

ULI

# CASTRO VALLEY



*April*



## CASTRO VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

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### An Evaluation of Development Potential And Strategies

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April 17–22, 1988

A Panel Advisory Service Report

ULI—the Urban Land Institute  
1090 Vermont Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005

## ABOUT ULI—THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

**U**LI—the Urban Land Institute is an independent research organization that conducts research; interprets current land use trends in relation to the changing economic, social, and civic needs of society; and disseminates pertinent information leading to the best and most efficient use and development of land.

Established in 1936 as a nonprofit institution supported by the contributions of its members, ULI has earned recognition as one of America's most highly respected and widely quoted sources of information on urban planning, growth, and development.

Members of the Washington D.C.-based Institute include land developers, builders, architects, city planners, investors, planning and renewal agencies, financial institutions, and others interested in land use.

Much of the Institute's work is accomplished through its 19 councils, each headed by an executive group of distinguished authorities:

- Urban Development/Mixed-Use Councils
- Commercial and Retail Development Councils
- Industrial and Office Park Development Councils
- Community Development Council
- Residential Development Councils
- Recreational Development Council
- Small-Scale Development Councils
- National Policy Council
- Development Regulations Council
- Development/Infrastructure and Services Council.

This Panel Advisory Service report is one of a series of research publications intended to further the objectives of the Institute and to make authoritative information generally available to those seeking knowledge in the urban land use field.

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In addition to preparing the briefing book, these people and others served as a support group that was constantly available to the panel during the week to answer questions and to provide further information and materials. Special thanks to Steve Arago, Reimer Associates, for his help with the graphics.

The panel also expresses its appreciation to the more than 50 community, business, and government leaders for their cooperation in meeting with panelists during the on-site deliberations. Interviews with them enabled the panel to base its recommendations on important and timely information. The broad range of perspectives represented in these interviews provided a balanced view on all pertinent issues.

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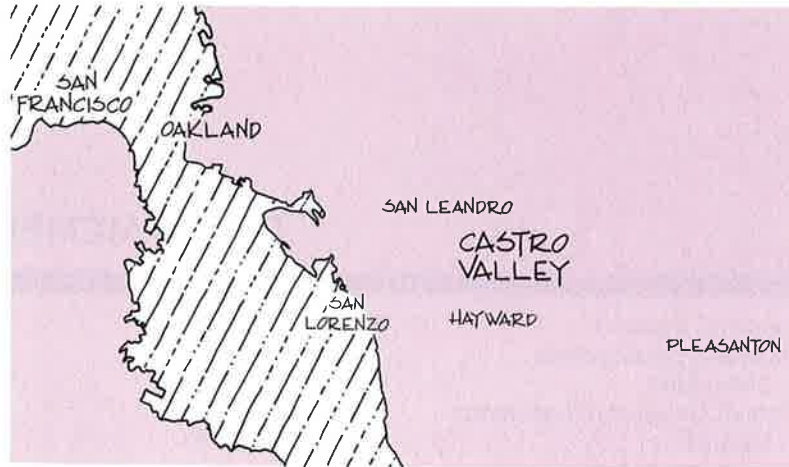
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*Chairman Fritz Duda leads  
the panel's presentation.*

## FOREWORD



Since the 1940s, people have migrated from cities to the suburbs to escape the crowded, noisy, and sometimes dangerous urban environment. They came for the quiet, rural streets, detached houses, good schools, and open space, and they were willing to commute long distances to attain this “American dream.” But what happens when a sleepy, suburban community becomes so popular that it begins to take on some of the very characteristics that drove people out of the cities in the first place? What can a community do when its development patterns, which were established 30 to 40 years ago, become outmoded and unworkable? For example, what can it do when narrow suburban roads become clogged with traffic that they were never designed to handle? What steps can a community take to maintain its essential character and its sense of place, while stimulating new commercial development? These are the kinds of questions being asked in Castro Valley, a quiet bedroom community in the San Francisco Bay Area.

For many years, Castro Valley was an undeveloped and undiscovered rural enclave of Alameda County, where chicken ranches outnumbered tract houses and fast food was something your mother made in a hurry. It gradually evolved into a highly desirable residential community of about 50,000 people, within easy commuting distance to nearby employment centers.

Flanked by I-580 on its east and west sides, by Hayward and San Lorenzo on the south, and by a recreational area on the north, Castro Valley now has relatively few areas open for residential and commercial development. Its central business district is a long, narrow commercial strip lined with small, independent retail stores, auto repair and auto service shops, and fast food restaurants. It also contains a mix of uses not generally found in a business district, like mobile home parks, lumber yards, and various other small-lot nonconforming uses. The business district, with its hodge-podge of commercial and residential uses, lacks a uniform design element that would liken it to a more conventional downtown.

The Castro Valley Chamber of Commerce and Alameda County asked the Urban Land Institute to help plan a revitalized CBD as a focus for Castro Valley. The aim would be to create a plan that balanced development, open space, and recreational areas.

The 10-member ULI panel—comprising developers, planning and design professionals, and real estate economists—conducted an on-site investigation that included interviews with members of the business community, county staff, and residents of the community. This report documents the panel’s findings and recommendations.

ULI’s Panel Advisory Services use the experience and talents of the Institute members to help address difficult issues and solve problems related to development and planning. Since the program was initiated in 1947, over 170 panel assignments have been undertaken, providing technical expertise to communities, developers, and other organizations.

Both the Institute and the panel members hope that this report will provide Castro Valley with a basis for resolving the issues that have been raised and with a vision of what Castro Valley could become.



## THE PANEL'S ASSIGNMENT

Castro Valley has long been a popular place to live. Its quiet suburban qualities, proximity to San Francisco, and easy access to employment centers are part of its attractiveness. But like much of the Bay Area, Castro Valley (as are its neighboring communities) is under increasing development pressure, and the community is beginning to experience some of the ills—such as increased traffic—that often go hand in hand with growth.

For the most part, people in Castro Valley want to maintain its suburban character, yet they would also like a downtown that not only meets the community's need for goods and services, but also reflects the community's spirit, heritage, and image. The challenge of revitalizing Castro Valley's downtown lies in recognizing and nurturing the area's special qualities and unique assets.

The panel was asked to address the following questions regarding the development potential in Castro Valley:

- How can the community develop a commercial base?
- What type of commercial development should be targeted?
- How can the central business district be revitalized?

- What can be done to attract shoppers, both residents and nonresidents, to the community?
- Where should and at what pace should future residential development occur?
- What type of housing should the community encourage?
- Should Castro Valley incorporate?



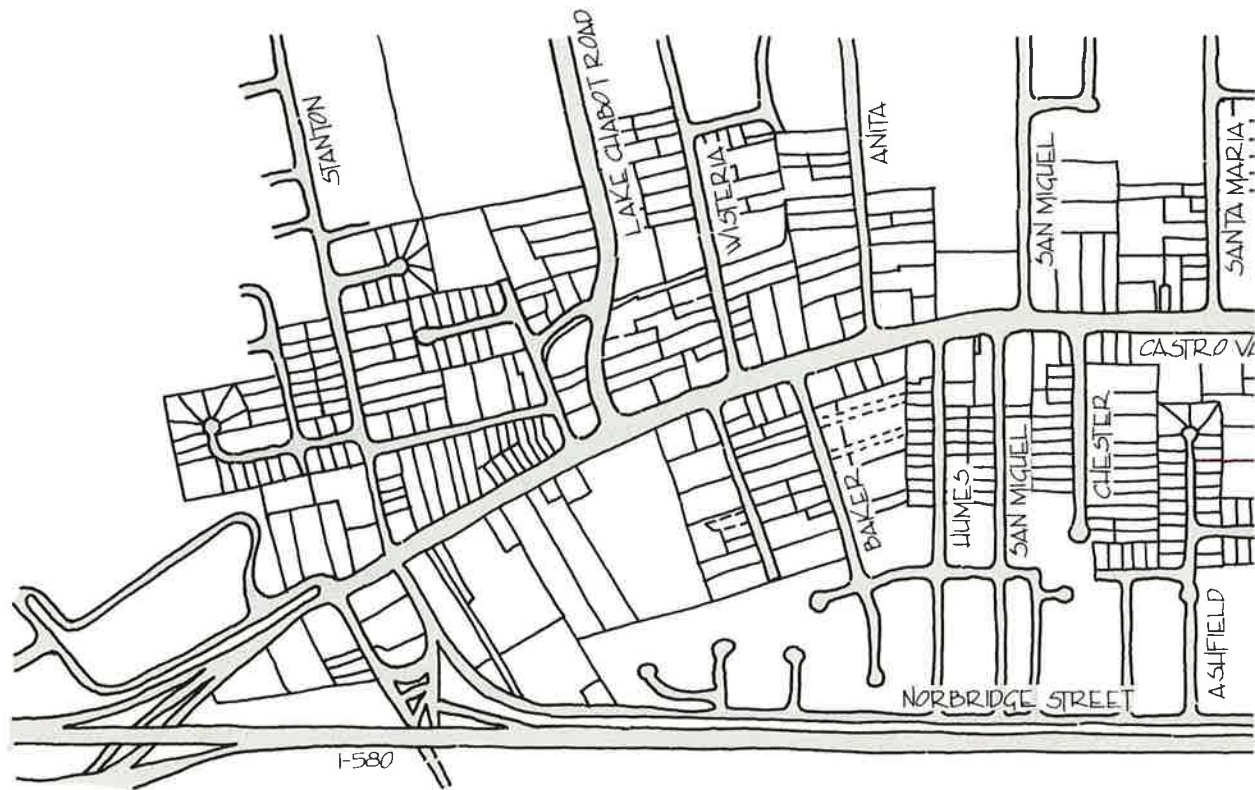
*Kermit Parsons gets a tour of the recreation area from local sponsor.*

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### RESIDENTIAL

Castro Valley is a predominantly residential bedroom community with a predominantly white, moderately affluent population. Over 75 percent of the housing in Castro Valley was built since 1950, and most of this was built between 1950 and 1970. The population is aging and is relatively stable.

Two potentially developable areas within Castro Valley can meet the next 20 years of growth demand. The first is the hillside section to the east of the community, much of which is included within planned or currently developing subdivisions and a limited supply of which is uncommitted land available for new development. The residential density that will occur in the east side of the community will be affected by the topography of the hillsides and the requirement for preserving significant natural resources, and will realize a development potential of two dwelling units (6.12 persons) per acre.



The second area is within the existing confines of the community. New market demands and changing concepts for development—for example, infill—will allow for more intensive use of existing properties.

