

Project Overview and Community Engagement

About the Project

The Town of Woodside is excited to launch an update to the Town Center Area Plan. The current Town Center Area Plan is contained within the Town’s General Plan, while the updated Plan will be a standalone document, containing policies, standards, and guidelines for land uses, new or modified buildings, placemaking, mobility, parking, open space, utilities, and other key topics.

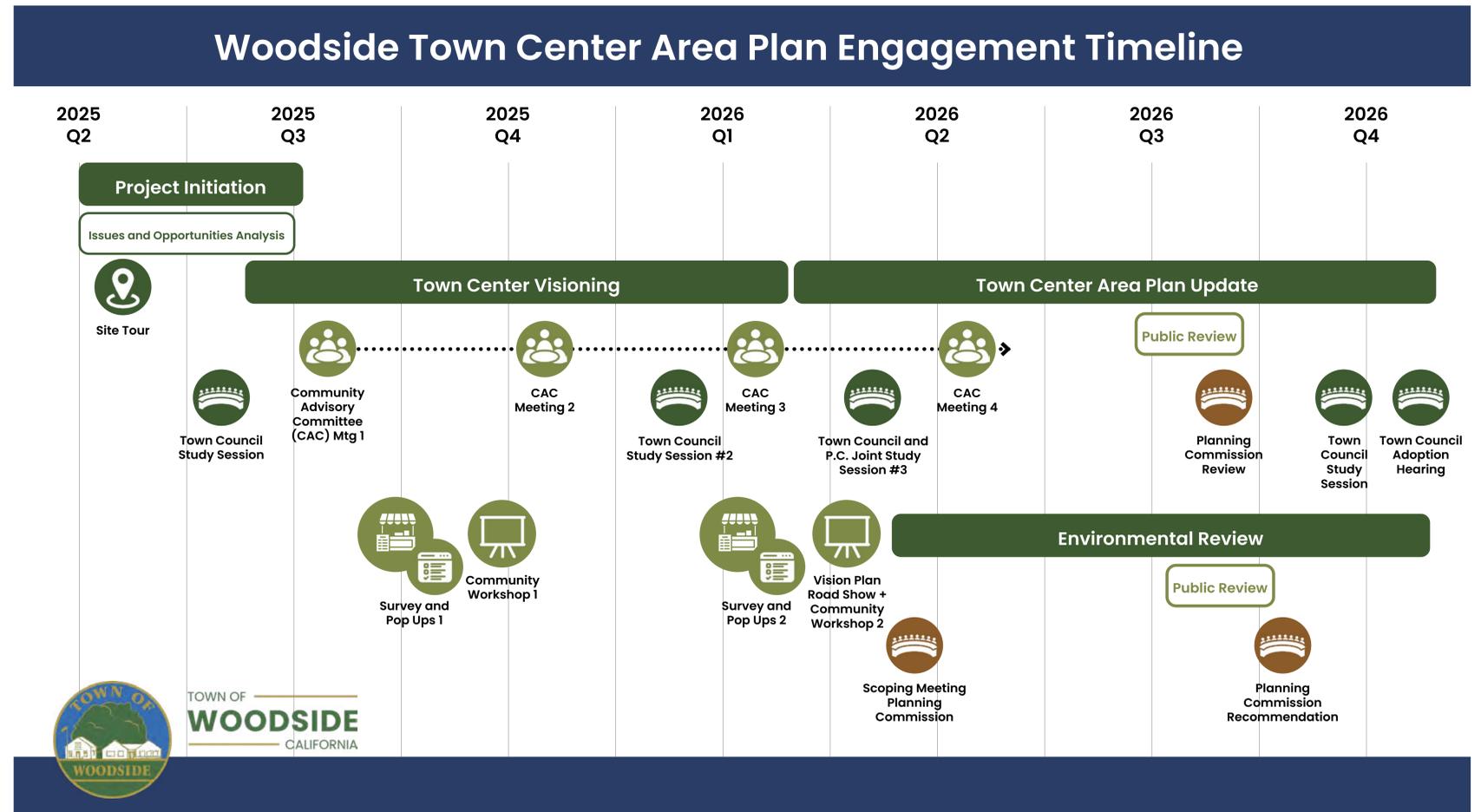
This planning effort builds on the Town Center’s historic roots and quaint character while exploring ideas for new housing opportunities and walkable public spaces, improved parking and movement for vehicles, pedestrians, equestrians, and bicycles, and enhanced streetscape design and public amenities. The update supports the implementation of Woodside’s adopted Housing Element, which calls for updating the Town Center Area Plan and determining whether the Town Center could accommodate housing. Along these lines, the updated plan will identify the desired and appropriate land uses and transportation facilities that best serve the Woodside community.

Project Timeline

The project began in Spring 2025 and is expected to be complete by late 2026. It will move through several phases – from identifying issues and opportunities, to developing a shared vision, to preparing a draft plan and environmental review, and finally to review and adoption by the Town Council.

Visit the website to keep up to date on the project or to sign up for email updates:

<https://www.woodsideca.gov/TCAP>



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Town Center Area Plan?

The Town Center Area Plan is the blueprint for how Woodside’s Town Center grows and changes over time. It guides land use, building design, parking, streets, public spaces, and community amenities.

Why is the Plan being updated?

The current plan is part of the Town’s General Plan. The recent Housing Element update called for the Town Center Area Plan to be updated. This update will create a stand-alone document that:

- Reflects today’s community priorities
- Builds on the Town Center’s historic charm
- Supports the Town’s Housing Element
- Explores opportunities for housing & public spaces
- Improves circulation for cars, pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians
- Enhances urban design, open space, and public amenities

How is the community involved?

This process is inclusive, transparent, and shaped by local voices. There will be two main rounds of engagement, as illustrated above. Activities include:

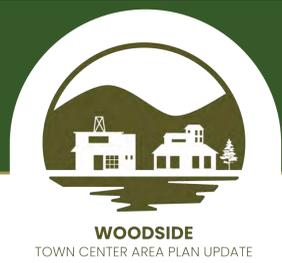
Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC): Local residents and stakeholders who review ideas and drafts.

Public Workshops & Pop-Ups: Interactive events in familiar community spaces, both casual (pop-up) and more formal (open houses).

Surveys: Share your thoughts and feedback online. Vote on the preferred options for the Town Center.

Stakeholder Interviews: Conversations with a wide range of community members.

Public Meetings: Opportunities to comment at Planning Commission and Town Council meetings.



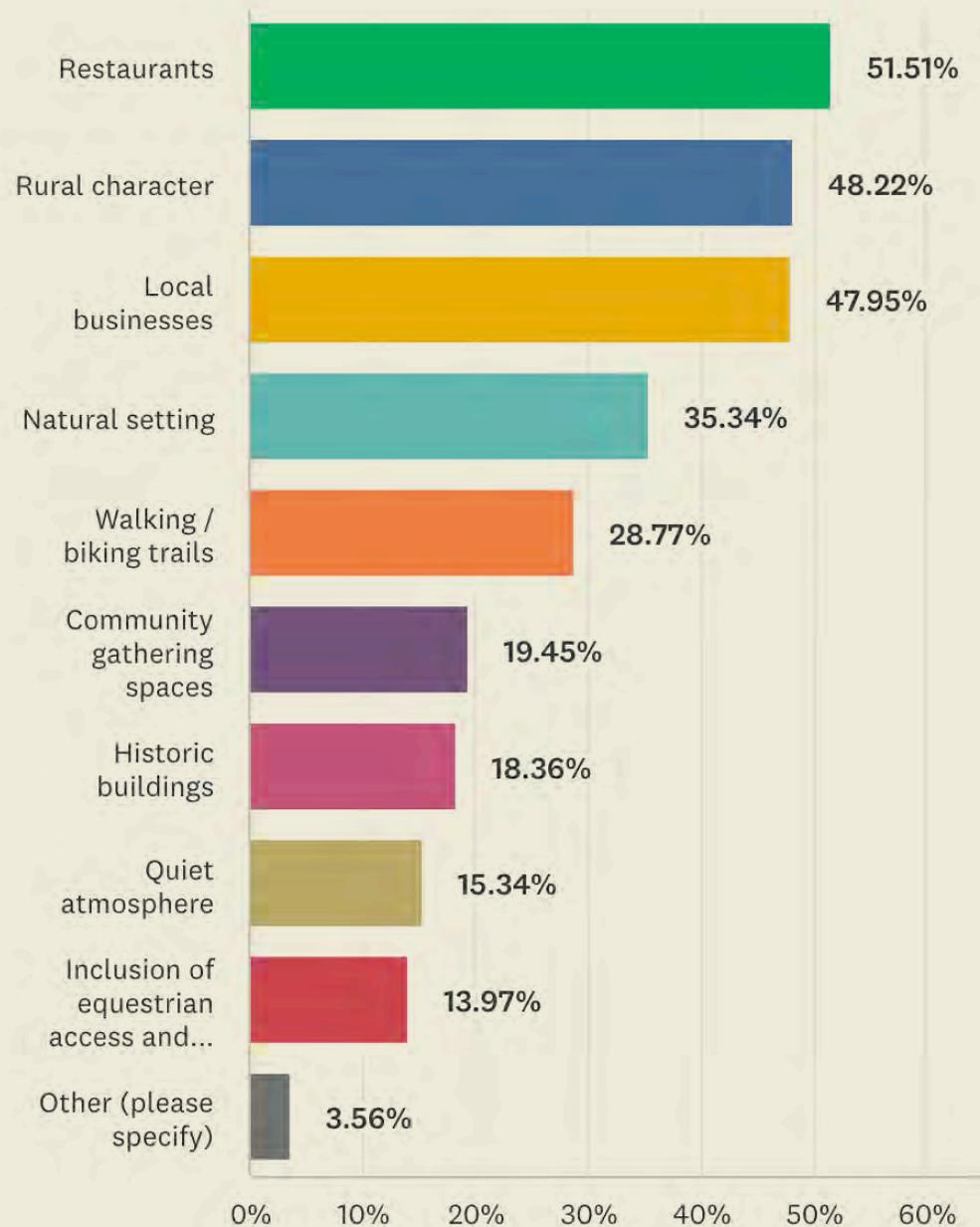
Values & Desired Outcomes for the Town Center

