

I INTRODUCTION

This report provides background information and describes opportunities and constraints for the Ocean Street Area Plan, a long-term strategy to revitalize this major corridor and gateway to the City. As this report explains, the Ocean Street corridor has the potential to become a vibrant gateway area that reflects the unique character of Santa Cruz, attracts visitors and accommodates the needs of residents.

A. *Ocean Street Setting*

The City of Santa Cruz is the largest city in Santa Cruz County. Located between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Monterey Bay, Santa Cruz is connected by Highway 1 to Half Moon Bay to the west and Watsonville to the east. Highway 17, which terminates at Highway 1 and Ocean Street as shown in Figure 1-1, connects the city with Los Gatos, San Jose and the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Ocean Street corridor serves as the north-south connection between Highway 17 and other major streets that link the corridor with other parts of the city. These streets include Water Street and Soquel Avenue, which provide east-west connections across the river, as well as Broadway, which runs through several Eastside neighborhoods. The San Lorenzo River sits to the west and south of Ocean Street. Five bridges, including one pedestrian bridge, provide connections from Ocean Street across the river, leading to destinations such as Downtown and the beach.

Figure 1-2 shows the preliminary boundaries of the Ocean Street Plan Area. It is approximately 1.2 miles long, stretching from Highway 17 at the north to the San Lorenzo River at the south. The Plan Area contains a total of 70 acres and is composed of almost 350 parcels, most of which front on Ocean Street. A few additional parcels are included that face other streets but are contiguous with the rest of the Plan Area. While most existing land uses along Ocean Street are commercial businesses, the Plan Area is also adjacent to several residential neighborhoods, and it incorporates portions of the

Lower Ocean neighborhood at its southern end. The Ocean Street Area Plan will address the relationship between Ocean Street and the surrounding neighborhoods.