To enhance the opportunities for the community to absorb growth while providing for a variety of housing and commercial activities, and without jeopardizing the historic image of Castro Valley, the panel suggests the following:

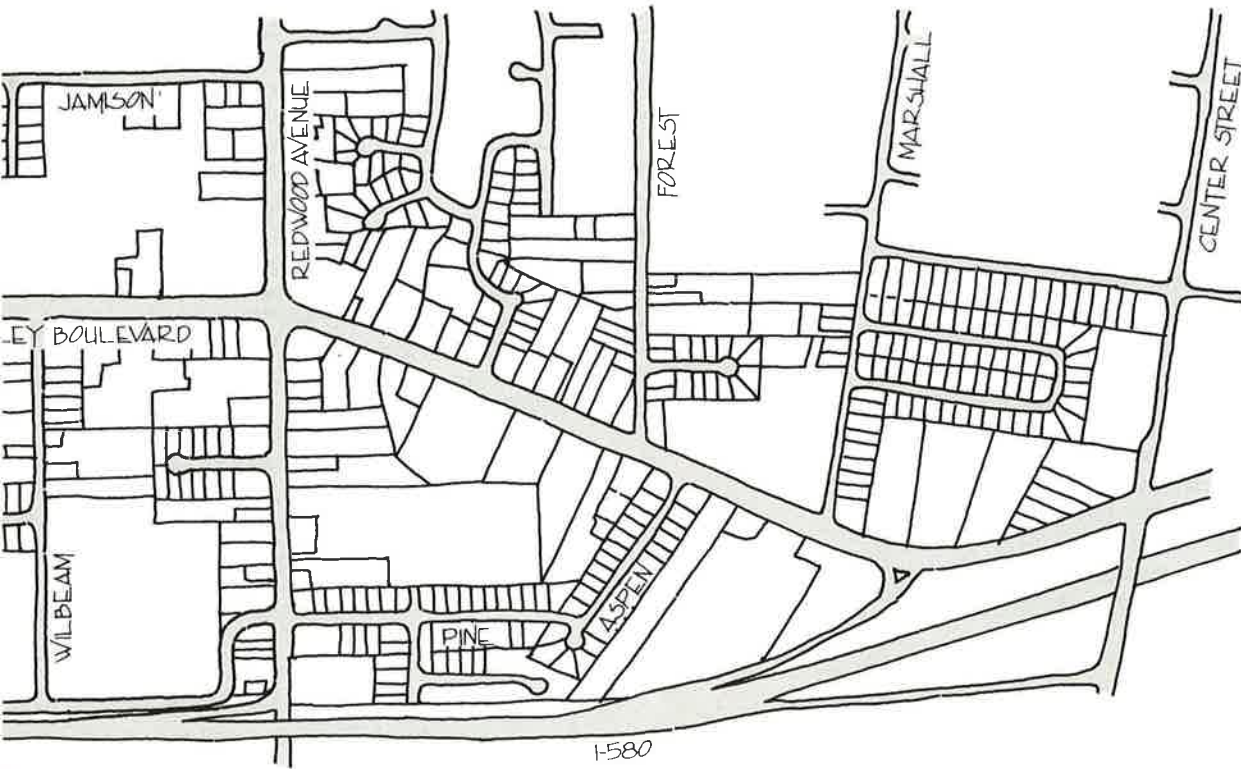
- Limit redevelopment in the northerly or upper area of Castro Valley to parcels of 20,000 square feet or more when dividing the existing homesites. This density could be increased in the central portion of the community by providing for a range of lot sizes from 7,000 to 20,000 square feet when new parcels are created. The lower east portion of the community could provide for an increase in density by allowing lot divisions to create single-family parcels with a minimum of 5,000 square feet.

- Redesignate the central portion of Castro Valley directly north of the boulevard between Redwood Drive and the hospital for higher-density multifamily development. The residential area in the central portion of the community between Castro Valley Boulevard and the I-580 Freeway would be designated for very high multifamily densities with developer incentives, such as density increases, to encourage consolidation of the parcels into larger-scaled apartment complexes. This regenerated housing stock should be allowed to mix with commercial uses along the boulevard and Redwood Road. No additional multifamily complexes should be developed within the defined single-family residential areas.

- Allow increased residential density in the area now bounded by the business uses on the east, north, and west, and by I-580 on the south. The goal is to provide additional, smaller apartment units for the increasing number of elderly households who no longer wish to live in single-family houses but who wish to remain in Castro Valley.

The panel believes that the Rancho Palomares project could satisfy a significant share of the Castro Valley primary housing demand over the next 10 years.

- Within the retail concentration, consider developing an attractive or eye-catching building or structure that can easily be seen from I-580, and that will serve as a marker or focal point, creating a strong image for Castro Valley.



Eastern end of Castro Valley Boulevard, looking west.



### COMMERCIAL

The main commercial area, located along Castro Valley Boulevard, is essentially a concentration of convenience-oriented neighborhood facilities providing for the day-to-day shopping needs of local residents.

Because much of the commercially zoned land along Castro Valley Boulevard seems better suited for noncommercial uses, the panel recommends that the community plan for high-density residential uses that would complement and support properly planned commercial development. Intensive retail/commercial uses should be grouped together in a selected core area of the larger commercial district of the community.

The retail facilities already along the boulevard could be expanded and improved by assembling sites large enough to accommodate a community shopping center that would incorporate new and/or expanded supermarket space, complemented with other convenience and specialty stores and restaurants. Pedestrian-oriented businesses should be linked to encourage pedestrian movement between businesses and discourage auto access and movements.

More parking should be developed, some of it in parking decks next to retail facilities. Access to these parking areas should be limited to relatively few points along the cross streets. Replacing the present internal parking areas, both north and south of Castro Valley Boulevard and west of Redwood Road—with these facilities placed outside the retail areas—would cut down on the parking and traffic problems and enhance pedestrian circulation.

The area east of the business district and north and south of Castro Valley Boulevard is already largely devoted to region-serving businesses, which should be consolidated and ultimately supplemented on land now occupied by several trailer parks. This would require a planning process to relocate the people occupying the trailers.

The circulation and parking improvements outlined in the CBD Specific Plan should be implemented, along with the beautification program for Castro Valley Boulevard and for the "gateways" at the eastern and western edges of the community. The signage program and design standards need to be expanded and strengthened to ensure compatible development in the business district, as changes occur to individual properties. On-street parking should be retained in selected areas to preserve the "downtown" character of Castro Valley Boulevard and to provide additional, convenient parking for patrons.

## LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION: BART

Castro Valley is experiencing a series of changes that will affect its future. The manner in which the community deals with these factors will, in many ways, permanently alter its shape and character.

The most powerful external forces for change involve access to regional transportation: the increased capacity of I-580 and the committed extension of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) rail system to Castro Valley. Both will improve the quality of access to jobs for valley residents and also will improve recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities in the Bay Area. The BART station could be the spark the community needs to ignite downtown redevelopment. Numerous options for joint development are possible. The objective would be to make a more compact, pedestrian-oriented business district with a major alignment along Redwood as well as Castro Valley Boulevard.

On the other hand, such transportation system "improvements," if not carefully planned, can detract from the community. If a new BART station with a large nine-acre parking area and vehicle turnaround at Redwood Avenue and I-580 becomes no more than an access point in the regional rail transportation system, its impact on Castro Valley's business area is likely to be negative. Therefore, if Castro Valley chooses not to use the current BART site as a catalyst for downtown redevelopment, then the station should be moved.

## INCORPORATION

The panel addressed several issues related to the existing structure of local government in Castro Valley, specifically its status as an unincorporated community.

The incorporation debate includes considering whether or not the present county government services and controls are sufficient to implement community objectives and/or proposals made by the panel. The panel's observations on this complex subject are based on experiences elsewhere, on pertinent information made available to the panelists, and on limited interviews with interested members of the Castro Valley community and government officials. From its review of these sources, the panel arrived at certain conclusions regarding the possibility of incorporation.

Incorporation represents the best long-term solution for both the community and the county in terms of community organization, control over decisions, provision of services, and community development. Therefore, the panel believes that the concept of incorporation should be pursued both by the county and the community within a reasonable time frame. Imagination, firm county support, and strong community commitment by both residents and businesses will be required to make incorporation feasible and successful.

The community should become incorporated when it is prepared to make the commitment to those actions necessary to build an adequate permanent tax base—through commercial revitalization and other forms of economic development and through expanding the residential tax base. At the same time, residents and businesses may have to accept lower levels of government services and/or higher levels of business and resident tax support (for instance, through special taxes adopted by the voters).

Until conditions are appropriate, the community and the county should pursue a course of action that will prepare Castro Valley for incorporation at some time in the future.



Panelist Lawrence Williams addresses the audience.

Panel member Dale Johnson explains redevelopment options.

## REDEVELOPMENT

If the community wants to change significantly the character and quality of commercial development, some form of government-assisted development activity will probably be necessary.

Creating a redevelopment agency to guide redevelopment would have three primary advantages. First, it could spur redevelopment through tax increment financing. Second, a redevelopment agency would enhance prospects for the acquisition and consolidation of commercially viable parcels for significant new development. Third, a redevelopment agency would provide a vehicle to program and support development, which would encourage partnerships between businesses and government.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation strategies can be short- or long-term efforts of varying intensity. The degree of effort depends on the funding resources and regulatory commitment. The panel strongly recommends that Castro Valley adopt and vigorously pursue the following three levels of implementation strategies. The choice of level and the timing is ultimately a Castro Valley decision on how important it is to control and direct its future.



### IMMEDIATE EFFORTS AT MODERATE COST

This level of effort is largely cosmetic but it sends a positive signal for future commitment.

*Image Building/Marketing.* The panel recommends that the Chamber of Commerce actively promote shopping and doing business locally. This would be a concerted, ongoing campaign that would be reinforced by the formation of a merchants' association made up of retailers and businesses on the boulevard.

*A Boulevard Improvement District.* The purpose of this District would be to design, fund, construct, and maintain development with a consistent, physical theme on Castro Valley Boulevard and Redwood Road.

### SHORT-TERM EFFORTS AT MODERATE COST

*Infill Residential Development.* Single-family and multifamily infill development can be better directed by providing stricter location designations and specific density, lot size, access, and parking requirements.

*Multifamily Development.* Incentive and transitional zoning can encourage a change of use and density for multifamily purposes.

*Transitional and Performance Zoning for Selected Commercial Areas.* The currently "permissive" commercial zoning classifications (C1 and C2) should be strengthened, as well as the site plan review process in the Specific Plan for the Castro Valley CBD.

*Commercial Uses.* These uses should be concentrated by type, particularly in the areas around Castro Valley Boulevard/Redwood Road and in the east and west gateway areas.

*Minimum Requirements.* Minimum requirements should be established for lot size (20,000 square feet), frontage, curb cuts, minimum parking (four spaces per 1,000 square feet of GLA), and building mass and height.

### INTERMEDIATE/LONGER-TERM EFFORTS AT HIGHER COST

Castro Valley should consider developing a civic center/community meeting place, most likely in the existing commercial core near the intersection of Castro Valley Boulevard and Redwood Road. The civic center/meeting place could serve as a focal point for the downtown.

## INTRODUCTION

The Castro Valley community has asked the panel to address numerous issues involving land use and related matters affecting the quality of life in the community. The issues range from residential land use policies and commercial sector redevelopment to numerous public sector, government, and economic issues. Not surprisingly, these issues evoke many different responses from the community. Some residents would block any new development to "keep Castro Valley like it is." Others have unrealistic expectations, envisioning a higher level of development than is achievable. Given the maturity of the area and the degree of citizen concern, many unique challenges must be met in addressing issues and in implementing responsible policies.

Almost all of the people interviewed by the panel were more concerned with improving the quality of development and encouraging responsibly planned projects than with banning or limiting future development. They were particularly interested in how existing commercial sectors of the community could be consolidated, improved, and redeveloped, thereby enhancing the image and quality of life in the community for future generations.

Castro Valley citizens expressed a clear sense of community. Many residents expressed frustration with the increased traffic stemming from the rapid growth in surrounding incorporated and unincorporated areas. And the panel did not find a strong consensus on how the community should respond to this growth. In effect, most of Castro Valley's active citizens were concerned that no clear vision for the future has been defined.



The panel conducted extensive interviews with local citizens and business persons.

