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## COMMUNITY LOCATION

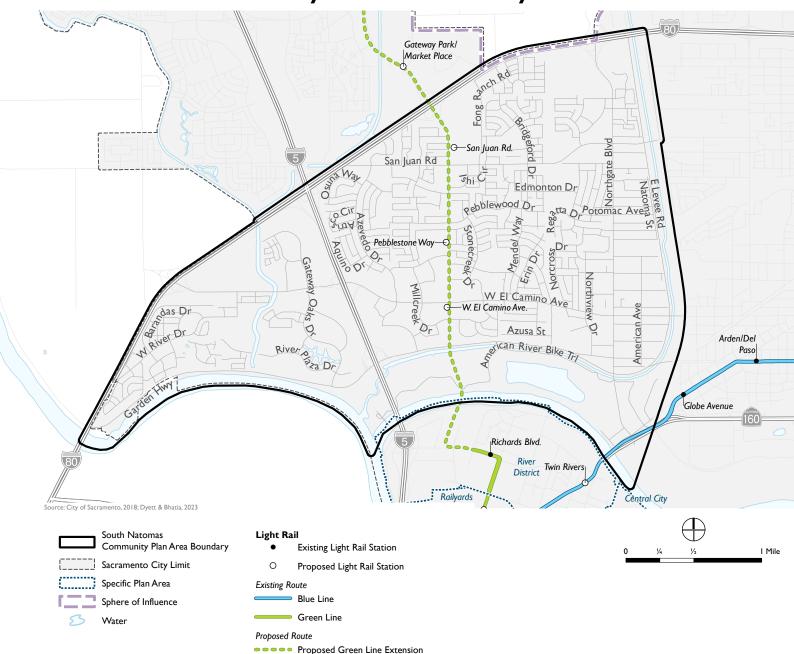
The South Natomas Community Plan Area is located just north of Downtown Sacramento and encompasses about eight square miles. As shown on Map CP-SN-1, the South Natomas Community Plan Area is bounded by Interstate 80 (I-80) to the west and north, the Ueda Parkway to the east, and the confluence of the Sacramento and American rivers to the south. Important community landmarks include public open spaces along the American River such as Discovery Park, Camp Pollock, and Sandy Cove Park, as well as the South Natomas Community Center and the Natomas Rose Garden.

# **DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING HISTORY**

Although neighborhoods existed as early as the 1920s, South Natomas was developed predominantly as residential subdivisions between 1950 and 1980 and was annexed by the City of Sacramento in the 1960s. Construction of I-5 shaped the fabric of the area, spurring the development of the many office parks that are home to some of the area's biggest employers, including offices of several State of California departments, drawing workers from around the region. I-5 also bisects the Plan Area with few crossings, resulting in two separate areas that often feel disconnected from each other.

Today, South Natomas is home to approximately 46,000 residents and is home to about 14,100 jobs, the majority of which are in professional and business services, education and health, and government. The

# **South Natomas Community Plan Area Boundary**



American and Sacramento Rivers, the International Garden of Many Colors—a community garden that celebrates cultural diversity by welcoming recent immigrants to share their food traditions through urban agriculture—and a variety of well-loved parks provide gathering spaces for members of the community.

### MAJOR TRANSPORTATION ROUTES

Bus routes run along Azevedo Drive, El Camino Avenue, San Juan Road, Northgate Boulevard, and Truxel Road, connecting South Natomas to Downtown and to the Sacramento Regional Transit (SacRT)

Blue Line light rail, and the planned Green Line light rail line extension along Truxel Road will connect South Natomas to Downtown Sacramento and to the North Natomas communities. Two major highways, Interstate 80 (I-80) and Interstate 5 (I-5) serve South Natomas. The Ueda and Ninos parkways and the "Main Drainage Canal" shared-use path are northsouth active transportation corridors providing offstreet walking and bicycling connections. East-west active transportation connections are limited due to disconnected street networks and I-5, and there are limited crossings of the American River for all modes of transportation.

