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ELEMENT

of the San Francisco General Plan

SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL PLAN

RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

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SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL PLAN
RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT
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San Francisco Planning Department
1650 Mission Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94103-3114
www.sfplanning.org

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I.

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

OBJECTIVE 1

ENSURE A WELL-MAINTAINED, HIGHLY UTILIZED, AND INTEGRATED OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

POLICY 1.1
Encourage the dynamic and flexible use of existing open spaces and promote a variety of recreation and open space uses, where appropriate.

POLICY 1.2
Prioritize renovation in highly-utilized open spaces and recreational facilities and in high needs areas.

POLICY 1.3
Preserve existing open space by restricting its conversion to other uses and limiting encroachment from other uses, assuring no loss of quantity or quality of open space.

POLICY 1.4
Maintain and repair recreational facilities and open spaces to modern maintenance standards.

POLICY 1.5
Prioritize the better utilization of McLaren Park, Ocean Beach, the Southeastern Waterfront and other underutilized significant open spaces.

POLICY 1.6
Support the continued improvement of Golden Gate Park while preserving the beauty of its landscape.

POLICY 1.7
Support public art as an essential component of open space design.

POLICY 1.8
Support urban agriculture and local food security through development of policies and programs that encourage food production throughout San Francisco.

POLICY 1.9
Preserve sunlight in public open spaces.

POLICY 1.10
Ensure that open space is safe and secure for the City's entire population.

POLICY 1.11
Encourage private recreational facilities on private land that provide a community benefit, particularly to low and moderate-income residents.

POLICY 1.12
Preserve historic and culturally significant landscapes, sites, structures, buildings and objects.

POLICY 1.13
Preserve and protect character-defining features of historic resources in City parks, when it is necessary to make alterations to accommodate new needs or uses.

OBJECTIVE 2

INCREASE RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE TO MEET THE LONG-TERM NEEDS OF THE CITY AND BAY REGION

POLICY 2.1
Prioritize acquisition of open space in high needs areas.

POLICY 2.2
Provide and promote a balanced recreation system which offers a variety of high quality recreational opportunities for all San Franciscans.

POLICY 2.3
Provide recreational programs that are responsive to community needs and changing demographics.

POLICY 2.4
Support the development of signature public open spaces along the shoreline.

POLICY 2.5
Encourage the development of region-serving open spaces in opportunity areas: Treasure Island, Yerba Buena Island, Candlestick and Hunters Point Shipyard.

POLICY 2.6
Support the development of civic-serving open spaces.

POLICY 2.7
Expand partnerships among open space agencies, transit agencies, private sector and nonprofit institutions to acquire, develop and/or manage existing open spaces.

POLICY 2.8
Consider repurposing underutilized City-owned properties as open space and recreational facilities.

POLICY 2.9
Address physical and bureaucratic barriers to opening schoolyards as community open space during non-school hours.

POLICY 2.10
Improve access to and level of activity provided at San Francisco reservoirs.

POLICY 2.11
Assure that privately developed residential open spaces are usable, beautiful, and environmentally sustainable.

POLICY 2.12
Expand the Privately-owned Public Open Spaces (POPOS) requirement to new mixed–use development areas and ensure that spaces are truly accessible, functional and activated.

OBJECTIVE 3.

IMPROVE ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY TO OPEN SPACE

POLICY 3.1
Creatively develop existing publicly-owned right-of-ways and streets into open space.

POLICY 3.2
Establish and Implement a network of Green Connections that increases access to parks, open spaces, and the waterfront.

POLICY 3.3
Develop and enhance the City's recreational trail system, linking to the regional hiking and biking trail system and considering restoring historic water courses to improve stormwater management.

POLICY 3.4
Encourage non-auto modes of transportation – transit, bicycle and pedestrian access—to and from open spaces while reducing automobile traffic and parking in public open spaces.

POLICY 3.5
Ensure that, where feasible, recreational facilities and open spaces are physically accessible, especially for those with limited mobility.

POLICY 3.6
Maintain, restore, expand and fund the urban forest.

OBJECTIVE 4.

PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE BIODIVERSITY, HABITAT VALUE, AND ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF OPEN SPACES AND ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN THE DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT OF OUR OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

POLICY 4.1
Preserve, protect and restore local biodiversity.

POLICY 4.2
Establish a coordinated management approach for designation and protection of natural areas and watershed lands.

POLICY 4.3
Integrate the protection and restoration of local biodiversity into open space construction, renovation, management and maintenance.

POLICY 4.4
Include environmentally sustainable practices in construction, renovation, management and maintenance of open space and recreation facilities.

OBJECTIVE 5.

ENGAGE COMMUNITIES IN THE STEWARDSHIP OF THEIR RECREATION PROGRAMS AND OPEN SPACES

POLICY 5.1
Engage communities in the design, programming and improvement of their local open spaces, and in the development of recreational programs.

POLICY 5.2
Increase awareness of the City's open space system.

POLICY 5.3
Facilitate the development of community-initiated or supported open spaces.

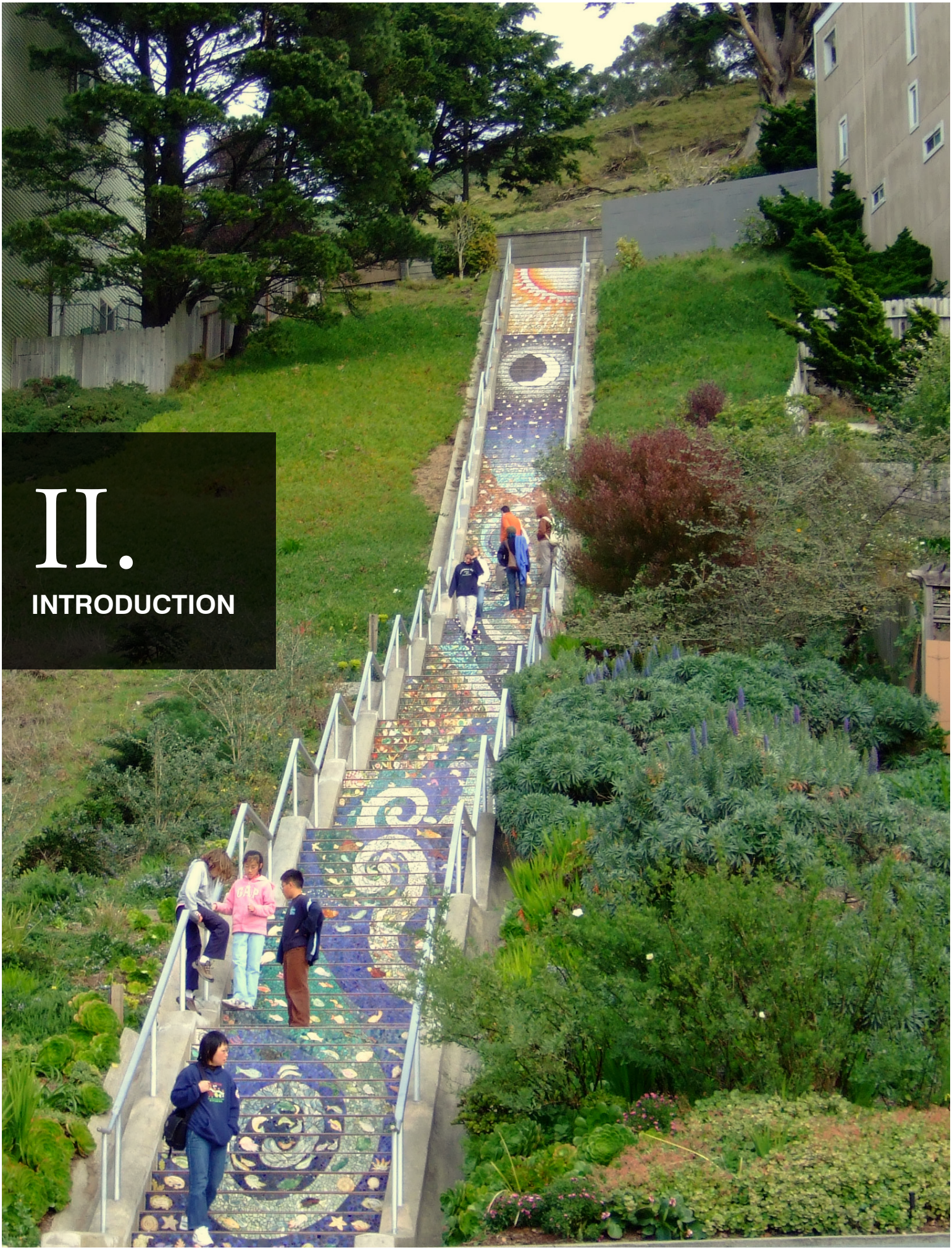
POLICY 5.4
Reduce governmental barriers to community-initiated recreation and open space efforts.

POLICY 5.5
Encourage and foster stewardship of open spaces through well-run, active volunteer programs.

OBJECTIVE 6.

SECURE LONG-TERM RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT FOR OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION, AND RENOVATION, OPERATIONS, AND MAINTENANCE OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACE

POLICY 6.1
Pursue and develop innovative long-term funding mechanisms for maintenance, operation, renovation and acquisition of open space and recreation.



II.

INTRODUCTION



With its dramatic physical setting comprised of hilltops and mountains, surrounded by the bay and ocean, with nature woven through the landscape, San Francisco has an intrinsic connection with its environment. The opportunity the City provides to move outside and connect with nature has drawn countless thousands here over time, and that draw continues today.

As our City grows, we must not lose sight of these very qualities. If San Francisco is to continue to offer its residents, visitors, and workers a vibrant, civic, livable environment connected with the wonders of the natural world, we need a framework that ensures a world-class open space system. The goal of the City's Recreation and Open Space Element is to continue the City's legacy of fine parks and recreational opportunities, and guide the City's future decisions so they improve that open space system for the benefit of everyone.

Why Is Recreation and Open Space Important?

Recreation and open space are critical components of any community's quality of life; for San Franciscans they are defining elements of the City itself. The City's open space system provides places for recreation, activity and engagement, for peace and enjoyment, and for freedom and relief from the built world. It serves the social and environmental health of the City, providing a sustainable environment. Among its benefits:

- **Open space and recreation activities improve resident's physical and mental health.** Open spaces and recreational facilities offer a wide range of health related benefits. They provide an opportunity for residents and visitors to exercise, give residents access to sunshine, nature and fresh air, and even encourage people to walk or bike from place to place. They can have a significant impact on people's stress levels and overall mental health, particularly in urban areas like San Francisco, and can be proven to be actual preventative measures that impact positively on health care and health care costs. Physical recreation reduces obesity and risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other health ailments. Public open spaces, whether playgrounds, picnic fields or even just engaging streets, can help build community by giving neighbors a realm in which to get to know each other, and giving children a safe place to play.

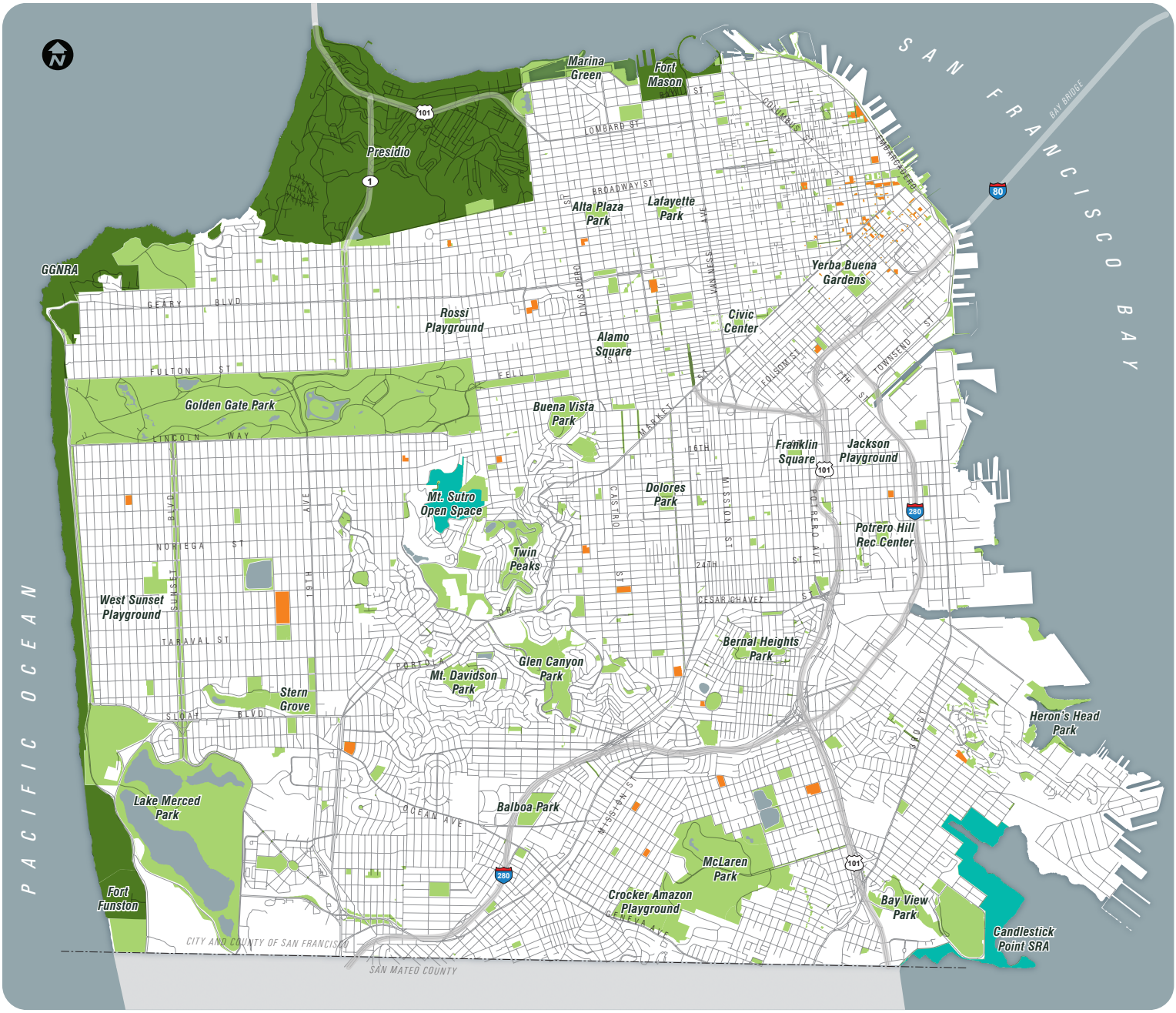
- **Open space promotes environmental sustainability.** Natural habitat provides sanctuary for wildlife species ranging from mammals, birds and insects to plants; trees and other types of vegetation provided in open space networks can reduce air pollution; and wetlands can filter contaminants. The trails and streets of an open space network can also aid in reducing greenhouse gases, by providing alternative transportation routes and promoting bicycling and walking.

- **Open space and recreation activities can help to address environmental justice across a community.** Public recreation provides accessible and low cost opportunities to all San Franciscans, regardless of income level. High rates of childhood obesity and illness often correspond to fewer acres of usable open space. Provision of open space in areas with high concentrations of density, poverty, youth or seniors can redress equity issues. A clear example is how local food production increases access to fresh local produce and provides an opportunity for communities to connect with nature.

- **Open space provides tangible economic benefit.** Numerous studies have quantified the dollars that parks and tree plantings bring back to a city, by making the area more attractive for investment, by attracting and expanding local businesses, by increasing tourism and by enhancing property values. The Trust for Public Lands' study, The Economic Benefits of Parks & Open Space, cited testimony that our own Golden Gate Park has been shown to increase the value of nearby property to the tune of $5-$10 million additional dollars annually.

How Are We Doing in Providing Recreation and Open Space?

By any measure, San Francisco is performing well against its urban counterparts. San Francisco has well over 3,400 acres of recreation and open space owned and managed by the Recreation and Park Department (RPD). It also contains over 250 acres of open space owned and managed by the State of California, and another 1600 acres of federally-owned open space. These publicly-owned open spaces make up almost 20% of the City's total land area. The quantity of usable open space increases even more when one includes the other spaces owned by city agencies, college campuses, schoolyards open during non-school hours, urban plazas or other publicly accessible outdoor spaces throughout the City, by another 560 acres. This puts San Francisco among the top five cities in the country in terms of parkland per resident. All of these open spaces are shown in *Map 1: Existing Open Space*.



Existing Open Space

0 Miles 1

MAP 01

SFRPD Land in San Francisco City Limits: 3,433 acres

State-Owned Land: 255 acres
Candlestick, Mount Sutro

Federal-Owned Land:
Ocean Beach, Fort Funston, Fort Mason, Lands End, Sutro Heights, China Beach: **642 acres**
Presidio: **1000 acres**

Other: 560 acres
Campuses, pilot program schoolyards, SFPUC lands, SFRA parks, SF Port parks, linear open spaces such as boulevards and parkways, and privately owned, publicly accessible open spaces in the Downtown.

