

SAN FRANCISCO COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS TOOLKIT



A Guide to Community Investments and Planning

AUGUST 2026

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SECTION 1: **INTRODUCTION**

Purpose of the Community Investments Toolkit

This Toolkit is prepared by the San Francisco Planning Department (SF Planning) as a resource for community members, community organizations, and policymakers to explain how community investments and infrastructure are delivered by public and private investment. The guide is meant to help residents plan for the future of their communities, including meeting local needs and shaping new development, while also aligning with state and local goals to build more homes.

The Toolkit supports effective collaboration between communities, city government (the City), and private developers by:

- 1. Explaining the community planning process.

- 2. Identifying ways to shape development in communities given current legal and economic conditions.
- 3. Describing the available tools and funding for community investments to meet local needs.

See next page on how to navigate the sections of the Toolkit.

The Community Investments Toolkit helps implement various policies and programs of the 2022 Housing Element (San Francisco’s eight-year housing plan). See the [Policy and Economic Context](#) section of the Toolkit for more on the Housing Element and the legal and economic conditions shaping development and planning.

What are Community Investments

Community Investments are the infrastructure and amenities that make San Francisco’s neighborhoods unique and livable.

This Toolkit focuses on six types of community investments:



**Community-Led
Small Scale Projects**



**Affordable
Housing**



**Parks and
Public Space**



**Street
Improvements**



**Community and
Cultural Facilities**



**Design and
Public Art**

These investments range from small, community-led projects to large, multi-million-dollar developments. This guide also explains how city rules and local planning can shape private development to better align with community goals.

Community investments are identified, funded, and delivered through public, philanthropic, and private investment, often in combination. Beyond new

infrastructure, they can support community stability and culture. This guide helps communities use available tools and rules to address their needs and goals.

This guide does not cover health, education, social programs, or larger-scale infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, and sewers, which are also key to equitable and resilient communities.

How to Use the Community Investments Toolkit

How do we plan for the future of our community?

Go to →
Community Planning &
Visioning on pg. 17

START here if you're asking:

- » How do we create a long-term community plan?
- » How do we address community needs in a holistic way?

Remember:

- » Community planning brings together community members, policymakers, and city agencies to coordinate vision and efforts.
- » Community planning can be time-consuming but can be worthwhile to address multiple community needs together.
- » Plans with major zoning changes may need environmental review and take more time, analysis, and coordination.

How can community shape development projects?

Go to →
Shaping Development on
pg. 27

START here if you're asking:

- » What rules do projects have to follow?
- » How can the community shape development?

Remember:

- » The City has zoning, land use, and design rules that shape development. (*pg. 30 Zoning, pg. 27 Shaping Development*)
- » The City sets fees and requirements on development. (*pg. 45 Impact Fees, pg. 32 Development Requirements*)
- » State housing laws limit local rules and process (*pg. 11 Changes in State Housing Laws*) for multifamily housing projects. Instead, these laws emphasize long-range, community planning that sets objective standards for housing.

How are community projects funded?

Go to →
Funding Community
Investments on pg. 39

START here if you're asking:

- » How are projects like parks and affordable housing built?
- » How do different community projects get funded?

Remember:

- » There are many kinds of community investments like affordable housing, parks, streets, art, and community facilities. (*pg. 47 Community Investments Case Studies*)
- » Small projects can be easier to fund and build quickly, while larger projects often require years to complete and millions of dollars from multiple funding sources. (*pg. 39 Funding Community Investments*)

Key Points to Consider

Addressing community priorities and implementing investments is an ongoing, collaborative process. It requires aligning community needs with available funding, economic conditions, and local regulations. The City and its communities have a range of tools to help shape development across residential, commercial, nonprofit, and mixed-use projects. At the same time, state laws are increasingly directing cities to build more housing, making it important for local approaches to be clear and proactive and clear about how housing is developed. Changes in the local economy, along with uncertainty around state and federal funding, can also make community investments a bit more challenging, highlighting the need for creativity, collaboration, and persistence to secure investments in communities.

Below are some considerations to help guide collaborative work with communities, the City, and nonprofit and private partners.



1. Planning processes play a critical role in organizing different efforts into an integrated vision but depend on the needs, commitment, and resources of the community, City agencies, and private partners.

Community Action Plans center immediate concerns and community-driven priorities, while **Area Plans** guide long-term growth and infrastructure needs. **Development Agreements** provide opportunities to plan for large-scale development projects. Together, these processes help translate community input into actionable strategies and investments. These kinds of community planning processes can be time consuming, requiring commitment from communities, policymakers, City staff, and nonprofit and private partners. The investment of time and resources in community planning typically makes the most sense where communities are facing multiple, interconnected issues or where significant growth seems possible or likely.

This guide emphasizes that shaping and delivering community investments is not a one-time effort, but a continuous process. It requires early engagement, clear priorities, and ongoing collaboration between community members, City agencies, and private partners. Different tools can be used at different stages of this process to help communities shape development, identify and pursue funding opportunities, and advance investments that reflect community priorities.

2. The rules for shaping development in communities have shifted as state and local policy encourage more multifamily housing, however, communities can work with the City and other partners to set rules for development to meet community needs while also meeting state requirements.

- » **Zoning and land use** changes can help encourage businesses and other uses that help communities to prosper and discourage those that do not.
- » **Design Standards** can be an opportunity for Cultural Districts or other equity communities to encourage development of multifamily housing that reflects the culture and design in that area.
- » **Cultural Heritage** tools can include landmarking key buildings with major architectural, cultural, and historic significance or using signage, plaques, banners and other tools to help record and share history and culture in a Cultural District or other historic community.
- » **Protection and Stabilization** programs that have been developed over years to keep residential tenants and businesses in place. They can continue to evolve based on community needs.
- » Other tools, like incentive and bonus programs, could be considered to help encourage outcomes that communities want to see.

3. Community investments can occur at multiple scales and require different types of funding and levels of effort depending on the project.

- » **Smaller, community-led projects**—such as murals, gardens, and streetscape improvements—can often be implemented more quickly through partnerships, volunteer efforts, and modest funding sources.
- » **Larger capital projects** like affordable housing, parks, major street improvements and other infrastructure and community facilities, require significant coordination and layered financing, drawing from public funding, assessment districts, philanthropy, and development impact fees. These funding sources are interconnected and often depend on broader economic conditions, public priorities, and sustained community advocacy.
- » **State and federal funding sources can often be key to delivering larger projects** at scale- to complete multiple projects over time or meet the needs of multiple communities. Similarly **sustained local funding sources can be important to delivering community investments over time.** Community advocacy and collaborative work with both nonprofit and public partners can be key to meeting long term funding needs.
- » Given economic conditions and state policies to encourage housing development, it is unlikely that new fees or development requirements can be added to housing development for the foreseeable future, highlighting the need for public and philanthropic funding for community projects.

SECTION 2:

POLICY & ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Policy & Economic Context

The Community Investments Toolkit helps communities and City policymakers respond to state laws that encourage housing development that have been adopted in recent years. The Toolkit also helps communities and policymakers respond to challenging economic conditions that have made building new housing more difficult as well as affecting City revenue and budgets.

The Toolkit implements key priorities in the 2022 Housing Element, the City's 8-year housing plan, that address community needs while also encouraging housing development. Specifically, the Toolkit advances the following Housing Element Policies:

- » Increasing investment in historically under-resourced communities that have ongoing needs and pressing challenges such as displacement, particularly Equity Communities that have faced disinvestment and discrimination. (Policy 17)

- » Codifying development requirements to address community impacts to ensure new development aligns with community goals as well as with the legal and economic context. (Policy 29)
- » Reducing constraints and streamlining processes for housing development to help support new multifamily housing projects and align with state housing laws. (Policies 26 and 28)

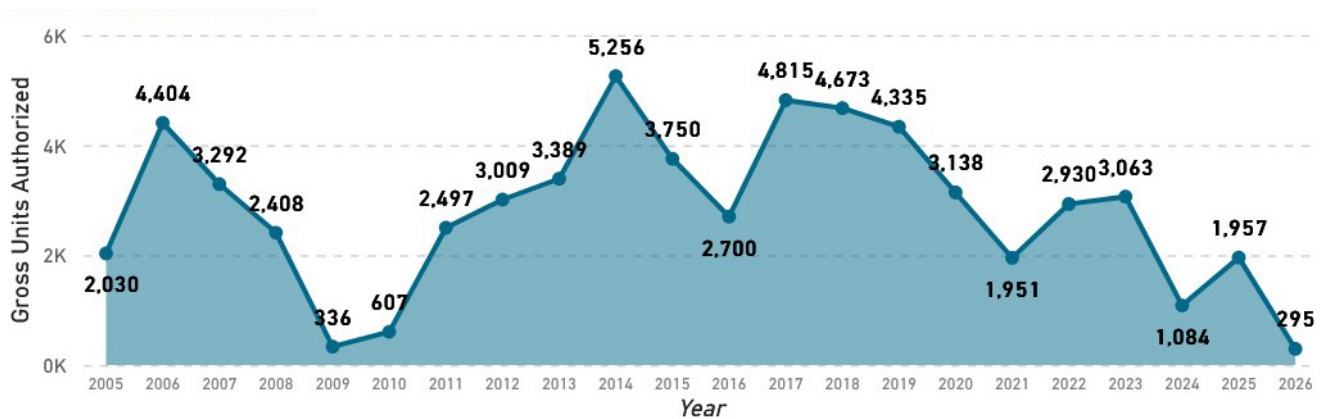
This Toolkit connects these priorities by explaining the planning, regulatory, and funding tools used in San Francisco. It also considers the broader context of economic conditions and state housing policy below.

Shifts in Economic Conditions

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic and social changes have left development projects stalled across San Francisco. Private development provides most new housing and commercial space in San Francisco. Through local requirements, new private developments pay fees that fund community benefits and investments like parks and streets or, in some cases, projects build these community investments directly. New developments also support community investments over time through property tax revenue, which is allocated to public services and infrastructure like affordable housing, schools, transit, and more.

Many development projects have not been financially feasible due to market conditions including rising construction costs and high interest rates. Housing construction permits have fallen to levels not seen since the Great Recession from 2008-2010 (see Figure 1 on housing units authorized for construction). As a result of slower development, tax revenue has also dropped. Broader changes in the city, like lower office occupancy, lower retail sales, and fewer workers and visitors, have also reduced local tax revenue. These trends have resulted in less funding for community investments from both public and private sources.

FIGURE 1: HOUSING UNITS AUTHORIZED FOR CONSTRUCTION PER YEAR 2005 THROUGH 2025



Source: [San Francisco Housing Dashboard](#)

Changes in State Housing Laws

To address California’s housing affordability crisis, recent State laws require cities to have predictable, faster review and permitting of housing projects. The result has limited local processes, meaning city agencies, community members, and elected officials have less discretion, reducing ability to weigh in and shape development. This shift in rules means that community priorities must be identified through early engagement and advanced planning to ensure that they are still reflected in development outcomes.

San Francisco historically had one of the lengthiest approval processes for housing development, according to data cited in the 2023 San Francisco Policies and Practices review conducted by California’s Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). Before recent changes to state laws, housing project approvals required discretionary approvals from the Planning Commission and in certain situations decision-making bodies like the Board of Supervisors. Public hearings provided opportunities for substantial community feedback on individual developments, even for projects that were fully compliant with code requirements. Community members also had many opportunities to appeal projects which could cause delays and

add to project costs. In some cases, community advocates and developers negotiated community benefits beyond City requirements or outside of the approval processes to address community concerns.

In recent years, changes to state law have limited the discretion cities can exercise over housing projects that meet local zoning, Planning Code requirements, and state law requirements.

Ministerial approval means a housing project must be approved without public hearings or environmental review if it meets all objective zoning and Planning Code requirements and applicable state program criteria. Under ministerial review, City decision-makers have little to no discretion to deny or modify the project.

Discretionary approval means decision-makers have authority to evaluate a project and consider community input, and may approve, modify, or deny it. These projects typically require public hearings before the Planning Commission or other decision-making bodies.

The Housing Accountability Act (HAA), Permit Streamlining Act, and the Housing Crisis Act of 2019 (SB 330), set timelines for review and approval of projects that add housing. These state laws also restrict the ability of cities to alter or reject projects that comply with the planning rules in place at the time of their application. SB 330 also prohibits cities from changing zoning in ways that decrease housing or impose subjective rules. While requirements on new development like childcare or inclusionary affordable housing continue to apply, the City cannot add new constraints on housing development, per state law.

In addition to complying with state requirements, San Francisco also created local streamlined and ministerial approval pathways over the past several years, particularly for 100% affordable housing developments, such as the Housing and Educator Housing Program. As a result, many early projects using streamlined approval processes were affordable housing projects.

Other state laws, including but not limited to SB 423, AB 2011, SB 9, and SB 684, apply ministerial approval pathways for certain multifamily housing projects that meet objective standards.

Now, the San Francisco Planning Commission has little or no discretion over these projects and cannot require changes to them, however, ministerial projects still must follow objective development requirements (pg. 32) in the Planning Code, including objective design standards (pg. 34). The State Density Bonus Law allows qualifying housing projects to receive additional density and height, as well as incentives, waivers, and concessions from local development standards,

when they provide certain amount of affordable housing on-site. In general, state law requires housing development rules and requirements to be objective and clearly defined in the Planning Code rather than applied on a project-by-project, subjective basis. At the same time, state laws such as the Density Bonus Law provide flexibility from some local development standards to support housing production and affordability. While this flexibility can make housing projects more financially feasible, it can also create less certainty about the final design and development outcomes of a project.

Overall, recent state laws and local implementation have significantly streamlined housing approvals, making project timelines more predictable and efficient. In San Francisco, ministerial housing projects are now completed in a median of 119 days from application to approval. Before state law changes, projects took about 2 years for approval due to discretionary review requirements. This demonstrates how these programs can accelerate housing delivery while still meeting established local standards (SF Planning Data and Streamlined Housing Project Dashboard, San Francisco Housing Policy and Practice Review, Permit Performance).

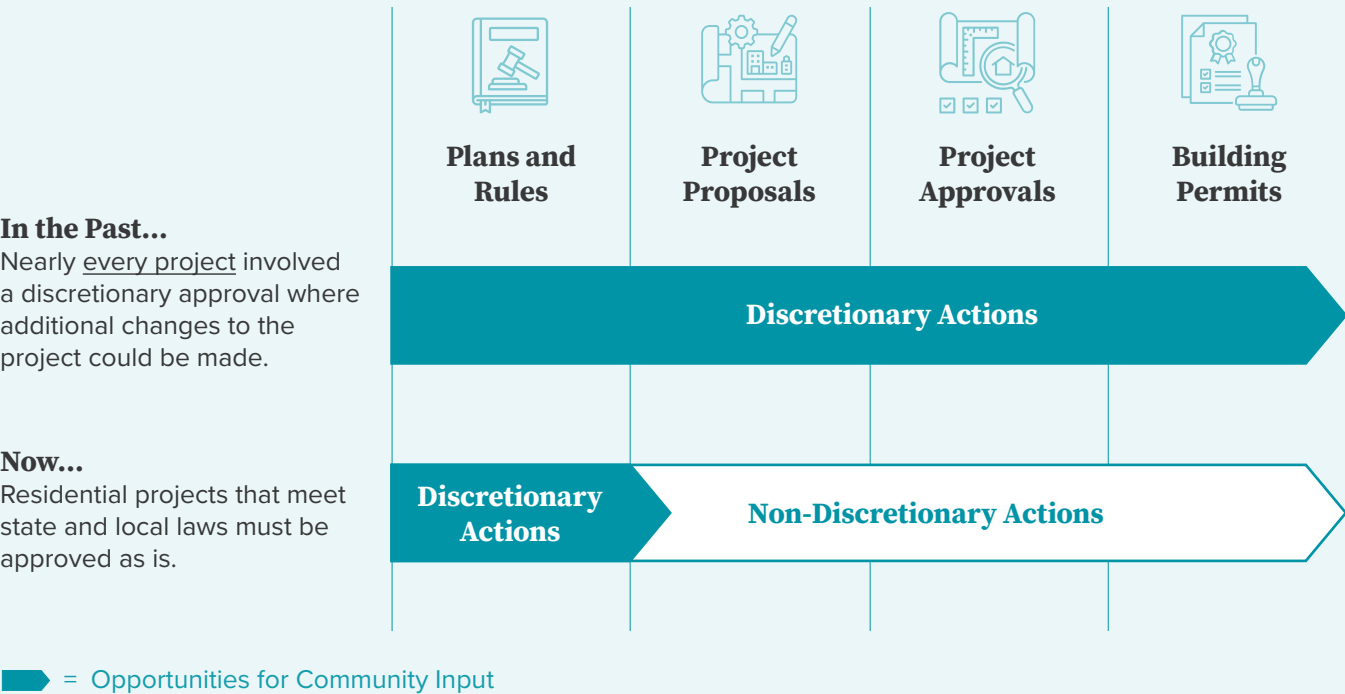
Between January 2018 - January 2026, 2,952 units have been constructed using streamlined programs. An additional 1,942 units are in the pipeline – most of which are 100% affordable. This demonstrates the growing impact of the streamlined programs on meeting San Francisco’s housing needs (SF Planning Data and Streamlined Housing Project Dashboard).

