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# Introduction

San Francisco is a special place. Foremost is its dramatic physical beauty, created by bay and ocean surrounding a cluster of hills that are often illuminated by brilliant sun or shrouded in silvery fog. The views from these hilltops were given to us inadvertently. The early settlers, in their scramble to forge a new life, imposed a simple grid system on the land. So instead of streets winding themselves around the hills we have streets that can scale the hilltops to reveal extraordinary vistas. These vistas give us a city that appeals from any perspective and sparks our imagination.

Secondly, San Francisco is compact. Its density creates a rich variety of experiences and encounters on every street. The city is cosmopolitan and affable, easily traversed by foot or by bus, and offers an intriguing balance of urban architecture.

Thirdly, San Francisco is the center, the soul of the region and cooperative efforts to maintain the area's quality of life are imperative. The City has long been a magnet for business, culture, retailing, tourism and education. Its rich 150 year history reflects the cultures of the world and gives energetic diversity to its neighborhoods. The residents strive to maintain this tradition, welcoming people from around the world to participate in the promise of a healthy city.

There are many issues we must face as we look to the future of our economy, work force, housing stock, transportation systems, open spaces, and vacant lands. San Francisco is a dynamic entity within which there are constant pressures for change and renewal. It remains the finance capital for the West and is an emerging gateway to the Pacific Rim. However as we enter the 21st century, new technologies, medical research and design are providing additional economic opportunity.

The City's General Plan serves to guide these changes to ensure that the qualities that make San Francisco unique are preserved and enhanced. The General Plan is based on a creative consensus concerning social, economic, and environmental issues. Adopted by the Planning Commission and approved by the Board of Supervisors, the General Plan serves as a basis for decisions that affect all aspects of our everyday lives from where we live and work to how we move about. It is both a strategic and long term document, broad in scope and specific in nature. It is

implemented by decisions that direct the allocation of public resources and that shape private development. In short, the General Plan is the embodiment of the community's vision for the future of San Francisco.

State law requires that the General Plan address seven issues: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise and safety.

The Charter approved by the voters in November 1995 requires that the Planning Commission recommend amendments to the General Plan to the Board of Supervisors for approval. This approval changes the Plan's status from an advisory to a mandatory document and underscores the importance of Referrals establishing consistency with the General Plan prior to actions by the Board of Supervisors on a variety of actions.

The San Francisco General Plan is designed as a guide to the attainment of the following general goals:

- Protection, preservation, and enhancement of the economic, social, cultural, and esthetic values that establish the desirable quality and unique character of the city.
- Improvement of the city as a place for living, by aiding in making it more healthful, safe, pleasant, and satisfying, with housing representing good standards for all residents and by providing adequate open spaces and appropriate community facilities.
- Improvement of the city as a place for commerce and industry by making it more efficient, orderly, and satisfactory for the production, exchange and distribution of goods and services, with adequate space for each type of economic activity and improved facilities for the loading and movement of goods.
- Coordination of the varied pattern of land use with public and semi-public service facilities required for efficient functioning of the city, and for the convenience and well-being of its residents, workers, and visitors.
- Coordination of the varied pattern of land use with circulation routes and facilities required for the efficient movement of people and goods within the city, and to and from the city.
- Coordination of the growth and development of the city with the growth and development of adjoining cities and counties and of the San Francisco Bay Region.

The Plan is intended to be an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of objectives and policies and its objectives, and policies are to be

construed in a manner which achieves that intent. Sec. 101.1(b) of the Planning Code, which was added by Proposition M, November 4, 1986, provides as follows:

*The following Priority Policies are hereby established. They shall be included in the preamble to the General Plan and shall be the basis upon which inconsistencies in the General Plan are resolved:*

- 1. That existing neighborhood-serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in and ownership of such businesses enhanced;*
- 2. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods;*
- 3. That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced;*
- 4. That commuter traffic not impede Muni transit services or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking;*
- 5. That a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development, and that future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced;*
- 6. That the City achieve the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and the loss of life in an earthquake.*
- 7. That landmarks and historic buildings be preserved; and*
- 8. That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development.*

The manner in which the general goals are to be attained is set forth through a statement of objectives and policies in a series of elements, each one dealing with a particular topic, which applies citywide. The General Plan currently contains the following elements: Residence, Commerce and Industry, Recreation and Open Space, Community Facilities, Transportation, Community Safety, Environmental Protection, Urban Design and Arts. In addition, a Land Use Index cross-references the policies related to land use located throughout the General Plan. Additional elements may be added from time to time.

