

Introduction

The City of Union City (City) is considering the development of a new high-density mixed-use development project on property owned by the City's Redevelopment Agency. The Station District Mixed-Use Development Project (herein after referred to as Proposed Project or project), as analyzed through this environmental review process, is the land use and phasing program proposed for an approximately 6-acre site that spans two blocks in the City's Station District (Blocks 2 and 3). Specifically, the Proposed Project includes development of up to 973 residential units, up to 37,500 square feet of retail and commercial uses, and up to 6,200 square feet of business condominiums.

Project Location

The Proposed Project is located in Union City, California (Figure 2-1). The study area of the Proposed Project encompasses Blocks 2 and 3 of the City's Intermodal Station District as shown in Figure 2-2. The Station District is located adjacent to the Union City Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Station, south of Decoto Road between Mission Boulevard and Alvarado-Niles Road.

Background

Planning for the Union City Intermodal Station (Station) began with the adoption of the Decoto Industrial Park Study Area (DIPSA) Specific Plan in 1994, which identified the area around the BART Station for mixed-use, high-density development.

The City completed the Intermodal Station District and Transit Facility Plan (Station District Plan) in June 2001. This Plan created a vision of a pedestrian-oriented, high-density downtown district. The policy goals of the Station District Plan included the creation of a two-sided BART station with direct transit connections to BART, Capitol Corridor, Altamont Commuter Express (ACE), Dumbarton Rail, Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District (AC Transit), and Union City Transit (local bus service). The underutilized and vacant lands surrounding the BART station were identified for high-density development that would provide retail services, jobs, and housing. The environmental impacts of the Station District Plan were evaluated in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

prepared for the Amended and Restated Redevelopment Plan, which was certified in 2002 by the Union City Council.

The Station District includes approximately 50 acres surrounding the BART station. It is comprised of a 29.84-acre site (formerly owned by Pacific Gas & Electric [PG&E] and now owned by the Union City Redevelopment Agency); the 14-acre BART property; and a 6-acre site that is owned by Avalon Bay Communities, Inc. and developed with 438 multi-family residential units. The original land use plan for the 50 acre Station District that was analyzed in the 2002 EIR included development of 630 dwelling units, 100,000 square feet of retail, 1.18 million square feet of office, and 2.85 acres of community open space and public facilities. Transit commuter parking facilities for 2,500 cars were also programmed for the area. Figure 2-3 depicts the layout for the entire Intermodal Station District, the 29.84-acre former PG&E site, and the 6-acre Proposed Project site. In addition, BART, in conjunction with the City, has currently embarked on a rehabilitation and upgrade of the BART Station, which would accommodate future residents of the Proposed Project.

The Proposed Project, along with the Avalon Bay project, would exceed the envisioned residential unit count for the Station District. However, the expected office development for the Station District will be reduced by approximately 300,000 square feet as a result of the increased land area devoted to residential uses. In order to be built, the Proposed Project would require amendments to the City's General Plan to accommodate the increase in proposed residential development over what was previously envisioned for the area and evaluated in previous environmental documents prepared for the area. In addition, a Zoning Text Amendment is proposed to incorporate the development standards listed in the Design Guidelines that were prepared for Blocks 2, 3 and 4 (Appendix C) and to accommodate the Proposed Project. This EIR, incorporates the previous EIR analysis of the Station District build-out included in the Amended and Restated Redevelopment Plan, and addresses the potential environmental consequences of redistributing residential, commercial and retail uses within Blocks 2 and 3 of the Station District.