#### **COMMUNITY VISION**

IN 2040, South Natomas is a lively, sustainable community where protection of the well-loved and well-connected American River Parkway and other natural areas goes hand-in-hand with sensitive infill development. At the heart of the community, colorful neighborhoods feature an inclusive mix of housing options, from older detached homes to higher density development with smaller residential units. Coffee shops, healthy and fresh produce grocery stores, and neighborhood restaurants thrive alongside small, locally-owned businesses. Residents and visitors enjoy the inviting, tree-lined streetscapes of the Northgate Boulevard and Truxel Road mixed-use corridors, where it is enjoyable to get around on foot, by bike, or by transit. Walking and bicycling is easy and comfortable throughout the community, enabled by efficient walking and bicycling networks that seamlessly interface with high-quality bus transit and light rail. Streets are easy to cross, with new speed controls, crosswalks, and traffic calming devices installed. Missing sidewalks and connector paths have been filled in, creating continuous networks for people of all ages and abilities. Residents can easily connect to destinations throughout South Natomas, Downtown, and the wider region. Well-loved local assets like Sand Cove Park, Bannon Creek Parkway, South Natomas Community Center, and Doyle Pool are well-maintained, well-lit, and are easily accessible through safe walking and bicycling paths. Residents are actively engaged in the community and a robust network of community organizations promotes a range of exciting community events that celebrate cultural diversity and inspire innovation. The annual "Celebrate Natomas" festival brings neighbors together over local food, music, and arts. South Natomas' diverse murals, trees, and neighborhood gardens enhance the community's strong sense of identity and make South Natomas a beautiful place to live.



# **Community Issues and Opportunities**

The following local planning issues and opportunities are synthesized from community input gathered over the course of the planning process, which included an in-person community plan area meeting in August 2019, a virtual open house conducted in October 2020, community-led "meetings in a box," and ongoing correspondence from individuals and neighborhood organizations as well as citywide outreach activities. The colored dots next to each paragraph and shown in the legend below indicate where readers can find policies and information related to each community issue and opportunity.

- Addressed in this Community Plan
- See Element 3: Land Use and Placemaking
- See Element 4: Historic and Cultural Resources
- See Element 5: Economic Development
- See Element 6: Environmental Resources and Constraints
- See Element 7: Environmental Justice
- See Element 8: Mobility
- See Element 9: Public Facilities and Safety
- See Element 10: Youth, Parks, Community, and Recreation
- See the Housing Element

Northgate "Main Street" Improvements -Northgate Boulevard, South Natomas's "main street," has many community-serving neighborhood shops, markets, and restaurants with multicultural and multiethnic offerings, giving South Natomas a wonderful sense of diversity. The corridor itself, however, lacks walkability and a strong sense of place. Mobility and placemaking improvements, such as lighting, continuous sidewalks, bikeways, street trees, on-street dining areas, and public art, could help to enhance the sense of place. A higher intensity mix of uses, including mixed-use housing areas, would provide a greater range of high-quality housing options to the community, as well as bringing more vitality to the Northgate corridor and better supporting local businesses.

Community Identity - South Natomas residents love their community, and many would like to strengthen the sense of place in the Plan Area by expanding and fostering outdoor gathering spaces, architectural variety and colorful buildings and murals. Residents are also interested in encouraging development of gathering places like coffee shops, plazas, and the transformation of the former Fire Station 15 into an art and garden center along with fostering events and festivals like Natomas Pops in the Park, an annual event in South Natomas Community Park with food, local bands, an art exhibition, and a youth talent show.

Infill Development - Because most of South Natomas is built out with established neighborhoods, there is relatively little vacant land. There are, however, still some opportunities for infill redevelopment of vacant and underutilized lots, as well as a few parcels west of I-5 that have not yet been developed. Many community members said that the community would be well-served by a hospital or more health centers, and noted that the area west of I-5 does not have a grocery store. The neighborhood between Truxel Road and Northgate Boulevard also lacks easy access to a grocery store. Some community members suggested adding restaurants, gathering spaces, and other vibrant uses in the Riverfront area along the western portion of Garden Highway, which some residents view as underutilized.

● ● ● Housing - Median home sale and home rental prices in South Natomas are generally close to citywide median prices. Forty-three percent of homes are part of multi-unit developments, a higher proportion than in most other areas of Sacramento, and many of these are garden-style apartment buildings near Garden Highway and I-80. The Gardenland neighborhood in South Natomas is designated as a State-defined disadvantaged community, meaning that its residents face a combination of pollution, health, and economic burdens. Some of this burden is due to a higher-than-average proportion of "substandard" housing, meaning housing that meets the criteria of having two or more of the following characteristics: residents pay more than 30 percent of their income towards housing cost, the housing is overcrowded (more than 1.01 occupants per room), the housing lacks an adequate kitchen, or the housing lacks adequate plumbing facilities. Ensuring that community members have access to quality housing

options will be a critical challenge. Residents value the South Natomas's relative affordability and want to continue to expand quality housing options for residents at all stages of life, including housing for seniors, to help maintain the social, family-friendly fabric of South Natomas.

