

3. Summary of Key Findings

3.1 KEY FINDINGS

To help sort through the information offered about each topic, this chapter summarizes the performance of each alternative relative to the topics analyzed in Chapter 5 Alternatives Evaluation, focusing on those topics where the alternative performs exceptionally well or poorly. Table 5 also provides a complete summary of the differences among the land use alternatives.

The findings of this report are meant to help the reader decide which elements of each of the alternatives should be combined to create the preferred land use and circulation alternatives. There are no value judgements placed on the findings because everyone differs on what outcomes could be considered positive or negative. For example, some individuals might consider maintaining an appropriate jobs-housing balance a top priority while others may place less importance on this issue. The goal of this report is to present sufficient information to let you draw your own conclusions.

– Land Use Alternative A

- This alternative would result in the least amount of residential growth and have lower densities and heights.
- Due to the lower densities, this alternative would likely not be able to meet future RHNA cycles beyond 2031 and would result in fewer residents within close proximity to transit and less publicly accessible open space.

- Since there are fewer residents near transit, the City's per capita VMT (including both residents and workers) would increase under Alternative A. However, total VMT would be lowest under Alternative A because it has the lowest total amount of new residents and job growth.
- All alternatives have the potential to impact historic resources, but Alternative A would propose the fewest changes to the Downtown historic district.
- Although police, fire, schools, parks, and library services would be impacted under all alternatives, Alternative A would necessitate the least expansion of these services because it results in the lowest population growth.
- In terms of equity and environmental justice, this alternative would add fewer residents within proximity to diesel particulate matter exposure but would also provide fewer affordable housing units.
- Alternative A would generate the most positive annual net fiscal impact for the City, producing 13 percent more net revenue (\$980,000) than Alternative B and 56 percent more net revenue (\$2.9 million) than Alternative C. Although Alternative A generates the lowest revenues, it also results in the lowest cost for public services.
- In terms of market feasibility, the land use types and densities would be feasible under Alternative A, although the development community would prioritize medium density development projects (4 to 7 stories) over the low-density projects allowed under Alternative A.

– Land Use Alternative B

- Alternative B would most likely be able to fulfill future State-mandated housing targets, but would have a smaller housing buffer compared to Alternative C.
- Alternative B could result in the most changes to the Downtown historic district.
- The current market climate favors medium densities (4 to 7 stories) because the construction costs and parking requirements enable the project to pencil out. Alternative B includes the most medium density land use designations and would have the highest market feasibility.

– Land Use Alternative C

- Alternative C would generate the greatest residential growth and have the highest heights and densities.
- Since Alternative C has the greatest residential growth, it would most likely be able to fulfill future State-mandated housing targets including a sufficient housing site surplus as preferred by the State Housing and Community Development Department.
- Higher densities around San Mateo’s Caltrain stations and high frequency bus stops, would likely increase transit ridership, resulting in the lowest per capita VMT of the three alternatives. However, total VMT is highest under Alternative C because it has the highest increase in both residents and workers.

- All alternatives would impact public services and schools and generate more water demand than Cal Water’s currently planned available supply, but Alternative C would produce the greatest demand for expansion of both public services and water supply. However, Alternative C could also generate the most publicly accessible private open space.

- Alternative C could generate the most affordable housing, but could also expose the most new residents to diesel particulate matter from trucks, buses, and trains on major nearby arterial roads and highways, including Highway 101, Highway 92, and El Camino Real, as well as the Caltrain rail corridor.

- Land Use Alternative C would have a positive net fiscal impact on the City, generating \$5.2 million net annual in funding after accounting for the City’s annual expenditures. All three land use alternatives would result in a net annual fiscal surplus, but Alternative C would produce the lowest net annual fiscal surplus since it has the highest cost for providing additional public service needs to accommodate the population growth.

- The high construction costs associated with buildings over eight stories and subterranean parking make Alternative C have lower market feasibility given current market conditions, although the market is likely to change over the life of the General Plan.

– Topics with Similar Outcomes Among Alternatives

- Understanding the different pros, cons, and tradeoffs of each alternative is valuable to inform decision-making about the preferred scenario. For some important topics, this evaluation concluded that the outcomes would likely be similar among the three land use alternatives.

- As shown in Table 4, for six of the 28 topics, the analysis concluded that there would not be a meaningful difference among the three land use alternatives. Potential impacts to the wastewater system, stormwater system, sea level rise, flooding, and wildfire hazards and the ability to secure community benefits would be the same under all alternatives.
- These outcomes are similar among the land use alternatives because they are not dependent on specific land use changes. These topics will be influenced more strongly or effectively by the policies and actions in the updated General Plan, as well as by other local, regional, or State actions and regulations.

