4 CIRCULATION AND PARKING

This chapter provides a summary of the existing transportation and circulation conditions within the Ocean Street Plan Area. The chapter discusses vehicular circulation and parking, pedestrian and bicycle networks, and transit routes that serve the Plan Area.

A. Vehicular Access

Because most visitors arrive to Santa Cruz by car, it is essential for Ocean Street to accommodate drivers. This section describes the existing vehicular circulation network and parking facilities within the Plan Area.

1. Freeways and Roads

Highway 17 carries substantial commuter and visitor traffic between San Jose and Santa Cruz, terminating at the junction of State Highway 1 and Ocean Street. The highway's presence results in large traffic volumes both to and from the highway, especially during the evening peak hours between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. A traffic count completed by the City on Friday, July 11, 2003, at a location between Highway 17 and Water Street, showed approximately 18,290 northbound trips and 21,030 southbound trips on Ocean Street.

The City's current General Plan identifies the following major streets in the Plan Area, in addition to Highway 17:

- **Arterial Streets.** Ocean Street, Water Street, Soquel Avenue, Broadway, Barson Street, San Lorenzo Boulevard and East Cliff Drive are all streets that carry especially large traffic flows, serving the city as well as the region. Water Street and Soquel Avenue connect the Plan Area with Downtown, as well as areas east of the city.
- **Collector Streets.** Plymouth Street and Grant Street are designed to collect traffic from local streets and distribute it to the arterial network.

- **Local Streets.** All other streets within the Plan Area are local streets, which provide direct access to individual businesses and homes. In general, there are few connections between the Plan Area's local streets.

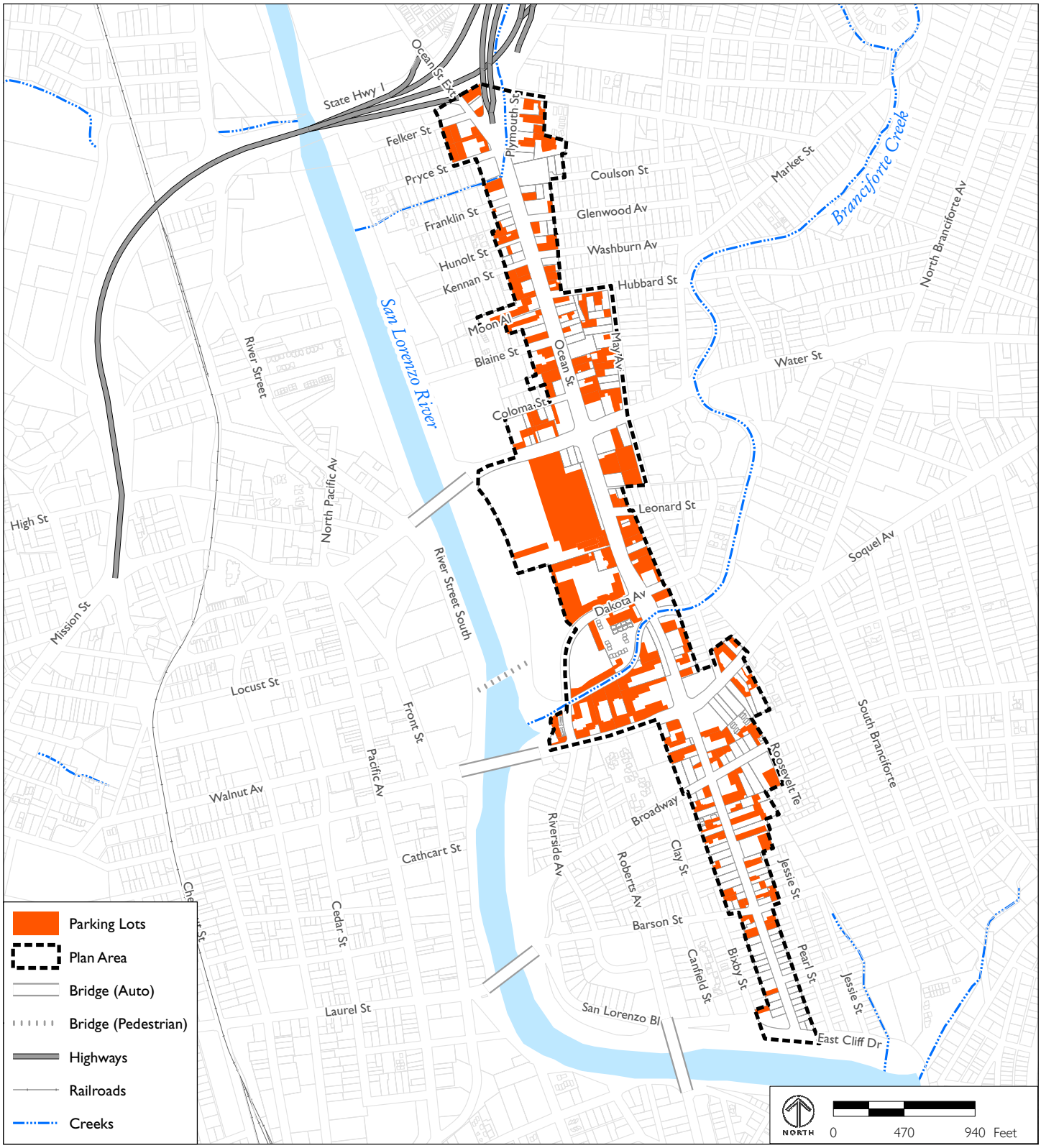
South of Soquel Avenue, Ocean Street's width is reduced so that it does not include a median; its width is further reduced south of Barson Avenue, where it shrinks from four lanes to three. To enable Ocean Street to carry more traffic in the future, the City's Municipal Code requires all buildings to have a minimum 42-foot setback from Ocean Street's centerline. This setback requirement provides for the future widening of Ocean Street by ensuring that new development will not be located within the expanded street right-of-way.

