



## **NOTICE OF PREPARATION & NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING**

**Date:** September 13, 2024

**To:** State Clearinghouse  
Governor's Office of Planning and Research  
San Mateo County Clerk  
Responsible and Trustee Agencies  
Interested Individuals and Organizations

**From:** Carlos de Melo  
Community Development Director  
City of Belmont  
1 Twin Pines Lane  
Belmont, CA 94002

**Subject:** Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Belmont Harbor Industrial Area Specific Plan (HIA Specific Plan)

**Lead Agency:** City of Belmont

**Project Title:** Belmont Harbor Industrial Area Specific Plan (project)

**Project Location:** The area bounded by O'Neill Avenue and the Belmont city limits to the north; Old County Road and the Belmont city limits to the west; Belmont Creek, the city limits and the City of San Carlos to the south; and US 101 to the east.

**Call for Comments:** The City of Belmont (City) is requesting written comments from responsible agencies and the public regarding the scope and content of the Belmont Harbor Industrial Area Specific Plan (HIA Specific Plan) Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The program-level EIR will evaluate the environmental impacts associated with the likely type and amount of development projected under the 2050 horizon year of the HIA Specific Plan. This EIR will not evaluate detailed, site-specific activities and future site-specific projects that may be

developed under the HIA Specific Plan. The City requests your written comments as to the scope and content of the EIR, including mitigation measures and/or project alternatives to reduce potential environmental impacts from the proposed project.

**Preparing an Environmental Impact Report:**

Notice is hereby given that the City will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an EIR for the project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations Section 15060(d)) as identified above and described in the attached materials.

**Comment Submittal:**

Written comments on the NOP are due no later than the close of the 30-day NOP review period at 5:00 p.m. on October 14, 2024. Please send your written comments to Carlos de Melo, Community Development Director, at the mailing address or email address shown below with "Harbor Industrial Area Specific Plan EIR" indicated as the subject. Public agencies providing comments are asked to include a contact person for the agency.

City of Belmont  
Community Development Department, Planning and Zoning  
Attn: Carlos de Melo, Community Development Director  
1 Twin Pines Lane, First Floor  
Belmont, CA 94002  
[hiaplan@belmont.gov](mailto:hiaplan@belmont.gov)

**Public Scoping Meeting:** Pursuant to Pub. Res. Code Section 21083.9 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(c), the City will hold a scoping meeting to provide an opportunity for agency staff and interested members of the public to submit verbal comments on the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR. The scoping meeting will be held as a part of the **September 17, 2024 Planning Commission meeting, at 7:00 p.m. at Belmont City Hall, Second Floor City Council Chambers, at One Twin Pines Lane, Belmont, CA 94002.** For more scoping meeting attendance information, please see <https://www.belmont.gov/our-city/city-government/meetings-agendas-minutes>. A link for this meeting will also be provided on the project webpage: [www.belmonthiaplan.com](http://www.belmonthiaplan.com).

**WATCHING/ATTENDING THE MEETING:**

The meeting will be broadcast live to Belmont residents on Comcast Cable Channel 27, streamed live via the City's website at [www.Belmont.gov](http://www.Belmont.gov), and streamed live on Zoom. The public may also attend the meeting in the City Council Chambers and address the Commission from the Chambers.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

To maximize time for live public comment, we encourage members of the public to provide oral comments by joining the Commission meeting via Zoom. To participate virtually, visit <https://belmont-gov.zoom.us/> select "Join" and enter Meeting ID:968 6972 2514. Use the Raise Hand feature to request to speak for a particular agenda item. You may rename your profile if you wish to remain anonymous. For dial-in comments, call \*67 1-669-900-6833 (your phone number will appear on the live broadcast if \*67 is not dialed prior to the phone number), enter Meeting ID: 968 6972 2514, and press \*9 to request to speak.

# **NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE BELMONT HARBOR INDUSTRIAL AREA SPECIFIC PLAN (HIA SPECIFIC PLAN)**

Date of Distribution: September 13, 2024

## ***Introduction***

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is to inform decision-makers and the general public of the environmental impacts of a proposed project that an agency (in this case, the City of Belmont) may implement or approve. The EIR process is intended to: (1) provide information sufficient to evaluate a project and its potential for significant impacts on the environment; (2) examine methods (e.g., project-specific mitigations, uniformly applied development regulations) of reducing adverse impacts; and (3) consider alternatives to the proposed project that reduce identified potentially significant environmental impacts.

