



# Strive San Mateo

## General Plan 2040

March 18, 2024





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# VISION AND VALUES









# VISION AND VALUES

The Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 Vision and Values expresses the community's aspirations for San Mateo for the next 20 years. Developed through a community visioning process, the Vision describes the future of San Mateo as the community would like it to be in 2040 and sets the tone for the entire document. The Values provide direction for decision making as the General Plan is implemented over time and are meant to remind local leaders and City of San Mateo staff of the community's most important ideals. The Vision and Values informed the development of the General Plan goals, policies, and actions. All policies and actions are intended to support the implementation of the Vision and Values.

## 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.

## 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.



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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction









# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS A GENERAL PLAN?

The Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 is the City's primary tool to guide physical changes in the city. It lays out the community's vision for how San Mateo will look, feel, and change over the next 20 years. The Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 covers many important topics, including where housing and businesses get built; how people travel around the city; and how to adapt to a changing climate, protect the natural environment, and provide parks and community services. This General Plan also expresses the City's commitment to environmental justice, community engagement, and sustainability.

Every municipality in California is required by State law to adopt and periodically update a general plan that provides a comprehensive, long-range statement of the jurisdiction's land use policies for the coming decades. It must respond to existing conditions on the ground today and anticipate broad, emerging trends that will shape the San Mateo of tomorrow. State law requires that general plans must address many different topics that affect our daily lives, such as housing, land use, transportation, climate change, natural resources, community health and safety, and public services and amenities.

Together with the City's Zoning Code and other related sections of the Municipal Code, the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 will serve as the basis for planning and policy-related decisions made by City staff, the City Council, the Planning Commission, and other City boards and commissions. Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 is also an important reference document for residents and those seeking to develop property in the city since it relays the City's vision for the future of San Mateo.

## WHO MADE THE GENERAL PLAN?

The process to update the General Plan kicked off in May 2018. At the outset of the project, the City Council appointed a seven-member General Plan Subcommittee (GPS) that was charged with providing feedback and encouraging community participation throughout the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 process. The GPS included two City Councilmembers, two Planning Commissioners, and three representatives from other City commissions and the San Mateo-Foster City School District.

Community engagement and feedback was the foundation for each decision point of the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 process. Public outreach began in fall 2018 with a series of visioning workshops and community meetings. Over the next five years, the City received input from over 6,000 people or organizations. Outreach activities included:

- Hosting over 25 community meetings, workshops, and open houses virtually and across the city.
- Staffing booths at over 30 different community events, such as September Nights on B Street, Movies in the Park, and the Día de los Muertos event at the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center.
- Offering seven online surveys and mapping activities to encourage remote participation.
- Making presentations to numerous community organizations, including neighborhood groups, business associations and major property owners, and local nonprofit groups.



- Holding pop-ups at local businesses, churches, parent group meetings, food distribution centers, bus stops, and various community events.
- Holding over 45 public meetings with the City Council, Planning Commission, and General Plan Subcommittee.

In addition, the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 website included online activities and shared information about upcoming meetings and draft documents throughout the process. The online activities allowed community members to provide input without having to attend events in person, which was especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic that limited public gatherings for much of 2020 and into 2021.

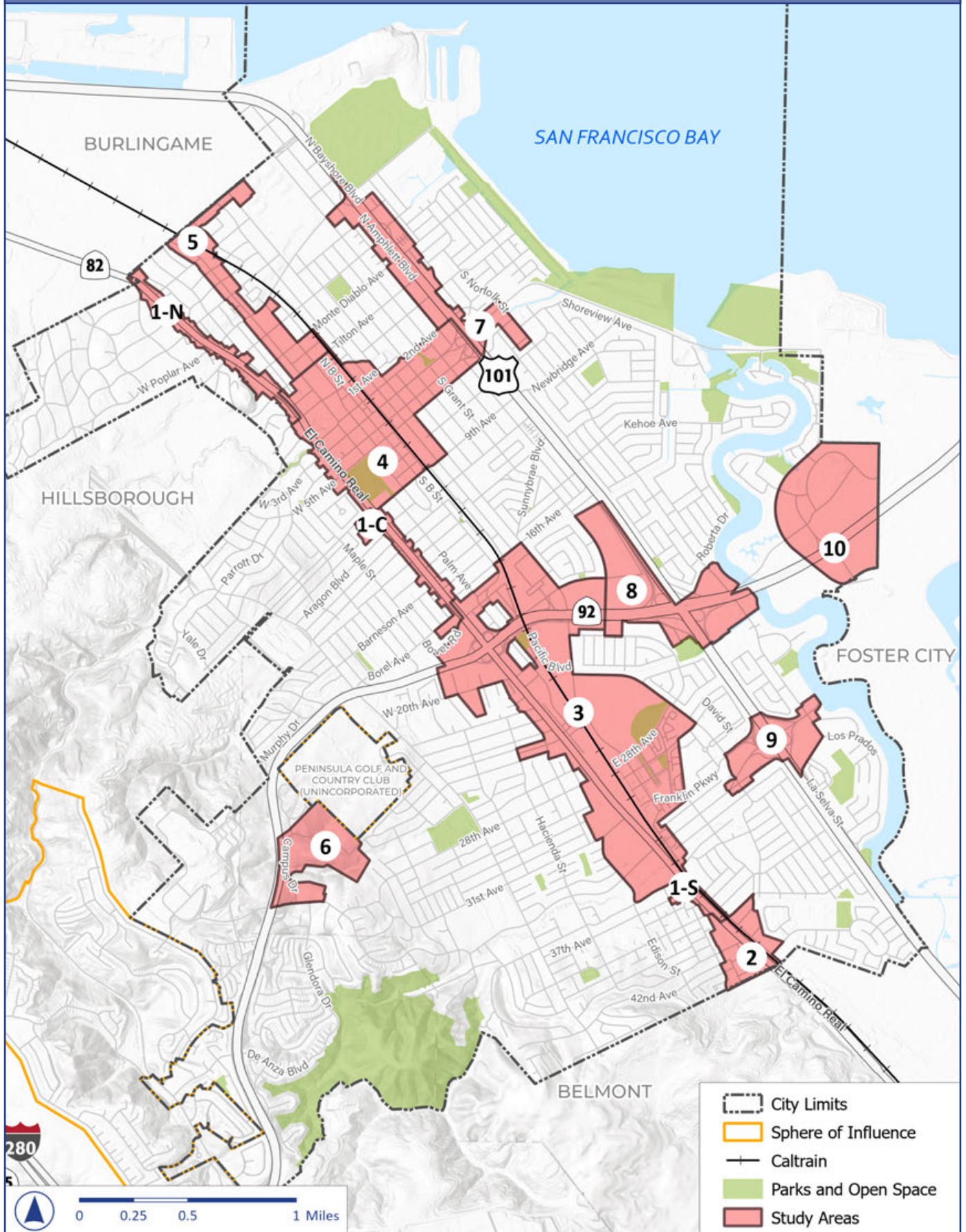
Throughout the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 process, the City Council emphasized inclusive outreach to ensure engagement from non-English speakers, renters, residents under the age of 44, low-income households, and underrepresented areas, including the North Shoreview, Shoreview, and North Central neighborhoods, and areas east of US Highway 101. City staff held pop-up events and workshops in the underrepresented neighborhoods and saw an increase in participation from these targeted groups over the course of the process.

Establishing the community's vision and values for San Mateo in 2040 was a first major step of the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 preparation process. Between September 2018 and April 2019, hundreds of San Mateo residents provided input on the vision and values for 2040. The City Council finalized the vision statement included as a preamble to this General Plan. The final vision and values statement will guide the implementation of this General Plan over the next 20 years.

Following the visioning phase, the City held community workshops, meetings, and online activities, to identify areas of the city that have the greatest potential to support growth and change over the next 20 years. Ten areas were identified as part of this process, as shown in Figure I-1, and they included the El Camino Real corridor, areas around the three Caltrain stations, and aging and underutilized shopping centers that have potential to transition to other uses. Although the 10 areas reflect the locations where the City anticipates most growth to occur, the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 will allow for continued growth outside of these areas based on existing densities, regulations, and State law. The City published an Alternatives Evaluation that analyzed land use and transportation alternatives for these 10 areas in January 2022. After receiving input from the community, General Plan Subcommittee, and Planning Commission, the City Council selected the preferred land use and transportation scenarios in spring 2022.



Figure I-1 Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 Study Areas



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.



After the alternatives process, the City prepared draft goals, policies, and actions for each Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 Element. The goals and policies are based on a combination of guidance from the existing General Plan, input from community members and decision makers throughout the process, State and local laws, and best practices



in the planning profession. The community, General Plan Subcommittee, Planning Commission, and City Council reviewed the draft policies and actions in a series of public meetings in summer and fall 2022. In addition, the community provided input on the draft policies and actions through an online survey that was active for over two months.

The Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 team incorporated City Council direction into the draft goals, policies, and actions, and prepared the Draft Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 for community, General Plan Subcommittee, Planning Commission, and City Council review.

## FOUNDATION OF GENERAL PLAN 2040

The previous iteration of San Mateo's General Plan, General Plan 2030, formed the basis of Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040. General Plan 2040 includes all of the same topics as General Plan 2030, but reorganizes the elements to improve usability, legibility, and implementation. General Plan 2030 focused on what it called "eight major proposals:" increasing housing opportunities while preserving single-family neighborhoods, strengthening downtown, concentrating new development near transit, improving community design, preserving historic resources, improving traffic congestion, increasing parks and recreational opportunities, and establishing San Mateo as a sustainable city. All of these major proposals are carried forward in General Plan 2040 with policy and action updates to recognize new ideas and solutions. General Plan 2040 also carries forward the height limits established in General Plan 2030 for most of the city, including existing low density neighborhoods, with some exceptions within the 10 Study Areas. Maintaining a connection to the City's past while planning for the future is central to General Plan 2040, with the Plan's Big Ideas embodying this concept.

In that spirit, this General Plan introduces new policy guidance to respond to issues that have emerged since the last General Plan update, such as planning for an equitable community, shifting the transportation focus from an auto-oriented circulation system to one that supports all travel modes, planning for sea level rise, and broadening the way the City approaches community outreach.



## THE BIG IDEAS IN GENERAL PLAN 2040

The Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 includes ten Big Ideas that will guide the next 20 years of San Mateo. These Big Ideas are a mix of enduring principles that have guided decision-making in San Mateo for many years and support the City's history and fabric while introducing new concepts and topics that reflect present-day concerns and challenges.



### **Balance Growth and Change.**

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 sets the stage for higher density residential and mixed-use development close to transit and jobs while maintaining existing development patterns in lower density neighborhoods. Allowing a range of housing densities encourages a broad variety of housing types and sizes that fit many different needs, and building new homes near Caltrain and high frequency bus routes helps reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.



### **Enhance San Mateo's Neighborhood Fabric and Quality of Life.**

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 promotes context-sensitive low density residential design, supports neighborhood shopping areas, improves neighborhood walkability and traffic congestion, protects homes, schools, and libraries from excessive noise levels, and provides for a comprehensive network of parks and recreational facilities for all to enjoy.



### **Preserve Nature as the Foundation of the City.**

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 honors San Mateo's natural setting as an irreplaceable asset that is the physical foundation of the community by protecting open space and natural habitat, planting trees, maintaining the City's urban forest, investing in natural infrastructure, preserving natural views and expanding access to parks and open space.



### **Encourage All Ways to Travel Around the City.**

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 supports a multimodal transportation system implemented using a complete streets approach that emphasizes safety and access for walking, bicycling, transit, and driving. By prioritizing mobility options and connectivity for all modes, the General Plan works toward reducing congestion on local streets, vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas GHG emissions.

**Support the Local Economy.**

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 focuses on ways to keep jobs and dollars in San Mateo by supporting local shops, businesses, and services. It encourages new businesses that residents need and enjoy, such as restaurants, child care facilities, medical clinics, gyms, pharmacies, and grocery stores, in convenient locations throughout the community.

**Address Historic Preservation Holistically.**

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 provides a comprehensive blueprint for historic preservation, starting with a citywide historic context statement and Historic Preservation Ordinance update, followed by updates to the historic resources inventory to identify architecturally, culturally, and historically significant buildings, structures, sites, and districts. These efforts will be based on community input and best practices from State and federal agencies, to find the right balance between preservation and other important priorities such as providing new homes.

**Initiate a Comprehensive Sea Level Rise Strategy.**

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 prioritizes development of a climate change adaptation plan that addresses all ongoing efforts, including the work of regional agencies, local jurisdictions, and private property owners, to establish a comprehensive strategy for resiliency and adaptation against sea level rise and flooding.

**Strengthen Community Outreach.**

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 prioritizes extensive community engagement and affirms culturally sensitive outreach methods that encourage early communication and broad representation, such as offering information and materials in the predominant language spoken in the community and scheduling meetings at convenient times and locations for community members.

**Focus on Equity and Health for all Residents.**

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 directs City investment to public improvements that address health and infrastructure disparities in equity priority communities, including the North Central and North Shoreview neighborhoods. City investments will also support active and healthy lifestyles, reducing health disparities around the city, improving access to fresh and health foods, making parks and open space equitably accessible for all residents, and making streets safer and more beautiful.

**Improve Community Safety Planning and Awareness.**

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 establishes clear actions to protect the community from emergencies and extreme weather events such as flooding, wildfires, earthquakes, and pandemics, by reinforcing the City's emergency readiness and response capabilities, increasing power system resilience, maintaining a state-of-the-art emergency notification system, providing community training programs, and planning ahead for disaster recovery.



## SAN MATEO'S PLANNING CONTEXT

### Setting

San Mateo is in the center of the Peninsula, between the bay and foothills, as shown on Figure I-2. It has the largest population in San Mateo County. San Mateo's vibrant and historic downtown, desirable neighborhoods, diversity of employment options, and high-quality public services make it a popular place to live and work. The city's three Caltrain stations, extensive bicycle and pedestrian network, SamTrans bus service, and well-maintained local roadways make it easy to travel to destinations in the city, along the Peninsula, and beyond.

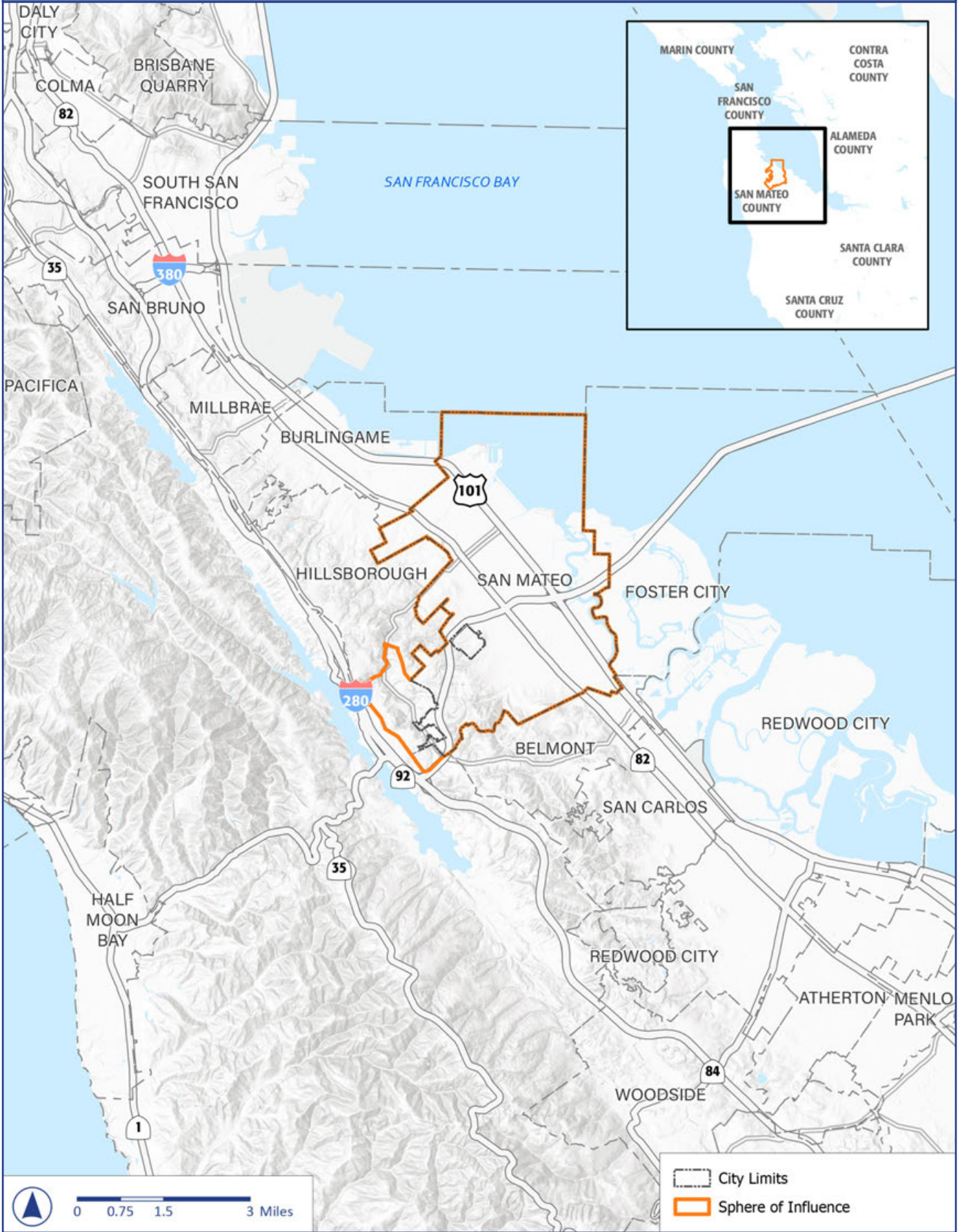
As shown on Figure I-3, residential uses account for the largest amount of land in the city. San Mateo also has a wide range of uses, including offices; commercial uses, such as shops and restaurants; and high-tech and light-industrial areas. Parks, open space, and private recreation make up most of the remaining land in the city, along with public facilities and quasi-public uses. There is only a small amount of vacant land in the city. Major new development in San Mateo is primarily concentrated around the three Caltrain stations (in the Downtown, Hayward Park, and Hillsdale areas) and along El Camino Real. Given San Mateo's central location on the Peninsula, the city functions as a crossroads for regional travel routes. The San Mateo-Hayward Bridge links San Mateo and other Peninsula communities to the East Bay. US Highway 101, State Route 92, and El Camino Real all pass through San Mateo, and Interstate 280 passes just west of the City Limits. Traffic congestion from these regional roadways regularly spills over to local city streets.

### Community Profile

At the time of the creation of the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040, the population in San Mateo was about 100,984 people from a diverse range of racial and ethnic backgrounds, as shown in Table I-1. The working-age population cohort, those aged 20 to 64, represented the largest population segment in the city. About half of San Mateo residents aged 25 years or older hold at least a bachelor's degree, as compared to about a third of California residents. The relatively high level of educational achievement among city residents meant that many were qualified for technology and innovation economy job opportunities. As a result of their high educational attainment and employability in high-income, high-growth fields, many residents' average earnings were also relatively high compared with the region and state medians.



Figure I-2 Regional Context

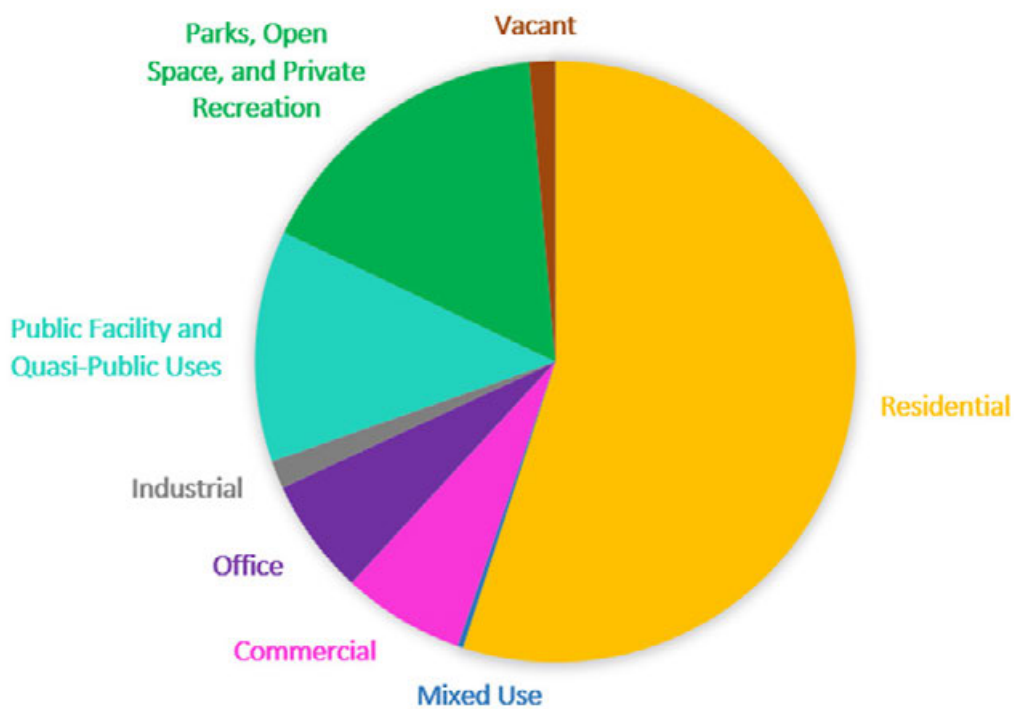


Source: ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.  
Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.



However, there are also many members of the San Mateo community who aren't reflected in these average statistics. Vulnerable populations in San Mateo include children, seniors living alone, families living in overcrowded households, unhoused people, low-income households and households in poverty, people with disabilities, non-English speakers, and people without a car. Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 includes policies and actions aimed at improving the quality of life for all of the people that live in San Mateo, including vulnerable populations.

**Figure I-3 Proportions of Existing Land Use in San Mateo**





**Table I-1 Race and Hispanic Origin (2022)**

<b>White alone</b>	<b>44.3%</b>
<b>Black or African American alone <sup>a</sup></b>	<b>1.9%</b>
<b>American Indian and Alaska Native alone <sup>a</sup></b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>Asian alone <sup>a</sup></b>	<b>27.0%</b>
<b>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone <sup>a</sup></b>	<b>1.4%</b>
<b>Two or More Races</b>	<b>11.6%</b>
<b>Hispanic or Latino <sup>b</sup></b>	<b>24.7%</b>
<b>White alone, not Hispanic or Latino</b>	<b>38.8%</b>

<sup>a</sup> Includes persons reporting only one race

<sup>b</sup> People of Hispanic or Latino origin may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories

Source: US Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey (ACS), 5-year estimates. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sanmateocitycalifornia>

## ECONOMIC PROFILE

San Mateo's economy has been strongly influenced by the strength of Silicon Valley technology companies and the city's prime geographic location. Many of the major employers in San Mateo are public agencies, such as the County Medical Center, County Environmental Health Services, local public schools and college districts, County Behavioral Health, and the City of San Mateo. The largest employers in the private sector include the entertainment and electronics conglomerate Sony, Franklin Templeton Investors, and the internet services company Rakuten.

San Mateo will continue to be attractive to office and other commercial development because of its unique location between the technology industry in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties and downtown San Francisco, proximity to San Francisco Airport, accessibility to the East Bay via the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge, and the capacity of Caltrain and regional freeways to accommodate additional growth.

Jobs-housing balance is a measure that can help inform how well the local economy provides jobs for the local labor force. An adequate balance of jobs and housing can benefit the city's economy, environment, and quality of life for residents. Although this topic is often described as "jobs-housing" balance, comparing the number of jobs to the number of residents is a more direct comparison of individuals, rather than comparing people to homes. While the City cannot control whether jobs within San Mateo are filled by residents, striving for a balanced jobs-to-employed residents ratio increases the opportunity for employed residents to find a job in San Mateo. When the number of employed residents is significantly higher or lower than the number of jobs in the city, it can lead to increased traffic congestion as workers commute either in or out, which in turn creates increased air pollution, noise, and GHG emissions.

Theoretically, an ideal jobs-to-employed residents ratio for a city like San Mateo would be 1.0, which would indicate that there is a job in the community for every employed resident. It should be noted that the ratio of jobs to employed residents indicates a numerical match, not a qualitative match in job type vs. resident skills and abilities. Even with an ideal jobs-to-employed residents ratio of 1.0, many residents will continue to commute outside of San Mateo while workers that do not reside in San Mateo will continue to commute in. Nevertheless, the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 is an opportunity for the City to enact policies that help to balance the amount and type of new jobs and new housing in the community and to maintain a balance between employment income levels and housing costs within the city, striving for a goal of one job for each employed resident.







## FUTURE GROWTH AND PROJECTED TRENDS

The City of San Mateo can reasonably assume the city will continue to grow, and that there will be a need to designate land for a range of uses to accommodate that growth. Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 sets the foundation for future growth that is logical, orderly, and achieves the community's vision of San Mateo as a place that is vibrant, livable, diverse, and healthy.

Although San Mateo is largely “built out,” California law requires cities to plan for housing to accommodate a range of households and income levels. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) – the regional planning agency for the Bay Area – assigns a State-mandated Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) to each jurisdiction. The RHNA is the number of new housing units the City needs to accommodate for every eight-year Housing Element cycle. Every jurisdiction, including San Mateo, must show how it can accommodate its RHNA in the Housing Element by designating and zoning land for new homes. Although the RHNA is not a direct requirement to build units, the State has stringent requirements on cities to ensure they are doing everything possible for housing to be built and to remove common barriers to housing construction. The legal consequences of not allowing for new housing development can be severe. Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 will cover three Housing Element cycles: the 6th (January 2023 to January 2031), 7th (January 2031 to January 2039), and part of the 8th (January 2039 to January 2047). Although the scale of future RHNAs is unknown, the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 Land Use Map was designed to anticipate sufficient housing capacity for the Housing Element cycles between now and 2040.

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 was prepared as the City, nation, and world continued to address the COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented public health crisis. Research for this General Plan was completed as the Bay Area, generally, appeared to be emerging from the worst of it. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated trends relating to the demand for office and commercial uses (e.g., gig economy, remote work, online shopping). During this time, some companies shifted towards open floor plans, shared workstations, and flexible work hours/locations. While the economic implications and future trends resulting from the pandemic may still not be fully known, it is anticipated that the demand for technology and innovation economy jobs will continue to grow through the year 2040 in San Mateo and the broader Peninsula region.

In the coming years, it is also anticipated that the sharing and electrification of vehicles will continue to increase. How people travel could also continue to change as mobile phone technologies and private transportation services expand, which may result in less need for parking in San Mateo. The COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020 initiated a significant trend of remote work for office workers and corresponding changes in commutes and office space demand; however, there will continue to be a need for office space as employers and workers see value in face-to-face work. In addition, other types of work, such as medical treatment or research and development in a lab environment, cannot feasibly happen from home. Many people will want to live in areas that are close to their jobs and have multiple transportation options. Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 was prepared with consideration of these projected trends.

## USER'S GUIDE

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 is for all members of the community and anyone interested in the future of the city. It was crafted with a constant eye toward keeping it useful, clear, and easy to understand. The following section provides an overview of the elements; describes the planning context for San Mateo; explains what a goal, policy, and action is in the context of the General Plan; and defines major themes integrated throughout the General Plan.

### Overview of the Elements

State law requires that general plans contain eight mandatory sections, or “elements.” The State provides considerable flexibility in how these elements are organized. Table I-2 shows the State-mandated elements and their counterparts in the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040. This General Plan addresses all the topics required by State law but has tailored the organization to reflect the local context. It also includes other topics that are not required by State law, but that community members have identified as being fundamental to the quality of life in the city. Once adopted, the optional elements have the same legal status as the mandatory elements. No single element or subject supersedes any other, and all elements must be internally consistent; policies and actions must complement one another across topic areas without conflicting.

**Table I-2 State-Mandated and Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 Elements**

State-Mandated Element	Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 Element
Land Use	Land Use Element
Circulation	Circulation Element
Housing	Housing Element (adopted separately)
Open Space	Conservation, Open Space and Recreation Element
Conservation	
Safety	Safety Element
Noise	Noise Element
Environmental Justice	Land Use Element Also incorporated in other elements
<b>Optional Elements</b>	
	Public Services and Facilities Element Community Design and Historic Resources Element Sustainability (incorporated into all of the elements) Community Engagement (incorporated into all of the elements)



A brief description of each General Plan element is provided below:

- The **Land Use Element** provides guidance for the future use and development of land, and also addresses environmental justice issues, community engagement, climate change and sustainability, regional cooperation, economic development, and development review.
- The **Circulation Element** provides guidance to help design a sustainable and comprehensive transportation system that is safe and accessible for all users and modes of travel.
- The **Housing Element** provides policies and programs to ensure that San Mateo can accommodate housing for all members of the community at all income levels.
- The **Community Design and Historic Resources Element** guides the development and physical form of San Mateo from the individual neighborhood scale to the overall cityscape and includes actions to support preservation of the City’s historic resources.
- The **Conservation, Open Space and Recreation Element** provides guidance for the development, management, and preservation of San Mateo’s natural, cultural, and recreational resources.
- The **Public Services and Facilities Element** addresses public facility and infrastructure needs, such as community safety, water supply, sewer and storm drainage, energy supply, childcare and schools, healthcare and social services, and solid waste.
- The **Safety Element** provides guidance to help protect the community and mitigate potential impacts from natural and human-caused hazards, such as flooding, sea level rise, wildfires, seismic and geotechnical hazards, and hazardous materials. This element also covers emergency preparedness.
- The **Noise Element** provides guidance to protect the community from excessive noise exposure.

The General Plan includes a **Glossary** to aid in understanding technical terminology used in the document.

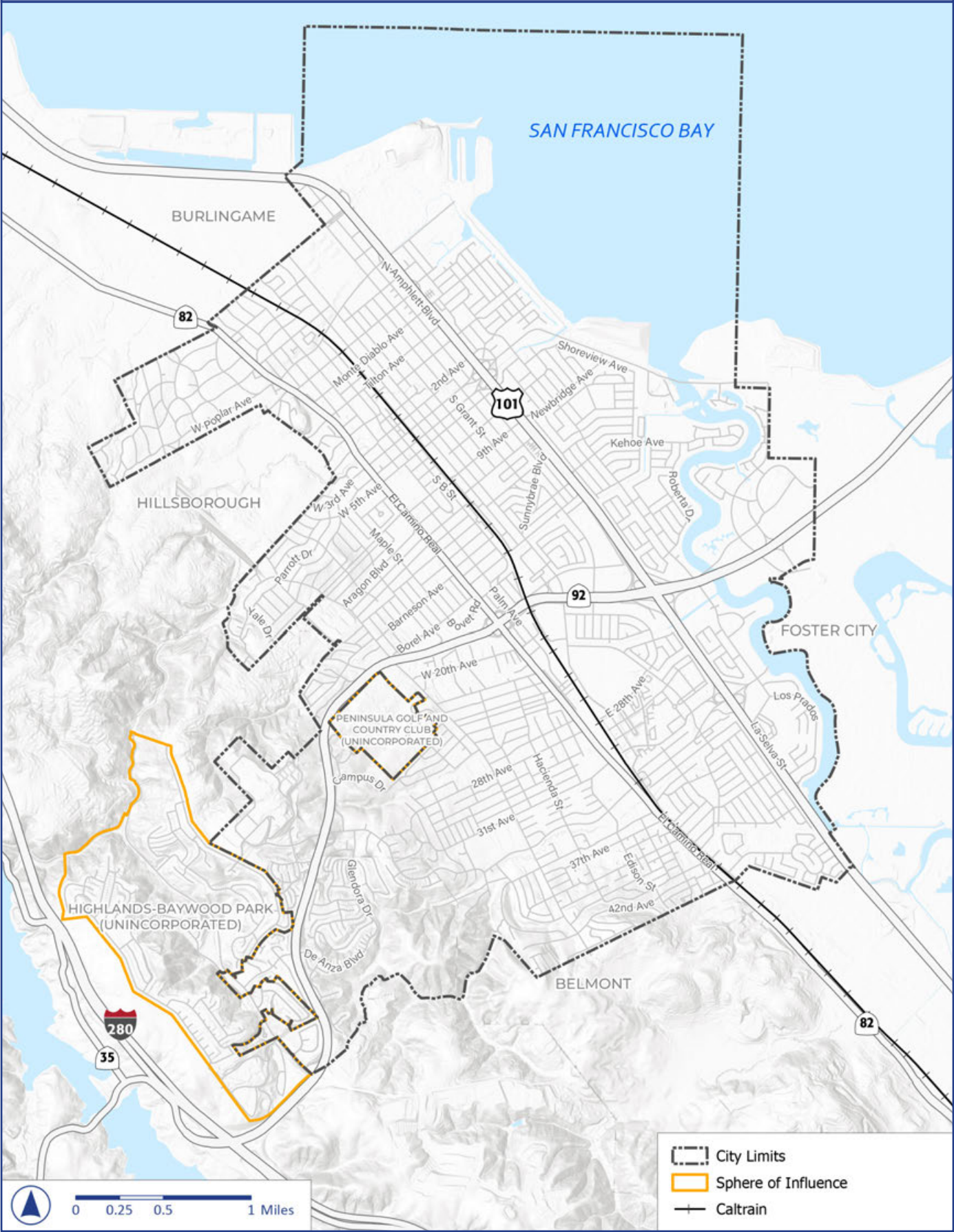
## Planning Boundaries

The Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 considers land within the City Limits as well as surrounding land the City may annex in the future, known as the Sphere of Influence (SOI). Determined in conjunction with the San Mateo County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), the SOI is the area that could be provided with City services in the future and can therefore be considered as a potential future boundary of San Mateo. The City Limits boundary encompasses the land over which the City of San Mateo has jurisdictional authority. Together, the City Limits and the SOI shown in Figure I-4 comprise the Planning Area for San Mateo.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 is built around a series of goals, policies, and actions that describe what needs to be done to achieve the community’s vision for the future. Goals are end-statements; they describe what the community wants to accomplish to resolve a particular issue or problem. Policies and actions guide day-to-day decision making so that there will be continuing progress toward the attainment of goals. Many goals will be implemented by both policies and actions.

Figure I-4 San Mateo Planning Area



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



### **The State Law Defines Environmental Justice as:**

*The fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.*  
(Government Code Section 65040.12(e)(1)).



The goal, policy, and action terms are defined as follows.

- **Goal:** A description of the general desired result that the City seeks to create through the implementation of the General Plan. Each goal has one or more policies and/or actions associated with the goal.
- **Policy:** A specific statement that regulates activities in the city, guides decision making, and directs ongoing efforts as the City works to achieve a goal. General Plan policies establish standards that will be used by City staff, Planning Commission, and City Council when prioritizing initiatives and expenditures, reviewing and approving new development, and in related City decision making.
- **Action:** A measure, procedure, or technique intended to help reach a specified goal or implement one or more policies. The actions in the General Plan will serve as a to-do list for City staff and officials to implement the goals and policies of the General Plan.

The placement of a goal, policy, or action in a specific element does not limit its scope to only that element topic. For example, a policy in the Circulation Element can apply to topics beyond the realm of transportation. Similarly, there is not a one-to-one correspondence between policies and actions. An individual action can implement more than one policy and can contribute to achieving multiple goals across different elements.

The graphic later in this chapter explains the goals, policies, and actions numbering in the General Plan.

## **Equity Priority Communities**

Throughout California, low-income communities and communities of color have experienced a combination of historic discrimination, negligence, and political and economic disempowerment, with the result that today, they are struggling with both a disproportionate burden of pollution and health impacts, as well as disproportionate social and economic disadvantages, such as poverty or housing instability. Environmental justice is the idea that planning and environmental policies should treat people of all races, cultures, and incomes fairly and equitably. Senate Bill (SB) 1000, the Planning for Healthy Communities Act, requires that General Plans address environmental justice for communities disproportionately burdened by pollution within San Mateo.

## **Identifying Equity Priority Communities**

Figure I-5 shows the communities in San Mateo that are disproportionately burdened by environmental pollution: North Central and North Shoreview/Shoreview. These areas are called “Equity Priority Communities” throughout this General Plan. This area was mapped using local knowledge and California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen), a

## Sustainability, Environmental Justice, and Community Engagement

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 goes beyond the minimum State requirements and embodies three key themes: sustainability, environmental justice, and community engagement. These themes are important community priorities that were considered as potential stand-alone elements. However, these topics are interrelated to and support achievement of the goals and policies in all of the General Plan's other elements. To reflect this relationship while highlighting the importance of addressing them, these three themes have been woven throughout Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040. Policies and actions in each element that relate to each of these themes are marked with a corresponding icon, as shown below.

**The specific themes of Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 include:**



**Sustainability.** Sustainability means ensuring that San Mateo can meet its current needs and leave viable resources for future generations. The sustainability policies and actions aim to improve resiliency, especially to the impacts of climate change, and to protect the environment, reduce pollution, water and energy use, and enhance overall quality of life. Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 also emphasizes sustainable modes of transportation to help lower pollution and GHG emissions, such as walking, bicycling, and taking transit.



**Environmental Justice.** Environmental justice policies and actions intend to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in the neighborhoods in 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. Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 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.



**Community Engagement.** Providing support for increased community participation in the planning and development processes is another important theme of Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040. Residents in San Mateo may face barriers when participating in the community engagement process. Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 aims to engage all residents and stakeholders on all matters of development, growth, and public policy in ways that are inclusive, equitable, and give everyone an opportunity to participate in the process.

tool developed by the State Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment on behalf of the California Environmental Protection Agency. CalEnviroScreen measures pollution and population characteristics using 21 indicators, such as air quality, hazardous waste sites, asthma rates, and poverty. It applies a formula to each Census tract in the state to generate a score that ranks the level of cumulative impacts in each area relative to the rest of the Census tracts in the state. A Census tract with a higher score is one that experiences higher pollution burdens and social or health vulnerabilities than Census tracts with lower scores. In addition to using CalEnviroScreen as a tool for identifying equity priority communities, SB 1000 encourages local agencies to work with community members and stakeholders to consider the available data from other sources, including the lived experience of community members, to refine the boundaries of equity priority communities and identify additional communities, if appropriate, to support planning efforts to improve environmental justice.

Using local knowledge and CalEnviroScreen, the City identified two equity priority communities per the data available as of December 2022: North Central and North Shoreview/Shoreview. Environmental justice issues in each community are described in more detail in the pages that follow. 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.





## Example Goals and Policies Page

**Goal Numbering:** Each goal number starts with the element acronym and is followed by the number of the goal. (e.g., C 1 = Circulation Element, first goal)

**Policy and Action Numbering:** The policy or action number has two parts: first, the number of the goal it supports, and second, the sequential number of the policy or action in the order underneath that goal. (e.g., C 1.4 = Circulation Element, first goal, fourth policy or action)

**Icons:** Policies and actions related to the three themes of the General Plan – sustainability, environmental justice, and community engagement – are identified using these icons. A policy or action can respond to more than one theme, so multiple icons may be applied.

Chapter 9
Noise Element

### GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL N-1** Protect noise-sensitive land uses from excessive noise levels.

#### POLICIES

**Policy N 1.1** **Noise and Land Use Planning.** Integrate noise considerations into land use planning decisions to minimize noise impacts to or from new development.

**Policy N 1.2** **Interior Noise Level Standard.** Require submittal of an acoustical analysis and interior noise insulation for all noise-sensitive land uses listed in Table N-1 that have an exterior noise level of 60 dBA ( $L_{eq}$ ) or above, as shown on Figure N-2. The maximum interior noise level shall not exceed 45 dBA ( $L_{eq}$ ) in any habitable rooms, as established by the California Building Code.

**Policy N 1.3** **Exterior Noise Level Standard for Residential Uses.** Require an acoustical analysis for new multifamily common open space for residents that have an exterior noise level of 60 dBA ( $L_{eq}$ ) or above, as shown on Figure N-2. Incorporate necessary mitigation measures into residential project design to minimize common open space noise levels. Maximum exterior noise should not exceed 65 dBA ( $L_{eq}$ ) for residential uses.

**Policy N 1.4** **Exterior Noise Level Standard for Parks and Playgrounds.** Require a feasibility analysis of noise-reduction measures for public parks and play areas that have an exterior noise level of 70 dBA ( $L_{eq}$ ) or above.

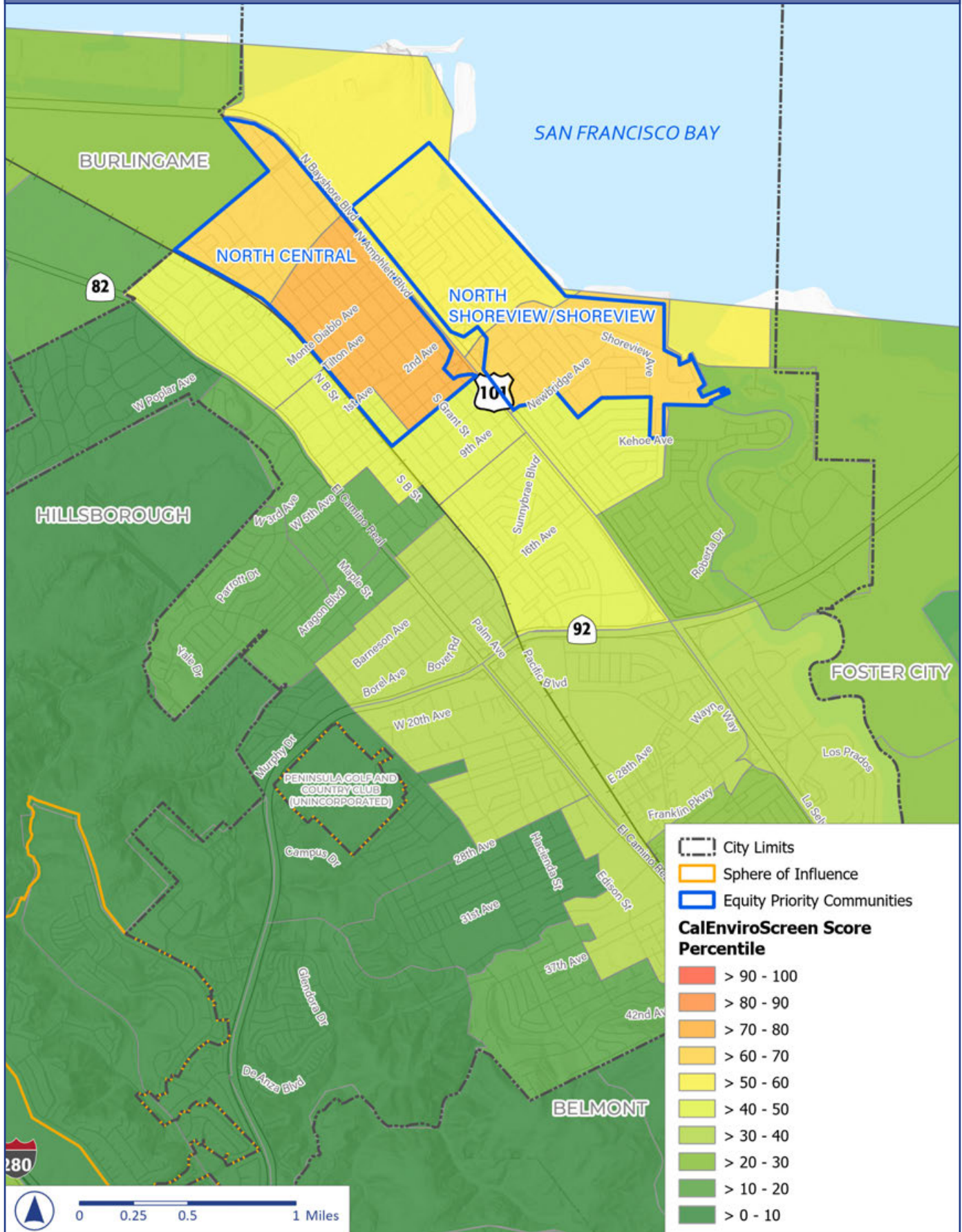
**Policy N 1.5** **Inclusive Outreach.** Notify the community when new land uses that would result in excessive noise levels are being considered and inform community members about how they can engage in the process. Use outreach and engagement methods that encourage broad representation and are culturally sensitive, particularly for equity priority communities.

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### North Central and North Shoreview/Shoreview

There are three Census tracts that encompass the North Central Equity Priority Community: 6081606000, 6081606200, and 6081606300. After reviewing the CalEnviroScreen data, the City defined the boundary for the North Central Equity Priority Community based on local knowledge of the neighborhood to focus on the residential areas within the Census tract. Two Census tracts encompass the North Shoreview/Shoreview Equity Priority Community: 6081606100 and 6081607701. After reviewing the CalEnviroScreen data, the City also refined the boundary for the North Shoreview/Shoreview Equity Priority Community based on their local knowledge of the neighborhood. Figure I-6 shows the CalEnviroScreen score by Census tract within the North Central Equity Priority Community for the 21 pollution and population indicators. As shown in Figure I-6, Census tract 6081606200, which encompasses most of North Central, received a score over the 75th percentile for traffic, diesel particulate matter, impaired water, groundwater threats, hazardous waste, lead in housing, linguistic isolation, education, and poverty. Census tract 6081606000, in the northern area of the boundary, received a score over the 75th percentile for traffic, diesel particulate matter, impaired water, groundwater threats, and linguistic isolation. Census tract 6081606300, which covers a small portion of North Central, received a score over the 75th percentile for traffic, diesel particulate matter, impaired water, groundwater threats, and hazardous waste.

Figure I-5 Equity Priority Communities



Source: California OEHHA, 2021; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.





Figure I-7 shows the CalEnviroScreen score by Census tract within the North Shoreview/Shoreview equity priority community for the 21 pollution and population indicators. As shown in Figure I-7, Census tract 6081606100, which encompasses a large area of North Shoreview/Shoreview, received a score over the 75th percentile for education, asthma, impaired water bodies, groundwater threats, traffic, and toxic releases. Census tract 6081607701, in the southern area of North Shoreview/Shoreview, received a score over the 75th percentile for education, asthma, groundwater threats, particulate matter 2.5.

North Central and North Shoreview/Shoreview received a high score for traffic. Both communities are near US Highway 101, one of the roadways that carries the highest amounts of traffic in San Mateo. North Central is also near El Camino Real, which is another roadway that carries a high amount of traffic. The amount of traffic and vehicles on the road directly impacts the amount of pollution in the air. Exposure to air pollution is associated with a variety of negative health outcomes, including reduced lung function, pneumonia, asthma, cardiovascular diseases, and premature death. It may also affect lung cancer rates. North Central also received a high score for diesel particulate matter, which is a harmful type of pollutant that comes from exhaust from trucks, buses, and other motorized vehicles that use diesel engines and may travel on US Highway 101 or city streets.

Impaired waters are also a concern in North Central and in part of North Shoreview/Shoreview. A 2012 report from the State Water Resources Control Board found that the San Mateo Creek, which runs through North Central and North Shoreview/Shoreview, is an impaired water, as defined by Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act. Impaired waters have contaminants that do not meet water quality standards. Contaminated waterways can impact equity priority communities if residents come in contact with contaminated water by interacting with the creek or during a flooding event.

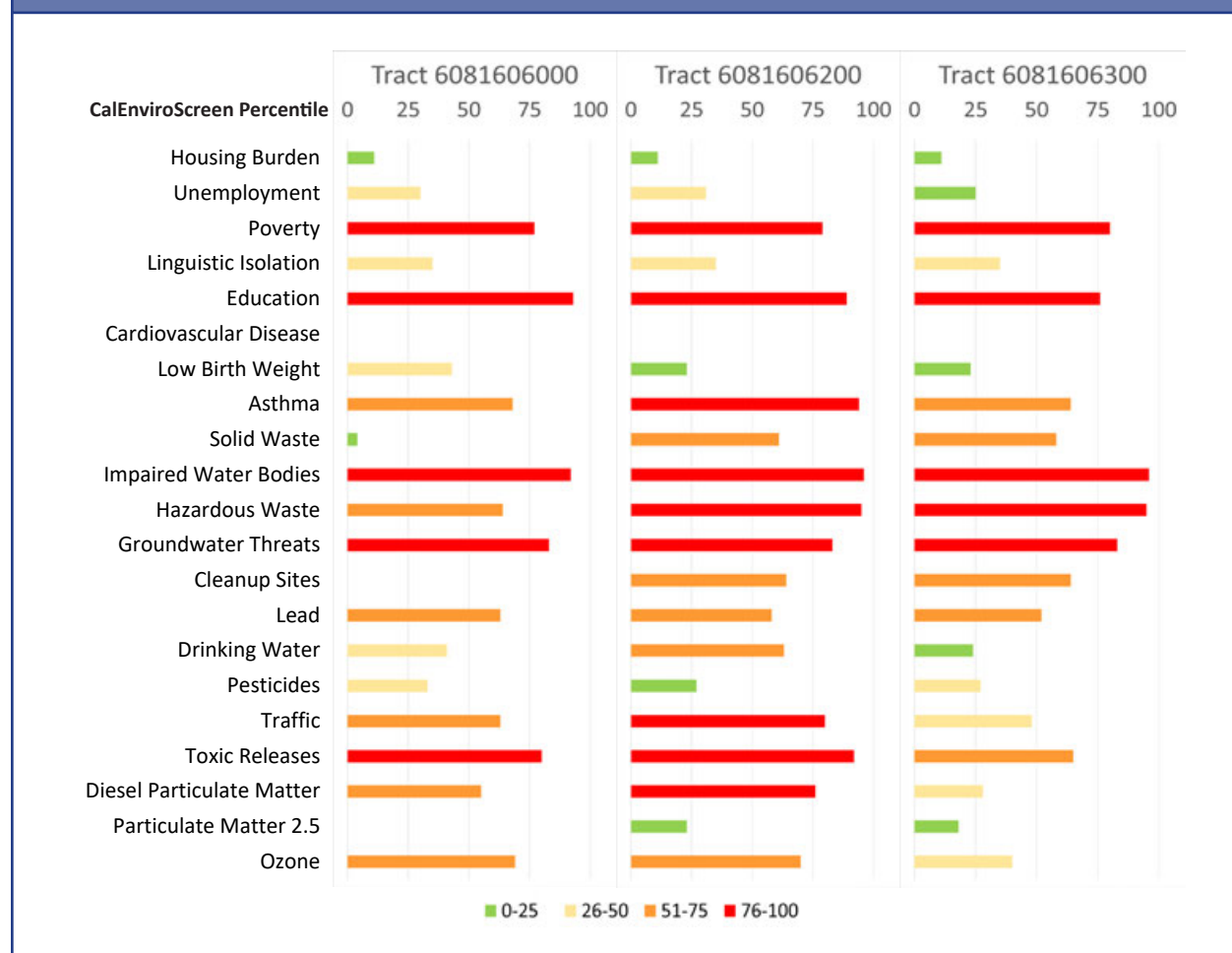
Residents in North Central and North Shoreview/Shoreview may live in older homes that were built prior to the adoption of building standards that prohibited the use of lead-based paint. Lead in housing ranked high as a toxin of concern in part of North Central and in North Shoreview/Shoreview. The California Building Standards Code was created in 1978. Approximately 73 percent of the homes in San Mateo were built before 1979, which increases the chances that lead can be found in these houses. Exposure to lead can

result in negative health impacts for children, such as slowed development and growth, learning difficulties, and hearing or speech problems.

