1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 Plan Purpose and Intent....1.0-1
1.2 Plan Organization and Use....1.0-13
1.3 Relationship to Other Documents and General Plan Compliance....1.0-15

Figures

Figure 1.1 Regional Location Map....1.0-4
Figure 1.2a Specific Plan Project Areas....1.0-5
Figure 1.2b San Pablo Avenue Project Area Boundary....1.0-7
Figure 1.2c Pinole Valley Road Project Area Boundary....1.0-9
Figure 1.2d Appian Way Project Area....1.0-11

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 PLAN PURPOSE AND INTENT

WHAT IS A SPECIFIC PLAN?

A Specific Plan is a regulatory and economic development tool that local governments use to implement their General Plan and to guide development in a well-defined sub-area of the community. While the General Plan is the primary guide for growth and development in a community, a Specific Plan is able to focus on the unique characteristics of a special area by customizing the planning process and land use regulations for that area. A Specific Plan is prepared pursuant to the procedures set forth in Article 8, Section 65450 to 65457 of the California Government Code, and implements the General Plan by further refining the objectives for the Project Area.

PURPOSE AND INTENT

The purpose of the Specific Plan is to facilitate revitalization of the San Pablo Avenue, the Pinole Valley Road, and the Appian Way commercial corridors. The City of Pinole has designated these corridors as Priority Development Areas (PDAs) through FOCUS, a regional development and conservation strategy that promotes more compact land use patterns for the Bay Area. PDAs are locally identified, infill development opportunity areas where there is local commitment to developing more housing along with facilities and services to meet the day-to-day needs of residents in a pedestrian-friendly environment served by transit. This Specific Plan will be used as a regulatory and economic development tool that the City of Pinole can use to guide development along all three corridors to take advantage of these underutilized properties and other assets.

While the General Plan is the primary guide for growth and development within Pinole, this Specific Plan seeks to establish a direct connection between the City of Pinole's General Plan and economic and revitalization opportunities within the three Specific Plan corridors. An overall goal is the orderly development of three project area(s) – San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road, and Appian Way –consistent with the City's General Plan and, more specifically, with the community's vision developed through the Specific Plan public outreach process.

The Specific Plan will work to realize the community's vision to build upon the following:

- San Pablo Avenue's diverse history as a major thoroughfare in the East Bay, home to important industrial and light industrial land use, and community aims of attracting new retail and service industry, while achieving more diverse residential development that can be served by transit.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- Pinole Valley Road's history as a shopping and service corridor, attracting new retail, medical facilities, and higher-density residential development, while simultaneously improving open space access, enhancing Pinole Creek, and improving automobile flow and pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

- Appian Way's history as a large-scale shopping, medical care, and service corridor, attracting new retail and higher-density residential development, while simultaneously improving open space access, automobile flow, and pedestrian and bicycle circulation.

Together, the Specific Plan for these corridors will preserve the character of Pinole, while:

- Supporting commercial and residential developments that can function as the catalyst for economic revitalization and further the City's goals and objectives;

- Enhancing Old Town Pinole as a vibrant, pedestrian-oriented commercial destination with a strong civic identity;

- Encouraging Transit Oriented Development (TOD) within the Priority Development Areas (PDA) on San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road, and Appian Way;

- Supporting economic development that will bring more housing, retail, and employment opportunities to the community.

BACKGROUND

Located in the San Francisco Bay Area and 20 miles northeast of San Francisco, the City of Pinole is situated on the shores of San Pablo Bay in west Contra Costa County (see Figure 1.1). It is well connected to the cities in central Contra Costa County (Martinez, Concord, and Pleasant Hill) and the rest of the Bay Area (San Francisco and Oakland) by State Route 4 and Interstate 80 (I-80). Pinole is close to major employment centers in Oakland and San Francisco via the I-80 freeway. Under good traffic conditions, the drive to either Oakland or San Francisco takes approximately 20 minutes, making Pinole a desirable community to live and raise a family in. Similarly, Oakland International Airport and the Port of Oakland are a 30- and 25-minute drive respectively from the heart of Pinole, providing easy access to international destinations for retail customers, suppliers, and leisure travelers. Although Pinole is not connected to the rest of the Bay Area via BART or Bay Area Ferry Service, it does benefit from regional public transit provided by WestCAT and AC Transit.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Communities surrounding Pinole include the unincorporated areas of Montalvin Manor, Bayview, Tara Hills, and El Sobrante and the cities of San Pablo, Richmond, and Hercules. The City of Pinole is largely built out with development opportunities only for infill housing and commercial development.