NOTE: The map is to be used for reference purposes only. For parcel specific details, please refer to adopted area plans: The 2018 Central Waterfront-Dogpatch Public Realm Plan conducted an updated inventory of parks and open spaces within a quarter mile of the Central Waterfront Plan Area.

The 2004 Recreation Assessment was the culmination of a nine-month planning effort and process to evaluate the recreation needs of residents and to ensure the future direction of recreation within the SFRPD. The assessment pieced together critical issues, challenges and opportunities. It was the first such report developed solely for recreation in SFRPD's history. The Recreation Assessment identified where the SFRPD should focus its energies and resources as it applies to the Recreation Division, continuing the legacy of high quality recreation facilities and program services for the citizens of San Francisco. SFRPD should regularly assess its recreation component as required in the Charter. See *Map 2* for a map of existing Recreation Facilities.

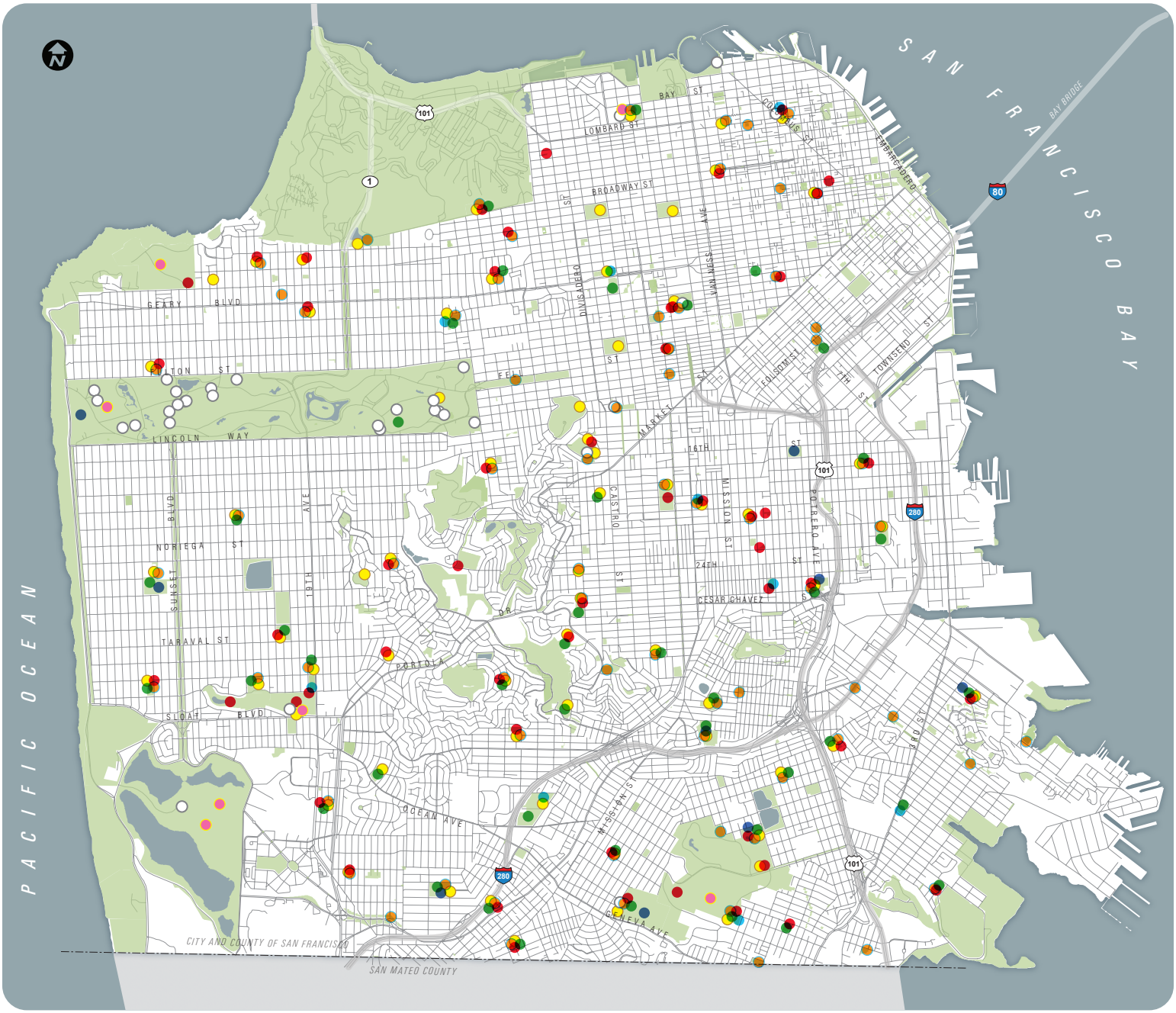
San Francisco values its recreation and open spaces. In 1974, San Francisco voters passed Proposition J, which directs a percentage of property taxes towards the City's Open Space Fund, to acquire new parks and open space. We spend more than any other urban area per resident on our parks, according to a 2008 report by the Trust for Public Lands, at an average of almost $200 per resident. But more revenue is needed as land costs increase and as we move to meet the challenges of providing space and recreation opportunities for a growing population.

How Do We Define Recreation and Open Space?

Recreation and open space are critical components of any city, and by necessity have to come in different forms and experiences. Open space provides the 'breathing room' in a dense urban environment and promotes opportunities to engage in outdoor activities, access nature, enjoy scenic views, and experience our City's many ecosystems. Recreation includes activities that happen within open space both at outdoor or indoor facilities, the key elements being that the activity is beneficial by way of being fun, stimulating, refreshing, or relaxing in some form, either physical, mental, or the combination of the two. Active recreation involves physical activity while passive recreation usually involves sitting or lying down. Active recreation refers to a mix of uses in a neighborhood park that includes the following facilities types: athletic fields, buildings or structures for recreational activities, concessions, community gardens, courses or sport courts, children's play areas, dog play areas, or bike paths. A passive recreation area refers to a mix of uses in a park, undeveloped land or minimally improved lands which can include the following: landscaped areas, natural areas, ornamental gardens, non-landscaped greenspaces, stairways, decorative fountains, picnic areas, and water bodies without recreational staffing.

San Francisco's definition of recreation and open space system includes a variety of types of spaces, including traditional spaces and facilities for recreation such as:

- ***Recreation Centers:*** The City operates 25 multi-use recreation centers, providing playground and sports opportunities, as well as programming for youth, adults and seniors.
- ***Playgrounds:*** Children's playgrounds including play structures for toddler and older children.
- ***Playing fields:*** Including baseball courts, soccer fields, basketball and tennis courts, as well as children's and toddlers' playgrounds.
- ***Unprogrammed or Unstructured Open areas:*** Grassy, landscaped, or even paved open areas provide opportunities for unstructured time away from the dense urban environment.
- ***Trails and Natural Areas:*** Including 1,100 acres of natural lands, protecting the plant and animal habitats of these unique landscapes for residents and visitors to enjoy, trail systems, and other planted green areas.
- ***Cultural Arts and Recreation Centers:*** The Recreation and Parks Department offers a variety of classes, community event spaces, and cultural activities such as: art camps, dance and theater classes, programs on music and poetry for all ages.
- ***Sports and Athletics:*** The City's robust system of sports programs and facilities includes several citywide sports facilities, such as Kezar Complex in Golden Gate Park and Crocker Amazon Park Playground Sports Facility.



Existing Recreation Facilities

0 Miles 1

MAP 02

- Ball Field
- Basketball Court
- Clubhouse
- Golf Course
- Soccer Field
- Swimming Pool
- Tennis Court
- Other

"Other" includes activity centers, an archery field, bocce ball courts, a bowling green, equestrian features, a frisbee golf course, a racquetball court, and horseshoe pits.



Recreation Centers


Playgrounds


Open Areas


Playing Fields


Trails & Natural Areas


Cultural Arts and Recreation


Community Gardens


Living Streets & Alleys


POPOS

The recreation and open space system also includes spaces that supplement traditional parks in the City such as:

- ***Community Gardens:*** Opportunities for residents to grow produce and flowers in their neighborhoods.
- ***Living Streets, and alleys, plazas or parklets:*** These are components of the public right-of-way that have been improved to provide a gathering space and enhance the pedestrian experience.
- ***Privately-owned Public Open Spaces (POPOS):*** Spaces owned by private development that are accessible to the public. POPOS come in a variety of forms including plazas, rooftop terraces, Greenhouse, and sun terraces, and include landscaping and public seating for the enjoyment of the public usually in dense neighborhoods.
- ***Piers and wharves:*** These are waterfront open spaces that provide shoreline access along the Bay edge. The Port provides public access along the perimeter of many of its piers as well as on individual public Piers such as Pier 7 and 14 as well as others.

Lastly, the system also includes spaces unique to San Francisco, such as such as Coit Tower, Union Square, Stern Grove, Palace of Fine Arts, and lesser known amenities like Camp Mather that offers outdoor camping experiences.

Guiding Principles for Open Space and Recreation

San Francisco provides a significant amount of open space already for its residents, particularly given its small land area, its hilly topography, and its density, all of which challenge open space development. But we can do better, particularly in the better utilization, maintenance and design of our open spaces. The policies of the General Plan are intended to improve these aspects of our recreation and open space system. A holistic recreation and open space system encompasses the full range of spaces within our definition of open space, as well as the necessary experiences that are integral to San Francisco's unique identity. The Recreation and Open Space Element follows these guiding principles to ensure such holistic system:

1. INTEGRATED & MULTIFUNCTIONAL. A major theme developed from the outreach process was the concept of "making the most of what we have": utilizing and improving the expansive recreation and open space system the City already provides. An integrated and multi-functional open space network would respond to a variety of needs for recreation and open space, better utilizing the existing resources. Such needs range from refreshing from daily pressures of life to exercising and active sports, from appreciating the beauty of nature to maintaining natural habitats and wildlife, and from enjoying play time for kids and adults to housing civic and cultural events.

2. SENSE OF PLACE. San Francisco is a regional epicenter for ecological, economic, and cultural diversity. Open spaces should aim to build on our City's intrinsic qualities, both natural and cultural, and to reflect the values we place on cultural diversity and biodiversity. Furthermore, they should create a network that inspires a deep connection to place.

3. EQUITY & ACCESSIBILITY. Open space and recreational programs should be equitably distributed. They should provide access for all residents, workers and visitors, and work towards a democratic network that includes all neighborhoods.

4. CONNECTIVITY. San Francisco's network of open spaces should be wholly connected. The open space system should facilitate non-motorized movement, link diverse neighborhoods, be easy to navigate and understand and, where feasible, enhance habitat through connectivity.

5. HEALTH & SAFETY. Open space should increase the City's capacity to be a safe and healthy place to live. Its design should promote social interaction, wellness, and a healthy lifestyle by providing opportunities for physical, cultural and social activities, and a connection to nature.

6. ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION & INTEGRITY. With environmental sustainability as a driving theme, the quantity and quality of natural systems in the City should be preserved and expanded, by promoting aquatic and terrestrial biodiversity, by designing for watershed health, and by implementing environmental, ecological and conservation-minded strategies.

7. SUSTAINING STEWARDSHIP. San Francisco's community members should be actively engaged as participants in its future. Policies should work towards shared, continued stewardship that increases the tangible link between community members and their open space network. Partnerships between public agencies, private business, and community based non-profits, and individual members of the community to foster pride, purpose and community should continue to be developed.

Related Plans and Agency Programs

The Recreation and Open Space Element, along with its related components that make up the City's overall Open Space Framework, aims to provide the elements needed to strive towards San Francisco's goal of a comprehensive open space network: a broad vision, a policy context, and a tangible task list for moving forward. The City also maintains several policy documents, plans and programs that provide direction about specific open space and recreational components, or to certain parts of the City. These include:

Street Park Program

Street Parks is a partnership between San Francisco Parks Alliance and the San Francisco Department of Public Works (DPW) to support the development and maintenance of community-managed open spaces on DPW owned properties, such as streets, stairways, sidewalks, median strips, traffic circles, and vacant lots. Improvements can range from sidewalk landscaping to median plantings to creation of mini-parks in unpaved street right-of-ways and in traffic circles. The program provides technical support on how to accomplish such projects, organizing seminars to assist in building a budget, and can provide matching funds.

Better Streets/Public Realm Planning

The City's Better Streets Plan, adopted in 2010, states that the City's rights-of-way should be "attractive, safe and useable public open space corridors with generous landscaping, lighting and greenery", providers of habitat for urban wildlife, and that they should invite multiple uses, including recreation. The Better Streets Plan provides a set of standards, guidelines, and implementation strategies to govern how the City designs, builds, and maintains its pedestrian environment. A number of public realm planning efforts implementing the principles of the Better Streets Plan are underway.

Community and Area Plans

A number of neighborhood-based planning efforts have been completed or are underway throughout the City. Each neighborhood plan seeks to increase the livability of several of San Francisco's urban neighborhoods by tapping the benefits of growth as a way to build more balanced neighborhoods. Most include capital improvement plans that draw from and build upon the policies of this Element to address a range of neighborhood needs including recreation, open space, and an improved public realm.

Waterfront Land Use Plan and Design and Access Element

The Port of San Francisco's Waterfront Plan was initially adopted by the Port Commission in 1997, defining acceptable uses, policies and land use information applicable to all properties under the Commission's jurisdiction. The Waterfront Plan defines locations for new public-private partnership projects coordinated with major public open space, maritime, and historic preservation improvements along the waterfront. The Design and Access Element of this Plan sets forth policies and site-specific design criteria to direct the location and types of public access and open spaces, public view corridors and urban design along San Francisco's waterfront.

Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure, (Former Redevelopment Agency), Open Space Planning

The Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure, which is the successor agency to the Redevelopment Agency, created a significant amount of open space in its project areas, with more in the planning stages. New parks have been developed at Golden Gateway, in the Western Addition, Yerba Buena Center, Bayview Hunter's Point, Rincon Point - South Beach, and Mission Bay (with additional parks to be developed in Mission Bay) and are a part of recent plans in Hunter's Point Shipyard and in the Transbay area. These spaces are currently being managed by the Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure and a number of different city agencies..

Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) Planning Efforts

The GGNRA encompasses a number of open space and parklands throughout Marin, San Mateo and San Francisco, including Alcatraz Island, Crissy Field, the Presidio and the majority of the City's public beaches. A major planning process was recently completed by the SPUR for Ocean Beach to examine ways to manage coastal processes that drive erosion, ensure the future of critical infrastructure, protect natural resources, and activate and enhance the beach to best serve the local and regional populations.

Significant Natural Resource Area Management Plan.

The San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department (SFRPD) has developed a Significant Natural Resource Areas Management Plan (SNRAMP) to address the restoration and management of the remaining elements of San Francisco's original ecosystem. The SNRAMP is implemented by the Natural Areas Program, a division in the Recreation and Park Department, and its goal is to restore and enhance remnant natural areas of the City, while also developing and supporting community-based stewardship of these areas. The program also includes a number of volunteer opportunities to engage students, businesses, groups, and individuals in the stewardship of San Francisco's natural lands.

Association of Bay Area Governments Bay Trail Plan and Bay Area Water Trail Plan

The Bay Trail Plan, adopted in 1989, includes a nine-county , 400 mile regional hiking and bicycling trail around the perimeter of San Francisco and San Pablo Bays. The Plan was prepared by the Association of Bay Area Governments pursuant to Senate Bill 100, which mandated that the Bay Trail:

- Provide connections to existing park and recreation facilities,
- Create links to existing and proposed transportation facilities; and,
- Avoid adverse effects on environmentally sensitive areas.

The San Francisco Bay Area Water Plan, adopted in 2005, was developed to create a network of launch and landing sites, or "trail heads". Such network would allow people in human-powered boats and beachable sail craft to enjoy the historic, scenic and environmental richness of San Francisco Bay through continuous, multiple-day and single-day trips on the Bay. The trail will promote safe and responsible use of the Bay, while protecting and increasing appreciation of its environmental resources through education and coordinated, and strategic access to the Bay.

San Francisco Blue Greenway Planning and Design Guidelines

The Blue Greenway Planning and Design Guidelines (draft released in 2011) catalog the open space network along San Francisco's Southeastern Waterfront, identify future open space opportunities; designate roadway designs for streets that link the open spaces, and prioritize improvements between neighborhood connections to the waterfront system of open spaces. In addition, it establishes design guidelines for signage and site furnishings along the entire length, identifies funding for Port projects and outlines a process for continued interagency coordination.

San Francisco's Sustainability Plan

In 1996, a collaboration of multiple city agencies, including the Commission on the Environment, the Planning Department, the Bureau of Energy Conservation, the Recreation and Park Department, and the Solid Waste Management Program; as well as a number of businesses; environmental organizations; elected officials; and concerned individuals, developed a plan for how the City might reach a sustainable development future. While the plan intended to lay out objectives for a five year time-frame, its intent, particularly with regards to "Parks, Open Spaces and Streetscapes" and their vital ecological, social and economic function in the City, is still applicable. The Plan's strategies for how to retain those functions – through increased provision, constant maintenance, additional funding, expanded community participation, and civic commitment – are reflected in the strategies presented in this Element.