Table 4 Land Use Alternatives Analysis Summary Matrix

Components	Land Use Alternative A	Land Use Alternative B	Land Use Alternative C
Urban Form			
Height and Density	Has the least high density designations.	Has more high density-designations than Alternative A, but less than Alternative C.	Has the most high density designations.
Ability to meet Future RHNA	Would provide the least assurance of meeting future RHNA cycles and buffers.	Would likely accommodate future RHNA cycles, but would have a smaller buffer compared to Alternative C.	Would provide the most assurance of meeting future RHNA cycles plus buffers.
Job-Housing Balance	Would have slightly more employed residents than local jobs.	Would have an even number of employed residents and local jobs.	Would have an even number of employed residents and local jobs.
Historic Resources	Has fewest changes within the Downtown historic district.	Has the most changes within the Downtown historic district.	Has fewer changes to the Downtown historic district than Alternative B, but more changes than Alternative A.
Traffic			
Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	Would result in least total VMT, but highest per capita VMT.	Would result in less total VMT compared to Alternative C, but more compared to Alternative A. Would result in less per capita VMT than Alternative A, but more than Alternative C.	Would result in most total VMT, but lowest per capita VMT.

Components	Land Use Alternative A	Land Use Alternative B	Land Use Alternative C
Mode Shift	Would result in the least amount of future residents traveling by bus, bicycle and walking.	Would have similar mode shifts as Alternative C and would result in more future residents traveling by bus, bicycle, and walking compared to Alternative A.	Would have similar mode shifts to Alternative C and would result in more future residents traveling by bus, bicycle, and walking compared to Alternative A.
Vehicle-Hours Traveled (VHT)	Would result in the lowest total hours in traffic, but the highest number of hours in traffic per capita.	Alternatives B and C would result in the highest total hours in traffic. Alternative B would have a slightly lower per capita hours in traffic than Land Use Alternative A and higher per capital hours in traffic than Alternative C.	Alternatives B and C would result in the highest total hours in traffic. Alternative C would have the fewest hours in traffic per capita.
Average Speed	Would have the highest average speeds.	Would have similar average speeds as Alternative C and lower average speeds than Alternative A.	Would have similar average speeds as Alternative B and lower average speeds than Alternative A.
Vehicle-Hours of Delay (VHD)	Would have the lowest total hours of vehicle delay.	Would have the highest total hours of vehicle delay.	Would have more total hours of vehicle delay than Alternative A and fewer total hours of vehicle delay than Alternative B.
Utilities			
Water	Would create more water demand than current projected supply, but would create less demand compared to Alternatives B and C.	Would create more water demand than current projected supply, but would create less demand than Alternative C.	Would result in the most water demand compared to Alternatives A and B and would result in the greatest need for additional future water supplies.
Wastewater Service	Wastewater Treatment Plant will have sufficient capacity to handle projected flows, but the use of capacity would have to be negotiated with other members of the Joint Powers Authority.	Wastewater Treatment Plant will have sufficient capacity to handle projected flows, but the use of capacity would have to be negotiated with other members of the Joint Powers Authority.	Wastewater Treatment Plant will have sufficient capacity to handle projected flows, but the use of capacity would have to be negotiated with other members of the Joint Powers Authority.
Stormwater Service	All alternatives would have an equal impact to the stormwater system.	All alternatives would have an equal impact to the stormwater system.	All alternatives would have an equal impact to the stormwater system.
Community Services			
Police	Would create the least demand for additional police services.	Would create more demand for additional police services compared to Alternative A, but less demand compared to Alternative C.	Would create the most demand for additional police services.
Fire	Would create the least demand for additional fire services.	Would create more demand for additional fire services compared to Alternative A, but less demand compared to Alternative C.	Would create the most demand for additional fire services.

