

3 Land Use

The Land Use Element is the cornerstone of the General Plan and establishes Piedmont’s fundamental goals for the use of public and private property. The Element includes the City’s official Land Use Diagram—a map which shows the types of land uses envisioned for the city over the coming years. It also includes policies to conserve Piedmont’s neighborhoods, guide the development of vacant lots, preserve the city’s open spaces, and avoid conflicts between adjacent uses.

Because Piedmont’s land use pattern is well-established, the focus of the Land Use Element is on preserving the stability and integrity of the city’s residential areas. The Element anticipates a limited amount of change, primarily on commercial land and publicly-owned sites. Policies and actions to guide that change are included in this chapter. Policies in the Land Use Element are complemented by those in other elements of the plan, ensuring that choices and priorities are balanced.

The requirements for the Land Use Element are spelled out in Government Code Section 63502(a). By law, the Element must designate the general distribution, location, and extent of land used for housing, business, industry, open space, recreational facilities, education, public buildings and lands, mineral extraction, and waste disposal. It must also contain standards for population density and building intensity. These standards must be coordinated with plans for transportation and infrastructure, and must also reflect environmental constraints such as steep slopes or unstable soils.

The Element is organized into three major sections. The first part includes a profile of existing land uses in Piedmont. The second part presents the Land Use Diagram, including definitions of the city’s land use categories. The final part contains goals, policies, and actions on an array of land use topics, including:

- Residential character
- Commercial and mixed uses
- Public, institutional, and open space uses
- Special sites
- Coordination with Oakland
- Planning and building administration

Table 3.1:
Existing Land Uses, 2008

	Acres	Percent of Total
Single Family Residential	772.4	68.1%
Multi-Family Residential	3.7	0.3%
Commercial (a)	3.7	0.3%
Parks (b)	43.6	3.8%
Other Open Space (c)	25.0	2.2%
Civic (d)	8.6	0.8%
Public Schools	25.5	2.2%
Religious	6.8	0.6%
Vacant (e)	21.6	1.9%
Streets	223.0	19.7%
TOTAL	933.2	100.0%

Source: City of Piedmont, 2008

Notes:

- (a) Excludes homes that are zoned commercially but used residentially.
- (b) Includes Davies Tennis Stadium and a portion of the Oakland Rose Garden
- (c) Includes EBMUD Reservoir, Tyson Lake, parts of Mountain View Cemetery
- (d) City Hall, Corp Yard, Veterans Bldg, pump stations, and transmission lines
- (e) Includes vacant PG&E building

EXISTING LAND USES

Table 3.1 indicates existing land uses in the City of Piedmont. Figure 3.1 shows this information graphically.

Piedmont is a primarily single family residential community. When streets are factored out, residential uses make up 86 percent of the city’s land area. The remaining 14 percent consists primarily of schools, civic buildings, and open space. Commercial uses comprise less than one-third of one percent of Piedmont’s land area and there are no industrial uses.

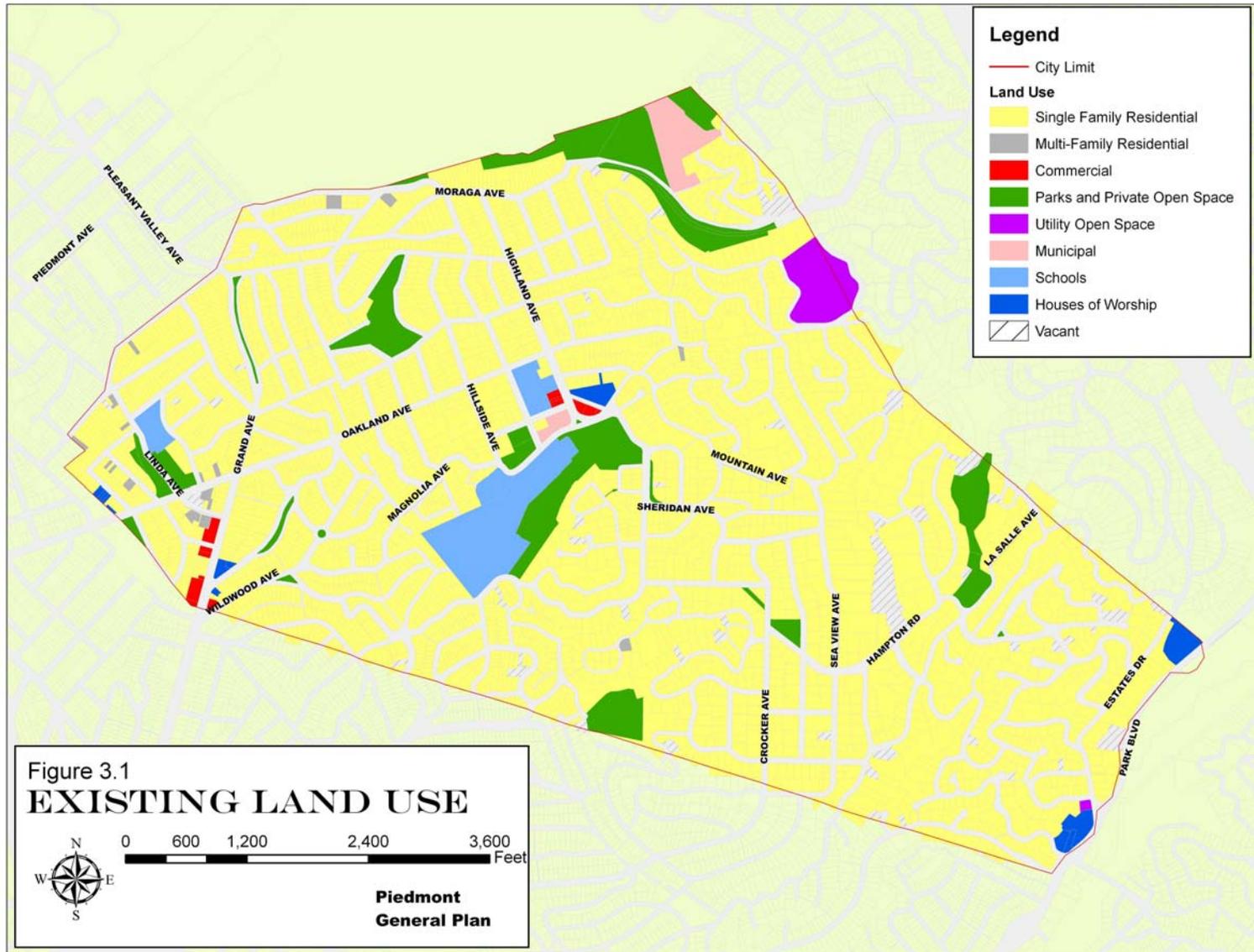
The greatest concentration of non-residential uses is in the Civic Center area, where a mix of commercial, public, open space, religious, and residential uses is present. The only other area with a concentration of non-residential uses is along Grand Avenue, extending west to Beach School, Linda Park, and the former PG&E substation. This is also where most of the city’s multi-family housing is located. Open space uses are scattered around the city, with the highest acreage in Moraga Canyon.

