

appendix A

**EXISTING CONDITIONS
REPORT**

downtown napa

SPECIFIC PLAN



Downtown Napa Specific Plan Existing Conditions Analysis Report

Public Review Draft June 2009

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------------|
| I. Introduction | 5 |
| Plan Purpose | |
| Community-Based Planning Process | |
| Regional Context and Planning Area Boundaries | |
| Definition of a Specific Plan | |
| Planning Context | |
| Document Overview | |
| II. Land Use and Urban Design..... | 13 |
| Key Findings | |
| Existing Land Uses | |
| Urban Design Analysis | |
| Existing Regulatory and Policy Framework | |
| III. Market Demand Analysis..... | 43 |
| Key Findings | |
| Policy Context | |
| Economic Context | |
| Socioeconomic Overview | |
| Residential Market | |
| Retail Market | |
| Hotel Market | |
| Office Market | |
| IV. Parking and Circulation..... | 74 |
| Key Findings | |
| Transportation Policy Context | |
| Existing Transportation Assessment | |
| Existing Conditions Traffic Operations Assessment | |
| Parking Policy Context | |
| Existing Parking Conditions | |
| Conclusions | |
| Issues and Opportunities | |
| V. Infrastructure..... | 114 |
| Key Findings | |
| Hydrology and Flood Protection Project | |
| Water Supply | |
| Wastewater System | |
| Dry Utilities | |
| VI. Next Steps..... | 130 |
| Appendix | |
| Appendix A: General Plan Policies Relating to Downtown Napa | |
| Appendix B: Economic Analysis Appendices | |
| Appendix C: Environmental Setting | |
| Appendix D: Stakeholder Focus Group Interviews Summary | |
| Appendix E: Community Web-Based Survey Results | |

LIST OF MAPS AND FIGURES

- Figure 1.1: Regional Context
- Figure 1.2: Citywide Context
- Figure 1.3 Planning Area
- Figure 2.1: Existing Land Uses
- Figure 2.2: 2020 General Plan Land Use Categories
- Figure 2.3: Community Amenities
- Figure 2.4: City-Owned Sites
- Figure 2.5: Visitor Amenities
- Figure 2.6: Neighborhoods and Historic Districts
- Figure 2.7: Parks and Open Space
- Figure 2.8: Waterways
- Figure 2.9: Figure Ground
- Figure 2.10: New and Pending Developments
- Figure 2.11: Prototypical Downtown Street Section
- Figure 2.12: Block Figure Ground
- Figure 2.13: Historical Resource Inventory
- Figure 2.14: Zoning
- Figure 2.15A and 2.15B: Zoning Overlay Districts
- Table 1: Household and Household Incomes, 2000-2030
- Table 2: Downtown Vicinity Demographic and Employment Summary, 2008
- Table 3: City of Napa Age Distribution Breakdown
- Table 4: Napa County Employment by Industry, 2000-2008
- Table 5: City of Napa Employment by Industry, 2000-2008
- Table 6: Largest City and County Employers by Number of Employees, 2007
- Table 7: City of Napa Employment Projections, 2000-2030
- Table 8: Jobs to Employee and Jobs to Housing Ratios
- Table 9: Journey to Work, 2000
- Table 10: Housing Units, City of Napa, 1995-2008
- Table 11: Planning Area Housing, 2008
- Table 12: Rates of Foreclosure in the Bay Area, as of April 2009
- Table 13: Median Home Prices, 2002-2009
- Table 14: City and County of Napa Apartment Market Indicators
- Table 15: Downtown Projects: Recently Completed and New Construction in the Development Pipeline
- Table 16: Violent Crimes Rates per 100,000 Persons

Table 17: City of Napa Shopping Centers

Table 18: Existing Commercial Space in the Planning Area

Table 19: Available Commercial Properties in Downtown Napa

Table 20: Estimated Citywide Retail Market Capture Rate

Table 21: Household Citywide Retail Sales and Estimated Demand in Napa

Table 22: Planning Area Taxable Sales

Table 23: Visitor-Generated Tax Receipts by County

Table 24: City of Napa Taxable Sales, 2000-2008 (2008\$)