The EIR for the Belmont Harbor Industrial Area Specific Plan (HIA Specific Plan) will be prepared and processed in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended. In accordance with CEQA, the Draft EIR will include the following:

- A summary of the project, its potential significant environmental impacts, and mitigations required to avoid or reduce those impacts;
- A project description;
- A description of the existing environmental and regulatory setting, potential environmental impacts, and mitigations for the project;
- Alternatives to the proposed project that reduce identified environmental impacts;
- Other environmental consequences of the project, including:
  - (1) Growth-inducing effects,
  - (2) Significant unavoidable impacts,
  - (3) Irreversible environmental changes,
  - (4) Cumulative impacts, and,
  - (5) Effects found not to be significant.

## ***Project Location***

The 62-acre HIA Specific Plan area (Plan area) is located east of Old County Road and west of Hwy 101, directly abutting the southern Belmont city limits (see attached Figure 1 and Figure 2). The Plan area is bounded by O'Neill Avenue and the Belmont city limits to the north; Old County Road and the Belmont city limits to the west; Belmont Creek and the City of San Carlos to the south; and US 101 to the east. The Plan area is currently located in unincorporated San Mateo County and is within the City of Belmont's Sphere of Influence.

## ***Project Background***

The City of Belmont has intended to annex the HIA Plan area since the adoption of the 2017 Belmont General Plan, Phase I Zoning, Belmont Village Specific Plan, and Climate Action Plan

Project and associated Environmental Impact Report. Belmont's pre-annexation Phase I Zoning for the HIA included the current districts HIA-1 and HIA-2, which replicated the existing San Mateo County zoning designations and standards for the area.

The City of Belmont will coordinate environmental and infrastructure improvements with the City of San Carlos and San Mateo County. Once adopted, the HIA Specific Plan will provide the groundwork for annexation of the Plan area from unincorporated San Mateo County and integration of this key redevelopment area into the City of Belmont. This process will require coordination between the City of Belmont, San Mateo County, and the San Mateo County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo).

The Environmental Impact Report for the City of Belmont General Plan, Phase I Zoning, Belmont Village Specific Plan, and Climate Action Plan (SCH #2016082075) can be viewed here: <https://www.belmont.gov/departments/community-development/2035-general-plan-update/draft-environmental-impact-report>.

### ***Existing Land Uses***

Existing San Mateo County General Plan land use designations in the HIA Plan Area include General Industrial and Medium High Density Residential (Figure 3). The Medium High Density Residential designation solely encompasses the existing mobile home park. Existing San Mateo County zoning districts in the HIA Plan area include Light Industrial (M-1), General Commercial (C-2), and Commercial Mixed Use-1 (MH) (Figure 4).

Several parcels within the HIA have previously been annexed into the City of Belmont: four parcels associated with the 608 Harbor Boulevard Residential Apartment Development; and two parcels associated with the 1325 Old County Road Residential Apartment Development. These parcels have general plan and zoning designations of Harbor Industrial Area - HIA-1 (608 Harbor Boulevard), and Village Corridor Mixed Use - VCMU (1325 Old County Road).

The HIA is currently occupied by warehousing and light manufacturing industrial; general retail and automobile service commercial; office; open storage; residential; and mixed-use land uses. Overall, the Plan area is comprised mostly of light industrial and commercial land uses. The existing developed square footage within the HIA totals approximately 1.35 million square feet. Most buildings within the HIA consist of one story, though several buildings consist of two or four stories. The average building height within the HIA is approximately 21.9 feet, and the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) varies by property, ranging from 0.2 to 3.59. There is an existing mobile home park on approximately 3.5 acres located between Highway 101 to the north and east, Harbor Boulevard to the south, and Karen Road to the west. As noted earlier, 1325 Old County Road was previously annexed into the City of Belmont consistent with the Belmont General Plan land use designation and zoning district of Village Corridor Mixed Use (VCMU). The redevelopment at 1325 Old County Road consisted of 250 residential units in a 4-story building with 224,000 square feet of building area including a 2,000 square foot commercial/community space.