Components	Land Use Alternative A	Land Use Alternative B	Land Use Alternative C
Emergency Access	Would have the fewest number of new homes in Study Areas 7, 8, and 9, which are currently difficult to access or pass through.	Would result in the most net new number of homes in Study Areas 8 and 9, which has difficult access	Would result in the most net new number of homes in Study Area 7, which has difficult access
Public Schools	Existing schools would be able to accommodate the additional new students under Alternative A. Would also generate the fewest new students.	Existing schools would be able to accommodate the additional new students under Alternative B. Would generate less students than Alternative C and more students than Alternative A.	Alternative C would exceed existing school capacity, and would also generate the most new students.
Parks and Recreation	All alternatives would further exacerbate the existing park land deficiency. Alternative A would generate the fewest new residents and would have the least demand for new parks compared to Alternatives B and C.	All alternatives would further exacerbate the existing park land deficiency. Alternative B would generate more park demand than Alternative A, but less park demand compared to Alternative C.	All alternatives would further exacerbate the existing park land deficiency. Alternative C would generate the most new residents and would result in the greatest demand for new parks.
Publicly Accessible Privately-Owned Open Space	Has the potential to provide the lowest amount of publicly accessible open space.	Has more potential to provide more publicly accessible open space than Alternative A, but less compared to Alternative C.	Has the potential to provide the most publicly accessible open space.
Library	Would generate the least demand for additional library services.	Would generate more demand for library services compared to Alternative A, but less demand compared to Alternative C.	Would generate the most demand for additional library services.
Environmental Sustainability			
Sea Level Rise	All alternatives would have an equal impact from sea level rise.	All alternatives would have an equal impact from sea level rise.	All alternatives would have an equal impact from sea level rise.
Flooding	All alternatives would have an equal impact from flooding.	All alternatives would have an equal impact from flooding.	All alternatives would have an equal impact from flooding.
Wildfire Risk	Study Area 6 is located within the Wildland Urban Interface for wildfire risk.	Study Area 6 is located within the Wildland Urban Interface for wildfire risk.	Study Area 6 is located within the Wildland Urban Interface for wildfire risk.
Equity and Public Health			
Housing Vulnerability/ Displacement	Would result in the least physical displacement through redevelopment. Displacement as a result of rising housing costs unknown. Includes the least amount of new housing, including less affordable housing.	Displacement as a result of rising housing costs unknown. Would provide more new housing, including affordable housing, than Alternative A, but less than Alternative C.	Displacement as a result of rising housing costs unknown. Would provide the most new housing, including affordable housing.

Components	Land Use Alternative A	Land Use Alternative B	Land Use Alternative C
Collision Reduction	All alternatives could present the opportunity to improve traffic and safety conditions in the study areas.	All alternatives could present the opportunity to improve traffic and safety conditions in the study areas.	All alternatives could present the opportunity to improve traffic and safety conditions in the study areas.
Traffic Density and Diesel Particulate Matter	Would add the fewest residents near diesel particulate matter exposure areas.	Would add more residents near diesel particulate matter exposure areas than Alternative A, but less than Alternative C.	Would add the most residents near diesel particulate matter exposure areas.
Groundwater Threats	Following regulations and appropriate construction practices will reduce the risk from groundwater threats under all alternatives.	Following regulations and appropriate construction practices will reduce the risk from groundwater threats under all alternatives.	Following regulations and appropriate construction practices will reduce the risk from groundwater threats under all alternatives.
Access to Parks and Open Space	Alternative A adds the fewest new residents to study areas with the least walkable park access. It also adds the fewest new residents in study areas with good park access.	Alternative B would add the greatest number of new residents to Study Areas 1-N, 1-S, and 2 that have the least walkable park access, but would add the most residents in 1-C with high park access.	Alternative C would add the greatest number of new residents to Study Area 6, which has low walkable park access, but would add the most residents to Study Areas 3 and 4 that have high park access.
Market Feasibility			
Fiscal Sustainability	Generates the least revenue (\$32.9 million), but would have the lowest costs to provide additional public service and infrastructure. (\$24.8 million).. The annual net fiscal surplus at General Plan buildout is estimated to be \$8.1 million	Would generate more revenue (\$40.3 million) than Alternative A, but less than Alternative C. Would cost more to provide additional public services and infrastructure (\$33.1 million) than Alternative A, but less than Alternative C. The annual net fiscal surplus at General Plan buildout is estimated to be \$7.1 million.	Generates the most revenue (\$48.6 million), but would also have the highest costs to provide for additional public services and infrastructure. (\$43.4 million). The annual <i>net</i> fiscal surplus at General Plan buildout is estimated to be \$5.2 million..
Financial Feasibility	Generally financially feasible.	Offers the greatest potential for near-term development feasibility due to the current feasibility of most midrange-height developments.	Could become more financially feasible if there are above ground parking solutions for high density development and/or changes in real estate economics over time.
Community Benefits			
Community Benefits	All alternatives have the potential to capture community benefits.	All alternatives have the potential to capture community benefits.	All alternatives have the potential to capture community benefits.

CIRCULATION ALTERNATIVES SUMMARY

This section highlights the primary differences between the circulation alternatives. Since land use and the performance of the circulation network are directly related, the circulation alternatives were reviewed in relation to the land use alternatives where feasible. Table 5 summarizes the of the analysis of the circulation alternatives in relation to the land use alternatives. Each analysis was worth three points and each mode had between four and six individual analyses that were combined to get a score for each mode. The pedestrian evaluation did not include land use changes because the analysis did not look at access but instead completing the sidewalk network, potential changes to Downtown and tree coverage. The highest scoring alternative is Land Use Alternative C with Circulation Alternative C. The lowest scoring is Circulation Alternative B with Land Use Alternatives A and B. For a more detailed description of this analysis, please refer to the Multimodal Network section in Section 5.2.

