



ENVISION CONTRA COSTA 2040

El Sobrante Community Meeting: Issues and Vision

Elks Lodge #1251
3931 San Pablo Dam Road, El Sobrante, CA 94803
Thursday, May 30th, 2019

A community meeting for residents of El Sobrante as part of Envision Contra Costa 2040 took place on Thursday, May 30, 2019, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at Elks Lodge #1251. The purpose of this workshop was to begin establishing a vision for the future of this community and identify issues the General Plan should address to achieve that vision. County staff and consultants facilitated the workshop and around 60 residents attended and participated. After a presentation about the Envision Contra Costa 2040 process, community members worked in small groups discussing questions regarding the future of El Sobrante. Responses to each question are summarized below.

Given the large number of participants, we heard a diversity of opinions at this workshop. The comments below were raised by one or more individuals; each comment may not necessarily represent the views of all who attended. Detailed notes from the small group discussions, as well as comment cards and letters submitted at the workshop, are attached to this summary.

Question 1: What do you like most about El Sobrante? What would you like to see supported, preserved, or enhanced as part of this planning effort?

- Maintain and enhance the “small town” feel of El Sobrante and preserve it as an unincorporated community.
- Support El Sobrante’s ethnic, cultural, and economic diversity.
- Protect open space and wildlife.
- Enhance local food options by encouraging locally-owned farmers market and restaurants.
- Support and expand local business opportunities in the downtown area.

Question 2: What are the challenges facing El Sobrante? What would you like to see changed in El Sobrante in order to make it a better place to live and work?

- Ensure new development is consistent with community character.
- Create new public spaces for community gathering, such as a community center.
- Improve road design to reduce speeding and improve safety along San Pablo Dam Road.
- Improve bike and pedestrian access by incorporating sidewalks and bike lanes.
- Improve public transit access, especially to BART and Orinda.
- Install green infrastructure and other sustainable features.
- Restore and improve creeks.
- Improve access to hospitals and doctors
- Increase public safety by improving local law and traffic enforcement.
- Create a noise ordinance.

Question 3: Do you think changes are needed to the planned land uses shown in the General Plan land use and zoning maps? If so, what changes are needed?

- Rezone residential areas that are designated as landslide hazard zones to open space or farmland.
- Increase the potential for mixed-use buildings along Appian Way, the Triangle Area, and parts of San Pablo Dam Road.
- Zone the downtown area to make it a walkable and pedestrian-friendly destination.
- Rezone a parcel in the Triangle Area to allow for public use/community plaza.
- Consider creating an open space corridor along Appian Creek.
- Add easements through properties to increase creek access.
- Support the current General Plan's vision for a creek boardwalk.
- Promote sustainable practices in the Zoning Code, such as rainwater harvesting, greywater reuse, and solar panels.

Envision Contra Costa Meeting 5/30/19

Citizens for a Greener El Sobrante would like to emphasize the imperative for a GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE approach to any planning & development process.

Major themes:

1. **Green Infrastructure & Climate Resilience**
2. **Development of Uptown Business / Arts District**
3. **Slowing Traffic**
4. **Community Character & Beautification**
5. **Downtown Creek Access**
6. **Commission**

Rm
Sharon
Korotkin
Citizens for a
Greener El
Sobrante

1. Green Infrastructure includes soft and hardscape, building and structural designs

- Storm water management with bioswales/rain gardens, permeable pavers & concrete, landscaping, lots of trees. Reduction and prevention of "heat islands", a major one being the "triangle" area
- Mandate and enforce new business development and renovation to incorporate a certain percentage of landscaping for curb appeal and reduction of the "heat island" effect, which occurs when using hardscape material
- Massive use of stone ground cover should be banned
- Solar farm on county-owned property
- Green transportation system and one that serves the senior community

2. Art & Uptown Arts District

- Inclusion of a designated "arts district" around the "7-corners" area (triangle area + four corners)
- Murals

3. Slowing Traffic

- Engineering solutions to encourage adherence to speed limit, which can include Parklets, rain gardens, bulb outs, traffic circles, all which bring the added benefit of landscaping
- Create safe and shady environment to encourage pedestrian and bike use. Redesign main streets for safe bike travel and develop boardwalk amenity to accommodate this need

