

SAN CARLOS SPOTLIGHT

ON
NEWSWORTHY
TOPICS

CITY OF
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SAN CARLOS

THIS ISSUE'S FOCUS:
Northeast Area
Specific Plan

March 2023

sancarlosnortheastplan.com



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Planning for a Prosperous, Resilient Future

The City of San Carlos has recently launched a new planning initiative called the Northeast Area Specific Plan. This Plan focuses on the area north of Holly Street to the San Carlos city limit at Belmont Creek, and between Old County Road and Highway 101.

In developing its annual Strategic Plan in 2022, the San Carlos City Council established a goal to create the Northeast Area Specific Plan to respond to and anticipate new development, especially in the life sciences and biotechnology sectors. The Northeast Area will likely see significant changes, and the City wants to thoughtfully plan for these anticipated changes.

The goal of the Northeast Area Specific Plan is to clearly state the expectations and requirements for new development and change in the Northeast Area. We will use the Specific Plan to guide growth in the area. The process will also explore the possibility of introducing housing to the area, and address other opportunities and challenges in the district, such as flooding and sea level rise, environmental needs, aging infrastructure, transportation, urban design, and more.

This newsletter provides additional details about the Specific Plan process, what we hope to achieve, and next steps. **We invite you to delve into this newsletter, sign up for project updates, and get involved!**

- **I Have a Question**

Reach out to:

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- **Learn more about the Plan and sign up for the Project Email List**

Visit: www.sancarlosnortheastplan.com





Message from Al Savay, Community & Economic Development Director

The Northeast Area is rich with a diversity of uses. Many businesses have been located there for decades and offer a wide mix of services, businesses, and office uses from recreation to automotive repair to furniture and office supplies. These businesses serve the San Carlos community and customers throughout the Peninsula and greater Bay Area.

Over the last few years, numerous properties have changed to new owners, and the area is experiencing renewed development interest. One new life science project at 642 Quarry Road is moving forward. We are seeing interest from other developers, especially in the life science and biotechnology sectors, and we anticipate more proposals in the future.

In April 2022, the City Council enacted a development moratorium for the Northeast Area which paused development to provide time to thoughtfully develop a new Specific Plan. In May 2022, the City Council extended the moratorium until April 2024. The development project at 642 Quarry Road, noted above, is exempt from the moratorium because their development application was deemed complete before the moratorium went into effect.

As a part of the City of San Carlos 2022 Strategic Plan, the City Council directed staff to prepare a Specific Plan to manage and direct changes in the area. This Specific Plan offers the opportunity to consider and tackle some big questions, such as:

- What is the best way to support the existing businesses and industrial fabric, and encourage and support new development and new companies?
- Is housing appropriate in this area, and if so, where should it be located?
- How can we address flooding from Belmont Creek, and other changes brought by climate change?
- Could the land around Belmont Creek become a recreational resource?
- How can we provide low-stress ways for people to walk and bicycle to and through the area, and provide connections from the San Carlos and Belmont Caltrain stations?

The City has hired a consultant team, led by Perkins&Will, to partner with City staff to create this specific plan. The Perkins&Will team will bring fresh ideas – ones that have been proven to work in other, similar communities. Their team is also familiar with San Carlos, and the transformation on the East Side, from their work creating the 2021 East Side Innovation District Vision Plan.

These are complex issues, and we want to know what you think. Please join us for the interactive Community Workshop on March 15th – more details on the back page of this newsletter.

