

Los Altos Complete Streets Plan

Existing Conditions

January 2021

alta

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Demographics and Equity	1
Population Density.....	1
Age	1
Access to a Vehicle.....	1
Median Household Income.....	1
CalEnviroScreen 3.0	2
Land Use	7
Key destinations.....	7
Employment and Commute Patterns	9
Commute to Work	9
Top Employers	10
Employment Destinations.....	10
Bicycling and Walking Conditions	13
Existing Bicycle Facilities	13
Bicyclist- and Pedestrian- Involved Collisions	15

Introduction

Introduction

This memo provides a broad overview of the existing conditions as they relate to walking and bicycling in Los Altos. This memo builds on the extensive existing conditions work located in the City's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plans and updates select demographic and infrastructure changes since these two plans were adopted. The information from previous planning efforts, new analysis in this document, and the input of community residents, the Los Altos Complete Streets Commission, City Council, and many others will be used to develop new and revised policies and projects for the future.

Demographics and Equity

Understanding a community's demographics is paramount to planning and prioritizing transportation facility improvements to ensure that projects improve accessibility, provide the greatest public benefit and serve communities equitably.

Population Density

Los Altos is a small residential community of approximately 30,588 residents in Northern Santa Clara County, in the heart of Silicon Valley, just 40 miles south of San Francisco. Compared to its neighbors, Los Altos at approximately 4,720 people per square mile is slightly less dense than neighboring Mountain View (6,899 people/sq mi) and Sunnyvale (6,932 people/sq mi), but more dense than neighboring Palo Alto (2,740 people/sq mi) and Los Altos Hills (952 people/ sq mi). Population density is one piece of information that can inform where infrastructure should be placed to meet demand.

Age

The median age is 45.8 years old, which is about 25 percent higher than the median age of California (36.3). About 46 percent of residents are either under the age of 18 years or 65 years or over. This is important because these residents are less likely to be able to drive, and are more likely to rely on transit and active transportation modes to reach their destinations. **Figure 2** on the following page shows the percentage of area residents that are under 18 or 65 and over by census tract.

Access to a Vehicle

The vast majority of Los Altos workers over the age of 16 have access to a vehicle. According to American Community Survey data, less than 100 (0.6 percent) of Los Altos workers over the age of 16 do not have access to a vehicle. The percentage of workers over the age of 16 without access to a vehicle in Mountain View (4.8 percent) is higher. Understanding where a concentration of these workers live helps inform decisions about providing additional transportation options to meet their needs. **Figure 3** on the following page shows the percentage of workers over the age of 16 by census tract that do not have access to a vehicle.

Median Household Income

Los Altos is an affluent city, and the median household income is \$215,339, more than double the same figure for the State of California. **Figure 4** on page 8 shows the median household income for each census tract in Los Altos and surrounding communities.

CalEnviroScreen 3.0

CalEnviroScreen 3.0 is a tool developed by the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) that assigns a social and environmental equity score to census tracts based on pollution and sociodemographic data. Every census tract in Los Altos is in the lower 20 percentiles, signifying that its exposure to environmental hazards, pollution, and other sociodemographic risks is far below the State mean. **Figure 5** on page 8 shows the area’s CalEnviroScreen 3.0 scores.

