

# REINTERPRETING CITY ALLEYS

## *Design Guidelines for the City of Vallejo*

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## IN THIS CHAPTER

### 1.1 Document Structure

## 1 Introduction

This document analyzes a specific topic, a single piece of the urban fabric – the alley. Designed as a means to access the rear of properties, its function has given way to its reputation as the storage location of garbage bins, the dumping ground of unwanted furniture, the cruising grounds for immoral encounters and acts. To some, the City of Vallejo shares the same notoriety as the forgotten side-streets. A city founded to support a new state and a new country's Navy, its stature has ceded to its distinction as a dying town.

Contemporary community design has seen attention being turned once again to alleys. Neo-traditional planning promotes the use of alleys in new communities and alley activation projects across the country seek to re-integrate existing alleys as a part of the urban and ecological landscape. San Francisco, Sacramento, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Baltimore are among many cities that have embarked on alley activation projects. The overlooked and disregarded side-streets left over from the days of carriage houses are becoming unique and integral aspects of these cities.

The reintegration of these existing alleys is the basis of this document. Vallejo too has an existing system of alleys in the heart of a city. This document seeks to understand how alleys have been reintegrated in other communities, distill design elements that encourage their reintegration, and provide design guidelines to achieve those means in a manner appropriate to Vallejo.

### 1.1 Document Structure

This document is organized into six chapters as follows:

#### *City Form and Alleys*

Chapter 2 provides a historical overview of alleys in the United States and the urban design elements that are present and encouraged by alleys. This chapter also identifies overall design principles related to alleys.

#### *Case Studies*

Chapter 3 presents four communities with alley activation programs as case studies: San Francisco, Sacramento, Baltimore, and Austin. The design principles identified in Chapter 2 are further expanded to encompass specific aspects of each of the selected studies. Lessons from these studies are also discussed.

#### *The City of Vallejo and its Alleys*

Chapter 4 provides a historical overview of the City of Vallejo's development. The plan area is identified and existing conditions are examined. A review of applicable municipal regulatory schemes and policies are outlined – leading to the identification of opportunities and constraints.

#### *Reinterpreting Vallejo's Alleys*

Chapter 5 begins with a vision and accompanying set of goals based on the local context examined in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. These goals inform the design guidelines which are divided by alley districts and design elements.

#### *Implementation*

Chapter 6 briefly discusses consistency with existing policy, the public review process, and potential financing strategies.

## 2 City Form and Alleys

### 2.1 Historical Overview of Alleys

The simplest explanation of alleys as pathways fails to convey their importance. Today they may only appear to be small-scale lanes that carry a small amount of vehicular traffic. But this definition as service access also discounts their historical significance.

#### The Gridded City and Alleys

Prior to the unification and subsequent declaration of independence from Britain, the east coast of the Americas was colonized by several empires, including Great Britain, Spain, and the Netherlands. These colonies were established as economic enterprises with charters granted by the rulers of their respective countries. The early development patterns of these colonies were centered around defense, with supporting agricultural uses encircling the fortifications of the original colony. Outward growth of these colonies was often organic and alleys were not a feature present on the landscape.

Elfreth's Alley in Philadelphia claims to be "Our Nation's Oldest Residential Street" and may be the earliest form of the alley as we understand it today. Created in 1702, it was the product of two businessmen who decided to share a strip of land between their two properties to allow for easier access between their blacksmith shops near the Delaware River and the commercial thoroughfare of Second Street (Elfreth, 2010).

### IN THIS CHAPTER

#### 2.1 Historical Overview of Alleys

#### 2.2 Alleys and City Form

#### 2.3 Design Principles

Formalized settlement of California as a colony of Spain was guided by the Law of the Indies. Promulgated in 1500s it prescribed the method and manner that presidios, missions, and pueblos would be set-up and operated in the New World. The Laws pre-planned communities and its implementation created grid systems oriented around civic spaces and were setup to allow for the logical expansion of the community. Of importance to the plans was the orientation of streets to provide for air circulation, the separation of uses (commercial, residential, civic, and agricultural), and the creation of spaces that would be of civic pride.

The 19th century brought the expansion of the newly created United States of America. Cities expanded in a regimented grid-pattern to accommodate the easy sale of land. Alleys were a common element in the urban landscape, allowing access to the rear of lots where stables, privies, and other unwanted elements were kept away from streetview. In cities such as Galveston, slaves were kept in the outbuildings at the rear of the property (Beasley, 1996).

Post-Civil War economic growth drove people into cities and property owners capitalized on the influx of freed slaves and immigrants and converted out-buildings into alley housing. With the automobile becoming a more widely available means of transportation, barns and stables reserved for horses and carriages were converted into residential units for people.

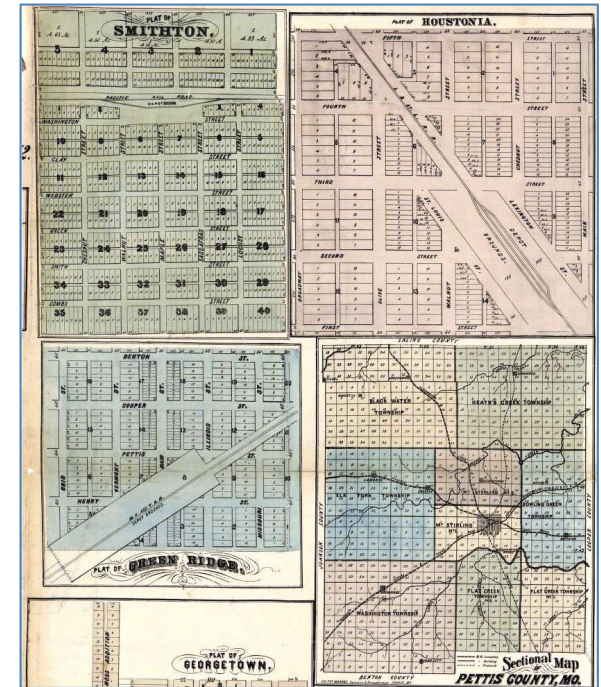
It is also at this time that cities began to take note of the poor circumstances that compromised alleys. The nascent field of planning in 1910 held the First National Conference on City Planning and the Problems of Congestion. Several speakers at the conference detailed the problems of overcrowding and noted the poor housing conditions of alleys (Meck and Retzlaff,

2009). As a partial answer to those issues, New York City adopted the first zoning ordinance in 1916 that divided the city into use zones with associated development standards that dictated height, uses and the uses' intensity.

## The Demise of Alleys

Known for the creation of grand avenues with visual axes that terminated on grand civic buildings and monuments, the City Beautiful movement brought with it the desire to improve the appearance of cities and to instill civic pride within the community. The placement of park-like civic centers connected by diagonal avenues were laid on top of the existing street patterns of communities. Alleys are not identified on the plans associated with this movement. Their disappearance may be related to the fact that alleys were too fine-grain in nature and conflicted with the monumental scale that this movement is remembered for. But perhaps this slight was also due to the social troubles affiliated with alleys.

Alleys were also largely left out of the Garden City movement. The design for Riverside, Illinois, the country's first planned community, in 1869 provided almost no alleys. In 1928 America's most prominent interpretation of the British movement was established, Radburn, New Jersey. Described as "a town for the motor age" pedestrian traffic and vehicular traffic were completely separated. Superblocks of housing and commercial were also separated with swaths of open space and pedestrian underpasses. While never finished due to the onset of the Great Depression, this alley-less, auto-oriented, suburban pattern established in this community would contribute to the development patterns for decades to come.

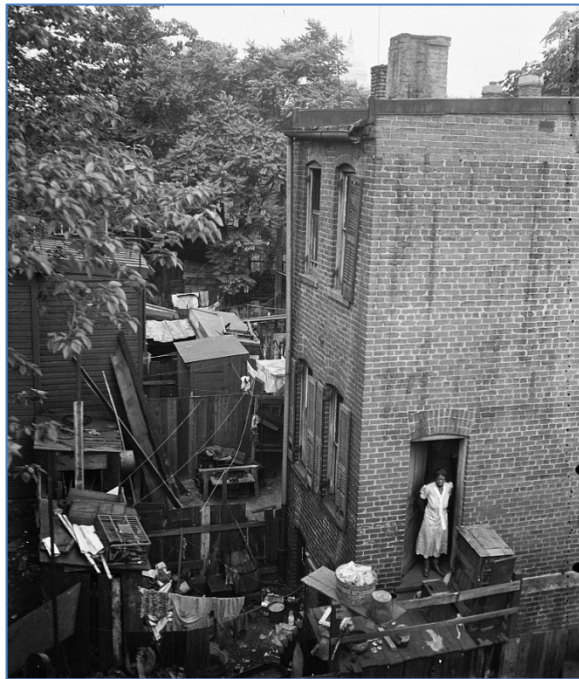


As railroads expanded westward companies set-up towns in a grid-pattern and sold them in mail order catalogs, 1872 (Magann, 1872)

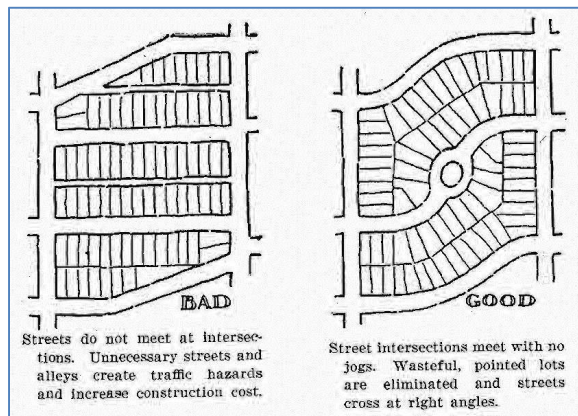


Washington DC alley slum, 1914 (Harris and Ewing, 1914)





Washington DC alley slum, 1935 (Harris and Ewing, 1935)



FHA bulletins planned alleys out of the urban form, 1938 (FHA, 1938, p. 20)

Alleys disappeared from the nation's development vocabulary in the years after the Great Depression. Created as a part of the New Deal in 1934, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) was tasked with assisting the recovery of the housing market (FHA, 1938). To achieve this, the FHA published technical bulletins to assist developers and communities secure financing, most efficiently subdivide their land, and locate home buyers (Southworth & Ben-Joseph, 2003). Based on concepts from the Regional Planning Association and the Conferences on City Planning, the FHA outlined design principles that in essence were federal development standards. The bulletins ingrained the use of setbacks, curvilinear streets, and cul-du-sacs and discarded the alley from its hierarchical street classifications. By coupling the ability to obtain financing and mortgage insurance with the use of FHA standards, the federal government was able to usurp local land use controls (Southworth & Ben-Joseph, 2003). Returning veterans looking to start families drove a residential development boom in the years after World War II where the suburban pattern defined by the FHA dominated.

Urban Renewal that started in the 1950s brought with it the large-scale redevelopment of communities. Large areas of cities were deemed to be "blighted," a legal designation that allowed for municipalities to take private land for public benefit. Bulldozers brought down not only buildings but entire city blocks. Reflecting the prominence of the car, the pedestrian-scaled urban fabric gave way to superblocks and massive Brutalist-inspired civic projects.

## The Reemergence of Alleys

Alleys only began to reappear in development patterns with the New Urbanism movement of

the early 1990s. The Charter of the New Urbanism defines 27 principles to guide public policy, development, and design. These principles address a broad array of disciplines and range in scale from the region, city, neighborhood, and building (Congress for the New Urbanism, 2001). Developments utilizing these principles have several defining features that have encouraged the use of alleys. With a focus on fine-grain, alleys once again became prominent as the movement rejected suburban development patterns in favor of mixed-use and neo-traditional design. These principles have created identifiable communities that include the following features.

### *Interconnected and Shared Network*

Neighborhood streets form a network that allow for a variety of route choices not only for vehicles, but for pedestrians and bicyclists as well. While a hierarchy of street types remains, their grid-like design disperses traffic and reduces bottlenecks caused by branching street patterns. The streets are also designed to be pleasant with narrow widths and plantings that encourage pedestrian use.

### *Variety of Housing*

Housing typologies vary within the neighborhood and may include single-family detached, single-family attached, and multi-family units. The wide variety of unit types allows for a diverse population to find housing, from new professionals, young families, and seniors. Additionally, the variety of housing allows access not only to homebuyers, but renters, and subsidized renters as well.

### *Parking in the Rear*

Smaller setbacks brings buildings close to the street and relegates parking to the rear of properties. Here alleys are once again used to access garages or motor courts behind homes. Accessory second units that front the

## CHAPTER 2

alleys allow for additional housing opportunities and are found in New Urbanist developments.

Existing alleys nationwide are undergoing a revitalization movement. While New Urbanism added alleys back into the fabric of cities, contemporary programs seek to improve on existing alleys. Many communities have alley systems that are still intact. Large cities such as Chicago, Los Angeles, and Seattle have garnered a lot of attention for their programs. But mid-size to smaller cities such as Sacramento, Santa Cruz, and Fullerton have drafted their own programs as well. Under the banner of “alley activation” or “alley greening” the new focus is to re-image alleys to serve as a community resource. Four communities with such programs have been selected as case studies and are further discussed in Chapter 3 of this report.



With the goal of creating a pedestrian-friendly street, New Urbanism utilizes alleys to access garages at the rear of properties.



## 2.2 Alleys and City Form

As an established feature in countless cities, the urban design principles of alleys must be analyzed in order to establish concepts that are present and encouraged by alleys. One analysis method developed by Kevin Lynch is to examine how alleys are perceived by their users. Since the publication of Lynch's works there have been several other methods developed of analyzing the city form. Lynch's analysis has been chosen for this report as it provides an analysis method that is easily accessible and understood to persons outside the planning profession.

A second approach is based on a work by Donald Appleyard who studied the social effects of traffic on the lives of residents in his book *Livable Streets* (1981). Rather than using traffic counts, turn movement models, and collision reports, Appleyard utilized surveys and personal mapping exercises to identify how residents actually perceived their neighborhood. His research culminated in proposals to create programs that protected neighborhoods, but his ideas to create a sense of place on the street are used for analysis.

### Lynch's Five Elements

Lynch's analysis model is based on "imageability," the "mental picture of the exterior physical world that is held by an individual" (Lynch, 1960, p. 2). Five elements are described by Lynch: paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks (Lynch, 1960). The perception of alleys is reviewed against the elements to help establish overarching design goals specific to alleys.

#### Paths

Paths are the main element used by people and are "channels along which the observer

customarily, occasionally, or potentially moves" (Lynch, 1960, p. 47). Lynch further identifies three sub-elements: identity, continuity, and directional quality (Lynch, 1960).

Euclidean zoning generally provides alleys with a specific identity. Segregated by land uses, alley identity is tied closely with the building form in which it is located. Enclosed mid-rises with continuous facades in commercial areas and fences with a staccato of low-rise accessory structures in single-family residential areas are a contrast, but provide the user with a specific identity.