Project Objectives and Goals

The primary objectives of the Proposed Project are to:

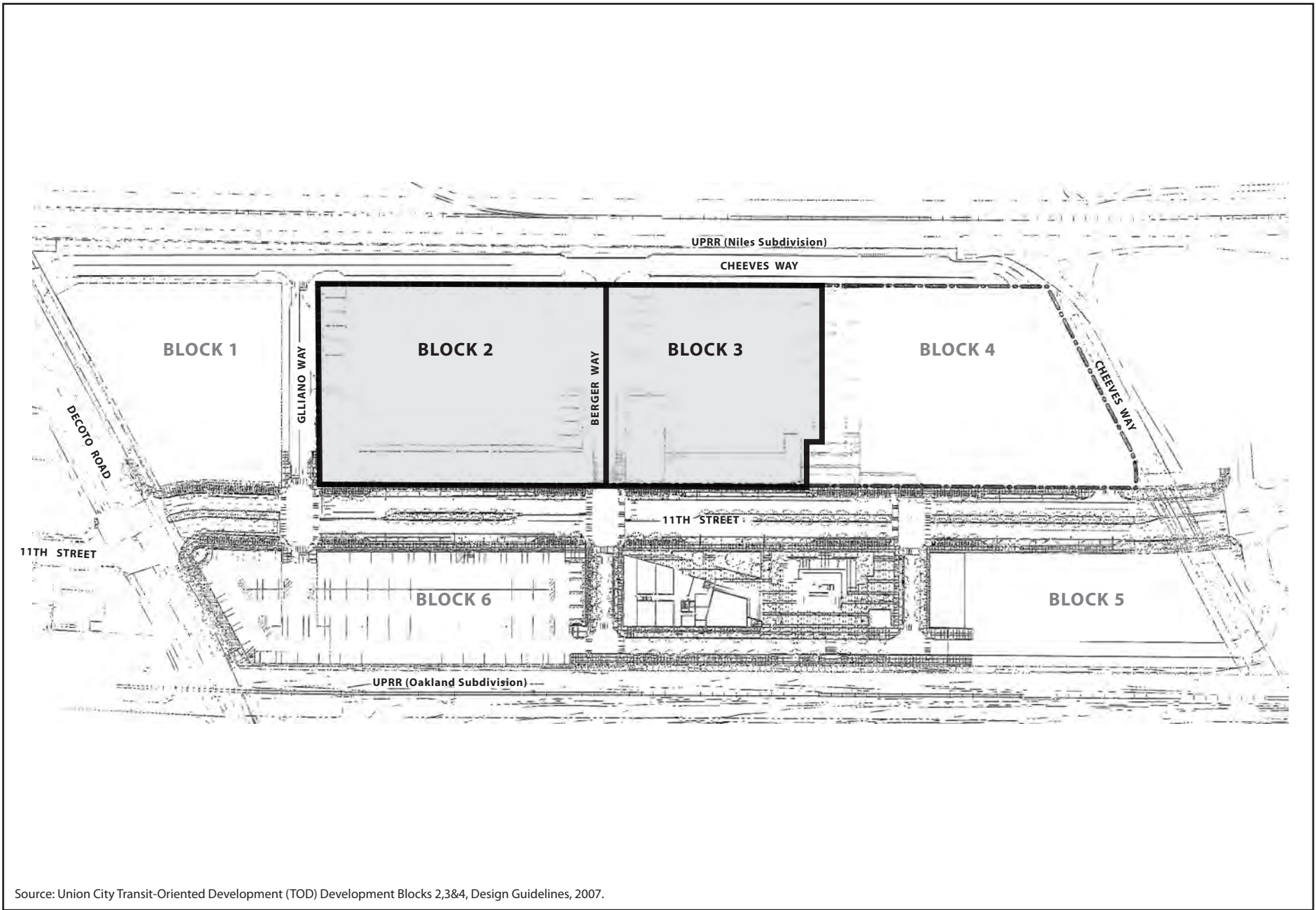
- Create a major architectural landmark and a sense of place for Union City while preserving views to and from the hillsides;
- Contribute to the vitality of the Station District area through the introduction of up to 973 units of housing with a mix of ground-level commercial uses;
- Ensure that the first phase of development is of sufficient size and scale to establish a positive sense of place and identity for the new district;
- Provide a range of commercial opportunities including ground-level space suitable for retail and restaurant uses, as well as office and workspace for small businesses, artisans, and entrepreneurs;



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Source: Google Inc. 2010, Google Earth Pro, Version 5.2, Mountain View, CA. Accessed: July 26, 2010.

