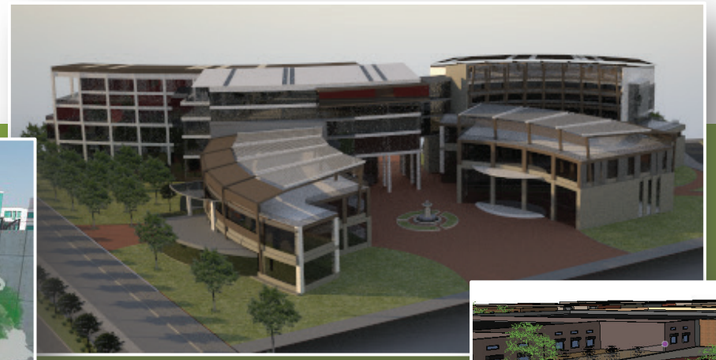
URBAN DESIGN VISIONS FOR MILPITAS

California Circle and Main at Serra



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URBAN DESIGN VISIONS FOR MILPITAS

California Circle and Main at Serra

Prepared by the

CRP 341 Urban Design III Studio
Bachelor of City and Regional Program
City and Regional Planning Department
California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo

For the

Department of Planning and Neighborhood Services
City of Milpitas

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The CRP 341 Urban Design Studio III would like to express their gratitude to City Manager Thomas C. Williams for his support and inspiration, Steven McHarris and Scott Ruhland for their committment to good planning and their guidance guidance througout this project, to all the members of the Planning Commission for their gracious comments and encouragement.

Disclaimer

This academic report summarizes the process and depicts the results of a quarter-long undergraduate class project conducted by the CRP 341 Urban Design Studio III, City and Regional Planning Department, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, during the Fall Quarter 2013. Delivered through an outreach effort that follows Cal Poly's "learn-by-doing" approach, this report reflects two major pedagogical goals. Firstly, by responding to a real problem and a community need, and by reflecting a process inspired by professional practice the class engaged students more fully and produced an effective learning environment. Secondly, the report is meant to contribute to the City of Milpitas planning and urban design efforts as a draft document offering a series of ideas for discussion with the community and planning professionals in search of future directions for Milpitas.

URBAN DESIGN VISIONS FOR MILPITAS

California Circle and Main at Serra

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URBAN DESIGN VISIONS FOR MILPITAS
California Circle and Main at Serra

Chapter 1
About the Studio

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1.1
Introduction

An undergraduate class from the City and Regional Planning Department at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo was charged by the City of Milpitas Planning and Neighborhood Services Department to develop pre-planning insights, vision and urban design concepts for two strategically ocated sites in Milpitas, California Circle, and, the area around Main Street at the Serra Way intersection.

This report represents a compilation of the work completed by the students in CRP 341 Urban Design Studio III during the 10-week period of Fall Quarter September-December, 2013. Instructors Vicente del Rio and Hemalata Dandekar, supported by Teaching Assistant Evan Evangelopoulos, guided the class efforts during this intense 10-week period. Students were engaged in a rapid information collection and data gathering process leading to the development of seven youthful, forward-looking urban design visions for California Circle and Main Street at Serra Way.

From the start of initial discussions between the instructors and the City of Milpitas Planning and Neighborhood Services Director Steven McHarris and Senior Planner Scott Ruhland, the student work was intended to represent a pre-planning phase. It was designed to be a rich and broad-ranging visioning exercise where the youthful energy of 29 third year undergraduate planning students would be turned to imagining a creative and dynamic future for two key sites in the City of Milpitas.

The two sites were chosen for their potential to bring about a catalytic, transformative effect in the City of Milpitas, stimulating both change within the city and creating nodes of activity that would bring new elements to its economy. In addition, the goal was to contribute by creating visual and physical imagery that could inspire the development of new identities for both sites and announce to the community and the region what Milpitas strove to become in the 21st Century.

Project Areas

The student work presented here does not aspire to provide a set of detailed and implementable plans but rather a rich array of possibilities from which the city policy makers and investors can pick and choose elements that resonate with their own analysis of what can succeed on these sites.

The California Circle area was embraced by the students for its great potential to become a new gateway to the city from the north, given its strategic location adjacent to the I-880. Moreover, developments fronting the highway could act as a “billboard” and give a new identity for Milpitas.

The Main Street at Serra project area with strategic frontage on Calaveras Boulevard, and including Milpitas’s historic center had important attributes that could, over time, transform the area into, once more becoming the heart of the city. Assets included the potential inherent in rediscovering the creek at Abel Street and capitalizing on the ethnic diversity of restaurants and cultural offerings of stores and institutions. A viable and vibrant city center that would enhance the quality of life for Milpitas residents and attract visitors from the region and beyond seemed possible.

The work presented in this volume should be read for its vision and ideas, and judged on its creativity and effort to think “outside the box” of what is “pragmatic” and “doable” immediately or in the near future. Great cities evolve over time, with incremental and purposive decisions, and the role of visions and strategic plans is to help move the city economy and its social and physical fabric towards a greater good and an enhanced quality of life. This process is incremental and may take decades but will derive guidance from a larger sense of direction – from a strategic plan for the future. The student’s efforts here offer visions and pre-plans to stimulate a broad and inclusive consideration of strategic positioning for the city of Milpitas. Their findings are presented to contribute toward that important effort.