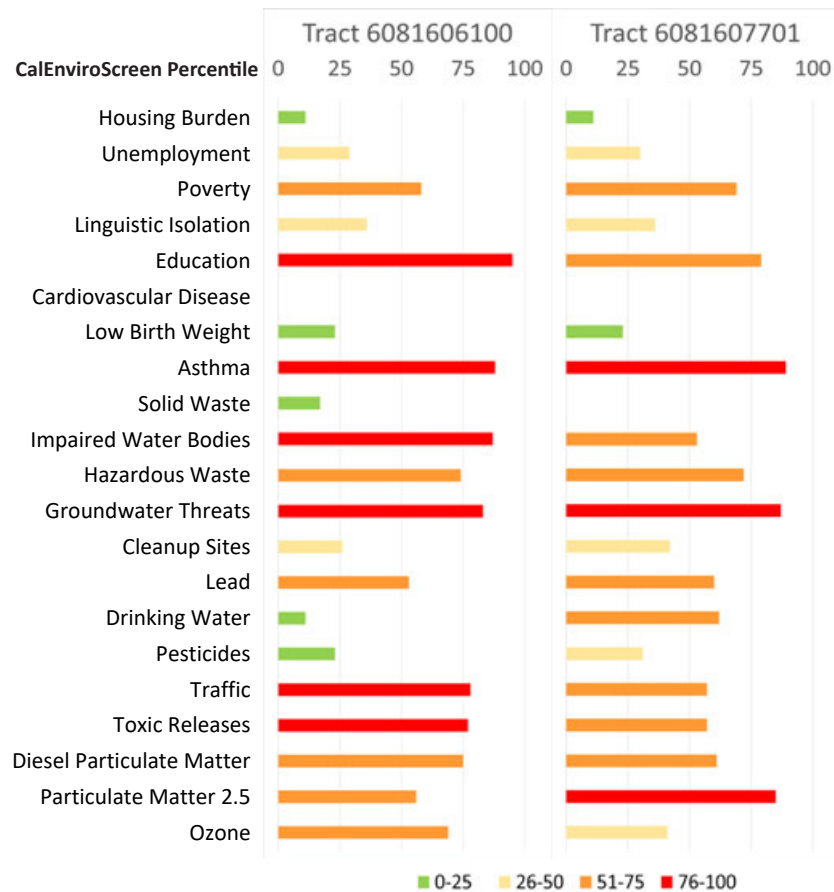
Most of North Central and part of North Shoreview/Shoreview ranked high in linguistic isolation, which means there are individuals in these communities that mainly speak another language, which may be Spanish, Mandarin or Cantonese, Tagalog, or another language. Barriers in communication can prevent people from participating in the planning process or may limit the amount of information that is available during an emergency. Data also indicated that some North Central and North Shoreview/Shoreview residents could be living below the federal poverty level and/or did not receive education beyond high school. There may also be people in the North Shoreview/Shoreview community that are over the age of 16 and are unemployed.

Hazardous waste materials, sites, or facilities that could emit toxins into the air, water, and soil that are harmful to people are present in North Central, such as existing or former dry cleaners, gas stations, and buildings with lead and asbestos.

**Figure I-6 Equity Priority Communities – North Central**





**Figure I-7 Equity Priority Communities – North Shoreview/Shoreview**

## Addressing Equity Priority Communities in General Plan 2040

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 must include policies and actions that will lead to an equitable distribution of resources and opportunities and will reduce the impacts of environmental hazards in the equity priority communities mentioned previously, or in other equity priority communities that are identified during the life of the General Plan. 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. Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 takes the approach of incorporating environmental justice goals, policies, and actions into its other elements. In addition to policies and actions that the City will implement through this General Plan and other City plans, other agencies and organizations, such as San Mateo County, nonprofits, and religious groups also provide resources and help improve outcomes in equity priority communities.

## IMPLEMENTING GENERAL PLAN 2040

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

### Implementation Strategy

To complement the implementation of Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040, the City maintains a list of implementation programs to help achieve the goals, policies, and actions identified in each element. The implementation plan describes and prioritizes the timing, responsible City department, cost range, and actions to implement various aspects of Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040. Some programs may already be budgeted and ongoing, while the City Council will need to identify resources during future budget cycles to implement other programs. The implementation plan will be maintained and updated over time to keep it current and to reflect progress in realizing the General Plan's vision.

### Relationship to the Zoning Ordinance and Other Plans

The General Plan establishes a broad vision and framework for land use in San Mateo and provides policies and actions to manage development through 2040. San Mateo's Zoning Code implements the General Plan with specific standards that regulate land uses and how and where they can be developed. The two must be consistent. Therefore, following adoption of the General Plan, the Zoning Code will need to be amended to retain consistency with the General Plan. Other Municipal Code sections, specific plans, and City planning documents will also need to be amended as needed to retain consistency with the General Plan.

### Amending the Plan

Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 provides long-range and comprehensive guidance to the City, but the process of growth and change is dynamic and often unpredictable. For these reasons, the City needs to monitor progress in achieving the major goals of the plan, periodically adjusting policy guidance as needed to advance those goals in light of contextual changes that may happen over the next 20 years. The City may need to revise portions of the General Plan to reflect land use map changes spurred by land use and development activity, changes in community values or the county's physical or economic conditions, or refinements to improve progress towards achieving the major goals of the General Plan. While some amendments change the land use designation of a particular property, any part of the General Plan may be amended as circumstances change.

Amendments to the General Plan may be initiated by an individual, organization, or the City, depending on the nature of the proposal. The Planning Commission reviews and provides recommendations to the City Council for all proposed General Plan amendments. The City Council then takes final action on all General Plan amendment requests. All amendments require public hearings by the Planning Commission and City Council and evaluation of the potential impacts to San Mateo's physical environment, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

While it is appropriate to revise the General Plan as conditions change in San Mateo, the goals and major themes of the plan are expected to endure for the life of the plan.



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# CHAPTER 2

## Land Use Element









# LAND USE ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

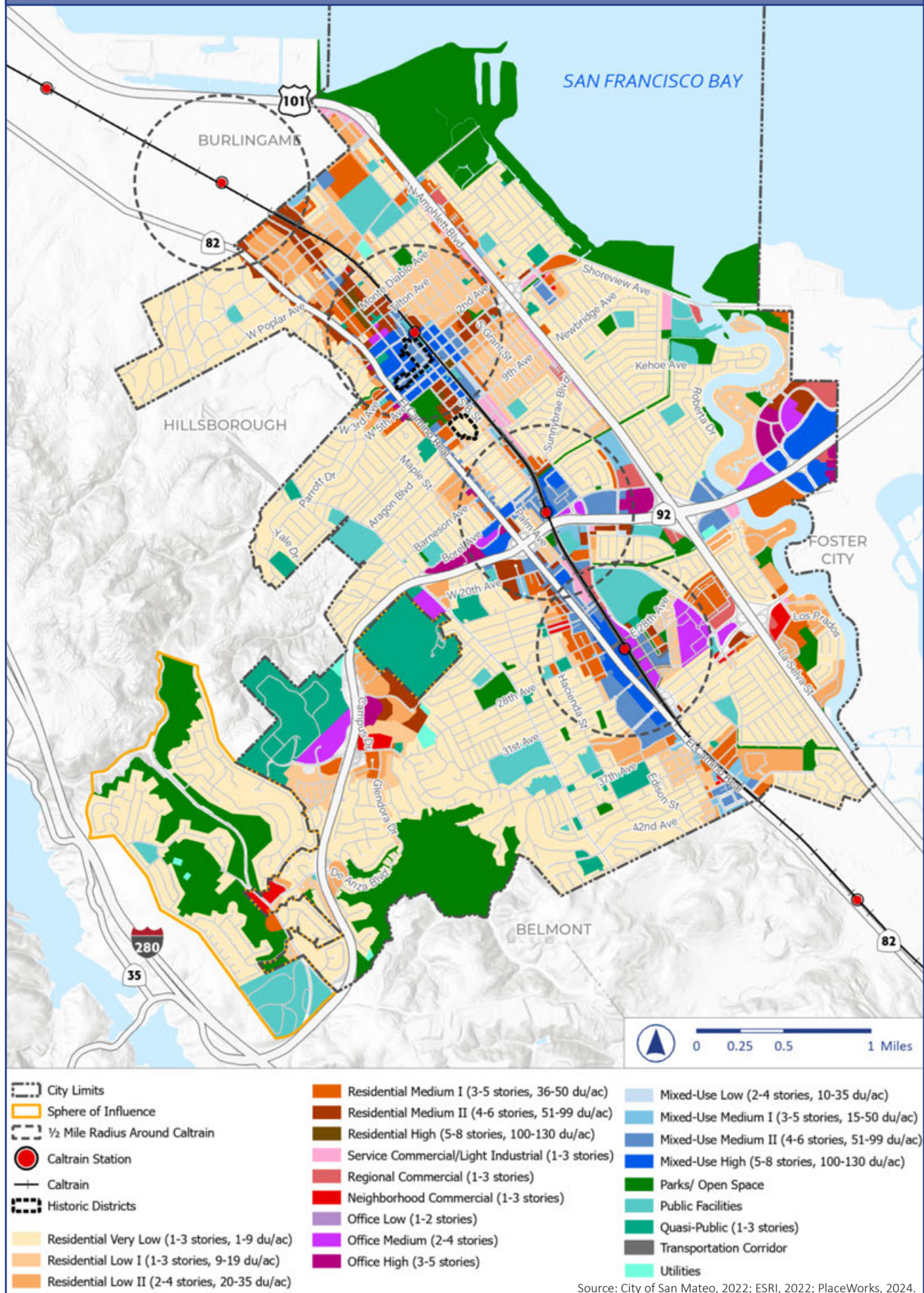
The Land Use Element sets the foundation for future growth, change, and preservation in San Mateo and serves as the blueprint for the development of public and private property in the city. The Element seeks to balance well-designed development and thoughtful preservation with a full spectrum of choices 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





## 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.

**Figure LU-2 Floor Area Ratio and Height**

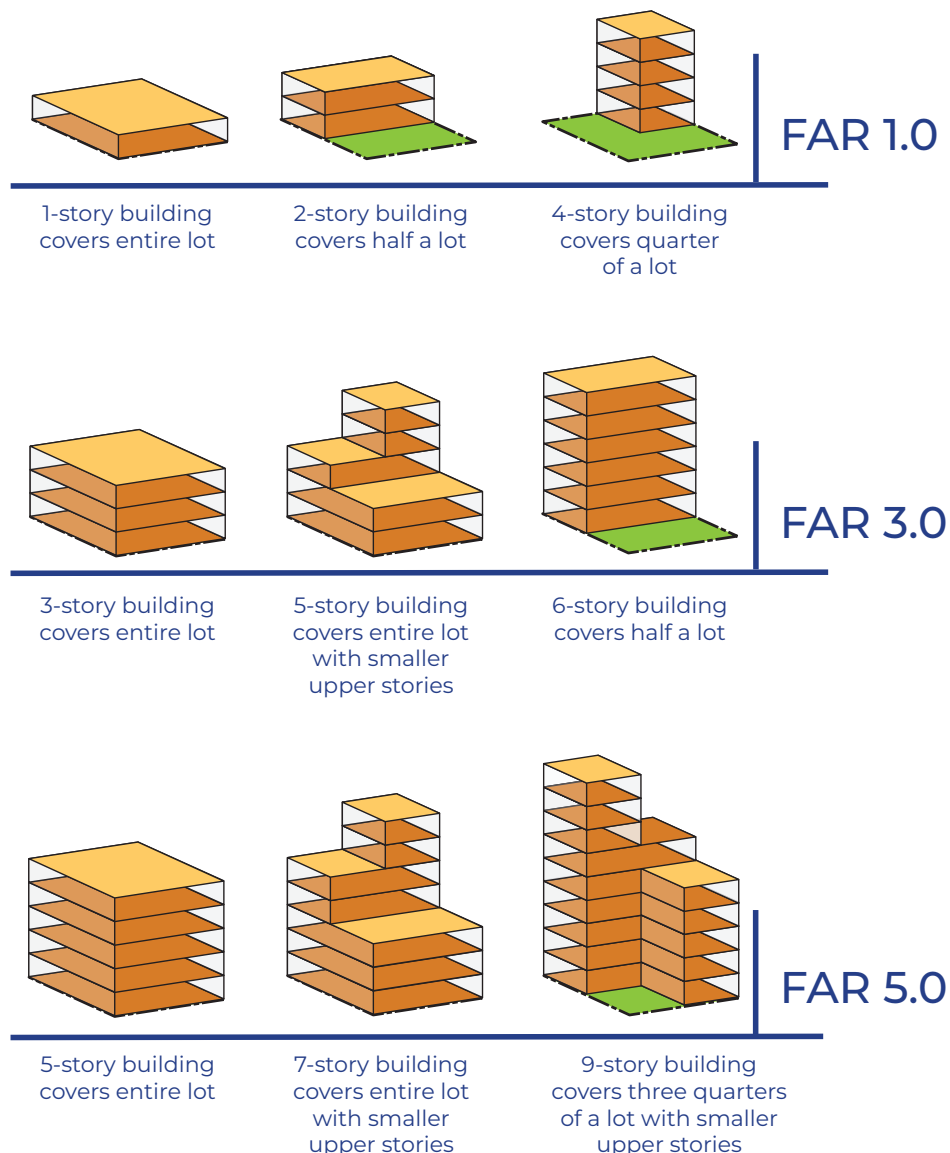




Table LU-1 Land Use Designations

Designation	Maximum Density Range (Residential Uses)*	Intensity/ Maximum FAR (Nonresidential uses)	Height Limit	Description
<b>Residential</b>				
<b>Residential Very Low</b>	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).
<b>Residential Low I</b>	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.
<b>Residential Low II</b>	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.
<b>Residential Medium I</b>	36 to 50 du/ac	n/a	3-5 stories	This designation allows medium-density multifamily dwellings, such as townhomes, condominiums, and apartments.
<b>Residential Medium II</b>	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.
<b>Residential High</b>	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.
<b>Mixed-Use</b>				
<b>Mixed-Use Low</b>	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.
<b>Mixed-Use Medium I</b>	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.
<b>Mixed-Use Medium II</b>	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
<b>Mixed-Use High</b>	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.
<b>Commercial</b>				
<b>Neighborhood Commercial</b>	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.
<b>Service Commercial/ Light Industrial</b>	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.
<b>Regional Commercial</b>	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.
<b>Office</b>				
<b>Office Low</b>	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.<sup>1</sup>

**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).

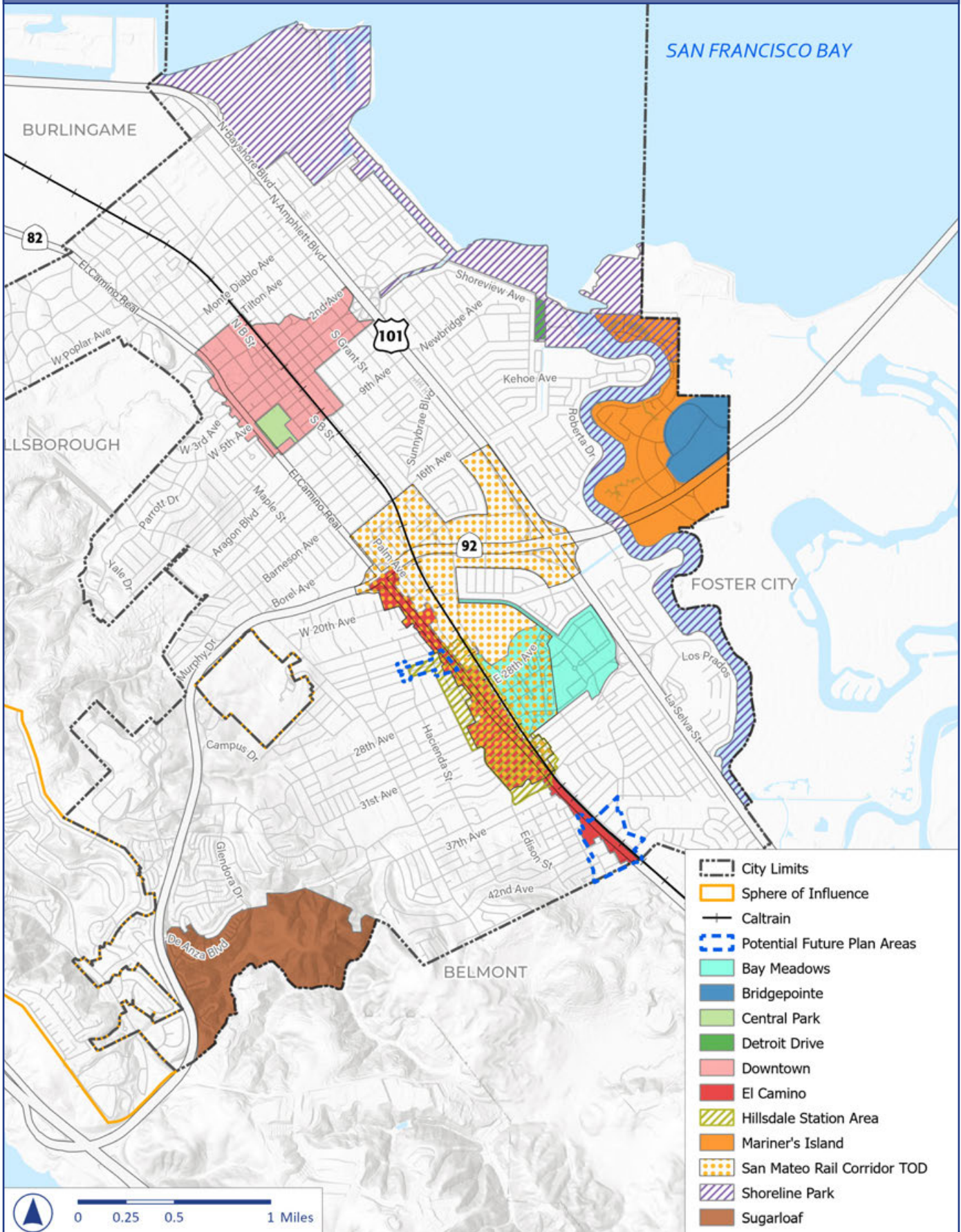
**Policy LU 1.5 Surplus Land.** Consider redesignating City-owned land not required for public services, facilities, or infrastructure for development of affordable housing.

**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.

<sup>1</sup> 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

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**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

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**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.



**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.





# CHAPTER 3

## Circulation Element







MAIN STREET

San Mateo  
Safe  
Center



# CIRCULATION ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

This Circulation Element provides the policy framework for attaining a future multimodal transportation system that meets the community's needs, is sustainable, advances environmental justice, and improves the community's welfare. This element promotes a circulation system that serves the land use plan in the Land Use Element and is designed for all users and modes of transportation, welcomes innovation, and addresses the challenges of roadway improvements and parking.

For the larger Bay Area region, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) coordinate transportation and land use planning through the Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, known as Plan Bay Area 2050. Plan Bay Area 2050 guides transportation funding and policy decisions for the region.

Transportation is the movement of people and goods and plays a significant role in a community's quality of life. A well-planned circulation system allows people and goods to get from where they are to where they want or need to go in an equitable, efficient, and timely manner. People, regardless of socioeconomic status, age, and physical ability, should be able to move around using many modes of transportation, whether that is walking, bicycling, using a mobility device, taking transit, driving, or other emerging technologies. Just as important, the circulation system plays a critical role in creating and enhancing public spaces like sidewalks, paseos, and pedestrian plazas for community interaction; providing access for goods to be transported and delivered; and managing the amount and location of parking and curbside access. Safety is a cornerstone of the Circulation Element and improving safety for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit-users, and motorists is integrated into the goals, policies, and actions identified in this Element. With this in mind, the Circulation Element presents the priorities for developing a multimodal transportation network in the city based on a complete streets approach.

This element addresses these eight transportation priorities:

- Multimodal Transportation Network
- Transportation Demand Management
- Pedestrian Network
- Bicycles and Micromobility Network
- Transit Services
- Roadway Network Improvements
- Parking and Curbside Management
- Future Mobility and Technology



## RELEVANCE TO GENERAL PLAN THEMES



### Sustainability in this Element:

- Increases the safety, convenience, and appeal of walking, bicycling, and transit use to reduce reliance on gas-powered vehicles, one of the City's primary sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- Requires new development to include specific, measurable strategies to reduce motor vehicle trips.
- Establishes new parking management practices to support both economic growth and environmental sustainability.
- Encourages urban spaces that promote walking and multi-modal transportation improvements, through methods such as requiring sidewalks as part of new development or through the implementation of a "superblock" or similar concept in the Downtown that focuses on creating car-light realms.



### Environmental Justice in this Element:

- Reduces single-occupant vehicle trips to reduce air pollution that causes acute and chronic illnesses in equity priority communities.
- Prioritizes new transportation amenities in equity priority communities based on community input and data analysis.
- Recommends safety improvements near transit stops and supports collaboration with transit agencies to improve transit services for residents who cannot drive or do not have access to a car.



### Community Engagement in this Element:

- Ensures that the City will involve the community early in the process so that future improvements in neighborhoods reflect community input.
- Engages seniors, students, transit users, community organizations, and residents of equity priority communities to provide input on solutions for different users.





## MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

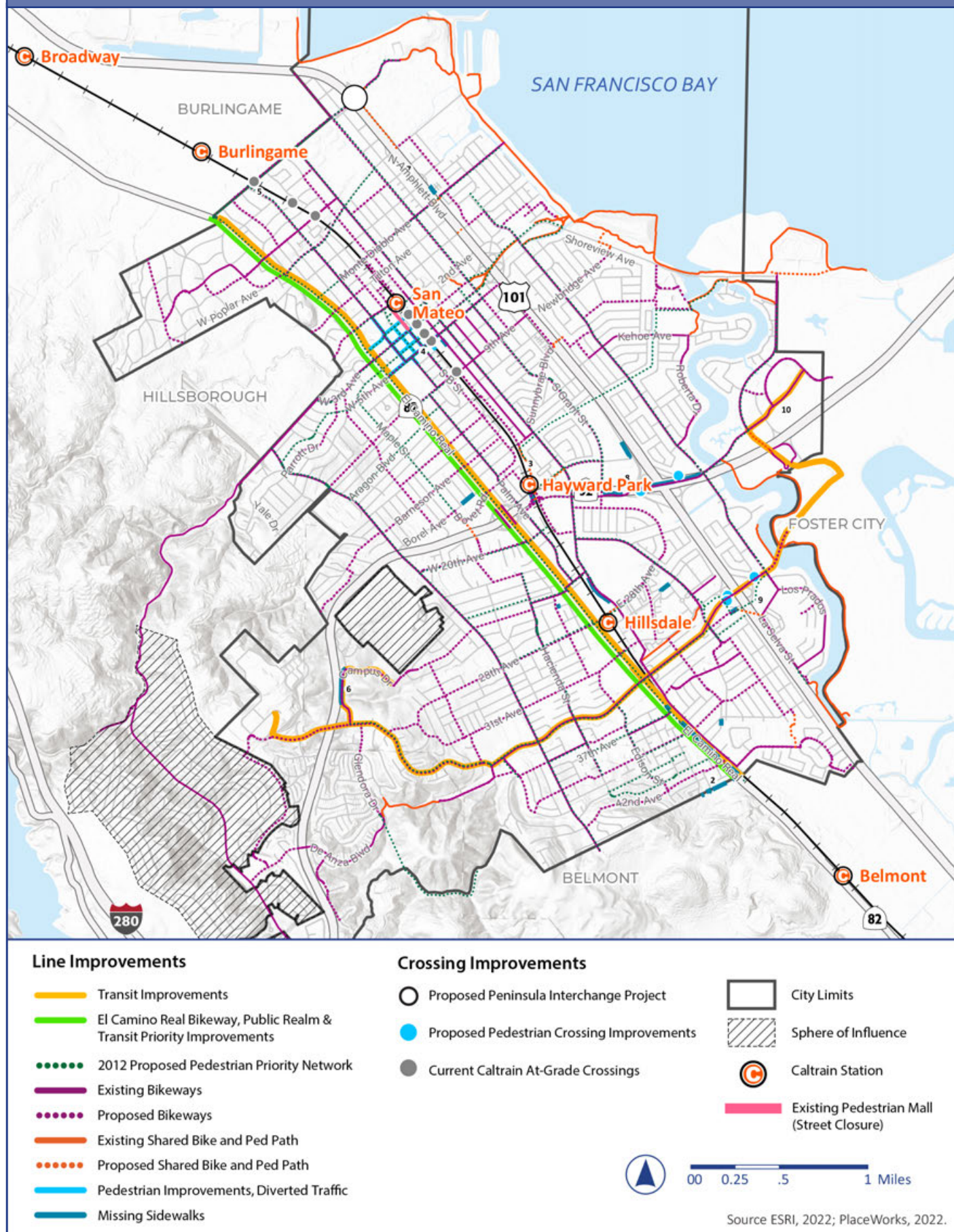
In transportation planning, “modes” refer to different ways of getting around: walking, bicycling, riding transit, and driving. A “multimodal” transportation network accommodates many different modes of transportation, while embracing complete streets principles. A complete street includes safety improvements that benefit all users (i.e., drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists) and incorporates green infrastructure elements to improve stormwater quality. By increasing travel options that don’t rely solely on driving, GHG emissions and congestion from the transportation system can be reduced. Figure C-1 represents possible options for the 2040 Circulation Network; while the identified pedestrian, bicycle, and transit improvements may change over the lifespan of the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040, the goal will be to complete travel gaps and maintain and improve the transportation network as the city grows.

Achievement of a multimodal transportation network requires both big-picture policy direction and focused policies and actions for infrastructure improvements. The policies and actions in this section provide a high-level approach to attain a multimodal network, with subsequent sections focused on the programmatic infrastructure policies, including those focused on biking, pedestrians, and transit use, to support such a network. In addition to this Circulation Element, the Land Use Element includes Action LU 5.3 to implement multi-modal improvements along El Camino Real.

Recognizing the importance of improving the safety of the multimodal transportation network, this element also includes a Vision Zero policy. Vision Zero is based on the five elements of a Safe Systems Approach advanced by the Federal Highway Administration to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries on the roadways: safe road users, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads, and post-crash care.



Figure C-1 2040 Circulation Scenario (Specific improvements may change)



## TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

San Mateo uses a variety of federal, State, regional, and local sources of funding for transportation infrastructure. While these funding sources fluctuate over time, they have proven to be reasonably reliable. Different sources can be used for different types of projects, and many sources are restricted to specific uses. For example:

- Federal sources, like the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grants and the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, can be used for roadway improvements, bridges, trails, and bicycle facilities.
- Funding from the California High Speed Rail Authority and the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA) was used for Caltrain grade separation projects.
- Measure S, a local quarter-cent sales tax, can be used to fund pavement maintenance.

Individual transportation plans, such as the Bicycle Master Plan and the Pedestrian Master Plan, include detailed sections on costs and potential funding sources for the specific types of projects described.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL C-1** Design and implement a multimodal transportation system that prioritizes walking, bicycling, and transit, and is sustainable, safe, and accessible for all users; connects the community using all modes of transportation; and reduces vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita.

### POLICIES



**Policy C 1.1 Sustainable Transportation.** Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from transportation by increasing mode share options for sustainable travel modes, such as walking, bicycling, and public transit.



**Policy C 1.2 Complete Streets.** Apply complete streets design standards to future projects in the public right-of-way and on private property. Complete streets are streets designed to facilitate safe, comfortable, and efficient travel for all users regardless of age or ability or whether they are walking, bicycling, taking transit, or driving, and should include landscaping and shade trees as well as green streets stormwater infrastructure to reduce runoff and pollution.

**Policy C 1.3 Vision Zero.** Use a safe systems approach for transportation planning, street design, operations, emergency response, and maintenance that proactively identifies opportunities to improve safety where conflicts between users exist to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries in our roadways.



**Policy C 1.4 Prioritize Pedestrian and Bicycle Mobility Needs.** Prioritize local pedestrian and bicycle projects that enhance mobility, connectivity, and safety when designing roadway and intersection improvements.



**Policy C 1.5 El Camino Real.** Facilitate efficient travel and pedestrian safety along El Camino Real by supporting improvements that enhance pedestrian connectivity, such as improved pedestrian crossings.



**Policy C 1.6 Transit-Oriented Development.** Increase access to transit and sustainable transportation options by encouraging high-density, mixed-use transit-oriented development near the City's Caltrain stations and transit corridors.



**Policy C 1.7 Equitable Multimodal Network.** Prioritize new amenities, programs, and multimodal projects, developed based on community input and data analysis, in San Mateo's equity priority communities.

**Policy C 1.8 New Development Fair Share.** Require new developments to pay a transportation impact fee to mitigate cumulative transportation impacts.

**Policy C 1.9 Dedication of Right-of-Way for Transportation Improvements.** Require dedication of needed right-of-way for transportation improvements identified in adopted City plans, including pedestrian facilities, bikeways, and trails.



**Policy C 1.10 Inclusive Outreach.** Involve the community in the City's efforts to design and implement a multimodal transportation system that is sustainable, safe, and accessible for all users. Use outreach and engagement methods that encourage broad representation and are culturally sensitive, particularly for equity priority communities.



## ACTIONS

**Action C 1.11 Complete Streets Plan.** Complete and implement the Complete Streets Plan to improve the City's circulation network, including pedestrian, bicycling, and transit infrastructure, to accommodate the needs of street users of all ages and abilities.

**Action C 1.12 Vision Zero Plan.** Complete and regularly update a plan that uses a safe systems approach to work towards Vision Zero and identifies specific citywide changes to policies, practices, funding, and other action items that will reduce speeding, collisions, and collision severity.



**Action C 1.13 El Camino Real Improvements.** Collaborate with Caltrans, SamTrans, and other partners to support accommodating higher-capacity and higher-frequency travel along El Camino Real, Bus Rapid Transit, and other modes of alternative transportation.



**Action C 1.14 Safe Routes for Seniors.** Develop a "safe routes for seniors" program to promote active transportation connections for seniors in collaboration with seniors' organizations and based on the likely walking routes for older adults identified in the Age Friendly Action Plan. Prioritize improvements for seniors in equity priority communities.







**Action C 1.15 Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan.** Coordinate with interagency partners and community stakeholders to seek funding opportunities to design, construct, and build the priority projects identified in the Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan to improve access to and from the Caltrain Stations.

**Action C 1.16 Residential Speed Limits.** Evaluate opportunities to reduce speed limits on residential streets to 20 miles per hour.

**Action C 1.17 Data-Driven Approach to Project Design and Prioritization.** Inform the prioritization of improvement projects through the consistent collection and analysis of modal activity data that reveals where the highest concentration of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit trips occur, and study routes and places people would like to access but are currently unable to because of limitations in pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure.

**Action C 1.18 Safety Education.** Provide safety education to increase awareness of roadway safety practices for all street users.

**Action C 1.19 Transportation Funding.** Regularly update adopted City master plans to secure reliable funding for transportation infrastructure projects identified in these plans.

**Action C 1.20 Transportation Fees.** Adopt and maintain fees and fiscal policies to fund circulation improvements and programs equitably and achieve operational goals.

**Action C 1.21 Performance and Monitoring.** Regularly monitor the City's mode split progress on reducing VMT and reducing GHG emissions from VMT, as data is available.

## TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is an approach that promotes the use of modes other than driving alone, using a multimodal transportation network that provides safe and accessible options for travelers. TDM programs help the City achieve its sustainability and environmental justice goals by reducing the amount of GHG emissions from vehicle trips. These programs have successfully expanded access to other transportation modes and reduced car trips in specific plan areas near the Hillsdale and Hayward Park Caltrain stations and from recent development projects. Examples of TDM strategies include providing free or subsidized transit passes for employees or residents, offering carshare discounts, offering on-site bicycle parking and repair stations, shuttle services, and other bicycle and pedestrian amenities.



San Mateo will continue to require and expand the use of TDM strategies by developing a citywide TDM ordinance, working to secure funding for new TDM programs, and educating residents, developers, employers, and employees about transportation options and incentive programs. The citywide ordinance will establish trip-reduction requirements to be met by development, include measures to consider for reaching these goals, and consider options if projects fall short of the trip-reduction requirements. Through implementation of this ordinance, the City can shift trips from single-occupancy vehicle to multiple modes, using the multimodal circulation network envisioned in this element.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL C-2** Use transportation demand management (TDM) to reduce the number and length of single-occupancy vehicle trips through policy, zoning strategies, and targeted programs and incentives.

### POLICY



**Policy C 2.1** **TDM Requirements.** Require new or existing developments that meet specific size, capacity, and/or context conditions to implement TDM strategies.

### ACTIONS

**Action C 2.2** **Implement TDM Ordinance.** Develop and implement a citywide TDM ordinance for new developments with tiered trip reduction and VMT reduction targets and monitoring that are consistent with the targets in their relevant area plans. Reduce parking requirements for projects that include TDM measures.

**Action C 2.3** **Education and Outreach.** Pursue education for developers and employees about programs and strategies to reduce VMT, parking demand, and the resulting benefits.

**Action C 2.4** **Leverage TDM Partnership Opportunities.** Work with regional partners to identify and fund TDM strategies that can be implemented at new and existing developments.

**Action C 2.5** **Facilitate TDM Services.** Facilitate the provision of TDM services to employees and residents through development agreements, Transportation Management Associations, and coordination with regional partners.



**Action C 2.6** **Travel to Schools.** Reduce school-related VMT and support student health by collaborating with private and public partners to increase the number of students walking or bicycling to school through expanded implementation of Safe Routes to School, including educating students and the community about the benefits of walking and bicycling and making physical improvements to streets and neighborhoods that make walking and bicycling safer. Prioritize school travel safety improvements in equity priority communities.



**Action C 2.7 New Development Shuttle Services.** Encourage new developments to provide shuttle services and shuttle partnerships as an option to fulfill TDM requirements. Shuttles should serve activity centers, such as the College of San Mateo, Caltrain stations, Downtown, the Hillsdale Shopping Center, or other areas and should accommodate the needs and schedules of all riders, including service workers.

**Action C 2.8 Unbundled Parking.** In conjunction with other TDM strategies that aim to reduce vehicle trips, encourage residential developments to unbundle the costs of providing dedicated parking spaces. Encourage additional parking capacity created by unbundling to be reallocated as shared or public parking spaces.

## PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

A safe and easy-to-navigate pedestrian network with connections to transit, schools, commercial areas, and parks and recreation facilities provides a healthier and more sustainable way to travel. Figure C-1 shows a representation of San Mateo’s 2040 Circulation Network, which includes the existing and planned pedestrian network from the Pedestrian Master Plan. The future pedestrian network will include improvements from other adopted or future City plans, such as an updated Pedestrian Master Plan, the Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan, and the Complete Streets Plan.

Nearly every street in San Mateo has a sidewalk, with some exceptions in the single-family neighborhoods of San Mateo Park and Sugarloaf. Downtown includes a permanent pedestrian mall along B Street between 1st and 3rd Avenues, which is a pedestrian-only zone with space for outdoor dining and special events in the public right-of-way. Moving forward, the City plans to increase car-light spaces in the Downtown by implementing elements of a “superblock” design that prioritizes pedestrian spaces. The City also plans for pedestrian improvements through the Safe Routes to School program, which encourages students and families to travel to school by means other than a car.

The City uses a data-driven approach to focus pedestrian safety improvements on the areas with the greatest need. For example, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) citywide assessment evaluated City facilities, right-of-ways, and programs to identify and prioritize measures to remediate ADA deficiencies. A similar approach was undertaken to identify pedestrian improvements needed to support safe walking routes for seniors. The City’s Age Friendly Action Plan used public data to identify likely walking routes for older adults and whether sidewalk improvements were needed to improve these routes.



While this element establishes the big-picture pedestrian policy framework for San Mateo, the City has two completed implementation plans that identify projects and policies to create a more walkable future:

- The San Mateo Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) includes a list of priority pedestrian infrastructure recommendations for corridors and intersections throughout the city. The PMP introduces a new Greenway Pedestrian Corridor Network, a pedestrian-friendly network of streets that are intended to improve pedestrian connections to neighborhood destinations, transit, and recreational opportunities. Improving the pedestrian network for all abilities and ages is one of the PMP’s primary objectives.
- The 2022 Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Pedestrian Access Plan provides a roadmap to enhance pedestrian safety and create comfortable walking routes to transit for all ages and abilities. The plan focuses on improving conditions for pedestrians around the city’s three Caltrain stations and along El Camino Real.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL C-3** Build and maintain a safe, connected, and equitable pedestrian network that provides access to community destinations, such as employment centers, transit, schools, shopping, and recreation.

### POLICIES



**Policy C 3.1 Pedestrian Network.** Create and maintain a safe, walkable environment in San Mateo to increase the number of pedestrians. Maintain an updated recommended pedestrian network for implementation. Encourage “superblock” or similar design in certain nodes of the city, such as the Downtown, that allows vehicle access at the periphery and limits cut-through vehicles to create pedestrian-focused, car-light spaces.



**Policy C 3.2 Pedestrian Enhancements with New Development.** Require new development projects to provide sidewalks and pedestrian ramps and to repair or replace damaged sidewalks, in addition to right-of-way improvements identified in adopted City master plans. Encourage new developments to include pedestrian-oriented design to facilitate pedestrian path of travel.



**Policy C 3.3 Right-of-Way Improvements.** Require new developments to construct or contribute to improvements that enhance the pedestrian experience, including human-scale lighting, streetscaping, and accessible sidewalks adjacent to the site.

### ACTIONS

**Action C 3.4 Implement Pedestrian Improvements.** Prioritize implementation of goals, programs, and projects in the City’s adopted plans that improve the comfort, safety, and connectivity of the pedestrian network.

- Action C 3.5 Pedestrian Trails and Routes Awareness.** Increase awareness of existing trails and routes by working with outside agencies and developers to promote these amenities to residents. Continue collaborating with the County on development of the trail network.
- Action C 3.6 Access for Users of All Ages and Abilities.** Implement the ADA Transition Plan and maintain accessible streets and sidewalks. Use ADA requirements when implementing design standards.
- Action C 3.7 Pedestrian Connectivity.** Incorporate design for pedestrian connectivity across intersections in transportation projects, including the El Camino Real corridor, to improve visibility at crosswalks for pedestrians and provide safe interaction with other modes. Design improvements should focus on increasing sight lines and removing conflicts at crosswalks.
- Action C 3.8 Safe Routes to School.** Fund and implement continuous Safe Routes to School engagement and improvements with San Mateo elementary, middle, and high schools, and provide support to increase number of students walking and bicycling to school.
- Action C 3.9 Downtown Pedestrian Mall.** Complete design and fund improvements to fully transition B Street between 1st Street and 3rd Street into a pedestrian mall.

## BICYCLES AND MICROMOBILITY NETWORK

Biking or traveling by other micromobility devices is an efficient, healthy, and sustainable mode of travel. Micromobility devices are small, lightweight, and typically low-speed, such as bicycles, electric-assisted or electric bicycles and scooters, hoverboards, and skateboards. Infrastructure supporting bicycling and micromobility devices complements the pedestrian network, and it is an important component of the city's multimodal transportation system.

Bicycles and micromobility devices allow people to reach destinations that they might otherwise drive to, and are well-suited for shorter trips that comprise the majority of San Mateans' transportation needs. They also help travelers complete their first- and last-mile transit connections, closing a travel gap that many people find too far to walk because of time constraints, safety concerns, and mobility issues. San Mateo's existing bicycle network provides some connections to destinations within the city and to neighboring city bikeway networks. The City's Bicycle Master Plan describes the existing and proposed bikeway network in more detail and includes programs and policies to help implement the goals outlined in the plan. In implementing the Bicycle Master Plan, the City will continue to build a safe and efficient bicycle and micromobility network.



The San Mateo bicycle network contains six classifications of existing and planned bicycle facilities as described herein. The classifications are described in order of the level of separation between bicyclists and motorists. Shared-use paths offer the most separation, while bicycle routes would require bicyclists to ride alongside motorists.

- **Shared-use paths (Class I):** Off-road pathways designed for people walking, biking, and rolling (e.g., skateboard or scooter).
- **Separated bike lanes (Class IV):** A designated lane separated from vehicular traffic by a buffer with vertical protection (e.g., flexible posts, planters, parked vehicles, curbs).
- **Buffered bike lanes (Class II):** A designated bicycle lane adjacent to vehicular traffic separated by a striped buffer area on the pavement.
- **Standard bike lanes (Class II):** A designated bicycle lane directly adjacent to vehicular traffic.
- **Bicycle boulevards (Class III):** Bicyclists share a lane with vehicular traffic and are identified with bicycle signage and pavement markings to increase driver awareness of bicyclists and aid bicyclists with navigation; however, bicycle boulevards include traffic-calming treatments and are solely implemented on low-speed (i.e., less than 25 miles per hour) and low-volume (i.e., less than 3,000 vehicles per day) streets to ensure they are low-stress facilities.
- **Bicycle routes (Class III):** Bicyclists share the lane with vehicular traffic and are identified with bicycle signage and pavement markings to increase driver awareness of bicyclists and aid bicyclists with navigation. The City is phasing out this type of route within the bicycle network and upgrading to other facility types.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL C-4** Build and maintain a safe, connected, and equitable bicycle and micromobility network that provides access to community destinations, such as employment centers, transit, schools, shopping, and recreation.

### POLICIES



**Policy C 4.1** **Bicycle Network.** Create and maintain a bicycle-friendly environment in San Mateo and increase the number of people who choose to bicycle.



**Policy C 4.2** **Bicycle Master Plan.** Maintain an updated recommended bicycle network for implementation in the adopted Bicycle Master Plan and related City plans.



**Policy C 4.3** **First- and Last-Mile Connections.** Encourage and facilitate provision of bicycle parking and shared mobility options at transit centers and other community destinations to provide first- and last-mile connections.





**Policy C 4.4 Bicycle and Shared Mobility-Related Technology.** Explore ways to use technology to improve bicycle and shared mobility safety and connectivity.



**Policy C 4.5 Bicycle Improvements.** Require new developments to construct or contribute to improvements that enhance the cyclist experience, including bicycle lanes and bicycle parking.



**Policy C 4.6 Coordination with Other City Projects.** Maximize opportunities to implement bicycle facilities through other City of San Mateo projects.



**Policy C 4.7 Interjurisdiction Coordination.** Continue to coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions and regional partners in the development of connected bicycle and pedestrian facilities and regional trails, as identified in adopted City plans.

**Policy C 4.8 Bicycle Lane Maintenance.** Maintain existing and future bicycle lanes to keep them in a usable and safe condition for cyclists.

## ACTIONS

**Action C 4.9 Bicycle Master Plan Implementation.** Implement the Bicycle Master Plan's recommended programs and projects to create and maintain a fully connected, safe, and logical bikeway network and coordinate with the countywide system. Update the Bicycle Master Plan and related adopted City plans to reflect future bicycle and micromobility facility needs to support the City's circulation network.

**Action C 4.10 Paving Coordination.** Coordinate and fund the implementation of bicycle facilities and pedestrian improvements identified in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans with the City's paving program.



- Action C 4.11 Connectivity Across Freeway Barriers.** Conduct feasibility studies and design alternatives for overcrossings and undercrossings at US Highway 101 and State Route 92 to facilitate connectivity across major barriers.
- Action C 4.12 Bay Trail.** Identify State and County programs to maintain safe pedestrian and bicycle access to and extension of the San Francisco Bay Trail through coordination with neighboring jurisdictions.
- Action C 4.13 Crystal Springs.** Pursue safe pedestrian and bicycle access to San Francisco Water District lands via Crystal Springs Road through coordination with the Town of Hillsborough and with State and County assistance.
- Action C 4.14 Bicycle Detection Devices.** Install signal modifications on existing and planned bikeways to detect bicyclists and micromobility users' presence at intersections and facilitate their safe movement through the intersection.
- Action C 4.15 Increased Bicycle Capacity on Caltrain and SamTrans.** Coordinate with Caltrain and SamTrans to support/increase bicycle capacity on transit vehicles and to provide an adequate supply of secure covered bicycle and micromobility parking at Caltrain stations, transit centers, and major bus stops.

## TRANSIT SERVICES

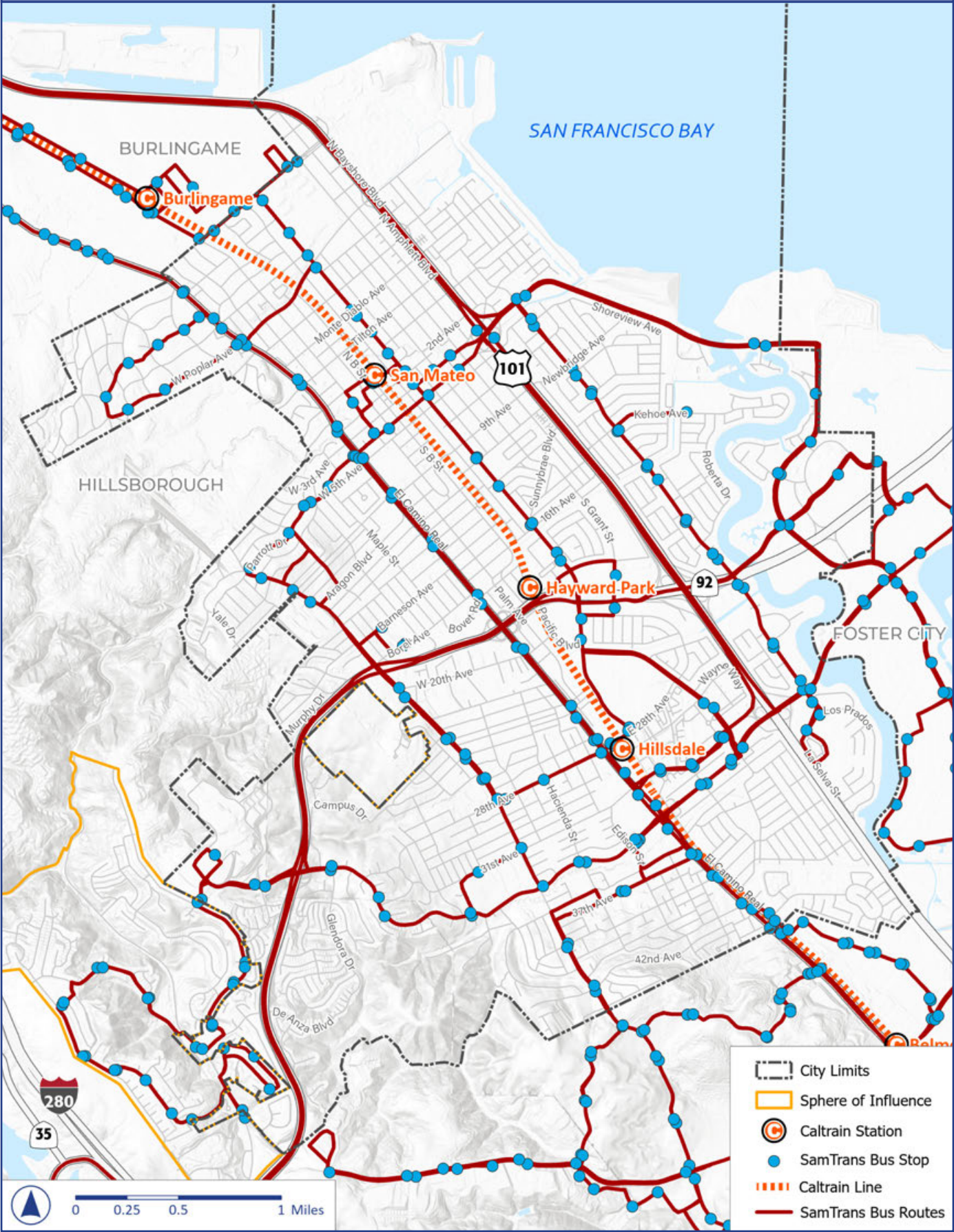
Public transit plays an important role in the multimodal transportation network by providing an efficient and affordable transportation option, offering equitable, economic, and community health benefits. Transit providers' primary objectives are to increase mobility options, reduce congestion, improve the environment by reducing GHG emissions, and contribute to the region's economic success by connecting workers, visitors, and other travelers to their destinations. Transit service is most successful in reaching these goals when there is a land use pattern focusing housing and jobs near transit, as the General Plan Land Use Map (Figure LU-1 in the Land Use Element) aims to do.

Local transit services are primarily provided by Caltrain, a commuter rail system, and SamTrans, a public bus service. Additional shuttle services are funded by various agencies and private companies that offer first- and last-mile connections from Caltrain stations. Figure C-2 shows the Caltrain stations and SamTrans bus stops and routes within San Mateo as of 2023.

Caltrain provides multiple connections to other transit operators around the Bay Area, enabling travelers to reach regional destinations. In San Mateo, Caltrain has three stations: San Mateo Station, Hayward Park Station, and Hillsdale Station, of which, the Hillsdale Station has express service (i.e., Baby Bullet). To improve commuter rail service, Caltrain adopted the Caltrain 2040 Long Range Service Vision to guide the long-range development of rail service. The Vision plans for a future with substantially expanded rail service and new regional and mega-regional connections and includes a business plan to work towards the vision. As an immediate effort to improve service, Caltrain is working on the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project, which will provide increased service throughout the network and provide the infrastructure needed for High-Speed Rail.



Figure C-2 Transit Routes



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





There are multiple SamTrans bus routes that operate within and through the City Limits. These routes connect to Caltrain and Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) stations, and local and regional destinations, such as the San Mateo Central Park, Downtown, Hillsdale Shopping Center, and San Francisco International Airport. SamTrans' long-range service plan, called ReImagine SamTrans, plans for operational improvements such as increased bus frequency and new routes and connections, including enhanced transit access on the El Camino Real corridor. SamTrans is also developing transit plans that will provide improved access and frequency along the El Camino Real corridor.

Although the City does not directly provide transit service, there are many things the City can do to make it easier, safer, and more appealing to use transit in San Mateo. The City's Complete Streets Plan includes policy guidance and proposes improvements for pedestrian, bicycle, and micromobility connections to transit. Further, the Transit-Oriented Development Pedestrian Access Plan identifies specific improvements to enhance pedestrian access to the City's current transit stations. Creating a circulation system that improves access to transit centers and stops, requiring new development projects to include transit supportive features, and working collaboratively with the transit providers to improve the system will bolster transit service in the community.

