

2. Aesthetics

This chapter discusses the physical and regulatory elements of community design and the natural environment that define the existing aesthetic nature of Livermore. It begins by summarizing existing plans and policies that most directly regulate aesthetics in Livermore, then discusses the physical context, built form, scenic views, and architecture that contribute to the look and feel of Livermore. This chapter uses the term “Livermore” to cover the City of Livermore together with the immediately surrounding area within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and Sphere of Influence (SOI). See the Introduction for more information on these boundaries.

2.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Several regulatory layers help govern and shape Livermore’s appearance and community design. The most influential are the local regulations that directly affect the development of buildings, built environment, and the natural and open space elements of Livermore. However, there are also regulations at the State and regional levels that influence aesthetic outcomes in Livermore.

2.1.1 STATE REGULATIONS

2.1.1.1 CALIFORNIA BUILDING CODE

The State of California provides a minimum standard for building design and construction through Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, commonly referred to as the “California Building Code” (CBC) in order to ensure health, safety, and welfare of the general public. The CBC is updated on a three-year cycle and is effective statewide, though a local jurisdiction may adopt more stringent standards to respond to local conditions under procedures prescribed by the State Building Standards Commission. The City of Livermore adopts the CBC under Chapter 15.02 of the Livermore Municipal Code (Building Code) with several modifications. The CBC regulates aspects of developments including site design, development size, materials, and lighting, along with other aspects of a building and its site. All developments in Livermore must comply with the CBC and Chapter 15.02 of the Livermore Municipal Code.

2.1.1.2 CALIFORNIA GREEN BUILDING CODE (CALGREEN)

Part 11 of Title 24 of the CBC is the California Green Building Standards Code, also known as CALGreen. CALGreen establishes building standards for the design and construction of buildings to improve sustainability and reduce negative environmental impacts. Specifically, Section 5.106.8, Light Pollution Reduction, establishes backlight, uplight, and glare ratings to minimize the effects of light pollution for nonresidential development. The City of Livermore adopts CALGreen through Chapter 15.26 of the Livermore Municipal Code.

AESTHETICS

2.1.1.3 CALIFORNIA STATE SCENIC HIGHWAYS PROGRAM

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the State legislature in 1963. Its purpose is to protect and enhance the natural scenic beauty of California highways and adjacent corridors through special conservation treatment. The State laws governing the Scenic Highways Program are found in the Streets and Highways Code, Sections 260 through 263. The California Scenic Highway Program is maintained by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Highway I-580, also known as Arthur H. Breed Freeway, which runs east-west through northern Livermore, has been identified by Caltrans as an eligible State Scenic Highway within the City of Livermore.¹

2.1.2 REGIONAL REGULATIONS

2.1.2.1 ALAMEDA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The hills and ridgelines surrounding Livermore define many of the views that the City has prioritized preserving in its plans. Many of these hills and ridgelines are outside of the City limits and therefore fall under the regulation of the Alameda County General Plan. Specifically, the Open Space Element of the County General Plan most directly regulates these unincorporated lands and areas. It establishes open space types, including agricultural open space, and limits development of these lands. The lands to the north, east, and south of Livermore are designated agricultural open space with some areas designated as open space or land preserves.

2.1.2.2 ALAMEDA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN SCENIC ROUTE ELEMENT

The Scenic Route Element of the County General Plan coordinates planning activities of cities and the County with Caltrans to establish a countywide scenic route system. It serves as a guide for establishing programs and legislation for addressing scenic routes and preserving their scenic qualities. The Element identifies existing and proposed scenic routes across the County. It identifies I-580 as a scenic highway.

2.1.2.3 ALAMEDA COUNTY SOUTH LIVERMORE VALLEY AREA PLAN

The South Livermore Valley Area Plan (SLVAP) is administered by Alameda County and regulates the development of land immediately south of the City of Livermore between the city boundary and the southern ridgelines. It accomplishes this by establishing a framework of land use coordination between Alameda County and the Cities of Livermore and Pleasanton with the explicit goal to prioritize and promote the area as a unique and historic wine region by protecting its rural and scenic qualities, discouraging urban development, and maintaining and expanding cultivated agricultural use in the area. The South Livermore Valley Specific Plan, described later in this chapter, is administered by the City of Livermore and functions as the city's component of the SLVAP for protecting the Valley.

¹ California Department of Transportation, California Scenic Highway Mapping System, https://dot.ca.gov/-/media/dot-media/programs/design/documents/desig-and-eligible-aug2019_a11y.xlsx, accessed on September 16, 2021.

2.1.2.4 EAST ALAMEDA COUNTY CONSERVATION STRATEGY

The East Alameda County Conservation Strategy provides a framework for conserving the natural communities and environment of the lands of Livermore with the goal of protecting biological and natural resources that are native to the area. It establishes growth controls to limit future residential and commercial development area. Although it is primarily a biological resources management strategy (and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, Biological Resources), the conservation of these lands help contribute to the natural aesthetics that surround and define Livermore to the east.

2.1.3 LOCAL REGULATIONS

2.1.3.1 LIVERMORE 2003-2025 GENERAL PLAN

The Community Character Element of the existing City of Livermore 2025 General Plan provides a framework for regulating the “sense of place” of Livermore and provides goals and policies that identify and preserve aspects contributing to the city’s historic, agricultural, and community qualities. Separate from the Land Use Element, it specifically addresses natural settings, urban design, cultural resources, and scenic routes within the planning area. Goals and policies here focus on physical standards of development and land to achieve the look and feel desired for Livermore.

