



CHAPTER 2

Land Use Element





LAND USE ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

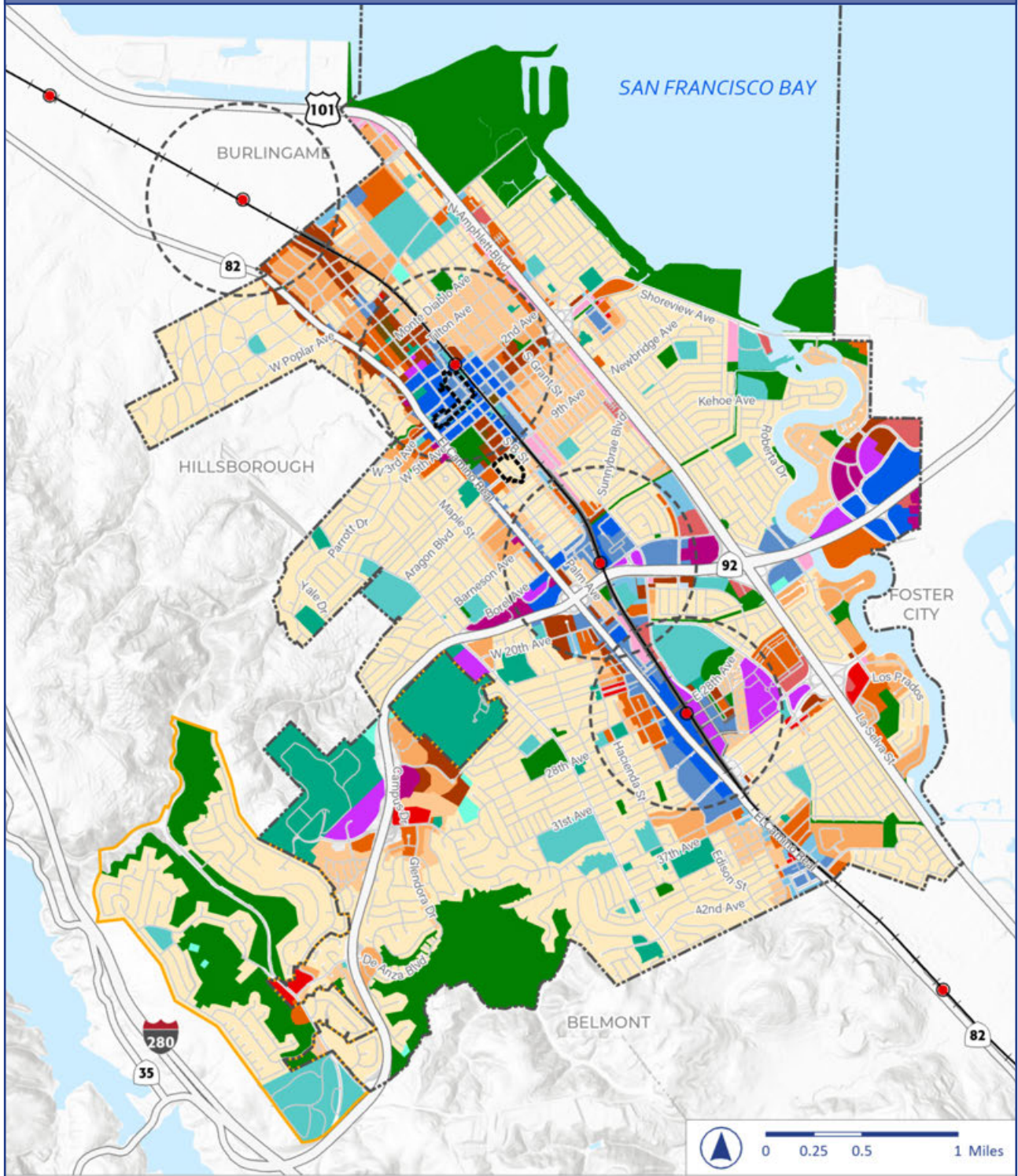
The Land Use Element sets the foundation for future growth, change, and preservation in San Mateo and serves as the blueprint for the development of public and private property in the city. The Element seeks to balance well-designed development and thoughtful preservation with a full spectrum of choices for housing, while also cultivating a diverse economy and supporting resiliency. It includes goals, policies, and actions that support the equitable health and well-being of all neighborhoods in San Mateo and all members of the community. It also encourages a diverse range of land uses to meet the needs of the community, including housing, parks, open space, recreation, retail, commercial services, offices, and industrial.

This element meets the State-mandated requirements for a Land Use Element. It defines categories for the location and type of public and private uses of land under the City's jurisdiction; it recommends standards for density on land covered by the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040; it includes a Land Use Map (Figure LU-1); and includes goals, policies, and actions to guide land use distribution throughout the city. By satisfying these requirements, the Land Use Element lays out basic guidelines and standards that act as building blocks for the General Plan's other elements. Each element, such as Circulation or Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation, provide more specialized guidance and corresponds with a land use category of the Land Use Element. For more information about environmental justice, please also refer to Chapter 1, Introduction.

The Land Use Element addresses the following topic areas:

- Balanced and Equitable Growth and Preservation
- A Diverse Range of Land Uses
- Focused Planning Areas
 - » Downtown
 - » El Camino Real Corridor
 - » Hillsdale Station Area
- Shopping Areas in Transition
- Environmental Justice
 - » Community Health
 - » Equity Priority Communities
 - » Access to Healthy Food
- Community Engagement
- Climate Change and Land Use
- A Sustainable Economy
- Development Review
- Regional Cooperation
- General Plan Maintenance

Figure LU-1 Land Use Map



- | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| City Limits | Residential Medium I (3-5 stories, 36-50 du/ac) | Mixed-Use Low (2-4 stories, 10-35 du/ac) |
| Sphere of Influence | Residential Medium II (4-6 stories, 51-99 du/ac) | Mixed-Use Medium I (3-5 stories, 15-50 du/ac) |
| 1/2 Mile Radius Around Caltrain | Residential High (5-8 stories, 100-130 du/ac) | Mixed-Use Medium II (4-6 stories, 51-99 du/ac) |
| Caltrain Station | Service Commercial/Light Industrial (1-3 stories) | Mixed-Use High (5-8 stories, 100-130 du/ac) |
| Caltrain | Regional Commercial (1-3 stories) | Parks/ Open Space |
| Historic Districts | Neighborhood Commercial (1-3 stories) | Public Facilities |
| Residential Very Low (1-3 stories, 1-9 du/ac) | Office Low (1-2 stories) | Quasi-Public (1-3 stories) |
| Residential Low I (1-3 stories, 9-19 du/ac) | Office Medium (2-4 stories) | Transportation Corridor |
| Residential Low II (2-4 stories, 20-35 du/ac) | Office High (3-5 stories) | Utilities |

Source: City of San Mateo, 2022; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2024.

RELEVANCE TO GENERAL PLAN THEMES

The Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 has three important themes that are woven throughout every element – sustainability, environmental justice, and community engagement – and this element addresses them in the following ways.



Sustainability in this Element:

- Encourages higher-density multifamily and mixed-use development in proximity to transit and jobs, and improves transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access to support a multimodal transportation network, both of which reduce car dependency and vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
- Supports infill development that provides benefits for preservation and ecological function.
- Supports efforts to transition to cleaner energy sources that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, consistent with the City's adopted Climate Action Plan.



Environmental Justice in this Element:

- Helps address vulnerabilities in equity priority communities, such as poverty, low educational attainment, and housing instability, by supporting affordable housing and economic development.
- Prioritizes City investment in public improvements that address health and infrastructure disparities in equity priority communities.
- Increases access to fresh food by allowing and encouraging local food production, micro agriculture, edible landscapes, rooftop gardens, community gardens, and urban farms.
- Supports collaboration between the City and local partners to improve healthy food access programs, such as the CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program.



Community Engagement in this Element:

- Promotes inclusive outreach methods that encourage broad representation and are culturally sensitive, such as preparing notices and other materials in the predominant language spoken in the community and scheduling meetings at convenient times for community members.
- Supports early and frequent community engagement by clearly outlining when and how members of the public can provide input for development projects under review.
- Requires sponsors of new development projects to have early, frequent, and meaningful communication with community members and stakeholders.
- Encourages a recurring, statistically reliable community survey to gauge community service needs, policy preferences, and effective communication methods.



GENERAL PLAN HEIGHT AND INTENSITY STANDARDS

Measure Y is a ballot measure that was passed by voters in November 2020. It retained the existing height, density and intensity limits on new development that were originally adopted under earlier ballot measures (Measure H in 1991 and Measure P in 2004), and has a sunset date of 2030. Overall, the Measure Y height limit is set to 55 feet and three to five stories, the density limit allows up to 50 units per acre and the nonresidential intensity allows up to a 3.0 floor area ratio (FAR). The height, density and intensity limits allow for exceptions in certain locations with provision of public benefits, and State Density Bonus law allows projects to exceed these limits when certain percentages of affordable units are provided.