The concentration of these uses allows users to follow a path and also plays into Lynch's second sub-element, continuity. This sub-element can be reinforced by the design of the alley through unified paving materials, lighting, and width. In mixed-use areas the continuity of alleys can be disrupted where there is a change in surrounding uses which may cause a sudden narrowing, through blockages of utilities or storage. This can also occur in a change due to the timing of development where new developments that front onto the alley include new paving materials that do not extend the entire length of the path.

The directional qualities of alleys are strong as they generally are short in length and almost always intersect adjoining streets at a right-angle, providing users with a clear choice in which new path to take. The naming of alleys contributes to the mental map of users. A simple name allows the user to associate the surrounding uses on the path and provides a type of mental continuity that strengthens the path's image.

#### Edges

Edges are described as "the linear elements not used or considered paths by the observer. They

are the boundaries between two phases, linear breaks in continuity" (Lynch, 1960, p. 47). Physically, alleys evoke few characteristics of edges as they generally are not features that divide distinct areas. However, where alleys intersect streets, a mental edge is present. As represent a break in the street façade, the gap may provide casual users with little incentive to explore. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the association of alleys with social ills provides a reinforcement of alley ends which users may want to avoid.

#### Districts

Most people order their community into districts that have an identifiable characteristic (Lynch, 1960). They are "medium-to-large sections of the city, conceived of as having two-dimensional extent, which the observer mentally enters 'inside of,'" (p. 47). Lynch further identifies physical characteristics that allow districts to develop a strong image. These include continuous and homogeneous building facades of similar form, detail, materials, and uses. A unifying activity whether it be art, architectural history, bars, or retail play into the identity of districts. Alleys do not form the backbone of districts. However, evoking the characteristics previously listed, alleys can be a contributor to districts they are located within and reinforce the internal identity of the district.

#### Nodes

Nodes are "the points, the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is travelling back" (Lynch, 1960, p. 47). While identified with plazas, squares, and transit stations, some alleys may serve as nodes. Alleys that open up at intersections may serve as a node simply due to the large influx of users at the junction. Alleys that function as neighborhood rear yards or as restaurant rows

provide for a unified concentration of an activity which creates a recognizable node.

### *Landmarks*

While simple objects, landmarks are “another type of point-reference, but in this case the observer does not enter within them, they are external. They are usually a rather simply defined physical object” (Lynch, 1960, p. 48). Stumbling upon a distinctive alley may arguably help orient users, but landmarks are meant to be external identifiers. As alleys are tucked within the urban fabric they lack the ability to provide way-finding cues. However as linear paths, alleys can be used to reinforce axial design. Locating prominent landmarks at the terminus of alleys, similar to monuments located at street intersections, can help users navigate through alleyways or to particularly distinctive alleys.

### *Appleyard’s Ideal Street*

Appleyard’s Charter of Street-Dwellers’ Rights captures the wants and needs of his survey respondents with seven aspects of an ideal street. While these goals are designed with a broader road network in mind, they nonetheless speak to a alleys sense of place and further contribute to our understanding of design principles present in alleys.

### *The Street as a Safe Sanctuary*

As a sanctuary, streets are the territory of pedestrians where children can walk or bike safely to places they visit such as schools and parks. While vehicles are expected on the streets they should “move slowly, carefully, and with warning - as guests, not as owners” (Appleyard, 1981, p. 243). The limited vehicular use of alleys lends itself naturally to use by residents for walking and cycling. Furthermore, the relatively narrow design of alleys forces drivers to use the

alley at slower speeds and with greater caution. Appleyard does not discount that streets must nonetheless be able to meet the need for access by emergency vehicles. This also holds true for utility vehicles such as garbage collection trucks.

### *The Street as a Livable, Healthy Environment*

Local residents “should not be forced to withdraw from the street because of the discomforts caused by traffic” (Appleyard, 1981, p. 244). Everyday activities should not be impaired by noise, dust, excessive lighting, and vibrations. Places on the street should be available for people to use whether it be for talking or playing. Unmaintained alleys can detract from achieving this goal. Poor paving can lead to pools of water collecting when it rains and dust clouds in dry weather. Broken and uneven paving also may unnecessarily add to noise pollution as vehicles navigating the alley get jarred. Poor placement and design of safety lighting in alleys can affect the sleep of residents if glare is not adequately shielded.

### *The Street as Community*

Streets can be a communal space where residents engage in daily activities. Community events such as block parties are also valid street activities. The short lengths and narrow widths of alleys create a defined area that lends itself to neighborhood activities. These communal events may be specific to the residents or businesses that abut the alley. Subject specific events relevant to the broader community, such as those found in arts districts, may find a home in alleys. These users maintain their communal space which in turn promotes activity within them.

### *The Street as Neighborly Territory*

The cleanliness of streets and their amenities such as landscaping and seating areas is encouraged when residents take responsibility

for their streets. “... the street should be symbolic, if not in a legal sense, territory that the residents feel belongs to them” (Appleyard, 1981, p. 244). In the same lines as “Streets as Community,” active users will maintain their alleys that they have “customized” by keeping it free of litter, serving as “bouncers” to keep unwelcome strangers away, and notifying municipal officials when the alleys need fixing.

### *The Street as a Place for Playing and Learning*

In urbanized settings with small rear yards and limited parks, the streets become a playground for children. Appleyard states, “[o]n it children can learn much about nature, through plants and trees, the sun and the wind, and through exposure to earth itself. They can learn about social life if there are people on the street whom they can safely meet” (1981, p. 244). Streets that include a variety of spaces, surfaces, landscaping, and textures provide for a diverse place not only for playing, but learning as well. Limited vehicular traffic allows for residential alleys to become an extension of the neighborhood rear yards. However, poorly maintained alleys increase the potential for injury when they are littered, flooded, pot-holed, or occupied with strangers.

### *The Street as a Green and Pleasant Land*

Landscaped city centers “... provide relief from the hardness and greyness of the city...” and can provide glimpses of nature in an otherwise austere urbanscape (Appleyard, 1981, p. 244). Where alleys no longer function as access to residential properties there are opportunities to “cede” the space back to its residents for landscaping. Current stormwater management practices also encourage the greening of streets and alleys to service as a means to control non-point-source water pollution. Commercial alleys can utilize planters to soften them and to screen utility meters and waste receptacles.

*The Street as a Unique Historic Place*

The stories and activities that have taken place over the years on streets contributes to the history of the street. Users take pride in a space that has a special identity to them, becoming a “place” to residents rather than just a route (Appleyard, 1981). Across a city, alleys may lack a broad quality that makes them unique. However individual alleys, such as those with views, that lead to parks, or within a historic district, can create an identity for themselves.

### 2.3 Design Principles

Having analyzed the historical aspects of alleys and the design elements that alleys contribute to the urban fabric, overall design principles for alleys can be developed. These overarching principles must still be grounded by taking a specific reading of the community in which these principles will be applied. Chapter 4 is an exercise in localizing this information.

#### *Principle 1 - Provide Access*

Alleys as a means to access the rear of properties must be maintained as they are channels of movement within an existing circulation network. This network provides people with passage to homes, businesses, and public spaces. This principle extends beyond simple ingress and egress as alleys provide a means to utility meters, waste collection facilities, and emergency access.

#### *Principle 2 - Define the Place*

A self-defining feature bound by buildings or fences along its length and streets at its ends, an alley should be an identifiable place. A continuous alley-fronting facade pattern that links both of ends of the alley with quality architectural elements encloses the space. Paving that is durable and consistent the length of the alley increases the legibility of the alley. Thoughtful orientation and placement of building facades, signage, lighting, plantings, and utilities must be accompanied by a contextually-based selection of materials and expression forms that are appropriate to the surrounding uses and history to establish a legitimate sense of place.

#### *Principle 3 - Foster Neighborhood Ownership*

Like streets, alleys provide access for nearly anyone. In a manner different than streets, alleys have a boundaries, a permeable edge, that

allow for them to become outdoor living rooms. Here users can play, socialize, and interact – creating a territory that the neighborhood invests in and maintains.

#### *Principle 4 - Encourage Multiple Uses and Functions*

Pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicles bringing residents, workers, visitors, and customers. The safe sharing of the alley by these users is encouraged and expected. Urban life is not limited to the confines of private property and positive casual encounters can be encouraged when alleys are seen as an extension of the community. This may extend only to immediate neighbors or, at the users' choosing, to a broader community.

## IN THIS CHAPTER

- 3.1 Selection and Evaluation Criteria
- 3.2 San Francisco
- 3.3 Sacramento
- 3.4 Baltimore
- 3.5 Austin
- 3.6 Lessons Learned

## 3 Case Studies

### 3.1 Selection and Evaluation Criteria

#### *Selection Criteria*

While there are many communities in the United States that have embarked on their own alley-related programs, four cities have been chosen as case studies. San Francisco, Sacramento, Baltimore, and Austin have produced separate programs that have produced alley “products” that are unique. San Francisco’s Belden Place exemplifies a concentration of a single-use on an alley: restaurants. Liestal Row in Midtown Sacramento’s Handle District is an example of an evolving alley where both restaurant uses and residential uses are oriented toward the alley and include environmentally-protective features. The Hill and Patterson Park neighborhoods in Baltimore are an example of the successful implementation of a program to return alleys to adjacent residences. And Austin’s Alley #111 is an example of engaging an alley as a cultural space through temporary events.

#### *Evaluation Criteria*

Each case study is divided into three subsections. The first provides a brief overview of the city to allow for a very generalized comparison of their settings. The second subsection, “Programs” provides a brief overview of city-wide or area-wide alley programs. The last subsection, “Survey” examines one alley based on the four design principles identified in Chapter 2:

1. Provide Access

2. Define the Place
3. Foster Neighborhood Ownership
4. Encourage Multiple Uses and Functions

This analysis includes a review of the alley's evolution, it's current condition, and the features that make it unique. Each case study includes a table that summarizes the conditions and built form of the the alleys

## 3.2 San Francisco

While only about 27 square miles (San Francisco, 2013), the City and County of San Francisco is the economic and cultural hub of the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. Initially a Spanish mission in 1776, the California Gold Rush brought with it an explosion in population and helped to establish the City as a major international trade hub. It has a population of 805,235, but is the center of a metropolitan area of 7.2 million (MTC and ABAG, 2013).

**Figure 3.1: San Francisco Context**



**Table 3.1: San Francisco at a Glance**

<b>Founded</b>	1776
<b>Incorporated</b>	1850
<b>Population - City</b>	805,235 (MTC and ABAG, 2013)
<b>Population - Metro</b>	7.2 million (MTC and ABAG, 2013)
<b>Area (Land)</b>	27 square miles

## Programs

### *Chinatown Alleyway Master Plan*

In conjunction with the San Francisco Department of Public Works, the Chinatown Community Development Center drafted a set of design guidelines for a 20 block area with 30 alley segments. This plan was adopted by the City in 1998 with the goal of not only maintaining the alleys but beautifying them as well. The plan offered recommended policies and physical improvements that could be made to each of the alleys within the plan.

### *Better Streets Plan*

With an aim to improve the pedestrian experience, the Better Streets Plan establishes procedures, guidelines, and standards for streets within the City. The Plan is notable for its explicit focus on the use of the street network as public space. It is also a comprehensive set of guidelines and standards that provide for a uniform set of standards pertaining to alleys.

## Survey

Belden Place is located between Pine Street and Bush Street in the Financial District. The Better Streets Plan identifies the lane as a “destination alley” due to its unique setting, European-centric establishments, and atmosphere.

### *Provide Access*

With the exception of service vehicles, the alley is generally closed to vehicular traffic. A sidewalk lines both sides of the alley and allows the middle of the alley to remain free of channels and drainage inlets.

### *Define the Place*

A continuous facade of storefronts encloses the alley, with high-rise buildings beyond providing layers of building form to the site. Further accentuating the intimate atmosphere of the alley is a set of string lights that drape across the length of the alley. Awnings project into the alley and denote the entrances into the restaurants which comprise the dominant land use within it.

### *Foster Neighborhood Ownership*

Moveable tables, chairs, planters, and windscreens fill the alley in the afternoons after the alley has been vacated for use by service and delivery trucks.

### *Encourage Multiple Uses and Functions*

Reflecting on the alley’s original establishments of French cuisine, celebrations such as Bastille Day are hosted at Belden Place.



**Figure 3.2: Belden Place Figure-Ground**



**Table 3.2: Belden Place Summary**

<b>Identification</b>	Belden Place
<b>Neighborhood</b>	Financial District
<b>Width</b>	20 feet (northern) 22.5 feet (south)
<b>Length</b>	275 feet
<b>Ownership</b>	City & County of San Francisco
<b>Land Uses</b>	restaurants; commercial office; residential
<b>Facade</b>	continuous with two openings on eastern-side
<b>Height</b>	2-3 stories
<b>Projections</b>	awnings; signage; fire escapes
<b>Signage</b>	awning, wall, and projecting signs for businesses
<b>Lighting</b>	strung canopy lights; exterior lights from restaurants
<b>Furniture</b>	moveable tables, chairs, planters, umbrellas, service stands, wind guards
<b>Paving</b>	asphalt and concrete
<b>Grading</b>	drains towards sides of alley along gutters; empties to drains at ends of alley
<b>Gating</b>	yes – vehicles only, pedestrian access always allowed
<b>Other</b>	neighborhood empties after work-hours but alley is most active during lunch, late-afternoon, and evenings



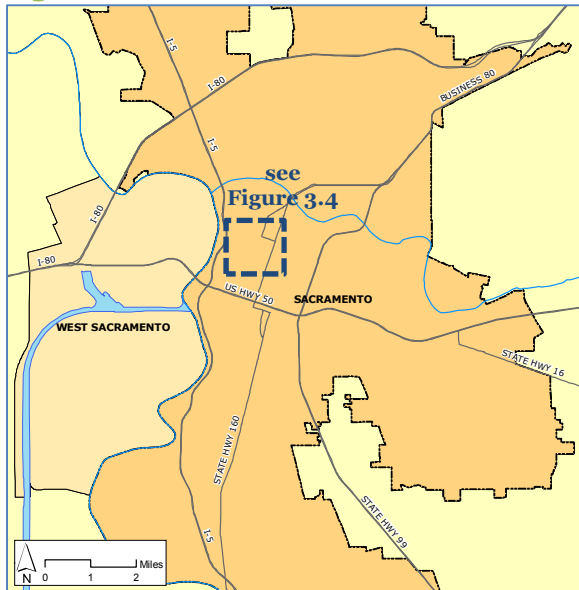
Belden Place begins to swell with diners in an alley in the Financial District that has become a culinary destination. (Hafalia, 2009)



### 3.3 Sacramento

Located on the Sacramento and American Rivers in the northern region of California's Central Valley, the City of Sacramento serves as the capital of the state. Established in 1849 during California's Gold Rush, the City's Central Core retains much of its historic neighborhoods. It has a population of 466,488, but is the center of a metropolitan area of 2.3 million (Sacramento Area Council of Governments [SACOG], 2013).

