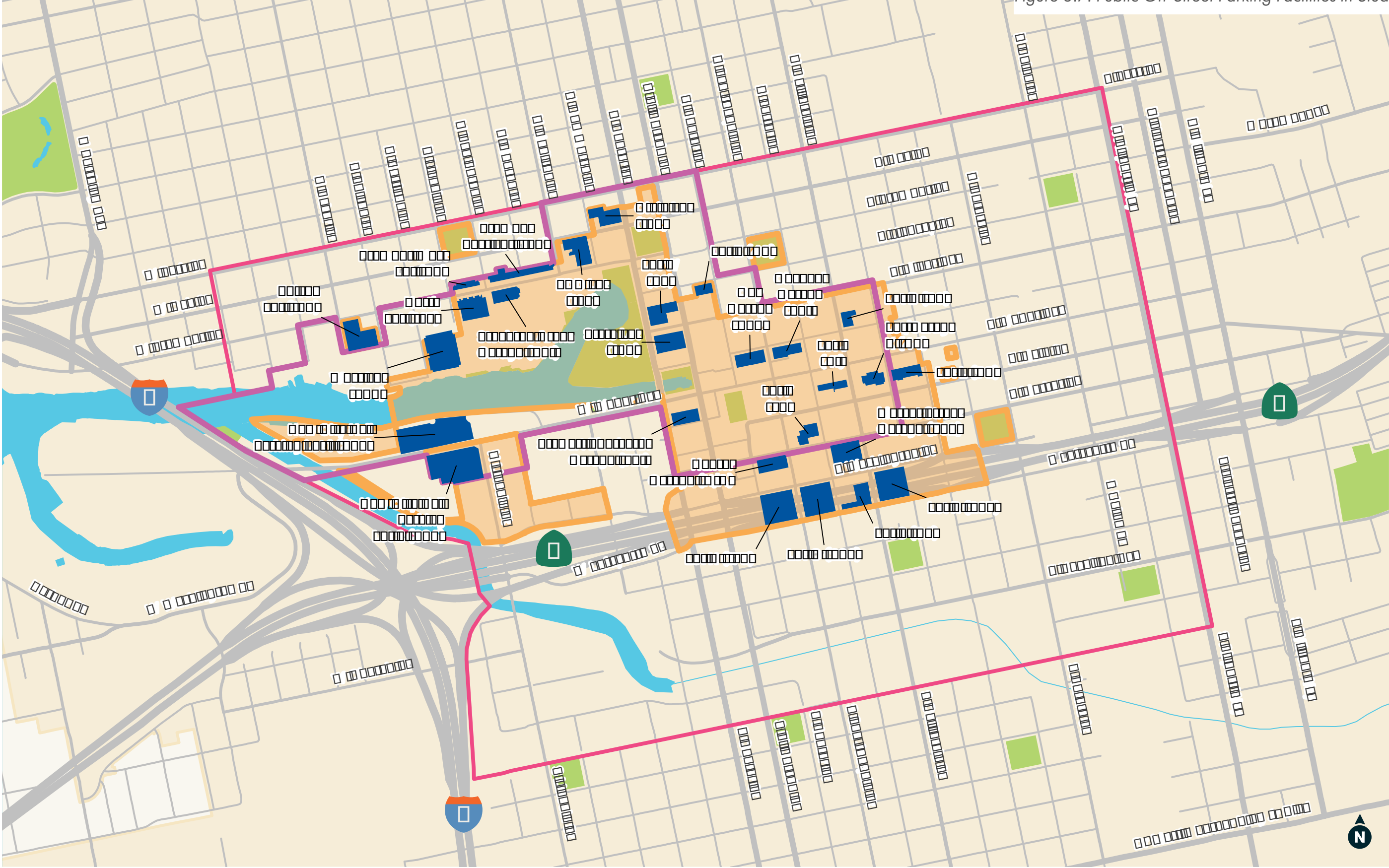


*Class IV Separated Bikeway on El Dorado Street at Miner Avenue*

### Off-Street Parking

Off-street parking plays a central role in meeting downtown Stockton’s existing and long-term parking needs, particularly for employees, all-day visitors, and event-goers. Off-street facilities within the study area include a combination of publicly owned garages and surface lots, as well as private parking resources that serve individual properties.

Figure 3.7: Public Off-Street Parking Facilities in Study Area



The City of Stockton, through its Parking Authority, owns and manages a network of public parking facilities within the Study Area, with some 6,156 spaces at 26 multilevel garages and surface lots shown in Figure 3.7. With major event centers like the Adventist Health Arena, Banner Island Ballpark, Bob Hope Theater, Memorial Civic Center, and the Weber Point Events Center in the study area, parking management for large events is critical. The following locations are the primary parking facilities for the main event centers in the study area:

- Adventist Health Arena – Arena Garage and Fremont East Lot (725)
- Banner Island Ballpark – North Lot and West Lot (521)
- Bob Hope Theatre – Lot F (78)
- Stockton Memorial Civic Center – Civic Center Lot (102)
- Weber Point Events Center – Coy Garage (569 spaces) and Stewart-Eberhardt Garage (721)

The City of Stockton recently relocated customer facing offices to the Waterfront Towers on Weber Avenue. The new City Hall site provides 749 parking spaces across two surface lots. This shift in weekday parking demand away from the downtown core is expected to increase the availability of off-street parking spaces in the downtown area in the near term.

Stockton offers parking programs through its partnership with LAZ Parking. It is designed to support residents, employees, and businesses that require long-term or recurring parking in the study area. These programs provide convenient access to designated parking locations. Businesses and agencies located downtown can enroll in the Monthly Parking Program, which provides employees with parking tags for assigned garages or surface lots. Residents living within the Central Parking District may apply for a Residential Parking Pass, offering a reliable option for finding parking near their homes.

#### *Downtown Parking Improvement District (PID)*

The Downtown Parking Improvement District covers the West End Redevelopment Area bounded by Park Street, Mormon Slough, Sonora Street and the UPRR tracks. Non-residential properties may either provide on-site parking or join the PID and rely on shared public parking. PID members must pay fees hourly, daily or monthly, with monthly permits ranging from \$20 to \$80 per month depending on garage, surface lot, or residential parking district.

Annexation to the PID is triggered by new construction, major remodel (>50% value), additions (>10% floor area), or parking-intensive land use change. Residential, religious, school, and emergency shelter uses may opt out but must meet full on-site parking requirements. The district enables shared parking and supports redevelopment while maintaining access.

#### *Off-Street Parking Requirements (New Development)*

The Municipal Code sets minimum parking requirements for new development unless reduced by City approval.

## STREETS & TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The street projects in the Capital Improvement Plan (2024-2029) show a shift toward prioritizing safer, more connected multimodal infrastructure, from near-term pedestrian and bike upgrades to larger, more complex corridor and grade-separation projects. Planned improvements target key corridors in Downtown: Weber Avenue, San Joaquin Street, Channel Street, Main and Market streets, and Park and Oak streets.

## Greater Downtown Bike and Ped Connectivity Project

### 1. Center Street and El Dorado Street Bike Lanes

Class IV separated bike lanes and Class II buffered bike lanes on **Center and El Dorado** streets from Cleveland to 3<sup>rd</sup> streets spanning the Downtown Study Area, received grant funding from Caltrans ATP Cycle 4. These improvements were recently completed at the time of the Thrive Downtown Existing Conditions Report.

### 2. Downtown Stockton East-West Connection

The Downtown East-West Connection project will improve connectivity along **Oak, Park, and Fremont** streets between Pershing Avenue and West Wilson Way. The project will provide dedicated, buffered bike lanes along Park and Oak streets, and a striped “sharrow” Class III route along Fremont Street, as well as new or reconstructed curb ramps, speed cushions, RRFBs, crosswalk installations/enhancements, signal timing improvements, and new signage. (FY 2025).

### 3 and 4. Lincoln and Aurora Streets

Safety elements such as bike lanes, flashing beacons, sidewalks, high visibility crosswalks, and speed cushions will be implemented on **Lincoln Street** (bike lanes) and **Aurora Street** (bike boulevard) in the Downtown Study Area. (FY 2025).

### 5. Main and Market Street Complete Streets, Phase 1

The City is in the process of improving safety along Main and Market streets. The first phase of the project will focus on the segment between California and Sierra Nevada streets and will involve reduction from two to one vehicle travel lanes, the addition of buffered bike lanes, signal and lighting improvements, pedestrian and bike amenities, and accessible street crossings. (FY 2026-27).

## Other Planned Street Improvements

### 6. Channel Street Improvements

This project aims to correct substandard street conditions and provide high-quality pedestrian and cyclist connections between Cabral Station, the Downtown Transit Center, and the Waterfront. Key improvements include widened sidewalks, curb bulb-outs, ADA-compliant ramps, high-visibility crosswalks, pedestrian-scaled lighting, Class III bike routes, and street trees and landscaping. (FY 2026).

### 7. SRTS Safety Connectivity Improvements

Install low-cost safety improvements and measures, such as; installation of high visibility crosswalk striping, pedestrian crossing flashing warning beacons, improved signage, and bicycle lanes. In addition, infrastructure-related safety measures will also be included, such as; the installation of sidewalks, center medians, ADA compliant curb ramps, pedestrian refuge islands, and a traffic circle. The project includes areas adjacent to or near six schools located in the City in predominantly disadvantaged communities and were selected for safety concerns from the 2017 Safe Routes to School Plan. The six schools include AG Spanos Elementary in the Downtown Study Area. (FY 2025).

#### *8. SRTS Sidewalk Gap Closure*

Install curb, gutter and sidewalk to close sidewalk gaps, upgrade or install curb ramps, bulb-outs and install crosswalks to complete the pedestrian network at five school locations, including Jane Frederick High School in the Downtown Stockton Study Area. (FY 2026).

#### *9. South Stockton Pedestrian Hawk Improvements*

This project will install 8 HAWK pedestrian hybrid signals in the south Stockton area, including one in the Study Area, at Airport Way and Lafayette Street. Each location will also include other crossing improvements and intersection lighting. (FY 2026).

#### *10. Janet Leigh Plaza Pedestrian Improvements*

Repair of sidewalk and cobble stones. (FY 2027).

#### *11. San Joaquin Street Bike Lane Improvements*

Implement a Road Diet on San Joaquin Street between Miner Avenue and Harding Way and install Class II bike lanes along with appropriate signing and striping. (FY 2027).

#### *12. Weber Avenue Improvements*

Install frontage improvements on both sides of Weber Avenue west of the new City Hall and near the Children's Museum. Improvements will include new curb, gutter, sidewalk, street lights, trees, and curb ramps. Lower of the brick median on Weber Ave at the intersections of Weber/Grant and Weber/Aurora due to the limited visibility of approaching traffic. (FY 2027).

#### *13. Mormon Slough Feasibility Study*

This project consists of a study to investigate viable options to curb blight, resolve the safety, and develop a viable plan that can restore Mormon Slough to a community asset with a community purpose. The study will also investigate available social and/or economic assistance programs and funding availability or partnerships. (FY 2027).

#### *14. Mormon Slough Bikeway Improvement Project*

This project will provide improvements to the Mormon Slough bicycle and pedestrian trail from Weber Ave to approximately 0.25 miles southeast along the slough to match existing improvements. Improvements will entail a 14 ft wide asphalt multi-use path for cyclists and pedestrians. Improvements will include paving, signage, striping, pavement markings, ADA improvements, shoulder widening, including a vegetative grassy swale. (FY 2028).

#### *15. Airport Way BNSF Grade Separation*

Construct a grade separation on Airport Way over the BNSF Railroad. (FY 2028).

#### *16. Hazelton Avenue/UPRR Grade Separation*

This project is located at Hazelton Avenue and Union Pacific Railroad tracks between Aurora and Union Street. The project will construct a grade separation taking Hazelton Avenue under the UPRR tracks. (FY 2028-29).