General Plan Land Use Designations and Land Use Map

The General Plan land use designations are grouped into the following categories: Residential, Mixed-Use, Commercial, Office, Parks and Open Space, Public Facilities, Quasi-Public Facilities, and Utilities.

The land use designations identify the locations in the city where specific types of land uses may occur. The designations are meant to be broad enough to give the City flexibility, but also provide clear enough direction to achieve the vision of the General Plan. Figure LU-1 shows where each land use designation is applied within San Mateo.

The General Plan provides the overall parameters of density and intensity for urban land use designations, but each project must also comply with the specific rules of the relevant zoning district in the City's Zoning Code.

Residential densities for the land use designations are expressed in terms of dwelling units per acre (du/ac). Building heights are expressed by the number of stories. Building intensities for nonresidential uses are expressed in terms of floor-area ratio (FAR), which is the ratio of gross building floor area to net lot area, both expressed in square feet. For example, on a site with 10,000 square feet of land area, a FAR of 1.0 will allow 10,000 gross square feet of building floor area to be built. On the same site, a FAR of 2.0 would allow 20,000 square feet of floor area. FAR does not regulate building placement, form, or height, only the spatial relationship between building size and lot size; it represents an expectation of the overall intensity of future development. Figure LU-2 shows a visual representation of the relationship between height and FAR.

The maximum density assigned to each land use designation does not constitute entitlement, nor are property owners or developers guaranteed that an individual project, when tested against the General Plan's policies, will be able or permitted to achieve these maximums.



Some of the land use designations in the ten study areas shown on Figure I-1 include building heights, densities and FARs that exceed the limits set by Measure Y. Any components in the General Plan that are inconsistent with Measure Y will require voter approval before they can take effect. If voters approve a ballot measure to allow the heights, densities and intensities that exceed the limits set by Measure Y, those higher limits would only apply within the ten study areas. The areas outside of the ten study areas would still be subject to the height, density, and intensity limits of Measure Y. As required by law, for the duration that Measure Y is in effect, any inconsistency between the measure and other provisions of the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 shall default to the provisions specified in Measure Y, as stated in Policy LU 1-9.

Table LU-1 lists land use designations and their density, intensity (FAR), height limit, and description of uses that can occur in the designation. The density ranges in Table LU-1 establish a maximum density. The lower end of the density range is not a required minimum density.

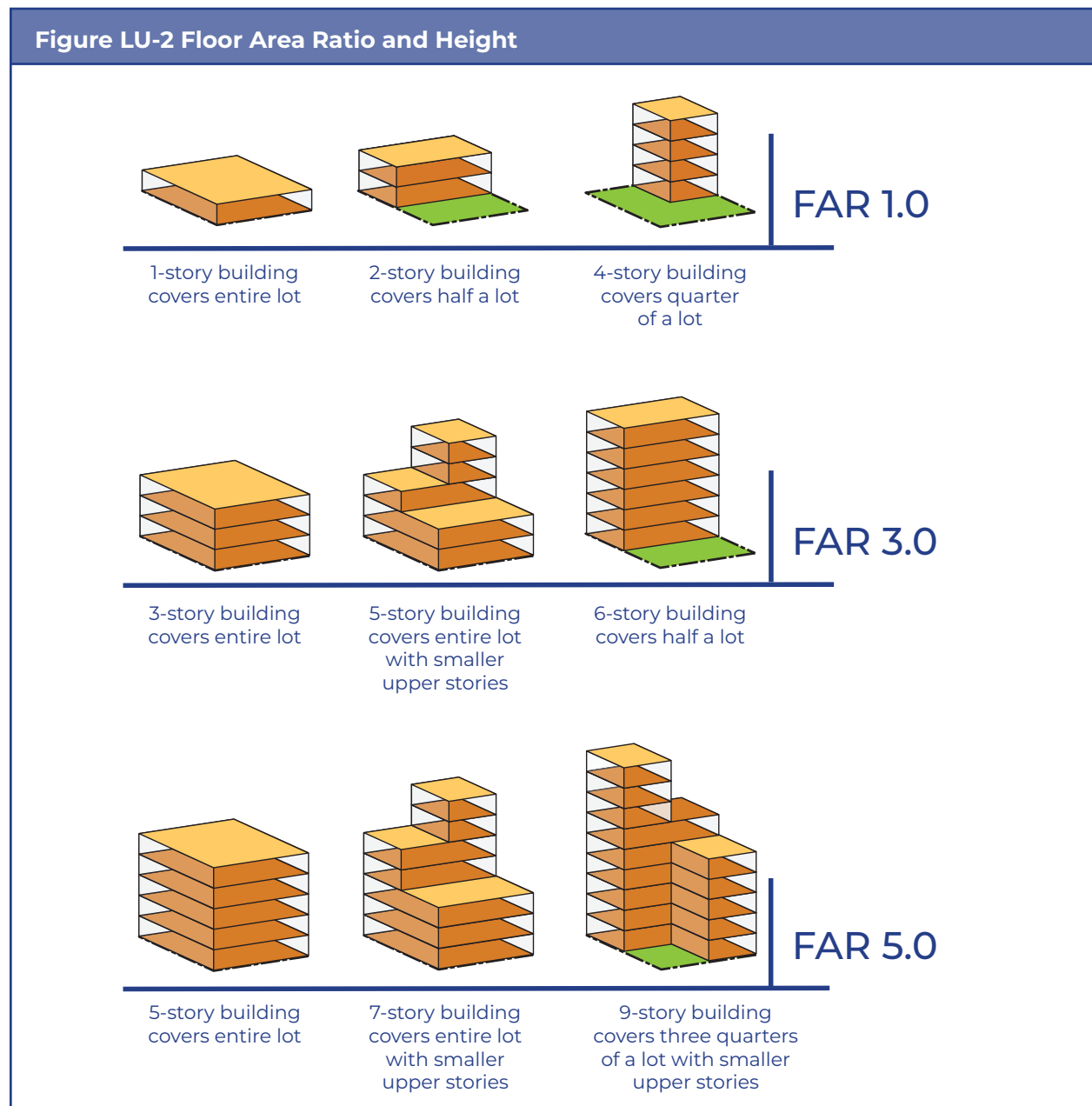


Table LU-1 Land Use Designations				
Designation	Maximum Density Range (Residential Uses)*	Intensity/ Maximum FAR (Nonresidential uses)	Height Limit	Description
Residential				
Residential Very Low	Up to 9 du/ac	n/a	1-3 stories	This designation allows very low-density residential dwellings, such as detached single-family homes, detached townhouses and duplexes, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs).
Residential Low I	9 to 19 du/ac	n/a	1-3 stories	This designation allows low-density residential dwellings, such as townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, low rise condominium and apartment buildings, and ADUs.
Residential Low II	20 to 35 du/ac	n/a	2-4 stories	This designation allows lower-density residential and multifamily dwellings, such as townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, condominiums, and apartments.
Residential Medium I	36 to 50 du/ac	n/a	3-5 stories	This designation allows medium-density multifamily dwellings, such as townhomes, condominiums, and apartments.
Residential Medium II	51 to 99 du/ac	n/a	4-6 stories	This designation allows medium-density multifamily residential dwellings, such as condominiums and apartments, near mixed-use, office, and/or commercial areas. This designation can also be found along major streets, such as El Camino Real and near residential low or residential high areas of the city.
Residential High	100 to 130 du/ac	n/a	5-8 stories	This designation allows higher-density multifamily residential dwellings, such as condominiums and apartments, in Downtown, in proximity to Caltrain stations, and along major streets, such as El Camino Real.
Mixed-Use				
Mixed-Use Low	10 to 35 du/ac	2.0	2-4 stories	This designation allows low-density mixed-use buildings that provide a mix of commercial, office, and/or residential uses within the same site or building. It is intended to allow a mix of uses that encourages people to live, work, play, and shop in close proximity.
Mixed-Use Medium I	15 to 50 du/ac	3.0	3-5 stories	This designation allows medium-density mixed-use buildings that provide a mix of commercial, office, and/or residential uses within the same site or building. It is intended to allow a mix of uses that encourages people to live, work, play, and shop in close proximity.
Mixed-Use Medium II	51 to 99 du/ac	4.0	4-6 stories	This designation allows medium-density mixed-use buildings that provide a mix of commercial, office, and/or residential uses within the same site or building. It is intended to allow a mix of uses near other mixed-use, commercial, or residential areas, and within Downtown.