Objective Standards

State law often requires local rules for multifamily residential development to be objective and measurable and to be in place prior to project application. These “objective standards” are primarily found in the Planning Code and can include requirements related to building height, massing, operational requirements, urban design and other measurable elements. Objective standards cannot involve subjective judgment, discretion, or interpretation that can vary person to person. Objective standards are applied to most housing development projects, including those that use state laws for ministerial approval. San Francisco’s Design Standards, which specify standard design requirements applicable to multifamily residential projects were adopted by the Planning Commission on November 14, 2024 and updated in October 2025.

State housing laws have helped speed up housing approvals; they also change opportunities for community input on individual projects.

FIGURE 2: CHANGE IN RESIDENTIAL APPROVAL PROCESS



Exceptions

Discretionary approvals are still required for certain projects. Discretionary approvals remain subject to environmental review. In many cases, both the project approval and the environmental compliance determination can be appealed which can delay the project. The Planning Commission has discretion over these entitlements and can require the project sponsor (the person or entity proposing the development) to make changes to the projects. Examples of projects that would require discretionary approval include:

- » A proposal for a fast-food chain restaurant in an area with Formula Retail (chain store restrictions).
- » A single family home, subject to design guidelines.
- » An office building.
- » A proposal that involves the demolition of multifamily housing.

Community Input on Development Projects

While state law has changed local approval processes and opportunities for community input for many multifamily housing developments, community members can still influence development projects in several ways.

First, communities can participate in long range planning processes, such as weighing in on objective design standards, neighborhood plans, and other policies that become part of the Planning Code.

Through these avenues, communities can help set the rules that guide future development—both commercial and residential.

When it comes to influencing specific projects, communities can share feedback directly with project sponsors, speak at public hearings before the Planning or Historic Preservation Commissions, or contact City staff or elected officials. A project sponsor is the person or organization proposing a development. Sponsors include property owners, developers, business owners, nonprofit organizations, or public agencies. Projects, such as commercial developments, public use, or nonprofit facilities require project approvals and may provide different opportunities for input than housing.

How Development Decisions Are Made

As discussed in the section on state housing laws, development projects are reviewed through either **ministerial approval** or **discretionary approval**. These approval pathways shape how projects are reviewed, the level of public input involved, and the extent to which City decision-makers can require project changes. Ministerial projects are reviewed administratively by City staff for compliance with objective standards, while discretionary projects generally involve additional

analysis, public hearings, and formal action by the Planning Commission or other decision-making bodies. State housing laws can also limit local discretion in certain discretionary processes, even when a project is not ministerial, as described in the state housing laws section.

Providing Input on Different Types of Development Projects

HOUSING

- » Housing projects of two or more units that meet state and local rules may have limited local discretion and may qualify for ministerial approval, limiting the City's ability to change or deny them if they meet all objective standards.
- » Some housing developments still require public hearings. For instance, a project located in census tracts that are designated on the State's Opportunity Map either as a moderate resource area, low resource area, or an area of high segregation and poverty may have an informational hearing before the Planning Commission depending on the program.
- » Projects involving a single housing unit often require local approvals and may involve more discretion.
- » State and local laws also include protections for tenants and existing rental housing. Projects that remove or significantly alter existing rental units, especially rent controlled or affordable units, may require additional review and hearings.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- » Larger commercial developments, such as office buildings or light industrial facilities, require review by SF Planning and other City agencies. These projects may include public hearings where community members can provide comments or testimony.

- » In some Downtown areas, the City has streamlined approval processes to attract business activity and investment. In other cases, projects may still include opportunities for community input during the review process.
- » Neighborhood commercial projects, such as new businesses opening in existing storefronts have fewer approval requirements. The City has taken steps to reduce permitting barriers to help retain and attract small businesses and neighborhood serving uses.
- » Additional review or approval, however, may be needed if the proposed project requires special permission (like a conditional use authorization or CUA) under existing zoning rules. In those cases, there may be opportunity for community to provide input.

PUBLIC USE PROJECTS

- » Public projects such as schools, parks, or government buildings may have different opportunities for input depending on the project type, scale, zoning rules, and the government agency proposing the project. Projects sponsored by state and federal agencies may not be subject to local zoning rules or City approval processes. Projects led by City agencies often include hearings at the Board of Supervisors, public meetings, community outreach processes, or other engagement opportunities.

NON-PROFIT FACILITIES

- » Nonprofit organizations operate many types of facilities including community centers, shelters, health services, and educational programs. Some uses are allowed by zoning, while other uses require additional review or approvals. When additional review is required, community members may have opportunities to provide input.

For more tools on tracking development go to [Planning & Project Information Resources](#) (pg. 16).

When Community Input May Have the Most Impact

Community members may influence projects through:

- » Participating in long-range planning to set policy, objective standards, and other planning code requirements that apply to projects
- » Attending public hearings and engaging with discretionary projects as they go from concept to entitlement
- » Engaging in projects that require a Conditional Use Authorization or other special approvals
- » Engaging in projects that involve demolition or major changes to existing housing
- » Participating in feedback process that requires environmental review

Planning & Project Information Resources

Finding Information About Development Projects

Community members can use various tools to track development proposals and identify opportunities to provide input. Residents and community organizations can also contact projects sponsors to share feedback.

Key Planning Department resources:

- » [San Francisco Planning Department Glossary](#) is a list of definitions used in the latest Housing Element
- » The [Planning Commission](#) and [Historic Preservation Commission](#) webpages list upcoming hearing dates, agendas, and projects scheduled for discussion. Community members can attend these hearings and provide public comment or sign up for agenda notifications.
- » [Property Information Map \(PIM\)](#) provides information about any parcel in San Francisco. This includes zoning rules, height limits, and development proposals for that property.
- » [Permits in My Neighborhood](#) map shows planning applications and building permits filed in a neighborhood or on a particular property.
- » [San Francisco Housing Dashboard](#) provides information about housing built or proposed in San Francisco since 2005. Users can filter the information by neighborhood or citywide and view housing production at different affordability levels.
- » [Block Book Notification \(BBN\)](#) allows individuals or organizations to receive notifications when planning applications are filed for specific properties or blocks.
- » The [Neighborhood Notification Handout](#), explains how neighbors are notified about certain development projects by location and scope of work.
- » [Development Impact Fee Register](#) Impact fees are a charge on new development to help fund and pay for the construction or needed expansion of offsite capital improvements.
- » SF Planning's [Resources Page](#) allows users to search for handouts, bulletins, and frequently asked questions about planning rules and development processes. These materials are designed to help community members better understand how development review works.

SECTION 3: **COMMUNITY PLANNING & VISIONING**

Community Planning & Visioning

The Community Planning and Visioning section highlights how the City and community members can develop different kinds of plans, develop shared goals, plan for action to address challenges and opportunities, and implement change over time. Community planning can take different forms, but all aim to capture a shared vision for a place.

Area Plans set long-term land use, development, and infrastructure policy as part of the City's General Plan. They require formal adoption by the Board of Supervisors. **Development Agreements** are negotiated for large projects needing zoning or regulatory changes. They also require approval adoption by the Board of Supervisors. **Community Action Plans** focus on near-term priorities and coordination among agencies, community groups, and the private sector. They are typically endorsed by the Planning Commission, though they do not require formal adoption by the Board of Supervisors.



Fillmore Community Action Plan Community Gathering #2
Photo credit: SF Planning

Community Plans Types



Area Plans

Initiated by:
City

Delivered by:
City + Developers

Approved by:
Planning Commission and
Board of Supervisors

Major Rezoning:
Yes

Scale of Community Participation:
Medium



Development Agreements

Initiated by:
Developer

Delivered by:
City + Developers

Approved by:
Planning Commission and
Board of Supervisors

Major Rezoning:
Yes

Scale of Community Participation:
Medium



Community Action Plans

Initiated by:
Community

Delivered by:
Community + City + Developers

Approved by:
Planning Commission

Major Rezoning:
No

Scale of Community Participation:
High

AREA PLANS



Area Plans are comprehensive policy visions for the development of specific neighborhoods. These plans are adopted by the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors as part of the City's General Plan. An Area Plan typically involves a zoning update, defining design policies, assessing needs for public improvements, and establishing financial and implementation frameworks to guide new development. Area Plans are often led by City staff, taking many years of planning in close partnership with residents, workers, businesses owners, community-based organizations, and City departments. When Area Plans include changes to the residential, commercial, and/ or public space rules, environmental review may be required to assess impacts and possible mitigations.

Infrastructure improvements and amenities, such as parks, street improvements, transit, childcare centers, and libraries can be essential to an Area Plan's vision for a complete neighborhood. Some Area Plans include fees on new development called "Area Plan fees" that partially fund public improvements and are in addition to impact fees on development normally charged. Note that Area Plan fees are commonly included when an Area Plan increases development capacity through zoning changes that add density, height, or more intensive uses. Read more on Impact Fees and Area Plan Fees in *Section 5: Funding Community Investments* (pg. 39).



Renovated Margaret Haywood Park, a Project in the Market & Octavia Area Plan
Photo credit: SF Department of Recreation and Parks

Example: Market & Octavia Area Plan

The Market & Octavia Area Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors and became effective in 2008. The plan area encompasses the neighborhoods surrounding the intersection of Market Street and Octavia Boulevard, including Upper Market, Duboce Triangle, Hayes Valley, the Lower Haight, and parts of the Western Addition. The plan was initiated in response to the removal of the Central Freeway—damaged in the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake—and the subsequent opportunity to rethink land use, mobility, and livability in this central part of the city. Several policies and development standards in the plan were codified including new zoning districts, new heights, design principles, parking policies, impact fees, and monitoring requirements.

The plan aims to reconnect neighborhoods fractured by the former freeway, increase housing supply and encourage walkable, mixed-use communities. The plan also made strategic use of public land from the former freeway parcels for both 100% affordable housing and mixed income housing and public open space. From 2008 to 2025, the Market and Octavia infrastructure fee collected \$54 million for various community improvement projects like turning former freeway parcels into new parks, pedestrian upgrades, and transportation improvements. The area plan impact fee concluded in 2025.

Illustration of a Living Alley. Source: San Francisco General Plan



PROCESS

The planning process began in the early 2000s, building on years of community advocacy to remove the Central Freeway. The plan was adopted after several years of public process and environmental review.

- » A Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) was formed to engage in implementation.
- » Development fees and sales of freeway parcels have funded more than \$100 million in improvements to streets, open space and transportation, and resources for childcare and affordable housing.

The Market and Octavia Area Plan has delivered substantial and measurable community benefits, including 4,785 new housing units—35% of which are affordable. While impact fees and development requirements played a key role in shaping this progress prior to 2020, changing market conditions and stalled housing production led the City to adapt its approach. In 2025, it adopted an ordinance waiving area plan impact fees for pipeline projects, amended the Van Ness and Market Residential Special Use District, and sunset the Community Advisory Committee to help reactivate housing delivery—positioning the plan to continue delivering housing and community investments into the future.

TOOLS USED IN THE PLAN

The City created a set of regulatory tools and funding mechanisms that are codified in the Planning Code and Capital Plan:

Regulatory Tools

- » Zoning Changes in the plan allow higher-density, mixed-use development near transit corridors, particularly along Market Street and major intersections.
- » Design Principles that provide specific design recommendations for building massing and design, ground floor design, sidewalks, alleys, and plazas to enhance the built environment, walkability, and pedestrian experience.

Funding Tools

- » Market & Octavia Infrastructure Impact Fee paid by new development in the plan area funds transit, streetscape improvements, public space, and community facilities. This ensures that growth pays for the infrastructure needed to support it. (See Impact Fees pg. 45).
- » Affordable Housing Program encourages affordable housing in exchange for increased height/density.

DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

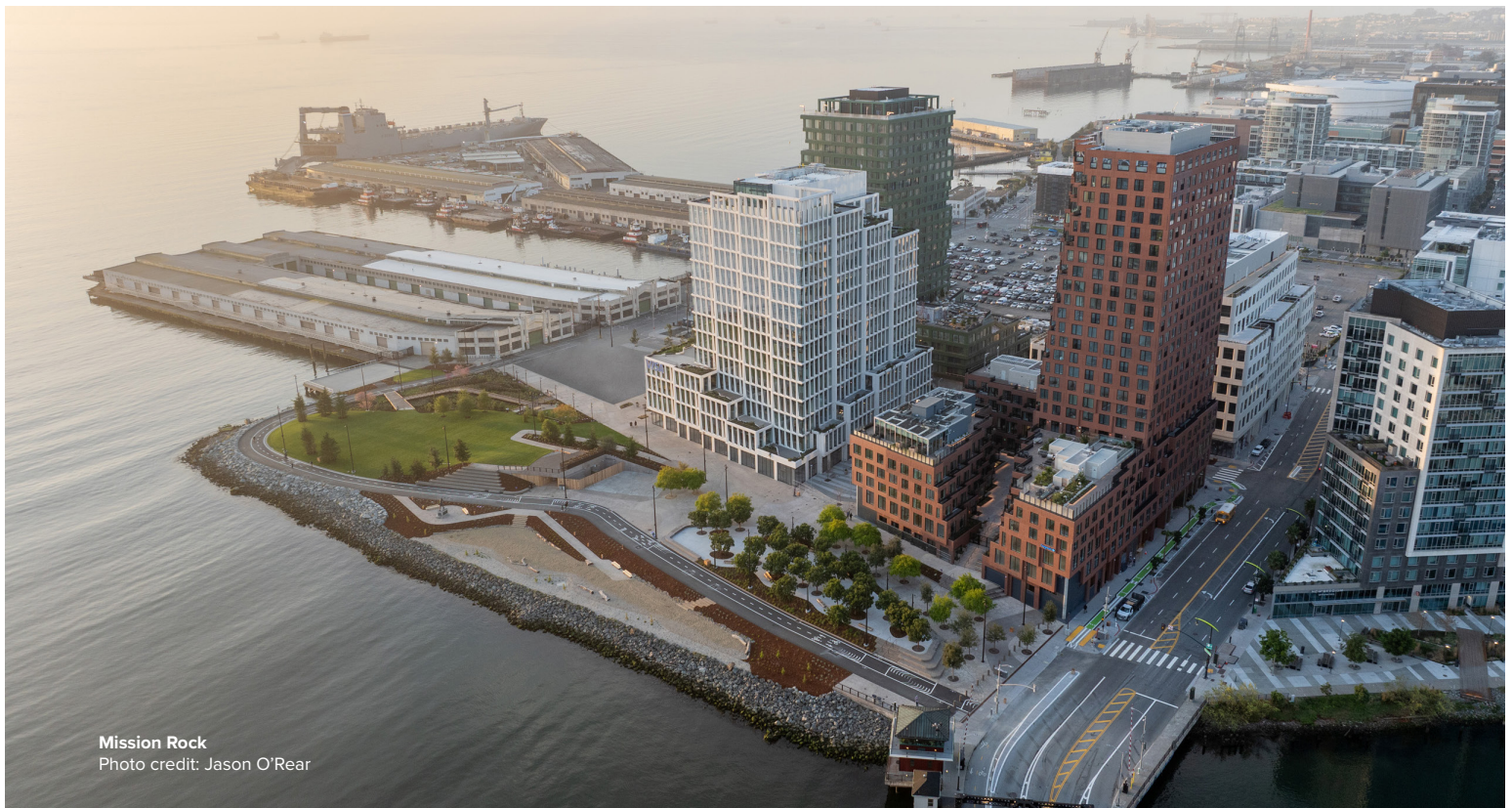


A Development Agreement (DA) is a contract between the City and a developer of a specific piece of land, granting development rights and codifying a project's specific uses, design, regulations, policies, and community benefits. A DA is different than an area plan because it is used on a project where a developer is seeking to codify a unique set of policies, programs, and community benefits that apply only to the project and is different than the surrounding zoning and development requirements. As part of the negotiation, the City approves zoning changes and grants the rights to develop the project over a longer span of time than is allowed with a typical building permit. The DA “runs with the land” which means even if the site is sold to another developer or owner the rights and obligations in the DA are still in place.