SPECIFIC PLAN BOUNDARIES

The Specific Plan Area contains the San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road, and Appian Way corridors (see Figure 1.2A). The San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan Area extends north and south along the San Pablo Avenue corridor between Dursey Drive to the west and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail line to the east. San Pablo Avenue is a Route of Regional Significance that has been designated as a Priority Development Area. As such, this corridor contains unique circulation challenges, areas for economic development and revitalization, and areas that would benefit from more activity generated by higher-density residential development (see Figure 1.2B).

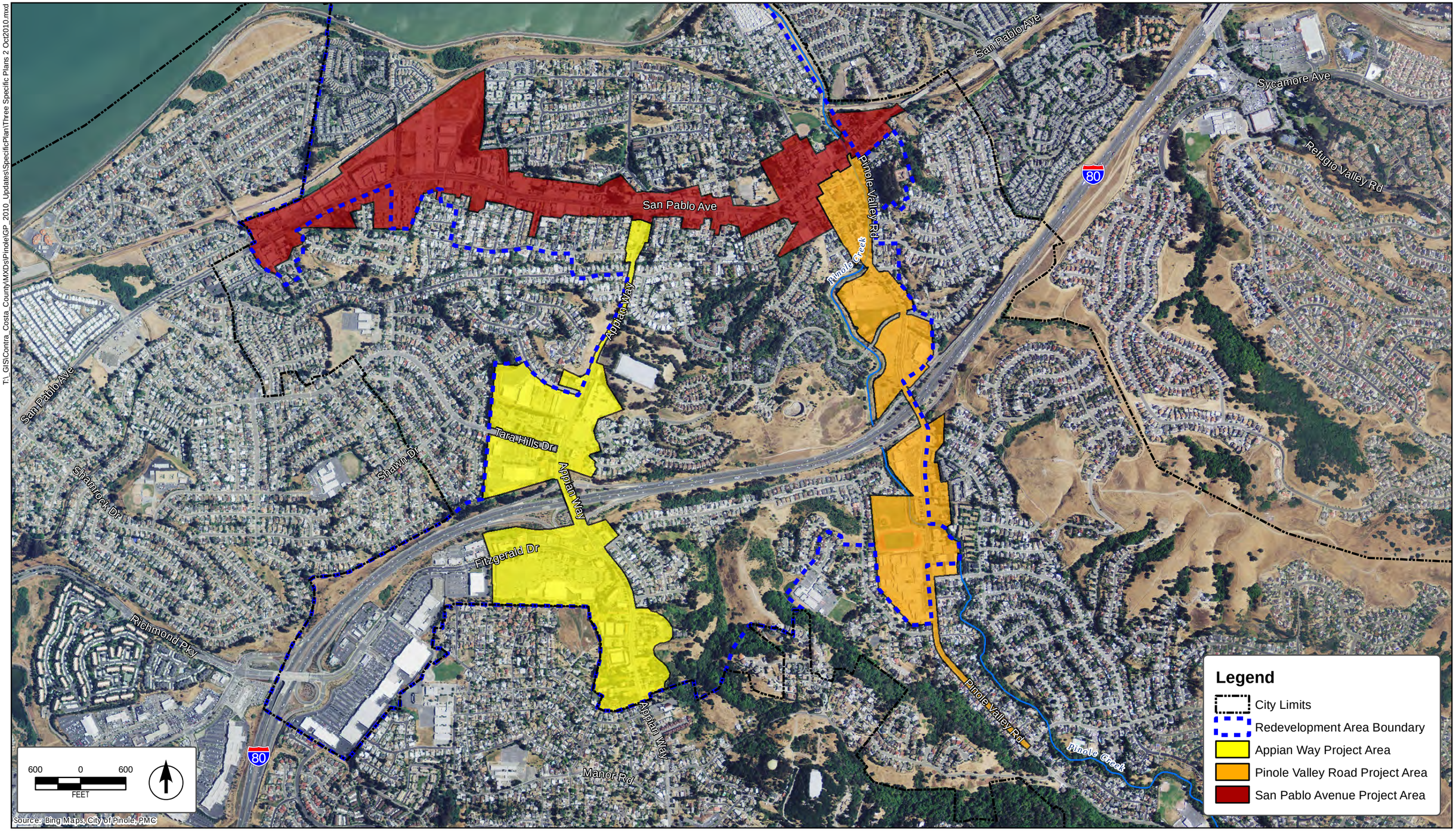
The Pinole Valley Road Specific Plan Area extends east and west along the Pinole Valley Road corridor between San Pablo Avenue to the north and Simas Avenue to the south. The Pinole Valley Road corridor contains diverse civic, commercial, residential, recreational, and public and private school uses. Recent renovation of the Pinole Valley Shopping Center and the opening of the Kaiser Medical Office Building will revitalize this corridor. To optimize land use in the corridor, the City will have to address unique circulation challenges in order to capitalize on areas of economic opportunity and revitalization and to promote diverse residential development (see Figure 1.2C).