### 3.3 Parks & Open Spaces

Stockton's natural features and urban open spaces are key to shaping the physical environment of Downtown Stockton. McLeod Lake provides a waterfront space for residents and visitors alike in the heart of Stockton. Along the water's edge are several parks, including Morelli Park, the Stockton Marina, and the Joan Darrah Promenade on the south edge of the lake, North Seawall Park on the north side, and McLeod Park and Weber Point Events Center along the eastern shore. Several neighborhood parks, typically each occupying a square block, provide valuable urban open spaces in other parts of Downtown.

As shown in Figure 3.9, most of Downtown falls within a ¼- to ½-mile walk of a park, though access becomes more uneven toward the outer neighborhoods. Projected Downtown population growth by 2040, however, may cause existing park space and amenities to be insufficient in the long term.

Weber Point Events Center provides an exceptional experience of Stockton's waterfront setting, but the site is fenced and gated, with only intermittent public access. This is a significant barrier for public access to and along the waterfront. Meanwhile, there is a distribution of square-block urban parks scattered throughout the Study Area, from Weber Square in the northwest to Union Square in the southeast. In general, these parks have lawn areas and a diversity of trees but lack other amenities to support community and recreational use.

The north shore offers a potential opportunity to accommodate additional public open space as part of future development, which would also require environmental remediation. At the south end of the Study Area, the Mormon Slough corridor is also an important opportunity as an open space and active transportation corridor.

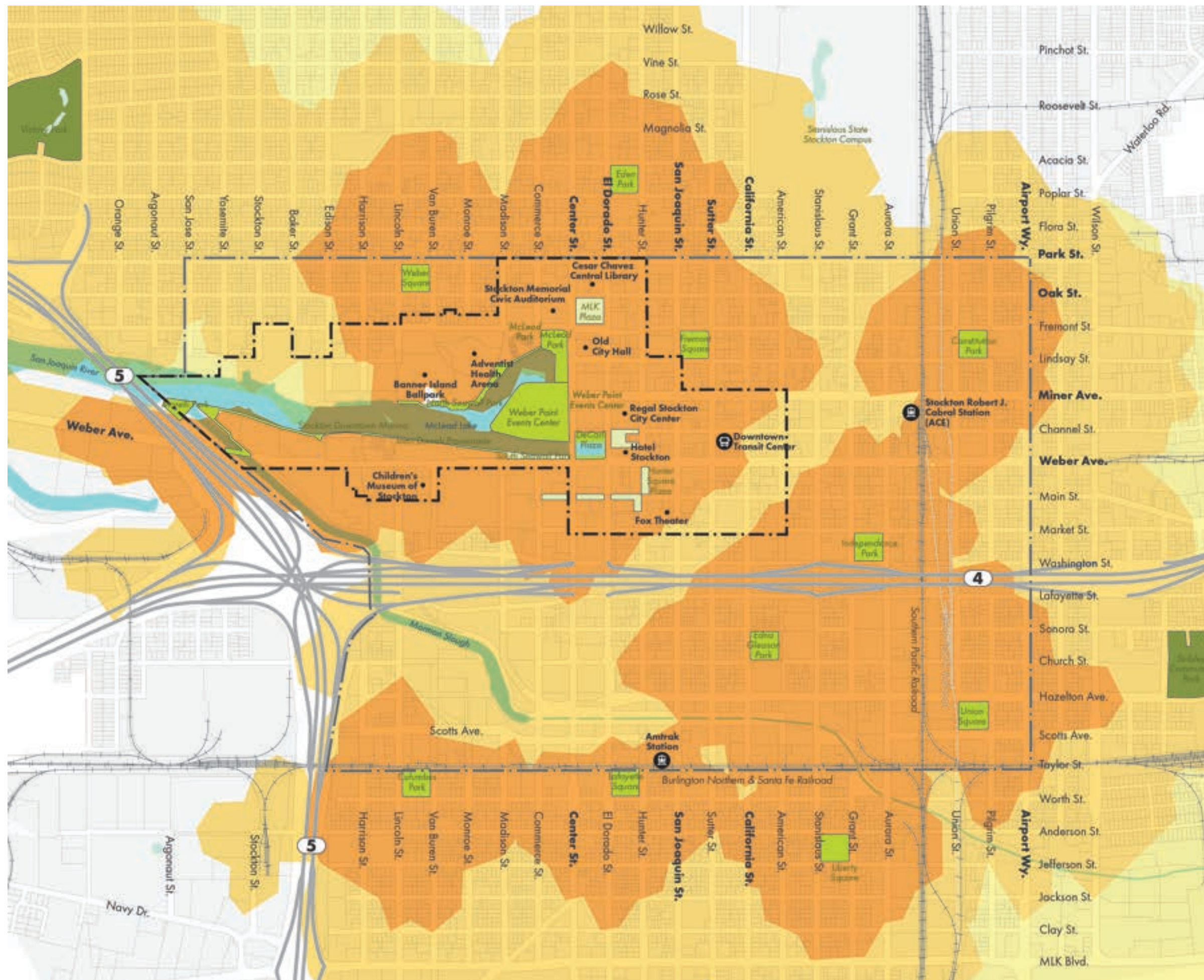


Figure 3.9: Parks & Open Spaces

(Park Standards: Parks And Recreation Master Facilities Plan/ General Plan 2040)

**Parks Typologies**

- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Pocket Parks

**Service Area**

- 1/4 Mile Walk Shed
- 1/2 Mile Walk Shed
- 1 Mile Walk Shed

- Focus Area Boundary
- Study Area Boundary

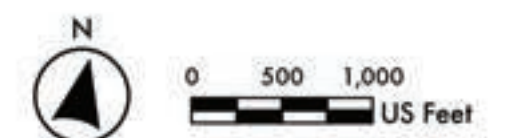


Table 3.5: Park, Type, and Acreage (Parks Master Plan)

Park	Park Type	Recreation Features	Area (acres)
<b>DeCarli Waterfront Square</b>	Community	Seating, water fountain, maintenance shed, open lawn, and historic/cultural features	2.1
<b>Martin Luther King (MLK) Plaza</b>	Community	Water fountain, open lawn areas, Vietnam memorial, and walking loop	1.7
<b>McLeod Park</b>	Community	Seating, restrooms, historic/cultural features, waterfront path, walking paths, and open lawn area	3.5
<b>Morelli Park</b>	Community	Seating, maintenance shed, playground, restroom, boat launch, walking path	4
<b>North Seawall Park</b>	Community	Seating, picnic tables, waterfront path, and art sculpture	2.1
<b>Weber Point Event Center</b>	Community	Picnic areas, seating, drinking fountains, shade shelters, community center, maintenance shed, playground, water features, restrooms, open lawn areas, bike parking, waterfront paths, and historic and cultural features	9.7
<b>Constitution Park</b>	Neighborhood	Picnic areas, seating, drinking fountain, playground, open lawn area, and walking loop	2.1
<b>Edna Gleason Park</b>	Neighborhood	Seating, water fountain, BBQ, playground, baseball field, bike parking, and walking path.	2.1
<b>Fremont Square Plaza</b>	Neighborhood	Maintenance shed, restrooms, historic/cultural features, open lawn area, fitness equipment, bike parking, and walking loop	2.1
<b>Independence Park</b>	Neighborhood	Open lawn area	2.1
<b>Union Square Park</b>	Neighborhood	Picnic areas, seating, BBQ, open lawn area, and walking paths	2.1
<b>Weber Square</b>	Neighborhood	Seating, drinking fountains, playground, walking path	2.1

## 3.4 Flood Hazards

The flooding analysis shown in Figure 3.10 combines FEMA flood hazard mapping with regional sea-level rise projections to understand current and future risk in Downtown Stockton. Stockton experiences tidal fluctuation, albeit much less than the Bay Area. The methodology draws on tidal datum and sea level rise projections from the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Adapts Flood Hazard Assessment Technical Memorandum (using USGS 2021 DEM data) to model a 2050 flooding scenario, including tidal ranges and storm surge conditions. These datasets were reclassified into tidal inundation categories and overlaid with FEMA flood zones (Zone A and Zone AE) to provide a comprehensive picture of both projected climate-driven flooding and existing regulatory flood hazards.

Much of the North Shore industrial and waterfront area falls within FEMA's 100-year flood zone, indicating existing flood vulnerability along the Stockton Deep Water Channel and surrounding waterfront lands. Portions of the waterfront appear exposed without clear levee or seawall protection, suggesting the need for further study to assess flood risk under future sea-level rise and storm surge conditions. Additional areas of concern occur along Mormon Slough, where low-lying landscapes show marginal inundation potential. Meanwhile scattered inland areas with elevations below approximately 9.67 feet may experience localized flooding.

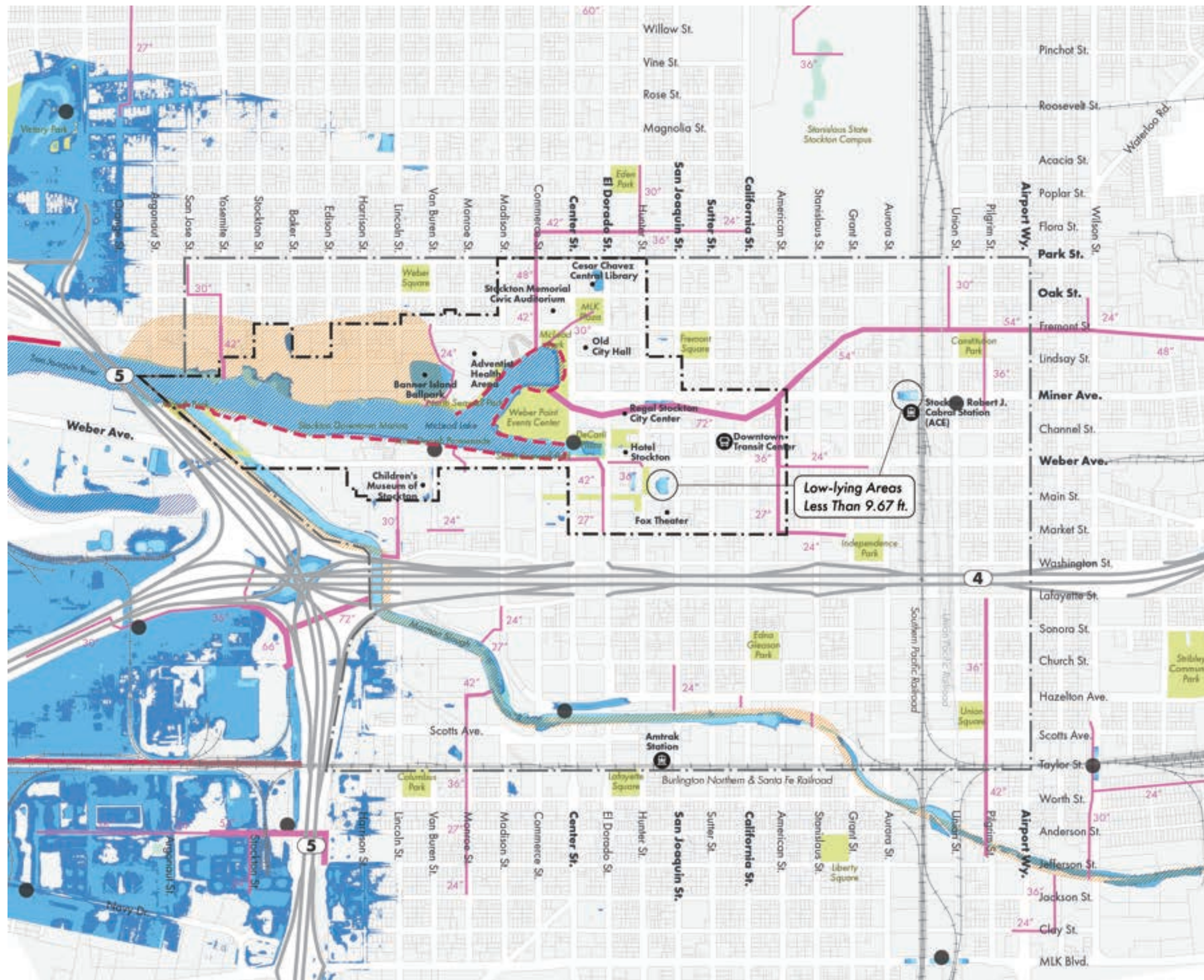


Figure 3.10: Flood Hazards and Sea Level Rise

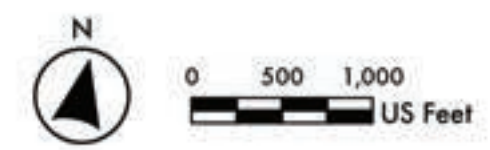
**Tidal Datum Calculations Sea Level Rise Scenario in 2050**  
 (Datum Data Source: Delta Adapts: Flood Hazard Assessment Technical Memorandum  
 Future Datum = Existing Datum + Adjustment  
 DEM Data Source: USGS 2021)

- Existing Subtidal <1.56 ft.
- Existing Tidal Range 1.56-5.60ft.
- Existing Storm Surge 5.60-8.60ft.
- Future Sea Level Rise & Storm Surge 8.61-9.67ft.

