

Chapter 5: Land Development

Existing Development Pattern

Development patterns can promote or inhibit automobile access or pedestrian and bicycle access. Automobile-promoting development patterns are characterized by wide roads, high travel speeds, parking-fronted development, direct access to adjacent roads, and large-radius curves. Pedestrian- and bicycle-promoting development patterns, on the other hand, are characterized by lower motor vehicle speeds, limited turning opportunities, buildings at or near the back of sidewalk with doors and windows oriented toward the wide sidewalk, street trees planted at the edge of the traveled roadway, short crossing distances across streets, and limited driveways crossing sidewalks. In areas where cars typically move rapidly down the street, businesses aim to attract attention using larger signs, or signs that flash or move. This effect is enhanced when commercial buildings are placed behind parking lots, farther from the street edge, making it more difficult for passing motorists to see signs attached to buildings. Several of these issues have been addressed as part of the Preferred Option for Crows Landing Road.

The majority of properties adjacent to Crows Landing Road are occupied by buildings located away from the public right of way to provide parking between the buildings and the sidewalk. Virtually all of the properties adjacent to Crows Landing Road provide motor vehicle access to parking from a driveway on Crows Landing Road. The resulting pattern of development increases sight lines for motor vehicles (encourages higher travel speeds) and allows vehicles to move across travel lanes at a large number of locations creating a large number of potential conflicts and a travel environment characterized by a high degree of unpredictability. For pedestrians and bicycle riders, who move more slowly than motor vehicles, the unpredictability of motor vehicle movements can be intimidating and physically dangerous. Parking lots located in front of buildings reached by driveways cut across the sidewalk makes walking down the sidewalk relatively unsafe, as vehicles may enter and exit driveways across the sidewalk every few feet and also makes it more difficult for a pedestrian to reach the front door of the business, by necessitating a walk through the parking lot. Curb cuts tend to result in a sidewalk that slopes downward toward the street, making pedestrian access for people with mobility problems (e.g. wheelchair, walker) more difficult. Motorists can also find this development pattern challenging, as maximizing motor vehicle access points to Crows Landing Road increases the locations from which cars may enter or exit the roadway. Two-way left-turn lanes increase the number of points from which motor vehicle traffic may enter or exit the traveled roadway.

General Plan and Zoning As noted earlier and as shown on **Figure 1**, jurisdictional boundaries in the study area are fragmented with some areas governed by Modesto and some governed by Stanislaus County, although all of the study area is in Modesto's Sphere of Influence. **Figures 3 and 4** show Modesto's existing general plan designations and Modesto's and Stanislaus County's existing zoning along the Crows Landing Road corridor. North of State Route 99 and northeast of the intersection of Crows Landing Road with Whitmore Avenue, the properties in Stanislaus County are designated Industrial. Properties in the County that front Crows Landing Road are designated Commercial. Properties near the corridor, but behind Commercial properties are designated either Urban Transition (west of Crows Landing Road) or Low or Medium Density Residential (both east of Crows Landing Road). The County's general plan designations are generally consistent with the City's general plan designations, although some areas, such as those zoned for A2-10 (10-acre agricultural parcels) are not consistent with Modesto's general plan. Modesto's draft general plan amendment redesignates the former tallow plant site (west of Crows Landing Road and adjacent south of State Route 99) from Industrial (I) to Business Commercial Residential (BCR), which, if adopted, would allow for business park, commercial, and medium-high density residential uses in close proximity to one another to create a walkable area.

Creating a Pedestrian-Friendly Development Pattern

In order to improve the pedestrian-friendliness of Crows Landing Road, it is important to slow traffic and make motor vehicle movements more predictable; reduce potential conflicts between pedestrians and traffic; and locate buildings and building entries near the sidewalk.