The City can also support transit providers to make improvements that would encourage ridership, such as:

- Transit priority treatments, such as signal priority, on high-frequency transit corridors.
- Extended hours to provide service for shift workers.
- Free Clipper cards to youth/students.
- Bus rapid transit (BRT), on-demand transit, or microtransit services in San Mateo.
- Caltrain modernization, electrification, transit experience improvements, and increased service frequency.
- Implementation of Caltrain's business plan, including increased service to San Mateo's three stations.
- Caltrain station access improvements such as sidewalks and bikeways near each station that are designed to provide safe and convenient access to and from transit.
- Regional transit integration and expansion to improve seamless access to BART, High-Speed Rail, and other regional transit systems.



## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL C-5** Make transit a viable transportation option for the community by supporting frequent, reliable, cost-efficient, and connected service.

### POLICIES



**Policy C 5.1** **Transit Ridership and Frequency.** Support SamTrans and Caltrain in their efforts to increase transit ridership and frequency of transit services.



**Policy C 5.2** **Caltrain and SamTrans.** Support Caltrain and SamTrans as critical transit service providers in the city and Peninsula.



**Policy C 5.3** **California High-Speed Rail.** Support and facilitate local and regional efforts to implement High-Speed Rail. Work to provide multimodal connections between San Mateo and planned High-Speed Rail stations.

**Policy C 5.4** **Safety at At-Grade Rail Crossings.** Eliminate existing at-grade rail crossings to improve safety and local multimodal circulation.



**Policy C 5.5** **Transit Improvements.** Support implementation of transit improvements by local and regional transit providers.



**Policy C 5.6 Transit Safety.** Prioritize improvements that enhance pedestrian connectivity to transit and increase safety, access, and comfort at transit centers and bus stops in equity priority communities, along commercial corridors, and in dense, mixed-use neighborhoods.



**Policy C 5.7 Transit Access in New Developments.** Require new development projects to incorporate design elements that facilitate or improve access to public transit.

**Policy C 5.8 Transit Education.** Educate the public about the benefits of transit use.

**Policy C 5.9 Paratransit.** Support San Mateo County's efforts to provide paratransit services in the city.

## ACTIONS

**Action C 5.10 Grade Separation Study.** Conduct a grade separation feasibility study for all at-grade rail crossings in San Mateo. Identify funding to complete these grade-crossing improvements.



**Action C 5.11 Transit Experience Improvements.** Prioritize installing new transit shelters and benches or other seating and an energy-efficient street lighting program at transit stops using SamTrans standards in equity priority communities and areas that improve transit access, safety, and experience.



**Action C 5.12 Shuttle Programs.** Continue to support public shuttle programs connecting to Caltrain stations. Work to expand public awareness and access to shuttles and expand shuttle service. Support the implementation of publicly accessible private shuttles.

**Action C 5.13 Safe Routes to Transit.** Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects that provide safe and equitable access to transit stops.

## ROADWAY NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

A well-planned roadway network is key to supporting safe and efficient travel for all users and accomplishing the transition to a multimodal system, as described throughout this element. Different modes of transportation have different infrastructure needs; by prioritizing improvements that support multiple modes, the City can meet the needs of multiple users. For example, adding bicycle lanes can make bicycling safer and more convenient, encouraging more people to bike instead of drive while also reducing traffic congestion for those who do drive. Another example is lowering vehicle speeds and installing traffic-calming measures in residential neighborhoods improves safety for all roadway users, making walking and bicycling more viable transportation options.

To identify future improvements needed to support the shift to a truly multimodal roadway network, the City will evaluate and consider adopting a Multimodal Level of Service (MLOS) standard or other transportation metric. MLOS is a rating system used to evaluate roadway operation efficiency for vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit, and other roadway users in place of Level of Service standards that consider vehicles only.

Decisions about appropriate improvements are also made based on the role of a roadway within the city's network. Roadway improvements may include traffic signal installation, signal timing adjustments for



different modes, and upgrading traffic signals to give priority to emergency vehicles. Some funding sources for roadway maintenance and improvements can only be used for specific roadway classifications.

Figure C-3 shows the existing roadway classifications in San Mateo as identified by Caltrans. The City uses the Caltrans roadway classifications to:

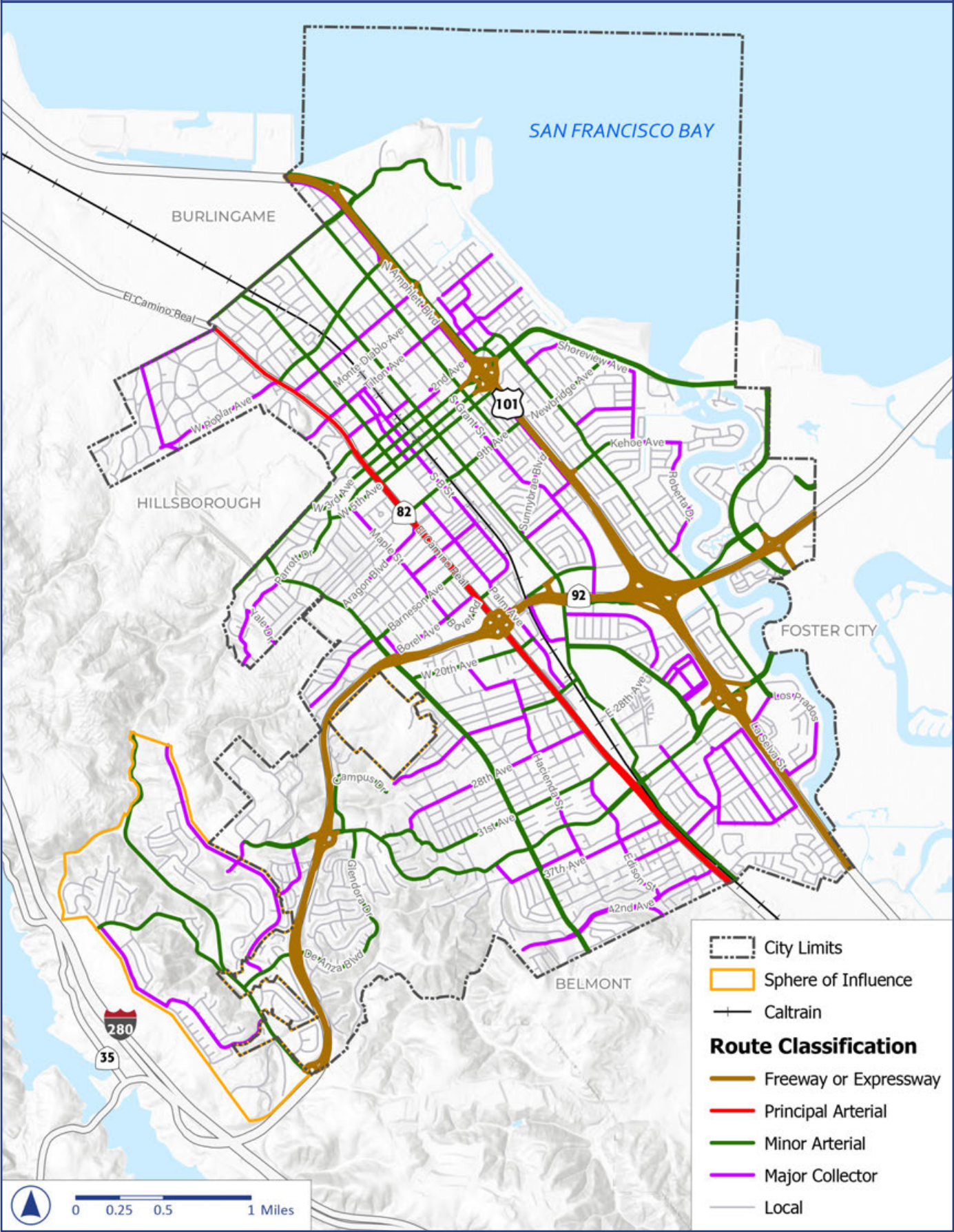
- Define the function of various street types in the transportation network;
- Monitor performance and track multimodal use; and
- Plan for improvements needed to accommodate changes in traffic over the life of the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040.

In addition, the City aligns with the Caltrans roadway classifications to receive State funding for roadway improvements. However, the Caltrans roadway classifications may not capture on-the-ground conditions for all roadway segments. To ensure that the roadway classifications meet the community's intended use of the street network, the City plans to request that Caltrans update the roadway classifications using the framework of the City's Complete Streets Plan as a guide for the suggested changes.

The roadway classification definitions below are based on the definitions from Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration. These definitions include the annual average daily trip volume for each classification. The surrounding land uses will influence the actual volumes for each roadway in San Mateo.

- **Freeways or Expressways.** Freeways and expressways have directional travel lanes that are usually separated by a physical barrier, and their access and egress points are limited to on- and off-ramp locations or a very limited number of at-grade intersections. The annual average daily traffic volume for freeways and expressways is 13,000 to 55,000 trips. US Highway 101 and State Route 92 are the two freeways in San Mateo.
- **Principal Arterials.** Principal arterials are the main streets within the city that carry the greatest number of users and serve the largest area. Unlike a freeway, travelers can access destinations directly from the arterial through driveways and at-grade intersections with other roadways. The annual average daily traffic volume for principal arterials is 7,000 to 27,000 trips. El Camino Real is the only principal arterial in San Mateo.
- **Minor Arterials.** Minor arterials are used for trips of moderate length, serve smaller geographic areas than principal arterials and offer connections between principal arterials and other roadways. The annual average daily traffic volume for minor arterials is 3,000 to 14,000 trips.
- **Major Collector.** Major collectors gather traffic from local roads and funnel it to arterials. Compared to local roadways, major collectors are longer, have fewer driveways, have higher speed limits, and may have more travel lanes. The annual average daily traffic volume for major collectors is 1,100 to 6,300 trips.
- **Local.** Local roads are the largest percentage of roadways in terms of mileage. These provide direct access to abutting land. They may be designed to discourage through traffic; they are not intended to cover long distances. The annual average daily traffic volume for local roads is 80 to 700 trips.

Figure C-3 Existing Caltrans Roadway Classification Map



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





In addition to planning and building physical improvements to the roadway network, the City is also responsible for maintaining streets, bridges, bicycle paths, signage, lighting, sidewalks, and other transportation facilities so that all users can travel safely and efficiently. Preventative maintenance of roadways and infrastructure keeps costs lower in the long term, and results in accessible, safe, and easy to navigate surfaces that improve conditions for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Roadway improvements and congestion reduction in San Mateo require a collaborative approach because the roadway network is regulated by multiple entities with roles that sometimes overlap. For example, US Highway 101, State Route 92, and El Camino Real are all Caltrans facilities that are not controlled by the City. At the regional level, the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG), the Congestion Management Agency for the County, is responsible for developing and updating a variety of transportation plans and programs while the SMCTA is an independent agency that administers funding generated by the voter-approved countywide transportation sales tax. At the local level, the City of San Mateo Public Works Department operates, maintains, and improves City-owned infrastructure, including roadways, bicycle facilities, and pedestrian facilities.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL C-6** Achieve a transportation system that prioritizes user safety, accommodates future growth, reduces VMT per capita, and maintains efficient and safe operations for all modes and all residents.

### POLICIES

**Policy C 6.1 Roadway Operations.** Maintain acceptable roadway operations for all intersections and all modes within the city.



- Policy C 6.2 Circulation Improvement Plan.** Maintain a transportation network that will accommodate future growth, reduce VMT per capita, and equitably implement complete streets.
- Policy C 6.3 Local Transportation Analysis.** Require site-specific transportation impact analysis following the City’s adopted Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) Policy for development projects where there may be an adverse condition or effect on the roadway system.
- Policy C 6.4 Operations Analysis for Development Projects.** Require new development to determine the need for new or modified circulation improvements, operations, or alignments where developments identify operational deficiencies that were not previously identified in a transportation impact fee study. Require development applicants to prepare an analysis to determine the need for modifications, such as signalization, turn restrictions, roundabouts, etc. Require applicants to fund identified off-site improvements if warranted, as determined by the legally appropriate transportation analysis, and as approved by City staff.
- Policy C 6.5 Neighborhood Traffic.** Implement traffic-calming measures on residential streets to reduce the volume of pass-through traffic and vehicular speeds.
- Policy C 6.6 Truck Routes.** Maintain and update the truck route network to use roadways that are adequately designed for truck usage and minimize potential conflicts with other transportation modes.
- Policy C 6.7 Capital Improvement Program (CIP).** Prioritize improvements that increase person throughput, such as increased pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access, that work toward achieving the City’s goal of reducing VMT.
- Policy C 6.8 Emergency Signal Preemption.** Require new and upgraded signals to include preemption for emergency vehicles to maintain and enhance emergency response times.

## ACTIONS

- Action C 6.9 Traffic Calming Policy.** Evaluate whether updates are needed to the City’s Neighborhood Traffic Management Program to determine if the program should be expanded to include major and minor collectors and arterials.
- Action C 6.10 Network Operations Standard.** Evaluate and adopt an operational metric for all roadway users that accounts for the safe, equitable, and efficient roadway access.



- Action C 6.11 Prioritization and Timing of Roadway Improvements.** Revise the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) prioritization system to include additional criteria, such as: potential to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita; proximity to high-injury locations identified in the Local Roads Safety Plan; eligibility and availability of grant or other funding source; benefit or harm to equity priority communities; and correlation with the distribution and pace of development, reflecting the degree of need for mitigation.

**Action C 6.12 Congestion Management.** Work with neighboring agencies and regional partners, such as the City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County (C/CAG), to implement traffic management strategies and technologies, such as signal coordination, to manage local traffic congestion.

**Action C 6.13 Street Classification Update.** Request that Caltrans and the Federal Highway Administration update their functional roadway classifications based on the roadway network framework defined by the Complete Streets Plan.

## PARKING AND CURBSIDE MANAGEMENT

Driving is part of a multimodal transportation network, which requires consideration of vehicle parking. Efficient management of parking is important to support economic growth, environmental sustainability, and transportation equity. Many San Mateo residents currently drive to their destinations, which leads to demand for vehicle parking. However, parking requires valuable real estate, whether on-street, off-street, or at the curb, and making parking abundant and readily available may encourage additional vehicle trips. As the competing demands for land increase, the City is exploring strategies that manage the curbside and leverage innovative tools and technologies that support a more sustainable and equitable parking system to more fully support the multimodal network.

On-street parking is often in high demand by motorists who prefer to park near their destination. The on-street public right-of-way has competing priorities throughout the city, necessitating decisions about how to best allocate this limited space for vehicle circulation, parking, bicycling, pedestrians, parklets, and loading. Effective curb management strategies, such as maintaining flexible curb space that can be easily used for multiple purposes, can help the City meet these future needs for this critical right-of-way.

New development projects evaluate and provide parking that is appropriate for all travel modes, and the City operates public off-street parking structures within the Downtown core. Space or structures for parking add significant cost to new development, which translates into higher rents for residents and businesses, and also encourages driving. In some cases, sharing parking resources can help to reduce both the amount of parking provided on-site as well as the cost of building. Provision of parking at levels that meet needs without inducing additional trips or hindering development is a key part of the City's future multimodal network.



Parking, especially structured parking, is very expensive to build and is a significant factor in the cost of new development. As one strategy to reduce the cost of building needed new housing, California has explored State laws that limit local governments' ability to require parking as part of new development. For example, in 2022, California passed Assembly Bill (AB) 2097, which prohibits minimum parking requirements for most development projects within a half-mile radius of a major transit stop. As the State continues to grapple with solutions to California's housing crisis, it is possible that there could be additional future legislation that affects parking requirements and regulations in San Mateo.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL C-7** Use parking, enforcement, and curb management strategies to effectively administer parking supply and maximize use of public assets.

### POLICIES



**Policy C 7.1** **Parking Management.** Manage parking through appropriate pricing, enforcement, and other strategies to support economic growth and vitality, transportation equity, and environmental sustainability. Ensure that the available parking supply is used at levels that meet ongoing needs without inducing additional demand or hindering future development.



**Policy C 7.2** **Shared Parking.** Encourage new and existing developments, especially those in mixed-use districts, to share parking between uses to maximize the existing parking supply, minimize the amount of new parking construction, and encourage "park once" behavior in commercial areas.

**Policy C 7.3** **Public Parking.** Maximize opportunities to expand the availability of existing parking by supporting the use of public/shared parking at private developments, discouraging reserved parking at new developments, providing incentives for developments to include shared/public parking, and allowing developers to fund public parking in-lieu of meeting parking demand/requirements on-site.



**Policy C 7.4** **Bicycle Parking.** Require the provision of bicycle parking as part of new private developments.

**Policy C 7.5** **Curbside Management.** Manage the supply and use of the curb to maintain an optimal balance between mobility, storage, placemaking, and loading uses allowing for flexibility for adaptive re-use, safety improvements, and activation of curb space whenever possible.

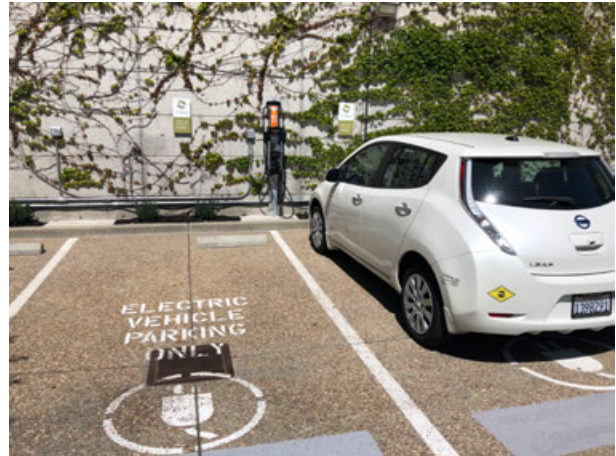
**Policy C 7.6** **Loading for New Development.** Require adequate loading to meet the needs of new development, including evaluation of shared use of loading zones.



## ACTIONS

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- Action C 7.7 Parking Requirements.** Evaluate options to amend minimum parking requirements, consistent with State and regional policy, to provide parking appropriate to the context of the development and support the multimodal transportation network, such as parking maximums or parking demand analyses.
- Action C 7.8 Parking Management Strategies.** Deploy enhanced parking management strategies, parking enforcement, and evaluate dynamic parking pricing strategies that fluctuate based on peak parking and/or district-level parking demands.
- Action C 7.9 Curbside Management Strategies.** Evaluate and implement curb management strategies, such as incentivizing or discouraging certain types of trips, mode choices, and behaviors in favor of broader mobility goals.
- Action C 7.10 Emerging Technology for Curbside Management.** Evaluate and implement performance monitoring and evaluation systems, such as digitization of curbside assets, to dynamically manage evolving curbside demands.
- Action C 7.11 Truck Loading.** Evaluate and implement ways to reduce conflicts between truck loading and pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks.
- Action C 7.12 Public Bicycle Parking.** Install safe, useful, and convenient short- and long-term bicycle parking facilities in the public right-of-way or near key destinations, City facilities, and transit facilities.
- Action C 7.13 Mechanical Parking Lift.** Adopt and maintain a code or policy that sets standards for mechanical parking lift systems.
- Action C 7.14 Off-Street Parking Incentives.** Explore a new policy or code amendment that would provide incentives to projects in exchange for providing additional off-street parking in neighborhoods that have on-street parking capacity issues, such as areas in the North Central Neighborhood.



## FUTURE MOBILITY AND TECHNOLOGY

Transportation technology is an important component in transportation network management today. Intelligent transportation systems allow for improved emergency response times, congestion relief, and safety benefits for all users. Active network management can share real-time information with roadway users to help inform their travel patterns. Technology will continue to be important to help manage future increased demand on the City's transportation network.

Additionally, advancement in mobility technologies and services is fueling rapid changes in travel behavior, transportation options, and land use. Future transportation technologies, such as autonomous vehicles (AVs), electric-assist bicycles and scooters, shared mobility options, micromobility devices, ride sharing, advancements in transit operations, and other transportation innovations, will greatly impact the future of mobility by:

- Expanding public transit service and connections to transit
- Affecting whether and how often people drive
- Increasing or decreasing VMT
- Changing how deliveries are made and how goods travel along the transportation network.

As new transportation innovations emerge, the City will work to ensure equitable deployment and responsive transportation solutions to accommodate technology that supports the multimodal goals in this element. At a regional level, the City will continue collaborating with Caltrain and SamTrans to improve transit operations in San Mateo as new technologies come online.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL C-8** Build a values-driven regulatory, management, and partnership framework that flexibly encourages emerging transportation technologies in service of City and community goals.

### POLICIES



**Policy C 8.1 Emerging Technologies.** Monitor, evaluate, test, and implement new technologies that expand options for safe and efficient trip making.



**Policy C 8.2 Equitable Mobility Options.** Ensure that the needs and perspectives of residents of equity priority communities as well as those who speak limited English, and low-income, senior, and disabled travelers are considered in the design, deployment, and management of new mobility services and technologies.

**Policy C 8.3 Mobility Data.** Leverage mobility data to support new policies, investments, and programmatic actions in service of City goals.

### ACTIONS

**Action C 8.4 Umbrella Regulations for Modern Mobility.** Develop comprehensive regulations and infrastructure standards that are not exclusive to specific service providers and that support a spectrum of digital information, micromobility services, and emerging technologies, such as autonomous vehicles.



**Action C 8.5 Strategic Partnerships and Pilots.** Create strategic partnerships and pilots with shared mobility service providers and community organizations that increase mobility options for residents.

**Action C 8.6 Future-Ready Infrastructure.** Establish public realm policies and tools that reflect San Mateo's goals and priorities in the design and management of streets, curbs, sidewalks, and parking facilities to account for emerging mobility trends and changes in demand over time.

**Action C 8.7 Equitable Mobility Technology.** Develop an equitable mobility policy, including a data-sharing policy, for vendors to ensure equitable deployment of emerging mobility options with consideration of residents who may be digitally challenged.

**Action C 8.8 Intelligent Transportation Systems.** Evaluate and deploy Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) measures to efficiently manage traffic operations and incident response, enhance transit service efficiency, and better detect and prioritize the travel and safety of people walking and biking.



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# CHAPTER 5

## Community Design and Historic Resources Element









# COMMUNITY DESIGN AND HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The Community Design and Historic Resources Element sets the policy framework for San Mateo's physical form, which is shaped first by nature and then by human factors. The natural context that has shaped the community and its history includes the city's topography, sloping from the undeveloped foothills to the San Francisco Bay, as well as the urban forest. Human factors in San Mateo's community design includes the architecture of historic and new buildings, the public spaces where people gather, gateways or entrances to the city, street trees lining neighborhoods, and art decorating public spaces. Urban design distinguishes the characteristics of specific areas, like residential neighborhoods and shopping districts, through differences in landscaping, building size and orientation, and treatment of access, entryways, and parking. Archaeological resources and cultural resources that are culturally significant to Native American tribes also serve as important connections to the city's rich history.

This element includes goals, policies, and actions focused on improving the city's urban tree canopy, enhancing the visual and architectural character of mixed-use and commercial areas, and encouraging the design of residential buildings that complement the neighborhood's visual and architectural character. It also includes guidance for the preservation of historic, archaeological, and cultural resources that help maintain San Mateo's unique identity. This element encourages new mixed-use and commercial development that respects the scale and rhythm of the surrounding buildings and provides human-scale design that cultivates pedestrian activity.

The Community Design and Historic Resources Element addresses the following:

- Natural Setting and the Urban Forest
- Archaeological and Paleontological Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Historic Resources
- City Placemaking
  - » Sustainable Design
  - » Gateways
  - » Corridors
  - » Public Art
- Elements of Design
  - » Residential Neighborhoods
  - » Mixed-Use and Commercial Areas



## RELEVANCE TO GENERAL PLAN THEMES



### **Sustainability in this Element:**

- Encourages sustainable design features and elements into the design of new buildings.
- Supports new development that respects and responds to the natural topography of San Mateo and minimizes grading.
- Promotes the preservation of protected heritage trees and requires tree planting for new developments, which helps sequester carbon from the atmosphere.
- Supports the preservation of historic resources by retaining existing buildings, which reduces the consumption of new construction materials, uses less energy, and sends less waste to landfills.



### **Environmental Justice in this Element:**

- Adds climate-adapted trees in neighborhoods with less street tree canopy.
- Explores funding sources and other forms of City support for low-income homeowners to plant and/or replace trees on their properties.



### **Community Engagement in this Element:**

- Collaborates with Native American representatives to identify locations of importance to Native Americans, including archaeological sites, sacred sites, traditional cultural properties, and other types of tribal cultural resources.
- Increases public appreciation of historic resources by supporting groups and organizations who provide neighborhood workshops, public presentations, interpretive signage, and walking tours.
- Supports community involvement in the City's efforts to develop and maintain an attractive urban fabric that reflects San Mateo's unique visual and architectural character.
- Encourages the use of outreach and engagement methods that include broad representation and are culturally sensitive.



## NATURAL SETTING AND THE URBAN FOREST

The natural setting of San Mateo is the foundation of its unique character and sense of place. San Mateo is set between two dominant physical features: San Francisco Bay and the ridge of hills along the western border. The city has developed between these two natural features following early transportation corridors, and the bay and western hills remain important natural views from many places in the city. Other key natural features of San Mateo include Coyote Point County Park, the Marina Lagoon, San Mateo Creek, and Laurelwood/Sugarloaf Park. The city also has a 3-mile length of shoreline along the San Francisco Bay, which includes a scenic vista point at Seal Point Park. San Mateo County's General Plan also designates the area surrounding Interstate 280 as a scenic corridor.

The City's urban forest—including both public and privately owned trees—is also a key part of the community's identity and quality of life. Trees contribute to the visual character of a neighborhood and can improve the aesthetics in commercial areas. Regular spacing of trees that are similar in form and texture provides order and coherence and gives scale to the street. A canopy of branches and leaves creates a sense of enclosure and comfort and provides shade, which will be increasingly important not only for aesthetics but for reducing building energy use and the urban heat island effect in a warming climate. While some city streets, such as Aragon Boulevard between El Camino Real and Maple Street, are lined with trees, the tree canopy is sparse in other areas.

This section provides policy direction for preserving and enhancing San Mateo's natural setting, minimizing the impact of hillside development, and protecting and improving the urban tree canopy. Goals and policies focused on access to nature and open space lands, natural resources, and parks and recreation can be found in the Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation Element. Strategies to combat climate change are further discussed in the Land Use Element and in the City's Climate Action Plan.





## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL CD-1** Preserve and enhance San Mateo’s natural setting as an irreplaceable asset that is the physical foundation of the community.

### POLICIES



**Policy CD 1.1** **Respect for the Landscape.** Encourage new development to respect and respond to the natural topography of San Mateo.

**Policy CD 1.2** **Preservation of Natural Views.** Preserve and enhance, to the extent feasible, publicly accessible views to the undeveloped foothills and the San Francisco Bay through the design of new development.

**Policy CD 1.3** **Scenic Corridors.** Require new development adjacent to designated scenic corridors within San Mateo County’s General Plan to protect and enhance the visual character of these corridors to the extent feasible.

**GOAL CD-2** Minimize the impact of hillside development on the natural environment and public safety.

### POLICIES

**Policy CD 2.1** **Hillside Development Principles.** Require hillside development to minimize impacts by preserving the existing topography, limiting grading or cuts and fills, clustering development, and identifying opportunities for restoration or re-wilding. Limit development on steep hillsides with a 30 percent or higher slope.

**Policy CD 2.2** **Minimal Impacts.** Require new development to preserve natural topographic forms and to minimize adverse impacts on vegetation, water, soil stability, and wildlife resources.

**GOAL CD-3** Protect heritage trees, street trees, and tree stands and maintain the health and condition of San Mateo’s urban forest.

### POLICIES



**Policy CD 3.1** **Tree Preservation.** Continue to preserve heritage and street trees throughout San Mateo, where feasible.

**Policy CD 3.2**

**Replacement Planting.** Require appropriate replacement planting or payment of an in-lieu fee when protected trees on public or private property are removed.

**Policy CD 3.3**

**Tree Protection During Construction.** Require the protection of trees during construction activity; require that landscaping, buildings, and other improvements adjacent to trees be designed and maintained to be consistent with the continued health of the tree.

**Policy CD 3.4**

**Public Awareness.** Pursue public awareness and education programs concerning the identification, care, and regulation of trees.

**Policy CD 3.5**

**Tree Maintenance.** Preserve and regularly maintain existing City-owned heritage and street trees to keep them in a safe and healthy condition.

**Policy CD 3.6**

**New Development Street Trees.** Require street tree planting where feasible as a condition of all new developments.

**Policy CD 3.7**

**Street Tree Equity.** Plant new street trees to increase the tree canopy throughout the city, especially in gateway areas and in tree-deficient neighborhoods; encourage neighborhood participation in tree planting programs; and incorporate programs for long-term care and maintenance of the new street trees.

**Policy CD 3.8**

**Tree Stand Retention.** Preserve the visual character of stands or groves of trees in the design of new or modified projects, where feasible.

## ACTIONS

**Action CD 3.9**

**Urban Tree Canopy.** Identify neighborhoods with less street tree canopy and adopt programs to plant climate-adapted trees within the public right-of-way, especially in equity priority communities and areas with a high heat index.

**Action CD 3.10**

**Tree Planting Funding.** Identify funding sources for tree planting programs for private, residential property on an annual basis.

**Action CD 3.11**

**Tree Support for Low-Income Homeowners.** Explore funding sources and other forms of City support for low-income homeowners to plant, maintain, and/or replace trees on their property.



**Action CD 3.12 Tree Establishment.** Develop a program and identify funding to support the early establishment and ongoing maintenance of City-owned street trees.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES AND TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Archaeological and cultural artifacts are treasures that help to preserve the city's complex history for future generations. The Costanoan people, commonly referred to as Ohlone people, are estimated to have been some of the earliest inhabitants in the area between 5,000 and 7,000 years ago. It is estimated that in 1770, the Ohlone of the Bay Area numbered around 10,000. Forty years later, by about 1810, much of the native population and much of the traditional culture of these people had been destroyed in the face of relentless European encroachment and its devastating impacts – disease, warfare, displacement, and the California mission system. The City acknowledges its history as indigenous land as well as the rich living tribal culture in the Bay Area and strives to protect resources that are culturally significant to present-day Native American tribes through consultation and collaborative relationship-building. Grading and construction in the modern era have eliminated most aboveground record of the region's indigenous inhabitants, but records of these communities may remain undisturbed underground.

Paleontological resources (fossils) are the remains and/or traces of prehistoric plant and animal life exclusive of human remains or artifacts. Fossil remains, such as bones, teeth, shells, and wood are often found in the geologic deposits (rock formations) in which they were originally buried. Due to the scientific and educational value of paleontological resources, they are protected under federal and State law. This section provides policy direction for protecting archaeological, paleontological, and cultural resources. Policy direction for the protection of historic resources can be found under Goal CD-5 of this element.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL CD-4** Protect archaeological and paleontological resources and resources that are culturally significant to Native American tribes and acknowledge San Mateo's past as indigenous land. Encourage development projects to recognize historical tribal lands.

### POLICIES

- Policy CD 4.1 Archaeological Resource Protection.** Preserve, to the maximum extent feasible, archaeological sites with significant cultural, historical, or sociological merit for present-day residents or Native American tribes.
- Policy CD 4.2 Tribal Cultural Resources.** Preserve areas that have identifiable and important tribal cultural resources and comply with appropriate State and federal standards to evaluate and mitigate impacts to cultural resources, including tribal, historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources.





**Policy CD 4.3 Tribal Consultation.** Consult with Native American representatives, including through early coordination, to identify locations of importance to Native Americans, including archaeological sites, sacred sites, traditional cultural properties, and other types of tribal cultural resources. Respect tribal concerns if a tribe has a religious prohibition against revealing information about specific practices or locations.



**Policy CD 4.4 Potential Archaeological Impacts.** Consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), prior to construction, consult the California Archaeological Inventory Northwest Information Center for project-specific reviews to evaluate the potential for impact on archaeological resources and determine whether or not further study is warranted.

**Policy CD 4.5 On-Site Mitigation.** If development could affect a tribal cultural resource or archaeological resource, require the developer to contact an appropriate tribal representative to train construction workers on appropriate avoidance and minimization measures, requirements for confidentiality and culturally appropriate treatment, other applicable regulations, and consequences of violating State laws and regulations.

**Policy CD 4.6 Paleontological Resource Protection.** Prohibit the damage or destruction of paleontological resources, including prehistorically significant fossils, ruins, monuments, or objects of antiquity, that could potentially be caused by future development.

## ACTIONS

**Action CD 4.7 Preconstruction Investigations.** Consistent with CEQA, establish specific procedures for preconstruction investigation of high- and medium-sensitivity sites identified in the 1983 Chavez investigation, unless superseded by more recent investigations, to assist property owners, developers, and the City in making decisions when archaeological resources may be affected.

**Action CD 4.8 Archaeological Sensitivity Data.** Update and maintain the City's data on areas with high archaeological sensitivity.

**Action CD 4.9 Paleontological Resource Mitigation Protocol.** Prepare a list of protocols in accordance with Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards that protect or mitigate impacts to paleontological resources, including requiring grading and construction projects to cease activity when a paleontological resource is discovered so it can be safely removed.

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

Spanish exploration of San Mateo began in the 1770s, but European settlement of this area started around 1793 when the San Mateo area became an asistencia, or outpost, for Mission Dolores. After Mexican independence from Spain in 1822, the missions were divided into large land grants. Rancho San Mateo and Rancho de las Pulgas encompassed what became San Mateo.

By the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848, California had become a territory of the United States and obtained statehood two years later. The small village of San Mateo began to develop at the juncture of several stagecoach lines, established in the late 1840s and 1850s, and the San Francisco and San Jose Railroad, which began servicing the community in 1864. San Mateo became a popular destination for tourists visiting Crystal Springs Canyon and for wealthy San Franciscan families, who constructed lavish mansions. The commercial Downtown developed around the intersection of the railroad station and B Street, and schools, utilities, and other public services were established to support the growing population. In 1894, an overwhelming majority of residents voted to incorporate the town of San Mateo.

From the late nineteenth century through the 1930s, numerous residential neighborhoods were established throughout San Mateo, particularly as former estates were sold and subdivided. These include subdivisions in the Central neighborhood in the late nineteenth century, and the San Mateo Park, San Mateo Heights, and Hayward's Addition subdivisions in the early 1900s. Residential development intensified following the 1906 earthquake and fires, with new development concentrated in the Hayward Park, East San Mateo, and North Central neighborhoods. Other notable developments included the Glazenwood neighborhood in the 1920s and the Baywood and Aragon neighborhoods in the 1930s.

As San Mateo's population evolved, it expanded from a town to an established community in the early twentieth century. Large numbers of Irish immigrants arrived in the 1860s and were followed by the first Chinese and Japanese immigrants the following decade. Chinese residents initially formed a small Chinatown at B Street and Second Avenue and later at Claremont Street and First Avenue around 1900. Chinese residents continued to live in small clusters in the Downtown area well into the 1940s. Japanese immigrants who arrived in San Mateo found employment as domestic workers and at the local salt plant; they also opened small businesses in the burgeoning Downtown and became successful gardeners as part of the Peninsula's flower industry. By the turn of the twentieth century, they made up the largest Japanese community in the county. Following World War II, development increased significantly in San Mateo. Significant postwar development included the construction of the Hillsdale shopping center and large-scale residential tract developments west of El Camino Real.



This history is represented in the almost 200 historic resources and two historic districts as identified in the 1989 Historic Building Survey. Approximately 37 of these structures are individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. They range from historic buildings in the Downtown to single-family homes from the late nineteenth century. In addition, there are seven historic resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places and seven historic resources on the State Register of Historic Places, as shown in Table CD-1. Figure CD-1 shows the location of the historic districts and resources within San Mateo.

State and federal laws and programs help to protect historic and archaeological resources, including the California Historical Building Code, which preserves California’s architectural heritage by ensuring historic buildings are maintained and rehabilitated in accordance with historically sensitive construction techniques. In addition, the Mills Act, enacted in 1976, provides a property tax incentive to owners of qualified, owner-occupied, historical properties to maintain and preserve the historic property in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

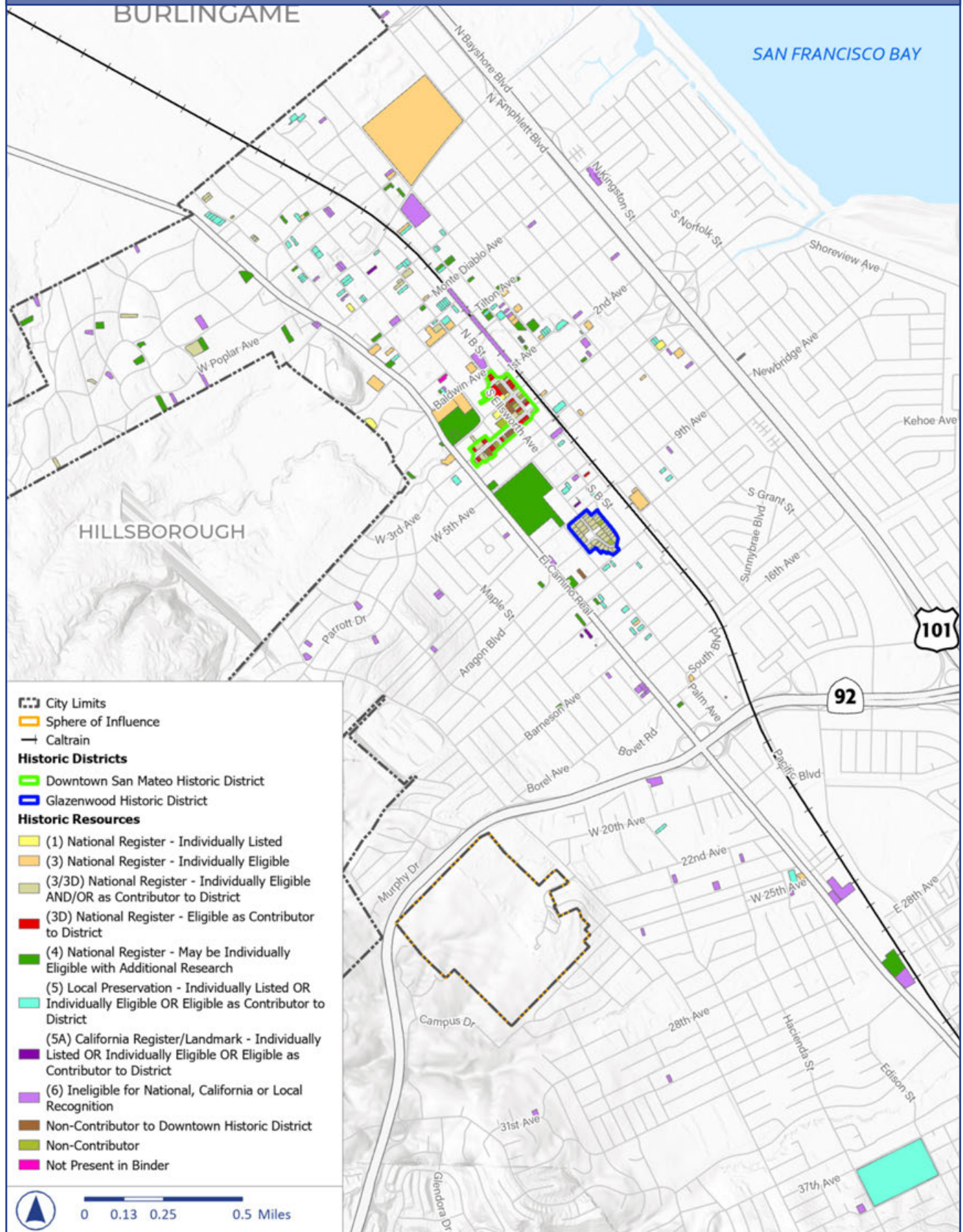
This section provides policy direction for the preservation of historic resources. Goals and policies focused on protecting archaeological and resources that are culturally significant to Native American tribes can be found under Goal CD-4 of this element.

**Table CD-1 National Register and State Register of Historic Places in San Mateo**

Historic Resource Name	Location	National Register	State Register	Year of Construction
Ernest Coxhead House	37 East Santa Inez Avenue	X	X	1891
Vollers House	353 North Claremont Street	X		1891
Hotel St. Matthew	215-229 Second Avenue	X	X	Early 1900
Eugene De Sabla J. Jr. Teahouse and Tea Garden	70 De Sabla Road	X	X	1907
National Bank of San Mateo	164 South B Street	X	X	1924
US Post Main Office – San Mateo	210 South Ellsworth Street	X	X	1935
Baywood Elementary School	600 Alameda de las Pulgas		X	1939
Yoshiko Yamanouchi House	1007 East 5th Avenue	X	X	Mid 1950s



Figure CD-1 Historic Resources in San Mateo



Source: ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL CD-5** Preserve historic and culturally important resources to maintain San Mateo's special identity and continuity with the past.

### POLICIES

**Policy CD 5.1 Comprehensive Approach to Historic Preservation.** Implement a comprehensive approach to historic preservation based on community input and best practices from State and federal agencies, to find an appropriate balance between preservation with other important priorities, such as affordable housing production and supporting local businesses.

**Policy CD 5.2 Historic Preservation.** Actively identify and preserve historic resources and concentrations of historic resources which convey the flavor of local historical periods, are culturally significant, or provide an atmosphere of exceptional architectural interest or integrity, as feasible, when they meet national, State, or local criteria. Historic resources include individual properties, districts, and sites that maintain San Mateo's sense of place and special identity, and enrich our understanding of the city's history and continuity with the past.

**Policy CD 5.3 Historic Resources Definition.** Define historic resources as buildings, structures, sites, and districts that are listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and/or California Register of Historical Resources, designated resources in the 1989 Historic Building Survey Report, and resources found to be eligible through documentation in a historic resources report.



**Policy CD 5.4 Public Awareness.** Foster public awareness and appreciation of the City's historic resources and educate the community about how to preserve and improve these resources. Increase public appreciation by supporting groups and organizations that provide neighborhood workshops, public presentations, interpretive signage, and walking tours.

**Policy CD 5.5 Historic Resources Renovation and Rehabilitation.** Promote the renovation and rehabilitation of historic resources that conforms to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Structures and the California Historical Building Code and prioritize historic structures for available rehabilitation funds.

**Policy CD 5.6 Historic Preservation Funding.** Pursue and promote historic preservation funding sources to incentivize the protection of historic resources, such as the California Mills Act Property Tax Abatement Program, Federal and State Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program, and State Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program.

**Policy CD 5.7 Demolition Alternatives.** Require an applicant to submit alternatives to preserve a historic resource as part of any planning application that proposes full demolition. Implement preservation methods unless health and safety requirements cannot be met or the City Council makes a finding explaining the specific reasons why the social, economic, legal, technical, or other beneficial aspects of the proposed demolition outweigh the unavoidable adverse impacts to the historic resource. If a designated historic resource cannot be preserved, require City approval before the demolition of a historic resource.

## ACTIONS

**Action CD 5.8 Historic Preservation Ordinance.** Update the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance to create a framework for the designation of historic resources and districts, establish review and permitting procedures for historic alterations, demolitions or relocations, be consistent with federal and State standards and guidelines, and align with the other goals and policies outlined in this Element.

**Action CD 5.9 Historic Resources Context Statements.** Prepare a citywide historic context statement to guide future historic resource survey efforts to identify individually eligible resources and historic districts. If a neighborhood is identified as a historic district, prepare a more detailed historic context statement for that individual neighborhood.

**Action CD 5.10 Historic Resources Survey.** Establish and maintain an inventory of architecturally, culturally, and historically significant buildings, structures, sites, and districts. Proactively maintain an up-to-date historic resources inventory by seeking funding opportunities to update the historic survey. Prepare neighborhood-specific historic context statements prior to updating the historic resources survey.

**Action CD 5.11 Preservation Incentives.** Explore the option to create incentives to preserve historic and cultural resources, such as reducing parking and other prescriptive requirements, allowing adaptive reuse, or establishing a transfer of development rights program.

**Action CD 5.12 Historic Resources Design Standards.** Create objective design standards for alterations to historic resources and contributors to a designated historic district, and new development adjacent to historic resources within historic districts. Use the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as the basis for these objective design standards to ensure projects have a contextual relationship with land uses and patterns; spatial organization; visual relationships; cultural and historic values; and the height, massing, design, and materials of historic resources.

**Action CD 5.13 Certified Local Government.** Explore the feasibility of becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG) to become eligible for federal grant funds and technical assistance in support of historic resource preservation efforts.



## CITY PLACEMAKING

San Mateo's image and unique identity is composed of distinct residential neighborhoods, major open spaces, key views and gateways, major corridors, distinct shopping areas, train stations, landscaping, and the spatial arrangement of buildings and architectural styles. Public art can be found throughout the city, from murals and mosaics to interactive sculptures to temporary installations. The city's vibrant Downtown, popular Hillsdale Shopping Center, and active dining scene also contribute to the city's image, create a sense of place for residents, and attract visitors from outside of the city.

### Sustainable Design

Since many goals and policies throughout the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040 promote San Mateo as a sustainable city, it is important to recognize that site layout and the design of buildings are major factors in meeting the objectives of sustainable design. Sustainability starts in the early design stages of a development, and the Land Use Element includes a number of policies and actions to ensure that features like walkability, transit access, and open space are integrated into new development. High-efficiency heating and cooling equipment and appliances can reduce water use, maximize energy efficiency, and improve indoor air quality, and are called for in the Public Services and Facilities Element. Drought-tolerant landscaping and the use of pervious paving materials can also reduce water waste and runoff into the bay, as noted in the Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation Element. This Community Design and Historic Resources Element focuses on locating and orienting structures on a site to take full advantage of solar access and shading, and to preserve natural resources, such as mature vegetation.

### Gateways

Gateways are the key locations where people enter and leave the city, distinct districts, and neighborhoods. They act as a point of distinction between different areas and contribute to a sense of arrival to one place from another. Gateways into and within San Mateo include El Camino Real as it crosses the north and south borders of the city, entrances from US Highway 101 and State Route 92, or Third Avenue at the edge of Downtown. As gateways convey a sense of arrival and provide initial and lasting impressions, they should be attractive and identifiable. Gateways can express a pleasant welcome through architectural features, landscaping, and art. Signage can also help define city gateways uniformly.

### Corridors

Corridors are the way residents and visitors most commonly see the city as they move through it. A well-designed corridor should connect to important destinations, provide a sense of orientation, be attractive, and project a positive image of the city. It should provide appropriate street width for neighborhood character, adequate lighting, accommodation for pedestrians and bicycles, and public spaces for gathering. Heights, setbacks of buildings, and the color and texture of paving materials should also be considered in corridor design.

Major corridors in the city include El Camino Real, US Highway 101, and the railroad. In addition to this element, the City's El Camino Real Master Plan also provides direction for enhancements to El Camino Real from State Route 92 to the Belmont border, which will further its role as an important community corridor that supports a vibrant mixed-use community.



## Public Art

Public art helps create an inviting atmosphere for gathering, fosters economic development, and contributes to vital public spaces. San Mateo’s Art In Public Places program recognizes that cultural and artistic resources enhance the quality of life for individuals living, working, and visiting the city. The program requires new commercial and multifamily residential projects valued over a certain amount to provide publicly visible art or pay an in-lieu art fee. Since its adoption, the program has resulted in new art installations throughout the city.

This section provides policy direction for developing and maintaining the city’s vibrant image. See the Land Use Element for guidance on different types and locations of future development; the Circulation Element for discussion of roadways, bike paths, sidewalks, and other transportation infrastructure; the Public Facilities and Services Element regarding utility undergrounding; and the Conservation, Open Space and Recreation Element on the importance of parks and open space as integral parts of the community.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL CD-6** Develop and maintain an attractive urban fabric that reflects San Mateo’s unique visual and architectural character.

## POLICIES

**Policy CD 6.1 Community Cohesion.** Design new private development, streets, and public spaces to enhance social connection by providing human-scale street-fronting uses and community spaces, as appropriate.

**Policy CD 6.2 Gateways.** Develop gateways that visually announce key entrances to San Mateo by maintaining or establishing distinctive architectural, art, or landscape features.



**Policy CD 6.3 Sustainable Design.** Encourage integration of sustainable design features and elements into the design of new buildings, including locating and orienting buildings to access solar exposure, preserving mature vegetation to the extent feasible, and using green building materials.

**Policy CD 6.4 El Camino Real (SR-82) Corridor.** Strive to make El Camino Real a destination, not just a corridor for people to pass through, by encouraging improvements to the public right-of-way and private properties along El Camino Real that will make the corridor safer and more attractive for all users. Examples of such improvements include redesigned transit stops, an improved pedestrian realm, and updated/improved building façades. Incorporate the Guiding Principles of the Grand Boulevard Initiative into future plans for the El Camino Real corridor in San Mateo.

**Policy CD 6.5 US Highway 101 Frontage.** Encourage upgrading of the appearance of US Highway 101 and properties adjacent to the freeway through design treatment, screening, and right-of-way landscaping.

**Policy CD 6.6 Signage.** Maintain signage controls that appropriately regulate the design, size, type, illumination, and quantity of signs visible from corridors and create consistent signage that reinforces San Mateo's unique identity.

**Policy CD 6.7 Public Open Space Design.** Seek opportunities to establish public open spaces in new developments and new public buildings, and promote innovative and creative designs to create exceptional, unique, and functional spaces. Require signage that clearly delineates these spaces as publicly accessible.

**Policy CD 6.8 Public Art.** Continue to require public art as part of new development and ensure the art is visible and accessible to the public. Support public art as a resource that enhances the quality of life for individuals living in, working in, and visiting the city, improves the quality of the urban environment, and increases property values.



**Policy CD 6.9 Inclusive Outreach.** Involve the community in the City's efforts to develop and maintain an attractive urban fabric that reflects San Mateo's unique visual and architectural character. Use outreach and engagement methods that include broad representation and are culturally sensitive, particularly for equity priority communities. Communicate clearly how and at what stages members of the public can provide input for development projects under review.

## ACTION

**Action CD 6.10 Brand Identity Package.** Develop a brand identity package for the City.



## ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

Site design and the architectural style of buildings contribute to the look and feel of a city. The orientation of buildings, the massing and scale of the building, and other design elements can improve the visual aesthetic of an area. Buildings can be oriented to take advantage of surroundings such as fronting sidewalks in commercial districts, capturing scenic views, and/or minimizing environmental impacts such as flooding, wind, shadows, etc. Massing refers to the height, width, and shape of a building. Scale is the relative size of the building overall as well as the elements that make up the façade. Building materials, lighting, landscaping, and outdoor spaces also contribute to the overall appearance and experience of a site. The design choices for buildings vary depending on the area. For example, the design elements for an active mixed-use downtown, auto-oriented shopping center, office park, or residential neighborhood will be different.