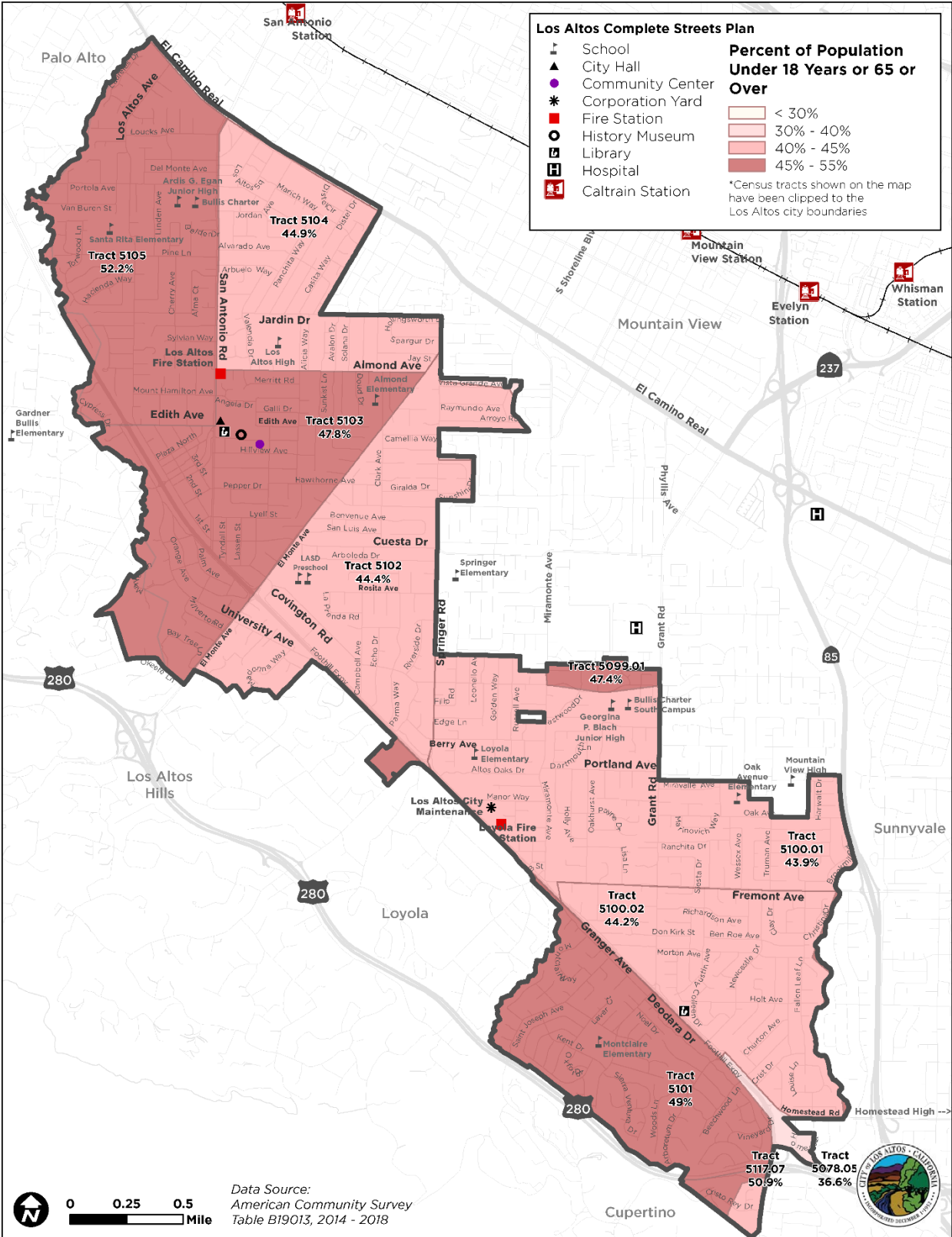


Figure 1 - Percent of Population Under 18 Years or 65 Years or Over

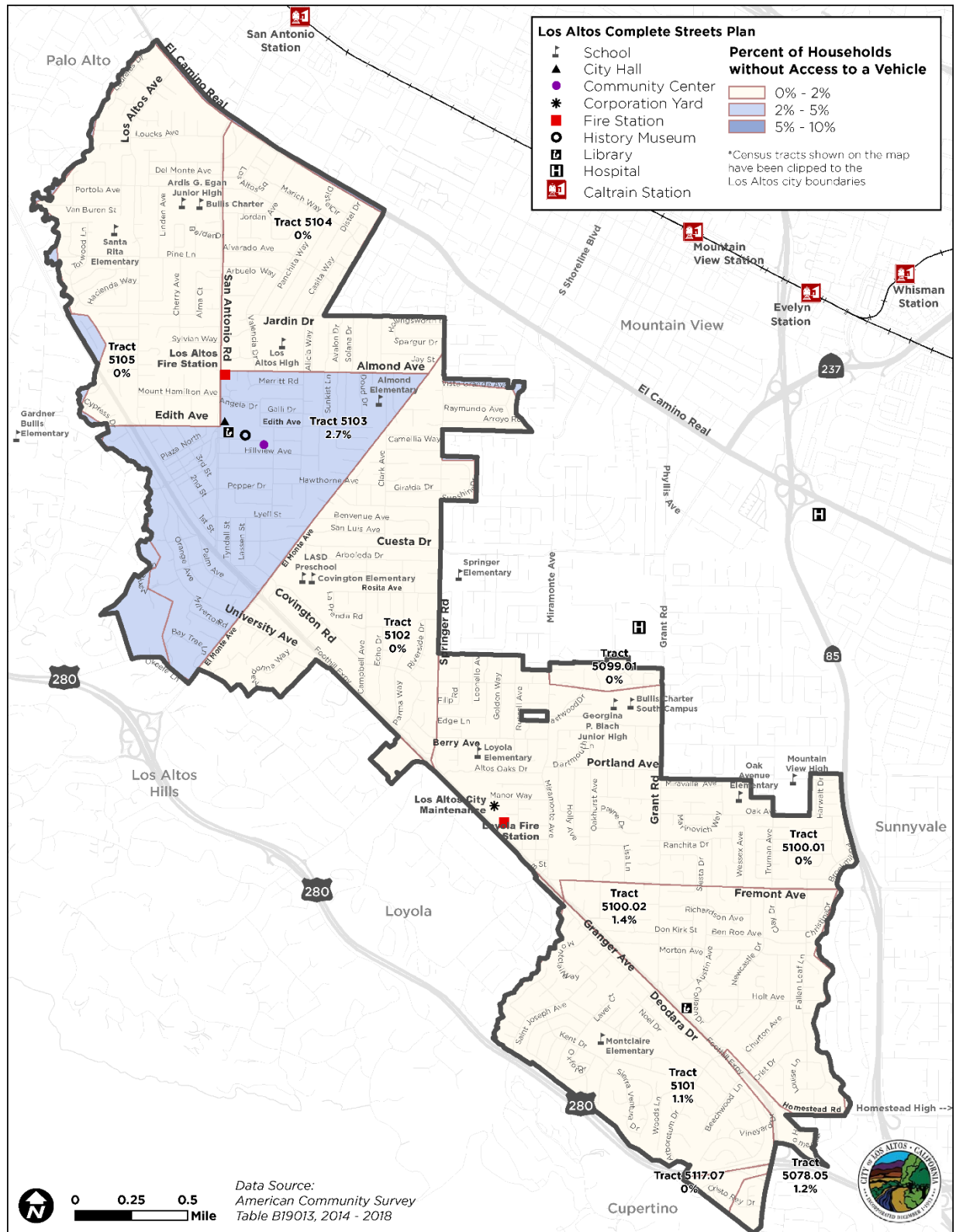


Figure 2 Percentage of Workers Without Access to a Vehicle

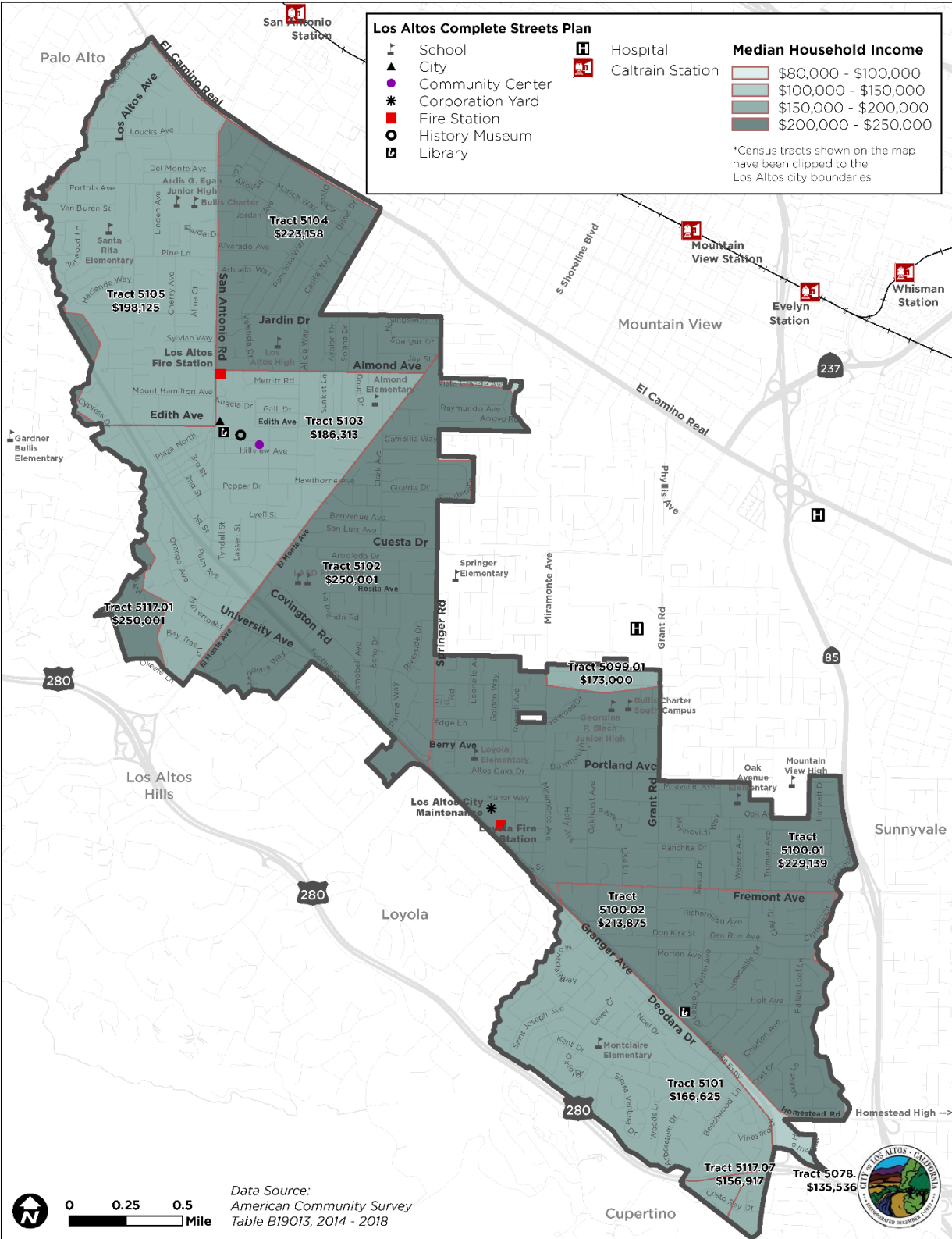


Figure 3- Median Household Income

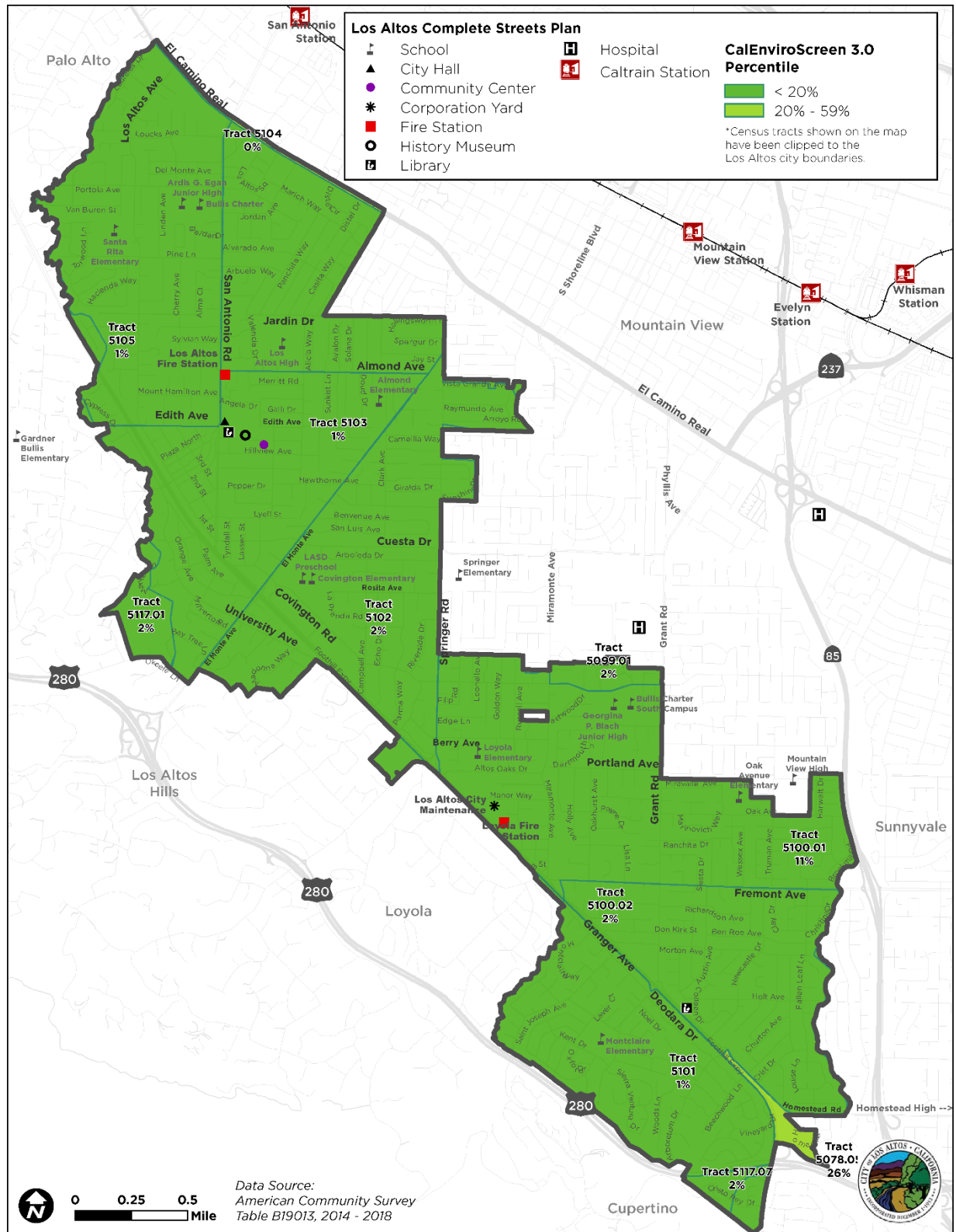


Figure 4 - CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Percentile Scores

Land Use

The arrangement of different land uses and distance between them is useful to understand where people live, work, recreate, shop, and go to school. A mixture of land uses in close proximity encourages short trips that can be accomplished by walking or bicycling as an alternative to driving. Understanding where the City is planning new development is also helpful to make sure that walking and bicycling facilities meets future demand. Los Altos is primarily composed of single-family residential neighborhoods served by seven small retail districts. The City is also home to small businesses, schools, parks, and recreational centers. **Figure 1** on the following page shows land uses in Los Altos.

Key Destinations

Primary trip generators and destinations in Los Altos include:

Retail Districts

Downtown and the Village Court/El Camino Real area are the largest and busiest shopping areas within the City. Neighborhood commercial centers that support residential include Loyola Corners, Woodland, Rancho Shopping Center, and Foothill Crossing. Additional commercial nodes include medical facilities, and the City's civic/senior center complex near Hillview and San Antonio Road.

Medical Services

While nearby El Camino Hospital and Stanford Medical Center offer health specialists, there are local general practitioners, dentists, eye doctors, and other medical professional offices that generate trips to and within Los Altos' neighborhood commercial zones such as on the west side of Altos Oaks Drive and along San Antonio Road near Downtown Los Altos.