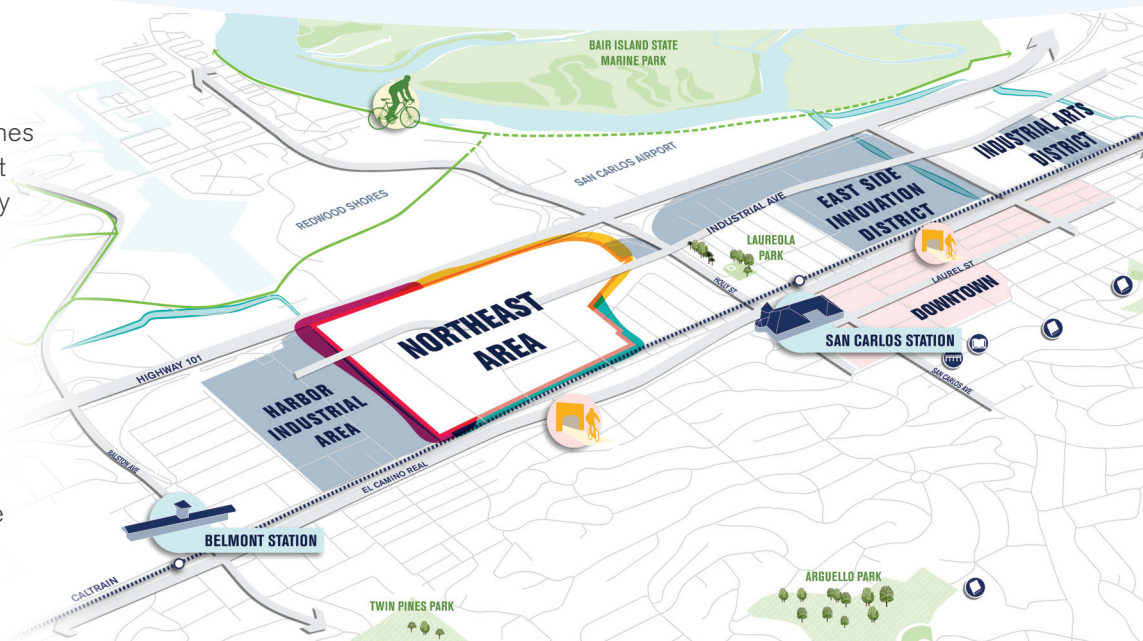
Please reach out to us at the City with questions or ideas. We look forward to hearing from you.



What is a “specific plan”?

A specific plan is a planning, policy, and zoning document, that establishes a vision for a defined area or district within a city. A specific plan typically includes policies to guide growth and change in an area, and includes development standards to guide the construction of new buildings or alterations to existing buildings. Specific plans consider land uses (industrial, office, retail, residential, and others), transportation, open space and recreation, infrastructure improvements, and the look and feel of the area.