Residential Uses

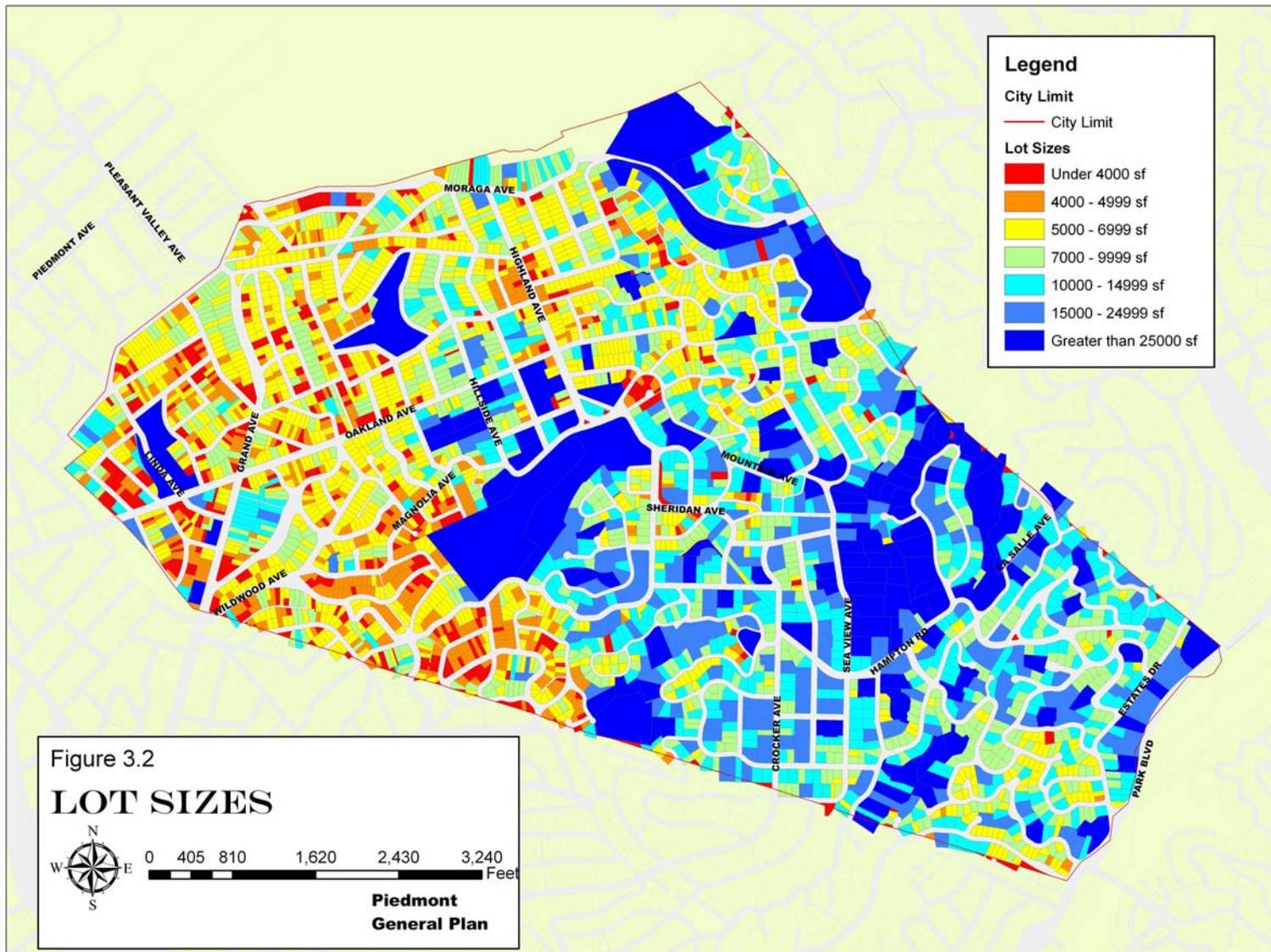
While the popular image of Piedmont is one of large homes on large lots, the City is relatively dense compared to many Bay Area suburbs. Much of Piedmont was developed during the streetcar era, a time when neighborhoods were designed for walkability rather than auto convenience. Parts of the city are developed on a rectangular street grid, with lots more typical of a mature urban neighborhood than a post-war suburb. The spacing and orientation of homes and lots creates a pedestrian-friendly feel that is distinct from the newer cities and towns of the East Bay. This is part of the city’s charm and is an important part of what makes Piedmont so attractive.

Figure 3.2 shows the range of lot sizes in Piedmont. About two-thirds of the lots in the City, comprising almost half of Piedmont’s land area, are between 4,000 and 10,000 square feet. This equates to a density of about five to 10 housing units per net acre. Nearly 10 percent of the city’s lots are less than 4,000 square feet, with some blocks west of Grand Avenue approaching densities of 20 units per acre.

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Comparing Densities

While the popular image of Piedmont is one of large homes on large lots, the City's density is comparable to Oakland; twice that of Walnut Creek and Hayward; and five times greater than Orinda.

City	Population per Sq. Mile
Berkeley	9,646
Albany	9,415
Oakland	7,062
Alameda	6,547
Piedmont	6,265
San Leandro	5,965
Walnut Creek	3,224
Pleasanton	3,049
Hayward	3,169
Fremont	2,618
Danville	2,313
Moraga	1,757
Lafayette	1,629
Orinda	1,451
Alamo	760

Source: City-Data.com, 2008

In general, Piedmont's higher elevations are less dense than its lower elevations. This contributes to the perception that Piedmont is divided into "upper" and "lower" sections, with the dividing line roughly formed by Highland Avenue. Indeed, the areas around Glen Alpine Road, Sotelo Avenue, and Sea View Avenue are substantially less dense than the rest of the city, with most lots exceeding 20,000 square feet and densities around 1-2 units per acre.

Table 3.2 shows the number of lots in the city broken down by size. There are over 4,000 lots in Piedmont, ranging in size from a mere four square feet to 519,000 square feet. The median lot size in the city is 6,350 square feet. Because the Piedmont zoning ordinance establishes a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet, approximately 78 percent of the lots in Piedmont are technically considered "non-conforming" because they are smaller than this threshold.