Preliminary Survey Results

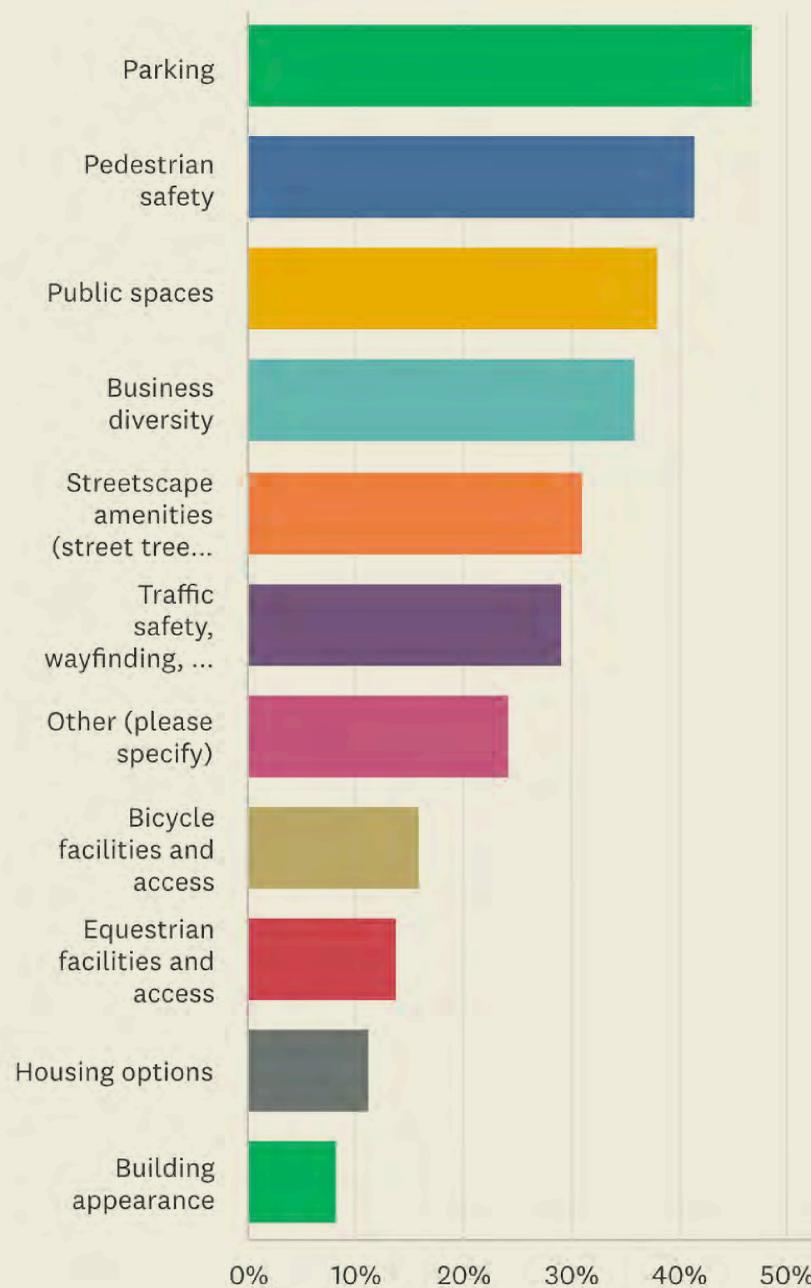
What do you value most about the Town Center today?

What aspects of the Town Center would you most like to see improved?

Survey Results



Survey Results



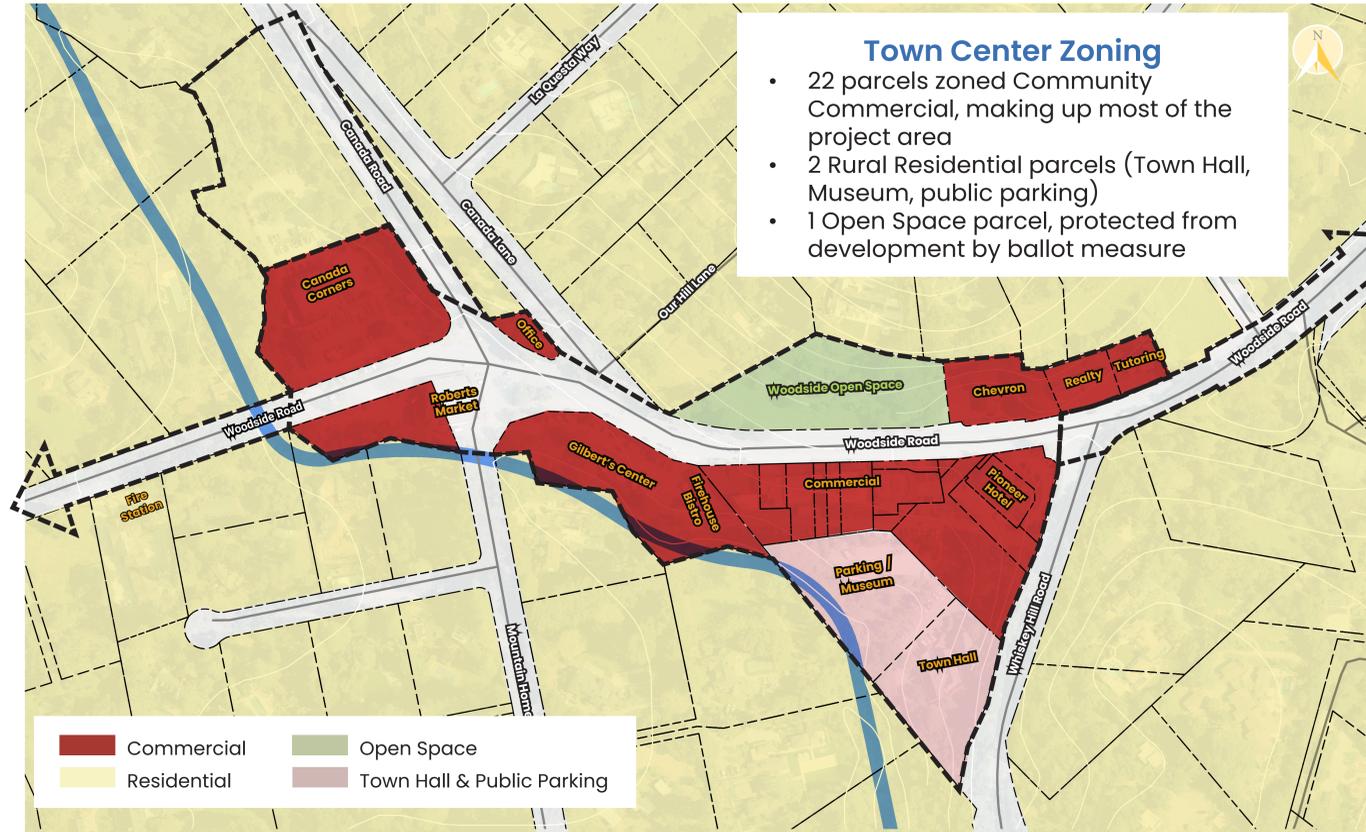
What do you value about the Town Center? What should be improved?