Al Savay,
Community & Economic Development Director

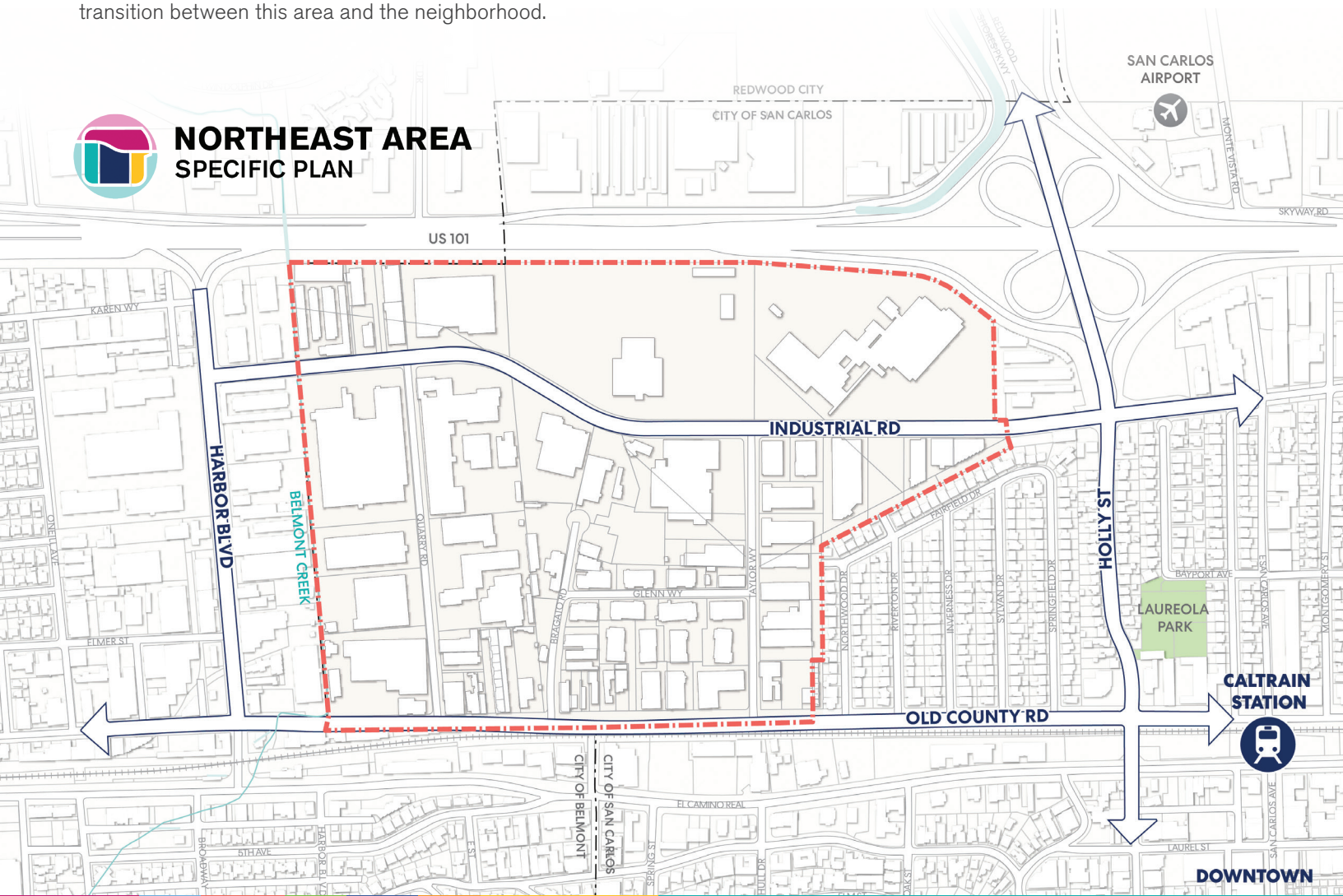


The Northeast Area

The Specific Plan focuses on the “Northeast Area,” which has historically been referred to as the Harbor Industrial Area. This area is defined as the area north of Holly Street, to the San Carlos city limits at Belmont Creek, and between Old County Road and Highway 101. The Plan does not include the nearby residential neighborhood, but it will thoughtfully plan for the transition between this area and the neighborhood.



NORTHEAST AREA SPECIFIC PLAN



Plan Goals

The goal of this Plan is to support the area’s existing economic ecosystem and plan for anticipated new opportunities – such as new development – and challenges facing the area – such as flooding and sea level rise, and the need for more vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle connections.

To support the entire San Carlos community, the Plan will also explore the possibility of introducing housing to the area to help meet ongoing housing needs.

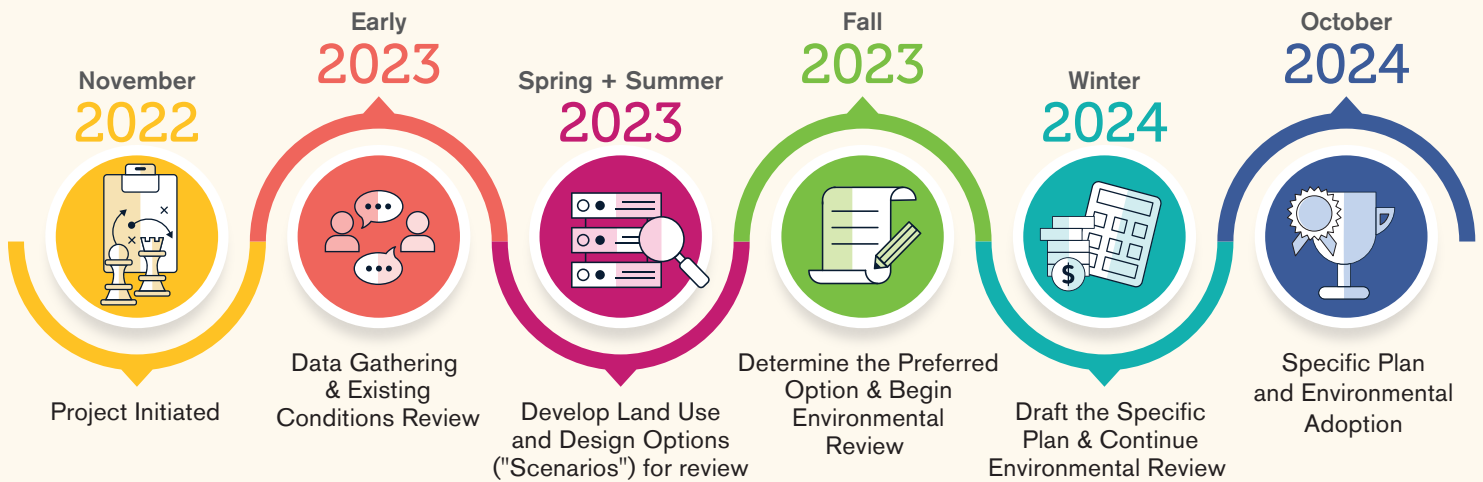
Overall, the goals of the Plan are to:

- **Carefully and creatively plan** for new development and construction
- **Celebrate the area’s industrial legacy** and leverage new economic opportunities
- **Explore the possibility** of introducing housing
- **Support industrial access** and provide ways for people to walk, bike, take transit, and drive to and through the area
- **Champion district resiliency** and thoughtfully plan for the future of both the natural and built environments, including planning for sea level rise and climate change
- **Address environmental needs**, including flooding from Belmont Creek; the potential presence of hazardous substances; and other needs



Proposed Schedule

The Northeast Area Specific Plan process began in late 2022, and will take approximately two years to complete. City staff anticipates bringing the draft Specific Plan to the City Council for consideration and adoption in October 2024.



Will housing be addressed in the Northeast Area Specific Plan?

The Specific Plan will explore the possibility of introducing housing into the area, and will ask questions such as:

- Where could housing be located?
- What are the best ways to locate housing with the existing industrial businesses?
- How can the City best support the existing businesses so that they can stay and thrive?
- What features need to be included to support the district?

While housing is not currently allowed in the Northeast Area per the City's General Plan, we recognize the importance of planning for additional housing to serve the community. The City recently adopted a new Housing Element which plans for over 3,000 new housing units at a range of affordability levels. The City anticipates that even more units will be needed in the future. To learn more about our Housing Element update, please visit: sancarlos2040.org.

Tying it all together

The Northeast Area Specific Plan will build upon and complement other planning initiatives that are either currently underway or recently completed by the City. Initiatives underway:

- **Downtown Specific Plan** (underway) is creating a new vision for Downtown San Carlos based upon what the community most loves and celebrates about Downtown, and what needs updating.
- **Objective Design and Development Standards** (underway) will create clear and measurable design standards for mixed-use and residential projects, as well as single-family units.
- **East Side Innovation District Vision Plan** (adopted in 2021) guides new development in the 150-acre commercially zoned area (bound by Holly Street, Brittan Avenue, Old County Road, and Highway 101). This area is envisioned to be a well-connected, multi-modal neighborhood with a mix of uses that integrates existing businesses with new science and technology uses, and offers a rich array of community amenities for a more resilient and inclusive future.
- **Climate Mitigation and Adaption Plan** (adopted in 2021) is San Carlos' strategic plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to changing climate conditions.
- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan** (adopted in 2020) identifies specific projects and policies to enhance the walkability and bikeability of San Carlos.