- FEMA Flood Zone**
- Zone A (100-Year Flood Zone)
  - Zone AE (100-Year Flood Zone)

- Levees
- Storm Drain Pipes over 24"
- Pump Stations

- Focus Area Boundary
- Study Area Boundary



## 3.5 Historic Context and Potential Historic Resources

Stockton has been home to Native peoples for thousands of years, including the Yatchicumne of the Northern Valley Yokuts. The city was established in 1847 by Charles Weber and rapidly grew during the Gold Rush as a key supply and transportation hub. Its economy later centered on agriculture, manufacturing, and shipping, supported by the Stockton Channel and rail connections.

From the late 1800s to early 1900s, downtown developed with brick commercial buildings, hotels, and a diverse immigrant population, including Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Sikh, and Italian communities. Stockton became known for its multicultural identity and agricultural labor force.

Post-World War II suburbanization, freeways, and urban renewal led to downtown decline and displacement. Since the 1980s, revitalization efforts particularly along the waterfront have reshaped downtown, while its historic character, industrial roots, and cultural diversity remain defining features.

Stockton's downtown is deeply shaped by its multicultural heritage, particularly the legacy of Chinese and Filipino communities who played a central role in its development. Downtown was once home to one of the largest Chinatowns in California, while the nearby Little Manila district became a national center of Filipino culture and labor organizing in the early 20th century. These communities contributed significantly to Stockton's economic and social fabric.

### HISTORIC RESOURCES ANALYSIS

The Historic Resources analysis evaluates the regulatory framework, documented historic assets, and adaptive reuse opportunities within the Downtown Stockton Study Area. Designated and potentially eligible historic resources are shown in Figure 3.11, while adaptive reuse candidate sites are shown in Figure 3.12. The full report is provided as Appendix C. Key findings are summarized here.

Downtown Stockton contains a dense and multi-layered preservation environment that will strongly influence redevelopment. The large concentration of designated historic resources includes 17 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, 2 California Historical Landmarks, 31 locally designated Landmarks and 18 Structures of Merit. Earlier survey efforts identified eligible districts and properties but were not formally adopted. The current effort helps fill gaps and improves certainty for planning and environmental review.

The feasibility for adaptive reuse is influenced by the presence of adjacent parking resources and undeveloped land. The Study Area has significant adaptive reuse potential. The survey identified 26 properties as candidates for residential adaptive reuse—a strategy for adding housing while preserving historic character.

Historic preservation is both constraint and economic opportunity. Protections limit demolition and major alterations. However, preserved character and reuse potential support downtown identity, investment, and cultural tourism. Preservation can also benefit from historic tax credits and the potential for Mills Act tax reductions, though Stockton currently lacks a Mills Act ordinance.

Figure 3.11: Designated and Eligible Historic Resources

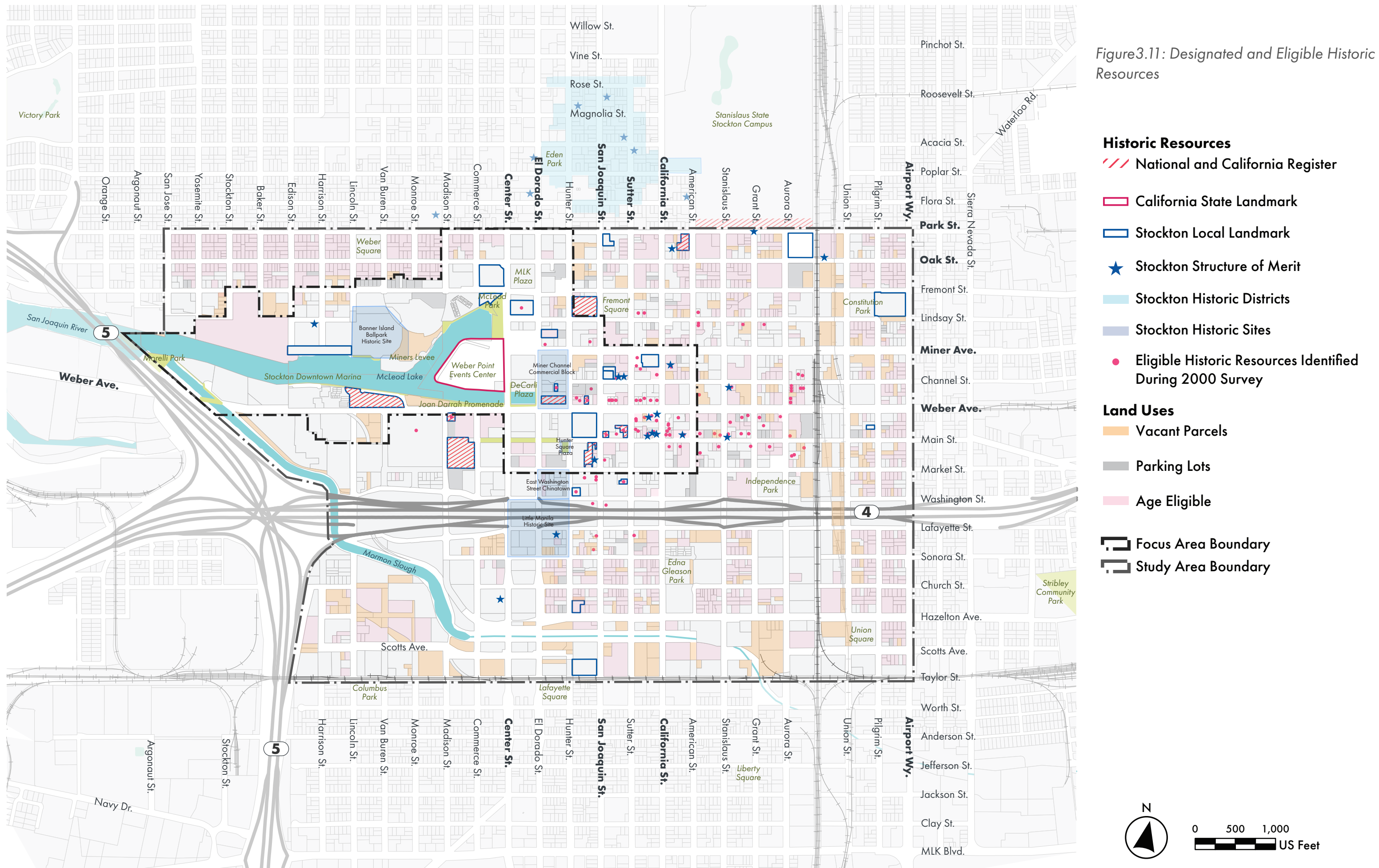
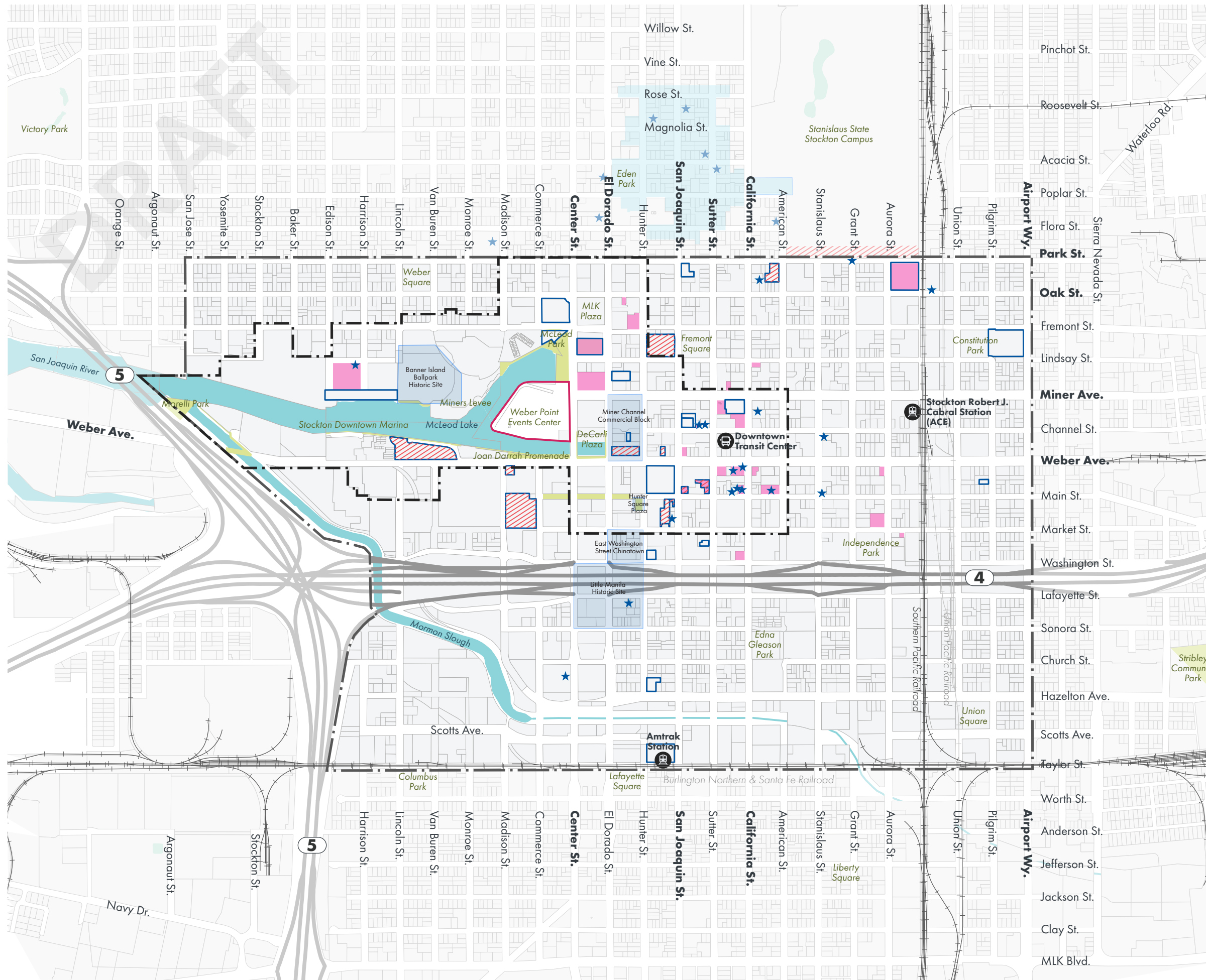


Figure 3.12: Potential Adaptive Reuse Candidates



- Historic Resources**
- National and California Register
  - California State Landmark
  - Stockton Local Landmark
  - Stockton Structure of Merit
  - Stockton Historic Districts
  - Stockton Historic Sites
- Potential Adaptive Reuse Candidates**
- Potential Adaptive Reuse Candidates
- Boundaries**
- Focus Area Boundary
  - Study Area Boundary



## 3.6 Cultural Programs and Events

### CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

Stockton is a diverse city, and its multicultural identity is reflected in various ways in the Downtown environment. Filipinos were instrumental in the development of Stockton's agricultural economy in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and played an important role in the advancement of justice for farm workers in California. Today, Little Manila Rising is dedicated to preserving the memory of Filipino impact on Stockton, and supporting the community today. The Filipino legacy is preserved in a small number of preserved buildings; street banners and signage help remind residents and visitors alike of Stockton's cultural heritage.

