

# **Joint Report Regarding the Design of the Proposed Safeway Redevelopment Plan for the Rockridge Shopping Center**

**December 8, 2010**

**The following neighborhood organizations have contributed to this report –**

FANS – Friends and Neighbors of Safeway  
PANIL – Piedmont Avenue Neighborhood Improvement League  
RCPC – Rockridge Community Planning Council  
STAND – Standing Together for Accountable Neighborhood Development  
ULTRA – Urbanists for a Livable Temescal Rockridge Area

**We want this to be a successful project for Safeway, our neighborhoods and the City as a whole.**

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# Deficiencies in the present proposal –

This road is an uninviting featureless blind drive leading to the loading docks and the parking lot.

This drive should be an internal street that connects to the existing streets. In this proposal it is artificial and contrived and nothing more than a parking lane.

For as much as possible there needs to be store entrances along Broadway.



This is the most prominent corner of the site. Instead of retreating from it the project needs to meet the street.

The eastern half of the site is still a typical suburban super-market strip mall. The Safeway is poorly situated, poorly accessible to pedestrians and transit patrons and not easily visible from the street. The large surface parking lot is both unattractive and an inefficient use of space, especially in this urban setting.



The project walls itself off from Pleasant Valley. These storefronts need to have entrances here too.

The project design makes poor use of the quarry pond amenity and what is proposed next to the pond will not attract patrons to it.

The fundamental flaw in this proposal is that it is inward facing and does not respond to or integrate itself with the adjacent urban neighborhoods. And in an attempt to disguise this it is sheathed in a bewildering array of textures, styles and articulations.

# City, Bay Area and State policies regarding urban in-fill development –

We strongly believe that Safeway's proposal for the Broadway & Pleasant Valley rebuild is contrary to the goals of City of Oakland policies and initiatives, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission goals as well as state law.

## City of Oakland Policies and Initiatives –

In 1998 Oakland adopted a visionary General Plan whose explicit intent is to promote higher density mixed-use development along our city's transit corridors.

Oakland is in the midst of updating the zoning for the city's commercial corridors to comply with the vision articulated in the General Plan by allowing for higher-density, mixed-use development on our transit corridors. This site is proposed to be a higher density mixed-use node.

The city is also in the process of preparing a Climate Action Plan for Oakland. A draft of this plan is already circulating and the city is soliciting public comment on it. Multiple sections of this plan call for higher-density, mixed-use development along transit corridors as well as even higher density Transit Oriented Development at transit nodes.

The city has commissioned at least one six figure retail study and analysis of our city, the Conley report, and the Safeway at Broadway & Pleasant Valley is one of only five finalist nodes specifically called out in the report with more detailed analysis and proposals. What Safeway has proposed does NOT reflect the conclusions of the Conley report.

## Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District Policies –

All three organizations have formed a joint regional planning initiative known as FOCUS, which is the regional blueprint plan for the San Francisco Bay Area. The centerpiece of the FOCUS strategy is the creation of Priority Development Areas (PDAs) in which incentives for compact, transit-oriented development will be used to help bridge the gap between regional objectives and local land-use authority. Oakland has designated Safeway at Broadway & Pleasant Valley as a Priority Development Area. What is presently proposed does NOT reflect the goals of the "Transportation 2035 Plan" as adopted by the MTC.

## California Laws –

At the state level we have at least two laws that also promote transit-oriented development – SB 375 (2008) and AB 32 (2006). Both compel local planning agencies to make planning choices that reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT.) What is proposed is a car-centric mall and opposite the intent of these laws.

# The Conley Report and how it pertains to this site –

**a. The Nodes Combined**

Major development changes will occur in these two nodes in the near to intermediate term. These two nodes abut some of the City's most affluent neighborhoods, yet neither provide the kind of neighborhood gathering places that are found in the Rockridge, Montclair, and Lakeshore nodes, or is emerging in the nearby Temescal node. Challenges and opportunities for retail enhancement in this node include the following:

- The Rockridge Shopping center underutilizes a rare commodity in Oakland: a retail site over 10 acres in a prime location. Today the center operates as a suburban retail solution in a key urban location. A proposal to relocate and expand the Safeway store only partially begins to intensify the use of the site by adding parking above the supermarket. More intensive use of this site could provide an expansion opportunity for the supermarket and also meet the City's strategic goal of expanding its supply of comparison retail stores.
- Existing development at the intersection of 51<sup>st</sup> and Broadway is auto-oriented and internally focused, with little encouragement for pedestrians to patronize retail on adjacent sites.
- In addition to the shopping center, the south western and south eastern corners of the intersection are likely to be redeveloped in the near future, creating an opportunity for re designing the way this important junction functions as one of the City's prime retail locations.
- Just north of Oakland Technical High School the site of the former Dave's Coffee Shop is available for development in conjunction with an adjacent site now operated as a Toyota used cars lot. Mixed-use development on this site has been discussed, but plans are currently on hold due to the economy.
- In the Oakland Tech node the available development site backs up to single family homes that will need to be protected from the impacts of shopper access, service and circulation.
- Retail on Broadway in the Oakland Tech node has diminished overtime, and with few exceptions, the current mix is underperforming and underutilized.

**2. Enhancement Strategy**

- ❖ Major development changes in these nodes provide an opportunity to redevelop the pattern of land use to one that is less auto-oriented, and supports creation of a pedestrian environment that serves the adjacent neighborhoods.
- ❖ Incorporate a viable comparison goods component into large scale retail

## 51st/ Broadway

The 51st and Broadway node is located along Broadway, between the Rockridge and Upper Broadway/Oakland Tech retail nodes. It contains the Rockridge Shopping Center, an auto-oriented neighborhood shopping center with surface parking on a key 12 acre site. The shopping center is anchored by Safeway and a 100,000 SF Longs Drug store that operates more like a big box comparison store than a drug store. Safeway, which controls most of the site through a long term ground lease, has plans to relocate and expand its store. In 2006, this area had well over \$10 million in total sales. More than 40 percent of total sales were in convenience good shopping. The immediately surrounding areas have high per-capita incomes and smaller households than are average for Oakland. Only a small portion of neighboring households include children.

Other comparison and eating and drinking outlets are located on outlying sites surrounding the shopping center. The long-standing Poppy Fabric store recently closed and both that site and the adjacent vacant lot are available for new development. The Rockridge Shopping Center is well located to serve affluent neighborhoods in Oakland and Piedmont, and is thus a valuable retail enhancement opportunity for the city.

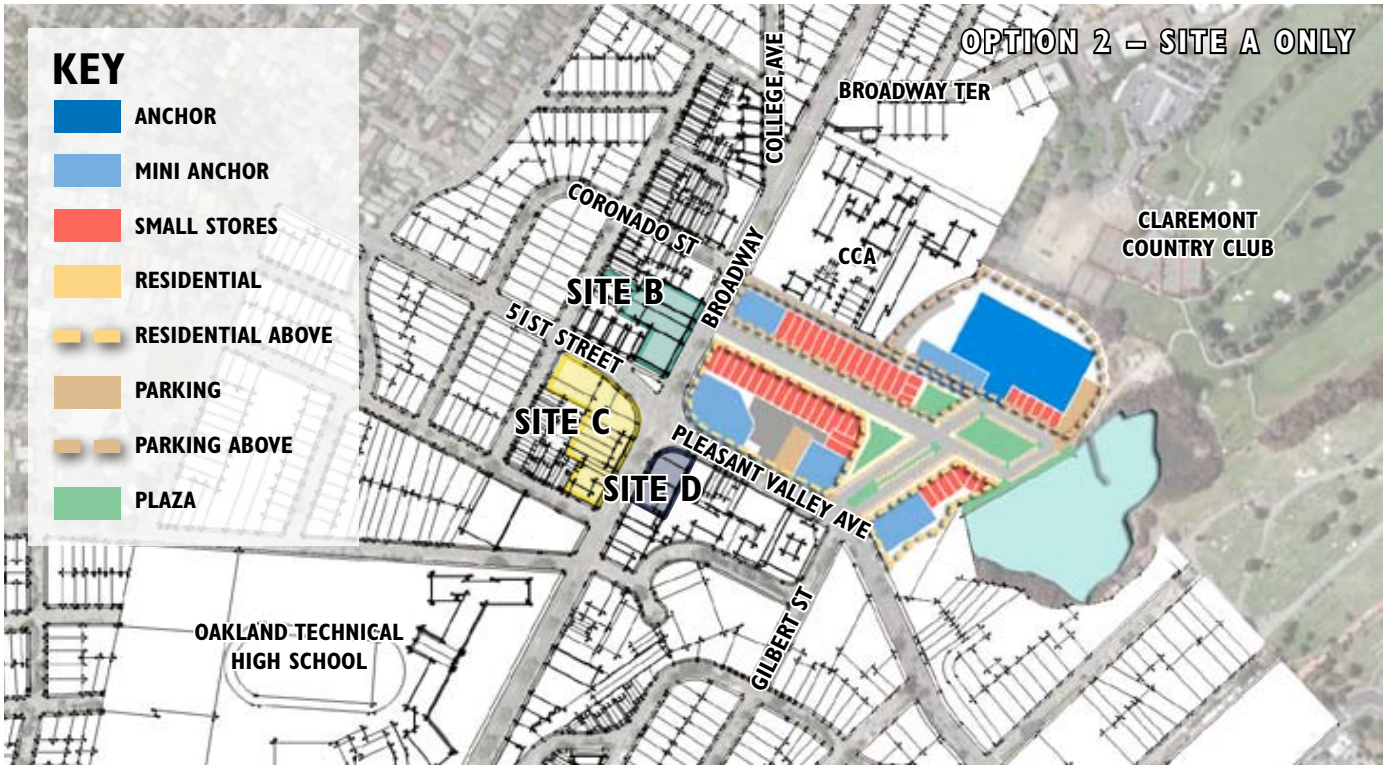
The City should carefully consider future development in this node and how those proposals enhance and protect the City's overall retail sector. This node is classified as a grocery, comparison, and restaurant node that is performing well.