### ***CEQA Baseline***

The Plan area is located outside the Belmont city limits in the unincorporated area of San Mateo County to the southeast of the city. Because the Plan area is currently located in unincorporated San Mateo County, the baseline zoning and land use in the HIA correspond with San Mateo County General Plan land use and zoning designations (as shown in Figures 3 and 4, respectively). Per



Section 15125 (e) of the CEQA Guidelines:

“Where a proposed project is compared with an adopted plan, the analysis shall examine the existing physical conditions at the time the notice of preparation is published, or if no notice of preparation is published, at the time the environmental analysis is commenced as well as the potential future conditions discussed in the plan.”

In compliance with Section 15125 (e), the EIR will use the existing physical development that has been permitted under the unincorporated San Mateo County General Plan land use designations and zoning districts as the baseline existing conditions for CEQA analysis, except for the few parcels that have already been annexed into the City of Belmont, where using the Belmont General Plan and zoning designations is appropriate. The EIR will reference and bring in as necessary the City of Belmont’s pre-annexation Phase I Zoning and 2035 General Plan EIR findings for the HIA; however, Belmont’s pre-annexation zoning is not considered the baseline conditions for the HIA for the reasons stated above.

### ***Project Description***

The City of Belmont is developing the HIA Specific Plan to guide anticipated growth and development in this district to best serve the community and facilitate a thriving economy. The HIA Specific Plan is guided by the following project objectives:

- Create a complete neighborhood with amenities for people to work, shop, gather, and live.
- Create complete streets to ensure safe pedestrian and bicycle access throughout the district and to adjacent residential and commercial neighborhoods.
- Provide publicly accessible green space for residents, employees, and visitors.
- Provide land use classifications and development standards that encourage industry and innovation, support existing businesses, and encourage new businesses.
- Provide opportunities for land uses that promote economic vitality, fiscal sustainability, and local employment opportunities.
- Identify land uses and create zoning standards that are sensitive to adjacent neighborhoods but flexible to accommodate future growth.
- Locate residential uses near compatible land uses.
- Establish policies to revitalize Belmont Creek and improve infrastructure to manage flooding.

The HIA was identified in Belmont’s 2017 General Plan Update as a special study area. The Specific Plan process will provide the groundwork for annexation and integration of this key redevelopment area into the City of Belmont. The overall Specific Plan (commenced in early 2023) and Program EIR process will take approximately two ½ years to complete, and is anticipated to be completed in late 2025.

The HIA Specific Plan’s proposed land use designations for the annexed HIA parcels include Industrial Commercial, Mixed Use Residential, and Mobile Home Park (see Figure 5). The HIA Plan area would be built out over an approximate 25-year period. Table 1 below presents the existing and proposed building area; a residential project that has received approval but has not been constructed is included in the “Proposed” numbers.

**Table 1. Existing vs. Proposed Building Area**

	<b><i>Existing</i></b>	<b><i>Proposed</i></b>
Non Residential Development	1,352,423 sq. ft.	3,900,000 sq. ft.
Residential Development		
Multi-Family	224,000 sq. ft. (250 units)	325,000 sq. ft. (303 units)
Mobile Home Park	91 units	-

Maximum building heights within the HIA Specific Plan area would be limited by the Comprehensive Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan for the Environs of San Carlos Airport (ALUCP), which dictates the maximum height permitted within the HIA Specific Plan to protect navigable airspace around the airport. Per the ALUCP, maximum heights are measured in relationship to sea level, not ground level. Actual building height for a given property would be a factor of maximum height above sea level minus ground elevation. Within the HIA Specific Plan, the height would range from 155 feet above sea level to 205 feet above sea level. Ground elevations within the HIA Specific Plan generally range from approximately 15 feet above sea level at Highway 101, and 35 feet above sea level at Old County Road.