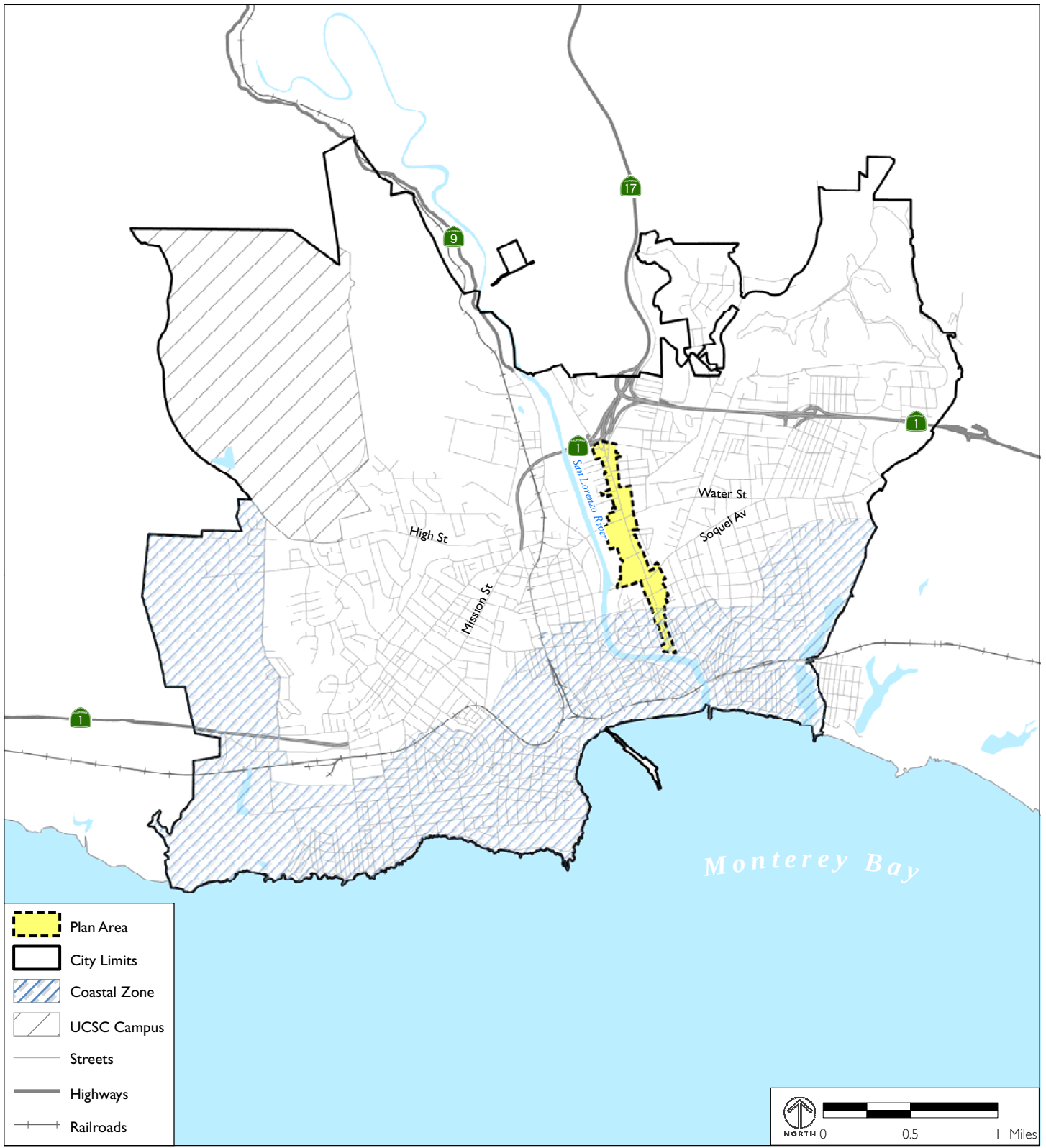
B. Area Plan Process

Santa Cruz has adopted a variety of Area Plans as amendments to its General Plan, which guides development and natural preservation in the city. In contrast to the General Plan, which focuses on citywide policy issues, an Area Plan provides more focused policy direction for a smaller part of the city. Area Plans can address all of the topics that are covered in the General Plan, including land uses, community character and transportation. They can also propose streetscape improvements and provide design guidelines for new buildings.

The City's existing Area Plans have been adopted for places that are of special importance or concern, such as Downtown and the Beach/South of Laurel area. Santa Cruz's current General Plan, adopted in 1992, calls for the City to create a Plan and Design Guidelines for Ocean Street, in recognition of the corridor's role as a key gateway to Santa Cruz.