The DA often includes various pieces covering different aspects of the project:

- » Affordable Housing Plan
- » Infrastructure Plan
- » Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
- » Transportation Demand Management Plan
- » Design Standards and Guidelines

Community benefits such as affordable housing, street improvements, transportation, and public space are also memorialized in the DA. They often require environmental review when changes are made to include more residential, commercial, or public building space than was allowed previously. The DA is approved by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors which means any future changes also require the Board's approval. SF Planning works closely with the Office of Economic and Workforce Development to develop and review the project details. Learn more information about Major Development Agreements and Projects at: sfplanning.org/major-development-projects.



Example: Mission Rock

The Mission Rock Development Agreement governs the transformation of a former 28-acre surface parking lot south of Oracle Park into a vibrant, mixed-use waterfront neighborhood with residential and commercial buildings and public space. The development is a partnership between the City and County of San Francisco and the San Francisco Giants/Tishman Speyer. The DA includes substantial public benefits such as parks, affordable housing, and infrastructure while offering predictability and flexibility to the developer to complete the project over many years.



PROCESS

The process began with years of planning, community engagement, and interagency coordination. Starting as a vision from the Port of San Francisco's Waterfront Land Use Plan in 2007, the project was shaped by robust outreach and planning studies.

- » Between 2014-2018, the project underwent a comprehensive Environmental Review process.
- » In 2015, San Francisco voters approved Proposition D, allowing an increase in building heights at the Mission Rock site.
- » The Development Agreement was reviewed through public hearings before the Planning Commission, Port Commission, and was ultimately adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2018.
- » The agreement formalized the terms for phased development over 20 to 30 years, grounded in community priorities and infrastructure feasibility.
- » In 2020, construction began on Phase One and in 2023, the 23-story residential tower Canyon was completed along with three office buildings and a 5-acre waterfront park in 2024.

TOOLS USED IN MISSION ROCK D.A.

Regulatory Tools

- » Development Agreement is the regulatory contract that outlines the terms and conditions which the Port of San Francisco and the developer will work together to develop Mission Rock
- » Zoning Changes:
 - Mission Rock Special Use District (SUD): As part of the project's approvals a new special use district was created which includes controls for permitted land uses, building standards, design review and the approval process. These controls live in Planning Code Section 249.80.
 - Mission Rock Height and Bulk District: As part of the project's approvals new height and bulk limits were established. These controls live in Planning Code Section 291. Design for Development or Design Controls were established to define the appearance and layout of buildings and public space.

Funding Tools

- » Community Facility District (CFD) and Infrastructure Financing District (IFD): These tools allow the City to reinvest a portion of new property taxes generated on-site into infrastructure such as roads, parks, and utilities, creating four special taxes for the district (Assessment Districts p.43).
- » The use of Port land for the Mission Rock project allows the project to provide a range of public benefits in combination with private investment and property tax revenue from the CFD and IFD.

COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS



Community-driven planning, or Community Planning, can take different forms but typically centers on community needs and solutions for neighborhoods dealing with interrelated issues of physical infrastructure and social and economic challenges such as:

- » Displacement of residents and businesses
- » Cultural and business vitality
- » Housing affordability and stability
- » Street conditions and safety
- » Lack of green spaces

Community Planning is particularly important in neighborhoods struggling with historic discrimination and/or lack of resources and investment. While community groups and organizations can engage in their own strategic planning, the focus in Community Planning is on collaboration between City agencies and residents, small business owners, and other key parts of the community. Community members and organizations bring deep knowledge of the neighborhood, its needs, and potential solutions. City agencies provide guidance and support on regulatory, design, funding, and implementation requirements. Collaborative Community Planning can result in a roadmap with actions and projects that align with the goals of residents, businesses, and community-based organizations. Projects can then be implemented with public and private funding.

Community Action Plans are a result of a collaborative, community planning approach in neighborhoods facing social and economic challenges. For example, the [Mission Action Plan](#) (pg. 24) focuses on the displacement of residents and businesses in the Mission District. The [Tenderloin Community Action Plan](#) has been addressing the deteriorating street conditions and safety in the Tenderloin. Community Action Plans focus on building community capacity and use many forms of community engagement including



large workshops or public meetings, core planning or steering committees, focus groups, walking tours, surveys, interactive webpages, and interviews.

Often the process includes multiple rounds of engagement to gather community feedback as well as coordination with policy makers and implementing agencies to ensure the ideas in the plan can be achieved. A Community Action Plan is different from an Area Plan in part because it does not center on major zoning changes, though they may include strategies to address zoning in the future. Community Action Plans are also not adopted as part of the City's General Plan, which means the planning process does not require environmental review and can be shorter and less costly. While not officially adopted into the City's General Plan, Community Action Plans can be endorsed by the Planning Commission and/or Board of Supervisors.

Example: Mission Action Plan 2030 (MAP2030)

The Mission Action Plan (originally MAP2020, now MAP2030) is a community-initiated and City-community-led partnership to fight displacement and preserve the cultural, social, and economic fabric of the Mission District. The plan centers on:

- » Housing affordability
- » Stabilizing small businesses and community organizations
- » Cultural vitality
- » Improved street conditions
- » Cleanliness and activation

The Mission is the hub of Latino life in San Francisco with a historically working-class and immigrant identity, vibrant cultural arts movement, and strong community activism. The Mission has also been home to American Indian organizations that played key roles during and after urban relocation of Native Americans, making it a home for the American Indian Cultural District (AICD).

The impact of MAP has been significant: sustained advocacy, policy innovation, prevented displacement of hundreds of tenants, stabilized local businesses, and targeted funding that has produced and preserved over 1,550 affordable units through the end of 2024 (with more than 1,200 more in the pipeline). These outcomes were made possible by tools such as legislation and housing General Obligation (GO) bonds. At the same time, ongoing pressures from rising costs, gentrification, and displacement underscore the need for organizing and long-term investment in community-driven solutions.

PROCESS

- » **2014 Initial Process:** MAP 2020 began in 2014 as a collaborative process between 20 Mission community organizations and City departments including SF Planning, MOHCD, OEWD.
- » **2015 Legislative Actions:** The City approved interim zoning controls for Mission and Calle 24 areas for large projects and in 2017 the City approved legislation to establish the Calle 24 Special Use District in Planning Code Section 249.59. The Mission was specifically named in the 2015 Affordable Housing GO Bond.
- » **2017 Endorsement:** MAP2020 was formally endorsed by the Planning Commission. Various affordable housing new construction and preservation projects were funded with local GO bonds, other local funding along with federal and state funds.
- » **2024 Update:** MAP2020 was updated to Mission Action Plan 2030, endorsed by the Planning Commission. This recent update emphasizes securing more funding for affordable housing, stabilizing small businesses, enhancing cultural vitality and public spaces, and maintaining community-driven implementation.

TOOLS USED IN MISSION ACTION PLAN 2030 (MAP2030)

Regulatory Tools

- » Calle 24 Special Use District and Design Guidelines
 - SUD: Requirements on uses of commercial buildings and urban design controls on 24th Street.
 - Design Guidelines: Require new buildings and exterior remodels adapt to surrounding areas and existing patterns of development.
- » Zoning protections for small businesses, existing multi-family housing, light industrial.

Public Funding Tools

- » \$50 million from the 2015 Housing General Obligation (GO) Bond allocated specifically to the Mission; additional affordable housing funding as also gone to affordable housing projects in the community.
- » Grants and programs from MOHCD, OEWD, and philanthropic funders as well as state and federal funding that pay for the majority of 100% affordable housing.
- » Small Sites Program and site acquisitions.
- » Affordable housing allocation in Eastern Neighborhoods fee.

Cultural Districts and Cultural History Housing & Economic Strategies Sustainability (CHHESS) Reports

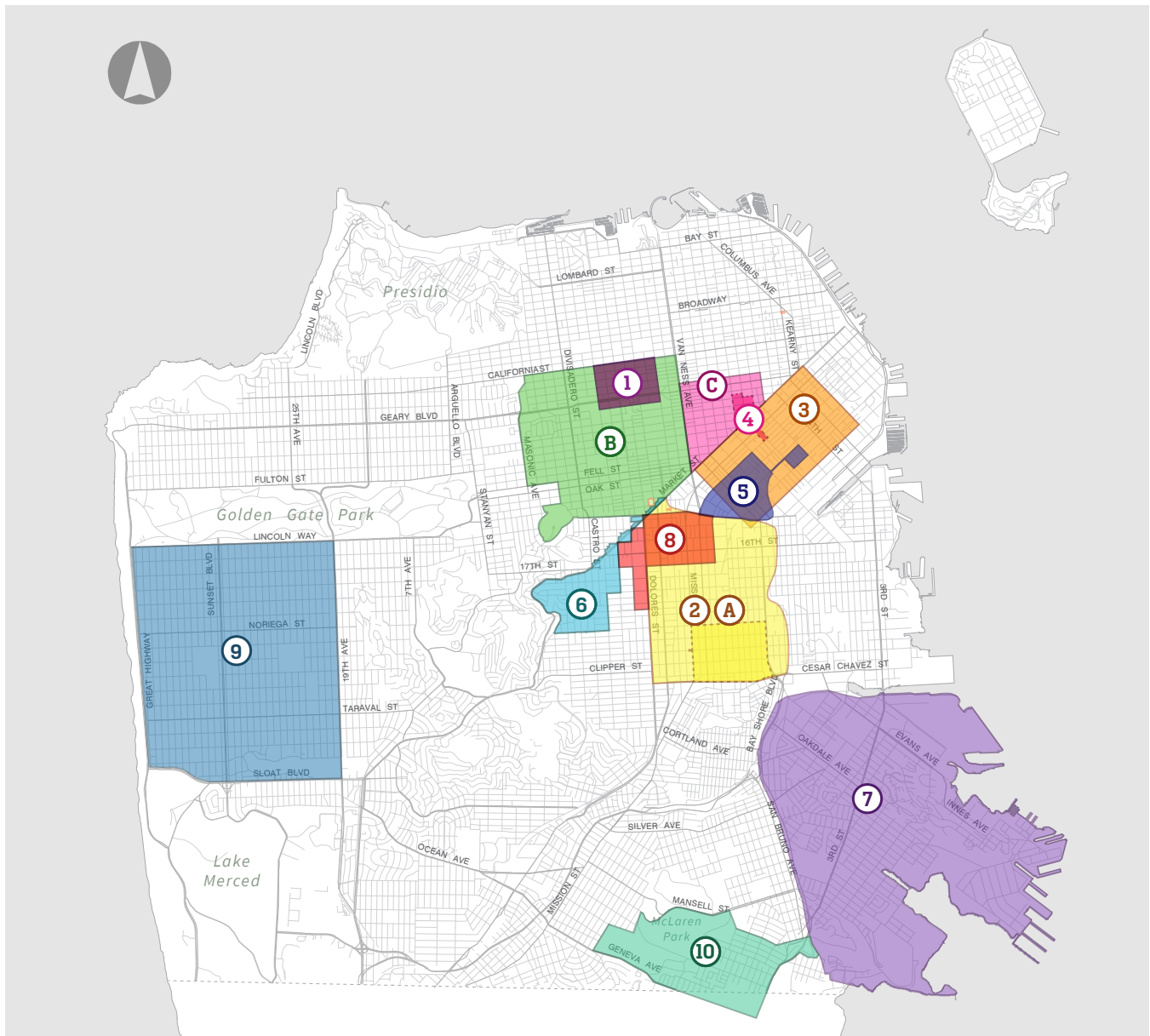
Cultural Districts are another community planning tool to preserve, strengthen, and promote cultural communities through robust community engagement and ongoing support for arts and culture as well as local residents, workers, small businesses, and community organizations. There are ten Cultural Districts across San Francisco. They maintain a partnership with the City to create a legacy document and strategic plan aimed at fulfilling each legislated district's vision and goals. The Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD) coordinates the Cultural District program for the City, working in collaboration with the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), SF Planning, and Arts Commission.

Cultural History, Housing, and Economic Sustainability Strategies (CHHESS) Reports are developed for each Cultural District to provide a roadmap of community priorities and strategies for community stabilization developed through an extensive community process. The CHHESS reports detail each district's history, demographics, and economic profile, followed by stabilization strategies in six key areas: cultural preservation, housing and tenant protections, arts and culture, economic and workforce development, land use, and cultural competency. The district, community partners, and City staff collaborate to implement these strategies, with the district evaluating their effectiveness every three years and having the opportunity to update the report every six years.

TABLE: CHHESS STRATEGY MATRIX

Cultural District Legislated Strategy Area	Strategy Area Description	City Department Scope Alignment
Cultural heritage preservation	Preserve and develop cultural and historic buildings, businesses, organizations, traditions, arts, events, and the district aesthetic	Planning Department / Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)
Housing and tenant protections	Protect residential tenants from displacement and promote affordable housing and homeownership	Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD)
Arts and culture	Attract and support artists and cultural enterprises	Arts Commission (SFAC)
Economic and workforce development	Promote jobs, tourism, and economic opportunities that stabilize the district's economy	Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD)
Land use	Create City regulations and programs that support businesses and industries that advance the Cultural District	All
Cultural competency	Promote culturally competent and appropriate City services, policies, and narratives	All

MAP 1: SAN FRANCISCO CULTURAL DISTRICTS & COMMUNITY ACTION PLANS



CULTURAL DISTRICTS

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Japantown Cultural District | 6. Castro LGBTQ Cultural District |
| 2. Calle24 Latino Cultural District | 7. African American Arts & Cultural District |
| 3. SOMA Pilipinas Cultural District | 8. American Indian Cultural District |
| 4. Transgender Cultural District | 9. Sunset Chinese Cultural District and Sunset Forward |
| 5. Leather & LGBTQ Cultural District | 10. Pacific Islander Cultural District |

ACTION PLANS

- A. Mission Action Plan 2030
- B. Fillmore Community Action Plan
- C. Tenderloin Community Action Plan

Source: SF Planning, sfplanning.org/community-resource-guide

SECTION 4: **SHAPING** **DEVELOPMENT**

Shaping Development

This section describes the regulatory tools that shape development. They establish standards for what can be built where and how buildings and property can be used through zoning and they set development requirements and design rules. Regulatory tools can also set rules for tenant protection and stabilization and help preserve cultural heritage by landmarking buildings and sites and creating other cultural markers. These tools help ensure that development supports livability and high-quality design while protecting existing residents and cultural assets. Incentives and bonuses can be used to encourage affordable housing and community-serving uses while offering exceptions and flexibility to support outcomes the community wants to achieve.



Islais Creek Adaptation Strategy Community Meeting #1.5 – September 19, 2019. Photo credit: SF Planning

Rules That Shape Development Projects



Zoning & Land Use

Implementing Agency:

Planning Department

Key Programs That Shape Investments:

Permitted and Non-Permitted Uses, Zoning



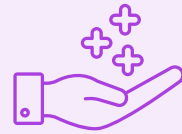
Development Requirements

Implementing Agency:

Planning Department

Key Programs That Shape Investments:

Development Standards, Impact Fees



Incentives & Bonuses

Implementing Agency:

Planning Department

Key Programs That Shape Investments:

Density increase, Parking Reductions, Waivers & Concessions



Design Standards & Guidelines

Implementing Agency:

Planning Department

Key Programs That Shape Investments:

Site Design, Architecture, Frontage



Protections & Stabilization

Implementing Agency:

MOHCD, OEWD, Rent Board, OCII

Key Programs That Shape Investments:

Rental Assistance, Small Business Support, Rent Control, Just Cause Eviction



Cultural Heritage

Implementing Agency:

Planning Department

Key Programs That Shape Investments:

Context Statements, Landmark Designation, Cultural Markers

ZONING & LAND USE



Every parcel of land in San Francisco has a zoning designation that defines the allowed use or what can occur on the land and inside the buildings. Zoning districts include residential, neighborhood commercial, downtown commercial, mixed use, industrial, and public use. Additional rules define the height and bulk of buildings allowed on each parcel. These regulations live in the San Francisco Planning Code, which also includes rules on related topics, such as the amount of parking allowed, limits on chain retail, limits on the size of certain uses, and development standards like common space and building setbacks.

Zoning controls help address neighborhood priorities such as supporting small businesses and shaping new growth. These regulations are created with input from a range of stakeholders including community members, property owners, business owners, developers, elected officials, and SF Planning and Planning Commission. Zoning and land use controls are adopted by the Board of Supervisors and implemented by SF Planning.

The Property Information Map (PIM) is a resource for information on any parcel in the city including zoning, height, and other rules along with information on proposed projects on a parcel.