**Figure 3.3: Sacramento Context**



**Table 3.3: Sacramento at a Glance**

<b>Founded</b>	1839
<b>Incorporated</b>	1849
<b>Population - City</b>	466,488 2.3 million (SACOG, 2013)
<b>Population - Metro</b>	2.3 million (SACOG, 2013)
<b>Area (Land)</b>	98 square miles

### Programs

Fee ownership of alleys belongs to adjacent property owners to the centerline of the alley. However, the City of Sacramento owns a 20-foot easement over all alleys for use by the public (City of Sacramento, 2009). Composed of City staff, property owners, businesses, and development professionals, the Alley Activation Committee was established in 2008 with the goal to transform selected alleys in the Central City. Rather than taking a singular and unified regulatory approach across the City, the committee drafted plans for three types of alleys.

#### *Pilot Alley 1: Pedestrian First Alleys*

The first project attempted to maintain vehicular access through the alley while encouraging the use by pedestrians. A two-block stretch of Liestal Way (named Liestal Row) between 17th Street and 19th Street was improved with decorative pervious pavers, seating, potted plantings, in-pavement lighting, and ADA-compliant upgrades.

#### *Pilot Alley 2: Alley-Oriented Residential Uses*

As a provision of the City's General Plan, residential uses fronting onto alleys is encouraged to increase the residential density in the city center and to protect historic resources fronting onto the streets. The first alley-oriented development was completed in 2010 on Liestal Way between 17th Street and 18th Street. The project involved the creation of three units at the rear of an existing lot with the historic home fronting on Capitol Avenue preserved.

#### *Pilot Alley 3: Restaurant Uses*

The last pilot alley program seeks to create an alley in favor of pedestrian-oriented uses with limited vehicular access. Two projects have been proposed in Downtown that emulate Belden Place in San Francisco.

#### *Central City Alley Names*

Prior to 2011, only a handful of Sacramento's alleys had names. Alleys lacked identification and were described by the streets that they fell between. In attempt to provide a naming convention that was acceptable to public safety agencies, businesses, and residents, the City established names for all alleys that matched the City's alphabetical street organization and tied in with local history.

Pilot Alley 1 and the Central City Alley Names projects were funded by the City of Sacramento. Pilot Alley 2 and 3 will be executed and maintained by private developers.

### Survey

Liestal Row is located parallel to L Street and Capitol Avenue, between 17th Street and 18th Street. Located in the Handle District of Midtown, a neighborhood of restaurants, cafes, and bars, the alley has benefitted from the Pilot Alley 1 and 2 programs.

#### *Provide Access*

Vehicular access has been maintained to allow for passage to parking lots and alley-loaded housing units.

#### *Define the Place*

While 20-feet at its widest points, Liestal Row narrows down to 12-feet. This reduction allows for the placement of above-ground planters and several consolidated trash enclosures. The majority of utilities are located beneath the alley. Gutter drains, fire risers, and electrical panels are located on the facades facing the alley. Several surface lots interrupt the facades located along the alley. In the middle of the alley are a few businesses that front onto the alley, including a cafe and bike repair shop on the north-side and a three-unit alley-loaded

condominium building on the south-side. The alley-loaded units allow for efficient use of land that was previously used as a surface parking lot. The alley is lined with pervious pavers that include built-in lights that accentuate the alley in the evenings.

#### *Foster Neighborhood Ownership*

Small tables and chairs are located adjacent to the alley, but are limited in their placement and location as they alley is still utilized by vehicles. There are several murals painted on the walls of the sides of buildings facing the parking lot on the east-side of the alley.

#### *Encourage Multiple Uses and Functions*

The alley's location in the cultural and culinary heart of Sacramento provides for a steady stream of pedestrian traffic throughout the day and night. The alley is also the location of small festivals throughout the year that close the center of the alley for events. It's pervious pavers allow for a portion of rainwater to infiltrate the soil, reducing surges in the stormwater system. Throughout the year the alley closes for events neighborhood and City events.

**Figure 3.4: Liestal Row Figure-Ground**



Alley-fronting residences and businesses share an alley lined with pervious pavers, lighting, and planters in the cultural center of Sacramento.

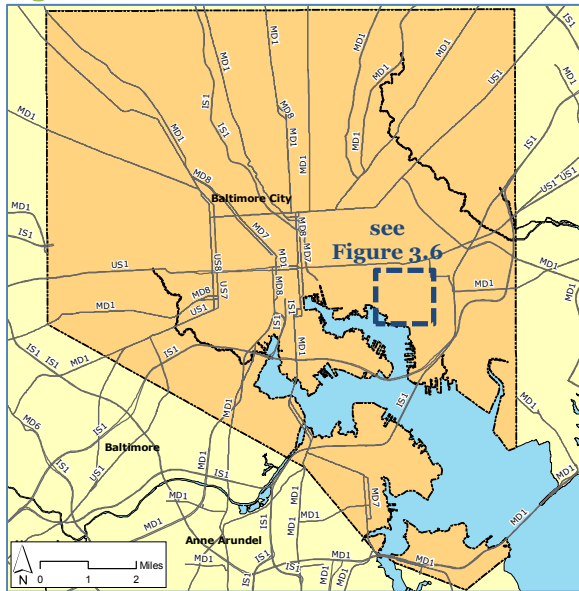
**Table 3.4: Liestal Row Survey**

<b>Identification</b>	Liestal Row; also known as Old Soul Alley (coffee shop located within alley)
<b>Neighborhood</b>	Handle District; Midtown
<b>Width</b>	20 feet
<b>Length</b>	320 feet
<b>Ownership</b>	City of Sacramento
<b>Land Uses</b>	surface parking lot on east, residential, retail, commercial service
<b>Facade</b>	continuous in center; open towards alley ends by parking lots
<b>Height</b>	3-story
<b>Projections</b>	signs; utilities
<b>Signage</b>	pole-mounted alley sign at ends of alley; business signs
<b>Lighting</b>	in-pavement lighting; street lights
<b>Furniture</b>	moveable furniture associated with restaurant; moveable planters
<b>Paving</b>	permeable pavers with concrete approach aprons
<b>Grading</b>	graded towards centerline of alley with two drainage inlets located towards center of alley
<b>Gating</b>	none
<b>Other</b>	holds small festivals; high pedestrian activity throughout day

### 3.4 Baltimore

Settled on the banks of the Chesapeake Bay in the 1700s, Baltimore was established as a trading hub between England and the Caribbean (Maryland State Archives (MSA), 2013). It has a population of 620,961, but is the center of a metropolitan area with a population of about 2.5 million (Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC), 2013)(MSA, 2013).

**Figure 3.5: Baltimore Context**



**Table 3.5: Baltimore at a Glance**

<b>Founded</b>	1729
<b>Incorporated</b>	1797
<b>Population - City</b>	620,961 (MSA, 2013)
<b>Population - Metro</b>	2.5 million (BMC, 2013)
<b>Area (Land)</b>	81 square miles

### Programs

#### *Alley Gating and Greening*

Established by Community Greens in the 2000s, the Alley Gating and Greening program sought to lease alleys back to neighborhoods to create a neighborhood space and to foster development in alleys that had surrendered to criminal activities. Each neighborhood group funds the initial application, the construction drawings, and the maintenance of the alley. Once approved, a lease agreement is executed between the City and the neighborhood. Because an easement is not established, the alley can be reopened by the City at anytime. So as to not constitute a taking, all property owners on the block must approve the closure. The initial project was championed by the Patterson Park Community Development Corporation and Community Greens for a one block stretch in the Luzerne-Glover neighborhood.

#### *Blue Alley*

Blue Water Baltimore began a new program to improve the quality of Baltimore's waterways in 2010. The main focus of the program is the replacement of impervious concrete alleys with pervious pavers. Existing infrastructure channels all runoff into a system of stormdrains which directly discharge into Baltimore Harbor. The switch allows for runoff to percolate through the alley paving, through the ground to be naturally filtered before entering the groundwater and waterways system. Funding for a pilot program was secured through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the City of Baltimore. Four alleys in the Butchers Hill and Patterson Park neighborhood have been selected for initial installation. Work commenced in 2012 and has recently been completed.

### Survey

Located in the Patterson Park neighborhood in southeast Baltimore, the Glover-Luzerne Alley was the first alley under the City's Alley Gating and Greening program.

#### *Provide Access*

East Fairmount Avenue bounds the alley to the north. Two alley entrances are located along North Glover Street on the east-side of the alley. A fourth entrance to the alley is located on the west, accessing North Luzerne Avenue, directly across from the southern access off of North Glover Street.

#### *Define the Place*

The alley is approximately 20-feet wide but appears to be wider as the rear yard fences of abutting residences encloses the alley. This is especially apparent where fences have been lowered or set back from the alley. Beyond the fences are continuous rows of attached homes which front on the the street. All four entrances into the alley are gated with access granted only to residents with keys and to public safety personnel.

#### *Foster Neighborhood Ownership*

As the alley has limited access, it has become the location of neighborhood block parties and gatherings. It functions as an additional open space, serving as an extension of the adjacent rear yards. Residents have personalized the space with brightly painted planters and walls. The alley is also furnished with tables, chairs, grills, and umbrellas. Rainwater drains along the center of the alley which is also dotted with utility poles. No formal lighting is provided within the alley, but several residents have installed lighting on their own fences and around utility poles.

### *Encourage Multiple Uses and Functions*

This alley no longer provides access to vehicles and users are limited to those with keys. Luzerne-Glover functions as a neighborhood space for those with residences that directly abut the alley. As an extension of their rear yards, the space is a playground and park utilized by the residents for playing and socializing.

### Figure 3.6: Glover-Luzerne Alley



### Table 3.6: Glover-Luzerne Alley Survey

<b>Identification</b>	Glover-Luzerne Alley
<b>Neighborhood</b>	Patterson Park
<b>Width</b>	10 feet
<b>Length</b>	475 feet
<b>Ownership</b>	City of Baltimore
<b>Land Uses</b>	exclusively residential
<b>Facade</b>	rear yards of attached townhouses
<b>Height</b>	2 – 3 stories setback from the alley due to rear yards
<b>Projections</b>	none
<b>Signage</b>	none
<b>Lighting</b>	no formal lights; impromptu lighting by residents
<b>Furniture</b>	moveable seating, tables, planters
<b>Paving</b>	concrete
<b>Grading</b>	drains to center of alley
<b>Gating</b>	4 gates; only residents and public safety has keys
<b>Other</b>	all property owners lease alley from City of Baltimore



Heavily utilized, this gated alley has been personalized by its residents with seating, planters, lights, and decorations (Harrod, 2009)



### 3.5 Austin

Austin was settled in the early 1800's as the capital of the Republic of Texas. Located on the Colorado River, Austin is the Travis County seat and Texas capital (City of Austin, 2013). It has a population of 656,562, but is the center the Austin-Roundrock metropolitan area with a population of about 1.2 million (City of Austin, 2013).

**Figure 3.7: Austin Context**



**Table 3.7: Austin at a Glance**

<b>Founded</b>	1835
<b>Incorporated</b>	1839
<b>Population - City</b>	656,562 (City of Austin, 2013)
<b>Population - Metro</b>	1.2 million (City of Austin, 2013)
<b>Area (Land)</b>	272 square miles

### Programs

#### *Green Alley*

In partnership with the various neighborhood groups and the University of Texas, the City's Public Works Department is charged with the development of a green alley program. The intent is to provide for affordable alley-facing units with community gardens, on-site stormwater treatment, and landscaping. A demonstration project is nearing completion in the Guadalupe neighborhood of the city (City of Austin, 2013).

#### *20ft WIDE*

20ft WIDE is a multi-disciplinary art exhibition in Austin's Downtown that took place over five days in the spring of 2013. Initially seen as a project to invite a discussion on the use of Downtown alleys, the exhibition has sparked a community-wide effort to reactivate alleys through temporary events (Art Alliance Austin, 2013) (Jackson, 2013) (Downtown Commission Alley Workgroup, 2013). Their pilot alley project selected Alley #111 which is located just south of the Capitol and is discussed as the case study below.

### Survey

Located in Downtown Austin, Alley #111 was the site of the 20ft WIDE art exhibition program. The alley's name is derived from the City's numerical alley identification scheme.

#### *Provide Access*

Alley #111 is bounded by 10th Street and 9th Street on the north and south and Congress Avenue and Brazos Avenue on the east and west. It is open to vehicular access.

#### *Define the Place*

Alley #111 is 20-feet in width and approximately 350-feet in length. With the exception of a large service area on the northern-side of the alley, the alley has a continuous facade, enclosed by two-story buildings on the south and three-story and a 12-story building on the north. Gutter drains, electrical panels, and fire escapes hang over the alley, with waste bins lining the edges of the alley.

#### *Foster Neighborhood Ownership*

The exhibition was the pilot project of the Alley Workgroup; a group organized by the City of Austin's Downtown Commission and composed of representatives from the Commission, city staff, Downtown businesses, and art organizations. Planning for the exhibition focused on physical improvements to the alley and activation of the alley. Grants funded the design of physical art that was to be installed on the ground and above the alley. Donations funded smaller individual art pieces, furniture, and landscaping. Activation of the alley took place over five days with the goal of attracting a diversity of interests. Over the course of the program there were vocal exhibitions, visual art installations, commuter networking events, culinary showcases, and family-oriented activities.

*Encourage Multiple Uses and Functions*

The organizers of this project sought to involve as many users as possible in their pilot installation.

**Figure 3.8: Alley #111 Figure-Ground**



**Table 3.8: Alley #111 Survey**

<b>Identification</b>	Alley #111
<b>Neighborhood</b>	Downtown
<b>Width</b>	20 feet
<b>Length</b>	350 feet
<b>Ownership</b>	City of Austin
<b>Land Uses</b>	Majority office commercial, limited amount of light industrial
<b>Facade</b>	Continuous with an opening on the southern-side
<b>Height</b>	2-story on southern-end; 3-story and 12-story on northern end
<b>Projections</b>	fire escapes; artwork during exhibition
<b>Signage</b>	none; signage placed during exhibition
<b>Lighting</b>	none; provided during exhibition
<b>Furniture</b>	none; provided during exhibition
<b>Paving</b>	concrete
<b>Grading</b>	drains to centerline; sloped to southern-end
<b>Gating</b>	none
<b>Other</b>	none; typically only utilized by abutting businesses, use was limited to pilot activation project



20ft WIDE exhibited various artforms to showcase Austin’s forgotten alleys (Garcia, 2013)

### 3.6 Lessons Learned

In Chapter 2, four design principles were identified based on an analysis of alley design elements that contribute to city form. Adding to those principles are four lessons learned from existing alleys based on the exploration of the elements that contribute to their character. While the sample examined was small and the evaluation criteria limited, they nonetheless provided information that can be applied to further our exploration of alleys.

#### *Lesson 1 - Not All Alleys are the Same*

A single typical design pattern for alleys cannot be applied to all alleys in a community. A community's alleys must be grouped into alley types based on surrounding land uses. Furthermore appropriate design features must be generated specific to each alley-type. As guidelines regarding alleys are developed, they must keep in mind activities of those using the alley consistent with Principle 1 - Provide Access and Principle 4 - Encourage Multiple Uses and Functions. Development proposals should be consistent with Principle 2 - Define the Place to ensure that a high-level of design quality is expected.