Table 3.2: Lot Sizes in Piedmont, 2007 (*)

Lot Area	Number of Lots	Percent of Total	Total acres	Percent of total
Smaller than 1,000	87	2.2%	0.4	0.1%
1,001 to 2,500 SF	49	1.2%	2.2	0.3%
2,501 to 4,000 SF	388	9.7%	31.8	4.0%
4,001 to 5,000 SF	679	16.9%	69.9	8.8%
5,001 to 6,000 SF	600	14.9%	76.1	9.6%
6,001 to 7,000 SF	592	14.7%	88.2	11.1%
7,001 to 8,000 SF	342	8.5%	58.9	7.4%
8,001 to 9,000 SF	220	5.5%	43	5.4%
9,001 to 10,000 SF	179	4.5%	39	4.9%
<i>Total smaller than 10K</i>	<i>3,136</i>	<i>78.1%</i>	<i>409.5</i>	<i>51.8%</i>
10,001 to 12,500	354	8.8%	90.4	11.4%
12,501 to 15,000	181	4.5%	57.2	7.2%
15,001 to 17,500	92	2.3%	34.2	4.3%
17,501 to 20,000	60	1.5%	26.2	3.3%
20,001 to 25,000	82	2.0%	41.2	5.2%
25,001 to 43,560	80	2.0%	60.6	7.7%
Greater than 43,560	31	0.8%	71.8	9.1%
<i>Total larger than 10K</i>	<i>880</i>	<i>21.9%</i>	<i>381.6</i>	<i>48.2%</i>
GRAND TOTAL	4,016	100.0%	791.1	100.0%

Source: Alameda County Assessor's Records, 2006. City of Piedmont, 2007

(*) Excludes Piedmont Unified School District and most properties owned by City of Piedmont

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Commercial uses represent less than three-tenths of one percent of the city's land area.

Most of the city's lots—about 3,780 out of the 4,106 total—contain one single family home each. About 100 lots include a legal second unit. Only 21 lots are developed with multi-family housing. Some of the multi-family units are in structures that were built as single family homes and subsequently subdivided; others are in structures built as apartments. The City also contains several lots that contain two detached single family homes, each of roughly equal size.

Commercial Uses

Commercial uses in Piedmont are clustered in two locations:

- The Civic Center area contains a church, three banks, a gas station, a small grocery store, and an office building occupied by real estate and professional offices.
- The Grand Avenue area is the northern tip of a neighborhood shopping district that is primarily located in Oakland. Commercial uses in Piedmont include a gas station, a hardware store/ garden center, a bath products shop, and three small office buildings with multiple tenants, including medical, legal, and financial offices, a bank, aerobics and ballet studios, and a tutoring center.

There are currently five single family homes in the commercially zoned area along Grand Avenue. There are also two housing units above the retail use at 1235 Grand Avenue—the only “mixed use” development in Piedmont.

Park and Open Space Uses

Piedmont contains about 80 acres of park and open space land, representing about 7 percent of the city's area. The acreage includes 50 acres of parks and 30 acres of “functional” open space associated with Mountain View Cemetery, Tyson Lake, landscaped traffic islands, and the EBMUD Reservoir on Blair Avenue. Additional analysis of the City's parks and open spaces is provided in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element.

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Piedmont Community Church

Civic, Educational, and Religious Uses

Civic, educational and religious uses in Piedmont comprise about 40 acres, or 4 percent of the city. Most of this acreage is associated with public schools, including Piedmont High School (and Millennium High), Piedmont Middle School, and three elementary schools (Beach, Havens, and Wildwood). Other civic uses include City Hall and the Veterans Memorial Building, the Corporation Yard on Moraga Avenue, and an EBMUD pump station on Grand Avenue.

There are three churches and one synagogue in the city. Two of the churches, both located on Park Boulevard, have affiliated parochial schools.

Vacant Land

There are approximately 70 privately-owned vacant lots in Piedmont, totaling 21 acres. There is also one vacant building—a former PG&E substation on 0.4 acres located at Linda Avenue near the Oakland Avenue bridge.

Many of the vacant lots in Piedmont are unlikely to be developed in the foreseeable future. Most are owned by adjacent homeowners (i.e., “double lots”) and are actively used as landscaped backyards, side yards, or gardens. Some include accessory uses such as pools. Others are very steep, and would require a significant amount of grading and excavation for new construction. Some are landlocked, and would require access easements or lot line adjustments. A majority are considered non-conforming under the Piedmont zoning ordinance, either because they are below the minimum lot size or have inadequate street frontage.

Conversely, a few of the vacant lots are large enough to be subdivided. The largest vacant properties are located in the area between Glen Alpine Road and Sea View Avenue, north of the Hampton/ St. James intersection. Access, steep terrain, and irregular boundaries present constraints to development in this area, however.

An application for redevelopment of the PG&E property as a 7-unit townhome development is pending. The existing structure is slated for demolition as part of the project.

Piedmont or Oakland?



Virtually the entire eastern and southern boundary of Piedmont consists of lots that are split by the Oakland-Piedmont city limit line. There are 133 split lots in total, including 51 lots where the city limit line runs through the house itself. Another 33 lots have a house in Oakland and a yard in Piedmont, while 44 lots have a house in Piedmont and a yard in Oakland. Five of the split lots are vacant.

Collecting taxes and providing services to these lots has been an issue since Piedmont's incorporation in 1907. Currently, taxes are pro-rated based on the percentage of lot and structure value in each city.

Beyond the Piedmont City Limits

Conditions in Piedmont are influenced by what happens just across the border in Oakland. In some cases, there are dramatic changes in land use and building type immediately beyond the city limits. This is most apparent on the western edges of the city where low-density single family homes transition immediately to multi-story apartment complexes in the Rose Garden neighborhood. On Kingston Avenue, for example, the Piedmont side of the street is zoned for single family homes of about four units per acre, while the Oakland side of the street is zoned to allow apartments of roughly 100 units per acre.

On the other hand, the transition along much of the Piedmont-Oakland border is seamless. Low density neighborhoods in Piedmont are similar in scale and character to Crocker Highlands and Montclair. Zoning regulations in these Oakland neighborhoods allow smaller lots than are permitted in Piedmont, but the overall look and feel of development is comparable.

Over the next 20 years, infill development is very likely to occur on Oakland properties on or near the Piedmont border. This is particularly true below Grand Avenue, along streets such as Monte Vista, Harrison, and Lower Oakland Avenue, where multi-family zoning prevails. Coordination with Oakland will be essential to reconcile permitting and environmental review issues, and to address broader concerns regarding aesthetics, building height and mass, traffic, parking, infrastructure, services, and land use compatibility.