Scenic routes are a key topic of the Community Character element. The General Plan identifies several roadways as scenic routes within the planning area. The most significant of these routes is the I-580 corridor, which the General Plan identifies as a Scenic Corridor. The I-580 Scenic Corridor encompasses the area within 3,500 feet of the freeway centerline as visible from the roadway.

The element provides goals, policies, and actions to preserve and protect the aesthetic qualities of scenic routes and more structured and specific policies and actions for preserving and protecting views along the I-580 Scenic Corridor by regulating development, grading, and landscaping.

An important aspect of the I-580 Scenic Corridor implementation policies is the group of policies incorporated from the North Livermore Urban Growth Boundary Initiative (NLUGBI). The NLUGBI is a voter initiative approved in 2002 that amended the existing General Plan to establish the North Livermore Urban Growth Boundary and policies to regulate development along the I-580 Corridor to protect the natural areas, open space, and agricultural resources in the area. These policies in incorporated under Section C, I-580 Scenic Corridor Implementation, of the element and cannot be altered without a vote of the people.

Table 2-1 shows the four goals of the element with a summary of the policies and actions under each. For the complete element and all goals, policies, and actions, please go on the City’s website.

AESTHETICS

TABLE 2-1 LIVERMORE 2003-2025 GENERAL PLAN GOALS RELATED TO AESTHETICS

Goal No.	Description
CC-1	Preserve and enhance Livermore's natural setting. Policies under Goal CC-1 focus on protecting and preserving the natural features and open space resources of the city, such as hills, ridgelines, vineyards, woodlands, and waterways from intensive development; and includes policies for minimizing glare and energy from nighttime lighting.
CC-2	Maintain high standards of urban design in Livermore. Policies under Goal CC-2 provide design standards and guidance for ensuring high-quality building design and built spaces within the city, including standards for public facilities and for enhancing entry corridors into the city.
CC-3	Preserve and enhance the City's cultural and historic resources not merely as positive reminders of the past, but also as relevant and unique alternatives for the present and the future - a source of community identity, architecture, and social, ecological and economic vitality. Policies under Goal CC-3 focus on identifying and protecting the city's cultural and historic resources, including maintenance of a citywide preservation program and establishing an inventory for cultural and historic resources.
CC-4	Protect and enhance public views within and from established scenic routes, including views of arroyos. Policies under Goal CC-4 regulate development, landscaping, grading, and other physical treatment of the land to protect and preserve the aesthetic qualities and views of scenic routes within Livermore. Goal CC-4 makes up the lengthiest part of the element and includes policies for regulating development along the I-580 Scenic Corridor, such as the policies incorporated through the NLUGBI.

2.1.3.2 LIVERMORE DEVELOPMENT CODE

The City of Livermore Development Code is adopted as a standalone section of the Livermore Municipal Code effective through Ordinance 2124. It functions as the City's zoning ordinance and implements the City's General Plan. One of its goals is to concentrate growth within Livermore's Downtown and existing fabric as high-quality in-fill development.

It is a Form-Based Code that establishes Transect and Non-Transect Zones within the City that regulate uses and built form within each Transect Zone. The Transect Zones of Livermore are established from the Downtown core to the surrounding natural areas, creating a gradient of zones of increasing density as development approaches the core. The remaining city land not designated Transect Zones are Non-Transect Zones. The Code provides development standards similar to typical zoning ordinances such as heights, setbacks, and site regulations for all zones. For the Transect Zones, it also establishes allowable building types with frontage and design standards. This approach intends to shape development over time to achieve the aesthetic goals of the code.

2.1.3.3 LIVERMORE DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The City Design Standards and Guidelines applies citywide and provides design guidance for development occurring within each land use category established in the City's General Plan. The goals of the Design Standards and Guidelines include encouraging development that is harmonious with the city's surrounding built and natural environments; preserving a small-town community surrounded by rural open space; maintaining views to around scenic corridors and natural features unique to Livermore; encouraging development that strengthens connectivity across the community by linking open space, parks, schools, and civic buildings; recognizing the historic significance of vineyards and wineries; identifying gateways to the city; high-quality placemaking; and facilitating sustainable design. The document also provides general guidance on design and development of city streets and streetscape features.

2.1.3.4 HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

The City of Livermore has a Historic Preservation Ordinance administered as Chapter 9.02 of the Livermore Development Code. It provides a framework and process for preservation, rehabilitation, and reuse of the city's historic resources, which include buildings and places. See the Cultural Resources chapter for more detail.

2.1.3.5 SPECIFIC AND NEIGHBORHOOD PLANS

Downtown Specific Plan

The Downtown Specific Plan regulates approximately 272 acres of land that constitute Downtown Livermore, establishing policies for land use, circulation, infrastructure, and a financial strategy. It includes design guidelines for mixed-use, commercial, residential, and historic structures, as well as streetscape features. Informed by an extensive public engagement process, it provides a vision for Downtown Livermore as a regional destination and as the heart of the community, allowing for a combination of mixed-use development, unique retail, civic uses, residential development, and public spaces. It builds on the historic fabric that give Livermore its visual character and provides a revitalization strategy and development standards to shape the look of Downtown. The Plan identifies several central parcels as catalyst development sites.