1.2
The Design Process

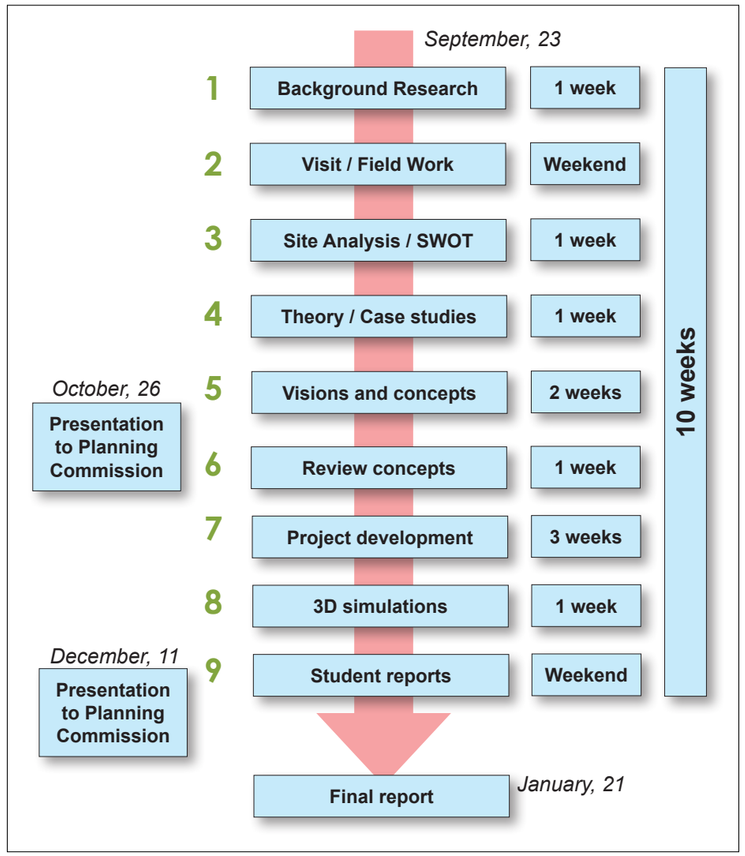
To embed student creativity in the thick context of Milpitas's past and present student were formed into seven teams and followed a nine-step design process purposively structured so as to involve them in becoming familiar with the City of Milpitas – it's land use and physical fabric, it's socio-economic and historic evolution, and it's aspirations today to become a "destination city."

Student teams looked within California and outside to find inspiration from successful project that had had a tranformative effect on their cities. This work informed the creative design process which the student teams immersed themselves in within a studio/laboratory environment. It served as background material which informed their site-specific concepts, three for California Circle and four for Main at Sierra, and the final urban design visions, grounding these in the realies of Milpitas.

Understanding the city enabled the student teams to connect their projected futures for their sites to their surroundings and to shape them so that they would augment the larger city entity, but also draw on creative and "out of the box" ideas that have worked elsewhere and have promise for consideration in Milpitas.

These are youthful vision for two strategically located parts of the city that soon-to-be young professionals believe would make for an interesting urban fabric, one that they would embrace and enjoy living and working in. As the chair of the Milpitas Planning Commission said to the students on hearing their visions, "this is your world, and your future, and I hope we can see these visions become a reality here in Milpitas."

To reach these visions student teams moved incrementally through three phases of information gathering, analysis, and design: *Phase 1- Understanding the Problem*, *Phase 2 - Concept Design*, and *Phase 3 - Urban Design Visions*.



The Design Process and quarter-long time-line

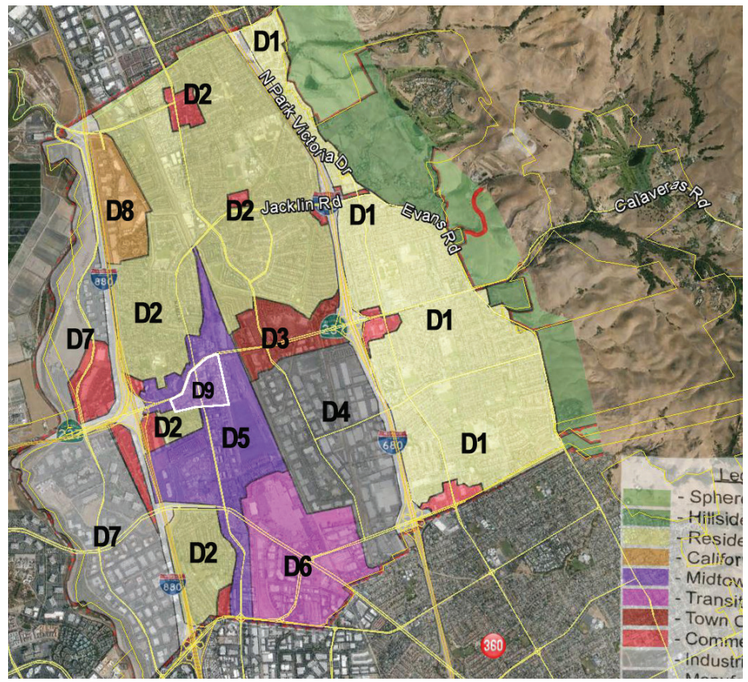
Phase 1: Understanding the Problem

Students obtained background and overview by reviewing plans and approaches developed previously by the city including those in the general plan, housing element, and the city's bikeway plan (see Appendix 1). Documents Reviewed) as well as by researching on-line information about Milpitas history, market and general trends. (Step 1)