Air Quality - Bounded and bisected by some of the region's largest highways, with many regional commuters driving through the area to get to work Downtown, the South Natomas Community Plan Area has areas with high exposure to air pollution, which is associated with high rates of asthma, low birth weights, and other indicators of poor health outcomes. Addressing air quality issues through comprehensive regional efforts, such as reducing vehicle emissions, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and increasing tree planting, could help to achieve better health outcomes in South Natomas.

Workforce Development - Natomas High School and the South Natomas Community Center are important institutions within the community, and many residents are interested in expanding youth programs and professional development offerings at these locations.

Transportation Safety - High traffic volumes and speeds throughout the community are a deterrent to walking or bicycling to local destinations. Several streets in South Natomas, including Garden Highway, Truxel Road, Northgate Boulevard, San Juan Road, West El Camino, Gateway Oaks Drive, and Natomas Park Drive, are part of the city's High Injury Network, where most crashes resulting in deaths or serious injuries take place. Northgate Boulevard is one of the top ten streets in Sacramento for these types of crashes. Residents suggested improvements to lower driver speeds on Truxel Road and Northgate Boulevard, widen sidewalks, reduce the length between marked controlled pedestrian crossings, and add separated bikeways.

Improving Active Transportation and Transit - Many residents would like to have more viable alternatives to driving. South Natomas's proximity to Downtown and to other community plan areas presents opportunities for improved bicycling and transit use, including the planned Green Line light rail

extension, that will connect the Central City, South Natomas and North Natomas and includes a bridge over the American River. For people who want to walk or bicycle off street, South Natomas has several well-used north-south off-street shared-use paths, but there are few east-west connections, particularly across I-5. Expanding walking and bicycling networks to access schools and commercial areas, paired with improvements like more trees and streetlighting, could help residents walk and bicycle to destinations more easily.

River Access - South Natomas sits at the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers. Many residents, however, feel disconnected from the rivers due to the limited number of Garden Highway crossings. North-south shared-use paths lack easy connections to the American River Parkway, and walking and bicycling connections to Discovery Park can be difficult.

Sense of Safety in Public Spaces - Many residents had concerns about safety in South Natomas's public spaces, particularly along the American River, due to poor lighting, litter, and the presence of long-term encampments of people experiencing homelessness. Residents suggested improving streetlighting, enhancing visibility of pedestrian and bicycle pathways, and providing housing options for people experiencing homelessness to ensure that the American River Parkway can continue to be used for recreation.



Parks and Recreational Facilities - South Natomas is well-served by parks, with almost all residential areas within a 10-minute walk of a park or green space. Residents especially love Sand Cove Beach, Chuckwagon Park, Sacramento County's Discovery Park in the American River Parkway, Ray and Judy Tretheway Preserve Park, South Natomas Community Center, and Doyle Pool. Community members suggested that lighting, picnic tables, restrooms, adequate parking spaces, and additional amenities such as tennis courts, pickleball, or basketball courts would enhance usability of the parks, and murals that reflect the community would add liveliness and a sense of place to these important public spaces. Residents would also like to see improvements made to the green space along the Garden Highway by maintaining and enhancing views of the Sacramento River through landscaping.

Residential Growth in Adjacent Unincorporated Areas - The Upper Westside Specific Plan in Sacramento County, in progress for the area just west of South Natomas in unincorporated Sacramento County, would include around 22,000 residential units, as well as commercial and park space. South Natomas residents want to ensure that proposed new development would not adversely affect existing communities, particularly by exacerbating traffic congestion.





# **Contextual Topic Areas**

## LAND USE AND PLACEMAKING

In Part 2 of the General Plan, the Land Use and Placemaking Element includes a land use diagram as well as maps that show maximum floor area ratio (FAR), minimum FAR, and minimum density standards across the city. Together, these maps provide direction for land use and development intensities citywide. Development in South Natomas is subject to these citywide development standards, and closeups of these land use designations and development intensities for the South Area Community Plan Area are provided in Maps CP-SN-2 through CP-SN-5 for ease of reference. Within South Natomas, these designations and standards seek to achieve community goals around promoting infill development and fostering vibrant public spaces.