Outside of this General Plan, other City regulations and plans also influence the design and architecture of new development. The Zoning Code adds more detail on allowed uses of land and buildings, the density of development and population, the height and bulk of structures, parking provisions, open space requirements, landscaping standards, and other design requirements. The Multifamily and Mixed-Use Objective Design Standards (ODS) provide clear and specific requirements for everything larger than a single-family home. Specific Plans guide infill development in several areas, including Bay Meadows and near the Hayward Park and Hillsdale Caltrain stations, and tend to allow greater flexibility in design than in areas not covered by Specific Plans. Throughout the city, projects that require a higher level of review must submit a Planning Application to ensure consistency with the General Plan and any applicable community or specific plans.

Streetscaping and other public landscaping also shapes the look and feel of San Mateo. The City's Department of Public Works has detailed engineering standards that work in combination with the Municipal Code and adopted plans to establish objective design standards within the public right-of-way.

### Residential Neighborhoods

Each neighborhood in San Mateo is a reminder of the unique blend of architectural styles, building materials, scale, and street patterns that were typical at the time of its development. The shape of a house, its placement on the lot, its arrangement of doors and windows, its roof style, and its architectural style all make up the character of a building and contribute to the collective appearance of the neighborhood. In every community, residential neighborhoods grow and evolve while balancing the continuity and consistency of existing physical characteristics through the appropriate design of new development.



This section provides policy direction for the design of residential neighborhoods, and mixed-use and commercial areas. The Land Use Element includes goals and policies for shopping areas in transition and three focused planning areas in the city: Downtown, El Camino Real Corridor, and the Hillsdale Station Area. For additional policy direction on sustainability, see the Climate Change and Land Use section of the Land Use Element.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL CD-7** Balance the growth and evolution of residential neighborhoods with the need to maintain and enhance their existing characteristics and physical qualities through the appropriate design of new development.

### POLICIES

- Policy CD 7.1 Low-Density Residential Development.** Require new homes in the Low- and Very Low-Density residential designations, including single-family dwellings, duplexes, triplexes, four-plexes, and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to be consistent with objective design standards as outlined in the City’s Residential Design Standards.
- Policy CD 7.2 Single-Family Design.** Encourage single-family additions and new dwellings that address the preservation and enhancement of neighborhood visual and architectural character through context-sensitive building scale, materials, architectural style and details, and privacy.
- Policy CD 7.3 Multifamily Design.** Encourage architectural design of new multifamily developments that enhances a neighborhood’s visual and architectural character by providing context-sensitive building and pedestrian-scale elements, high-quality materials and construction, open space, and resident amenities.
- Policy CD 7.4 Multifamily Parking.** Require new multifamily developments to design and site parking to avoid blank, ground-floor walls and to screen views of parking from the street.
- Policy CD 7.5 Multifamily Open Space.** Require that a portion of required open space for new multifamily projects be useable for passive or active recreation.
- Policy CD 7.6 Nighttime Lighting.** Require nighttime lighting to be energy efficient and designed to minimize light pollution and light spillage on adjacent properties, while protecting public safety.

### ACTION

- Action CD 7.7 Objective Design Standards.** Implement the City’s objective design standards to ensure that new multifamily and mixed-use projects with a residential component meet required standards and streamline the development review process.

## Mixed-Use and Commercial Areas

This element aims to improve the visual and architectural character, livability, and vitality of mixed-use and commercial areas in San Mateo. It supports human-scale design that cultivates pedestrian activity in commercial and mixed-use areas by providing adequate sidewalk widths; activating ground-floor street façades with windows, plantings, and awnings; using high-quality construction materials; and including human-scale details and architectural features. New mixed-use and commercial development that respects the scale and rhythm of surrounding buildings, including by providing breaks in the building face at spacings common to buildings in the area and by stepping back upper floors, feels more appealing and welcoming to visitors. Sidewalk and pedestrian mall outdoor dining and parklets, the outdoor display of goods for retail uses, and public seating areas can add visual interest and activity to commercial and mixed-use areas.





## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL CD-8** Improve the visual and architectural character, livability, and vitality of mixed-use and commercial areas.

### POLICIES

- Policy CD 8.1 Objective Design Standards.** Provide clear, objective, and quantifiable design standards to guide new mixed-use and commercial development.
- Policy CD 8.2 Human-Scale Design.** Cultivate pedestrian activity in commercial and mixed-use areas by providing adequate sidewalk widths, activating ground-floor street façades with active uses, windows, plantings, and awnings, using high-quality construction materials, and including human-scale details and architectural features.
- Policy CD 8.3 Respect Existing Scale and Rhythm.** New mixed-use and commercial development should have context sensitive design that incorporates architectural styles and elements that relate to the scale and design of surrounding buildings, including by providing breaks in the building face at spacings common to buildings in the area and by stepping back upper floors.
- Policy CD 8.4 Commercial Parking.** Encourage commercial projects to provide required parking underground to minimize the amount of ground-floor area dedicated to parking. When parking is at-grade, it should be located towards the rear of a parcel, away from active street frontages and public spaces.
- Policy CD 8.5 Outdoor Display and Eating.** Support sidewalk and pedestrian mall outdoor dining and parklets, the outdoor display of goods for retail uses, and public seating areas to add visual interest and activity to commercial and mixed-use areas.

### ACTIONS

- Action CD 8.6 Objective Design Standards.** Develop and adopt objective design standards for new mixed-use and commercial development to provide a clear understanding of the City's expectation for new project design, including context appropriate architectural styles and pedestrian-friendly design.
- Action CD 8.7 Commercial Development Adjacent to Residential.** Develop and adopt objective design standards that define and require appropriate design transitions from commercial to residential zones.

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# CHAPTER 6

## Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation Element









# CONSERVATION, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The Conservation, Open Space and Recreation Element provides the policy framework for the development, management, and preservation of San Mateo's natural and recreational resources.

San Mateo is home to a variety of natural resources, open spaces, and parks and recreational facilities that are cherished by the San Mateo community. The city's air quality and open spaces, creeks, and wetlands provide habitats for plants and animals, natural infrastructure that supports resilience, and access to nature that offers social, physical, and mental health benefits. The City's system of parks and recreation programs and facilities promotes a healthy and active lifestyle and lifelong learning.

The Conservation, Open Space and Recreation Element combines the State-mandated elements for Open Space and Conservation given the interrelatedness of the two. It contains the following topics:

- Natural Resources
- Access to Nature and Preservation of Open Space
- Creeks and Riparian Areas
- Air Quality
- Parks and Recreation



## RELEVANCE TO GENERAL PLAN THEMES



### Sustainability in this Element:

- Protects the City's natural resources from development, including wetlands, riparian habitats, and other sensitive natural communities.
- Manages public access to the City's natural resources to balance connections to nature and disturbance to habitats.
- Affirms that all San Mateo residents should be able to breathe safe, clean air.
- Guides park and recreation management using environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable practices.



### Environmental Justice in this Element:

- Prioritizes preservation, restoration, rewilding, and enhancement of natural landscapes in or near equity priority communities.
- Establishes mitigation requirements for construction activities or new developments that could be a source of toxic air contaminants (TACs).
- Prioritizes rehabilitation of parks and recreation facilities in equity priority communities.



### Community Engagement in this Element:

- Fosters appreciation and awareness for natural conservation opportunities through enhanced programs and public outreach.
- Cultivates opportunities for community engagement through the City's park and recreation programs.
- Provides experiences for all community members, including children, youth, and aging adults to promote personal enrichment and lifelong learning.







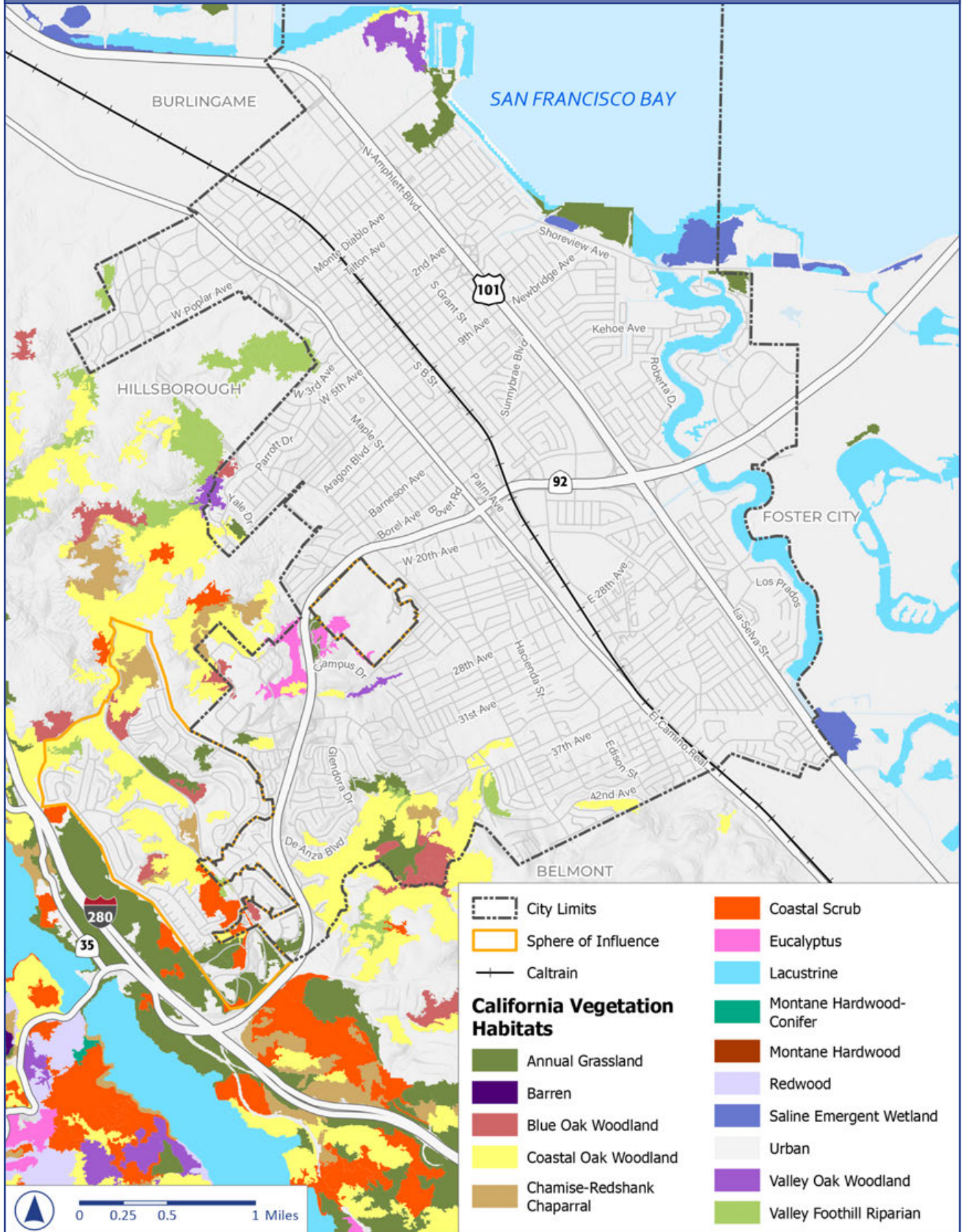
## NATURAL RESOURCES

Natural resources are abundant in and around San Mateo. These diverse open spaces comprise an integrated natural network supporting the city's livability and resiliency and are important recreational and scenic resources highly valued by the community. The City's natural environment is part of the broader San Francisco Bay Area ecosystem. The San Francisco Bay and Delta form the largest estuary on the Pacific Coast, encompassing approximately 1,600 square miles of waterways and is the outlet for over 40 percent of California's fresh water. The marshes and mudflats of the San Francisco Bay provide important feeding and roosting habitat for migrating waterfowl along the Pacific Flyway.

Natural features that define San Mateo's local setting include the city's three-mile length of shoreline and marshes along the San Francisco Bay, Coyote Point County Park, the Marina Lagoon, San Mateo Creek, and a number of smaller creeks, Sugarloaf Mountain, and hillsides to the west. These natural areas host biological communities that are home to many plant and animal habitats and serve as wildlife corridors. Riparian and wetland habitats in and around San Mateo are recognized and protected sensitive habitats under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Figure COS-1 shows the sensitive vegetation habitats within San Mateo.

This section provides policy direction for protecting and enhancing the City's natural resources. Goals and policies focused on preserving and enhancing San Mateo's natural setting, minimizing the impact of hillside development, and protecting and improving the city's urban tree canopy can be found in the Community Design and Historic Resources Element.

Figure COS-1 Vegetation Habitats



Source: USDA, 2013; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL COS-1** Protect and enhance the City’s natural resource areas that provide plant and animal habitat and benefit human and ecological health and resilience.

### POLICIES



**Policy COS 1.1 Sensitive Natural Communities.** Protect riparian habitat and other sensitive natural communities. When an opportunity arises, restore natural resources, including wetlands.



**Policy COS 1.2 Interjurisdictional Coordination.** Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions and regional, State, and federal agencies to protect critical wildlife habitat, including by participating in comprehensive habitat management programs.



**Policy COS 1.3 Site Evaluations.** Require independent professional evaluation of sites for any public or private development within known or potential habitat of species designated by State and federal agencies as rare, threatened, or endangered.

The site evaluation shall determine the presence/absence of these special-status plant and animal species on the site. The surveys associated with the evaluation shall be conducted for proper identification of the species. The evaluation shall consider the potential for significant impacts on special-status plant and animal species and shall include feasible mitigation measures to mitigate such impacts to the satisfaction of the City and appropriate governmental agencies (e.g., US Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife). The City shall require adequate mitigation measures for ensuring the protection of sensitive resources and achieving “no net loss” of sensitive habitat acreage, values, and functions.

In lieu of the site evaluation, presence of special-status plant and animal species may be assumed, and the City may require “no net loss” mitigation of sensitive habitat acreage be applied to the satisfaction of the City and appropriate governmental agencies.

**Policy COS 1.4 Avoidance of Nesting Birds.** Disturbance of active native bird nests shall be avoided when required by State and federal regulations. For new development sites where nesting native birds may be present, vegetation clearing and construction must be initiated outside the bird nesting season (March 1 through August 31) or preconstruction surveys be conducted by a qualified biologist in advance of any disturbance. If active nests are encountered, appropriate buffer zones shall be established based on recommendations by the qualified biologist and remain in place until any young birds have successfully left the nest.

**Policy COS 1.5 Surveys for Sensitive Natural Communities.** Require that sites with suitable natural habitat, including creek corridors through urbanized areas, be surveyed for the presence or absence of sensitive natural communities prior to development approval. Such surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist and occur prior to development-related vegetation removal or other habitat modifications.



**Policy COS 1.6 Surveys for Regulated Waters.** Require that sites with suitable natural habitat, including creek corridors through urbanized areas, be surveyed for the presence or absence of regulated waters prior to development approval. Such surveys shall be conducted by a qualified wetland specialist and occur prior to development-related vegetation removal or other habitat modifications.

**Policy COS 1.7 Surveys for Wildlife Movement Corridors.** Require that sites with suitable natural habitat, including creek corridors through urbanized areas, be surveyed for the presence or absence of important wildlife corridors prior to development approval. Such surveys should be conducted by a qualified biologist and occur prior to development-related vegetation removal or other habitat modifications.



**Policy COS 1.8 Development Near Wetlands or Water.** Avoid wetlands development where feasible (as defined under California Environmental Quality Act [CEQA] Guidelines, Section 15364). Restrict or modify proposed development in areas that contain wetlands or waters to ensure the continued health and survival of special-status species and sensitive habitat areas. Development projects shall be designed to avoid impacts on sensitive resources, or to adequately mitigate impacts by providing on-site or off-site replacement at a higher ratio. Project design modification should include adequate avoidance measures, such as the use of setbacks, buffers, and water quality, drainage-control features, or other measures to ensure that no net loss of wetland acreage, function, water quality protection, and habitat value occurs. This may include the use of setbacks, buffers, and water quality, drainage-control features, or other measures to maintain existing habitat and hydrologic functions of retained wetlands and waters of the US.



**Policy COS 1.9 Wetland Development Mitigation.** If an applicant has demonstrated that wetlands avoidance is not feasible, provide replacement habitat on-site through restoration and/or habitat creation to ensure no net loss of wetland acreage, function, water quality protection, and habitat value. Allow restoration of wetlands off-site only when an applicant has demonstrated that on-site restoration is not feasible. Off-site wetland mitigation should consist of the same habitat type as the wetland area that would be lost.

**Policy COS 1.10 Wetland Access Design.** Design public access to avoid or minimize disturbance to sensitive resources, including necessary setback/buffer areas, while facilitating public use, enjoyment, and appreciation of wetlands.

**Policy COS 1.11 Marina Lagoon Island.** Maintain Marina Lagoon Island as a bird nesting and breeding site.

**Policy COS 1.12 Reduced Risk of Bird Collision.** Require that taller structures be designed to minimize the potential risk of bird collisions using input from the latest bird-safe design guidelines and best management practice strategies to reduce bird strikes.

## ACTION

**Action COS 1.13 Environmental Review.** Review the environmental documents for projects adjacent to City boundaries regarding impacts and mitigation to species and habitat.

## ACCESS TO NATURE AND PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE

Spending time in nature is known to have positive social, physical, and mental health benefits. Ensuring that the City's natural resources, including open space areas, are accessible is critical for maintaining the quality of life in San Mateo for city residents and visitors. Preserving open space is also essential for maintaining the uniqueness of San Mateo and the ecological health of its environment.

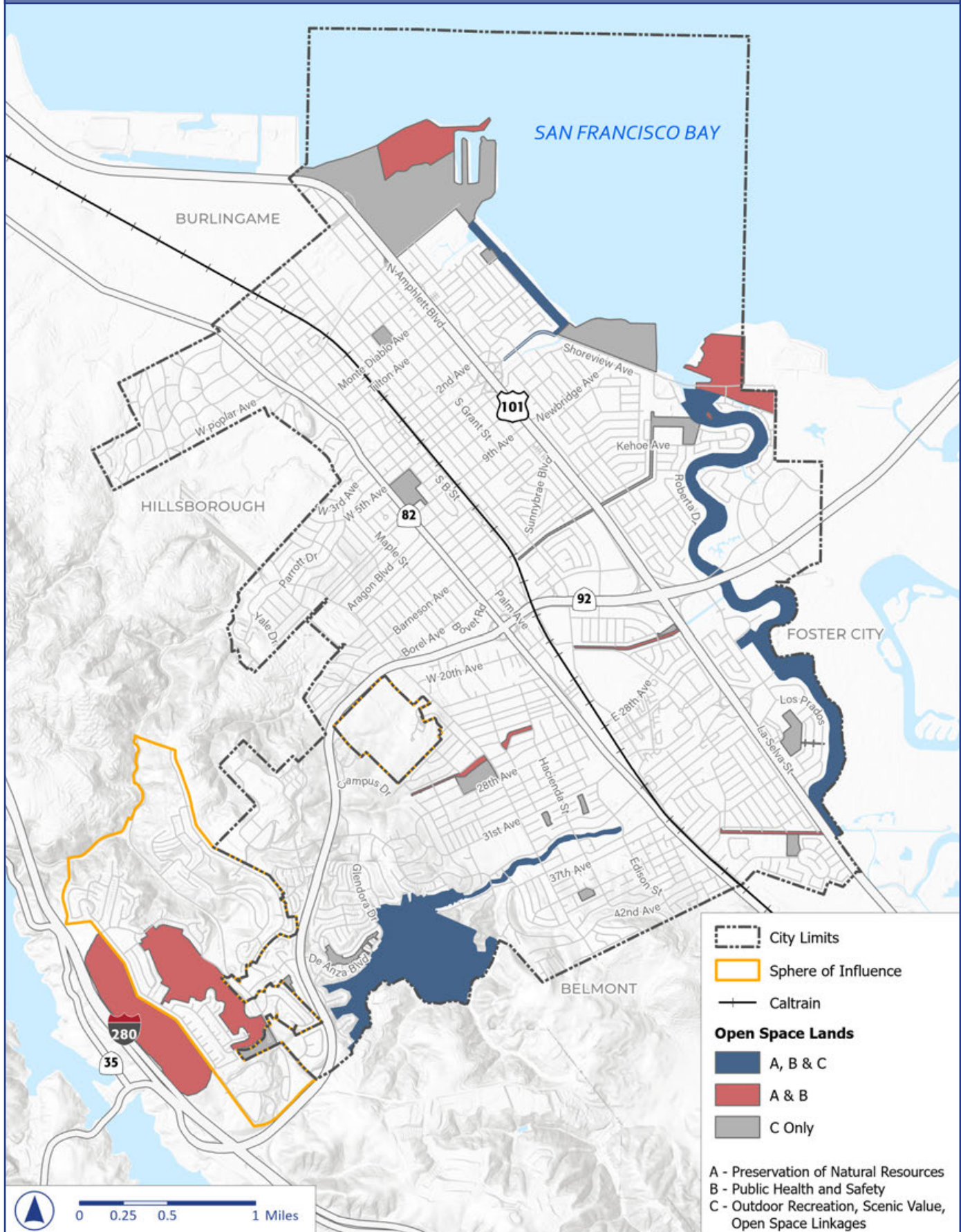
Figure COS-2 illustrates the type and nature of open space land in the City of San Mateo as defined by State law. "Open space land" is any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open-space use, as defined in this section, and that is designated on a local, regional, or State open-space plan as any of the following:



- **Open Space for Natural Resources.** This includes areas required for plant and animal habitat or for ecological and scientific study. In San Mateo, these open spaces include areas such as the Bay Marshes, creeks, private open spaces, and Sugarloaf Mountain.
- **Open Space for Outdoor Recreation.** This includes parks and areas of scenic and cultural value, stream banks, trails, and other links between open spaces. In San Mateo, these open spaces include Marina Lagoon, Seal Point, Sugarloaf Mountain, designated private land **reserves**, and a variety of park sites.
- **Open Space for Public Health and Safety.** This includes areas that require special management because of hazardous conditions, such as unstable soils, fire risk, fault zones, or flooding. In San Mateo, these open spaces include portions of the shoreline, Sugarloaf Mountain, and San Mateo Creek.
- **Open Space for Tribal Resources.** This includes protected tribal resources as described in Sections 5097.9 and 5097.993 of the Public Resources Code, which includes Native American historic, cultural, or sacred sites. San Mateo does not have any protected open space tribal resource areas, but it is possible that tribal resources may exist in open spaces.
- **Open Space for Managed Production of Resources.** This includes forest and agricultural lands, water bodies important to the management of commercial fisheries, and mineral deposits. San Mateo does not have any such areas.
- **Open Space for Military Support.** This includes areas in support of military installations, such as areas adjacent to military installations, military training routes, and underlying restricted airspace. San Mateo does not include any open space areas for military support.

This section provides policy direction for access to nature and the preservation of open space. Goals and policies focused on access to parks, recreation, and facilities can be found under Goals COS-5 and COS-6 of this element.

Figure COS-2 Open Space Lands



Source: ESRI, 2022; City of San Mateo Parks and Recreation, 2023; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.



## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL COS-2** Ensure that current and future generations will enjoy the environmental, social, health, and economic benefits derived from access to our urban forest, parks, and open spaces.

### POLICIES



**Policy COS 2.1 Preservation of Open Space.** Preserve, protect, and enhance open space areas in San Mateo that provide health benefits and access to nature for all residents.



**Policy COS 2.2 Sustainable Access.** Continue to design and manage public access to the City's natural resources, including open space areas, in a way that promotes public health and connection to nature while avoiding or minimizing disturbance and sustaining these resources into the future.



**Policy COS 2.3 Equitable Conservation.** Prioritize preservation, restoration, re-wilding, and enhancement of natural landscapes in or near underserved communities for their role in improving air quality and community health.



**Policy COS 2.4 Shoreline Interpretive Opportunities.** Promote public awareness of the value and care of the shoreline for habitat values, water quality, and safety through on-site interpretive programs or outdoor displays that are in character with the adjacent open spaces.

**Policy COS 2.5 Marina Lagoon and Shoreline Public Access.** New development having frontage on Marina Lagoon shall provide and retain public access to provide a connection to the Marina Lagoon.



**Policy COS 2.6 Sugarloaf Mountain Management.** Improve, maintain, and manage the natural qualities and habitat of Sugarloaf Mountain and Laurelwood Park, including management of public access, study, recreation, and wildland fire hazards.



**Policy COS 2.7 Sugarloaf Mountain Interpretive Opportunities.** Promote public awareness of the value and care of Sugarloaf Mountain through on-site interpretive programs or displays that are in character with the open space, consistent with the adopted management plan.

### ACTIONS

**Action COS 2.8 Improvements to Bayfront Nature Area.** Review plans for the remaining uncompleted portions of Shoreline Park, including the Bayfront Nature Area, Bay Marshes, and J. Hart Clinton Drive to ensure they reflect current environmental and programmatic needs.

**Action COS 2.9 Volunteer Program.** Focus volunteer resources on restoring native habitat around the city, especially in the creeks, where feasible.



## CREEKS AND RIPARIAN AREAS

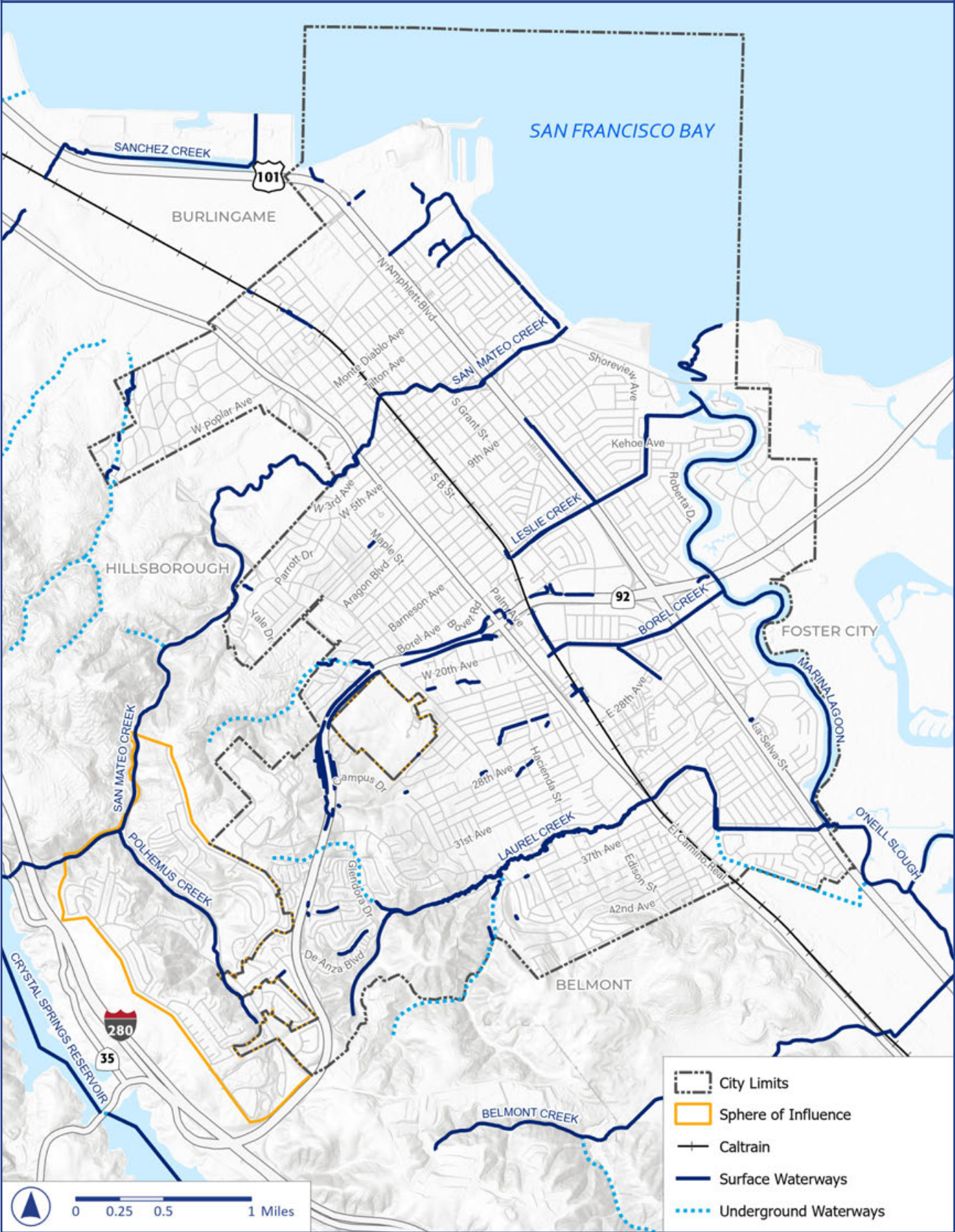
San Mateo has many waterways and riparian areas that offer immense biological benefits. They provide valuable natural habitats for wildlife and fauna, are a part of the city's hydrologic system, and serve as groundwater recharge areas and wildlife corridors. Some of the city's prominent waterways include the Marina Lagoon (formally Seal Slough), San Mateo Creek, Polhemus Creek, and Laurel Creek. Other waterways in the city include Leslie Creek, Borel Creek, and the Marina Lagoon. Figure COS-3 shows waterways in San Mateo, including underground waterways.

While the creeks and riparian areas serve important ecological functions, they are also susceptible to stormwater runoff and pollution. The City strives to protect and improve the system of creeks so wildlife habitats can continue to thrive, current and future generations can continue to enjoy them, and the city's hydrologic system is more resilient to flooding and sea level rise.

This section provides policy direction for protecting and enhancing creeks. Goals and policies focused on water supply, flood-control infrastructure, and creekside development requirements can be found in the Public Services and Facilities Element, and policies and actions to protect against flooding and sea level rise are in the Safety Element.



Figure COS-3 Waterways



Source: USGS and City of San Mateo Public Works; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.



## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL COS-3** Protect and improve San Mateo's creeks as valuable habitat and components of human and environmental health.

### POLICIES



**Policy COS 3.1 Aesthetic and Habitat Values – Public Creeks.** Preserve and enhance the aesthetic and habitat values of creeks, such as San Mateo, Laurel, and Beresford Creeks, and other City-owned channels in all activities affecting these creeks, including revegetation, rewilding, erosion control, and adequate setbacks for structures.



**Policy COS 3.2 Aesthetic and Habitat Values – Private Creeks.** Encourage preservation and enhance the aesthetic and habitat values of privately owned sections of all other creeks and channels.

**Policy COS 3.3 Groundwater Protection.** Support the County of San Mateo's efforts to protect the quality and quantity of groundwater resources in the city.



**Policy COS 3.4 Groundwater Infiltration.** Protect existing open spaces, natural habitat, floodplains, and wetland areas that allow for percolation and infiltration of stormwater runoff to slow and reduce the flow of runoff and improve water quality and identify areas to protect when considering new development.



**Policy COS 3.5 Preservation of Beneficial Uses.** Manage Marina Lagoon to balance and enhance its beneficial uses. Manage other water bodies to allow for limited nearby recreation, such as picnicking, hiking, boating, sightseeing, and interpretive study.



## AIR QUALITY

Clean and safe air is essential to the health of everyone in San Mateo. While San Mateo benefits from fresh air that blows in from the bay and the Pacific Ocean, air quality remains a concern due to the serious and lifelong health impacts of exposure to air pollution. “Mobile sources,” including cars and trucks along US Highway 101 and State Route 92, are a significant source of air pollution in San Mateo. While San Mateo and its neighbors do not include much heavy industry, smaller “stationary sources,” like gas stations and dry cleaners, also emit pollutants. Finally, natural sources, such as windblown dust and wildfire smoke from other parts of the state, can have drastic effects on air quality in San Mateo.

San Mateo neighborhoods do not have equal access to safe and clean air. For example, neighborhoods along US Highway 101, and around the US Highway 101 and State Route 92 interchange, are exposed to significantly more pollutants, including particulate matter (PM), carbon monoxide (CO), oxides of nitrogen (NOx), and benzene, than neighborhoods in the hills or along the bay. These pollutants, emitted by engines in cars, trucks, buses, and other heavy equipment, are particularly harmful because they are breathed deep into our lungs, and are known to increase cancer risk, asthma attacks, and chronic heart and lung disease. Improving air quality and health outcomes in equity priority communities is a theme throughout this General Plan.

This section provides policy direction on improving air quality throughout San Mateo. Some of the policies support mitigation measures focused on lessening air quality impacts, as identified in the General Plan 2040 Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Those policies that also serve as mitigation for air quality impacts are detailed, specific, and quantitative to meet the requirements of State environmental law.

Goals, policies, and actions focused on equity priority communities can be found throughout the General Plan. The Land Use Element also includes goals and policies on environmental justice under Goal LU-8.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL COS-4** All San Mateo residents should have the ability to breathe safe, clean air.

### POLICIES



**Policy COS 4.1 Air Quality Thresholds.** Use thresholds of significance that match or are more stringent than the air quality thresholds of significance identified in the current Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) Air Quality Guidelines when evaluating air quality impacts of projects.



**Policy COS 4.2 Health Risk Assessment.** Require new development not exempt from CEQA that includes sensitive receptors to prepare Health Risk Assessments. Identify appropriate mitigation, based on the findings of the Health Risk Assessment, to reduce health risks from major sources of toxic air pollution, such as high-volume roadways, stationary sources, permitted sources from BAAQMD, and warehousing.



**Policy COS 4.3 BAAQMD Planning for Healthy Places.** Require new development to adhere to BAAQMD's Planning for Healthy Places guidance when warranted by local conditions.



**Policy COS 4.4 Activity Near Sensitive Receptors.** Comply with State regulations that prohibit nonessential idling of vehicles near sensitive receptors, such as the requirements outlined in Title 13 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR).



**Policy COS 4.5 Odors.** When proposed development generating odors is proposed near residences or sensitive receptors, either adequate buffer distances shall be provided (based on recommendations and requirements of the California Air Resources Board [CARB] and BAAQMD), or filters or other equipment/solutions shall be provided to reduce the potential exposure to acceptable levels. Potential mitigation associated with this policy requirement will be coordinated with any required permit conditions from BAAQMD.

When new residential or other sensitive receptors are proposed near existing sources of odors, either adequate buffer distances shall be provided (based on recommendations and requirements of CARB and BAAQMD), or filters or other equipment/solutions shall be provided to reduce the potential exposure to acceptable levels.



**Policy COS 4.6 Toxic Air Contaminants.** Require that when new development that would be a source of toxic air contaminants (TACs) is proposed near residences or sensitive receptors, either adequate buffer distances shall be provided (based on recommendations and requirements of CARB and BAAQMD), or filters or other equipment/solutions shall be provided to reduce the potential exposure to acceptable levels.

When new residential or other sensitive receptors are proposed near existing sources of TACs, either adequate buffer distances shall be provided (based on recommendations and requirements of CARB and BAAQMD), or filters or other equipment/solutions shall be provided to the source to reduce the potential exposure to acceptable levels.



**Policy COS 4.7 Air Quality Construction Impacts.** Require new construction and grading activities to mitigate air quality impacts generated during construction activities in compliance with BAAQMD's regulations and guidelines on construction activity impacts.



**Policy COS 4.8 Truck Facilities.** Require new development, when applicable, to provide adequate truck parking loading space, and generators for refrigerated trucks to prevent idling during truck operation.



**Policy COS 4.9 Air Pollution Exposure.** For new development that is located within 1,000 feet from US Highway 101 and State Route 92, require installation of enhanced ventilation systems and other strategies to protect people from respiratory, heart, and other health effects associated with breathing polluted air in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

## ACTIONS



**Action COS 4.10 Air Quality Improvement.** Support and partner with Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) in monitoring, education, permitting, enforcement, grants programs, or other efforts to improve air quality issues and health outcomes for all.



**Action COS 4.11 Clean Air Refuges.** Develop and implement a plan to provide clean air refuges during times when outdoor air quality is unhealthy. Explore the feasibility of participating in State grant programs to fund retrofits of ventilation systems at public buildings to provide refuge for residents during periods of unhealthy air quality caused by excessive smoke from wildfires.

**Action COS 4.12 Outdoor Air Quality Mitigation.** Explore the feasibility of funding and installing pollutant screening solutions, such as walls and dense vegetation, to address outdoor air quality in residential areas located within 1,000 feet from US Highway 101 and State Route 92.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

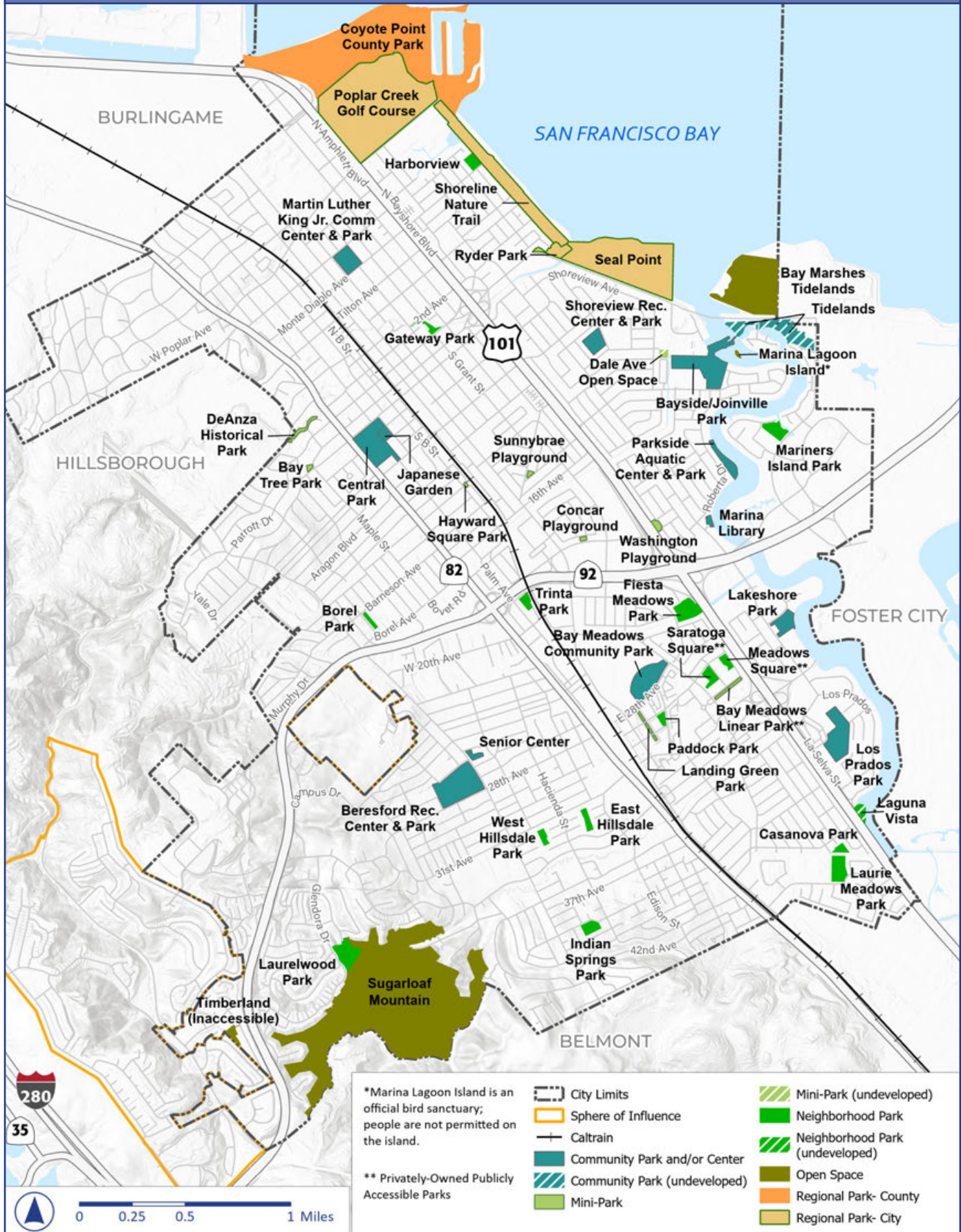
The City of San Mateo has a variety of parks and recreational facilities that provide community members with access to nature, encourage healthy lifestyles, and support a mixture of active and passive recreation opportunities. The City's park system includes more than a dozen neighborhood parks, nine community parks, six recreation/community centers, two pools, the Shoreline regional park system, several small "mini" parks, and an estuary lagoon for boating. Within the City Limits, the County of San Mateo owns and operates the 155-acre Coyote Point Recreation Area. Combined, the San Mateo community has access to approximately 795 acres of parks and open space, or 7.36 acres per every 1,000 residents. Figure COS-4 depicts the location of the parks and open spaces within San Mateo and Figure COS-5 shows a one-third-mile radius around each park and open space area. As shown in Figure COS-4, Marina Lagoon Island is a bird breeding and nesting site, which means people are not permitted on the island.

San Mateo offers many recreation facilities and programs for its members, guided by the Recreation Facilities Strategic Plan. The City's facilities include six recreation/community centers, two pools, and the 18-hole Poplar Creek Golf Course. People of all ages participate in the City's extensive menu of community activities, which includes youth and family aquatics, children's summer camps, adult fitness programs, teen programs, and interactive classes for older adults and seniors. Throughout the year, the City hosts special community events to foster community engagement and provide family friendly fun for San Mateo residents.

This section provides policy direction for parks, recreational programs, and facilities in San Mateo. Goals and policies focused on access to nature and the preservation of open space can be found under Goal COS-2 of this element. Goals and policies focused on public services and facilities that serve the needs of seniors and other City services are addressed in the Public Services and Facilities Element. Expectations for the integration of parks and open spaces into new development can be found in the Land Use Element.



Figure COS-4 Public Parks and Recreation Sites

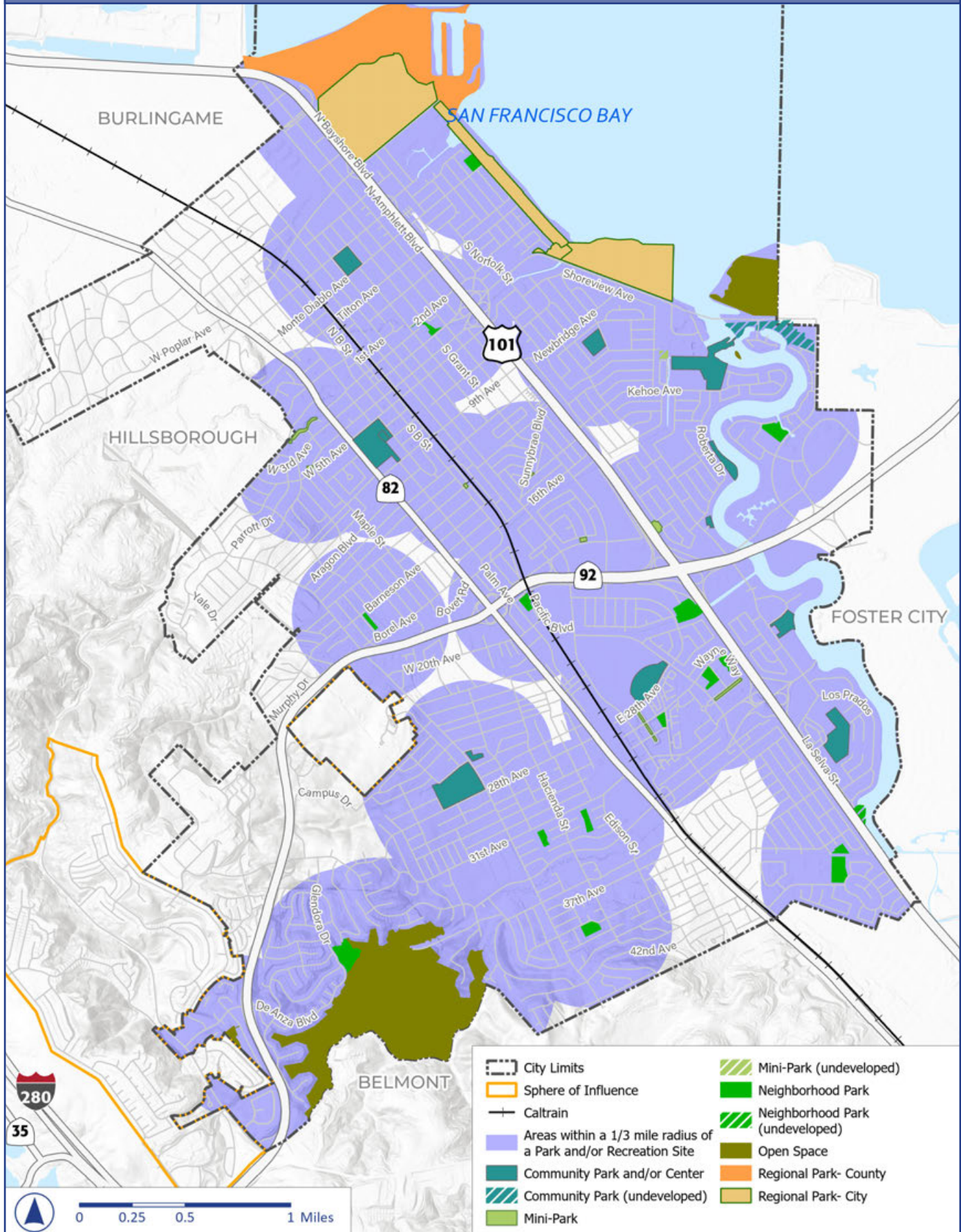


Source: ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.



Figure COS-5 Public Parks and Recreation Sites Service Radius



Source: ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.



## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL COS-5** Provide a comprehensive system of park and recreation programs and facilities based on the needs of the city's residents to encourage healthy lifestyles and ensure access for all.

### POLICIES

**Policy COS 5.1 Active and Healthy Lifestyles.** Maintain and expand programs that promote active and healthy lifestyles and incorporate health and wellness practices into everyday life, such as healthy eating and nutrition education programs, water safety and swim programs, walking and bicycling as a mode of healthy transportation, and youth fitness activities.



**Policy COS 5.2 Creating Community.** Cultivate opportunities to come together as a community, celebrate our heritage, cultures, and milestones through cultural and entertainment events and have social supports available, which are key to creating a sense of community and building community resilience.



**Policy COS 5.3 Creative Outlets.** Provide skill development, cultural, and performance opportunities within each of the major art forms with an emphasis on promoting lifelong enjoyment to nurture creative discovery.

**Policy COS 5.4 Enrichment and Lifelong Learning.** Provide a wide array of enriching and lifelong learning opportunities that provide mental stimulation, self-improvement, exploration, educational opportunities, and skills that can be applied at home or business.



**Policy COS 5.5 Parks as Learning Environments.** Enhance the role of parks as learning environments by providing interpretive opportunities to community organizations and at City-operated facilities to increase public awareness of their unique cultural, historical, and environmental characteristics.



**Policy COS 5.6 Child and Youth Development.** Provide preschool through teenage youth with a variety of experiences that nurture individuality, spark imagination, promote health, increase safety, encourage active recreation, and build the skills needed to ensure success in the next stage of development.



**Policy COS 5.7 Aging Adults.** Promote policies, programs, services, and public infrastructure improvements through either direct City provision or through collaborative partnerships with other agencies to ensure that older adults can age in place while feeling valued and supported.



**Policy COS 5.8 Community-Led Activity Initiatives.** Work with local community groups and San Mateo County Health to initiate walking, hiking, cycling, and other recreation clubs and activities to increase participation, safety, and social cohesion.



**Policy COS 5.9 Conservation and Nature Awareness.** Increase public awareness of the importance of and appreciation for conservation opportunities and the value of connecting children to nature with enhanced programs and public outreach.

**Policy COS 5.10 Community Gardens.** Support community gardens on sites with quasi-public uses and on publicly owned land, such as City parks or facilities, or as part of new private development, where feasible and appropriate.



**Policy COS 5.11 Central Park.** Promote Central Park's character as the City's signature park and community gathering place.

**GOAL COS-6** Provide equitable and convenient access to parks, recreational programs, and facilities so that all residents experience the physical and mental health benefits of parks and open space.

## POLICIES



**Policy COS 6.1 Accessible Facilities.** Continue to provide general park facilities that are free and open to the public, except for reservations of specific facilities by groups or individuals, or for facilities that traditionally charge fees (e.g., Golf Course, Marina Lagoon boat access). Address the lack of access to recreational facilities for neighborhoods east of El Camino Real, especially east of US Highway 101.

**Policy COS 6.2 Recreation Fee Assistance.** Continue to provide program fee assistance to qualifying families and older adults consistent with the Park and Recreation Commission-endorsed administrative policy for fee assistance.

**Policy COS 6.3 Privately Owned Public Spaces.** Require privately owned publicly accessible open space to be designed in a way that is welcoming for all, including public access signage and minimal physical or visual barriers, to ensure that the space is open and available to the community.

**Policy COS 6.4 Equitable Access Analysis.** When developing park master plans, include an equitable access analysis to identify deficiencies and potential solutions to address deficiencies found in the analysis.

## ACTIONS



**Action COS 6.5 Comprehensive Park Access Analysis.** Conduct a comprehensive park accessibility gap analysis to address equitable park access, with an emphasis on neighborhoods east of El Camino Real and east of US Highway 101.

**Action COS 6.6 Customer Service.** Adopt policies and practices that create satisfied customers and develop life-long relationships with our users.

**Action COS 6.7 Inclusion and Accessibility.** Create policies, programs, and facility designs that are age-integrated, inclusive, respectful, and supportive for all members of the community. Expand cultural awareness and appreciation through culturally relevant programs and special events.

**Action COS 6.8 Privately Owned Public Spaces Inventory.** Develop and maintain a list of all publicly accessible private open space in the city.



**Action COS 6.9 Resident Input.** Solicit a broad spectrum of resident input for major park improvements or park master plans. Conduct multilingual and culturally sensitive outreach to ensure all voices are included in park planning efforts and that San Mateo's parks reflect the diversity of the community.



**Action COS 6.10 Public Information.** Communicate through diverse channels and in multiple languages the benefits and value park and recreation services bring in making San Mateo a more livable, economically viable, and socially responsible community.

**Action COS 6.11 Technology Innovation.** Identify and incorporate technology innovations as an ongoing strategy to better serve the public, e.g., virtual trail maps, digitalized park signage, virtual programming.

**GOAL COS-7** Provide the appropriate mix of parks and facilities that balances the needs of active and passive facilities, allows formal and informal uses, is accessible for all residents, and meets existing and future recreation needs.

## POLICIES

**Policy COS 7.1 Facility Standards.** Use the Park and Recreation Facility Standards to assess the adequacy of existing facilities; to design, develop, and redevelop sites; and to acquire or accept new sites.

**Policy COS 7.2 Acreage Standards.** Acquire or accept for dedication two acres of neighborhood and community parks per 1,000 residents.

**Policy COS 7.3 Walkable Parks and Amenities.** Provide accessible public parks or other recreational opportunities that are within approximately one-third of a mile (a 15-minute walk) of residents without travel over significant barriers. Ideally, one or more of the following amenities should be available: multipurpose turf area, children's play area with preschool and youth apparatus, seating areas, picnic areas, a multiuse court, and an opportunity for passive enjoyment of an aesthetically landscaped space.