Isabel Neighborhood Specific Plan

The Isabel Neighborhood Specific Plan provides a framework for developing approximately 1,138 acres in northwest part of the city. It is significant planning area surrounding the proposed Isabel Valley Link Station located at Highway I-580 and Isabel Avenue. The Valley Link Rail Transit Project replaces the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) to Livermore project and will connect Northern San Joaquin County communities to the Tri-Valley area and BART. that seeks to create a complete, transit-oriented neighborhood with housing and amenities for residents, workers, and students. The specific plan area includes Las Positas College at the northern edge. The urban design of the plan introduces new, higher-density and forward-looking developments that express sustainability, healthy living, and innovation balanced with existing historic look of Livermore to create a transit-oriented neighborhood. Design standards allow for dense mixed-use and residential developments alongside campus-like work environments that maintain viewsheds to the surrounding natural landscape.

El Charro Specific Plan

The El Charro Specific Plan establishes policies and standards for development of the westernmost subarea of Livermore along Highway I-580. It envisions this area as a regional commercial node that does not contend with Downtown by focusing on providing and servicing volume. The San Francisco Premium Outlets are now developed in this area, consistent with the design guidance of the El Charro Specific Plan.

AESTHETICS

South Livermore Valley Specific Plan

The South Livermore Valley Specific Plan (SLVSP) is the City of Livermore's component of the County's SLVAP for protecting the agricultural area and open space of the South Livermore Valley. Together, they provide policies and standards for managing future growth and development of approximately 1,891 acres within the South Livermore Valley. The SLVSP only applies to specific areas within City limits along the south border of the city. It is the culmination of a collaborative planning effort between the County of Alameda, the Cities of Livermore and Pleasanton, winegrowers, vineyard owners, and associated parties to conserve the agricultural activities and natural landscape that contribute to the valley's rural, wine country character. It allows for limited and focused residential and commercial development in the valley and provides design standards for ensuring new development maintains the existing, small-scale aesthetic of the area.

Arroyo Vista Neighborhood Plan

The Arroyo Vista Neighborhood Plan establishes policies and standards for development approximately 28 acres of land, also known as the "Pell Site" located in the eastern side of the city. It envisions this area a residential community at densities between 14 to 18 units per acre combined with a circulation network, open space, and neighborhood-serving amenities. It provides for a mixture of two- to three-story detached and attached single and multifamily homes in street-facing or courtyard-oriented configurations.

2.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.2.1 REGIONAL SETTING

Livermore is situated 43 miles east of San Francisco within the valley floor of the Tri-Valley area. The Tri-Valley area is in the East Bay of the San Francisco Bay Area, specifically within Alameda County. The name comes from the grouping of three separate valleys: Amador Valley, San Ramon Valley, and Livermore Valley. Livermore is located within the Livermore Valley. The shading on Figure 2-1 shows the hills and valleys of the Tri-Valley region.