Parks and Schools

Schools in Los Altos are neighborhood-based, with elementary schools serving smaller enrollment areas than the junior high school that pulls from wider areas. Los Altos High School pulls students from the cities of Mountain View, Los Altos, and Los Altos Hills. Additionally, neighborhood parks or playgrounds are found within walking distance (approximately ½ mile) of nearly every resident of Los Altos.

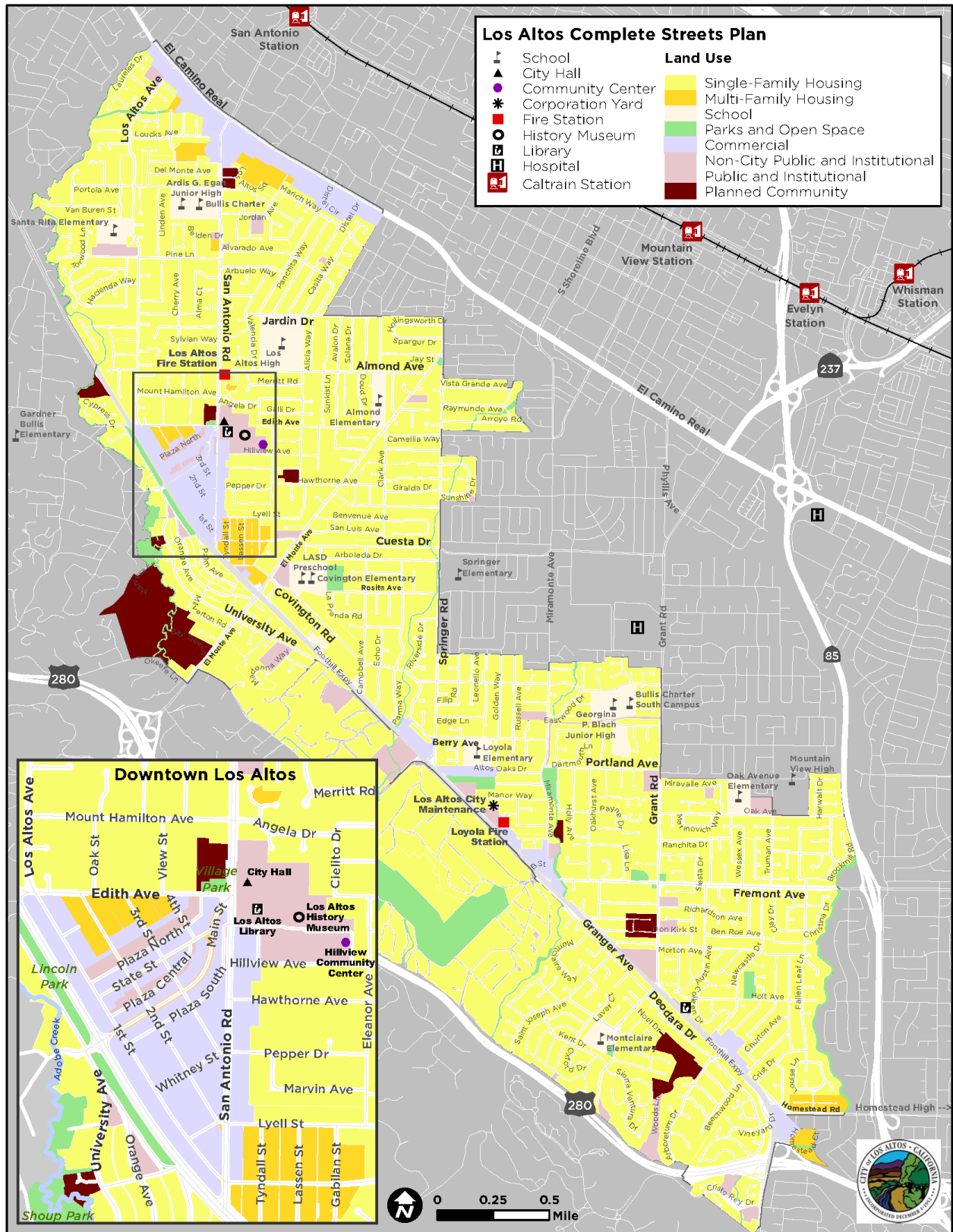


Figure 5 - Land Use Map

Employment and Commute Patterns

Most workers in Los Altos commute to other areas in the Silicon Valley for work, but there are many employers and key destinations in Los Altos and neighboring towns. This section looks at commute patterns of Los Altos residents and top employers in Los Altos. While not every work trip may make sense for biking, the rise in popularity of e-bikes has extended the distance people are willing to travel. Understanding the patterns will also make sure comfortable facilities are available to meet demand. For workers interested in taking transit, providing a pleasant walking experience to high use transit stops is important.

Commute to Work

The breakdown of how Los Altos workers commute to work is listed in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Mode Share of Commute to Work for Los Altos Workers

Travel Mode	Total Number	Percentage of Total
Drove Alone	10,144	78.0%
Carpooled	736	5.7%
Public Transit	379	2.9%
Bicycle	260	2.0%
Walked	163	1.3%
Other	82	0.6%
Worked at Home	1,250	9.6%

Source: ACS 2018 5-year estimates, Table B08006: Means of Transportation to Work

Top Employers

The top employers in the City are listed in **Table 2** below. It should be noted that these employers draw their workforce from throughout the region, not just Los Altos.

