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Planning

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San Francisco Planning Department
General Plan Annual Progress Report
2022 Reporting Period

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Introduction

About the General Plan

California Government Code Section 65300 mandates that each planning agency prepare, and the legislative body shall adopt a General Plan for guiding physical change in the City. Chartered cities must include specific elements in the General Plan, as listed in Government Code Section 65302¹. San Francisco's first General Plan was adopted by the Planning Commission in 1945 as the embodiment of San Francisco's vision for the future. The General Plan is intended to serve as a living document in "the first step in the continuous process of planning,"² and provides a comprehensive set of objectives and policies that influence how we live, work, and move about, as well as the quality and character of the City.

The San Francisco General Plan includes objectives and policies in a series of Elements and Area Plans. Each Element deals and with a particular topic and applies citywide, while Area Plans make policies found in the Elements more precise as they relate to specific parts of the city. The San Francisco City Charter³ requires the Planning Commission to update the General Plan from time to time through the process of amendments and referrals.

About the Annual Progress Report

Government Code Section 65400 and 65700 mandates that all cities and counties submit an annual report on the status of the General Plan and progress in its implementation to their legislative bodies, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and Housing and Community Development (HCD) by April 1 of each year. The General Plan Annual Progress Report (APR) provides local legislative bodies and the public with information regarding the implementation of the General Plan for the City.

This 2022 General Plan APR covers the period from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022.

This General Plan APR does not describe San Francisco's progress toward implementing the Housing Element. This information can be found in the 2022 Housing Element APR, which will be submitted to HCD by April 1, 2023.

¹ [*California Government Code section 65302.*](#)

² [*San Francisco General Plan, adopted December 1945.*](#)

³ [*San Francisco Charter, section 4.105*](#)

General Plan Amendments and Updates

Safety and Resilience Element

San Francisco adopted a Safety and Resilience Element in December 2022. This new element replaces the former 2012 Community Safety Element to comply with OPR General Plan Guidelines Chapters 4 (required elements), 5 (equitable and resilient communities), 6 (healthy communities), and 8 (climate change); SB 379; and SB 1000. The Safety and Resilience Element incorporates stronger and additional content on climate resilience, environmental justice, and racial and social equity. In addition to pandemic, sea level rise, and poor air quality, the Safety and Resilience Element provides comprehensive policies for minimizing the City’s contribution to the climate crisis and ensuring local resilience to all hazards. The Safety and Resilience Element incorporates the 2020 Hazards and Climate Resilience Plan and 2021 Climate Action Plan by reference, two major implementation and action documents for mitigation and adaptation. For environmental justice and racial and social equity, the Safety and Resilience Element names Environmental Justice Communities as geographic areas in the City to prioritize attention and resources, where there are communities facing disproportionate burden of pollution exposure and social vulnerabilities. These policies were identified during development of the Environmental Justice Framework (see below) per Chapter 5 and SB 1000.

Housing Element

San Francisco adopted an update to the Housing Element of the General Plan in January 2023 (adoption commenced in the 2022 reporting period). The update is the City’s first Housing Element centering racial and social equity in its policies while addressing state mandated goals of Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing, ensuring sufficient sites and zoning to meet larger RHNA requirements, removing constraints to housing development, maintenance, and improvement, and incorporating policies on environmental justice, as identified in the Environmental Justice Framework (see below). The Housing Element includes Implementing Programs consisting of over 350 actions the City is undertaking or intends to undertake to implement the Housing Element’s policies and achieve its goals and objectives. See the 2022 Housing Element APR for further details.

Other General Plan Elements

The date of adoption or latest major update of each General Plan Element is given in table 1 below.

Table 1: General Plan Components, year of adoption or latest major update

General Plan Component	Year Adopted or Updated
Introduction	1996 (In process, update anticipated Spring 2023)
Housing	Updated January 2023
Safety and Resilience (new element, replaces Community Safety)	Adopted December 2022
Recreation and Open Space	2014
Air Quality	1997

General Plan Component	Year Adopted or Updated
Transportation	1995 (In process, update anticipated 2025)
Arts	1991
Environmental Protection	1988
Community Facilities	1988
Commerce and Industry	1987
Urban Design	1972

General Plan Updates underway

The San Francisco Planning Department is currently developing objectives and policies that will result in major updates to several General Plan Elements, described in Table 2 and in the Compliance with OPR General Plan Guidelines section below.

Table 2: General Plan Updates underway

Amendments to:	Date
Environmental Justice Framework & Updated Introduction to the General Plan	Recommended for adoption by the Planning Commission March 2023. Adoption by the Board of Supervisors anticipated Spring of 2023.
General Plan Amendments related to the Port's Waterfront Plan update	Initiated at the Planning Commission March 2023. Adoption by the Board of Supervisors anticipated Summer of 2023.
Transportation Element	Update in process; adoption anticipated 2025

General Plan Implementation

General Plan policies and objectives are implemented via the San Francisco Planning Code and Zoning Map, Development Agreements, Design Guidelines, other implementation documents associated with General Plan elements and area plans, and through review and approval of private and public projects by the Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and other City bodies.