4. Community Character & Beautification

- Parklets
- Appian Bridge improvements
- Downtown boardwalk along the creek

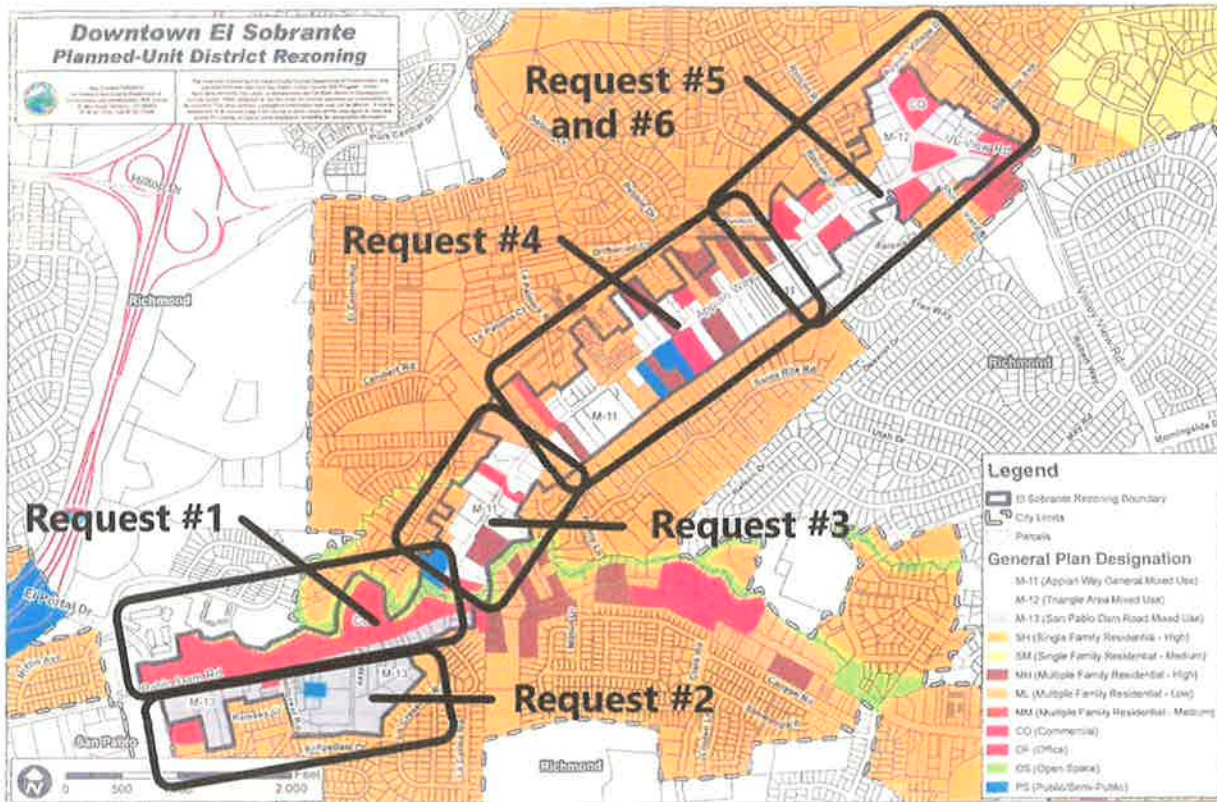
5. Creek Access

- Creek access for restoration and recreational benefits. Provide an easement between Bank of America and the Mowery property for pedestrians and cyclists

6. Commission

- Appoint a Commission to develop building guidelines and review design plans to ensure green development, a certain aesthetic of good taste, with no cookie cutter malls

From Maurice:



1. Change the existing land use designation for the North side of San Pablo Dam Road from CO Commercial to M-13 Mixed-Use at a density of 12.0 to 20.9 units per net acre, the same as the County's MM – Multiple-Family Residential – Medium. This change involves 31 parcels totaling 13.32 net acres and would increase the number of allowable housing units by 119 units.
2. Increase the M-13 Mixed-Use densities within the entire El Sobrante Downtown from its current 12.0 units per net acre to 12.0 to 21.9 units per acre, the same as the MM – Multiple-Family Residential – Medium designation. This change involves 46 parcels totaling 21.01 net acres and would increase the number of allowable housing by 187 units.
3. Increase the M-11 Mixed-Use densities along Appian Way between San Pablo Dam Road and Appian Creek, approximately 200' North of Santa Rita Road from its current 8.0 units per net acre to 12.0 to 21.9 units per net acre, the same as the MM – Multiple-Family Residential – Medium designation. This change involves 17 parcels totaling 6.95 net acres and would increase the number of allowable housing units by 90 units.
4. Change the Mixed-Use designations along the Appian Way Corridor between Appian Creek (North of Santa Rita Road) to a distance approximately 275' south of Sunhill Court to Multi-Family Residential – Low Density (ML) 7.3 to 11.9 units/acre. This designation would be comparable to the existing Multi-Family (Low-density) housing along Appian Way. This change involves 35 parcels totaling 16.49 net acres and would increase the number of allowable housing units by 213 units.
5. Increase the M-11 and M-12 Mixed-Use densities within the existing "Triangle Area", including to a point 275' south of Sunhill Court from its current 8.0 units per net acre to 12.0 to 21.9 units per acre, the same as the Multiple-Family Residential-Medium Density (MM) designation. This change involves 44 parcels totaling 13.78 net acres and would increase the number of allowable housing units by 178 units.
6. We request that all General Plan references to the "Triangle Area or "Triangle Business District" be changed to "Uptown Business District" except in cases where the terms "Triangle Area" or "Triangle Business District" might be used parenthetically for colloquial clarity.



ENVISION CONTRA COSTA 2040

COMMENT CARD

Date: 5/30/19

Please fill out this form if you have any comments about the General Plan, Zoning Code, and/or Climate Action Plan Updates. (Name and contact information are optional).