Table 2. City of Los Altos Principal Employers

Employer	Employees	% of Total City Employment
Los Altos School District	568	4.26%
Whole Foods Market	242	1.81%
Los Altos High School	217	1.63%
Palo Alto Medical Foundation	135	1.01%
City of Los Altos	133	1.00%
Coldwell Banker	130	0.97%
Adobe Animal Hospital	129	0.97%
Alain Pinel Realtors	107	0.80%
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation	100	0.75%
Trader Joes	71	0.53%
Total	1,832	13.73%
Total Employees Working in the City	13,341	

Source: City of Los Altos Comprehensive Annual Financial Report: Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2018

Employment Destinations

About 57.8% of Los Altos residents travel less than 10 miles to get to work, 21.8% travel 10 to 24 miles, while the remaining 20.3% travel over 25 miles. **Figure 6** on the following page shows where Los Altos residents commute to work.

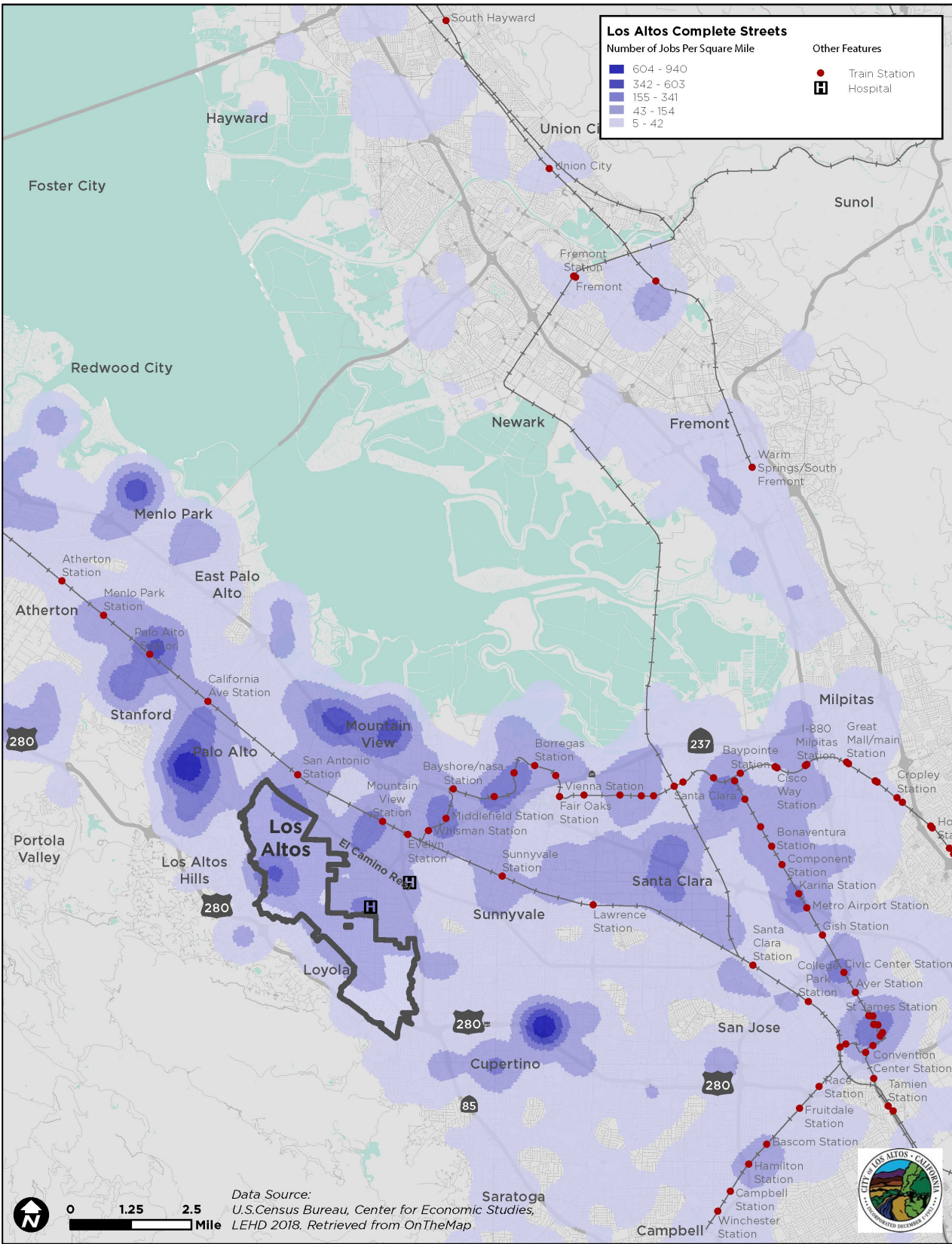


Figure 6 - Los Altos Employment Destinations for Residents

Bicycling and Walking Conditions

While approximately 73 percent of workers in Los Altos drive a vehicle or carpool to work, many trips happen on foot, bike, transit, or other non-vehicular mode. This section of the report details existing bicycle facilities in and around Los Altos, and maps bicyclist- and pedestrian- involved collisions in the City.