Private Projects

The objectives and policies reflected in the Planning Code and Zoning Map translate the General Plan's vision into specific rules for private development. Review and approval of private projects must also incorporate assessment of the proposed project against General Plan policies and objectives. This comes in the form of "Findings" that affirm a project's compliance with specific objectives and policies of the General Plan, and Consistency with eight priority-planning policies in Planning Code Section 101.1(b).

Public Projects

San Francisco's Administrative Code requires that certain actions be referred to the San Francisco Planning Department for evaluation of consistency with the General Plan prior to their consideration by the Board of Supervisors. Actions requiring finding of consistency with the General Plan include real estate transactions by San Francisco, subdivision mapping, improvements to public structures, affordable housing projects that benefit from assistance by San Francisco, Redevelopment plans or amendments thereto, changes to public right-of-way, and capital expenditure plans (San Francisco Charter Section 4.105 and San Francisco Administrative Code Section 2A.53). In most cases, an agency with jurisdiction over a particular action to be considered by the Board of Supervisors will submit a General Plan Referral (GPR) application to the Planning Department, requesting findings of consistency with the General Plan. In 2022, the San Francisco Planning Department received 35 GPR applications.

Master Plans

Site-specific master planning efforts for several large sites are currently ongoing. These are typically mixed-use developments with mixed-income and affordable housing, open space, and community benefits such as improved mobility, sustainability and resilience. Notable sites include:

1. **Freedom West**, a 4-block cooperative housing development in the Western Addition neighborhood, built as part of the former Redevelopment project area in the early 1970s. The project aims to rebuild and replace the existing co-op community and add substantial new housing (including additional affordable units), neighborhood-serving retail and community services, and new public open space.
2. **Potrero Yard**, a 4-acre, full city block SFMTA-owned bus yard in the northeastern Mission District. The project aims to add mixed-income housing on top of a new multi-story bus storage and maintenance facility.
3. **Stonestown**, a large indoor retail mall surrounded by surface parking, located on the west side of San Francisco adjacent to San Francisco State University. The project aims to add substantial housing and public spaces, create a more pedestrian-friendly street environment, and connect the site with the surrounding community.
4. **Railyards Working Group**, an interagency group studying and coordinating the transportation infrastructure and land use configurations and opportunities for the 20+-acre 4th/King Railyards that separates the South of Market and Mission Bay neighborhoods, where Caltrain, future CA High Speed Rail, SFMTA light rail and buses come together at a major node.
5. **Treasure Island Job Corps Site**. The Treasure Island Development Authority (TIDA), in conjunction with the Planning Department and other City and Federal agencies, is exploring the redevelopment of the 37-acre Treasure Island Job Corps site to integrate it into the wider Treasure Island redevelopment effort. As currently envisioned, the existing US Department of Labor Job Corps campus would be redeveloped into a mixed-use, primarily residential neighborhood, along with consolidated new facilities for the San Francisco Job Corps.
6. **Plaza East**, a re-envisioning of the existing public housing at Plaza East Apartments in Fillmore Western Addition. The project proposes a mix of market rate housing, replacement of existing affordable units, and flexible community space. The new development would be a mixed-income

community that leverages tax credits for buildings with public housing units and financing to support robust property management.

Policy Studies

Several Citywide and District-scale Policy Studies concluded or were ongoing in 2022, including:

1. **Transportation Network Companies and Land Use Planning Study**, published June 2022. This study analyzed the impact of Transportation Network Companies (e.g., Lyft and Uber) on land use planning and identified policy options to address the impacts.
2. **Citywide PDR Strategy**, ongoing. The Strategy aims to create an updated, cohesive and comprehensive policy strategy, land use regulatory framework, and supporting programs to protect and grow production, distribution and repair business and jobs in San Francisco. The PDR sector is essential to the social and economic diversity and vitality of the City and to its daily functioning and resiliency.

Compliance with OPR General Plan Guidelines

Several ongoing planning efforts will increase the General Plan’s compliance with OPR Guidelines:

Environmental Justice Framework and General Plan Introduction update

The San Francisco Planning Department has developed an Environmental Justice Framework (“Framework”) which sets priorities to integrate environmental justice considerations throughout the General Plan. Rather than a standalone Environmental Justice Element, the Framework will be incorporated by reference into the General Plan Introduction, which will be updated with themes distilled from recent long-range planning efforts. The Framework was developed in accordance with SB 1000 requirements and OPR’s General Plan Guidelines, and in strong alignment with citywide racial and social equity goals. These priorities guided the development of environmental justice objectives and policies in the Safety and Resilience Element (adopted in 2022) and the update to the Housing Element (adopted in 2023). The Framework includes a map of Environmental Justice Communities which identifies disadvantaged communities as defined by state law and additional areas identified by the Planning Department with the highest cumulative environmental burden and social vulnerability. The Framework and General Plan Introduction update have been recommended for adoption by the Planning Commission and is anticipated to be adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2023.