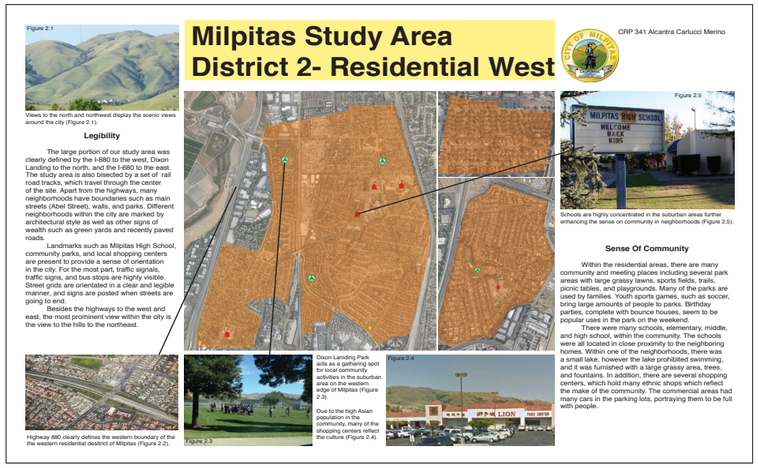
To obtain a city overview student teams did windshield and on-foot surveys to collectively experience the city first-hand with on-site investigation. The city was divided into seven district types (residential east and west, town center, manufacturing, midtown, transit area, industrial park) and discrete neighborhood characteristics and land uses were documented and assessed in terms of: Imageability, Legibility, Accessibility and Sense of Community. The analysis of each of the six district types can be found in (Appendix 2)

The field work and data analysis of each district was used to develop a SWOT analysis of the city to reveal the critical elements that the city could seek to attract two the two project sites that would augment and enhance the overall image and attraction of Milpitas for both residents and visitors.

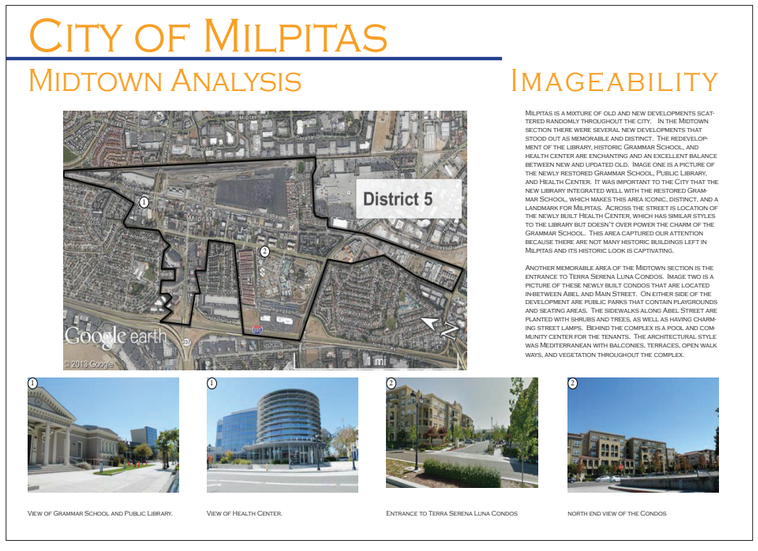
The two student teams investigating the California Circle and Main at Serra sites did intensive plot by plot documentation and data collection utilizing a Lot Survey form and recording each site with photographs of buildings and relevant site attributes (see Appendix 3).



How the City of Milpita's territory was divided among teams for the field studies.



Top and bottom: Examples from two of the student teams' reports from the field studies.



The California Circle site is located north of the city between Highway 880, Dixon Landing Road, and the Berryessa Creek. It has approximately 110 acres and is currently designated as an Industral Park. It includes a hotel and several industrial buildings of which approximately 32% are vacant. The area is surrounded by residencial land uses except across Highway 880 to the West where an industrial park area currently has some agricultural use and the city sewage pump station. This site has excellent accessibility and is highly visible from Highway 880.

The Main at Serra site is approximately 55 acres and is located in Milpita's Midtown, along parts of West Calaveras Boulevard, Main and Abel streets. This area is of great importance to Milpitas since it is served by one of the main access roads to the city core from highways 880 and 237. Its present state is below its development potential as it holds several outdated shopping centers, commercial and office buildings, as well as various under-utilized lots. Accessibility from both highways is excellent but is limited from the east due to the railroad tracks and facilities. The existing Midtown Specific Plan needs revision and better detailing in the study area (Step 2 and Step 3).

Case studies selected for their relevance to the two sites were identified and analyzed with a view to extracting the lessons to be learned for to the two project sites in Milpitas (Step 4). They were cases of successful urban design interventions in California and nationally that had served to transform and act as a catalyst for area improvement.