Existing Bicycle Facilities

Los Altos has approximately 26 miles of bicycle facilities. **Table 3** below shows the total mileage of bicycle facilities within the City, broken down by facility type. **Figure 7** on the following page shows the location and extents of bicycle facilities in and around Los Altos.

Table 3. Bicycle Facility Mileage by Facility Type

Facility Type	Mileage
Class I Multi-Use Path	2.1
Class II Bicycle Lane	10.7
Class III Bicycle Route	13.2
Total	26 miles

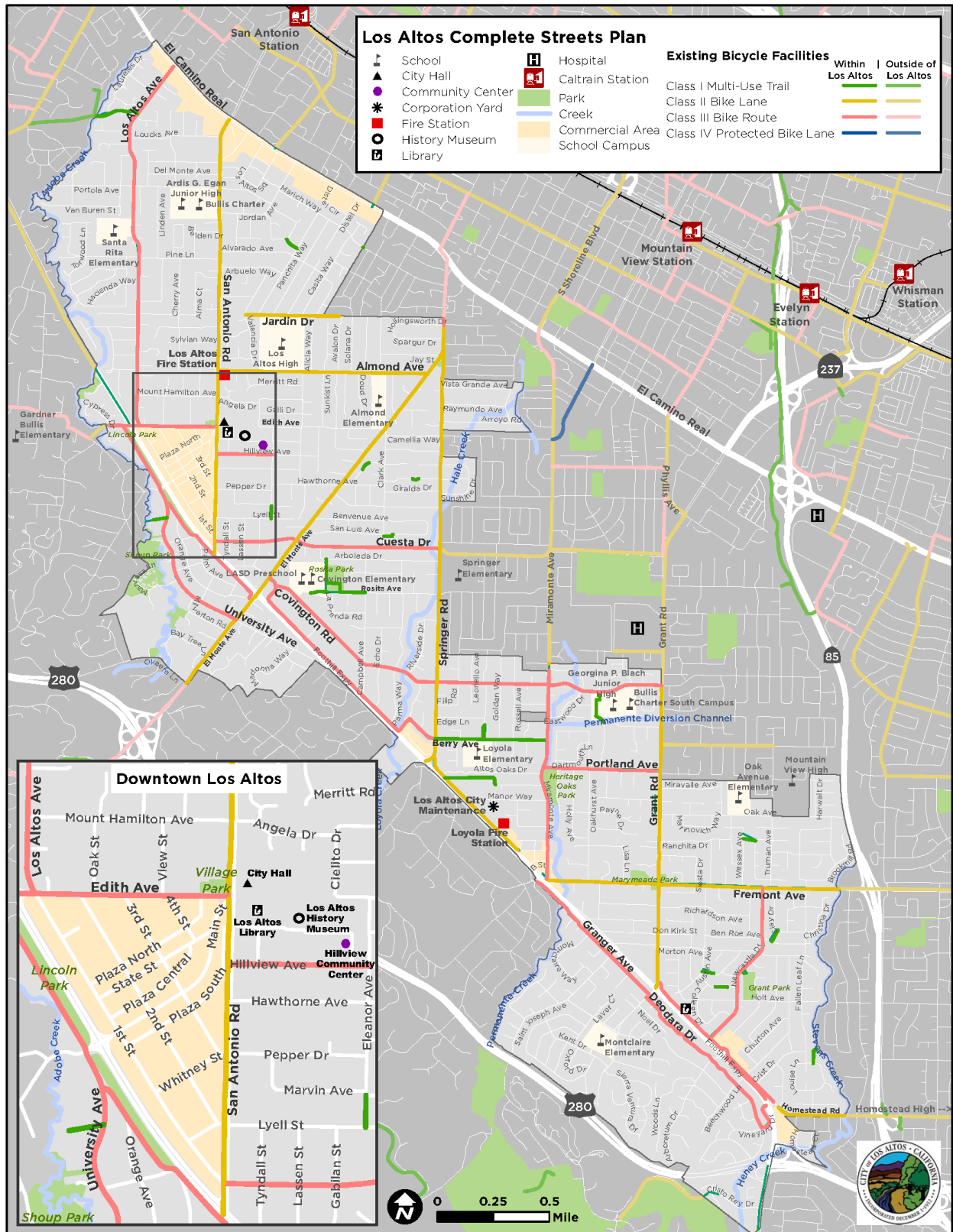


Figure 7 - Existing Bicycle Facilities

Bicyclist- and Pedestrian- Involved Collisions

To better understand bicyclist and pedestrian safety conditions in Los Altos, this section quantifies and maps pedestrian- and/or bicyclist- involved collisions in the City. The collision data was acquired from UC Berkeley's Transportation Injury Mapping System (TIMS) for collisions occurring between January 1, 2015 and December 31, 2019. This data omits collisions that do not involve an injury or death (property damage only collisions).