**Policy COS 7.4 Passive Recreation.** Support efforts to create a passive recreation system that connects parks and nodes in the city to increase connectivity on select public rights-of-way for pedestrians.



**Policy COS 7.5 Active-Use Facilities.** Provide sufficient active-use facilities to support current needs and future trends, including, but not limited to, multiuse athletic turf areas; court games; action sports, e.g., bicycling; and a system of pedestrian and bicycle trails that will provide interconnectivity between parks.

**Policy COS 7.6 Master Planning.** Continue to prepare and maintain master plans for all undeveloped parks and for those parks over two acres prior to development or major redevelopment. Allow interim uses if such uses will not adversely impact or limit potential permanent uses.

**Policy COS 7.7 Rehabilitation or Purchase of School Sites.** Consider contributions towards rehabilitation or the purchase of recreational facilities on surplus school sites based on an evaluation of their value as community recreation resources.

## ACTIONS

**Action COS 7.8 Regional Facilities.** Explore the feasibility of developing regional recreational and sports complexes with neighboring cities.

**Action COS 7.9 Bay Meadows Community Park.** Complete the master planning for Bay Meadows Community Park to reflect its value as a city-wide asset that can address one or more identified facility deficiencies.

**GOAL COS-8** Plan and develop well-designed parks and recreation facilities compatible with surrounding uses that promote accessibility, efficient use, and practical maintenance.

## POLICIES



**Policy COS 8.1 Rehabilitation Priorities.** Prioritize parks and recreation facilities projects that rehabilitate facilities that have become or will become costly to maintain, only marginally usable, meet the highest community needs, provide significant benefits in relation to costs, or are in equity priority communities.

**Policy COS 8.2 Park Preservation.** Preserve existing parklands, open spaces, and the golf course for open space, habitat, and recreational use.

**Policy COS 8.3 Shared Use.** Encourage schools to make their facilities available for City and community-sponsored activities to the greatest extent possible and encourage school agencies to adopt reasonable user fees and operating practices that allow improved community access.

**Policy COS 8.4 Optimum Cost-Effectiveness.** Proactively maintain and upgrade park infrastructure to optimize its cost-effectiveness and value in meeting community recreation needs.



**Policy COS 8.5 Sustainability Practices.** Operate park and recreation facilities using environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable management and operating practices that proactively reverse the impacts of climate change or better prepare for its effects.

**Policy COS 8.6 Maintenance Standards.** Maintain the park system by a set of maintenance standards that reflects community values; maintains, promotes, and optimizes positive use; reduces wildfire risk; and ensures that equipment and facilities are maintained in a safe condition.



**Policy COS 8.7 Environmentally Sound Park Operations.** Use native and drought-tolerant plant species, efficient irrigation systems, reclaimed water, and sustainable management practices. Expand efforts to improve recycling opportunities in all parks and implement trash-reduction measures, especially during large community events.

**Policy COS 8.8 San Mateo City Parks and Recreation Foundation.** Continue to support the San Mateo City Parks and Recreation Foundation efforts to expand non-City resource opportunities, such as funding and volunteers, in support of park development, improvements, and maintenance.

## ACTIONS

**Action COS 8.9 Recreation Facility Infrastructure.** Implement the highest-priority improvements identified from the Recreation Facilities Master Plan with special focus on improvements that address safety and accessibility, geographic equity, childcare, aquatics, and multigenerational programming.

**Action COS 8.10 Design Principles and Park Image.** Establish design principles for all new or renovated parks to maximize productivity, efficiency, and community value, including adding the potential for flexible use for emergency shelters and disaster response. Develop an image plan that includes the effective use of signage, color, lighting, and plant material that meets both aesthetic and maintenance needs.

**Action COS 8.11 Maximized Park Assets.** Review and update the Asset Management Plan to identify the highest and best use of undeveloped parcels or underutilized areas within existing parks to ensure they are best positioned to meet current and future needs.

**Action COS 8.12 Strategic Community Partnerships.** Develop and maintain positive partnership relations with schools, businesses, community groups, and civic organizations for park access, maintenance, and enhancement to maximize resources, eliminate duplication of effort, and reach common goals.



**Action COS 8.13 Neighborhood-Supported Projects.** Increase efforts to seek neighborhood support for enhancement and beautification projects as the City's fiscal resources become constrained. Prioritize enhancement and beautification efforts in equity priority communities.

**Action COS 8.14 School Facility Access.** Partner with local school districts to explore ways to expand public access to school facilities, including gymnasiums and swimming pools.



**GOAL COS-9** Provide stable and adequate operational and capital funding for the parks and recreation system.

## POLICIES

- Policy COS 9.1 Program Fees and Cost Recovery.** Maintain and periodically update program fees to recover costs.
- Policy COS 9.2 Maintenance and Operating Costs.** Consider long-term maintenance and operating costs in acquisition, development, and redevelopment decisions.
- Policy COS 9.3 Park Equipment and Maintenance.** Phase out the use of gas-powered equipment and increase the use of more environmentally friendly fertilization options in City parks and facilities over time.
- Policy COS 9.4 Parks and Facilities in Major Projects.** Factor park and facility maintenance and operating costs into park master plans or major facility upgrades.
- Policy COS 9.5 Development Fees.** Assess appropriate fees and taxes to ensure that new development contributes proportional funding to compensate for its impacts on recreation facilities and services.
- Policy COS 9.6 Cooperative Service Delivery.** Use opportunities for cooperative acquisition, development, operation, and programming with private organizations or other public agencies that will provide more effective or efficient service delivery.



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# CHAPTER 7

## Public Services and Facilities Element







CITY OF SAN MATEO  
City Hall



# PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

Public services and facilities contribute to San Mateo's high quality of life. The City of San Mateo is committed to ensuring our community is safe and has adequate and equitable infrastructure and services. The Public Services and Facilities Element is not one of the required elements for a General Plan. However, the City understands the importance of public services and facilities, and the goals, policies, and actions in this element work to maintain and enhance these services as our community changes. This element covers the following topics:

- Community safety
- Water supply
- Wastewater and flood-control infrastructure
- Energy and telecommunications infrastructure
- Public facilities
- Child care and schools
- Seniors and aging adults
- Healthcare and social services
- Solid waste

## RELEVANCE TO GENERAL PLAN THEMES



### Sustainability in this Element:

- Manages wastewater and stormwater to protect water quality in our waterways.
- Supports a resilient building stock that reduces or eliminates carbon emissions.
- Maintains the quality of public services as the city grows.
- Supports solid waste reduction and recycling.
- Supports plans for water management and conservation.



### Environmental Justice in this Element:

- Provides for the equitable distribution of public services and facilities throughout the city so that everyone, including vulnerable residents such as children, low-income households, and seniors, can thrive in San Mateo.
- Supports efforts to explore creative options such as reduced permit fees, reduced impact fees, and tax incentives to provide better healthcare services in equity priority communities.
- Commits to code enforcement that advances equity.



### Community Engagement in this Element:

- Continues to support public facilities, such as libraries, schools, and child care centers that engage with the community and help them discover, enjoy, connect, and learn in an ever-changing world.
- Ensures that the San Mateo community is informed about potential public services and facilities improvements in their neighborhood by applying outreach and engagement strategies that encourage broad representation and are culturally sensitive.





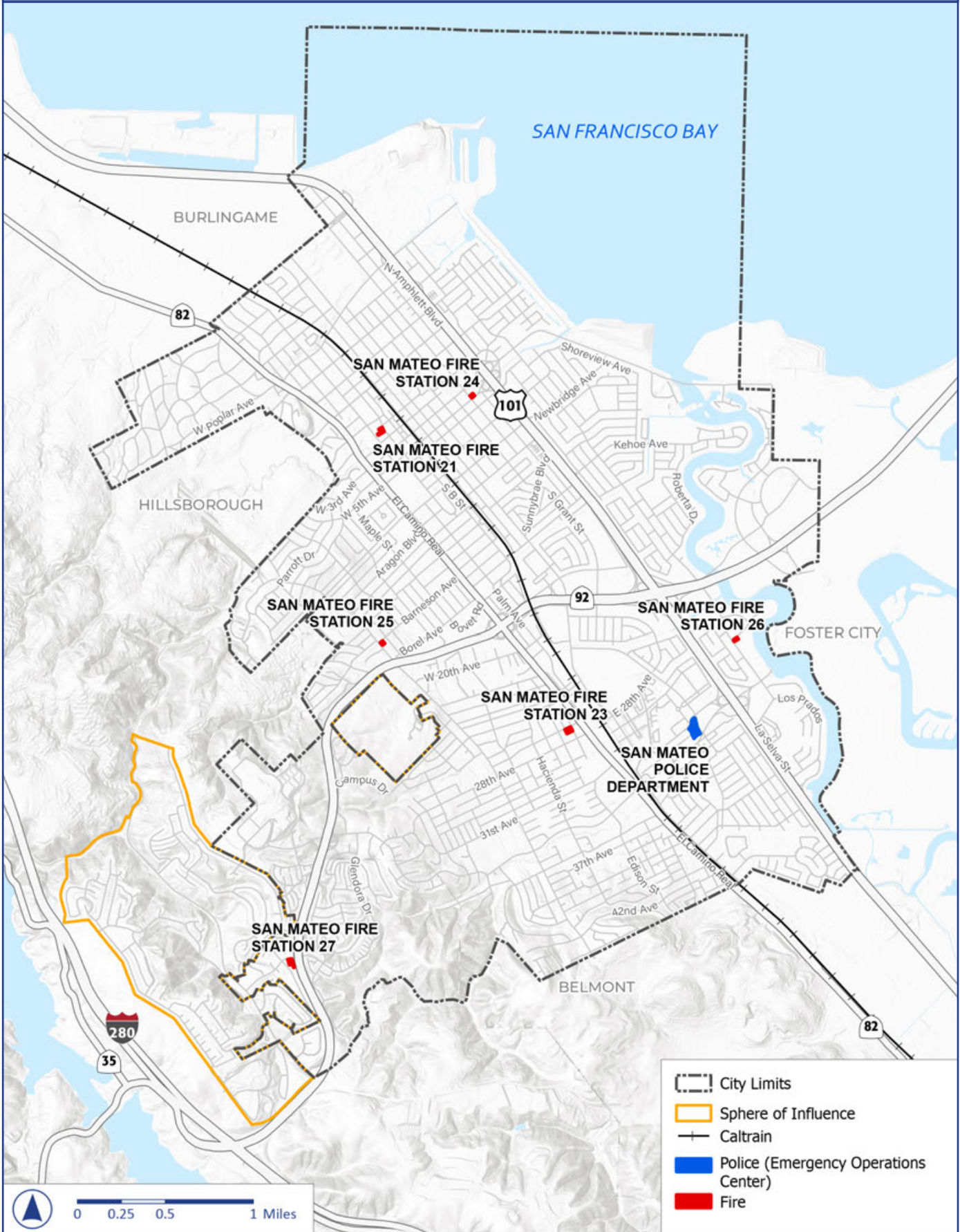
## COMMUNITY SAFETY

Community safety services, such as law enforcement, fire personnel, and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Readiness are vital to protecting the community's health, safety, and welfare. The San Mateo Police Department (SMPD) is a 24/7 comprehensive community policing department that provides many types of services, including responding to crime, enforcing traffic and parking regulations, and working with the city's youth on education and community-building programs. Fire services are provided by the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department (SMC Fire), a separate agency that serves San Mateo, Belmont, and Foster City. SMC Fire's goals are to meet the State fire protection requirements for all land uses. There are six fire stations in San Mateo, each of which has one fire engine staffed by one Fire Captain and two Firefighters/Engineers. Figure PSF-1 shows the police and fire stations in San Mateo.

The City works with the San Mateo County EMS to respond to medical emergency needs. The County's EMS system is a public/private partnership between a private consulting service that offers ambulance service and paramedic first response, fire service agencies in San Mateo County, and the County Health Services Department's EMS office.

While community safety services are invaluable to San Mateo, the City also recognizes and understands that code enforcement to address safety issues has the potential to both benefit and harm low-income households. The City believes and will work towards a future where code enforcement is used to advance equity, while still continuing to provide high-quality service to the community.

Figure PSF-1 Fire and Police Services



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.



## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL PSF-1** Protect the community's health, safety, and welfare by maintaining adequate police, fire, and life safety protection.

### POLICIES

**Policy PSF 1.1 Effective Police and Fire Services.** Maintain facilities, equipment, and personnel to provide an effective police force and fire protection to serve existing and future population and employment, as identified in the Land Use Element.

**Policy PSF 1.2 Police Station.** Provide police station facilities to meet the facility requirements through 2040. Distribute, locate, and design police support facilities (i.e., substations) as needed to maximize effectiveness, use, accessibility for police personnel, and community interaction.

**Policy PSF 1.3 Fire Stations.** Coordinate with and support San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department (SMC Fire) to maintain a high level of service by modernizing fire stations, as needed. Provide new stations and improvements to existing stations and training facilities to meet equipment, staffing, and training requirements, as well as Essential Services Building Requirements.

**Policy PSF 1.4 Fire Inspections.** Coordinate with and support SMC Fire to maintain fire inspection staffing levels to meet existing needs and the projected 2040 population, employment and development, and inspections mandated by other governmental agencies, consistent with the City's Building Security Code.

**Policy PSF 1.5 Maintenance and Replacement.** Coordinate with and support SMC Fire to provide fire apparatus replacement and maintenance programs to achieve a high state of readiness.

**Policy PSF 1.6 Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Readiness.** Maintain the highest level of Emergency Medical Service (EMS) readiness and response capabilities possible by encouraging interagency medical drills and exercises where hospital personnel work with emergency responders in the field and with Emergency Operation Centers and by encouraging citizens to become trained in basic medical triage and first aid through the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).



**Policy PSF 1.7 Equitable Code Enforcement.** Continue to use code enforcement to equitably enforce the City's property maintenance codes to ensure that all residents, specifically those living in equity priority communities, have safe and sanitary living conditions.

### ACTION

**Policy PSF 1.8 Police and Fire Cover Assessments.** Complete standard of cover assessments or staffing studies periodically for Police and Fire Services to ensure that appropriate response times, staffing and levels of service are available to meet community needs as the City's population grows.

## WATER SUPPLY

San Mateo receives water from two primary providers: the California Water Service (Cal Water) and Estero Municipal Improvement District (EMID). Cal Water’s Mid-Peninsula District, which includes the City of San Carlos, serves the majority of San Mateo, while EMID provides services to the bayside portions of San Mateo east of Seal Slough and Foster City.

Cal Water and EMID distribute and sell water directly to consumers; however, both agencies receive their water supply from the San Francisco Regional Water System (SF RWS) operated by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). Most of San Mateo’s current water supply comes from Hetch Hetchy reservoir and the Tuolumne River watershed in the Sierras, while the remaining supply comes from the Alameda Creek and San Mateo County watersheds. Figure PSF-2 identifies the watersheds in San Mateo.

Given that drought will be a persistent challenge in California and could affect future water supply, the City will continue to require water conservation and support alternatives to the current water supply to increase the resilience of this critical resource. In addition, the City will continue to explore strategies to increase the water supply such as the SF-Peninsula Regional PureWater project that would turn wastewater from San Mateo and other areas into drinking water.

This section focuses on policy direction for water supply and flood-control infrastructure. Policy direction for protecting and enhancing the city’s waterways can be found in the Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation Element, and policies and actions to protect the community from flooding and sea level rise are in the Safety Element.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL PSF-2** Support access to a safe, sustainable, and resilient supply of water for San Mateo.

### POLICIES



**Policy PSF 2.1 Supplemental Water Sources.** Support efforts by California Water Service, Estero Municipal Improvement District, and adjacent jurisdictions to develop supplemental and resilient water sources.

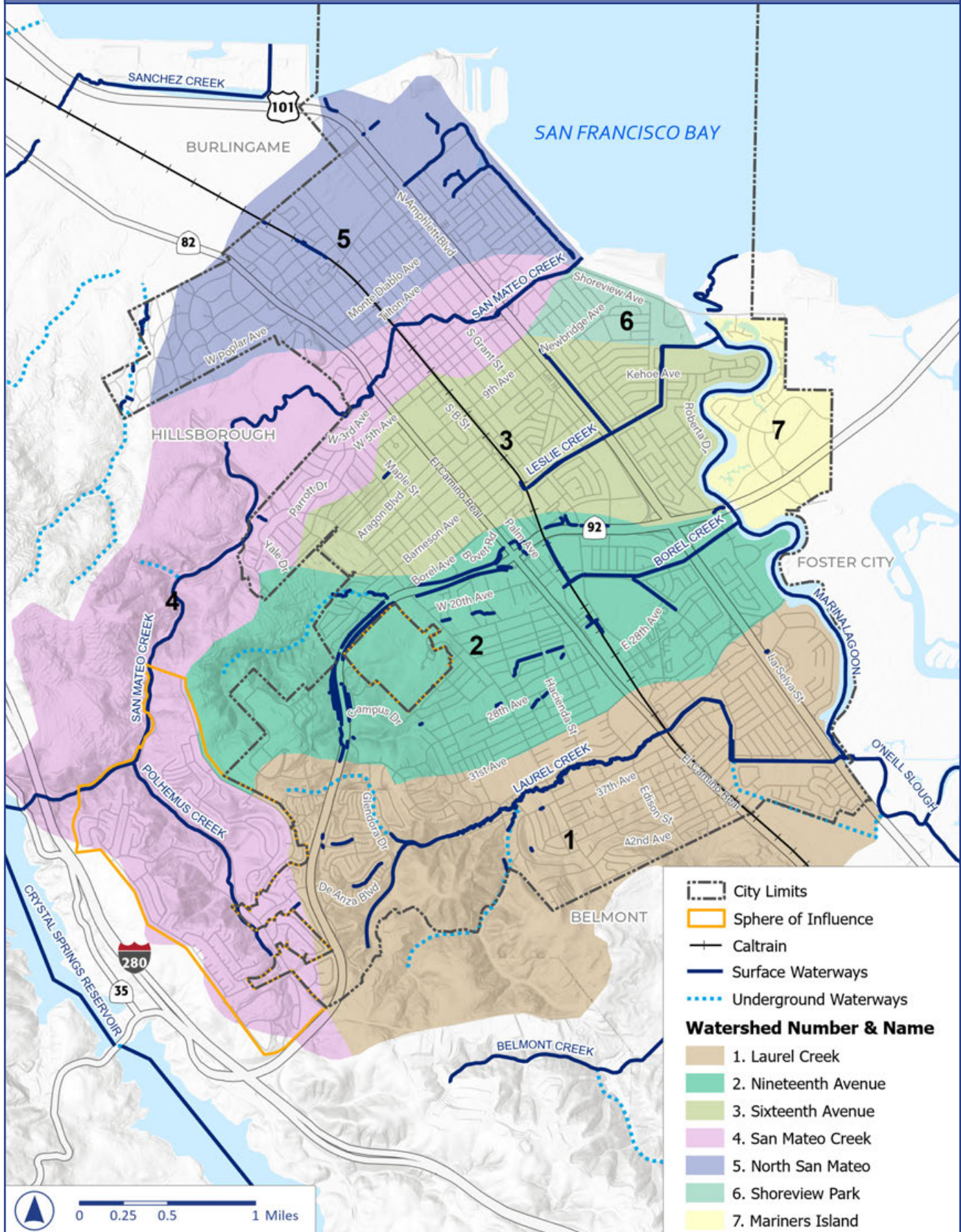


**Policy PSF 2.2 Water Supply Planning.** Coordinate with Cal Water and Estero Municipal Improvement District upon each update of their respective Urban Water Management Plans to ensure there is an adequate and sustainable water supply for current and future development.



**Policy PSF 2.3 Water Conservation.** Work with California Water Service, Estero Municipal Improvement District, Bay Area Water Supply Conservation Agency, and other mid-peninsula cities to support local, regional, and statewide water conservation efforts. Encourage all properties to convert to water-efficient landscaping.

Figure PSF-2 Watershed Areas



Source: City of San Mateo, 2022; USGS; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.



**Policy PSF 2.4 Water Supply for New Development.** Require applicants to provide will-serve letters from water purveyors prior to issuing building permits for new development to demonstrate that water supply is available.

**Policy PSF 2.5 Water-Conserving Fixture Retrofits.** Require that all residences and commercial properties that apply for a building permit for alternations or renovations provide proof of water-conserving plumbing fixtures.

**Policy PSF 2.6 Water Offset Requirements.** Require all new development or redevelopment projects to comply with the water conservation and offset policies and requirements imposed by California Water Service or Estero Municipal Improvement District, depending on the water service area in which the project is located.

**Policy PSF 2.7 Water Shortage Plans.** Coordinate with California Water Service and Estero Municipal Improvement District to conduct community outreach and take other steps to ensure compliance with their Water Shortage Contingency Plans during water shortages, such as a drought or supply interruption.



**Policy PSF 2.8 Water Efficiency.** Support increased water efficiency in all new development and existing building stock.

## ACTIONS

**Action PSF 2.9 Recycled Water.** Continue working with California Water Service, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, the Bay Area Water Supply & Conservation Agency, the City of Redwood City, and Silicon Valley Clean Water to develop an advanced water purification facility that treats wastewater from the San Mateo wastewater treatment plant to tertiary treatment standards.

**Action PSF 2.10 Water-Reduction Strategies.** Work with California Water Service, Estero Municipal Improvement District, Bay Area Water Supply Conservation Agency, and other mid-peninsula cities to promote water-reduction strategies and to create an outreach program that will help inform residents and businesses of increased costs, the need for conservation efforts, and available incentives and rebates.

**Action PSF 2.11 Water Usage.** Work with Cal Water to collect and track water use by land use type and make this information available to the community.



## WASTEWATER AND FLOOD-CONTROL INFRASTRUCTURE

### Wastewater

Wastewater is produced by using sinks, flushing the toilet, showering, and doing laundry. Commercial services, industrial facilities, and other sources also create wastewater as a part of their normal business operations.

The City of San Mateo maintains wastewater infrastructure through the Department of Public Works. The City's wastewater system treats wastewater to create a healthy and sanitary environment. The City's wastewater system is made up of over 200 miles of sanitary sewer lines, more than 5,000 manholes, and dozens of sewer lift stations. A majority of the wastewater system is over 60 years old, and the City is in the process of upgrading the aging infrastructure. The Sewer System Management Plan, Integrated Wastewater Master Plan, and Clean Water Program are some of the key documents that will guide San Mateo with this effort.

This system moves the wastewater from where it is generated to the San Mateo Wastewater Treatment Plant, where the wastewater gets treated and eventually discharged into the San Francisco Bay. The wastewater treatment plant is jointly owned by the City of San Mateo, City of Foster City, and EMID, and it serves more than 150,000 people and businesses at an average flow of 10 million gallons each day. Because of its location along the San Francisco Bay shore, upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant have been designed to anticipate and be resilient to impacts from rising sea levels.

## Flood-Control Infrastructure

The city encompasses seven major drainages, both artificial and natural, between the Santa Cruz Mountains and San Francisco Bay along the eastern side of the San Francisco Peninsula. Major watersheds include the North Shoreview District, San Mateo Creek, East Third Avenue, 16th Avenue Drain, 19th Avenue Drain, Laurel Creek, and Mariners Island. The City maintains the Laurel Creek Dam, has 130 miles of storm drain lines, and 10 pump stations that all discharge to San Francisco Bay. The city is also protected against high tides and wind-generated waves from San Francisco Bay through a three-mile bayfront levee system.



The Marina Lagoon is a 1,400-acre-foot water storage facility that was created from remnants of O’Neill Slough and Seal Slough and was dredged and leveed to provide flood protection and recreational opportunities. The lagoon captures water flowing from the 16th Avenue Drainage Channel, 19th Avenue Drainage Channel, and Laurel Creek. The three tributaries provide a source of freshwater runoff during the winter. The Marina Lagoon pump station is a critical flood-control infrastructure system. Circulation and water quality in the Marina Lagoon are enhanced by allowing bay water from Belmont Slough to flow into the lagoon at the O’Neil Tide Gate.

The 2004 San Mateo Storm Drain Master Plan provides an assessment of capital improvement projects needed for flood protection. San Mateo’s flood-control infrastructure will continue to play a key role in protecting the community from both sea level rise and extreme storm events as the climate changes.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL PSF-3** Maintain sewer, storm drainage, and flood-control facilities adequate to serve existing needs, projected population and employment growth, and that provide protection from climate change risk.

### POLICIES

**Policy PSF 3.1 Sewer System.** Provide a sewer system that safely and efficiently conveys sewage to the wastewater treatment plant. Implement the Sewer System Management Plan to ensure proper maintenance, operations, and management of all parts of the wastewater collection system.



**Policy PSF 3.2 Sewer Requirements for New Development.** Require new multifamily and commercial developments to evaluate the main sewer lines in the project vicinity, which will be used by the new development and make any improvements necessary to convey the additional sewage flows.

**Policy PSF 3.3 Sewer Overflow Reduction.** Eliminate sanitary sewer overflows, which create a public health hazard for residents and compromises the water quality of the city's creeks, Marina Lagoon, and San Francisco Bay.

**Policy PSF 3.4 Wastewater Treatment Plant.** Operate, upgrade, and maintain the Wastewater Treatment Plant to ensure ongoing wastewater treatment in compliance with regulatory requirements.

**Policy PSF 3.5 Interagency Coordination for Wastewater Planning.** Coordinate future planning of the sewer collection and wastewater treatment plant with the other users of the systems, including the Estero Municipal Improvement District (City of Foster City), the Crystal Springs County Sanitation District, Town of Hillsborough, and City of Belmont.

**Policy PSF 3.6 Stormwater System.** Operate, upgrade, and maintain a stormwater drainage and flood-control system that safely and efficiently conveys runoff to prevent flooding and protect life and property; minimizes pollutants discharging to creeks and San Francisco Bay; manages stormwater as a resource and not a waste; and protects against the impacts of climate change.



**Policy PSF 3.7 Water Quality Standards.** Manage City creeks, channels, and the Marina Lagoon to meet applicable State and federal water quality standards. Manage City creeks and channels for both flood protection and aquatic resources.

**Policy PSF 3.8 Stormwater Pollution Prevention.** In accordance with requirements in the Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit, implement programs, plans, and policies to ensure pollutants are minimized in stormwater runoff.



**Policy PSF 3.9 Green Infrastructure.** Minimize stormwater runoff and pollution by requiring new green infrastructure to treat and improve stormwater quality as part of public and private projects.



**Policy PSF 3.10 New Creekside Development Requirements.** Require that new creekside development protect and improve setbacks, banks, and waterways adjacent to the development projects to increase flood protection and enhance riparian vegetation and water quality. Prevent erosion of creek banks.



**Policy PSF 3.11 Hydrologic Impacts of Creek Alteration.** Ensure that improvements to creeks and other waterways do not cause adverse hydrologic impacts, adversely affect adjacent properties, or significantly increase the volume or velocity of flow of the subject creek.

**Policy PSF 3.12 Levee System.** Continue to assess, maintain, and upgrade the City's levee system. Collaborate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, OneShoreline, and neighboring agencies to ensure adequate flood control and sea level rise protection.

**Policy PSF 3.13 Marina Lagoon.** Continue to maintain the Marina Lagoon as flood control infrastructure that accounts for climate change risks and major flood events.

**Policy PSF 3.14 City Utility Programs Funding.** Maintain adequate, sustained, and dedicated revenue sources for City utility programs to support the sanitary sewer system, stormwater system, and refuse collection.

## ACTIONS

**Action PSF 3.15 City Infrastructure Studies and Master Plans.** Develop and coordinate studies and master plans to assess infrastructure and to develop a Capital Improvement Program for necessary improvements. Incorporate climate change risks, such as the impacts of droughts, increasing storm events, sea level rise, and groundwater changes in the planning process.

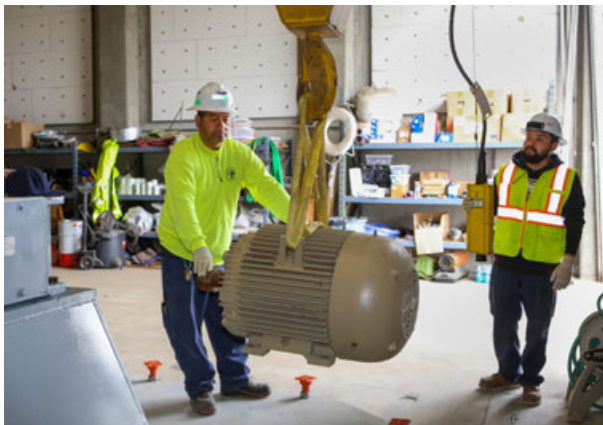
**Action PSF 3.16 Stormwater Treatment.** Continue to participate in the San Mateo Countywide Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program, “Flows to Bay,” to ensure compliance with the Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit to prevent water pollution from point and non-point sources.

**Action PSF 3.17 Stormwater Pollution Prevention Education.** Partner with other agencies and organizations, such as Flows to Bay, to help inform residents and businesses of ways to protect water quality and prevent stormwater pollution.

**Action PSF 3.18 Stormwater Requirements for Development.** In accordance with State regulatory mandates, require applicable new and redevelopment projects to incorporate site design, source control, treatment, and hydromodification management measures to minimize stormwater runoff volumes and associated pollutants.

**Action PSF 3.19 Green Infrastructure Plan.** Implement the City’s Green Infrastructure Plan through complete streets implementations or private development projects to gradually shift from a traditional stormwater conveyance system (“gray”) to a more natural system that incorporates plants and soils to mimic watershed processes, capture and clean stormwater, reduce runoff, increase infiltration, and create healthier environments (“green”).

**Action PSF 3.20 Stormwater Management Funding.** Establish a dedicated funding source for stormwater management.



# ENERGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

## Energy

In San Mateo, energy mostly comes from electricity and natural gas. Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE) provide electrical services. PCE purchases electricity that is produced from renewable energy sources and works with PG&E to distribute the electricity to consumers in San Mateo. PG&E is the sole provider and distributor of natural gas services.

Because electric utilities serving San Mateo offer clean electricity options, much of San Mateo's electricity already comes from carbon-free sources. Residents and businesses in PCE's service area, including San Mateo, are automatically enrolled in PCE's ECOplus service, which is distributed to customers through PG&E's existing grid infrastructure. Both PCE and PG&E are required by State law to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy to achieve a standard of at least 60 percent renewable electricity by 2030 and 100 percent electricity from carbon-free sources by the end of 2045. Increasing the amount of locally distributed energy resources from renewable sources, such as rooftop solar energy systems, will reduce the cost of electricity for residents and businesses and enhance the local economy. The City is also pursuing policies and building code changes that will require new and existing buildings to use all-electric energy sources and eliminate natural gas as an energy source. By expanding on-site electricity generation and storage, San Mateo will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and become more resilient to grid failures and power disruptions.

Additional policies and actions that connect energy use and climate change are in the Land Use Element.

## Telecommunications

Telecommunications services, which include wireless internet, cell phone and wireline telephone, cable television, and satellite television, are offered by multiple service providers in the City of San Mateo. Mobile telephone service and wireless internet service is offered by multiple companies, which gives San Mateo residents and businesses a variety of options when choosing a mobile telephone and/or internet service provider.

The backbone of wireless networks consists of long-haul fiberoptic cables that connect major internet hubs over long distances. In San Mateo County, long-haul fiberoptic cables run north to south throughout the county. These networks can be expanded using small cell facilities, which are single small antennae placed on existing utility poles or streetlights along with small pole-mounted radios and other accessory equipment. They help wireless service providers meet the growing demand for wireless services. In general, as of 2019, residential and commercial broadband service levels in San Mateo are consistent with San Francisco Bay Area averages, according to the California Broadband Mapping Program.

## Utility Undergrounding

Undergrounding electrical lines and telecommunications infrastructure helps improve safety and community aesthetics with the added benefits of a more reliable utility and increased property values.



Placing electrical lines underground reduces wildfire risks by eliminating the potential for live electrical wires to ignite fires. Utilities placed underground are also protected from wind and storm events that often disrupt service. Personal safety is also improved by removing the potential for live-wire contact injuries and reducing collision points for automobiles and people, especially those with vision or mobility disabilities, through the removal of utility poles. Although there are many benefits to utility undergrounding, the primary disadvantage is it is more costly to underground utilities compared to the traditional overhead configuration. The City will continue to require private developers to underground utility service connections for new development and underground existing overhead lines when justifiable. The City will also continue to work with PG&E and other utility providers to underground new and existing overhead infrastructure as opportunities arise and funding permits.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL PSF-4** Promote the development of a clean energy supply, energy-efficient technology, and telecommunications facilities that benefit all members of the community.

### POLICIES



**Policy PSF 4.1 Clean Energy.** Support the advancement of a carbon-neutral energy supply.



**Policy PSF 4.2 Energy Conservation.** Support efforts to reduce per-capita energy use.

**Policy PSF 4.3 Building Electrification.** Require electrification for new building stock and reduce fossil fuel usage for existing building stock at the time of building alteration.



**Policy PSF 4.4 Energy Resilience.** Require new development projects to incorporate energy-efficiency measures, electric equipment, solar energy systems, and battery storage into their projects (Building Integrated Photo-Voltaic/BIPV) and encourage existing development to incorporate solar energy systems and battery storage.



**Policy PSF 4.5 Grid Resilience.** Support PG&E's efforts to improve grid resilience and capacity to meet increased electrical demand.



**Policy PSF 4.6 Renewable Energy Neighborhood Microgrids.** Encourage the establishment of renewable energy neighborhood microgrids to support resilience, especially within equity priority communities.



**Policy PSF 4.7 Service Improvement and Expansion.** Seek to ensure adequate energy and communication systems to serve existing and future needs while minimizing impacts on existing and future residents by requiring new development to underground power lines and provide underground connections, when feasible, and prioritizing cellular coverage for all areas of the city while appropriately minimizing visual impacts of cellular facilities, antennas, and equipment shelters.

**Policy PSF 4.8 Access and Availability.** Work with service providers to support access to and availability of a wide range of state-of-the-art telecommunication systems and services for households, businesses, institutions, and public agencies in San Mateo.

**Policy PSF 4.9 Coordinate Infrastructure Improvements.** Combine, to the extent possible, upgrades and repairs to public infrastructure, such as roadways with utility needs, broadband upgrades, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and levees.

**Policy PSF 4.10 Private Utility Undergrounding.** Require new private development to underground service connections onto private property.

**Policy PSF 4.11 Public Wi-Fi.** Provide high-speed internet access to the public at all City facilities.

## ACTIONS

**Action PSF 4.12 Dig Once.** Establish a “dig once” policy, coordinating utility and roadway construction to avoid digging up the right-of-way multiple times, to reduce costs and impacts on the public right-of-way. The policy shall apply to infrastructure, utilities, and broadband whenever possible.

**Action PSF 4.13 Utility Network Undergrounding.** Underground existing electrical and communication transmission and distribution lines in the public right-of-way as funds permit.

**Action PSF 4.14 Utility Undergrounding Requirements.** Amend the San Mateo Municipal Code to require new private development to underground utilities and service connections on and adjacent to the site and to install and maintain signs, streetlights, and street landscaping adjacent to sidewalks.



**Action PSF 4.15 Renewable Energy.** Increase new annual installations of solar or renewable energy systems. Partner with Peninsula Clean Energy to study and implement a sustainable and resilient system that can be used as a pilot program for locally generated power not reliant on outside power sources.



**Action PSF 4.16 Solar Energy.** Promote local partnerships and rebate opportunities that make solar and battery storage simpler and more affordable while ensuring that the permit process is quick and inexpensive.

## PUBLIC FACILITIES

San Mateo’s public facilities provide a range of community services that support and enrich the lives of the city’s residents. The San Mateo Public Library operates three physical libraries that have services, programs, and resources for members of all ages, such as Project Read – an adult literacy program, activities for teens, and a Job Seekers Center. It also has an eLibrary that allows users to borrow digital copies of printed material. Other public facilities include City Hall, the Corporation Yard, and the Senior Center and the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center. The City is proud to provide these services and facilities for its residents, and it will continue to ensure that all San Mateo residents, particularly those in vulnerable communities such as youths, low-income households, and seniors have access to well-maintained facilities that serve their needs.



The San Mateo County Events Center is a public facility within the city, but it is owned and operated by the County. The Events Center covers 48 acres and includes a park, outdoor space, and 195,000 square feet of meeting space for trade events, corporate meetings, sporting events, festivals, etc.

For background information and policies about the City's park and recreation facilities and programs, please refer to the Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation Element.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL PSF-5** Maintain and develop public facilities, and ensure they are equitably available to all current and future members of the community.

### POLICIES



**Policy PSF 5.1 Equitable Facilities.** Ensure that all San Mateo residents and employees have access to well-maintained facilities that meet community service needs. Encourage the development of facilities and services for vulnerable communities, such as children, low-income households, and seniors, in a variety of settings.

**Policy PSF 5.2 Joint Use.** Encourage joint use and public-private partnerships where feasible.

**Policy PSF 5.3 City Hall.** Consider upgrading or expanding City Hall to ensure sufficient space is available and consider establishment of a Downtown facility or civic campus to support City staffing and service needs through the year 2040 and beyond.



**Policy PSF 5.4 Library Resources and Services.** Continue to maintain a comprehensive collection of resources and services to help the community discover, enjoy, connect, and learn in an ever-changing world. Continue to offer quality library services and programs to a diverse community promoting literacy and lifelong learning. Maintain a materials budget, staffing, and service hours for the City's library system that are adequate to meet the community needs and meet the continuing changes in information technology.



**Policy PSF 5.5 Library Facilities.** Maintain capital investment for essential repairs and space-enhancements to meet current and future needs of library patrons and community organizations.

**Policy PSF 5.6 Cultural and Entertainment Facilities.** Encourage the establishment of cultural and entertainment facilities in the Downtown core and allow these types of uses to fulfill retail frontage requirements.

**Policy PSF 5.7 Incentives for Public Facilities.** Provide incentives to developers for projects that include needed space for public facilities in new development.



**Policy PSF 5.8 Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center.** Improve and maintain the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center as an important neighborhood-serving community and recreational facility in the North Central Equity Priority Community.

**Policy PSF 5.9 San Mateo Senior Center.** Maintain and, as feasible, improve the Senior Center as an important facility that serves as an age friendly community space and provides programming, activities, and services for older adults.

**Policy PSF 5.10 Corporation Yard.** Maintain corporation yard facilities with functions such as vehicle repair facilities, equipment and material storage, and administrative office space to support City operational needs.

**Policy PSF 5.11 San Mateo County Events Center.** Promote the physical and aesthetic improvement of the San Mateo County Events Center.

**Policy PSF 5.12 City Property Acquisition.** Seek opportunities to purchase or acquire property to meet current or future needs for the expansion of specific City services and facilities or if there is a demonstrated public need.



**Policy PSF 5.13 Inclusive Outreach.** Notify the community of potential public services and facilities improvements in their neighborhood. Use outreach and engagement methods that encourage broad representation and are culturally sensitive, particularly for equity priority communities.



**Policy PSF 5.14 Public Facilities Funding.** Maintain adequate, sustained, and dedicated revenue sources to support maintenance and investment of the City's public facilities.

## ACTIONS

**Action PSF 5.15 Progress Tracking.** Develop and maintain communication tools, such as a dashboard or heat map, to communicate information and updates related to capital improvements and other facility and infrastructure projects to promote community awareness.

**Action PSF 5.16 Restroom Facilities.** Explore the feasibility of installing additional restrooms at City parks and public facilities.

## CHILD CARE AND SCHOOLS

Although the City doesn't have direct control over educational institutions, it can support local schools through efforts like coordinating on construction and improvements, calming traffic along student travel routes, and communicating about major projects and planned growth to help all parties adequately prepare for the future.

Within the City Limits, there are four public school districts with 19 public elementary, middle, and high schools; the College of San Mateo; and multiple K-12 private schools. A majority of the public school students in San Mateo attend elementary and middle schools through the San Mateo-Foster City School District, and high school through the San Mateo Union High School District, as shown in Figures PSF-3 and PSF-4. Public school students in southern portions of the city adjacent to Belmont are within the Belmont-Redwood Shores Elementary School District and the Sequoia Union High School District. All four public school districts are highly ranked for their quality of education when compared to districts across the San Francisco Bay Area.

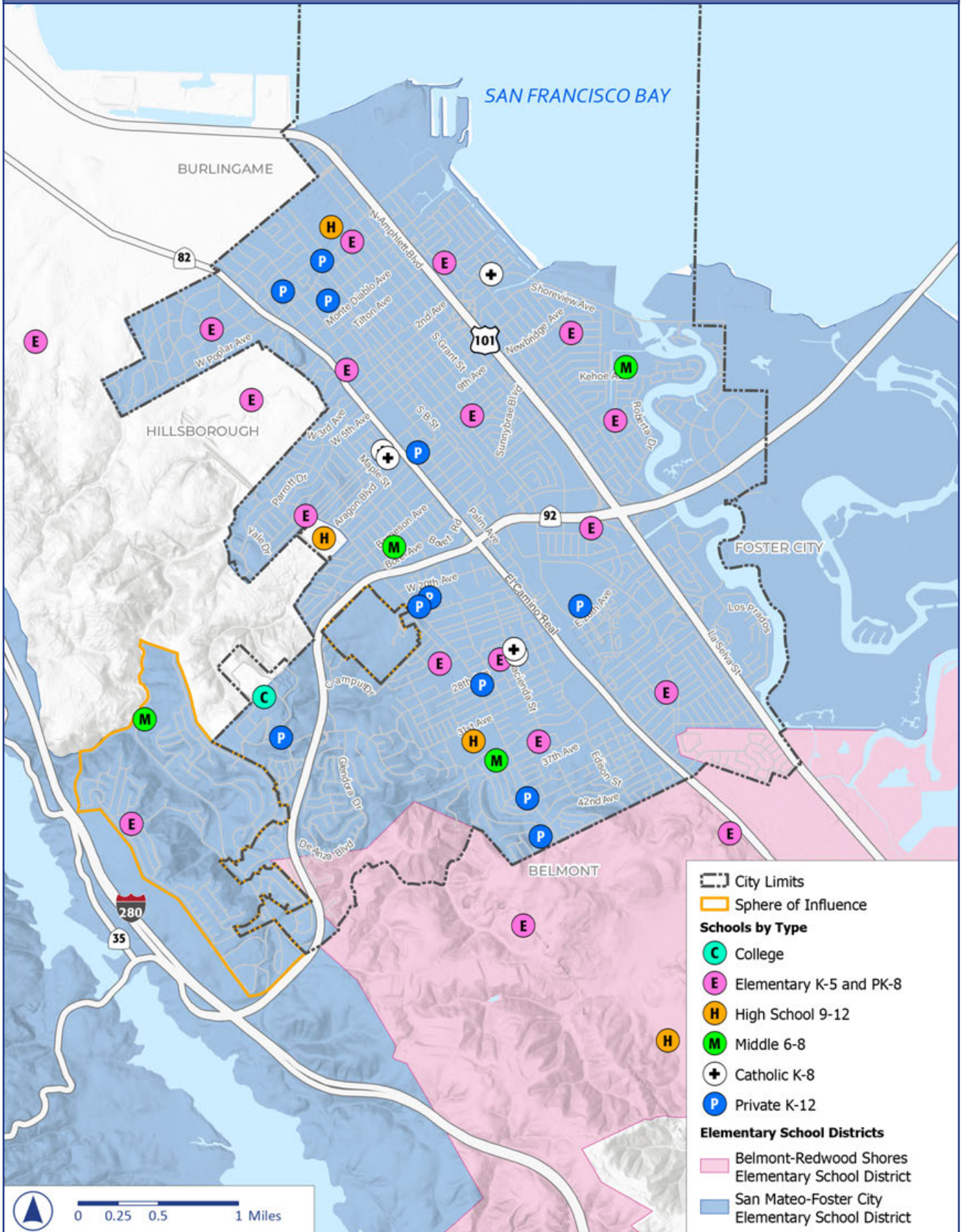
The San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD) operates the College of San Mateo, a community college that offers associate degrees and certificate programs. These include the Associate in Arts Degree for Transfer (AA-T) and Associate in Science Degree for Transfer (AS-T), which offer guaranteed admission to the California State University system.

Child care facilities are important components of the city's infrastructure. However, working families have historically struggled to find child care services in San Mateo. Affordable and high-quality child care services that are equitably distributed throughout the city allow parents, grandparents, and guardians to work and contribute to the local economy. The City is committed to increasing child care facilities within its City Limits. In 2004, the City adopted a Child Care Development Fee for new residential and commercial development to fund child care facilities. Recognizing the ongoing need to address this challenge, the City will continue to collaborate with child care providers, employers, young families, and other stakeholders and support policies to provide more child care facilities in San Mateo.





Figure PSF-3 School Sites and Elementary School Districts

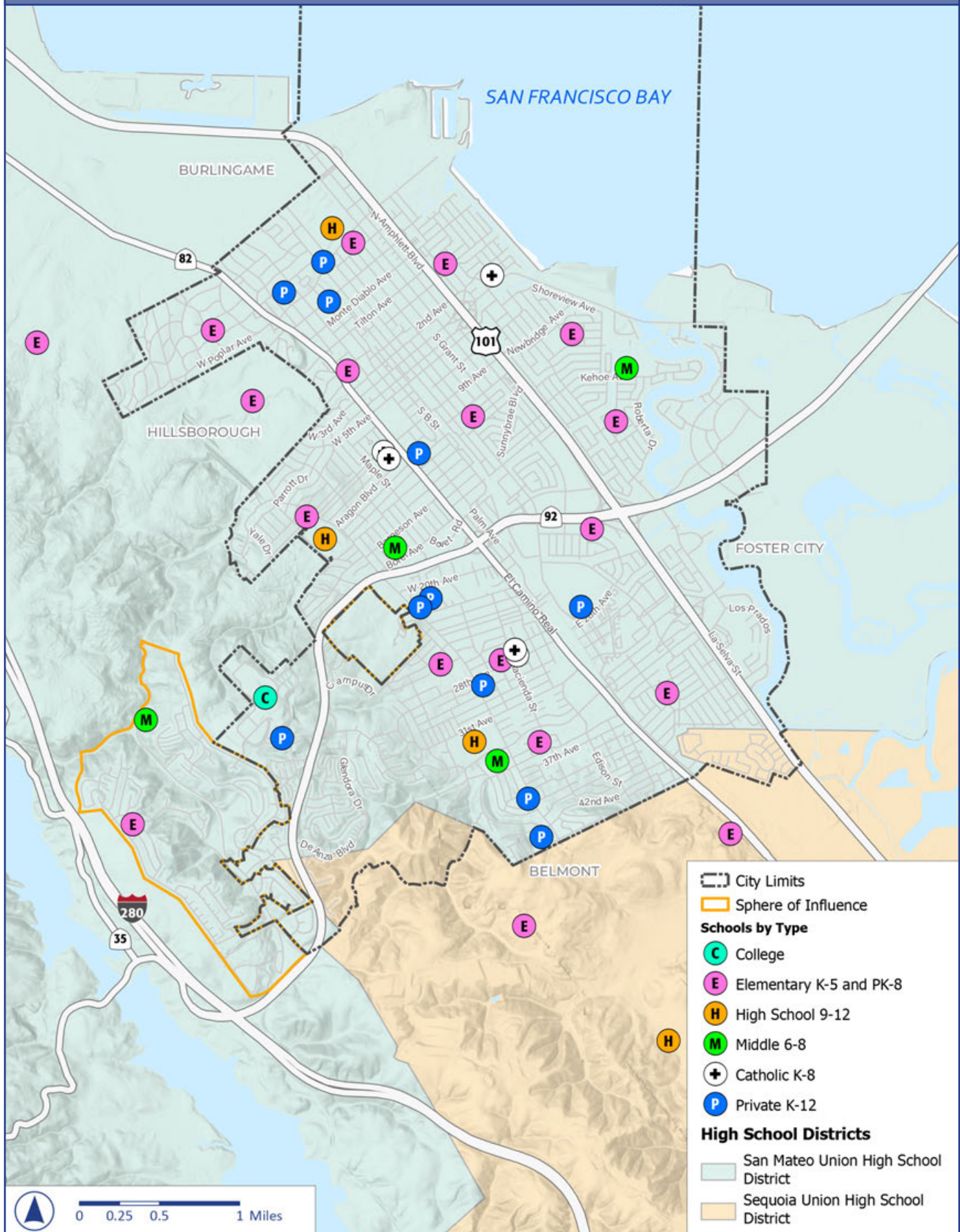


Source: City of San Mateo, 2022; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.



Figure PSF-4 School Sites and High School Districts



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.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL PSF-6** Foster the healthy development and education of children of all abilities, incomes, and backgrounds.

### POLICIES

- Policy PSF 6.1 School Assistance.** Support efforts by the school district to maintain facilities, equipment, and personnel to provide quality public education to students in San Mateo.
- Policy PSF 6.2 Child Care Needs.** Support the provision of child-care programs and facilities to meet the needs of children of all abilities, incomes, and backgrounds through 2040.
- Policy PSF 6.3 Provision of Child Care.** Encourage public and private agencies and employers to provide child-care services and facilities.
- Policy PSF 6.4 Child Care Centers at Public and Quasi-Public Facilities.** Encourage retention of existing child care centers and support programs at public and private school sites and other quasi-institutional facilities because of their suitability for such uses and proximity to adjacent residential neighborhoods.
- Policy PSF 6.5 Child Care Centers in Residential and Employment Areas.** Encourage child care centers in residential neighborhoods where they meet City standards and at employment centers.
- Policy PSF 6.6 Recreation Centers.** Consider offering full-day, licensed child care at City recreation centers to meet working families' needs or offering space for other operators to do so.
- Policy PSF 6.7 Child Care Homes Resources.** As feasible, support existing and new licensed family child care homes with available housing-related and small business resources.

### ACTIONS

- Action PSF 6.8 School District Coordination.** Maintain effective, collaborative relationships with all local school districts.
- Action PSF 6.9 Child Care and New Construction.** Encourage new residential and nonresidential development to include space for child care by taking the following actions:
- Provide incentives for inclusion of space for a child care center, or housing units for licensed family child care providers, in a new development.
  - Promote child care to developers as an amenity favored by the City.
  - Continue to implement the developer impact fee for funding child care facilities.
  - Encourage housing developers to include units that meet size and functionality requirements to support the operation of licensed family child care home providers.

## SENIORS AND AGING ADULTS

The 65 and older population is San Mateo's fastest growing age group, and they benefit from dedicated programming and policies to ensure that seniors can age in San Mateo with dignity, independence, and connection to the wider community. San Mateo has a history of planning for older adults that began in 1986 with the establishment of the San Mateo Senior Citizen Master Plan Task Force and the first Senior Citizen Master Plan, which conducted an exhaustive study of the needs of older adults and prepared recommendations, two of which were the creation of the Senior Citizens Commission and the construction of the Senior Center.