The cases were examined for characteristics of good place-making based on seven urban design attributes delineated in the book *Responsive Environments* by Ian Bentley et al as follows: permeability, variety, legibility, robustness, visual appropriateness, richness and personalization. The case studies revealed the significant characteristics of place making and offered the following lessons for Milpitas (see Appendix 4 for the full case-studies):

<u>City Place, West Palm Beach, Florida</u>

An underused area in a well located part of the city which was similar to Midtown Mipitas was redeveloped with a mixed-use development that took reference from the existing historical Spanish Colonial Revival style church to provide an integrating architectural theme to the site and lend an identity to the project. A mix of public open space surrounded by a variety of businesses lend vibrancy to the area.

<u>Mizner Park, Boca Raton, Florida</u>

A mix of old and new buildings on the site offered low and high rent opportunities which allowed a greater variety of services to establish in the area. Land values increased. Incorporating public open spaces close and easily accessible to activity centers of future developments provided a sense of identity that allowed a mix of apartments and office space, which had no destinct identity themselves to "borrow" and benefit from this proximity and be successful.

Model of the lot survey form utilized to gather information on the two project areas during the field studies.

LOT SURVEY Project area _____ Lot number: _____

Vacant: ____ No buildings but lot used for _____

		Buildings *(number them on the map)*				
		1	2	3	4	5
Number of stories *(ground floor counts as one)*						
Type of Use	Ground					
	1st floor					
Dominant façade materials						
Dominant façade color						
General maintenance aspect *(Good, average, bad)*		B A G	B A G	B A G	B A G	B A G
Historical/cultural significance *(Indicate if its your judgment)*		No Yes	No Yes	No Yes	No Yes	No Yes
Muture trees in the lot *(locate on the map)*		How many ___ Aspect _____				
Other observations and elements of note *(locate on the map)*						

Sidewalk	No	Yes	Average width:	Condition: *(Good, average, bad)*	B	A G
Mature trees in the sidewalk *(locate on the map)*	How many ___ Aspect _____					
Other observations and elements of note *(locate on the map)*						

<u>When you are back in the studio, fill in one letter-head sheet per Lot Survey with:</u>

The photo(s) showing the building(s) in the lot (one photo per building), numbered accordingly to the map.

Photos of any special observation you want to make.

City Place

Mizner Park

Valencia Town Center, Valencia, California

Emphasizing accessibility and legibility, the town center provides small plazas and malls for pedestrian enjoyment along walkways through the shopping centers. Good signage enhances way-finding through the complex and the mix of housing, retail and dining attracts a divese population.

Downtown Brea, California

Restoring two icons of the historic but dilapidated downtown - the “Welcome to Brea” sign and Charlie’s Clock with it’s “Good Old Brea” sign provided a connection to past history and an identity to this site. This suburban, small town community benefits from access to a walkable downtown in which activities such as a Tuesday night Farmers Market, movie theater, shopping and specialty restaurants attract people from the surrounding area.

Uptown District, San Diego, California

Located on the site of an abandoned Sears store and parking lot, this project includes a mix of housing units, retail and commercial and a community center. The development was designed in a variety of architectural styles and richly landscaped open spaces to provide recreational opportunities for residents. The Hillcrest sign, a landmark over the intersection of two major streests serves to create an identity and provides a sense of place.

The Grove, Los Angeles, California

Proximate to, and connected with, a historic Farmer’s Market and adobe, the Grove features a central street through the site which is European themed, has a trolley line and brick paving to provide organization and legability to the complex. Two and three-storey buildings allow tenants leeway to change facades and personalize their facilities. The configuration of buildings is designed to create small and medium sized outdoor malls spaces for seating and watching, and allow pedestrians to interact freely. Landmarks at strategic locations along the main axis provide focal points of identity.

Santana Row, San Jose, California

The largest mixed use project to date in San Jose this project is an ambitious retrofit of retail and residential space. Transitioning from two

Valencia Town Center

Downtown Brea

The Grove

Santana Row

Uptown District

way traffic areas to a pedestrian boulevard of three to five storey mixed use buildings on the site of a former outdoor mall and shopping center, Santana Row attracts thousands of tourists and residents daily. With it's pedestrian friendly environment, water features, a variety of gathering places, attractive landscape and high and mid-range shopping it is a regional attraction.

Across these seven case studies students identified various lessons and design attributes for their concepts for Milpitas. These included the need to create: pedestrian-friendly, walkable environments which were mixed use, vibrant, higer density, featured attractive and accessible public spaces with unique features and identity, recognized the history and traditions of place, were anchored by key institutions which provided a theme and identity to the complex, were legible in their spatial organization, and had good wayfinding characteristics in their layouts and signage.

Phase 2: Concept Design

Preliminary concept plans were developed which identified key elements of each team's design vision, development direction, land uses and a preliminary development program (Step 5). Student teams presented their concept plans to the Milpitas Planning Commission and city staff and received written assessments of the creativity, aesthetic quality, functionality and feasibility of their proposals. Each commissioner was also asked to identify what they thought was the most appealing aspects of each team's concepts, and the least.

Elements of the student concepts which were perceived as most appealing by the commissioners included: the high-tech walk, tech museum, the creek related water walk, water park, preforming arts center, cultural and community center, village walk, farmers market, restaurant row, convention center, hotel complex, elements that addressed the cultural landscape and incorporated the multi-culturalisam of Milpitas, international movie theater complex, history center for the city of Milpitas, health plaza, mixed use developments, using second floors and roof tops, walkability of projects, pedestrian bridges over major streets and a green cap on the railroad tracks, closing Able Street, odor reduction techniques, using buildings as noise barriers, an amphitheater that serves as a "city gateway" inviting "iconic architecture," focus on vibrancy, elements to attract to, and keep younger residents in the city, and elements to encourage night life.