The Northeast Area: A Thriving Business District

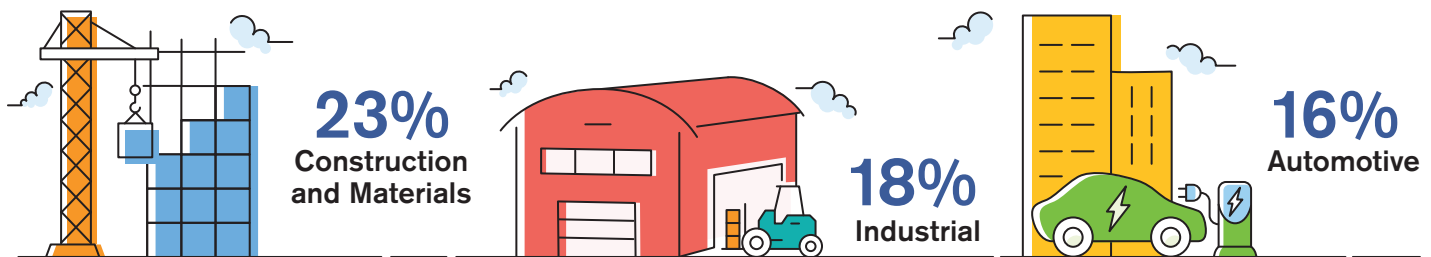
The Northeast Area is currently home to many thriving businesses and talented entrepreneurs. Some businesses have been in the area for decades, while others are new to the area. Characteristics that set the Northeast Area apart from other areas in San Carlos include:

- **Rich industrial identity.** Many businesses are classified as industrial; these businesses offer services ranging from automotive repair services to wineries. These businesses play a vital role in the local economy and generate considerable tax revenue for San Carlos, supporting the City's services and amenities.
- **Growing life sciences sector.** In recent years, East San Carlos has attracted many life science businesses and private sector investment. This investment helps drive economic growth and development, creating new jobs and opportunities.
- **Strategic location.** The Northeast Area is conveniently located in the heart of the Peninsula, right off Highway 101 and El Camino Real, and near the San Carlos Airport. The area is situated near two Caltrain stations – making it an ideal location for business logistics and employees' commutes, providing easy access to and from work, and facilitating connections with customers and suppliers.
- **Proximity to leading tech and life science companies.** The area's connections to established and emerging companies in the technology and life sciences industries make it an attractive location for companies looking to expand or relocate, further attracting businesses and investment, and promoting economic development in the district.



What's in the Northeast Area today?

The Northeast Area is home to over 175 diverse businesses. The most common types of businesses are classified as:



Some of San Carlos' largest employers are located in the district, including Sutter Health Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Natera, Inc. (a clinical genetic testing company), PG&E, and Delta Star (a transformer manufacturing company).

Smaller businesses also call the Northeast Area home and offer services including recreation, gardening supplies, food service equipment, plumbing services, office supplies, and photography.

The Northeast Area offers a variety of small-scale industrial spaces. These spaces provide entrepreneurs and small businesses with relatively lower-cost rents and the opportunity to start and grow. The spaces are adaptable and flexible to changing economic conditions, allowing businesses to pivot and adjust to new market conditions as needed.



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Northeast Area Specific Plan Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the Northeast Area Specific Plan?

A: The proposed Plan will prepare for change and new development coming to the Northeast Area, in a way that supports existing and new businesses, residents, and the overall community.

Q: Why is this process happening right now, and what is the timeline?

A: Significant interest from developers has prompted the City Council and City staff to start the process to develop a road map to thoughtfully plan for anticipated changes. The Plan process will take about two years to complete, wrapping in October 2024.

Q: How can I get involved?

A: The City is eager for all to be involved in this process. Visit sancarlosnortheastplan.com/getinvolved for opportunities to share your input.



SAVE THE DATE!

Join Us for the Community Workshop on March 15th!

You are invited to the first Community Workshop for the Northeast Area Specific Plan!

Mark Your Calendar & Register Today!

When:
Wednesday,
March 15, 2023
from 7:00-8:30PM

Where: Held Virtually on Zoom

To register, visit:
tinyurl.com/NASPWorkshop1 or scan the QR code

We want to hear from you – This workshop will be interactive and offer plenty of opportunities for you to share your input. We will also share more information about the overall process, including project goals, schedule, and next steps.

The City is eager for all to be involved in this process. We will offer many ways for you to share your input, starting with this March 15th Community Workshop – We look forward to seeing you there!