Put a sticker on results that you agree with or add additional comments here:

Land Use Context: Existing & Potential Uses

Land Use Patterns

- The Town Center functions as a rural village core with virtually no mixed use
- Dominated by low-scale retail and office; no residential presently exists:
 - Eight realtors/financial offices
 - Four restaurants/cafes
 - Four personal service stores (hardware store, flower shop, hair salon, and dry cleaners)
 - One bar at the Pioneer Building
 - One supermarket (Roberts Market)
 - One gas station (Chevron)
 - One bank, doctor, and post office
 - The Town Hall and Town Museum



How do you feel about housing in the Town Center?

Put a sticker on quotes that you agree with or add additional comments here:

Survey Quotes: Housing

Opinions were sharply divided about housing in the Town Center.

"We must allow more affordable housing in town, especially so the firefighters, teachers and other members who contribute so much to our community can live here too."

"Let's be inclusive. Add more housing. Be a real community!"

"Would definitely support cottages, townhomes, mixed use in the Town Center."

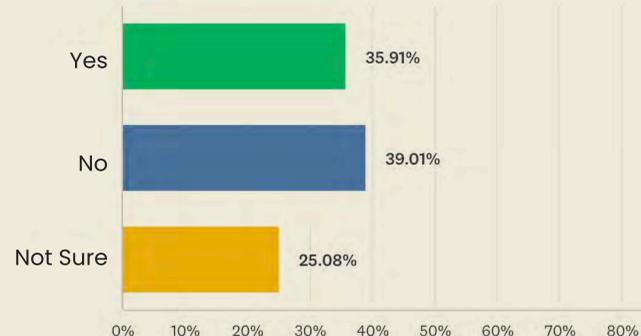
"Small scale housing in town center would ruin this town and our property value. We will become Menlo Park."

"We should not have affordable housing in the town center or anywhere in Woodside. It would ruin the neighborhood."

"Please do not consider building housing in the Town Center—would change the entire feel and specialness of the town."

"If new housing were added, parking, continuity of trails, and traffic studies should be performed to minimize negative impact."

Would you support small-scale housing (cottages, townhomes, mixed-use) in the Town Center?



Policy Context: Ballot Measures and Plans

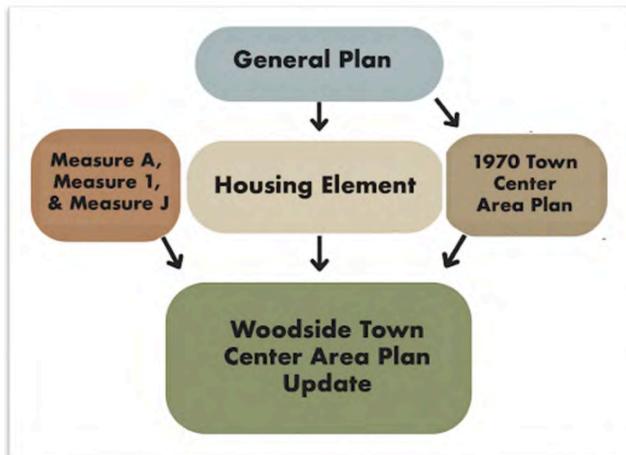
Key Land Use Plans & Policies

General Plan & (1970) Town Center Area Plan

- The Town's primary planning document, guiding development and public capital projects over 20+ years, last updated in 2012.
- Town Center Area is addressed within the General Plan with specific policy guidance; first adopted in 1970, amended in 1988.
- Focused guidance on allowed land uses/compatibility with surroundings, circulation goals, maintaining rural character, intention to preserve historic elements.

6th Cycle Housing Element (2023-2031)

- Program H-2.1k requires an update to the Area Plan to determine where new housing might be appropriate in the Town Center and if so, what kind (i.e., townhouse, mixed use, duplexes, etc.)



Voter-Adopted Land Use Measures

Measure J (1988):

Intent:

- Preserve the Town Center's low-intensity character & prevent incremental commercial encroachment into surrounding residential areas.

Impact:

- Established a boundary between residential and commercial uses, restricted the expansion of parking and commercial uses beyond existing properties, capped building heights facing Woodside Road to 17 feet above the road's crown, and limited the Town's ability to alter many aspects of zoning in the Town Center without a public vote or referendum.

Measure 1 (1989):

Intent:

- To accommodate key civic functions in the Town Center without compromising the rural open space character preserved by Measure J.

Impact:

- Enabled the construction of roadway access and associated public parking needed for usage of the Town Hall, introduced the requirement that a minimum of 50% of the residentially zoned parcels used for public benefit must be maintained as open space; and created a legal path for public uses that support Town Center civic activity.

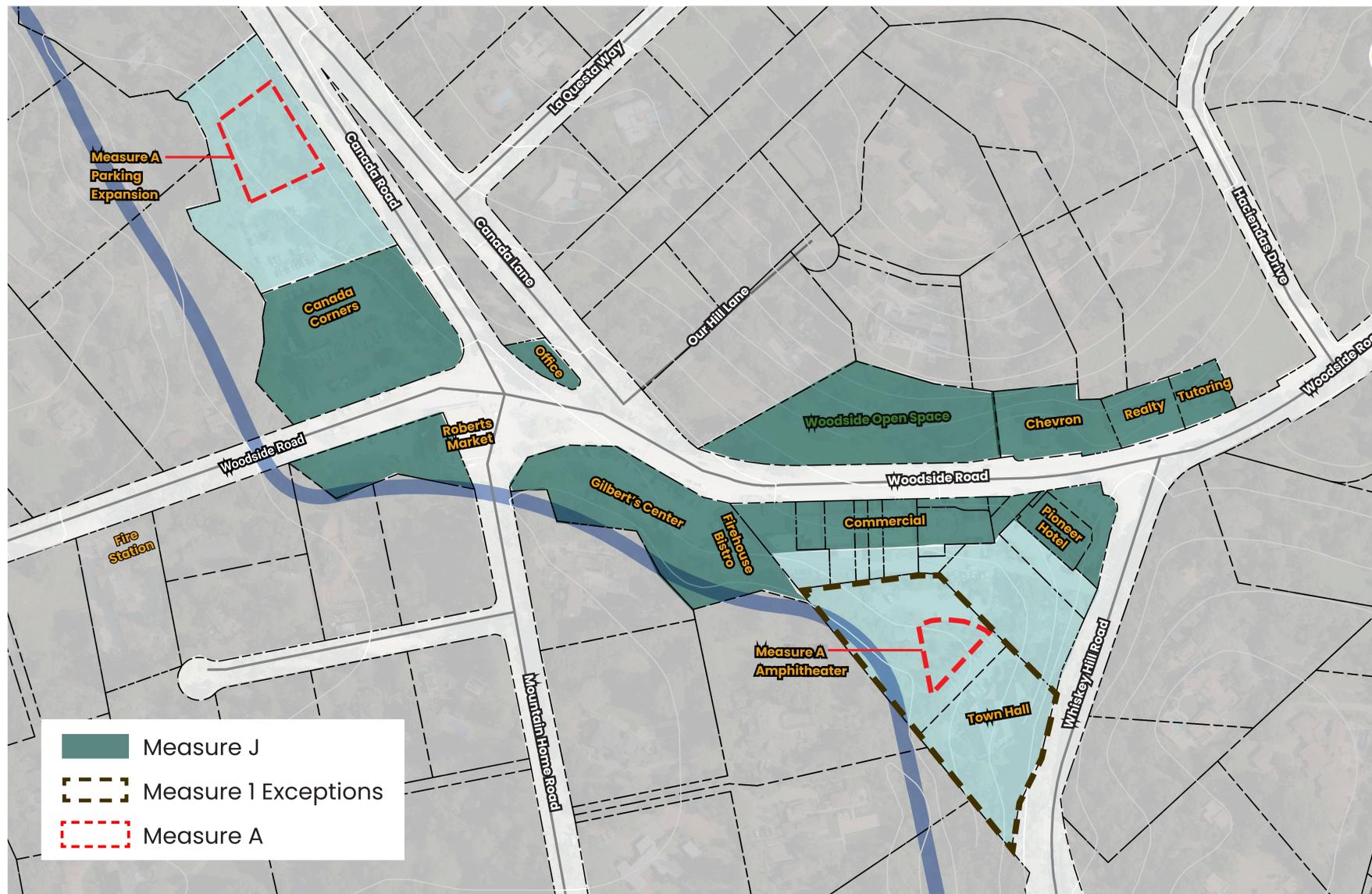
Measure A (2021):

Intent:

- To expand the community-serving function of the Town Center by allowing specific listed improvements to support public parking, cultural & arts facilities/events, and community gathering spaces on residentially zoned parcels—without opening the door to full commercial development on these sites.

Impact:

- Permitted the area behind Cañada Corners to be improved for public benefit (parking or outdoor dining) under strict design conditions. Maintained the requirement for discretionary review & design compatibility through a CUP.
- Allowed a gazebo or amphitheater to be constructed in the open space adjacent to the Town Hall and Dry Creek.
- Passed by only five votes, underscoring continued community sensitivity to Town Center land use changes.