The Appian Way Specific Plan Area extends east and west along the Appian Way corridor between San Pablo Avenue to the north and the City of Pinole boundary to the south. The Appian Way corridor contains the now vacant Doctors Medical Center facility, regional-serving retail and service uses, and presents unique circulation challenges, areas of economic opportunity and revitalization, and areas that can accommodate increased residential development (see Figure 1.2D).

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Figure 1.1
Regional Location Map

T:_GIS\Contra_Costa_County\MXDs\Pinole\GP_2010_Updates\SpecificPlan\Three Specific Plans 2 Oct2010.mxd



Source: Bing Maps, City of Pinole, PMC

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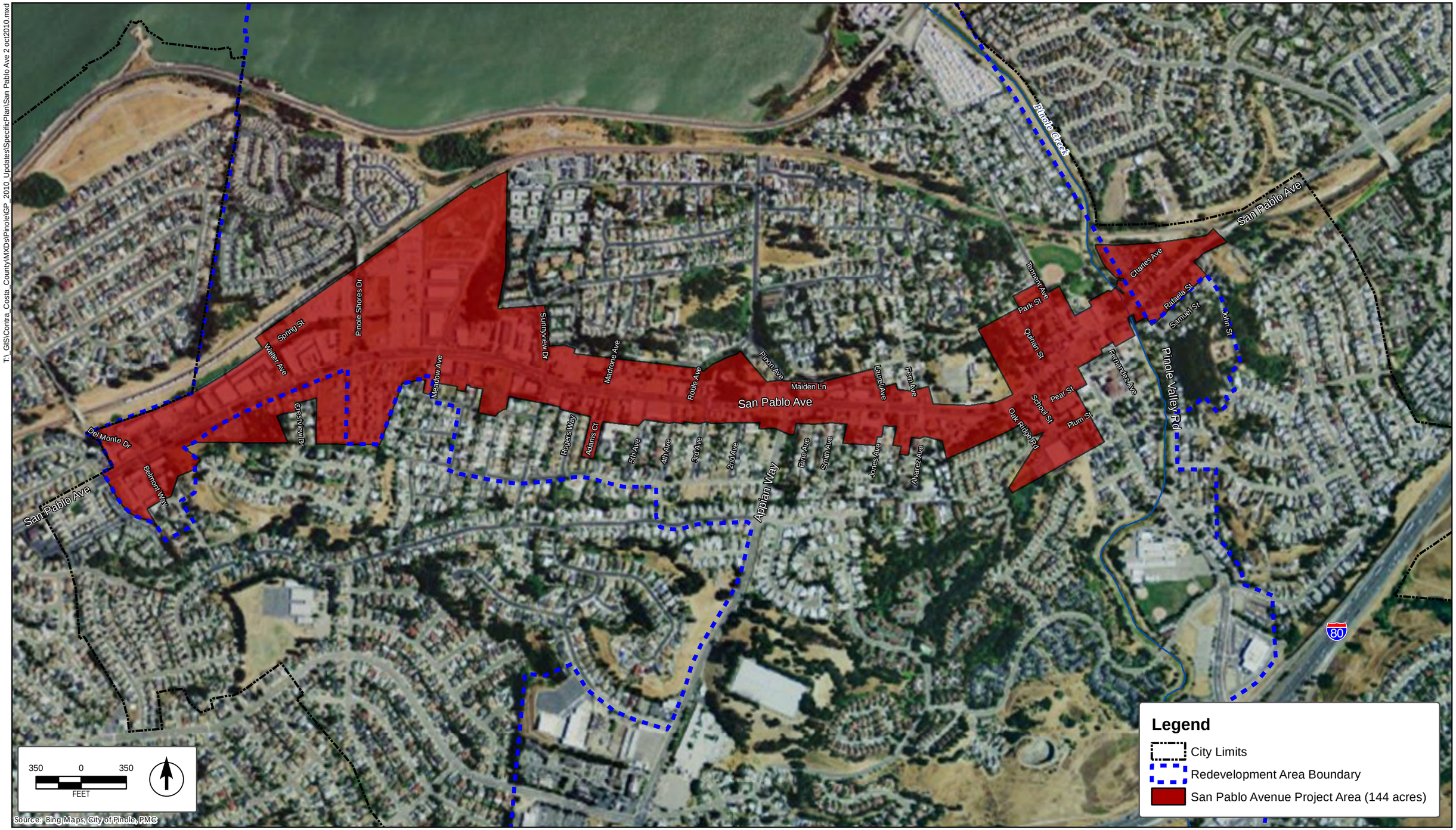
Specific Plan Project Areas Figure 1.2a