The Plan also contains several area plans which cover their respective geographic areas of the city. Here the more general policies in the General Plan elements are made more precise as they relate to specific parts of the city.

In addition to the elements, area plans and the land use index comprising the complete General Plan, there are several documents which support the plan. These include background papers, technical reports, proposals for citizen review, environmental impact reports or negative declarations, program documents, and design guidelines. Program documents provide schedules and programs for the short range implementation of the General Plan.

*(Amended by Resolution No.14149 adopted on 6-27-96)*

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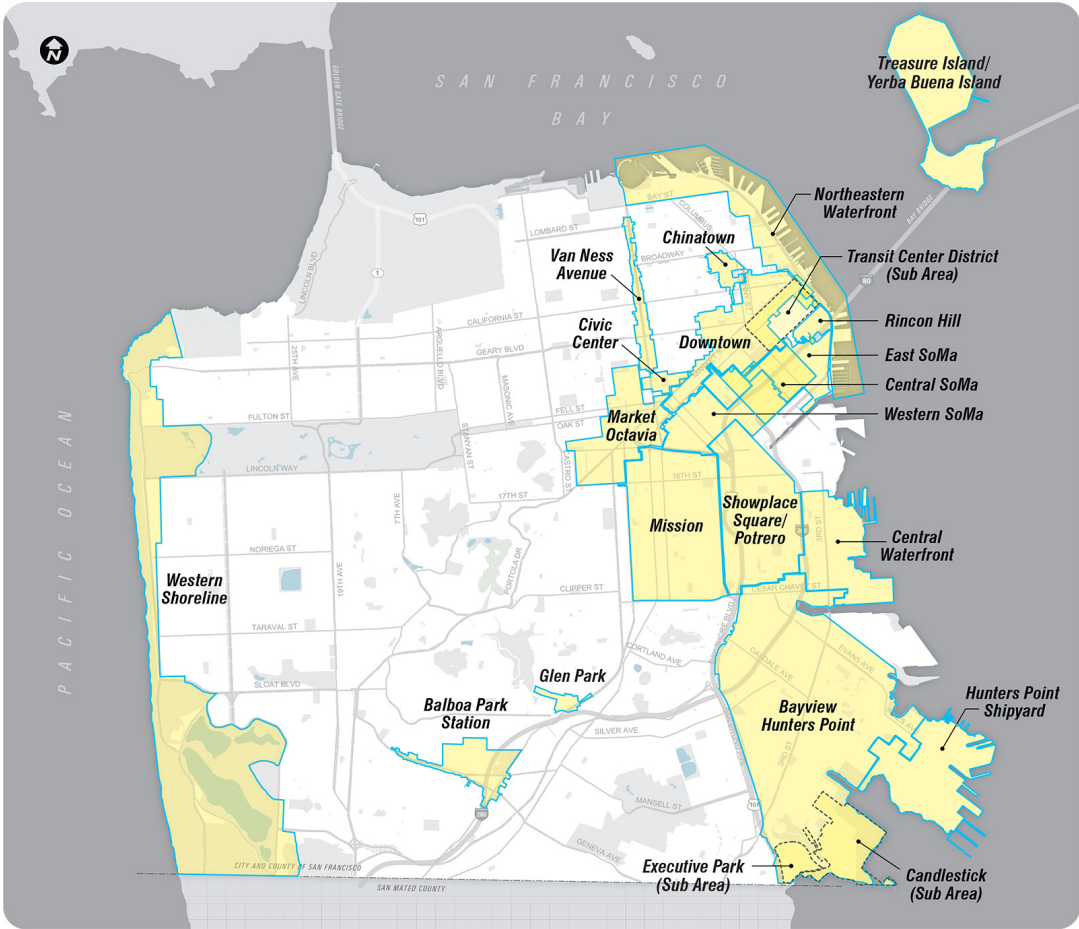
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- WESTERN SHORELINE



- **WESTERN SOMA (SOUTH OF MARKET)**



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### III: LAND USE INDEX

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In addition to the complete General Plan as listed above, program documents for the Residence Element, Recreation and Open Space Element and Transportation Element are published separately and are available at the Planning Department.



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