More far-reaching impacts could occur as development takes place in other parts of Oakland, particularly Downtown, Broadway (Auto Row), and the Telegraph and MacArthur corridors. Thousands of new residential units are planned in these areas during the coming years, along with new offices, entertainment venues, shopping areas, and institutional uses. The City will monitor Oakland's major projects closely, providing comments on key environmental documents and participating in the approval and entitlement processes for projects which could affect Piedmont residents.

“The City of Piedmont desires to permit construction of new homes and reasonable residential expansions to adapt older homes to modern lifestyles, while at the same time preserving those elements which make Piedmont a desirable place to live: visual open space, bounteous trees and landscaping, and residential privacy and tranquility.”

- Piedmont Municipal Code, Section 17.22.1

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Land Use Pattern

Piedmont’s land use pattern will remain essentially unchanged over the lifetime of this plan. As noted in Chapter 2, the number of households and jobs is projected to increase by only about 1 percent between 2010 and 2030. Future development will reinforce existing patterns, and the city will remain almost entirely residential.

Between 2010 and 2025, the city’s remaining buildable lots are projected to develop incrementally with single family residences, much as they have for the past 30 years. The pace of development is expected to remain slow, with an average of two homes added each year. Given the environmental constraints associated with most of the city’s vacant lots and the sensitivity to new construction in established neighborhoods, each new home will receive close attention as it proceeds through the planning and design review processes.

As in the past, most future construction in the city will consist of improvements to existing homes. Piedmont residents spend tens of millions of dollars each year on additions and major remodels. The City maintains design guidelines to ensure that these improvements maintain neighborhood character and preserve architectural integrity. There are also zoning requirements for setbacks, lot coverage, hardscape surface coverage, building height, and floor area ratio which effectively limit the square footage that may be constructed on each site. The City further limits home expansions through parking requirements related to the number of bedrooms.

One objective of the city’s zoning standards is to discourage “teardowns”—that is, the replacement of small older homes with large, modern homes. The city has worked instead to preserve the diversity of its housing stock and retain the scale of existing construction. Piedmont’s older homes are part of the city’s cultural heritage, and their conservation is an important public goal. The City strongly supports the improvement of all homes, regardless of size, however. Enhancements are necessary to upgrade aging or outdated building components, and respond to housing market trends.

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Most construction in Piedmont consists of home improvement projects rather than new residences. In 2007, the City issued permits for \$31.9 million worth of improvements.

Very modest increases in density may take place in the future due to the addition of second units to some Piedmont homes. A large number of the city's homes are ideally configured for second units, with multi-level living areas, multiple entrances, second kitchens, detached studios or guest cottages, and so on. Piedmont also has many "empty nester" households who may wish to downsize without leaving the city. The rental income from a second unit can be helpful for retirees, and having someone else in the house may bring real benefits to frail elderly residents living alone. At the same time, there is a need for rental units in the city for college-age students, young professionals, and other moderate income workers. Given the lack of land available for multi-family housing, second units can provide a "win-win" solution.

There are three areas in Piedmont where more substantial changes may take place. These are highlighted below.

Civic Center

The Piedmont Civic Center includes the four blocks bounded by Highland, Magnolia, Hillside, and Oakland Avenues and their immediate environs. A Master Plan was prepared in 2007-2008 to strengthen this area's role as a community gathering place and identify opportunities for new recreational and civic amenities for Piedmont residents (see text box on facing page). At the time of adoption of this General Plan in April 2009, the Civic Center Master Plan remains a working draft and has not been formally adopted.

Most of the changes planned for the Civic Center are on the block bounded by Bonita, Vista, Hillside, and Magnolia. Proposed changes include renovation of the Recreation Center, a new swim/fitness center, and a new pool and pool deck area. Illustrative plans for the block also include a new 120-space parking garage with rooftop tennis courts, although alternatives to the parking structure are being considered. At this point in time, additional commercial or residential uses are not envisioned in the Civic Center. Although new public buildings may include concession space for a small café or other vendors, the primary activities will be recreational and civic.

Other proposed changes to the Civic Center include the closure of Bonita Avenue and the development of a public plaza in its place, the renovation or replacement of 801 Magnolia (the former Christian Scientist Church) with a new civic use (to be determined), and a variety of circulation changes including a traffic roundabout at Highland and Magnolia. In addition, Havens Elementary School is scheduled for replacement as part of the Measure E seismic upgrade program. A new two-story school building is planned, along with new public open space.

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The 2008 Civic Center Master Plan



The Civic Center Master Plan (CCMP) was prepared to address the long-term need for new recreational, social, and cultural facilities in Central Piedmont. The Civic Center area already supports municipal and educational facilities, including City Hall, and Piedmont High School and Middle School. The CCMP complements these uses with new activities, while at the same time improving recreational space, applying consistent design principles, and building pedestrian linkages through the area.

The planning process included a series of community workshops, engaging Piedmont residents in visioning and design. Participants' ideas were refined and tested, and ultimately combined into a preferred alternative for the area. A scale model of the area was built, and color renderings of the proposed improvements were prepared. Detailed traffic and parking studies were conducted to address circulation and traffic safety in the area.

At the heart of the CCMP are a series of capital improvement projects, including a new swimming pool complex, a 22,000 square foot swim and fitness club, a remodeled recreation center, a new or remodeled community building at 801 Magnolia Avenue, and a reconstructed tennis court atop a two-level sub-surface parking structure.

The cost of these improvements has been estimated at \$35-\$50 million, excluding some of the roadway changes. Because a funding source has not been identified, the Plan is likely to be implemented in phases. Environmental review will be required for all CCMP projects as they move forward, and further refinements are likely.

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Upper Moraga Canyon includes some of the largest open spaces in Piedmont.

Moraga Canyon/ Piedmont Reservoir

Upper Moraga Canyon includes some of the largest open spaces in Piedmont, including Blair Park, Piedmont Reservoir, and a portion of Mountain View Cemetery. Some long-term change in this area is likely, although open space will remain the primary use.

Blair Park occupies a narrow swath of land along the south side of Moraga Avenue. The 8-acre site has minimal improvements and is a popular dog walking spot. As noted in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element of this plan, the possibility of developing a multi-use athletic field in the park is being explored. This General Plan does not change the City's policy toward Blair Park, except to eliminate references in the prior General Plan to the development of housing or a corporation yard on the site. An amendment to the Plan would be required for any use not ordinarily allowed on land designated for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (for example, public facilities or residential).

Just above Blair Park, the Piedmont Reservoir site occupies more than nine acres straddling the Oakland-Piedmont border (8.3 acres of the site is in Piedmont). The site, which is owned by East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), contains a 22.8 million gallon water storage tank that provided water for Piedmont from 1905 to 2003. The facility was decommissioned and drained in 2003 as part of EBMUD's facility modernization program, and Piedmont's water now comes from other large tanks in the Oakland Hills. EBMUD will retain a portion of the site to develop a new 4.1 million gallon tank and pressure regulator, but most of the site will become available for other purposes.