Sustainability Plan for Public Parks

Using the 2011 SFRPD Departmental Climate Action Plan as a baseline, the Recreation and Park Department's Sustainability Plan sets forth guidelines for sustainable park practices. These practices offset municipal greenhouse gas emissions through landscape management and operations standards within the SFRPD parks and open spaces system to better manage natural resources, including soils, vegetation, and water. The Sustainability Plan expands the function of SFRPD parks beyond from providing recreational opportunities to mitigation of and adaptation to the effects of global climate change through environmental stewardship, resource conservation, and ecological responsibility.

San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department Project Standards and Design Guidelines

The Project Standards and Design Guidelines were created to ensure a well maintained and actively used park system that supports the long-term health of people, plants, and animals. Recognizing that management practices have impacts beyond park boundaries, SFRPD developed the Standards and Guidelines to adapt to and preserve local systems through sustainable design of open spaces and facilities, and maintenance procedures. These practices include the use of proven sustainable materials and technologies.



III.

OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

OBJECTIVE 1

ENSURE A WELL-MAINTAINED, HIGHLY UTILIZED, AND INTEGRATED OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

The City's goal is to make the very most of the open space assets that San Francisco's robust system already provides. Well-maintained, highly utilized, and integrated open spaces are hallmarks of a unified and connected open space system with diverse programming, numerous amenities, and regular maintenance. Offering a diverse range of active and passive recreational opportunities in the City's current recreation and open spaces would help better utilize existing resources and encourage access for diverse users and activities.

POLICY 1.1
Encourage the dynamic and flexible use of existing open spaces and promote a variety of recreation and open space uses, where appropriate.

San Francisco has a variety of high-quality open spaces, where diverse types of users can engage in a myriad of activities—children can play, seniors can linger on benches and socialize, people can exercise and enjoy nature, and families can gather for a picnic. San Francisco's open spaces vary in their form and function: from smaller local green streets, pocket parks, plazas, and community gardens; to neighborhood parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and recreation centers; to large regional-serving parks such as Golden Gate Park and special destinations such as Camp Mather. To ensure vibrant parks and open spaces the City should deploy a diverse range of opportunities, including the following options:

- Provide recreational opportunities, both active and passive, that respond to user demographics and emerging recreational needs.
- Include innovative community-driven uses such as food production, education, and improved streetscaping.
- Design open spaces that include both active programming and passive uses in tranquil spaces.
- Provide programming for healthy and active lifestyles.
- Add user amenities such as concessions that cater to and attract visitors.
- Expand opportunities for temporary uses such as festivals, art, performances, and farmers markets.
- Allow active engagement with natural areas through public access trails, wildlife observation, birding, and educational displays and programs.
- Increase cultural programming and activities based on neighborhood need and interest.
- Provide spaces and structures that encourage unstructured natural play.

Some of the City's open spaces and recreational facilities are underutilized and need additional programming and activation to address community interests and needs. These underutilized spaces offer a tremendous opportunity because the space is already owned and operated by the City. Such locations would in most cases require minimal renovation to take full advantage of the space. These open spaces and recreational facilities should be redesigned or re-programmed to better serve the needs of the surrounding neighborhood, while ensuring a flexible design to adapt to changing neighborhood needs over time. Some types of public spaces that have traditionally been overlooked can offer additional opportunities for innovative and community-driven strategies for activation – wide sidewalks and traffic medians can be considered for community gardens, and parking lots and other spaces can support temporary festivals and farmers markets. There also are events large and small, such as fairs, concerts, and sporting events, that occur annually or on a recurring basis in parks and open spaces throughout the City. These events are often well-attended and enjoyed by many residents and visitors. In some cases the draw of these events provides the first exposure for many people to the City's diverse parks and open spaces. The City should continue to evaluate how these events impact the open space itself and on the surrounding neighborhoods.

POLICY 1.2
Prioritize renovation in highly-utilized open spaces and recreational facilities and in high needs areas.

Many of the City's open space and recreational facilities support a high intensity of uses. These spaces clearly provide a welcome respite for residents and visitors, but they are often so heavily utilized that more frequent maintenance is necessary to keep up with their heavy usage. The City should perform user studies and collect usage data to

assess which of the existing recreation and open spaces are the most highly used so that those spaces may be targeted for renovation and improvement. Renovation of resources also should be prioritized in "high needs areas," defined as areas with high population densities, high concentrations of seniors and youth, and lower income populations, that are located outside of existing park service areas(See *Map 7: High Needs Areas: Priority Renovation & Acquisition Areas* and Policy 2.1).

POLICY 1.3
Preserve existing open space by restricting its conversion to other uses and limiting encroachment from other uses, assuring no loss of quantity or quality of open space.

The shortage of vacant sites and the intensity of development in San Francisco produce pressures on the City's public open spaces, sometimes putting spaces at risk of conversion to uses not serving the public purpose of respite and recreation. These same factors generate considerable public demand for access to open spaces. It is essential that the City protect its public open spaces from conversion to other uses, which threatens the overall integrity of the open space network.

Outdoor space in parks and playgrounds should not be diminished except in very unique cases. Yet, despite general agreement on the need to preserve public open space, developments may indeed be proposed on public land designated as open space. It is anticipated that the most persuasive arguments in favor of development will be based on the "public value" of the proposed development. The public value will differ among proposals, and a determination of this projected value as compared the potential open space benefit will be difficult and must be subject to rigorous public scrutiny. In order to assist in this determination when proposals for new development occur, the following provisions should be applied:

1. Proposals for Non-recreational Uses on Recreation and Park Department Land:

Decisions related to non-recreational uses on RPD land shall conform to the San Francisco Charter Section 4.113. The Charter requires a vote of the electors for park property to be sold or leased for non-recreational purposes or to build any structure for non-recreational purposes on park property. The Charter also notes that the Recreation and Parks Commission, with the approval of the Board of Supervisors, may use subsurface space for parking or other uses that would not be detrimental to the original park purpose.

2. Proposals for Permanent New or Expanded Recreational and Cultural Buildings, and Supporting Facilities on Recreation and Park Department Land:

A properly balanced recreation system combines both indoor and outdoor spaces and programs. Indoor recreational facilities are as important as outdoor space in a well-integrated park system. New indoor recreation facilities may be necessary to respond to local community needs, changing demographics of many San Francisco neighborhoods, and shifting maintenance requirements. Additionally, amenities that serve users of recreational facilities and open spaces – such as bicycle rental stands, cafes, and kiosks – can help provide services that enable and attract more people to visit and use underutilized open spaces and spend more time there. Culture is also an important aspect of community recreation; cultural facilities such as libraries or community spaces can support and enhance the existing park system. Proposals for such facilities or uses should be carefully evaluated to ensure the proposed location is optimal and appropriate. Decision-making bodies should consider the following criteria in making their determinations on such proposals:

- Facility directly serves and improves the existing open space by supporting better utilization of space while continuing to provide public access and respond to the needs of the local community.
- Facility is limited in size. The size will vary by open space, but the size shall be limited to the smallest footprint appropriate and feasible for the proposed use, taking into account the intensity of use, expected participants and spectators, as well as other relevant factors.
- Facility incurs limited impacts on the existing open space (because of a preponderance of nearby outdoor open space or other factor), or the projected public benefits outweigh the impacts.
- A clear rationale exists for siting the facility, articulating the advantages of the proposed site compared to reasonable alternatives.

A loss of open space resulting from approval of the proposed facility generally should be offset with replacement open space of equal or higher quality. This new open

space can be provided through a variety of ways, such as the removal of existing non-utilized structures, the acquisition of new space, or rearrangement of existing recreational and open space uses to better integrate these uses and the proposed facility. Maintenance facilities, restrooms, and other park-supporting facilities owned and operated by the Recreation and Park Department that are necessary for the maintenance of parks are exempt from these requirements.

3. New and Expanded Facilities in Non-RPD Open Spaces:

Many of the City's current and potential open space sites are under the jurisdiction of public agencies other than the Recreation and Park Department ("RPD") - including the Port of San Francisco (the Port), the SFPUC, the Office of Community Investment & Infrastructure, and the Department of Public Works. These spaces include parkland, shoreline access, reservoirs, grounds of public institutions, streets, alleys, and undeveloped street rights-of-way, and are shown in *Map 3: Existing and Proposed Open Space*. In some cases, these non-RPD-owned sites are intended for public uses other than recreation and the site's role as open space is secondary to the primary use. Yet their role as open space is important, as they supplement playgrounds and parks and are a major visual asset.

New facilities related to that primary use, or expansions of various types of supporting facilities may be requested. These proposed facilities may be necessary to perform the public function of the particular land-owning agency. Decision-making bodies should analyze all of the following criteria in making their determinations on such proposals:

- Facility is necessary to provide the public service or operations of the agency holding the site in question.
- A clear rationale exists for siting the facility, articulating the advantages of the proposed site compared to reasonable alternatives.
- Facility incurs limited impacts on the existing open space (because of a preponderance of nearby outdoor open space or other factor), or the projected benefits outweigh the impacts.

Upon approval, the city may request the sponsoring agency to meet certain design criteria and performance standards that ensure conformity with the General Plan.

Removing non-recreational uses

In keeping with the overall policy goal of limiting encroachments, the City should also pursue eliminating non-recreational uses in its public open spaces. In the past, parks and playgrounds have been used as sites for public facilities such as fire and police stations, sewer plants and schools. Undoubtedly, the public need for them was great at the time of their construction and many are still essential. But as non-recreational facilities such as these require maintenance, the City is faced with the decision to renovate them or to relocate them altogether.

Where it is possible to provide services elsewhere, the City should demolish the facility so as to return the site to open space use. If the facility can be successfully converted to recreational use, then reuse could be an alternative to demolition. The City should not, however, permit the reuse of such facilities for other non-recreational purposes. The same policy should apply to the reuse of obsolete recreational facilities.

Temporary Structures

Temporary structures are often needed for different events, and in the case of natural disasters, our parks serve as temporary evacuation space. Therefore, all temporary structures (i.e. all structures that do not have in-ground footing attached to the structure) in compliance with the City's permit process are exempt from the above requirements. Use of such structures beyond their original intent, however, would be subject to the criteria explained earlier in this policy.

POLICY 1.4
Maintain and repair recreational facilities and open spaces to modern maintenance standards.

Maintaining open spaces and recreational facilities at a high level of quality will help ensure that they are well-utilized and enjoyed. In order to maintain this goal, the City should continue to employ well-trained staff, such as gardeners, arborists, electricians, plumbers and other tradespeople to maintain our open space system and recreational facilities.

However, maintaining the City's existing recreation and open space system in a good condition continues to be a challenge due to intensive use, facility age, and a high number of sites. The City has diminishing resources devoted to general maintenance and upkeep.

The city, especially for private and supplemental spaces, should continue to explore creative partnerships to meet maintenance goals of parks and open spaces. Where feasible and in keeping with the City's goal of providing well-maintained spaces the City should continue to seek alternative maintenance methods, such as working with non-profit stewards, or developing alternative maintenance agreements.

The Recreation and Parks Department owns a significant portion of the City's open space system. With over 220 parks and 3000 acres of parkland, RPD requires significant resources to keep the system in good to excellent condition. However, even as RPD continues to seek additional funding sources to address these needs, maintenance continues to be a problem due to rising costs and limitations on staffing and equipment.

RPD now evaluates parks on a quarterly basis and in addition the City Controller's Office provides an annual report on the state of the City's parks. The reports have helped direct RPD management and City resources to address maintenance needs. The City should continue to analyze maintenance needs by using these reports and other sources as data from users throughout the recreation and open space system to ensure the maintenance standards are met and funding is adequate.

POLICY 1.5
Prioritize the better utilization of McLaren Park, Ocean Beach, the Southeastern Waterfront and other underutilized significant open spaces.

Some of the City's large signature spaces offer a special opportunity to provide multifunctional open spaces that serve a diverse set of users. In particular:

McLaren Park

McLaren Park is a citywide resource due to its large size, varied landscape, and the specialized activities and programs located within the park. At the same time, it is located in an area of the City with one of the highest concentration of children, youth, seniors, and low-income households. McLaren Park should offer uses which satisfy the recreation needs of adjacent neighborhoods as well as meeting the needs of the city. The McLaren Park Master Plan was originally written in 1983, updated in 1996, and most recently updated with recommendations in the 2010 McLaren Park Needs Assessment. The City should ensure that the objectives and priorities of the Master Plan provide effective guidance for the needs of the park today.

Development of the park should capitalize on the site's natural conditions, including topography, existing native vegetation, and views, in compliance with RPD guidelines. New plantings should be added to provide habitats and windbreaks, to define sub-areas of the park, and to provide colorful and attractive visual accents. Plant species should be hardy, wind- and fire-resistant, and provide for and enhance wildlife habitats.

In an effort to increase park use, the City should continue promoting events that attract visitors to the Park. For example, Jerry Garcia Day, an annual festival held in honor of the local musician, draws thousands of visitors to the park. Revenues generated from such events could fund maintenance of and improvements to recreation facilities and open space.

The City should consider a number of improvements to McLaren Park. Existing traffic conditions should be examined to reduce conflicts between vehicles and park users. The City should investigate the feasibility of improving the existing right of way in the park to allow for safe pedestrian, vehicular and bike access where appropriate and converting those areas to recreational use. The existing trail system should be retained and improved by completing missing linkages. Any new development should build on the existing infrastructure including roads and parking areas, the irrigation system and drainage structures, and lighting and electrical installations. Infrastructure that is damaged should be replaced within the existing network, channel or path. New recreation areas should serve active, as well as passive, non-organized recreation needs, that respond to a wide spectrum of park users.

Ocean Beach

Ocean Beach offers a vast, unbroken expanse of natural open space that is one of the longest urban beaches in the country. The area historically served the growing San Francisco population with the Sutro Baths, the Cliff House, the Fleishhaker Pool, and an amusement park, but now suffers from erosion and a lack of amenities. At the same time, Ocean Beach is annually visited by as many as three million people for activities such as walking, picnicking, sunbathing, jogging, dog walking, surfing, fishing, and simply enjoying the natural beauty.

Ocean Beach faces significant obstacles to fulfilling its potential as a great public space at the city's edge. First, critical components of the wastewater infrastructure are located near the beach, with some elements that are threatened by erosion. Coastal management to protect infrastructure, ecological resources, and public access is a complex challenge. The erosion is likely to worsen as climate-related sea level rise accelerates. In addition, Ocean Beach is administered by a host of Federal, State, and Local agencies, including the National Park Service[1], the SF Recreation and Park Department, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, and the State Coastal Commission.

A non-binding Master Plan for Ocean Beach has been developed by a project team led by San Francisco Planning and Urban Research (SPUR) and incorporating input from an interagency Steering Committee, Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), Technical Advisors and the general public. The plan addresses the complex challenges faced at the coastline, including severe erosion, jurisdictional issues, a diverse array of beach users and points of view, and the looming challenge of climate-induced sea level rise. It presents recommendations for the coastline and how it should be managed and protected for the stretch from the Cliff House to Fort Funston, spanning roadway changes, bike and pedestrian connectivity, technical interventions, and ecological restoration.