Designation	Maximum Density Range (Residential Uses)*	Intensity/ Maximum FAR (Nonresidential uses)	Height Limit	Description
Mixed-Use High	100 to 130 du/ac	4.5	5-8 stories	This designation allows high-density mixed-use buildings that provide a mix of commercial, office, and/or residential uses within the same site or building. It is intended to allow a mix of uses near major streets, train stations, and shopping centers, and within Downtown.
Commercial				
Neighborhood Commercial	Up to 19 du/ac	1.0	1-3 stories	This designation is intended for a mix of neighborhood-serving commercial uses that include small-scale retail stores and other commercial uses that serve the immediate neighborhood, such as grocery stores and pharmacies. Typical commercial uses include supermarkets, bakeries, drugstores, restaurants, delicatessens, barber shops, hair salons, laundromats, hardware stores, dry cleaners, small offices, and other personal services. Residential may also be allowed above the ground floor.
Service Commercial/ Light Industrial	n/a	1.0	1-3 stories	This designation is intended for a wide range of service commercial and light industrial facilities. Examples of uses in this land use include facilities that provide city-wide and regional services, such as auto repair services, building material yards, overnight boarding of animals, and industrial uses with light manufacturing, warehousing, and/or distribution facilities. These uses do not necessarily benefit from being in high-volume pedestrian areas, such as shopping centers or Downtown and can instead be found along North and South Amphlett Ave, and portions of South Claremont St, Railroad Ave and Palm Ave. New residential uses are not allowed.
Regional Commercial	Up to 50 du/ac	1.5	1-3 stories	This designation is intended for large-scale commercial developments that serve residents and visitors from the surrounding region, such as the Hillsdale Mall and Bridgepointe Shopping Center. Examples of commercial uses in this land use include shopping centers, large-format retail, auto sales, and travel-related services, such as hotels, gas stations, and restaurants. Residential may also be allowed.
Office				
Office Low	Up to 35 du/ac	1.0	1-2 stories	This designation is intended for low-density office uses, such as medical, administrative, or professional offices. Supportive uses, including personal services, restaurants, health clubs, residential, day care, and limited retail sales are permitted. Research facilities that support the development of new products and may include professional uses, manufacturing, laboratories, and/or maker's spaces in the same building or site may be permitted depending on the type and intensity of the use.

Designation	Maximum Density Range (Residential Uses)*	Intensity/ Maximum FAR (Nonresidential uses)	Height Limit	Description
Office Medium	Up to 50 du/ac	2.0	2-4 stories	This designation is intended for medium-density office uses, such as medical, administrative, or professional offices. Supportive uses, including personal services, restaurants, health clubs, residential, day care, and limited retail sales are permitted. Research facilities that support the development of new products and may include professional uses, manufacturing, laboratories, and/or maker's spaces in the same building or site may be permitted depending on the type and intensity of the use.
Office High	Up to 130 du/ac	3.0	3-5 stories	This designation is intended for high-density office uses, such as medical, administrative, or professional offices, and for research and science facilities that support the development of new products and may include professional uses, manufacturing, laboratories, and/or maker's spaces in the same building or site. Supportive uses including personal services, restaurants, health clubs, residential, day care, and limited retail sales are permitted.
Other Designations				
Parks and Open Space	n/a	n/a	n/a	This designation is intended for public parks, City-owned conservation lands, and private open space or recreation facilities. Parks and open space areas can be found throughout the city and are important to preserve because they provide community members with access to nature, encourage healthy lifestyles, and support a mixture of active and passive recreation opportunities.
Public Facilities	n/a	See Zoning District or Specific Plans for maximum FAR	n/a	This designation is intended for facilities owned and/or operated by the City or other governmental agencies, such as City Hall, libraries, public school sites, San Mateo County's Event Center, and the public parking lots in Downtown.
Quasi-Public	Up to 20 du/ac	See Zoning District or Specific Plans for maximum FAR	1-3 stories	This designation is intended for facilities owned and/or operated by quasi-public agencies and organizations, such as schools and faith-based organization facilities. Examples of these facilities include St. Matthew Catholic Church and the Nueva School. Ancillary residential uses, with a focus on affordable housing, may also be allowed when aligned with the organization's mission or to provide employee housing.
Utilities	n/a	n/a	n/a	This designation is intended for facilities owned and/or operated by public utilities to serve the public with electricity, gas, water, and communications. Examples of uses in this designation include electricity substations, water tank sites, and the sewer treatment plant.
Transportation Corridor	n/a	n/a	n/a	Fixed transit lines along the railroad corridor that provide mass transportation. Portions of the railroad corridor not required for transportation purposes may be considered for other uses.

*Note: Table LU-1 establishes the maximum allowed density range for this land use designation, with associated Zoning district setting a maximum density within this range; but this range does not set a minimum required density.

BALANCED AND EQUITABLE GROWTH AND PRESERVATION

It is important to plan future development and growth in the city in a way that maximizes efficient use of available land and infrastructure; limits adverse impacts to the environment; and improves social, economic, environmental, and health equity. The General Plan itself does not mandate change, but over time, change will occur based on market forces and the decisions of property owners. Climate change will also likely influence land use changes over the next 20 years in ways that are not currently fully known, which is why sustainability is a key theme throughout the General Plan.

Over the lifetime of this General Plan, the areas that are likely to change in the city include the El Camino Real corridor, Downtown, Hayward Park Caltrain station area, Hillsdale Mall and the surrounding Hillsdale Caltrain station area, and older shopping centers and office parks. The Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 includes policies and actions that promote transit-oriented development around the Caltrain stations; encourages residential and mixed uses along El Camino Real; prioritizes a wide range of residential, lodging, restaurant, leisure, recreational, cultural, and other commercial uses in Downtown; and supports incorporating a mix of housing, shopping, services, and jobs into older shopping centers to create vibrant neighborhoods.

The Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 also encourages innovative urban design approaches for Downtown, inspired by Barcelona’s “superblocks,” that focus on vehicle access at the periphery and reducing cut-through vehicle traffic to create pedestrian-focused, car-light spaces downtown. The Circulation Element adds more detail about the superblock concept and pedestrian improvements.

In addition to the General Plan, San Mateo has other plans that guide future development in specific areas of the city, including specific plans, master plans, and area plans. The City’s existing specific plans, area plans, and master plans are shown on Figure LU-3. This figure also identifies two areas – Bel Mateo and 25th Avenue – that are opportunities for future focused planning efforts. This section is focused on balancing growth through land use. Policy direction on maintaining and improving the transportation network as the city grows can be found in the Circulation Element.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL LU-1 Plan carefully for balanced growth that provides ample housing that is affordable at all levels and job opportunities for all community members; maximizes efficient use of infrastructure; limits adverse impacts to the environment; and improves social, economic, environmental, and health equity.

POLICIES



Policy LU 1.1 Equitable Development. Prioritize development projects that meet social and economic needs of the economically vulnerable populations to address and reverse the underlying socioeconomic factors in the community that contribute to residential and social segregation in the city. Provide a range of housing types, sizes, and affordability levels in all San Mateo neighborhoods.



Policy LU 1.2 General Plan 2040 Maximum Development. Maintain the City’s ability to rely on the General Plan EIR to approve future discretionary actions. When approved development within City Limits and unincorporated properties within the Sphere of Influence reaches the number of new residential units and net new nonresidential square feet below, require that environmental review conducted for any subsequent development project address growth impacts that would occur from further development:

- 19,764 new dwelling units
- 3,186,000 square feet of new nonresidential floor area

When approved nonresidential development reaches half of the anticipated development, evaluate the citywide jobs-housing balance.¹

Policy LU 1.3 Optimize Development Opportunities. Encourage new development in major commercial and transit-oriented development areas, including the Downtown, Caltrain station areas, and the El Camino Real corridor, to maximize the density and intensity specified in the Land Use Plan and to efficiently use land and infrastructure resources.