Figure 2-1
Regional Vicinity



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Source: Union City Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Development Blocks 2,3&4, Design Guidelines, 2007.



Figure 2-3
Station District

- Provide a range of living opportunities including for-sale and rental units including apartments, condominiums, and townhouses;
- Create public-spirited and pedestrian-friendly environment that reinforces a pleasant and safe environment along all of the key street frontages and public spaces within the area including 11th Street, Berger Way, Galliano Way, and Cheeves Way;
- Orient parking to Cheeves Way as well as internal street network, where they would have the least impact on the more pedestrian –intensive areas of the planned community;
- Provide complimentary spatial definition of the Station District area with a composition of low-, mid-, and high-rise buildings that are carefully scaled to create an interesting and diverse “townscape”;
- Apply cost-effective techniques and practices in green-building, sustainable design, energy conservation, and comfortable pedestrian environments that discourage automobile use and reinforce transit.

Project Description

Overview

Vision for Blocks 2 and 3

When completed, the Intermodal Station is planned to accommodate patrons using BART, Dumbarton Rail, Capitol Corridor, ACE, AC Transit, and Union City Transit. The Station would be one of the San Francisco Bay Area’s most intensive transit interchanges, with connections among BART, bus, and passenger rail. The City wishes to ensure that future development in the Station District area build on the considerable public transportation investments that are being made, and contribute to the creation of a vibrant mixed-use and pedestrian friendly environment that is supportive of transit. The City’s goal is to create a new activity center on lands surrounding the Intermodal Station, which can serve as a gathering place for the community, with a concentration of commercial, residential, and cultural uses that create a strong sense of place and identity.

Blocks 2 and 3 are located across 11th Street from the future Intermodal Station and the East Plaza, which provides a forecourt to the east entry of the Intermodal Station and a major new civic gathering place within the City. The East Plaza is intended to be the focus of the transit-oriented development (TOD), and, as such, it is important that any private development across from it reinforce the area as a public-oriented activity center. Therefore, the organization and placement of high-rise development and the design and character of ground-level uses are of particular concern. The creation of active, publicly-oriented uses along the building frontage that face the East Plaza across 11th Street are given the highest priority. The configuration of buildings and open spaces within both the public and private development are intended to promote opportunities for the creation of a vibrant public environment that is pedestrian-friendly with a memorable sense

of place. It is envisioned that the combination of local businesses and the friendly pedestrian orientation of the Station District would make it an attractive destination, not only for residents of the Proposed Project, but also for surrounding neighborhoods throughout the City and beyond. The configuration of public spaces, the treatment of building edges and corners, and the orientation and relationship of ground level commercial and residential development to public streets and spaces are also critical to the success of this public-oriented environment.

Infrastructure Improvements

The City is currently in the process of constructing the public infrastructure in the Station District, which includes utilities, public streets, sidewalks, lighting and landscaping within the City's right-of-way. This construction is not part of the Proposed Project. It is anticipated that the infrastructure will be installed prior to the Proposed Project breaking ground.

Development Proposal

Blocks 2 and 3 represent approximately 6 acres of land at the center of the Station District TOD. This Draft EIR analyzes the development of residential, commercial/retail, and business condominiums on Blocks 2 and 3.

The Proposed Project will include up to 973 units of housing, up to 37,500 square feet of commercial/retail and up to 6,200 square feet of business condominiums in a range of building types from low- to mid- to high-rise.¹ The residential development within these blocks will include three strategically located towers. Each block would accommodate one tower that would range in height from 10 – 16 stories, and would measure approximately 110 – 170 feet in height (including podium levels). On Block 3, this tower is proposed on the corner of 11th Street and Berger Way. On Block 2, the 10-16 story tower (i.e. western tower) is proposed on the corner of 11th Street and Galliano Way. One additional tower is proposed on Block 2, on the corner of Cheeves Way and Berger Way. This tower is proposed to measure up to 24 stories (including podium levels) and would be located diagonally across Block 2 from the smaller tower. On both blocks, additional units would be located on top of the podium within mid-rise buildings that measure up to four-stories high. A few townhome units are proposed along Berger Way and Galliano Way that would be directly accessed from the street. The proposed units will either be a for-rent or a for-sale product or initially start out as for-rent and transition into a for-sale product.