Stockton has a strong Southeast Asian population, reflected in neighborhood businesses, community organizations, and religious institutions. Now Stockton's current largest demographic group, the Latino community also plays an important role in shaping the public realm and cultural life in Stockton. Latino culture is visible throughout Stockton's neighborhoods in locally owned markets, restaurants, bakeries, and small businesses that contribute to the vibrancy of commercial corridors. The Mexican Heritage Center and Gallery (111 South Sutter Street) and Chicano Research Center (415 East Main Street) seek to retain and express this cultural legacy in Stockton. One of the more notable events in Stockton is the Día De Los Muertos Street Fiesta, which celebrates Mexican arts, food, and music, using South Sutter and Market streets in Downtown Stockton.

### EVENTS

Downtown Stockton hosts a variety of events, ranging from performing arts to sports games and tournaments. Events take place at Banner Island Ballpark, Adventist Health Arena, the Stockton Memorial Civic Auditorium, and the Bob Hope Theater, as well as at Weber Point Events Center, DeCarli Plaza, Janet Leigh Plaza, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza, and with temporary street closures. As shown in Figure 3.13, Downtown Stockton hosts several large regional festivals and sports events that attract significant crowds, particularly during spring and fall. However, the event calendar shows seasonal and programmatic gaps, with limited outdoor programming during the winter months and relatively few recurring small-scale events that activate public spaces on a regular basis. As a result, downtown activity tends to be episodic and tied to major ticketed events or festivals rather than sustained daily programming in the public realm.

Figure 3.13: Cultural Programs and Events



\* Note: The Stockton Asparagus Festival is no longer held at Weber Point Events Center.

## 3.7 Schools, Libraries and Social Services

Downtown Stockton is home to several schools that bring educational opportunities and youth energy. Downtown also benefits greatly from the support of independent organizations that provide financial and programmatic support to individuals, families, and small businesses.

### SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

The Downtown Stockton Study Area is home to a variety of schools, with an emphasis on specialized high school programs and charter schools. The Weber Institute of Applied Sciences & Technology, Stockton Alternative High School, and one. TLC School for Homeless Children are co-located on a campus in the South Shore area. Jane Frederick Continuation High School is located at the east edge of Downtown at 1141 East Weber, co-located with the Early Childhood Education/School Readiness Program. The Study Area also has a traditional elementary school, Spanos, adjacent to Edna Gleason Park.

Charter schools have made an impact Downtown. Stockton Collegiate International Schools and TEAM Charter School are located along East Main Street, in adaptively reused office buildings. Unbound Stockton Community School is a new 4th-to-8th grade charter school option located downtown at 444 North American Street. Other charter schools (Pittman, KIPP University Park Elementary) are located just outside the Study Area.

Finally, the Cesar Chavez Central Library is located at 605 N. El Dorado Street, across from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Plaza.

### COMMUNITY SERVICES

One of the critical service providers and public space activators in Downtown is Main Street Youth & Family Services. The organization provides programs aimed at supporting justice-involved youth and their families from their location at 306 East Main Street (Courthouse Square). The organization supports a business incubator that provides skill-building opportunities for youth and generates vital downtown activity.

Little Manila Rising administers health and wellness programs, an urban forestry program, and workforce training opportunities for the Filipino community and south Stockton neighborhoods.

Empowering Marginalized Asian Communities (EMAC) promotes civic engagement, workforce development opportunities, and other means of building resiliency among Asian communities in Stockton.

El Concilio, an organization dedicated to supporting Latino and underserved communities in Stockton, provides outreach, education, engagement, counseling, job training, and classes, with a new headquarters Downtown.

### SMALL BUSINESS PROGRAMS

The City and the Downtown Stockton Alliance launched a Downtown Stockton Business Façade Improvement Grant Program in 2023 using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The grant supported 83 businesses with paint, windows, doors, signage, awnings, and murals totaling over \$2 million in improvements. The Downtown Stockton Alliance has been a critical partner in administering this and other programs with the City of Stockton.

## SERVICES FOR THE UNHOUSED

The City of Stockton, San Joaquin County and Continuum of Care released an updated Regional Homeless Action Plan in 2024. As part of the study, a point-in-time count found 3,469 unsheltered individuals in San Joaquin County, a 39% increase from 2020. Black/African American residents are disproportionately impacted, representing 19% of those experiencing homelessness despite comprising less than 8% of the regional population. Additionally, over one-third of individuals report a disabling condition, and more than half have experienced multiple episodes of homelessness. Overall, regional data indicates that homelessness had increased substantially across the County, a trend that is observed in Downtown Stockton.

Stakeholders in Downtown Stockton and beyond are taking steps to ensure unhoused individuals are receiving services, while Downtown remains welcoming for all. Organizations such as St. Mary's Dining Room and the Stockton Shelter for the Homeless providing daily meals, shelter, and supportive services. Through the Downtown Stockton Alliance, Downtown Ambassadors provides on-street staff to help to provide visibility, monitor activities and events, and assist with directions to services and programs in Downtown.



*The City of Stockton and Downtown Stockton Alliance supported 87 façade improvements for downtown businesses.*

## 3.8 Recent & Planned Development

In the past twenty years, several key projects have been completed in Downtown and along the waterfront including the Banner Island Ballpark, City Center Cinema, Stockton Marina, and Weber Point Event Center. These major projects are valued in the community, and they are also drivers for economic growth and housing density in Downtown Stockton.

### RECENT HOUSING DEVELOPMENT, ADAPTIVE REUSE, AND RESTORATION

In recent years, several buildings have been renovated, leading to increased housing in Downtown. These include the 12-story Medico Dental Building, originally built in 1927 and now serving as work-live space for artists; the Tretheway Building, from 1892, (12 units); the former Mansion House, built in 1873, now Hunter Square Lofts (26 units); and Cal-Main Lofts, (30 units) in the former Avon Theater from 1860. Cort Tower, at Main and California streets, and the old PG&E Building, on Channel and Sutter streets, have been remodeled for office tenants.

### PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE

#### City Hall Relocation

Originally built in 1923, the City Hall building at 425 N El Dorado Street cannot accommodate the City's office space needs and is in need of substantial renovation. In 2007, Stockton City Council made the decision to relocate, as it was more cost-effective. At the time of this writing, the City is completing more minor renovations to Waterfront Towers, an office complex on the south shore of McLeod Lake, and moving staff to this location.

#### Stockton Maritime Museum

Stockton was historically a significant port, with shipbuilding and freight shipment as economic drivers. The story of Stockton's maritime history will be told through the Stockton Maritime Museum, which is planned on a site along the south shore of McLeod Lake. The Museum will feature the restored World War 2-era ship the USS Lucid, and 5,000 square feet of event and classroom space.

#### South Pointe

A major project happening on the south shore of McLeod Lake is South Pointe, just west of the new City Hall location. A joint effort between RBH and the City of Stockton EDD Department, the project will be a mixed-use development, consisting of mixed-income residential units, retail, and parking. Phase 1 of the Project includes 300 units of combined workforce and senior housing, 4,000 SF of educational space, and 16,000 SF of retail space. Phase 2 consists of 220 market rate housing units.

#### Other Projects in the Pipeline

Table 6 shows the current projects with permit documentation from the Stockton Community Development Department and projects from the Stockton Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), as well as recently completed projects mentioned above. There are 26 projects in the study area that are

planned or under construction. Most of these projects are new residential construction, including mixed use and affordable developments including Village at South Pointe, Grand View Village, Hunter House, and the View at Channel. There are ten educational and civic projects, including the Maritime Museum, Cesar Chavez Library Remodel, District Attorney office buildout, and the new City Hall relocation to Waterfront Towers.

Entertainment projects include upgrades to infrastructure within the arena and ballpark and upgrades to the Bob Hope Theater facility.

*Table 3.6: Recent and Planned Development*

Map ID	Project and Description	Address	Primary Program	Alteration or New Construction	Status
1	<b>Cal Weber 40:</b> New development provides 40 affordable housing units (28 2-bedroom and 12 3-bedrooms).	512 E. Weber St.	Residential	New Construction	Recently Completed
2	<b>Cal Main Lofts:</b> Adaptive reuse of 1885 building, 29 housing units.	500 E Main St.	Residential	Alteration	Recently Completed
3	<b>Medico Dental Building:</b> Adaptive reuse for 34 affordable and market-rate units. A portion of the building's units are reserved for artists.	242 N Sutter St .	Residential	Alteration	Recently Completed
4	<b>Trethaway Building:</b> Adaptive reuse of 1880 building, 12 housing units.	229 – 231 E Weber Ave	Residential	Alteration	Recently Completed
5	<b>Cort Tower:</b> Renovated office space.	343 E Main St.	Office	Alteration	Recently Completed
6	Old PG&E Building: Office renovation.	345 E Channel St.	Office	Alteration	Recently Completed
7	<b>The Brix:</b> New 2-story residential building with 51 units.	510 E Miner Ave.	Residential	New Construction	Planned
8	<b>Grand View Village:</b> Affordable housing project with 75 studio, 2- and 3- bedroom units, amenities.	240 N Hunter St.	Residential	New Construction	Under Construction
9	<b>Hunter House:</b> Affordable housing, 120 units.	610 N Hunter St.	Residential	New Construction	Planned
10	<b>Infill Residential:</b> New two-story house.	738 E Fremont St.	Residential	New Construction	Planned
11	<b>La Passeggiata:</b> New 5-story building with a total 94 affordable units with ground floor commercial,	601 E Miner Ave.	Residential	New Construction	Planned
12	<b>Maritime Museum:</b> Future museum location featuring the USS Lucid.	321 W Weber Ave.	Educational and Civic	New Construction	Planned
13	Residential 2-story Duplex: New duplex.	542 N American St.	Residential	New Construction	Planned
14	<b>San Joaquin District Attorney Office Buildout:</b> Improvements to existing commercial building for relocation of DA's Office.	6 S El Dorado St.	Educational and Civic	New Construction	Under Construction
15	Satellite Apartments - New Construction: 24 studio units.	530 N Stanislaus St.	Educational and Civic	New Construction	Planned

Map ID	Project and Description	Address		Primary Program	Alteration or New Construction	Status
16	<b>Stockton Unified Campus - Weber Institute Gymnasium Project:</b> Construction of gymnasium and associated site work; modifications to existing spaces.	103 Monroe St.	S	Educational and Civic	New Construction	Planned
17	<b>Village at South Pointe:</b> Mixed-use development consisting of mixed-income residential units, retail, and parking. Phase 1 of the Project includes 300 units of combined workforce and senior housing, 4,000 SF of educational space, 16,000 SF of retail space. Phase 2 consists of 220 market rate housing units.	701 Weber Ave.	W	Residential	New Construction	Planned
18	<b>The View at Channel:</b> Affordable housing project at Stockton State DGS site, with 110 units.	246 Center St.	N	Residential	New Construction	Planned
19	<b>Ruhl Building:</b> Interior renovation of the 2nd and 3rd floors of the historic Ruhl building into 12 loft apartments.	521 E Main St.		Residential	Alteration	Planned
20	<b>Satellite Apartments – Rehab:</b> Affordable housing rehab for existing building	530 Stanislaus St.	N	Residential	Alteration	Planned
21	<b>Diamond Auto Body:</b> Tenant improvements and site improvements.	521 Stockton St.	N	Office	Alteration	Planned
22	<b>New El Concilio HQ:</b> Improvements to existing commercial building for social service offices.	110 Weber Ave.	E	Office	Alteration	Planned
23	<b>Weber Avenue Health Center:</b> Alteration of existing 2-story building plus new addition, for medical offices.	701 Weber Ave.	E	Office	Alteration	Planned
24	<b>Arena and Ballpark Upgrades:</b> Upgrades and replacement may include: Ball park roof repair; Arena security system/CCTV upgrade; Arena lighting and control system LED retrofit/replacement; and Arena IT switch and infrastructure upgrade.	404 Fremont St.	W	Entertainment	Alteration	Under Construction
25	<b>Bob Hope Theatre Facility Upgrades:</b> Upgrade and replace HVAC ventilation, mechanical, structural, electrical, production systems, plumbing, and staging.	242 E Main St.		Entertainment	Alteration	Planned
26	<b>Cesar Chavez Library Remodel:</b> Redesign interior public spaces; Hazardous materials	605 Dorado St.	N El	Educational and Civic	Alteration	Under Construction