#### *Lesson 2 - Garner Community Buy-In*

Improvements made to the alley should require not only investment from the City, but from adjacent property owners, residents, and businesses. Regulatory authority over rights-of-ways generally required that municipalities take the lead in implementation of alley programs. However, funding sources came from various agencies and the community with technical assistance provided by businesses and local universities. As these alleys will eventually be largely patrolled by abutting users, neighborhood buy-in is required - consistent

with Principle 3 - Foster Neighborhood Ownership.

#### *Lesson 3 - Urban Life Can Occur in Alleys*

Alleys are an underutilized land resource that can be transformed into recreational spaces to supplement parks and open space in a developed area. The community space can further strengthen neighborhoods by addressing criminal and safety concerns through their attractive appearance and active use. This lesson is consistent with Principle 2 - Define the Place, Principle 3 - Foster Neighborhood Ownership, as well as Principle 4 - Encourage Multiple Uses, which seek to create a context-appropriate identity for the alley.

#### *Lesson 4 - Alleys Can be "Green"*

Plantings within the alley soften what can often be an austere environment. Alleys can also assist with the treatment of runoff through the choice of materials and the design of the alley. When correctly designed the alleys will reduce nonpoint-sources of pollution discharged into waterways, eliminate localized pooling and/or flooding of alleys, and require minimal maintenance. This particular use of the alley requires thoughtful engineering to ensure proper stormwater pollution reduction functions. A continuous linear system encompassing the length of the alley would provide an identifiable identity to the alley, consistent with Principle 2 - Define the Place and Principle 4 - Encourage Multiple Uses and Functions.

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## 4 The City of Vallejo and its Alleys

Chapter 4 of this report provides a second, but equally important analysis, through various mapping exercises of elements of Vallejo that contribute to its present condition. This reading of the community is important to properly contextualize identified concepts as not all design principles or lessons learned about alleys may be appropriate for Vallejo.

### 4.1 Regional Context

Located approximately 32 miles northeast of San Francisco and 57 miles southwest of Sacramento, Vallejo is the largest city in Solano County (Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments [MTC and ABAG], 2013). The city is situated on Mare Island Strait, which drains the Napa River into San Pablo Bay.

Part of the nine counties that encompass the San Francisco Bay Area, Vallejo can be argued to be either on the eastern fringes of the North Bay or the northern fringes of the East Bay. Interstate 80 generally runs in a north-south orientation and connects Vallejo to business centers in Sacramento and to San Francisco via the Carquinez Bridge. Interstate 780 runs eastward connecting Vallejo to the neighboring city of Benicia and southeastward to the East Bay across the Suisun Bay via the Benicia-Martinez Bridge.

The city's also serves as a gateway to Sonoma County to the west through State Route 37 and to Napa County to the north through State Route

### IN THIS CHAPTER

- 4.1 Regional Context
- 4.2 Historical Overview
- 4.3 Project Area
- 4.4 Existing Conditions
- 4.5 Regulatory Framework
- 4.6 Opportunities and Constraints

29. Passenger rail no longer services the city, however freight rail lines still service industrial uses on Mare Island. In addition to public bus services, the city is also serviced by a robust ferry system.

### Table 4.1: Vallejo at a Glance

<b>Founded</b>	1851
<b>Incorporated</b>	1867
<b>Population - City (2010)</b>	115,942 (MTC and ABAG, 2013)
<b>Population - Metro (2010)</b>	7.2 million (MTC and ABAG, 2013)
<b>Area (Land)</b>	30 square miles

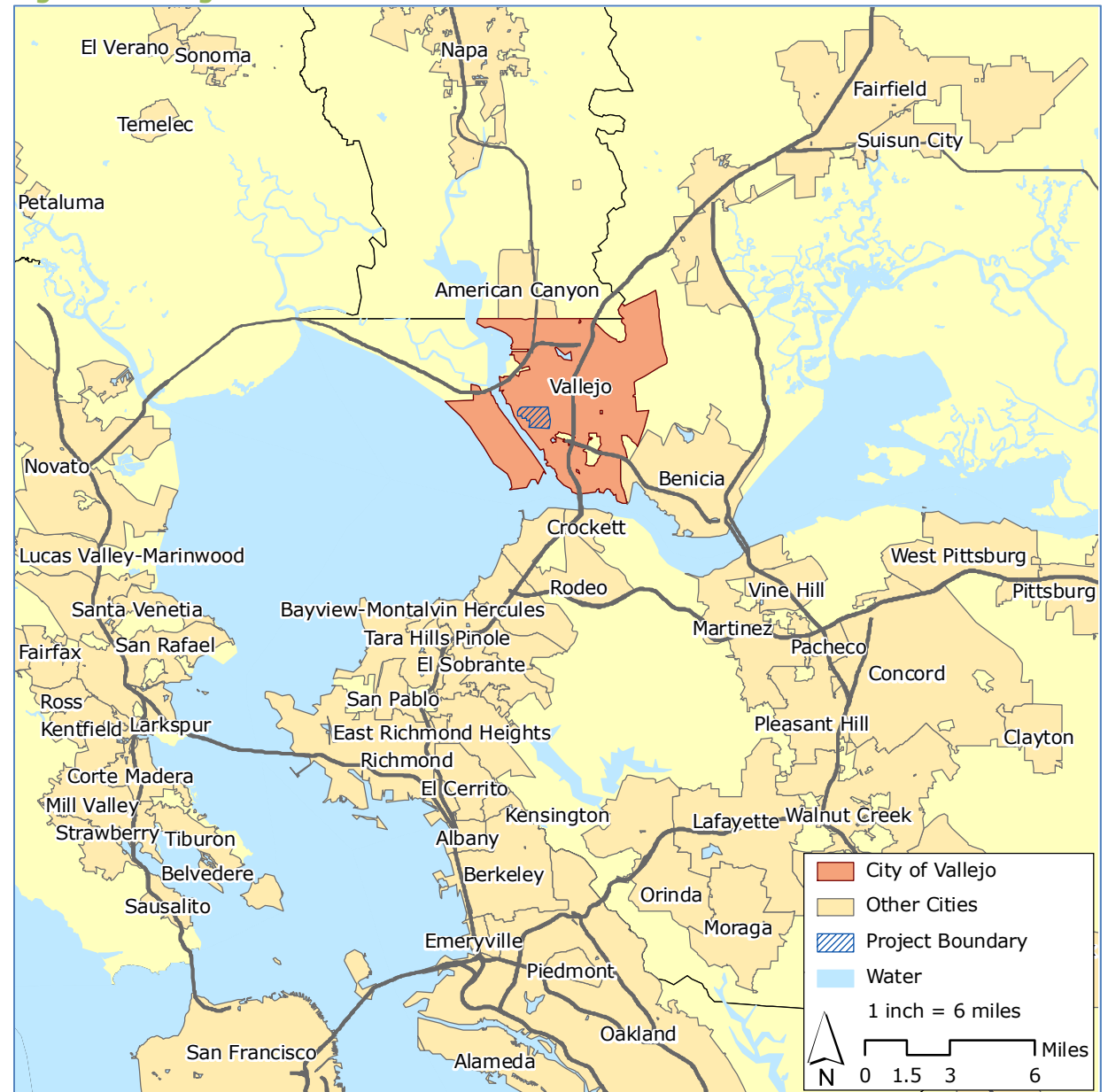


The Capitol is located on the hill on the left with Mare Island beyond, 1852 (Kern, 2004, p. 11)



### Ferry Terminal & Mare Island from Vallejo Station

### Figure 4.1: Regional Context



## 4.2 Historical Overview

The area that would become the city was originally a part of the vast Rancho Suscol, a Mexican rancho granted to General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo in the 1830s (Kern, 2004). When California gained independence from Mexico and was subsequently annexed by the United States, General Vallejo offered 156 acres of his rancho to establish a new state capitol. While he proposed that the new city be called Eureka, the new California legislature honored the offer by naming the city after him. While Vallejo was the namesake of the capitol, it was his son-in-law John Frisbie that was responsible for the lobbying, financing, and management of the development of the town (Dingler, 2007). However General Vallejo was unable to develop the capitol to the satisfaction of legislature who eventually decided to move the capitol to Sacramento in 1852 (Delaplane, 1995).

While the city's 1852 stint as capital was brief, Vallejo's new identity as a navy town would soon begin. That same year the US began searching for a new naval facility to support commerce in the newly opened Pacific. The search led to Mare Island, a low island opposite Mare Island Strait, then known as the Bay of Vallejo. Based on the island's sheltered location across the selected site of the state's new capital, the US purchased Mare Island the same year. Construction of ship-building facilities began immediately and in 1854 Commander David Farragut, of Civil War fame, opened Mare Island Naval Shipyard; the nation's first naval base on the West Coast (Kern, 2004) (Delaplane, 1996).

Vallejo was little more than a small town of 3,000 in the early 1860s. But the shipyard brought business interests into town from San

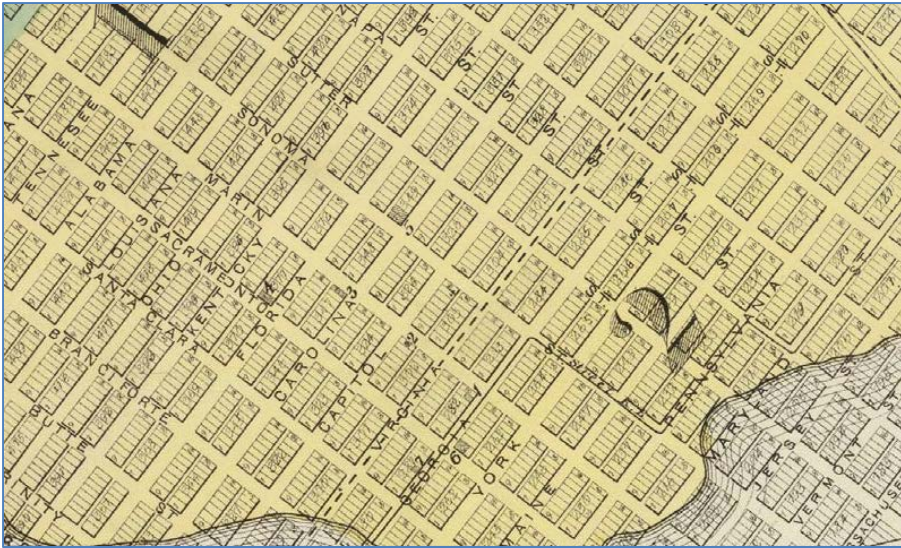
Francisco and California's hinterland. Wharves were constructed along the water, a telegraph line to Benicia and Napa was installed, and a railroad to Sacramento brought an influx of people and money and by 1866 the town's population had doubled (Munro-Fraser, 1879). The state granted a charter to incorporate the town into a city in 1868 which ushered in a boom of construction in the new city (City of Vallejo, 2004). Over the next 100 years the City of Vallejo would grow to support the Navy through the Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II. Mare Island population alone would peak to over 41,000 during World War II (City of Vallejo, 2003). Vallejo became a trade and transportation hub supporting the shipping of commodities from throughout the world to the interior of the state (Kern, 2004). Moving to seek out new opportunities in the navy town, Vallejo's immigrant population also grew. This is especially evidenced in Vallejo's large Filipino community which came as part of the Philippine diaspora in the early half of the 20th century (Orpilla, 2005).

Vallejo in the 1950s was far removed from the primitive town that the legislature rejected 100 years earlier. The city had grown-up with all the amenities required to support a navy town. Hotels, shops, offices, churches, schools, and hospitals grew in the city center alongside stately mansions. Vallejo also began to push eastward to accommodate the growing population of World War II veterans that either remained or settled in Vallejo. The city's population exploded from 26,000 in 1950 to 61,000 in 1960 (Census, 2005, 1960). But the growth left the downtown in disrepair, and like countless towns across the US, redevelopment took hold in the 1960s and 1970s. Large areas of the historic downtown and waterfront were demolished under the banner of urban renewal (City of Vallejo, 1994).

With the end of the Cold War in 1989, Mare Island's budget was gradually reduced and in 1996 the base closed after constructing 513 vessels and repairing another 1,227 which ranged from wood ships to nuclear submarines (City of Vallejo, 2003). The Navy's presence had identified the city since its inception and the base closure left the City reeling. While Vallejo's population continued to grow outward, the commercial heart of the city began to fade. Vallejo's identity as an industrious American navy town shifted to a crime-ridden central core with empty storefronts. This identity was further pushed with Vallejo's bankruptcy in 2008, which was at that time the largest municipal bankruptcy in the nation. Newsweek listed Vallejo in their "Dying Cities" rankings and Forbes.com listed the city as one of the "Most Miserable Cities" in 2011, 2012, and 2013.

With the City's exit from bankruptcy, Vallejo's appeal is drawing new investments due to its established infrastructure, centralized location, and trained workforce. The City is home to the Vallejo Center (a campus of Solano Community College), Touro University (an osteopathic medical school), and California Maritime Academy (a campus of the California State University System). Six Flags Discovery Kingdom and the regional office of the United States Forest Service also call Vallejo home. Downtown has retained a majority of its historic structures which have appealed to those from around the Bay Area seeking to own a historic home.





Survey of Vallejo with alleys platted, 1878 (Thompson and West, 1878)



Birds-eye view showing the gridded layout of the city, 1891 (Moore, 1891)



Georgia Street and Marin Street showing power lines that drove electric trains serving Vallejo and Napa, 1910s (Kern, 2004, p. 2)



Georgia Street and Marin Street crowded by customers of the City of Paris department store, 1940s (Kern, 2004, p. 107)



### 4.3 Project Area

Development patterns within the city have varied through the time. Despite the redevelopment movement of the 1960s and 1970s, Vallejo has been able to retain a large portion of its original lotting pattern. Alleys that separated the rear yards of properties on a block are still present today. These alleys are the focus of this report and guided the establishment of the boundaries of the project area. However the project area does not include all alleys within the city. In order to provide for a focused analysis an area was selected based on the following criteria:

1. All areas with existing alleys shall be considered;
2. The project area shall include a variety of residential uses (i.e. single-family and multi-family) and commercial uses (i.e. offices, retail, restaurant);
3. Project boundaries shall utilize identifiable physical landmarks; and
4. The project area shall be contiguous and shall not have any detached portions.

Using the criteria above, a project area has been selected in the historic core of Vallejo. The project area is bounded by Tennessee Street to the north, railroad tracks to the east, and Maine Street to the south. The western boundary follows Mare Island Way in the north and the zigzagging edge of the superblocks that surround the civic center to the south. The project area encompasses approximately 444 acres with 2,054 parcels over 116 blocks. There are 108 alley segments that total 8.2 miles in length.