Along Northgate Boulevard, Residential Mixed-Use designations and higher maximum FARs aim to catalyze infill development of vacant and underutilized parcels. Mixed-use residential developments along this corridor, adjacent to the disadvantaged community in the Gardenland neighborhood, would help to provide a broader range of types and price points of higher-quality housing, and would also help to support higher-frequency bus service, the vitality of existing local businesses, and a stronger sense of place along Northgate corridor. Collaborations with the Natomas Community Association and the City's Arts Culture and Creative Economy Commission, as well as with developers and landowners, could further enhance the sense of place along Northgate by promoting murals and public art, tree planting and landscaping, and provision of patios and lively gathering spaces.

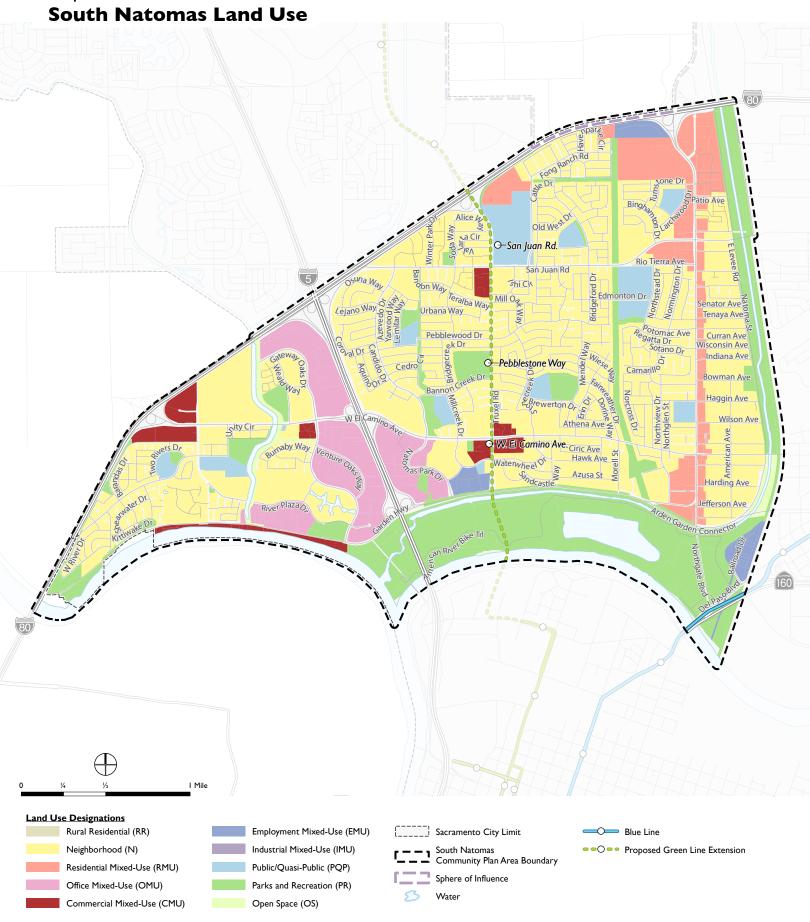
Commercial Mixed-Use designations in the western portion of the Plan Area along undeveloped or underutilized stretches of West El Camino, including near planned Green Line light rail stops, reserves space for community-serving uses like grocery stores. Additionally, the Commercial Mixed Use designation along the riverfront on the Garden Highway maintains opportunities for vibrant restaurants that bring the community down to the river. The planned Green Line extension will improve community access to nearby hospitals and health centers, including the



planned California Northstate University teaching hospital, to be located in North Natomas, just a few light rail stops to the north, as well as the wide variety of medical services located in and around Central City. Along the I-5 corridor, Office Mixed Use designations allow for additional office space and uses like childcare, cafes, and limited housing to complement existing employment uses, including State offices and the offices of the local public television station, PBS KVIE. Areas with a Neighborhood designation are primarily located in existing and established neighborhoods within South Natomas. In these areas, lower FARs control the size of new development while allowing a wider range of housing types to be built throughout the community, serving a wider range of household types, ages, and income levels.