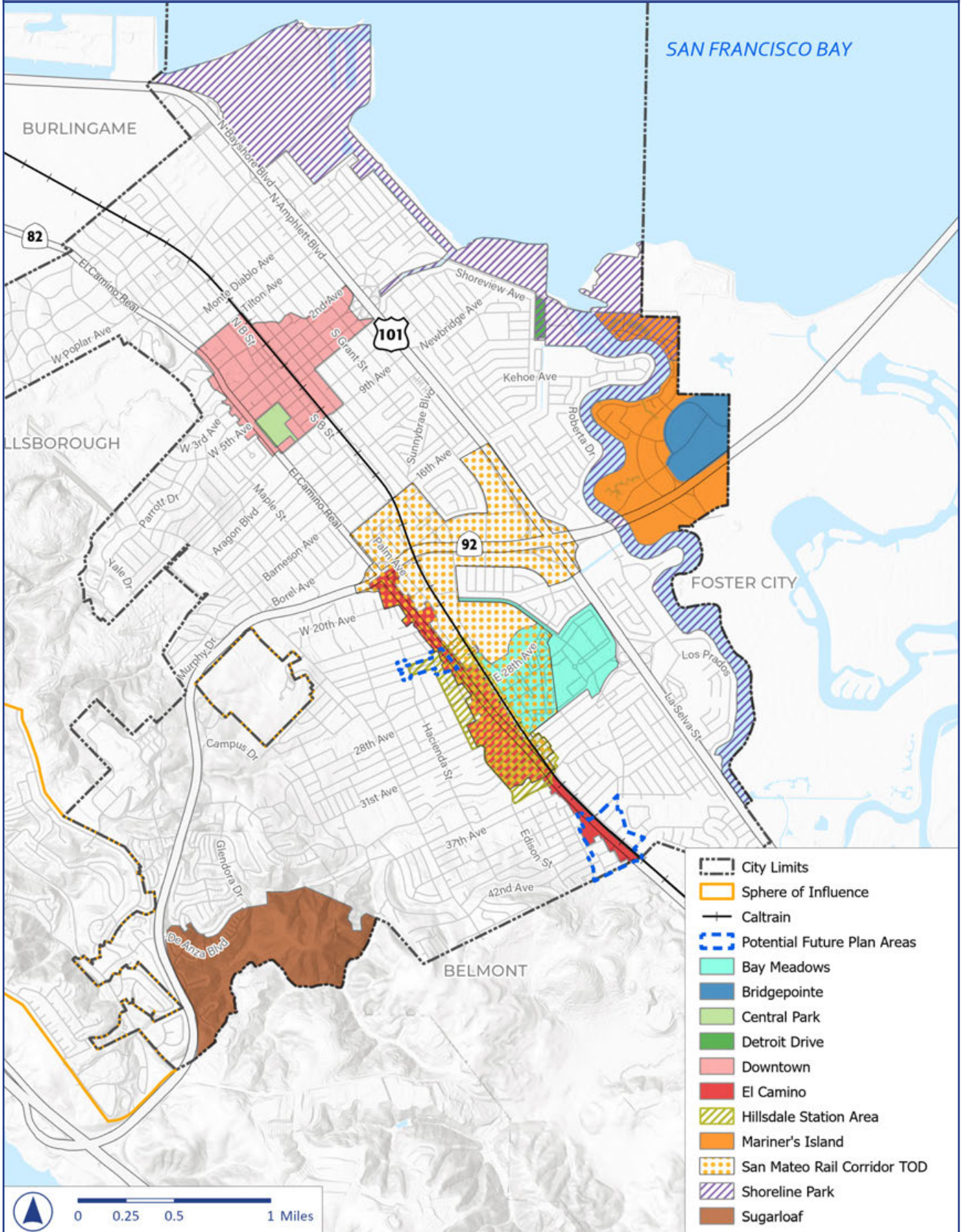
Policy LU 1.4 Mixed-Use. Encourage mixed-use developments to include increased residential components to provide greater proximity between jobs and housing, promote pedestrian activity, and reduce traffic congestion and vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Policy LU 1.5 Surplus Land. Consider redesignating City-owned land not required for public services, facilities, or infrastructure for development of affordable housing.

Policy LU 1.6 Legal Nonconforming Developments. Allow legally established nonconforming uses and buildings to be maintained, have minor expansions where appropriate, and be reconstructed if destroyed by fire or natural disaster. Encourage reconstruction and/or minor expansions to have a design that is visually compatible with surrounding development and complies with the City’s development standards.

¹ The General Plan Update Draft EIR (August 2023) analyzed a buildout potential of 21,410 new dwelling units and 4,325,000 square feet of new nonresidential floor area. During the public review period for the Draft General Plan 2040 and Draft EIR, changes were incorporated into the final adopted General Plan that reduced the residential and nonresidential development capacity. This policy reflects the reduced amounts, as acknowledged in the General Plan Update Final EIR (January 2024).

Figure LU-3 Specific Plan, Master Plan, and Area Plans



Source: City of San Mateo, 2022; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.
 Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.

Policy LU 1.7 Annexation. Annex urbanized areas of the unincorporated land adjacent to the City Limits where landowners petition the City to be annexed, subject to the following conditions:

- The annexation is comprehensive, rather than piecemeal; and
- Landowners will pay the full cost of City services, will assume a proportionate share of existing City debts, and will contribute to the existing capital improvements of the City, which will benefit the area to be annexed.

Policy LU 1.8 New Development within the Sphere of Influence. Work with the County of San Mateo to require new developments and related infrastructure within the Sphere of Influence to be consistent with the City’s General Plan, Zoning Code requirements, and development standards.

Policy LU 1.9 Voter-Approved Growth Limits. As required by law, for the duration that Measure Y is in effect, any inconsistency between the measure and other provisions of the General Plan’s Land Use Element shall default to the provisions specified in Measure Y.

ACTION

Action LU 1.10 Review of New Development. Track actual growth of both new housing units and net new nonresidential floor area annually, and review every two to three years. Use this information to monitor nonresidential floor area and housing units in San Mateo and to adjust this General Plan, infrastructure plans, and circulation plans, as necessary, if actual growth is exceeding projections. When approved nonresidential development reaches half of the anticipated development, evaluate the citywide jobs-housing balance.

GOAL LU-2 Balance well-designed development with thoughtful preservation.

POLICIES

Policy LU 2.1 Development Intensity/Density. Regulate development density/intensity to recognize natural environmental constraints, such as floodplains, earthquake faults, debris flow areas and other hazards, availability of urban services, and transportation and circulation constraints.

Policy LU 2.2 Caltrain Stations and El Camino Real Minimum Densities. Require new residential development within a half mile of a Caltrain station or within one block of the El Camino Real corridor to meet the minimum density established by the applied land use designation and encourage new development to achieve maximum density.

Policy LU 2.3 Community Benefits. Develop a framework to allow density/intensity bonuses and concessions in exchange for the provision of community benefits, such as additional affordable housing, increased open space, public plazas or recreational facilities, subsidized retail space for small businesses, subsidized community space for nonprofits that provide community support services or childcare facilities, pedestrian and multimodal safety improvements, and/or off-site infrastructure improvements above minimum requirements.

- The framework shall allow for nonresidential development (office and commercial) within ¼-mile of the Hayward Park and Hillsdale Caltrain stations to have heights up to eight-stories when commensurate community benefits are provided.



Policy LU 2.4 Clustering. Encourage clustered development where benefits to natural ecology, habitat conservation, and/or preservation of historic resources can be achieved.

ACTION



Action LU 2.5 Community Benefits Dashboard. Create an online public portal that highlights the community benefits derived from new development projects, such as payment of in-lieu fees, contribution to the childcare fund, contribution to the public art fund, and other benefits to improve and standardize communication about new development projects and their benefits.



A DIVERSE RANGE OF LAND USES

To help keep San Mateo a great place to live, work, visit, and raise a family, it is important to plan for a diverse range of land uses that support one another. Placing housing, job centers, shopping, and eating areas close together and near transit encourages people to live, work, play, and shop without needing a car to travel between destinations. Commercial centers and an active Downtown provide a space where people can work, recreate, and build community through cultural and entertainment events while also supporting the city's fiscal health.

The Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 includes land use designations and policies that concentrate higher-density residential, mixed-use, office, and commercial uses in and around Downtown, along the El Camino Real corridor or within a half mile from a Caltrain station. It also supports locating and preserving certain commercial uses, such as convenience retail or grocery stores, adjacent to residential neighborhoods, which encourages walkability and increases access to healthy foods. This General Plan supports the development of office buildings and business parks that facilitate transit, pedestrian, and bicycle commutes. It also promotes parks, open space, cultural venues and recreational facilities, and community gathering spaces for all members of the San Mateo community. For background information and policies about parks, open space, and recreational facilities, please refer to the Conservation, Open Space and Recreation Element.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL LU-3 Provide a wide range of land uses, including housing, parks, open space, recreation, retail, commercial services, office, and industrial to adequately meet the full spectrum of needs in the community.

POLICIES

Policy LU 3.1 Housing Diversity. Promote safe, attractive, and walkable residential neighborhoods with diverse types and sizes of homes for individuals, families, and households of all income levels.

Policy LU 3.2 Commercial Development. Encourage development that builds on the strengths and unique qualities of existing neighborhoods and provides appropriate transition in terms of intensity of use, height, bulk, and design. Require commercial development adjacent to residential areas to appropriately address circulation, traffic, truck loading, trash/recycling, noise, visual impacts, public safety, hazardous materials storage, fire safety, air pollutant emissions, and odors in a way that minimizes impacts on neighboring uses.

Policy LU 3.3 Neighborhood Commercial and Service Uses. Encourage the preservation of local-serving commercial retail and service uses in neighborhood shopping districts and adjacent to residential neighborhoods, including as part of new mixed-use development.

Policy LU 3.4 Neighborhood Commercial Preservation. Support neighborhood serving shopping area vibrancy and maintain commercial concentrations by encouraging new development to retain existing ground floor retail and commercial uses, to continue to meet the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods.