Name: K C ROURKE

Affiliation: HUMAN

Address: ST JAMES DRIVE

Phone / Email: LORRETT@IX.NETCOM.COM

Comments (Use back if necessary): _____

THIS IS A COMMUNITY THAT HAS BENEFITED FROM BEING
A COLLECTION OF BITS AND PIECES, UNTIL IT STARTED BEING
NIBBLED AWAY BY OUR INCORPORATED NEIGHBORS. WE
NEED TO PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY CULTURE

STOP CHASING HOMELESS PEOPLE AROUND AND
GET AS MANY OF THEM AS POSSIBLE INVOLVED
IN THE COMMUNITY AROUND THEM



ENVISION CONTRA COSTA 2040

COMMENT CARD

Date: 5/30/19

Please fill out this form if you have any comments about the General Plan, Zoning Code, and/or Climate Action Plan Updates. (Name and contact information are optional).

Name: Martha Berthelsen

Affiliation: SPAWNERS, El Sobrante Resident

Address: 4218 Foster Ln

Phone / Email: mrthbrthlsn@gmail.com

Comments (Use back if necessary): _____

Climate Action: Continue/expand incentives for solar panels
& electric vehicles

Mandate solar panels for parking lots + commercial
buildings

Public transit needs to be more convenient, clean & safe
- perhaps a more flexible system w/ small busser/vans

Bike lanes - improve extent, connections & safety

Open Space & Agriculture land
rezone slide hazard zones

Watershed & Creek Protection

- bioswales/rain gardens in parking lots + along
main streets

- permitted gray water reuse systems



ENVISION CONTRA COSTA 2040

COMMENT CARD

Date: _____

Please fill out this form if you have any comments about the General Plan, Zoning Code, and/or Climate Action Plan Updates. (Name and contact information are optional).

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Phone / Email: _____

Comments (Use back if necessary): _____

① ^{proposed} How, if at all, does the traffic circle at Appian Way & Valley View improve anything. Now, today, I see the area is referred to as "M-12-Triangle area". To me it looks like a bad piece of traffic planning at that corner. (I've seen the printed plan, Apr 2019.)

② Reclaim for El Sobrante the 40' path across San Pablo Dam Road for the County &/or El Sobrante currently "owned" by the city of Richmond where they tried to put the Methadone Clinic on El Sobrante



ENVISION CONTRA COSTA 2040

COMMENT CARD

Date: 5/3/19

Please fill out this form if you have any comments about the General Plan, Zoning Code, and/or Climate Action Plan Updates. (Name and contact information are optional).

Name: Mark Porter

Affiliation:

Address: 665 Appian Way

Phone / Email: 415 846 4099 Mark.A.Porter@AMPF.com

Comments (Use back if necessary):

Rural, Animals, horses, chickens, etc
Open space
Heavy Level of Commj Involvement

Lack of Emergency Room
Speed Limit Reduction / Enforcement
BART STOP



ENVISION CONTRA COSTA 2040

COMMENT CARD

Date: 5/30

Please fill out this form if you have any comments about the General Plan, Zoning Code, and/or Climate Action Plan Updates. (Name and contact information are optional).

Name: Kim Hazard

Affiliation: C4AGES / CoCo Sustainability Commish.

Address: 3040 Desert Drive Richmond 94803

Phone / Email: hazardousme@gmail.com

Comments (Use back if necessary): _____

Green Infrastructure Parklets
- creek boardwalk Farmers Market
- bike infrastructure
- rain gardens bioswales
Slow traffic on Dam Rd.

"Triangle Area" → Uptown Arts District

Murals Art. Opportunities for play
~~poor~~ pocket parks
Beautifully Appian Bridge



The future of El Sobrante is...

Q NATURAL DISASTER PLANNING; CLIMATE CHANGE, EARTHQUAKES, FLOODING, WILDFIRES.

+ Light-Rail down the middle of the Dam Rd.

2 senior center + Creek access/Greenway

+ Walkable! sidewalks + public transit ditto. along Creek
Better bike paths

+ **BIKE LANES!!!**

+ Park Preservation & Expansion ditto.

Semi-rural ☺

WALKABLE
ATTRACTIVE
COMMERCIAL
DISTRICT

Let us keep our small livestock + horses! ← YES!

+ GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE YES.

yoga, great-small business cafe, organic food

SMART GROWTH

Keep us rural

BETTER FIRE CONTROL
TAKE CARE OF WOODS

+ Tax credit/Carbon ^{sequestration} ~~offset~~ for smart
Tree & shrub planting (lawn reduction)

+ Adopt Bay-Friendly Land-
scaping principles county-wide

+ Local Farm Stand for
produce and other products

Affordable housing - e.g.
tiny home village,
community land trusts

+ using grey water to
irrigate our yards

+ Supportive of small farms

WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE

PAGE 2


COMMUNITY CULTURAL SPACE

- PUBLIC SPACE
- OUTDOOR THEATER
- LIVE MUSIC
- TENNIS COURT

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

• PLAYGROUNDS

- CURB CUTS
- RAIN GARDEN
- RAINWATER CATCHMENT

TRAIN TO ORINDA  EL CERRITO

ACCESS TO WILDCAT FROM LA COLINA

MORE PARKS

SOLUTION FOR ILLEGAL DUMPING

UPDATE RECYCLING + EDUCATION ON WASTE

GREENWAYS/WALKING PATHS ON CREEK
AND IN NEIGHBORHOODS

MAKE COMPOSTING TOILETS LEGAL

TABLE
5

WHAT WOULD WE LIKE TO CHANGE?