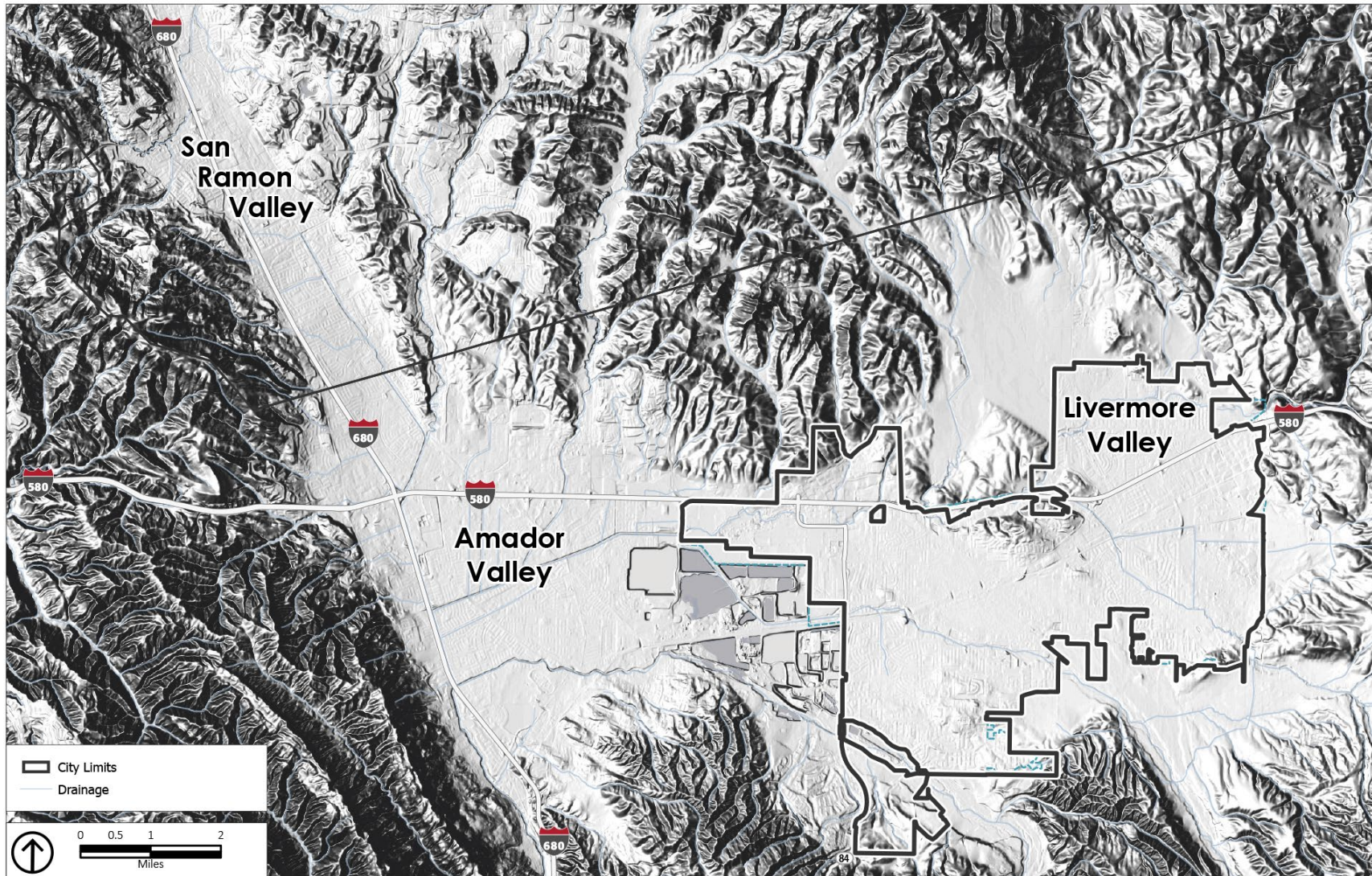
2.2.2 PHYSICAL SETTING

The current extent of the Livermore city limits encompass approximately 27 square miles on the floor of the Livermore Valley. It is surrounded to the north, east, and south by hills and ridgelines, some of which are part of open space preserves managed by the East Bay Regional Park District. Several arroyos and canals route through Livermore.

2.2.2.1 TOPOGRAPHY

Livermore is situated at the eastern end of the Livermore Valley on the valley floor and is on relatively flat topography with rising elevations as the land approaches the hills to the north, east, and south. The western area is flat as it continues towards Pleasanton.

Figure 2-1 Tri-Valley Regional Topography



Source: City of Livermore, 2021; Esri, 2021.

AESTHETICS

2.2.2.2 ARROYOS AND WATERWAYS

Several arroyos and waterways run through Livermore and contribute to the scenic views. These are known locally as arroyos. Many arroyos run through the northern part of the city along I-580. Two of the most visible are Arroyo Las Positas and Arroyo Mocho. Arroyo Las Positas runs east-west along the northern edge close to I-580 and is occasionally visible from the highway. Arroyo Mocho runs east-west through the southern part of the city and turns southeast to the South Livermore Valley. Development is buffered from this arroyo, giving space for open space, trails, and the placement of several parks along its routes. It is a defining natural feature within this part of the city that is publicly accessible.

The other arroyos in and around Livermore include Altamont, Arroyo Seco, Collier Canyon, Cayetano, and Arroyo del Valle.

2.2.2.3 UNIQUE FEATURES

The existing 2025 General Plan Community Character Element identifies the following natural and human-made features as significant and unique to the community of Livermore.

Natural Features

- Ridgelines
- Oak Woodlands and Grasslands
- Grasslands
- Riparian Woodland
- Arroyos and Creeks
- Knolls
- Brushy Peak
- Arroyo Mocho/Cedar Mountain
- Corral Hollow
- Sycamore Grove
- Hilltops [North Livermore Urban Growth Boundary Initiative (NLUGBI)]
- Slopes (NLUGBI)
- Viewscapes (NLUGBI)
- Frick Lake
- Springtown Alkali Sink

Human-Made Amenities

- Vineyards and agriculture
- Lake Del Valle
- Scenic Highways, Roads, and Corridors
- Buildings of Historic or Architectural Significance or Interest
- Community Entrance Points

AESTHETICS



AESTHETICS

2.2.3 BUILT FORM

The community of Livermore can be organized through the growth of its built form, the special districts surrounding the main city, and the agricultural land along the southern edge. Like many California communities with a historic core, Livermore's original growth can be traced to the railroad station that is part of the Union Pacific Railroad system, which runs east-west through Livermore. The original block structure is oriented towards this rail line and station and extends in a nearly three-quarters of a mile radius from the original station location.