It is important to understand that transit projects and roadway projects on the state highways system envisioned in the alternatives will require partnership and coordination with neighboring jurisdictions, transit operators, and Caltrans to implement and cannot be completed by the City of San Mateo alone.

– Circulation Alternative A

- This alternative would result in the second highest amount of pedestrian improvements and would perform the same under all land use alternatives
- Circulation Alternatives A and C include more bicycle improvements than Circulation Alternative B.
- Circulation Alternative A performed the lowest in terms of transit because it does not include east-west transit connections.

- Bicycle and transit improvements under Circulation Alternative A performed slightly higher when matched with Land Use Alternative C because these improvements would benefit more residents.

– Circulation Alternative B

- Circulation Alternative B includes the fewest number of pedestrian improvements.
- All circulation alternatives include good bicycle network coverage, but because Circulation Alternative B does not include bicycle improvements along El Camino Real it scored the lowest in this category.
- Circulation Alternatives B and C would have the highest transit benefit and both circulation alternatives would perform slightly better under Land Use Alternative C.
- Pedestrian and bicycle improvements included under Circulation Alternative B performed the same when considered in context of the three land use alternatives. However, the transit improvements performed slightly higher under Land Use Alternative C because it would benefit a higher number of people.

– Circulation Alternative C

- Circulation Alternative C would have the highest multi-modal benefit because it anticipates the most pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements.
- The public realm improvements and Downtown superblock included in Circulation Alternative C would result in the most pedestrian benefits amongst the three circulation alternatives and would perform the same under all land use alternatives.

- The bicycle improvements included in Circulation Alternative C would perform the same under all land use alternatives.
- Circulation Alternative C implemented with Land Use Alternative C would have the most circulation benefits.

Table 5 Summary of Multimodal Analysis of Circulation Alternatives

Circulation Alternatives evaluation by Mode (best scores bolded)	Circulation Alternative A Walkability			Circulation Alternative B Transit Connections			Circulation Alternative C Hybrid		
	Land Use ¹ A	Land Use B	Land Use C	Land Use A	Land Use B	Land Use C	Land Use A	Land Use B	Land Use C
Pedestrian Evaluation	13/18			7/18			16/18		
Bicycle Evaluation	15/18	15/18	15/18	13/18	13/18	13/18	15/18	15/18	15/18
Transit Evaluation	6/12	6/12	7/12	8/12	8/12	9/12	8/12	8/12	9/12
Total Multimodal Score ²	34/48	34/48	35/48	28/48	28/48	29/48	39/48	39/48	40/48
¹ Land Use Alternative ² Points assigned based on comparative evaluation, description of methodology in the Traffic and Multimodal Circulation section.									

4. Project Context

4.1 GENERAL PLAN VISION AND VALUES

For six months from fall of 2018 through spring 2019, hundreds of San Mateo residents provided input on the General Plan Vision Statement. In April 2019, the City Council discussed and finalized the General Plan Vision Statement:

OUR VISION:

San Mateo is a vibrant, livable, diverse, and healthy community that respects the quality of its neighborhoods, fosters a flourishing economy, is committed to equity, and is a leader in environmental sustainability.

OUR VALUES:



Diversity: We embrace diversity and respect the experiences, contributions, and aspirations of people of all ages, abilities, incomes, and backgrounds. We celebrate arts and culture.



Balance: We seek to balance well-designed development and thoughtful preservation with a full spectrum of choices for housing and effective transportation.



Inclusivity: We strive to include everyone in community life and decisions for a shared, sustainable future.



Prosperity: We cultivate a diverse and thriving economy with different types of homes, jobs, recreation, lifelong learning opportunities, and services for both current and future generations.



Resiliency: We are leaders in sustainability, making San Mateo strong and resilient by acting boldly to adapt to a changing world.

4.2 PIPELINE PROJECTS

There are a number of projects currently underway in the City. Table 6 shows the approved projects by Study Area. Approved projects are concentrated in the Downtown area, rail corridor area, and the Campus Drive area. This table includes projects that have been approved and are eligible to start construction. It does not include projects that are currently under review but not yet approved, or projects that are currently under construction. There are also a number of projects under construction in the city, including Station Park Green (599 units), “One 90” on Waters Park Drive (190 units), 1650 S. Delaware Street (73 units) and the redevelopment of Trag’s Market at 303 Baldwin Avenue (64 units).