Key Market Opportunities and Constraints

1. Restaurants Are Economic Anchors

Dining is the top-performing sector, with strong demand for more restaurants, cafes, and local eateries.

2. Office Space Demand Is Stable

Small office spaces remain desirable for local service businesses and see low turnover.

3. Visitors Boost the Local Economy

Tourists help support local businesses; amenities that attract and serve visitors may represent an opportunity.

4. Parking Limits Growth

Business expansion is constrained more by parking and access than by market demand.

5. Enduring Commitment to the Town

The charm and appeal of the Town Center have been maintained and sustained by dedicated, long-time business and property owners.

Survey Results

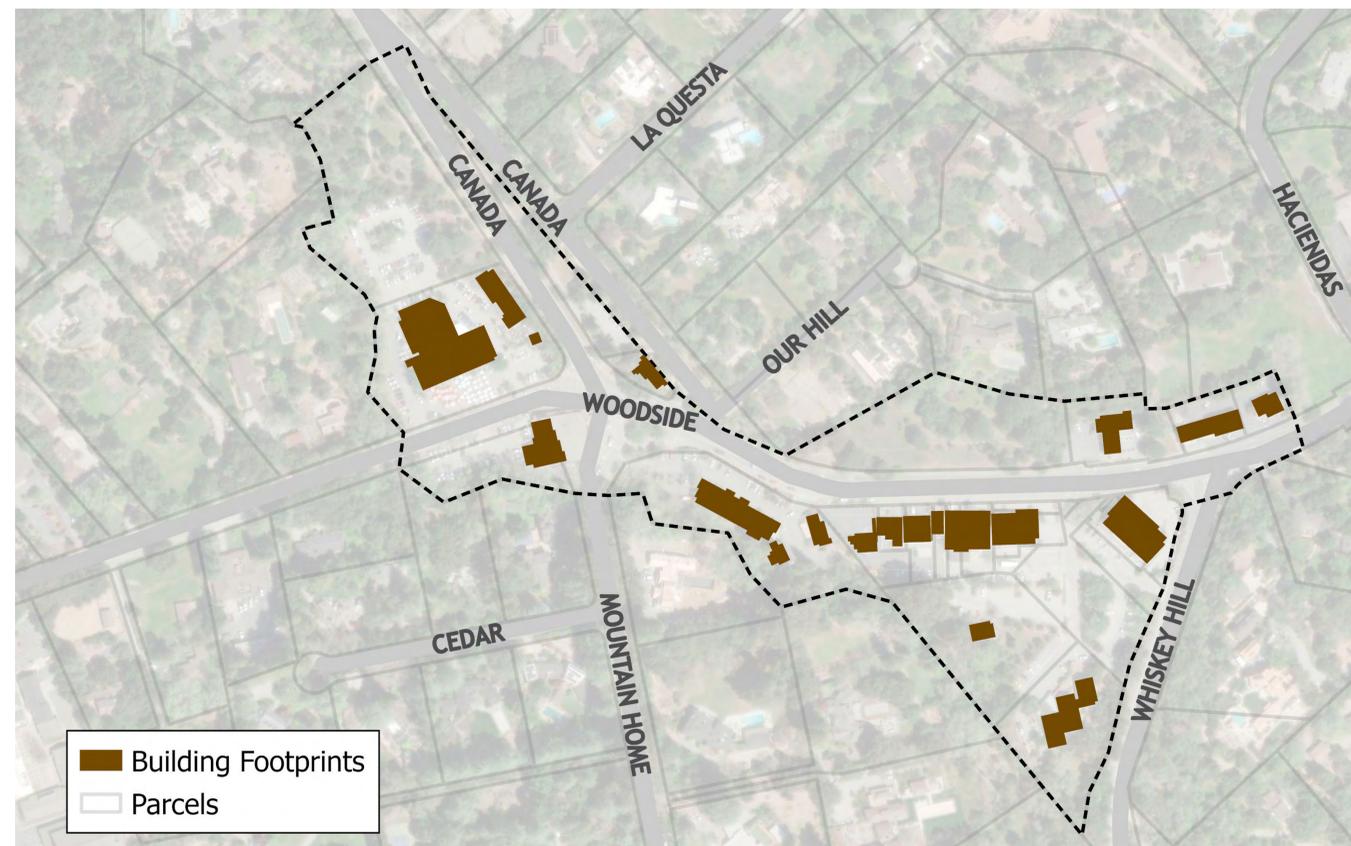
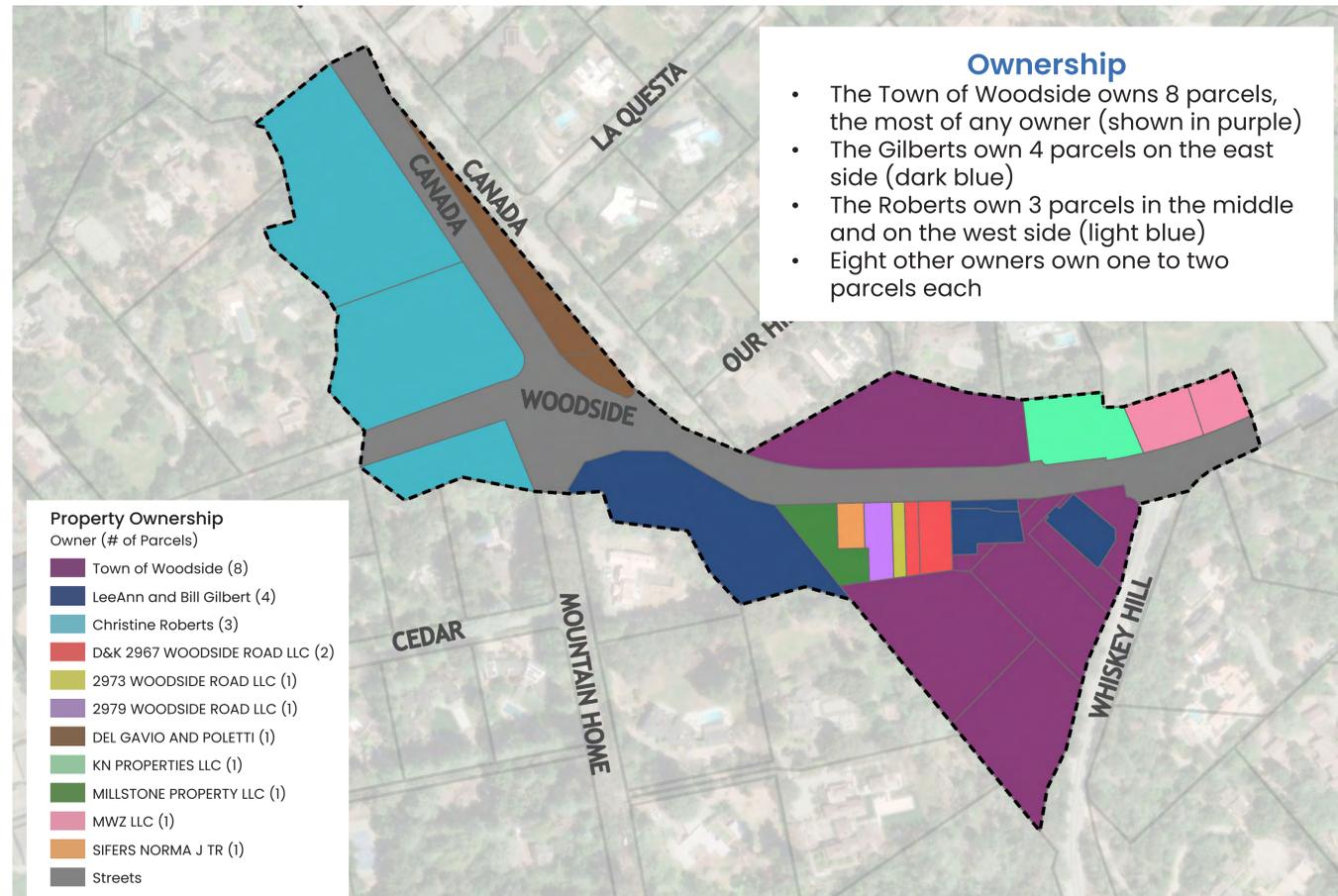
Quotes: Business Mix & Local Amenities

Many feel the Town Center is dominated by real estate and office uses, and want more diverse, everyday businesses.

"Too many Realty agencies. We need more opportunities for small business owners."

"Citizens deserve a broader array of dining options, significant and appealing seating options, a boutique store... and functional shops."

"Make it a gathering place for our community with shops and restaurants instead of a ton of real estate offices."



What types of businesses do you feel are missing from the Town Center?