Led by the Parks and Recreation Department, the Senior Citizens Commission, and the Age-Friendly Task Force, San Mateo is committed to working towards a more accessible and inclusive community for all ages. In 2020, San Mateo joined the AARP's Network of Age Friendly Communities, and in 2022 the City and community members completed the Age Friendly Action Plan, which provides a guide for assessing and improving major aspects of public life including the physical environment, government programs, activities, and social norms.

This General Plan also addresses aging adults in the Conservation, Open Space, and Recreation Element, through policies and actions focused on providing inclusive and accessible recreational programs and activities that are age-integrated, as well as in the Circulation Element with a policy that supports safe routes for seniors which are strategies and projects that make it safer for seniors walk around the city.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL PSF-7** Deliver public services and facilities that serve the needs of seniors, are age friendly, and allow San Mateo residents to age in place.

### POLICIES

**Policy PSF 7.1 Universal Design.** Encourage Universal Design, a design concept that encourages accessibility for people of all ages, in new residential construction and major remodels.

**Policy PSF 7.2 Healthy Aging.** Support institutions and initiatives that promote healthy aging, both at home and in care centers.



**Policy PSF 7.3 Outreach to Seniors.** Provide regular and timely communication to seniors and aging adults about the services, programs, and other opportunities available to these groups of people. Use age-appropriate outreach channels to disseminate information.



## ACTIONS

- Action PSF 7.4 Age Friendly City.** Support the City’s commitment to becoming an Age-Friendly City by continuing to implement the Age Friendly Action Plan.
- Action PSF 7.5 Comprehensive Senior Services.** Study the effectiveness of existing senior services and explore ways to increase and strengthen these services in coordination with senior service providers. Comprehensive services include addressing senior nutrition, mental health, and transportation.
- Action PSF 7.6 Senior Volunteers.** Continue the volunteer program by recruiting/encouraging participation of seniors with certain skills and experience.
- Action PSF 7.7 Caregiver Support.** Collaborate with private, nonprofit, faith-based and public community service organizations, including the County of San Mateo, to offer support for caregivers of seniors and people with disabilities.

## HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES

### Healthcare

Healthcare facilities in San Mateo, such as hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies, and social services in neighborhoods help to create a healthier city where residents can take care of their physical and mental health and social welfare. In San Mateo, two of the biggest healthcare providers are the San Mateo County Hospital, a public hospital operated by the San Mateo County Health Department, and Mills Health Center, a healthcare facility that is part of Sutter Health’s Mills-Peninsula Medical Center. These facilities provide community members access to a diverse range of care, including primary care, emergency services, dental care, cancer services, behavior health care, mental illness, gynecology and women’s health, and more.

### Social Services

The City of San Mateo does not directly provide social services but does have partnerships with and provide finance assistance to agencies and community-based organizations to provide social services to residents who need support.

The San Mateo County Department of Human Services has offices across the San Francisco Peninsula where community members can receive assistance to participate in State and federal social welfare programs. Community Health Advocates, a statewide nonprofit, collaborates with the City of San Mateo to provide insurance counseling and advocacy for Medicare



recipients. Social Vocational Services (SVS), another California-wide nonprofit, has a local office in the city where community members with development/intellectual differences can participate in unique programs that are tailored to their needs. Locally based nonprofit organizations, such as Peninsula Family Services and Samaritan House San Mateo, support children, families, older adults, and community members in need with a variety of social services programs that not only enrich the individuals but also contribute to a better community.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL PSF-8** Support access for all residents to healthcare facilities, social services, and other important community health amenities.

### POLICIES

- Policy PSF 8.1 San Mateo County Hospital.** Encourage the County to maintain County Hospital services in the city to provide access to medical care for all residents.
- Policy PSF 8.2 Mills Health Center.** Support the Mills Health Center remaining in San Mateo and encourage the continued provision and expansion of high-quality medical care services.
- Policy PSF 8.3 Health Centers.** Support the development of healthcare centers and the County's efforts to provide mobile clinics that are dispersed throughout the city. Avoid the concentration of health centers in any one neighborhood.
- Policy PSF 8.4 Social Services.** Support the provision of social services. Balance the need for social services in each neighborhood while ensuring that services are dispersed throughout the city and not concentrated in any one neighborhood.
- Policy PSF 8.5 Vulnerable Populations.** Support local religious institutions, nonprofit organizations, and community-based organizations in providing services and facilities for vulnerable populations.

### ACTIONS



**Action PSF 8.6 Community Healthcare Facilities.** Evaluate options to support existing and potential community healthcare facilities in equity priority communities through a variety of mechanisms, such as reduced permit fees and reduced impact fees.



**Action PSF 8.7 Incentives for Support Services.** Study and, as feasible, implement economic incentives to encourage and sustain the development of support service uses, particularly in equity priority communities.

## SOLID WASTE

The City contracts with a private waste management company to provide residential and commercial solid waste collection, composting, and recycling services to San Mateo. Solid waste is transferred to the Shoreway Environmental Center in San Carlos where recyclable materials are sorted and separated. The remaining solid waste is disposed of at the Los Trancos Canyon (Ox Mountain) landfill in Half Moon Bay.

Solid waste in landfills emits methane, a powerful greenhouse gas, as it decomposes. Efforts to divert waste away from landfills helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and raises awareness of our individual impact on the environment. Educational campaigns to repair, reduce, reuse, and recycle have helped reduce trash generation. In addition, State laws requiring many kinds of solid waste to be diverted from landfills have also significantly decreased the amount of trash that ends up in a landfill. Between 2015 and 2022, the City achieved a diversion rate of 73 percent. This means that close to three-quarters of all debris produced in the city is sent to recycling, composting, or alternative fuel centers instead of the landfill. The City aims to continue to increase this diversion rate over the life of this General Plan through ongoing active leadership to reduce trash and increase source reduction, recycling, and composting.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL PSF-9** Reduce the generation of solid waste and increase the diversion of waste from landfills.

### POLICIES



**Policy PSF 9.1 Solid Waste Disposal.** Support waste reduction and diversion programs to reduce solid waste materials in landfill areas in accordance with State requirements.



**Policy PSF 9.2 Recycling.** Support programs to recycle solid waste and require provisions for on-site recycling in new development, in compliance with State requirements.



**Policy PSF 9.3 Composting.** Maintain the curbside composting program and expand composting of organics in accordance with State requirements.

### ACTION



**Action PSF 9.4 Waste Reduction.** Reduce waste sent to landfills by San Mateo's residents, businesses, and visitors, as required by State law and San Mateo Municipal Code, by mandating recycling and compost programs, setting aggressive waste-reduction goals for all development, and implementing appropriate solid waste rates to recover cost of services provided. Supportive actions for waste reduction are detailed in the Climate Action Plan.





# CHAPTER 8

## Safety Element









# SAFETY ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

General Plans in California must identify and address potential natural and human-caused hazards that could affect the City of San Mateo's residents, businesses, visitors, environment, and services. The framework established by the Safety Element anticipates these hazards and prepares the community to reduce exposure to these risks. San Mateo is at risk from a number of natural and human-caused hazards. Climate change is likely to make many of these hazards more damaging for people, buildings and structures, ecosystems, and other important community assets.

The Safety Element does not exist in a vacuum but is instead one of several plans that address public health, safety, and related topics, including the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Emergency Operations Plan, the San Mateo – Santa Cruz Strategic Fire Plan, the Santa Cruz and San Mateo Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and the Climate Action Plan. The Safety Element must be consistent with these other plans to minimize conflicts between documents and ensure the City has a unified strategy to address safety and hazard issues.

The City of San Mateo is committed to the preservation of life, property, and the environment during emergencies. The City implements the most recent version of the San Mateo County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP), which assesses risks from natural and human-caused hazards, including risks to people and facilities, and identifies mitigation actions to reduce or eliminate hazard risks in the county. The MJHMP for the County of San Mateo planning area, which includes the City of San Mateo, was developed in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and followed the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) 2011 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan guidance. The MJHMP incorporates a process where hazards are identified and profiled, the people and facilities at risk are identified, and mitigation actions are developed to reduce or eliminate hazard risk. The implementation of these mitigation actions, which include both short-term and long-term strategies, involve planning, policy changes, programs, projects, and other activities. The MJHMP can be found on the City of San Mateo's website and at <https://www.smcgov.org/ceo/2021-multijurisdictional-lhmp>. The current MJHMP, certified by FEMA, is incorporated into this Safety Element by reference, as permitted by the California Government Code.

The focus of this element is on increasing resilience throughout the city and reducing the risk of hazards. This element is organized around five key topics that are important to the San Mateo community.

- Emergency Readiness and Emergency Operations
- Geologic and Seismic Hazards
- Sea Level Rise and Flood Hazards
- Wildfire Hazards
- Hazardous Materials





## RELEVANCE TO GENERAL PLAN THEMES



### **Sustainability in this Element:**

- Ensures the maintenance of City-owned trees that will provide relief from extreme heat, reduce energy use, and sequester greenhouse gas emissions.
- Encourages the use of natural systems to protect the community against sea level rise, which will provide shoreline habitat and capture greenhouse gas emissions.
- Ensures the cleanup of hazardous materials contaminated sites.



### **Environmental Justice in this Element:**

- Focuses emergency readiness activities in equity priority communities and most vulnerable areas of the city.
- Prioritizes locating critical facilities and resilient infrastructure outside of hazard-prone areas.
- Expands and increases resiliency of existing community facilities to better serve neighborhoods that are currently underserved.
- Provides emergency preparedness and public safety education for equity priority communities in formats and languages consistent with the demographics of the city.



### **Community Engagement in this Element:**

- Informs the community about safe and effective evacuation through notifications.
- Ensures inclusive outreach about potential hazards affecting neighborhoods, fire-safe education, and overall public safety.
- Supports Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training in collaboration with San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department (SMC Fire).



## EMERGENCY READINESS AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

Emergency preparedness activities in the city are conducted through SMC Fire. The SMC Fire Chief coordinates with the City Manager to prepare for and respond to acute events like heat emergencies, wildfires, and flooding. This department, along with the City Manager, is responsible for the operation of the City's Emergency Operations Center, which coordinates the City's emergency planning, training, response, and recovery efforts for emergencies such as fires, floods, earthquakes, acts of terrorism, public safety power shutoff (PSPS) events, extreme weather events, and pandemics. SMC Fire also provides the public with access to a CERT training program to help residents be prepared for disasters.

San Mateo uses the San Mateo County Alert Notification System (SMC Alert) and, other notification systems, to reach the community and distribute emergency information and instructions before, during, and after a disaster. Notifications are provided through telephone calls, text messages, email notifications, and various social media platforms. Other emergency alert systems include the national Emergency Alert Systems (EAS), the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES)-operated Emergency Digital Information System (EDIS). These systems are available in multiple languages.

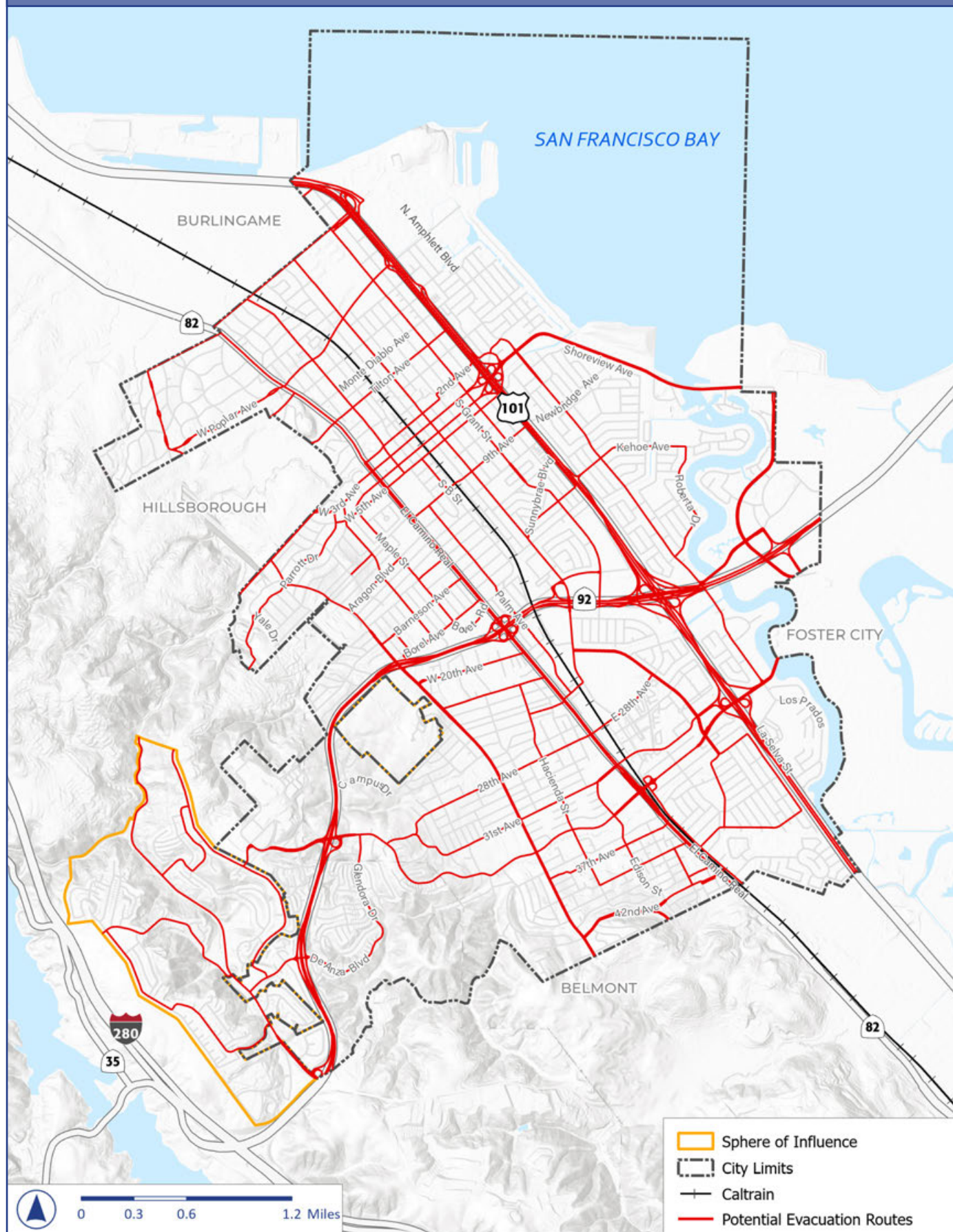
The City participates in the California Master Mutual-Aid Agreement, which is designed to ensure that adequate resources, facilities, and other support are provided to jurisdictions whenever their own resources are insufficient to cope with the needs of a given emergency. The State Office of Emergency Services Coastal Administrative Region (Mutual Aid Region II) serves the mutual-aid region that encompasses San Mateo County. Automatic-aid pacts with San Mateo County and surrounding cities provide additional emergency management and response services to the City of San Mateo during and after a disaster.

With advanced warning, evacuation can be effective in reducing injury and loss of life during a catastrophic event. The City of San Mateo uses a comprehensive evacuation support system implemented by San Mateo County. The system provides the community with critical evacuation updates, resources, and latest updates on active incidents. In the event of a wildfire or an emergency situation, the San Mateo Police Department and SMC Fire can issue evacuation warnings or evacuation orders for impacted areas.

Figure S-1 shows the evacuation routes throughout the city. All evacuation routes in San Mateo may be disrupted by a landslide, wildfire, or flooding event, which may block and damage the roadways or collapse bridges. In the event of widespread disruption to local evacuation routes, the remaining evacuation routes may become congested, slowing down evacuation of the community or specific neighborhoods.

An analysis of San Mateo's roadway network and parcels, as shown in Figure S-2, was conducted as part of Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040. It identifies several evacuation-constrained residential parcels, or parcels with less than two ingress/egress routes, spread throughout the city. The majority of these parcels are in the western hillsides and east of US Highway 101, at the edge of the City Limits. Many of the evacuation-constrained parcels in these areas could be subject to damage from wildfires, flooding, or sea level rise. All evacuation-constrained parcels are in at least one hazard-prone area. The lack of multiple emergency access points limits roadway access for these properties, creating difficulties if there is a need to evacuate.

Figure S-1 Potential Evacuation Routes

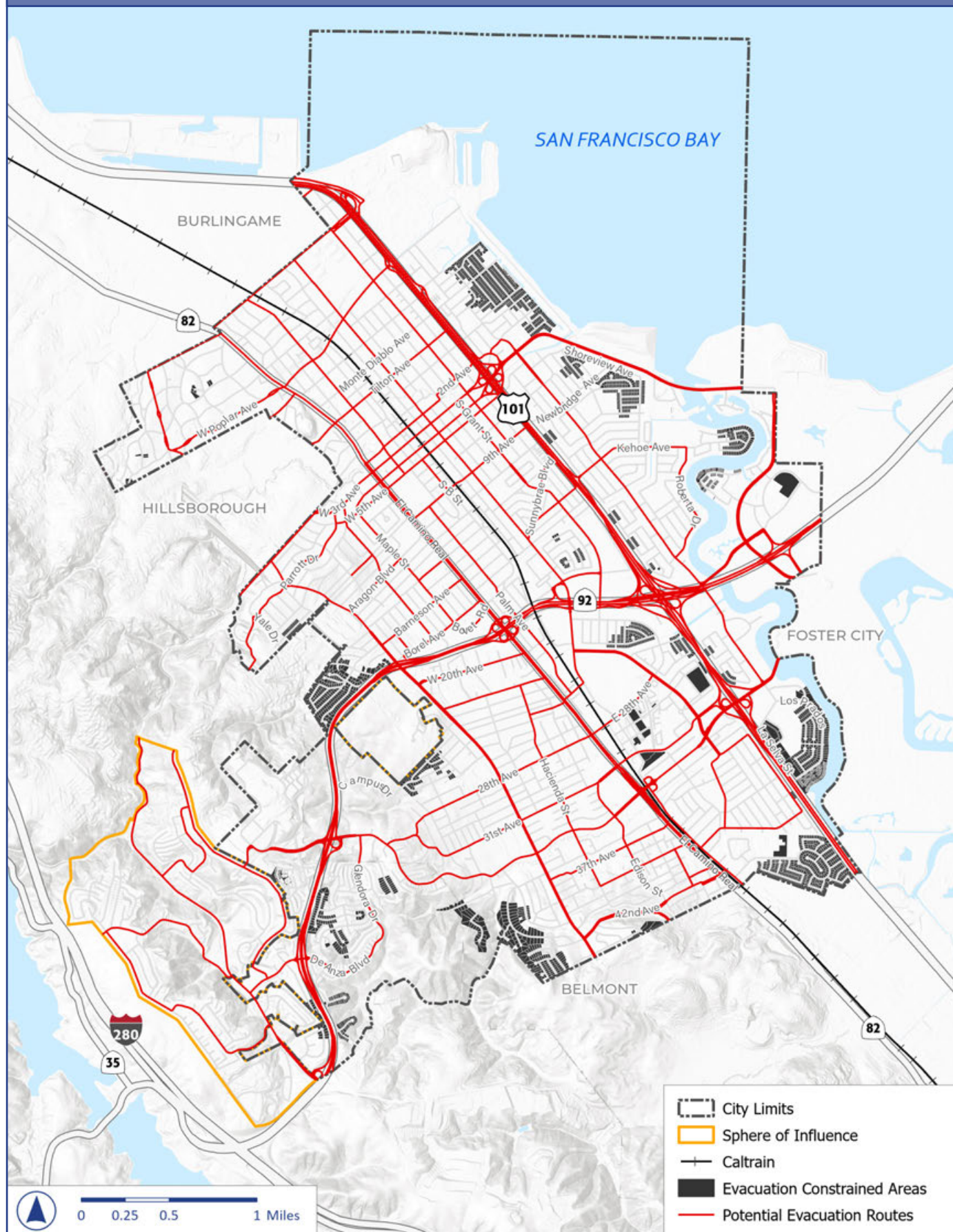


Source: ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.



Figure S-2 SB-99 Evacuation-Constrained Areas



Source: ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL S-1** Minimize potential damage to life, environment, and property through timely, well-prepared, and well-coordinated emergency preparedness, response plans, and programs.

### POLICIES



- Policy S 1.1 Emergency Readiness.** Maintain the City's emergency readiness and response capabilities, especially regarding hazardous materials spills, natural gas pipeline ruptures, fire hazards, wildland fire risk, earthquakes, pandemics, and flooding. Focus primarily on areas identified by the City as underserved and most vulnerable to loss of life and property due to proximity to hazardous incidences, and work to ensure funding is available to these communities as a key component of emergency readiness.
- Policy S 1.2 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.** Incorporate by reference the San Mateo County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2021, along with any future updates or amendments, into this Safety Element in accordance with Government Code Section 65302.6.
- Policy S 1.3 Location of Critical Facilities.** Avoid locating critical facilities, such as hospitals, schools, fire, police, emergency service facilities, and other utility infrastructure, in areas subject to slope failure, wildland fire, flooding, sea level rise, and other hazards, to the extent feasible.
- Policy S 1.4 Multiple Egress Points.** Require new development to provide at least two points of emergency access (ingress and egress).
- Policy S 1.5 Emergency Planning Document Coordination.** Pursue integration of the City's existing safety and emergency management documents with one another, including this Safety Element, the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, and other related documents.
- Policy S 1.6 Emergency Infrastructure and Equipment.** Maintain and fund the City's emergency operations center in a full functional state of readiness. Designate a back-up Emergency Operations Center with communications redundancies.
- Policy S 1.7 Defensible Design.** Require that new development support effective law enforcement and fire protection by promoting a safe and accessible public realm, including investing in social gathering spaces, enhancing lighting and safety in public spaces through community-led planning, and ensuring adequate property maintenance.
- Policy S 1.8 Response Times.** When reviewing and analyzing roadway improvements, consider how emergency response times can be maintained and improved without reducing roadway user safety.



**Policy S 1.9 Local Utility Cooperation.** Work with local utility operators to coordinate any disruption in services, such as a public safety power shutoff (PSPS) event or other disruption that may be necessary to reduce hazard risks in San Mateo and/or the surrounding area, and support publication of advanced notification and resources to residents in the city, particularly equity priority communities, to help them prepare.

**Policy S 1.10 Disaster Recovery.** Ensure that the City government continues to operate during and after hazard events and is able to provide resources and guidance to people and institutions in San Mateo for recovery and reconstruction following the end of the hazard event.



**Policy S 1.11 Evacuation Education.** Include information about safe and effective evacuation as part of natural disaster awareness, prevention, and community education and training efforts. Share information about how to prepare for evacuations, potential evacuation routes and shelter locations, how to receive notifications, and other relevant topics.



**Policy S 1.12 Inclusive Outreach.** Notify the community of potential hazards affecting their neighborhood. Use outreach and engagement methods that encourage broad representation and are culturally sensitive, particularly for equity priority communities.

**Policy S 1.13 Emergency Training.** Conduct training for all City employees to ensure basic understanding of Disaster Service Worker responsibilities, the State Emergency Management System, National Incident Management System, and the Incident Command System.

**Policy S 1.14 Multijurisdictional Cooperation.** Continue the development of local preparedness plans and multijurisdictional cooperation and communication for emergency situations.

**Policy S 1.15 Emergency Preparedness.** Coordinate with San Mateo County, neighboring cities, and nongovernmental partners to effectively prepare for and respond to hazards and natural disasters.

**Policy S 1.16 Evacuation Planning.** Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions and public protection agencies to delineate evacuation routes and locations, identifying their capacity, safety, and viability under different hazard scenarios, as well as emergency vehicle routes for disaster response, and where possible, alternate routes where congestion or road failure could occur. Update as new information and technologies become available.

## ACTIONS

**Action S 1.17 Evacuation Routes.** Maintain adequate evacuation routes as identified by arterial streets shown in the Circulation Element, Figure C-3. Evaluate each evacuation route's feasibility using a range of hazard criteria. Update this map on a regular basis to reflect changing conditions and State requirements for evacuation routes.

**Action S 1.18 Regular Updates.** Update the Safety Element with each Housing Element update, or every eight years, as necessary, to meet State and local requirements.

**Action S 1.19 Automatic and Mutual-Aid Agreements.** Participate in mutual-aid agreements with other local jurisdictions to provide coordinated regional responses, as necessary, to fire, flood, earthquake, critical incidents, and other hazard events in San Mateo and the surrounding



area. Work with local jurisdictions to share resources and develop regional plans to implement disaster mitigation and resilience strategies, such as government continuity, emergency operations centers, and communications redundancies.

**Action S 1.20 Community Centers and Recreation Spaces.** Create an inventory of existing community center facilities and recreation spaces and assess their readiness to serve as a community shelter during a disaster. Following the inventory, create a facilities improvement plan that addresses deficiencies found in each facility or recreation space to improve resilience and disaster preparedness in the city.



**Action S 1.21 Rebuilding Priorities.** Establish rebuilding priorities and procedures in the event of a major disaster to expedite reconstruction and enhance access to funding opportunities with special emphasis on equity priority communities that are more vulnerable to climate hazards.

**Action S 1.22 Resilient Power Systems.** Explore the feasibility of on-site power generation and storage at City facilities to reduce reliance on regional power infrastructure in case of a hazard-caused power outage.



**Action S 1.23 Public Safety Outreach.** Develop a public safety education program to increase public awareness of potential hazards, City's emergency readiness and response program, and evacuation routes. Target public education programs to segments of the community that are most vulnerable to hazards and safety risks.



**Action S 1.24 Community Training.** Collaborate with SMC Fire to provide emergency preparedness trainings to maintain and expand existing Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs).

**Action S 1.25 Emergency Infrastructure and Equipment.** Establish systems to ensure that traffic lights at major intersections, communications and radio infrastructure, and other critical infrastructure continues to function in the event of a localized power outage. Repair any damaged sets of infrastructure or equipment as needed to continue City operations.

**Action S 1.26 Continuity of Operations.** Regularly review, update, and implement the San Mateo Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government Plan.

**Action S 1.27 Response Time Study.** Conduct a Response Time Study to provide a data-driven understanding of how future roadway safety improvements could impact emergency response times and use this information to adjust proposed roadway improvements as needed.

**Action S 1.28 Future Emergency Needs.** Assess future emergency service needs during each update to the Safety Element.

**Action S 1.29 Emergency Notification System.** Develop an emergency notification system (e.g., SMC Alert and Nixle) for flood-prone neighborhoods and businesses before, during, and after a climate hazard event, to assist with evacuation and other support activities. This includes coordination with the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District (OneShoreline) on its early flood warning notification system.



## GEOLOGIC AND SEISMIC HAZARDS

San Mateo is in a region of high seismicity with numerous local faults. The California Geological Survey classifies faults as “active” when they have ruptured the ground surface within the last 10,000 years, while “potentially active” faults are those formed during approximately the last 2 to 3 million years. There are two major active faults that run within six miles of the city:

- San Andreas Fault
- San Gregorio Fault

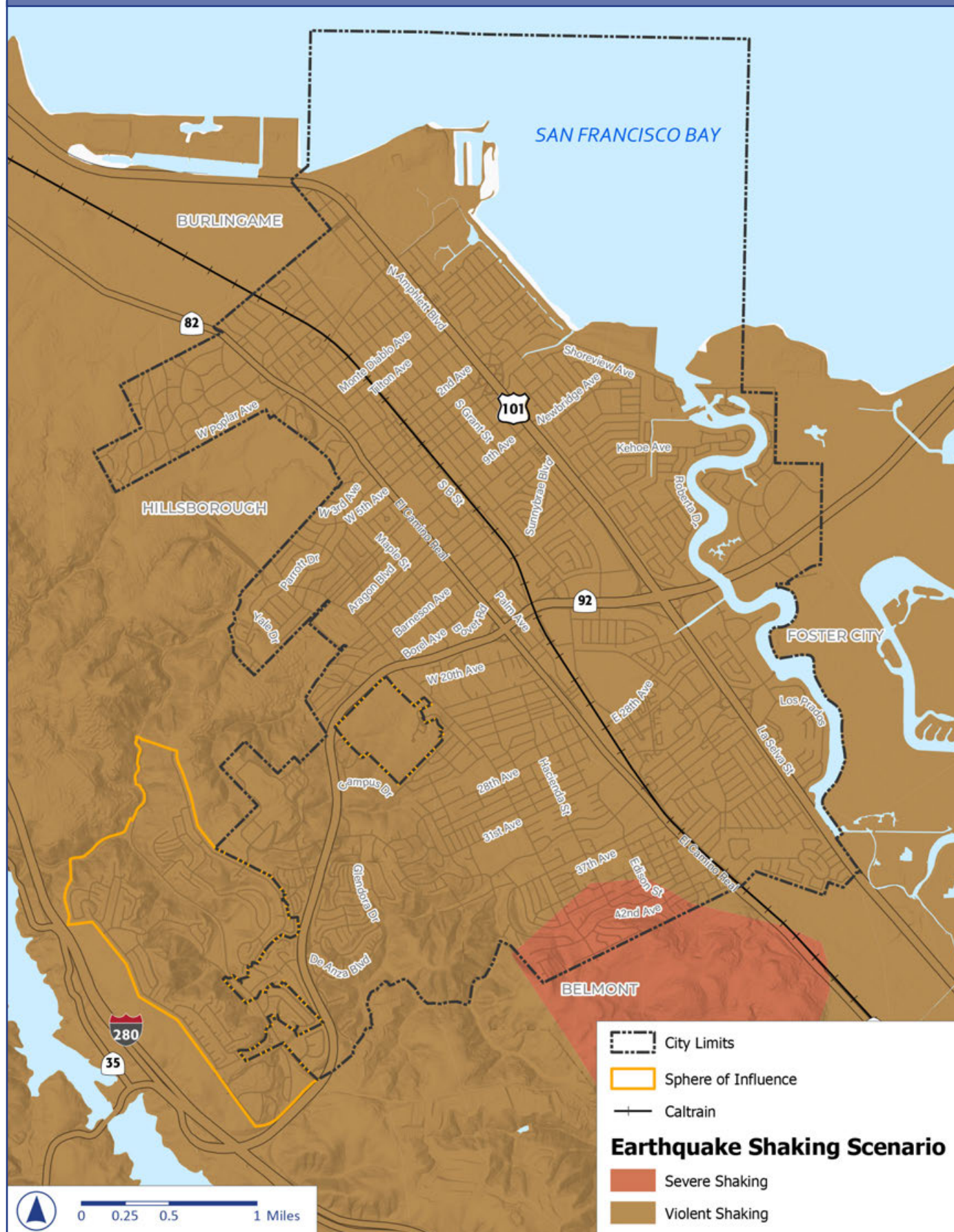
Movement on any of these two faults or other fault lines in the region could cause earthquakes, fault rupture, and liquefaction. A number of earthquakes of magnitude 5.0 or more have occurred in and near San Mateo over the last 35 years. Earthquakes are caused by a sudden dislocation of the Earth’s crust or a fault rupture, which is when the Earth’s crust slides in opposite directions along the fault line. Figure S-3 shows where the most severe ground shaking would occur from an earthquake.

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act is a State law that limits development along active faults in areas known as Alquist-Priolo Fault Zones. The city may also be subject to tsunami hazards from earthquakes, which is discussed in more detail in the Flood Hazards section.

A secondary effect of seismic activity is liquefaction, which occurs when sandy or silty soil materials become saturated during ground shaking and liquefy. This can damage pipelines, cause roadways and airport runways to buckle, and damage or destroy building foundations. Figure S-4 shows the potential liquefaction areas in the city. Areas along the shoreline and east of US Highway 101 are most susceptible to liquefaction.

Other non-seismic geologic hazards are landslides and erosion, which can occur gradually, continuously, or suddenly, often with disastrous results. In San Mateo, landslides are often triggered by heavy rain, so the potential for landslides largely coincides with severe storms that saturate steep, loose soils. Earthquakes can also trigger landslides, and western areas of the city are highly susceptible to landslides, as shown in Figure S-4.

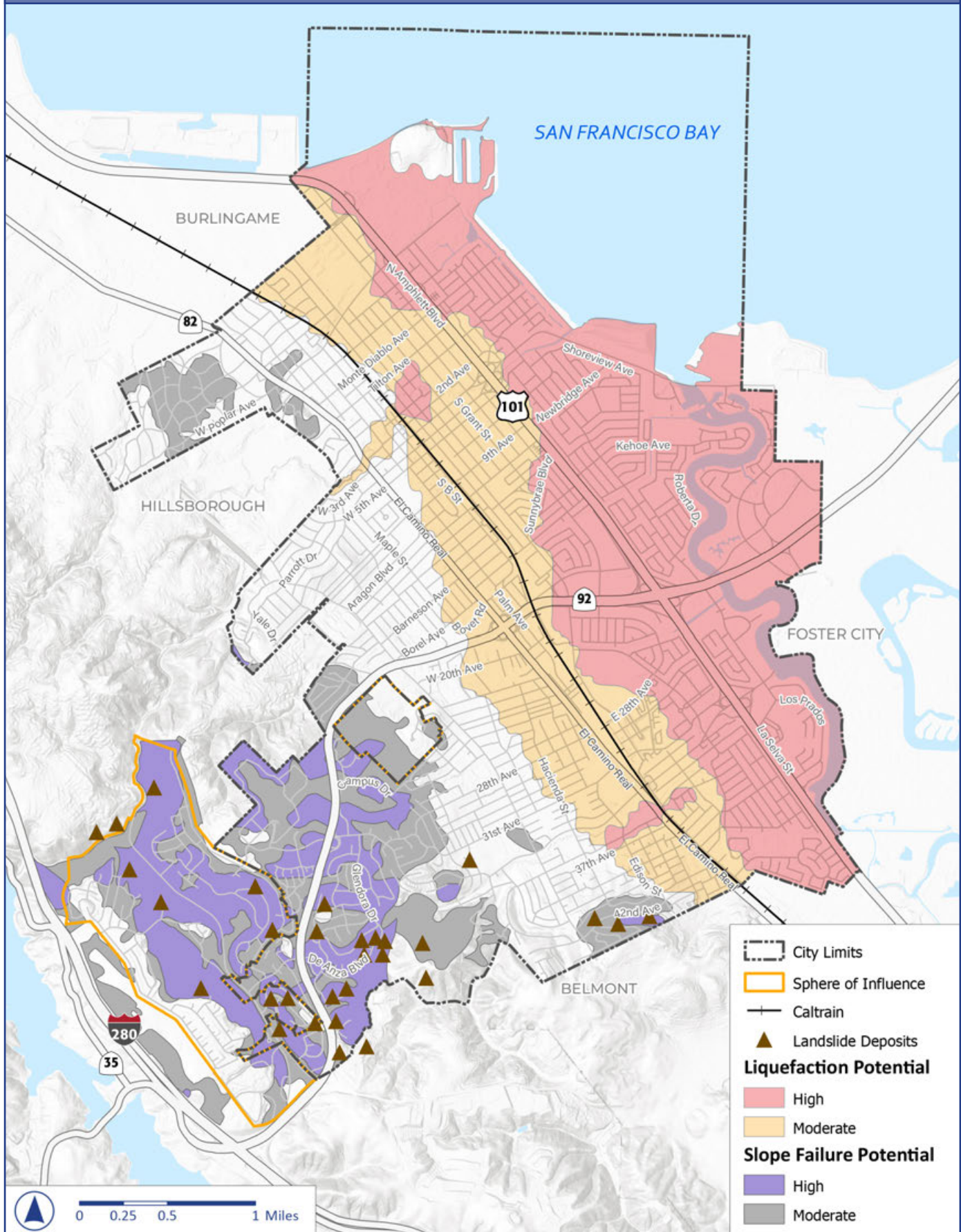
Figure S-3 Shaking Amplification During Earthquakes



Source: California Integrated Seismic Network (CISN), 2021; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.



Figure S-4 Slope Stability and Liquefaction



Source: City of San Mateo, 2022; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL S-2** Take steps to protect the community from unreasonable risk to life and property caused by seismic and geologic hazards.

### POLICIES

- Policy S 2.1 Geologic Hazards.** Require site-specific geotechnical and engineering studies, subject to the review and approval of the delegated City Engineer and Building Official, for development proposed on sites identified in Figure S-4 as having moderate or high potential for ground failure. Permit development in areas of potential geologic hazards only where it can be demonstrated that the project will not be endangered by, nor contribute to, the hazardous condition on the site or on adjacent properties.
- Policy S 2.2 Landslides and Erosion Control.** Reduce landslides and erosion in existing and new development through continuing education of design professionals on mitigation strategies. Control measures shall retain natural topographic and physical features of the site, if feasible.
- Policy S 2.3 Vulnerable Buildings.** Encourage modifications to existing unreinforced masonry and soft story buildings, and similar unsafe building conditions to reduce the associated life safety hazards from ground shaking during earthquakes, as shown on Figure S-3. Require voluntary structural modifications to be designed in character with the existing architectural style.
- Policy S 2.4 Liquefaction.** Use the best-available liquefaction mapping data to avoid siting and locating new public facilities and infrastructure in areas susceptible to liquefaction, as shown in Figure S-4.

### ACTIONS

**Action S 2.5 Seismic Shaking Mapping.** Consult with a geology specialist to update the City's geologic hazard mapping, documenting the areas within the city with moderate or high potential for liquefaction or ground failure, as shown in Figure S-4.



**Action S 2.6 Incentives for Seismic Upgrades.** Develop and implement a program to provide financial incentives and education to building owners to support seismic upgrades.

**Action S 2.7 Seismic Stability.** Review the seismic stability of the City's assets and infrastructure, such as City Hall, recreational facilities, roadways, and bridges and identify improvements necessary to enhance each facility's ability to withstand geologic hazards, up to and including a full replacement of the facility.

**Action S 2.8 Unreinforced Masonry Buildings.** Establish and maintain an inventory of unreinforced masonry buildings in the city and work with the property owners to upgrade the buildings to meet minimum safety and building code requirements.

**Action S 2.9 Soft Story Buildings.** Establish and maintain an inventory of soft story multifamily residential buildings in the city. Educate residents about the vulnerability of soft story construction to severe damage and potential collapse during a significant seismic event, and work with property owners to substantially improve the seismic performance of these residential buildings to meet current structural building design standards.

## SEA LEVEL RISE AND FLOOD HAZARDS

Climate change is associated with an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as heavy rainfall and storms, which can cause inland flooding if storm drainage infrastructure is overwhelmed. Climate change also contributes to sea level rise, which has the potential to strain bay shoreline infrastructure and compound the effects of inland flooding. The City of San Mateo will continue working with regional, State, and federal partners to proactively address the potential impacts of sea level rise and flooding. The City participates in data gathering and mapping, collaborates with OneShoreline, manages an assessment district in North Shoreview to fund flood protection improvements, and completes infrastructure projects to provide flood protection. The City is also engaged through the BayCAN collaborative, a Bay Area-wide collaborative network of local governments and organizations focused on responding effectively and equitably to the impacts of climate change. Additionally, the City will develop a Climate Change Adaptation Plan that will identify the extent of areas vulnerable to sea level rise and flooding in the city and set a comprehensive strategy to ensure people, buildings, and infrastructure are protected from sea level rise and flood hazards. More information about each hazard can be found in the subsections below.

### Flood Hazards

Flooding occurs when there is too much water in inland areas to be held in local water detention areas, be carried away by drains or creeks, or soak into the soil. When this happens, water can build up and wash into normally dry areas, causing significant harm to buildings, people, and habitats. Floods can be caused by heavy rainfall or long periods of moderate rainfall, or clogged drains during periods of little rainfall. In rare instances, a break in a dam, levee, water pipe, or water tank can also cause flooding.

FEMA maps areas at risk of inundation from a 100-year flood, which has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any year, and a 500-year flood, where the risk of flooding is 0.2 percent annually, as shown in Figure S-5. These areas are primarily located along creeks, including Laurel Creek and San Mateo Creek, and east of El Camino Real. Climate change may increase the frequency and severity of storms and expand the parts of the city that are considered prone to flooding.

Flooding can also be induced by dam failure, which is caused by structural failure or deficiency associated with intense rainfall, prolonged flooding, earthquakes, landslides, or equipment malfunction. There are two dams of significant concern to San Mateo, as shown in Figure S-6. Failure of Crystal Springs Dam and Laurel Creek Dam would inundate areas along San Mateo Creek and Laurel Creek, and the eastern sections of the city towards the San Francisco Bay. Although dam failures are very rare, they aren't unprecedented. Each dam is required to have a comprehensive emergency action plan approved by the California Department of Water Resources, Division of Safety of Dams.

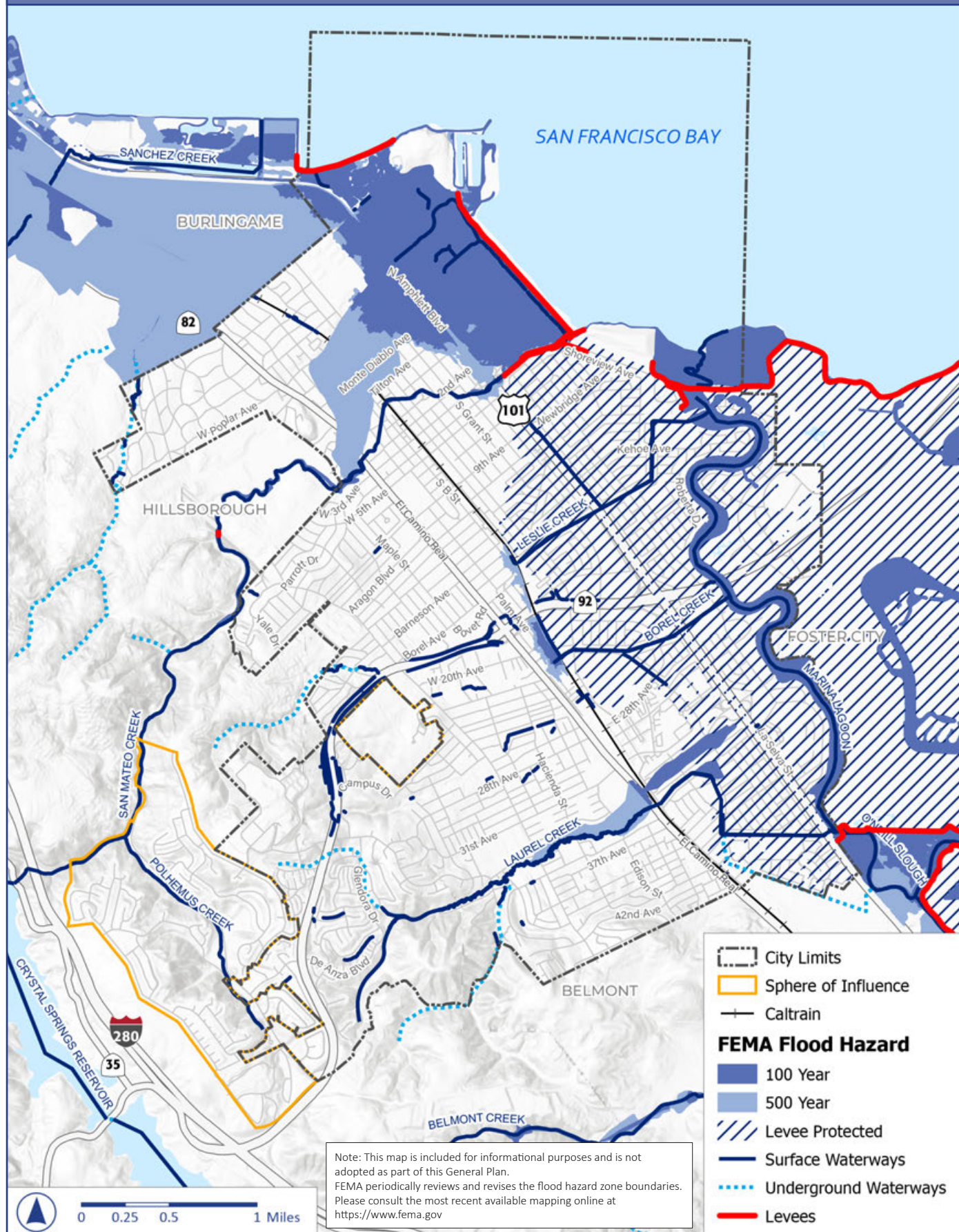




Tsunamis, caused by offshore earthquakes, can severely damage property, result in loss of lives, disrupt emergency services, and obstruct roads through intense flooding. Figure S-7 illustrates the areas that may be subject to tsunami inundation in San Mateo, which include shoreline areas along the San Francisco Bay. As shown in Figure S-7, although much of the tsunami flooding would occur in the northeast portion of the city, the area of tsunami inundation along the southeast corner of the city originates from the Belmont Slough and would stop at the levee, where the Bay Trail is located and the lagoon starts. Earthquakes with magnitudes below 6.5 are very unlikely to trigger a tsunami. See also the Geologic and Seismic Hazards section of this element for more information on earthquake hazards.

As discussed in the Public Services and Facilities Element, San Mateo has levees that protect the city from flooding from creeks and the San Francisco Bay. Non-federal levees are along the shoreline of Seal Point Park, and over 1,300 feet of levees have been upgraded along the San Mateo and Burlingame border. The San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District, or OneShoreline, was created in 2020 to facilitate multijurisdictional flood and sea level rise resiliency projects in San Mateo County. Earthquakes or overtopping due to major storms can cause levees to fail, flooding the shoreline areas of the city. Policies and actions aimed at maintaining adequate flood-control infrastructure are also covered in the Public Services and Facilities Element.

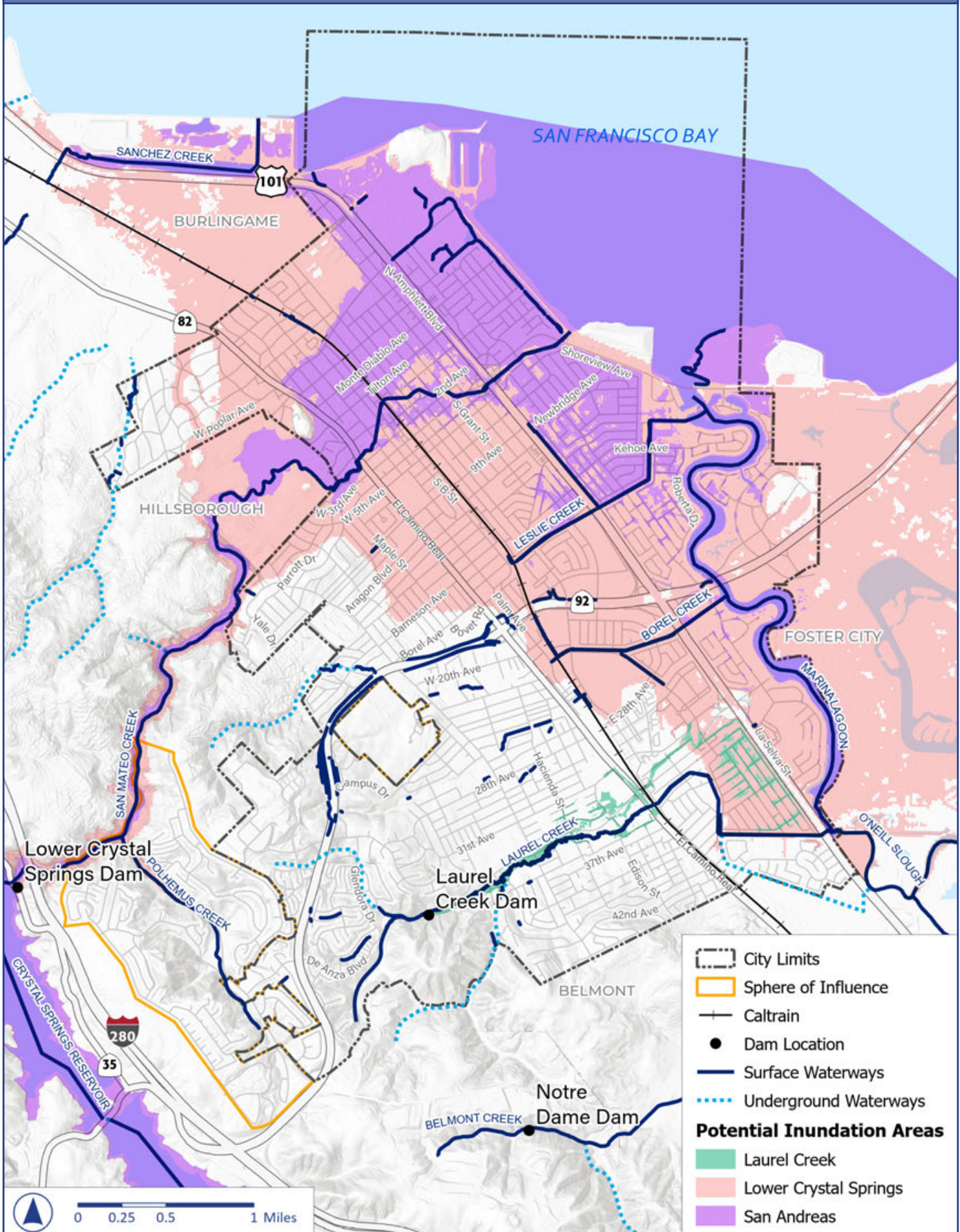
Figure S-5 Potential Flood Hazards



Source: CalDWR, 2022; FEMA, 2022; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.