- Study Area 3 (Rail Corridor Area) includes a major development project called Concar Passage, which is located on the Concar Shopping Center site. The site is approximately 14.5 acres in size. The Concar Passage project includes construction of 961 multifamily dwelling units and approximately 40,000 square feet of commercial and retail space. The project also includes 73 affordable housing units, associated parking and 3 acres of community open space. This project was approved by the City Council on August 17, 2020. However, due to existing leases for shopping center tenants, construction is not anticipated to start until 2023 or 2024.
- Study Area 4 (Downtown) includes the Kiku Crossing project at 480 E. 4th Avenue, which consists of a new 7-story residential building with 225 affordable rental units on two City-owned sites that are approximately 2.4 acres in size. Construction is anticipated to begin in the first half of 2022.
- The Peninsula Heights project in the Study Area 6 on Campus Drive was approved by the Planning Commission on December 8, 2020, and consists of 290 new residential units on two parcels approximately 15.5 acres in size. Construction is anticipated to begin in the first quarter of 2022.

There are currently no approved but unbuilt projects in Study Areas 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10; however, the City is currently reviewing development proposals for new projects in most of these Study Areas.

For the most up-to-date information on development projects in San Mateo, visit the City’s website:
www.cityofsanmateo.org/whats happening.

Table 6 Approved Projects by Study Area

Study Area	Project name	Land Use	New Units
3	Hillsdale Terraces	Mixed Use/ Parking Garage	68
	21 Lodato	Residential	3
	Bay Meadows II SPAR #1 STA 1 & 5 Modification	Office	-
	Bay Meadows MU 2	Office	-
	Bay Meadows MU 3	Office/Residential	67
	Bay Meadows Res 6	Residential	54
	Concar Passage	Mixed Use	961
	1919 O’Farrell	Mixed Use	49
4	210 South Fremont Street	Residential	15
	Essex at Central Park	Mixed Use	80
	180 E. Third Avenue	Commercial/Office	-
	480 E. 4th Ave (Kiku Crossing)	Affordable Housing/ Parking	225
6	Peninsula Heights (Campus Drive)	Residential	290

Source: City of San Mateo, 2021

4.3 AREA PLANS, MASTER PLANS, AND SPECIFIC PLANS

The following approved specific plans, master plans and area plans guide the development and growth in the city:

- **Bay Meadows Specific Plan.** The Bay Meadows Specific Plan covers the 75-acre area of the former Bay Meadows Racetrack. Phase I of the Specific Plan has been constructed and included 734 residential units, 300,000 square feet of retail, 900,000 square feet of office/commercial, and a 310-room hotel with a restaurant. Phase II of the Specific Plan, which includes 1,048 residential units, 68 of which are affordable units, 1.2 million square feet of office space, 67,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, a 450-student private high school, Nueva School, and three public parks, is in the process of being constructed.
- **Hillsdale Station Area Plan.** The Hillsdale Station Area Plan, adopted on April 18, 2011, is the guiding document for the Hillsdale Station Area that sets forth the regulatory framework, goals, and policies to transform the area surrounding the Hillsdale Caltrain Station into a sustainable, pedestrian-oriented, transit hub.
- **El Camino Real Master Plan.** The City of San Mateo’s El Camino Real Committee (ECRC) developed a vision for the future of El Camino Real south, from State Route (SR) 92 to the Belmont city border. The El Camino Real Master Plan provides greater depth into streetscape plans, design guidelines, and implementation strategies than the San Mateo Rail Corridor Transit Oriented Development Plan.
- **Mariner’s Island Specific Plan.** The Mariner’s Island Specific Plan established land use and policy regulation for the 263 net acres of land located between Marina Lagoon and San Mateo/Foster City City Limits. It was mostly developed in the 1970’s and 1980’s to include retail, offices, and residences. The

Plan included the following major development projects: the Century Centre, San Mateo Centre, and other Class A offices; The Edgewater Isle condominiums project; and the Fashion Island Shopping Center.

- **Shoreline Specific Plan.** The Shoreline Specific Plan, adopted in 1971 and revised in 1990, covers a total of 885 acres and plans for 511 acres of park and recreation, the expansion of the wastewater treatment plant, water-oriented commercial uses, passive open space, storm drainage facilities, and bicycle and pedestrian paths. The five subareas of the Plan include Shoreland, Seal Point, Seal Cove, Marina Lagoon, and San Mateo Creek.
- **Detroit Drive Specific Plan.** The Detroit Drive Specific Plan, adopted in 1984 and amended in 1990, established development criteria for industrial and manufacturing use of a 7.25-acre site bounded by J. Hart Clinton Drive, the realigned Detroit Drive, the Dale Avenue Entrance to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the South Shoreview residential subdivision.
- **Downtown Area Plan.** The Downtown Area Plan, adopted by the City Council in 2003 then revised on May 19, 2009, covers about 70 blocks traditionally known as Downtown, plus the area known as the Gateway and portions of adjacent neighborhoods. This plan pertains to new Downtown development and focuses on preserving existing Downtown resources, enhancing its vitality and activity, all while maintaining a sense of place.