Indeed, the panel views its role as being that of a catalyst in helping to formulate a plan and vision for the future and in defining alternatives. Castro Valley has two primary options:

- It can attempt to maintain the status quo, react to each development proposal on an ad hoc basis, and ignore the impacts of matters outside its control. Under this *reactive* strategy, the community runs the inherent risk of being victimized by external developments occurring beyond its natural boundaries.
- It can initiate a *proactive* strategy requiring several primary tasks:
  - Assessing the residential and commercial development potential of the area.
  - Providing a mechanism for restricted land use, consolidation of small lots, land use governance, and redevelopment.

–Developing a plan for implementing, enforcing, and marketing the adopted strategy.

To succeed, a proactive plan for the future requires consensus within the community, as well as compromise, cooperation, hard work, and sacrifice. It requires a committed leadership, trust, and positive action in order to satisfy the goals established by the community.

The proactive alternative constitutes much of the panel's report. Within this alternative, many diverse and community-enhancing possibilities are available for revitalizing both the residential and commercial sectors of Castro Valley.

## DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

### HISTORIC AND CURRENT SETTING

Castro Valley, an unincorporated area of Alameda County, is located in the East Bay Area of the San Francisco Bay region, generally north of the city of Hayward and east of the city of San Leandro. It is traversed by Interstate 580, the principal access to major urban centers in the Bay Area to the west, and to the rapidly urbanizing Livermore Amador and San Ramon Valley areas to the east.

The predominant physiographic features are the flat to gently sloping valley bowl and the surrounding steep, hill-canyon areas. The valley bowl is largely developed, with relatively little vacant land remaining. Most of Castro Valley is residential. The hill areas—primarily undeveloped—are used for grazing, for watershed management, and for recreation and a regional park. Since the early 1960s, however, several major residential developments have been constructed, are under construction, or are planned for construction on the ridgetops to the northeast and southeast of the valley bowl.

Before World War II, Castro Valley was a rural community with a population of some 5,000. The population increased significantly through the 1950s and 1960s, reaching about 45,000 in the 1980s. (See Figure 1.)

The housing stock is predominantly single-family detached (78 percent in 1980) and most of it is relatively new; 75 percent has been built since 1950. Approximately 70 percent of the units are owner-occupied.

Consistent with a national trend, the household size in Castro Valley is diminishing; for example, from 1970 to 1980, the population actually declined slightly, while almost 2,900 homes were added.

Both home prices and apartment rentals in Castro Valley are equal to or higher than those of its neighbors. Figure 2 shows average home prices and apartment rentals taken from newspaper classified listings in July–August 1987 for Castro Valley and surrounding communities.

The population, predominantly white (92 percent in 1980), is aging, a trend that should continue: the average age of residents increased from 30.7 in 1970 to 35.5 in 1980. Per capita and household income levels are generally equal to or higher than surrounding areas.

**Figure 1**  
**POPULATION CHANGES IN CASTRO VALLEY**

	Pre-WII	1950	1960	1970	1980	1995	2005
Population	5,000	18,000	39,000	45,700	45,000	47,900 <sup>1</sup>	54,200 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Projections by Association of Bay Area Governments.



**Figure 2**  
**COMPARISON OF AVERAGE HOME AND APARTMENT PRICES IN THE CASTRO VALLEY REGION**

Cities	Home Prices (In Thousands)			Apartment Rents Per Month		
	2-BR	3-BR	4-BR	1-BR	2-BR	3-BR
CASTRO VALLEY	\$130	\$195	\$225	\$500	\$615	\$870
Hayward	120	145	190	510	610	835
San Leandro	130	170	220	500	630	870
San Lorenzo	110	140	155	460	635	860
Pleasanton	130	163	225	570	630	950
Dublin	—	160	190	540	660	875

Castro Valley is considered a bedroom community, as there are fewer jobs there than the number of employed residents. The labor force participation rates for Castro Valley residents equal approximately the county average; however, the female participation rate is considerably less.

White-collar occupations dominate the job market, with the largest proportion of residents working in retail trade. Of the 22,300 employed residents in 1980, only 18 percent worked in Castro Valley. Over half the employees (53 percent) worked in Oakland, Hayward, and San Leandro. The vast majority of people (89 percent in 1980) drive to work.

In summary, Castro Valley is primarily a residential bedroom community with a predominantly white, moderately affluent population. More than 75 percent of the housing was built after 1950, with the major share built between 1950 and 1970. The population is aging and is relatively stable.

**COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

Three types of commercial development opportunities are discussed in this section: retail/restaurants, offices, and motels.

Castro Valley is within a retail market area (five-mile radius) with a population of about 260,000 people with aggregate incomes of over \$2.3 billion. The population in this larger market area has increased since 1980 and should continue to increase. Incomes within the market area are also continuing to rise.

There is a wide range of land uses within the central commercial area. According to the last available inventory, there are over 500 businesses, including various types of retail stores, professional offices, services, recreational facilities, and building supply and construction-related businesses. There are also a number of residential uses mixed within the commercial area, including single-family homes, duplexes, apartments, and trailer parks.



*One of several trailer parks on Castro Valley Boulevard.*

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Medical offices and related uses are concentrated along Lake Chabot Road near Eden Hospital; offices also are located along Redwood Road between Castro Valley Boulevard and I-580. Most of the trailer parks are situated at the eastern end of the strip.

The main commercial area stretches along Castro Valley Boulevard, and is essentially a concentration of convenience-oriented neighborhood commercial facilities providing for the day-to-day shopping needs of local residents. The facilities vary considerably, ranging from larger centers anchored by supermarkets with related establishments—such as drugstores, laundry and dry cleaning stores, barber shops, and others—to smaller facilities often consisting of a single convenience or “mom and pop” store.

Supermarkets constitute the principal uses in the several neighborhood shopping centers within and near the central area. The two primary supermarkets in the central area are Safeway and Lucky’s. The panel interviewed a representative from Lucky’s, who confirmed the panel’s belief that an additional supermarket could be supported within the central area.

The recent overall performance of Castro Valley’s commercial establishments has been healthy compared to nearby communities, as well as communities throughout the county. In 1985, Castro Valley business establishments recorded about \$119 million in taxable retail sales, which constituted 1.9 percent of the entire county’s taxable retail sales. Given that Castro Valley’s population made up 3.9 percent of the county’s population at that time, it is clear that Castro Valley residents make a disproportionate share of their retail purchases outside of Castro Valley. As Castro Valley has no regional shopping centers, residents shop for items such as major appliances, furniture, and other goods in regional centers in neighboring communities. These centers include: Southland, Bayfair, and Stoneridge.

Because much of the commercially zoned land along Castro Valley Boulevard seems better suited for noncommercial uses, the panel suggests that the community plan for high-density residential uses, which will complement and support properly planned commercial development.

In commercial terms, the central place in Castro Valley is Redwood Road and Castro Valley Boulevard. About 55 percent of the community lives to the west of that intersection, and about 45 percent to the east. In real estate, this sometimes is called the “100 percent corner,” and it is usually the best commercial spot in the community. In Castro Valley, the 100 percent corner is occupied by two service stations, a bank, and a large parking lot used for a supermarket. The panel believes this corner could be put to better use. Such underutilization is partly due to economic factors, but could also be caused by the lack of firm planning policies. This latter condition was mentioned by a number of the interviewees.

The “100 percent” corner.



Intensive retail commercial uses should be grouped together in a selected core area of the larger commercial district of the community. This development pattern could improve access, parking, and pedestrian circulation among the retail establishments. Those uses that require less pedestrian access and concentration, such as service stations and fast food restaurants, could be located on the periphery of the commercial areas, where land is less valuable and there are fewer problems with traffic flow.

A few multistory office buildings have been developed within the commercial area, particularly north of Castro Valley Boulevard and south of the boulevard on Redwood Road, a trend that will probably continue. Many offices do not require prime commercial space, and the panel believes that concentrating retail centers in clusters will free land for in-fill type office developments.

## **RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

The market for single-family homes can be separated into two categories: 1) move-up buyers who typically have two or more children, and 2) first-time homebuyers, which include singles, childless couples, and families with young children. Market research made available to the panel on townhouse and condominium developments in the Castro Valley market area indicates that attached units are typically purchased by first-time homebuyers, the elderly, retired people, or empty nesters.

The condominium market is not as strong as the single-family or apartment markets, but smaller condominium units (900 to 1,450 square feet) could command market prices in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 range. Apartment units have high occupancies (about 98 percent), and new one- and two-bedroom units rent in the \$650 to \$900 range.

Two potentially developable areas are available to meet the next 20 years of growth demand. The first is the reasonably undeveloped hillside area east of the community. Much of this area is included within planned or currently developing subdivisions, leaving a limited supply of uncommitted land available for new development. The residential density that will occur on the east side of the community is significantly affected by the hillside configurations and the required preservation of significant natural resource features. These new additions to the community will realize a development potential of two dwelling units (6.12 persons) per acre.

The second developable area lies within the existing community. New market demands and changing concepts for development will allow for more intensive use—such as infill development—of existing properties.

## **INFILL DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

Infill development is the addition of development to a property already in use, or the conversion of that property to a more intensive use. It normally occurs where properties were passed over when areas were first developed, or where increasing demand causes the use of property to be intensified.

In Castro Valley, infill development occurs by dividing large single-family residential lots into several smaller single-family properties, allowing a higher density of neighborhood development. Most of the multifamily units have been developed in this way—by removing existing single-family or other less intense uses and reconstructing small apartment or similar complexes within the existing neighborhoods.

## **SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL INFILL DEVELOPMENT**

Most of the single-family infill construction in Castro Valley has occurred on the larger properties in the upper valley floor and in the hillside area. This has happened in the one- to five-acre parcels that were originally developed as rural subdivisions and also on the deep, narrow-front properties that typically exist in the central portion of the community. Many homes in the community were developed by dividing the larger lots into smaller single-family properties. In a few instances, small, older homes were removed and larger single-family residences were constructed in their place. This practice is not widespread, however.



### MULTIFAMILY INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Initially, Castro Valley was primarily a single-family residential community with virtually no multifamily housing. Although the demand for affordable rental housing and attached single-family housing grew, the only opportunity to fill that need was to develop the larger existing single-family homesites or to redevelop the lesser-valued single-family properties. As a result, two things happened. First, rental units were developed throughout the older sections of town in a scattered fashion, and second, apartment complexes were built substantially smaller than those normally found in the East Bay region. The typical apartment complex in Castro Valley contains four to 12 units, although in some cases owners have consolidated properties to provide more than 12 units. Thus, high-density rental units now intrude on historically single-family, owner-occupied neighborhoods, and rental complexes were developed that cannot provide—because of property size and configuration—the on-site amenities that are traditionally considered part of a rental community. Developing virtually all of the apartment complexes as infill projects has resulted in rather homogeneous units with a very narrow range of sizes, rents, and amenities.

### COMMERCIAL INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Additional commercial development is limited (almost exclusively) to redeveloping or infilling properties that were originally residential or that were underdeveloped commercial properties. Most often, commercial infilling occurs on older, less efficient commercial properties, although a substantial number of Castro Valley's single-family residences have been converted to commercial uses, such as small retail shops or professional buildings.

Historically, commercial development in Castro Valley occurred along Highway 580, with property owners developing many businesses on very narrow-frontage properties with a variety of lot depths. Most businesses served both the adjacent neighborhoods and the traveling public; the initial planning for Castro Valley did not anticipate the larger-sized parcels that contemporary commercial developers need, nor did it anticipate the traffic impact of providing each commercial site with independent access and parking.

