

Chapter 3 is a relatively short chapter that describes the various street and parking lot conditions that generate stormwater runoff in San Mateo County. These distinctions are important to consider because the successful design of green streets responds to the context, opportunities, and constraints found in differing land use conditions.

In terms of streets, four general street types can be described for San Mateo County based on the surrounding land use context or use of the street. They are:

- Low-Density Residential Streets
- High-Density Residential Streets
- Commercial Streets
- Arterial Streets and Boulevards

The predominant land use type found in San Mateo County is residential. As a result, there are a considerable amount of low and high-density residential streets within the region. While residential streets alone do not generate the same amount of runoff as larger commercial or arterial streets, their cumulative area results in significant amounts of stormwater runoff.

For parking lots in San Mateo County, the issue of site context is not much of a factor in determining design solutions. What is important to note is prevalence of extremely large parking lots that are connected to high-traffic volume arterial streets such as El Camino Real. In many cases, these large parking lots are so extensively paved that they contribute runoff from up to 20 acres of surface area. Even the smallest storm events, given this amount of impervious area, can generate substantial amounts of stormwater runoff.

Due to the predominance of residential streets and large-size parking lots within San Mateo County, this might be an excellent area to prioritize for implementing future green street and parking lot retrofits.

The following pages illustrate a “snapshot” of common San Mateo County street and parking lot conditions found in the region. All of the aerial photographs are taken at an altitude of approximately 1,000 feet. Take notice of the impervious area, denoted in shaded areas of red, for each street and parking lot type. In addition, keep in mind that the buildings in each scenario, although not highlighted, also contribute to stormwater runoff that may or may not be discharged to adjacent streets or parking lots. When taking this into account, many areas in San Mateo County are almost completely impervious.



Figure 3-1: Residential, commercial, and arterial street types can be found in close proximity to each other in San Mateo County. However, the design solutions for each can vary considerably in complexity.