***Potential Environmental Impacts of the Project***

The EIR will identify the significant environmental effects anticipated to result from the development and occupancy of buildings as proposed in the HIA Specific Plan. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted. The EIR will include the following specific environmental categories as related to the proposed project:

***1. Aesthetics***

The EIR will describe the existing visual setting of the project area and the visual changes that are anticipated to occur as a result of the HIA Specific Plan. Aesthetics impacts will be evaluated pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21099. Any HIA Specific Plan design standards intended to address aesthetic quality will be presented. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

***2. Agriculture and Forestry Resources***

According to the San Mateo County Important Farmland Map (2018), properties within the Plan area are designated as Urban and Built-Up Land. The Plan area does not include land mapped as farmland. The EIR will describe the HIA Specific Plan's impact (if any) on existing farmland, forest land, and timberland.

***3. Air Quality***

The EIR will describe regional air quality conditions in the San Francisco Bay Area and evaluate the air quality impacts from implementation of the HIA Specific Plan in conformance with the criteria identified by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). Given the timing and nature of individual construction projects are unknown, construction air quality impacts and health risk impacts would be addressed qualitatively. Operational emissions of criteria air pollutants from buildout of the Plan would be computed using the CalEEMod model supplemented with the most recently available on-road mobile emission factors and compared to relevant

BAAQMD thresholds. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *4. Biological Resources*

The EIR will evaluate the HIA Specific Plan's impact on biological resources within and near the Plan area, including trees, sensitive habitats, and special-status species. The EIR will also discuss the HIA Specific Plan's consistency with local policies and ordinances protecting biological resources. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *5. Cultural Resources*

A joint SB 18/AB 52 notification letter was sent to the eight tribes included on the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) San Mateo County Tribal Consultation List via electronic mail and certified mail on September 21, 2023. No responses to the SB 18/AB 52 notification letters have been received to date.

A number of existing buildings within the Plan area are more than 50 years old and may be historic resources. There are several known archaeological resource sites with close proximity to the HIA Specific Plan area. The current alignment of Belmont Creek has been altered from its historical course and is channelized within the HIA Specific Plan area, thus there is not a high likelihood that unknown archaeological or tribal resources are present. Searches of the California Historical Resources Information System and the Native American Heritage Commission databases has been conducted for information on known archaeological and tribal resources within the HIA Specific Plan area. The results of these searches will be documented in the EIR. The EIR will describe the potential impacts to historic, cultural, and archaeological resources that could result from implementation of the HIA Specific Plan. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *6. Energy*

In conformance with Appendix F of the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR will examine the potential for the HIA Specific Plan to result in excessive or inefficient use of energy and discuss the energy conservation measures to be included in future development implementing the HIA Specific Plan. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *7. Geology and Soils*

The EIR will describe the general geologic and soil conditions within the HIA Specific Plan area and discuss possible geological impacts associated with seismic activity and existing soil conditions. The potential for future development construction activity to encounter paleontological resources (i.e. fossils) will also be assessed. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *8. Greenhouse Gas Emissions*

The EIR will qualitatively discuss the HIA Specific Plan's consistency and conformance with applicable plans, policies, and/or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas

emissions. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *9. Hazards and Hazardous Materials*

The Plan area contains sites with recorded spill incidents resulting in groundwater and soil contamination. Additional groundwater and soil contamination may exist within the HIA due to historical and current industrial activities in the area. The EIR will evaluate the potential for the HIA Specific Plan to result in a hazard to the public or environment from the transport, use, disposal, or upset of hazardous materials. The Plan area is located within the San Carlos Airport Influence Area. The EIR will discuss the HIA Specific Plan's conformance with applicable Airport Land Use Commission policies governing development near the San Carlos Airport. The EIR also will address whether the Plan would interfere with an adopted emergency response plan. Mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *10. Hydrology and Water Quality*

The HIA is bounded by Belmont Creek to the southeast. The HIA is subjected to localized flooding due to its proximity to Belmont Creek, among other factors. The EIR will describe the general hydrologic and drainage conditions of the HIA Specific Plan area and any changes in site drainage and hydrological conditions resulting from implementation of the proposed Plan. The EIR will also describe impacts on stormwater runoff quantity/quality and groundwater resources and impacts related to inundation and sea level rise. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *11. Land Use and Planning*

The EIR will evaluate if the HIA Specific Plan would physically divide an established community or cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with relevant land use plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Land use impacts that would occur as a result of the proposed project will be analyzed, including the consistency of the project with the City's General Plan and zoning code and compatibility of the proposed and existing land uses in the Plan area. The effect of the project on the City's jobs/housing balance will also be analyzed. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *12. Noise and Vibration*