BIKE LANES / SIDEWALKS / PARKLETS

REDUCE TRAFFIC

ACCESSIBILITY FOR FIRE & 911

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

- MORE BUSES & DIRECT TO DEL NORTE
- LIGHT RAIL / LOCAL TRAM SHUTTLE
- MORE CREEK ACCESS

ROAD SAFETY / ^{FOOD} FARMERS MARKETS
MORE LOCALLY < PRODUCED FOOD

TAX BREAKS FOR CARBON SEQUESTRATION

WIND POWER → PLANTING TREES

RESIDENTIAL GREYWATER

ACKNOWLEDGE THIS IS INDIGENOUS LAND
→ USING INDIGENOUS NAMES

WHAT DO WE LIKE

RURAL ENVIRONMENT

WILDLIFE / WILD LAND

REGIONAL PARKS

LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS

COMMUNITY

AGRICULTURAL / LIVESTOCK

WATERWAYS / CREEK ACCESS

DIVERSITY / MULTICULTURAL PRESENCE

THE LIBRARY?!

~~NAME~~

LIKES:

OPEN SPACE, LESS HOUSING

WELL INTEGRATED SCHOOLS

(ethnically, economically balanced)

LIVESTOCK, RURAL FEEL

LOW DEVELOPMENT FARMING FEEL

DIS IMPROVEMENTS:

- MORE FAMILY OWNED BUSINESSES
- ROADS, POWER LINES (BURY)
- MORE FARMERS MARKETS, FAMILY OWNED MARKETS (NOT THE EXPENSIVE ONES)
+ SIMILAR TO MONTEREY MARILET
- ** PUBLIC TRANSIT FROM EL SOBRIANTE TO ORINDA. GETTING DANGEROUS
- + MORE "GREEN" TRANSPORTATION
- + MORE SENIOR TRANSPORTATION
- + LIGHT RAIL ABOVE STREAM BED ALONG SAN PABLO CREEK
- + PEDGSTRIAN WALKWAY TO WATER WITH BIKE PATH
- + TRAFFIC ON SAN PABLO DAM ROAD
 - BIKE ACCESS & SAFETY ON SAN PABLO DAM RD

CHALLENGES (CONT)

- ENHANCED STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
 - Bioswales, rainwater capture, grey water systems
- MORE RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS (SOLAR FARMS)
- MORE CULTURAL CENTERS. ESTABLISH AN ARTS DISTRICT
- APPIAN WAY BRIDGE IMPROVEMENT

+ LESS HIGH DENSITY HOUSING

+ MORE OVERSIGHT OVER DEVELOPMENT

+ Building Partnerships w/ private groups

Improve

Q1 - WHAT DO YOU LIKE?

TABLE
6

- SMALL TOWN FEEL
- OPEN SPACE
- ABILITY TO KEEP LIVESTOCK
- WILDLIFE
- FEELING OF COMMUNITY
- KENNEDY GROVE
- LIBRARY
- GOOD TABLE PROJECT
- THERE'S LESS TRAFFIC
- LOCAL BUSINESSES
- RESTAURANT DIVERSITY
- DIVERSE PEOPLE

Q1

TABLE 6

- SHERRIE'S DANCE STUDIO
- CANYON POOL
- RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Q2 - WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

- TOO MUCH TRAFFIC
 - ↳ SPD HAS BECOME A REGIONAL ARTERY
- HOMELESSNESS
- PEDESTRIAN AND BIKE UNFRIENDLY
- PROSTITUTION
- LACK OF A TOWN CENTER
- LACK OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
 - " " MEDICAL FACILITIES
- VISUAL CHAOS, ESPECIALLY ALONG SPD
- Lack of quality grocery/food

Q2 - CHALLENGES

- GENERAL LACK OF SIDEWALKS
- NO COHESIVENESS
- AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- BETTER QUALITY SCHOOLS

ASSETS

TABLE 7

- 1) OPEN SPACE AREAS
- 2) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
- 3) WILDLIFE ~~IN~~^{AND} THE CREEKS
- 4) LIVESTOCK KEPT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY
- 5) ITS NOT OAKLAND/BERKLEY
- 6) BEING UNINCORPORATED, LESS GOVERNMENT RESTRICTION.

NEEDS

- 1) NEED A COMMUNITY CENTER
- 2) POCKET PARK, GATHERING AREA
- 3) HOSPITALS RETURNED TO THE AREA
- 4) REDUCTION OF CUT-THROUGH TRAFFIC FROM I-80
- 5) BETTER PUBLIC TRANSIT W/ CONNECTION TO SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES
- 6) IMPROVEMENT OF TRAFFIC CIRCULATION AT THE TRIANGLE, OTHER THAN TRAFFIC CIRCLE
- 7) IMPROVE MOVEMENT OF TRAFFIC ALONG EL PORTAL BETWEEN SAN PABLO DAM AND I-80
- 8) MORE LOCAL FOOD-GROWING SERVICES
- 9) BETTER COORDINATION BETWEEN JURISDICTIONS WITH RESPECT PUBLIC SERVICES. EMT, FIRE, POLICE
- 10) A BART STOP SOMEWHERE IN THE AREA
- 11) TRAFFIC CALMING ALONG APPIAN WAY

LAND USE CHANGES

TABLE 7

1) REZONE RESIDENTIAL AREAS w/ LANDSLIDE AREAS TO PARKS/FARMING

- 2)
- Creeks are open to environment.
 - Open Space (access to Open Space)
 - Small town feel
 - El Sobrante become more pedestrian friendly
 - Good access to S.F., Sierras other cities
 - Ensure mature trees are preserved.