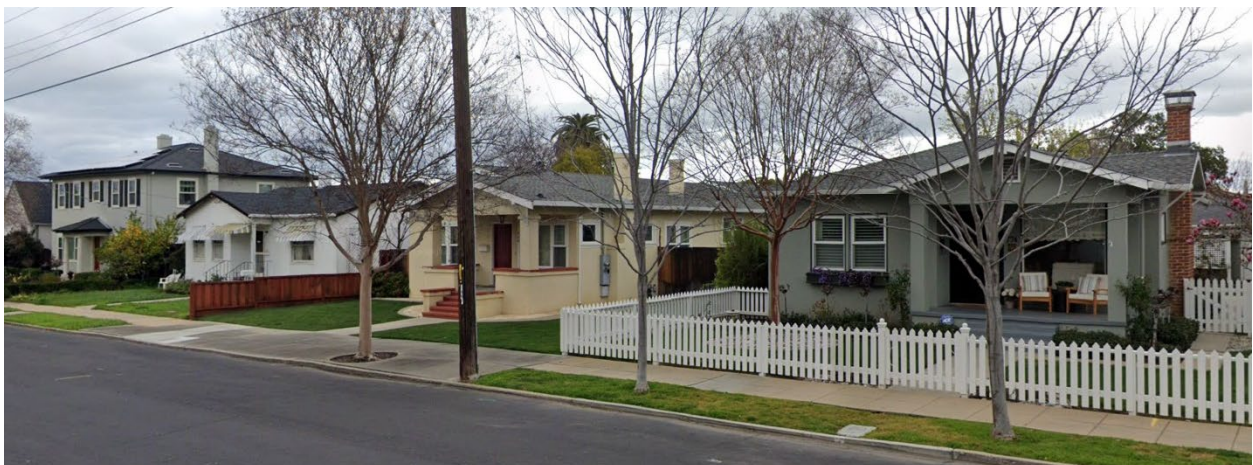
Downtown

The Downtown is comprised of the commercial core centering on the historic rail line of Livermore surrounded by the single-family residential areas that developed from the late nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century. It has a grid block structure with blocks typically being 325 feet by 325 feet square. First Street and Livermore Avenue are walkable, tree-lined retail with attached two- to three-story commercial buildings.

The residential areas surrounding the commercial core have one- to two-story detached single-family neighborhoods that extend the Downtown street grid with typical parcel sizes being 50-feet wide by 150-feet deep. The street environment is pedestrian-friendly with landscaped sidewalks, street trees, and front porches of houses being the primary feature connect the house to the street. The block sizes are conducive to walkability. Homes were built in the California Bungalow, Ranch, or Craftsman style.



AESTHETICS



AESTHETICS

Architecture Downtown

Historic Buildings

There are three buildings and places in Downtown Livermore registered as historic resources with the California and National Register of Historic Places. See Chapter 13, Historic Resources, for additional detail on historic structures and regulations protecting historic resources in Livermore.

- Bank of Italy Building (2250 First Street) – Renaissance Revival
- Carnegie Library (2155 Third Street) – Classical Revival
- D.J. Murphy House (291 McLeod Street) – Italianate Cottage

The Bank of Italy Building and Carnegie Library share a similar monumental aesthetic with Renaissance Revival and Classical Revival architecture, respectively. They were built in the early 20th Century and are significant to the architecture of Downtown.



<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=21222145>

AESTHETICS

The D.J. Murphy House is in the style of an Italianate Cottage. Distinguishing features of the Italianate Cottage include a portico, tall narrow windows, a nearly square footprint, and use of hip roof structure, as opposed to gable roofs often seen in California bungalow and ranch style homes.



Postwar to Contemporary Residential Growth Area

Surrounding the Downtown is residential growth that occurred in 1950s and after. This area can be identified aerially by the shift in the street grid away from being oriented to the railroad and being more directly oriented to the Cardinal directions. These areas follow a typical mid-century suburban neighborhood layout with one- to two-story single-family residential areas containing centrally located parks and school. Residential parcel sizes are approximately 50-feet wide by 150-feet deep.

The earlier sections of this growth area begin to shift away from being pedestrian-oriented environments like Downtown to more automobile-centric environments with minimal to no presence of landscaped sidewalks and trees along the street. A prominent feature of homes fronting the street is the one- or two-car garage. The blocks are longer than Downtown, closer to 1,000-feet long, which diminishes walkability.

Radiating further outwards are newer growth areas and developments that are designed in the same automobile-centric fashion. Sidewalks here typically have no landscaping and street trees are less common, providing less canopy and shading. Some neighborhoods do not have sidewalks. The grid structure continues with long, rectangular blocks in some neighborhoods and curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs in others. Low-density tract housing communities can be found in these newer areas, often along the edges of the city's growth boundaries. Houses here are one- to two-story detached single-family modern Ranch and Craftsman styles.

AESTHETICS



Architecture of Residential Areas

Most residential buildings in Livermore are detached single-family homes configured as California bungalows or ranches. Bungalow configurations can be found in the more immediate postwar development vicinity of Downtown. Farther out, the Ranch configuration is most dominant since it can be easily configured to accommodate one- to two-car garages. In both configurations, architectural styles are mostly Craftsman and Mediterranean or Spanish Revival, although the suburban production of these styles largely muted their aesthetic qualities. The Craftsman homes often exhibit natural materials, such as visually emphasizing the wood structure and other wood elements of a house. Mediterranean and Spanish Revival homes feature stucco exteriors that mimic adobe, one of the earliest building materials in history. They often have tiled roofs and are painted in warm-hued colors.



AESTHETICS

Livermore also has attached and multifamily buildings throughout. These also follow similar aesthetics found in single-family homes.