The Permit Center is an in-person resource for people, businesses, or organizations trying to build a new project, change an existing building or space, or hold a public event that require permits and process.

The Zoning Use Districts Map classifies different uses on given block numbers. Due to the number of zoning districts used on this map, one district is difficult to differentiate from an adjacent district by color alone, hence the labeling of districts. It is best viewed on a large screen or printed on large materials. In general:

- » Residential is *yellow*
- » Neighborhood Commercial is *purple*
- » Downtown is *red*
- » Industrial is *blue/gray*
- » Mixed use in its multiple variants is *light orange*

Process

Local land use power is given to city government by state law. However, state laws can also step shape local land use rules. Changes to the San Francisco Planning Code must follow a formal public process. Amendments to the Planning Code can be initiated by SF Planning, Planning Commission, members of the Board of Supervisors, or the Mayor.

Zoning changes and other Planning Code changes happen in various ways:

- » The Mayor or members of the Board of Supervisors may propose zoning or code changes to address a policy issue.

- » Through a community plan or area plan or other planning process, zoning changes could be proposed and adopted for a corridor or neighborhood based on collaboration and conversations between the community, City, policymakers and other stakeholders.
- » SF Planning and Planning Commission may also propose zoning changes to address a policy issue or update and clarify outdated or confusing code.

SF Planning will typically provide analysis of proposed zoning or code changes which are heard at the Planning Commission, allowing for public feedback through testimony, email, or letters. The Planning Commission then approves or rejects proposed changes.

The Board of Supervisors then holds hearings, considers community input, and votes to approve or reject changes. If approved, it is signed by the Mayor and is codified in the Planning Code.

Examples of Zoning rules include:

- » Use Controls determine what types of activities are allowed in different neighborhoods so new development fits the surrounding area. For example, in the Mission District, zoning along neighborhood commercial corridors allows housing and small, local-serving shops, but limits large nightlife venues or formula retail to prevent uses that would conflict with local businesses and residential uses. Nearby industrial zones restrict housing and instead prioritize space for production, distribution, and repair businesses to support jobs. In Mission Bay, special zoning allows hospitals, research buildings, and housing, while prohibiting uses that would conflict with those activities. Together, these use controls guide where housing, jobs, and services can be located.
- » Formula Retail Controls are another land use tool, often used in neighborhood commercial districts, or main streets where residents eat, gather, and access services. Formula retail (or chain stores) are defined in Planning Code Section 303.1 as “retail sales establishments having eleven or more other retail sales establishments in operation anywhere in the world.” Formula retail controls in a neighborhood commercial district could require a chain store to receive a special permission from the Planning Commission called a Conditional Use Authorization (CUA) to open. These types of controls can help to preserve small businesses, cultural identity, and economic diversity.

Considerations for Zoning and Land Use Changes

While zoning and land use controls can be used to restrict uses that may have negative impacts in a community and allow desirable uses, zoning itself has a complex history that can have both positive and negative impacts on working class communities and communities of color. Zoning began in part to make cities cleaner and more organized, for example by separating industrial uses from residential areas. At the same time, zoning has also been used to create social and economic exclusion by restricting multifamily housing or other affordable housing options in residential areas. Zoning has also been used to punitively target certain groups. For example ordinances in San Francisco from the late 1800s imposed restrictions on Chinese-owned laundries intended to drive them out of business.

Given the complex history of zoning, unintended consequences and barriers that can result from new zoning and land use rules must be considered when they are adopted. For example, adding new rules or restrictions can add complexity that businesses, property owners, and residents must navigate to maintain their property or expand or open a business. State housing laws also limit zoning changes that reduce the number of homes allowed on a parcel without changes elsewhere in the city to offset a reduction in housing capacity.

DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS



Development requirements ensure that a new development meets certain standards for sustainable and livable buildings. They also ensure projects contribute to the public space around the development depending on its scale and type of use. In San Francisco, these requirements are primarily established through the Planning Code and related ordinances to align private development with citywide goals for equity and livability. The City is limited by state laws from imposing new constraints on housing development and must assess impacts of new requirements when developing them.

Major Development Requirements address issues such as:

- » Inclusionary affordable housing, in projects of 25 units or more, through on-site units, off-site units, or in-lieu fees (see [Impact Fees](#), pg. 45).
- » Street improvements, such as street trees and improved sidewalks through the [Better Streets Plan](#), particularly for larger projects that front longer stretches of streets
- » Open Space and Public space, including on-site open space for residential developments and public open spaces for downtown commercial projects (Planning Code Sections [135](#) and [138](#)).
- » [Transportation Demand Management](#), to reduce car dependence and support transit, walking, and biking (Planning Code Section [169](#)).
- » Sustainability and resilience, such as requirements for solar-ready roof area as part of the [Better Roofs](#) initiative and green landscaping in (Planning code Sections [132\(g\)](#) and [138.1](#)).
- » Design Features and Public art, provided on-site or through fee contributions for buildings downtown, neighborhood-focused, and city-wide (Planning code Sections [101.1\(b\)](#) and 302).



Process

Development requirements address specific physical characteristics of buildings and how new developments interact with the community around them. Development requirements apply to projects based on specific criteria and are typically not negotiated on a project-by-project basis. Development requirements are established through a public, legislative process and codified in the Planning Code and related regulations.

During the project review process, SF Planning and other City agencies review proposed projects to determine which requirements apply and whether the project is compliant with these requirements. Specific thresholds such as project size (square footage or street frontage), development type, and location determine when and how requirements apply. Developers are responsible for designing, funding, and building improvements to satisfy the requirements.



INCENTIVES & BONUSES

Local and state government can also shape development through incentives or bonuses to encourage housing and other community-serving uses. This approach allows more housing units, a larger building, lower fees, and/or faster, streamlined process in exchange for more affordable housing or space for community serving uses such as nonprofits, grocery stores, or childcare. Because the state already has programs to encourage affordable and other types of housing, local incentives are most effective when they add clear value beyond what those state programs already provide.

Process and Implementation

Incentive and bonus programs have been adopted through legislation at the state and local level. Typically, local government must then implement these laws locally.

STATE BONUS PROGRAMS AND INCENTIVES FOR HOUSING

- » **California State Density Bonus Law** (CA Gov Code Section 65915) grants additional height and density for projects that include affordable housing. Bonuses depend on the percentage of affordable units and income levels served by the affordable units. Housing projects can also use development waivers and concessions that result in flexibility in planning code requirements and other objective planning standards.
- » A range of state laws provide ministerial or streamlined approval and permitting for housing as discussed in *Section 2 on Policy & Economic Context* (pg. 9), and summarized in San Francisco Planning Director Bulletins [No.3](#), [No. 5](#), [No. 8](#), and [No. 9](#). These bills include SB 35/SB 423, AB 2162, AB 2011/AB 2243, SB 4, SB684/SB 1123, SB9, and state ADU laws.

LOCAL BONUS AND INCENTIVE PROGRAMS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVING USES

- » **Proposition E 100% Affordable Housing and Educator Housing Streamlining Program** (Planning Code Section 206.9) supports development of affordable and educator housing by allowing additional height and density for affordable housing projects. In addition, the **100% Affordable Housing Program** (Planning

Code Section 315) provides streamlined approvals and incentives for 100% affordable projects.

- » The [HOME-SF Program](#) (Planning Code Section 206.3) provides additional density and height for mixed-income housing developments when they provide more inclusionary affordable housing than required under San Francisco's basic inclusionary housing requirements.
- » The [Family Zoning Plan](#) **offers incentives for affordable housing and community uses.** The plan allows more housing in parts of San Francisco where little housing had been built for decades. The Family Zoning Plan introduced the Housing Choice-SF program, which offers additional height and other incentives for housing projects or projects that opt to include community serving uses like childcare, grocery stores, or small retail spaces, or provide family friendly units and amenities. Projects that preserve a historic resource can also access more height and density. More information about the Housing Choice-SF program, including incentives for affordable housing and community uses, can be found in the [Planning Director Bulletin Number 11](#).
- » The [Commercial to Residential Adaptive Reuse Program](#) supports conversion of office buildings to housing by relaxing planning code requirements that would be difficult to meet for projects converting existing office buildings. The Adaptive Reuse Program also includes some financial incentives, such as tax breaks, to help make office conversion to housing more feasible.

DESIGN STANDARDS & GUIDELINES



Design Standards for Multifamily Housing

As mentioned earlier in this guide, San Francisco created **objective design standards**, also known as SF Design Standards, that provide urban design rules for building height, massing, and other measurable elements. Objective standards are applied to housing development projects that use state laws for ministerial approval or for limited discretionary review. Broadly, SF Design Standards apply to projects that qualify for the Housing Accountability Act (HAA) and/ or Category A historic properties. Eligible projects include:

- » Housing projects that construct two or more dwelling units
- » Mixed-use developments that are at least two-thirds residential
- » New construction and alterations to existing buildings that add two or more units
- » Projects involving additions and modifications to existing historic buildings

Design Standards cannot involve subjective judgment, discretion, or interpretation that can vary person to person. All proposed projects must abide by SF Design Standards before being approved. By codifying these rules, the City aims to:

- » Deliver predictable permitting for applicants
- » Meet state requirements for ministerial review
- » Ensure new development contributes to healthy, vibrant and equitable communities

PROCESS

The SF Design Standards was adopted by the Planning Commission on November 14, 2024 and updated in October, 2025. It is a living document



Illustrative diagram from the San Francisco Design Standards showing a building with bay windows that are spaced no more than 30 feet apart.

and can be amended through the approval of the Planning Commission.

In response to state requirements disallowing extensive discretionary review for most multifamily housing/ mixed use projects, SF Planning is exploring ways to incorporate unique design goals and considerations of Cultural Districts. Cultural Districts with existing design guidelines (which cannot be enforced for many housing projects) have expressed interest in translating those documents into design standards in order to influence the design of proposed developments. The department is currently collaborating with the SOMA Pilipinas Cultural District on the first neighborhood specific design standards. As of yet, no Cultural District specific design standards have been adopted but SF Planning and other agencies are willing to work with Cultural districts to develop these standards over time.

Design Guidelines for Public Realm, Commercial, and Single-Family Homes

Design guidelines can be more flexible than design standards and involve subjective elements to define the look and feel of a neighborhood. However, guidelines are not enforceable for HAA multifamily housing projects that comply with local codes and use State housing programs. Design guidelines can still shape projects such as public realm projects (streets, plazas, etc.) commercial development, single family homes, and building renovations that do not add housing. San Francisco has existing Residential Design Guidelines that apply to single family homes and other housing projects not covered by the HAA while Urban Design Guidelines cover a wider range of buildings and public realm projects.

Design guidelines have been adopted at a neighborhood level translate the history, cultural identity and aesthetic of a community into rules for building form, façade appearance, signage and public spaces. Existing examples include the Calle 24 Special Area Design Guidelines and Japantown Special Area Design Guidelines which apply to projects not considered multifamily housing or defined under HAA.

PROCESS

The development of neighborhood-specific design guidelines can help define the look and feel of the public realm, commercial areas, and

other parts of the community. As described above, multifamily housing projects covered by the HAA can only be shaped by objective design standards and are not covered by design guidelines. Neighborhood specific design guidelines are developed through a collaborative effort between various city agencies and community.

- » The Community Planning and Current Planning divisions at SF Planning lead development of neighborhood design guidelines in close coordination with the Urban Design and Historic Preservation teams.
- » Planning staff study existing conditions and draft design guidelines. They collaborate with key City agencies—such as the Department of Public Works for right-of-way and landscape elements, Arts Commission for public art, and Office of Economic and Workforce Development for storefront vitality—to ensure the guidelines are practical and align with City goals.
- » Staff engage stakeholders through outreach and workshops, refine the draft guidelines, and present them to the Planning Commission for adoption. Once approved, the guidelines are applied with the Planning Code through the development review process to guide project design.

A3.1 USE NATURAL MATERIALS IN FACADES AND FINISH THEM HONESTLY



Wood slats help break facades into very fine-grained detailed proportions.

A7.1 INTEGRATE SIGNAGE WITH BUILDING ARCHITECTURE



Text can be added in an intentionally compositional way.

Examples from the Japantown Special Area Design Guidelines



PROTECTION & STABILIZATION

San Francisco has a range of local laws and programs to protect tenants, preserve housing available to lower-income renters, and to help stabilize local businesses and organizations. Various services and programs, such as tenant counseling and legal services, accompany the City's protections to help residents understand their rights and receive technical and legal support.

Process and Implementation for Key Programs

San Francisco's stabilization laws have been adopted and implemented over decades through actions by elected officials, city and state voters, and state policies. Many local programs need ongoing funding for City agencies and nonprofit providers to implement.

Some key local protection and stabilization programs include:

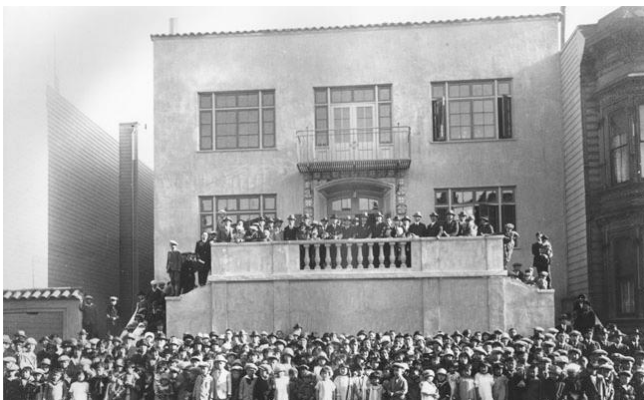
- » **The Rent Control Ordinance, Just Cause Eviction Controls, and Rent Board** provide the City's tenant protections and are also shaped by state law. San Francisco's Rent Control Ordinance, passed in 1979, limits rent increases for much of the city's multifamily housing. The City also has Just Cause Eviction protections that set reasons and process for evictions. The Rent Board administers Rent Control and rules on eviction by responding to complaints and mediating tenant and landlord disputes.
 - » **Protections for SRO (single-room occupancy) Residential Hotels** through the Residential Hotel Conversion and Demolition Ordinance (HCO) limit the removal or conversion of SRO units, which have historically housed low income renters with few options. The City works with SRO residents, and nonprofit tenant organizations through the SRO Collaborative Program. Maintenance and habitability issues in SROs will likely require more funding and policy solutions.
 - » **Local Controls on Demolition or Removal of Dwelling Units** generally require special permission from the Planning Commission. A Conditional Use Authorization (CUA) is needed to demolish or remove existing housing units, based on specific criteria, particularly for multifamily housing subject to protections like affordability or rent control restrictions. Demolition of multifamily rental housing is rarely approved.
 - » **Tenant Programs and Services** by the City help residents and landlords understand their rights and responsibilities. Services include counseling, education, legal help and emergency rent assistance.
 - » **State Tenant Protection Laws: The Housing Crisis Act of 2019 (also known as "SB330" or "HCA")** established protections for existing housing stock and tenants. The City can only approve a project that demolishes existing housing units if the project includes at least the same number of units as are demolished. Demolition of below-market rate units, rent-controlled units, units rented by low-income renters, or units withdrawn from the rental market in the last 10 years is only permitted if replaced by units that meet rules for affordability and tenant protections. Existing occupants are eligible for right of first refusal and relocation assistance.
- In 2026, San Francisco's Tenant Protections Ordinance codified the Housing Crisis Act locally with clarified expanded implementation. The California Tenant Protections Act (AB 1482, 2023/24) and other laws provide protections and limit rent increases for residential tenants, but local protections may be stronger.
- » **Legacy Businesses** are supported through the Legacy Business Program that designates long-time community serving businesses and provides funding resources and other supports.

CULTURAL HERITAGE



San Francisco's Cultural Heritage (SF Cultural Heritage) brings together community stories, cultural history, and preservation tools to help recognize, understand, and care for San Francisco's places and traditions. Cultural heritage includes tangible places, such as buildings and sites, and intangible heritage, like traditions, cultural practices, and community memory. Led by SF Planning with the Historic Preservation Commission serving in an advisory role, the program is carried out in partnership with community members, historians, cultural practitioners, and other City agencies.

Cultural heritage is preserved through tools such as historic landmark designation and Historic Context Statements that document the histories of neighborhoods and communities. Together, these efforts ensure that San Francisco's physical and cultural resources reflect the City's diverse history.