Sidewalks Curb, gutter, and sidewalk is absent or narrow (less than 10 feet) in many areas. Narrow sidewalks can be difficult to negotiate and often are further narrowed by utility poles and various kinds of signage. Add fairly high traffic speeds and freight trucks on the adjacent roadway to the narrow sidewalk and walking can be uncomfortable for pedestrians. Ten-foot-wide sidewalks will be constructed or widened along Crows Landing Road as development or

annexation occurs or as funding becomes available. Adding bicycle lanes and buffers and adding street trees at the roadway edge will move motor vehicle traffic away from the sidewalk to provide a more comfortable pedestrian experience.

East and west of Crows Landing Road, just behind the corridor, most developed blocks are short, making a walking trip to Crows Landing Road reasonably short. However, much of the land on either side of the corridor is not developed with curb, gutter, and sidewalk or with storm water drainage. This makes walking problematic, especially during wet weather, when unpaved areas are muddy. Generally speaking, areas that have been annexed to the City of Modesto are equipped with curbs, gutters, and sidewalks and have some sort of storm water drainage system. Exceptions to this occur at Amador Avenue, which was annexed to Modesto in 1959 without the adjoining properties, and the southeast corner of E. Glenn Avenue, which was annexed in 1979 and is occupied by a building located in what will eventually be the public right of way.

Other streets that intersect Crows Landing Road and which are not improved with curb, gutter, and sidewalk are Blankenburg Avenue, Butte Avenue, Colusa Avenue, Crater Avenue, Flamingo Drive, Imperial Avenue, Olivero Road, Glenn Avenue west of Crows Landing Road, and the southeast frontage of Hatch Road. Additionally, Kende Road is unpaved. Past practice has been for Modesto to reach an agreement with Stanislaus County regarding installation of infrastructure prior to annexation of developed areas. This practice is expected to continue for future annexations of developed areas, but does not apply to Amador Avenue, which has already been annexed to the City of Modesto.

Driveway Placement Driveways should be relatively few in number and oriented to the streets intersecting Crows Landing Road whenever possible. This will occur with new development and requires the development of cross-access easements to allow access to several parcels from a driveway on one parcel. Coordination and cooperation between neighboring property owners is necessary, but provides important benefits. Reorienting driveways to intersecting streets will smooth the flow of traffic in the curb lane on Crows Landing Road by reducing the points at which a right turn is possible. Additionally, closed driveways should be replaced with sidewalk to reduce hazards for the mobility impaired. Discretionary permits for new construction may consider driveway closures and sidewalk reconstruction to meet Modesto's current driveway location standards.

Building Location and Orientation Changing where new buildings can be located on a site is a long-term strategy for transforming the Crows Landing Road corridor that will require revisions to the zoning code. Redeveloping the Crows Landing Road corridor to be more pedestrian friendly should include locating new buildings close enough to the sidewalk that parking between the building and sidewalk is eliminated. Building entries and display windows should be oriented to the sidewalk and street with parking behind the building. Entries from the rear parking area might be provided through a secondary rear entrance or via passages between buildings leading to the front entries adjacent to the sidewalk. This would have multiple benefits, including reducing motor vehicle sight lines, which will contribute to reducing vehicle speeds; eliminating the need for pedestrians to cross parking lots in order to enter the building; and reducing the perceived need for larger signs and banners to identify businesses that are set back from the edge of right of way.