At Ocean Street's intersections with Water Street and Soquel Avenue, the streets widen to create queueing space on Ocean Street for northbound vehicles making right turns, and to provide left-turn lanes on Water Street and Soquel Avenue. In addition, Broadway widens at its intersection with Ocean Street to accommodate left-turn lanes.

2. Parking

As shown in Figure 4-1, almost 27 acres in the Plan Area are dedicated to surface parking lots. Businesses on Ocean Street primarily have on-site parking lots with access from Ocean Street. For example, Ferrell's Donuts, located at Ocean Street and Franklin Street, has a gross floor area of approximately 2,150 square feet, along with 23 parking spaces—almost 11 spaces per 1,000 square feet. The Soquel Ocean Center has a gross floor area of roughly 25,000 square feet, along with 95 parking spaces—almost 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet. Both parking lots provide slightly more spaces than the City requires.

On-street parking is also provided on most streets in the Plan Area, except on Water Street east of Ocean Street; Soquel Avenue west of Ocean Street; and the segment of Ocean Street between Soquel Avenue and Barson Street. Ocean Street has a two-hour parking limit between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.,



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

FIGURE 4-1

PARKING LOTS

and parking meters are used to enforce time limits on Water Street and Dakota Avenue.

The County Government Center is the largest employer in the Plan Area. The Government Building and Courthouse has 480 on-site surface parking spaces, occupying approximately 48 percent of the site. In addition, the County currently leases 80 spaces from the University Inn & Conference Center, located next door.[1] The County has acknowledged that there is not enough on-site parking to meet its current needs.[2] As a result, some County employees and visitors must park on the street in nearby neighborhoods. A 2002 study found that more than 800 spaces would be required at the Government Building and Courthouse if the facility were built today. However, the study also noted that actual parking demand may be somewhat lower than this, since the facility is near downtown Santa Cruz and alternative transportation modes.[3]

B. Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

The Plan Area includes a variety of bicycle and pedestrian connections to other parts of Santa Cruz. This section describes bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the Plan Area.