Table 25: Napa County Office Market Indicators

Table 26: City of Napa Business Parks (as of Spring 2009)

Table 27: Hotel Inventory, 2000-2007

Table 28: Hotels in the Planning Area

Table 29: Napa Valley Hotel Market Trends

Table 30: Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) Revenue FY00/01 to FY07/08

Figure 4.1: Existing Circulation System

Figure 4.2: Existing and Planned Bicycle and Pedestrian System

Figure 4.3: Existing Transit Routes

Figure 4.4: Study Intersection Locations

Figure 4.5: Parking Block Numbers (For 2009 Parking Counts)

Figure 4.6: Existing Off-Street Public Parking Lots and Structures

Figure 5.1: Hydrology

Figure 5.2: Stormdrain

Figure 5.3: Planning Area Land Use and City-wide Water Demand

Figure 5.4: Water System

Figure 5.5: Wastewater System

Figure 5.6: Electric

Figure 5.7: Gas

I. Introduction

This Existing Conditions Analysis Report provides an overview of the baseline conditions of the Planning Area for the Downtown Napa Specific Plan (“the Plan”). In addition, assets, issues and opportunities identified in this analysis will be used throughout the planning process. This information provides a foundation for developing recommendations and strategies to ensure high-quality design, development and economic opportunities in the Planning Area, both for the private and public realms, as well as enhancing connections with adjacent neighborhoods and throughout the City. This chapter provides an overview of the Plan purpose, planning process, planning area boundaries, the definition of a specific plan, and the planning context for the Downtown Napa Specific Plan.

Plan Purpose

In 1998, the citizens of Napa approved a \$300 million Napa River Flood Protection Project that has facilitated public infrastructure improvements that allow the City to re-orient development toward the Napa River. As a result, Downtown has experienced substantial new private investment in recent years. With the fear of flooding receding and several tourist-related assets such as the Wine Train, the renovation and re-opening of the Opera House, the (former) Copia Center, as well as Napa’s location at the southern end of the Napa Valley wine country, there has been renewed interest in Downtown development. In the last several years, there has been over \$500 million in new civic improvements and over 600,000 square feet of new development. Recent developments include new hotels, restaurants and commercial spaces including completion of the Napa Mill complex, Main Street West, the River Terrace Inn, Westin Verasa, Avia Hotel, Napa Square, the Riverfront mixed use and Oxbow Public Market. Despite current slow national, state and regional economic conditions, interest in Downtown is likely to continue and may accelerate in the future as the Flood Control Project is completed and economic conditions improve.

The Downtown Napa Specific Plan provides the City, its residents and businesses the opportunity to shape and create a vibrant future for Downtown. The purpose of the Downtown Napa Specific Plan is to craft a community-based vision to make land use refinements based on the community vision, and to take the necessary steps to guide and integrate future public and private investment in Downtown. The Plan will build from a strong base of General Plan policies focused on Downtown as well as other policies and guidelines gathered in previous City-initiated studies. As a “specific plan” under by California State law, the Plan will include detailed policies, design guidelines and development standards and financing mechanisms.

Community-Based Planning Process

To prepare the Downtown Napa Specific Plan, the City of Napa is leading a community-based process in partnership with urban planning and design firm MIG, Inc. MIG is the prime consultant on a multi-disciplinary team of planners, designers, engineers, transportation specialists, and economists. This community planning process is expected to culminate with an adopted plan by late 2010.

The process begins with an existing conditions analysis of the Planning Area. The consultant team has conducted a background analysis, drawing upon existing studies and information, and supplementing the work with additional field observations, stakeholder interviews, a community survey and other analysis. This report includes a compilation of the results of the analysis.