Northwest Employment Center and Livermore Municipal Airport

The northwestern area of Livermore contains office parks, Las Positas College, and the Livermore Municipal Airport. These are off some of the westernmost exits off I-580 going into Livermore from the East Bay. The office park arrangements are one- to two-story buildings set back behind surface parking and landscaping, which also includes Las Positas College. Some newer residential communities have been developed near the College. Las Positas College itself is a 70-acre campus with modern buildings. This area is planned to be redeveloped over time under the Isabel Neighborhood Specific Plan as a transit-oriented neighborhood in anticipation of the proposed Valley Link Transit Station that will be located at the juncture of Isabel Avenue and I-580.

- One- to two-story retail and office buildings surrounded by landscaping and surface parking
- Located off I-580 in northern Livermore with views to the northern hills

Architecture of Employment and Office Buildings

The architecture of Livermore's employment centers and industrial areas take on office park aesthetics with minimalist and mid-century modern styles, though there are a few exceptions that have taken on a rustic warehouse aesthetic.



AESTHETICS

Commercial Areas

Livermore contains several commercial areas located near I-580 in the northern part of the city. These commercial areas feature a mixture of one- and two-story strip retail and regional, big-box retail with landscaped surface parking lots. The commercial areas are of various modern styles. Newer retail areas, such as along Isabel Avenue, adopt New Urbanist principles that place parking internally in the site and away from the street frontage to create more walkable environments.

Architecture of Commercial Areas

The architecture of Livermore's retail nodes are mostly minimalist and reflect shopping mall styles from 1960s to 1990s, though some newer buildings are reintroducing Classical and small-town, rural aesthetics.



AESTHETICS



Industrial Areas

The northeast area of the city is dedicated to use by heavy industries. Buildings here can range from a few thousand square feet upwards to over 50,000 square feet in footprint and are between one- to two-stories high. They are mostly built in the style of modern industrial office parks and warehouses with landscaped setbacks and surface parking. The boundaries of this area are primarily defined on the south by the existing railroad and on the north by I-580. A second industrial area is near the Livermore Airport to the west of the city with access off Isabel Avenue.

AESTHETICS



South Livermore Valley

The land along the south of Livermore contains existing vineyards and cultivated agriculture industries. This area is an important aspect of Livermore's identity as a winegrowing city and the unique views that contribute to this image. Most of this land is farmland with agricultural buildings interspersed and some low-density residential areas. The valley floor here lies against the backdrop of the hills and ridgelines to the south and southeast.



Architecture from Historic Buildings with Rural Aesthetics

There are two buildings and places in Livermore registered as historic resources with the California and National Registries that convey historic, rural aesthetics of Livermore Valley.

- Hagemann Ranch (455 Olivina Avenue) – 19th Century Livermore Valley farmstead
- Ravenswood Historic Site (2647 Arroyo Road) – 19th Century Agricultural and Victorian

Hagemann Ranch and Ravenswood were both built in the 19th Century and have buildings in various rural aesthetics that communicate the style of Livermore Valley agricultural and winery buildings. Buildings on Hagemann Ranch can be described as Livermore Valley farmstead aesthetic. Ravenswood also has similar aesthetic and also has two Victorian-style buildings as part of the property.

AESTHETICS



<https://noehill.com/alameda/nat2007001351.aspx>



Lawrence Livermore National and Sandia National Laboratories

The Lawrence Livermore National and Sandia National Laboratories form another important part of Livermore's identity as a center of science of innovation. Located on the east side of the city between Vasco Road and Greenville Road, the two laboratories are approximately 1.5 square miles in area and are configured mostly as a research campus with multiple buildings. Sandia Laboratory is immediately south of Lawrence Livermore Laboratory. Laboratory and research facilities throughout are of various scales, heights, and design but are mostly modern and contemporary in style. Both laboratory campuses are buffered from rest of the city with walls, landscaping, and are restricted from public access. From the outside, views of the labs are primarily views of walls and landscaping around the perimeter. Within the campuses, both developed in the 1950s and after, architecture includes are mid- to late-century modern, postmodern, minimalist, and high-tech, among others.

The buildings of Las Positas College exhibits similar styles.

AESTHETICS



AESTHETICS

Open Space Preserves and Natural Topography

The surrounding topography and several regional open space preserves define the scenic beauty that is enjoyed by the Livermore community. The open space preserves are maintained by the East Bay Regional Park District. The hills and ridgelines are all part of the Diablo Range.

To the north are the Doolan Canyon and Brushy Peak Regional Preserves, with Mt Diablo further north in the distance. These spaces feature rolling hills and ridgelines that are important to the scenic views looking north, especially as seen from I-580, which has been identified as a scenic corridor. Brushy Peak is a round-top landmark to the northeast of Livermore.

Hills to the east provide a natural boundary for the Livermore Valley and the eastern city limits. The Altamont Pass connects Livermore and Tracy over the Diablo Range. The Altamont Pass wind farm is in this area which is visible from the eastern areas of the city.

To the south is Del Valle Regional Park, which features hills and Lake Del Valle. At the south valley floor, rolling hills begin from agricultural areas and rise steadily toward Mt. Hamilton further south.