1. Bicycle Network

Santa Cruz's network of bicycle routes connects the Plan Area with other parts of the city. The following types of bicycle routes are found in and near the Plan Area, as shown in Figure 4-2:

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[1] Personal communication with Joy Anzinger, Sales Manager, University Inn and Conference Center, October 22, 2007.

[2] Personal communication with Susan Mauriello, County Administrative Officer, Santa Cruz County, November 1, 2007.

[3] County of Santa Cruz, 2002, *701 Ocean Street Campus Parking and Circulation Study*: page 1.

- **Class I (Bike Path).** Provides a completely separate right-of-way used exclusively by bicyclists and pedestrians. Although there are no Class I bike paths within the Plan Area, there are bike paths nearby on the levees along the San Lorenzo River.
- **Class II (Bike Lane).** Provides an on-street bike lane marked by pavement striping. The majority of Ocean Street provides a Class II bike lane, with connections to bike lanes traveling east-west on Water Street and Soquel Avenue. The bike lane is 5 feet wide and is adjacent to on-street parking, creating a potential hazard when vehicles open their doors. The bike lane is also immediately adjacent to a high volume of traffic on Ocean Street.
- **Class III (Bike Route).** A route designated by signs or pavement markings where bicyclists share the road with drivers. The segment of Ocean Street between Soquel Avenue and Barson Street is a Class III bike route.

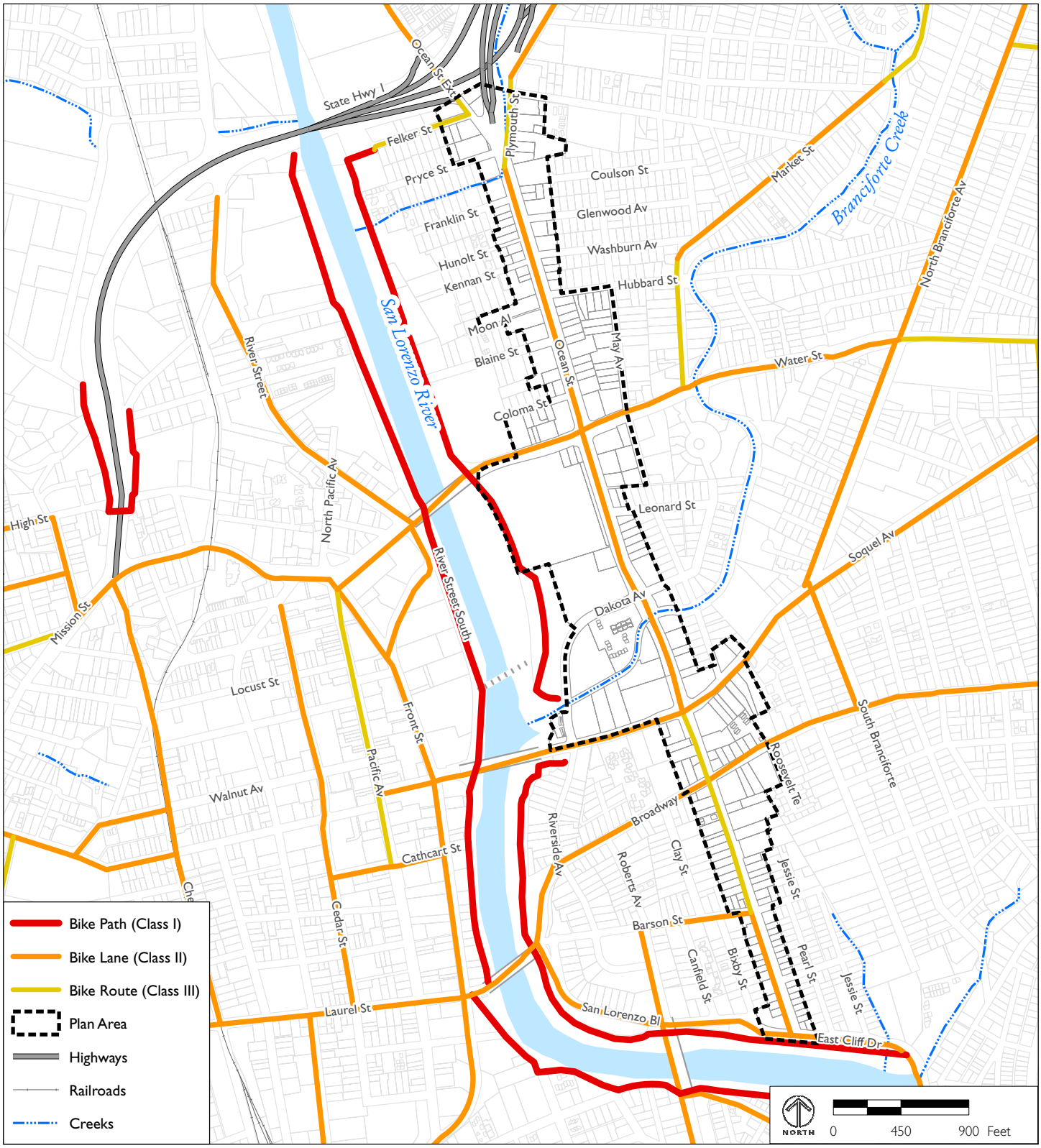
Some businesses on Ocean Street offer bicycle parking on site. However, there are no on-street bicycle racks on Ocean Street's narrow sidewalks.