Contemporary commercial practices require a substantially larger property configuration and must depend more on the provision of convenient parking for the customer. The only way to achieve this is to consolidate the existing smaller commercial sites and redevelop the area or move into the residential neighborhoods. Most of the recent commercial development that has taken place within Castro Valley has been along the boulevard or on major roadways near their intersections with Castro Valley Boulevard.

Commercial infill redevelopment has caused a haphazard "pattern" of growth within the community and has not provided for a centralized business center. Property owners generally have developed their properties independent of neighboring sites, resulting in self-contained businesses that make it difficult for customers to move from one business to another, without going back onto Castro Valley Boulevard. As one panelist stated, Castro Valley is the "curb cut capital of the world." It has also resulted in a somewhat unique configuration of some of the properties, placing new commercial uses behind or around existing older businesses.

## IMPACT OF INFILL

Infill development can satisfy the requirements of growth or provide new business services to the community by increasing density of uses or by providing more intensive use on the property, without expanding the urban limits. It is not, however, without drawbacks. Infill can affect the character of a neighborhood and the ability of the urban services to meet the growing demands that are placed on them.

The redevelopment of large-lot, single-family homesites into smaller single-family homesites generally does not affect the neighborhood significantly. The character of the neighborhood, however, can be changed when the new homesites are substantially smaller or the value of the homes are substantially less than the existing neighborhood. Generally, urban services, such as water and sanitary sewers, in established neighborhoods can accommodate modest infill development of single-family homes. Too much infill, however, can overload the facilities. Usually, this is first indicated when the water distribution system can no longer handle the increased demands placed on it.

In addition, when several lots are created by developing existing driveways into cul-de-sacs, the overall efficiency of the local street system may suffer. New alley roads should be located/designed to avoid creating unsafe intersections.

An even greater impact is felt when single-family homesites are converted to multifamily uses like rental apartments. Typically, a multifamily development will maximize the allowed number of dwelling units on a site, thereby minimizing site amenities and off-street parking, while substantially increasing demands on the existing infrastructure serving the area. Converting a single-family neighborhood into a large number of independently developed apartment complexes typically will result in a significant demand for on-street parking and could overload the water and sanitary sewerage systems. Introducing multifamily units into a single-family neighborhood will also affect the value of the remaining single-family homes. Multifamily infill projects in a predominantly single-family neighborhood could have the most visible impact on a community and could change the character of an area. Whether or not infill developments occur should depend upon the availability of support services such as transportation routes, employment centers, and the capacity of the public infrastructure to meet the higher usage demands. The community should ensure that high-density rental units will be placed in appropriate areas within the neighborhood. Similarly, commercial infill should relate to the ultimate customer needs and marketplace, and its demands on transportation and other public infrastructure should be supported by existing or committed improvements.

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The community will benefit if the provisions for infilling in both multifamily and commercial areas provide an incentive for consolidating properties in order to provide more efficient use of the land. Castro Valley also should encourage redevelopment efforts that include provisions for sharing facilities like off-street parking.

## LOCATIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR VARIOUS INFILL OPPORTUNITIES

To maintain some consistency of future development in Castro Valley with its traditional image as a premier residential community, certain areas should be designated for selected types of infill development. This designation would include the types of uses allowed, the public facilities that would be necessary, and the size and configurations of properties that could be created by dividing existing sites. Not enough undeveloped land exists within the Castro Valley basin to meet all of the community's development demands.

*Tee shirts, hotdogs, and travel on Castro Valley Boulevard.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Castro Valley is a good place to live. The community's residential inventory has been well maintained and the community exhibits a strong degree of residential stability in both occupancy and value.

To enhance the community's opportunities to absorb growth while providing for a variety of housing and commercial activities, and without jeopardizing the historic image of Castro Valley, the panel makes the following recommendations:

- *Residential.* Limit redevelopment in the north or upper area of Castro Valley to parcels of 20,000 square feet or more when dividing the existing homesites. This density could be increased in the central portion of the community by providing for a range of lot sizes from 7,000–20,000 square feet when new parcels are created. The lower east portion of the community could provide for an increase in density by allowing lot divisions to create single-family parcels with a minimum of 5,000 square feet.



Redesignate the central portion of Castro Valley directly north of the boulevard between Redwood Drive and the hospital for higher-density, multifamily development. The residential area in the central portion of the community between Castro Valley Boulevard and the I-580 freeway would be designated for very high multifamily densities and would use incentives, such as density increases, to encourage consolidation of the parcels into larger-scaled apartment complexes. Such regenerated housing stock should be allowed to mix with commercial uses along the boulevard and Redwood Road as a form of mixed-use development. No additional development of multifamily complexes should occur within the defined single-family residential or commercial areas.

The continued development of the eastern hill areas appears to be largely focused on the Rancho Palomares project. The panel believes that the project could satisfy a significant share of the Castro Valley primary housing market over the next 10 years. The community must ultimately decide whether or not to allow the project; in deciding, the community must consider the environmental and fiscal impacts of the project. Its economic impact on the community's commercial sector should be favorable.

This approach to directing infill development will give the community a feeling of certainty while providing a variety of opportunities to develop homes that will meet the needs of the population. It will also give the development community a sense of direction in locating properties for redevelopment and in consolidating properties for more efficient use of the available sites.

- *Commercial.* The panel believes that the development potential exists to add to and change the character of retail facilities along the boulevard. This could be accomplished by assembling large enough sites to develop a community shopping center that would incorporate new and/or expanded supermarket space with other convenience and specialty stores and restaurants. Creating a large, modern center in the central portion of the strip, essentially between Redwood Road and Anita Street, could establish a downtown cluster. A critical mass of this nature, anchored by larger food stores and drugstores, could attract more retailers in the specialty, recreational, and restaurant businesses and fill a market demand currently unmet locally.

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In a downtown central core or cluster, pedestrian-oriented businesses should be linked, thus encouraging pedestrian movement between businesses and discouraging auto access and movements. Zoning, urban design standards, street and site improvements, and marketing programs must all work together to achieve the central clustering. This focused planning and development would both enhance and strengthen Castro Valley's commercial base. Such a concentration might also draw shoppers and patrons from outside the community if a strong and, to some extent, unique mix of businesses could be clustered in the central Castro Valley.

Auto-related businesses like service stations, fast food restaurants, and auto repair shops should be located at the freeway access points at the east and west ends of the boulevard. The central portion of the commercial area should offer those commercial services that are oriented toward the local residential community. Medical commercial facilities should be located near the Eden Valley Hospital.

## LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

Western end of Castro Valley Boulevard, looking east.



### BACKGROUND

The present land use and transportation patterns within Castro Valley have evolved over an extended period of time and are essentially well established. Within this established framework, provisions for change have been formulated, and in particular, efforts to implement programs within the central business district have been undertaken, such as removing overhead power lines, reducing the number and size of signs, and other programs to beautify the town.

As community attitudes shift, as the economy changes, and as new external factors (such as the extension of BART to Castro Valley, expanded I-580 capacity, and new interchanges) make themselves felt, the community must remain resilient and maintain its ability to direct resources toward actions that will achieve its desired future.

### ELEMENTS THAT WILL CHANGE THE COMMUNITY

Castro Valley is experiencing a series of changes that will affect its future. The manner in which the community deals with these factors will, in many ways, permanently alter its shape and character.

### HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

The most powerful external forces for change in Castro Valley involve access to regional transportation: the increased capacity of I-580 and the extension of the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) rail system to Castro Valley. Both will improve the quality of access to jobs for valley residents and also will improve recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities in the Bay Area. Therefore, these improvements will make Castro Valley more attractive to newcomers as well as to current residents. They can also change the opportunities for land use in the commercial district along Castro Valley Boulevard by reducing congestion and by making it attractive to region-serving businesses that will offer higher levels of service to Castro Valley residents and increase its tax base. On the other hand, such transportation system "improvements," if not carefully planned, can also detract from the community.



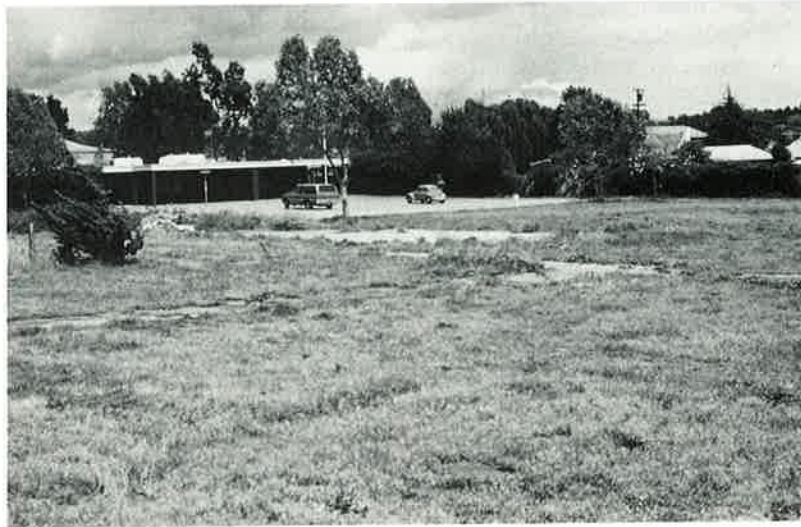
## DECLINE IN COMMUNITY SERVICES

The decline in revenues available to pay for public services has acted as a powerful external constraint on the quality of residential and commercial land use in Castro Valley. This problem is a direct result of Proposition 13. Castro Valley's residents are justifiably pleased with the quality of their school and recreational services and their basic community services: fire and police protection, water supply, sanitary services, and waste disposal. But to keep up these services and to expand them to include traffic improvements will be difficult. Maintaining current levels of community services depends on balancing tax income and, to some extent, revenue growth, with population growth. Private investment in upgraded community retail services, some office construction, and housing construction (both in new subdivisions and by infill) have brought modest increases in Castro Valley's tax base in the recent past. But these increases are quite small in relation to the needs of the community.

## BART: OPPORTUNITY OR PROBLEM

The planned BART station can help or hinder the development potential of Castro Valley. If a new BART station, with a nine-acre parking area and vehicle turnarounds, at Redwood Avenue and I-580 becomes no more than an access point in the regional rail transportation system, its impact on Castro Valley's business area is likely to be negative. During rush hours, the station will bring 1,000 to 2,000 commuter vehicles to the area. Few of these commuters will shop in the business district when they return to the station.

On the other hand, the BART station could be the spark the community needs to ignite downtown redevelopment. Numerous options for joint development are possible. For example, a modestly scaled development of offices and high-density housing with retail services and a cineplex near the station would provide a larger daytime population and therefore improve the market for shops, restaurants, etc. These services would also be available to Castro Valley residents. As in the case of reorganizing and expanding parking and organizing the shopping area, this development would require the land assembly powers of BART and/or a public redevelopment agency. Cooperative planning and action in joint development is essential.



*Proposed BART site.*

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If Castro Valley chooses not to use the current BART site as a catalyst for downtown redevelopment, the station should be moved to avoid the negative impacts. An alternative site at the eastern edge of the community with direct access to I-580 would appear a better choice for the BART station, freeing the currently proposed site for more appropriate uses. Since BART acquired the site on attractive terms, obtaining an alternative site would seem feasible.