Southeastern Waterfront/The Blue Greenway

The Blue Greenway is a project to improve and expand the public open space network along the City's central and southern waterfront from China Basin Channel to the San Francisco County Line. Collectively, the Blue Greenway is intended to provide opportunities for much-needed open space that is easily accessible for exercise and recreation, including bicycle and pedestrian access, recreational uses in the water, (e.g. kayaking), access to historical resources, and enjoyment of art as well as waterfront public access from nearby neighborhoods. The plan realizes objectives set forth in the Association of Bay Area Government's (ABAG) Bay Trail Plan and the Bay Area Water Trail Plan. High priority should be given to the project's completion as it will provide a much-needed open space system that is easily accessible for exercise, recreation and enjoyment of art and open space in the City's southern and central corridor. (See *Map 8: Blue Greenway* and Policy 2.4)

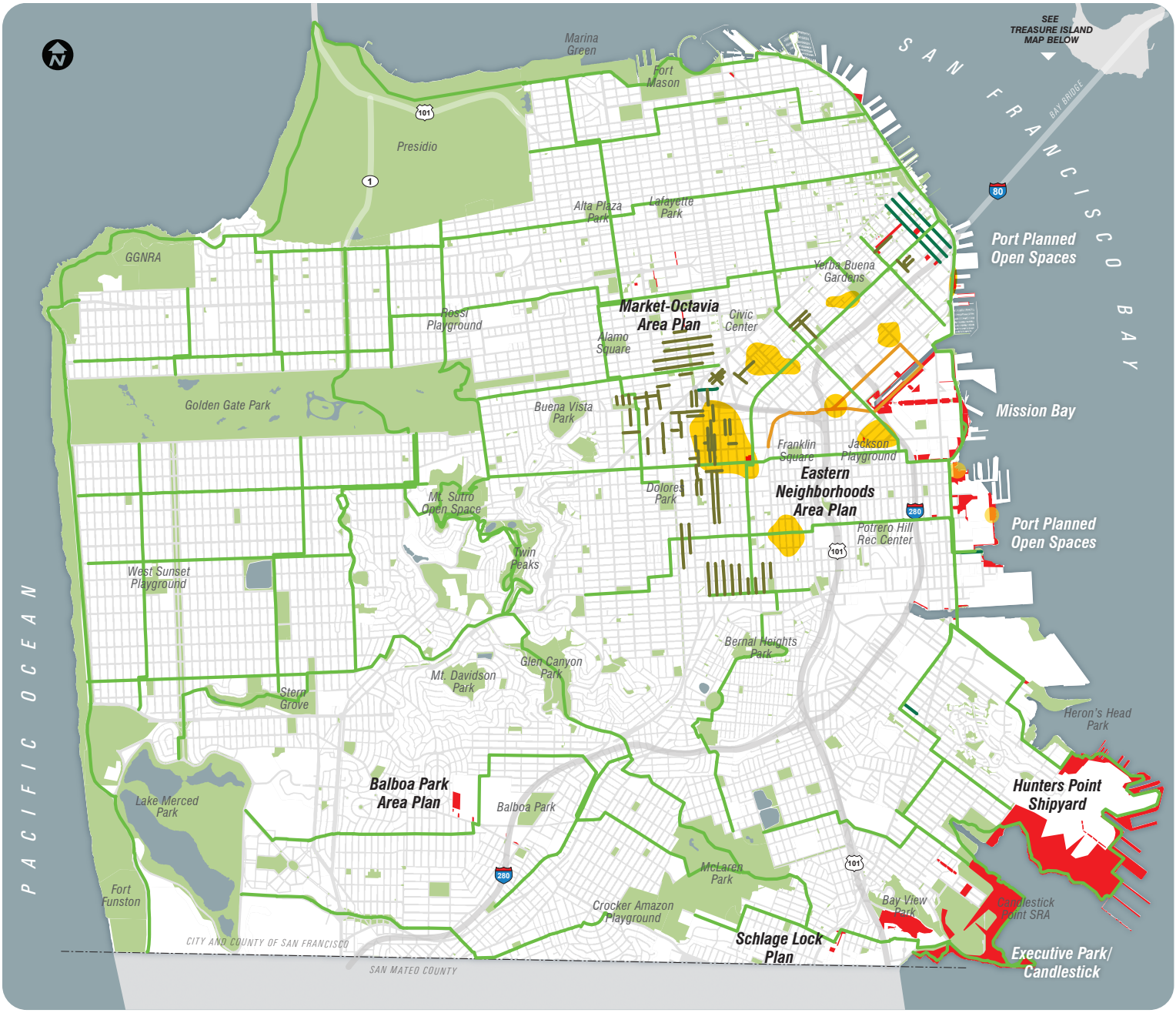
POLICY 1.6
Support the continued improvement of Golden Gate Park while preserving the beauty of its landscape.

Golden Gate Park is San Francisco's largest and one of its most important parks, with over 1,000 acres of open space and an estimated number of users topping 13 million annually. The park offers immeasurable opportunities to meet the needs of neighborhood, citywide and regional residents, and visitors from national and international destinations. The landscape design and natural legacy of Golden Gate Park are some of the many features that draw people to this park, and they would benefit from additional investment in restoration efforts. Many recently renovated and new facilities in the park, including the Conservatory of Flowers, the DeYoung museum, and the new California Academy of Sciences, have made the park increasingly popular. After ten years of community input, the City completed a 1998 Master Plan, a comprehensive plan that laid out landscaping, circulation, recreation facilities, buildings and monuments, utilities and infrastructure, maintenance, as well as funding for this signature open space. This Master Plan provides guidelines for continued improvements. Going forward, major areas of focus should include:

1. **Assess the Master Plan:** Many of the proposals in the Plan have been completed, while some remain unfinished. Golden Gate Park is one of the City's most important resources and a detailed assessment of the Master Plan should be completed to determine if the goals for the Master Plan have been implemented. In the long-term, the City should work with the community to determine if this Master Plan should be updated.

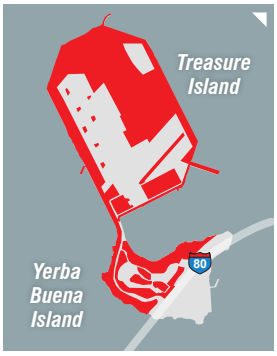
2. **Improve pedestrian access to Golden Gate Park:** Current pedestrian access around and to Golden Gate Park is highly limited, with sidewalks entirely lacking along one side of Lincoln Avenue, and limited formal pedestrian access points into the park. The City should consider a long-term goal of improving pedestrian access into the park and along its edges and discouraging entering the park on improvised trail entrances, which harms the flora in the Park. In response to the Master Plan's recommendation for a comprehensive signage system, signage standards were developed and many new signs have been added to the Park.

1 Most of the beach is GGNRA property.



Existing and Proposed Open Space

- Potential Living Alleys
- Potential Living Streets
- Proposed Green Connections
- Off Street Multi-Use Paths
- Proposed Open Space
- Existing Open Space
- Acquire and develop sites for open space (Eastern Neighborhoods Area Plan)



0 Miles 1

MAP 03

NOTE: The map is to be used for reference purposes only. For parcel specific details, please refer to adopted area plans: The 2018 Central Waterfront-Dogpatch Public Realm Plan conducted an updated inventory of parks and open spaces within a quarter mile of the Central Waterfront Plan Area.

3. **Discourage automobile traffic:** The increasing popularity of the Park has also brought an increase in users. The City should continue to pursue alternative transportation to and within the park and examine both incentives for alternative transportation and disincentives for automobile traffic. The City should study potential options for improving the pedestrian experience, including considering roadway improvements and redesign(such as the cross-park tunnel that is incorporated in the Doyle Drive project at the Presidio) to improve safety and enhance views.

POLICY 1.7
Support public art as an essential component of open space design.

Art plays a critical role in both activating spaces and indicating to passersby that the space is public. The public requirement for art, originally passed in 1969, established the importance of monumental art integrated within public projects. This ordinance, currently titled the Art for Enrichment program, requires two percent of the construction cost of civic projects, including buildings, transportation projects, and new parks to be spent on public art for civic projects.[2] In 1985, the Downtown Plan required certain private projects to spend one percent of the project's worth on the provision of public art. This requirement was expanded to other areas the city in a new Ordinance in 2012.[3] In order to promote art in public and open spaces, the City should continue to evaluate the possibility of expanding this requirement to other areas in the City. These projects vary greatly in their style and substance, from murals to monuments, but they have in common the ability for the public to access them. When parks or open spaces are renovated or new spaces are built, public art should be placed where it's both visible and appropriate given the parkland or open space.

POLICY 1.8
Support urban agriculture and local food security through development of policies and programs that encourage food production throughout San Francisco.

The benefits of urban agriculture include increased access to healthy fresh food, a closer connection between residents and their food system, and opportunities for community-building and beautification. The growing movement to increase urban agriculture should be supported on both public land and on private spaces where possible. Currently, a huge and unmet demand for more community garden space exists in the City. Urban gardens should be permitted and promoted in public open spaces. To promote this goal, the Mayor's 2009 Executive Directive on Healthy and Sustainable Food encourages food production within the City and requires departments to identify public land for food production. City practices should support the work of organizations promoting urban agriculture, and explore ways to increase their access in new housing developments, existing publicly managed housing developments, and other public lands. The City should continue to make it a priority to find additional public spaces to meet this need. The City's Administrative Code also calls for comprehensive programs, policies, and strategies to generally enhance and increase urban agriculture uses. The City should also incentivize creation of community agriculture on private sites, such as private yards and building rooftops. Activities that allow distribution of locally grown food, such as farmers markets, Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) distribution sites, or even direct sales of local and large-scale urban agriculture, should be considered a valuable part of activating underutilized public and private open spaces.

POLICY 1.9
Preserve sunlight in public open spaces.

Solar access to public open space should be protected. In San Francisco, presence of the sun's warming rays is essential to enjoying open space. Climatic factors, including ambient temperature, humidity, and wind, generally combine to create a comfortable climate only when direct sunlight is present. Therefore, the shadows created by new development nearby can critically diminish the utility and comfort of the open space.

Shadows are particularly a problem in downtown districts and in neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the downtown core, where there is a limited amount of open space, where there is pressure for new development, and where zoning controls allow tall buildings. But the problem potentially exists wherever tall buildings near open space are permitted.

Properties under the jurisdiction of the Recreation and Park Department or designated for acquisition are protected by a voter-approved Planning Code amendment. It restricts

2 For additional detail, See San Francisco Administrative Code, Section 3.19.
3 For additional detail, See San Francisco Planning Code, Section 4.29.

the construction of any structure exceeding forty feet in height that would cast a shadow that is adverse to the use of the park from between one hour after sunrise to one hour before sunset, unless it is determined that the impact on the use of the space would be insignificant. In determining whether a new shadow cast by a development is adverse to the use of a particular property, the City considers several quantitative and qualitative criteria, including the size of the park property, the amount of existing shadow, and the timing, size, location, and duration of the new shadow and the public good served by the building.

The City should support more specific protections elsewhere to maintain sunlight in these spaces during the hours of their most intensive use while balancing this with the need for new development to accommodate a growing population in the City.

POLICY 1.10
Ensure that open space is safe and secure for the City's entire population.

Safety and security in the City's open spaces is essential to allow San Franciscans to enjoy their community open spaces. Improving the design of an open space through design treatments can reduce the fear of crime and the actual level of crime. Design treatments can include:

- Providing clear sightlines, where appropriate.
- Designing the street/open space interface to encourage permeability and access.
- Ensuring adequate and appropriate lighting.
- Better utilizing parks and open space to increase park visitors and encourage "eyes on the park."

POLICY 1.11
Encourage private recreational facilities on private land that provide a community benefit, particularly to low and moderate-income residents

Outdoor space is not the only medium for physical activity. San Franciscans use indoor recreation spaces for activities like swimming, tennis, basketball, ping-pong, yoga, and general fitness and group classes. Private recreational sources, such as clubs and gyms, offer residents spaces to participate in such activities. In permitting new development, San Francisco should continue to encourage space for physical activity, including private recreational facilities in building projects to supplement those provided by the City.

Some private and non-profit recreational facilities act in a quasi-public manner. These may provide free or low-cost community access, supplementing existing City programs in underserved communities for active education, sports and recreational activities. Examples include the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, and other community-based organizations. These types of facilities should be supported when they serve San Francisco residents, and, if removed, the loss of recreational space they provide should be considered.

For-profit recreational facilities can offer similar educational and recreational benefits, provided the participant can pay. Examples include country and tennis clubs, yoga studios, and private gyms. These facilities should receive support, based on the level at which they can demonstrate they are meeting underserved low and moderate income need. Such facilities should be encouraged to offer neighborhood discount or "community class" rates to improve access for community members that are not able to afford full rates. The City should also look for opportunities to partner with such private organizations, to provide benefits to the public at a lower cost.

POLICY 1.12
Preserve historic and culturally significant landscapes, sites, structures, buildings and objects.

Historic resources are an important element of our park system. The value of these resources should be preserved and celebrated because they provide an important link to the significant events, people, places or design that they represent.

POLICY 1.13
Preserve and protect character-defining features of historic resources in City parks, when it is necessary to make alterations to accommodate new needs or uses.

The City should identify, evaluate, and preserve historic and cultural resources in City parks. Prior to any project that involves the alteration or replacement of any of these resources, the City should conduct a comprehensive survey and analysis to identify resources and associated character-defining features within the vicinity of the proposed project. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of

features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the resource should generally be avoided. The replacement of historic and cultural resources and features should be avoided if possible.

OBJECTIVE 2

INCREASE RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE TO MEET THE LONG-TERM NEEDS OF THE CITY AND BAY REGION

In an urban area, the most critical factor in the provision of open space is its distribution. All types of open space activity - from sports fields to playgrounds - should be accessible to and within walking distance of every resident of the City. Walking distance, however, ranges depending on the type of activity and the resident. A half mile is commonly accepted as a distance that can be comfortably walked in 10 minutes, and as a distance most people are willing to walk to access community uses.[4] For most recreational activities, including active ones such as hiking, biking and sports activities; or for passive ones, like picnicking, this walking distance is acceptable. However, for activities that involve small children, such as a playground, one-quarter mile (a five minute walk) is more appropriate. Using these walking distances, and taking into account topography and other barriers, the City's open space is generally well distributed, as illustrated in *Map 4: Walkability*.

However, some parts of the City are still deficient in certain types of open space. The eastern side of the City has a lack of large open spaces. While certain areas are planned and zoned for Production, Distribution, and repair (PDR) uses and for maritime industries, other areas were recently rezoned to support additional residential development. The future population increase in these areas and throughout the City (See *Map 6: Areas of Potential Additional Population Growth, 2040*) will exacerbate current open space deficiencies.

Many parts of the City also lack playground space. Sports fields are well-distributed; however, capacity is limited and the demand for their use is often greater than what can be provided in neighborhood spaces.

Even in neighborhoods that have open spaces within walking distance, higher density and lower income populations may mean demand in these areas exceeds the capacity of local open spaces. As these communities continue to grow, open space improvements and acquisition are needed to maintain access to this limited resource. This objective, and the policies that follow, are aimed at addressing these deficiencies through new or improved open space provision.

POLICY 2.1
Prioritize acquisition of open space in high needs areas.

Throughout the country, safe, green open spaces are in short supply in dense communities, where low-income and minority populations tend to be concentrated, as well as large numbers of children and seniors. In the more densely populated, older areas of San Francisco, people often have less mobility and fewer financial resources to seek recreation outside of their neighborhood. People in less dense parts of the City may enjoy use of private yards and patios, while residents in denser neighborhoods may not have that option. Finally, studies have found that the need for a park as a restorative "oasis" is most critical in dense urban areas.

Priority for acquisition of new space to address open space inequities should be given to high need areas, defined as places where there is low access to open space (illustrated in *Map 4: Walkability*),a conglomeration of high density, high percentages of children, youth, seniors, and low income households (illustrated in *Map 5: Population Density, Household income, Concentration of Children and Youth, Concentration of Seniors*), and in which the most growth is projected to occur between now and 2040 (illustrated in *Map 6: Areas of Potential Additional Population Growth, 2040*).[5] Future areas with adopted master plans or Redevelopment plans, such as Mission Bay, Park Merced, Hunters Point Shipyard/ Candlestick, and Treasure Island (See *Map 4D: Walkability: Proposed Open Spaces in Large Plan Areas*) have identified site specific open spaces and recreational facilities, along with funding and implementation strategies for those parks and recreation facilities. These proposed site-specific parks and open spaces would support the planned population growth and therefore these proposed parks are incorporated into the

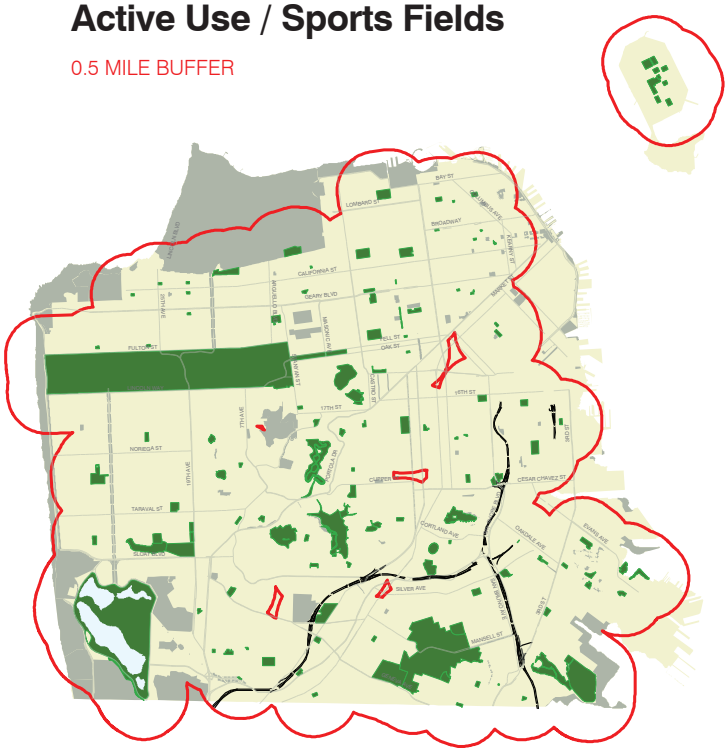
4 Regional Plan Association (1997) Building Transit-Friendly Communities A Design and Development Strategy

5 The Planning Department Land Use Allocation distributes projected housing and employment growth as determined by the Association of Bay Area Governments to 981 Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ). These zones vary in size, from a block around downtown to several blocks in more outlying areas. The allocation of TAZ-specific growth is based on the current development pipeline (development projects under construction, approved or under review) and an estimate of additional development potential for each TAZ.