The Proposed Project also includes development of up to 37,500 square feet of commercial/retail space along 11th Street with residential units above. The retail space will average 50 feet in depth and will accommodate a variety of shopping

¹ For the purposes of this project description, buildings that are 1-3 stories are considered “low-rise”, buildings that are 4-7 stories are considered “mid-rise”, and buildings taller than 7 stories are considered “high-rise.” Note that the plans submitted for the project listed in Appendix D and E refer to “low” and “mid” rise units as defined above as “low-rise.”

and restaurant opportunities. Lastly, the Proposed Project includes development of up to 6,200 square feet of business condominiums constructed along the Pedestrian Promenade located between Blocks 3 and 4 (the Pedestrian Promenade is not included in the Proposed Project). These units are anticipated to accommodate office uses.

Development Phasing

The following discussion provides a brief summary of the development phasing strategy for Blocks 2 and 3. It is anticipated that construction will begin in 2012 and end by 2022. The submitted plans for the Master Plan development of Blocks 2 and 3 are shown in Appendix D.

Phase 1 (Block 3) Development

The first phase of development would be critical in establishing the image and identity for the Proposed Project and in creating a sense of place. As such, the first phase of development would occur on Block 3, directly across 11th Street from the East Plaza to provide the spatial definition for the civic space in sequence with its anticipated development (Figure 2-2). It is anticipated that the first phase may include two sub-phases, described below.

The following descriptions provide estimated residential unit counts and commercial square footage amounts based on the conceptual development plans submitted by the Applicant. These amounts may be revised slightly between phases but the overall level of development is not anticipated to exceed the levels analyzed in this document.

Phase 1A

At a minimum, the first sub-phase shall include development of the frontage along 11th Street, including: one high-rise tower at the Berger Way corner, the retail-ready frontage along Block 3 with housing above, business condominiums, the internalized service corridor and loading areas for the retail-ready uses, and the parking podium required to support the residential program.

In summary, Phase 1A of the Project would include:

- Up to 220 residential units, including one tower;
 - 188 high-rise units;
 - 32 mid-rise units;
- Construction of up to 15,200 square feet of retail space, 4,000 square feet of business condominiums and 374 parking stalls.

Phase 1B

If not constructed as part of the first sub-phase, Phase 1B would include the construction of the remainder of the residential units and associated parking as

well as the additional business condominiums located adjacent to the Pedestrian Promenade.

In summary, Phase 1B of the Project would include:

- Up to 111 residential units, all mid-rise; and,
- Construction of up to 2,200 square feet of business condominiums and 163 parking stalls.

Construction of Phase 1 is anticipated to begin in June 2012 and finish in December 2016.

Phase 1 Summary

- Up to 331 residential units, including one tower;
 - 188 high-rise units;
 - 143 mid-rise units;
- Construction of up to 15,200 square feet of retail space, 6,200 square feet of business condominiums and 537 parking stalls.

Site Development Review Application

The Applicant has submitted an application for Site Development Review approval associated with Phase 1A and 1B. Site Development Review evaluates the architectural and site components of a project and must be completed prior to the Applicant submitting for building permits. The plans submitted for Site Development Review approval – Phase 1 (Appendix E) detail a residential unit count and square footage amount for the retail area and business condominiums that are slightly less than what is being evaluated for Phase 1, as described above. The Applicant has stated that they would like this environmental analysis to evaluate a slightly denser project to provide additional flexibility in the future. The following provides an overview of the development strategy listed in the plans:

Phase 1A

- 191 residential units, including one tower;
 - 159 high-rise units;
 - 32 mid-rise units;
- Construction of approximately 14,515 square feet of retail space, 3,328 square feet of business condominiums, and 287 parking stalls

Phase 1B

- 83 mid-rise units

- Construction of approximately 1,747 square feet of business condominiums and approximately 116 parking stalls

Phase 1 Summary

- 274 residential units, including one tower;
 - 159 high-rise units;
 - 115 mid-rise units;
- Construction of approximately 14,515 square feet of retail space, 5,075 square feet of business condominiums, and 403 parking stalls.