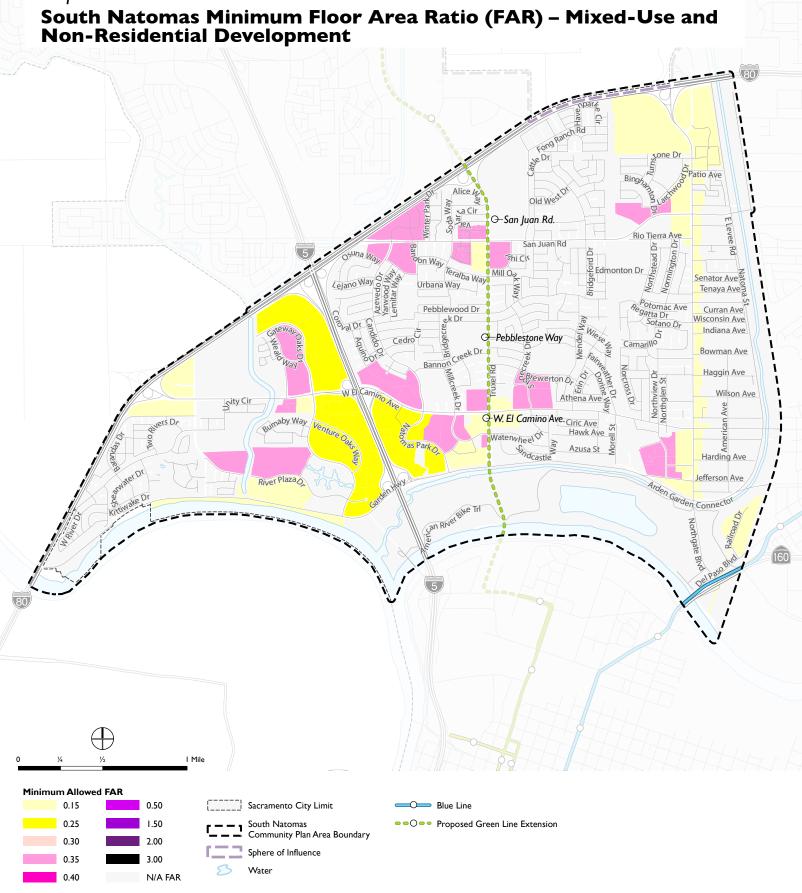
The South Natomas Community Center, located at a proposed Green Line light rail station and adjacent to the South Natomas Library, is an important asset for the community and represents an opportunity for new or expanded job development programs, a key community priority. Citywide programs, such as Landscape and Learning and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, provide great opportunities for Sacramento youth, but are not currently located in South Natomas or conveniently accessible along transit lines for South Natomas residents. Expanding these types of programs or offering new programs at the South Natomas Community Center could provide better access and more opportunities for youth in South Natomas.