MAP 4A

Walkability: Active Use / Sports Fields

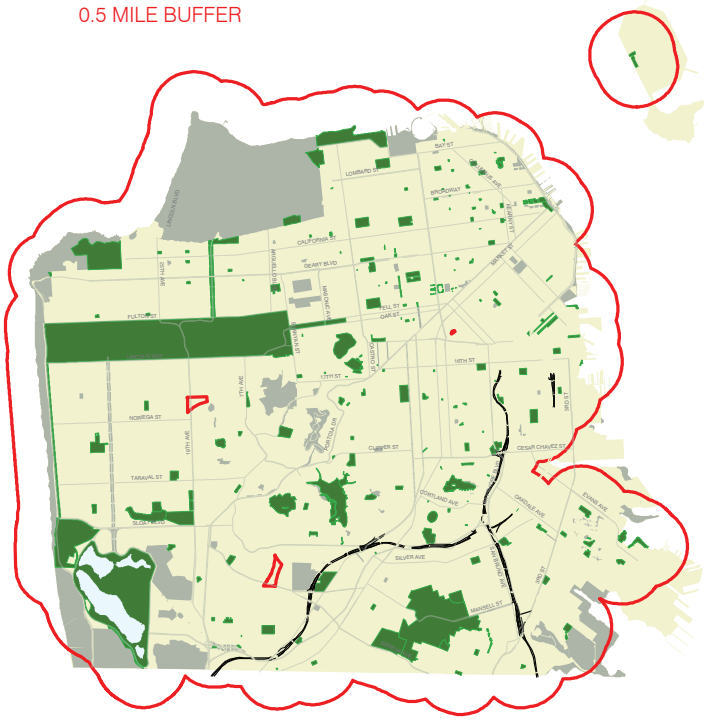
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MAP 4B

Walkability: Passive Use / Tranquil Spaces

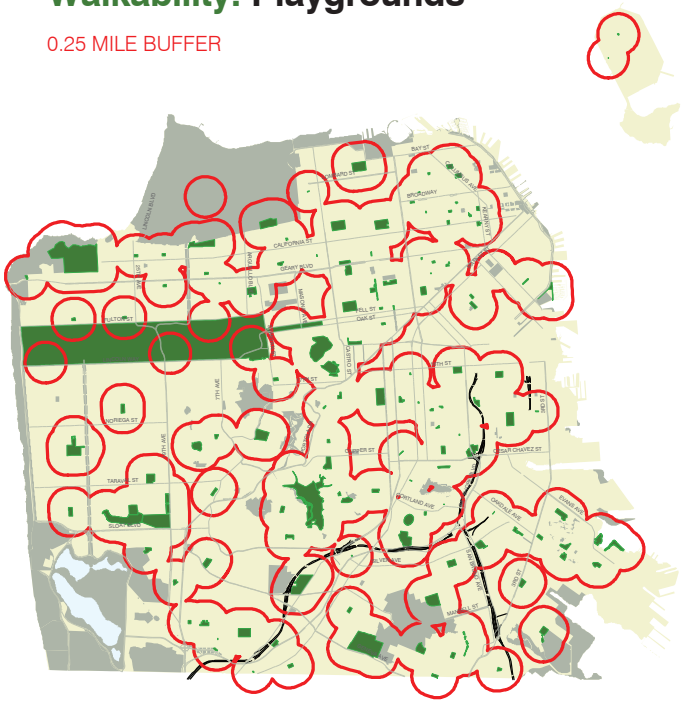
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MAP 4C

Walkability: Playgrounds

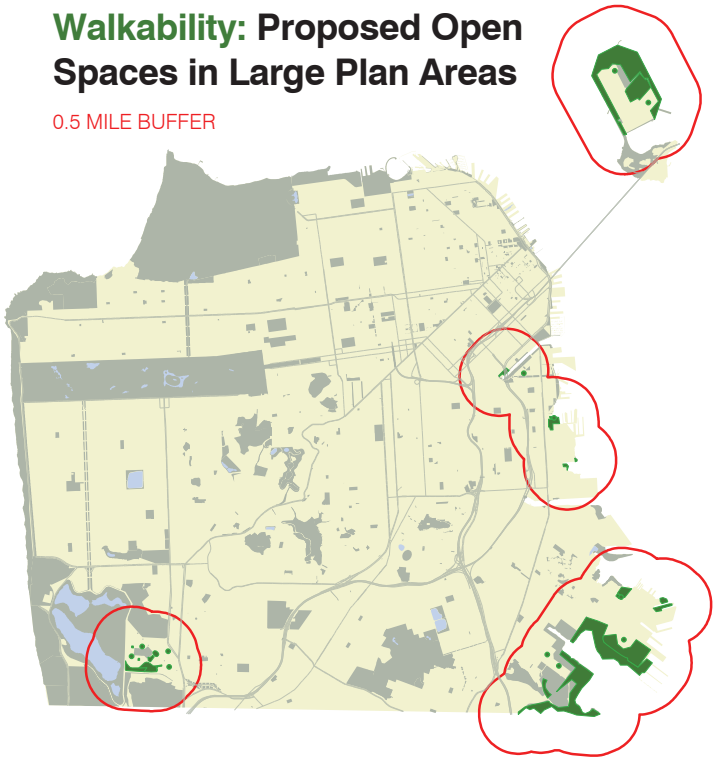
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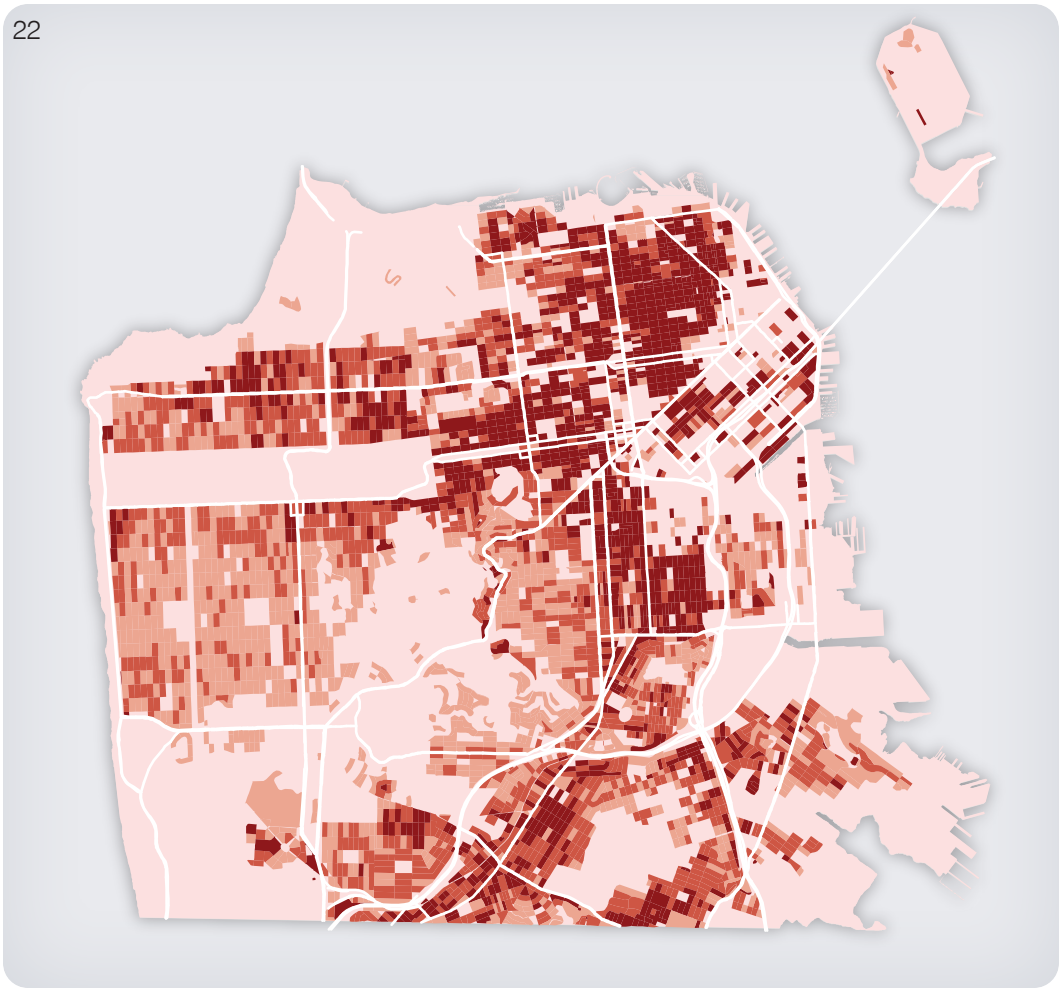


MAP 4D

Walkability: Proposed Open Spaces in Large Plan Areas

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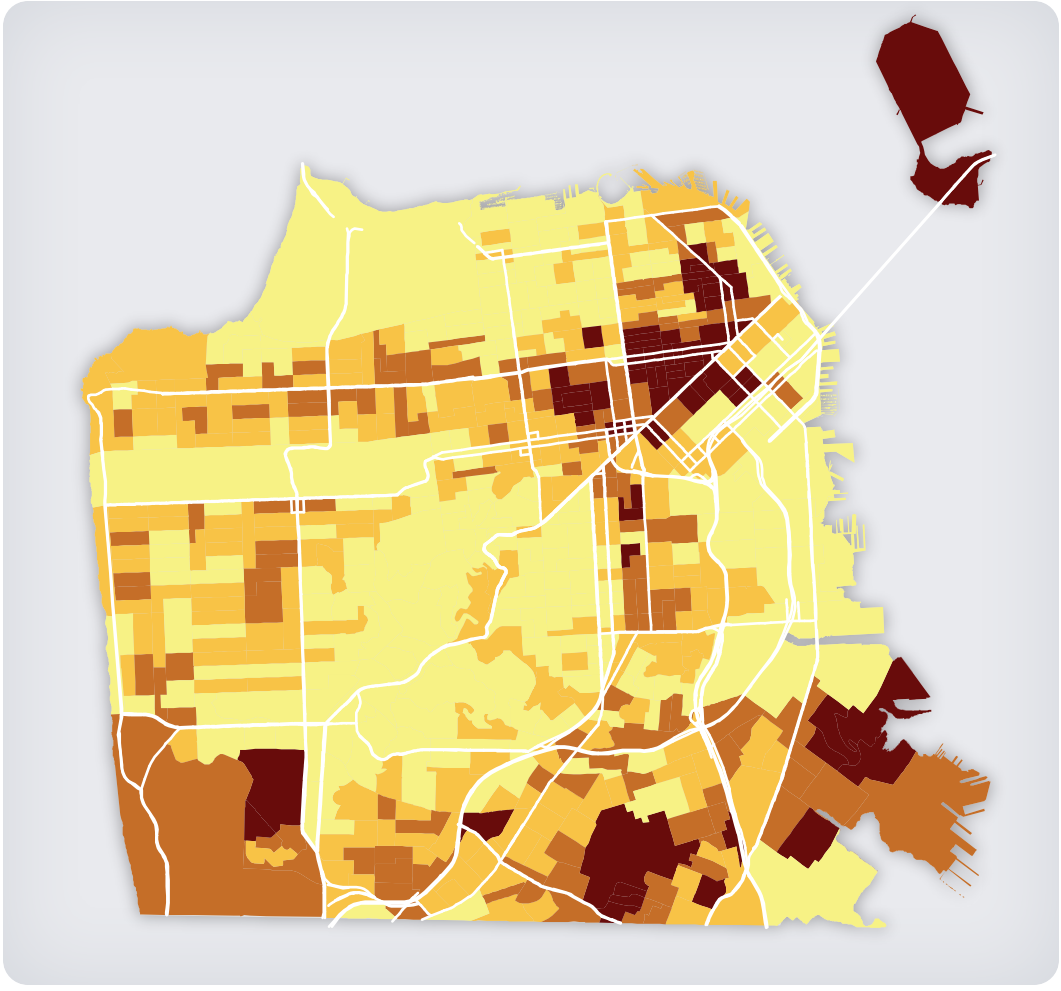
MAP 5A

Population Density

People Per Acre

- 0 - 23.722
- 23.732 - 38.153
- 38.158 - 54.267
- 54.268 - 875.893

Median Population Density Per Block Group: 38.158 Persons Per Acre
(Source 2010 Census)



MAP 5B

Household Income

Household Median Income

- More than 120% of SF HMI
  More than $93,625
- 80% - 120% of SF HMI
  $62,632 - $93,333
- 50% - 80% of SF HMI
  $40,375 - $62,273
- Less than 50% of SF HMI
  Less than $38,409

Median Houshold Income (HMI) for San Francisco Block Groups: $77,845
(Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey)



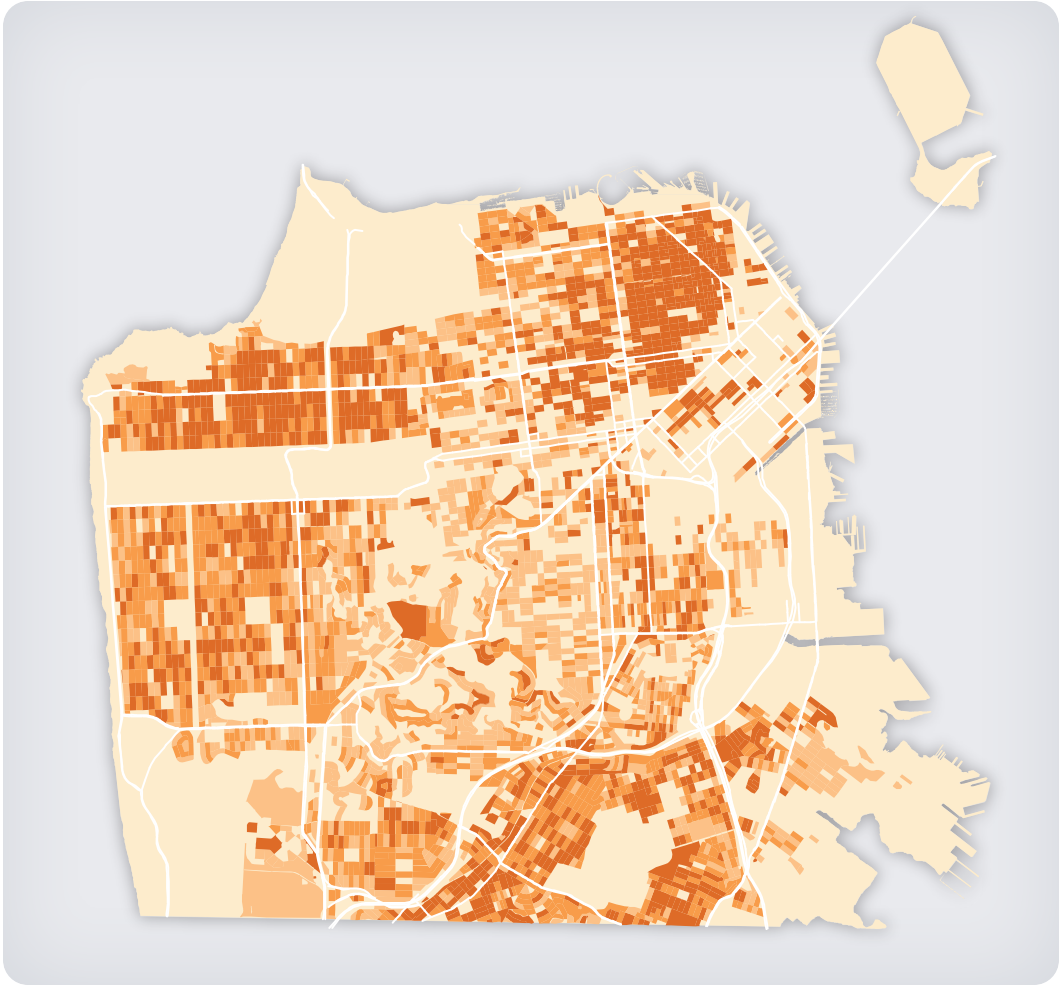
MAP 5C

Children & Youth (0-17)

Children & Youth (0-17) Per Acre

- 0 - 3.230
- 3.232 - 5.188
- 5.189 - 7.699
- 7.700 - 105.107

Median Youth Density Per Block:
5.188 Youth Per Acre
(Source: 2010 Census)