As in the 1984 and 1996 General Plans, the EBMUD site is designated for open space on the Piedmont General Plan Land Use Diagram. This is an expression of the city's desire to keep the site as a wooded buffer between Piedmont and Oakland. Use of the property for recreational use, including sports fields or other recreational facilities, would be consistent with this designation. Any other use of this property would require an amendment to this General Plan.

Elsewhere in Moraga Canyon, the small portion of Mountain View Cemetery within the Piedmont city limits is also designated for open space. The Piedmont Corporation Yard on Moraga Avenue is designated "Public Facilities" on the Land Use Diagram and is expected to remain a municipal maintenance facility for the lifetime of this plan.

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Some of the commercial properties along Grand Avenue are aging and are not used as intensively as they might be.

Grand Avenue

The commercial district along Grand Avenue between Linda and Wildwood Avenues has the potential for a small amount of additional development. Although there are no vacant lots, some of the commercial properties are aging and are not used as intensively as they might be. Private redevelopment of some of these properties is possible and is permitted under existing zoning. The five single family houses within the commercial district are in excellent condition and are not expected to be replaced; however, conversion to office, retail, or multi-family residential uses could occur.

In the event that any property in the Grand Avenue commercial area is redeveloped, the city strongly supports mixed use projects which combine residential and commercial uses. Development which includes ground floor retail shops and upper story office or residential use is encouraged. The commercial district should not be expanded beyond its current boundaries, however, since such expansion would encroach on established, stable residential uses.

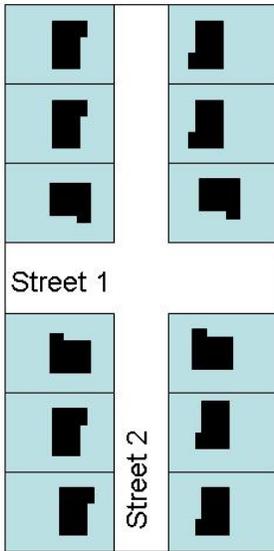
Just beyond the northern edge of the Grand Avenue commercial district is a small multi-family district. Again, some of the older apartment buildings in this area could be privately redeveloped, and a few of the properties are developed below the maximum density allowed by zoning. To the extent feasible, any redevelopment of multi-family property in this area should avoid displacing tenants and result in a net gain of total housing units. Affordable housing units, as well as market rate units, are encouraged.

The General Plan identifies the former PG&E substation on Linda Avenue as being part of the multi-family district, since it is planned for redevelopment with townhomes. The existing structure has been proposed for demolition and replacement.

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Gross and Net Densities

- 12 Residential Parcels, 60' X 120' ea
- 50-foot street right-of-way



GROSS DENSITY = 4.4 UNITS/AC
NET DENSITY = 6 UNITS/AC

The General Plan refers to both "gross" and "net" densities. Gross densities include streets, utilities, and common open space, and are usually used when describing larger geographic areas. Net densities include only the area within individual parcel boundaries. As a rule of thumb, gross densities are typically 20 to 30 percent lower than net densities.

Land Use Categories

The Land Use Diagram (Figure 3.3) uses six categories to describe the general types of uses allowed in the city. Definitions of each category are provided below. Each category corresponds to a zoning district which includes more specific and prescriptive regulations for the use of property.

The State Government Code [65302(a)] requires that each general plan category include standards for development density and intensity. In residential areas, this is expressed by setting a limit on the number of units that may be built per gross acre (see text box at left). In employment areas, this is expressed through floor area ratios, or FAR (see text box next page).

 **Estate Residential**
Density: 1 to 2 units per acre

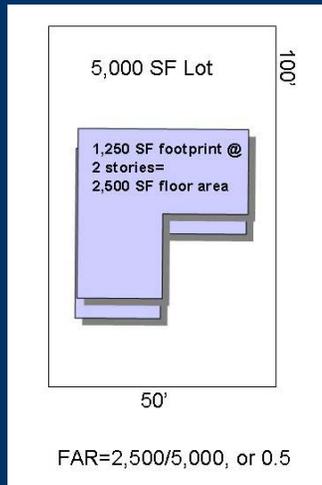
The Estate Residential land use category designates areas suitable for large homes developed at densities of one to two units per gross acre. Single family homes and related accessory structures (including second units) are permitted. Religious uses (churches, parochial schools, etc.) also are permitted, as are other uses stipulated by state law, including family child care, small group homes, and home occupations. This designation corresponds to Piedmont's Zone "E," which has a 20,000 square foot minimum lot size. Existing vacant lots smaller than 20,000 square feet may be developed, but any land subdivision must conform to this standard. This designation has been mapped in eastern Piedmont, along the Sotelo-Glen Alpine loop, and along Sea View and King Avenues, portions of Lincoln and Lakeview Avenues, and portions of Mountain and Bellevue Avenues.

 **Low-Density Residential**
Density: 3 to 8 units per acre

Low-Density Residential is the predominant General Plan designation in Piedmont, applying to about 75 percent of the city. The designation denotes areas developed at densities ranging from three to eight units per gross acre. Single family homes and related accessory structures (including second units) are permitted. Religious uses (churches, parochial schools, etc.) also are permitted, as are other uses stipulated by state law, including family child care, small group homes, and home occupations. The designation corresponds to Piedmont's Zone "A," which has a 10,000 square foot minimum lot size. Existing vacant lots smaller than 10,000 square feet may be developed, but any land subdivision must conform to this standard.

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Floor Area Ratio



Floor area ratio refers to the ratio of building area to land area on any given site. In Piedmont, building area excludes basements, garages, and other non-habitable spaces. The zoning code allows a maximum FAR of:

- 0.55 on lots smaller than 5,000 square feet (SF)
- 0.50 on lots between 5,000 and 10,000 SF
- 0.45 on lots larger than 10,000 SF

These limits discourage excessively large homes in the city, especially on small lots.

Medium-Density Residential

Density: 9 to 20 units per acre

The Medium-Density Residential designation provides for the development of multi-family housing and accessory structures that are harmonious with the character of existing development. Multi-family housing is defined as multiple dwelling units in a single building, designed to be occupied by more than one family independent of each other. It includes apartments, condominiums, townhomes, as well as duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes. This designation provides for the development at approximately nine to 20 units per gross acre. The Medium-Density designation applies to a small area near Oakland and Linda Avenues, adjacent to the Grand Avenue commercial district. The area corresponds to Piedmont's Zone "C."¹

Mixed Use

Density/ Intensity: Up to 20 units per acre, or
Floor Area Ratio of 0.75

The mixed use designation includes the city's commercial properties, as well as a handful of existing residences that are zoned for commercial use. Whereas previous Piedmont General Plans designated these areas as purely "Commercial", they are shown as "Mixed Use" in this Plan. This recognizes both the existing land use pattern and the City's desire to encourage housing above any new retail or office uses within these areas. The corresponding zoning district is Piedmont Zone "D."