Map ID	Project and Description	Address	Primary Program	Alteration or New Construction	Status
	assessment/abatement; extensive interior renovations.				
27	<b>Civic Auditorium Upgrades:</b> Replace electronic message board, replace stage controls/rigging and stage curtains, repair/replace exterior awnings, refinish all floor surfaces, paint the interior and exterior, other interior renovations.	525 N Center St.	Entertainment	Alteration	Planned
28	San Joaquin County Office of Education –Code stack Camp: New building for Code stack program.	201 California St.	Educational and Civic	Alteration	Under Construction
29	<b>340 E Main St:</b> Expand existing school facility by demolishing a building (326 and 330 E Main St), and expanding -outdoor recreational area.	340 E Main St.	Educational and Civic	Alteration	Planned
30	<b>Historic City Hall Renovations:</b> Components to include asbestos/hazardous material removal, HVAC, roofing, interior/exterior improvements, and updates to bathrooms.	425 N El Dorado St.	Civic	Alteration	Planned
31	<b>New City Hall - Waterfront Towers:</b> Tenant and site improvements for relocation of City offices.	501 and 509 W Weber Ave.	Educational and Civic	Alteration	Planned
32	<b>San Joaquin County Consolidation:</b> Consolidation of San Joaquin County staff in Downtown Stockton.	400 E Main St.	Educational and Civic	Alteration	Planned

**Source:** City of Stockton Municipal Code, Title 16 (Development Code), Chapter 16.20 — Land Use Regulations, Table 2-2: Allowable Land Uses and Permit Requirements



## 3.9 Opportunity Sites and Development Capacity

Development potential in the Study Area is influenced by land use and land value, lot size and configuration, opportunities for adaptive reuse, as well as zoning, access to the waterfront, proximity to rail and major corridors, and, of course, market demand for different types of development.

Figure 3.14 shows WRT's best sense of development opportunity sites in the Study Area. These sites are included because they meet one or more of the following characteristics:

- Vacant land
- Parcels with a relatively low (less than 2.0) ratio of improved value to land value, on sites larger than 10,000 square feet
- Vacant buildings
- Housing Element sites
- Priority sites identified in the North Shore Areawide Plan
- Publicly owned sites that have the potential for reuse
- Sites where development plans are underway

Figure 3.15 shows this same set of sites and displays them by zoning district. Zoning can be used as a basis for realistic development assumptions. Most of the large opportunity sites are located near the waterfront and are zoned Downtown Commercial; other large opportunity sites in the vicinity of Mormon Slough and the rail corridors are primarily zone Industrial or General Commercial. The Downtown Core area consist mostly of smaller infill opportunity parcels.

A high-level development capacity analysis was conducted for all identified opportunity sites in the Study Area. This assessment assumes that parcels are developed to their reasonable full potential, utilizing the allowable floor area ratio (FAR) for the most likely land uses permitted under each zoning designation. It also assumes that the likelihood of development varies based on parcel size, location, and site conditions. The analysis is intended to provide a general understanding of development potential rather than a site-specific forecast. Based on these assumptions, the projected development capacity across opportunity sites is as follows:

- **Residential:** approximately 8,900 units
- **Office:** approximately 3.84 million square feet
- **Restaurant/Retail:** approximately 1.29 million square feet
- **Other uses (community, civic, entertainment):** approximately 690,000 square feet

Development opportunities suggest significant potential for waterfront activation and for both job-generating commercial uses and substantial residential growth, reinforcing Downtown Stockton's potential to evolve into a more active, mixed-use, and population-supporting urban center.

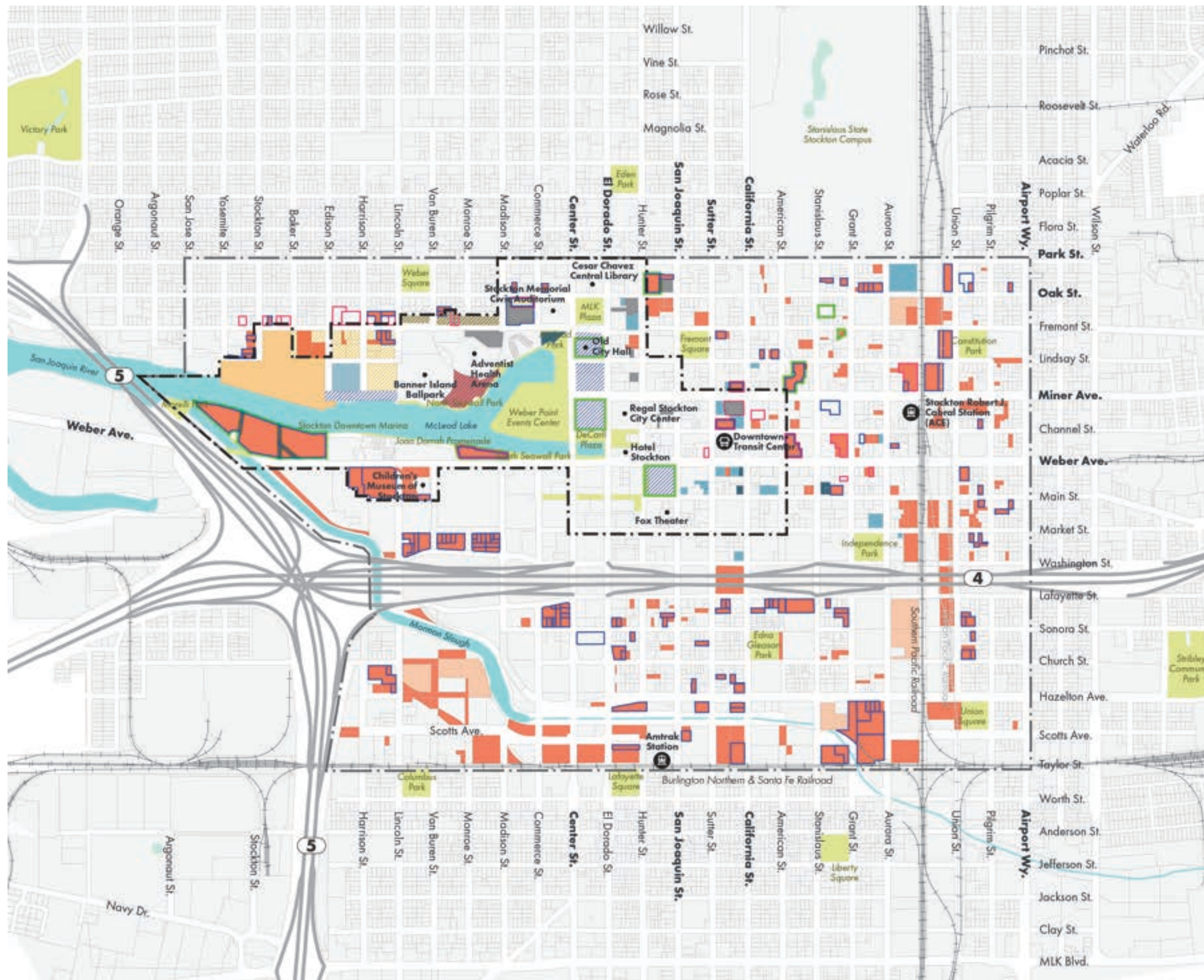
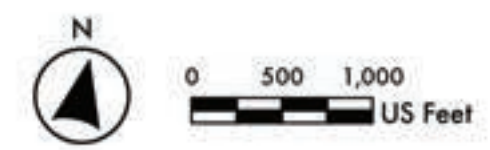


Figure 3.15: Opportunity Sites in the Study Area

- \* $r = (\text{Structure Value} + \text{Land Value}) / \text{Land Value}$
- Vacant Land ( $r = 1.00$ )
  - Relatively Low Value Large Site ( $1.00 < r \leq 2.00$ , Area > 10,000sqft.)
  - Vacant Building
  - Housing Element Site
  - Brownfield Site
  - North Shore Opportunity Sites
  - Publicly-Owned Opportunity Sites
  - Potential Parking Lot
  - Potential Adaptive Reuse Buildings
  - Potential Site with a Planned Project
  - Focus Area Boundary
  - Study Area Boundary



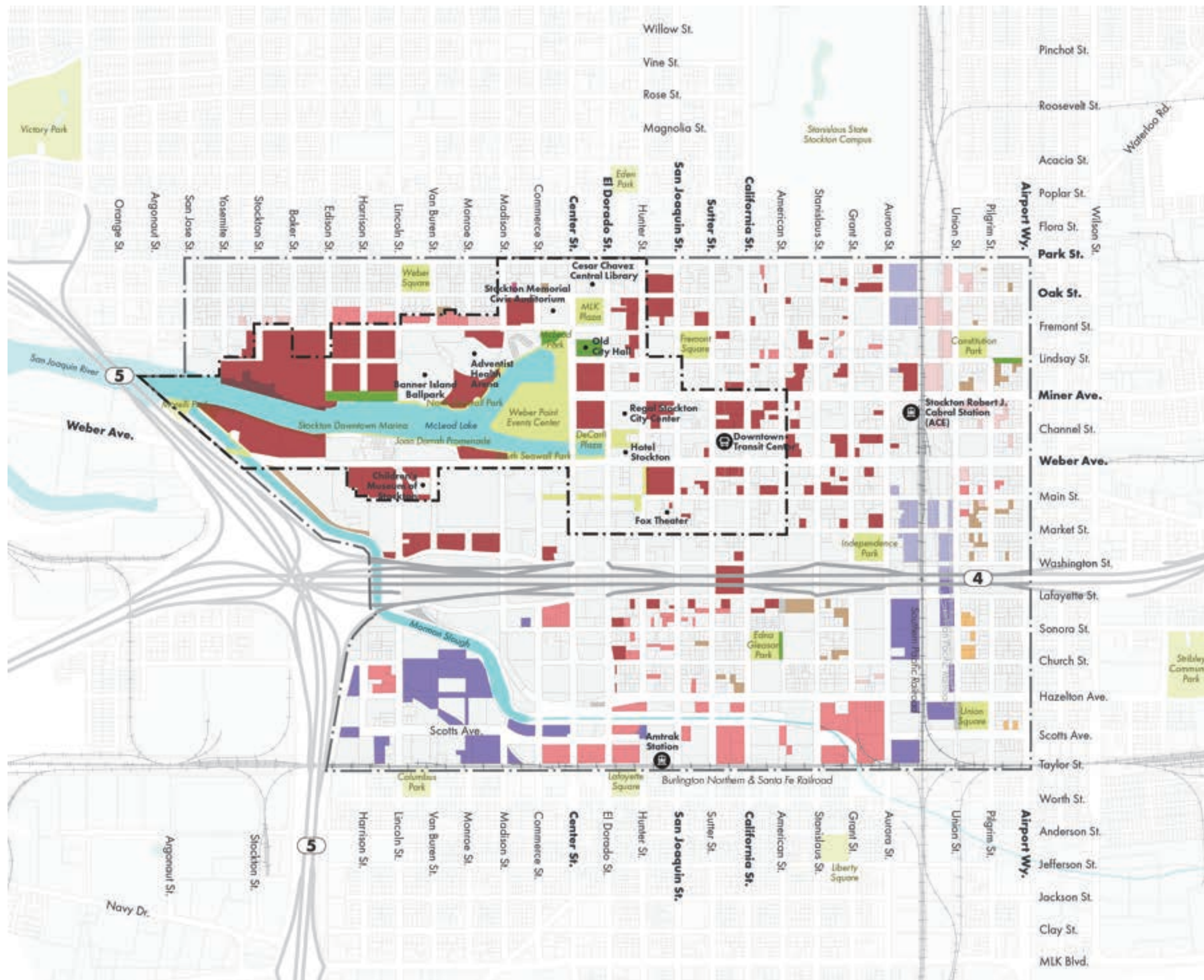
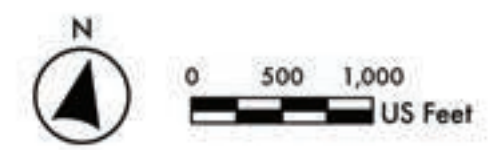