Features that were pointed out as needing additional attention included: incorporating and recognizing the history of Milpitas, assessing parking needs, collecting data to assess economic feasibility, enhancing visibility of the business retail from I-880, enhancing public transportation, making park and open spaces publically accessible, needing to provide for religious institutions and needing to buffer and transition to residential areas.

Phase 3: Urban Design Visions

A design and project development period during which student teams took into consideration and followed the comments and critique they received from the City of Milpitas planning commissioners and staff. This work culminated in a developed set of vision plans, elevations and sections for their project sites, renderings of a signature sector of their urban design vision, a development program and three-dimensional simulations to allow for a dynamic fly-through, walk-through of each concept. Three dimensional models of the urban design vision allowed an enhanced sense of fit and appropriateness. (Steps 6,7 & 8).

The work was presented to the City of Milpitas Planning Commission and has culminated in this report and a video that presents the student perspective on this exciting undertaking. (Step 9)

Student teams developed three discrete and different urban design visions for California Circle and four for Main at Serra. Detailed delineation of the seven visions is provided in Chapters 4 and 5 of this report. Key elements of these designs:

California Circle:

Team 1: Benzel, Johnson, Shimer, Vargas, Zanmiller
Waterview Plaza

With a focus on technology, sustainability and community this design features:

- a waterpark which is a north entry gateway
- core plaza
- business incubator
- creek walk as a focal point for recreational use
- hotel

Team 2: Bonilla, Coleman, Ha, Sheikhali
Cosmo Center

With a focus on creating a Live-Work-Play complex which is attractive to the local multicultural, technology rich community this design features:

- Open Air Amphitheater as Gateway
- Cultural Complex
- Freeway Buffer of Buildings such as Parking Structures with animated facades
- Milpitas Tech Museum
- Residential over Commercial and Parking

Team 3: Bertwistle, Perez, Severon,Way
The Circle

With a focus on recreational, educational, and cultural activities and seeking to create a space that will be a destination for experiencing ethnic cuisine and for artistic expression this design features:

- Cultural Center
- Central Plaza with stage and space for community events such as farmers market
- Terraced parks radiating from the central plaza up to the height of the creek levy
- Creek walk

Main at Serra

Team 4: Caruso, Granger, Merino, Van Leeuwen
The Main Connection

Celebrating the history of Milpitas and it's cultural richness this design features:

- A semi-circular plaza forming a gateway into Serra
- Green median-rich treatment of Serra
- A plaza at the terminus of Serra with a mural depicting the history of Milpitas
- A cultural history museum

Team 5: Alcantara, Bedekovic, Kim, Tran
The Core

Increasing and maximizing pedestrian permeability by restoring the creek-side and creating a connectivity grid this design features:

- A Gateway at Serra Boulavard
- Convention Center with Hotel
- Art District with Plaza and Art Center
- Residential Hotel
- Restored Creek at Able Street
- A Multi-Screen Movie Theater at terminus of Serra

Team 6: Marston, Oreizi, Paul, Wood
HOTSPOT

A commercial-based development anchors this design which features:

- A Performing Arts Center
- High Tech Walk between Main and the rail road tracks
- Large mixed use buildings which create a raised community platform on top of retail
- Open public space and a Community Center

Team 7: Ammari, Carlucci, Kramer, Osterhus
Milpitas Main

- A bridge between a hotel and convention center form a visual gateway to the site in this design which features:
- A Hotel and Convention Center to lend identity to the city
- A Cultural Center with movie theater, museum and grocery store
- A Restaurant Row along Main

1.3
Summary and Conclusions

The student work compiled in this report has the virtue of bringing several solutions and possibilities that might be considered by investors and policy makers when exploring the capacity and potential of two significant Milpitas sites – California Circle and Main at Serra. The urban design ideas presented by the students identify a wide range of possibilities that might, with creative mixing and matching, provide workable, successful, alternatives for future development.

The student work presented in this report gives physical form through their renditions of seven alternatives. They present sometimes complementary, sometimes competitive visions for the two sites. Collectively they provide a rich tapestry of possible interventions that the City of Milpitas decision and policy makers might, in conjunction with private sector entities, undertake to make these catalytic sites ones that initiate a change in the overall identity and sense of place of the city.

URBAN DESIGN VISIONS FOR MILPITAS
California Circle and Main at Serra

Chapter 2
Site Assessment

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Through visiting and studying the California Circle and the Main at Serra Streets areas and their surroundings, understanding them within the city and the regional contexts, relating them to the General Plan and other planning documents, and talking to Milpitas's planners about it, allowed the students to define and delineate their potentials and limitations for development.

As noted in Part I of this report, the assessment of the project areas included analysing and discussing observations from the field studies, including the students' impressions of the fundamental urban design qualities of imageability, legibility, sense of community, and accessibility (see Appendix 2).

The class compiled the assessment of both project areas into site analysis maps which served as a visual summary of the most noticeable aspects that limit or support development. These maps indicate the main vehicular and pedestrian patterns, sun direction and primary wind directions, land uses, conditions of occupied and vacant buildings, existing facilities, areas of conflicting uses, viewsheds, natural elements, and relationships with the surroundings.