Put a sticker on things that you agree with or add additional comments here:

Visual Character & Design Context



Building Patterns

- Approximately 20 total structures in the Plan area
- Many buildings date back decades or even to the 19th century
- Most structures are set back from the road at least 20-40' except for those along the central stretch of Woodside Road
- Most parcels are less than a half-acre in size (19 out of total 25 parcels). This small parcel size is consistent with 19th-century building patterns, but small by today's development standards

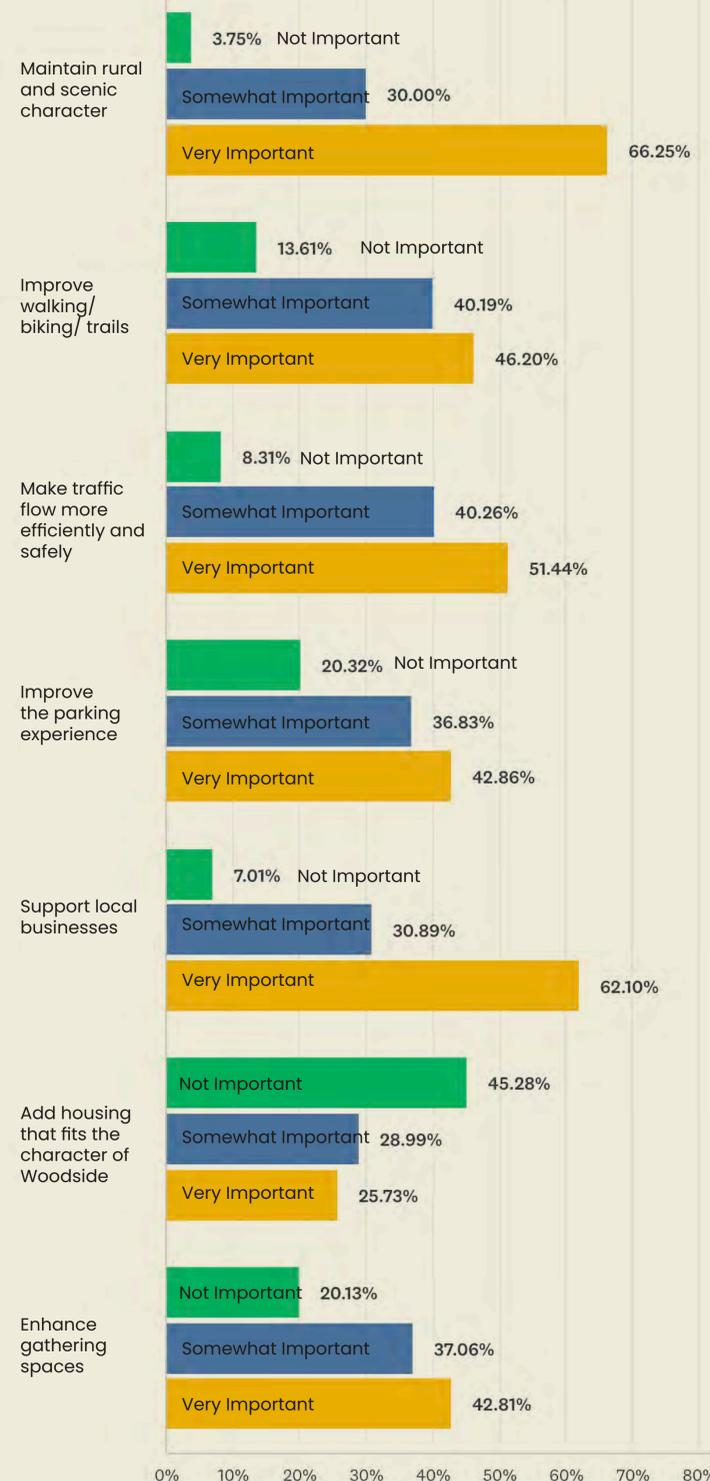
Visual Character

- Rural village identity
- Natural woodland setting (alongside Dry Creek)
- General sense of informality
- Small-town feel with rural character
- Exclusively one- and two-story structures
- Detached buildings
- Use of natural materials and subdued color palettes
- Edges transition into residential or wooded areas without abrupt changes; this soft edge is part of rural character



Survey Results

How important are these goals for the Town Center?



Quotes: Rural & Small-Town Character

Many residents emphasized keeping Woodside's unique, rural feel intact, resisting urban-style development.

"Do not make changes similar to the look of Saratoga, Los Gatos, Calistoga. Keep the rural look of Pescadero, La Honda, Niles."

"Woodside is horse country... if we start changing it, we might lose the reason why we all came here in the first place."

"Woodside's current rural and scenic character is critically important to maintain. Any townhome or mixed-use development would ruin the unique character."

"Please maintain the Town's rural, small town character. More open space, walking/biking paths and places to gather and enjoy the outdoors. Less traffic, parking, development."

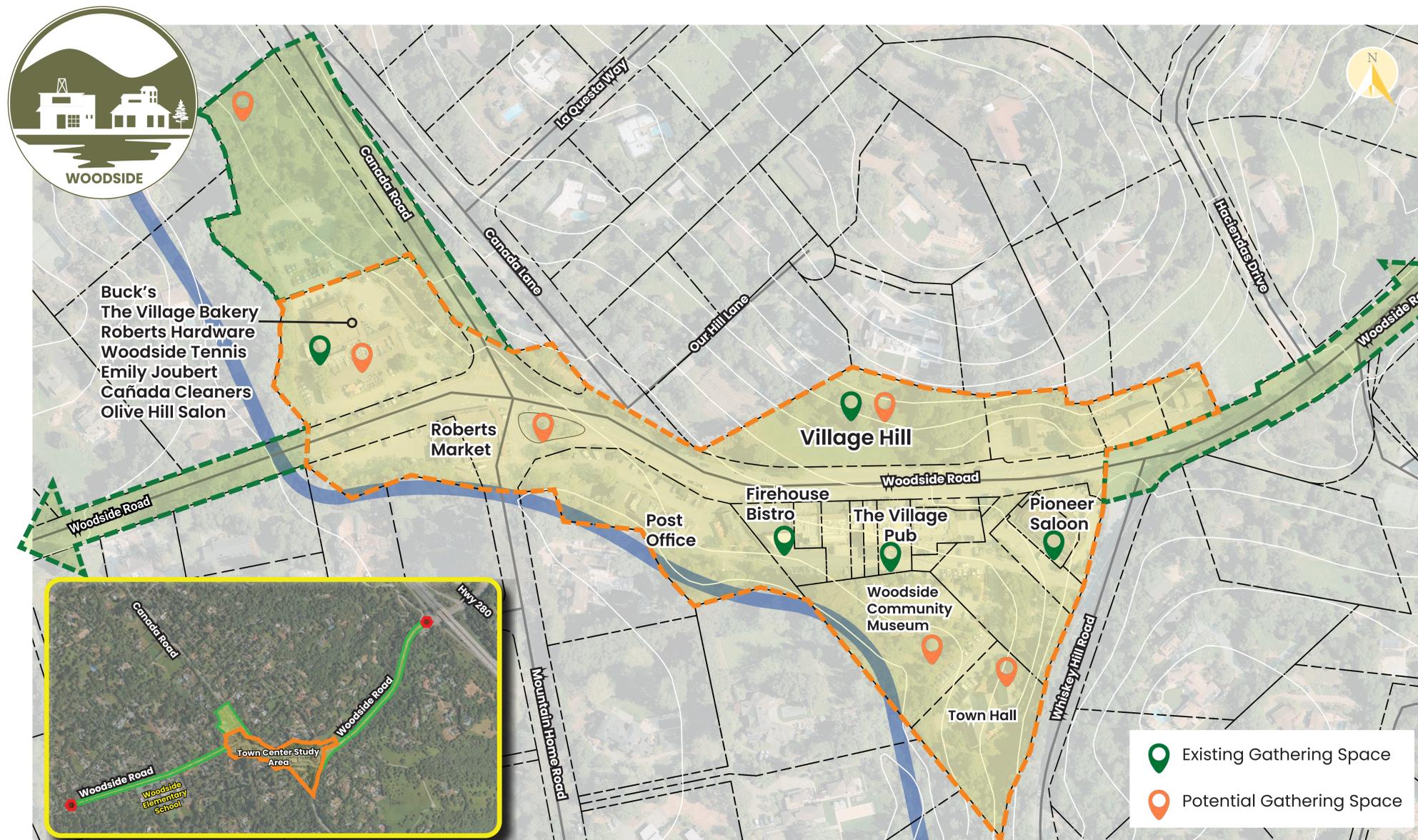
"The rural and 'western' character of Woodside is what makes it special. Woodside to me would be less charming if it was homogenized to look like suburbia."

"Keep Woodside true to what it is and don't turn it into Redwood City."

What do you think is important to preserve regarding the Town Center's character and design?