The two Mixed Use areas in Piedmont are the Civic Center commercial district, and the Grand Avenue district. Commercial uses in these areas are required to be local-serving, rather than regional in nature. This is due in part to concerns over parking and traffic, but also to the extremely limited supply of commercial land in the city and the need to use this land to meet the day to day service needs of Piedmont residents. Projects which are entirely commercial are permitted in these areas, subject to a maximum FAR of 0.75. Projects which include multi-family residential uses are encouraged but are only permitted when combined with ground floor commercial uses; densities in such projects may not exceed 20 units per acre.

¹ Because designations on the Land Use Diagram are generalized and not parcel-specific, a few properties zoned for multi-family use and currently developed with apartments are contained within the Low-Density Residential area. The overall gross density of these areas remains within the 3-8 unit per acre range, however.

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The Piedmont Zoning Code

The legislative document controlling land use in Piedmont is Chapter 17 of the Municipal Code, (“Regulations Prescribing the Character of Construction”), more commonly known as the zoning ordinance. Although Piedmont has had zoning since 1929, most of the present code dates to 1987. Periodic amendments have been made since then in response to new land use issues, definitions, and state requirements.

The Zoning Code divides Piedmont into five zones, as noted in the Table below. Chapter 17 defines the allowable uses in each zone; sets development standards; defines on-site improvement and parking requirements; includes standards for fences, walls, retaining walls, landscaping, and signs; and establishes design review requirements. Chapter 17 also describes the findings necessary for granting variances and conditional use permits, as well as the procedures for hearings and appeals. It also addresses non-conforming uses and a range of administrative issues.

Key development standards in the five zoning districts are summarized below. This is an overview only; additional standards apply. Chapter 17 should be consulted for the full text of the regulations.

	Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D	Zone E
	Single Family Residential	Public Facilities	Multiple Family Residential	Commercial	Single Family Residential Estate
Lot Size	10,000 SF	None	10,000 SF	None	20,000 SF
Lot Frontage	90'	None	90'	None	120'
Max. Lot Coverage	40%	None	40%	50% if 1-story 25% if 2-story	40%
Max. Impervious Surfaces	70%	None	70%	80%	60%
Height	35'	35'	35'	35'	35'
Front Yard	20'	20' (*)	20'	None, unless adj to Zone A (*)	20'
Side Yard	4' except 20' on corner	20'	4' except 20' on corner	None, unless adj to Zone A	20', with 4' near rear
Rear Yard	4' except on double frontage lots	20'	4' except on double frontage lots	None, unless adj to Zone A	20'

() Single family residential uses in Zones B and D are subject to Zone A development regulations*

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Public Facilities

Intensity: Floor Area Ratio of 0.75

This designation applies to public schools and municipal facilities, including City Hall, the Corporation Yard, and the Veterans Building. It has been applied only to land owned by the City of Piedmont and the Piedmont Unified School District. Although the maximum FAR is 0.75, the actual FAR on most parcels with this designation is considerably lower. Any increase in square footage on public land is subject to environmental review, and a public process which ensures resident participation. Consistent with the Piedmont zoning code, housing is a permitted use within Public Facility areas. Areas with this designation are generally in Piedmont's Zone "B."



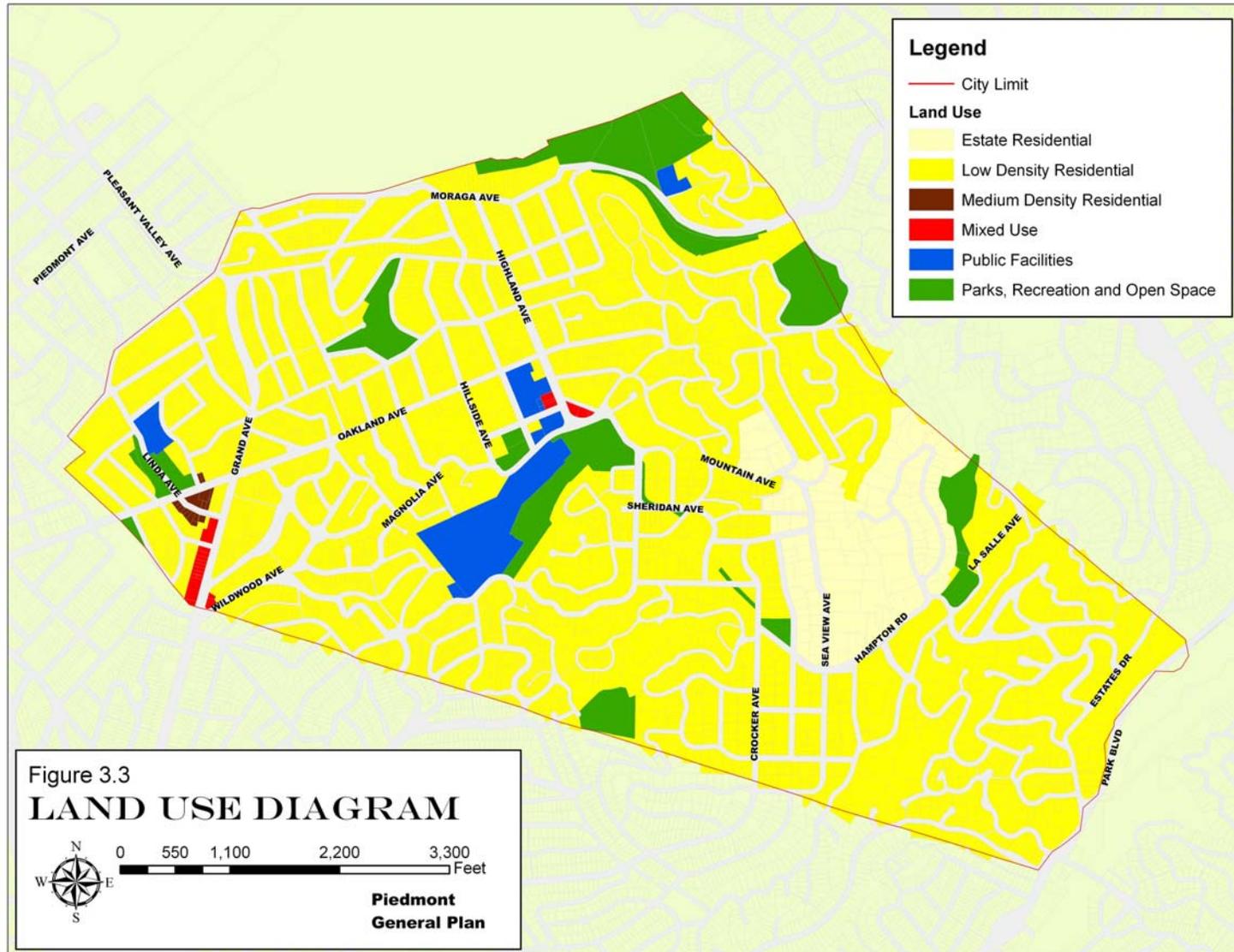
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Intensity: Not applicable.