4.4 THE HOUSING ELEMENT

The Housing Element is a required section of the General Plan that provides policies and programs to ensure that San Mateo can accommodate housing for all members of the community at all income levels. The Housing Element must include a variety of statistics on housing needs, constraints to development, and policies and programs

to implement a variety of housing-related land use actions, and a detailed inventory of “opportunity sites” on which future housing may be built. The Housing Element is the only element of the General Plan that is subject to State requirements for content and which must be approved (“certified”) by the State Housing and Community Development Department (HCD). Having a certified Housing Element is a prerequisite for many State grants and funding programs.

Although the Housing Element is legally a part of the General Plan, the two projects are on parallel but separate tracks in order to ensure that the Housing Element meets State imposed deadlines for adoption by the beginning of 2023. The General Plan team is working closely with the Housing Element team to ensure that these two important efforts are integrated. The Housing Element will evaluate specific sites citywide and establish programs and policies to address fair housing conditions citywide.

The City itself is not responsible for building housing, but it must demonstrate in the Housing Element that it has policies and programs in place to support housing construction for all income levels, as well as available land with appropriate zoning and densities to accommodate new housing. The City of San Mateo supports efforts to provide affordable housing in the city and has a department that is dedicated to providing financial assistance for the construction and rehabilitation of rental housing, minor home repair programs, and home ownership programs. The following is a list of housing resources and programs available at the City:

- **Minor Home Repairs.** The City provides grants to non-profit service agencies for provision of Minor Home Repairs to income qualified homeowners. The program offers home repairs to improve health and safety, housing accessibility modifications, and energy efficiency retrofit measures to income qualified individuals.

- **Home Rehabilitation Loan.** The City offers up to a maximum of \$60,000 for housing rehabilitation assistance to low-income homeowners in the form of deferred payment loans.
- **Code Enforcement.** The City enforces State and local codes to improve residential areas through abatement, administrative citations and fees, civil penalties, and civil litigation to bring about compliance. It also provides tenant relocation assistance in the event tenants are displaced due to code enforcement actions.
- **Public Funding of Low/Moderate Income Housing.** The City coordinates federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) Program funds, Low/Moderate Income Housing funds from the former Redevelopment Agency, Commercial Linkage Fees, the State Permanent Local Housing Allocation, and CalHome funds to address the construction, acquisition, and rehabilitation of housing units affordable to very low, low and moderate income households.

Since 2013, the City has provided three City owned sites for affordable housing resulting in the development of 400 units. The City's [First Time Homebuyer](#) program provides down payment assistance to units at three locations in addition to the below-market rate ownership units located in market rate developments. The City keeps a master waitlist for interested buyers of these restricted units. The City also has over 1,670 restricted affordable units (300 ownership and 1,370 rental) citywide. In 2021, another 388 affordable units are approved or under construction.

- **Private Development of Affordable Housing.** The City increased the minimum inclusionary requirement from 10 to 15 percent for its Below Market Rate program in February 2020. Many developers also take advantage of the State Density Bonus provisions that often results in more affordability than the

City base requirements. The City also adopted a Commercial Linkage Fee ordinance in 2016. All non-housing projects with net new construction of 5,000 square feet or greater are required to pay the commercial linkage fee, which is used to provide affordable housing units.

- **ADUs/JADUs.** Consistent with 2016 State housing legislation, the City Council adopted a new ADU/JADU ordinance in March 2017. The City is working on another revision of the ADU/JADU Ordinance to be consistent with current State law and to further streamline production, with adoption anticipated in the first quarter of 2022.
- **Senior Project Location.** The City continues to promote the development of senior housing through its use of the Senior Citizen Overlay District, which reduces parking requirements for senior developments and by allowing senior projects within multifamily and commercially zoned properties.
- **Mixed Use.** Construction of mixed use buildings that include housing units are permitted in all commercial zoning districts, except Service Commercial, either by zoning or a Special Use Permit.
- **Persons Experiencing Homelessness.** The City provides continuous representation and participation in the County Continuum of Care, which focuses on programs for prevention of homelessness and services to homeless families and individuals. There is also a permanent supportive housing project, called Vendome, that provides 16 units for the most chronic formerly homeless individuals. First Step for Families also provides 39 emergency and transitional shelter units for families with children.

The Zoning Code was amended in 2009 to allow emergency shelters in C-2 and C-3 zoning districts as a permitted use. The City also supports home sharing through funding Human Investment Project Housing, a local non-profit whose main service is matching home seekers with those offering space for home sharing to prevent homelessness.