Loc El Sobrante

next coast road

Table 2. LIKES

- 1. • Creeks are open to environment.
- ~~to~~ • Open Space (access to Open Space)
- • Small town feel
- El Sobrante become more pedestrian friendly
- • Good access to S.F., Sierras other cities
- • Ensure mature trees are preserved.

1. • Enhance access to
public transport, improve
train / light rail \$
along San Pablo, and to the
neighboring cities

• Improve roads

San Pablo Dam Rd.
Re-envision ↓

Bikes lanes - Sidewalks ^{Speeding}

Planted medians

- Population projections
for EL Sobrante

- want to see 3D
heights of bldgs for
next ~~round~~ round

Like: Affordable, economically diverse

Challenges: 1. Transportation

2. Code for affordable housing, 50% of units

3. ~~Code enforcement~~

4. San Pablo Dam Rd, Speeding + safety

5. Absence of emergency room + hospitals
- lack of access to nearest one.

6. Wildfire hazards + evacuation.

~~7~~ Daylighting, Creek access

Zoning: Issue w/ ability to ~~cover~~ ^{protect creeks from being} effects. Lack covered

of creek planning.

- Bring in more interesting Commercial Activity

into downtown + parks, plazas + Public space

- Nowry property rezone to parks + rec, community gathering space.

What we like about E.S.

- Small town feel (hidden gem)
- easy access to parks, OS, cities, culture jobs
- More affordable
- more Feasible for land-based act. (Farming)
- not as restrictive as cities
- ~~not~~ lots of individuality / uniqueness
- diversity (race, class)
- ~~side~~ creeks
- sidewalks not everywhere - an ex of flexibility
- Wildlife abundant & diverse
- access to certain ~~be~~ specialized health care
- ~~likes~~ local ~~businesses~~ abound, but would love more/better

Fix/Improve

- things to get me out of car
 - ↳ buses seem focused around schools. Would like better

access to:

- ECONDART

- Richmond Farm

- Shore

- Pinole (stop/trail/farm market)

- El Cerrito (line 70 doesn't go there anymore)

- bus travel time too long

- More density in core / along corridors rather than sprawl

Fix/Improve (page 2)

- traffic a problem but making more capacity can have unintended consequences
- make biking safer/easier
 - priority biking
- better access to creeks
- feature creeks w/ trails & w/ creekside businesses
- Current GP calls for creek boardwalk (good)
- Coffee Shop Condominium (want more bus, but these will need more people)
- make more wildlife safe - esp. vacant lots

- move opps for play for kids/adults ^(playgrounds, etc)
- more affordable housing / community, land trust, tiny house village / communal living)
- more thriving businesses)
- see 596 acres example from NY
- Solar farms on vacant lands, parking lots
- parklets, rain gardens bioswales
- planning for cannabis industry
- natural disaster response /
- climate ^{proactive} resiliency
- emergency response slow (traffic)

Nail
Joe
Doug
John
Emil
Lyle
Melanie

uniqueness LIKES

gorgeous scenery

regional park access

ridgelines

suburban/wild border
wildlife

birdwatching

owls!

blue herons!

hawks!

kites!

→ the community, atmosphere

unpretentious (not trying to be something else)

daily needs can be met locally

"time warp" in a good way

civility

new sidewalks + street trees (soon to be more)

ethnic diversity

range of historic features

bldgs

views

points of interest

TABLE
3

CHALLENGES

- neighborhoods turning over - losing sense of community
- cut thru traffic (Waze)
- ~~speeding~~ + accidents on the Dam Road
- dangerous conditions (including too high speed limit)
- need safe bike routes / lanes / access → also Appian
- homeless (library fire)
- inadequate law enforcement esp. traffic enforcement.
- CHP / Sheriff lack of service → #1 problem (?)
- aging bldgs / infrastructure / owners
- thru traffic not interested in stopping to shop
- noise ordinance needed**
- changing demographics (also maybe an opportunity)