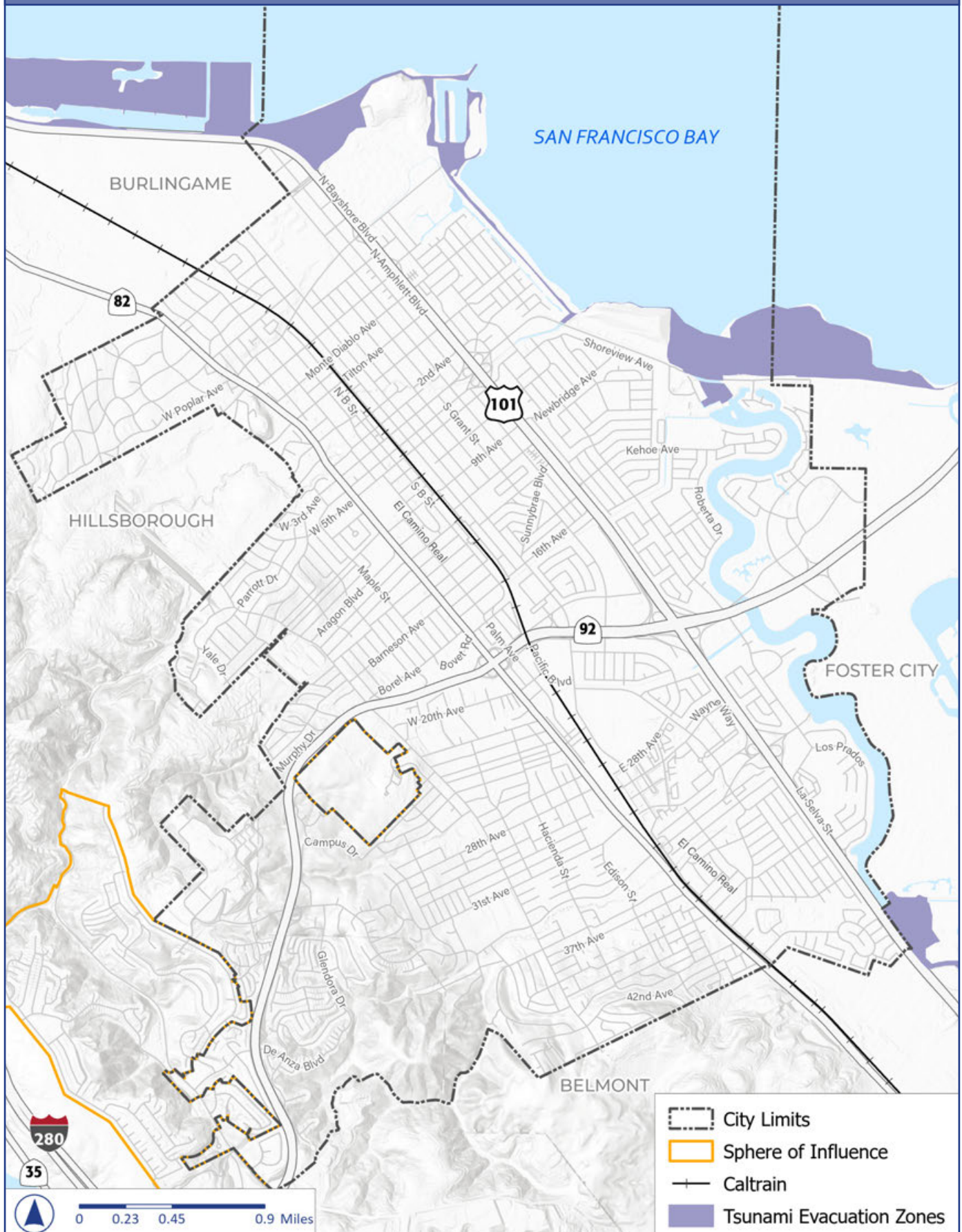
Figure S-6 Potential Flood Hazards – Dam and Levee Failure



Source: CalDWR, 2022; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.



Figure S-7 Tsunami Hazard Zones



Source: CGS, 2022; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.

## Sea Level Rise

As global temperatures increase, glaciers and other land ice near the north and south poles melt and sea levels rise. Higher temperatures also cause water to expand in oceans, further contributing to sea level rise. Rising seas increase the risk of flooding, storm surge inundation, erosion and shoreline retreat, and wetland loss. According to OneShoreline, San Mateo County as a whole is the most vulnerable county in California to sea level rise because of its extensive coastline and Bay shoreline and the number of people, value of properties, and critical assets in sea level rise-prone areas. Along the shoreline of the city, different scenarios project that sea levels will rise between 1.1 and 2.7 feet by 2050, with levels above 2 feet likely, and by 3.4 to 10.2 feet by 2100. However, it is possible that sea levels could rise faster than these projections. Figures S-8 and S-9 display the expected sea level rise in San Mateo in 2050 (2 feet) and 2100 (7 feet) based on the Ocean Protection Council's 2018 Updated California Sea Level Rise Guidance, featuring models from the Adapting to Rising Tides program of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). These figures do not reflect the improvements currently underway for the Foster City levee system.

Rising sea levels can also cause the shoreline to flood more frequently and severely during storms or king tide events. King tides are abnormally high, predictable astronomical tides that occur about twice per year, with the highest tides occurring when the earth, moon, and sun are aligned. Because sea level rise will cause ocean levels to be higher during normal conditions, shoreline floods can reach further onto land. For example, a storm that has a one in five chance of occurring in a given year (known as a five-year storm) can create a temporary increase in sea levels of approximately two feet. The goals, policies, and actions in this section call for planning for a medium- to high-risk aversion scenario in 2100. This scenario uses a 1 in 200 chance for sea level rise projections, providing a precautionary projection that can be used for less adaptive (less able to make changes that reduce harm in response to hazards), more vulnerable developments or populations that will experience moderate to high consequences if actions are not taken to address sea level rise in these areas. Figure S-10 shows shoreline flooding on top of sea level rise in the event of a five-year storm for 2050.

Rising sea levels also threaten a significant portion of San Mateo's housing, commercial buildings, essential infrastructure, and economic drivers, as low-lying land near the shoreline could be subject to more frequent flooding. Affected essential infrastructure includes US Highway 101, State Route 92, and the Caltrain station and associated railroad infrastructure. Meanwhile, rising tides may increase groundwater levels, inundating contaminated soils. Given that some contaminated sites in San Mateo sit near the shoreline, rising groundwater may cause contaminated soils to leach into new, different areas.

Natural ecosystems in the bay will be disrupted by the higher tide levels and intrusion of saltwater into freshwater creek systems and the Marina Lagoon. Historically, marshlands along the shoreline have adapted to changes in sea level by building up sediment, increasing the height of the marsh to keep pace with the tide levels of the San Francisco Bay, and moving inland. However, eastern San Mateo is lined with a three-mile levee system that has very little marsh habitat, and any habitat migration is expected to be outpaced by sea level rise. Creative integration of nature-based solutions to combine natural buffers with San Mateo's extensive existing levee system to mitigate flooding risks could be an opportunity to re-establish ecological communities and enhance natural areas, such as the creeks throughout the city and the Marina Lagoon.

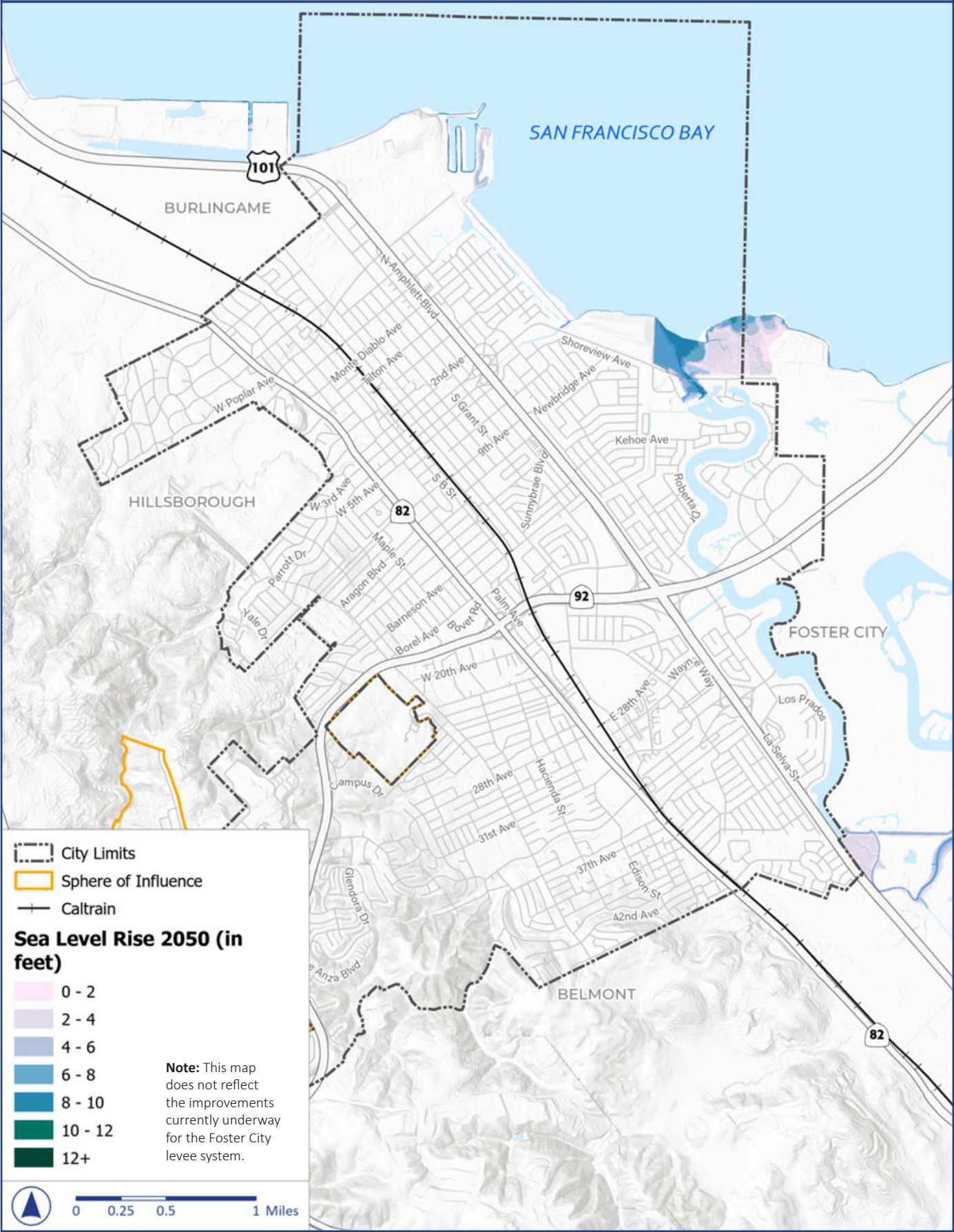


In 2023, the City completed improvements in the North Shoreview neighborhood, which is south of Coyote Point, roughly bound by San Mateo Creek to the south, U.S. Highway 101 to the west, the Poplar Creek Golf Course to the north, and San Francisco Bay to the east. Ground elevations in the neighborhood range from below sea level to about 10 feet above sea level, so the area is susceptible to flooding from San Francisco Bay and stormwater runoff that collects behind the levees protecting the neighborhood from bay water intrusion. Figure S-11 shows a map of the neighborhood and the various structures and facilities that provide protection against these flood risks. The City upgraded the Coyote Point and Poplar Avenue pump stations and made improvements to a section of the Bayfront Levee. With the added protection, approximately 1,600 properties in North Shoreview will be removed from the 100-year flood zone once approved by FEMA. The levee improvements will add 3.9 feet above the predicted base flood elevation to account for sea level rise.

Neighboring Foster City is also in the process of constructing improvements to their levee system, which interconnects with the City of San Mateo's system. Their improvements will provide protection from the 100-year flood and an additional 3 feet above the predicted base flood elevation to account for sea level rise.



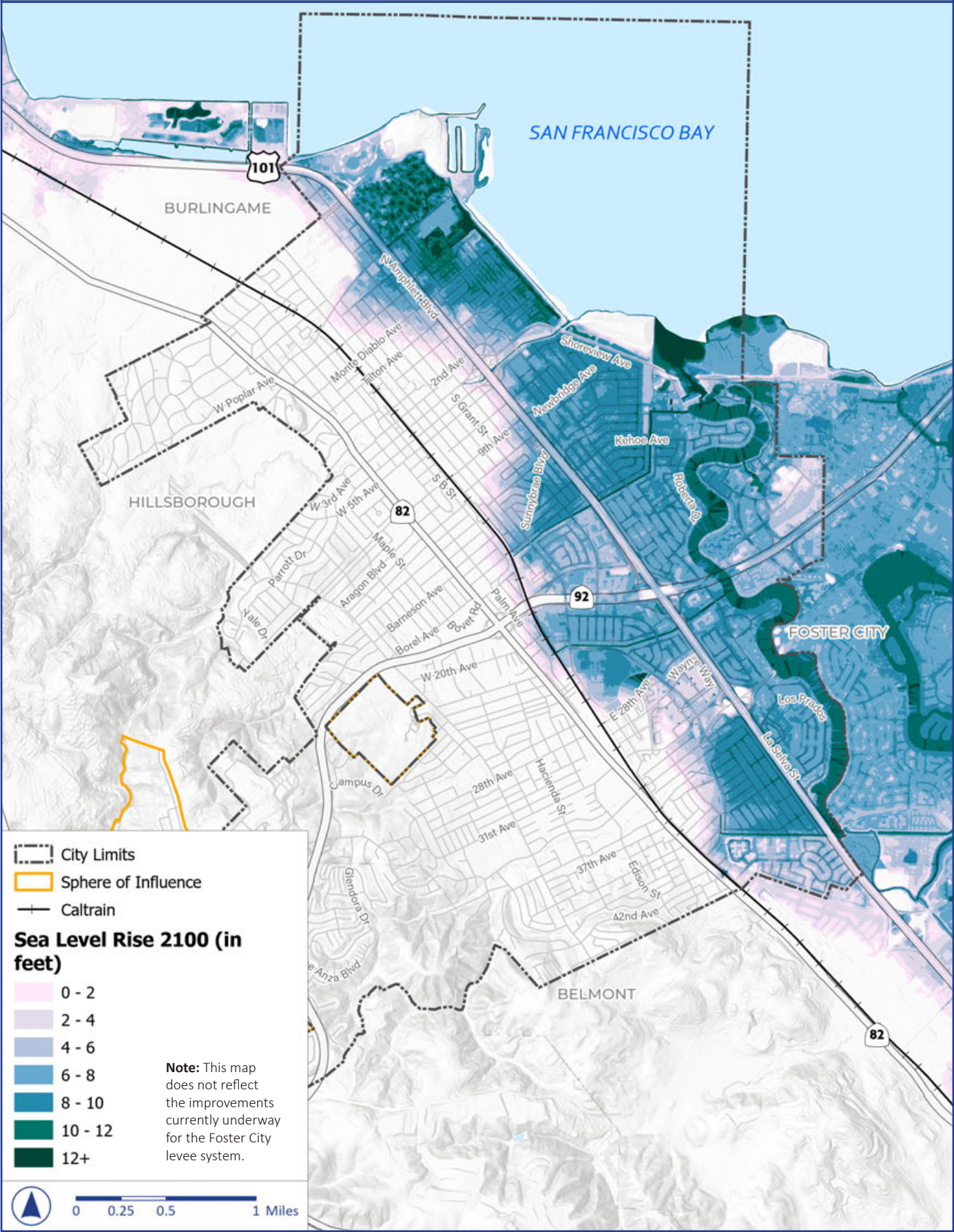
Figure S-8 2050 Sea Level Rise



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



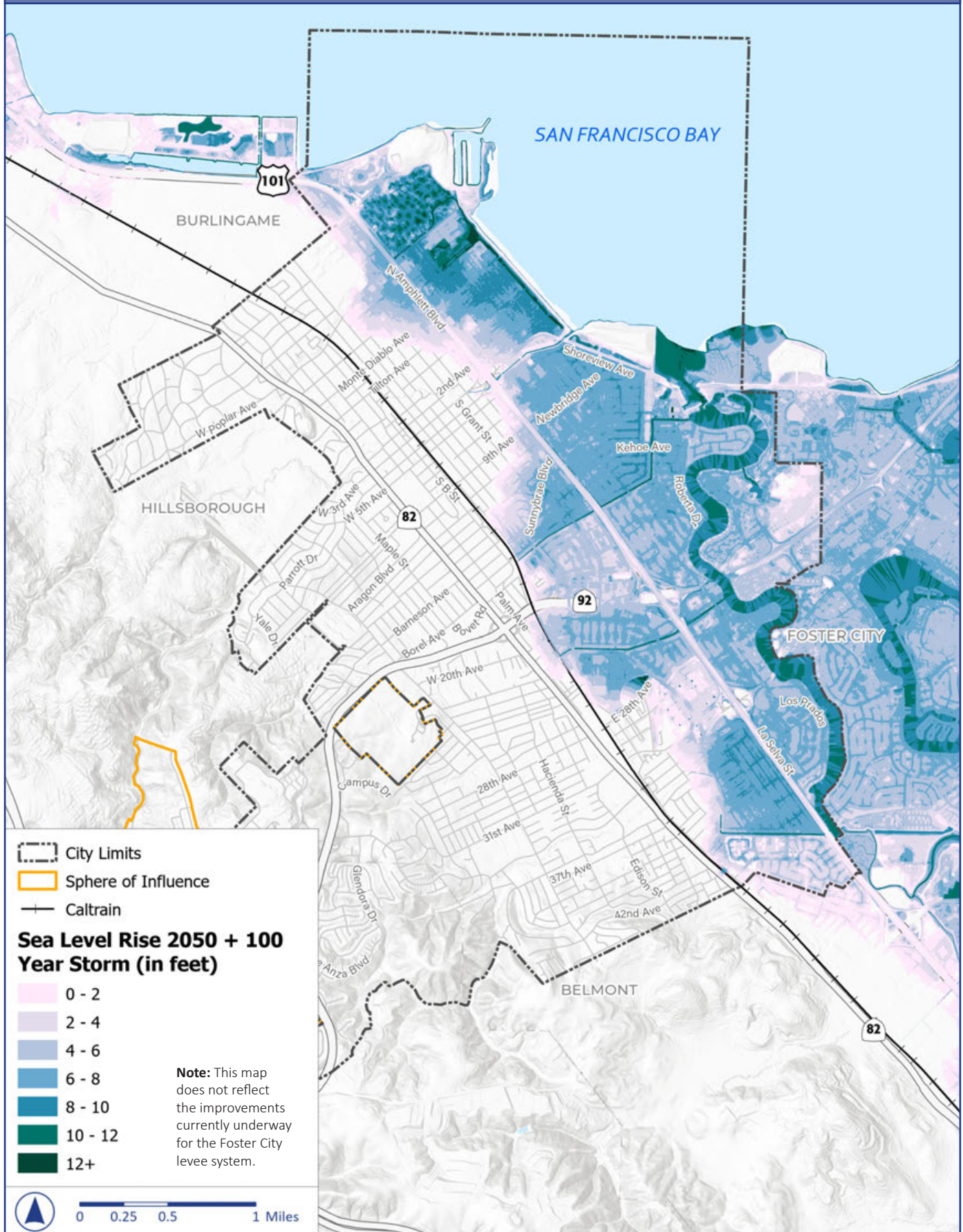
Figure S-9 2100 Sea Level Rise



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



Figure S-10 2050 Sea Level Rise Plus 100-Year Storm



Source: ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.



Figure S-11 North Shoreview Flood Protection Improvements



Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL S-3** Protect the community from unreasonable risk to life and property caused by flood hazards and sea level rise.

### POLICIES

**Policy S 3.1 Development within Floodplains.** Protect new development and substantial retrofits within a floodplain by requiring the lowest finish floor elevation to be above the applicable floodwater elevation or by incorporating other flood-proofing measures consistent with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regulations, OneShoreline guidance, the City’s Floodplain Management Ordinance, and other City policy documents.

**Policy S 3.2 Sea Level Rise and Flood Planning.** Integrate sea level rise and flood planning into all relevant City processes, including General Plan amendments, Specific Plans, zoning ordinance updates, capital projects, and review and approval of new development and substantial retrofits.

**Policy S 3.3 Sea Level Rise, Flooding, and Groundwater Rise Protection.** Ensure that new development, substantial retrofits, critical facilities, City-owned buildings, and existing and future flood control infrastructure are planned and designed to accommodate climate change hazards, including increases in flooding, sea level rise, and rising groundwater, based on the best available science.



**Policy S 3.4 Natural Infrastructure.** Consider the use of nature-based solutions and natural infrastructure in sea level rise and flood adaptation strategies.

**Policy S 3.5 OneShoreline Coordination.** Coordinate with OneShoreline to develop and implement coordinated approaches to sea level rise and flood management with other San Mateo County jurisdictions.

**Policy S 3.6 Storm Drain and Flood Infrastructure.** Manage the City’s storm drain infrastructure, levee system, and dams in accordance with state and federal regulations and to protect life and property.

### ACTIONS

**Action S 3.7 Climate Change Adaptation Plan.** Assess sea level rise and precipitation projections using the best-available climate change science, identify the extent of areas vulnerable to sea level rise and flooding in the city, consider OneShoreline recommendations for levels of protection, and develop a Climate Change Adaptation Plan that sets a comprehensive strategy and includes planning and design standards for climate risk protection. Use this plan to evaluate development applications to ensure projects are protected from sea level rise and flood hazards over the life of the project and to assess public infrastructure needs for adequate protection.

- Action S 3.8 Sea Level Rise and Flood Hazard Monitoring.** Review and use the best-available sea level rise science and projections and regularly identify natural resources, development, infrastructure, and communities that are vulnerable to sea level rise and flood hazard impacts, including impacts from rising groundwater. Use this information to continue to develop or adjust planning and adaptation strategies.
- Action S 3.9 Community Rating System.** Explore establishment of a City rating under FEMA’s Community Rating System, such as expanding and improving Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping capacity, developing a flood early warning system, and creating a Flood Emergency Action Plan.
- Action S 3.10 Early Flood Warning.** As feasible, provide early flood warning for flood-prone areas of the city through collaboration with regional partners such as OneShoreline’s stream monitoring station and notification system.
- Action S 3.11 Rising Groundwater Coordination.** Coordinate with OneShoreline, local jurisdictions, and regional and State agencies to study and enforce requirements related to rising groundwater levels caused by sea level rise.
-  **Action S 3.12 Natural Infrastructure.** Use or restore natural features and ecosystem processes where feasible and appropriate as a preferred approach to the placement of hard shoreline or creek protection when implementing sea level rise and flood adaptation strategies.
- Action S 3.13 Sea Level and/or Flood Overlay Zone.** Evaluate establishment of a sea level rise and/or flood overlay zone as a primary mechanism for establishing adaptation policies, rules, or construction codes within such zones, recognizing the particular land use and zoning characteristics of this area as a part of the Climate Adaptation Plan, and in collaboration with OneShoreline.
- Action S 3.14 Sea Level Rise Funding.** Study options for establishing dedicated funding to support efforts to address sea level rise, including considering support for OneShoreline.
- Action S 3.15 New Development.** Explore creation of a fee for new development to fund sea level rise and flood protection measures and adaptation strategies.
- Action S 3.16 Floodplain Ordinance Update.** Update the Floodplain Management Ordinance, including to align with FEMA and OneShoreline recommendations and to update construction cost value information.
- Action S 3.17 Flood Risk Mapping Data.** Regularly update mapping data pertaining to the 100-year and 500-year floodplains, dams, and levee failure as information becomes available.



## WILDFIRE HAZARDS

Wildfires are a regular feature of the landscape in much of California and can be sparked by lightning, malfunctioning equipment, vehicle crashes, or other causes. High winds, such as the Diablo Winds, can cause fires to spread rapidly and erratically, increasing the difficulty of containment and possibility of burning into developed areas. In addition to direct fire impacts on people and property, wildfires remove stabilizing vegetation from hillsides, increasing the likelihood of future landslides. When wildfires burn at very high temperatures, soils can become hydrophobic, preventing the ground from absorbing stormwater and causing flooding downslope. Residents can also be harmed by smoke from wildfires in the region or across northern California. Particulate matter from smoke can cause respiratory illnesses, especially for those who spend a lot of time outdoors during smoky conditions.

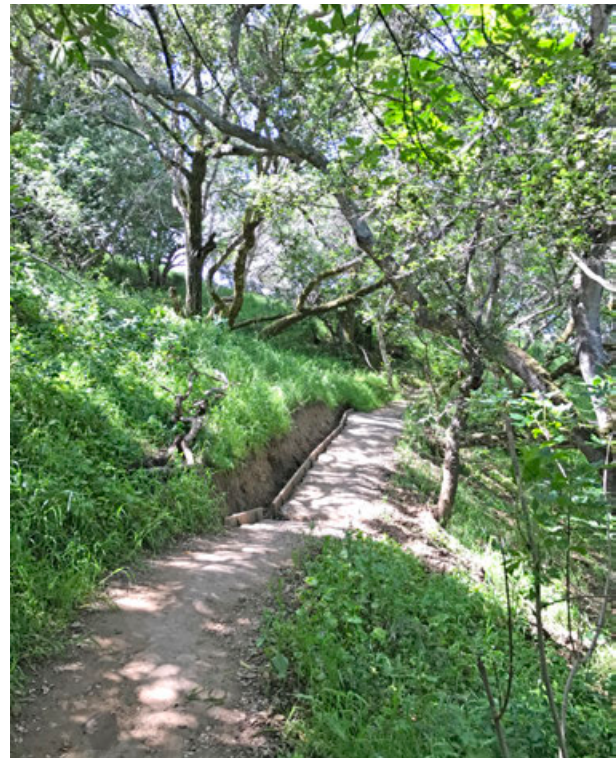
The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) designates lands into responsibility areas based on who is financially responsible for fire-protection services. Local Responsibility Areas (LRAs) include areas where City fire departments or local fire protection districts are charged with fire protection. State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) include unincorporated areas and State lands where the State has financial responsibility for wildfire protection. San Mateo is within an LRA, and the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department provides fire prevention and protection services for the area. There are no locations in San Mateo that currently lack access to fire-protection services.

Within the responsibility areas, CAL FIRE designates (with City approval) lands as Moderate, High, or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. As shown in Figure S-12 and the most current Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps on the CAL FIRE Fire and Resource Assessment Program website, Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones are in western San Mateo between the City Limits and State Route 92, as well as near Yale Drive and St. Johns Cemetery. Current mapping does not yet designate Moderate or High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the City Limits. Users should consult the most recent available mapping from CAL FIRE's Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP).<sup>1</sup> Future updates to this Safety Element will include new fire mapping data as it becomes available.

Wildfires may start in wildland areas, natural areas in the unincorporated county, but they can easily spread to developed areas in the city between urban development and wildlands. This area is called the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), as shown in Figure S-13. The WUI is made up of two distinct zones. The interface zone contains dense housing or other structures next to vegetation but has little wildland vegetation that can burn in a wildfire. The wildland zones have higher concentrations of wildland vegetation with fewer structures and may have limited access and/or steeper terrain that makes controlling wildfires more difficult. As shown in Figure S-13, the wildland zones are in and near Laurelwood Park and in open space areas near the Peninsula Golf & Country Club. The interface zones border the park and open space areas and include residential neighborhoods, roadways, and other infrastructure throughout west and southwestern parts of San Mateo.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at <https://frap.fire.ca.gov>.

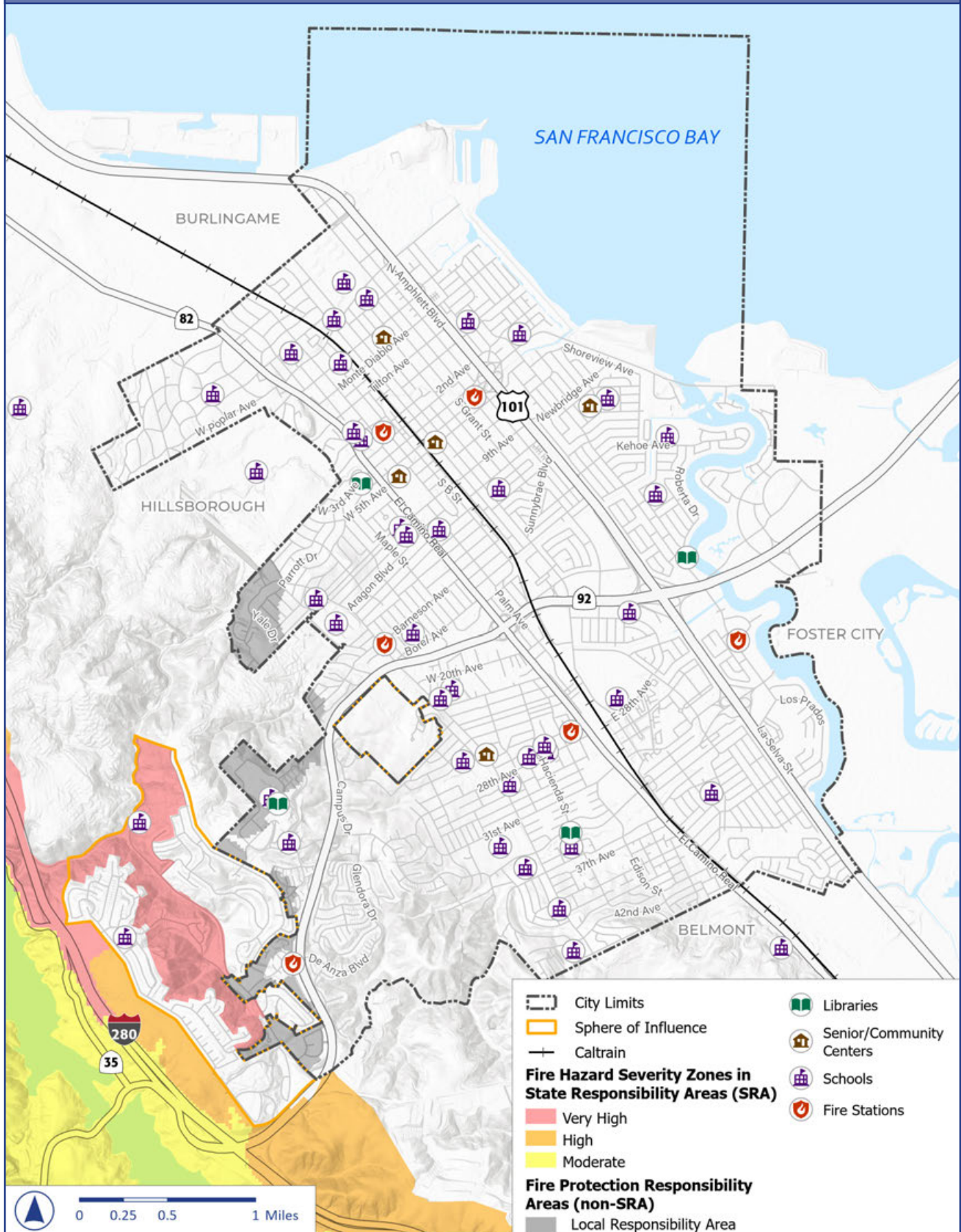


Within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones and WUI zones, there are existing homes, businesses, and public land uses, as well as associated infrastructure like major roadways (e.g., State Route 92 and Interstate 280), electrical transmission infrastructure, water and wastewater distribution systems, and communication facilities. Much of this development occurred prior to wildfire hazard mapping; the policies and actions in this element limit future residential development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones and aim to protect existing buildings and infrastructure. Meanwhile, State law requires that homeowners in the WUI zones create and maintain defensible space around homes and other structures, keep roofs clear of flammable material, and use spark arresters on chimneys. Figure S-14 shows the land use designations within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones for the Strive San Mateo General Plan 2040.

Although no fires have burned in close proximity to San Mateo since CAL FIRE has kept records (1878), several fires have burned in the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County. Recently, the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire burned over 86,000 acres in southern San Mateo County. In 2022, a wildfire burned in the Emerald Hills area of Redwood City, to the south of San Mateo, which could have burned into the city under different conditions. Areas that have previously burned, regardless of their location within or outside of a Fire Hazard Severity Zone, are likely to burn again. Due to climate change, fire activity is projected to increase where development expands in the WUI zones and in areas of high winds.



Figure S-12 Wildfire Hazard Zones

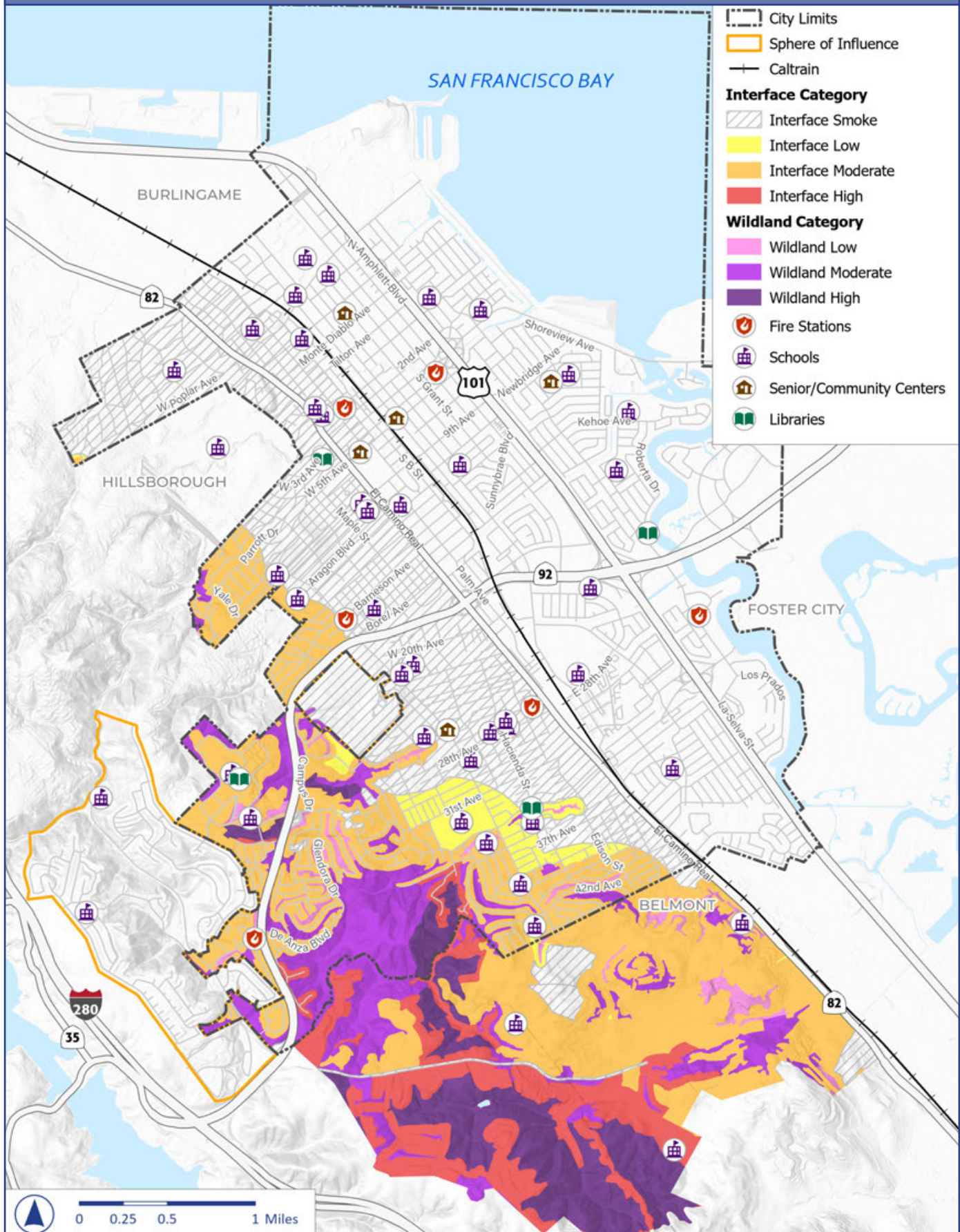


Source: CAL FIRE, 2022; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is a draft and will be updated once CAL FIRE publishes the new Wild Hazard Zones.



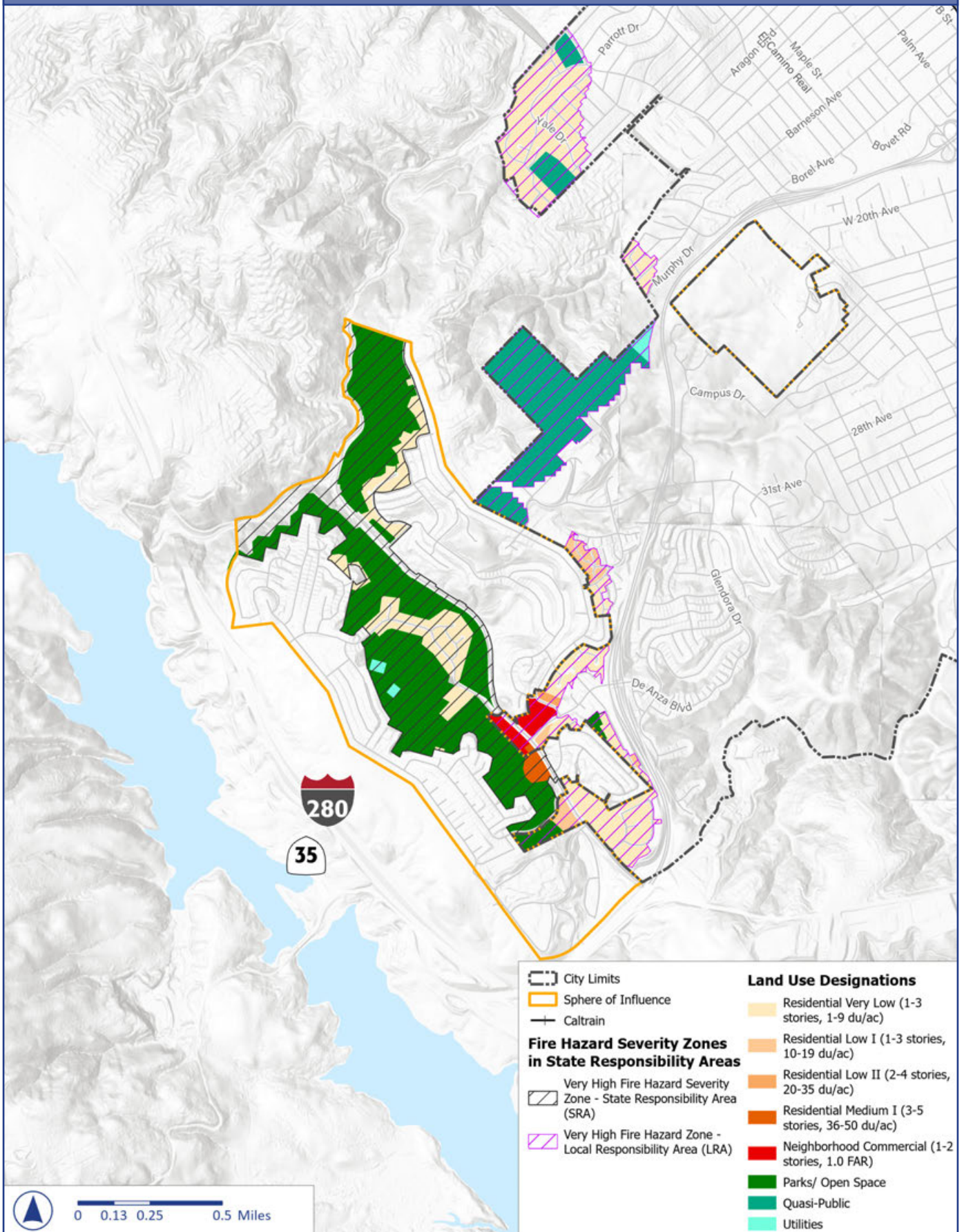
Figure S-13 Wildland-Urban Interface



Source: City of San Mateo, 2022; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.



Figure S-14 Land Uses in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones



Source: City of San Mateo, 2022; ESRI, 2022; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is a draft and will be updated once CAL FIRE publishes the new Wild Hazard Zones.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

### GOAL S-4 Maintain adequate fire and life safety protection from wildland fires.

#### POLICIES

- Policy S 4.1 Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.** Avoid new residential development in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, as shown on Figure S-14, or the most current data available from CAL FIRE. Redevelopment or reconstruction of existing structures is allowed. Coordinate with San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department (SMC Fire) to ensure new construction of buildings or infrastructure within a Fire Hazard Severity Zone or Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), as shown on Figures S-12 and S-13 or the most current data available from CAL FIRE, meet or exceed applicable State and local regulations and meet the Fire Safe Regulations for road ingress and egress, fire equipment access, and adequate water supply.
- Policy S 4.2 Reconstruction of Development.** Require reconstruction projects or significant retrofits in a Fire Hazard Severity Zone and the Wildland-Urban Interface, as shown on Figures S-12 and S-13 or the most current data available from CAL FIRE, to be consistent with the California Building Standards Code, California Fire Code, and Fire Safe Regulations.
- Policy S 4.3 Wildland Fire Protection.** Require all development in and adjacent to designated Fire Hazard Severity Zone and Wildland-Urban Interface to prepare a fire protection plan for review and approval by SMC Fire prior to issuance of building permits and to provide access and defensible space in accordance with California codes and local ordinances.
- Policy S 4.4 Hillside Vegetation Stability.** Stabilize, and as feasible re-vegetate, burned slopes following a wildfire event to reduce landslide and debris flow risk.
- Policy S 4.5 Fire Risk Mapping.** Coordinate with SMC Fire to consistently update any mapping data showing fire extent in San Mateo using CAL FIRE data and local wildland fire risk maps indicating the locations and extents of Fire Hazard Severity Zones, Local Responsibility Areas, and the Wildland-Urban Interface. Use this mapping data to inform decisions about existing risk and future land uses throughout the city and share these maps widely on the City's website, published handouts and flyers, and at in-person and virtual education events.
- Policy S 4.6 Firefighting Infrastructure.** Coordinate with SMC Fire to ensure adequate firefighting infrastructure, including road and building clearance for firefighting vehicles, residential and building signage, and clear and legible street signage throughout the community.
- Policy S 4.7 Peakload Water Supply.** Ensure that the California Water Service Company and the Estero Municipal Improvement District provide and maintain a water supply and distribution system that provides an adequate static pressure to deliver the minimum fire hydrant flow to all areas of the city, except where a lesser flow is acceptable, as determined by SMC Fire.



- Policy S 4.8 Facilities Planning.** Place all new public facilities or relocate existing public facilities outside of identified fire hazard risk areas as feasible. Appropriately retrofit public facilities to mitigate fire risk.
- Policy S 4.9 Land Use Management for Fire Risks.** Maintain all City-owned public lands and work with private landowners and FIRE SAFE San Mateo County to reduce fuel loads, establish appropriately placed fire breaks/defensible space, require long-term maintenance of fire hazard reduction projects, and educate all property owners in the city on proper landscape maintenance and firescaping standards to reduce the risk of fire hazards.
- Policy S 4.10 Wildland Fire Vulnerability.** Consider all improvements at Sugarloaf Mountain and Laurelwood Park in the context of the area's high fire risk and include wildfire mitigation components in projects when feasible.
- Policy S 4.11 Fire-Safe Roads.** Coordinate with SMC Fire to evaluate new development or significant retrofits that have access on roadways that do not meet fire-safe road and vegetation standards within the Wildfire-Urban Interface and/or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and ensure that road standards and vegetation management occurs and is maintained.
- Policy S 4.12 Secondary Access.** Explore secondary means of ingress and egress in areas with evacuation constraints, as shown in Figure S-2, Evacuation-Constrained Areas, for existing subdivisions or developments of 30 units or more within a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.
- Policy S 4.13 Emergency Access.** Require that roads, driveways, and other clearances around structures are located and designed to ensure emergency access.
- Policy S 4.14 Emergency Services.** Work with SMC Fire to provide fire prevention, protection, and emergency preparedness services that adequately protect residents, employees, visitors, and structures from fire and fire-related emergencies.

## ACTIONS



- Action S 4.15 Tree Maintenance.** Collaborate with SMC Fire to maintain City-owned trees in a manner that does not contribute to fire danger, in accordance with current best management practices (BMPs).



- Action S 4.16 Fire-Safe Education.** Work with SMC Fire and seek funding to develop a fire-safe education program that provides information and awareness to community members about defensive space, fire-resistant landscaping and construction, evacuation preparation, and other wildfire education topics.
- Action S 4.17 Fire Hazard History.** Include a historical record of any significant fire events that have occurred in San Mateo or the surrounding area in all updates to the City's Safety Element.
- Action S 4.18 Vegetation Management on City-Owned Land.** Coordinate with SMC Fire to continue conducting and providing long-term maintenance of vegetation management projects in City-owned parks and open spaces to prevent wildfire ignition and spread.

**Action S 4.19 Reevaluation of Development Standards.** Reevaluate development standards for wildfire risk areas following major wildfire events and apply updated standards as needed to maintain high levels of wildfire protection.

**Action S 4.20 Vegetation Management.** Coordinate with the SMC Fire and the FIRE SAFE San Mateo County to obtain funding for and conduct vegetation and fuel modification or management.

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Much of the economic success of the Bay Area is based on research and manufacturing, the byproducts of which include substances that may be harmful to people and the surrounding environment. Hazardous waste ranges from familiar substances, such as waste oil and cleaning solvents, to highly toxic industrial compounds, and include toxic metals, gases, flammable and explosive liquids and solids, corrosive materials, radioactive materials, and infectious biological waste. They can be released through human error, malfunctioning or broken equipment, or as an indirect consequence of other emergencies (e.g., if an earthquake damages a hazardous material storage tank). Hazardous materials can also be released accidentally during transportation, as a consequence of vehicle accidents.

Most of the waste generators in San Mateo are small-quantity generators – small businesses and households that generate less than 12 tons per year. Numerous industrial and commercial operations, both past and present, have manufactured, handled, stored, and disposed of hazardous materials. Hazardous material sites include manufacturing operations, facilities with leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs), and generators of hazardous waste. In the twenty-first century, life science buildings are replacing industrial businesses as users of hazardous materials and producers of hazardous waste.

The San Mateo County Hazardous Waste Management Plan, implemented by San Mateo County Environmental Health Services, the designated Certified Unified Program Agency for the county, has designated 15 areas in San Mateo that are zoned for either commercial or industrial uses as suitable for waste treatment, recycling, storage, and transfer facilities. The sites designated for these facilities are in manufacturing districts adjacent to the Union Pacific rail corridor. Sites designated for storage and transfer facilities are in service commercial and transit-oriented development zoning districts adjacent to the rail corridor, west of US Highway 101 on Amphlett Boulevard, and in Coyote Point Park.

Hazardous materials are primarily transported within San Mateo via trucks carrying a variety of materials, including gasoline, other petroleum products, and other chemicals known to cause fire and life safety problems. There is a significant potential for accidental release of wastes in transit due to the presence of US Highway 101 running through the eastern portion of the city. The transport of hazardous materials is regulated by the California Department of Transportation and California Highway Patrol on State and Interstate highways in California. Local agencies have the authority to restrict the use of local roads for waste transport, as well as the time of transit, if not unduly restrictive to commerce.

Generally, selection of transportation routes should minimize the time and distance that hazardous waste is in transit, avoid residential neighborhoods and sensitive receptors, avoid periods and areas of traffic congestion, minimize use of local roads, and provide for adequate emergency response services.

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL S-5** Protect the community's health, safety, and welfare relating to the use, storage, transport, and disposal of hazardous materials.

### POLICIES

- Policy S 5.1 County Cooperation.** Cooperate with the County of San Mateo and San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department in the regulation and transportation of hazardous materials in San Mateo. Share hazardous materials management enforcement with San Mateo County and San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department.
- Policy S 5.2 County Hazardous Waste Management Plan.** Adopt the San Mateo County Hazardous Waste Management Plan by reference into the Safety Element. Make amendments, as necessary, to suit local needs and issues.
- Policy S 5.3 Transportation Routes.** Restrict the transportation of hazardous materials and waste to designated truck routes and limit such transportation to non-commute hours.
- Policy S 5.4 Hazardous Waste Management Facilities Location.** Regulate the location and operation of new hazardous waste management facilities.
- Policy S 5.5 Design of Hazardous Waste Management Facilities.** Require the following features and mitigation measures in the design of proposed hazardous waste management facilities, including life sciences buildings, to minimize potential health, safety, and aesthetic impacts on surrounding properties and occupants:
- For sites in areas subject to flooding or inundation as shown on Figures S-5 and S-6, require facilities to have a surface elevation at least 1.5 feet above the maximum flood water level for areas containing hazardous substances or to be flood-proofed in some other manner suitable to the City.
  - Require facilities to provide for full on-site containment of maximum permitted quantities of hazardous substances, including protection of storm drain or sanitary sewer inlets from accidental entry of hazardous materials.
  - Require facilities to provide separate storage and/or treatment of potentially reactive substances, including separate spill containment vessels. Require that storage of hazardous gases provides adequate filtration and neutralization devices to prohibit accidental release of toxic substances.
  - Require that all storage and treatment occur within an enclosed structure.
  - Require new facilities be sited as far away as possible within the project site from sensitive communities, such as homes, schools, playgrounds, sports fields, childcare centers, senior centers, and long-term healthcare facilities.



**Policy S 5.6 Risk Assessment.** Require applications for hazardous waste management facilities to prepare a risk assessment to determine site suitability. Establish risk criteria such as distance from public facilities, residential, or immobile population and recreation areas; impacts from natural hazards (seismic, geologic, flood, and fire hazards); impacts on wetlands, endangered species, air quality, and emergency response capabilities; and proximity to major transport routes.



**Policy S 5.7 Contaminated Sites.** Require the cleanup of contaminated sites, including those indicated on the Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites List (Cortese List) published by the Department of Toxic Substances Control and/or other agencies, such as the San Mateo County Health Department and the Regional Water Quality Control Board, in conjunction with substantial site development or redevelopment, where feasible.

**Policy S 5.8 Cost Recovery.** Require San Mateo County businesses that generate hazardous waste or applicants for hazardous waste management facilities to pay necessary costs for implementation of Hazardous Waste Management Plans and for application costs, and to pay for costs associated with emergency response services in the event of a hazardous material release, to the extent permitted by law.

## ACTION

**Action S 5.9 Shared Data.** Regularly coordinate with San Mateo County to collect data on businesses that store hazardous substances to share with local emergency service providers, including the Police Department and San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department, as well as the Public Works Department for the wastewater source-control program.

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# CHAPTER 9

## Noise Element







# NOISE ELEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

This Noise Element provides the policy framework for controlling, managing, and mitigating excessive noise in the city. These policies will protect land uses that are sensitive to noise, such as residences, schools, and libraries, while minimizing noise from the sources that create them.

### RELEVANCE TO GENERAL PLAN THEMES



#### Sustainability in this Element:

- Reducing noise levels reduces stress for humans and animals, improving the health and well-being of our community and habitats.



#### Environmental Justice in this Element:

- Minimizing and mitigating noise impacts will help alleviate the harmful effects of noise pollution in neighborhoods close to freeways, the rail corridor, and other high-volume roadways, which already experience disproportionate impacts from multiple pollution sources.



#### Community Engagement in this Element:

- Informs the San Mateo community about upcoming land use projects that would contribute to or be affected by a noisy environment.
- Leverages creative outreach strategies to engage with all San Mateo residents, particularly those that live in equity priority communities, about development projects and new activities that could generate noise or mitigate existing noise nuisances.



## NOISE IN SAN MATEO

Sounds can bring joy to the listener, but they can also be a nuisance. Loud sounds can become unwanted noise that could be harmful to our physical, mental, and emotional health. Stress and lost sleep from noise pollution contributes to cardiovascular and metabolic diseases. While noise pollution has the potential to affect all San Mateo residents, existing noise levels are highest in neighborhoods closest to freeways and the rail corridor, compounding the negative health effects of air pollution and other pollution sources in those communities.

San Mateo's vibrant urban environment generates noise on a daily basis. Vehicles create a rhythmic hum that is oftentimes punctuated by honks and other noises as they travel along the city's streets and thoroughfares. Trains traveling on the Caltrain/Southern Pacific rail corridor sound their horns to warn pedestrians, motorists, and others about their impending arrival. This safety measure also creates noise pollution for those that live or work near the rail corridor. Commercial activities and open spaces, such as restaurants, storefronts, and parks help to create a lively atmosphere for social interactions and economic activities. However, they also have the potential to generate noise nuisances, especially for entertainment uses that occur after normal business hours. Other noise sources in the community come from construction activities, aircraft flyovers, landscaping equipment, and fixed mechanical equipment, such as air conditioning units.