T:_GIS\Contra_Costa_County\MXDs\Pinole\GP_2010_Updates\SpecificPlan\San Pablo Ave 2 oct2010.mxd



Source: Bing Maps, City of Pinole, PMC

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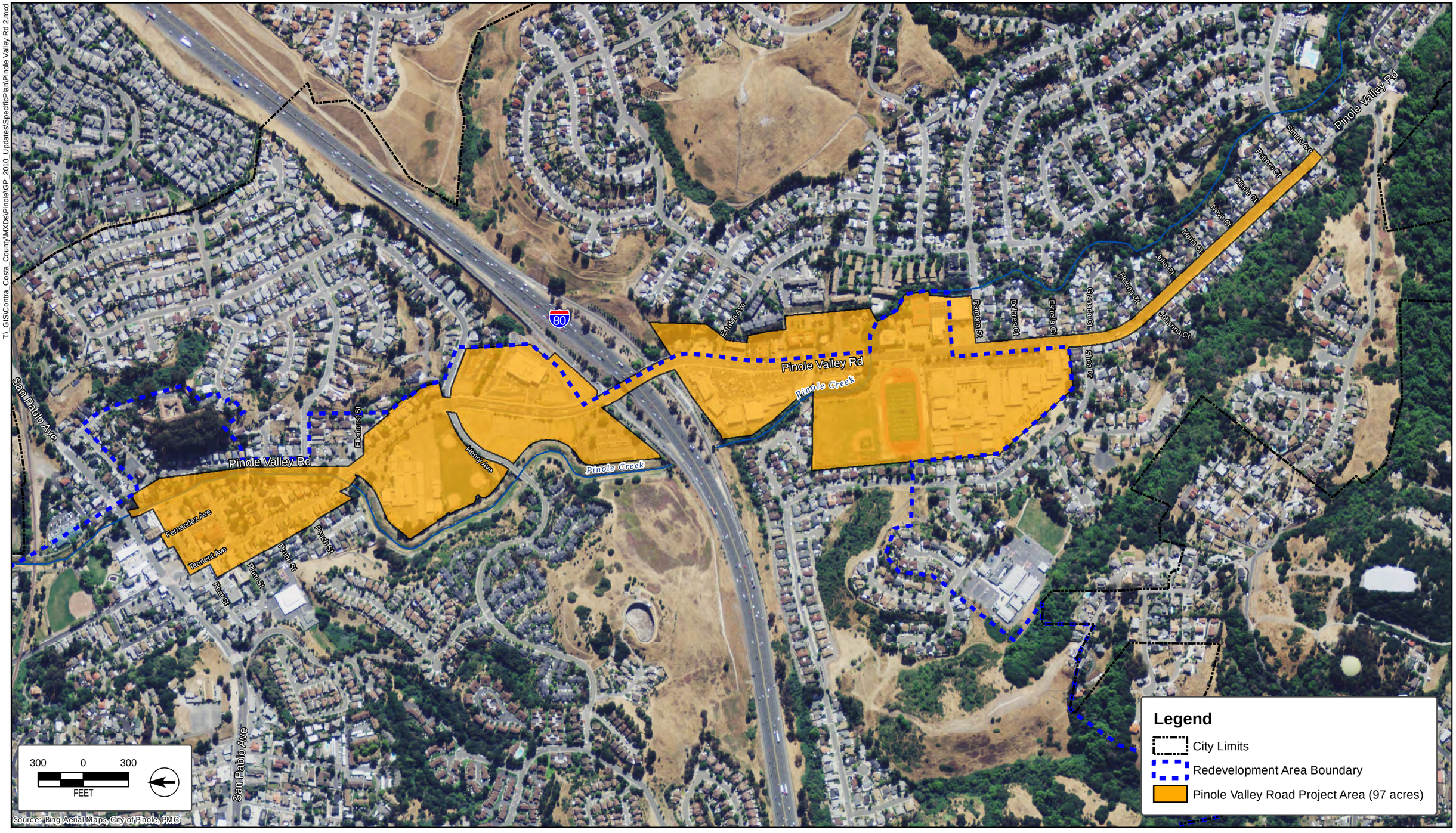
San Pablo Avenue Project Area Boundary Figure 1.2b