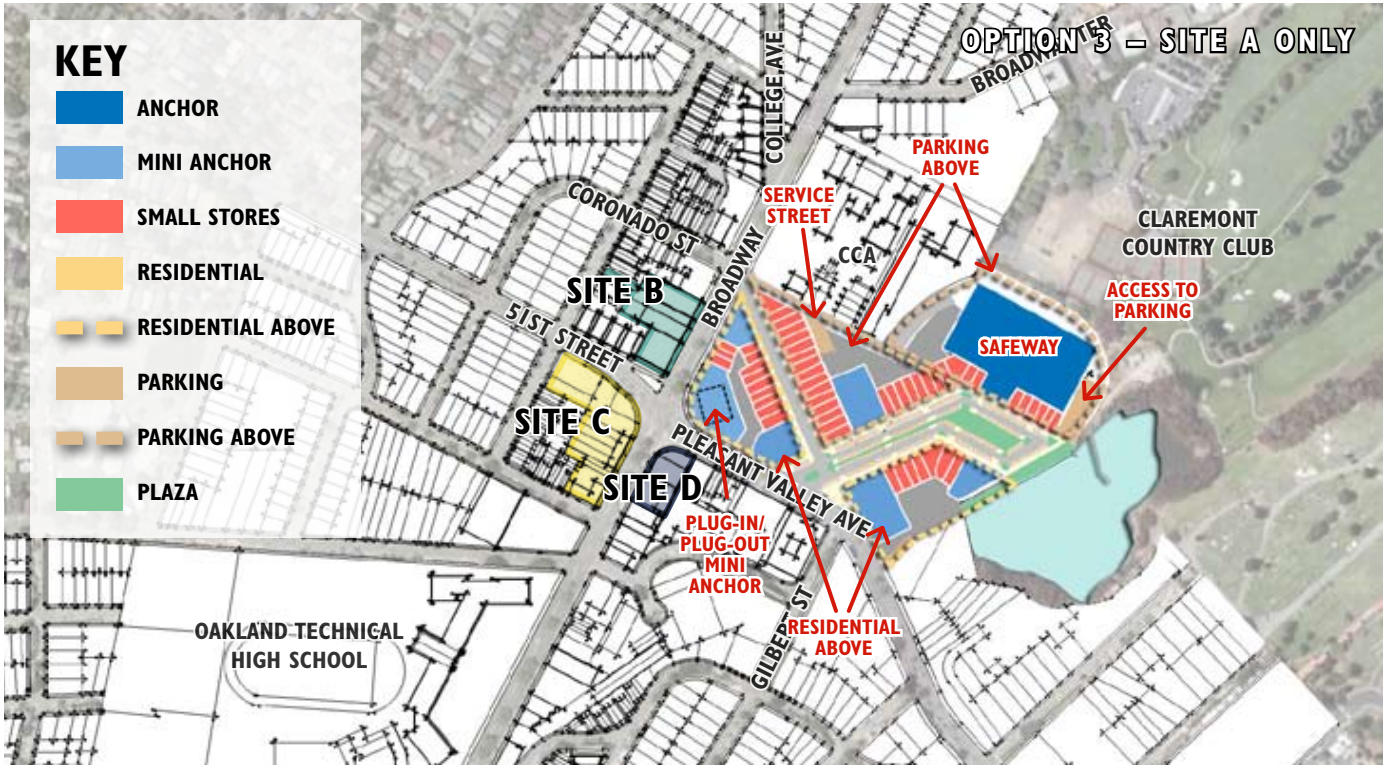


### Node Demographics

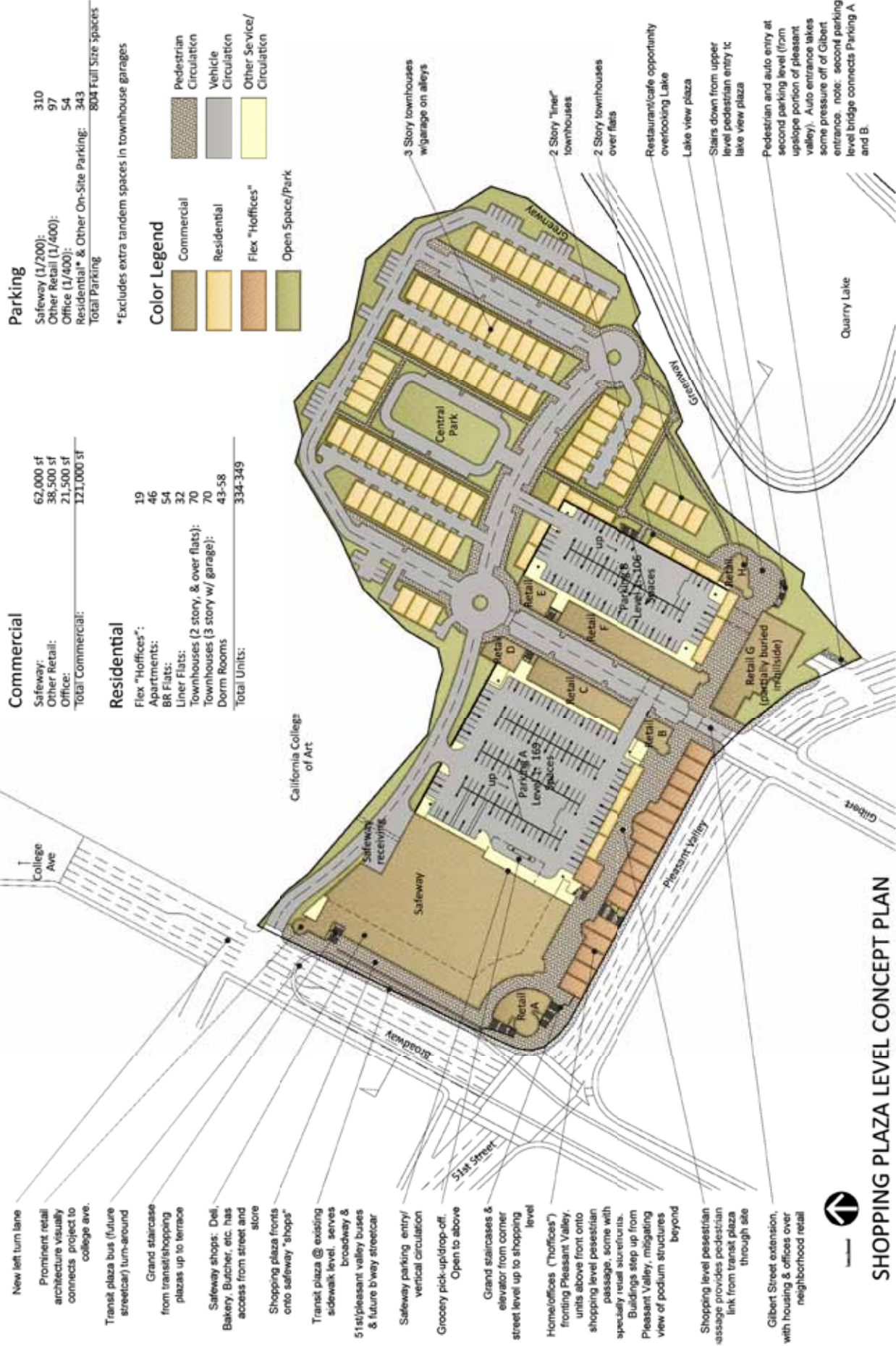
51st & Broadway 2006	1/2 Mile Radius	1 Mile Radius	3 Mile Radius	City of Oakland
Population	7,333	31,143	257,617	400,377
Households	3,916	15,611	115,072	149,082
Households Size	1.86	1.97	2.16	2.64
Per Capita Income	\$43,711	\$41,131	\$32,839	\$25,469
Number of Households with Children	594	2,967	25,408	49,976