- **Energy and Water Efficiency.** The City joined 5 Property Assessed Clean Energy programs to provide financing options to homeowners to perform energy upgrades to their homes.
- **Special Need Groups.** The City provides financial assistance to nonprofit organizations that provide housing, rental assistance and/or housing related services to a variety of special needs populations. The City also adopted a Reasonable Accommodation ordinance on June 16, 2014, which allows reasonable accommodation requests from the City's Zoning Code.
- **Open Choice.** The City contracts with Project Sentinel to provide Fair Housing services, monitoring and investigation. All housing related projects or services funded by the City include affirmative marketing guidelines and are monitored on a regular basis.
- **Transit-Oriented Development.** The San Mateo Rail Corridor Plan Transit-Oriented Development Plan, and a subsequent ordinance, was adopted by the City Council in 2005. This document and the subsequent specific plan and design guidelines regulate development in the rezoned Transit Oriented Development properties.

REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) – the regional planning agency for the Bay Area - assigns State-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) units to each jurisdiction. The methodology used to allocate units is the same for all jurisdictions within the nine-county Bay Area. ABAG must distribute the Bay Area's regional housing need of 441,176 housing units to all of the cities, towns, and counties in the Bay Area. San Mateo's RHNA for the current Housing Element is expected to be approximately 7,015 units, distributed among four income categories that range from very low income to above moderate income.

This means the City of San Mateo must ensure that there is enough land zoned at appropriate densities to accommodate 7,015 new units, plus a buffer which is described further herein. In comparison to this current RHNA, which is the "6th cycle," San Mateo's previous 5th Cycle allocation in 2014 was 3,100 units. The draft allocations throughout the Bay Area are high in part because the region's bulk allocation from the State of California is more than double the last Housing Element Cycle's allocation to the region, which was about 189,000 units.

Although the RHNA allocation is *not* a direct requirement to build units, the State legislature has enacted increasingly stringent requirements on localities to ensure they are doing everything possible for housing to be built and to remove common barriers to housing construction. This includes demonstrating in an opportunity sites inventory that the allocation can be met, plus providing a buffer of *at least* 15 to 30 percent. A buffer is necessary to ensure that if some of the sites listed in the Housing Element are developed without housing, are developed with less than the full amount of housing projected in the Housing Element, or are not developed at the income levels identified in the Housing Element, there is sufficient remaining capacity to ensure an ongoing supply of sites for the full RHNA during the eight years of the Housing Element Cycle at every income level. HCD recommends a buffer of at least 15 to 30 percent, but many jurisdictions anticipate providing a buffer of up to 50 percent. The City's previous Housing Element

included a RHNA allocation of 3,100 units along with a “buffer” of 1,623 units (about 52 percent of the allocation) – that is, the Housing Element identified enough land zoned at appropriate densities to accommodate a total of 4,723 units.

It is important to note that, while the State requires the City of San Mateo to plan for the RHNA housing units, it does not mean that the City is required to build these housing units.

Please visit <https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/HousingElement2023> to learn more about the City’s Housing Element.

AFFIRMATIVELY FURTHERING FAIR HOUSING

Assembly Bill 686 requires cities and counties to administer its programs and activities relating to housing in a manner to affirmatively further fair housing and not take any action that is inconsistent with this obligation. This means taking actions to overcome patterns of segregation, address disparities in housing needs and access to opportunity, and foster inclusive communities. Housing Elements must now, among other things, include an assessment of fair housing practices, examine the relationship of available sites to areas of high opportunity, and include actions to affirmatively further fair housing. Potential programs that may be included in the Housing Element which affirmatively further fair housing include assisting with rehabilitation and repair of housing for low-income households and expanding services to underserved communities. The Housing Element is also intended to affirmatively further fair housing by ensuring that San Mateo can accommodate housing for all members of the community at all income levels.

HOUSING ELEMENT SITES

State law requires that the Housing Element contain a site-by-site inventory of land suitable for development of all housing types, including multifamily. The identified land must have access to appropriate services and infrastructure, such as water, wastewater, and roads. These are called *opportunity sites*. As has been the case for the last three Housing Elements, staff has conducted a City-wide review of parcels that are either vacant or underutilized to discern if these sites are appropriate for development. These sites may or may not eventually be developed for housing, as the choice is, and always will be, at the owner’s decision.

The constraints facing the City with respect to developing the opportunity sites inventory are significant, in part because there is very little vacant land available for development. As a consequence, the City must analyze sites with existing uses that may be redeveloped. Further, Measure Y imposes height and density limits that limit the amount of development that can be built on any site in San Mateo through 2030. All of these factors will present challenges in developing an acceptable opportunity sites inventory for the current and future RHNA Cycles solely within the 10 Study Areas.

Some additional factors considered in the development of the site inventory include:

1. Whether a site has an underperforming use on it;
2. Whether other sites in the area have seen recent redevelopment to housing;
3. Whether the site has sufficient infrastructure available to it;
4. Whether the site’s topography makes it suitable for housing development; and,
5. Whether the site is of a sufficient size to be developed for housing.