Any increase in intensity subject to public review.

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space designation applies to public parks and other public and private open space areas. These other open spaces include EBMUD facilities, Tyson Reservoir, and the Piedmont portion of Mountain View Cemetery. Permitted uses in these areas include recreation, resource conservation, and facilities which support park and recreation activities. Depending on site conditions, these facilities may include recreation centers, swimming pools, tennis courts, sports fields, restrooms, child care centers, parking areas, park maintenance and staging areas, and similar uses. Because the primary activity in these areas is recreation, no floor area ratio limit has been established. The intent is to maintain these sites as open space to the greatest extent feasible. Areas with this designation are generally in Piedmont's Zone "B."

LAND USE



The essential form of the city’s residential areas—including the scale and appearance of its homes, the mature vegetation, the views and vistas, the appearance of streets and public places, and the street layout—should be maintained for the long-term future.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

Goal 1: Residential Character

Maintain the character of Piedmont as a residential community.

Policies and Actions

Policy 1.1: Encroachment of Non-Residential Uses

Maintain zoning regulations which strictly limit the encroachment of non-residential uses into residential areas, and which support residential uses on private land throughout the City.

Policy 1.2: Neighborhood Conservation

Sustain the balance between homes, private yards, and public space that defines Piedmont’s residential neighborhoods. The essential form of the city’s residential areas—including the scale and appearance of its homes, the mature vegetation, the views and vistas, the appearance of streets and public places, and the street layout—should be maintained for the long-term future.

Policy 1.3: Harmonious Development

Maintain planning and development review procedures which ensure that new development is harmonious with its surroundings and will not conflict with adjacent properties. New development and home alterations should be consistent with established standards for setbacks, height, and bulk, thereby conserving the low-density, pedestrian-friendly character of the city’s neighborhoods.

Policy 1.4: Lot Sizes

Retain lot size standards that conserve prevailing densities and discourage the division of developed lots into multiple parcels.

Policy 1.5: Home Occupations

Permit home-based businesses, subject to a licensing process which ensures that off-site impacts are minimized and that the residential nature of structures and their surroundings are not threatened.

Policy 1.6: Construction Impacts

Minimize the impacts of residential construction on the peace, quiet, visual integrity, and environmental quality of Piedmont neighborhoods. All new construction and home improvements should be completed in a timely manner, subject to standards established by the Municipal Code.

LAND USE

- **Action 1.A: Work Sessions**
Conduct periodic work sessions with the Piedmont City Council and Planning Commission to address emerging issues and to discuss changes that would help the City achieve its goal of protecting residential neighborhoods.
- **Action 1.B: Mandatory Lot Mergers**
Continue City efforts to merge constrained, adjacent non-conforming lots under common ownership.

See the Housing Element for policies on second units and residential “teardowns.”

See the Design and Preservation Element for policies on the design of new or altered residential structures.

Goal 2: Commercial and Mixed Use Areas

Provide for a limited range of commercial uses which serve the basic needs of the community.

Policies and Actions

Policy 2.1: Local-Serving Emphasis

On the city’s limited commercial land supply, strongly encourage activities that meet the needs of Piedmont residents rather than region-serving activities. By supporting local-serving businesses in these areas, Piedmont can advance its goals of reducing driving, promoting walking, and creating a more balanced and well-rounded community.

Policy 2.2: Mixed Use Development

Within the Grand Avenue commercial district, encourage mixed use development that combines ground floor commercial uses and upper story residential uses.

Recognize the importance of Piedmont's commercial land uses as community gathering places. Any new commercial project should be designed in a way that contributes to pedestrian vitality and safety, and provides a clean, attractive, and welcoming environment for the public.

Policy 2.3: Office Development

Support limited office development in the city's commercial districts to accommodate businesses serving Piedmont residents, and to provide rental office space for Piedmont residents with small businesses.

Policy 2.4: Commercial Parking

Resolve parking problems in the city's two commercial districts in a way that balances the needs of local businesses with those of immediately adjacent residents and the community at large.

Policy 2.5: Off-Site Impacts

Maintain a conditional use permit procedure for commercial uses which ensures that off-site impacts such as traffic, noise, parking, and odor are disclosed and mitigated to the greatest extent possible. Buffering and screening should be required between commercial development and adjacent residential properties to minimize the potential for land use conflicts between the two uses.

Policy 2.6: Commercial Uses as Gathering Places

Recognize the importance of Piedmont's commercial land uses as community gathering places. Any new commercial projects should be designed in a way that contributes to pedestrian vitality and safety, and provides a clean, attractive, and welcoming environment for the public.

- *Action 2.A: Allowing Multi-family Residential in Commercial Zones*
Amend City regulations so that multi-family housing becomes a conditionally permitted use in the Commercial zone (Zone D). However, such uses should only be permitted when they are part of a mixed use project that includes ground floor commercial uses.
- *Action 2B: Commercial Development Standards*
Review the development standards for commercial uses to ensure that they support the goal of promoting pedestrian-oriented development and attractive streetscapes.

See the Design and Preservation Element for additional policies on the design of commercial areas, including Action 28.F on commercial design guidelines.

Protect environmentally sensitive open space in Piedmont to the greatest extent feasible. Recognize open space as an important ecological and aesthetic resource in the city, and a defining element of Piedmont's character.

Goal 3: Public, Institutional, and Open Space Lands
Manage public and institutional land in a way that meets the educational, civic, and recreational needs of Piedmont residents, while preserving the city's open spaces and natural resources.

Policies and Actions

Policy 3.1: Civic Facilities

Provide attractive and safe civic facilities that foster and enrich public life. The City will promote the use of schools and other community facilities as gathering places that deliver a variety of services to Piedmont residents.

Policy 3.2: Need for Public Land

Retain a sufficient supply of public land to support all essential local government activities, including schools, parks, municipal maintenance facilities, utilities, cultural facilities, police and fire stations, and administrative offices. In the event public land becomes available for another purpose, first priority shall be placed on uses that benefit Piedmont residents.