Kinmon Gakuen, built in 1926, is a Japanese educational center is one of the few remaining pre-World War II Japanese American institutions in San Francisco, (Designated Landmark No. 288) WCA, etc. Article 10. Source: SF Planning. Photo credits: kinmongakuen.org (left) & SF Planning (right)

Process

- » SF Historic Context Statements: Context statements are developed by SF Planning based on community input to define the histories and themes that are meaningful to San Franciscans. Context statements guide the SF Survey, and landmark designations which are adopted by the Historic Preservation Commission.
- » SF Survey: Planning staff works with communities to identify and document places connected to cultural and social life and lived experience. Community knowledge shapes what is documented and how places are understood, including intangible aspects that give a place meaning, such as oral traditions, social practices and festivals. Specifically, SF Survey aims to create greater clarity for property owners and members of the public by re-categorizing properties with "Unknown" (Category B) status into either Category A ("Historic Resource Present") or Category C ("No Historic Resource").
- » SF Places: Community knowledge, Historic Context Statements, and survey findings help identify places that may be eligible for landmark designation. Commemorative tools such as plaques, signage, and interpretive panels can help acknowledge important places, people,

and events. For architecturally and historically significant places, landmark designation is the City’s primary tool for recognition and care.

- Local landmark and historic district proposals are reviewed and approved at public hearings held by the Historic Preservation Commission and Board of Supervisors. Once approved, the Mayor signs the ordinance and goes into effect.
- Once designated, alterations to landmarks may constitute a significant alteration or demolition and must undergo Certificate of Appropriateness or other reviews to ensure compatibility with the historic character of a building or site.
- Environmental review under CEQA evaluates potential impacts to historic resources, regardless of designation status.



Bayview Community Center, 1957. Photo credit: San Francisco History Center, SF Public Library

Local Examples

- » African American Historic Context Statement (AAHCS) was adopted in 2024. The AAHCS identifies important themes in the development of San Francisco’s African American community and the vital role the community played in the City’s history. Key themes include patterns of migration and settlement, the impact of Redevelopment, artistic and cultural contributions.
- » Landmark Designation helps formally recognize these places and provides a framework for their long-term care. The opera house was built in 1888 and is designated for its importance in local history, culture, and architecture as San Francisco’s oldest surviving theater.
- » Cultural Markers are place-based tools such as plaques, interpretive signage, and murals that help maintain, share, and celebrate the history of a community. The SoMa Pilipinas Filipino Cultural Heritage District uses vibrant street banners to mark its cultural presence and celebrate Filipino identity across the neighborhood.
- » The plaque in Uptown Tenderloin is located on the sidewalk on Turk and Taylor Street, dedicated to the transgender activism that fought police abuse.



Ruth Williams Opera House (formerly known as the Bayview Opera House), San Francisco Designated Landmark No. 8. Photo credit: Sanfranman59 (CC BY-SA 3.0)



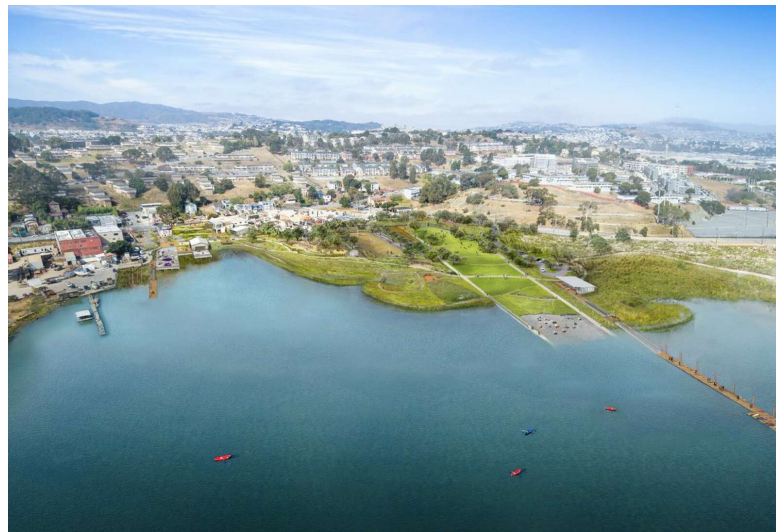
Street Banners in SoMa Pilipinas Cultural District. Photo credit: somapilipinas.org, Photo by Nix Guirre



Uptown Tenderloin Local Landmark plaque, Compton's Cafe Riot. Photo credit: ???

SECTION 5: **FUNDING COMMUNITY** **INVESTMENTS**

This section highlights the funding tools for community investments to support thriving neighborhoods and meet community needs. These funding tools deliver, operate, and maintain community investments such as affordable housing, infrastructure, parks, playgrounds and plazas, community and cultural facilities, public art, and community services. Funding tools can include direct public funding from various sources, assessment districts that generate revenue within a specific area for infrastructure and services, philanthropy from private donors, impact fees on development, and other fees or in-lieu fees associated with development.



San Francisco Recreation and Parks India Basin Park

Funding Sources



Public Funding

Description:

City capital budget, State and Federal grants

Source:

Public

Where Funding Is Generated:

Citywide

Example:

San Francisco General Fund



Assessment & Special Financing Districts

Description:

Special districts like IFDs, CFDs, CBDs levy fees from property owners

Source:

Public & Private

Where Funding Is Generated:

Area-Specific

Example:

Potrero/Dogpatch Green Benefit District



Philanthropy

Description:

Grants from private foundations to fund community investments

Source:

Private

Where Funding Is Generated:

Citywide & Area-Specific

Example:

India Basin Waterfront Park



Impact Fees

Description:

Citywide fees on new development set through technical studies

Source:

Private

Where Funding Is Generated:

Citywide & Area-Specific

Example:

Job-Housing Linkage Fee

PUBLIC FUNDING



Public funding is often the largest contributor to infrastructure projects such as affordable housing, streets, parks, playgrounds, and community centers because the cost of these investments can be quite large. Infrastructure projects can range in size and cost from building a new transit line to building a new recreation center to installing a new corner light post or garbage can. San Francisco uses many public funding sources from different levels of government to pay for infrastructure projects. Local funding comes mainly from the City's General Fund, which

funds a large part of the annual budget, and publicly issued debt such as General Obligation (GO) bonds. Federal and State funding, including grants and tax credits, can also be a major funding source for various kinds of projects.

San Francisco's Capital Planning process brings together City agencies and elected officials to coordinate funding for infrastructure projects.

Process

Agencies identify projects based on the state of existing infrastructure and future needs. For example, agencies select projects based on repair, maintenance, and operational needs, which parts of the city are under-served, or where growth is occurring. Community members can raise the need for investments to be a part of an agency's planning processes and by sharing their priorities with the Mayor, Board of Supervisors, and commissions that approve the City agencies' budgets and plans.

The City's Capital Planning Program then integrates the capital needs across agencies into the Capital Plan covering schools, streets, transit, healthcare, parks, affordable housing, climate resiliency and more. The Capital Plan does not address how to pay for all of these needs, however, it allows policymakers, the public, and city agencies to see the range of needs and decide how the City will use its annual budget and long-term debt to pay for these investments.

Local funding is a source for community investments and can be key to unlocking other sources including state and federal funds. Early local investment helps projects move faster by

providing seed funding for study, scoping and design. Local funds can fund some projects entirely if other sources aren't available or help leverage federal and state funds. Local funding comes from two main sources:

- » The General Fund is the City's pool of revenue for the annual budget, mostly coming from taxes on property, businesses, sales, and hotel occupancy. The General Fund pays for many local services and programs as well as infrastructure through the Pay-As-You-Go program, that typically covers routine infrastructure maintenance and smaller projects. Elected officials can spend General Fund money on these types of projects in balance with other funding needs. The Board of Supervisors and Mayor have more discretion over allocation of the General Fund than they have over budgets of enterprise agencies, which are public agencies that generate significant revenues or other outside funding and are largely self-supporting such as the Airport, Port, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, or San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

- » General Obligation (GO) bonds are a main form of debt the City uses to fund larger, long-term projects. GO bonds are paid for by property taxes separate from revenue that flows to the General Fund. State law requires 2/3 majority voter approval for GO bonds that fund specific investments like affordable housing, transit, or parks. GO bonds for schools require 55% approval and some policymakers and advocates have proposed state law changes to apply the 55% threshold for other infrastructure as well. The City has a cap on total debt and has typically kept debt well below the cap so new GO bonds do not raise the tax rate.

Federal and State funding are often the largest funding sources for some important infrastructure.

- » Federal funding is a major source for community investments and can be especially important for affordable housing and new transit (as well as funding key health and social programs). While some federal funding is distributed to cities automatically, other programs are competitive and awarded by federal or state agencies. In recent years, federal funding levels and priorities have been subject to budget constraints, shifting policy priorities, and uncertainty around federal spending, making long-term planning and reliance on federal sources less predictable. Unfortunately, many federal programs are not scaled to meet the need nationwide, and funding is limited. Congress and the President would need to act to expand federal funding for community infrastructure or services.
- » State funding can come through annual state budget allocations or through state debt, like bonds. Much like for city government, new state bonds or dedicated revenue sources must go to the voters for approval on ballot propositions initiated by the Governor, California Legislature, or citizen-sponsored initiatives. As with Federal funding, state funding for various infrastructure programs can be competitive and places emphasis on certain criteria so local projects may need to be designed in a way that complies with program or grant rules.

Implementation and Construction

Most public projects are managed by City agencies but many may be built by private contractors. Agencies select and design projects, working with consultants to include public input in the process. Once funding is secured from the sources discussed above, public procurement processes award responsibility for further design and construction of projects to private contractors. The City also carries out some ongoing maintenance of the projects and builds some projects itself.

For different community investments public funding may be combined with private funding from philanthropy or fees from private development. Affordable housing is somewhat unique because it is developed and operated by nonprofit developers using public funds, with the City often retaining land ownership and long-term funding and federal and state funds playing a significant role.

COMMUNITY CHALLENGE GRANTS

The Community Challenge Grants program provides City funding for community-led, neighborhood improvements, which range from installation of a community garden to creating shared neighborhood spaces to providing youth environmental education over the summer. Grants either support physical improvements to public spaces or support activities that bring people together and foster community use.

**COMMUNITY
CHALLENGE
GRANTS** 



ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS

Assessment and special finance districts are enabled by state law to allow the City to raise funds through taxes or assessments on property within a defined boundary to pay for infrastructure, community facilities, maintenance, or services that benefit the area. These tools are often used when public funds are limited, or when new development or revitalization requires targeted investment. Each type of district has different legal authorities, eligible uses, and funding mechanisms:

- » Infrastructure Finance Districts (IFDs) and Enhanced Infrastructure Finance Districts

(EIFDs) capture future increases in property tax revenues (increment) to fund infrastructure including affordable housing.

- » Community Facility Districts (CFDs) (also known as Mello-Roos Districts) impose a special tax on property owners to fund capital improvements or ongoing services.
- » Community Benefits Districts (CBDs)/Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)/Green Benefit Districts (GBDs) assess businesses and/or property owners to fund services like cleaning, safety, beautification, and marketing.

Process

The formation of an assessment district generally follows these steps:

1. **Initiation:** A local agency, group of property owners, or community-based organization identifies a need for infrastructure or services and proposes a district.
2. **Define the District and Improvements:** A map of the proposed district is drawn, and the types of improvements or services to be funded are defined.
3. **Public Outreach and Feasibility Analysis:** Feasibility studies, cost estimates, and benefit analyses are prepared. Outreach is conducted to build support among affected property owners or businesses.

Approval

Each district type has specific legal requirements:

- » **CFDs and CBDs/BIDs** require approval by affected property or business owners through a mailed ballot.
- » **IFDs** require public hearings, approval by the Board of Supervisors, and may also require voter approval when the district is created or if

it plans to issue bonds backed by tax increment revenue. Enhanced IFDs allow broader participation and use, like affordable housing and climate adaptation.

Implementation and Oversight

Once formed, the district levies assessments (or taxes) on property and begins funding the planned improvements. The EIFD Public Financing Authority No.1 is the governing board for existing and proposed enhanced infrastructure financing districts.

Local Examples

- » The Transbay EIFD captures a portion of future property tax increment from new development to fund infrastructure, parks, and transportation improvements in the Transbay area.
- » The Mission Rock CFD, created as part of the Mission Rock development agreement (DA), helps fund new infrastructure such as roads, utilities, and public space in the project area.
- » The Mid Market Community Benefit District (CBD) provides services like the Clean Team and Community Ambassadors, promotes local business, and implements public improvements.

PHILANTHROPY



Philanthropy can provide flexible funding for community-led projects, including support for both major organizations and important facilities as well as innovative pilot projects. Philanthropy can invest in building organizational capacity and respond nimbly to emerging needs. Unlike most public funding streams, philanthropic dollars can be deployed quickly, support risk-taking and innovation, and cover costs that may be ineligible under government programs. In San Francisco, philanthropy has supported efforts such as neighborhood planning and housing, economic development, small business stabilization, arts and cultural programming, public parks and playgrounds, public space activation, and disaster response.

Process

Philanthropic effort usually begins when funders articulate a vision or define a problem they want to address. These funders may be large institutions, family foundations, or individual donors, and they often select or contract with organizations, including nonprofits already working in the field, to implement that agenda.

Community groups or institutions can initiate funding conversations by approaching foundations or donors with requests to support a specific project, campaign, or urgent need. These requests can range from seed funding to test new ideas to multi-year grants that help stabilize and grow organizations. Individual donors also play a critical role, providing flexible contributions that may be used to launch or sustain work on community priorities.

Local Examples

- » **India Basin Waterfront Park:** Public funding was matched by multiple philanthropic investments including the Trust for Public Land and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Funding unlocked a community-informed vision for a new waterfront park.
- » **HOPE SF Initiative:** A collaboration between the City and foundations such as The San Francisco Foundation, committed millions to support resident leadership, youth development, and trauma-informed community building as part of public housing revitalization.
- » **Tahanan 833 Bryant:** A 145-unit permanent supportive housing development was built through a first-of-its-kind public–private partnership between the City of San Francisco, Tipping Point Community Foundation, and Mercy Housing. Philanthropy covered upfront construction costs, enabling the project to move forward years faster than through public funding alone.

IMPACT FEES



The City imposes development impact fees on development projects in order to mitigate the impacts caused by new development on public services, infrastructure, and facilities. For example, the increase in ridership on the transit system created by a new office building is offset through the payment of an impact fee to improve MUNI. Some impact fees apply throughout the City to various types of development projects while others apply only in certain neighborhoods.

Process

Impact fees are set based on state-required nexus studies, which establish the relationship between new development and the need for additional infrastructure and costs of that infrastructure. Most development impact fees are established in Article 4 of the Planning Code.

The San Francisco Citywide Development Impact Fee Register is adjusted annually and becomes effective at the beginning of the year on January 1. Some impact fee programs allow a project sponsor to meet the requirement by providing an improvement on-site instead of paying a fee.

In other cases, an in-lieu fee applies only when a project sponsor elects to pay a fee rather than meet a Planning Code requirement to provide a specific on-site improvement. Examples of development requirements with in-lieu fee options include inclusionary affordable housing, street trees, and bicycle parking.

Citywide Development Impact Fees

The table below highlights citywide impact fee categories currently adopted by the City. No new categories beyond those currently adopted are anticipated at this time.

TABLE: IMPACT FEE MATRIX

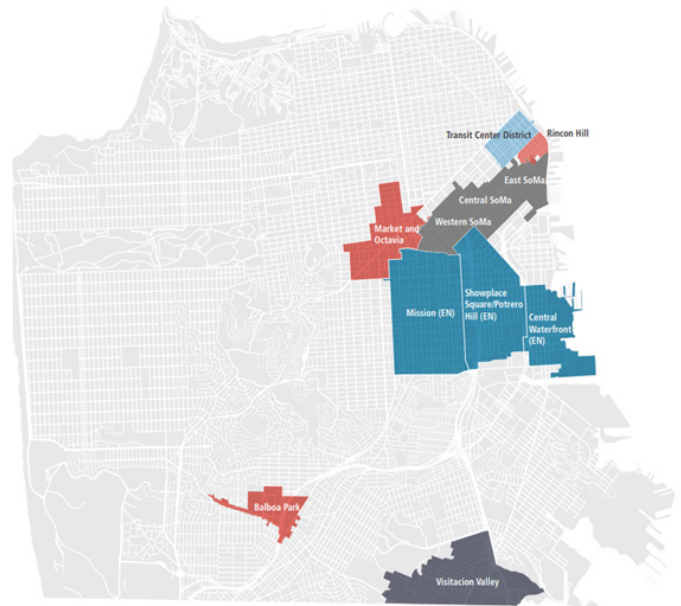
Fee	What It Funds	Who Pays	Nexus Study	Lead Agency
Jobs Housing Linkage	Affordable housing to offset demand from new jobs	Commercial development > 25,000 sq. ft.	<u>Jobs Housing Nexus Study (2019)</u>	MOHCD
Inclusionary Affordable Housing Program Fee	Affordable housing in the city	Residential Developers	<u>Inclusionary Housing Economic Feasibility</u>	MOHCD
Childcare Fee	New or expanded childcare facilities	Residential & Commercial Developers	<u>Citywide Nexus Study, 2021</u>	DEC
School Impact Fee	Local Public Schools	Residential Developers	State mandated fee	SFUSD
Transportation Sustainability Fee	Transit, pedestrian, and bike infrastructure	Residential & Commercial Developers	<u>Citywide Nexus Study, 2021</u>	SFMTA
Wastewater Capacity Charge	Sewer system capacity and upgrades	All new development connecting to sewer and water	Set by SFPUC; Based on water meter equivalents.	SFPUC

Area Plan Fees

Area Plan Fees are development fees applied to certain neighborhoods undergoing area plan-based rezoning or growth. Area Plan Fees are typically established as part of the community planning and rezoning process and are tied to the added value created by new development. They help fund infrastructure and amenities needed to support neighborhood growth. In general, each Area Plan funds infrastructure projects under the following categories:

- » Affordable Housing
- » Parks and public space
- » Streetscape and pedestrian improvements
- » Child Care
- » Community Facilities
- » Transit

MAP 2: SAN FRANCISCO AREA PLANS



Source: SF Planning

Process

Fees are adopted by ordinance through the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors and must demonstrate a clear connection between the impacts created by new development and the fee being charged. For major development projects that require additional zoning or land use changes beyond what's allowed in the Area Plan, project sponsors and the City may negotiate a Development Agreement that has different land use controls, community benefits, and fees tailored to the site.