Source: Conley Consulting Group, JRDV, Strategic Economics, Claritas, 2008.





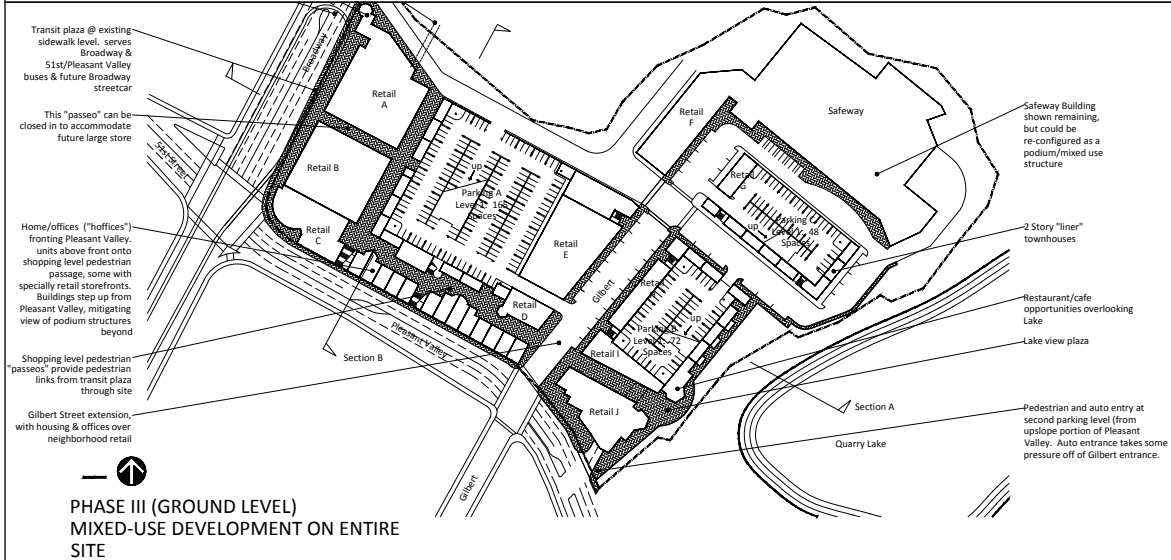