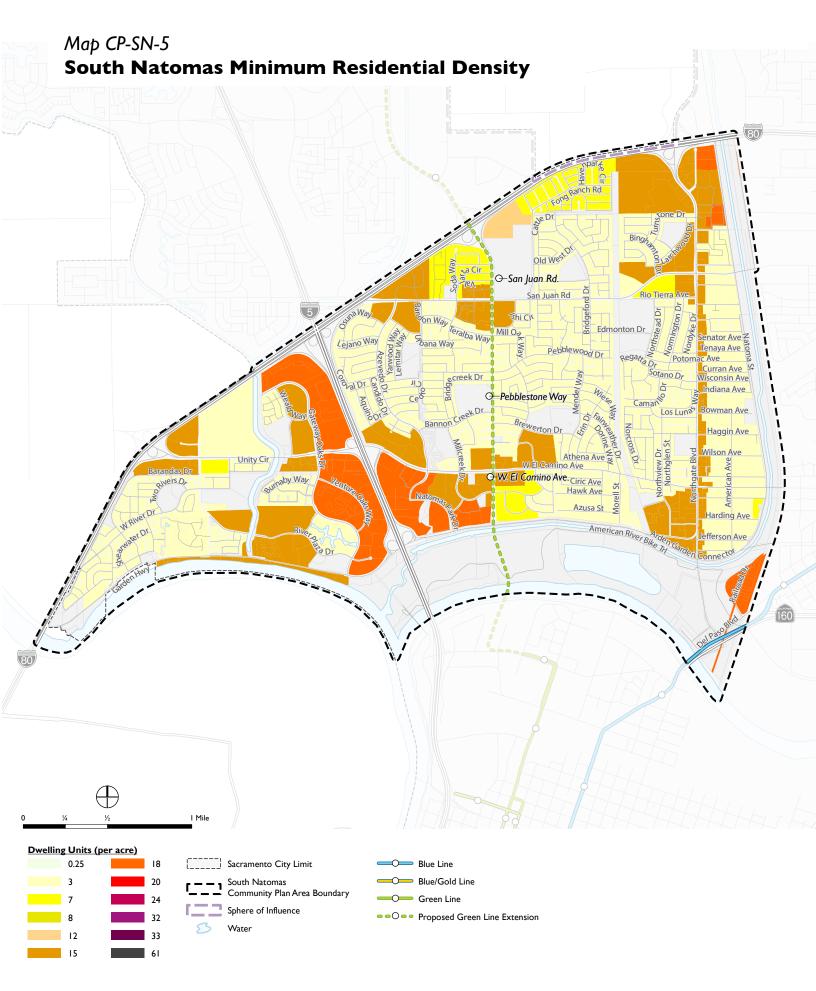
Map CP-SN-2



Map CP-SN-3 South Natomas Maximum Floor Area Ratio (FAR) -All Development 80 Bingha atio Ave Old West Dr ⊖San Ju<mark>an Rd.</mark> San Juan Rd oon Way, Teralba Way! Edmonton Dr তিhi Ciগ Regatta Dr Sotano Dr Pebblewood Dr Curran Ave Cedro Camarillo Indiana Ave O-Pebblestone Way Bowman Ave Ranno Northylew Dr Northglen St Haggin Ave Wilson Ave Sity Cir O W. El Camino Ave. Ciric Ave Hawk Ave Azusa St S Harding Ave Jefferson Ave Arden Garden Connector an River Bike Tri I Mile Maximum Allowed FAR 1.0 Sacramento City Limit 8.0 Blue Line 2.0 10.0 South Natomas Proposed Green Line Extension Community Plan Area Boundary 15.0 4.0 Sphere of Influence 5.0 N/A FAR Water 6.0

Map CP-SN-4





Land use policies in this Community Plan complement Citywide policies in the Land Use and Placemaking Element and in the Housing Element meant to promote availability of a wider range of housing types, improve housing affordability, and address homelessness. Additional policies in the Economic Development Element will help to address equitable economic development, including by coupling business development and attraction efforts with workforce development strategies to ensure that local residents are equipped with the skills needed to perform in the new job sectors.

### **MOBILITY**

Many of the major priorities voiced by the South Natomas community are related to mobility, including improving walking and bicycling connectivity, transportation safety, and transit reliability. A potential solution to explore involves reallocation of roadway space on two corridors, Northgate Boulevard and Truxel Road. Removing travel lanes to provide more space for walking, bicycling or transit infrastructure such as through transit-priority lanes, wider sidewalks, and separated bikeways can improve mobility, connectivity, and safety for all roadway users.

A Truxel Road roadway reallocation could provide important space for the planned extension of the Green Line light rail; the light rail extension is a long-term project, however, and in the meantime, high-frequency buses along a reallocated roadway with transit-priority lanes could fill the gap in providing more frequent, reliable transit.