Implementation

The Interagency Plan Implementation Committee (IPIC) was created in 2009 to coordinate the funding of infrastructure improvements identified in the adopted area plans where growth from new housing and jobs was being planned. To help implement the projects identified in the Area Plans, the City created geographically based impact fees to fund infrastructure projects and affordable housing that serve the plans' new growth.

IPIC is responsible for overseeing the implementation of eleven Area Plans. Since

2009, the City has collected \$307.6 million dollars of infrastructure-related impact fees. The Area Plans that fund community improvements by IPIC's impact fee revenue include Eastern Neighborhoods (Mission, Central Waterfront, and Showplace Square/Potrero), Market and Octavia, Rincon Hill, SoMa (East SoMa, Central SoMa, and Western SoMa), Transit Center District, Balboa Park and Visitacion Valley. See map above.

- » SF Planning chairs IPIC, overseeing fee policy and implementation, in coordination with departments like Public Works, the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD), and the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD).
- » Fees are collected at a project's first certificate of occupancy (towards the end of construction, rather than the beginning).
- » SF Planning tracks collection and implementing agencies like MOHCD or SFMTA manage disbursement.
- » Impact fee revenue collection and funding allocation are reported annually.

SECTION 6: **COMMUNITY** **INVESTMENTS CASE** **STUDIES**

This final section showcases examples of community investments including affordable housing, parks and open space, cultural facilities and cultural spaces, street improvements, and design features and public art. These investments vary in scale, cost, and who builds and delivers them.

Case studies are not intended to be exact models to follow but as examples of how the funding tools and City policies produce different community investments. Each example provides details on the project, the tools used to make it happen, and the process behind it.



Community-Led Small Scale Projects

Gardens

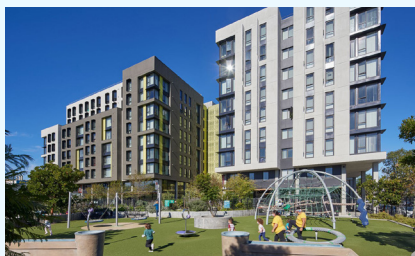
Painted murals on walls and bridges



Affordable Housing

100% Affordable Housing

Inclusionary Housing



Parks & Plazas

Parks and Playgrounds

Plazas and Other Public Spaces



Community Facilities & Cultural Spaces

Community Centers

Arts and Cultural Facilities



Design & Public Art

Design Standards and Guidelines

Public Art and Murals



Street Improvements

Accessibility and Safety

Greening



COMMUNITY-LED SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS



Photo credit: Help McLaren Park

Community-led small-scale projects are neighborhood-driven improvements that enhance public spaces through locally identified needs, cultural expression, and stewardship. These projects are typically initiated and shaped by residents, community-based organizations, or informal neighborhood groups, and focus on modest physical interventions—such as stairway improvements, landscape restoration, public art, and accessibility upgrades—that deliver high community value with relatively limited resources.

Unlike large capital projects, small-scale initiatives emphasize community ownership, adaptability, and place-based knowledge. They often leverage a combination of public micro-grants, in-kind contributions, volunteer labor, and partnerships with City agencies to move quickly from concept to implementation. Regulatory involvement is usually light-touch, focusing on design review,

public safety, and coordination with departments responsible for streets, parks, or public works.

Projects like creating a mosaic tile mural or volunteer clean-up days demonstrate how small interventions can strengthen neighborhood identity, improve access and safety, and foster long-term care of public spaces. Collectively, these projects illustrate how community-led action can complement City investment by delivering meaningful improvements at a human scale.

Tools

- » **Funding Sources:** Community Challenge Grants, Grants from Neighborhood Associations, non-profits, foundations and other granting organizations
- » **Regulatory:** Love Our Neighborhoods program

AFFORDABLE HOUSING



Income-targeted affordable housing in San Francisco is built to be affordable for lower-income households and is rented or sold at below-market rates. Deed restrictions require these homes to be affordable for the life of the project. These homes are rented and sold to households of various incomes, including extremely low, very low, low-, and moderate-income households.

Typically, affordable housing requires subsidy to be constructed and to operate. Affordable housing is provided by 100% affordable projects or inclusionary units as part of market-rate developments. Existing housing can also be acquired and preserved as affordable housing.

Lead Agencies:

- » [The Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development \(MOHCD\)](#)
- » [Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure \(OCII\)](#)
- » [Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing \(HSH\)](#)

Comparison of Affordable Housing Delivery and Preservation

This table summarizes the main ways affordable housing is delivered, highlighting differences in site acquisition, funding, development roles, and timelines.

Function	100% Affordable Housing	Inclusionary Housing	Preservation of Affordable Housing
What It Is	Entire buildings dedicated to affordable homes	Affordable units required in market-rate projects (may provide units on-site, off-site, or pay fee)	Existing buildings converted or protected as affordable housing
How Land Is Acquired	Nonprofit purchase (usually with city funds); public land; land dedicated by private projects	Provided within private, market-rate developments	City or nonprofit acquisition of existing buildings
Who Builds and Operates	Affordable housing developers (often nonprofits)	Market-rate developer	City or nonprofit
Funding Sources	City, State, Federal, and private sources (City ~1/3 of cost)	No public subsidy	City programs, some State or Federal funds
Typical Project Scale	Larger sites (75+ units)	Smaller number of units within larger buildings	Existing building size
Policy/ Oversight	City, State, and Federal funding program rules	Set by Mayor and Board; requirement reviewed every 3 years	Program-specific eligibility and targeting
Timeline	About 7 years from project start to move-in	Tied to market-rate construction timeline	Faster than new construction
Who It Serves	Extremely-low, low- and very-low income households	Mixed-income residents	Stabilizes existing tenants; rented to lower-income households over time



Photo credit: Bruce Damonte

How do you apply to live in affordable housing?



DAHLIA

In San Francisco, units are leased to applicants who apply via the **DAHLIA housing portal** and meet income requirements.

What are some ways to support and learn more about affordable housing?



Connect with citywide and neighborhood based affordable housing providers and advocacy groups to support specific housing projects or broader funding measures.



Engage with District Supervisors and other elected officials to support and advocate for affordable housing projects and funding.



Participate in the public process. While most 100% affordable housing developments receive ministerial approval if they are code compliant, there are still opportunities to organize at community meetings or with neighborhood advocacy groups.



Support funding for affordable housing. This is the biggest hurdle, so public support for local and regional housing bonds, and other local, regional, and state funding measures for affordable housing is important.



Islais Place in the Excelsior



FUNDING COMMUNITY
INVESTMENTS

Islais Place provides 137 affordable homes for very low- to moderate-income families. The five-story building includes 14,000 square feet of ground-floor space. The commercial space houses the expanded Excelsior branch of the Mission Neighborhood Health Center (MNHC) which offers low-cost medical, behavioral health, and dental services. Other amenities include community rooms, planted courtyards, and a mid-block pedestrian pathway connecting Mission Street to Alemany Boulevard.

Location:

4840 Mission Street, San Francisco

Developer:

Bridge Housing

Project Cost:

\$121 million

Completed:

2024

TOOLS

» Public Funding:

- Federal Low-income Housing Tax Credits
- Local MOHCD funding from the 2015 and 2019 Affordable Housing General Obligation Bonds
- Operating subsidies for 35 replacement units for public housing residents from the Potrero HOPESF site through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

PROCESS / TIMELINE

2017	Acquisition: Bridge Housing bought the 4840 Mission Street site, the former Valente Marini Perata & Co. Funeral Home, at a below-market price using a low-interest loan from the San Francisco Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). Bridge Housing later transferred the site to MOHCD.
2018 - 2020	Approvals: Under Senate Bill 35 (now replaced by SB 423), the project benefited from streamlined approvals, making development easier than earlier projects.
2020	Financed: The project was funded using federal tax credits and local MOHCD funding provided by general obligation bond for affordable housing.
2021	Construction began
2024	Project Completed





1064 Mission Street in South of Market



FUNDING COMMUNITY
INVESTMENTS

1064 Mission Street is a 100% affordable housing development with 256 units, making it San Francisco's largest permanent supportive housing development for formerly homeless adults. It includes a building of 103 homes for formerly homeless seniors (age 55+) and a building of 153 homes for other formerly homeless adults. 1064 Mission offers on-site nursing and primary medical services. It is the home for Conquering Homelessness through Employment in Food Service, a culinary training program operated by Episcopal Community Services. The building also houses Maria X Martinez Resource Center, a homeless services center operated by the San Francisco Public Health Department.

1064 Mission sits on a former parking lot of the Federal Court at 7th and Mission streets, which was transferred to the City for \$1 under a federal program that allows federal land to be used for housing for people who have been homeless.

Location:

1064 Mission Street, San Francisco

Developer:

Mercy Housing and Episcopal Community Services (ECS)

Project Cost:

\$140 million

Completed:

2022

TOOLS

» Public Funding:

- Federal Low-income Housing Tax Credits
- Local MOHCD funding from the 2015 and 2019 Affordable Housing General Obligation Bonds

PROCESS / TIMELINE

2017	Property Transfer: The City began negotiation with the Federal government and acquired the site for \$1, setting off a tight timeline to complete the project per federal rules for use of federal land.
2018 - 2019	Approvals: The project accessed state funding and federal tax credits as well as limited private debt. The project was able to use SB 35 (now SB 423) to streamline entitlements and State Density Bonus for density and design flexibility.
2020	Construction: Faster construction techniques including modular construction were used to meet the rapid construction timeline requirements from using federal land.
2022	Project Completed





The Quincy in South of Market



FUNDING COMMUNITY
INVESTMENTS



SHAPING
DEVELOPMENT

The Quincy at 555 Bryant Street is a 16-story mixed-use residential development delivering 501 homes, including 71 affordable units. These affordable homes serve a range of income levels, with 44 designated for very low-income households, 13 for moderate-income households, and 14 for middle-income households. Through the State Density Bonus program, the project increased from a base of 359 units by adding 142 bonus units, enabling the higher overall housing yield. Resident amenities include community rooms, two second-floor landscaped courtyards, a rooftop terrace, and sidewalk widening along Bryant and Welsh Streets.

Location:

555 Bryant Street, San Francisco

Developer:

Strada Investment Group

Project Cost:

\$200 million (privately financed)

Completed:

2025

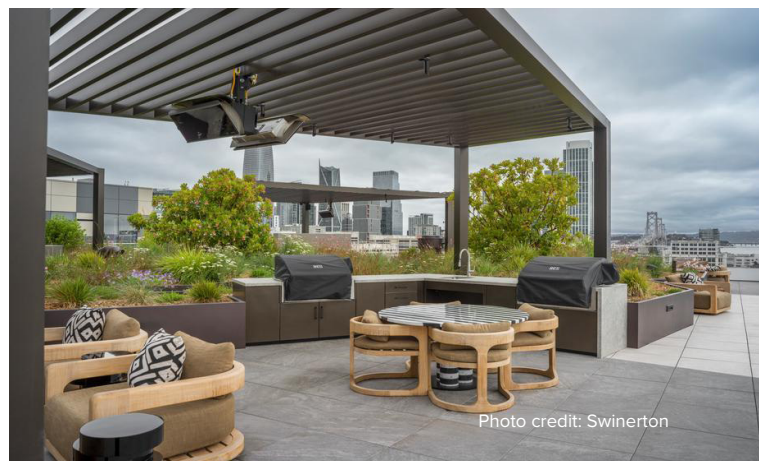
TOOLS

» Regulatory Tools:

- State Density Bonus, used 42% bonus over base
- Central SOMA Housing Sustainability District (HSD) applied, using ministerial approval process

PROCESS / TIMELINE

2020	Project Application: Preliminary Project Assessment Application filed with the Planning Department.
2021	Approvals: Under the Central SOMA Housing Sustainability District (Planning Code Section 343) that was adopted in 2018, the project benefited from ministerial approvals.
2022	Regulatory Agreement for State Density Bonus and agreement to provide on-site affordable housing was approved.
2023	Construction Began
2025	Project Completed



PARKS & PLAZAS



In San Francisco, parks and plazas support community life and play a critical role in advancing public health, environmental resilience, and neighborhood quality of life. The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (Rec and Park) manage more than 230 parks, playgrounds, and open spaces. The Department of Public Works (Public Works) manages the construction of civic buildings and streets, maintains and greens the public right of way, and ensures civic buildings are clean and functional.

Adding parks, plazas, and publicly accessible open space is a common priority across neighborhoods throughout the city. Many residents look to new development as an opportunity to help deliver these vital community assets and strengthen the city’s urban fabric. Reflecting this, the City places a strong emphasis on equitable access—especially in communities that have historically lacked green space and safe places to gather. This commitment has helped make San Francisco the first U.S. city where all residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park, a milestone achieved in 2017.

Lead Agencies:

- » San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department (Rec and Park) manages parks, playgrounds, and open spaces
- » Department of Public Works (Public Works) manages the public right of way, removes hazards, paves streets, repairs bridges, and improves accessibility

Comparison of Parks and Plazas Delivery and Preservation

This table summarizes the main ways parks are delivered, funded and acquired.

Function	New Parks & Plazas
Who Leads	Rec and Park and private developers for parks and playgrounds Public Works, nonprofits, and community groups for open spaces, like plazas
How It’s Delivered	Capital projects, development agreements, programming and activation agreements
Where	Public land, private development, privately owned public spaces (POPOS)
Funding Sources	Public funding, including capital planning, Open Space Acquisition Fund, bonds, fees, exactions from private development, and philanthropy
Operations and Maintenance	For parks, long-term stewardship is led by Rec and Park’s budget, capital reinvestment, partnerships with conservancies and “friends of” groups, and development agreements. For plazas and other types of public spaces, there is a <u>shared stewardship model</u> across Public Works, SF Planning, community groups, and nonprofits. This approach emphasizes activation, programming, and community-led care to keep spaces safe, clean, and actively used. Some may rely more on informal stewardship or agreements (e.g., plaza partners, business districts)



What are some ways to support and learn more about parks or plazas?



Connect with local park stewardship organizations to participate in volunteer days, cleanups, habitat restoration and advocacy.



Engage with city agencies to support and advocate for park projects and funding.



Participate in public processes, including community meetings, design workshops, and public hearings before the Recreation and Park Commission, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors. Rec and Park also offers opportunities for public input through its committees and the Park, Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee (PROSAC).



Support funding for parks and plazas. Bonds, grants, and assessment districts are essential to maintaining and expanding the park system.



India Basin Waterfront Park



COMMUNITY PLANNING
& VISIONING



FUNDING COMMUNITY
INVESTMENTS

India Basin Waterfront Park, a park in Bayview–Hunters Point, is a three-phase public-private partnership to convert an underutilized park and an adjacent parcel into a transformational new park for a historically under-served community. The first part of the new park opened in October 2024. The renovation was spurred by Rec and Park's 2014 purchase of a parcel at 900 Innes Street that had been used for shipbuilding.

The new park was created through a two-year Equitable Development Plan that was shaped by the community to ensure local benefits. Benefits included hiring 19 Bayview-based contractors and suppliers, all BIPOC-owned businesses. Rooted in a community vision dating back to 1999, the park addresses long-standing gaps in access to green space while providing restored habitats, public shoreline access, recreational amenities, and climate-resilient design for residents and the city.