Policy LU 3.5 Support Service Uses. Encourage businesses that provide a variety of services, such as restaurants, child care facilities, medical clinics, gyms, pharmacies, hardware stores, and grocery stores in locations that serve residential neighborhoods and commercial/office uses. Prioritize the development of these services in equity priority communities in the city.

Policy LU 3.6 Service Commercial/Light Industrial. Retain service commercial and light industrial uses in San Mateo to support local businesses and to meet the needs of residents locally. Preserve properties that are zoned for service commercial uses and discourage uses that are allowed elsewhere in the city from locating in service commercial and light industrial areas.

Policy LU 3.7 Hotels. Recognizing the importance of transient occupancy tax revenue to the City's budget, encourage development of hotels in commercial areas and allow small hotels in mixed-use districts where they are consistent with the density of adjacent uses.

Policy LU 3.8 Visitor Economy. Collaborate with other Peninsula cities and the San Mateo County/Silicon Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau to support the continued development of the visitor economy of both the city and the region, including lodging, entertainment, cultural, recreation, retail, and local events; encourage uses that attract visitors. Incentivize through fee reduction and visitor perks, sustainable modes of travel to and from the city to reduce both the use of air travel and gas-powered vehicles.



- Policy LU 3.9 Workplaces.** Develop office buildings and business parks to facilitate transit, pedestrian, and bicycle commutes. Provide compact development, mixed uses, and connectivity to transit to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
- Policy LU 3.10 Office Park Evolution.** Support the transition of single-use office parks into mixed-use districts that include residential, retail, office, services, and/or parks and open space. Within an office site that is redeveloping as mixed-use, locate offices and commercial space closest to high-volume roadways and locate new residential uses and outdoor spaces as far as possible from high-volume roadways.
- Policy LU 3.11 Community Gathering Places.** Provide and maintain inviting public spaces and streets that provide space for all members of the San Mateo community to meet, gather, and enjoy.
- Policy LU 3.12 Publicly Accessible Spaces.** Integrate a variety of privately owned and maintained publicly accessible spaces into new development. Spaces should be safe, welcoming, easy to access, and include signage that clearly identifies these spaces as publicly accessible.
- Policy LU 3.13 Cultural Facilities and Public Art.** Recognize cultural facilities, entertainment events, performing arts, and public art as part of a healthy and thriving community. Use funds from the City's art in-lieu fee to enhance existing public art and cultural facilities and encourage new facilities that reflect the character and identity of the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Policy LU 3.14 School Site Reuse.** Encourage the school district to prioritize affordable housing and community recreation needs when a school site is planned for reuse or redevelopment, in accordance with the priorities in the Housing Element and Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation Element.
- Policy LU 3.15 Residential Uses to Support Institutions.** Support the development of housing at quasi-public institutions such as schools, churches, and other facilities of an educational, religious, charitable, or philanthropic nature, consistent with the mission of these organizations. Encourage the development of ancillary residential uses when aligned with the organization's mission or to provide housing for employees.
- Policy LU 3.16 Public Facilities.** Encourage reuse or redevelopment of public facilities to residential and/or recreational uses that provide a public benefit to the community, such as community gardens.
- Policy LU 3.17 Peninsula Golf and Country Club.** Support the retention of the existing club and recreation use. If the site is redeveloped, residential development that is compatible with adjacent uses in terms of density and intensity should be encouraged.

ACTIONS

- Action LU 3.18 Permitted Uses.** Re-evaluate the types of commercial uses that are permitted and that require a special-use permit in all commercial districts to ensure requirements are forward looking and aligned with current economic needs and trends.

Action LU 3.19 Major Institutions/Special Facilities. Work with relevant agencies and organizations to support the long-term viability of major institutions and special facilities that provide important recreational, educational, or medical services, such as the San Mateo County Events Center, College of San Mateo, San Mateo County Hospital, Mills Health Center, and Peninsula Golf and Country Club. Require a Specific Plan and/or Master Plan to guide reuse or redevelopment of institutions and special facilities when appropriate.

FOCUSED PLANNING AREAS

This section focuses on three specific areas around the city – Downtown, the El Camino Real Corridor, and the Hillsdale Station Area. These areas are near transit and are designated for future growth and change in this General Plan as well as in other adopted planning documents:

- **The Downtown Area Plan**, adopted in 2003 and revised in 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 and enhancing its vitality and activity while also maintaining a sense of place.
- **The El Camino Real Master Plan**, adopted in 2001, provides guidance on streetscape, design guidelines, and implementation strategies for the future of the El Camino Real corridor, from State Route 92 to the Belmont city border.
- **The Hillsdale Station Area Plan**, adopted in 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.



This General Plan includes additional policy guidance to help plan for the growth and change that is anticipated and encouraged in these three focused planning areas. Policy guidance focused on historic resources, city image, and the design of mixed-use and commercial areas can be found in the Community Design and Historic Resources Element. The Circulation Element also includes policies focused on promoting walking and multi-modal transportation improvements in Downtown and facilitating efficient travel and pedestrian safety along the El Camino Real corridor. It also includes policy guidance for transit stations, including the Hillsdale Station.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

Downtown

GOAL LU-4 Maintain downtown San Mateo as the economic, cultural, and social center of the community.

POLICIES

- Policy LU 4.1** **Downtown Land Uses.** Allow and prioritize a wide range of residential, dining, cultural, entertainment, lodging, and other commercial uses downtown, at high intensities and densities, with strong multi-modal connectivity to the San Mateo Caltrain station and other transit.
- Policy LU 4.2** **Quality of Downtown Development.** Promote quality design of all new development that recognizes the regional and historical importance of Downtown San Mateo and strengthens its pedestrian-friendly, historic, and transit-oriented character.
- Policy LU 4.3** **Significant Historic Structures.** Protect key landmarks, historic structures, and the historic character of Downtown, as defined in the Community Design and Historic Resources Element.

ACTIONS

- Action LU 4.4** **Downtown Area Plan.** Update the Downtown Area Plan to support and strengthen the Downtown as a vibrant and active commercial, cultural, entertainment, and community gathering district. The updated Downtown Area Plan shall align with the General Plan, integrate recommendations from other concurrent City efforts, focus growth and intensity in proximity to the Caltrain station, encourage superblock concepts or approaches and allow parklets, update parking standards and parking management strategies, allow for increased housing units and density, and support high-quality, pedestrian-oriented design and architecture.
- Action LU 4.5** **Downtown Special Events.** Sponsor and support Downtown activities and events that brings Downtown to life, attracts residents and visitors, promotes local businesses, creates inclusive community gatherings, and provides information to residents about City initiatives and services.



El Camino Real Corridor

GOAL LU-5 Promote residential and mixed land uses along El Camino Real to strengthen its role as both a local and regional corridor.

POLICIES

- Policy LU 5.1 Housing on El Camino Real.** Encourage new residential uses along El Camino Real as part of both pure residential and mixed-use development to diversify the existing commercial character.
- Policy LU 5.2 El Camino Real Landscaping.** Retain the general residential and landscaped character of El Camino Real north of Tilton Avenue. Promote the visual upgrading of El Camino Real south of 9th Avenue through increased landscaping, coordination of public improvements, property maintenance, and sign control, and through conformance with the El Camino Real Master Plan or a future consolidated Corridor Plan per Action LU 5-3.

ACTION

- Action LU 5.3 El Camino Real Corridor Plan.** Prepare a Corridor Plan for El Camino Real that assembles existing planning documents for the corridor into a single comprehensive plan that implements the El Camino Real policies in General Plan 2040.



Hillsdale Station Area

GOAL LU-6 Promote transit-oriented development around the Hillsdale Caltrain station.

POLICIES

- Policy LU 6.1 Rail Corridor Transit-Oriented Development Plan (Rail Corridor Plan).** Continue to implement the Rail Corridor Plan to allow, encourage, and provide guidance for the creation of world-class transit-oriented, mixed-use development (TOD) within a half-mile radius of the Hillsdale and Hayward Park Caltrain stations, while maintaining and improving the quality of life for those who already live and work in the area.
- Policy LU 6.2 Hillsdale Shopping Center.** Allow redevelopment of the Hillsdale Shopping Center for a mix of uses, including commercial, retail, office, hotel, and residential uses. Update the Hillsdale Station Area Plan or require preparation of a master development plan to ensure the site is developed comprehensively and provides appropriate transitions to the adjacent neighborhoods.

ACTION

- Action LU 6.3 Hillsdale Station Area Plan.** Update the Hillsdale Station Area Plan to foster higher-density residential, office and mixed-use, transit-oriented development that connects to neighborhoods to the east and west, improves bicycle and pedestrian connectivity west of the station, and increases park and open space areas.