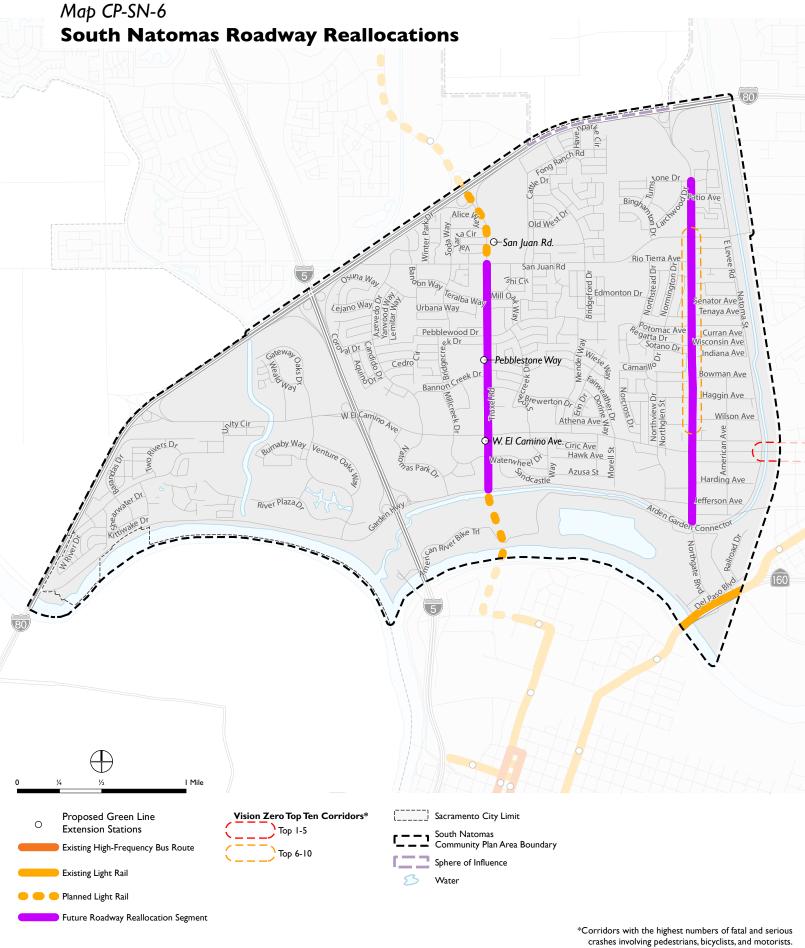
A Northgate Boulevard roadway reallocation could also provide space for transit-priority lanes or for expanded bike and pedestrian infrastructure, improving walkability and bikeability of the corridor and supporting local businesses. A portion of Northgate Boulevard is designated as a Vision Zero Top 10 Corridor, one of the streets in the city with the highest numbers of fatal and serious crashes involving pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. This portion of Northgate Boulevard also partially located in a disadvantaged community, and several streets within South Natomas are within the High Injury Network.

Roadway reallocations can help slow traffic speeds and improve roadway safety. The City has initiated a Northgate Boulevard Corridor Study (2021) that will further study, and engage the communities to gather feedback on needs and potential designs. Map CP-SN-6 shows the existing and planned roadway reallocations for the South Natomas Community Plan Area, which are street segments throughout the city that have been identified as places where excessive roadway capacity could be repurposed as spaces to prioritize walking, biking, and transit use. These could take the form of improvements such as wider sidewalks, protected bike lanes, bulb-out transit stops, and bus-only lanes, and will require further community outreach, study, and roadway design.

While South Natomas is well-served by north-south shared-use paths, connections in the east-west direction, including across I-5, could be improved to better connect the community. The Bicycle Master Plan (2018) plans for a bridge across I-5 on West El Camino and a new shared-use path connecting Venture Oaks Way and Natomas Park Drive. The community is also disconnected from the river; better connections from the Ueda, Ninos, and Bannon Creek parkways to and across the river would facilitate access both to the American River Parkway and to Downtown.

Additional policies around transportation safety, transit frequency and reliability, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure can be found in the Mobility Element.





# **PARK ACCESS**

South Natomas has five community parks, ten neighborhood parks, two open space parks, and four parkways, for a total of 208 acres or about 4.5 acres of City park per thousand residents. The area also includes 470 acres of open space not owned by the City, primarily along the American River Parkway. Almost every neighborhood has a park or open space within a 10-minute walk, as shown in Map CP-SN-7. One exception is the disadvantaged community at the eastern edge of the Plan Area, north of Gardenland Park. Informal trails connect the neighborhood to both Gardenland Park and up the levee to the Walter S. Ueda Parkway but no formal or accessible trail entrances exist. Collaborating with local agencies for joint use shared paths and maintenance facilities could provide better pedestrian and bicycle access to these important community spaces. This community also experiences higher rates of obesity than the citywide average (37 percent versus 30 percent). Improving park access for South Natomas could help improve health outcomes by providing opportunities for active recreation. The American

River Parkway, owned and operated by Sacramento County, includes the 302-acre Discovery Park, which has sport fields, picnic areas, and boat launches. However, Discovery Park and the wider American River Parkway is generally not easily accessible by foot or bike from South Natomas, and as a County park, there is a fee to park a vehicle at Discovery Park. Many residents consider the American River Parkway to be an underutilized asset that could be better integrated into the community and is in need of more maintenance and amenities. Capitalizing on opportunities to improve pedestrian and bicycle connections to the river by collaborating with Sacramento County to improve river maintenance could expand community access to and use of the river corridor.

Additional policies addressing park and river maintenance and access can be found in the Youth, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element.



# **Community Policies**

The policies below address issues specific to South Natomas and supplement citywide policies; many of the issues and opportunities of South Natomas are common to many areas of Sacramento, and are addressed at the citywide level.