As part of both community outreach and existing conditions research, the project team held interview sessions with six stakeholder focus groups related to Downtown Napa. The goal of these interviews was to gather feedback for the Downtown Napa Specific Plan from key community members representing different perspectives and experiences with Downtown. Approximately 65 community members attended altogether, including residents, employees, community organization leaders, environmental activists, artists, business owners, and property owners from Napa. These various stakeholders were grouped in the following categories: Property Owners/Developers; Commercial Tenants; Professional Tenants and Oxbow District Stakeholders; Neighborhood, Historic, and Environmental Groups; and Downtown Agencies/Organizations. A summary of these interviews is provided in Appendix D of this report.

Building on the existing conditions work, community outreach efforts will focus on defining a vision for the future of the Planning Area. Following the establishment of the community vision, the team will develop alternative future scenarios, evaluate their effects and present them to the City and community. The City and community will then select a preferred alternative for future change in the area. The draft and final Specific Plan will encompass topics, such as new Downtown zoning; refined Downtown sub-districts; housing, circulation and parking improvements; a stronger commercial strategy; urban design and character; catalytic project opportunities; and infrastructure improvements. Environmental analysis and adoption of the plan will occur in the final phases of the project.

To help guide the process as the plan develops, a Downtown Specific Plan Steering Committee will provide feedback and serve as a liaison between the planning team and the community at large. City staff will participate in ongoing team meetings to offer additional comments and technical assistance. The general public will also be invited to participate in three community workshops and web-based surveys to help develop a vision for the Planning Area, identify improvement concepts, and review draft plan contents prior to presentation to the City Council for adoption.

In order to reach both a wide variety and large number of people, additional outreach efforts have been designed as part of this planning process. A project website – www.downtownnapaspecificplan.org – serves as a publically-accessible library of project materials, meeting summaries and upcoming event announcements. Two web-based surveys will be featured on the website during the project to solicit input from community members. The first web-based survey was conducted in April and May 2009. This first web-based survey focused on the perception of the strengths and challenges of the Planning Area. Over 900 people took part in the survey, which was available in both English and Spanish. A full summary of the results of this survey are included in Appendix E of this report.

Additionally, all community workshops as well as an additional Latino outreach event will be simultaneously translated in Spanish. The goal of this planning process is to include the participation of as many members of the Napa community as possible.

Regional Context and Planning Area Boundaries

Located in Northern California approximately 50 miles of San Francisco, the City of Napa is located at the southern end of the world-renowned Napa Valley (see Figure 1.1: Regional Context). The Napa River runs north-south through the City, starting in Mount St. Helena, flowing through San Pablo Bay and emptying into the San Francisco Bay. Located on the Napa Valley floor and surrounded by rolling hills, the City's surroundings are predominantly rural and agricultural.

Within Napa, the Downtown is located on the west bank of the Napa River, near a large meandering oxbow in the river's course. The Downtown is in the central part of the City in between Highway 121 and Highway 29 (see Figure 1.2: Citywide Context). The City of Napa is the largest nearby city for visitors coming from the San Francisco Bay Area to explore the Napa Valley wine country.

Napa is the location of the Napa County seat and is the County's largest incorporated city. With about 76,000 residents in 2005, the City of Napa housed more than 70% of the County's population.

For the purposed of this Plan, the Planning Area is bounded on the east by the Napa River, on the south by Division Street and 3rd Streets; and Jefferson Street on the west. The northern boundary generally follows the zigzagging edge of the "Downtown Commercial" zoning area boundary adjacent to northern residential neighborhoods along Polk and Caymus Streets west of Soscol Avenue. Plan boundaries extend east to include the Oxbow Market and former Copia area east of Soscol Avenue (see Figure 1.3: Planning Area).

Definition of a Specific Plan

In the State of California, a specific plan is one of the many policy and regulatory tools used by local governments as a complement to a general plan. Specific plans implement a city or county's general plan through the development of more detailed policies, programs and regulations for a localized area.