2.2.4 SCENIC VIEWS AND CORRIDORS

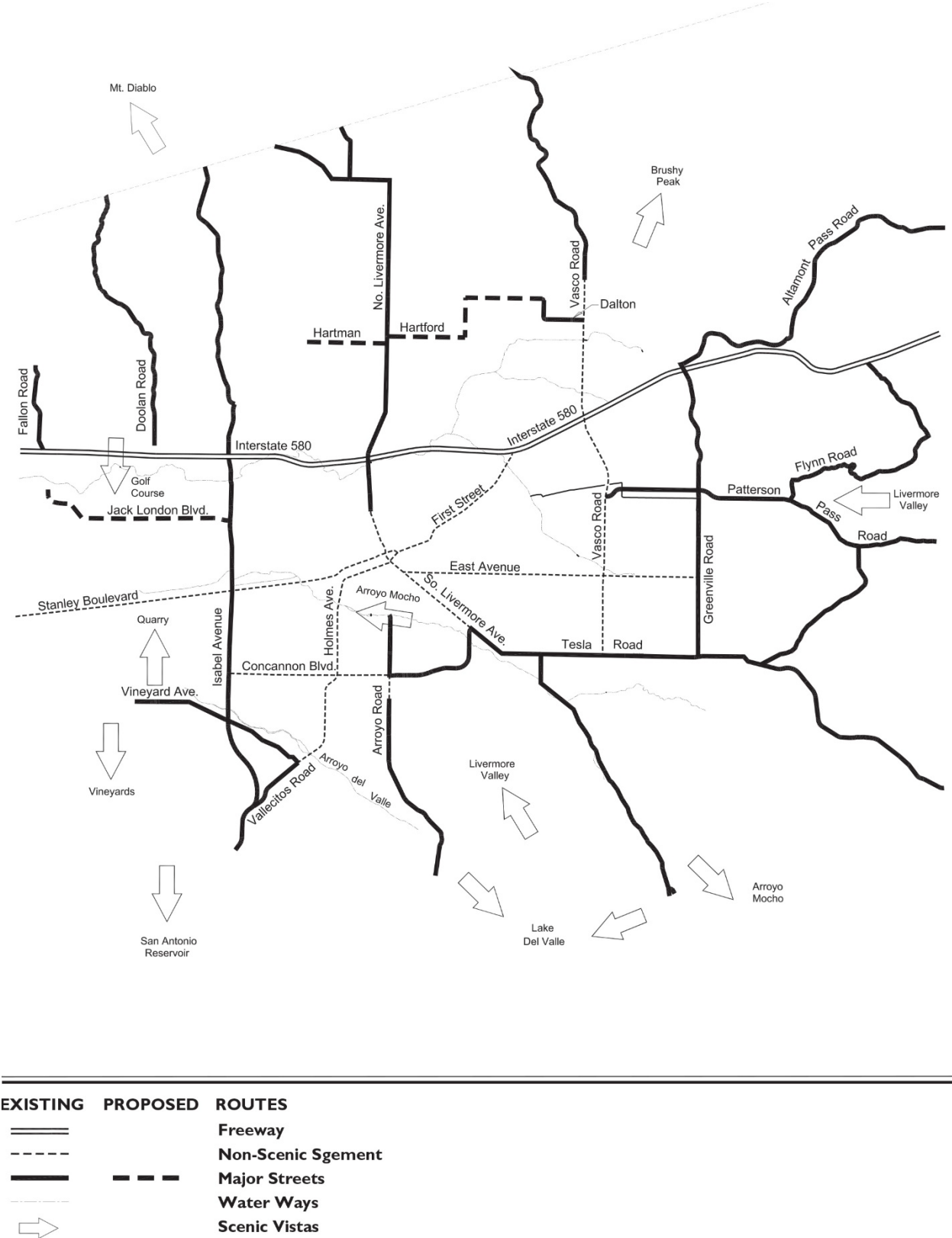
The surrounding natural landscape, hills, and ridgelines create many scenic views from Livermore and its street network. These views include Brushy Peak and Mount Diablo to the north and Livermore Valley, vineyards, and hills to the south and east. Streets around Livermore and the surrounding natural areas reveal more scenery as one travels along them, including views of Lake Del Valle and Arroyo Mocho when traveling south. Views of some of these landmarks and features are visible from many areas within Livermore. The existing General Plan identifies scenic routes and views that should be protected.

A significant scenic route is I-580 that runs east and west through northern Livermore. Its location near the northern hills situates it at a slightly higher elevation than most of the city, giving it clear views to natural features to the north and views to the hills in South Livermore Valley. The scenic and aesthetic quality of I-580 is regulated directly by policies under Section C in the Community Character Element of the existing General Plan. These policies define the I-580 Scenic Corridor as the area within 3,500 feet from the centerline of the freeway and establish requirements that must be met for development to be allowed. They were incorporated into the General Plan with the approval of the NLUGBI and cannot be changed without voter approval.

The other identified scenic routes are rural arterials that have views of Livermore's agricultural and vineyard landscape. Some of these roads include Isabel Avenue, which runs north-south along the western edge of the city; Arroyo Road as it runs south into the valley; Tesla Road, which runs east-west between the developed and agricultural areas along the southern part of the city; and Greenville Road, a north-south road on the eastern edge of the city that passes along the Laboratories. Figure 2-2 reproduces the existing General Plan figure identifying the scenic routes important to Livermore.