Figure 3.16: Development Potential in the Study Area

- Low Density Residential (RL/P)
- Medium Density Residential (RM/P)
- High Density Residential (RH/P)
- Neighborhood Commercial (CN)
- Office Commercial (CO)
- General Commercial (CG)
- Downtown Commercial (CD)
- Mixed Use (MX)
- Limited Industrial (IL)
- General Industrial (IG)
- Public Facilities (PF)
- Right Of Way (ROW)
- Focus Area Boundary
- Study Area Boundary



## 3.10 Market Assessment

Economic & Planning Systems, Inc. (EPS) completed a market assessment to gauge the performance of the real estate market and trends affecting the drivers of demand Downtown and Citywide, particularly drivers of residential demand, since household growth will be a driver of demand for other uses that will follow. The market assessment is provided as an appendix to the Existing Conditions Report. Key findings are summarized here.

**Residential development is key to revitalizing Downtown.** Residential demand is high and residential development is typically feasible before other uses. New households will then stimulate demand to support other uses. The estimated annual pool of households that would be interested in new market rate Downtown units ranges from 140 to 260 households for owner-occupied units and from 390 to 630 households for renter-occupied units. Projects Downtown will be in competition for those households with other projects citywide, so only a portion of those households will choose Downtown.

A modest amount of **ground floor “amenity” retail** may be supportable in the early stages of Downtown revitalization. As the number of residential units Downtown increases, additional retail spaces for categories such as **groceries and other convenience-oriented purchases** may become supportable. A specialty grocer that can appeal to both Downtown residents and households beyond Downtown could increase the attractiveness of Downtown residential units. The addition of new residential units will directly support increased **eating and drinking space**, with every 100 new market rate units supporting an estimated 300 to 350 square feet. Concentrating bars and restaurants, particularly near other entertainment uses, increases the perception of variety, safety, and vibrancy, which can draw additional patrons from beyond Downtown.

Revitalization of existing Class B and Class C **office space** provides the best opportunity for growing the office-using job base in Downtown. These spaces are often attractive to small local businesses, start-ups, and creative occupations, which can further enhance Downtown as a place for these workers to live. However, renovation costs for these older buildings can be prohibitive, with residential conversion often the most feasible option.

Downtown has seen moderate growth in **industrial employment**, despite loss of manufacturing jobs. Most of the growth has been in Utilities and Construction. These users may be able to support smaller industrial spaces at the fringe of Downtown.

The **hotel** market likely needs additional strengthening to support hotel development Downtown. A smaller, boutique or niche-market hotel may be feasible sooner than a large national brand. The hotel market has been soft for the last few years, locally and nationally, with recent development activity generally limited to limited-service brands in freeway-adjacent locations proximate to new growth areas. As overall hotel demand grows and Downtown becomes a stronger destination, the feasibility of new hotel development Downtown can be expected to improve.

## 3.11 Key Takeaways

- Downtown has a fine-grained mixed-use fabric, but existing land uses often do not align cleanly with zoning.
- Publicly owned land is extensive and strategically located, creating major opportunities for redevelopment, civic activation, and waterfront transformation.
- Downtown is regionally well connected by freeway, rail, and transit. The urban street grid is a great asset for local connectivity but is weakened by rail corridors, wide one-way streets, and freeways.
- Streets generally function well for vehicles; congestion is localized rather than systemwide, with El Dorado Street as the main pressure point. Safety issues are corridor-wide and tied to street design, speeds, freeway ramps, and conflicts near transit hubs.
- The bicycle network is incomplete, transit access is uneven, and one-way streets undermine walkability, safety, and sense of place. Current street improvement projects are focused on walking, biking, and transit safety and comfort.
- Downtown is relatively well served by parks and open spaces today, but there remains a need for greater waterfront access, recreation amenities, and public space activation.
- Water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure is aging and has condition issues that will require investment to serve both existing and future development. Flood hazards will need to be addressed as part of any future development along the north shore.
- Historic resources are a major defining asset; preservation and adaptive reuse can reinforce identity, add housing, and support investment.
- Stockton's cultural diversity and Downtown's cultural venues and events are strengths, but public life is driven more by episodic large events than by regular, everyday activation.
- Schools, libraries, social services, and community organizations are important downtown anchors that support youth, families, small businesses, and vulnerable populations.
- Recent and planned projects show signs of momentum in housing, adaptive reuse, civic investment, and waterfront development. Substantial opportunities exist for additional development in the future, especially around the waterfront and in smaller infill and adaptive reuse in the downtown core.
- Residential development is most likely the engine for driving downtown revitalization. As housing is delivered, the market will grow for amenity and convenience retail, eating and drinking places.



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**STAKEHOLDER  
ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**

## 4. Stakeholder Meetings Summary

### Who Was Interviewed?

City Staff and the Consultant team met with Downtown Stockton stakeholders one-on-one and in small groups over the course of three days, between December 19 and December 23, 2025. Additional interviews here were held remotely between January 22 and February 3, 2026. The people that were interviewed represent a broad cross-section of organizations that collectively shape how Downtown Stockton functions today and how it could evolve in the future. These included representatives of public agencies and civic leadership; downtown management, tourism, and economic development organizations; community-based and social service organizations; developers; and advocates for heritage and culture. The following organizations were represented:

- City of Stockton Mayor Christina Fugazi
- San Joaquin County Supervisor Mario Gardea
- San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG)
- San Joaquin County Regional Transportation District
- San Joaquin Partnership
- Visit Stockton
- Downtown Stockton Alliance
- New San Joaquin CDC
- Main Street Youth and Family Services
- Stockton Community Kitchen
- San Joaquin County Historical Society & Museum
- Stockton Maritime Museum
- LAZ Parking
- Legends Global
- Anthony Barkett (developer)
- Farr Yazdi (developer)
- Pacific Development Group
- Visionary Home Builders

The interviews followed a loose structure. We asked each person what they and their organization do, and about their involvement in downtown Stockton. Then we asked them to share their visions for Downtown, what they see as key issues and challenges, their identification of opportunities or approaches to achieve the vision. We asked everyone to name *one outcome* that the Downtown Vision and Master Plan should achieve. A summary of their responses to these prompts follows.

## What is Your Vision for Downtown Stockton?

The community leaders we met with described a vision for downtown Stockton in the following terms.

People we talked with describe a desire for a “live–work–play” Downtown: not just a daytime civic and employment center but a complete neighborhood. To help accomplish this, Downtown would have more housing, especially market-rate, and more ground-floor retail, restaurants and bars clustered near the Fox Theater and the waterfront. Streets would be designed for pedestrian comfort, with slower traffic, wider sidewalks, and potentially two-way conversions.

Many stakeholders want Downtown to be the place where Stockton’s diverse communities come together. This would include festivals and performances, restaurants and bars, more use of plazas, parks, and streets, and marketplaces.

Downtown would be and would feel active, safe and welcoming. Streets, garages and public spaces would be clean and well-lit. Wayfinding would make it easy and attractive to get around. Unhoused people would continue to receive services and alternatives. Event-goers would have more places to walk, eat and gather, and there would be more people out enjoying activities.

Stakeholders see Stockton’s history and diversity would be clearly represented, with rehabilitated historic buildings, creative reuse of waterfront industrial structures, cultural institutions and public art leveraging Stockton’s significant Filipino, Mexican, Sikh, and Chinese communities, downtown presence of successful businesses, and small-scale individual actions taken by the diverse people that live and invest here.

A vibrant, active waterfront. Stakeholders envision hotels, restaurants, entertainment, event spaces, recreation facilities, and housing (market-rate, not just affordable) along and around the channel. The waterfront is widely seen as the biggest opportunity to change perception, attract visitors and investment, and create a signature identity for Stockton.

Downtown was seen as an important driver of regional economic competitiveness, helping Stockton attract and retain employers and talent, make a strong positive impression on visitors, and support workforce development, education, and youth opportunities.

While large projects matter, many stakeholders emphasized that downtown’s future depends on small-scale developers, entrepreneurs, and community-based organizations, especially people of color.

## Issues and Challenges

Several critical challenges were consistently identified across agencies, developers, businesses, community organizations, and public officials.

The **perception of safety** was named in many interviews as a barrier to downtown Stockton's success. This perception is driven by a visible unhoused population, vacant buildings, and a lack of activity, especially in the evenings. This undermines downtown's ability to function as a district rather than a series of isolated destinations. Many stakeholders emphasized that conditions have improved, but perception lags behind.

Related to this issue is the **absence of activity after business hours**. People reported that Downtown "becomes a ghost town" after 5pm, leaving few if any places for people to gather after events at the Fox Theater, the arena, or other venues. Developers and businesses face a "chicken-and-egg" problem: housing needs active amenities to attract residents, and amenities need residents and foot traffic to survive.

Numerous **barriers to development** were named, including high costs associated with uncertainty around permitting requirements, the length of time permitting takes, infrastructure conditions, the potential need to address asbestos, lead paint and soil contamination, prevailing wage requirements that may negate the value of incentives, parking assessment fees that surprise buyers, and buildings that are effectively unusable due to fire code egress requirements. These costs are combined with limited rents, financing gaps, and insufficient incentives; while some funding tools exist, demand exceeds available resources.

**Aging infrastructure** is a key challenge. Water and sewer lines are poorly documented, and developers may be forced to absorb improvement costs. A large pipe that extends east from the Channel under Channel Street and several Downtown blocks and has historically protected downtown from flooding requires repair. While State grants have been used to address the latter issue, there is a lack of funding tools to systematically upgrade infrastructure.

Another concern was around **vacant and dilapidated buildings**, often owned by absentee or legacy owners that are hard to reach and may have little interest in selling or making improvements. Legacy industrial properties along the Channel may have significant contamination and cleanup needs. The "frozen" nature of redevelopment along the waterfront has stalled the evolution of the waterfront more generally, causing the City to miss opportunities to leverage that asset.

Stakeholders repeatedly identified street design as a barrier to downtown vitality. **One-way, over-scaled corridors** such as El Dorado and Center Streets create unsafe conditions for pedestrians and divide downtown rather than connect it, making it difficult to walk between venues, businesses, housing, and cultural destinations.

**Parking** was seen as a significant barrier to Downtown vitality. While parking exists, much of it is controlled by the County or closed outside business hours, limiting access for evening and weekend users. Other issues include the need for wayfinding for garages, a mismatch between where available parking is and where people want to go, and the way long-term on-street parking limits turnover. Alternatives to driving are constrained by the high cost and long wait times for ridesharing in Stockton and the relatively limited transit service, especially at night.