# **Land Use and Placemaking**

#### SN-LUP-1

**Vibrant Northgate.** The City shall support intensification of uses along Northgate Boulevard, including by promoting mixeduse development and housing, to provide a wider range of quality housing options for the community, to support frequent bus service, and to support local business vitality.

#### SN-LUP-2

Northgate Boulevard Placemaking. The City shall incentivize and encourage activities that strengthen the sense of place along Northgate Boulevard by working with developers, landowners, local community groups, and the Arts Culture and Creative **Economy Commission to promote** murals and other public art, wayfinding, landscaping and tree planting, and outdoor gathering spaces to enhance pedestrian experiences, support local businesses, and enhance the sense of place in South Natomas.

#### SN-LUP-3

Truxel Road Site Design. The City shall promote transit-oriented site designs for new development along Truxel Road, particularly near planned light rail stops, that create an active street frontage, screen parking, and are oriented to the street, to enhance vitality and support transit use along the corridor.

#### **SN-LUP-4**

**Drive-through Commercial.** The City shall discourage drive-through commercial uses in South Natomas.

#### SN-LUP-5

**Riverfront Landscaping.** The City shall ensure that landscaping along the Garden Highway enhances and frames views of the Sacramento River.

# **Historic and Cultural Resources**

There are no historic and cultural resource policies specific to South Natomas that supplement the citywide General Plan policies. Please see the Historic and Cultural Resources Element in Part 2 of the General Plan.

# **Economic Development**

#### SN-ED-1

Youth Workforce Development. The City shall recognize youth work-based learning and work readiness training programs as a citywide priority, that includes South Natomas, and will continue to offer programs such as Landscape & Learning, Prime Time Teen, and Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act opportunities at the South Natomas Community Center.



# **Environmental Resources and Constraints**

There are no environmental resources and constraints policies specific to South Natomas that supplement the citywide General Plan policies. Please see the Environmental Resources and Constraints Element in Part 2 of the General Plan.

### **Environmental Justice**

There are no environmental justice policies specific to South Natomas that supplement the citywide General Plan policies. Please see the Environmental Justice Element in Part 2 of the General Plan.

# Mobility

SN-M-1

**Improved Transit.** The City shall coordinate with the Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) for planning and provision of high frequency, connected and convenient transit in South Natomas, particularly along Northgate Boulevard and Truxel Road.

SN-M-2

Transit Right-of-Way. The City shall coordinate with the Sacramento Regional Transit District (SacRT) to acquire rightof-way needed for bus and light rail infrastructure.

SN-M-3

**American River Parkway Connections.** When planning walking and bicycling improvements, the City shall seek opportunities to provide active transportation connections across the American River to better connect South Natomas with Downtown and the regional bicycling network.

# **Public Facilities and Safety Section**

There are no public facilities and safety policies specific to South Natomas that supplement the citywide General Plan policies. Please see the Public Facilities and Safety Element in Part 2 of the General Plan.

# Youth, Parks, Recreation, And Open Space

SN-YPRO-1 Gardenland Park Access. The City shall explore the feasibility of collaborating with Reclamation District 1000 and Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency to create multi-use paths and a new access point to Gardenland Park from Indiana Avenue to expand park access for nearby residents.

SN-YPRO-2 Walter S. Ueda Parkway Access. The City shall explore options to create new accessible access points to the Walter S. Ueda Parkway throughout the Gardenland neighborhood.



SN-YPRO-3 Garden Highway Crossings. When conducting planning and engineering work on Garden Highway, the City shall explore options to expand walking access to the Sacramento and American rivers from South Natomas neighborhoods by providing more frequent crossings across Garden Highway.

SN-YPRO-4 River Access Points. The City shall collaborate with the Sacramento County Department of Parks and Recreation to improve access to the American River Parkway from South Natomas by incorporating new river access points and improved bicycle and pedestrian entrances, where consistent with the American River Parkway Plan, Natural Resources Element.

SN-YPRO-5 American River Maintenance. The City shall collaborate with Sacramento County and the South Natomas Improvement Association to address litter along the American River Parkway.

SN-YPRO-6 Connections to East Levee Road Trails.

The City shall explore options to improve connectivity to the East Levee Road trails.

# **SOUTH NATOMAS COMMUNITY PLAN**

The following section lists relevant plans and studies that have been prepared or adopted by local agencies and are directly pertinent to the South Natomas Community Plan:

Gardenland/Northgate Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP) (2003)