Vallejo Station links busses to the ferry system



Stately historic homes have been preserved



City Park is a 2.5 acre park within the project area



The Empress Theatre is the center of the Arts District



Figure 4.2: Project Area

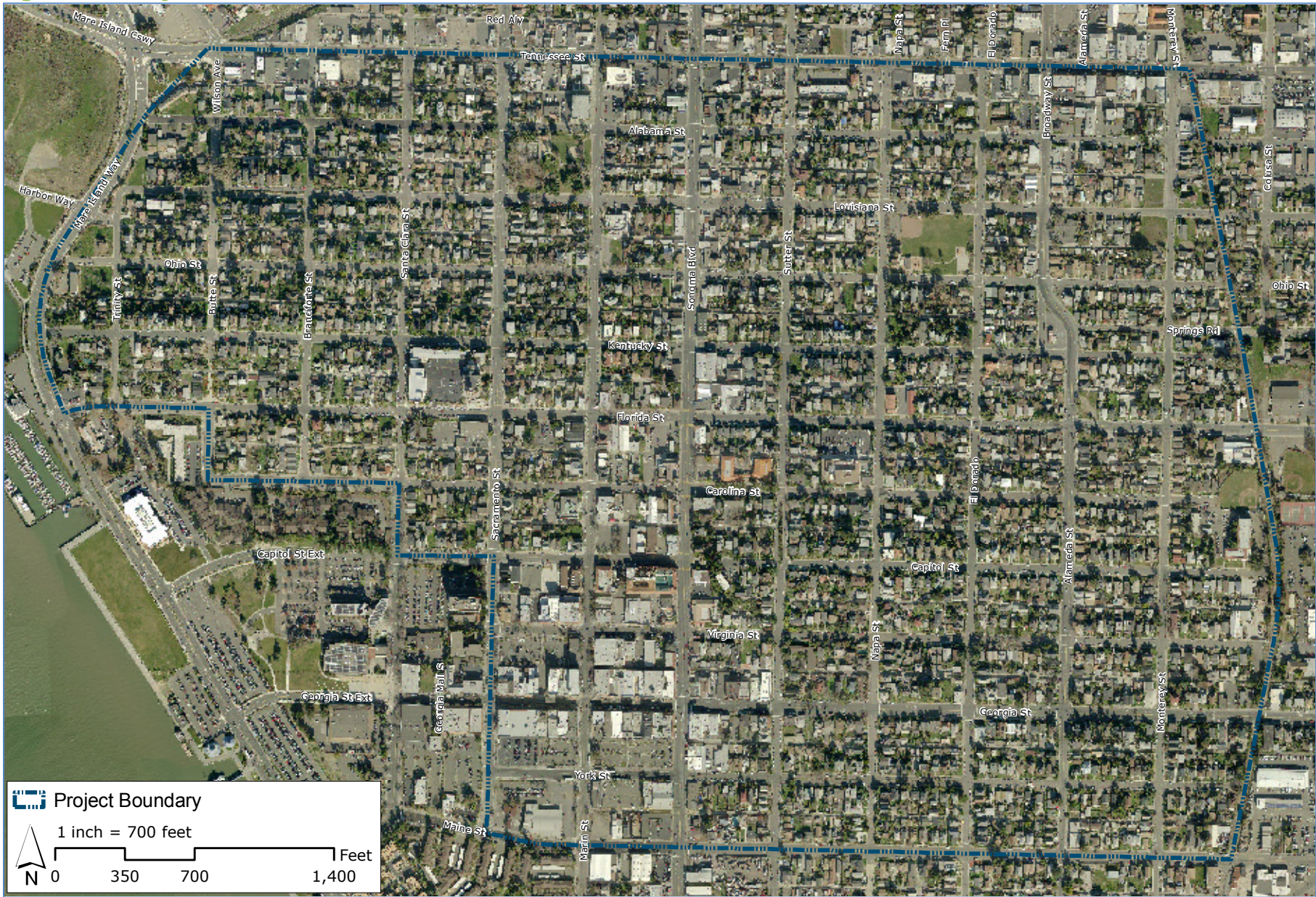
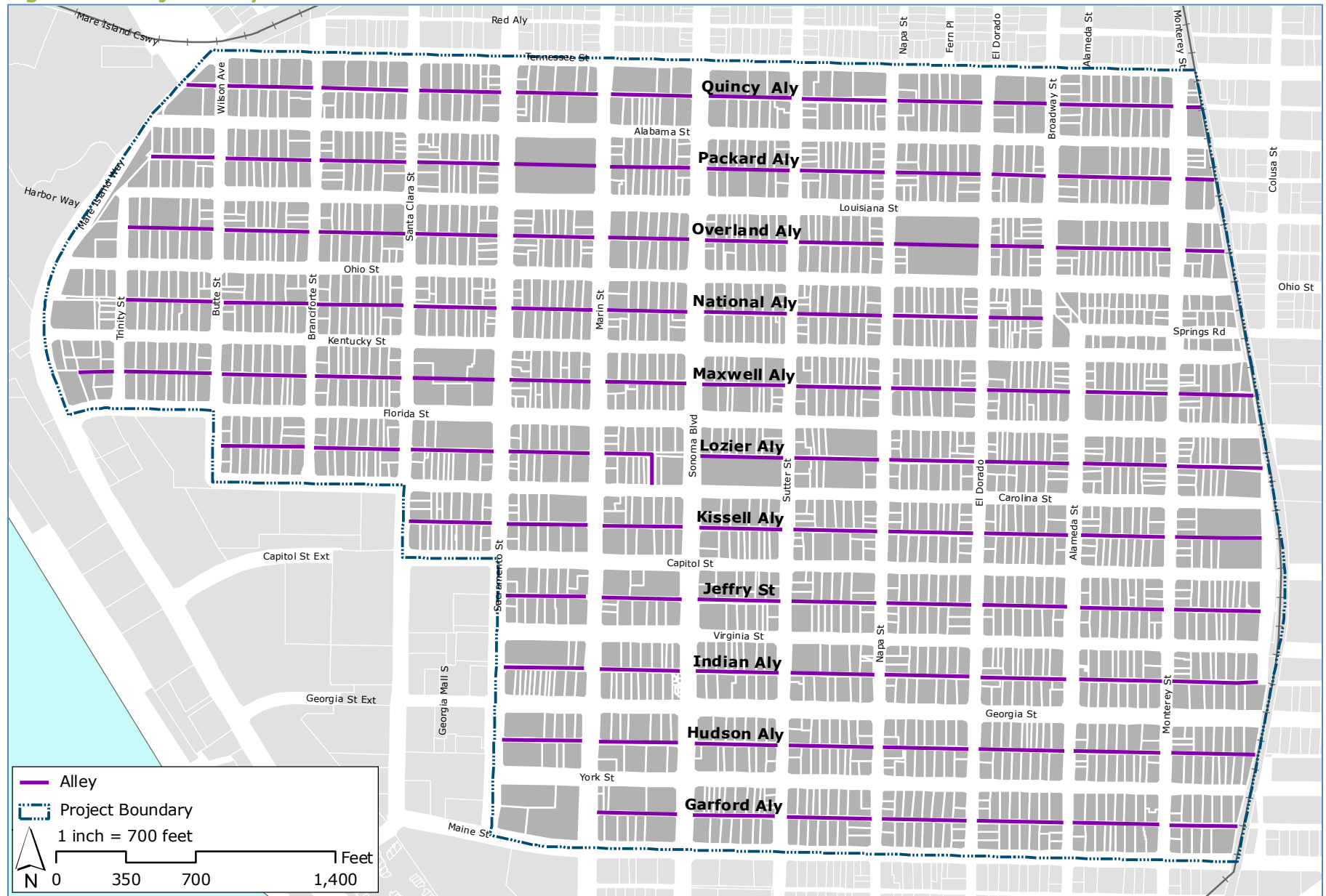




Figure 4.3 Project Alleys



## 4.4 Existing Conditions

### Land Use Context

The majority of the project area is composed of residential uses. Detached single-family residences dominate but attached single-family and multi-family residences are also present. Strip commercial uses are located along Tennessee Street to the north, as well as Sonoma Boulevard and Broadway Street which bisect the project area. The Downtown provides for a mix of commercial uses, including restaurants, a theatre, and small markets. While most civic uses are located west of the project area, a few City facilities are located Downtown. Two schools are within the project area – Lincoln Elementary and St. Vincent. Two public parks are located on the northern-portion of the area.

### Street Pattern

The roadway system is oriented in a north-south and east-west direction. Streets running east-west are named after states and streets running north-south are named after California counties. The alleys run in the east-west direction and are named after motorcycle brands (York, 2013).

State Highway 29 runs along Sonoma Boulevard and connects the area to Napa County and Sonoma County (via State Highway 37) to the north, and Sacramento and San Francisco (via Interstate 80) to the south.

Arterials and collectors are functional classifications and are identified as those streets that carry a higher volume of traffic. Arterials generally distribute traffic between highways, while collectors serve intra-city traffic. These two types of streets include the north-south

streets of Mare Island Way, Santa Clara Street, Sacramento Street, Marin Street, Broadway Street, and Alameda Street. Running east-west are Tennessee Street, Florida Street, Georgia Street, and Maine Street.

### Urban Fabric

Founded in 1851, the growth of Vallejo is not evident in the urban form of the area. Despite the hilly terrain, the project area retains essentially the same block pattern from when the City was first platted. Frisbie's initial division of the town created a block 280-feet by 400-feet. Lots 50-feet in width and 130-feet deep were separated by 20-foot alleys and 80-foot streets. The pattern was duplicated as the City expanded eastward, adhering to the pattern when the grid was shifted diagonally to the north and south of the project area.

In the 1970s, Solano County moved their facilities to a campus outside of Downtown. However the City kept many of its offices in the area as a part of the redevelopment that created the superblocks located west of the site. West of the project area are several formal open spaces along the waterfront. Two block-sized parks and two schools sites provide open space on the northern portion of the area. Strip commercial uses dominate along the project area's arterials and collectors. Commercial buildings north and east of Downtown become further spaced apart with adjacent lots utilized as surface parking. Structural setbacks from the alleys differ in residential areas and the main enclosing features are garage doors and fences.

The majority of the project area is composed of single-family detached houses that are two- to three-stories in height. Downtown consists mainly of three- to four-story buildings. The grain of the project area is varied. While the

historic block pattern remains, the inconsistent building pattern and patchwork of surface parking lots do not provide for long lengths of continuous street-fronts or alley-fronts.

The strong defining features of historic buildings are lost on more contemporary structures in the area. Both historic commercial and residential buildings provide a base, body, and crown that are accentuated with detail that are missed on buildings developed within the past 60 years. These historic structures are also oriented towards the street and are pedestrian in scale with a rhythmic pattern of windows and recessed entries.

### Historic Resources

While large blocks of the historic city core and waterfront fell to the wrecking ball as a part of the urban renewal movement, a large variety of historic properties remain within the project area. The growth of the City is reflected in the various architectural styles represented within the project area. These are best exemplified in two districts. The St. Vincent Historic District is a 134 acre area centered around the hill where St. Vincent church and school are located. The 70 acre Architectural Heritage District is located southeast of the St. Vincent Historic District and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to these districts, the City maintains an official registry of individually designated historic resources.