Put a sticker on comments or results you agree with, or add additional comments here:

Community Assets, Amenities, and Spaces



Public Space & Placemaking Issues and Opportunities

Few Gathering Spaces

- Aside from Town Hall and dining patios, there are limited community areas. Residents want a Village Green, playgrounds, and family-friendly spaces.

Support for Outdoor Dining

- Widespread interest in restoring outdoor seating at restaurants to bring back vibrancy and social activity.

Gaps in Pedestrian Access

- Missing sidewalks and crossings make it hard to walk or bike safely. Residents want better connections for kids, strollers, cyclists, and equestrians.

Underused Green Areas

- Sites like the Cañada/Woodside triangle are not activated, and Dry Creek could be better highlighted as a visual amenity.

No Clear Gateways

- There's no signage or landmarks to signal arrival in the Town Center. Public art and landscaping are minimal.

Streetscape Needs Care

- Residents want cleaner, greener streets with improved landscaping, seating, and waste bins.

Survey Results

Quotes: Gathering Spaces

Respondents want a central hub with outdoor seating, playgrounds, and places to connect.

"You cannot call it a town center when there is not a park or central area for kids to play and people to gather."

"Bring back the outside seating at Bucks & Village Bakery. Everyone loved that."

"[The Town Center] really lacks public space, even a small park area with benches would be nice. As it is, it's really just a business district."

Quotes: Outdoor Dining

Outdoor dining during COVID was widely remembered as a positive addition that created vitality.

"The outdoor dining added vitality and provided an opportunity for neighbors to see each other, bring dogs or ride horses."

"Really miss the outdoor dining that was allowed during Covid."

"The town felt more welcoming and vibrant during the time the restaurants had outdoor dining in the former/current parking areas."

"The outside dining initiated by the Village Bakery in response to the Covid epidemic should be returned. It created a feeling of community for the first time in the 34 years I have lived here."

What community assets or public spaces do you desire in the Town Center?

Put a sticker on comments you agree with, or add additional comments here:

Ideas to Inspire Improvements to the Town Center



Portola Valley

Portola Valley prioritizes a low-impact rural aesthetic, with natural materials, preserved open space, and minimal signage—all within a modestly scaled town center that fits its semi-rural character. Its successful use of clustered civic uses, native landscaping, and equine-friendly paths offers a valuable precedent for Woodside. The model of quiet civic prominence and integration with the landscape is especially relevant for aligning Woodside's rural identity with modest enhancements to walkability and gathering spaces.



Saratoga

Saratoga has invested in village beautification, pedestrian safety, and placemaking through landscaping and public space. Key lessons for Woodside include their use of street furniture, sidewalk cafes, wayfinding, and seasonal plantings to foster a welcoming town center without major development or density changes. Saratoga also leverages community branding and arts programs that create identity and pride.



Los Altos

Downtown Los Altos has successfully introduced outdoor dining, public art, and gathering plazas while maintaining a village-scale character. Their approach to flexible outdoor space (especially post-pandemic) and business-friendly streetscape upgrades could guide Woodside in supporting its restaurants and local-serving businesses, while encouraging safe, sociable outdoor activity in the Downtown area.



Fairfax

Fairfax exemplifies a bohemian, community-oriented downtown with vibrant retail, murals, bike amenities, and community events. While denser than Woodside, it offers a precedent for supporting local identity, sustainability, and arts without relying on large-scale development. The emphasis on walkability, music, and public gathering is a model for nurturing civic life through programming and design.



Half Moon Bay

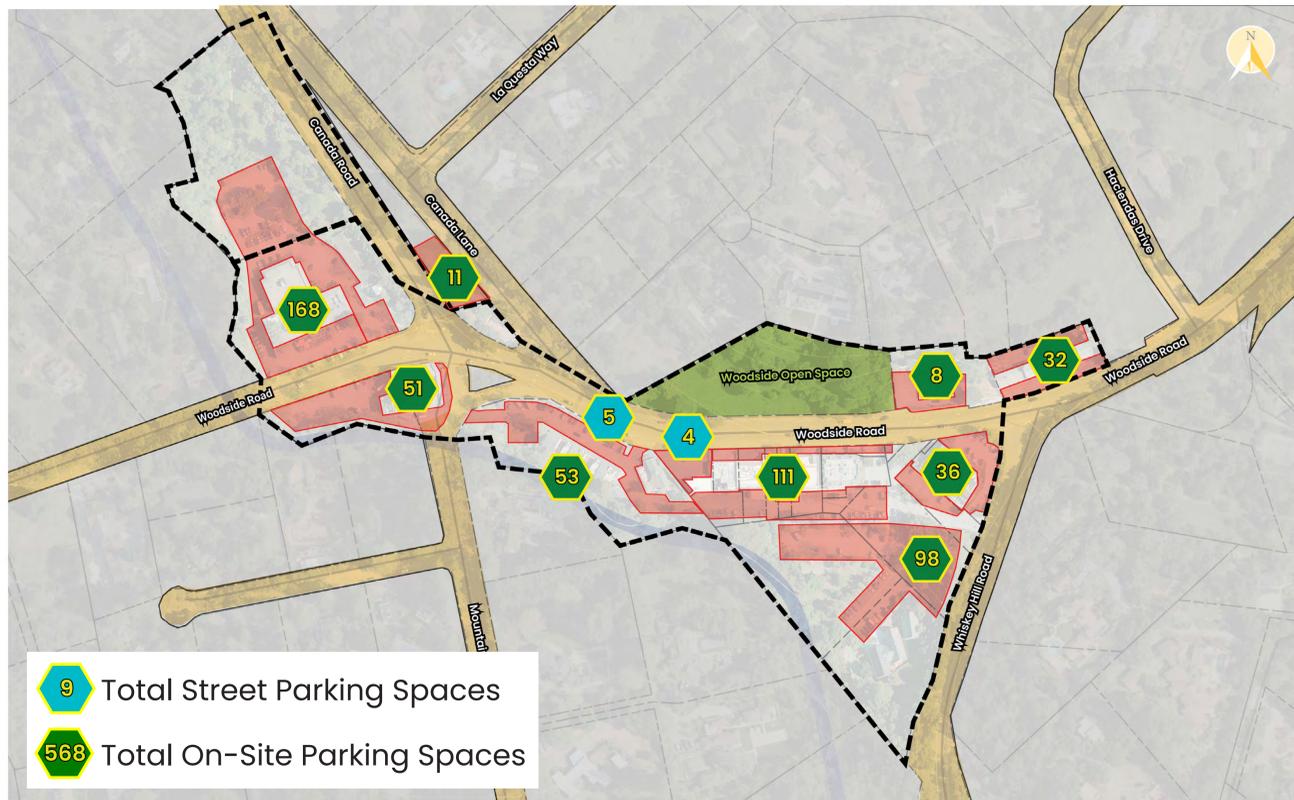
Half Moon Bay balances historic character preservation with tourism and economic activity. Its Main Street plan demonstrates how traffic calming, sidewalk improvements, and gateway features can support both local businesses and rural charm. Woodside could benefit from Half Moon Bay's strategy of integrating slow streets and multimodal safety into a historic rural main street setting.