2. Pedestrian Network

Sidewalks are present on all streets within the Plan Area. Most sidewalks are narrow and can accommodate only a limited number of pedestrians. The sidewalks generally range from 5 to 8 feet wide, although wider sidewalks are present in some locations, such as near the Best Western All Suites Inn on Ocean Street and Soquel Avenue. Increased building setbacks allowed the sidewalks to be widened to 10 feet at this northeast corner of the intersection.

On the upper portion of Ocean Street above Water Street, there are pedestrian crossings at its signalized intersections with Plymouth Street, Washburn Avenue/Kennan Street and Water Street, with approximately 900 to 1,100 feet between crossings.

In the central portion of Ocean Street, there are crossings at its signalized intersections with Water Street and Soquel Avenue, located approximately



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

FIGURE 4-2

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

1,800 feet apart. There are also two unprotected crosswalks, where vehicles are not required to stop unless a pedestrian is crossing. They are located across from the County Government Center and at Dakota Avenue. Including these unprotected crosswalks, distances between crossings range from approximately 475 to 800 feet.

On lower Ocean Street below Soquel Avenue, there are crossings at Ocean Street's signalized intersections with Broadway and San Lorenzo Boulevard, as well as a crossing at its stop-controlled intersection with Barson Street. Typical distances between crosswalks in this area range from approximately 400 to 800 feet.

An existing pedestrian bridge connects San Lorenzo Park to River Street South, two blocks from Pacific Avenue. In addition, the City plans to build a new pedestrian bridge across the river at Felker Street, at the north of the Plan Area. The City also intends to extend the path along the river levee from the Soquel Avenue bridge to San Lorenzo Park, with a new pedestrian bridge over the mouth of Branciforte Creek; however, this project has not yet been funded.