T:_GIS\Contra_Costa_County\MXDs\Pinole\GP_2010_Updates\SpecificPlan\Pinole Valley Rd 2.mxd



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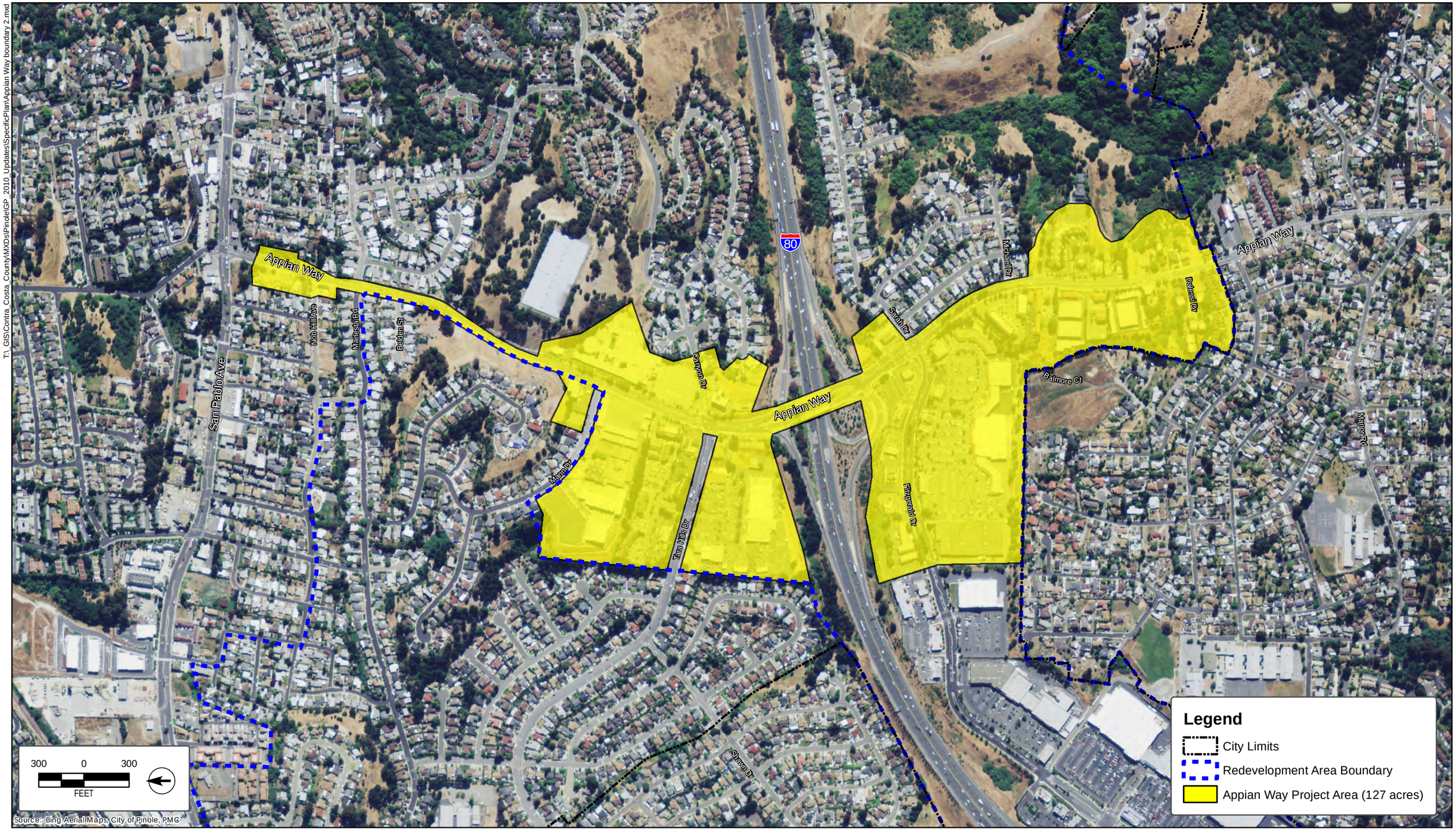
Pinole Valley Road Project Area Boundary