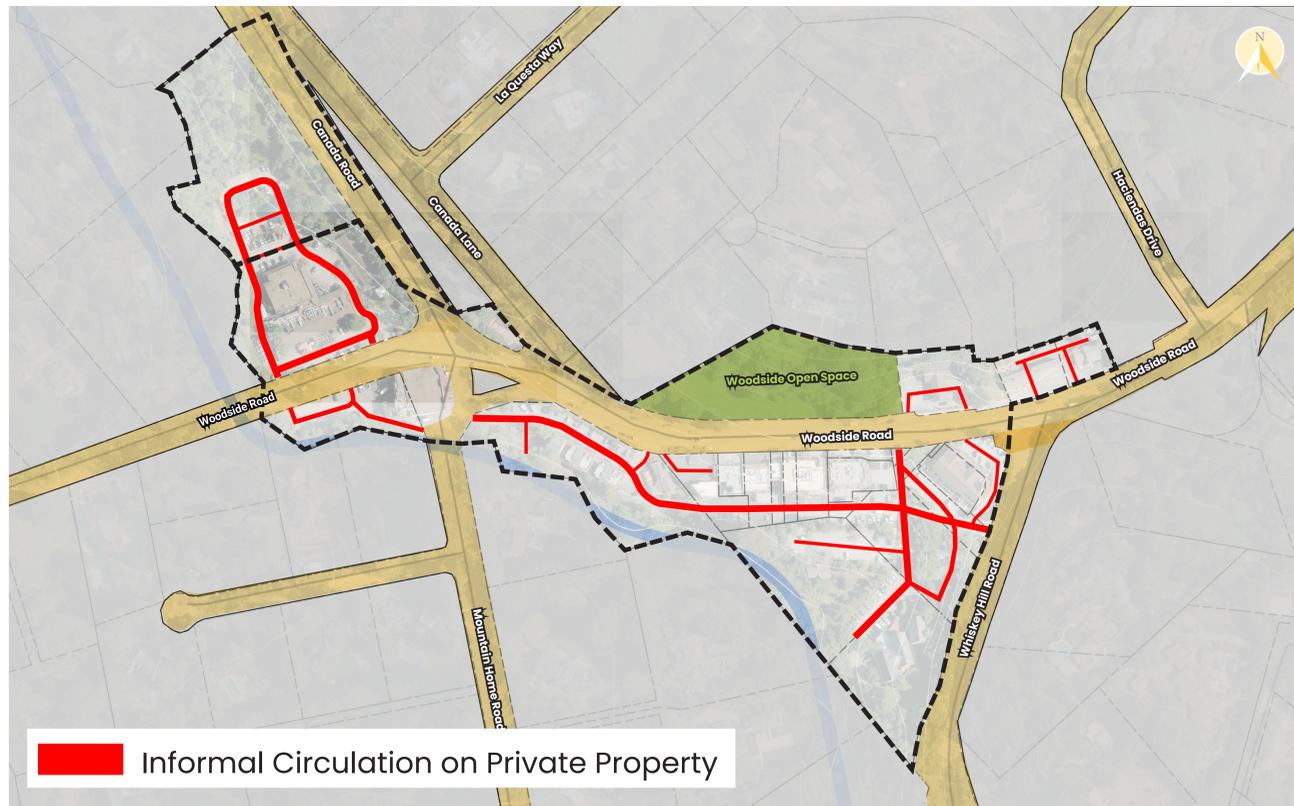
Benicia

Benicia blends small-town charm with a lively, walkable downtown that supports both locals and visitors. Its well-preserved historic architecture, waterfront access, and mix of civic and cultural amenities create a strong sense of place. Public spaces are integrated with retail and dining, encouraging foot traffic and lingering. Woodside could learn from Benicia's emphasis on pedestrian-scaled design, heritage preservation, and a mix of uses that foster everyday community life.

Parking and Mobility Conditions



Parking Data Map



Parking Circulation Map

Survey Results

How would you describe the current parking situation in the Town Center?



Quotes: Parking Concerns

Parking shortages remain a top issue.

"The parking situation around Cañada Corners is a joke... people circling the lot aggressively looking for parking is unsafe and unpleasant."

"Adding more buildings, either residential or commercial, without first addressing existing parking and traffic challenges is not the most efficient use of planning."

"Parking allocation for tenants is something that needs to be re-evaluated."

"Reasonable dining and retail options in town require reasonable levels of parking, even at peak times. 10-12 more spaces would make the roads around town center safer."

"I don't believe much has been done to control parking and traffic issues caused by non-residents."

Quotes: Mobility

A recurring theme is making the center safer and more inviting for pedestrians and cyclists.

"We would like to have the community feel more walkable and slow down. We want young children to feel safe walking to school and to the library."

"Efficient flow of traffic is a priority... easing the back-ups and stop-and-go while not giving cars dominion over pedestrians, equestrians, and cyclists."

"Creating access for bikes and pedestrians would alleviate some parking needs and make spaces safer for children."

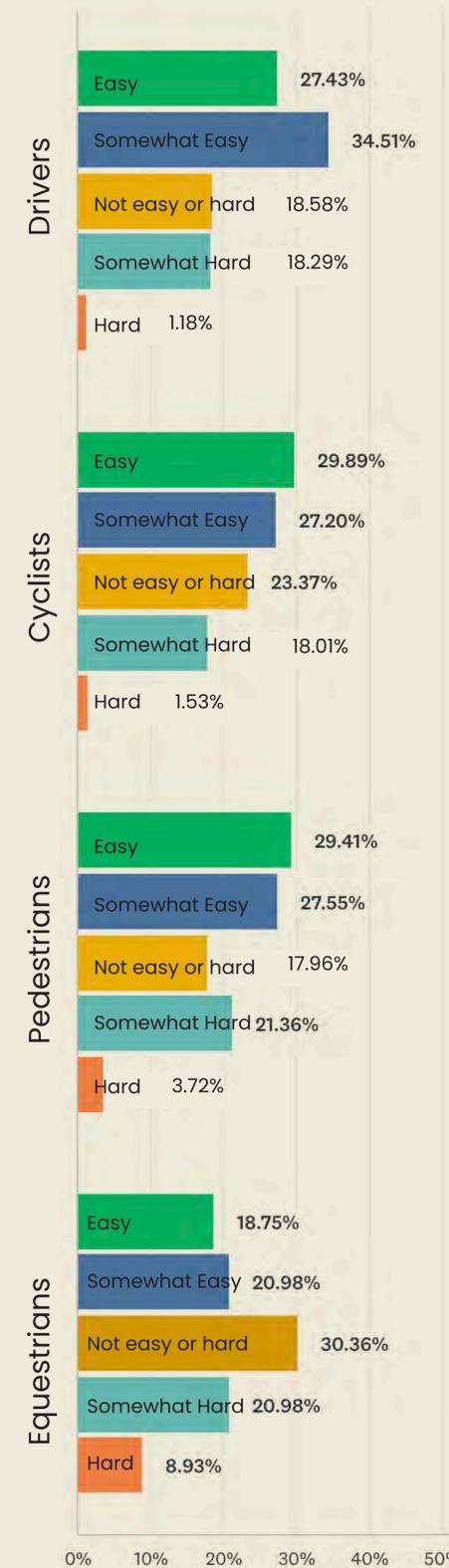
"It would be lovely to create a landscaped pedestrian area between the Pioneer and Roberts Market."

"Creating access for bikes and pedestrians would alleviate some parking needs and make spaces safer for children."

"I love the new pedestrian markings on Woodside Rd from the school to 4 corners. I'd like to see a walking lane and bike lane not just a shared lane."

"It would be lovely to create a landscaped pedestrian area between the Pioneer and Roberts Market."

How easy is it to get around the Town Center?



Vehicular Circulation Challenges

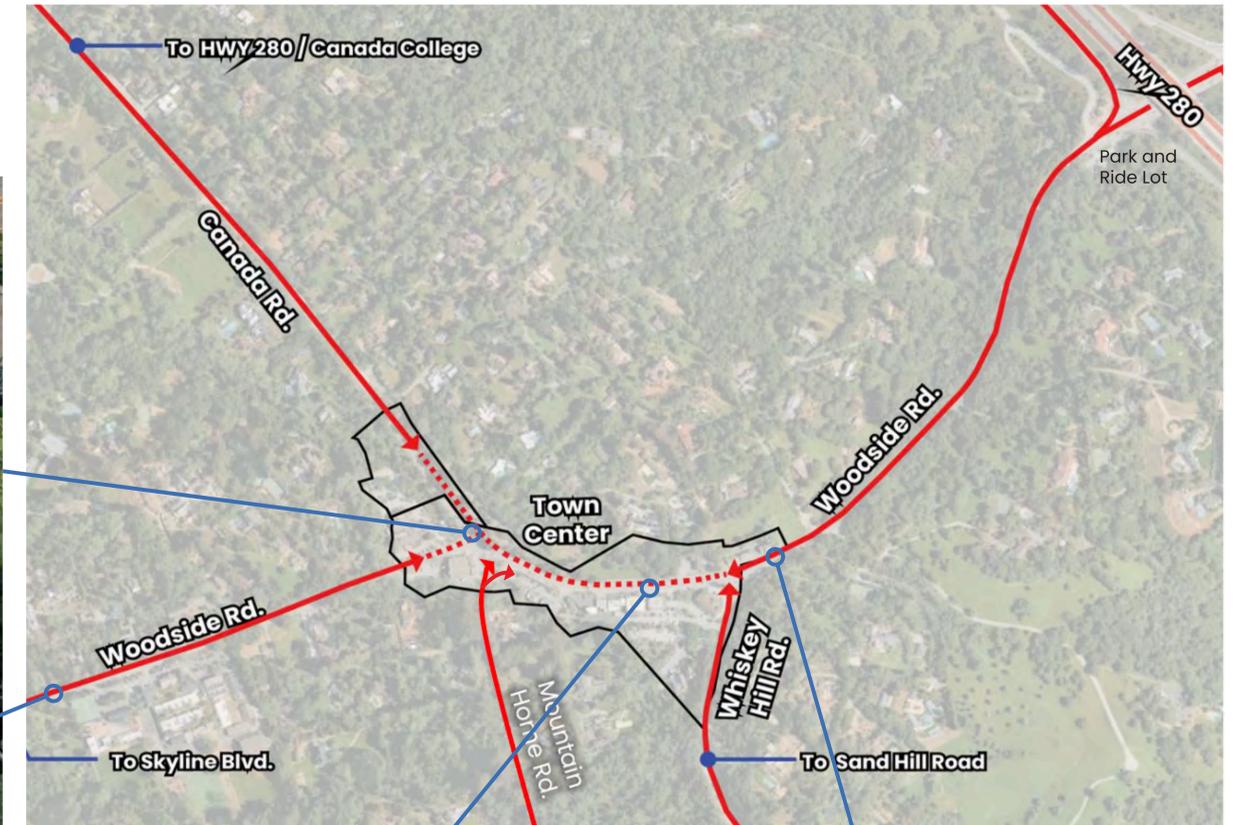
- **Congestion & Safety Conflicts on Woodside Rd (State Route 84):** High traffic volumes, frequent turns, and parking maneuvers disrupt flow—especially in the commercial core.
- **Poor Access Management:** Undefined ingress/egress points from lots create unpredictable traffic movements.
- **Woodside Road, between Whiskey Hill Road and Cañada Road:** Wide expanse of asphalt lacks clear physical separation between travel lanes, parking, and pedestrian areas—diminishing its safety and visual appearance.
- **Regional Cut-Through Traffic:** Commuter traffic increases congestion and reduces safety for local users, especially during peak commute hours.
- **Cañada Road at Woodside Road intersection:** Unusual geometry is confusing and sightlines are poor; community stakeholders have voiced that safety concerns should be addressed through this process.