Tribal Cultural Resource Consultation

The San Francisco Planning Department conducts outreach, notification, and consultation with local Native American representatives for General Plan Updates, for affordable housing projects as required under Assembly Bill 168, and for tribal cultural resources per CEQA requirements. Additionally, the department notifies Native American tribal representatives of public interpretation projects. The Planning Department contacts representatives on the Native American Heritage Commission’s (NAHC) list for San Francisco as well as parties on the interested local Native American representative list maintained by the department.

In 2022, the Planning Department issued 18 notifications to Native American tribal representatives on project and plans, of which, approximately 70% resulted in consultation with Native American tribal representatives. The Planning Department continued consultation with multiple tribal representatives on the SF Port’s Waterfront Plan EIR and the Housing Element 2022 Update EIR. In regard to General Plan updates, the Planning

Department continued consultation with Native American representatives on the goals, plans, and policies of the Housing Element 2022 Update. The Planning Department also engaged with the American Indian Cultural District (AICD) regarding the Housing Element 2022 Update, which is located in the Mission neighborhood and founded in 2020 to recognize, honor, and celebrate the American Indian legacy, culture, people, and contributions. In 2022, the Planning Department received an OHP grant to undertake an American Indian Historic Context Statement and is coordinating with the AICD and local Native American representatives on the development and realization of the historic context, which help inform both our CEQA review and General Plan updates.

Transportation Element

The San Francisco Planning Department is updating the Transportation Element of the General Plan, last updated in 1995. Adoption of the update is anticipated in 2025. In addition to addressing statutory requirements (e.g., correlation with land use, existing and proposed transportation networks, Complete Streets), the update will include policies related to important transportation issues in San Francisco, such as parking and curb management, emerging mobility services and technologies, and others. The new Transportation Element will be aligned with the City's recently updated Housing Element (2022) and incorporate content in the Environmental Justice Framework discussed above.

Budget Request for Future General Plan Updates

Currently pending before the Mayor's Office is a proposal from the Planning Commission, seeking staffing support for the development of two new General Plan elements: Healthy Cities and Land Use & Economy.

1. **Healthy Cities Element.** If funded, work on this proposed element would begin July 1, 2023. The Healthy Cities element would build on the Environmental Justice Framework, now pending before the Board of Supervisors, and would update and consolidate content from several existing elements including Environmental Protection (last updated 1988), Urban Design (last updated 1972), Air Quality (last updated 1997), and Arts (last updated 1991).
2. **Land Use & Economy Element.** The Department is devoting greater resources to economic recovery from the current COVID-fueled downturn, particularly grappling with the long-term structural changes affecting patterns of employment, land use and commercial activity. The Department is collaborating with OEWD and community organizations to explore the Future of Downtown, particularly looking at economic diversification of the office-based economy, growing opportunities for housing, activating ground floor spaces and the public realm, and supporting economic activity Union Square. Additionally, the Citywide Division is collaborating with OEWD to develop strategies to facilitate the growth and recovery of businesses that enhance the diversity and resiliency of the job base, with particular focus on the PDR and biotech sectors. With the foundation of these efforts the Department will be undertaking the creation of a new Land Use Element of the General Plan, as required by state law, consolidating into this effort updates to content from the outdated Commerce & Industry Element (last updated in 1987) and Community Facilities Element (last updated in 1990) along with content from the recently adopted Housing Element. Aligned with equity goals to ensure adequate access to public services, the Department will continue to coordinate interagency planning and community engagement around Community Facility needs.

Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination

The Planning Department is heavily engaged in the regional Plan Bay Area process, the Bay Area's regional long-range plan focusing on the economy, environment, housing, and transportation. This plan, which is updated every four years under the auspices of the region's Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), is coordinated with agencies across nine Bay Area counties that represent 101 cities and towns of the region. The Plan Bay Area process also produces the region's Sustainable Communities Strategy as required by Senate Bill 375, and the Regional Transportation Plan. The most recent plan, Plan Bay Area 2050, was adopted in fall 2021. The Planning Department continues to be an active participant in Plan Bay Area implementation activities, including commenting on guidelines for MTC/ABAG's implementation of the Transit Oriented Communities Policy, the Priority Sites program, and grant programs for the Priority Development Area, Priority Conservation Area, and Priority Production Areas.

Strategy for Monitoring Long-term Growth

Plan Bay Area is the primary source of long-term population and growth projections for the City and region. The Planning Department has and is working on a variety of projects to address the public service and infrastructure needs of this growth, specifically through the various General Plan updates, site-specific master plans and citywide or district-scale policy studies mentioned earlier in this report. Participating in and implementing strategies in Plan Bay Area is the Department and City's primary strategy for monitoring long-term growth.

The Planning Department provides and refines the regional projections for use by our local infrastructure and public services agencies, including but not limited to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, San Francisco Unified School District, transit agencies (e.g., SFMTA, BART, Caltrain), Recreation & Parks Department, and public safety agencies. Through the recently adopted update to the Housing Element and ongoing through implementation, the Planning Department is engaged with these various infrastructure and service-delivery agencies to ensure each agency's plan are aligned with the General Plan's vision of housing and population growth.