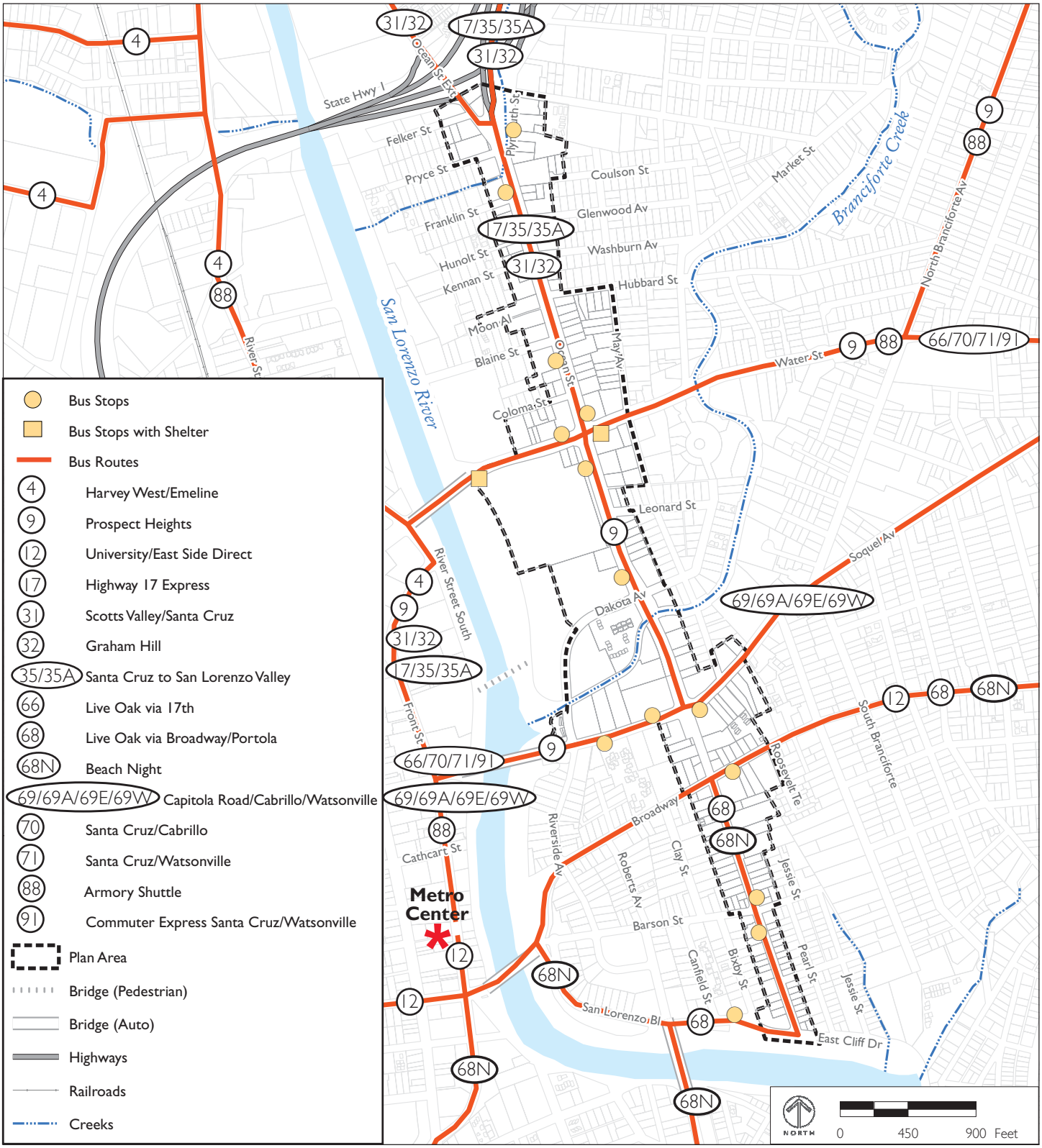
C. Transit Service

Public transportation within the Plan Area is offered by the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District (Metro), the public transit system for Santa Cruz County. Metro operates 39 routes, 20 of which operate during weekends; 15 of these routes run through the Plan Area, eight of which operate on weekends. In general, the Plan Area's bus routes have 30- to 60-minute headways between buses.

Figure 4-3 shows bus routes that travel through the Plan Area. Most of the Plan Area's bus routes serve the Santa Cruz Metro Center and must travel through the Plan Area to reach Eastside Santa Cruz, as well as the Capitola Mall and other points east. Four of the bus routes that travel on Ocean Street

itself do so in order to reach Highway 17 and travel to Scotts Valley and other points north; these routes include the Highway 17 Express, which provides commuter service to Downtown San Jose's Amtrak station.

There are no bus routes that run the entire length of the Ocean Street corridor. In addition, the only bus route that runs directly from Ocean Street to UCSC provides only one trip to campus each day, and it does not operate at all on weekends or during the summer.



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

FIGURE 4-3

BUS STOPS AND ROUTES