Figure 4.4: Amenities

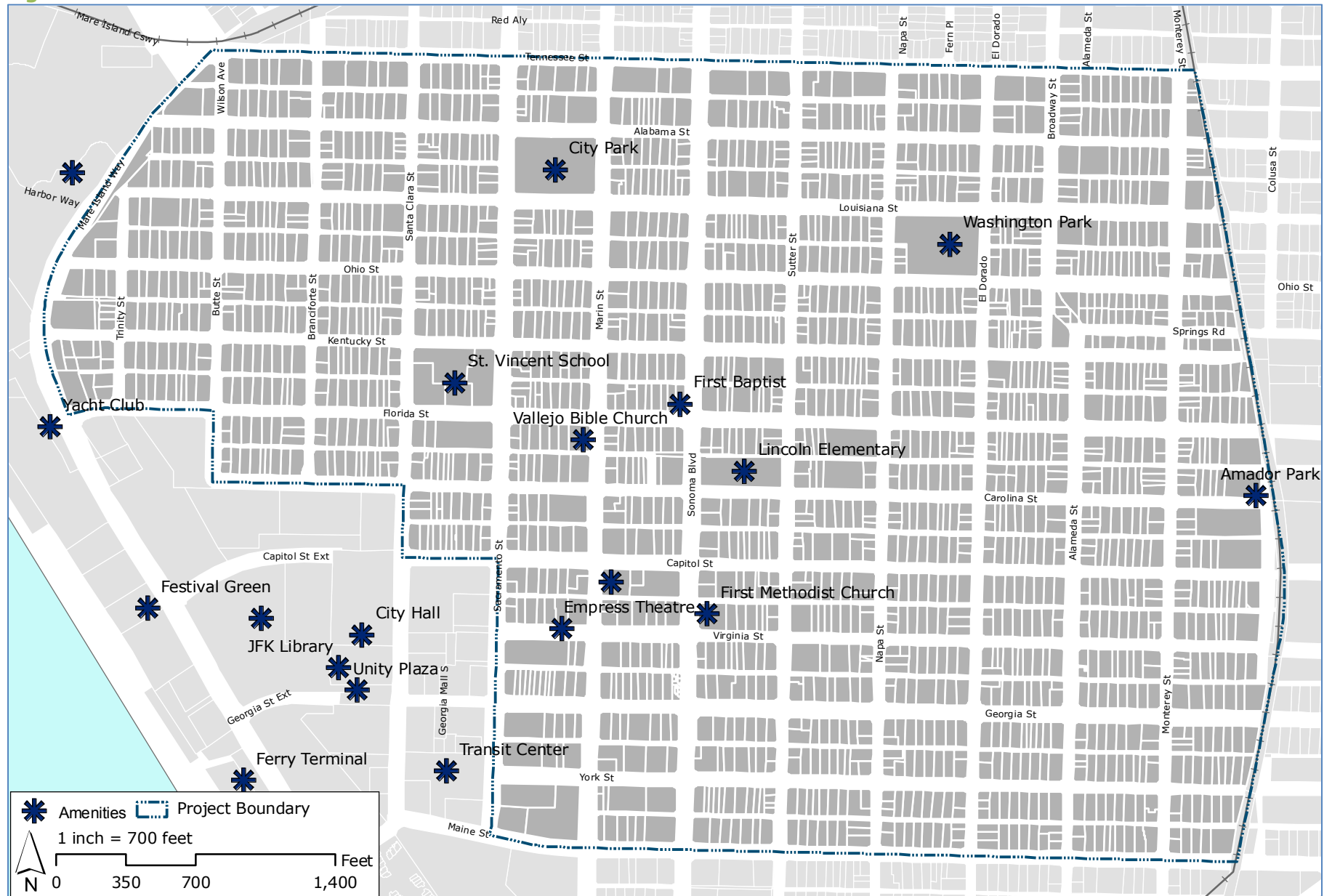


Figure 4.5: Block Figure-Ground

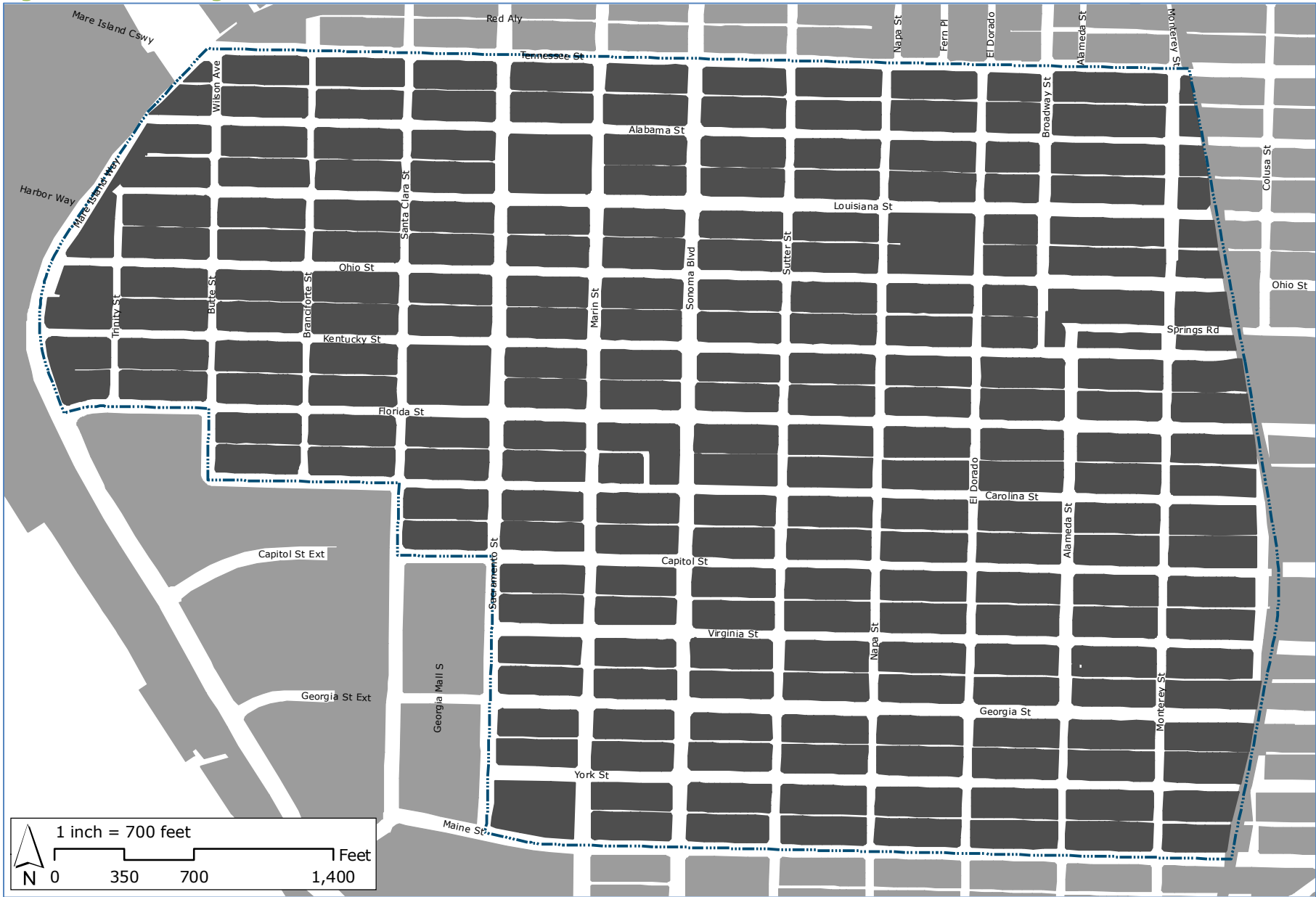
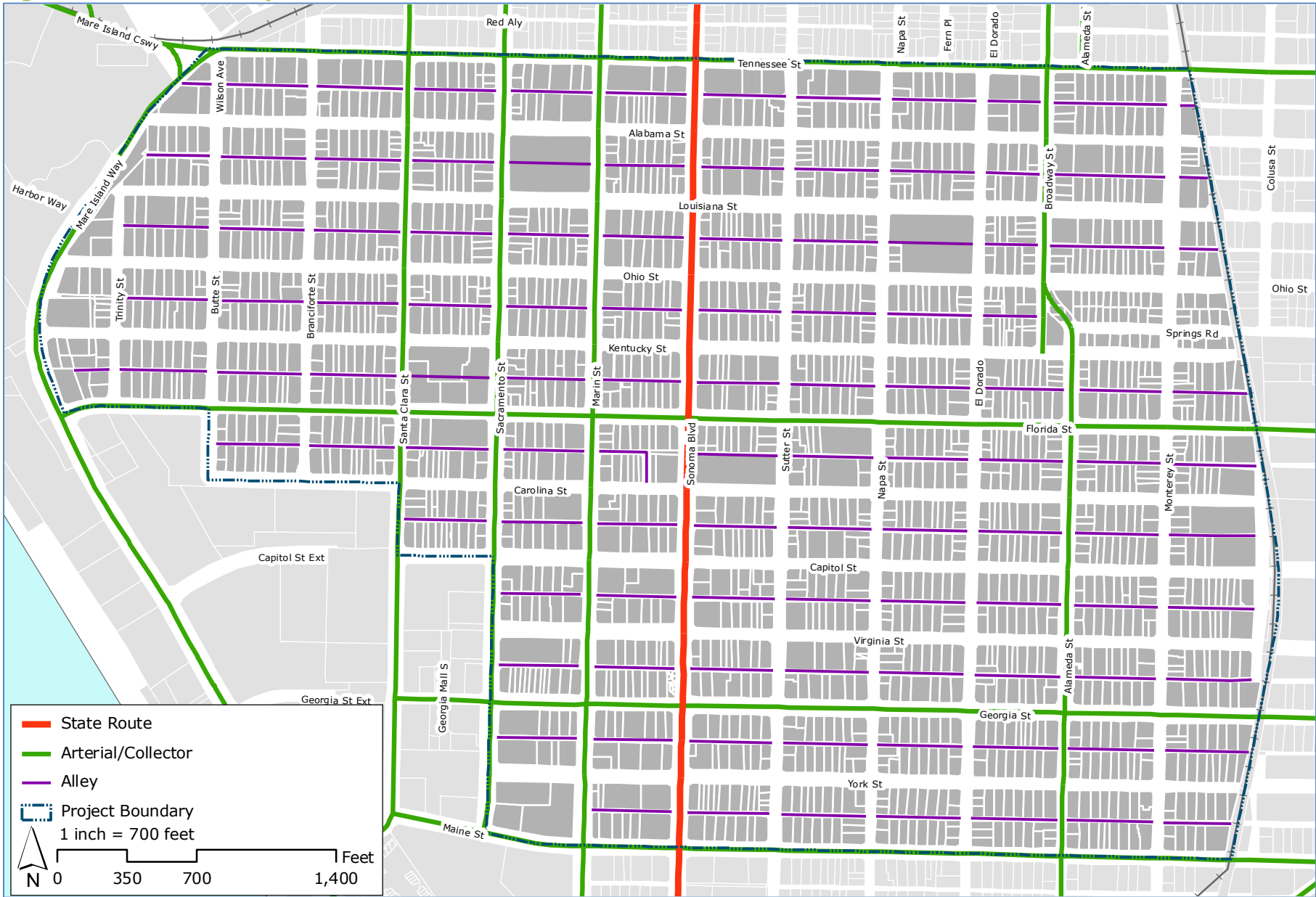


Figure 4.6: Building Figure-Ground



Figure 4.7: Circulation System



## 4.5 Regulatory Framework

### Major Policy Documents

#### *General Plan*

The General Plan, in its current format, was adopted in 1999 after a comprehensive rewrite to account for the closure and eventual reuse of the Mare Island Naval Shipyard. A required policy document by the State of California, the General Plan provides a long-range vision of how the city will physically develop. The vision is implemented through goals and policies which are the basis of decisions that implement the long-range vision. Since 1996 the General Plan has been amended only a handful of times, mainly to account for changes in the vision of Mare Island and the Downtown, as well as for State-mandated amendments. The City is in the process of a comprehensive update to the General Plan.

#### *Downtown Vallejo Specific Plan*

The Downtown Specific Plan and Design Guidelines encompasses 97 acres in Vallejo's Downtown. The Plan outlines policies and standards to guide the development of the City's historic Downtown. Goals include a significant increase in housing and commercial uses, the preservation of historic resources, transit-oriented development, and the enrichment of the community's arts scene. The Plan divides the area into five districts. The eastern portion of the Georgia Street Corridor District, Central Downtown District, and Outer Downtown District are located within the project boundary.

#### *Sonoma Boulevard Corridor Design Plan*

The Sonoma Boulevard Corridor Design Plan spans 5.5 miles along State Route 29 between State Route 37 to the north and Curtola Parkway to the south. As one of Vallejo's commercial

spines, the plan provides a framework to guide the transformation of the underperforming thoroughfare. Goals include targeted economic development within specific nodes, pedestrian and bicycle safety enhancements, and the creation of a unique identity. The Plan's Central South and South Focus areas are located within the project boundary.

#### *Zoning Ordinance*

The Zoning Ordinance is the primary tool for implementing the goals and policies outlined in the General Plan. Zoning is codified in Title 16 of the Vallejo Municipal Code and includes provisions for signage, historic preservation, and procedures to administer the ordinance. Based on General Plan land use designations, the Zoning districts establish allowable land uses and development standards. Due to the piecemeal Zoning updates that have occurred over several decades, the requirement for consistency between Zoning Ordinance and the updated General Plan, and the desire to streamline the City's permitting process, the Ordinance is also undergoing a comprehensive rewrite. An expected significant change will be the transformation of the ordinance from a traditional code to a form-based code (City of Vallejo, 2013).

#### *Historic Preservation Ordinance*

Chapter 16.38 of the Zoning Ordinance, also known as the Architectural Heritage and Historic Preservation Ordinance, establishes provisions for the review of proposed modifications to historic properties. The ordinance lists six historic designations for properties. Included in that list are two districts within the project area: the St. Vincent Historic District, and the Architectural Heritage District. A relatively recent ordinance, it was drafted as a response to the redevelopment of Downtown which brought the demolition of

several historic structures such as the Carnegie Library in the 1970s. (Vallejo Architectural Heritage Foundation, 2009).

### Other Documents

#### *Public Works Standards*

In order to maintain utilities, provide proper drainage, ADA-compliance, and fire safety, the City has established standards related to alleys (City of Vallejo, 2011).

#### *Climate Action Plan*

The Climate Action Plan is a policy document that address climate change through the reduction of greenhouse gasses, mixed-uses and transit-oriented development, conservation, and efficiency. Developments that are found to be consistent with these plans have the added benefit of a streamlined CEQA process.

#### *Vallejo Waterfront Planned Development and Design Guidelines*

While located along the western boundary of the project, this 110 acre project aims to preserve the public space along the waterfront. New commercial and residential buildings are proposed, along with a performing arts center and a hotel (City of Vallejo, 2007). All of these uses will be centered around the existing ferry terminal and Vallejo Station, a recently completed parking garage and bus transit center.

Figure 4.8: Zoning

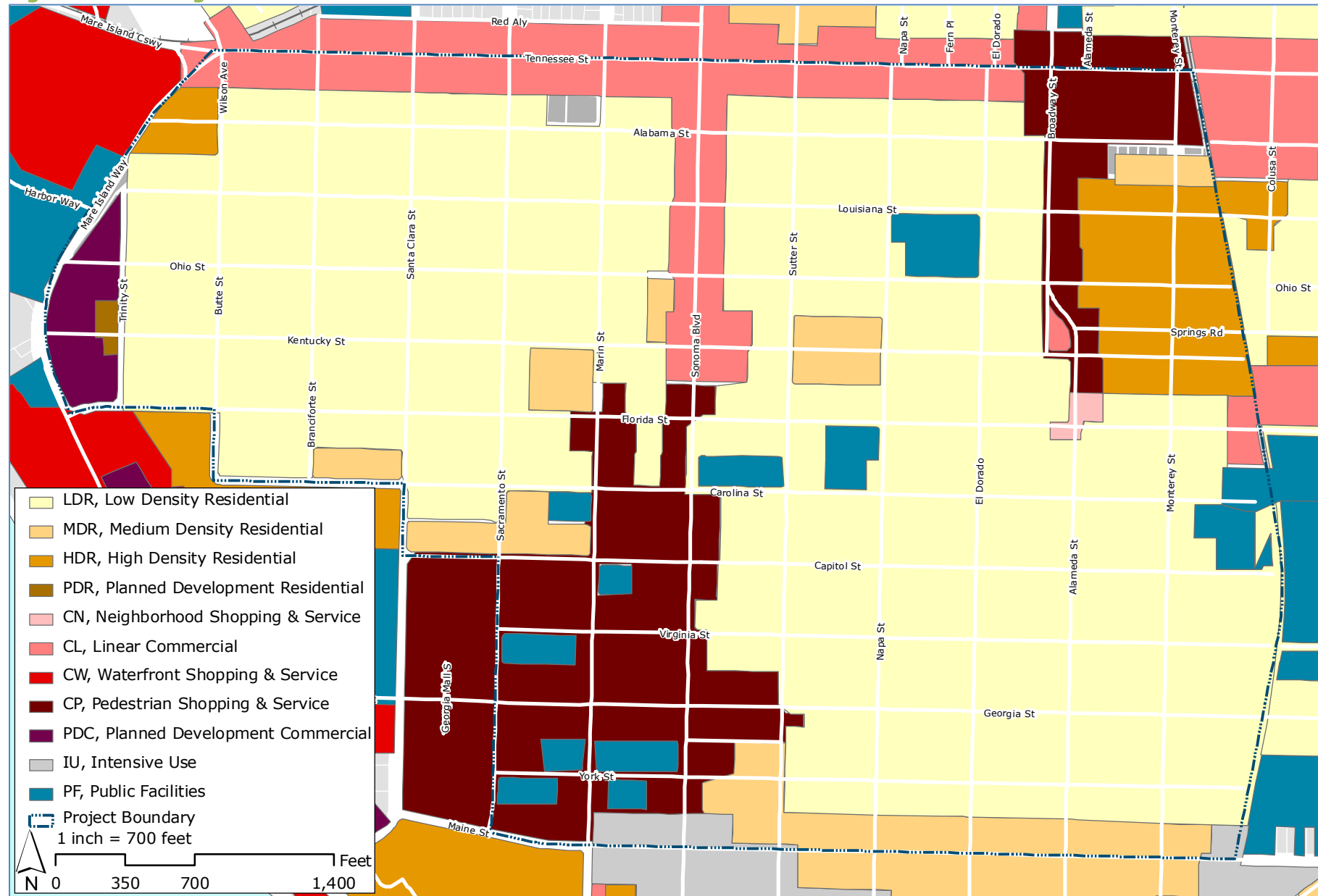
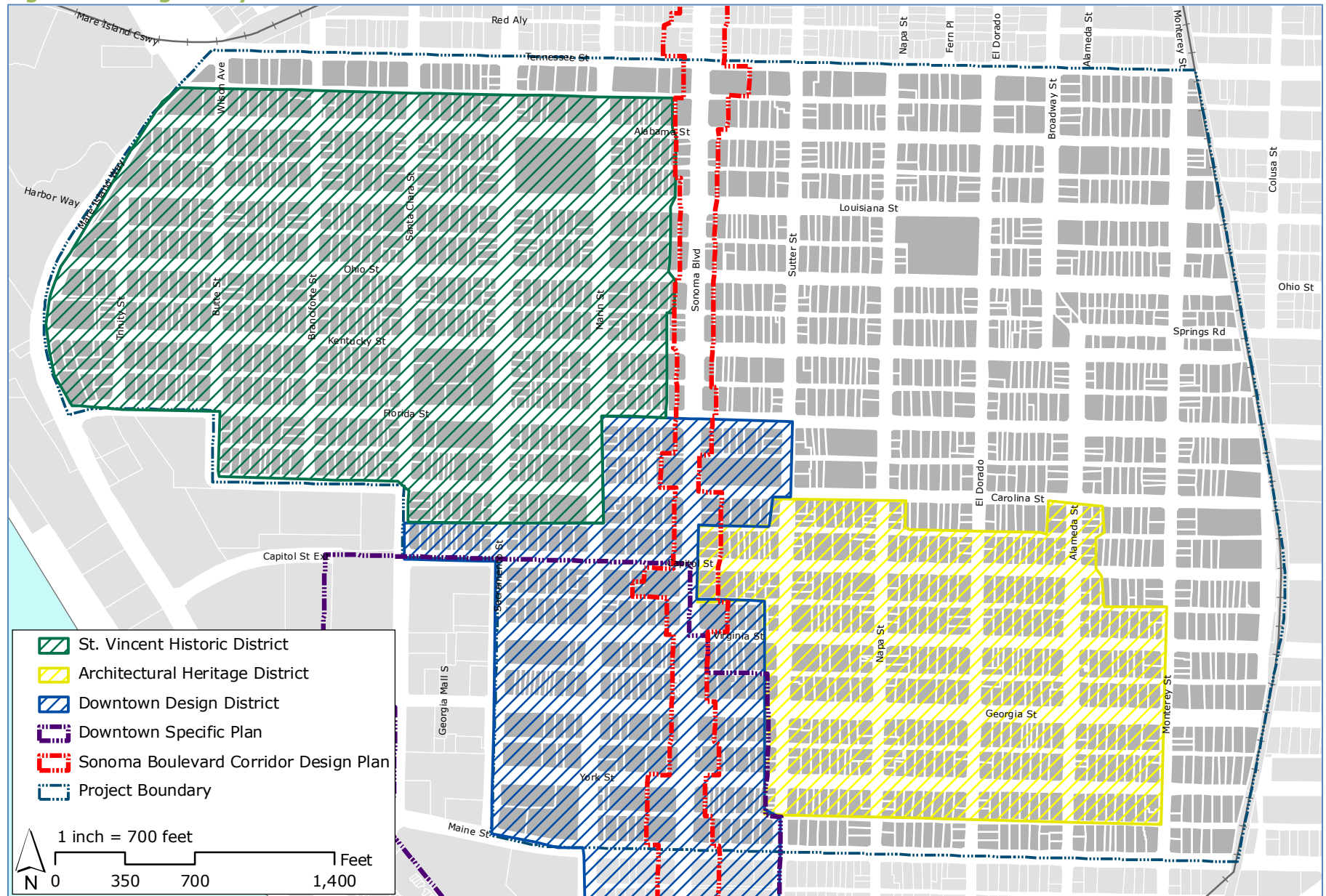