Figure 1.2c

T:_GIS\Contra_Costa_County\MXDs\Pinole\GP_2010_Updates\SpecificPlan\Appian Way boundary 2.mxd



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Appian Way Project Area Figure 1.2d

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.2 PLAN ORGANIZATION AND USE

Though the project area contains three distinct corridors, each of which has a unique character, they are combined into one Specific Plan to ensure coordinated land use planning where they intersect, efficiently communicate common standards and provisions, and ensure consistency in planning for these three areas. Portions of this document include provisions (e.g., vision, land plans, sub-area frameworks) that are unique to one of the corridors. Except as explicitly stated, all other provisions in this document apply to all three corridors. The document is organized into ten chapters as described below:

Executive Summary: This chapter is a general overview of the Specific Plan's content and intent.

1.0 Introduction & Background: Chapter 1.0 discusses the purpose, intent, and organization of this document. It describes the project area boundaries and outlines this plan's relationship to the City's General Plan and other documents relevant to the Specific Plan project areas.

2.0 Vision: This chapter describes the community's vision for the three project area(s) – San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road and Appian Way – and the guiding urban design principles that were created through the public participation process.

3.0 Existing Conditions: Chapter 3.0 summarizes relevant conditions existing within the study areas on topics such as existing circulation issues, urban design conditions, land uses, historical resources, and economic conditions. Additionally, this chapter establishes sub-area plans for each of the three Specific Plan Areas.

4.0 Economic Development Strategy: Chapter 4.0 summarizes economic and demographic trends in Pinole and identifies development standards and economic development tools for the Specific Plan Areas, Old Town, and opportunity sites.

5.0 Circulation: Chapter 5.0 describes and provides solutions for mobility and safety such as truck traffic, movement of vehicles, traffic calming, intersection treatments, pedestrian circulation, bicycle circulation, and public transit viability.

6.0 Land Use Standards: This chapter establishes land use plans, allowed use regulations, and site development standards (e.g., height, setback, and parking) for each of the three Specific Plan Areas.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

7.0 Private Realm Standards and Design Guidelines: This chapter provides direction for private property such as guidance for site planning and design, parking lot design and screening, building design and architectural character, building massing and articulation, lighting, screening utilitarian aspects of buildings, landscape and hardscape, and signage.

8.0 Public Realm Standards and Design Guidelines: This section provides direction for public improvements for the entire plan area. Topics include: Gateways and Corridor identity, parking lot design, and streetscape treatments such as medians, street trees, lighting, street furnishings, crosswalks, public art, and public right-of-way landscaping.

9.0 Infrastructure and Public Facilities: This chapter summarizes the conditions of the infrastructure and public facilities in the Specific Plan Area. Subjects addressed include: Water supply, sewer and wastewater, solid waste, drainage, police and fire protection, schools, and parks.

10.0 Implementation: This chapter explains Specific Plan administration, recommends strategic public improvements, and identifies key catalyst projects and programs needed to make the Specific Plan vision a reality. Priorities, phasing, potential funding mechanisms, persons responsible for implementation items, and administration of the Specific Plan document are all defined by this chapter. Also discussed are investment incentives, retail recruitment strategies, and business organization programs for creating and maintaining a vibrant Pinole Valley Road retail and service environment.