SHOPPING AREAS IN TRANSITION

Over the lifetime of this General Plan, some older shopping centers in the city are likely to change as old formats of brick-and-mortar retail evolve. The Hillsdale Mall, Bridgepointe Shopping Center, and Bel Mateo commercial area (Olympic Village) are three areas around the city that appear likely to experience meaningful transition over the next 20 years. Since these shopping areas provide neighborhood-serving uses that support nearby residences, the intent of this section is to support preservation while allowing for transition to a different mix of housing, shopping, services, and jobs. Policy guidance for other neighborhood shopping areas is contained under Goal LU-3 and policies related to the Hillsdale Mall are under Goal LU-6. Policies focused on the design of mixed-use and commercial areas can be found in the Community Design and Historic Resources Element.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL LU-7 Support the transition of shopping areas designated for new uses into vibrant districts with a range of housing, shopping, services, and jobs.

POLICY

Policy LU 7.1 Shopping Areas in Transition. Support the long-term viability of shopping centers and districts that provide neighborhood-serving uses by allowing these sites to redevelop with higher-density, mixed-use development that includes restaurants, services, other commercial uses, housing, and open space, while preserving core neighborhood-serving uses.

ACTIONS

- Action LU 7.2 Bridgepointe Area Plan.** Update and consolidate the Bridgepointe Master Plan and Mariner’s Island Specific Plan into one planning document to guide redevelopment of the Bridgepointe Shopping Center and the surrounding properties into a mixed-use neighborhood that maintains its regional retail component while developing a diverse range of housing types, including affordable housing; new parks and recreational facilities; community gathering places; ample facilities to support transit, bicycling, and walking; and a range of businesses and services. The plan shall include safe access for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders from Bridgepoint to the City’s transit corridors, such as Caltrain and El Camino Real.
- Action LU 7.3 Bel Mateo Area Plan.** Prepare a Specific Plan or Master Plan to guide redevelopment of the Bel Mateo area into a mixed-use neighborhood with a diverse range of neighborhood-serving commercial uses and amenities; new market-rate and affordable housing; ample facilities to support bicycling and walking; and publicly accessible park and open space areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 includes policies and actions that support the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities and reduce the impacts of environmental hazards in the areas of the city that experience the highest levels of pollution and negative health outcomes, such as asthma and low birth weight babies, as well as the greatest social and economic disadvantages, such as poverty and housing instability. This General Plan uses the term equity priority community for these neighborhoods and focuses on improving environmental justice and public health for the people who live in these communities by promoting meaningful community engagement and prioritizing improvements that address their needs.

During the development of this General Plan, the City identified two equity priority communities using local knowledge and CalEnviroScreen: North Central and North Shoreview/Shoreview. Figure I-5 in Chapter 1, Introduction, shows the location of these communities and provides more context about the health and socioeconomic issues affecting residents in these neighborhoods.

This section includes policy guidance focused on improving community health and access to healthy foods, with specific policies focused on the identified equity priority communities. State law allows cities and counties to address environmental justice either by adopting a stand-alone Environmental Justice Element or by incorporating environmental justice goals, policies, and actions into other elements. This General Plan takes the approach of incorporating environmental justice goals, policies, and actions into all of its elements; therefore, policies and actions focused on environmental justice can also be found throughout the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040. Safe and sanitary housing, as required by Senate Bill (SB) 1000, is addressed in the Housing Element. Please refer to the Housing Element for housing-related programs that are focused on equity priority communities.

In addition to policies and actions that the City will implement through the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 and other City plans, other agencies and organizations, such as the County of San Mateo, nonprofits, and religious groups, also provide resources and help to support equity priority communities. It is important to note that the State regularly updates CalEnviroScreen, and new data sources may become available. The equity priority communities mapped in this General Plan may change as conditions change.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL LU-8 Support the equitable health and well-being of all neighborhoods in San Mateo and all members of the San Mateo community by improving conditions in equity priority communities.

Community Health

POLICY



Policy LU 8.1 **Prioritizing Community Health.** Continue to support the physical and mental health and well-being in equity priority communities by prioritizing public safety, resolving land use conflicts and incompatible uses that pose risks to health or safety, remediating contamination, and enforcing building code standards.

ACTIONS



Action LU 8.2 **Collaborations for Community Health.** Develop intentional, strategic, and mutually beneficial relationships with organizations engaged in improving health and well-being, reducing environmental health disparities, expanding access to affordable quality healthcare and mental healthcare, and mitigating negative environmental health hazards. Encourage greater emphasis on expanding or improving health services, including mental health services, in equity priority communities.



Action LU 8.3 **Health Disparities.** Coordinate with the San Mateo County Public Health Department to promote healthier communities through education, prevention, intervention programs, and other activities that address the health disparities and inequities that exist in San Mateo.



Action LU 8.4 **City Investment.** Use funds from the park impact fee and other sources to invest in programs and public improvements that connect residents with opportunities to increase their physical activity and improve their physical and mental health, especially in equity priority communities with higher risk of negative public health outcomes. Identify new funding sources for programs and public improvements, if needed.

Equity Priority Communities

POLICIES



Policy LU 8.5 Community Preservation. Prevent displacement in equity priority communities by protecting tenants, helping homeowners remain in place, and funding affordable housing.



Policy LU 8.6 Safe and Sanitary Homes. Encourage homes and neighborhoods that are free of environmental health hazards.



Policy LU 8.7 Access to Parks and Recreation. Provide attractive, comfortable, and safe pedestrian and cyclist access to public parks and recreational facilities in and near equity priority communities.

ACTIONS



Action LU 8.8 Streetscape and Safety Improvements. Work with residents in equity priority communities to identify sidewalk, lighting, landscaping, and roadway improvements needed to improve routes to parks, schools, recreation facilities, and other destinations within the community. Prioritize investments that address health disparities in equity priority communities in the annual Capital Improvement Program.



Action LU 8.9 Equity Priority Community Mapping. Regularly update the map identifying equity priority communities with data from CalEnviroScreen or other sources, including information from community members.



Action LU 8.10 Equity Priority Communities Plan. Prepare a plan for the equity priority communities that addresses the needs of each community, including health, safety, and improved circulation with community input. The plan shall seek to ensure the streets in each community are measurably safe, include ADA accessibility, and have adequate on-street parking. Changes included in the plan shall be developed and enacted with the expressed purpose of improving health, safety, and welfare of the members of each community.



Action LU 8.11 City Services. Work with residents in equity priority communities to improve services provided by the City or other partners related to safety, sanitation, and security in these neighborhoods.



Action LU 8.12 Neighborhood Beautification. Support and promote neighborhood clean-up and beautification initiatives in equity priority communities, including street tree planting and maintenance, through partnerships with neighborhood organizations.

Access to Healthy Food

POLICIES



Policy LU 8.13 Locally Grown Food. Increase access to fresh food by allowing and encouraging local food production, micro agriculture, edible landscapes, rooftop gardens, community gardens, and urban farms, and by distributing information about community-supported agriculture programs that provide affordable access to fresh food.



Policy LU 8.14 Retail Food Sources. Strive to ensure that all households in San Mateo, including those in equity priority communities, have access to retail sources of affordable healthy food, including organic options, such as full-service grocery stores, specialty food markets, farmers markets and/or community gardens, and convenience stores with fresh food options, by working to retain existing retail sources and attract new ones.

ACTIONS



Action LU 8.15 Healthy Food Access. Support the work of San Mateo County Health and other local partners to:

- Continue and expand the ability to use the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) program at farmers' markets and other sources of healthy food.
- Implement programs to encourage markets and convenience stores to stock fresh produce and other healthy foods.
- Encourage restaurants to enlist restaurants in the CalFresh Restaurant Meals Program, which allows people at a high risk of chronic hunger to use CalFresh benefits to buy prepared meals at participating restaurants.
- Continue to provide and expand the subsidized senior lunch program at the San Mateo Senior Center and the Congregate Nutrition Program at the King Center Community Center.



Action LU 8.16 Urban Agriculture. Develop City regulations that encourage urban agriculture, community gardens, and farm stands, as appropriate.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement and resident participation is a high priority for San Mateo. The Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 aims to engage all residents and stakeholders on matters of development, growth, and public policy in ways that are inclusive, equitable, and give everyone an opportunity to participate in the process. Public engagement with disadvantaged communities can help identify programming and policy changes to allow for improvements where it is needed most. However, many members of vulnerable populations and disadvantaged communities face barriers to meaningful engagement. For example, people with disabilities may have difficulty accessing a meeting location or hearing verbal dialogue. Non-English speakers may have difficulty reading meeting notices or meeting materials in English. Low-income households may be more likely to work multiple jobs or do shift work that precludes attending evening meetings. It is important to understand the specific vulnerable populations and disadvantages faced by San Mateo residents to minimize the barriers to their participation. This General Plan takes the approach of incorporating community engagement goals, policies, and actions into all of its elements; therefore, policies and actions focused on community engagement can also be found throughout the General Plan.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL LU-9 Include everyone in community development decisions for a shared, sustainable future.