Except for Study Area 1-North, all other Study Areas have several sites that have been identified as suitable land for development of all housing types, including multifamily. All identified opportunity sites are designated Residential Medium or Residential High, Mixed Use Medium, or Mixed Use High in all three alternatives to maintain consistency with the Housing Element process. The inventory of opportunity sites will be finalized when the Housing Element is adopted.

4.5 OTHER CITYWIDE REGULATIONS AND PROJECTS

In addition to the General Plan, the City has other documents and projects that guide land use, transportation, and sustainability. The following lists includes a several of the key documents and projects:

- **Zoning Code.** The City’s Zoning Code implements the land use goals and policies established in the General Plan. It regulates land uses, building heights, setbacks, provision of open space, and other factors that relate to development on individual properties.
- **Future Complete Streets Plan.** The City was awarded a California Department of Transportation Sustainable Communities Grant for the development of a Complete Streets Plan. This effort, which will be initiated in 2022, will create an actionable transportation plan rooted in safety for all modes, resulting in policies, goals, and prioritized projects that are focused on improving mobility, equity, connectivity, and sustainability.
- **Climate Action Plan.** The City’s 2020 Climate Action Plan provides a comprehensive list of community-wide actions that will help reduce GHG emissions from buildings, vehicles, and other sources.

- **Green Infrastructure Plan.** This plan guides the siting, implementation, tracking, and reporting of green infrastructure projects, which use plants and soils to mimic natural watershed processes, capture stormwater, increase groundwater infiltration and create healthier environments on City-owned land.
- **Citywide Pedestrian Master Plan.** The City’s pedestrian master plan provides a broad vision, strategies, and actions for improving the pedestrian environment in San Mateo. It studied pedestrian travel in the City, analyzed collision data, and developed recommendations to improve pedestrian access.
- **Bicycle Master Plan.** This plan guides the future development of bicycle facilities and programs in the City. This plan will enable San Mateo residents and visitors with the opportunity to utilize various bicycle network roadways and parking facilities for work or recreation.
- **US 101/Peninsula Avenue Interchange Project.** This project includes the relocation of the U.S. Hwy 101 southbound on- and off-ramps from East Poplar Avenue to Peninsula Avenue in order to create a single, full-access interchange at Peninsula Avenue and Airport Boulevard to improve safety and traffic operations. The project is currently undergoing an environmental review process.
- **25th Avenue Grade Separation Project.** This project was completed in September 2021. It raised the train tracks, slightly lowered the road (grade separated) at E. 25th Avenue, and created new east-west street connections at 28th and 31st Avenues between S. Delaware Street and El Camino Real.

- **Multijurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.** A Draft 2021 Multijurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan was recently released. This Plan was written with a partnership of 36 local governments and special districts in San Mateo County, including the City of San Mateo. It identifies natural and human-caused hazards and helps the City plan ahead to mitigate, respond to, and recover from disasters.

For more information on other planning efforts, please visit the City's website: www.cityofsanmateo.org

4.6 DEVELOPMENT REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

Even after the Preferred Scenario is selected and the updated General Plan is adopted, there are many steps a project must go through to ensure it meets all applicable City standards and requirements. The following is a brief summary of San Mateo's development review process for all projects that require a Planning Application:

PRE-APPLICATION REVIEW

- **Planning staff consultation.** Initial discussions with planning staff to determine scope of project, application requirements, applicable codes and policies, and to determine if a pre-application submittal is required. Formal Pre-Applications are required for projects consisting of more than 20 residential units; 10,000 square feet of new floor area; and/or Zoning Reclassifications or General Plan Amendments.
- **Pre-Application submittal.** Plans and materials submitted per the submittal requirements in the [Pre-Application Guide](#).
- **Internal staff review.** Departmental review (Planning, Building Public Works, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Police, Fire) for high-level compliance with applicable codes, policies and City requirements

- **Neighborhood meeting.** In coordination with staff, a neighborhood meeting is scheduled and notices are sent out. Applicant leads the meeting and takes meeting minutes. Staff planner attends and answers City requirements or procedure-related questions.
- **Planning Commission Study Session.** Following the neighborhood meeting, a study session is held before the Planning Commission to review the project on a preliminary basis to provide input on elements such as site planning, building and architectural design, and landscaping.

FORMAL PLANNING APPLICATION

- **Internal staff review.** Once an application is submitted, City departments (Planning, Building Public Works, Transportation, Parks and Recreation, Police, Fire) review for compliance with applicable codes, policies and City requirements; once all comments are addressed the application is deemed complete. After being deemed complete, Conditions of Approval are prepared.
- **Environmental Review.** Once an application is deemed complete, environmental review completed consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which could include an exemption, an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, or an Environmental Impact Report.
- **Final Approval.** Depending on the type of project and the type of approval being sought, final approval could come from the Zoning Administrator, the Planning Commission, or the City Council.