Phase 2 (Block 2) Development

Development of Block 2 would be the second phase of construction and would follow the completion of Block 3. Phase 2 would include construction of two towers, townhouses and flats, associated parking and retail-ready space fronting 11th Street.

Presuming Phase 1 only includes the development noted above in the Site Development Review application (e.g. 274 residential units), then Phase 2 of the Project would include:

- Up to 699 residential units, two towers, street-level townhouses, and podium level flats; including:
 - 376 one-bedroom units;
 - 301 two-bedroom units;
 - 22 three-bedroom units; and,
 - Construction of up to 22,120 square feet of retail space and 1,026 parking stalls.

If Phase 1 were to include 331 residential units as discussed above, then Phase 2 would include 642 residential units with a similar breakdown of unit counts, while the retail space and parking stalls would remain the same.

Construction of Phase 2 is anticipated to begin in December 2017 and finish in September 2022.

Project Approvals and Permits

The agencies that have project permitting approval authority or that may use this Draft EIR for their decision-making are identified in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1. Project Approvals and Permits

Agency	Required Permits, Approvals, or Other Entitlements	Reason Required
City of Union City	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General Plan Amendment ▪ Zoning Text Amendment ▪ Site Development Review Approval ▪ Use Permit Approval ▪ Public Works Encroachment Permit ▪ Fire Department and Building Department Approval/Review 	Project located in Union City and will require these amendments, approvals, and reviews prior to construction.
Regional Water Quality Control Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preparation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) 	Project site >1 acre.

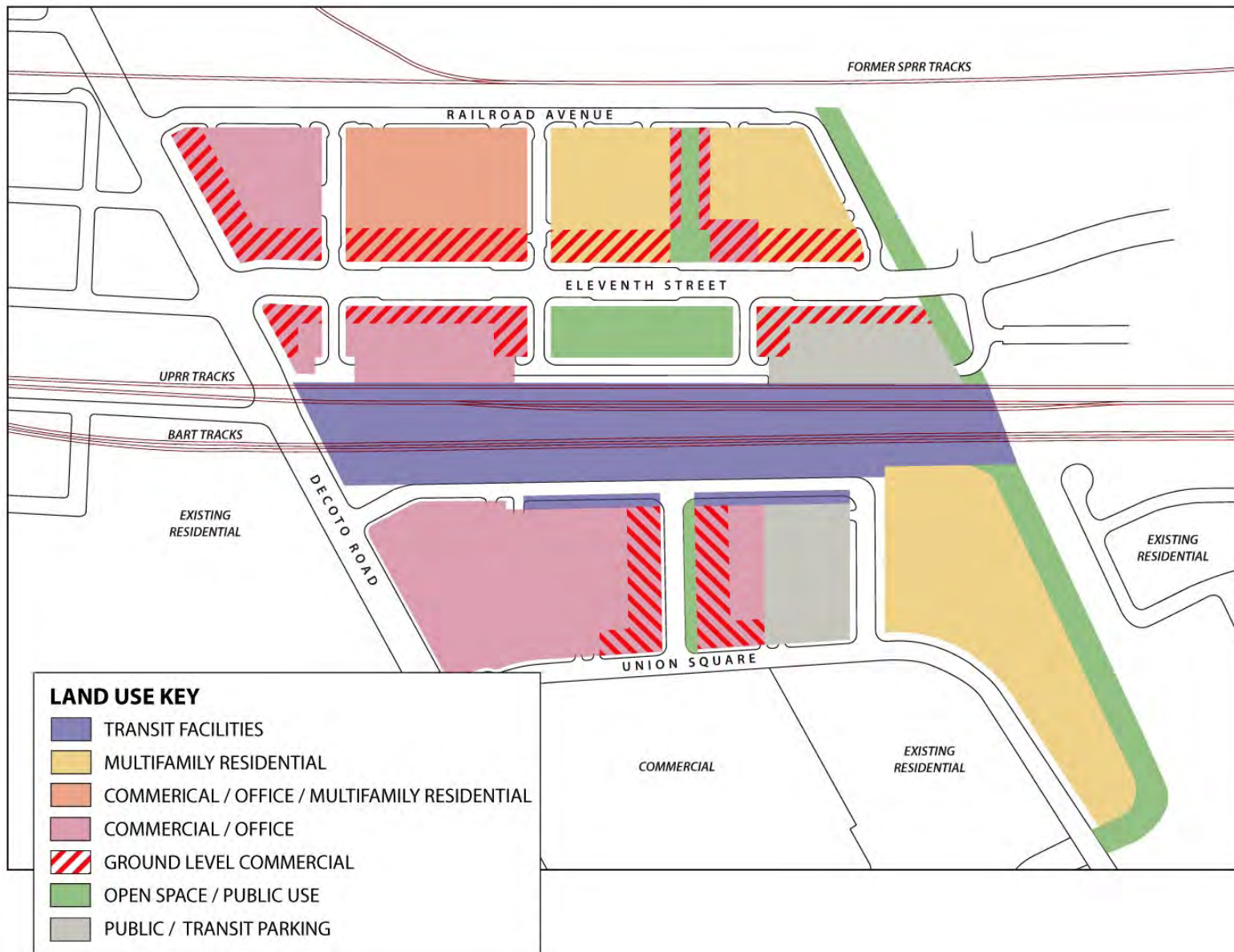
The Applicant has applied for a General Plan Amendment to increase the maximum density from 80 to 165 units per acre and update the required site area per dwelling unit accordingly. The General Plan Amendment also includes a modification to Figure LU-3 to allow for residential mixed-use in addition to commercial uses on Block 2 (Figure 2-4).