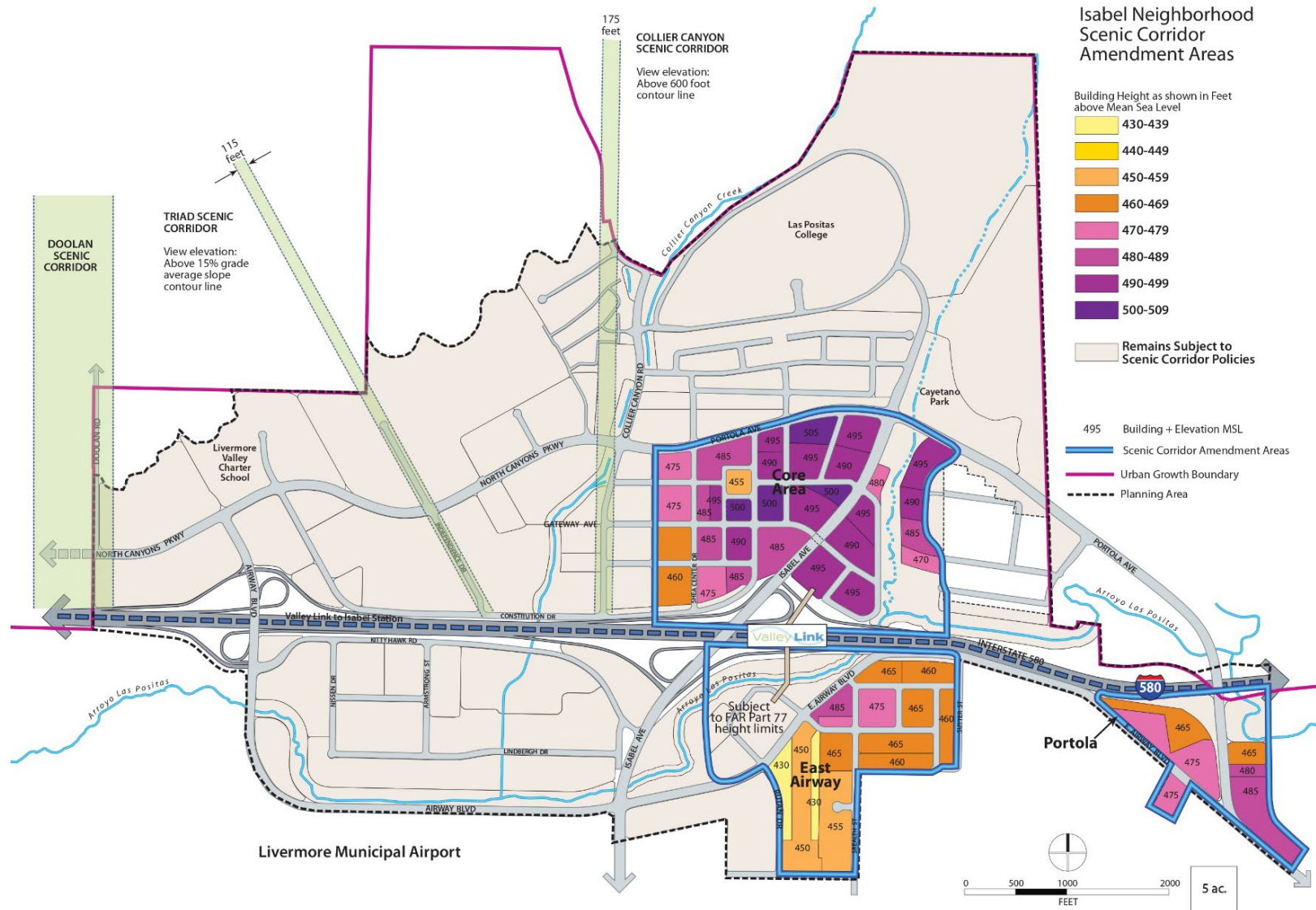
It should be noted that adoption of the Isabel Neighborhood Specific Plan led to amendment of scenic corridor policies contained in the General Plan to accommodate the Plan's proposed building heights. Figure 2-3 shows the Scenic Corridor Amendments for the Isabel Neighborhood Specific Plan Area.

Figure 2-2 Existing General Plan Planned Scenic Routes



AESTHETICS

Figure 2-3 Existing General Plan: Isabel Neighborhood Scenic Corridor Amendment Areas



2.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Based on information contained in this chapter, the General Plan Update should consider the following:

- Identify opportunities to draw from and introduce aesthetics from Livermore Valley agricultural buildings new infill and residential buildings to build connection to the city's agricultural history
- Identify opportunities to introduce more modern style architecture that draws from the laboratory campus to expand the image of the city as a center for technology and innovation
- Ensure development of new areas maintain Livermore's existing view corridors to surrounding landscape and vineyards from within the city and along scenic routes
- Explore possibilities for limited, taller development in central Livermore that can enhance existing views into the city from I-580
- Encourage and promote infill opportunities as development opportunities are limited on all sides. The most available land is north and developments here would be subject to need to protect views to the surrounding landscape from I-580
- Maintain and/or expand efforts to conserve and enhance existing natural features within Livermore, such as Arroyo Mocho and Arroyo Las Positas
- Explore feasibility of higher-density housing that can offer lifestyles and aesthetics different from the detached, single-family communities that currently dominate the city's fabric
- Identify strategies to allow for compact, higher-density development along available land near I-580 that does not compromise the existing scenic views from that corridor

AESTHETICS

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