POLICIES



Policy LU 9.1



Inclusive Outreach. Notify the community when planning and development decisions are being considered and inform community members about how they can engage in the process. Use outreach and engagement methods that encourage broad representation and are culturally sensitive, particularly for equity priority communities.

**Policy LU 9.2**

Equitable Engagement. Provide support for increased community participation in the planning and development processes, particularly in areas with language barriers or a concentration of low-income households that have been historically underrepresented and/or disproportionately impacted by traffic and municipal or industrial uses.

**Policy LU 9.3**

Development Projects. Communicate clearly how and at what stages members of the public can provide input on development projects under review and ensure public awareness of all the factors the City must consider in approving or denying a project.

**Policy LU 9.4**

Applicant Communications. Require that sponsors of new development projects, especially those that require Planning Commission and/or City Council approval, have early, frequent, and meaningful communication with affected community members and stakeholders, including members of equity priority communities.

ACTIONS

**Action LU 9.5**

Community Partners. Work with community-based organizations and community partners to engage members of equity priority communities in planning and policy decisions.

**Action LU 9.6**

Community Surveys. Periodically conduct statistically reliable community surveys, representative of the demographics of the population, to gauge community service needs, policy preferences, and effective communication methods.

**Action LU 9.7**

Communications Strategy. Develop a communications strategy that outlines goals and tactics to engage a broad cross-section of the community.

- Prepare public notices and other materials in the predominant language(s) spoken in the community and provide interpretation services at meetings as needed.
- Make public notices and other important documents available in print at local libraries, community centers, or other gathering places.
- Use culturally appropriate approaches.
- When possible, schedule and locate meetings to be convenient for community members to attend.
- Use the City's website, social media, and other communication channels to share information about how community members can participate in public meetings.
- Gather data to understand the economic, gender, age, and racial diversity of the affected population before designing communication approaches aimed at reaching the affected population.
- Provide notification and outreach for development projects using clear and easy-to-understand language to ensure all stakeholders and interested community members understand and have the ability to engage in the development review process.



CLIMATE CHANGE AND LAND USE

Climate change is driven by an increase in GHGs in Earth’s atmosphere, trapping more heat near the surface and changing Earth’s climate in a number of ways. These changes often include increasing the frequency and severity of natural hazards, either directly (such as causing summer temperatures to reach dangerously high levels) or indirectly (such as warm temperatures and droughts leading to more dry vegetation, increasing wildfire risks). The hazardous situations created or exacerbated by climate change may result in an increased chance of personal injury or other harm, a greater risk of damage to buildings and infrastructure, and disruption of essential services, among other hardships. San Mateo, like most communities in California, is expected to experience multiple direct impacts as a result of climate change, including potential flooding, sea level rise, wildfires, drought, extreme heat, and negative effects on public health and biodiversity.

Land use decisions and regulations can decrease GHG emissions by affecting how frequently and how far people drive (the single greatest source of GHGs in San Mateo) and how much electricity or natural gas is used in buildings. Land use decisions can also reduce the exposure of people and assets to climate change hazards by locating new development outside of hazard areas and/or designing it to withstand expected future events. This element includes policies and actions aimed at significantly reducing GHG emissions by encouraging sustainable urban design, requiring transit-oriented and mixed-use development, and reducing car dependency. It also supports San Mateo’s adopted Climate Action Plan, which is the City’s comprehensive strategy to reduce GHG emissions.

Most buildings, both residential and nonresidential, use electricity and natural gas to operate appliances and other pieces of equipment. While sources of electricity have become much cleaner over time and will continue to become cleaner due to State law and utility policies, the GHG emissions associated with using a unit of natural gas has remained constant, as natural gas is a fossil fuel and cannot become a cleaner energy source. To reduce GHG emissions, buildings can be “decarbonized,” or constructed to be mostly electric or all electric, and existing buildings can be electrified as part of retrofit activities. Advances in electric equipment, such as those used for space heating, water heating, and cooking, can also help make building electrification easier and more cost-effective.

Both this Land Use Element and the Safety Element include policies and actions to plan ahead for future climate conditions and protect San Mateo residents from climate hazards. The Public Services and Facilities Element includes policies and actions to promote energy conservation and renewable energy.

While this General Plan includes policy guidance to help reduce GHG emissions, data about existing and projected GHG emissions in San Mateo and strategies for the reduction of GHG emissions can also be found in the City’s Climate Action Plan.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL LU-10 Make San Mateo strong and resilient by acting to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate.

POLICIES



Policy LU 10.1 Effects of Climate Change. Account for the effects of climate change in updating or amending the General Plan or Zoning Code, disaster planning efforts, City projects, infrastructure planning, future policies, and long-term strategies, as feasible. Recognize potential climate change consequences, such as sea level rise, flooding, higher groundwater, less availability of drinking water, hotter temperatures, increased wildfire risk, and changing air quality. Prioritize protecting equity priority communities from the disproportionate burden of climate hazards, including against risks of displacement and challenges in rebuilding after major incidents.









Policy LU 10.2 Decarbonized Building Stock. Eliminate the use of fossil fuels as an energy source in all new building construction and reduce the use of fossil fuels as an energy source in the existing building stock at the time of building alteration through requirements for all-electric construction.



Policy LU 10.3 Sustainable Improvements. Ensure that all improvements to existing structures are developed or remodeled in a sustainable and resilient manner.

ACTIONS

- 
Action LU 10.4 Climate Action Plan Implementation. Implement the greenhouse gas reduction strategies to meet the City’s Climate Action Plan emission-reduction goals.
- 
Action LU 10.5 Climate Action Plan Monitoring. Monitor and report progress on the implementation of the City’s Climate Action Plan on an annual basis. Regularly review new opportunities and approaches to reduce emissions consistent with the Climate Action Plan’s goals.
- 
Action LU 10.6 Greenhouse Gas Inventory. Every five years, prepare an updated greenhouse gas emissions inventory consistent with the Climate Action Plan.
- 
Action LU 10.7 Engage the Public in the Climate Action Plan. Provide public information to educate residents and businesses on the Climate Action Plan and to spark behavioral changes in individual energy and water consumption, transportation mode choices, and waste reduction.
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- 
Action LU 10.8 Building Decarbonization. Evaluate and adopt reach codes and other policies to decarbonize the building stock.
- 
Action LU 10.9 Resilience of Critical Facilities and Public Infrastructure. Identify critical facilities and public infrastructure in areas vulnerable to climate change hazards, and work to site, design, and upgrade these facilities with consideration for future increases in severity that may occur over the anticipated life of the development. In cases where facilities cannot be sustainably maintained, evaluate the costs and benefits of relocation. Where facilities can be safely sited for the near term, but future impacts are likely, prepare an adaptive management plan detailing steps for maintenance, retrofitting, and/or relocation.
- 
Action LU 10.10 Clean Fuel Infrastructure. Support efforts to build electric vehicle charging stations and clean fuel stations in San Mateo, including hydrogen and sustainably sourced biofuels, as supported by market conditions.



A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

The City's fiscal health and livability depend on maintaining a diverse community of businesses that are supported by residents, visitors, and workers. High-quality public services, reliable infrastructure, and local quality of life are critical to attracting, retaining, and growing local businesses. In addition to providing land where businesses can locate and expand, the City plays a key role in building, maintaining, and/or coordinating infrastructure to support businesses, including roadways, water and sewer services, solid waste disposal, and energy and telecommunications systems. The financial resources to address these needs require that the City maintain a healthy and fiscally sustainable budget. This, in turn, depends on cultivating a diverse tax base that includes a broad mix of businesses and balances the need for both housing and job-generating land uses.

The economic success of regional industry clusters, such as technology, life science, and entertainment has generated a concentration of jobs on the Peninsula. As a result, demand for housing from workers moving to the area for job opportunities has increased at a much higher rate than housing production. Limited housing production in the Bay Area region has created a housing shortage, which has in turn led to rising costs and other housing challenges, such as overcrowding and displacement.

A sustainable economy in 2040 will harness the strength of the regional job market to create quality jobs, support the growth of local businesses, and provide local housing opportunities for residents and workers at all income levels. An important component of a sustainable economy includes balancing job growth with housing development to ensure that all workers have an opportunity to live in proximity to their job. There is also a need to support local workers and the local economy by encouraging local hires, living wages, and training for workers, such as an apprenticeship program. The City currently charges a Commercial Linkage Fee for new job-generating construction like offices, hotels, medical buildings, retail, and restaurants to support the creation or preservation of affordable housing to assist lower- and moderate-wage workers who cannot afford the current housing market prices.