## MEASURING ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE

Environmental noise level or intensity is measured in decibels (dB), which range from 0 dB, the threshold at which people can detect sound, to 140 dB, the threshold where it becomes painful to hear. For every increase of 10 dB, the perceived loudness of noise is doubled. For example, a motorcycle accelerating (90 dB) seems twice as loud as a power lawn mower (80 dB).

This Noise Element uses a unit of measurement called the "A-weighted" decibel scale, which is sometimes expressed as dBA. Humans do not hear all frequencies equally. As a result, this measurement takes into consideration that human hearing decreases at extremely low and high frequencies. State law requires general plans to use the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) or the Day/Night Average Sound Level ( $L_{dn}$ ) to describe the community noise environment and its effects on the population. The City of San Mateo uses the Day/Night Average Sound Level ( $L_{dn}$ ), which represents a 24-hour average sound level, with an additional 10 dB added for nighttime noise between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., as shown in the land use compatibility standards for noise in Table N-1.

Table N-1 is used to determine whether the existing exterior noise levels that would surround a proposed new use are acceptable or unacceptable and to identify where a proposed project may need to incorporate noise mitigation features. Roadway noise is the primary contributor to the average exterior noise levels in San Mateo. Existing and projected average exterior noise levels in San Mateo are shown in Figures N-1, N-2, and N-3.

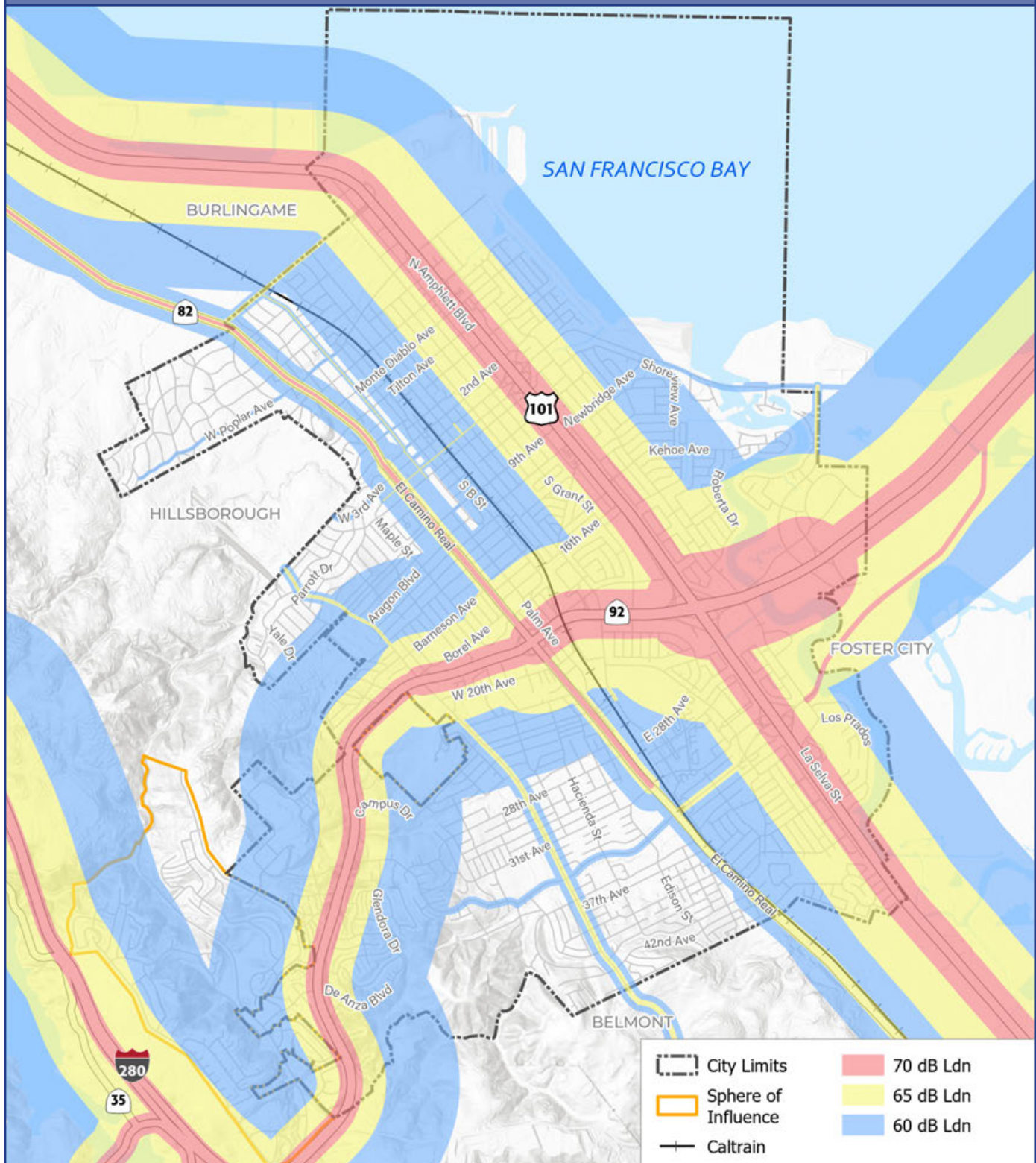


Table N-1 Land Use Compatibility Guidelines

Land Use Category of Proposed New Use		Day-Night Average Exterior Noise Level, $L_{dn}$ (dBA)				
		0 - 59	60 - 65	66 - 70	71 - 80	over 81
Noise-Sensitive Land Uses	Residential (all densities) *					
	Multifamily Common Open Space for Residents					
	Hotels, Motels, and Other Lodging					
	Schools, Libraries, Hospitals, Churches, Long-Term Care Facilities					
	Parks, Playgrounds, Privately Owned Publicly Accessible Open Space					
Office and Commercial						
Research and Development, Industrial						
	<b>Normally Acceptable.</b> Specified land use is satisfactory based on the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal, conventional construction, without any special noise mitigation requirements.					
	<b>Conditionally Acceptable.</b> New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise-reduction requirements is made and needed noise mitigation features have been included in the design.					
	<b>Normally Unacceptable.</b> New construction or development should not be undertaken.					

\* See residential land use designations in the Land Use Element of this General Plan.

Figure N-1 Existing Traffic Noise Contours



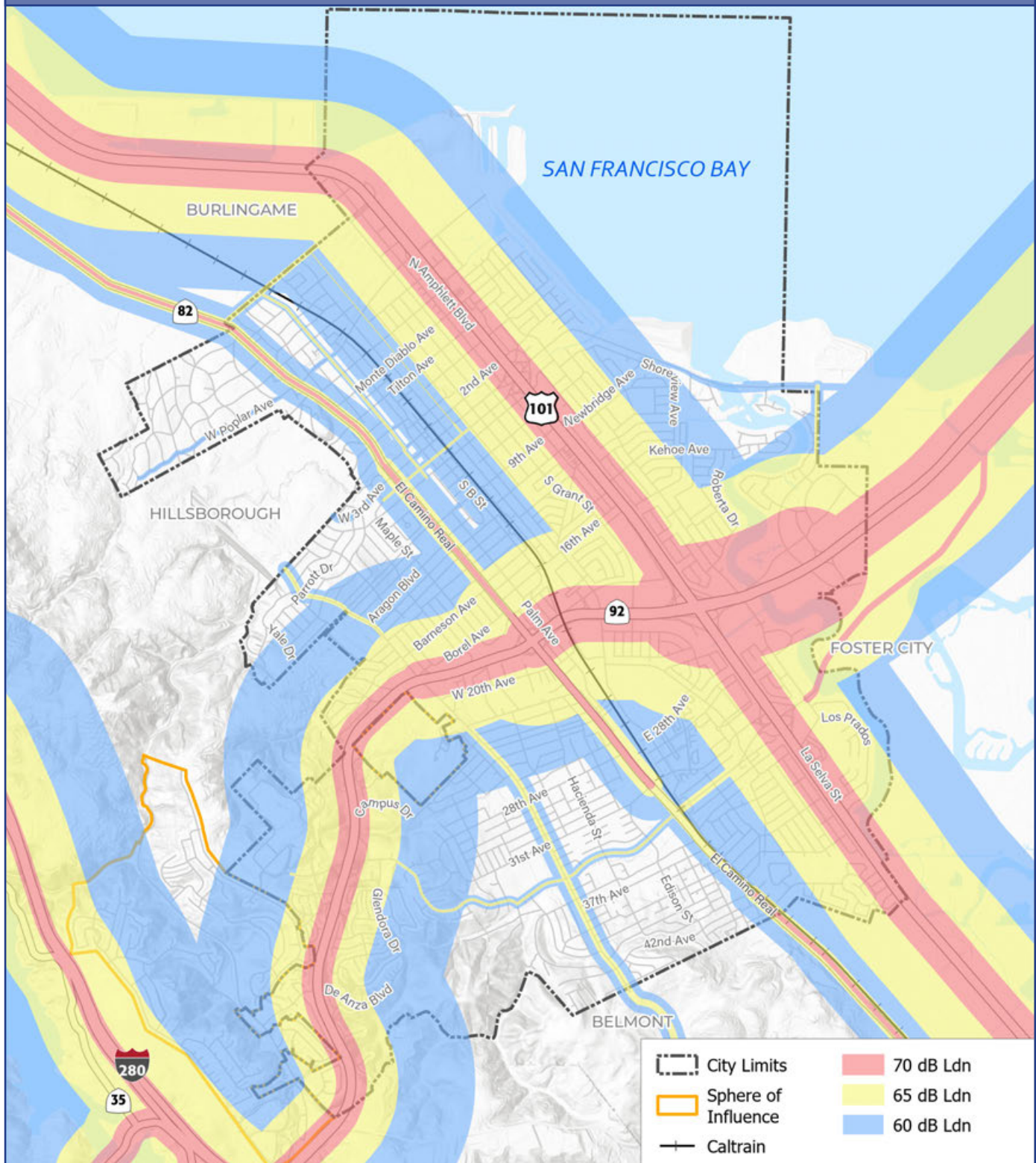
Source: ESRI, 2022; ECORP, 2023; PlaceWorks, 2023.

Note: This map is included for informational purposes and is not adopted as part of this General Plan.





Figure N-2 Future Traffic Noise Contours

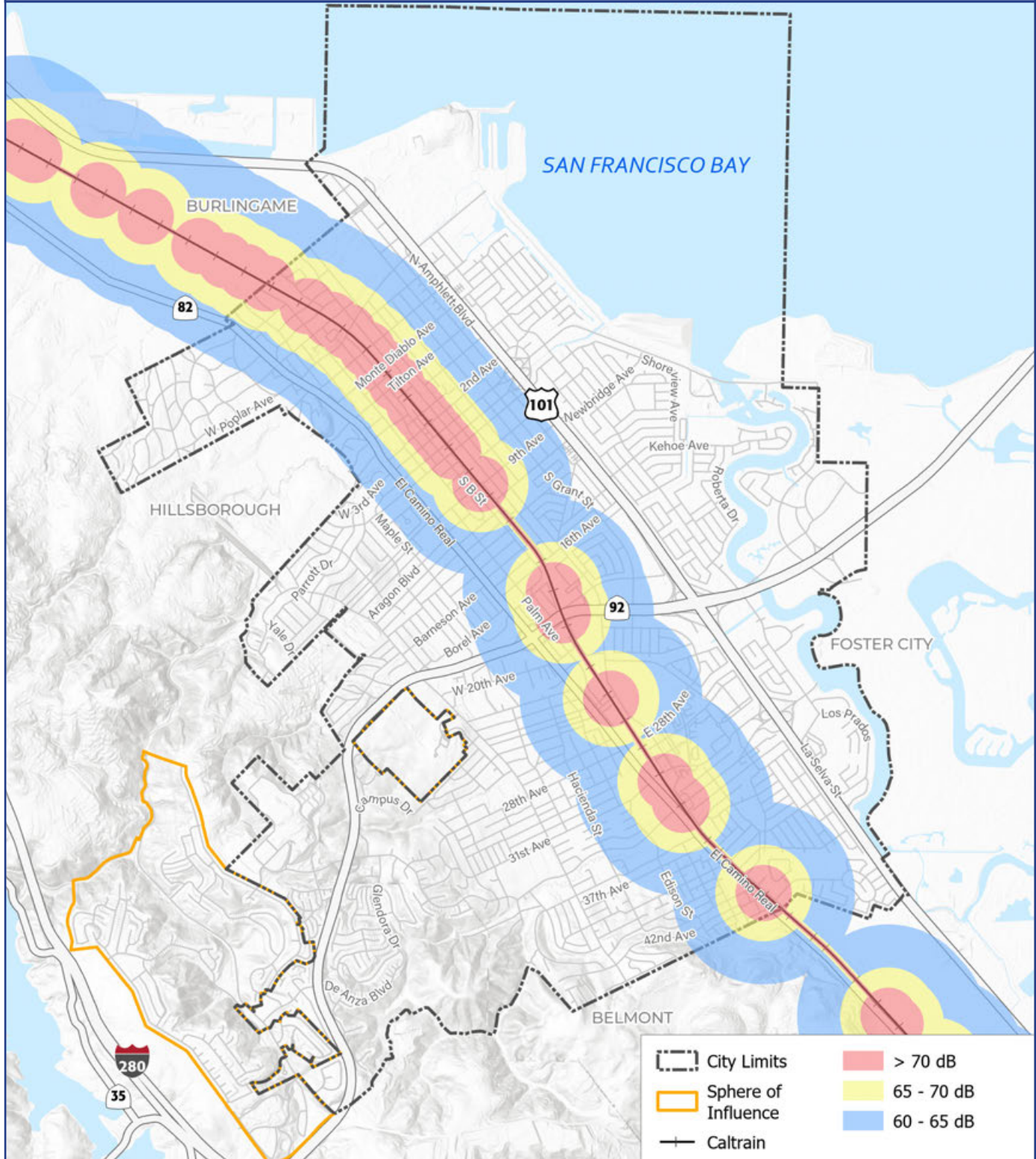


Source: ESRI, 2022; ECORP, 2023; PlaceWorks, 2023.





Figure N-3 Rail Noise Contours



Source: ESRI, 2022; ECORP, 2023; PlaceWorks, 2023.



## MITIGATING NOISE IMPACTS

Excessive noise in the city can be addressed in three ways: land use planning, physical mitigation, and administrative regulation. Land use planning means considering the existing and future noise environment when reviewing proposed development and locating new uses in a way that minimizes the exposure of new community members to excessive noise. Most of San Mateo is within the “conditionally acceptable” range of between 60 dB and 70 dB ( $L_{dn}$ ), so some form of noise mitigation will likely need to be incorporated into building and site design for any new noise-sensitive land uses listed in Table N-1.

San Mateo’s residential neighborhoods that border US Highway 101, State Route 92, El Camino Real, and the railroad corridor are subject to sound levels exceeding 70 dB ( $L_{dn}$ ), as shown in Figures N-1 and N-3. The Land Use Element allows residential and other types of development in these areas, and this Noise Element provides policy guidance to mitigate noise impacts on that new development, such as through site design and construction methods.

Physical mitigation refers to reducing the noise level by controlling how buildings are built and where they are located. For instance, buildings could use sound-absorbing materials to absorb the noise, install walls or windows to reduce the noise indoors, or be located in areas away from sources that produce substantial noise, such as freeways or train tracks. Trees and other vegetation can also help to absorb, deflect, and mask unwelcome noise, while also offering shade and absorbing carbon.

The City’s Noise Control Ordinance is an example of administrative regulations. This ordinance, which is part of the Municipal Code, limits the operating hours and duration of noise sources by decibel level. For example, construction activities are restricted at night so residents can have a quiet and peaceful night of sleep.

Noise mitigation in the city requires a collaborative approach between the City of San Mateo and other agencies. The City has the power to enact the policies in this Noise Element and the regulations in the Noise Control Ordinance. However, many sources of noise pollution are outside of the City’s control. Noise generated from trains that use the Caltrain/Southern Pacific rail corridor, particularly the train horns, is regulated by safety standards set by the Federal Rail Administration. While there is noise pollution from the San Francisco International Airport (SFO), the City has limited influence on flight paths, which are determined by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Additionally, freeways are under the jurisdiction of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). Moving forward, the City will continue to work closely with agencies such as Caltrain, Caltrans, and SFO to reduce noise impacts to all those that live, work, and play in San Mateo.



## GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

**GOAL N-1** Protect noise-sensitive land uses from excessive noise levels.

### POLICIES

**Policy N 1.1 Noise and Land Use Planning.** Integrate noise considerations into land use planning decisions to minimize noise impacts to or from new development.

**Policy N 1.2 Interior Noise Level Standard.** Require submittal of an acoustical analysis and interior noise insulation for all noise-sensitive land uses listed in Table N-1 that have an exterior noise level of 60 dBA ( $L_{dn}$ ) or above, as shown on Figure N-2. The maximum interior noise level shall not exceed 45 dBA ( $L_{dn}$ ) in any habitable rooms, as established by the California Building Code.

**Policy N 1.3 Exterior Noise Level Standard for Residential Uses.** Require an acoustical analysis for new multifamily common open space for residents that have an exterior noise level of 60 dBA ( $L_{dn}$ ) or above, as shown on Figure N-2. Incorporate necessary mitigation measures into residential project design to minimize common open space noise levels. Maximum exterior noise should not exceed 65 dBA ( $L_{dn}$ ) for residential uses.

**Policy N 1.4 Exterior Noise Level Standard for Parks and Playgrounds.** Require a feasibility analysis of noise-reduction measures for public parks and play areas that have an exterior noise level of 70 dBA ( $L_{dn}$ ) or above.



**Policy N 1.5 Inclusive Outreach.** Notify the community when new land uses that would result in excessive noise levels 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.



## GOAL N-2 Minimize unnecessary, annoying, or unhealthful noise.

### POLICIES

**Policy N 2.1 Noise Regulation.** Regulate noise in San Mateo to prohibit noise that is annoying or injurious to community members.

**Policy N 2.2 Minimize Noise Impacts.** Incorporate necessary mitigation measures into new development design to minimize short-term noise impacts. Determine whether new development has the potential to result in a significant noise impact on existing development based on the following standards. Impacts will be analyzed based on long-term operational noise increases at the sensitive receptor property line, or new uses that generate noise levels at the sensitive receptor property line, as follows:

Ldn Category of Existing Development Per Figures N-1, N-2, and/or N-3	Noise Increase Considered “Significant” over Existing Noise Levels
Normally Acceptable	An increase of more than 5 dBA and the total Ldn exceeds the “normally acceptable” category
Conditionally Acceptable	An increase of more than 5 dBA
Unacceptable	An increase of more than 5 dBA

**Policy N 2.3 Minimize Commercial Noise.** Protect land uses other than those listed as “noise sensitive” in Table N-1 from adverse impacts caused by the on-site noise generated by new developments. Incorporate necessary mitigation measures into development design to minimize short-term and long-term noise impacts. Prohibit new uses that generate noise levels of 65 dBA ( $L_{dn}$ ) or above at the property line, excluding existing ambient noise levels.

**Policy N 2.4 Traffic Noise.** Recognize projected increases in ambient noise levels resulting from future traffic increases, as shown on Figure N-2. Promote reduced traffic speeds and the installation of noise barriers or other methods to reduce traffic noise along highways and high-volume roadways where noise-sensitive land uses (listed in Table N-1) are adversely impacted by excessive noise levels (60 dBA [ $L_{dn}$ ] or above).

**Policy N 2.5 Railroad Noise.** Support the installation of noise barriers and other mitigations along the railroad corridor where noise-sensitive land uses are adversely impacted by excessive noise levels (60 dBA [ $L_{dn}$ ] or greater), as shown in Figure N-3.

**Policy N 2.6 Railroad Vibration.** Require that new residential projects (or other sensitive uses) within 200 feet of existing railroad lines conduct a ground-borne vibration and noise evaluation consistent with Federal Transit Administration-approved methodologies.

**Policy N 2.7 Construction Noise and Vibration Monitoring.** Require construction noise limits and vibration monitoring around sensitive receptors, including through limiting construction hours and individual and cumulative noise from construction equipment. For larger development projects that demand intensive construction periods and/or use equipment that could create vibration impacts, require a vibration impact analysis, as well as monitoring and reporting of noise/vibration levels throughout construction, consistent with industry standards.

## ACTIONS

**Action N 2.8 Conditions of Approval for Noise Monitoring.** Establish conditions of approval for larger development projects to ensure that requirements for construction noise and vibration monitoring include a requirement for a monitoring plan that provides information on the monitoring locations, durations and regularity, the instrumentation to be used, and appropriate noise and vibration control measures to ensure compliance with the noise ordinance and any applicable vibration limits.

**Action N 2.9 Railroad Noise Reductions.** Implement projects necessary to achieve Quiet Zones in the city, such as elimination of at-grade rail crossings or other mitigation measures to decrease horn and other operational noise levels, with a focus on achieving Quiet Zones as part of any substantial expansions of the rail service.

**Action N 2.10 Railroad Noise Barriers.** Work with the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board to promote and encourage adequate noise mitigations and barriers to be incorporated into any rail service expansion or track realignment.





# CHAPTER 10

## Abbreviations and Glossary









# ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

This glossary explains the technical terms used in this General Plan. Definitions come from several sources, including the California Office of Planning and Research, the California Institute for Local Government, and the American Planning Association *Glossary of Zoning, Development, and Planning Terms*.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AARP</b>	American Association of Retired Persons
<b>AA-T</b>	Arts Degree for Transfer
<b>AB</b>	Assembly Bill (State)
<b>ABAG</b>	Association of Bay Area Governments
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act
<b>ADU</b>	Accessory Dwelling Unit
<b>AMI</b>	Area Median Income
<b>AS-T</b>	Associate in Science Degree for Transfer
<b>AV</b>	Autonomous vehicle
<b>BAAQMD</b>	Bay Area Air Quality Management District
<b>BART</b>	Bay Area Rapid Transit
<b>BMR</b>	Below Market Rate
<b>BRT</b>	Bus Rapid Transit
<b>BUILD</b>	Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development
<b>CalEnviroScreen</b>	California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool
<b>CAL FIRE</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
<b>CalOES</b>	California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
<b>Cal Water</b>	California Water Company
<b>Caltrans</b>	California Department of Transportation
<b>CAP</b>	Climate Action Plan
<b>C/CAG</b>	City/County Association of Governments of San Mateo County
<b>CDFW</b>	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
<b>CEQA</b>	California Environmental Quality Act
<b>CERT</b>	Community Emergency Response Team

<b>CNEL</b>	Community Noise Equivalent Level
<b>CIP</b>	Capital Improvement Program
<b>dB</b>	Decibel
<b>dBA</b>	Decibel “A-Weighted”
<b>du/ac</b>	Dwelling units per acre
<b>EAS</b>	Emergency Alert System
<b>EBT</b>	Electronic Benefit Transfer
<b>EIR</b>	Environmental Impact Report
<b>EMS</b>	Emergency Medical Service
<b>EMID</b>	Estero Municipal Improvement District
<b>EV</b>	Electric Vehicle
<b>FAR</b>	Floor Area Ratio
<b>FAST</b>	Fixing America’s Surface Transportation
<b>FEMA</b>	Federal Emergency Management Agency
<b>FHSZ</b>	Fire Hazard Severity Zone
<b>FIRM</b>	Flood Insurance Rate Map
<b>FRAP</b>	Fire and Resource Assessment Program
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse Gas
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information Systems
<b>GPA</b>	General Plan Amendment
<b>GPS</b>	General Plan Subcommittee
<b>ITS</b>	Intelligent Transportation Systems
<b>JPB</b>	Joint Powers Board
<b>LAFCO</b>	Local Agency Formation Commission
<b>Ldn</b>	Day/Night Average Sound Level
<b>LID</b>	Low Impact Design
<b>LOS</b>	Level of Service
<b>LRA</b>	Local Responsibility Area
<b>MFD</b>	Multi-Family Dwelling
<b>MJHMP</b>	Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
<b>MMRP</b>	Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program



<b>MTC</b>	Metropolitan Transportation Commission
<b>ODS</b>	Objective Design Standards
<b>OneShoreline</b>	San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District
<b>PCE</b>	Peninsula Clean Energy
<b>PG&amp;E</b>	Pacific Gas and Electric Company
<b>PSPS</b>	Public Safety Power Shutoff
<b>RHNA</b>	Regional Housing Needs Allocation
<b>SB</b>	Senate Bill (State)
<b>SLR</b>	Sea Level Rise
<b>SPAR</b>	Site Plan and Architectural Review
<b>SFD</b>	Single-Family Dwelling
<b>SFPUC</b>	San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
<b>SF RWS</b>	San Francisco Regional Water System
<b>SMC Fire</b>	San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department
<b>SMCTA</b>	San Mateo County Transportation Authority
<b>SMPD</b>	San Mateo Police Department
<b>SOI</b>	Sphere of Influence
<b>SR-</b>	State Route
<b>SRA</b>	State Responsibility Area
<b>SVS</b>	Social Vocational Services
<b>TAC</b>	Toxic Air Contaminant
<b>TDM</b>	Transportation Demand Management
<b>TIA</b>	Transportation Impact Analysis
<b>TNC</b>	Transportation Network Company
<b>TOD</b>	Transit Oriented Development
<b>USACE</b>	United States Army Corps of Engineers
<b>VMT</b>	Vehicle Miles Traveled
<b>VHFHSV</b>	Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone
<b>WUI</b>	Wildland-Urban Interface

## TERMINOLOGY

**21 Elements.** A multi-year, multi-phase collaboration of all 21 San Mateo County jurisdictions, along with partner agencies and stakeholder organizations.

**Acreage.** The land area that exists prior to any dedications for public use, health, and/or safety purposes.

**Action.** A measure, procedure, or technique that helps the City achieve a specific goal. An action is something concrete that can and will be completed. (see “Goal”)

**Active Transportation.** Biking, walking, and other human-powered ways of getting around.

**Adaptation.** Making changes in response to current or future conditions (such as the increased frequency and intensity of climate-related hazards), usually to reduce harm and take advantage of new opportunities.

**Adaptive Management.** A flexible, iterative decision making process that can be adjusted in the face of uncertainties as outcomes from management actions and other events become better understood.<sup>1</sup>

**Adverse Impact.** A negative consequence for the physical, social, or economic environment resulting from an action or project.

**Affordability, Housing.** The relation of housing costs to household income.

**Affordable Housing.** A for-sale housing or rental housing affordable to households whose incomes do not exceed 120 percent of the area median income (moderate- or lower-income households).

**Archaeological Resource.** Material evidence of past human activity found below the surface of ground or water, portions of which may be visible above the surface.

**Assembly Bill (AB).** A State law or bill originating from the State Assembly. The abbreviation “AB” preceeds the specific bill number.

**Association of Bay Area Governments.** The regional planning agency for the nine Bay Area counties, including San Mateo County, and the 101 cities and towns within these counties.

**Asset.** A valued feature of a community that may be harmed by climate change. Assets may include buildings, infrastructure, community services, ecosystems, and economic drivers.

**Below Market Rate (BMR) Unit.** A below market rate unit is an affordable housing unit (see Affordable Housing definition).

**Buffer.** An area established between potentially conflicting land uses, which, depending on the potential impact, may use landscaping or structural barriers such as yards or roads.

**Bicycle Class Facilities.** A classification system for bicycle paths and roadways identified in the California Highway Design Manual.

**Shared-use paths (Class I):** Off-road pathways designed for people walking, biking, and rolling (e.g., skateboard or scooter).

**Separated bike lanes (Class IV):** A designated lane separated from vehicular traffic by a buffer with vertical protection (e.g., flexible posts, planters, parked vehicles, curbs).

1 U.S. Department of the Interior, 2009. *Adaptive Management, The U.S. Department of the Interior Technical Guide*, page 5.

**Buffered bike lanes (Class II):** A designated bicycle lane adjacent to vehicular traffic separated by a striped buffer area on the pavement.

**Standard bike lanes (Class II):** A designated bicycle lane directly adjacent to vehicular traffic.

**Bicycle boulevards (Class III):** Bicyclists share a lane with vehicular traffic and are identified with bicycle signage and pavement markings to increase driver awareness of bicyclists and aid bicyclists with navigation; however, bicycle boulevards include traffic-calming treatments and are solely implemented on low-speed (i.e., less than 25 mile per hour) and low-volume (i.e., less than 3,000 vehicles per day) streets to ensure they are low-stress facilities.

**Bicycle routes (Class III):** Bicyclists share the lane with vehicular traffic and are identified with bicycle signage and pavement markings to increase driver awareness of bicyclists and aid bicyclists with navigation. The City is phasing out this type of route within the bicycle network and upgrading to other facility types.

**Building.** A structure with substantial walls and roof designed for the shelter, enclosure, or protection of persons, animals, chattels, or property of any kind. (see “Structure”)

**Building Code.** Standards adopted by the State governing the construction, alteration, demolition, occupancy, or other use of buildings used for human habitation. The State regulations are substantially the same as those contained in the most recent editions of the Uniform Building Code, Uniform Housing Code, Uniform Plumbing Code, Uniform Mechanical Code, and the National Electric Code. Local governments may have stricter standards under certain circumstances.

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).** Legislation and corresponding procedural components established in 1970 by the State of California to require environmental review for projects anticipated to result in adverse impacts to the environment. (see “Environmental Impact Report”)

**Capital Improvement Program.** A program that schedules permanent improvements, usually for a minimum of five years in the future, that fits the projected fiscal capability of the local jurisdiction. The program generally is reviewed on an annual basis for conformance to and consistency with the General Plan.

**Carbon Neutral.** Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to zero, either by entirely eliminating all GHG emissions or by balancing out all remaining GHG emissions through carbon removal practices so that the “net” emissions are zero.

**City.** City with a capital “C” generally refers to the City of San Mateo government or administration. City with a lower case “c” may mean any city or may refer to the geographical area.

**City Limits.** The legal boundaries of the geographical area subject to the jurisdiction of the City of San Mateo’s government. For example, development applications for properties located within the City Limits must be reviewed by the City.

**Clean Air Refuge.** A building with efficient air filtration and improved air quality that is opened to community members during poor air quality days.

**Climate Change.** Long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns that have come to define the Earth’s local, regional and global climates. In the context of this plan, this term refers to changes brought on by human activities, also known as anthropogenic climate change.



**Compatible.** Capable of existing together without conflict or ill effects.

**Complete Street.** A transportation facility that is planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained to provide comfortable and convenient mobility, and improve accessibility and connectivity to essential community destinations for all users and abilities, regardless of whether they are travelling as pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchair users, public transportation riders, or drivers. Complete streets are especially attuned to the needs of people walking, using assistive mobility devices, rolling, biking, and riding transit.

**Complete Streets Act.** A law that requires all road construction and improvement projects to evaluate how the right-of-way serves all who use it, including pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

**Conservation.** The management and use of natural resources in a sustainable manner. Conservation results in land and water areas that are protected and managed for durability to sustain functional ecosystems, both intact and restored, and the diversity of life they support.

**Conserve.** To manage natural resources sustainably.

**Critical Facility.** A facility whose continued functioning is necessary to maintain public health and safety following a disaster, and where damage or failure could pose hazards to life and property well beyond their immediate vicinity.

**Cultural Resource.** A historic, archaeological, tribal, or paleontological resource or human remains. Cultural resources include tribal cultural resources, as defined in California Public Resources Code Section 21074, regardless of whether a tribe is federally recognized.

**Decibel (dB).** A unit used to express the relative intensity of a sound as it is heard by the human ear. The lowest volume a normal ear can detect under laboratory conditions is 0 decibel, the threshold of human hearing. Since the decibel scale is logarithmic, 10 decibels are 10 times more intense and 20 decibels are 100 times more intense than 1 decibel.

**Decibel, A-weighted (dBA).** The “A-weighted” scale for measuring sound in decibels, which weighs or reduces the effects of low and high frequencies to simulate human hearing. Every increase of 10 dBA doubles the perceived loudness, even though the noise is actually 10 times more intense.

**Dedication.** Giving private land for public use, and the acceptance of land for such use by the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the public function for which it will be used. Dedications for roads, parks, school sites, or other public uses are often required by a city or county as conditions for approval of a development. (see “In-Lieu Fee”)

**Density.** The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land (du/acre). Densities specified in this General Plan are expressed in dwelling units per net acreage, excluding land area that may be devoted to public right-of-way, including roadways.

**Development Review.** The comprehensive evaluation of a development and its impact on neighboring properties, the environment, and the community as a whole, from the standpoint of site and landscape design, architecture, materials, lighting, and signs, in accordance with a set of adopted criteria and standards.

**Development.** The physical expansion and/or construction of non-farm land uses. Development activities include subdivision of land; construction of a single-family dwelling on an existing lot; construction or alteration of structures, roads, utilities, and other facilities; grading; deposit of refuse, debris, or fill materials; and clearing of natural vegetative cover (with the exception of agricultural activities). Routine repair and maintenance activities are not considered development.

**Development Fees.** Direct charges or dedications collected on a one-time basis for a service provided or as a condition of approval being granted by the local government. The purpose of the fee or exaction must directly relate to the need created by the development. In addition, its amount must be proportional to the cost of the service or improvement. Fees can be broken down into two major classes: (1) service charges, such as permit fees covering the cost of processing development plans, connection, or standby fees for installing utilities, or application fees for reviewing and considering development proposals; and (2) “impact” fees levied on new development to cover the cost of infrastructure or facilities necessitated by development. (See “Impact Fee”)

**Duplex.** A free-standing house divided into two separate living units or residences, usually having separate entrances; or two single-family detached dwelling units on a single lot.

**Dwelling Unit.** The place of customary abode of a person or household, which is either considered to be real property under State law or cannot be easily moved.

**Ecosystem.** An interacting system formed by a biotic community and its physical environment.

**Electric Vehicle.** A zero-emission vehicle that uses electricity stored in a battery to power one or more electric motors and can be plugged in at home, work, fleet, or public charging stations.

**Environmental Impact Report.** A study required pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act that assesses all the environmental characteristics of an area, determines what effects or impacts will result if the area is altered or disturbed by a proposed action, and identifies alternatives or other measures to avoid or reduce those impacts. (see “California Environmental Quality Act”)

**Equity.** The state in which each individual or group is allocated or has access to the resources needed to reach an equal or fair outcome.

**Equity Priority Community.** A low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation. This is the term the City of San Mateo uses in place of “disadvantaged communities,” as named in Senate Bill (SB) 1000. SB 1000 defines disadvantaged communities per Health and Safety Code Section 39711, specifying CalEnviroScreen as the primary screening method for identifying these communities.

**Erosion.** The process by which soil and rock are detached and moved by running water, wind, ice, and gravity.

**Evacuation Route.** A roadway designated in the General Plan as a potential recommended route to travel when evacuating from a hazardous condition.

**Evacuation-Constrained Parcels.** Parcels located on a single-access road that do not have at least two ingress/egress routes.

**Exposure.** The presence of people, infrastructure, natural systems, and economic, cultural, and social resources in areas that are subject to harm.

**Farmers' Market.** A mobile or non-mobile market: (1) operated by a local government agency, one or more certified producers, or a nonprofit organization; (2) certified by and operating in a location approved by the County Agricultural Commissioner; and (3) where farmers sell directly to consumers agricultural products or processed products made from agricultural products that the farmers grow themselves.

**Fault.** A fracture in the earth's crust that forms a boundary between rock masses that have shifted.

**Fire Hazard Severity Zone.** An area of significant fire hazard based on fuels, terrain, weather, and other relevant hazards.

**Flood, 100-Year.** In any given year, a flood that has a 1 percent likelihood (a 1 in 100 chance) of occurring, and is recognized as a standard for acceptable risk.

**Flood, 500-Year.** In any given year, a flood that has a 0.2 percent likelihood (a 1 in 500 chance) of occurring.

**Floodplain.** The relatively level land area on either side of the banks of a stream regularly subject to flooding.

**Floor Area Ratio.** The size of a building in square feet (gross floor area) divided by gross land area, expressed as a decimal number. For example, a 60,000-square-foot building on a 120,000-square-foot parcel would have a floor area ratio of 0.50. The FAR is used in calculating the building intensity of development.

**Garden, Community.** A shared, semi-public space where people in the surrounding neighborhood share the work and harvest of maintaining a plot of fruits, vegetables, or other plants. Community gardens provide residents with an opportunity to grow fresh produce, flowers, or other plants on land that they do not own. Community gardens can also serve an educational function, especially when operated by community organizations or educational institutions.

**Gateway.** A unique transition point in topography, architecture, or land use that serves as an entrance to the city or specific neighborhoods within the city.

**General Plan.** A collection of City policies regarding its long-term development, in the form of maps and accompanying text. The General Plan is a legal document required of each local agency by the State of California Government Code Section 65301 and adopted by the City Council.

**Geographic Information Systems.** A combination of approaches, programs, methodologies, and technologies to map, gather, store, manipulate, analyze, present, and interpret spatial information and data.

**Goal.** A description of the general desired result sought by the City. Each goal has one or more policies and/or actions associated with the goal. (see "Policy" and "Action")

**Greenhouse Gas.** A gas that allows sunlight to pass through but reflect heat radiated from the earth's surface, trapping heat in the lower atmosphere. Common greenhouse gases (GHGs) include water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O). They may be emitted by natural or human processes.

**Groundwater.** Water that exists beneath the earth's surface, typically found between saturated soils and rock, and is used to supply wells and springs.



**Habitat.** The physical location or type of environment in which an organism or biological population lives or occurs.

**Hazard.** An event or physical condition that has the potential to cause fatalities, injuries, property damage, infrastructure damage, agricultural losses, damage to the environment, interruption of business, or other types of harm or loss.

**Hazard Mitigation.** Sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property through actions that reduce hazard, exposure, and vulnerability.

**Hazardous Material, Hazardous Waste.** A substance or waste that, because of its physical, chemical, or other characteristics, may pose a risk of endangering human health or safety or of degrading the environment. This does not include household hazardous waste, universal waste, or electronic waste, as they do not contain the quantity, concentration, and/or types of products significant enough to pose a substantial risk to human health and safety or to the environment.

**Historic Resource.** A historic resource is a building, structure, site, or district that has one or more of the following characteristics:

- Listed in or determined to be on or individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and/or California Register of Historical Resources.
- Identified as a Downtown Historic District or Glazenwood Historic District contributor building as designated in the 1989 Historic Building Survey Report.
- Determined to be eligible through documentation contained in a historic resources report.

**Horizon Year.** The year through which the General Plan is intended to be effective, or 2040.

**Household.** All persons occupying one dwelling unit.

**Human Scale.** Buildings, structures, streetscape, and other urban design elements that are of a size and proportion that relates to the size of a human to create a comfortable and inviting experience.

**Impact, Climate.** The effects (especially the negative effects) of a hazard or other condition associated with climate change.

**Impact Fee.** A fee imposed on a proposed development project by a jurisdiction to address impacts to city services or infrastructure, based on the number of units, square footage, or acreage. The fee is often used to offset costs of schools, roads, police and fire services, housing, and parks. (See “Development Fee”)

**Implementation.** Actions, procedures, programs, or techniques that carry out a plan.

**Infill Development.** Development that occurs on vacant or underutilized land within areas that are already largely developed.

**In-Lieu Fee.** A fee that may be required of an owner or developer as a substitute for a dedication of land or an asset for public use, such as public art, replacement of trees, or parking spaces, usually calculated in dollars per lot, and referred to as in-lieu fees or in-lieu contributions. (see “Dedication”)

**King Tides.** Abnormally high, predictable astronomical tides that occur about twice per year, with the highest tides occurring when the Earth, Moon, and Sun are aligned.

**Land Use.** The occupation or use of an area of land for any human activity or purpose.

**Land Use Designation.** One particular land use category, from a range of land use classifications, assigned to a parcel as established by the General Plan Land Use Element.

**Landslide.** Movement of soil and/or rock down a slope, which typically occurs during an earthquake or following heavy rainfall.

**Liquefaction.** The transformation of loose, wet soil from a solid to a liquid state, often as a result of ground shaking during an earthquake.

**Local Agency Formation Commission.** A five- or seven-member commission within each county that reviews and evaluates all proposals for formation of special districts, incorporation of cities, annexation to special districts or cities, consolidation of districts, and merger of districts with cities. Each county's LAFCO is empowered to approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve such proposals.

**Maximum Development.** Development of land to its full potential, or theoretical capacity, as permitted under current or proposed planning or zoning designations.

**Micro Agriculture.** The practice of growing and processing fresh food in an urban area.

**Micromobility.** Transportation via small, lightweight vehicles, typically electric assisted, operated by the driver, such as electric scooters and bicycles. Vehicles typically do not exceed 15 miles per hour and are often available for rent for short-range travel within a defined area.

**Mitigation.** A protective measure or modification of a project to avoid, reduce, minimize, or eliminate a negative impact. There are various types of mitigation, including environmental impact mitigation, hazard mitigation, greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, and more.

**Mixed-Use.** Any mix of land uses, including mixing residences with commercial, offices with retail, or visitor accommodation with offices and retail. As distinguished from a single-use land use designation or zone, mixed use refers to an authorized variety of uses for buildings and structures in a particular area. When the mix of uses is within one building, it's called vertical mixed-use. A type of mixed-use development where uses are behind or next to each other but in different buildings on the same development site is called horizontal mixed use.

**Multimodal Level of Service.** A scale that measures the performance of vehicle, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities.

**Municipality.** An incorporated city or town.

**Neighborhood.** Relatively large residential areas that have some common characteristics, such as a common history, neighborhood association, or common physical characteristics (e.g., architectural style), a common meeting place, intangible characteristics (e.g., a psychological sense of cohesion), or clear physical boundaries (e.g., waterways or major roads).

**Noise Contour.** A line connecting points of equal noise level as measured on the same scale.

**Noise-Sensitive Use.** A location where people reside or where the presence of unwanted sound could adversely affect the use of land, such as residences, schools, and hospitals.

**Non-Conforming Use.** A use that was legally allowed when brought into existence, but no longer permitted by current regulation. “Non-conforming use” is a generic term and includes: (1) non-conforming structures (because their size, type of construction, location on land, or proximity to other structures is no longer permitted); (2) non-conforming use of a conforming building; (3) non-conforming use of a non-conforming building; and (4) non-conforming use of land. Any use lawfully existing on any piece of property that is inconsistent with a new or amended General Plan, and that in turn is a violation of a Zoning Ordinance amendment subsequently adopted in conformance with the General Plan, will be a non-conforming use. Typically, non-conforming uses are considered “grandfathered in” and permitted to continue, subject to certain restrictions on discontinuance or rehabilitation.

**Nonessential Idling.** Unnecessary operation of a gas-powered vehicle while it is stationary when none of the following circumstances are met: the vehicle is stuck in traffic; idling is necessary to inspect or service the vehicle; the vehicle is transferring power via a power-takeoff device; the vehicle can’t move due to adverse weather conditions or mechanical failure; the vehicle is a bus with passengers on board. See California Code of Regulations, Title 13, Section 2485, for a full definition.

**Overlay.** A land use or zoning designation that modifies the basic underlying designation or designations in some specific manner.

**Parcel.** An area of land that is a legally created lot.

**Park.** Tract of land set aside for public use, aesthetic enjoyment, recreation, or the conservation of natural resources.

**Regional Park:** Regional Parks are of a relatively expansive size and their unique natural and cultural attractions draw visitors from the entire region. These parks usually have many uses and require a higher level of management when compared to smaller parks such as city parks, neighborhood parks, recreation centers, and pocket parks, which have fewer activities and primarily serve local residents.

**Community Park:** Community parks serve the needs of a range of people, from several neighborhoods to the entire city. They typically contain a wide variety of facilities for active and passive recreation, and organized sports. They also provide amenities typical of neighborhood parks for use by the surrounding residents. Parks containing fewer elements but that contain facilities that serve the entire city may be considered to be community parks.

**Neighborhood Park:** Neighborhood Parks provide for the daily recreation needs of nearby residents, with primarily passive and informal recreation facilities. Neighborhood parks often include play areas, picnic areas, open turf areas or green space, basketball courts, and tennis courts. The neighborhood parks also may contain play fields.

**Mini Parks:** Mini parks are small parks, generally less than one acre in size, that accommodate the daily recreation needs of nearby residents. They typically include children’s play areas, sitting areas, and limited green space, but are not large enough to contain play fields.

**Policy.** A specific statement that guides decision making as the City works to achieve a goal. Policies represent statements of City regulation and set the standards used by decision makers when considering proposed development and actions. A policy is ongoing and requires no further action (see “Goal”).



**Reach Code.** A local municipal code that exceeds the State Building Code requirements. A reach code must be at least as stringent as the State Code, cost-effective, approved by the California Energy Commission, and updated and re-approved with each State Energy Code update.

**Reconstruction.** Redevelopment of a building or structure, after being damaged or destroyed in a disaster, to its original state.

**Resilience.** The capacity of any entity—an individual, community, organization, or natural system—to prepare for disruptions, recover from shocks and stresses, and adapt and grow from a disruptive experience. Community resilience is the ability of communities to withstand, recover, and learn from past disasters to strengthen future response and recovery efforts.

**Rewilding.** Returning land to its natural state to regenerate natural areas. In contrast to restoration, rewilding focuses on returning ecosystems to their former states as close as possible while allowing for plant, animal, and other ecosystem substitutions to account for changing future conditions.

**Riparian.** A habitat and vegetation zone that is associated with the banks and floodplains of a river, stream, or lake. Riparian trees and shrubs are typically phreatophytes, plants whose root systems are in constant contact with groundwater.

**Risk.** The potential for damage or loss created by the interaction of hazards with assets such as buildings, infrastructure, or natural and cultural resources.

**Roadway Classifications.** Roadway classifications define the function of various street types in the transportation network. The City of San Mateo classifies its roadways using the Caltrans Functional Classification System.

**Local:** Local roads are the largest percentage of roadways in terms of mileage. These provide direct access to abutting land. They may be designed to discourage through traffic; they are not intended to cover long distances. The annual average daily traffic volume for local roads is 80 to 700 trips.

**Major Collector:** Major collectors gather traffic from local roads and funnel it to arterials. Compared to local roadways, major collectors are longer, have fewer driveways, have higher speed limits, and may have more travel lanes. The annual average daily traffic volume for major collectors is 1,100 to 6,300 trips.

**Minor Arterials:** Minor arterials are used for trips of moderate length, serve smaller geographic areas than principal arterials and offer connections between principal arterials and other roadways. The annual average daily traffic volume for minor arterials is 3,000 to 14,000 trips.

**Principal Arterials:** Principal arterials are the main streets within the city that carry the greatest number of users and serve the largest area. Unlike a freeway, travelers can access destinations directly from the arterial through driveways and at-grade intersections with other roadways. The annual average daily traffic volume for principal arterials is 7,000 to 27,000 trips. El Camino Real is the only principal arterial in San Mateo.

**Freeways or Expressways:** Freeways and expressways have directional travel lanes that are usually separated by a physical barrier, and their access and egress points are limited to on- and off-ramp locations or a very limited number of at-grade intersections. The annual average daily traffic volume for freeways and expressways is 13,000 to 55,000 trips. US Highway 101 and State Route 92 are the two freeways in San Mateo.

**Safe Routes to School.** Pedestrian and bicycling routes that provide children with safe access to and from schools.

**Scenic Roadways; Scenic Trails.** Land that is visible from, adjacent to, and outside a roadway right-of-way, and is made up primarily of scenic and natural features. Topography, vegetation, viewing distance, and/or jurisdictional lines determine the scenic corridor boundaries.

**Sea Level Rise.** The worldwide average rise in mean sea level, which may be due to a number of different causes, such as the thermal expansion of sea water and the addition of water to the oceans from the melting of glaciers, ice caps, and ice sheets, including as a result of climate change.

**Seniors.** People 65 years of age or older.

**Sensitive Habitat.** Land containing unique, representative, threatened, and/or endangered plant and animal communities, or ecosystems.

**Sensitive Receptor.** A use that is highly sensitive to impacts from other uses, including homes, schools, playgrounds, sports fields, childcare centers, senior centers, hospitals, and long-term healthcare facilities.

**Sensitivity.** The level to which a species, natural system, community, or government would be affected by changing climate conditions.

**Severe Ground Shaking.** Intense ground movement resulting from the transmission of seismic waves during an earthquake.

**Specific Plan.** Under Article 8 of the Government Code (Section 65450 et seq.), a legal tool for detailed design and implementation of a defined portion of the area covered by a General Plan. A Specific Plan may include all or a part of detailed regulations, conditions, programs, and/or proposed legislation that may be necessary or convenient for the systematic implementation of any General Plan element(s).

**Sphere of Influence.** The probable physical boundaries and service area of a municipality or special district, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission of the county.

**Stormwater.** Water that comes from a rain event.

**Story.** The term to define building height in the General Plan. The General Plan does not regulate the height of individual stories. Overall building height limits are established by Measure Y and/or the Zoning Code.

**Structure.** Anything constructed or erected on and permanently attached to the ground, except fences six feet or less in height (see “Building”).

**Sustainability.** Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs in three key realms, or pillars: economic viability, environmental protection, and social equity.

**Toxic Air Contaminant.** An air pollutant that may cause or contribute to an increase in serious illness, or that may pose a present or potential hazard to human health, according to California Health and Safety Code Section 39655.

**Traffic Calming.** Measures designed to reduce motor vehicle speeds and to encourage pedestrian and bicycle use, including narrow streets with fewer lanes, tight turning radii, sidewalk bulbouts, parking bays, textured paving at intersections, and parkways between sidewalks and streets.

**Transit-Oriented Development.** The clustering of homes and jobs at higher densities within a half mile of a rail station or bus service with 15 minute headways or less.

**Triplex.** A free-standing house divided into three separate living units or residences, usually having separate entrances, or three single-family detached dwelling units on a single lot.

**Unincorporated Area.** Land that is outside of an incorporated city and falls under a County's jurisdiction. Development proposals in unincorporated areas need County review and approval.

**Use.** The purpose for which a lot or structure is or may be leased, occupied, maintained, arranged, designed, intended, constructed, erected, moved, altered, and/or enlarged in accordance with the City Zoning Code and the General Plan land use designations.

**Wastewater.** Water that contains other elements, such as sewage, small pathogens, organic matter, and inorganic contaminants. This term is also used to refer to water generated in industrial plants and commercial activity.

**Wetland.** An area that is seasonally or permanently inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a distinct ecosystem with a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, commonly known as hydrophytic vegetation. Wetlands may be coastal or inland.

**Wildland-Urban Interface.** An area that includes both houses and wildland vegetation, creating a significant threat to human life or property from wildfires.

**Zoning.** Zoning implements the land use policies of the General Plan. The adopted codes of a City by ordinance or other legislative regulation that identifies districts or zones citywide. These zones specify allowable uses for real property, as well as standards for buildings constructed in these areas.







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