Existing noise sources in the HIA include vehicular traffic along roadways (including US 101, Old County Road, and Harbor Boulevard), trains along Caltrain's tracks, and aircraft operations associated with the San Carlos Airport. The EIR will evaluate construction and operational noise and vibration impacts from buildout of the HIA Specific Plan. The EIR will also discuss the HIA Specific Plan's consistency with the San Carlos Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, particularly its potential to expose people residing or working in the Plan area to excessive aircraft noise levels. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *13. Mineral Resources*

The EIR will describe whether the HIA Specific Plan would result in the loss of availability of a

known mineral resource or locally-important mineral resource recovery site. There are no mineral resource deposits in the Plan area and this impact is expected to be less than significant.

#### *14. Population and Housing*

Currently, there is multi-family housing in the HIA in the form of the mobile home park and a recently developed residential apartment building at 1325 Old County Road. A key facet of the HIA Specific Plan is to retain the mobile home park. For this reason, the HIA Specific Plan would not displace existing housing or residents. The EIR will discuss if the HIA Specific Plan would induce substantial unplanned population growth in the Plan area, beyond what is proposed as part of the HIA Specific Plan, either directly or indirectly. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *15. Public Services*

The EIR will describe the available public services (e.g., fire and police protection, schools, libraries, and parks) in the HIA Specific Plan area and the potential for the HIA Specific Plan to require the expansion or construction of additional facilities. The EIR discussion will focus on whether the expansion or construction of additional facilities would result in significant environmental impacts. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *16. Recreation*

The EIR will describe the available recreational facilities in the HIA Specific Plan area and the potential for the HIA Specific Plan to substantially accelerate the deterioration of those facilities or require the expansion or construction of additional facilities, and whether the expansion or new construction of additional facilities would result in significant environmental impacts. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *17. Transportation*

The EIR will evaluate possible transportation impacts from implementation of the HIA Specific Plan. Per the City of Belmont's Transportation Analysis Policy (City Council Policy 5-1), the Plan's potential transportation impacts will be assessed using the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) metric. The EIR will discuss the HIA Specific Plan's consistency with programs, plans, ordinances, and policies addressing the circulation system (including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities). Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

#### *18. Tribal Cultural Resources*

A joint SB 18/AB 52 notification letter was sent to the eight tribes included on the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) San Mateo County Tribal Consultation List via electronic mail and certified mail on September 21, 2023. No responses to the SB 18/AB 52 notification letters have been received to date.

The EIR will identify whether tribal cultural resources have been identified in the area, via consultation with a tribe(s) culturally affiliated with the area, per Assembly Bill 52. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as warranted.

## 19. *Utilities and Service Systems*

The EIR will describe the existing sanitary sewer, storm drain, water, and solid waste services for the HIA Specific Plan area. The EIR will discuss the ability of the existing utilities and service systems to accommodate the demand from the proposed HIA Specific Plan and identify necessary improvements. Pursuant to SB 610, Mid-Peninsula Water District (MPWD), the local water retailer serving the HIA, will complete a Water Supply Assessment (WSA) for the HIA Specific Plan, and the results of the WSA will be included in the EIR. The EIR will also discuss any changes in service providers that would result upon annexation of the HIA Specific Plan area from San Mateo County to the City of Belmont. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as necessary.

## 20. *Wildfire*

The proposed project is located within an urbanized area of the City of Belmont and is not within a State Responsibility Area or lands classified as High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones according to CAL FIRE. The EIR will discuss locally adopted policies and maps and analyze whether the HIA SP would impact or exacerbate wildfire risk and/or impair emergency response. Program level mitigation measures will be identified for significant impacts, as necessary.

## 21. *Alternatives*

The EIR will examine alternatives to the HIA Specific Plan including a “No Project” alternative and one or more alternative development scenarios depending on the impacts identified. Other alternatives that may be discussed could include reduced development alternatives (e.g., reduced maximum building height or reduced density alternatives) and/or alternative land uses. Alternatives discussed will be chosen based on their ability to reduce or avoid identified significant impacts of the proposed project while achieving most of the identified objectives of the project. The environmentally superior alternative(s) will be identified based on the number and degree of associated environmental impacts.