During the 5-year study period, there were a total of 422 collisions within the City involving at least one injury. Of these collisions, 90 involved a bicyclist, while 31 involved a pedestrian. Eleven of these crashes involved a severe injury or death. **Figures 10 and 11** on pages 16 and 17 show the locations of bicyclist- and pedestrian-involved collisions. Locations of collisions involving a severe injury or death are also mapped.

Figure 8 at right shows the top five primary collision factors segmented by the party at fault for bicyclist-involved collisions. The top collision factor was "Automobile Right of Way," which includes collisions where it was determined that the motor vehicle had the right-of-way and a party (of any mode) did not yield to the driver's right-of-way or the driver observed his or her right-of-way improperly, depending on which party is listed at fault. A common citation under this category is for drivers who do not yield to oncoming traffic during a left turn or U-turn. Other citations include not yielding properly at a stop sign, and not yielding when entering a road from a property. This also covers not yielding to pedestrians for right turns on red.

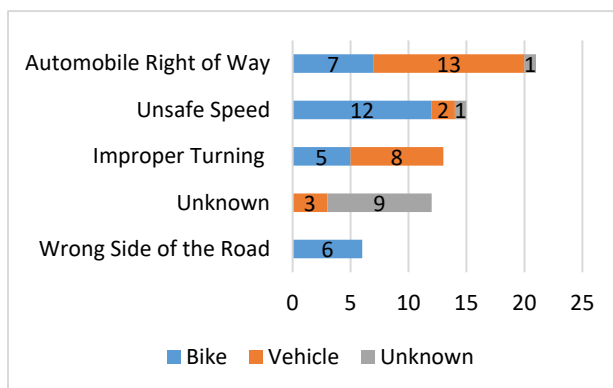


Figure 8 – Bicyclist-Involved Collisions Primary Collision Factor by Party at Fault

Figure 9 at right shows the primary collision factors segmented by party at fault for pedestrian-involved collisions. The most common collision factor was "Pedestrian Right of Way," which includes collisions where it was determined that the pedestrian had the right-of-way and the motorist did not. This is a common citation is for drivers not yielding to a pedestrian at a crosswalk or at a driveway. The next most common collision factor was "Pedestrian Violation," which includes collisions where it was determined that the pedestrian did not follow a rule of the road. This is a common citation is for a pedestrian crossing outside of a crosswalk or not yielding to vehicles. It also includes pedestrians crossing improperly during the flashing "DON'T WALK" or red phase of a signal, suddenly leaving the curb, and walking in the roadway on the right-hand side of the road.

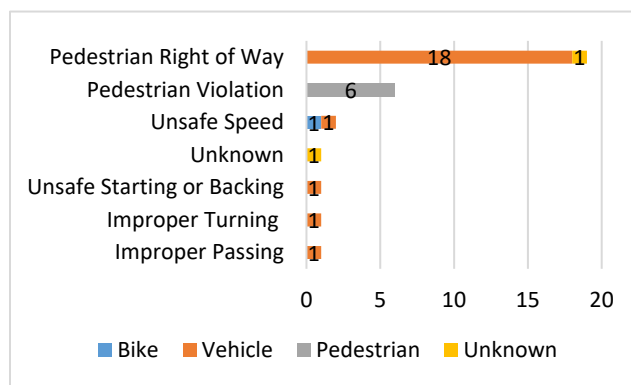


Figure 9 - Pedestrian-Involved Collisions, Primary Collision Factor by Party at Fault

Key Findings

Assessing current conditions is a key step to developing recommendations for investment in infrastructure and programs that promotes walking and biking as safe and convenient modes of transportation. The following key findings will help guide the recommendations process:

- Primary destinations people are commuting to/from include Downtown, and schools and parks throughout the city.
- There is high demand for accessing services in Downtown Los Altos, such as medical facilities.
- The city's existing grid network makes bicycling a viable transportation option, but the bicyclist-involved collision rates make it clear that there are challenges.
- The existing bicycle and pedestrian networks are extensively built out, but the quality of these facilities may not be adequate enough for residents to feel safe and comfortable frequently using active transportation as a means of transportation. The percentage of residents walking or biking to work is still quite low.
- Bicycle collisions are concentrated along major corridors with existing facilities, such as Granger Avenue, Edith Avenue, San Antonio Road, Portland Avenue, and Fremont Avenue. Some of these corridors may be safer to ride on with upgraded facilities including bicycle crossings, buffers on existing bike lanes, and/or traffic calming. Many of these occurred due to violation of automobile right-of-way, unsafe speeds, or improper turning, both from bicyclists and drivers. This suggests that beyond infrastructure, bicycle safety education may benefit Los Altos residents.
- Pedestrian collisions are concentrated in Downtown and along El Camino Real, Los Altos' major commercial districts. The majority of these were due to pedestrian right-of-way violations. Higher-visibility crossings, increased signage, and other improvements could make these locations safer for people walking. Additionally, there may be a need for pedestrian safety campaigns that target unsafe driver behavior.