Location:

Hunters Point Blvd and
Hawes Street in Bayview
Hunters Point, San Francisco

Lead Agency:

San Francisco Recreation
and Park Department
(Rec and Park)

Project Cost:

\$225 million

Completed:

Phases 1 and 2 in 2024,
Phase 3 currently in
construction

TOOLS

- » **Public Funding:** \$82.6 million in State of California funds including the California Coastal Conservancy, a Proposition 68 grant, and California Habitat Conservation Fund grants. \$9 million in Federal funding, including EPA's Brownfields Program, \$44.8 million in City funding, such as \$29 million from the San Francisco's 2020 Health and Recovery Bond, \$6.1 million in local funding, including funding from Measure AA from the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority.
- » **Philanthropy:** Major philanthropic funding from the John Pritzker Family Fund, Crankstart, Marc and Lynne Benioff, Hellman Foundation, and others.

PROCESS / TIMELINE

2021 - 2022	Phase 1: The site was remediated and restored to natural conditions, with infrastructure designed to address community priorities, sea level rise, and provide multi-use trails.
2022 - 2024	Phase 2: New park amenities were developed, including a food pavilion, makers shop, walkways to the shore, viewing decks and platforms, and the construction of the Bay Trail segment.
2024	Phase 1 and 2 Completed: These phases were completed as part of a broader 64-acre vision for a continuous Bayview waterfront park system.
2025 - 2028	Phase 3: Final phase will renovate existing 7.5 acre park to improve accessibility.





In Chan Kaajal Park in the Mission



COMMUNITY PLANNING
& VISIONING



FUNDING COMMUNITY
INVESTMENTS



SHAPING
DEVELOPMENT

In Chan Kaajal Park (“My Little Village” in Yucatec Maya) is a 31,850 square foot public park in the Mission District. It was developed alongside the 2060 Folsom Street affordable housing project on a former publicly owned parking lot. Designed to address the neighborhood’s lack of green space, the park serves children and families and reflects the Mission’s immigrant and Indigenous Latino communities. Advocacy for the park was led by PODER in partnership with community organizations and local schools. The park design integrates cultural, ecological, and recreational elements, including fence artwork by renowned San Francisco artist Carmen Lomas Garza.

Location:

3100 17th Street in the Mission District, San Francisco

Lead Agency:

San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (Rec and Park)

Project Cost:

\$7.7 million

Completed:

2017

TOOLS

- » **Regulatory Tools:** Eastern Neighborhoods Mission Area Plan has a policy to create a new park in the neighborhood.
- » **Public Funding:** \$800,000 from the PUC, \$54,000 in Open Space Funds, set aside funds from property taxes, \$478,000 in Lease Revenue Bonds, SFPUC Funds \$496,000, 1% Public Art funded the artwork on the fence.
- » **State Funding:** \$2.7 million California Statewide Park and Community Revitalization Grant and \$500,000 California Housing Related Parks Grant.
- » **Impact Fees:** Eastern Neighborhoods for Recreation and Public space \$1.25 million for park renovation and \$2.27 for park acquisition.

PROCESS / TIMELINE

2008	Planning: Planning for the park began with the adoption of the Eastern Neighborhoods Area Plan.
2012	Acquisition: The site was acquired from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). Progress was paused for a year as SFPUC explored potential sewer improvements at the site and then resumed once plans were withdrawn.
2015	Approval: The Rec and Park Commission awarded the construction contract and approved the park project.
2017	Project Completed



Photo credit: SF Department of Recreation and Park



Photo credit: SF Department of Recreation and Park



Kapwa Gardens in the South of Market



COMMUNITY PLANNING
& VISIONING

Kapwa Gardens was a five-year interim public-space activation on City-owned land in the Filipino Cultural Heritage District in San Francisco, or SOMA Pilipinas. The project transformed a City-owned parking lot at 967 Mission Street into a community-built cultural garden and outdoor event hub. The site was previously owned by Hearst Corporation and was dedicated to the City for affordable housing as part of the 5M Development Agreement. While the City was arranging funding for affordable housing on the site, an agreement was made to activate the space in the interim. Kapwa Gardens was created and run by non-profit Kultivate Labs as a healing, arts-and-wellness space and was used to bring community together, elevate Filipino culture, and helped the neighborhood recover from impacts of COVID-19.

TOOLS

- » **Regulatory and Funding Tools:** The developer transferred 967 Mission Street to MOHCD to meet off-site affordable housing and community benefits requirements for the 5M project.
- » **Public Funding:** MOHCD provided the site and support through the Interim Use Program, grant funding from MOHCD, OEWD, and a community challenge grant.
- » **Other:** In-kind and volunteer contributions from artists and community members also supported the project.

Location:

967 Mission Street in the South of Market Area, San Francisco

Developer:

Forest City later Brookfield in partnership with Hearst Corporation

Lead Agency:

Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD)

Site Operator:

Kultivate Labs

Active:

2020-2025

PROCESS / TIMELINE

2015	Site Transfer: As part of the 5M Development Agreement, the 967 Mission Street parcel was transferred to the City and County of San Francisco.
2020	Partnership: The City partnered with Kultivate Lab to design a temporary community space.
2020 - 2024	Activation and Programming: Hosted hundreds of events and markets, supporting local entrepreneurs, artists, and cultural organizations.
2025	Transition and Planning: With the site preparing for the future affordable senior housing development, Kapwa Gardens is closed and Kultivate Labs is identifying new locations.



Photo credit: SOMA Pilipinas and Kapwa Gardens



Photo credit: Kultivate Labs



Photo credit: Kapwa Gardens



Photo credit: Alvaro Batista

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & CULTURAL SPACES



Community facilities and cultural spaces include recreation centers, youth and senior centers, cultural institutions, and nonprofit service spaces. Community facilities provide essential services, support neighborhood resilience, and strengthen community identity and cohesion. Cultural spaces including performance venues, galleries, museums, and community centers preserve high-quality design and cultural traditions and help prevent displacement of community-based organizations and artists.

Lead Agencies:

- » [San Francisco Arts Commission](#) for cultural programming and public art.
- » [San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department](#) for planning, programming, and maintenance of community recreation centers, like Harvey Milk, Sharon Arts, and Randall Museum.
- » Some community facilities are created through unique agreements between the city and community for example the Southeast Community Facility funded by San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

Comparison of Community Facilities & Cultural Spaces Acquisition and Preservation

This table summarizes the main ways community facilities and cultural spaces are built and funded.

Function	New Community Facilities & Cultural Spaces
Who Leads	SF Arts Commission, Rec and Park, Public Works, SFPUC, nonprofits, and community groups
Purpose	Long-term community advocacy with a clear vision for space and programming
Planning and Justification	Often supported by community-led or City supported needs assessment
How Space is Acquired	Public capital projects, development agreements; nonprofit partnerships; acquisition or lease through stabilization programs
Funding Sources	Public funding, private development contributions, and nonprofit partnerships
Preservation and Maintenance	Long-term leases, stabilization funding from the City, private and nonprofit support help to prevent displacement and loss of culturally significant spaces.



Example of a community facility
Photo credit: Community Arts Stabilization Trust

What are some ways to support and learn more community facilities and cultural spaces?



Volunteer or use the services at various community facilities and cultural spaces.



Support and promote local programming, attend a performance, and take classes.



Partner with community-based organizations to gather knowledge about how spaces are used, who they serve, and what gaps exist.



Southeast Community Center



COMMUNITY PLANNING
& VISIONING



FUNDING COMMUNITY
INVESTMENTS

The Southeast Community Center at 1550 Evans Avenue is a 40,000 square foot hub for community to gather, learn, and play in Bayview-Hunters Point. The Center was built to offset impacts from the nearby San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) wastewater plant. This facility replaced the 1800 Oakdale Avenue Southeast Community Facility (SECF).

The Community Center offers low-cost childcare, public workspaces, conference rooms, the Alex Pitcher Jr. Pavilion for events, and two-acres of public space. The project was created with support from the Southeast Community Facility Commission, San Francisco Public Works, the San Francisco Arts Commission, local nonprofits, and neighborhood partners. Local hiring requirements ensured economic benefits went to local Bayview-Hunters Point residents.

Location:

1550 Evans Avenue in
Bayview-Hunters Point, San
Francisco

Lead Agency:

San Francisco Public Utilities
Commission (SFPUC)

Project Cost:

\$100 million

Completed:

2022

TOOLS

- » **Public Funding:** Revenue bonds issued by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) as part of its Capital Improvement Program tied to the Southeast Treatment Plant (SEP) modernization.
- » **Additional Funding:**
 - City grants for community programs.
 - Funding from the San Francisco Art Enrichment Ordinance, which dedicates two percent of eligible project costs to public art.

PROCESS / TIMELINE

1979	Advocacy: Alex Pitcher, Harold Madison, Ethel Garlington, Dr. Espanola Jackson, Shirley Jones, and Elouise Westbrook, a group of Bayview community leaders known as the “Big 6”, advocated for the neighborhood’s right to a community center.
1987	Their advocacy led to the construction of the Southeast Community Facility at 1800 Oakdale, as an effort to mitigate environmental impact during the 1970s.
2011	Community Assessment: Conducted in partnership with the Southeast Community Facility Commission, tenants and community members identified the building at 1800 Oakdale needed major improvements.
2015	Study: SFPUC along with tenants of SECF and key stakeholders explored the options of (1) building a new SECF at Third and Evans or (2) renovating 1800 Oakdale.
2016	Community Engagement: The SFPUC held extensive stakeholder engagement and public outreach that included a door-to-door campaign of 2,400 households, focus groups, presentations, and community events.

2018 - 2019

Request for Proposals and Award: SFPUC invited requests for proposals for construction services for the center. SFPUC approved a contract for \$71 million for construction services, workforce training, childcare, and affordable community space.

2020

Construction: Construction began of the new Southeast Community Center.

2022

Project Completed





African American Art & Culture Complex



FUNDING COMMUNITY
INVESTMENTS

The African American Art & Culture Complex (AAACC) is a cornerstone of San Francisco's Black cultural life. The Center has been located at 762 Fulton Street in the Fillmore District since 1989. Housed in a 1935 former brewery building owned by the City and leased to the nonprofit, the 34,000 square foot facility includes visual and performing arts spaces, community meeting rooms, and offices for Black-led organizations.

This case study focuses on the ongoing seismic retrofit and building improvements at AAACC, which represent a major investment in preserving and modernizing one of the City's designated cultural centers. The project aims to strengthen the building's structural resilience, improve safety and accessibility, and ensure the long-term viability of the facility for artists, tenants, and community members. While AAACC's year-round programming and cultural contributions remain central to its mission, the current capital improvements are critical to sustaining this work and enabling the Center to continue serving as a hub for African American heritage and creative expression for decades to come.

Location:

762 Fulton Street in the Fillmore, San Francisco

Lead Agency:

Arts Commission and Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development

Improvement:

Seismic retrofit, replace windows, and code required upgrades

Project Cost of the

Improvement:

\$12.5 million

Completed:

2022

TOOLS

- » **Public Funding:** Core operational funding from the Arts Commission and the Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development (MOHCD), along with support from philanthropic partners.
- » **Capital Improvement Funding:** General Funds and Certificates of Participation, Arts Commission funding.

PROCESS / TIMELINE

1989	Establishment: 762 Fulton Street was a meeting place for the San Francisco African Historical and Cultural Society and was formerly the Western Addition Cultural Center. In 1989, it officially became the location for AAACC.
2009 - 2019	Building Improvements: AAACC has undergone phased renovations over the years to improve accessibility, safety, and usability of its historic space.
2020	Needs Assessment: The Arts Commission conducted a Cultural Center Facility Needs Assessment. The assessment showed the need for window and roof replacement, upgrades to mechanical, electrical and fire systems, as well as seismic upgrades.
2025	Request for Proposals: Announced and Awarded to contractors.
2025 - 2027	Renovation: AAACC will be renovated from 2025-2027.





Kinmon Gakuen 金門学園 or Golden Gate Institute



FUNDING COMMUNITY
INVESTMENTS

Kinmon Gakuen (Golden Gate Institute) is a historic Japanese American cultural and educational institution located at 1840 Sutter Street in San Francisco's Japantown. Founded in 1911, Kinmon Gakuen has served generations of Japanese and Japanese American families as a language school, cultural center, and community anchor. The building is one of the few remaining pre-World War II Japanese American institutions in San Francisco and stands as a symbol of cultural resilience, particularly following the forced incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.

Today, Kinmon Gakuen is a recognized historic building and continues to provide Japanese language instruction, cultural programming, and operate as a community space. The upcoming renovation will support classes, nonprofit office use, social and legal services, community meetings, and cultural activities.

Location:

762 Fulton Street in the Fillmore, San Francisco

Lead:

Golden Gate Institute, a non-profit organization, with support from SF Planning

Improvement:

Rehabilitation to comply with ADA accessibility, structural upgrades, and convert auditorium into community center

Project Cost of Improvement:

\$12.5 million

TOOLS

» Regulatory Tools:

- Registered as a *Legacy Business* and named in the *Japantown Historic Context Statement*.
- Designated a San Francisco Landmark under San Francisco Planning Code *Article 10*.

» **Public Funding:** \$4.5 million in State funding; \$5 million grant in City funding through the API Nonprofit Acquisition Fund.

PROCESS / TIMELINE

1911	Establishment: Established as a language school for Japanese American students who were not allowed to attend American public schools.
1926	Building Completion: The new building on 2031 Bush Street is completed and dedicated to Japanese language education and culture for Japanese American youth.
1942 - 1949	Closure: School closes during Japanese American incarceration and reopens after the World War II.
2018	Feasibility Study: A feasibility study is conducted to evaluate the condition of the building and found that the building needed seismic, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing upgrades as well as accessibility improvements.
2019	Landmark Designation: Designated as a Historic Landmark.
2025	Groundbreaking: Renovations to the historic building begin.



Photo credit: kinmongakuen.org



Photo credit: Wikimedia Commons / BriefEdits (CC BY-SA 4.0)



Photo credit: kinmongakuen.org



Photo credit: kinmongakuen.org



DESIGN & PUBLIC ART

The design of both public and private buildings plays a critical role in shaping the public realm. Elements such as façade treatment, materials, lighting, transparency, landscaping, and architectural details influence how people experience streets, sidewalks, and public spaces. These features affect safety, comfort, walkability, and the overall feel of a neighborhood. Design standards and guidelines influence the form, quality, and integration of features in the public realm to ensure consistency, functionality, and long-term durability. Public art like murals, sculptures, and installations help reflect community identity and creativity.

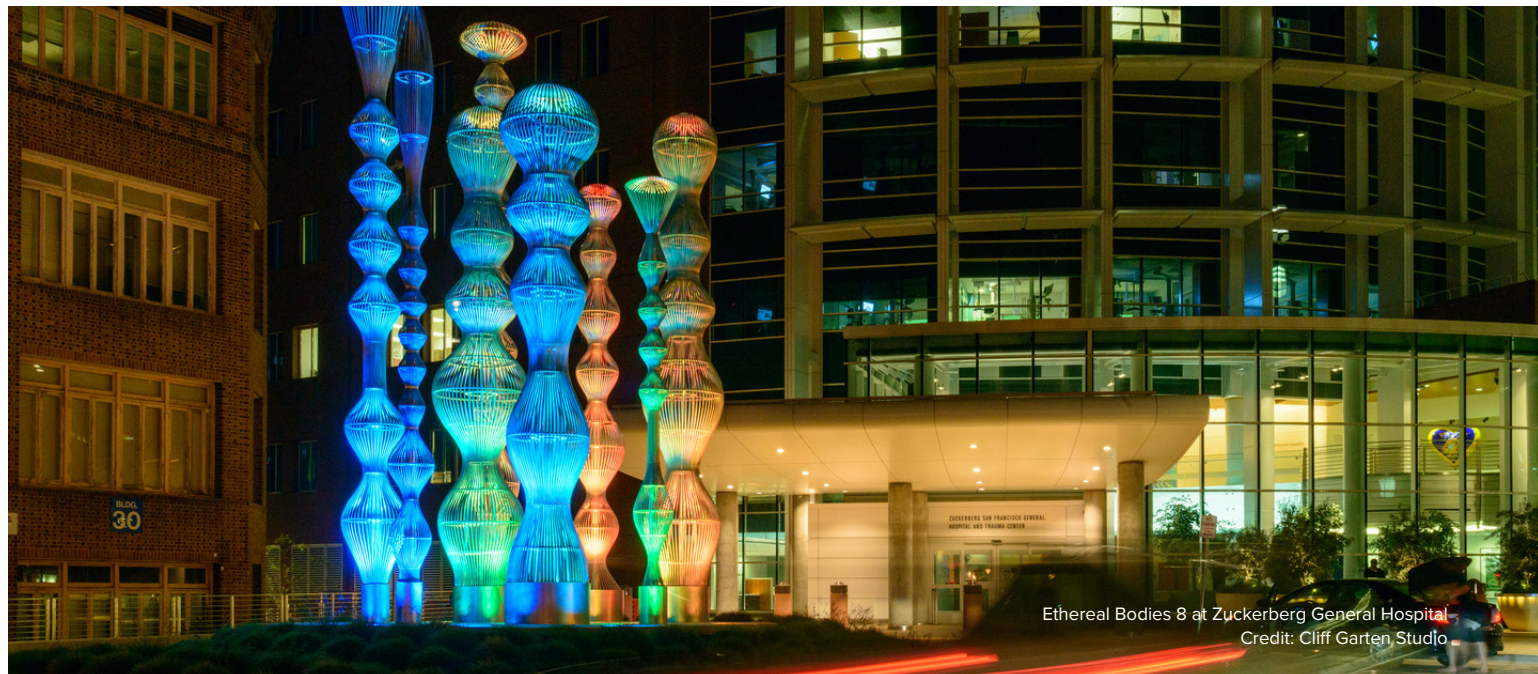
Lead Agencies:

- » San Francisco Arts Commission is responsible for reviewing, commissioning, and approving public art, and investing in a vibrant arts community and shaping innovative cultural policy.
- » San Francisco Planning Department is responsible for architectural design standards and guidelines.
- » San Francisco Public Works delivers streetscape, plaza, and public realm improvements. Proposed non-standard elements may involve different agencies dependent on project sponsors and funding.
- » Recreation and Parks Department manages public art and design elements in parks.