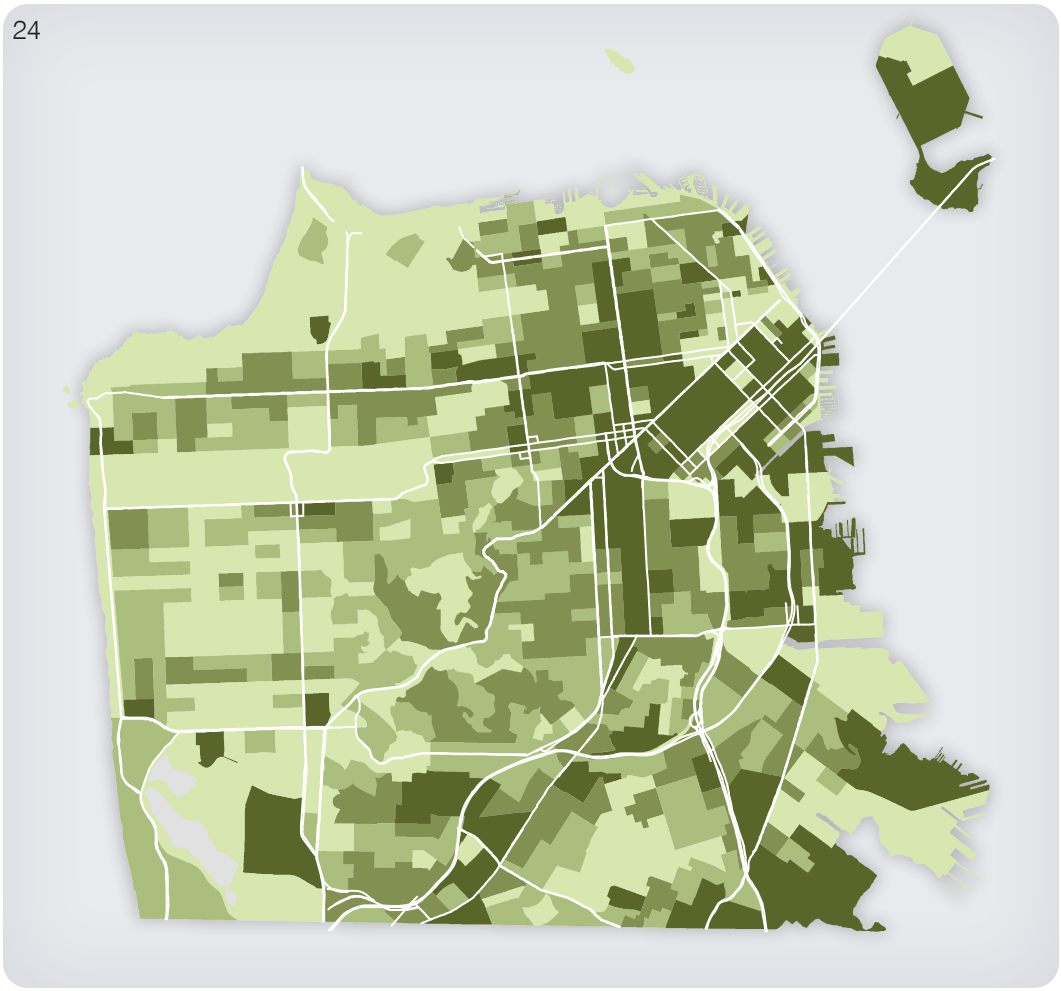
MAP 5D

Seniors (65 and over)

Seniors (>64) Per Acre

- 0 - 2.818
- 2.822 - 4.599
- 4.600 - 7.219
- 7.220 - 2,471.195

Median Seniors Density Per Block:
4.599 Seniors Per Acre
(Source: 2010 Census)



MAP 06

Areas of Potential Additional Population Growth (2040)

Potential New People by 2040

- 0 - 33.41
- 33.93 - 81.85
- 82.22 - 200.46
- 201.46 - 8,943.86

Difference between 2010 population and projected 2040 population by Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ)
(Source: San Francisco Planning Department Land Use Allocation Analysis 2013)



MAP 07

High Needs Areas: Priority Acquisition & Renovation Areas

- Greater Need
- Lesser Need

analysis as existing park spaces. Layering all of these factors results in *Map 7: High Needs Areas: Priority Acquisition & Renovation Areas*. This map and analysis should be updated periodically using updated decennial US Census data.

Recreation and Parks Department maintains an Acquisition Policy, as required by the City Charter (Section 16.107) and the Park Code (Section 13.02), aimed at facilitating acquisition of open space in high needs areas. The Acquisition Policy provides guidance to promote equitable recreational and open space opportunities through several criteria: location in High Needs Areas, available funding sources that may be leveraged, inter-jurisdictional cooperation, and community support. In order to maintain new acquisitions, the policy also acknowledges the need to identify and leverage resources for continued maintenance and operational support.

New acquisitions should continue to consider the composition of current and projected neighborhood populations. There are both demographic and cultural differences in how people use parks: preschoolers, school age children, teenagers, adults, and senior citizens have distinct open space needs that should be accommodated, that may also vary according to social and economic groups. Design of new spaces should rely on the specific needs and values of its user communities, by using a participatory community design process.

While open space acquisition should not be limited by the City's inability to maintain additional parkland, the City should recognize that acquisition will require an on-going commitment of additional resources for maintenance. In appropriate cases, the City should acquire the property and develop low cost maintenance techniques and programs for open space that are not used for intensive recreation, or should hold the land vacant until development and maintenance funds are available.

POLICY 2.2
Provide and promote a balanced recreation system which offers a variety of high quality recreational opportunities for all San Franciscans.

The City's goal is to ensure that all San Franciscans are within a reasonable walk from an open space with a range of active and passive recreational opportunities. To ensure the highest quality of recreational opportunities for its residents, the City must be able to respond to changing demographics, neighborhood demand, and emerging recreational trends as it plans for new or expanded recreation and open space. The recreation system should provide an equitable distribution of facilities and services and consistent hours of operation. It should also provide sufficient opportunities for populations who are frequent users of open space, such as seniors and children.

POLICY 2.3
Provide recreational programs that are responsive to community needs and changing demographics.

In 2010, SFRPD implemented a new recreation system that focuses on flexibility and responsiveness to changes within communities by providing appropriate programming based on community interest and demand. To stay up-to-date with current needs and interests, RPD routinely surveys their recreation program users. The results provide RPD with information to ensure that programs and services meet the existing needs of neighborhood residents and are on the cutting edge of emerging trends.

RPD also works with the Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families (DCYF) on their Community Needs Assessment, conducted every two years. RPD participates in the assessment as a service provider, and relies on this report to update its recreation programming in coordination with other surveys and assessments. RPD and the City should continue to provide innovative recreational programs that respond to changing community needs.

POLICY 2.4
Support the development of signature public open spaces along the shoreline.

The Pacific Ocean, San Francisco Bay, and their respective shorelines are important natural resources in San Francisco. They offer opportunities for water-oriented recreation, passive recreation, views, and habitat. Most of the property adjacent to the thirty-two mile shoreline is in under public ownership. Maintaining public access to the waterfront is integral to San Francisco's identity and creating continuous open spaces along the ocean and bay is one of the City's long-term goals. Much of the waterfront is already accessible to the public, through parks ranging from Fort Funston, Ocean Beach, the Presidio and Fort Mason to the urban waterfront of the Embarcadero, and numerous open spaces along the Piers to Candlestick Point State Recreation Area.

These open space opportunities should be enhanced and expanded by focusing on the development of several signature open spaces that draw people from their immediate neighborhoods and beyond. Key focus opportunities for developing new or enhanced signature open spaces on the waterfront are listed below by geographic area, and are identified in *Map 8: Blue Greenway*. Additionally, connecting these open spaces to the surrounding neighborhoods and throughout the City and region is an important goal and is discussed further in Policy 3.2.

Northeastern Shoreline

Significant progress has been made in opening and improving the city's northern shorelines. With the opening of Crissy Field in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the retention of much of the open space in the Presidio as publicly-accessible open space, this area has transformed itself into a regional destination. Long-term, maximizing the recreational opportunities of other shoreline areas should be considered and inter-governmental and other partnerships should be pursued to further develop these opportunities.

In addition, a major opportunity exists to create an expanded, multi-park open space at the juncture of Market Street and the Embarcadero. The existing open spaces of Embarcadero Promenade, Justin Herman Plaza, and Sue Bierman (formerly Ferry) Park provide a wealth of untapped opportunity, which can be connected to function as a coherent link from downtown to the Ferry Building and the waterfront, holding several linked yet distinct activity and recreation spaces. Additionally, the Port is planning to open the Northeast Wharf at Pier 27, which would be a three acre plaza at the base of Telegraph Hill, and a series of linked open spaces in the heart of Fisherman's Wharf.

Western Shoreline

The western shoreline has the advantage that it is already a long-stretch of natural and publicly-accessible open space. Ocean Beach is a national treasure and should be improved to acknowledge the significance of vast, unbroken expanse of beach in the City.

A non-binding Ocean Beach Master Plan has been developed by SPUR (a San Francisco non-profit supporting planning and good government in the Bay Area) in close coordination with responsible agencies. The Plan includes recommendations to improve and restore conditions at Ocean Beach by adapting proactively to the changing coastline. The western shoreline also connects to Lake Merced, providing opportunities for enhanced access to the waterfront and recreational opportunities. The SFPUC is currently exploring ways to improve access to the watershed lands in this area. If additional space becomes available, this space should provide improved connections from the neighborhood to the waterfront.

Southeastern Waterfront

The continued development of Mission Bay, the passage of the Eastern Neighborhoods plans (Mission, East SoMa, and Showplace Square/Potrero Hill, and Central Waterfront Area Plans), and the proposed Candlestick Point and Hunters Point Shipyard developments will bring growth, which will require increased access and open spaces throughout the Southeast. Most of these plans are accompanied by specific open space strategies for parkland along the waterfront, where active water-oriented uses such as shoreline fishing, swimming, and boating should be promoted. The 2018 Central Waterfront: Dogpatch Public Realm Plan includes additional, more specific recommendations for the Central Waterfront-Dogpatch Public Realm Plan area.

Blue Greenway

The Blue Greenway is a project to improve and expand the public open space network along the City's central and southern waterfront, from the China Basin Channel to the San Francisco County Line (see *Map 8: Blue Greenway*). It provides a new vision of how parks and public spaces can be created to complement and connect with existing open spaces in this industrial mixed-use area along the Bay waterfront. The Blue Greenway seeks to both provide opportunities for much-needed open space that is easily accessible for exercise and recreation, including bicycle and pedestrian access, recreational uses in the water (e.g. kayaking), access to historical resources, and enjoyment of art, as well as improve waterfront public access from nearby neighborhoods. These goals realize objectives set forth in the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) San Francisco Bay Trail Plan and Bay Area Water Trail for southeast San Francisco.



Blue Greenway

0 Miles 1

MAP 08

1 Mission Creek Shoreline North
2 Mission Creek Shoreline South
3 China Basin Park
4 Terry Francois Blvd Improvements
5 Pier 52 Boat Launch
6 Bayfront Park
7 Agua Vista Park
8 Mission Bay Parks 23 & 24
9 Pier 64 Shoreline Access
10 Illinois Street
11 Pier 70 Crane Cove Park
12 Pier 70 Upland Open Spaces
13 Pier 70 Slipways Park
14 Power Plant Shoreline Access
15 24th Street Improvements
16 Warm Water Cove Park
17 Islais Creek North-West
18 Tulare Park/Islais Creek North-East
19 Islais Landing/Islais Creek South
20 Third and Cargo Gateway
21 Cargo Way
22 Pier 94 Wetlands
23 Heron's Head Park
24 PG&E Shoreline
25 Jennings St/Hunters Point Blvd/Innes Ave
26 Hudson Avenue Right-Of-Way Improvements
27 India Basin Shoreline Park
28 India Basin Open Space
29 Hunters Point Shipyard Open Spaces North
30 Hunters Point Shipyard Open Spaces South
31 Yosemite Slough Wetland
32 Candlestick Point State Recreation Area



The following Blue Greenway projects should be given high priority as the neighborhoods along the Bay waterfront – which are already deficient in open space – continue to grow in population. These projects correspond with identified high needs areas. Some are longer-term, large-scale projects that will require public funding:

- **China Basin Shoreline Park:** This existing approximately two-acre park will be expanded as a part of the development of the Port's Sea Wall Lot 337 project and will be the northern gateway of the Blue Greenway.

- **Mission Bay Park System:** This 41-acre park system will include a large scale, bayfront park between the China Basin Shoreline Park and Pier 70, with an important Blue Greenway segment. These open space opportunities and projects are incorporated into the Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure's Mission Bay Redevelopment project.

- **Pier 70 Open Space System:** the Port's Pier 70 Plan proposes the following open spaces along the Blue Greenway:

  - *Crane Cove Park:* Plans for this approximately nine-acre shoreline park within the Port's Pier 70 development area include construction of an aquatic center and opportunities for park designs and interpretative materials that provide educational information on the City's deeply rooted maritime history. In addition to Crane Cove Park, the Pier 70 site presents opportunities for a variety of other open spaces, all of which must be consistent with the industrial maritime character and setting of the site.

  - *Waterfront Development Site / Slipways Park:* The waterfront development site is an approximately 28-acre site that is slated for mixed-use development. The side includes Slipways Park, an approximately four-acre park along the southeastern shoreline that will incorporate historic shipbuilding infrastructure. The park will eventually connect with new shoreline open spaces once the former Potrero Power Plant site is redeveloped. Adjacent to the waterfront development site is the Irish Hill / Hoe-Down Yard property at Illinois and 22nd Street, which is jointly owned by the Port and PG&E. This area is also being evaluated for development and open space potential as part of the waterfront development site planning process.

  - *Power Plant Site:* This approximately 23-acre parcel is the former site of the Potrero Power Plant. The privately owned site has substantial redevelopment potential and will be coordinated with the adjacent Pier 70 planning process, as it provides an opportunity to extend waterfront access through the pier to Warm Water Cove.

- **Warm Water Cove:** This isolated park has the opportunity to be improved and expanded by up to three acres to provide access to the City's Eastern shoreline and to provide recreational opportunities to the growing population. The 2018 Central Waterfront-Dogpatch Public Realm Plan includes concept designs for this site to guide future expansion and enhancements.

- **Islais Creek Improvements:** This project may consist of shoreline improvements, including rebuilding dilapidated wharves, removing ghost piles, and providing for open space system linkages to expand public access and recreational water use of Islais Creek.

- **India Basin:** The recently closed Hunters Point Power Plant and adjacent shoreline properties offers the opportunity to bring much-needed recreational space to the center of the City's southeast neighborhoods, helping address the health and environmental impacts of the plant's operations.

- **The former Hunters Point Shipyard, Candlestick Park and Candlestick State Recreation Area:** These areas form the southern terminus of the Blue Greenway. These open space opportunities and projects are incorporated into the Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure's Candlestick and Hunters Point Shipyard redevelopment project.

The City, including the SFRPD, the Port of San Francisco, and Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure, should continue ongoing planning efforts to improve connections and address any gaps amongst the various waterfront open spaces to create a linked system of parks that is consistent with the Blue Greenway planning efforts. In addition to signature open spaces, the City should consider new waterfront open space improvements that serve a non-recreational purpose, including climate change adaptive infrastructure. Current projections by the Pacific Institute predict that global warming may cause the ocean to rise as much as five and a half feet along California's coastline in the next 100 years, impacting many areas

of the San Francisco Bay, including the shoreline areas, much of Mission Bay and adjacent portions of SoMa. Inclusion and restoration of open space, particularly tidal wetlands, can act as a natural buffer and play a key role in adapting to sea level rise. Wetlands can protect shorelines from storm surges while assisting in reducing carbon levels through sequestration, so wetland restoration and habitat enhancements should be considered for inclusion in all waterfront open spaces. While many of these areas are already developed, and therefore not appropriate for open space development at this time, ecosystem-based management principles and retrofits should be considered wherever possible to ensure that shoreline retreat and flood protection are considered as measures to assist in adapting to projected sea level rise.

POLICY 2.5
Encourage the development of region-serving open spaces in opportunity areas: Treasure Island, Yerba Buena Island, Candlestick and Hunters Point Shipyard.

Several large, underutilized sites within the City offer not only the opportunity for new mixed use development to meet the City's housing needs, but the chance to create new, large scale region-serving open spaces.

- **Treasure Island**, the former naval base just off the City's northeastern shoreline, is planned to reserve over 60% of its land area for open uses, ranging from parks and ball fields, to organic farms, to wetlands and tidal marsh. Combined with open spaces on contiguous **Yerba Buena Island**, its 290 acres of proposed open space will be planted with a diverse and healthy range of plants which will help offset the city's greenhouse gas emissions. As a part of the planning for the redevelopment of Treasure Island, a Habitat Management Plan was prepared to assure the protection and restoration of wildlife habitat and biodiversity on the adjacent Yerba Buena Island. It is critical that the final designs of open space on these two islands, taken together, provide not only a range of playgrounds and recreational areas to meet the new residents' activity needs, but also offer strong, permanent protections for their wetlands and natural habitat. Agriculture and biodiversity components of this Management Plan should be developed to serve as educational and cultural amenities for the City and the region.