Intersection of Woodside Rd, Cañada Rd, and Mountain Home Road

- Existing design features a 4-way stop
- Difficult to see all stopped cars from all lanes
- Backs up during peak hours, especially towards Woodside Elementary School

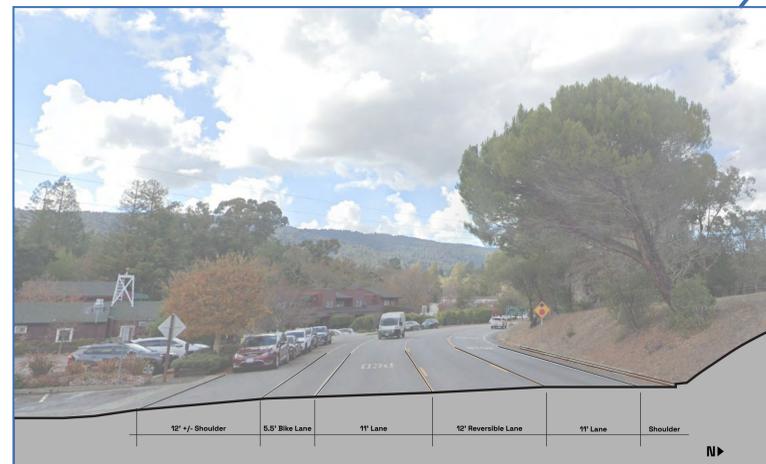


Connections to Town Center



**Woodside Road
Segment East of Town Center**

- Two regular travel lanes, one with a bicycle sharrow
- Bicycle lane and narrow shoulder/drainage ditch on north side
- Uneven shoulder and wide grade-separated pedestrian/equestrian trail on the south side
- No protection for pedestrians or bikes
- Crossings & flashers added as part of a Safe Routes to School initiative



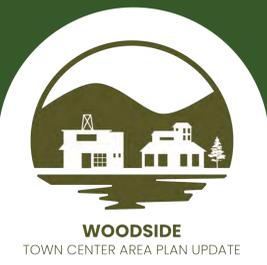
**Woodside Road
Segment at Town Center**

- Three travel lanes (two through lanes plus a turn lane)
- Narrow shoulder on the north side
- Wide shoulder and bike lane on the south side
- Street parking was removed several years ago

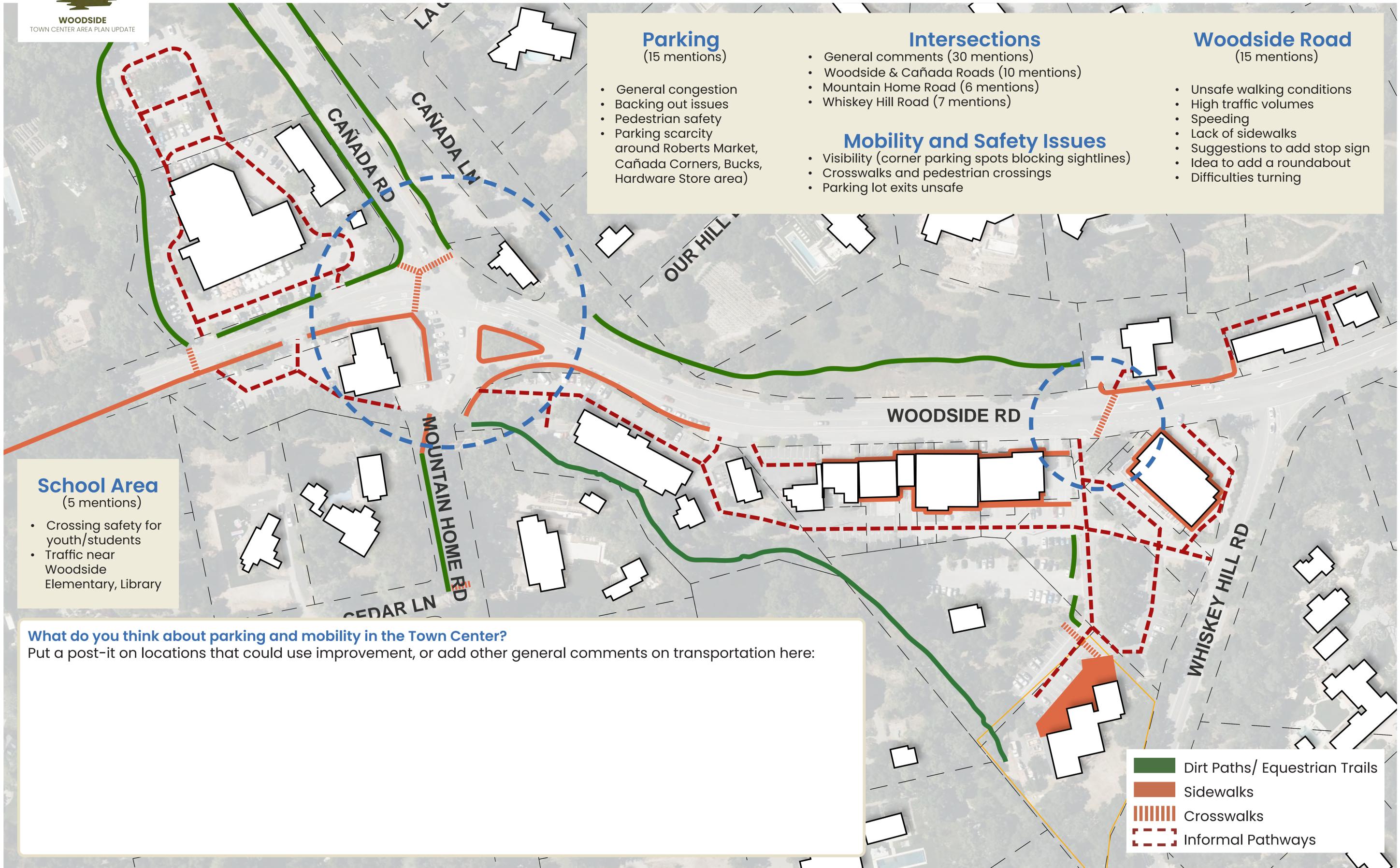


**Woodside Road
Segment West of Town Center**

- Two wide 13' travel lanes
- Two wide shoulders, marked as bicycle lanes (but without buffers or bollards)
- Safety upgrades coming soon to the south side shoulder



Survey Results: Parking and Mobility



Parking (15 mentions)

- General congestion
- Backing out issues
- Pedestrian safety
- Parking scarcity around Roberts Market, Cañada Corners, Bucks, Hardware Store area)

Intersections (30 mentions)

- General comments (30 mentions)
- Woodside & Cañada Roads (10 mentions)
- Mountain Home Road (6 mentions)
- Whiskey Hill Road (7 mentions)

Mobility and Safety Issues

- Visibility (corner parking spots blocking sightlines)
- Crosswalks and pedestrian crossings
- Parking lot exits unsafe

Woodside Road (15 mentions)

- Unsafe walking conditions
- High traffic volumes
- Speeding
- Lack of sidewalks
- Suggestions to add stop sign
- Idea to add a roundabout
- Difficulties turning

School Area (5 mentions)

- Crossing safety for youth/students
- Traffic near Woodside Elementary, Library

What do you think about parking and mobility in the Town Center?

Put a post-it on locations that could use improvement, or add other general comments on transportation here:

- Dirt Paths/ Equestrian Trails
- Sidewalks
- Crosswalks
- Informal Pathways