During the development of the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040, the City completed a comprehensive update to the Housing Element. Please refer to the Housing Element for programs aimed at supporting households facing housing challenges, such as overcrowding and potential displacement. The Housing Element also encourages housing for all income groups.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL LU-11 Cultivate a diverse, thriving, inclusive, and green economy.

POLICIES

Policy LU 11.1 Economic Development. Prioritize the retention and expansion of existing businesses and attract new businesses that strengthen and diversify the City’s economic base.

Policy LU 11.2 Local Employment. Encourage a diverse mix of uses that provide opportunities for employment of residents of all skill and education levels.

Policy LU 11.3 Local Hiring and a Living Wage. Encourage developers and contractors doing work in the city to evaluate hiring local labor from the Bay Area region and providing living wages.

Policy LU 11.4 Diverse Economic Base. Strive to maintain a reasonable similarity between potential job generation and the local job market by maintaining a diverse economic base.

Policy LU 11.5 Jobs to Housing Balance. Strive to maintain a reasonable balance between income levels, housing types, and housing costs within the city. In future area-wide planning efforts, rather than with individual projects, recognize the importance of matching housing choice and affordability with job generation in the city, through an emphasis on the jobs-housing balance.



Policy LU 11.6 Job Training Programs. Collaborate with educational services, nonprofits, labor, and businesses to provide job training programs that meet the needs of businesses and industries. Help connect local businesses with programs, organizations, or educational institutions, such as NOVAworks, College of San Mateo, the San Mateo County Community College District, San Mateo Union High School District, and Small Business Development Centers.

Policy LU 11.7 Apprenticeship Programs. Encourage employers within San Mateo, especially building and construction companies, to evaluate hiring from or contributing to apprenticeship training programs that provide on-the-job training and are certified by the State’s Division of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS).

Policy LU 11.8 State-of-the-Art Telecommunications. Support the development of telecommunications policies and infrastructure, including public Wi-Fi, to meet the needs of local businesses and residents and support remote work.

ACTIONS

Action LU 11.9 Quality Local Jobs. Develop programs to retain and attract businesses that provide a living wage, offer health insurance benefits, and match the diverse range of education and skills of San Mateo residents.



Action LU 11.10 Small Business Support. Help small businesses stay and grow by offering tools and support, such as multilingual outreach, assistance accessing free educational services and financing opportunities, connecting with the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown San Mateo Association, and assistance understanding City requirements and preparing for code compliance.

Action LU 11.11 Commercial Displacement. Provide proactive support to local businesses affected by construction and redevelopment by communicating with business owners well in advance of construction and assisting in identifying potential locations for temporary relocation. Encourage and support the retention of existing businesses in new or renovated spaces that are a part of redevelopment projects.

Action LU 11.12 First Source Hiring. Explore the feasibility of establishing a First Source Hiring Program that encourages developers and contractors to make best efforts to hire new employees, workers, and subcontractors that are based in San Mateo County, and to partner with organizations that offer job training programs, such as the San Mateo County Community College District and San Mateo Union High School District.

Action LU 11.13 Living Wage Incentives. Maintain provisions in the Affordable Housing Commercial Linkage Fee that offer fee reductions to developers who voluntarily enter into Area Standard Wage Participation Agreements with the City.

GOAL LU-12 Create financial stability for the City by maintaining its ability to pay for public improvements, core infrastructure, and essential services.

POLICIES

Policy LU 12.1 Revenue Generators. Retain and grow existing businesses and attract new businesses that can generate and diversify the City's tax revenue, including from transient occupancy tax and other sources, and increase job opportunities to ensure the City has adequate resources for infrastructure improvements and essential City services, such as police, fire, parks, recreation, and libraries.

Policy LU 12.2 Commercial Linkage Fee. Maintain the City's Affordable Housing Commercial Linkage Fee assessed to new nonresidential construction that recognizes the connection between increased workers in San Mateo and increased demand for housing at all levels. Use the fees collected to support the creation or preservation of affordable housing to assist the workers who will make lower or moderate wages and cannot afford the current housing market prices.

ACTION

Action LU 12.3 Fiscal Neutrality. Study the feasibility and potential impacts of adopting a Fiscal Neutrality Policy that would require new development to offset any difference between future tax revenue and the cost of City services to that development. The policy should also consider the City's goals to provide for a diverse range of housing that is affordable to all members of the community.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

New development projects in San Mateo go through a planning review process to ensure that all applicable City standards and requirements are addressed. Most development projects require a Planning Application, which is a written request for approval of a project before a building permit application can be submitted. Before a formal Planning Application, applicants usually meet with staff in the Community Development Department to discuss the scope of the project, application requirements, and applicable codes and policies. Most projects also require community outreach and engagement, usually in the form of mailed notification and a neighborhood meeting, prior to a Planning Application submittal to collect early input from residents. Larger projects can also include a Planning Commission study session. These early steps help to ensure success when a project's formal Planning Application is submitted.



Once the Community Development Department receives the plans and required application materials, the project is reviewed by other City departments, like Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Police, and Fire, for completeness and compliance with applicable codes, policies, and City requirements. During this time, the City also determines the scope of the environmental review, which could include an exemption, an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, or an Environmental Impact Report, consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). After being deemed complete and finishing the environmental review process, City staff prepare findings and conditions of approval for the project. Depending on the size and scope of the project, and the type of approval being sought, final approval may come from the Zoning Administrator, the Planning Commission, or the City Council.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL LU-13 Maintain Development Review and Building Permit processes that are comprehensive and efficient.

POLICIES

Policy LU 13.1 Development Review Process. Review development proposals and building permit applications in an efficient and timely manner while maintaining quality standards in accordance with City codes, policies, and regulations, and in compliance with State requirements.



Policy LU 13.2 Public Education. Promote public awareness of the development review and permitting process.



Policy LU 13.3 Fee Information. Maintain an updated schedule of fees and housing development affordability requirements, all zoning ordinances and development standards, and annual fee or finance reports on the City's website. In addition, maintain archives of impact fee nexus studies, cost of service studies, or equivalent reports for ease of information sharing with the public.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

Many issues addressed in the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 extend beyond the city boundaries; therefore, it is important to highlight the need for collaboration between the City and other public agencies on these issues. This General Plan encourages inter-agency cooperation and engagement by the City in current and long-range plans prepared by other regional agencies, such as Plan Bay Area. The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), in partnership with the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), prepared Plan Bay Area 2050, which includes strategies that connect housing, the economy, transportation, and the environment. The vision of the plan is to ensure the Bay Area is affordable, connected, diverse, healthy, and vibrant for all by the year 2050. Plan Bay Area focuses on land use and transportation investments in Priority Development Areas, which are areas identified by local jurisdictions where housing and job growth will be concentrated close to public transit. San Mateo has identified five Priority Development Areas that are included in Plan Bay Area 2050.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL LU-14 Collaborate and communicate with other public agencies regarding regional issues.

POLICIES

- Policy LU 14.1 Interagency Cooperation.** Promote and participate in cooperative planning with other public agencies and the jurisdictions within San Mateo County, such as the 21 Elements regional collaboration, regarding regional issues such as water supply, traffic congestion, rail transportation, wildfire hazards, air pollution, waste management, fire services, emergency medical services, and climate change.
- Policy LU 14.2 Public Agency Developments.** Require developments constructed by other governmental agencies to conform to the City's General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and other development regulations, to the extent possible.
- Policy LU 14.3 Plan Bay Area.** Remain engaged in current and future long-range plans prepared by Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), and other regional organizations to influence and be aware of projected growth assumptions for San Mateo and regional priorities for transportation, infrastructure, and the economy that could affect the city.
- Policy LU 14.4 Priority Development Areas.** Support the strategies outlined in Plan Bay Area 2050, especially within City-identified Priority Development Areas.



GENERAL PLAN MAINTENANCE

Long-range planning in San Mateo does not end with the adoption of the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040. To achieve the community's vision, decisions about development projects, capital improvements, specific plans, and other plans and policies affecting land use, transportation, and the physical environment will need to be consistent with this General Plan.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

GOAL LU-15 Ensure that the City's General Plan is consistent with State law, legally adequate, and up to date.

POLICIES

Policy LU 15.1 General Plan Amendments. Amendments to the General Plan shall be considered as needed. Revisions to the General Plan may be needed to ensure that elements remain consistent with each other and in compliance with State law.

Policy LU 15.2 Specific and Master Plans. All adopted plans, including transportation plans, Specific Plans, and Master Plans, shall be consistent with this General Plan.

ACTIONS

Action LU 15.3 Annual General Plan Progress Report. Submit an Annual Progress Report on the status of the General Plan implementation to the City Council and to the Office of Planning and Research by April 1 of each year, per Government Code Section 65400. The Annual Progress Report should also include population projection information.

Action LU 15.4 Specific Plans and Master Plans. Review all adopted Specific Plans and Master Plans and determine if updates are needed for consistency with this General Plan or if any out-of-date plans should be retired.