However, by taking a proactive posture toward regional transportation facilities such as BART stations, other communities have turned such potential liabilities into major assets, focusing an intense mix of land uses around them and creating vibrant community activity centers on adjacent parcels of land. Castro Valley could exploit the station in this manner to “energize” the business district, and set the tone for future development of community and regional serving activities.

## HOUSING DENSITY

Raising housing densities by replacing single-family housing with apartment buildings on a parcel-by-parcel basis in the older, central area of the community and by dividing larger parcels for single-family infill construction in the outer parts of the community is slowly, but noticeably, increasing traffic in Castro Valley, particularly during peak hours. In addition, residential density intensifies the demand for educational and retail services. Thus, infill development puts greater strain on transportation and educational services.

## LOCAL RETAIL SERVICES

Although the number and quality of stores and services along Castro Valley Boulevard have increased in recent years, the need for more retail space outstrips local supply. The business district’s circulation and parking capacity severely limit the patronage of residents at the principal retail area. On the other side of the coin, the small size of lots and buildings inhibits the ability of merchants and businessmen to serve the increased need for parking. To improve parking and to construct larger stores and offices require land assemblage, which merchants have been unable to pursue because of the time and costs involved.

## ELEMENTS THAT COULD CHANGE THE COMMUNITY

Castro Valley has significant opportunities and implementation tools available to shape its future, should it choose to use them. Among them, the following should be considered:

- *Development Impact Fees.* It is usually easier to quantify and mitigate negative impacts of large-scale development projects than small-scale projects. In addition, for large projects, developers are generally willing and able to shoulder their fair share of improvements that enhance the character and desirability of the community.

The cumulative impacts of a number of smaller developments, however, can equal or exceed those of a higher-profile development.

As funding sources become more scarce, many communities are turning to impact fees as a method of raising funds for needed improvements, to ensure that each new development carries its fair share of the burden, and that new development or redevelopment “pays its way.” For example, impact fees can be used to fund road improvements that are needed to handle an influx of traffic generated by a particular development.

An impact fee program could begin to address implementation of street extensions within the CBD, for example, as well as sidewalks and bikepaths throughout the community, thereby increasing safety for residents while providing alternative forms of mobility.

- **Community Facilities Districts.** Although a number of plans have been formulated to improve parking and circulation within the CBD, they have not been implemented due to a lack of funds and/or a lack of a broad base of support among the business community. In addition, programs for beautification have been planned only piecemeal and have had little overall impact.

Coordinated programs, funded through a community facilities district, could provide an effective means of implementing the programs outlined in the Specific Plan for the CBD. The benefits of such programs must be measured in terms of economic benefits and improved traffic flows, as well as the community pride they engender.

- **Downtown Redevelopment Authority.** Due to the nature of fragmented landownerships, or the reluctance on the part of landowners to sell their holdings, assembling land parcels of sufficient size and configuration for consolidated developments is difficult within the CBD.

Creation of a public authority that could assemble appropriate land parcels, either through purchase or condemnation, could be important in reconfiguring underused land, replacing nonconforming uses with preferred uses, and providing a way to attract development of desired activities that might not otherwise locate within the CBD.



*Castro Valley's sign control efforts have been thwarted by creative interpretations of the law.*

- **Zoning and Design Standards.** While zoning provisions have been enacted, they may not fully serve the needs of the community. Also, current regulations are essentially mute on design standards that control site development and architectural features of buildings.

Zoning criteria and design standards are only as good as the program that implements and enforces them. To take advantage of refined zoning criteria and design standards—including sign control, landscaping, and architecture—a process must be established, funded, and staffed to carry out the program. If aggressively used, these tools can improve the form and image of the community, without significant hardship or cost to its citizens.

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE**

The crucial element in the success of any planning and implementation program is the amount of support and commitment it receives from the community. Castro Valley enjoys a wide range of options in its near-term and long-range future, and can expect to realize results in direct proportion to the level of effort and commitment of resources it is prepared to invest.

In order to survey the range of opportunities that are present, two scenarios are described below, along with possible actions the community could pursue to assist in their implementation. Neither scenario is intended to represent a preferred or ideal view of the future, only to demonstrate the range of results that might be expected if certain actions with varying degrees of commitment are employed.

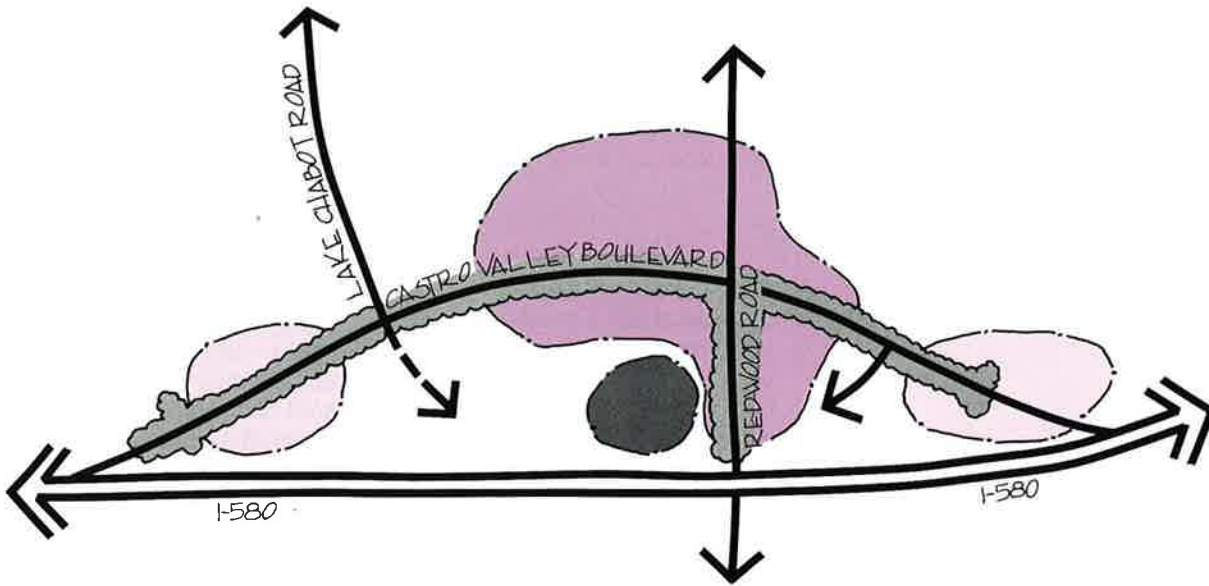
Scenario one anticipates a market-driven program with relatively passive public management and a lower level of committed community resources such as zoning incentives and design standards and reviews. It assumes that existing land use and implementation procedures will remain essentially unchanged. It generally follows the currently adopted plans for the community as a whole and the CBD in particular, with some suggested options that might better exploit the community's untapped potential. It might be characterized as a continuation of the present policy with some additional measures.

## **ELEMENTS THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO CHANGE**

One of the primary elements that give form to a community and determine its livability is the road network. Castro Valley's road system has developed in a haphazard manner over several years, and, due to limited rights-of-way in many instances, can be changed only with difficulty. Although discontinuity in the east/west street system and limited north/south corridors help create the unique character that makes Castro Valley an attractive and desirable community, these same characteristics also contribute to congestion during peak commuting hours.

As Castro Valley fills out to its anticipated development level, many streets will exceed their "comfortable" carrying capacity. In some cases, important linkages between streets will need to be completed. In other cases, traffic will need to be directed or stabilized through transfer-of-use to other streets. Finally, selected revisions to current land use provisions could defer or reduce the potential impact on certain streets.

Some land uses that have been around for a while but may no longer be appropriate in their current location are also difficult to change—for example, the mobile home parks along Castro Valley Boulevard. Also, a strong case exists for locating a community and regional serving facility at the east end of the community. To date, however, an acceptable relocation site has not been found.



KEY	DESCRIPTION	USES	ACTIONS/EXPECTATIONS
	REGIONAL/COMMUNITY-SERVING	RETAIL/COMMERCIAL	DESIGN STANDARDS/INCENTIVES
	BEAUTIFICATION/PARKING	CIRCULATION/JOINT PARKING/ LANDSCAPING	FUNDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION
	CORE AREA	RETAIL/OFFICE CIRCULATION	PERFORMANCE ZONING AND INCENTIVES
	BART SITE	MIXED USE	RELOCATE STATION TO EAST

Scenario two modifies current plans substantially. It includes significant changes in the present policy, primarily in the sphere of investment of human and financial resources within the community. It attempts to create a larger commercial and retail base for the community and assumes that the community will create an effective body to finance and assemble land, and will also assert control over local land use decisions. It can be characterized as a more aggressive community-sponsored program that achieves results through public cooperation and market force.

**SCENARIO ONE**

The vision for Scenario One is articulated effectively in the existing planning documents. In general, the ULI panel concurs with the recommendations of the Castro Valley plan and the CBD Specific Plan. However, to better exploit the opportunities and minimize the negative impacts, the panel recommends the following:

- Relocate the BART station to an appropriate site at the eastern edge of the community in the vicinity of the interchange with I-580. The property should be used for community-serving retail and commercial uses, reinforcing the recent investments that have occurred in the area.

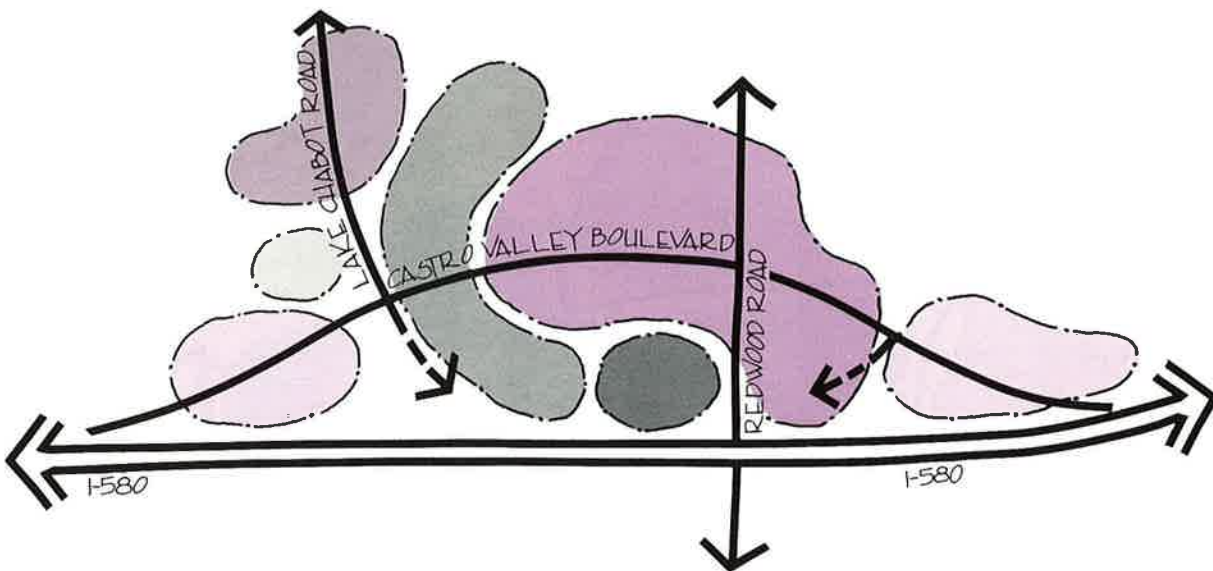
- Use a portion of the funds generated from the traffic impact fees to form a community facilities district to implement the circulation and parking improvements outlined in the CBD Specific Plan. In addition, implement and maintain the beautification program along Castro Valley Boulevard and include gateways at the eastern and western edges of the community. Expand the signage program and design standards to ensure compatible development in the business district, as changes occur to individual properties. Retain on-street parking in selected areas to preserve the "downtown" character of Castro Valley Boulevard and to provide additional, convenient parking for patrons.