More detailed field surveys helped the class to complete their understanding of both project areas and the conditions of their buildings and parcels. A specific lot survey form was used to annotate such conditions, allowing for a complete assessment of the existing uses, maintenance, and development potential of all parcels in both areas (see Appendix 3).

Assessing the project areas allowed the class to discuss their development potential through a strategic planning method. A SWOT analysis revelealed the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunites-Threats of both areas divided into five categories: man-made, economic, socio-political, natural and cultural resources. The SWOT analysis allowed the students to comprehend the development potential of both areas from a strategic perspective, as wel as to understand the reflections that their proposals could have onto the site and the region, and vice-versa.

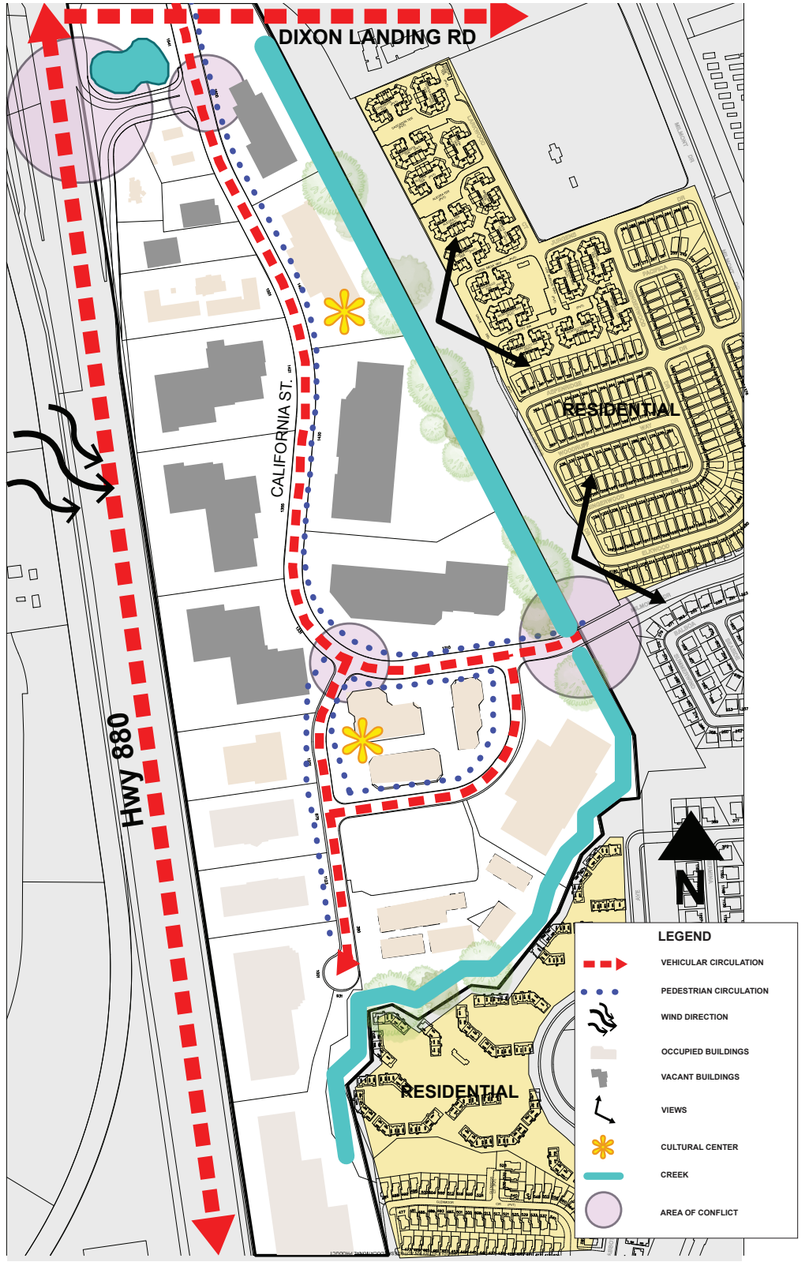
2.1
Assessment of the California Circle Area

The California Circle project area has approximately 110 acres and is designated as an Industrial Park. Most of the existing buildings are dedicated to light industrial uses and storage, though there are some structure rented to different ethnic groups for community meeting/religious pursoses. Approximately 35% of the existing buildings seem to be vacant. A detailed lot by lot survey can be found in Appendix 3.

Generally speaking, the class concluded that the California Circle area has a strong development potential as a north gateway into Milpitas, which is facilitated by its proximity, visibility, and easy accessibility to State Highway 880. The site is also easily accessible from the south, east, and the rest of Milpitas. Dixie Landing Road also serves as an important connector to both the highway (access from the North) and the rest of the city.

The Berryessa Creek is an important natural element that may also provides stronger accessibility to the south, as linear open space. The streets, sidewalks, and the existing infrastructure are in very good condition. The whole area has good landscaping and most sidewalks profit from a very good level of tree-planting. Other positive factors for development are the proximity to residential development and the long vistas towards the mountains.