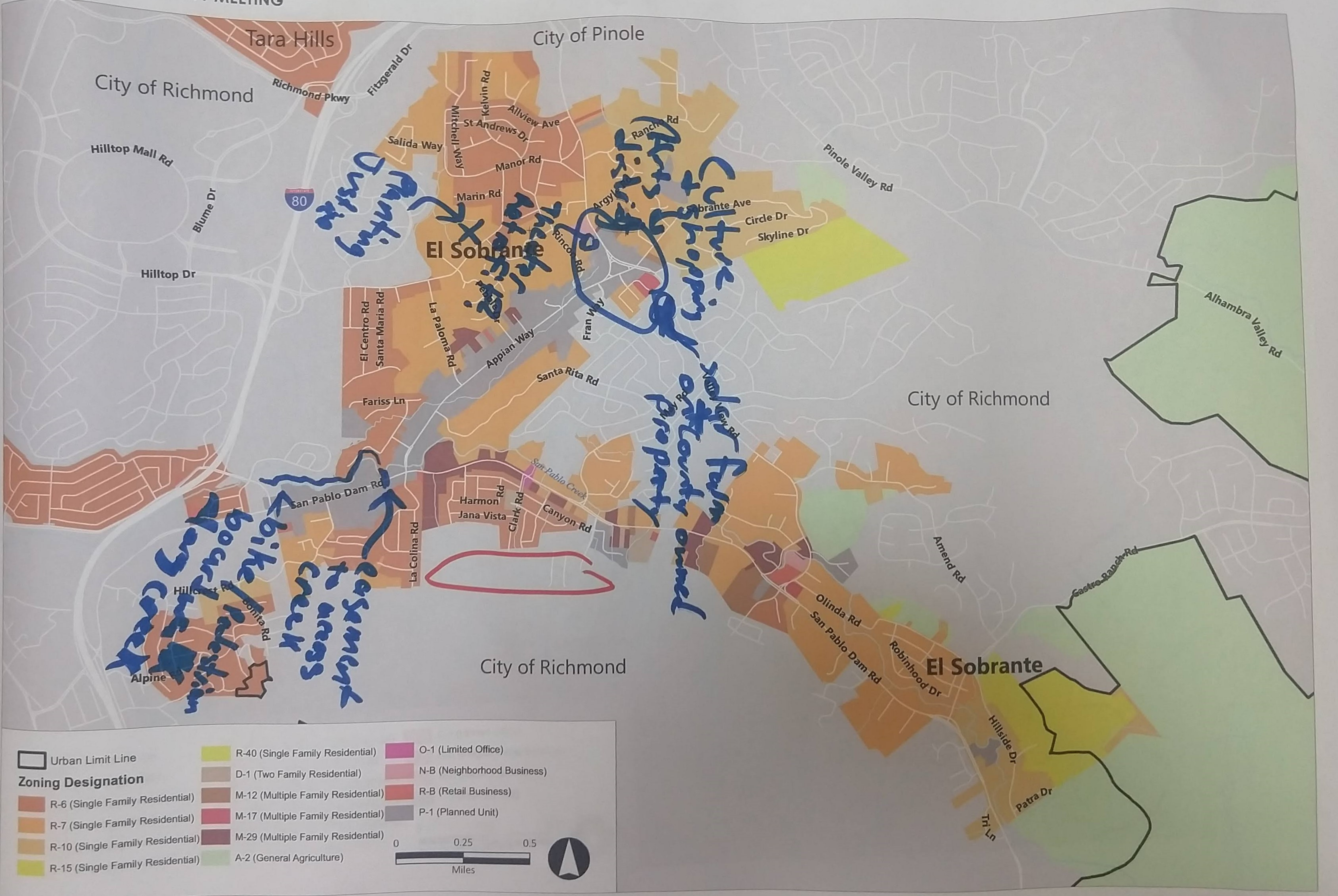
zoning/land use comments

pro mixed use +1

chain stores bad, support local +1

think about compatible uses +1

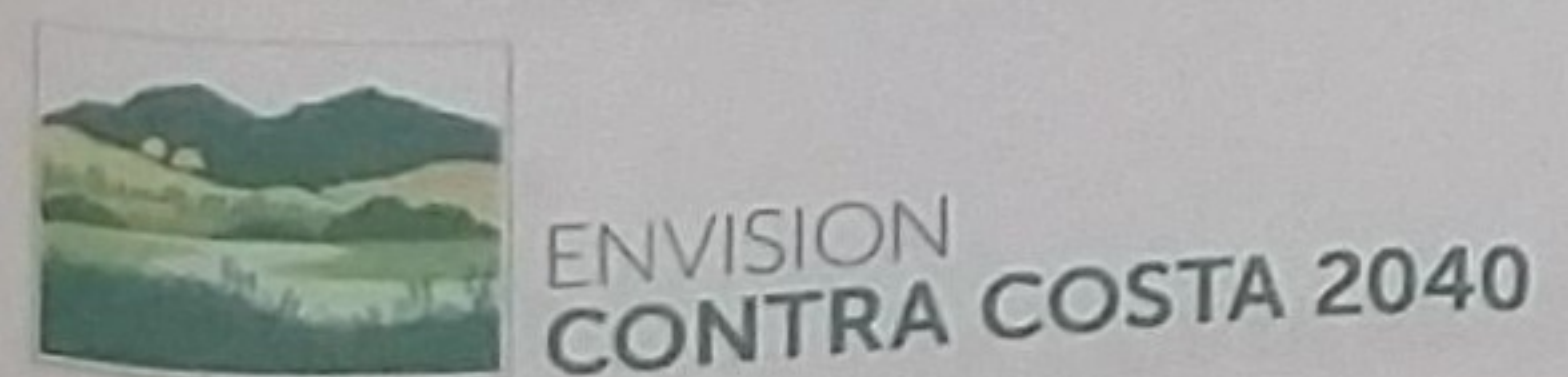
more "daily needs" +1



Source: Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2019.