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## SCENARIO TWO

Should Castro Valley's residents decide to pursue a more ambitious program to change its central business district and other development areas, like that of its medical services and the new development at the edges of the community, the panel recommends the following:

- The BART station and its connected parking facility should be the site for joint development. The adjacent areas would provide for expansion of the business uses on Redwood Road north of Castro Valley Boulevard. The objective would be to make a more compact, pedestrian-oriented business district with a major alignment along Redwood Road as well as the boulevard. With retail development clustered, the movement of autos can be reduced.
- Within the more concentrated business district, land for development should be provided by public land assembly/redevelopment, or by BART if necessary, to expand or add to the current supply of food stores and possibly to provide a wider range of retail goods.
- Additional parking areas should be developed, some of them in decks next to retail facilities. Access to these parking areas should be limited to relatively few points along the cross streets. The present internal parking areas, both north and south of Castro Valley Boulevard and west of Redwood Road, should be replaced by these facilities—outside the retail areas. This would cut down on the parking and traffic problems and enhance pedestrian circulation.
- Within the retail concentration, Castro Valley should consider developing an attractive or eye-catching building or structure that can be easily seen from I-580, and that will serve as a marker or focal point, creating a strong image for Castro Valley.
- Improved apartment and high-density housing and office services related to the health center should be provided along Castro Valley Boulevard and Lake Chabot Road. Some of this would be achieved directly through the use of hospital funds and by changes in zoning and other land use controls with, if necessary, some redevelopment.
- The retail strip along the central part of Castro Valley Boulevard should be shifted gradually into the new consolidated business district or to a new small-scale, pedestrian-oriented, business development that would be located west of Lake Chabot Road and north of Castro Valley Boulevard. This commercial area would include some of the older Castro Valley business establishments.
- Immediately south of this new retailing area, some of the present fast food uses would be permitted to continue, but with very strong controls. This retail activity could be supplemented by additional automotive uses that might gradually replace the lumber yards and service activities now located there.
- Increased residential density should be allowed in the area now bounded by the business uses on the east, north, and west, and by I-580 on the south. The goal is to provide additional, smaller apartment units for the increasing number of elderly households who no longer wish to live in single-family houses but who wish to remain in Castro Valley. Higher-density residential units also might be encouraged north of Castro Valley Boulevard in this same sector. Some of these uses might ultimately replace the strip development along Castro Valley Boulevard and help consolidate the business service areas to the east and west.

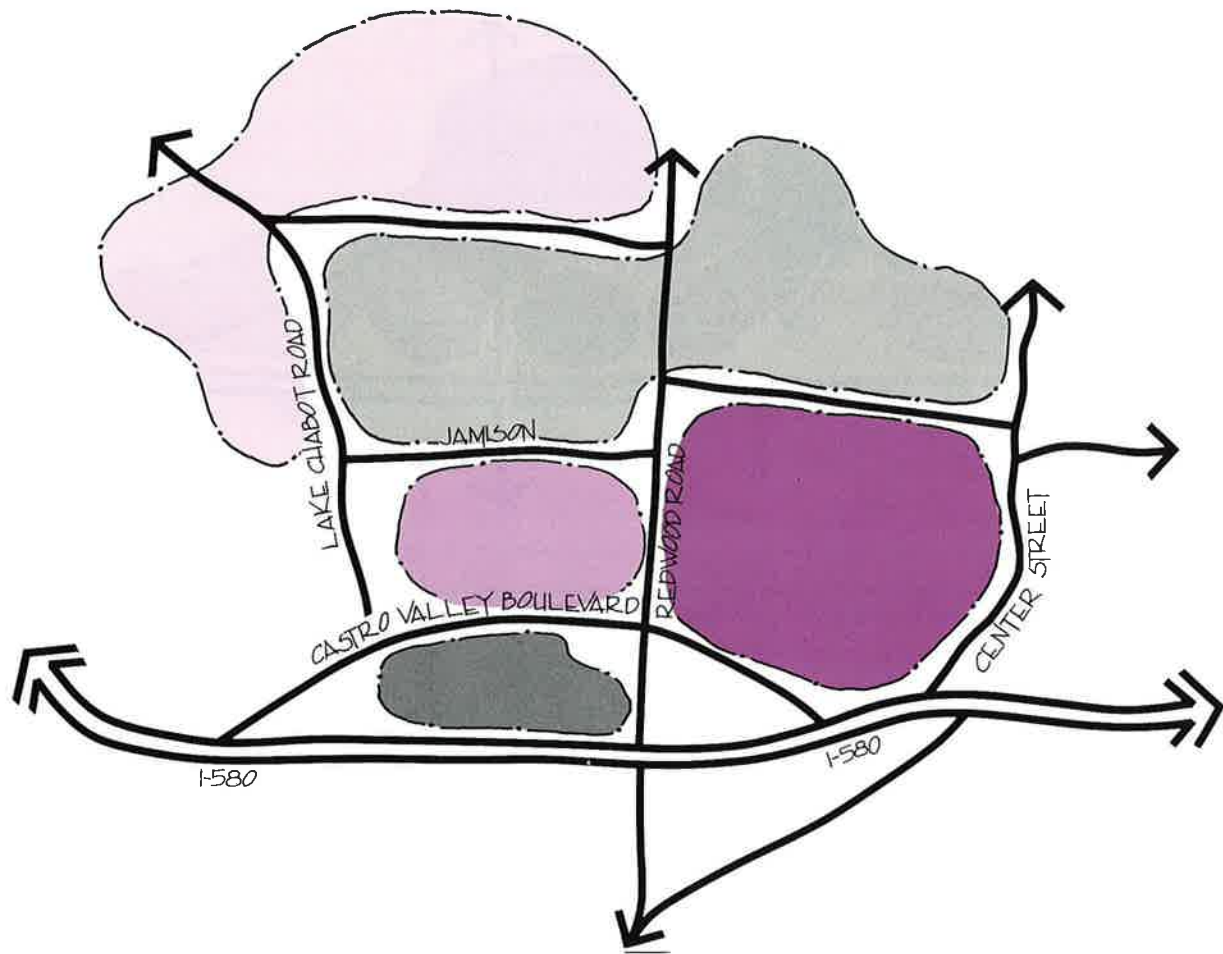


KEY	DESCRIPTION	USES	ACTIONS/EXPECTATIONS
	REGIONAL/COMMUNITY-SERVING	RETAIL/COMMERCIAL	REZONE/REDEVELOP
	LOCAL SERVICE CLUSTER	SMALL USER/RETAIL	REHABILITATION/ POSSIBLE REDEVELOPMENT
	MEDICAL SERVICES/SUPPORT	MEDICAL OFFICES/ HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	REZONE AND REDEVELOP INCENTIVES
	MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL	RESIDENTIAL/SUPPORT	REZONE AND REDEVELOP INCENTIVES
	BART SITE	MIXED USE	JOINT DEVELOPMENT
	CORE AREA	RETAIL/OFFICE/CIRCULATION	PERFORMANCE ZONING AND INCENTIVES

- Traffic circulation should be improved. Many of the circulation improvements proposed in the current Specific Plan for the business district would be appropriate. They include extending Lake Chabot Road south of Castro Valley Boulevard to connect to a southern periphery road parallel to I-580 and leading to the BART station parking facility. This extension would form a loop south of Castro Valley to connect to Redwood Road at the end of the BART parking/joint development area.

- Finally, the area east of the business district and north and south of Castro Valley Boulevard is already largely devoted to region-serving businesses that should be consolidated and ultimately supplemented on land now occupied by several trailer parks. This would require planning and executing relocation for the people occupying these trailer dwellings.  
Achieving these goals would depend on establishing adequate control over land use and public transportation improvements and on a redevelopment process.

This very general set of concepts for the future development of downtown Castro Valley is, admittedly, ambitious. It would require aggressive community action and substantial resources. Although they are ambitious, these ideas are extensions of the basic concepts of the 1983 Specific Downtown Plan for the Castro Valley Boulevard business area. By presenting them, the panel hopes to stimulate thinking and set goals that go beyond the 1983 plan. These goals seem achievable within a longer time frame, and would make maximum use of the opportunities available in Castro Valley.



KEY	DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM LOT SIZE	ACTIONS/EXPECTATIONS
	LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	20,000	RETAIN PRESENT STATUS
	MODERATE-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	10,000/20,000	SELECTED DENSIFICATION WITH STANDARDS
	MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	5,000/7,500	SELECTED DENSIFICATION WITH STANDARDS
	MEDIUM-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	2,000/3,000	DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES/ STANDARDS/IMPACT MITIGATIONS
	HIGH-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	500/1,000	REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY/ MIXED USE



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## PRESERVING AND EXTENDING RESIDENTIAL QUALITY

Some ideas for residential change were discussed in the preceding section on those areas within or adjacent to the Castro Valley Boulevard business development and the medical center. In contrast to the extensive changes in the business area that the panel sees as desirable over the long term, changes in the community's residential areas would be much more conservative.

The goal is to maintain the good qualities of existing residential areas and enhance them in minor ways—for example, by making small traffic improvements that reduce the volume of traffic through residential areas while permitting residents easy access to other parts of the community. A plan for achieving this would probably be quite inexpensive but would require the participation of community residents. It should address the need for east/west circulation and for the protection of residential areas from noise and from threats to the safety of its inhabitants.

In some cases, it may be desirable to provide for changes through incentive zoning or through improvements of access or parking, and perhaps such uses should be phased out over a longer period since they do not directly support community needs. Throughout these established residential areas, and in the newer subdivisions on the hillsides adjacent to present developments, questions of access and fire protection should be addressed along with current approval criteria. Hillside developments with only one access road may require a second road for fire equipment and ambulance access during emergencies. And if they are some distance from main fire stations, they may require small local facilities.

## GOVERNANCE

*Panel members interviewed representatives from both the public and private sectors.*

Castro Valley is served by several special districts providing specific services of both a local and regional nature and by Alameda County with respect to general government. It is the most populous remaining unincorporated area in Alameda County. As with many older semirural communities that have urbanized gradually over time, incorporation as a city has never occurred. Put to a vote more than 30 years ago, incorporation was rejected by the voters.

Recently the issue of incorporation has been rekindled. Based on materials reviewed and interviews conducted by the panel, it has become a key issue, at least among active members of the Castro Valley community. The focus on incorporation has been due in part to the Castro Valley Municipal Advisory Council (MAC), which is responsible for advising the Alameda County Board of Supervisors on issues within its jurisdictional area. The area, which is being considered for possible incorporation, coincides with the boundaries of the Castro Valley Fire Protection District.



As stated earlier, to debate the incorporation issue, one must consider the adequacy of present county government services and controls in implementing community objectives and/or proposals made by the panel. Necessarily, the panel's observations on this complex subject are based on experiences elsewhere, on information made available to the panel, and on limited interviews with interested members of the Castro Valley community and with government officials.