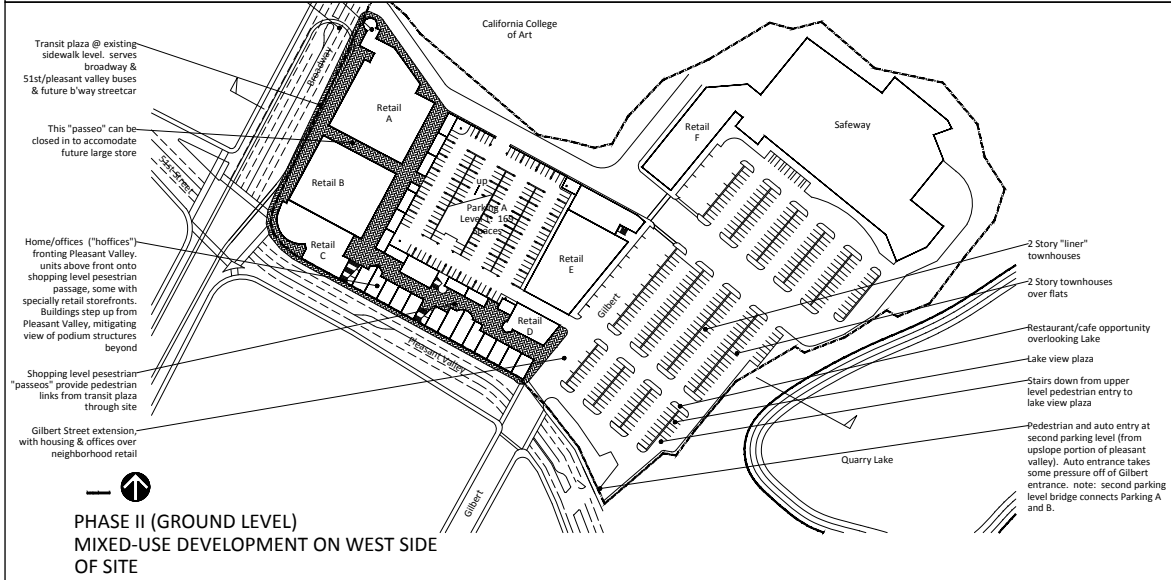
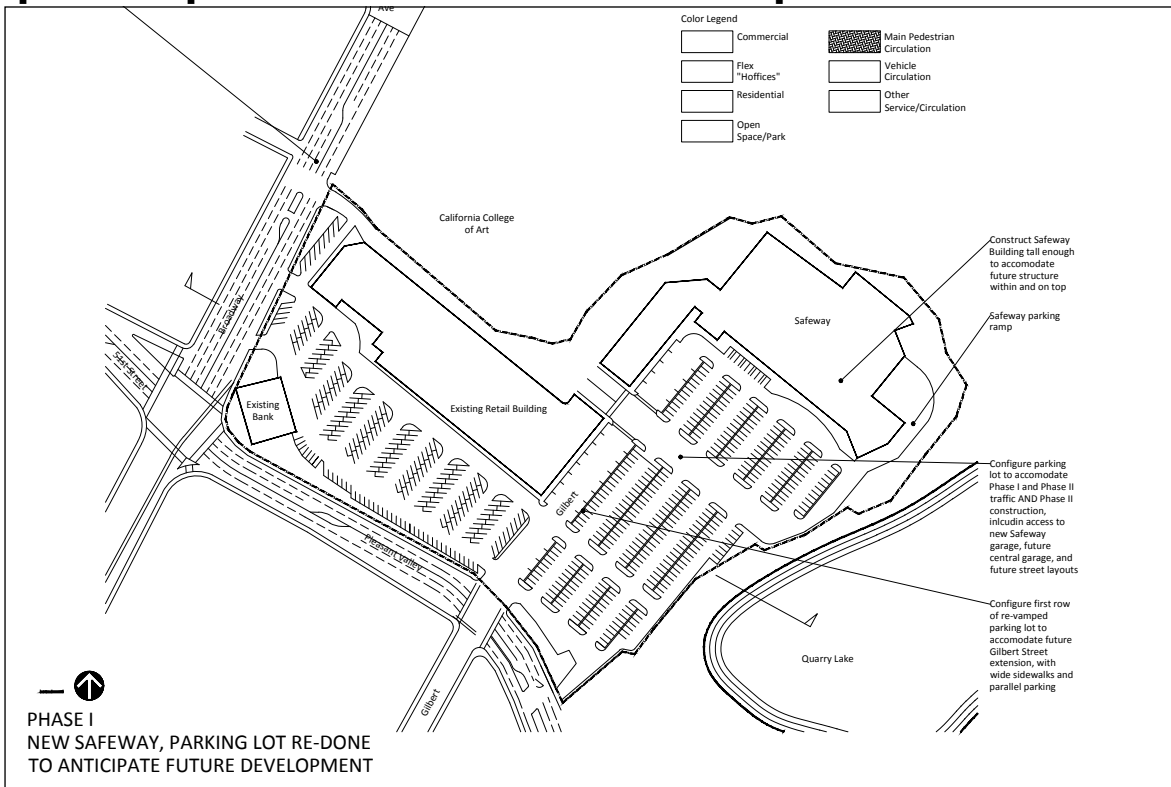
# Concept with a residential emphasis –