Appendix: The appendix provides a timeline of project events, a summary of raw feedback from public workshops, an overview of data provided by Bay Area Economics consultants, and a glossary of terms related to the Specific Plan.

The Specific Plan for San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road, and Appian Way should be used by readers to gain a clear understanding of the community vision for development along the three corridors. This document will be used by property owners, governing bodies, and City staff as a set of regulations containing area-specific land use regulations, development standards, and design guidelines. The Specific Plan establishes the framework for future capital improvement projects. These actions will improve the quality of the City's environment, as well as the clarity and effectiveness of the design review process.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.3 RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DOCUMENTS AND GENERAL PLAN COMPLIANCE

The Specific Plan for San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road, and Appian Way must be compatible with the Pinole General Plan and the Pinole Redevelopment Plan and will be implemented in conjunction with the Pinole Municipal Code. The Specific Plan provides information needed to guide development within the planning area. Future development proposals within the Specific Plan Area must be consistent with the relevant provisions in this document.

THE CITY OF PINOLE GENERAL PLAN

The Specific Plan for San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road and Appian Way is consistent with the City's General Plan adopted in 2010. The Pinole General Plan includes the vision, goals, and policies and implementation actions relevant to the three Specific Plan Areas addressed in this document. The General Plan provisions are listed below:

General Plan Vision

The Overall Vision is to "Build a City" that is a vibrant destination place in the region and intentionally seeks change in land use for profound improvement in the City. It also expresses a vision for the future where "sustainable development" and land use practices provide for the needs of existing residents and businesses while preserving choices for future generations.

The Land Use Vision is for a series of walkable neighborhoods, that facilitates interactions between residents, employees, and visitors. The City will provide a balanced mix of housing, jobs, commercial activities, and services, as well as cultural and civic amenities. Pinole will foster an integrated mix of uses that are connected by lively streets and contiguous open space areas.

The Community Character Vision and goal is to preserve, enhance, and strengthen community identity. The City will preserve its small-town feel, define itself as a memorable destination with a range of entertainment and recreation opportunities, and promote connections between neighborhood and commercial districts. Pinole will maintain and celebrate its rich cultural heritage and diversity through cultural art and preservation of locally significant sites, buildings, and history.

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

General Plan Goals, Policies, and Actions

COMMUNITY CHARACTER GOAL CC.1	Maintain Pinole's unique qualities and sense of place to preserve the established historic and small town character of the City.
COMMUNITY CHARACTER GOAL CC.2	Emphasize and enhance the visual and physical connection between the City's natural environment and the community's quality of life.
COMMUNITY CHARACTER GOAL CC.3	Support the development of local-oriented services in Old Town Pinole and encourage and support the local economy.

In addition to the above-listed items, the Overall Vision and Land Plan herein implement smart growth principles for land use, circulation, and transit concepts for the three planning areas – San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road, and Appian Way – in the Land Use Element. The General Plan directs the creation of a Specific Plan for the San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road, and Appian Way corridors.

If the Specific Plan conflicts with any of the requirements of the following related documents, the Specific Plan provisions will take precedence.

General Plan Environmental Compliance

Environmental review for this Specific Plan document has been prepared and certified as part of the Environmental Impact Report prepared for the Pinole General Plan. All projections of this Specific Plan respect the thresholds set forth in the General Plan.

The City of Pinole Zoning Ordinance (PMC Title 17)

This Specific Plan document customizes many of the standards and regulations found in the City Zoning Ordinance to help achieve the vision for the three Specific Plan Areas – San Pablo Avenue, Pinole Valley Road, and Appian Way. In any instance where the Specific Plan conflicts with the requirements of the City of Pinole's Zoning Ordinance, the Specific Plan provisions will take precedence (e.g., allowed uses, setbacks). Where the Specific Plan is silent on a topic, the Pinole Municipal Code requirements remain in force (e.g., allowable sign area).

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

CITY OF PINOLE RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Citywide Residential Design Guidelines supplement the Zoning Code development standards with more detailed provisions that direct the look and feel of residential development. The guidelines and standards govern the site and architectural character of residential development.