## 22. *Significant and Unavoidable Impacts*

The EIR will identify those significant impacts that cannot be avoided, if the project is implemented as proposed.

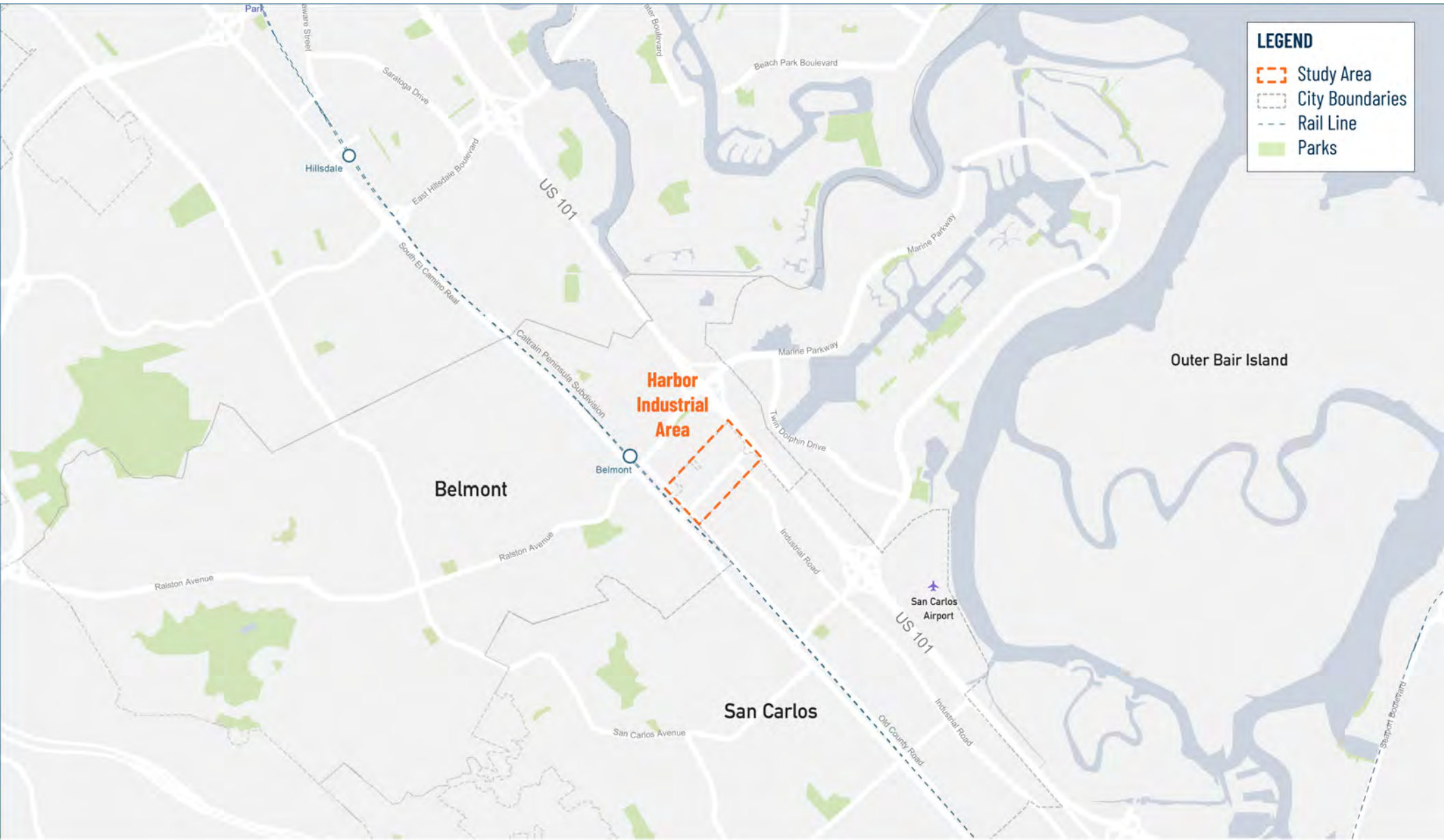
## 23. *Cumulative Impacts*

The EIR will include an analysis of potentially significant cumulative impacts of the project when considered with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the development area.