Figure 4.9: Regulatory Districts





## 4.6 Opportunities and Constraints

Out of the information-gathering process of this project, opportunities and constraints have been identified to guide the formation of strategies to transform Vallejo's alleys.

### Opportunities

#### *Intact Alley System*

While many of the alleys require a significant amount of maintenance, the lanes themselves have survived and the purchase of additional right-of-way is not required. A large amount of development potential is stored in the surface parking lots that are located throughout the area that about the alleys.

#### *Prime Location*

Alleys located within the Downtown are located within walking distance of the City's civic center, arts district, and transit hubs. This positioning allows not only for an increase in street-level activity but the influx of potential customers spending money within commercial establishments.

#### *Planned as a Center*

Recently adopted policies and regulations seek to greatly increase the amount of residents in the Downtown. A larger neighborhood base allows for a wider variety of uses to flourishing during the day and evening.

#### *Green Trend*

A trend towards the greening of communities has been extant in Vallejo for some time. Opportunities to create new open space for infill areas that incorporate green technologies are welcome.

### Constraints

#### *Local Regulation*

Although the City has relaxed many of its regulations toward restaurants to encourage a more active Downtown, the City maintains very restrictive requirements and permitting processes for outdoor dining and alcohol service. Many permits are not subsidized and require the applicant to pay the full cost of the processing of applications. A lack of adequate staffing also results in a lengthy processing timeframe.

#### *Maintenance of Functionality*

Aside from their function as a means of access to the rear of properties, alleys provide service access to residences and businesses. Waste collection and utility meters are located within the alley requiring access by both large waste collection vehicles and utility works on foot. Additionally, fire trucks must also be able to access the rear of properties and require a minimum width and vertical clearance.

#### *Insufficient Financing*

The City is still undergoing a recovery from the recent economic downturn and bankruptcy. While the passage of Measure B (a voter-approved sales tax increase) allowed for additional tax to be levied for the benefit of City services, a consistent and sufficient amount of public funding may still not be available to address the beautification and maintenance of upgraded alleys. Additionally, private property owners do not appear to have the financial means to upgrade their own buildings so the private funding of alley improvements may be a challenge.

## 5 Reinterpreting Vallejo's Alleys

### 5.1 Vision for Vallejo's Alleys

This vision for Vallejo alleys is the culmination of the overall design principles discussed in Chapter 2, the characteristics of the alleys explored in the case studies of Chapter 3, and the local conditions and regulatory framework discussed in Chapter 4. It serves as a unifying reinterpretation of Vallejo's alleys' potential for rediscovery.

**“Vallejo’s alleys serve a diversity of uses and are attractive spaces that encourage neighbors, the community, and visitors to share in the distinct cultural character of the City. As a part of the community’s network of streets, sidewalks, and open spaces, alleys are inviting and functional, linking the community and contributing to the environmental, social, and economic well-being of Vallejo.”**

### IN THIS CHAPTER

5.1 Vision for Vallejo's Alleys

5.2 Design Goals

5.3 Guidelines Orientation

5.4 Private Realm Design Guidelines

5.5 Public Realm Design Guidelines

5.6 Alley Programs

## 5.2 Design Goals

Building on the foundation of the vision statement are design goals. While these are broad statements, they serve as the driver for developing specific design guidelines. These goals are implementable actions that add up the vision statement.

### *Design Goal 1 - Neighborhood Identity*

Create alleys that enhance the neighborhood and are respectful of the residents and businesses that abut the alley. Build on the character of existing neighborhoods to create a distinct identity.

### *Design Goal 2 - Economic Vitality*

Strengthen the historic heart of Vallejo by creating destination alleys that attract residents and visitors and encourage them to patronize neighborhood businesses.

### *Design Goal 3 - Aesthetic Quality*

Foster a pedestrian environment with public improvements that provide visual interest, durability, and functionality. Maintain the rhythm and scale of the neighborhood with the use of quality materials and architectural elements.

### *Design Goal 4 - Environmental Responsibility*

Incorporate green infrastructure systems that improve stormwater drainage, minimize resource consumption, and promote a healthy lifestyle.

### *Design Goal 5 - Accessibility*

Ensure that alleys retain their function as a means of access to the rear of properties. Provide a route for residents to access garages, alley units, and accessory second units and for customers patronizing businesses.

### *Design Goal 6 - Social Vitality*

Encourage the potential for social interactions by creating a usable outdoor space. Create safe spaces for a diverse range of users.



Typical alley in the Single-Family District



Typical alley in the Shared-Use District



Typical alley in the Central Core District

## 5.3 Guidelines Orientation

The design guidelines are broken into three sections. Section 5.4 addresses the “private realm,” which includes privately-developed buildings and improvements. Section 5.5 addresses the “public realm,” which in this report is confined solely to alleys. While not design-oriented, Section 5.6 proposes several programs related to the functions of the alley that address the goals above. These three components are inter-related and their individual development shapes the alley’s function, the character, and ultimately the user’s experience.

The project area is additionally divided into three alley districts. As alleys serve a large geographical area with a diversity of uses that sometimes conflict, guidelines for an alley Downtown may not be appropriate for an alley surrounded by single-family homes. These districts are further discussed below and are illustrated. Each guidelines is then tagged to the district or districts where they should be applied.

### *Single-Family District*

Alleys in this district are located in an area that is exclusively residential and function mainly as automobile access to homes. The singular land use and low development density results in a low volume of vehicular traffic and are used as paths for pedestrians from their homes to neighborhood destinations. Alleys in this district may serve as neighborhood open space, an extension of rear yards. In appropriate locations where vehicular access is not required, the gating of the alley may be considered.

### *Shared-Use District*

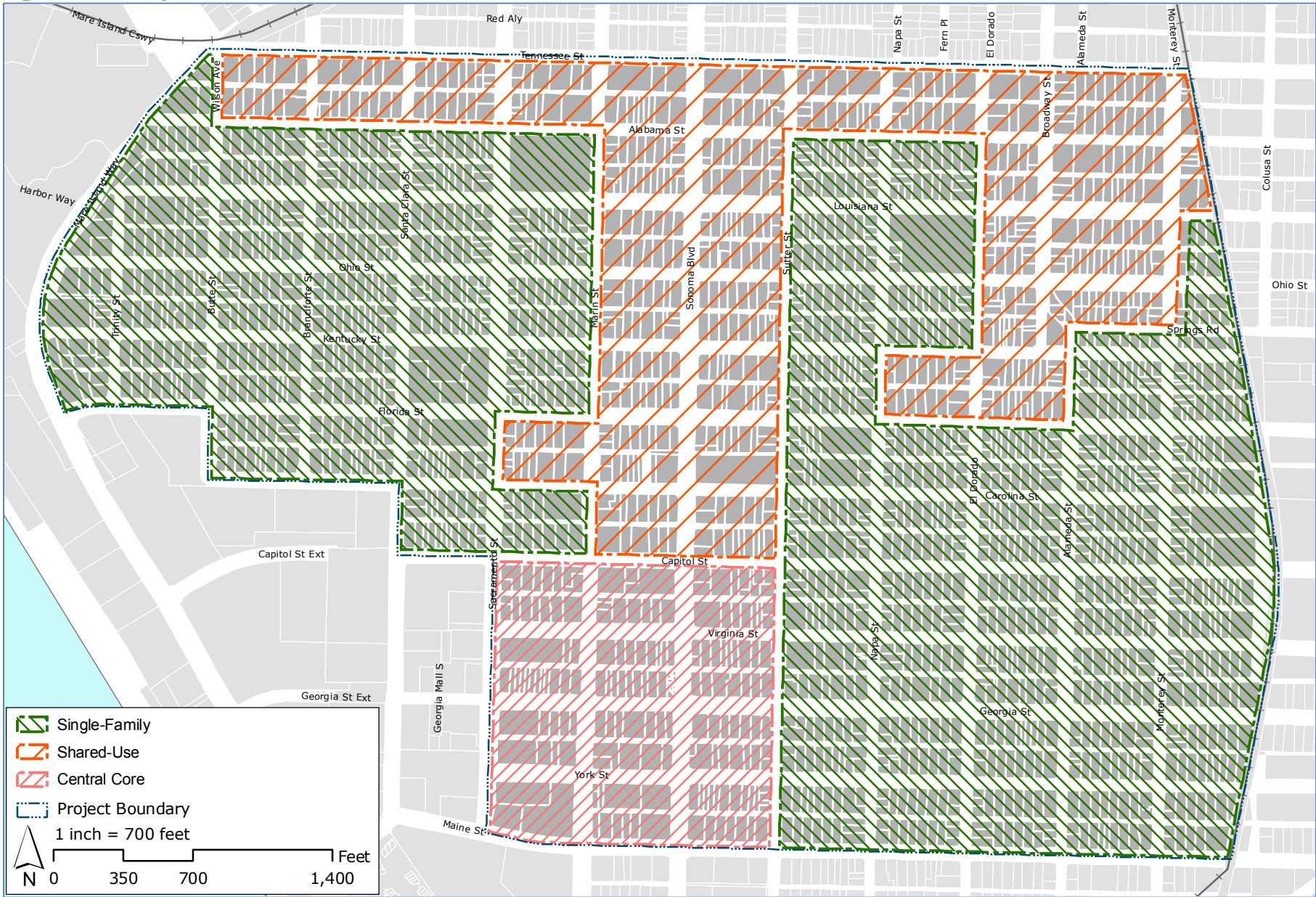
Alleys in this district are located on blocks that include both commercial uses and residential

uses and are located near arterial and collector streets. As opposed to residents of the block, commercial tenants draw users from the greater community. These users arrive by car which result in a higher volume of vehicular traffic. Commercial improvements should be sensitive to potential negative impacts that may be created that affect residential properties sharing the alley.

### *Central Core District*

Alleys within this district are located in the heart of Vallejo’s historic Downtown. They primarily serve office, restaurant, retail, and civic uses. Their location in the Downtown, proximity to regional transit hubs, increased residential density, and large variety of allowable uses provide potential for these alleys to be a destination to users outside the neighborhood.

Figure 5.1 Alley Districts





## 5.4 Private Realm Design Guidelines

### A. Site Layout and Building Design

Orienting uses towards the alley creates a feeling of vibrancy and reduces potential for criminal activity. Setbacks from the alley should respond to the neighborhood.

A1. Orient buildings so that facades and pedestrian entrances face the alley in addition to streets and plazas.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

A2. Encourage rear and side facades that are visible from the public realm to be pleasant and inviting. These facades should have the same level of trim and finish as street-facing facades.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

A3. Avoid large uninterrupted expanses of wall surfaces.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

A4. Ensure that buildings are designed with references to a particular style or period and use materials consistent with that style or period. New developments should not however imitate historic styles but should complement them.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

A5. Locate ground-floor commercial uses that encourage pedestrian activity in the alley.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

A6. Encourage new development to reflect the parcel widths that characterize the Downtown, with sensitivity to historic building sizes and storefronts.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
		X

A7. Strengthen the rhythm of alley facades by ensuring a consistent setback and continuous facades patterns.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

A8. Reduce potential for criminal activity by discouraging cutouts or openings that are not visible from the ends of the alley.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

A9. Require the placement of fencing along rear property lines to provide a continuous enclosure of the alley and to prevent criminal activity by providing spaces that are not visible from the ends of the alley.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X		

A10. Allow for awnings or overhangs to provide overhead protection for pedestrians and to highlight alley entrances. Awnings should complement the overall alley facades.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

A11. Ensure that the alley network remains intact by preventing the abandonment for a singular private use of an alley.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X



Alley-fronting units make efficient use of rear yards while still providing parking for residents. Active uses also discourage criminal activity.