Policy 3.3: Joint Use of School District and City Facilities

Achieve full utilization of existing and future school facilities and public buildings to the mutual benefit of the City of Piedmont and the Piedmont Unified School District.

Policy 3.4: Planning and Public Facilities

Fully consider the potential impacts of local planning decisions on City and School District properties and facilities.

Policy 3.5: Protection of Open Space

Protect environmentally sensitive open space in Piedmont from development to the greatest extent feasible. Recognize open space as an important aesthetic and ecological resource in the city, and a defining element of Piedmont's character.

Policy 3.6: Other Public and Institutional Lands

Coordinate with East Bay Municipal Utility District, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, the City of Oakland, and the Mountain View Cemetery Association in the management and long-term use of their Piedmont properties. All of the land belonging to these entities in Piedmont is designated as "Open Space" on the Land Use Diagram.

LAND USE

Policy 3.7: Religious Uses

Recognize the important contribution of religious facilities and parochial schools to Piedmont while ensuring that any adverse effects of operation or expansion are mitigated.

Policy 3.8: Donation of Property

Review any proposed donation of private property to the City to ensure that a net community benefit will result, and to ensure that an undue burden will not be placed on adjacent property owners or the City.

- *Action 3.A: Seismic Retrofit of Schools*
Actively coordinate with the Piedmont Unified School District on the reconstruction of school sites under Measure E (2006). Recognize the opportunity for new facilities which benefit all Piedmont residents.
- *Action 3.B: Park and Open Space Zone*
Consider creation of a new zoning district (Zone F) for Piedmont's parks and public open spaces. The development standards and use restrictions in this zone would emphasize park and resource conservation activities rather than public facilities or residential uses.

See the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element for additional policies on parks.

See the Community Services and Facilities Element for additional policies on schools and public buildings.

“I would like to see one or more places in the Civic Center area where residents could grab a cup of coffee or a smoothie and interact socially with other Piedmonters.”

“I would like to have one place, under roof or in public, where I could say, ‘I’ll meet you at...’”

-General Plan Survey Responses

Goal 4: Special Sites

Maximize potential benefits to Piedmont residents on key opportunity sites.

Policies and Actions

Policy 4.1: Civic Center

Encourage land uses, activities, design changes, circulation changes, and capital improvements which transform the Piedmont Civic Center into a more cohesive pedestrian-oriented gathering place. The intent of this policy is not to commercialize or expand the Civic Center, but rather to enhance existing uses and create new places for social interaction.

Policy 4.2: Piedmont Reservoir

Retain the EBMUD Piedmont Reservoir as open space, consistent with previous General Plans for Piedmont.

Policy 4.3: Moraga Canyon

Retain open space and recreation as the primary uses in Moraga Canyon, including Blair Park, Coaches Field, and the Mountain View Cemetery Association property.

Policy 4.4: Availability of Services

Ensure that infrastructure and community facilities are adequate to handle any new development before approval is granted.

Policy 4.5: Environmental Review

Ensure that any land use changes on special sites in Piedmont (as defined by this Plan) are accompanied by appropriate and comprehensive environmental review. All land use changes shall occur through an open and transparent public process.

▪ **Action 4.A: Civic Center Master Plan Implementation**

Complete the Civic Center Master Plan process. Additional analysis and public hearings should be conducted, and a modified version of the Plan reflecting further community input should be presented to the Council for adoption. Once adopted, develop a phasing and funding plan.

▪ **Action 4.B: Reservoir Reuse**

Undertake a dialogue with EBMUD to preserve the Piedmont Reservoir site as open space and explore opportunities for long-term community use. In the event a use other than open space is required, a General Plan Amendment shall be required and the proposed use shall maintain the open, wooded quality of the site.

“We need to realize that by living ‘within’ Oakland, we should embrace—not reject or fear—the vibrant opportunities that surround us.”

-General Plan Survey
Response

Goal 5: Coordination with Oakland
Coordinate local planning efforts with the City of Oakland.

Policies and Actions

Policy 5.1: Collaborative Planning with Oakland

Work collaboratively with the City of Oakland on issues of mutual concern, including the preparation of land use plans for Oakland neighborhoods and shopping districts near Piedmont, and the review of large-scale development proposals in Oakland that could potentially impact Piedmont

Policy 5.2: Lots on the City Limit Line

Coordinate with Oakland on the permitting of development on lots that are bisected by the Piedmont-Oakland line.

- *Action 5.A: Joint Permitting*
Develop standard operating procedures for the issuance of planning and building permits on lots that are bisected by the Oakland/Piedmont city limit line.
- *Action 5B: Notification of Oakland Projects*
Explore the feasibility of standard notification and comment procedures for projects in Oakland, following the parameters of the City Code.

Goal 6: Planning Administration
Maintain planning and building procedures which ensure the safety of all new construction and which protect the quality and character of Piedmont.

Policies and Actions

Policy 6.1: Planning Process

Ensure that all planning decisions are made in a clear, consistent, objective, transparent, and timely manner.

Policy 6.2: Appropriateness of Planning Requirements

Periodically assess planning practices and requirements in response to community feedback.

“It is important to us that the city keeps its original appearance and that everybody’s interests are taken into account when new construction projects are approved.”

- General Plan Survey Response

Policy 6.3: Pre-Development Conferences

Encourage pre-development conferences for medium- and large-size projects to identify neighbor concerns, discuss potential problems, and convey the City’s expectations and standards for major construction projects.

Policy 6.4: Community Input

Maintain a high level of public input in the permitting process, including opportunities for neighbors to comment on proposed plans.

Policy 6.5: Involving Community Organizations

Recognize the contribution of Piedmont’s organizations, clubs, and community groups to civic improvement, and engage these groups in the planning process.

Policy 6.6: Homeowner Resources

Prepare printed brochures and internet materials which clearly explain planning and building requirements and help homeowners navigate the permitting process.

Policy 6.7: Enforcement

Use enforcement authority, including fines and penalties, to ensure compliance with the conditions of approval issued under the City’s zoning and design review requirements.

- *Action 6.A: Review of Practices and Procedures*
Periodically review city planning procedures to ensure that they are appropriate and responsive to local concerns. This review could include community surveys, public hearings and meetings, and changes to the process which reflect public input.
- *Action 6B: Review of Regulations*
Revise zoning, subdivision, and design review regulations as needed to address emerging issues such as the siting of telecommunications equipment and the use of solar panels.
- *Action 6C: Website Upgrades*
Consider changes to the Piedmont Planning and Building websites which help homeowners understand the City’s planning requirements. Consider on line permit applications for small projects as a way to reduce trips to City Hall.

LAND USE