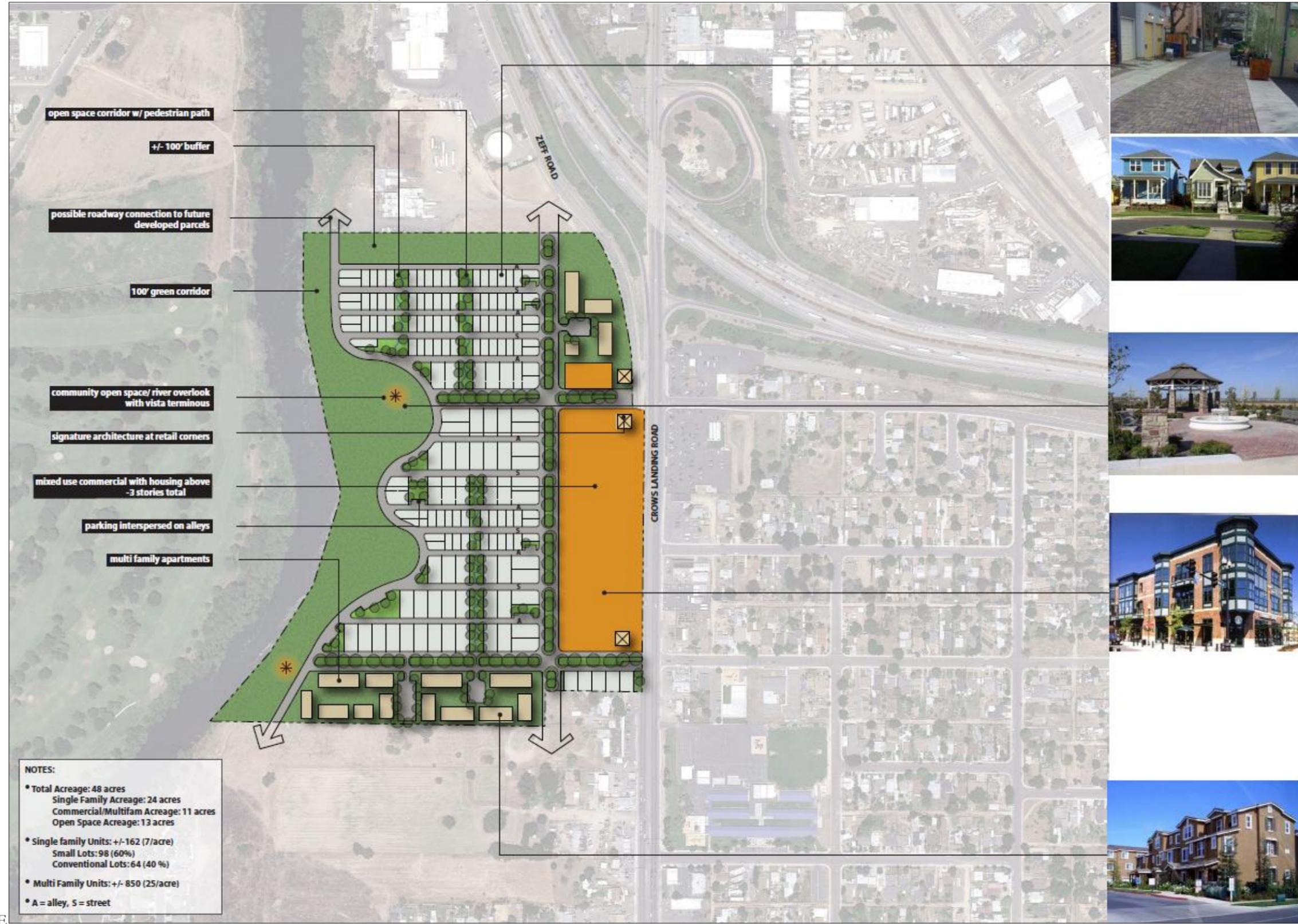
Implementation

New or updated zoning regulations will need to be established to shape future development along Crows Landing Road. Such regulations will need to consider such issues as building placement, allowable land uses, landscaping, and access standards. Additionally, zoning regulations will need to consider near-term and mid-term approaches for addressing non-conforming development. Various options include a form-based code for the area, an overlay zone, or design guidelines or some combination of these approaches to ensure a more vibrant, pedestrian-friendly environment. A general plan amendment may also be necessary, if Modesto wants to allow a mix of commercial and residential land uses. A possible development concept showing building locations, uses, and access, is shown on **Exhibit D**.

As developed areas are annexed to Modesto, the City will continue to pursue its agreement with the County providing for the installation of infrastructure to City standards. Nevertheless, Modesto will also need to develop a strategy to install curb, gutter, and sidewalk along those portions of Amador and E. Glenn Avenues that have already been annexed

to Modesto. In coordination with Stanislaus County, Modesto will need to develop a strategy for consolidating driveways and retrofitting with vertical curbs and raising the sidewalks to grade.

Exhibit D: Possible Future development Scenario Along Crows Landing Road



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