Building facades provide a continuous enclosure of the space but are punctuated with entrances that face the alley. Cut-outs in the façade can allow for private courtyards to be created that are set back from the alley.

## B. Landscape and Lighting

Plantings provide for an inviting pedestrian atmosphere and can soften austere facades. Adequate lighting discourages crime and encourages pedestrian use. Lighting fixtures should be attractive and provide for an inviting ambiance.

B1. When they do not conflict with the structural integrity of the building, access to utilities, and public safety systems, encourage the use of green walls to soften facades and to add vegetation to alleys.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

B2. Ensure that alley entrances are adequate-lit with light fixtures that complement the architectural style of the building.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

B3. Avoid washing the rear facades with light to reduce unnecessary glare that only flattens the appearance of the facade.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

B4. Unique materials, such as masonry, can be accentuated by using lighting that grazes the facade to highlight their texture.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
		X

B5. Lighting should be downward-oriented or shielded to prevent glare onto residential properties.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	



Vegetated wall systems add greenery to alleys that may otherwise be austere (Manuguf, 2012)



Reinforce the pedestrian scale with signage that is high-quality and finely detailed

## C. Signage

Signage is important not just for business identification, but for contributing to the character of the alley.

C1. Encourage the use of suspended signs that are mounted perpendicular to the wall and are scaled for pedestrians.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

C2. Signs on awnings should be on the valances and placement on the sloping portion of the awning should be avoided.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

C3. Require that all electrical components be placed behind the wall.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

C4. Prohibit interior illuminated plastic panel faces with sheet metal enclosures.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X



## 5.5 Public Realm Design Guidelines

### A. Paving

As public right-of-way, the paving and maintenance of alleys falls to the City. Paving should be chosen not only based on pattern and style, but their ability to reduce environmental impacts, reduce ongoing maintenance, and their ability to support the functions of the alley.

A1. Consider the use of special paving materials, colors, and/or patterns to differentiate the alley from the periphery streets and sidewalks. The change in materials should provide for an attractive pedestrian environment and lend an identity to the alley.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

A2. Impervious paving should be avoided to reduce associated stormwater pollution. Encourage the use of pervious pavement, permeable pavers, grid pavers, and or strip paving where appropriate.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

A3. Explore on-site water treatment through the use of drainage channels located within the alley.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

A4. Encourage the use of high-albedo paving to reduce the heat absorbed by the pavement and reduce the heat-island effect.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

A5. Explore the use of recycled construction materials, potentially from existing street repair projects, to reduce the amount of new material utilized when rehabilitating an alley.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

A6. Ensure that the design and installation of paving satisfies the bearing loads required by utility vehicles such as waste collection trucks and public safety vehicles such as fire trucks.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

A7. Ensure that the design and installation of paving is completed using quality materials and practices with low-maintenance needs and a long-life cycle in-mind.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X



Pervious paving differentiates the alley from the street

## B. Furniture

Furniture provides convenience for users and is a way to encourage the public use of the alley. Moveable tables and chairs allow for use of the space by restaurants while allowing for deliveries and pickups in mornings and evening. Furniture also includes waste receptacles, bicycle racks, bollards, and public art.

**B1. Match new installations to current fixture specifications in the Downtown Specific Plan and Sonoma Boulevard Design Corridor Plan**

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

**B2. Encourage the use of quality and attractive furniture by businesses utilizing the alley.**

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

**B3. Ensure that bicycle racks are placed in convenient locations within the alley.**

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

B4. Waste receptacles placed within the alley should be screened. Screenings should be consistent with the building architecture in form, material, and detail.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

B5. Property owners and/or tenants are encouraged to consolidate collection areas to provide for efficient service and to reduce encroachments into the alley. To the extent possible, these areas should be located away from public pathways and public gathering places to minimize views and offensive odors.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

B6. Encourage the placement of public art to be installed within the alley. Non-historic facades provide a canvas that can bolster the local art community.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X



Atractive enclosures screen unsightly waste receptacles and can be consolidated to reduce encroachments into the alley.



New developments can incorporate waste receptacle rooms into their design, reducing clutter of the alley. Utilities can also be grouped together to allow for efficient access.



## C. Landscape and Lighting

Plantings provide for an inviting pedestrian atmosphere and can soften austere facades. Adequate lighting discourages crime and encourage pedestrian use. Lighting fixtures should be attractive and provide for an inviting ambiance.

C1. Landscaping should incorporate plants, shrubs, and trees native to California. These species require less maintenance and watering that those from other climates. Additionally the impact of invasive species is reduced with local plant selection.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

C2. Lighting should be downward-oriented or shielded to prevent glare onto residential properties. High-pressure sodium or metal halide lights should be avoided.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

C3. Match new installations to current lighting fixture specifications in the Downtown Specific Plan and Sonoma Boulevard Design Corridor Plan.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

C4. Encourage the use of lighting that employs low-consumption technologies to reduce the use of electricity.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

C5. Consider in-pavement lighting within destination alleys to create an identifiable place.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
	X	X

C6. Canopy lighting or decorative lighting that drapes across the alley are encouraged to reduce the scale of surrounding buildings. Lighting should be placed at a minimum clearance of 14-feet to allow for service by utility and public safety vehicles.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
		X



Low-powered, in-pavement lighting can highlight the alley as a pedestrian path



When space allows, planters can be used to buffer from vehicles using the alley



Canopy lights accent and define the alley (Wodtke, 2012)

D. Signage

Signage assists users with wayfinding and should be designed for pedestrians and vehicles.

D1. Consider the placement of pole-mounted signs that are of a different sign-type than street name signs to identify

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	

D2. Match new installations to current sign fixture specifications in the Downtown Specific Plan and Sonoma Boulevard Design Corridor Plan. Consider the placement of building-mounted signs to identify alleys. Explore a alley name sign-type that is different than the street name signs.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
		X



Simple signage identifies alleys and assists in navigation



Distinctive signage adds to the identity of alleys (Grandmont, 2012)



## 5.6 Alley Programs

### A. Festival Space

A1. Consider a process to allow for the use of alleys as an event space for festivals. Alleys can be an alternative for intimate festivals that do not require the closing of large streets, parks, or plazas.

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X	X	X

### B. Gating

B1. Consider a process to allow for the gating of alleys in locations where vehicular access is no longer required. These spaces can be used as an extension of rear yards, adding recreational space to an area lacking in open space

Single-Family	Shared-Use	Central Core
X		



People attending festivals activate alleys  
(International Sustainability Institute, 2013)



Where vehicular access is no longer required, alleys can be returned to the neighborhood as open space  
(Ashoka, 2013)

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## IN THIS CHAPTER

- 6.1 Planning Context
- 6.2 Implementation Strategies
- 6.3 Regulatory Review Process
- 6.3 Financing Strategies
- 6.4 Concluding Remarks

# 6 Implementation

## 6.1 Planning Context

The City of Vallejo's Charter requires regulations be consistent with the General Plan. The proposed guidelines are consistent with the following General Plan goals and policies:

### *Urban Design Goal 1*

To establish a strong city identity.

### *Urban Design Goal 2*

To have within each neighborhood an image, sense of purpose, and means of orientation.

### *Urban Design Goal 2 - Policy 1*

Each neighborhood should have variation in textures of development through variation in dwelling types, in intensities of development, and the patterning of uses and open spaces.

### *Commercial Development Goal 2 - Policy 3*

Promote the development of pedestrian-oriented environment by making the routes for pedestrians as pleasant as possible including mid-block walkways, landscaping, benches, and rehabilitation of buildings.

### *Commercial Development Goal 6 - Policy 4*

Access to businesses on strip commercial streets should be off alleys wherever possible to reduce the number of conflicts with through-traffic. Driveways serving parking lots should be shared to reduce the overall number of driveways.

### *Non-Motorized Transportation Goal 2 - Policy 1*

Provide wide sidewalks, plazas, street furniture, street trees, and arcades in intensive shopping



areas to increase pedestrian movement and comfort.

### *Other Services Goal - Policy 1*

Encourage infilling; that is, development within the urban area already served by sewer, drainage and water lines, and streets.

### *Other Services Goal - Policy 6b*

Subdivision designs should be reviewed to minimize the amount of permeable surface.

### *Other Services Goal - Policy 8c*

Street lighting should be low energy consumptive and agreeable to neighborhood character. Mid-block lighting should be reduced where safe to conserve energy and lower lighting costs.

### *Other Services Goal - Policy 11d*

Provide street numbers on alleys to allow rapid identification. Encourage the use of lighted house numbers.

### *Air Quality Goal 1 - Policy 1*

Develop a more balanced transportation system in Vallejo that provides opportunities for non-auto travel through promotion of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit modes of travel.

### *Air Quality Goal 1 - Policy 4*

Promote the use of trees and plants in landscaping to reduce air pollutant levels.

### *Air Quality Goal 2 - Policy 1*

Promote high-density development and infill development in those portions of Vallejo served by transit.

## 6.2 Implementation Strategies

Implementing the proposed alley design guidelines requires the adoption of amendments to City policies and regulations. In order to involve the public, a community-based planning process is encouraged to engage property owners, business owners, residents, City staff, and appointed and elected officials. Recommended “next steps” may include:

### *Exploratory Committee*

Similar to efforts in Sacramento and Baltimore, a committee could be formed and tasked with creating protocols and implementation plans for an alley program, as well as identifying potential pilot projects. This body should be composed of community stakeholders as well as City of Vallejo staff members.

### *Funding Sources*

Funding source should be sought that will pay for the development of plans, the creation of pilot projects, the evaluation of those projects, and the eventual full implementation of plans. The identification of potential funding sources are discussed later in this chapter.

### *Pilot Alleys*

As funding and existing regulations permit, construct pilot projects. Once these projects are constructed an analysis of their benefits and impacts should be performed. Lessons learned should be incorporated into any comprehensive guidelines or standards that are to be adopted by the City.

### *Regulation Development*

Ideas drafted by the committee must then be “grounded” against existing regulations to identify where amendments to regulations must

occur to implement the plans. Vallejo’s Planning, Building, Development Engineering, and Fire Prevention Divisions should be consulted as those divisions must draft the amendments, implement processes, and administer the policies and regulations.

## 6.3 Regulatory Review Process

After the development of policies, guidelines, and regulations pertaining to alleys, a strong legal foundation to allow for their implementation is required. At minimum, the following policy and regulatory documents may need to be amended:

- General Plan
- Downtown Specific Plan and Design Guidelines
- Sonoma Boulevard Corridor Design Plan
- Zoning Ordinance
- Historic Preservation Ordinance
- Public Works Standard Specifications
- Fire Department Standards

As a part of Vallejo's robust public review process, public hearings in front of the following boards and commissions would be required prior to review by the City Council. These boards and commissions serve as an advisory role in the adoption of policies and ordinances, but also take on an administrative and quasi-judicial functions in reviewing individual projects or issues that may come before them.

- Architectural Heritage and Landmarks Commission
- Beautification and Design Review Board
- Economic Vitality Commission
- Planning Commission

- Vallejo Tourism Business Improvement District Board

Vallejo is served by three special districts that are separate legal entities from the City that must also be consulted.

### *Greater Vallejo Recreation District*

The Greater Vallejo Recreation District (GVRD) is an Independent Special Service District created in 1944 by local voters. GVRD is tasked with providing recreation facilities and activities to the City of Vallejo. The District manages parks, pools, community centers, and open space areas (GVRD, 2013).

### *Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District*

The Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District (VSFCD) was created by the State in 1952 as an Independent Special Service District. VSFCD manages the City's sanitary sewer system as well as the stormdrain system and flood protection systems. The District also administers several programs to ensure that reduce pollutant discharge into area waterways (VSFCD, 2013).

### *Vallejo City Unified School District*

The Vallejo City Unified School District (VCUSD) provides public school education through 15 elementary schools, one charter school, three middle schools, two high schools, a continuation school, a day school, independent study/home study school, and an adult school (VCUSD, 2013). While VCUSD jurisdiction does not extend off school property, the District should be included as many schools back-on to alleys which often serve as routes to schools.

## 6.4 Financing Strategies

There are several sources that may be available to fund the further exploration and implementation of these guidelines. They include public sources, project-funded sources, and new taxes.

### *General Fund*

An appropriation from the General Fund could be approved to allow for the further exploration and development of a program directly related to alleys. Once a program has been established, funds could be appropriated to implement alley programs. Additionally, incremental sales tax or property tax revenues in the Downtown area could be set aside and dedicated for specific use of alley reintegration in that area.

### *Federal and State Grants*

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program provides Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds to support low-income development. These HUD funds could be used to rehabilitate existing neighborhoods, improve infrastructure, and assist in the development of affordable housing. The Vallejo Waterfront Planned Development Master Plan and Design Guidelines and Downtown Vallejo Downtown Specific Plan have been identified by MTC as one of the Bay Area's Priority Development Areas (PDA). PDAs are infill areas where existing plans provide for housing and neighborhood services around transit hubs. This designation allows for technical assistance as well as funds and grants through MTC.

### *Measure B*

In 2012, the citizens of Vallejo voted to levy an additional sales tax. A portion of these funds are available to fund one-time projects proposed by

Vallejo residents. Through a unique Participatory Budget process, programs are proposed, identified, and recommended for funding to the City Council. As a one-time money source, Measure B funds could be used to fund the development of an alley plan.

### *Benefit Zones*

Property Business Improvement Districts can be used to finance programs, infrastructure, and maintenance of commercial areas. Businesses located within a benefit zone pay an additional tax on their business licensees. A portion of these funds could be directed to the physical implementation of an alley plan. The City has an existing district, established as the Vallejo Tourism Business Improvement District. The City has also legislated the creation of Community Benefit Districts. These districts allow for residents to impose a tax on their properties to fund neighborhood improvements.

### *Development Impact Fee*

An impact fee special to alleys could be adopted. A study would have to be completed that demonstrates a nexus between the alley improvements that are programmed and the calculated fee.

### *Development Agreements*

As the City has large amounts of under-developed land within the Downtown, Vallejo could negotiate for the funding or actual completion of alley programs as individual private development projects are proposed.

### *Capital Improvement Program*

Once an alley program is adopted, selected alley programs can be incorporated into Vallejo's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). CIP's are five-year programs in public infrastructure that pool federal, state, regional, and local funds.

### *Special Districts*

Partnering opportunities with GVRD, VSFCD, and VCUSD should be explored. Several goals of alley reintegration projects match-up with the mission of these districts. Jointly pursuing grants with shared-costs requirements may maximize the potential to be awarded funds.

## 6.5 Concluding Remarks

These proposed guidelines to reintegrate alleys is only a starting point in a community-wide discussion on their future use. Any alley program implemented by the City should reflect the desires of the community. As planners we are tasked with bringing forward the latest processes, tools, and practices that support those desires. But the educational and professional background we have allows us, and requires us, to bring forward ideas that are new to the community. This targeted and single-topic exploration of a small feature of the built environment isn't the panacea to Vallejo's re-emergence. But perhaps in the same manner that alleys have seen a rise in esteem, a reinterpretation of Vallejo alleys will see the same for the City.

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