## 24. *Other Required Sections*

In conformance with the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR will also include the following sections: 1) growth-inducing impacts, 2) significant irreversible environmental changes, 3) references and organizations/persons consulted, and 4) EIR authors.

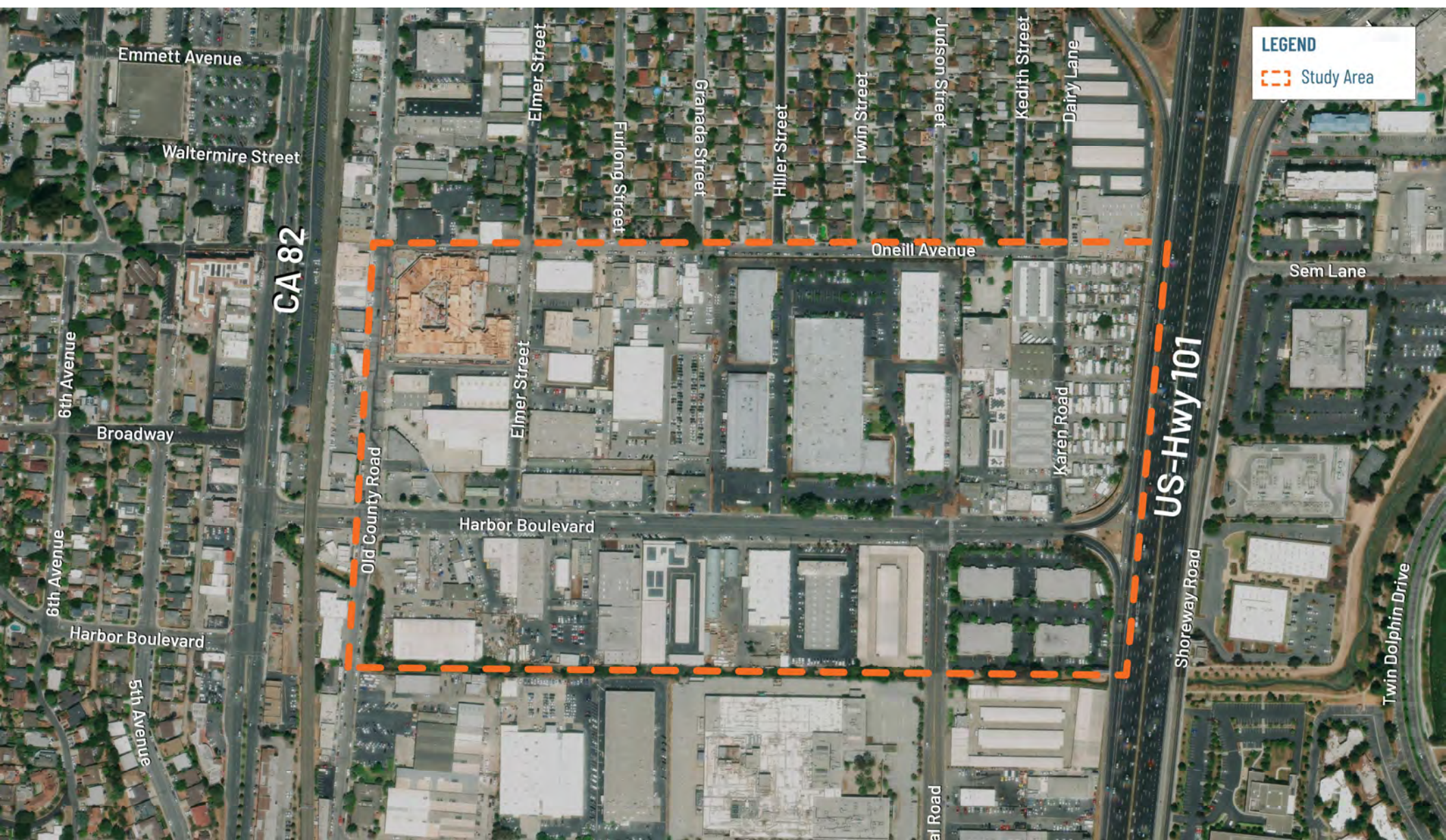
Figure 1



Regional Map



Figure 2



Aerial Map





Figure 3



Existing County of San Mateo  
General Plan Land Use Designations



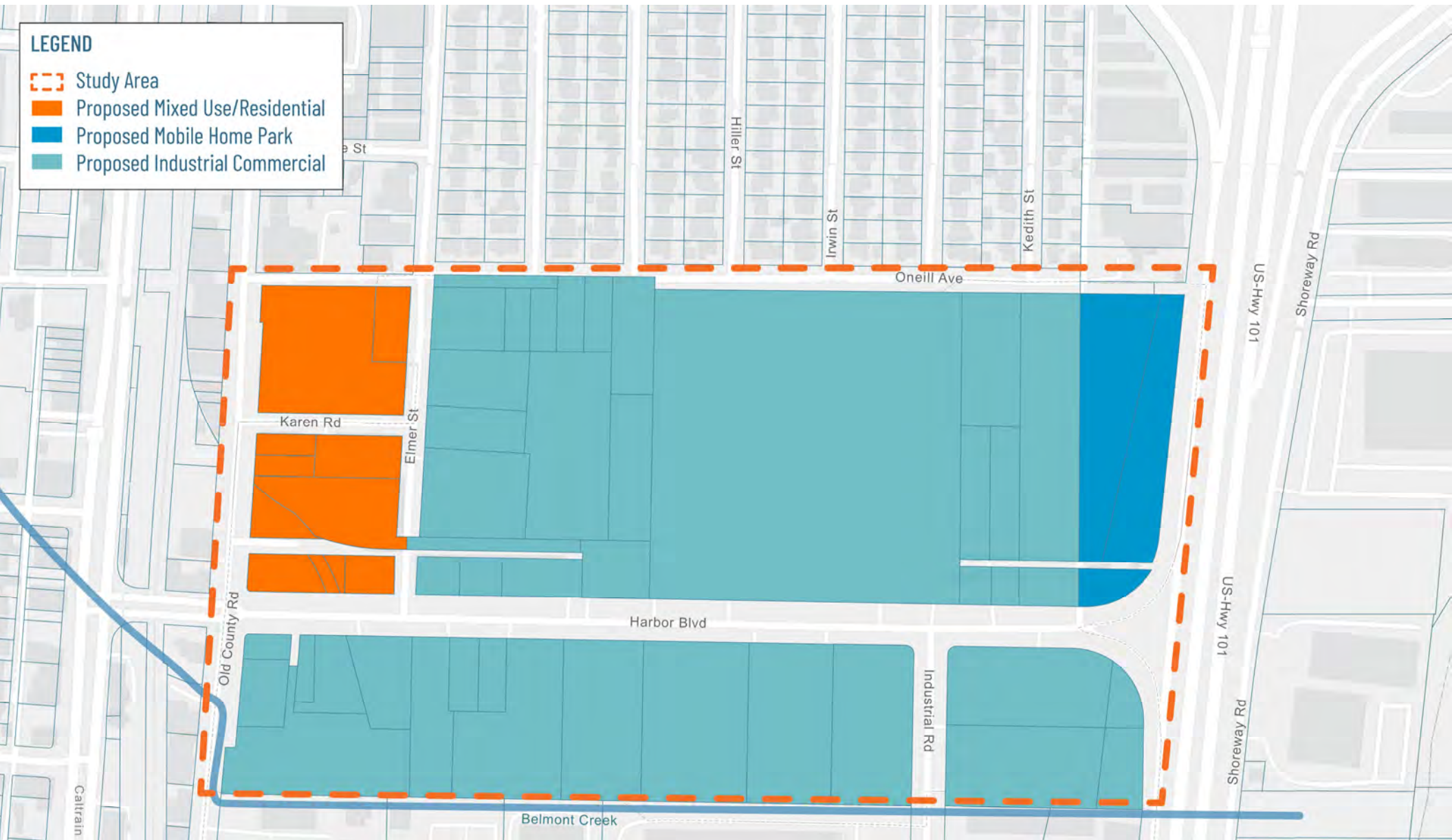
Figure 4



Existing County of San Mateo  
Zoning Designations



Figure 5



Proposed General Plan  
Land Use Designations