### **CAPACITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH BASIC SERVICES**

Published studies and comments by Castro Valley residents and business owners indicate that the community generally is satisfied with the level of basic services provided by the county and special districts in Castro Valley. While there may be some complaints regarding street maintenance or police protection, residents seem generally satisfied with police protection, fire protection, street maintenance, and similar services. Indeed, some of the service providers have shown more concern about their ability to provide adequate services now and in the future, given fiscal constraints, than have residents.

**LACK OF CONTROL OVER  
POLICY, PLANNING, AND  
LAND USE**

In contrast to their satisfaction with basic government services, residents are greatly dissatisfied with their lack of control over planning and land use decisions that apply both to Castro Valley and to adjacent areas. The dissatisfaction expressed to the panel may simply reflect the variety of opinions on such sensitive matters as land use and development, but concern over lack of control is often present when a community has a relatively small voice in the county. While the MAC may influence land use decisions, it possesses no ultimate authority.

**LACK OF AN ADEQUATE VOICE**

By comparison with the forceful presence of local government associated with cityhood, both in terms of direct governmental authority and participation in regional decision making, an unincorporated community has a relatively ineffectual voice in making decisions of major import to that community or its surroundings. Castro Valley's only representative in county government is one member on a five-member board of supervisors, and that member is also responsible to other communities. The MAC members are appointed and serve essentially at the pleasure of that supervisor.

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**WEAK CAPACITY FOR  
COMMUNITY CONSENSUS  
BUILDING AND MOBILIZATION**

Unincorporated communities typically lack the capacity to establish a sense of community, reach consensus, or mobilize community support for any proposal. These problems exist in Castro Valley and could easily build as the future brings changes in the development and character of the valley. On the other hand, the success of the Castro Valley Unified School District has proved that the community can rally support for a strong school program; therefore, it might well be able to rally support in other areas. Although the MAC has provided some focus for nonschool issues, because it is not an elected body and has no decision-making authority, it will continue to be limited in its ability to build community consensus and mobilize residents to participate in community affairs.

**LACK OF SOURCE FOR MAJOR  
COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

Because of existing arrangements and general demands on it, the county government will not likely serve as a source of major initiatives on behalf of the Castro Valley community. The county government functions best in responding to community needs and desires as they are raised by members of the community. Its size and obligations to a much larger area make it an unlikely candidate for major initiatives that might direct the future of Castro Valley.

Panelist John Sanger explains pros and cons of incorporation.

## DIFFICULTY IN MEETING SPECIFIC PROGRAM NEEDS

County government is not intended or particularly well suited, under California law and practice, to respond to certain types of programmatic needs of particular communities. An example is redevelopment. Although counties can create and have created redevelopment agencies, Alameda County does not have and has not had, at least for many decades, a redevelopment agency. Such an agency belongs more naturally under the aegis of a city, where effective action can result. Thus, to the extent that redevelopment activity is viewed as a suitable tool to achieve community objectives, current arrangements make it unlikely that such a tool would be available or effective through the county. In addition, the county is not empowered to levy business taxes for revenue purposes and therefore does not tend to become involved in economic development or commercial support programs that would need funding from business tax revenues. Alameda County in particular, where most of the urbanized county has long been incorporated, would not typically engage in urban redevelopment activities that have long been dominated by cities. It is equally unlikely that the county would initiate such action for the benefit of one small community.



## INCORPORATION: PROS AND CONS

Ultimately, the balance in favor or against incorporation must relate to fundamental community objectives. Other portions of this report refer to alternative directions that the community may choose to take. The panel has not attempted to make an exhaustive tabulation of the pros and cons of incorporation for the community. This is best left to discussion within the community. However, it has reached some conclusions that may contribute to the value of the process.

Incorporating Castro Valley could result in the following advantages:

- Heightened community participation in both local and regional affairs.
- Increased ability of the community to take initiatives in addressing local issues.
- Greater capacity to tailor solutions to problems and concerns unique to the valley.
- Availability of a more effective vehicle for achieving community consensus and making decisions.
- More effective means of accomplishing economic development and commercial revitalization objectives and of tapping new revenue sources associated with the same.

- Increased total countywide financial resources available for governmental purposes from state and federal sources.
- Increased sense of community identity.
- Greater control over the future destiny of the community, including standards for development.

Incorporating Castro Valley could result in the following disadvantages:

- Possible declines in or substantial strains on the maintenance of existing levels of basic government services—although the same declines and strains may occur in any event.
- A relatively weak tax base.
- Lack of fiscal strength to undertake major initiatives.
- The need for greater financial commitment by residents and businesses to achieve community objectives.
- Possibly greater parochialism in land use and development matters, which would affect the area's ability to assist in meeting regional objectives, such as satisfying housing needs.

- Limited capacity to raise new revenues to provide services to residents or to respond to new demands for services caused by social and demographic changes.
- Limited options for unincorporated lands remaining (San Lorenzo, Ashland).

Based on its review, the panel sees incorporation as representing the best long-term solution for both the community and the county in terms of community organization, control over decisions, provision of services, and community development. It recommends that incorporation be pursued both by the county and the community within a reasonable time frame.

To make incorporation financially feasible, imagination, firm county support, and strong community commitment by both residents and businesses will be required. While Castro Valley lacks the tax base desirable for a fiscally healthy city, there are alternatives, identified both in various studies and by proponents of incorporation. Other communities with considerably fewer resources have incorporated successfully.

Both the community and the county should consider the potential decline in county resources available to maintain existing levels of services, as well as the lack of county revenue options. The business community must also recognize that it is likely to be called upon to contribute more in taxes and fees, if the community is to remain vital and achieve some of its objectives.

Castro Valley should also recognize that its location makes it susceptible to substantial economic, physical, and demographic changes. Incorporation would help the community to manage these changes effectively. For example, incorporation could be used to improve opportunities for economic development and an enhanced tax base, especially in combination with redevelopment. Incorporation should occur when the community is prepared to make the commitment to those actions necessary to build an adequate permanent tax base for a new city, through commercial revitalization and other forms of economic development and through expanding the residential tax base. Alternatively, residents and businesses could accept lower levels of government services or higher levels of business and resident tax support (for instance, through special taxes adopted by the voters).

Until conditions are appropriate for incorporation, the community and the county should pursue a course of action that will prepare Castro Valley for incorporation in the future. Steps along such a route should include an elected or designated MAC that would act as an area planning commission, the formation of a community council to establish goals and objectives, the formation of a community development corporation, or similar measures that would mobilize greater community participation and enhance community identity.

Once the community is prepared to consider incorporation, it should seriously consider expanding the boundaries of the new city beyond those of the Castro Valley Fire Protection District to include undeveloped (but developable) lands south of Highway 580 and northeast of Hayward. The expanded boundaries will help to increase the tax base, community diversity, and control over future growth.



**REDEVELOPMENT**

**NEED FOR GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE**

If the community wants to change significantly the character and quality of commercial development, some form of government-assisted development activity will probably be necessary. The classic conditions frustrating private redevelopment and justifying government intervention in land development are present in the Castro Valley business district. These are extreme fragmentation of landownership, inadequate infrastructure (particularly accessed and shared parking), land cost disparities, and absence of capital resources to redevelop declining land uses into more productive uses. Castro Valley could rely on gradual rehabilitation and redevelopment, as has occurred to some degree in the recent past, without government intervention. But because the area is as subject to decline as it is to improvement, failing to pursue more accelerated redevelopment could be risky.

## ADVANTAGES OF REDEVELOPMENT

Creation of a redevelopment agency and formal redevelopment action would have three primary advantages. *First*, it could generate revenues for redevelopment through tax increment financing. Under this method, a portion or all (depending on negotiations with the county) of increased property taxes after a particular date derived within the designated redevelopment project area would be allocated exclusively to the agency for redevelopment purposes. Given the apparent low rate of property turnover and the likelihood that most existing assessed values are frozen at very low 1975 values, the potential exists for substantial tax increases that could be used to finance redevelopment. A study should be undertaken to determine the potential magnitude of the increments. *Second*, a redevelopment agency would heighten prospects for the acquisition and consolidation of commercially viable parcels for new development. Consolidation is necessary to meet the substantial demand for commercial services, both locally and regionally. The availability of eminent domain would increase the possibilities of acquisition and offer numerous benefits to owners desiring to sell and exchange properties without adverse income tax consequences. *Third*, a redevelopment agency would provide a vehicle for programming and supporting development, which would encourage partnerships between businesses and government.

A redevelopment program could assist in financing transportation improvements, a civic center, and other capital projects that would strengthen the city's tax base. Thus, redevelopment can help make incorporation feasible. Revenues derived from redevelopment projects can be used for:

- *Infrastructure/Public Improvements.* Funds can be applied to the installation of utilities, traffic signalization, reconstruction or widening of streets, public parking facilities, and streetscape improvements (for example, special lighting, coordinated signage, and landscaping in public rights-of-way). These activities could also be consolidated with the improvement district, previously described.
- *Rehabilitation.* Loans can be made to local merchants/property owners for building and facade improvements in specific areas consistent with an agreed upon architectural plan.
- *Land Consolidation.* Funds can be used to acquire and consolidate small, nondevelopable lots into larger single parcels suitable for development.
- *Land Disposition.* Funding would permit the disposal of assembled parcels, which would precipitate development that otherwise would not occur in a timely manner on critical sites. This technique also can enable existing landowners to "participate" in the development of larger sites.

On the other hand, incorporation is not essential to redevelopment if the county is willing to redevelop and revitalize Castro Valley's commercial area. Obviously, the county is unlikely to do that without substantial support from the community.

## IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Castro Valley has a history of planning for the future—notably the 1983 General Plan and the 1985 Specific Plan for the central business district. The panel found that, while both of these adopted plans are conceptually sound, they lack a strong and highly focused approach for achieving their objectives. Implementation strategies can be short- or long-term efforts, and they can be pursued at varying degrees of intensity. The degree of effort depends on the funding resources and regulatory commitment.

The panel has formulated a number of economic and physical responses and recommendations for the future development of Castro Valley. This section addresses three strategies for implementing these recommendations, starting with early action at a moderate cost, and moving to higher degrees of effort and financial commitment.

### **IMMEDIATE ACTION AT MODERATE COST**

#### **IMAGE BUILDING/MARKETING**

Throughout the panel's interviews, a strong, recurrent theme expressed was that Castro Valley is a highly desirable place in which to live, with a well-established, excellent school system and attractive, conveniently located recreational facilities. The one element regarded by interviewees as inconsistent with the overall character and image of the community is the commercial/retail use along Castro Valley Boulevard and Redwood Road. A frequent complaint was that the retail/commercial component in the community does not reflect the image of the overall community, nor does it fully serve the needs of the community.

This view is supported by the panel's observation that substantial retail sales are "leaking" out of Castro Valley to adjoining communities in the East Bay and the Amador Valley. Accordingly, the panel recommends—at the most basic level of implementation—that a strong, concerted image-building effort be initiated "to shop and do business in Castro Valley." The Chamber of Commerce could actively promote shopping and doing business locally. This would be a continuous drive, reinforced by the formation of a merchants' association of retailers and businesses on the boulevard.

Funding to sustain this promotional effort for at least two years could come from the association's monthly membership dues.

Promotion could consist of:

- Design and adoption of a logo and set of graphics, reflecting the overall theme.
- Publication of a weekly promotional flyer, on the order of "Happenings and Special Events on the Boulevard."
- Periodic (four to six times per year) special events, staged to further attract Castro Valley and nearby residents to the boulevard.



Castro Valley Boulevard.