Several stakeholders were concerned that affordable housing, while needed in the community, does not do a good job of supporting broader goals of Downtown vitality because residents lack disposable income allowing

them to support Downtown businesses. **Market-rate housing** has struggled to be realized because it has lacked parking or come too early in the development cycle.

Most stakeholders saw **events** as a helpful element of Downtown activation, and noted that Downtown has lost the Asparagus Festival and Brewfest in recent years. Public spaces are generally underused, and Weber Point is inaccessible except for paid events.

Inconsistent **coordination among the City, County, regional agencies, school districts, and property owners** has been a barrier for advancing shared projects to support Downtown. There is a desire for the City to take clear leadership, and for there to be better funding tools, especially to address infrastructure needs.

Last but not least, Downtown Stockton is harmed by a lack of **civic confidence**. A “trust deficit” stemming from unfulfilled promises and prior City actions is present among downtown stakeholders. Local residents are often more skeptical than visitors or investors, inured to a longstanding negative narrative that is reinforced by the media and by a lack of visible, tangible wins.

## Opportunities and Ideas

Stakeholders identified a number of improvement opportunities for Downtown Stockton. These, of course, are closely related to the issues and challenges – they point to approaches both broad and specific that should inform Thrive Downtown.

**The waterfront is seen as Stockton’s single greatest untapped asset.** Approaches to activate the waterfront included developing waterfront housing, hotels and entertainment; creating ways for people to engage directly with the water; creating continuous, unfenced access along the waterfront, including Weber Point and future development areas on the North Shore; improving connections across the channel; developing City-owned land adjacent to the Arena and activating the ground floor of the Arena Garage; and creatively repurposing legacy industrial buildings on the north shore. Stakeholders pointed to San Antonio Riverwalk, Oklahoma City’s recent downtown waterway enhancements, and the Sacramento Railyards as good precedents.

Many stakeholders believe downtown is safer than perceived, but acknowledge visible issues undermine confidence. The City should **create an environment that feels safe** by expanding clean-and-safe programs, lighting, cameras, and ambassadors; continue to assist the unhoused population through expanded services, safe camping, training and capacity-building programs; incentivize building rehabilitation (the City’s façade improvement programs have been a great success!); and most importantly, work to generate more activity at night.

Housing is seen as the foundation for downtown vitality. Stakeholders recognized the need for affordable housing, but advocated especially for the City to **focus on attracting market-rate and mixed-income housing**, whose residents can better support restaurants and retail. Reuse of high-quality historic buildings is a prime opportunity for housing.

At the same time, stakeholders saw an opportunity to make Downtown function successfully for **entertainment and nightlife**. This might be done by working to cluster restaurants, bars and music venues, such as near the Fox Theatre and in the North Shore; to support late-night businesses with shared security and marketing, and to use festivals and “festival streets” to build momentum. Events were also seen as a helpful catalyst. Downtown spaces like DeCarli and Janet Leigh Plazas should be programmed, and the City should ease permitting and provide logistical support.

It is critical for the City to **reduce barriers to development**. The City could use an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD) and leverage State economic development and affordable housing grants to finance upgrades to water, sewer, stormwater and telecommunications infrastructure. The EPA’s brownfields program is a critical resource for assessment and cleanup of potentially contaminated sites. The City should evaluate ways to make its fire code and parking requirements less of a barrier to developing old buildings, and provide clear pathways for historic rehabs, change of use, and utility connections.

Stakeholders felt the City should work to facilitate **investment by small-scale entrepreneurs** Downtown, fast-tracking these projects. These projects can also tap into such tools as historic and New Markets tax credits and community investment models like “Buy Back the Block.”

Stockton should **leverage Downtown’s historic buildings**, facilitating their rehabilitation through the use of historic tax credits, landmarking key buildings such as City Hall and the Civic Auditorium, opting into the Mills Act to incentivize private historic preservation, and repositioning historic buildings for cultural, civic, and educational use.

The City should redesign downtown streets to **prioritize people over cars**. Stakeholders consistently pointed to El Dorado and Center Streets—and secondarily Main, Weber, Miner, and Fremont—as places where change would have an outsized impact.

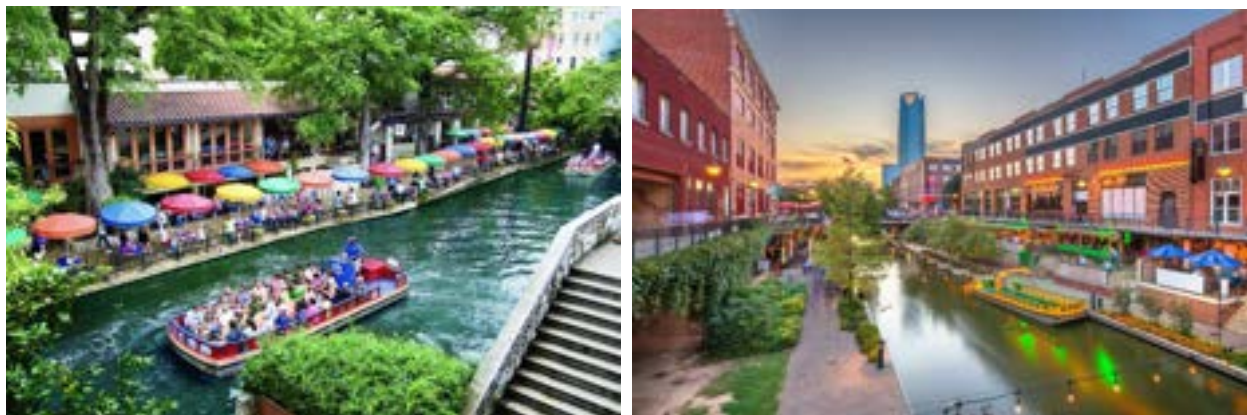
Stakeholders said that successful change depends on **coordination and credibility**. City, County, regional agencies, school districts, and major landowners need to work toward a shared vision. This effort needs to clearly signal that downtown is a priority and that investment will be supported.

And many stakeholders reflected that there needs to be a focus on **incremental, visible “wins,”** to rebuild trust and keep momentum. Improvements like lighting, bollards, and temporary street closures, potted plants and façade improvements are important in the near term and ongoing.

## Learning from Other Places

### Waterfront Revitalization

Stakeholders pointed to the role that waterfront revitalization has played in San Antonio (the Riverwalk), Chicago, and more recently in Oklahoma City. Those cities leveraged small waterways to create destinations for eating, drinking, walking, and enjoying a sense of place.



*San Antonio Riverwalk (L), Oklahoma City Riverwalk (R)*

## Industrial Heritage

Sacramento was raised as a good example for its successful revitalization of old industrial buildings with retail, restaurants, and housing (the Ice Blocks development in Midtown, Sacramento was called out) and for the Railyards redevelopment beginning to take shape on fallow land north of Downtown.



*Ice Blocks, Midtown, Sacramento*

## Public Markets

One stakeholder is seeking to create a public market in Downtown Stockton, and pointed to good examples from Atlanta, where a market was created in an old mill building, and Redding, where a public market has been developed from the ground up, in tandem with housing.



*Public Market, Atlanta (L), Redding Market (R)*

## Cultural Mix + Entrepreneurship

Stakeholders pointed to Stockton's great cultural diversity as a strength. San Francisco's Mission District was cited as a place that has successfully drawn on its diverse cultural mix to become incredibly vibrant while holding onto its diversity. La Cocina, a San Francisco business incubator, was the model for the Stockton Community Kitchen.



*La Cocina Incubator, San Francisco*

## Downtown Turnarounds

Stakeholders pointed to Cincinnati, Ohio; Manchester, New Hampshire; and, closer to home, Lodi, where downtown vitality has been achieved because community leaders pulled together and were able to direct public and private resources and deliver change.



*Downtown Lodi (L), Downtown Manchester, New Hampshire (R)*

## Relevant Programs and Funding Resources

Some key programs and funding resources that the City, the Downtown Stockton Alliance, community groups and developers are or could be using, are summarized here.

- The City of Stockton has a façade loan program (at \$25,000 total) using City funds, and has managed a grant program funded by ARPA funds that has resulted in improvements to 83 business facades around the City, mainly downtown.
- The City’s Parking Assessment District charges a fee to properties within its boundaries to help repay the loan used to build public parking Downtown.
- The City received grants from the EPA’s Brownfields program to do areawide planning for the North Shore, and to clean up a 9-acre, vacant City-owned site on the South Shore, enabling development to follow.
- The State’s Affordable Housing Sustainable Communities (AHSC) program has been a funding source for infrastructure improvements completed both by the City of Stockton (Miner Street) and private developers (for Grand View Village.)
- SJCOG has established a housing revolving loan fund, currently seeded at \$13 million with contributions from the State and a private philanthropy. So far the fund has supported two affordable housing projects Downtown.
- The City got a grant from the State of California’s Strong Communities program (Measure M) for a new library/community center in northeast Stockton.
- As a property-based business improvement district (PBID), the Downtown Stockton Alliance is funded by a property surtax charged to owners within its district boundaries. The DSA is transitioning to a become a “community improvement district,” which will allow it to provide all of its services (marketing, the Clean and Safe program, and others) to all parts of its district.
- San Joaquin CDC received a \$20,000 grant from the New Growth Innovation Network to do engagement and capacity-building Downtown.
- San Joaquin Partnership is leveraging the State’s California Jobs First initiative to incentivize investment by advanced manufacturing, ag tech, and transportation industries.

Funding strategies that stakeholders identified as having potential included:

- Federal Historic tax credits have the potential to be key pieces in the funding puzzle for rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings.
- New Markets tax credits are a potential source for building reinvestment Downtown;
- California’s Mills Act allows property owners to receive a tax deduction for investing in historic buildings. The City would need to adopt its own legislation to enable this.
- Tax increment financing (TIF), within a community benefit or enhanced infrastructure financing district;
- Waiver or deferral of property tax increases that would accrue from building improvements;
- Downpayment assistance to help put homeownership within reach for owner-occupants;
- New San Joaquin CDC is exploring the “Buy Back the Block” program, an investment fund that allows small-dollar investors to pool resources to buy real estate.
- New San Joaquin CDC is also looking at the New Growth Innovation Network’s \$750,000 predevelopment fund.
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation may have grant funding relevant for Downtown Stockton pursuits.
- A bill in the California State Legislature sponsored by Assembly Member Haney would focus on Downtown revitalization.
- A major state investment in the form of a university campus (Cal State, Cal Poly, or UC) could be a major boost for Downtown.

## If There Could be One Outcome from Our Plan, What Would It Be?

From our conversations with stakeholders, the single outcome people most want to see from a Downtown Stockton master plan is a **vibrant, safe and active downtown**. Individual elements called out included activating the waterfront, changing the perception of safety, creating reasons to be downtown at night, building a critical mass of housing, prioritizing small-scale downtown development and local entrepreneurs, and restoring civic pride.