The California Circle area can serve well as a new commercial/ service hub as well as for additional residential use, particularly hotels. The fact that several buildings and/or parcels are underutilized should facilitate development and, particularly, suggest the need for an integrated planning approach that can take full advantage of the area's potential.



California Circle Area

Site Analysis Map

California Circle Area

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
MAN-MADE RESOURCES			
• Almost all parcels front street • Plenty of parking on all parcels and street • Site can be seen easily from I-880 • Large parcels ease development • Sidewalks along all of CA Circle • Bike lanes through out the site • Hotel, Starbucks, & Chevron are few of the busy uses within the site, appeals to interstate drivers • Potential to draw in frustrated drivers • CA Circle Rd is in good condition	• Unused parking space • Outdated/run down architecture • About 30% vacant • Creek trail dead ends at I-880 • Sidewalks are narrow and in poor conditions in some areas. • Limited access to creek – no paths and fences in some areas • Bike lanes are narrow & unprotected • Few crosswalks in odd locations • No amenities for workers • Poor Signage • 880 can cause congestion, • Poor LOS on Dixon Landing	• Easy access to I-880 • Dixon Landing is also a main thoroughfare • Easily visible from highway • Significant residential community on other side of creek	• Noise from I-880 • Name change of street from Milmont to CA Circle is confusing and lacks signage
NATURAL RESOURCES			
• 4 Parcels border Peni-tencia Creek and trail • Penitencia trail brings runners and other users to site • Flat topography • Mature trees along California Circle/Nice Smelling Trees! • Water Fowl • Views of hills to the east	• Goose poop • Sensitive species can deter development • Few mature trees Berms are high/ accessibility to creek trail is low • Exposure to site flooding • Un-exciting topography	• Creek creates natural divide between different uses • Views of hills to the east	• Wind draws odors to sight • Barrier between residential and industrial • Flooding • Mosquitos

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
ECONOMIC RESOURCES			
• Some businesses drawing freeway traffic • Visibility • Proximity to residential • Captive market of office workers & residential • High vacancy rate provides opportunity for easy development • City is willing to go big!	• Lacks a 24 hour use largely • Uncool! • Single use orientation makes the area not resilient.	• Regional economic recovery • "Tech Bubble" • Vehicular infrastructure makes access easy for employees • "Gateway" to Silicon Valley	• High competition with existing tech companies • Single use orientation makes the area susceptible to economic tides
SOCIO-POLITICAL RESOURCES			
• Opportunity for walkability, recreation, and mixed use. • Blank canvas in terms of creating identity.	• Lack of public trans (auto-oriented) • Surrounding communities may oppose new developments • Milpitas lacks cultural and social cohesion	• City is ready to promote changes in the site	• Developers ready to promote housing in the site • Milpitas lacks an identity and a brand
CULTURAL RESOURCES			
• Indian Cultural Center/ Temple has a large community	• Lack of cultural anything	• Rich variety of cultural influences in Milpitas as a whole • Culturally diverse residential neighborhood nearby	• Existing lack of cultural infrastructure reflects poorly on site

2.2
Assessment of the Main at Serra Area

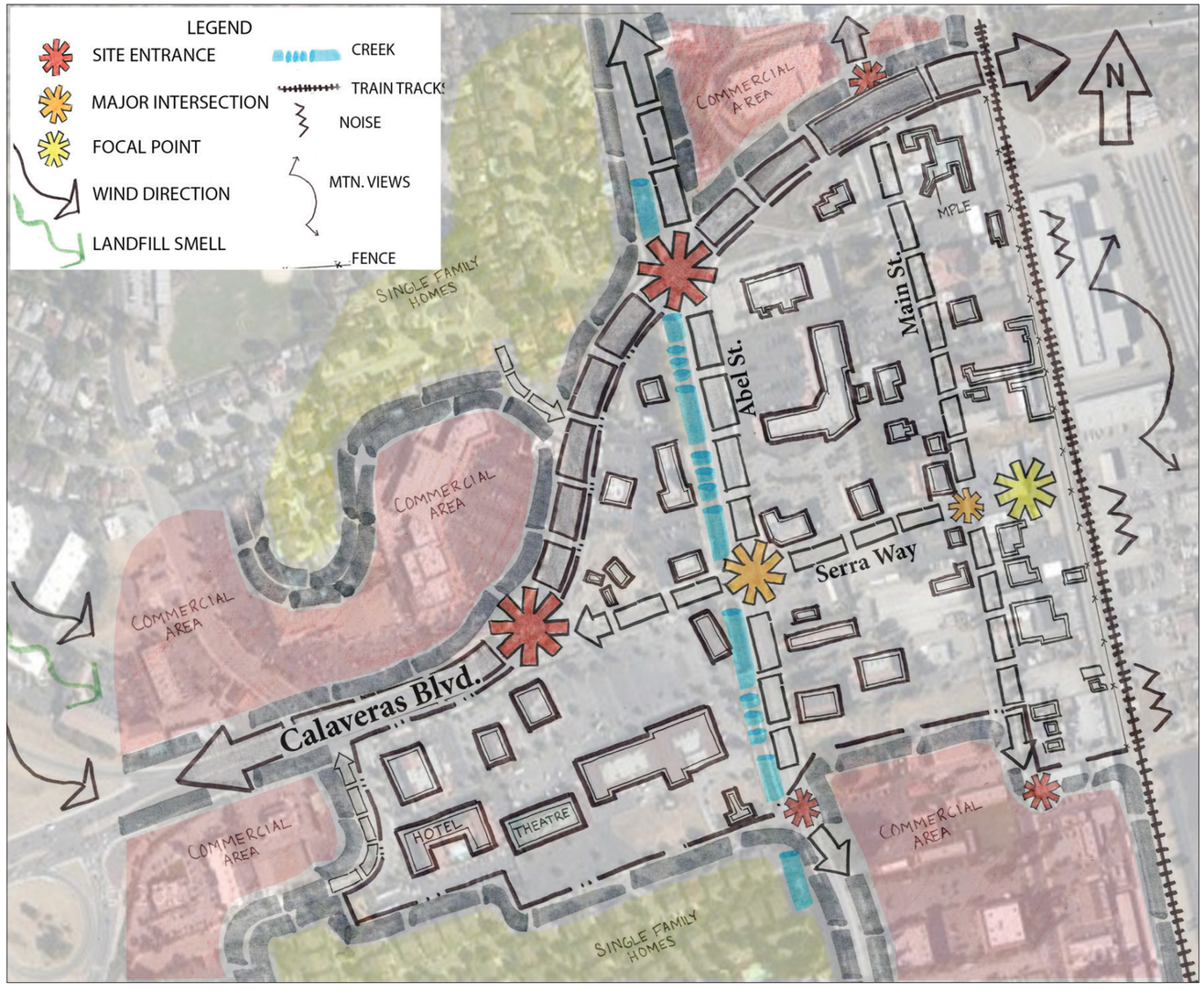
The class was excited with the potential for development in the area around the Main Street and Serra Way intersection. The designated project area has approximately 60 acres and our survey revealed that is underutililized with vacant parcels and low-usage buildings (see Appendix 3). However, it represents tMilipitas's historical core and is easily accessible from all directions, particularly from Highway 880. Limiting the project area to the west and north, the Calaveras Boulevard (Highway 237) is an important link from/to the nearby highway and to the West part of Milpitas, the Town Center, and Highway 680. On the east, the project area is bounded by land controlleds by Union Pacific Railroad which includes the tracks proper, depots, patios, and spurs. Views from the project area to the mountains on the west are very beautiful and a distinct landmark.