A specific plan can focus on broad policy concepts or detailed development regulations, but it must address:

- Land use;
- Transportation and circulation;
- Utilities and infrastructure;
- Public facilities;
- Development standards; and,
- Implementation and financing.

Because specific plans are mechanisms for executing the goals and policies of a community's general plan, state law requires that specific plans must be consistent with the general plan which typically results in a general plan amendment.

Once adopted, the Downtown Napa Specific Plan will guide all new development in the Planning Area. New development projects will be required to follow the policies, programs and guidelines set forth in the specific plan. Existing developments will not be directly affected unless the occupants or owners choose to expand or change their structures, grounds or uses.

Any environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the specific plan, such as noise, traffic and school enrollment, would be anticipated and analyzed in the state-mandated environmental review prior to its adoption.

The authority for preparation and adoption of specific plans is set forth in the California Government Code, Sections 65450 through 65457. The law stipulates that a specific plan must include text and diagrams detailing:

- The distribution, location and extent of land uses, including open space, within the area covered by the plan;
- The proposed distribution, location, extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy and other essential facilities proposed to be located in the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described therein;
- Standards and criteria by which development will proceed, as well as standards for the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, where applicable; and,
- A program of implementation measures, including regulations, programs, public works projects and financing strategies necessary to carry out the plan.

Planning Context

Building on the planning framework established by the City of Napa's General Plan, the Downtown Napa Specific Plan will provide a greater level of definition to the Planning Area's land uses, character of development and infrastructure than is articulated in the General Plan. It will also build on and incorporate initiatives from other relevant planning guidelines and studies, which are further described in Chapter 2: Land Use and Urban Design.

The entire Planning Area is set within either the Downtown or Soscol Gateway Redevelopment Project Areas (see Figure 1.4: Redevelopment Area). Location within a redevelopment project area allows the City's Redevelopment Agency to rehabilitate specific sites and/or areas in places that the private sector would not typically develop. Redevelopment agencies use tax increment funds to acquire property, facilitate redevelopment, and build public improvements and infrastructure that support revitalization of an area. The Redevelopment Plan is based on and follows the General Plan.

Document Overview

The remainder of the Existing Conditions Analysis Report consists of the following chapters:

Chapter II. Land Use and Urban Design

Chapter II identifies the existing uses currently operating in the Downtown. The urban design analysis focuses on the existing assets, issues and opportunities with regard to the Planning Area's built environment, public realm and overall identity and character. This chapter also summarizes the existing setting and policy framework for land use and zoning in the Planning Area.

Chapter III. Market Demand Analysis

Chapter III provides an economic context and socioeconomic overview of the Planning Area, as well as market demand analysis for four market segments – residential, retail, hotel and office.

Chapter IV. Circulation and Parking

Chapter IV outlines the existing parking and circulation regulation framework, and identifies existing parking and transportation conditions in the Planning Area. This chapter also contains a summary of challenges and opportunities in terms of parking and circulation

Chapter V. Infrastructure

Chapter V presents a summary analysis of the Planning Area's infrastructure conditions in the four areas of hydrology, water, wastewater and dry utilities.

Chapter VI. Next Steps

Chapter VI concludes the Existing Conditions Analysis Memo and defines the next steps of the planning process.

The **Appendix** includes the General Plan policy framework, economic analysis appendices as well as the initial Environmental Setting portion of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that will be a part of the final Plan. Additionally, the results of five stakeholder focus group interviews as well as a city-wide web-based survey are also included in the Appendix. The Appendix is organized as follows:

Appendix A: General Plan Policies Relating to Downtown Napa

Appendix B: Economic Analysis Appendices

Appendix C: Environmental Setting

Appendix D: Stakeholder Focus Groups Interviews Summary

Appendix E: Community Web-Based Survey Results

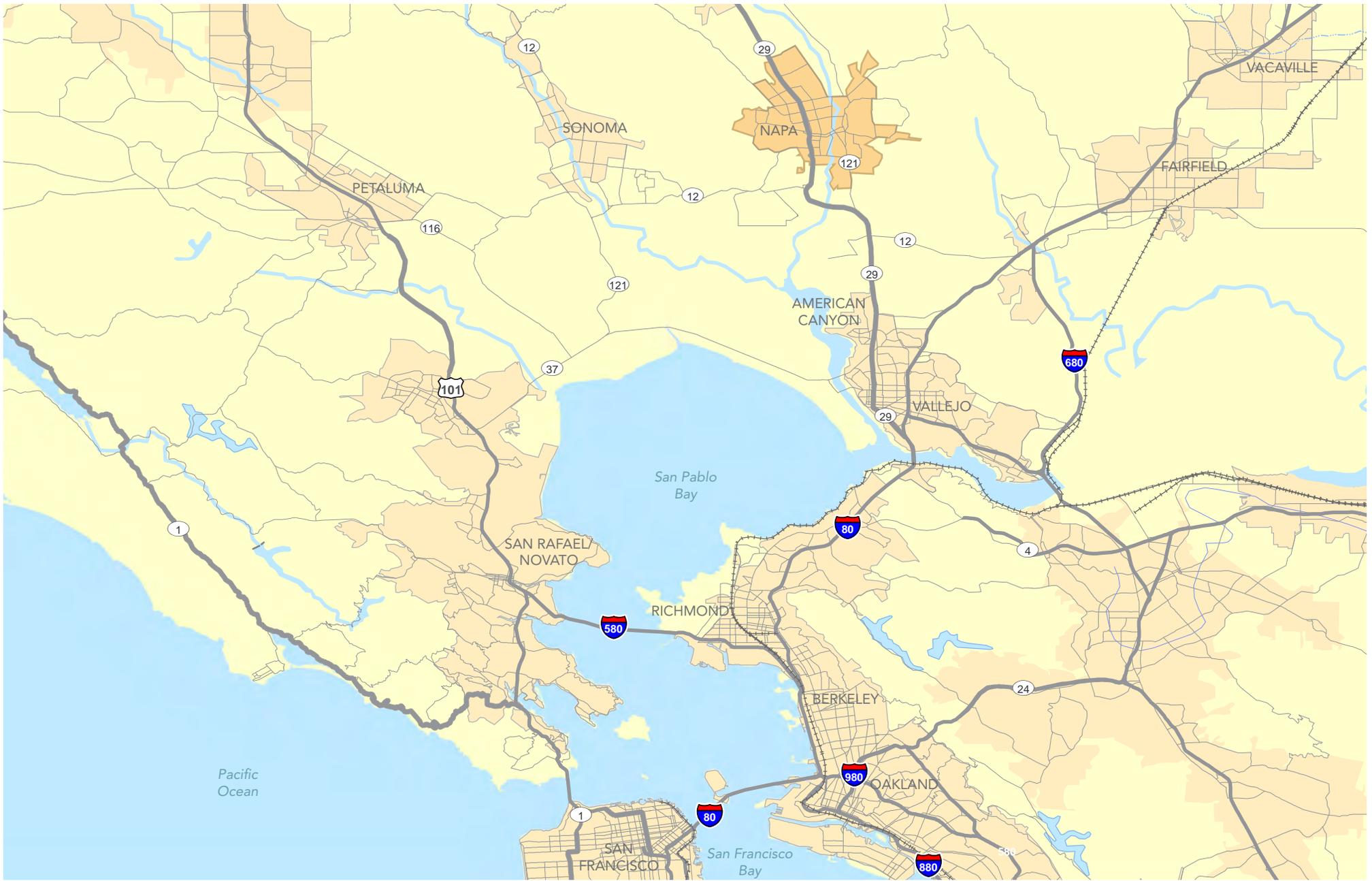


Figure 1.1: Regional Context

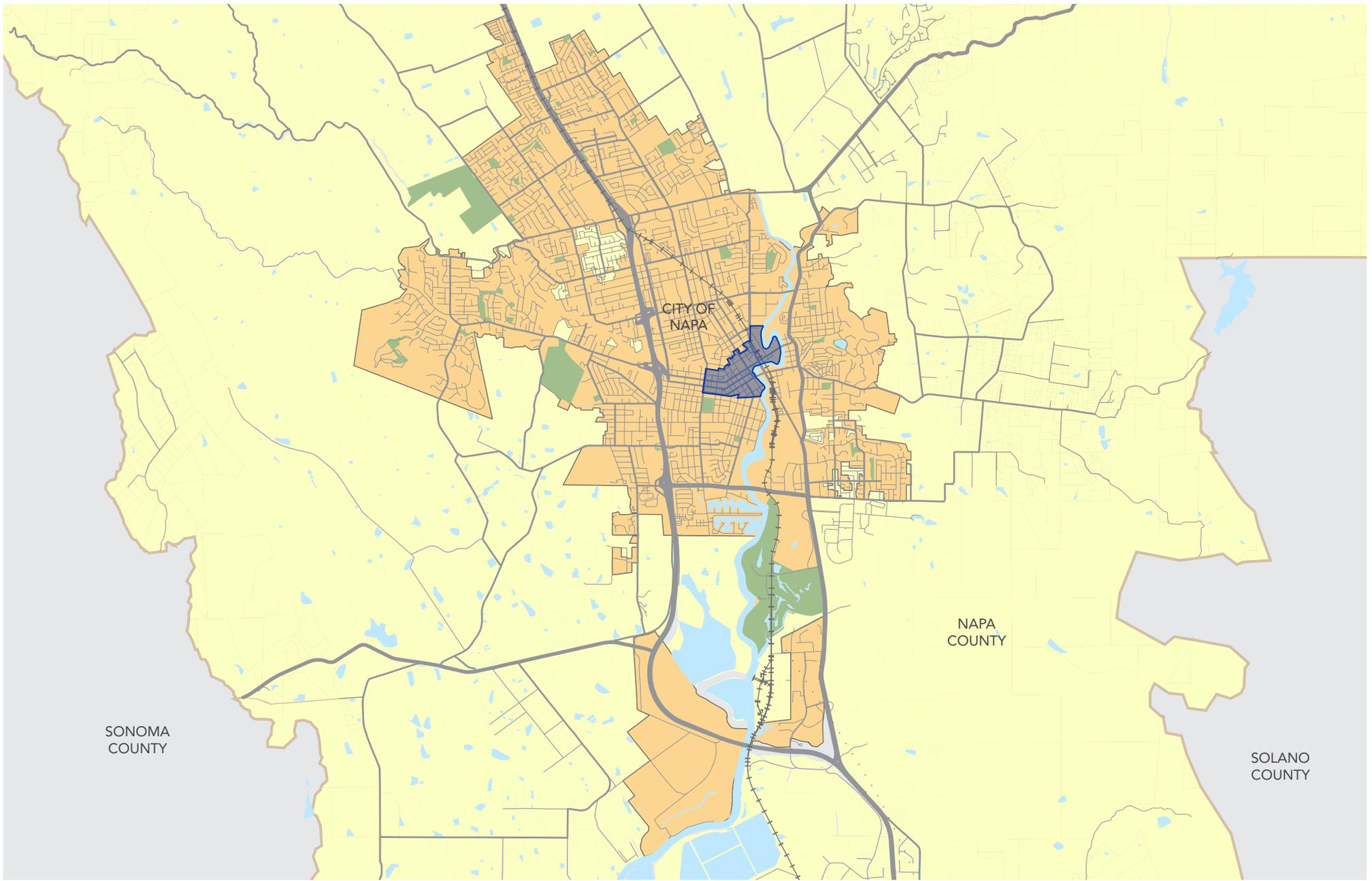


Figure 1.2: Citywide Context