The Applicant has also applied for a Zoning Text Amendment to incorporate the development standards listed in the Design Guidelines that were prepared for Blocks 2, 3 and 4 and to accommodate the Proposed Project. These include the following changes to Chapter 18.38, *Station Mixed Use Commercial*:

- Increase maximum allowed residential density to be consistent with the revised General Plan wording
- Increase allowed height from 8 to 14 stories and from 100 feet to 160 feet²
- Allow for glass fiber reinforced concrete (GFRC) with integral color as a building material
- Allow for flexibility in loading berths requirements for mixed-use developments and residential storage requirements

An application for Site Development Review has also been submitted to accommodate the proposed development on Block 3. In addition, a Use Permit application has been submitted for the development of a mixed-use, high-density residential project on Blocks 2 and 3 that includes up to 973 units, up to 37,500 square feet of retail space and up to 6,200 square feet of business condominiums, as required by Section 18.38.030 (B) of the Union City Municipal Code. The Use Permit will also address the reduction in the amount of required storage per residential unit (proposed modification to Section 18.38.250), the development of a building that exceeds 65 feet as required by Section 18.38.140, and a reduction in parking demand for the residential portion of the Phase 1 project to 403 parking spaces in exchange for the implementation of Transit Demand

² Towers in excess of 14 stories or 160 feet will be reviewed pursuant to Section 18.38.250 of the Municipal Code.



Source: City of Union City, 2010.

Management (TDM) strategies, which mainly entails the project site's proximity to public transit options, per Section 18.28.110.

Green Building

The Proposed Project is required to comply with Chapter 15.76, Green Building and Landscaping Practices, of the Municipal Code. This Chapter requires the Proposed Project to meet a minimum Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED™) Silver rating and be so certified by the U.S. Green Building Council. LEED™ is an internationally recognized green building certification system, providing third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance across all the metrics that matter most: energy savings, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.

The Applicant has indicated their intent to meet this requirement and has begun the process with the U.S. Green Building Council. A LEED™ checklist is included in the attached Site Development Review Application (Appendix E).

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