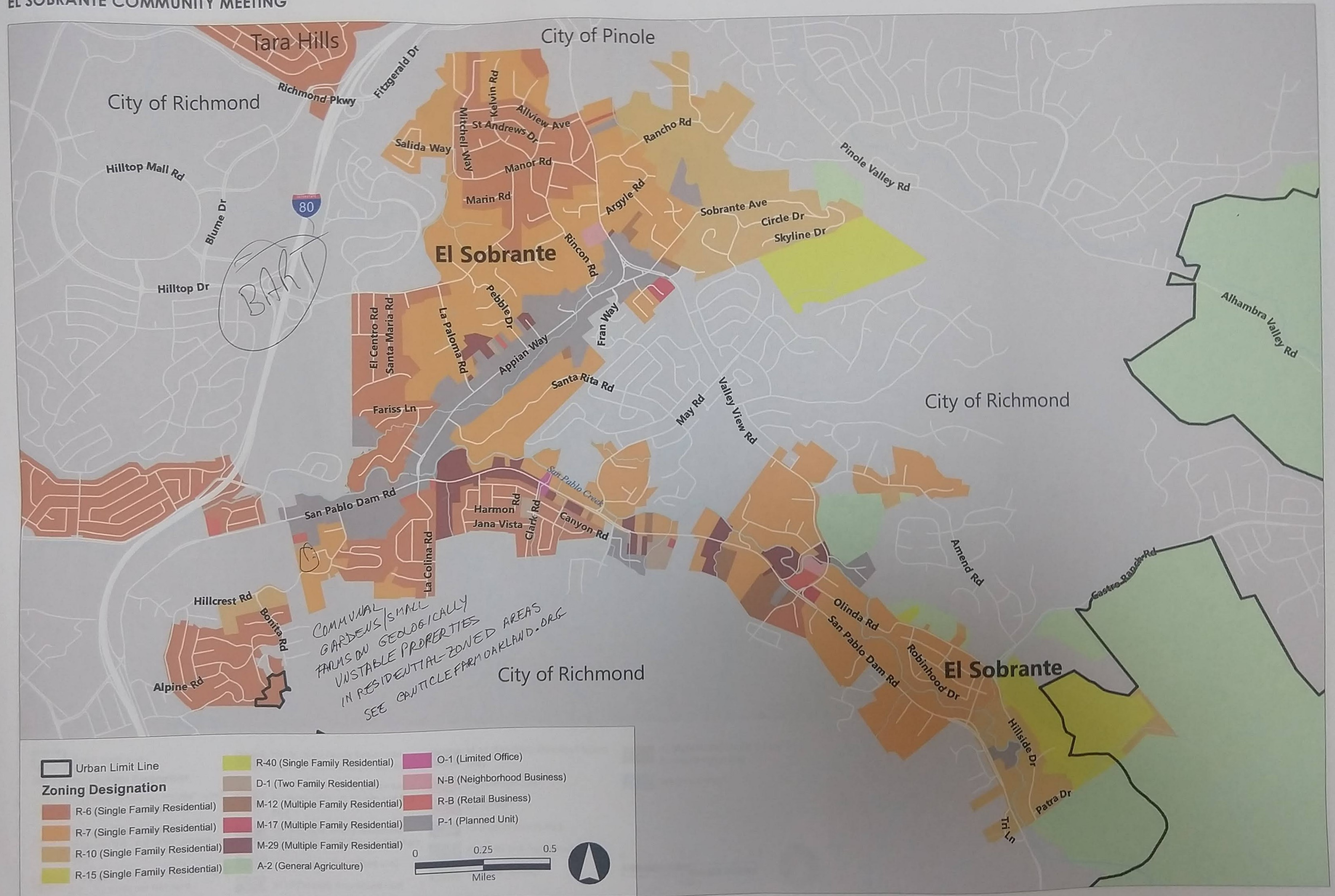
Source: Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2019.



General Plan Land Use Designations for El Sobrante



Source: Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2019.



Source: Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2019.