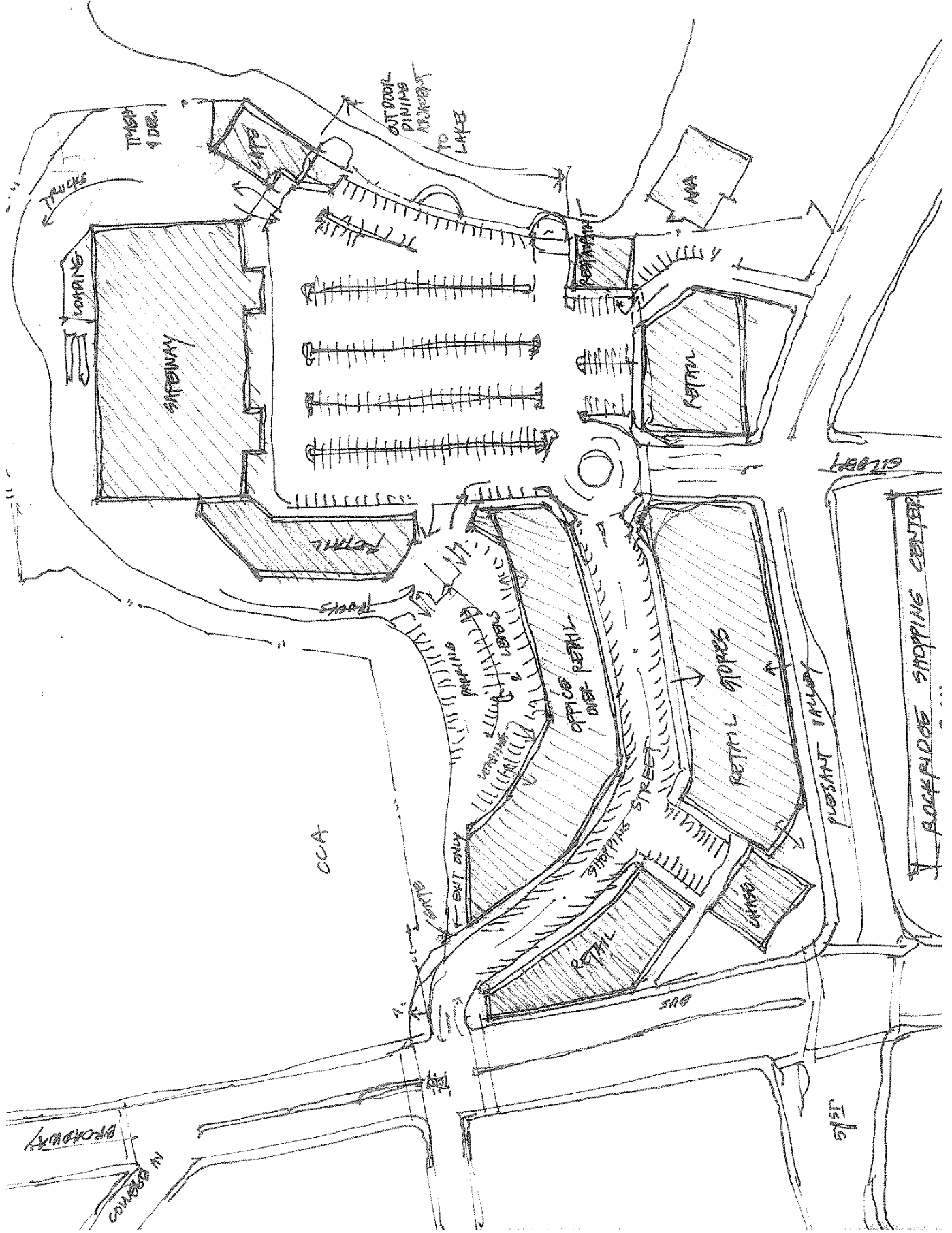
SHOPPING PLAZA LEVEL CONCEPT PLAN

# Rockridge Shopping Center Proposed Alternative

# Concept with phased-in commercial emphasis –



Concept with commercial emphasis that keeps the bank in the same location -



Concept with a more intense commercial emphasis –