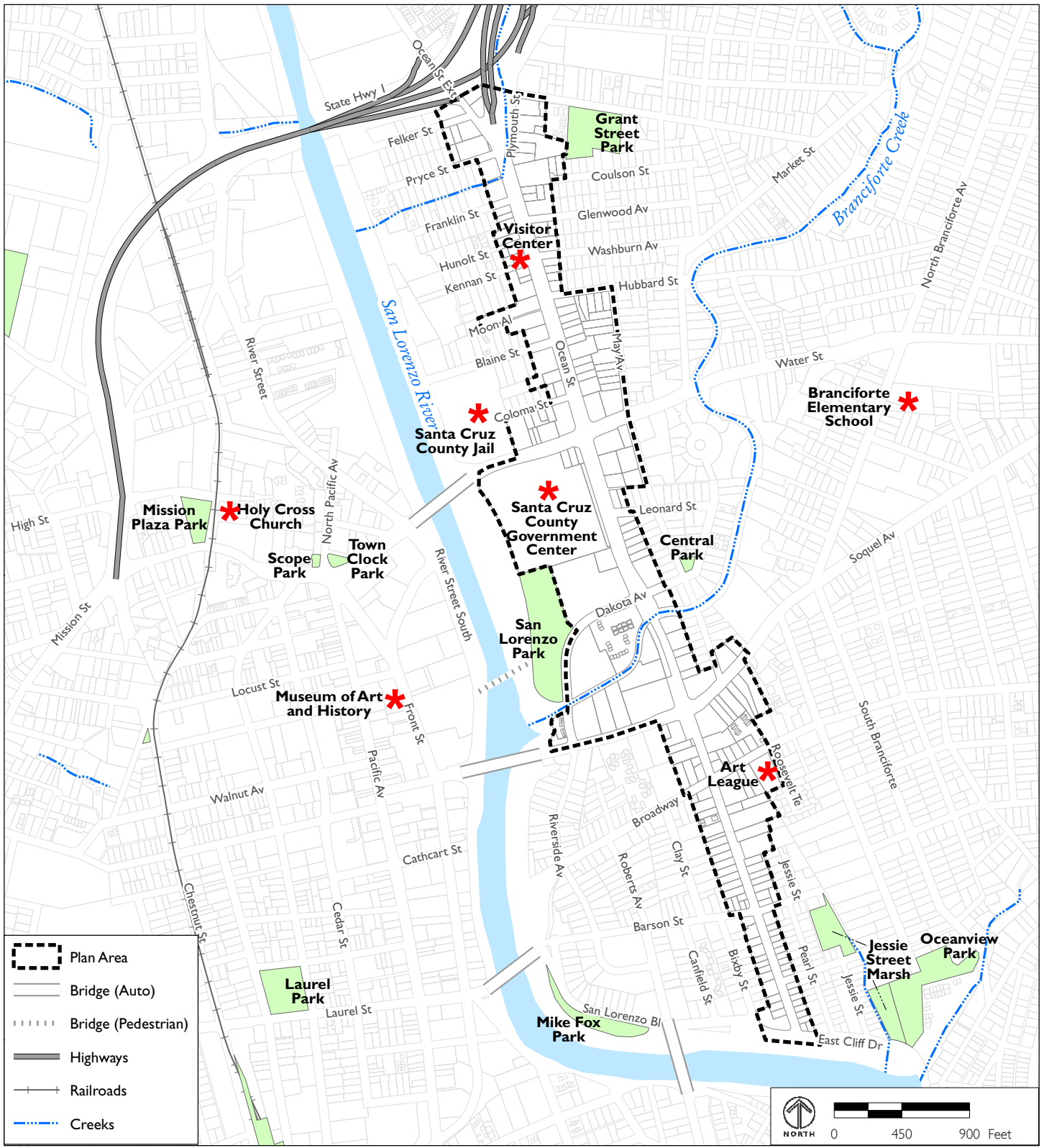
This Opportunities and Constraints Report represents a first step in the process of creating an Area Plan. It describes existing conditions and identifies opportunities for future improvements within the Plan Area. The Report has been developed based on a comprehensive review of background documents, as well as through interviews with key decision-makers, City staff and other experts. The Opportunities and Constraints Report contains the following chapters:

- ◆ **Chapter 2: Land Uses.** Describes existing uses and businesses, current and proposed developments, vacant and underutilized sites, and ownership patterns in the Plan Area.



Source: City of Santa Cruz GIS, 2007

FIGURE I-1
PLAN AREA CONTEXT



Source: City of Santa Cruz GIS, 2007; DC&E, 2007

FIGURE I-2

PLAN AREA AND SURROUNDING CONTEXT

- ◆ **Chapter 3: Community Character.** Describes the physical character and streetscape conditions in the Plan Area.
- ◆ **Chapter 4: Circulation and Parking.** Describes existing circulation and parking conditions in the Plan Area, pedestrian and bicycle facilities and transit service.
- ◆ **Chapter 5: Existing Plans and Policies.** Describes the regulatory setting, including General Plan policies and land use designations, that pertains to the Plan Area.
- ◆ **Chapter 6: Opportunities and Constraints.** Identifies opportunities for streetscape and gateway improvements, land uses, architecture and site planning, and circulation.

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OCEAN STREET OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS
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