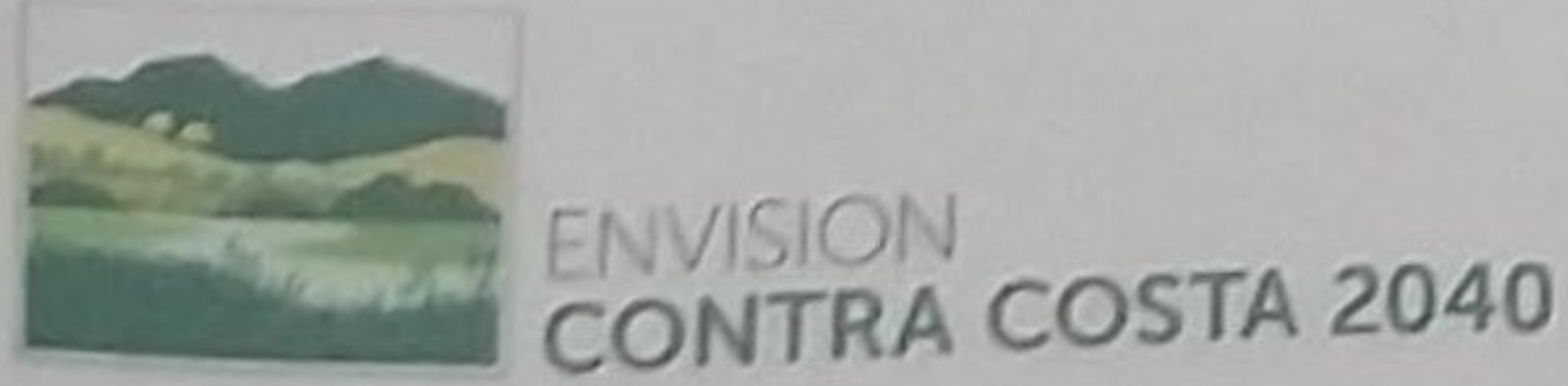


ENVISION
CONTRA COSTA 2040

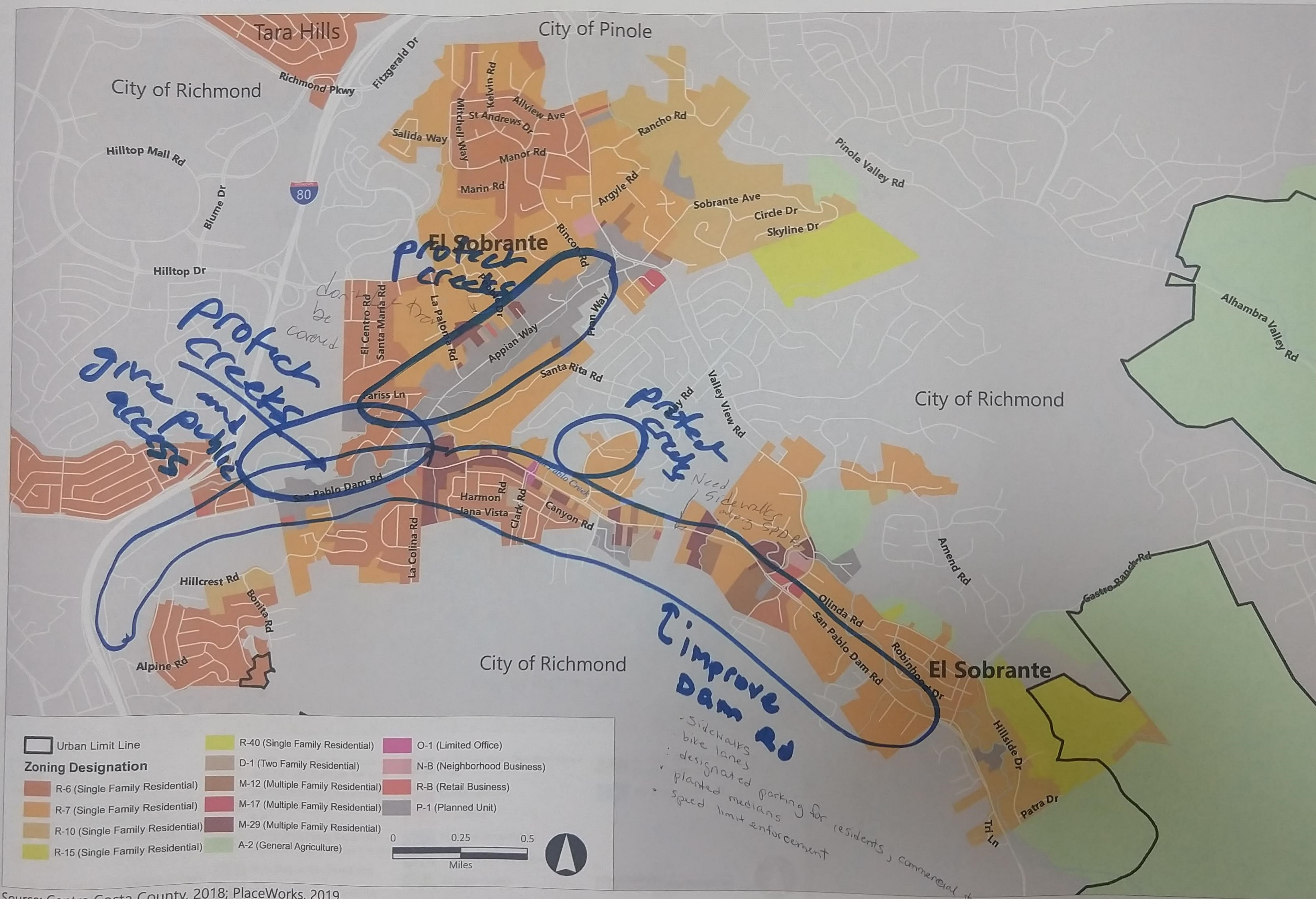
Zoning Designations for El Sobrante



Source: Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2019.



General Plan Land Use Designations for El Sobrante



Source: Contra Costa County, 2018; PlaceWorks, 2019.



ENVISION
CONTRA COSTA 2040

Zoning Designations for El Sobrante