- **Hunters Point Shipyard and Candlestick Point** are currently undergoing a transformation into a vibrant, urban neighborhood and livable green community. Candlestick Point currently consists of the 49ers stadium, parking lot and the Candlestick Point State Recreation Area, of which only about half is improved. Hunters Point Shipyard consists of a decommissioned Naval Shipyard currently undergoing remediation with very limited public access. Plans for the two areas call for a well-connected, full breadth of complimentary uses. A major feature of the project is the robust open space program including upwards of 325 acres of open space, roughly 220 acres of which is being developed at the Hunters Point Shipyard. While the plans call for some reconfiguration of the existing Candlestick Point State Recreation Area (CPSRA) as provided for by SB 792, the reconfiguration will help assure the full realization of currently underutilized portions of the State park. The waterfront open spaces within this project will be the southern section of the Blue Greenway.

Taken together, the new open spaces will enable a continuous Bay Trail along this southeastern portion of the City, and provide a wide range of shoreline-oriented recreational opportunities that could include boat launches, fishing piers, restored wetlands, picnic areas, and food services. The new open space system should be designed in coordination with the proposed adjacent new urban neighborhoods and improve connectivity to the Bayview community, greater San Francisco, and the rest of the region.

POLICY 2.6
Support the development of civic-serving open spaces.

San Francisco is a civic city— celebrations, rallies, gatherings and protests take place almost weekly; political speeches, music, performances in the open air are also common occurrences. Our identity is defined as much by expressions of our social and cultural goals as it is by our physical landscape. These regular events in San Francisco emphasize the role of our City as a regional stage where like minds can gather and deliberate.

San Francisco needs civic spaces which can accommodate these activities – weekly events like farmer's markets, annual events such as the Pride Celebration, and special events such as broadcasting presidential inaugurations. As the City grows, these spaces need to accommodate ever-larger crowds of people and different types of functions – from simple gatherings to technical showcases and wired events. The main opportunities to unify and bolster City

landmarks and activity centers are focused around three major open spaces:

- **Civic Center:** Our existing Civic Center, surrounded by City Hall, the Main Library, the Asian Art Museum, and other civic spaces, hosts many of the activities described above. The Civic Center is part of the Civic Center Historic District with National, State, and Local designations. Civic Center's design, however, limits its capacity and functionality, with activities often spilling into less optimal public spaces such as nearby streets. The nearby UN Plaza provides additional activity space that is used for weekly farmers and craft markets, but the two spaces are generally underused outside of scheduled activities and are separated by a virtual parking lot along Fulton Street between Hyde and Larkin Streets. A series of connected open spaces, along a "Civic Center axis" from Market Street to City Hall, could be created with the development of a pedestrian mall along Fulton Street between the Main Library and Asian Art Museum, and with corresponding activity improvements to increase the usability of the Civic Center and UN Plazas. Some components that should be included in the revamping of these public spaces include an event lawn or amphitheater for performances, a gathering plaza, and pavilions for special events.

- **Embarcadero Open Spaces:** At the other end of Market Street, the numerous yet underutilized open spaces along the Embarcadero – Embarcadero Plaza, Justin Herman Plaza, and Sue Bierman Park- offer a glaring opportunity for synthesis into the City's gateway civic open space. Inspiration can be found in Millennium and Grant Parks in Chicago. Just as they serve as Chicago's front door, San Francisco needs a civic space for large outdoor events – a place where arrivals can be greeted by the vibrancy of the City, and where its citizens can gather for moments of great joy or great mourning. A series of linked outdoor "rooms" would enable the reconnection of Market Street to the Ferry Building, enhance visual connections to the Bay, activate public space edges with uses that draw people to inhabit and use the space, and create a series of distinct activity spaces for civic and news events, large gatherings, and performance space.

- **Market Street:** Market Street, San Francisco's premier street and most important destination, is more than the city's primary corridor for Downtown movement; it also acts as a civic and cultural center where people can gather to see, learn and participate in our city's vibrant life. The Better Market Street initiative is currently underway to enhance public life along Market Street with a memorable and active identity; more diverse range of social, cultural, and economic activities; and with more gathering spaces to visit, promenade and linger. These changes will complement the transit and bicycling improvements that are also an integral part of Better Market Street

- **Hallidie Plaza:** Hallidie Plaza is a prominent San Francisco public space. Many more people visit Hallidie Plaza every day than any other plaza in San Francisco because of its proximity to shopping, hotels, and theatres. Despite these attractive qualities, Hallidie Plaza has never met its potential to be a world-renowned space where residents and visitors alike come to meet. The multi-level design fractures the plaza, making it impossible to create a place at street-level that can accommodate any sort of meeting space. The Better Market Street Project included preliminary designs for Hallidie to suggest different directions the City could go. Further, there were several conceptual designs developed in the early 2000s that highlighted preferred elements for the plaza, but no definitive design. These should be used as the basis for a design competition, hosted by the Planning Department.

  Given the financial constraints San Francisco will continue to experience for the foreseeable future and the anticipated cost of fixing Hallidie Plaza, there will need to be a public-private partnership that brings philanthropic funding to match City contributions. Building the partnerships necessary to support the refurbishment of Hallidie Plaza should remain a high priority for the City so that the space can become a destination with iconic value to both San Franciscans and our many national and international visitors.

POLICY 2.7
Expand partnerships among open space agencies, transit agencies, private sector and nonprofit institutions to acquire, develop and/or manage existing open spaces.

Public agencies and private organizations and individuals are working to maintain open space in the Bay Area. These bodies include the Federal Government, the State of California, local governments, several sub-regional open space agencies, as well as public nonprofit organizations and private landholders. Preserving a regional open space system is beyond the scope of the seventy-odd local governments in the nine-county Bay Area. Valuable open spaces cross city and county lines and individual municipalities have

neither the regulatory powers nor the funds to retain them. Preservation of such spaces will depend upon regional action.

The City should facilitate efforts of existing agencies and organizations working toward regional open space goals. The City should encourage and work with these groups to secure additional land for open space retention and management, and to maintain existing open space areas in their current undeveloped open space status. The City should also support use of selected areas of open space lands within its jurisdiction for appropriate recreational uses.

POLICY 2.8
Consider repurposing underutilized City-owned properties as open space and recreational facilities.

All major metropolitan areas face challenges in providing sufficient open space due to lack of available land. While vacant or underutilized sites may be found, they are in high demand for private commercial or residential development, driving competitive land prices which are often too expensive for public acquisition. In order to meet the City's need for new open spaces in these high needs areas, the City should creatively look at the resources it already has – sites already in public ownership.

Surplus Sites: Occasionally public agencies find some land surplus to their current and projected needs. When public land becomes surplus to one public use, San Francisco's Surplus Property Ordinance, passed in May 2004, requires the city's surplus property be considered for affordable housing. Some such parcels are not feasible for housing because of their size or shape. When surplus land is already zoned for open space, open space should take priority over other public uses, including housing. When other surplus land becomes available for review as open space, the City should evaluate its suitability as a park site based on suitability criteria described in Policy 2.1 and in RPD's Acquisition Policy while considering other public benefits the land could provide. If the analysis finds the property necessary for open space usage, the City should consider if and how to transfer the property to the Recreation and Park Department under the procedures determined in SFRPD's Acquisition Policy for jurisdictional transfers.

Publicly Owned Sites: The City should evaluate all publicly-owned sites in high needs areas (see summary *Map 7: High Needs Areas: Priority Renovation & Acquisition Areas*) to determine their feasibility for full or partial park site usage. Some of these sites may be underutilized and therefore available for purchase or swap—these should be reviewed for potential transfer to or purchase by RPD. Other sites may be currently utilized for valuable public purposes, but could offer opportunities for joint use. For example, public parking lots that are underutilized on weekends could serve as active recreational spaces during off-business hours, and could even be improved with reinforced turf systems that create greened parking areas. Public buildings could be evaluated for their potential to provide active roof space, which could be creatively developed as green spaces accessible to the public during certain hours.

The opportunity to create open spaces on neglected or overlooked city owned parcels should be explored, particularly in high needs areas – such designs could repurpose existing infrastructure in unique and exciting ways. For example, the award-winning Gas Works Park in Seattle is built on a former coal plant site. More recently in New York City, an abandoned elevated rail track was redesigned as the High Line park, a wildly successful public space that drew over two million visitors in its first year and earned several design excellence awards. The City should consider the innovative reuse of abandoned, vacant or excess city owned land of all shapes and sizes.

Public Rights Of Way: As described in Policy 3.1 below, numerous streets, alleys, schoolyards, and other rights of way offer potential for cooperative recreational use. City departments and State agencies, such as the Municipal Transportation Agency and Caltrans, own and operate spaces that could be better utilized to serve as open spaces throughout the city. Spaces under freeways could serve as skate parks and bicycle paths, while city-owned parking lots could be developed as open space.

POLICY 2.9
Address physical and bureaucratic barriers to opening schoolyards as community open space during non-school hours.

During school hours, schoolyards provide students with a space to learn, socialize, exercise and play. They also often provide the greatest expanse of open space available in their immediate neighborhood. But if the neighborhood cannot tap into that resource when the school day is over, the schoolyard becomes a lost opportunity for half its life. Opening these spaces for use during these times could

provide much needed additional space in areas that are currently deficient in open space. This could prove mutually beneficial in that it could provide additional revenue for the school district and large new open spaces for residents without the high costs of acquiring new spaces.

In 2008, the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and the City launched a pilot program which opened eleven school yards to neighborhoods during weekend hours. This program has been successful in increasing community access to recreational space without any corresponding significant damage to school property. The program has continued to expand, to 21 schools in total, and offers many benefits to participating schools, such as open space improvements, grants to support physical education, gardening activities during the school day, and an activity fund to provide weekend activities open to the public. Schools receive maintenance, programming, and surveillance support from San Francisco Department of Public Works, San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department, and the San Francisco Police Department.

The City should consider ways to better market the availability of these spaces through multi-language signage and events in the space. Continued efforts to add greening to schoolyards would provide benefits to students as well as the neighborhood. As the program continues to expand, additional funding may be needed to address staffing, programming, and operational needs that come along with any joint use project. In addition, based on lessons learned from joint-use agreements thus far, the city should review and further codify the structure of its joint-use agreements to ensure consistency and ease of implementation.

The lessons from this pilot project could also be applied to other public or quasi-public sites. For example, as a next step the City could look at small branch libraries or child care centers as opportunities for increasing public access. The City should also approach private schools throughout the City and attempt to gain their support for such a program on their properties. Other cities have successfully established mutually beneficial joint use or development agreements that opened the privately-owned open space to the public. Private schools could use this vehicle as a way to be "good neighbors" that contribute to neighborhood needs, similar to private recreational facilities offering neighborhood discounts. Where liability is an issue, the City should look to equitably share liability with private entities or among multiple agencies.

POLICY 2.10
Improve access to and level of activity provided at San Francisco reservoirs.

The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) owns and manages a significant amount of open space lands in San Francisco, as well as sites in Alameda, Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. These lands are managed as watershed lands and serve as the city's major water source; in some cases these sites also serve as open spaces with scenic easements, and have recreational features such as playgrounds, walking paths, seating areas and even golf courses. The SFPUC has recently expanded uses on its lands to include sustainable agriculture and composting.

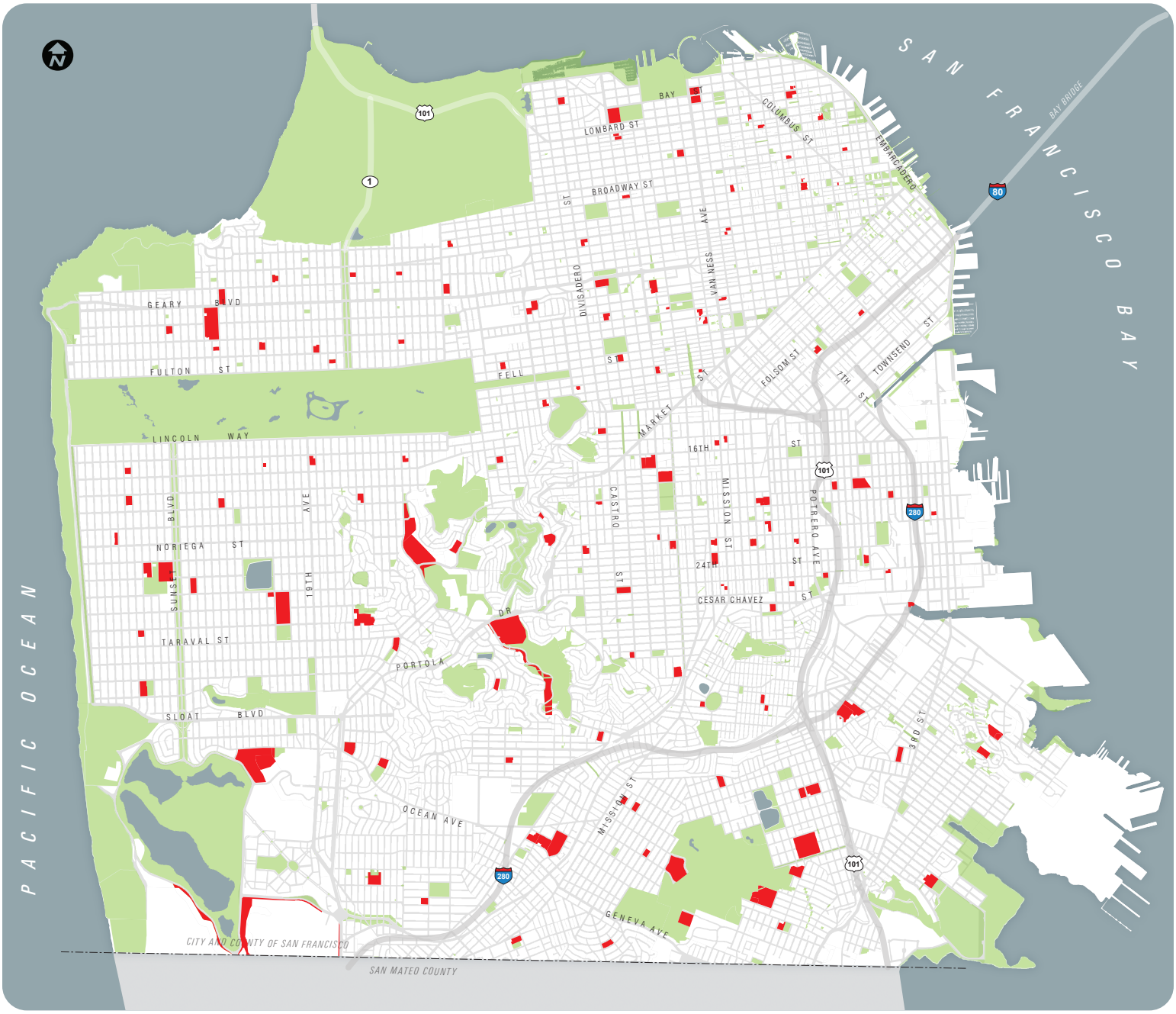
Because of the SFPUC's mission to protect public health and safety by ensuring water quality and the filtration capability of the existing system, these sites need to be carefully managed, and in some cases large-scale public recreational use is not possible given such constraints. However, increased public access to portions of its watershed lands with high recreational value is still possible, particularly on certain opportunity sites where the water quality would not be threatened.

Several of the SFPUC's treatment, tank or station sites may offer the potential to yield limited right-of-ways connecting proposed trails or greenways discussed elsewhere in this Element. Such connections, however, must be limited to pedestrian crossings, and made with consideration of safety of the underlying substructure and whether there is risk of potential degradation.

Future leases and lease renewals on watershed lands should be consistent with protection of existing natural values. Watershed lands should be managed to limit potential fire and erosion hazards. Access should be consistent with the legal rights of existing tenants, and with the intent of existing scenic and recreational easements.

The SFPUC should seek to increase public access to and enjoyment of surplus sites by seeking funding for site improvements, better access, and the ability to address safety issues at existing and potential open space properties.

In the case of reservoir lands outside of the City and County of San Francisco, the SFPUC has several long-standing agreements for the recreational, educational and agricultural use of its lands. These agreements have gone



School Yards & SFPUC Sites With Open Space Potential

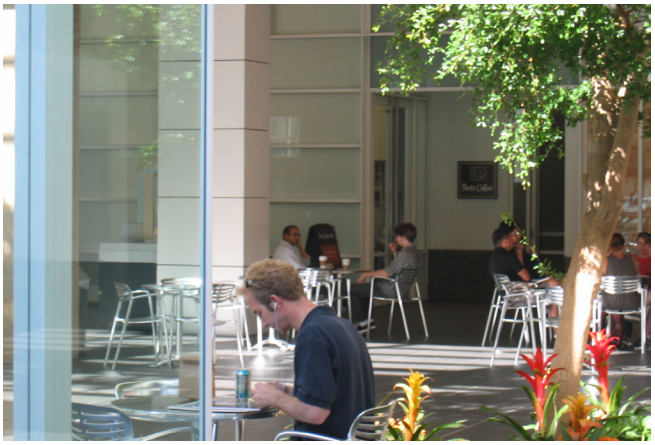
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MAP 09

Existing Open Space

Opportunity Area
(School yards and SFPUC sites with open space potential)





Privately-owned Public Open Spaces (POPOS)

through extensive public processes and any change to the agreements would involve additional outreach and review. Some examples of successful joint-use of SFPUC lands include: Sawyer Camp Trail, one of the most popular trails in San Mateo County, which is located inside the Peninsula watershed and passes by the reservoir; and the Sunol Water Temple AgPark, an urban farm located on SFPUC land in Alameda County.