The project area is surrounded by residential communities within walking distance. On the north and just outside the project area along Main Street there is an important new complex of community-serving municipal buildings as well as a parking garage. To the south, along Main Street and also within walking distance, lies the Transit Area and the future stop of the BART line. Though commercially active, the three existing shopping centers located between Abel Street and Calaveras Boulevard are out-dated and poorly designed. The class found that the project area is an excellent representation of the diversity in the Milpitas demographics, with numerous ethnic oriented shops, services, excellent restaurants, religious centers, and even a movie-theatre exclusively dedicated to showing Indian films.

Not may negative factors affect this project area but the strongest is certainly the Union Pacific Railroad both because it generates a strong easy-west barrier and is a noise source. The Calaveras Boulevard can also be seen as an impediment to pedestrians due to its width and heavy traffic. Although it is an important natural element, the Berryssa Creek runs along Abel Street in a concrete canal. It could provide an opportunity for a North-South connection and linear park, linking both project areas. Finally, the nearby landfill negatively impacts the areas through bad smells that are sometimes brought in by the prevailing winds, although this does not seem to occur too often or be too significant.

Main at Serra Area

Site Analysis Map



Main at Serra Area

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
MAN-MADE RESOURCES			
• Proximity to I-880 (highway) • Major roadways and railways through and around the project site	• Awkward parcel placement and orientation • Lack of appropriate signage for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers • No architectural style • No multi-mobile transportation system; skewed toward cars	• Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) currently being extended • Railroads could provide transportation in the future • Midtown supports walkable design	• Landfill toward the northeast end of the site can lead to dissatisfaction from the public • Random development pattern
NATURAL RESOURCES			
• Proximity to creek • Large aromatic trees distributed throughout the site • Scenic mountains that surround the project site	• Trail alongside creek exists, but needs renovating • Not many trees along the streets to provide shade • Lack of adequate landscaping	• Geographic location of the project site is close to the bay and natural parks	• Many earthquake faults near the project site • Risk of liquefaction
ECONOMIC RESOURCES			
• Average income of households is relatively high • Serra Center ready for repositioning • Many restaurants	• Commercial districts within the site provide no inviting aspects • No central business district besides Great Mall	• Vacant lots have the potential to be developed without any constraints in the future • Average income of households is twice as much as the national average • Close to Silicon Valley businesses and light industry	• Majority of jobs outside of Milpitas and the project site • Over-reliance on automobile transportation due to high gas prices

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
SOCIO-POLITICAL RESOURCES			
• Presence of community centers • Civic pride	• No specific guidance or vision for redevelopment	• Strong tax base • Strong interest from the city	• Nearby jail lowerS property values • Lack of appropriate vision plan
CULTURAL RESOURCES			
• Existence of Asian communities • Presence of Indian movie theater • Variety of ethnic restaurants	• Lack of identity • Lack of social interaction or common public space	• Temples in and close by • Lack of identity allows us to create new identity • Historic resources • Close to city library, cultural and health centers	• Possibility of xenophobia • Conflict between ethnic groups