Comparison of Design and Public Art Delivery and Preservation

This table summarizes the main ways design and public art are built and funded.

Function	Architectural and Public Design	Public Art
Who Leads	SF Planning, private developers and non-profit developers	SF Arts Commission, community organizations, neighborhood groups
Purpose	Enhance visual identity and ensure cohesiveness and accessibility	Enhance public spaces and promote a diverse cultural environment
How It's Delivered	Objective design standards and guidelines; private development; public capital projects, community-initiated projects; nonprofit and arts partnerships	Public art commissions; artist calls; private development contributions; community-led and nonprofit arts partnerships
Funding Sources	Public capital funds; required private development contributions; grants; philanthropy	Public art set-asides (e.g., % for art); required private development contributions; grants; philanthropy
Maintenance	Property owners, property managers are responsible for care, repair and maintenance	Conservation, restoration, and ongoing stewardship of public art through <u>maintenance programs</u> , conservation funding by SF Arts Commission



Ethereal Bodies 8 at Zuckerberg General Hospital
Credit: Cliff Garten Studio



Ani - Harvested Hopes by Venazir Martinez with Atlix Martinez.
Credit: SOMA Pilipinas

What are some ways to support and learn more about design features and public art?



Provide feedback during community planning processes that focus on design standards or guidelines.



Attend a San Francisco Art Commission meeting.



Residents and advocates can **connect with community-based organizations and advocacy groups** to support specific public art or funding measures that support civic art.



Calle 24 Corridor (24th Street)



SHAPING
DEVELOPMENT

The 24th Street or Calle 24 Cultural District is one of San Francisco's most vibrant and culturally significant corridors, rooted in the Mission District's Latino heritage. It serves as both a commercial main street and a cultural spine, where small businesses, community institutions, murals, and historic architecture reflect decades of community identity and activism.

The design of Calle 24 reflects the Mission District's blend of Latino cultural heritage, urban form, and active street life. Its design features reinforce the corridor's history and role as a center of community, commerce, and culture.

TOOLS

» **Regulatory Tools:** The Calle 24 Design Guidelines currently serve as a guide for the development and improvements along the 24th Street Cultural District, emphasizing cultural preservation, neighborhood scale, and community character. While these guidelines provide qualitative direction—such as encouraging culturally expressive façades, small-scale storefronts, and context-sensitive design—they rely on interpretation to implement. They also do not apply to Housing Accountability Act (HAA) or ministerial housing projects.

A longer-term goal is to translate these qualitative guidelines that apply to housing into objective design standards for housing development that can be applied consistently and predictably. Moving toward objective standards will help ensure that future development aligns with the community's cultural and design values while meeting state housing law requirements.

Geographic Focus:

24th Street commercial corridor, from Bartlett Street to San Bruno Avenue and surrounding Mission area blocks

Partner Agencies:

Mayor's Office of Community Development (MOHCD), SF Planning, Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD)

Purpose:

Preserve Latino cultural identity while guiding compatible growth and preventing displacement

Level of Community Oversight:

High – strong role of community-based leadership in review and implementation

PROCESS / TIMELINE

2015 - 2016	Visioning: The Calle 24 Latino Cultural District Council, in partnership with SF Planning, began developing a vision document to guide preservation, small business support, and culturally rooted design principles.
2018 - 2019	Partnership: SF Planning collaborated with community members to draft the Calle 24 Design Guidelines, establishing qualitative guidance for architecture, storefronts, murals, and public realm improvements that reflect Latino cultural identity.
2021	Adoption: Calle 24 Guidelines was adopted as part of City's Urban Design Guidelines framework.





Portrait of a Phenomenal Woman in Civic Center



FUNDING COMMUNITY
INVESTMENTS

Portrait of a Phenomenal Woman by Lava Thomas is a powerful monument outside San Francisco's Main Library. The monument honors the legendary Dr. Maya Angelou who lived in San Francisco as a teenager and became the city's first Black streetcar conductor. Dr. Angelou subsequently became a renowned writer. Shaped like an open book, it features her portrait and the inspiring phrase "*Still I Rise*." This project also serves as a symbol for representation.

Location:

100 Larkin Street in the Civic Center, San Francisco

Artist:

Lava Thomas

Lead Agency:

SF Arts Commission

Project Cost:

\$293,000

Completed:

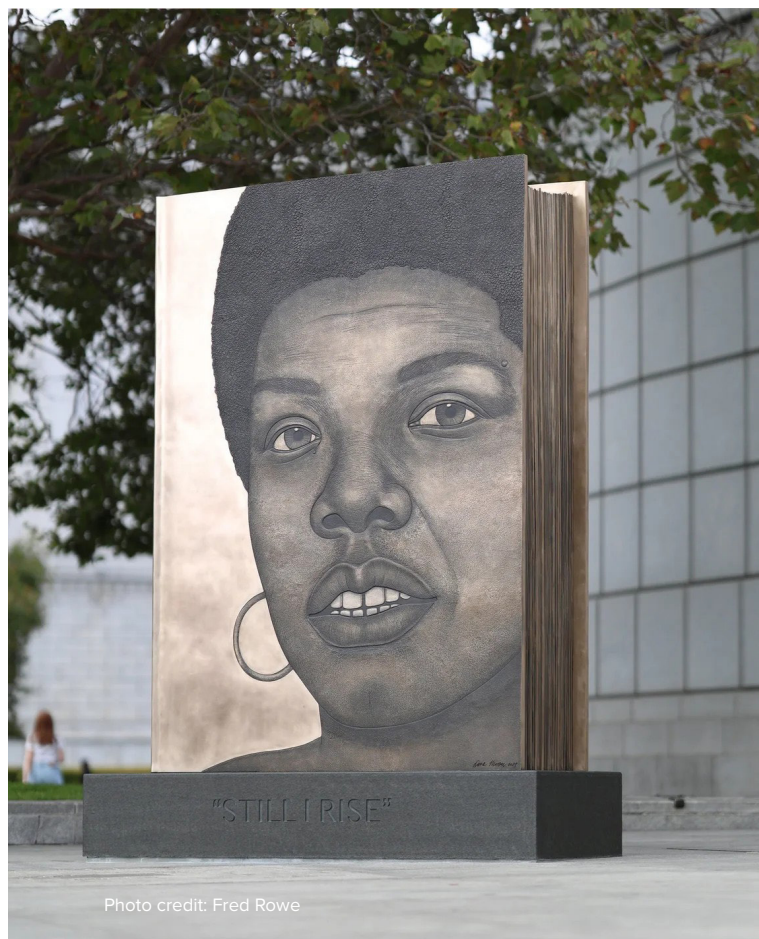
2024

TOOLS

- » **Public Funding:** The project was commissioned by the San Francisco Arts Commission in partnership with the San Francisco Library

PROCESS / TIMELINE

2017	Recognition: The Board of Supervisors recognized that women were underrepresented in public art. This is the first public monument in the city to celebrate a Black woman, making it a meaningful step toward recognizing the diverse stories that shape our community.
2019	Process: The Arts Commission's undertook a process for an artwork to honor of Dr. Angelou that included a Request for Qualifications, public meetings, community workshops, and selection panels to include local voices in the selection.
2020	Re-awarded: Changes in city leadership and shifting priorities delayed the project. The Commission re-awarded the project in 2020, allowing fabrication to move forward.
2024	Opening: Public unveiling and celebration of the sculpture took place in front of the Main Library.





Everyone Deserves a Home Mural in the Tenderloin

Located in the Tenderloin, Everyone Deserves a Home mural was painted in 2016 on the six-story facade of the Windsor Hotel, above Boeddeker Park, a vital green space in the low-income, high-density area.

Led by residents with lived experience of homelessness and displacement, the project used community input and centered voices that are often left out of planning and design decisions. The mural conveys a powerful message of housing justice, community strength, and belonging. The mural was part of the redesign and reopening of Boeddeker Park in 2014, a project led by the Trust for Public Land, Rec and Park, and community partners to create a safe, welcoming environment for Tenderloin residents, especially families, seniors, and youth.

Location:

Boeddeker Park (246 Eddy Street) in the Tenderloin, San Francisco

Artist:

Precita Eyes and Larkin Street Youth Services Art Program

Lead Agency:

SF Arts Commission

Project Cost:

\$50,000

Completed:

2016

TOOLS

» Public Funding:

- Community Challenge Grant: The mural was funded in part by a Community Challenge Grant from the City and County of San Francisco
- Donated materials
- Fundraising by Delivering Innovation in Supportive Housing (DISH)

PROCESS / TIMELINE

2014	Improvements: The mural was part of the redesign of Boeddeker Park.
2019	Community Feedback and Approvals: Delivering Innovation Through Supportive Housing (DISH), muralists from 1AM, Friends of Boeddeker, and community members spent several months on a design for the mural. The design was approved by the Arts Commission.
2016	Mural Completed





STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Creating safer streets and managing improvements includes planning, design, and construction of roadways, sidewalks, and related infrastructure. Accessibility is essential to improving street conditions and can be achieved with bulb-outs, accessible signals, lighting and wayfinding. Street improvements can also include aesthetic and greening elements like trees, sidewalk landscaping, and paving enhancements. Street improvements support the former Vision Zero, now the [Street Safety Initiative](#) goals to eliminate traffic fatalities and injuries by increasing street safety as well as promoting climate resilience.

Lead Agencies:

- » [San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency \(MTA\)](#) is responsible for transportation operations and street design “curb to curb,” including traffic signals, transit infrastructure, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and parking management.
- » [San Francisco Public Works \(Public Works\)](#) is responsible for the design, construction, and maintenance of public infrastructure and streetscape improvements in the public right-of-way. Role may vary depending on project jurisdiction, scope, and funding source.
- » [San Francisco Public Utilities Commission \(SFPUC\)](#) is responsible for water, wastewater, and power infrastructure, including underground utilities, stormwater systems, and green infrastructure within the public right-of-way.

Comparison of Street Improvements Delivery and Maintenance

This table summarizes the main ways street improvements are built and funded.

Function	Street Improvements
Who Leads	MTA, Public Works, SFPUC, developers, community organizations
Purpose	Improve safety, support transit, walking, and biking, and enhance streetscapes to advance safe travel for all users
Funding Sources	Federal grants, state and regional funding, impact fees, in-kind improvements, development agreements, bond measures, and special tax and assessment districts, which are captured in the capital planning process
Maintenance	Ongoing maintenance led by Public Works, MTA, and SFPUC, Community Benefit Districts/Green Benefit Districts, Business Improvement Districts (CBDs/GBDs/BIDs) depending on asset type (e.g., streets, transit infrastructure, utilities), with support from community partners for stewardship and activation



Banig Crosswalk on 6th and Howard
Credit: San Francisco Public Works

What are some ways I can learn more or support street improvements in my neighborhood?



Join your neighborhood association and advocate with your neighbors for safer streets, including bike lanes, crosswalk upgrades, curb ramps, and transit improvements.



Engage with SFMTA, Public Works, and your District Supervisor to support traffic safety, transit, and public realm projects.



Participate in community workshops and project meetings for upcoming street improvement projects near you at: sfpublicworks.org/projects.



Support funding measures for transportation, safety, and streetscape programs.



Leland Avenue Streetscape Project



FUNDING COMMUNITY
INVESTMENTS

The Leland Avenue Streetscape Improvement Project aimed to revitalize a key commercial corridor in the Visitacion Valley neighborhood. The project enhanced pedestrian safety, accessibility, aesthetics, and environmental performance through streetscape and infrastructure upgrades. The City's investment not only delivered immediate neighborhood improvements but also set the stage for seamless integration into the proposed Baylands North development.

The project includes corner bulb-outs, installation of bioretention planters and landscape planters, ADA curb ramps, public art, and street lighting.

TOOLS

» **Funding Sources:** Federal Transportation for Livable Communities grant, with state and local matching funds.

Location:

Leland Avenue (between Bayshore Boulevard and Rutland Street) in Visitacion Valley, San Francisco

Lead Agency:

San Francisco Public Works

Project Cost:

\$4.1 million

NOTE: Project cost reflects 2006 dollars and may not represent today's construction or implementation expenses

Completed:

2006

PROCESS / TIMELINE

2005	Design: The project's design and implementation were shaped through a collaborative community process.
2006	Community Engagement: A series of workshops and public meetings engaged Visitacion Valley residents and stakeholders to identify neighborhood needs and priorities. Interagency collaboration ensured alignment across Public Works, Planning Department, and SFMTA.
2009	Construction: Improvements of 63 planted trees, new curb ramps, bulb outs, and light fixtures as well as enhancing pedestrian experience.
2010	Project Completed





Cesar Chavez Streetscape Project in the Mission



FUNDING COMMUNITY
INVESTMENTS

The Cesar Chavez Streetscape Project transformed Cesar Chavez Street between Hampshire and Guerrero Streets, a major east-west corridor connecting the Mission District, Bernal Heights, and Bayshore Boulevard and the 101 Freeway. The project goal was to create a green, multi-modal street that is safer for walking and biking.

Longtime community advocacy, including efforts by CC Puede, helped shape the improvements, which were coordinated with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) for sewer and stormwater upgrades. Planning was led by SF Planning, with implementation by Public Works and SFMTA.

Key improvements include:

- » New public plazas honoring Cesar Chavez Street and widened sidewalks; corner bulb-outs; and ADA curb ramps; and dedicated bike lanes
- » Green infrastructure, including permeable paving, planters, medians with 200+ trees and plants
- » Upgraded lighting, seating, trash cans, signage, and crosswalks

Location:

Cesar Chavez Street
(between Hampshire
and Guerrero Street) in
the Mission District, San
Francisco

Lead Agency:

San Francisco Public Works

Project Cost:

\$11.6 million

NOTE: Project cost reflects 2014 dollars and may not represent today's construction or implementation expenses

Completed:

2014

TOOLS

- » **Funding Sources:** 2011 Road Repaving and Street Safety Bond; regional (San Francisco County Transportation Authority); state/federal environmental grants for stormwater infrastructure.

PROCESS / TIMELINE

2003 - 2008	Advocacy: Parents rallied to protest about traffic on Cesar Chavez Street in response to an incident in which a truck hit and injured two children. Community advocates held meetings to express concerns about traffic and pedestrian safety, and pushed for more greening along Cesar Chavez.
2008 - 2012	Formal Design Development: Initially proposed as a sewer replacement, the Cesar Chavez Streetscape Improvement became a collaborative effort, with Public Works, SF Planning, and the MTA partnering with community members to create a safer, more vibrant corridor. Through public meetings, open houses, and on-the-ground outreach, residents and advocacy groups shared priorities that directly shaped the project.
2014	Construction Streetscape Project Completed



Photo credit: San Francisco Public Works



Photo credit: San Francisco Public Works



Photo credit: SF Planning



Photo credit: San Francisco Public Works