### A BOULEVARD IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

The purpose of this District would be to design, fund, construct, and maintain development with a consistent, physical theme on Castro Valley Boulevard and Redwood Road. The District would be responsible for the physical appearance of the public rights-of-way, covering:

- Streetscape (landscaping, signals, signage, and on-street parking).
- Ongoing maintenance (maintenance, repair, and replacement).

The Improvement District could be funded by annual assessments on all property owners within the District. Assessments would be designed to provide needed capital and operating requirements to fulfill the Improvements District mandate. The maintenance of improvements constructed by the District could be "contracted out" to another organization like the Hayward Area Recreation District.

### SHORT-TERM ACTION AT MODERATE COST

The next level of commitment to enhance the future image and appearance of Castro Valley begins to address fundamental physical changes. The panel's recommendations are:

- *To Revise Existing Zoning Codes to Provide "Incentives."* These initiatives would be aimed at providing economic incentives not now available under the Alameda County Zoning Ordinance, in order to accomplish:
  - Better directed, infill residential (single-family and multifamily) development, by providing stricter location designations and specific density, lot size, access, and parking requirements.
  - Multifamily development, through incentive and transitional zoning, to encourage change of use and density for multifamily purposes. Specifically, densities in selected single-family zones can be raised to 30 to 40 units per acre, and minimum lot sizes and strict off-street parking requirements can be specified.

- *To Provide Transitional and Performance Zoning for Selected Commercial Areas.* This initiative would be directed at strengthening the currently "permissive" character of the existing commercial zoning classifications (C-1 and C-2), as well as the site plan review process in the Specific Plan for the Castro Valley CBD. This would be done as follows:

- Commercial uses would be concentrated geographically by type that would be more consistent and compatible with existing uses than is presently specified, particularly in the areas around Castro Valley Boulevard/Redwood Road and the east and west gateway areas.
- Improved minimum requirements would be established for lot size (20,000 square feet), frontage, curb cuts, minimum parking (four spaces per 1,000 square feet of GLA), and building mass and height.
- Performance standards would be set for consistent signage, facade treatment, and exterior site improvements (for example, landscaping).

Some but not all of these standards were previously addressed in the 1985 Specific Plan for the central business district, but the panel has concluded that, while well intentioned, this plan lacks concrete standards or an effective means for implementation.



## INTERMEDIATE/LONGER-TERM ACTION AT HIGHER COST

The panel has identified four areas for potential redevelopment:

- *"Super Block" West (Commercial / Retail)*. Located east of Lake Chabot Road this area serves as a gateway to the community from the west. Its development could make a positive statement pertaining to the community's vitality. An area should be assembled, ranging from 10 to 12 acres, that would be developed for retail uses, serving regional customers and local residents and providing a strong additional tax base for the community.
- *Local Retail Service Cluster/Non-automotive*. This area is immediately east of Lake Chabot Road and comprises approximately four to six acres that are currently occupied by small businesses. The panel recommends that local, non-auto-related retail businesses be preserved in this area. A redevelopment agency should implement development through the use of rehabilitation loans and the assemblage of sites for shared public parking.

- *BART Station/Joint Development*. The redevelopment agency could represent the community's development interest in the BART site, to assure compatibility with adjacent development, including linkage with off-site public improvements. The site covers about 10 acres and will be used for a BART station and commuter parking.
- *"Super Block" East (Commercial/Retail)*. Although this is the eastern gateway into the community, it is not oriented toward the freeway. The site should be developed for community-type retail/commercial services serving primarily residents in the eastern portion of the community. This would expand the tax base by encouraging residents to shop and conduct business at home rather than in adjacent municipalities like Dublin and San Ramon.

In addition, Castro Valley should consider developing a civic center/community meeting place—most likely in the existing commercial core area near the intersection of Castro Valley Boulevard and Redwood Road—which could serve as a focal point for the downtown.

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To actively address one or all of the opportunities described under the third level of action requires *redevelopment*. Formation of a redevelopment project area and a redevelopment agency would permit the agency, on behalf of Castro Valley, to capture the increased value of the tax base created from new development and to direct revenues from this tax base back to the redevelopment project area. The potential revenue stream created in the project area would depend on the size of the area and the magnitude of new development and/or the turnover in property that occurs over time.

If redevelopment is pursued, the Castro Valley project area should encompass an area extending 1,000 feet north of Castro Valley Boulevard to I-580 on the south.

The panel strongly recommends that Castro Valley adopt and vigorously pursue all three levels of implementation strategies. The choice of which level to pursue and at what time ultimately will remain a decision to be made by the community as it looks toward the future.

## PANEL MEMBERS

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**FRITZ L. DUDA**  
**PANEL CHAIRMAN**  
Dallas, Texas

Duda is president of the Fritz Duda Company, which is active in land development and commercial investment building. The company has developed mixed-use planned developments and neighborhood and community shopping centers, and is currently developing a 700-acre, mixed-use project in the Moreno Valley area of southern California. Duda is also an owner and director of the Von's Grocery chain and Von's Real Estate Company in southern California. He is a graduate of the University of California's Hastings College of Law, where he is a Trustee of the University of California's Hastings 1066 Foundation. Duda serves as a director of the Hammond Company, a publicly held mortgage banking firm.

**JOHN BUCHANAN**  
Irvine, California

Buchanan has over 14 years of development experience representing public agencies. For the last six years, he has been the development services manager for the Anaheim Redevelopment Agency. He was previously the development operations manager for the city of Pasadena, and director of economic development for the state of Nevada. Current projects include: Anaheim City Center, a 1.25 million-square-foot, mixed-used project in downtown Anaheim; a 60-acre auto mall; a 600,000-square-foot corporate headquarters; a 19-acre multiphased residential project; and several industrial projects. Buchanan's education includes an MBA from Peter F. Drucker Management Center at the Claremont Graduate School, an MPA from the University of Nevada, and a BS from the University of Utah. Buchanan is a full member of the Urban Land Institute and serves on its Development Regulations Council.

**HUGH FITZPATRICK**  
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Fitzpatrick is senior director of transportation policy and planning for the Irvine Company. He is also responsible for coordinating the company's active participation in the planning, funding, and implementation of the regional and local transportation network in south and central Orange County, where the company owns over 60,000 acres. Before joining the Irvine Company in 1985, he was an assistant director and then a deputy director of the California Transportation Commission. Fitzpatrick received his BA from California State University-Fullerton and his MA and PhD from the University of California-Davis.

**EUGENE B. JACOBS**  
Provo, Utah

Jacobs is a professor of law at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. He teaches courses in land use planning, real estate development, public finance, and state and local government. He has also taught courses in real estate finance. Before his work as a professor, Jacobs was deputy attorney general with the state of California, dealing primarily with annexations and incorporations of cities. He later became general council for redevelopment agencies in numerous cities such as Los Angeles, San Diego, Pasadena, Bakersfield, Santa Monica, and South Pasadena. He was very active in litigation involving negotiation and implementation of major developments such as the Bonaventure Hotel in downtown Los Angeles and also of numerous projects in the Bunker Hill area. He was a major contributor to the development of UDAG and other similar programs. Jacobs received his BA and JD degrees from the University of California at Berkeley.

**DALE JOHNSON**  
Beaverton, Oregon

Johnson is co-owner and president of Blueridge Development Inc., a real estate development consulting firm. Recent development projects include a 1,500-acre destination resort on the Oregon coast, a 300-acre mixed-use planned community, and a variety of residential subdivisions in the Northwest. Johnson also developed liquidation and redevelopment programs for distressed properties owned by lenders. Previously, he served as president of Benj Fran Development Inc., a major real estate development subsidiary of Benjamin Franklin Federal Savings and Loan Association of Portland, Oregon. He majored in landscape architecture and construction at California State Polytechnical College-Pomona and served as planning director of Claremont, California, and Washington County, Oregon. He has served as president of the Oregon Chapter of the American Institute of Planners and the Homebuilders Association of Metropolitan Portland and is currently a member of ULI, the National Association of Home Builders, and the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America.

**J. KEVIN LAWLER**  
Washington, D.C.

Lawler is a principal with GA/Partners (formerly Gladstone Associates). Since 1973, he has been engaged in and directed numerous assignments concerning the application of market and financial analysis to solve development-related problems; assignments have been for both private and public clients. He is responsible for coordinating the firm's retail services practice. He has also been deeply involved in the financial feasibility and development of hotels and convention centers. Lawler is actively involved with the structuring of development financing and disposition of major real estate projects for private landowners, corporations, and public agencies. He holds a BS from Michigan State University and a Master of City Planning from Harvard University. He served as an adviser to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, representing the District of Columbia, from 1977 to 1980.

**JAMES O'NEAL**  
Denver, Colorado

O'Neal is president of HOH Associates, Inc., a planning and landscape architecture firm headquartered in Denver, with offices in Atlanta and Alexandria, Virginia. He joined HOH Associates in 1983 as vice president and director of planning. Before joining HOH, he served as executive director of Interplan Services, Inc., a consortium of eight multidisciplinary design and consulting firms in which HOH is an active participant. He has been the principal in charge of various planning projects including Belmar Plaza; Horizon Center; Quail Springs Office Park; Telluride Valley; and Centennial Valley. From 1975 to 1978, O'Neal was responsible for planning, engineering, and environmental studies for a western Colorado destination resort. Previously, he was principal of a San Francisco Bay Area architectural firm, where his experience included serving as project manager for the downtown Oakland subway stations for the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit district and the master plan for the SynTex Research Center.

**KERMIT C. PARSONS**  
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Parsons is an urban planning professor at Cornell University and an urban planning consultant in city planning, urban renewal planning, and college and university planning. He has also provided urban and regional development consulting in developing countries. He holds a bachelor's degree in architecture from Miami University (Ohio) and a Master of Regional Planning from Cornell University. He is also a registered architect in the state of Ohio. Parsons has over 30 years of professional experience in the planning field. He has written numerous articles, consultant reports, and books and has received many awards, fellowships, and training grants for continued research in the planning field.

**JOHN M. SANGER**  
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Sanger is a real estate partner with the law offices of Pettit & Martin in the San Francisco office. He is involved in general real estate practice, specializing in land use, environmental, and redevelopment law. Before joining Pettit & Martin, Sanger owned an urban planning, economic, and development consulting firm providing services to private and governmental clients. He drafted an innovative law in California establishing development fees to support transit system expansion linked to new office development and an ordinance providing development rights transfers to preserve historic buildings. He has taught local government and land use law at the University of California at Berkeley and San Francisco State University and is a member of the California bar. Sanger received his undergraduate and master's degrees in urban planning and law degrees from Harvard University.

**LAWRENCE E. WILLIAMS**  
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Williams, a principal with the real estate consulting firm of Williams-Kubelbeck and Associates, has over 26 years of experience in real estate economic, financial, and management consulting to both business and government. He has participated in the market and financial planning for numerous residential, commercial, and industrial developments in California, throughout the nation, and overseas. In addition to his consulting work, he has developed residential and commercial projects in California and the Pacific Northwest. Some of his more notable projects are the Embarcadero development project in San Diego, the New Orleans Convention Center expansion, the Rincon-South Beach Redevelopment project and Pier 39 in San Francisco, the River Place mixed-use development in Portland, Oregon, the shoreline development program in Long Beach, and the North Point Marina in Lake County, Illinois. Williams is a graduate of Cornell University with postgraduate work in real estate economics and law. He is a member of numerous professional and civic organizations and a frequent speaker and author of real estate-related publications.





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