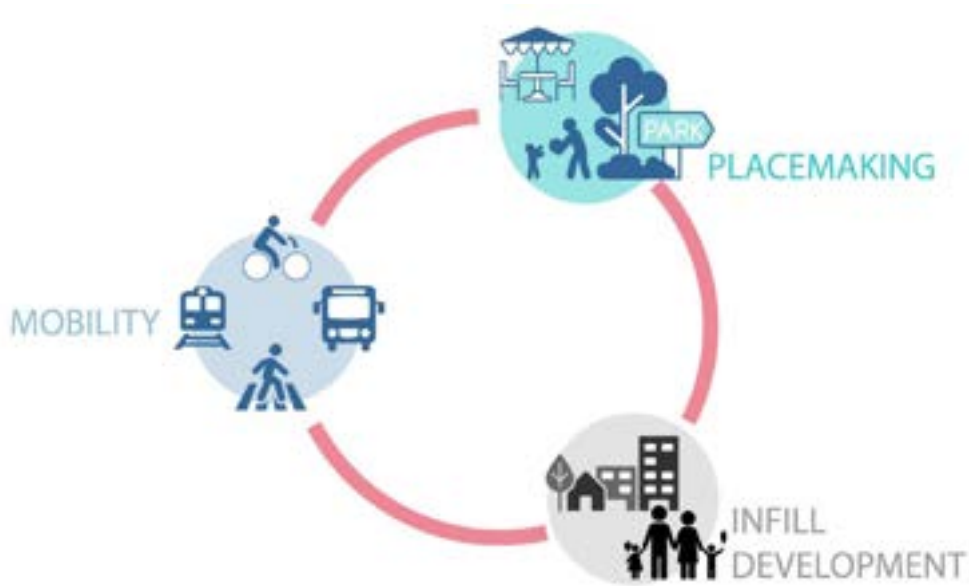
05

COMMUNITY DESIGN  
FRAMEWORK AND  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
CHANGE

## 5. Opportunities for Change

Downtown Stockton’s existing conditions were thoroughly analyzed through a combination of site visits, GIS analysis, and review of sources including zoning and land use patterns, transportation conditions, historic resources, market trends, and recent and planned development activity. Community priorities were incorporated through prior engagement materials and stakeholder interviews to ground the analysis in local understanding of need. Together, these inputs directly shape the community design framework presented here.

The opportunities for the Study Area highlight an approach to transition from a primarily pass-through downtown toward a connected, mixed-use destination anchored by its waterfront, historic landmarks, and transit assets. New development, adaptively reused buildings, and multimodal corridors collectively position Downtown Stockton to accommodate new housing, employment, active ground floors and public life while strengthening connectivity. Together, these opportunities suggest a coordinated strategy to integrate Infill development, placemaking and mobility.



*Figure 5.1: Opportunities Framework*

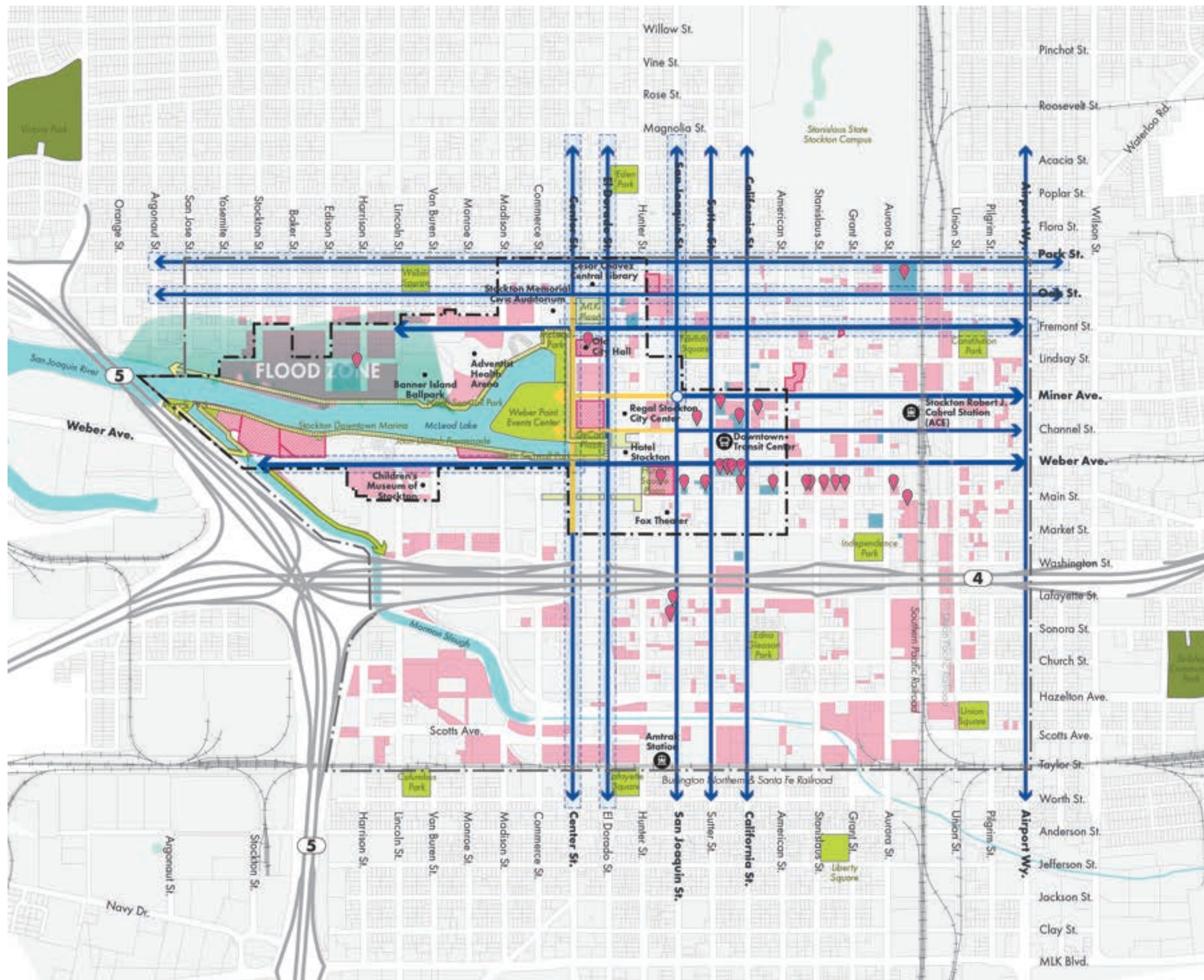


Figure 5.2: Opportunities for Change in the Study Area

- Street & Circulation**
  - Multi-model Opportunity Streets
  - Pedestrian & Bike Opportunity
  - Streets with Planned Improvements
- Parks & Open Spaces**
  - Community Parks
  - Neighborhood Parks
  - Pocket Parks
  - Waterfront Trail Opportunity
  - Planned Waterfront Trail
- Development Potential & Historic Resources Overlay**
  - Development Opportunity Sites
  - Opportunity Sites with Planned Projects
  - Adaptive Reuse Opportunity Buildings
  - Potential Site or Building with Historic Value
- Boundaries**
  - Focus Area Boundary
  - Study Area Boundary

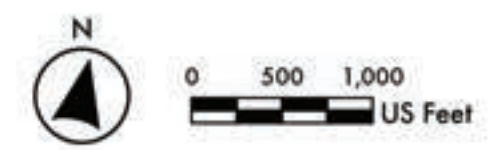
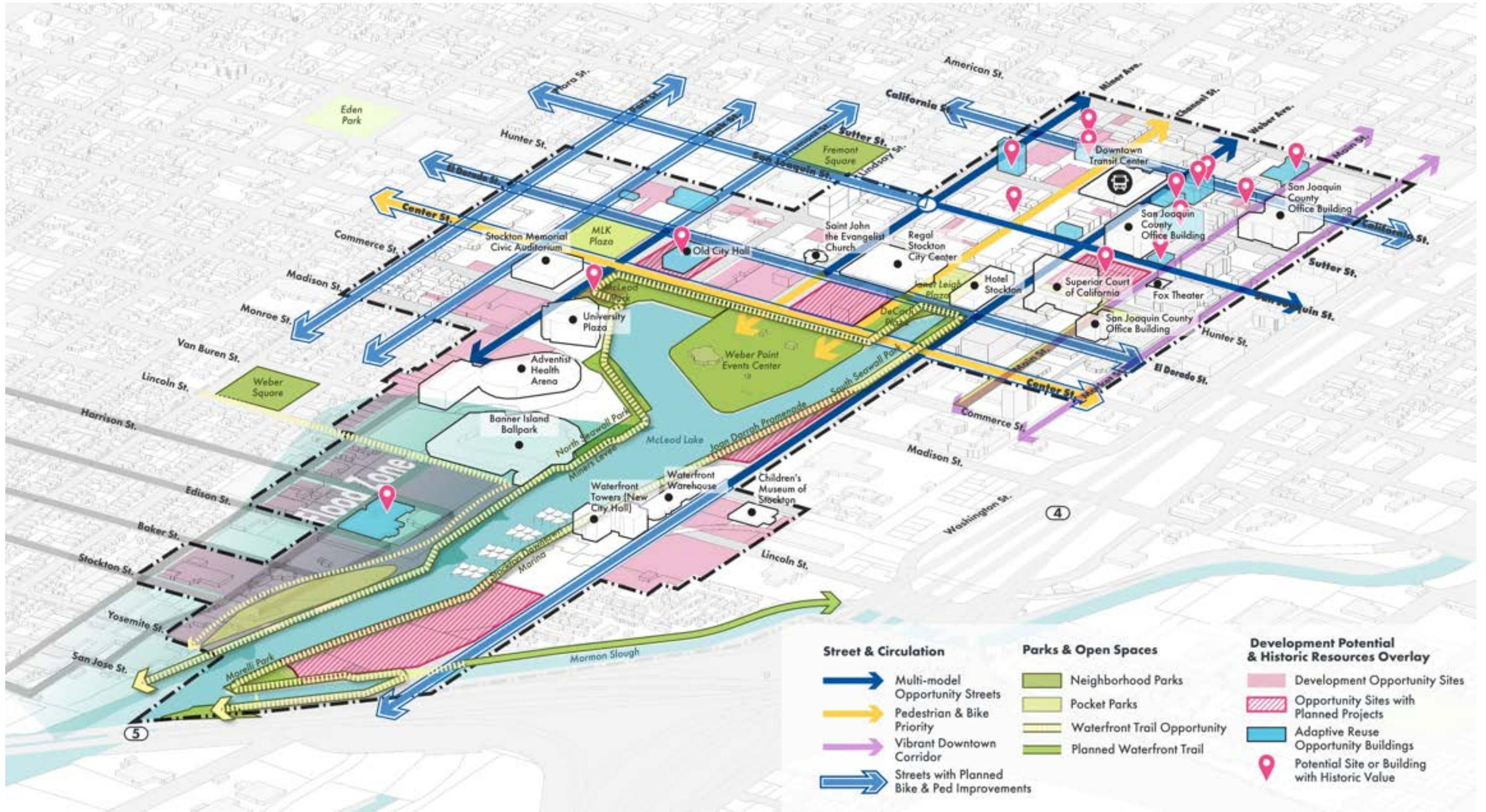


Figure 5.3: Opportunities for Change in the Focus Area



## 5.1 Opportunities

### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- **Transit-oriented development nodes:** Opportunity sites cluster near the Downtown Transit Center and along major corridors, supporting higher intensity development and ridership growth.
- **Adaptive reuse in the downtown core:** Numerous historic resources with reuse opportunities (around the Civic Center, transit center, and historic commercial blocks) support housing, creative office, and entertainment uses without large-scale demolition.
- **Industrial edge transition areas:** Large parcels along the North shore, the rail corridor and Mormon Slough present long-term redevelopment potential.

### MOBILITY OPPORTUNITIES

- **Multimodal Network:** A dense grid of street corridors (e.g., Weber Ave, Miner Ave, Center St, El Dorado St) can function as multimodal streets strengthening connections to major public transport stations and acting as primary walking, biking, and transit spines, improving internal connectivity and reducing auto dependence.
- **Pedestrian & bicycle network:** Planned bike/ped improvements provide opportunity to connect the waterfront and the downtown core, enabling a bike-ped friendly thus people centric downtown core.

### PLACEMAKING OPPORTUNITIES

- **Waterfront activation potential:** Large development opportunity sites cluster around McLeod Lake, creating strong potential for waterfront destinations, public spaces, promenades and event-supporting uses, to add vibrancy in the downtown.
- **Parks and open space system:** Existing parks, pocket parks, and waterfront trail create opportunities to link recreation areas into a cohesive green network and improve downtown's quality of life.
- **Historic character as placemaking asset:** Concentrations of historic buildings in the core can strengthen the identity of Downtown Stockton while guiding infill development with opportunities of adaptive reuse.