POLICY 2.11
Assure that privately developed residential open spaces are usable, beautiful, and environmentally sustainable.

In order to improve living conditions in each residential building and the quality of environment in San Francisco as a whole, the City should continue to require that all new residential development provide outdoor open space. Current San Francisco Planning code requires a minimum amount of open space and this minimum must be maintained. However, open spaces should not only meet a minimum size requirement but should also be usable, quality recreational opportunities directly outside residents' front door, and they should also supplement any public open space that is provided nearby.

In single-family districts, rear yards are required and these yards provide much-needed open space for use by residents, natural habitat value, as well as stormwater management benefits. In most multi-family zoning districts, a minimum of 60-125 square feet per unit is required. In some areas such as Downtown, Chinatown, and high-density residential zoning districts, minimum open space requirements can dip as low as 36 square feet per unit. This requirement is too low, especially for areas that correspond with the high needs areas in *Map 7*. Comprehensive planning in these areas should consider if the requirements should be increased or how open space needs can be met with alternative methods.

In multi-unit developments, providing required open space as common space has many benefits. It provides a collective place for residents to gather, allowing residents to get to know their neighbors and fostering a sense of community. It also provides larger areas for explorative play for children, something small balconies and private spaces usually cannot provide. Finally, it can be more space-efficient than providing numerous smaller spaces, especially if placed on rooftops or adjacent to common entry points where space for access is already required. Common open spaces can expand these benefits to the broader neighborhood as well, if they are publicly accessible during safe times of the day, such as daylight hours, or if they contribute to scenery by being visible from the street. Therefore, open space requirements should include incentives to promote the provision of common open space, and publicly accessible common open space in particular.

The value of private open spaces rests largely on their design. Open spaces should be designed to relate to the type of development they support; while lower density districts may typically include ground level or rear yard gardens, higher density residential development can include not only rear yards or common courtyards at grade level, but also balcony, terrace and rooftop open space. Whatever type of open space is provided, it should be usable with landscaped areas that add greenery. Elements such as playground equipment, lawns, and gardens should be considered as well, based on the expected resident population of



Folsom Street



Linden Alley

the project. Appropriate minimum amounts of open space and guidelines should be developed to codify these recommendations.

Open space in the downtown urban core is already very limited, and continued development will make meeting these higher requirements both more challenging and more necessary in order to maintain livability. Rooftop open spaces can provide a promising way to meet this challenge. Aside from the environmental benefits of roof greening – reduction of stormwater runoff, improvement in air quality, and reduction in energy used for building heating and cooling – green roofs can help to meet a number of the City's open space goals, from recreational enjoyment, to aesthetic improvement and greening of urban landscapes, to increased local food production and increased biodiversity. To enable quality roof space that provides these benefits, roofs should be constructed with load bearing capacity that can accommodate minimum soil depths for planting, or should at minimum support expected person occupancy and potted plantings. Design considerations also include safety, how the space overlooks neighboring properties, and where access can be provided.

POLICY 2.12
Expand the Privately-owned Public Open Spaces (POPOS) requirement to new mixed–use development areas and ensure that spaces are truly accessible, functional and activated.

In denser neighborhoods of the City, Privately-owned Public Open Spaces (POPOS) are a critical strategy to promote livability and provide much-needed spaces for relaxation, enjoyment of greenery, and socializing with others.

POPOS have been provided in a wide range of forms including outdoor seating with landscaping, to beautiful rooftop terraces, or indoor atriums. The quality of these spaces varies greatly, with some of them providing true oases with trees and planters and ample seating; while others are dark, tucked-away spaces that are accessible in name only. While this type of space can never replace true public open space, these spaces should be accessible to the public and should provide features to create a functional and pleasant open space. The City should deploy a variety of tools to educate the public of the existence of POPOS, especially in cases where such spaces are tucked away from the sidewalks—located on the building's rooftops or on the back of the building. The City should enforce all violations by existing POPOS, ensuring that they meet the conditions they were required to meet when the development was approved. The City should also reevaluate the guidelines provided in the Downtown Plan for required features of each type of POPOS, including seating, access to public restrooms, landscaping, and ecological functionality, to determine how to improve these open spaces. Additionally, the City should consider ways of allowing increased activation of the space and provide quality bicycle connections to these spaces.

POPOS have traditionally served the denser downtown core, a result of policies adopted in the 1980s mandating that new large commercial developments provide publicly-accessible open space. These policies should be evaluated to determine how POPOS requirements can be strengthened and expanded citywide. For instance, fee requirements could be extended to all types of development projects of a certain size (not just commercial uses) and provide an in-lieu fee option, as is the case in the Transit Center District Area Plan. Similarly, the Eastern Neighborhoods



Green Connections concept



Living Alley concept



Linden Alley

plan allows developers to satisfy some portion of private open space requirements by providing publicly accessible open spaces. Moving forward, POPOS requirements should ensure that such open spaces are designed and maintained to accommodate and attract a diverse range of users.

OBJECTIVE 3

IMPROVE ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY TO OPEN SPACE

San Francisco is a dense, built-out city, where it may be difficult and expensive to acquire new land for parks and open spaces. Even though acquisition remains an important means to improve open space access, San Francisco's street network provides an untapped opportunity to supplement the city's open space system and link the network of open spaces. The street network, which makes up 25% percent of the City's total land area, is a valuable public space asset that can incorporate many types of open spaces, such as pocket parks, play streets, trails, and walkable streets and bike routes. These systems can connect residents to larger parks and open spaces and serve as restorative green spaces in their own right, places where residents can interact with urban nature on their doorstep. This system should be clearly legible, and include signage to guide pedestrians to and through the larger open space system.

POLICY 3.1
Creatively develop existing publicly-owned right-of-ways and streets into open space.

San Francisco's right-of-ways offer a variety of opportunities for developing open spaces. Streets can supplement traditional open spaces with standard streetscaping improvements such as bulb-outs, crosswalk improvements, tree planting, and pedestrian lighting. More extensive traffic calming on expanded or existing wide sidewalks can create additional pocket parks, sitting areas, and opportunities for sustainable plantings, community gardens, stormwater treatment, and other landscape elements.

Green Connections

Green Connections are special streets and paths that connect people to parks, open spaces, and the waterfront, while enhancing the ecology of the street environment. By increasing greening in the right-of-way with street trees, sidewalk gardens, and other landscaped areas, these streets will become sustainable corridors that enhance mobility, green neighborhood streets, and improve pedestrian and bicycle access to community amenities and recreational opportunities.

Living Alleys

The City's network of alleyways– small-scale, quieter streets that primarily serve vehicles needing access to adjacent properties—can provide vibrant open spaces, especially in dense neighborhoods. Some alleys, such as Belden Place in the financial district, are currently closed to traffic and provide an intimate atmosphere where patrons of adjacent restaurants can enjoy outside dining amidst a bustling urban environment. Other alleys, such as Maiden Lane, are closed during certain times of the day, serving adjacent businesses during the day, but allowing deliveries during the evening hours. Still other alleys, such as Linden Alley, are open to traffic, but carefully designed to ensure that drivers proceed slowly and with caution. These alleys are designed with seating, landscaping, and pedestrian-scale lighting to create useable and attractive open spaces. All three alley types should be considered and encouraged.

In some residential neighborhoods in the City, such as Visitacion Valley, Mission Terrace, Crocker Amazon and Bayview Hunters Point, there are narrow, unpaved alleyways that originally provided service vehicle access before paved roads were built. These abandoned and overgrown spaces can provide much-needed spaces that supplement the traditional open space, potentially providing walking and biking paths, or seating, landscaping, and lighting appropriate to the area. Using the City's Better Streets Plan, the design for the different types of alleys can be implemented. The City should study different neighborhood needs and determine a priority plan for creating living alleys in areas most in need of these improvements.



Living Street on Rincon Hill



Parkway on Sunset Boulevard



Sunday Streets in the Western Addition

Living Streets

Living Streets are wider streets where sidewalks are expanded into excess right-of-way to accommodate formal open spaces or linear parks. Wide streets that have excess right-of-way provide an opportunity to develop living streets, especially where dense residential developments are being built. Many of these areas are deficient in open space, and the streets should be designed with places for relaxation, recreation, and neighborhood gatherings.

Enhancing Existing Parkways

Parkways are streets with broad, well-landscaped medians and sidewalks that provide recreational paths while moving bikes and vehicles. These streets function not only as transportation corridors, but also as linear parks, creating a green network. This green space can often be effectively used for pedestrian and open space functions, by providing multi-use trails, seating, and open spaces. They can also perform ecological functions, including stormwater runoff retention and infiltration and creating habitat. Two of the existing parkways, Park Presidio Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard, offer a major opportunity to enhance the north-south connections from Golden Gate Park. These streets already provide ample trails and open space, but are in need of overall care, improved crossings, and enhancement. By utilizing the existing open spaces offered by these parkways, the City is focusing on how to make the most of what we have. The City should develop a specific design program to address the enhancement of these two parkways.

Temporary and Permanent Street Closures

The City's Sunday Streets program – which was modeled on a 25-year program in Bogota, Colombia – has been a huge success. The proposal began in 2008 with the idea to close one street to cars on Sunday mornings so people can get out and be active in a car-free space. The program has since expanded to offer more opportunities for temporary public gathering spaces. Additionally, City agencies' collaborative effort to transform excess pavement into public spaces is on-going and several projects are being initiated around the city. This concept of temporary or even permanent street closures in the City presents a great opportunity to take advantage of existing street rights-of-way to create space for people to walk or ride their bike.

See *Map 3: Existing and Proposed Open Space* for more information on existing and proposed green street concepts.

POLICY 3.2
Establish and Implement a network of Green Connections that increases access to parks, open spaces, and the waterfront.

Despite San Francisco's many open space assets, park accessibility can be a challenge, particularly for those on bike or foot. For decades, streets have been built to maximize car volume and speed, resulting in roads with fast-moving traffic, inadequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and other barriers can that make it difficult and unpleasant for people to walk, bike and use other forms of active transportation.

In recent years, San Francisco has made great strides in retrofitting streets with pedestrian and bicycle improvements that make it easier to access parks, schools and other neighborhood destinations. Green Connections builds on this work, envisioning a 115-mile network of safe, functional, and attractive streets connecting people to parks, open spaces, and the waterfront. Green Connections is designed to meet three goals:

- Public Health: Increase park access
- Sustainability: Enhance urban ecology
- Livability: Support neighborhood stewardship and placemaking

Routes on the Green Connections network should significantly calm traffic, prioritize pedestrian and bicycle travel, enhance urban ecology and ecoliteracy, include beautification and artwork, and provide opportunities to gather and play. Routes will also be designed to be consistent with the Better Streets Plan, which creates a unified set of standards, guidelines, and implementation strategies to govern how the City designs, builds, and maintains its pedestrian environment to ensure streets contribute to a gracious public realm.

Green Connections will not create a new City program, rather, it calls for coordinating existing initiatives such as traffic calming and stormwater management, with the goal of creating a cohesive network of improved neighborhood walking and bicycling routes over the next twenty years. The scale of the network creates opportunities to coordinate with city projects and private development. Additionally, community members and neighborhood groups will play an important role in the Network's implementation and stewardship.

See *Map 10: Green Connections Network*.



Green Connections Network

ROUTES

- 1 Presidio to Bay: *Monarch*
- 2 China Beach to Bay: *Pygmy Nuthatch*
- 3 Market to Beach: *Anna's Hummingbird*
- 4 Page, Stanyan to Market: *Cedar Waxwing*
- 5 Kirkham, Sutro to Beach: *Coyote Bush*
- 6 Mission to Peaks: *Anise Swallowtail*
- 7 Ortega, 14th St to Beach: *Coastal Prairie*
- 8 Noe Valley to Central Waterfront: *American Bushtit*
- 9 Vicente, 20th to Beach: *Coastal Dune Scrub*
- 10 Yosemite Creek: *Red-winged Blackbird*
- 11 Ingleside: *Coast Live Oak / California Buckeye*
- 12 Lake Merced to Candlestick: *Western Fence Lizard*
- 13 Lincoln Park to Zoo: *American Dune Grass*
- 14 Presidio to Park Merced: *Coast Buckwheat*
- 15 West of Twin Peaks: *Green Hairstreak*
- 16 Marina Green to Dolores Park: *West Coast Painted Lady*
- 17 Excelsior: *Cliff Swallow*
- 18 Tenderloin to Potrero: *Western Tiger Swallowtail*
- 19 Downtown to Mission Bay: *Western Gull*
- 20 Folsom, Mission Creek to McLaren: *Pollinators*
- 21 Bayview to Bay Trail: *Black-tailed Jackrabbit*
- 22 Ridge Trail: *Nutall's White-crowned Sparrow*
- 23 Crosstown Trail: *Coyote*
- 24 Shoreline: *Western Snowy Plover and Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse*

0 Miles 1

MAP 10

Notes: Some portions of routes may not be ideal for bicycles due to conditions such as steep topography, stairs or trails.

The proposed network falls mostly on public rights of way, but occasionally deviates onto public properties such as park lands.

POLICY 3.3
Develop and enhance the City's recreational trail system, linking to the regional hiking and biking trail system and considering restoring historic water courses to improve stormwater management.

San Francisco currently has an extensive network of trails that provide local opportunities for walking and biking and link to regional trails and open spaces throughout the Bay Area. These trails surround the Bay, parallel the ocean, extend through parks and neighborhoods and connect existing open spaces. Many of these trails have gaps and lack adequate signage. The City should prioritize filling these gaps and increasing awareness of the trails through updated signage. New trails are also envisioned to provide additional hiking and biking opportunities and important wildlife corridors. The City should also work with Daly City and San Mateo County to encourage better links to San Bruno Mountain and trails to the south.

New trails throughout the city could consider historic water courses to incorporate stormwater management, provide trail connections, or restore aquatic and riparian habitats or wildlife corridors.. These trails should provide better ways to move people through increased hiking and biking opportunities. Some adopted Area Plans, such as the Glen Park Area Plan, have identified such opportunities.

Continuous Waterfront Trail

The trails along the waterfront are administered by many different jurisdictions including regional, city, and federal agencies. However, visitors do not necessarily distinguish between these jurisdictions, and want a continuous, usable trail system along the waterfront. The City should improve trail signage to ensure users are provided clear routes and destinations and work to fill any gaps in the proposed trails and in the connections between them where it does not impede on water dependent commerce.

Bay Trail

The Bay Trail is a regional trail developed by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) that is proposed to surround the entire San Francisco Bay. In San Francisco, this trail would extend from the Golden Gate Bridge along the bay to the Central Waterfront neighborhood, where the trail is being built inland along Illinois Street through Pier 70 (which, along with the Power Plant site, will eventually provide opportunities for waterfront access). The Bay Trail will eventually continue around the Bay through Hunters Point Shipyard and down to San Mateo. (See *Map 11: San Francisco Bay Trail*.) The gaps are shown in *Map 11* and the City should prioritize closing these gaps to ensure a complete Bay Trail. Closing the Bay Trail gaps would also help in the development of the Blue Greenway, a continuous corridor that links the existing and proposed open spaces through the Bay Trail and the San Francisco Water Trail. The City's Blue Greenway project intends to complete San Francisco's southeast section of the Bay Trail and that portion of the Bay Area Water Trail, described below.

Coastal Trail

The California Coastal Trail is a network of trails for walkers, bikers, equestrians, wheelchair riders, and others along the entire 1,200 miles of the California coast. Through San Francisco the 10.5 mile trail connects many scenic and tourist attractions along the coastline, including the Golden Gate Bridge, the Presidio, Ocean Beach and Fort Funston. While the current trail is relatively complete, prioritizing improvements such as signage and fixing small gaps would ensure that the trail is accessible and visible for its entire route.

Bay Area Water Trail

The State Coastal Conservancy is leading the implementation of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail Plan (Water Trail Plan), a new regional access project. The Water Trail will be a network of access sites (or "trailheads") that will enable people using non-motorized, small boats or other beachable sailcraft—such as kayaks, canoes, dragon boats, stand-up paddle and windsurf boards—to safely enjoy single and multiple-day trips around San Francisco Bay. This regional trail has the potential to enhance Bay Area communities' connections to the Bay and create new linkages to existing shoreline open space and other regional trails, such as the Bay Trail. The Water Trail will include educational, stewardship, and outreach components.

The Bay Area Ridge Trail

The Bay Area Ridge Trail is a multi-use trail that links the hills and ridges of the nine counties of the Bay Area. It will be approximately 550 miles in length when completed. Most of the 13.5-mile portion of the trail in San Francisco was completed in 1992 and is in the process of being



San Francisco Bay Trail

0 Miles 1

MAP 11

- San Francisco Bay Trail
- San Francisco Bay Trail (Gap)
- San Francisco Bay Trail (Interim)

reevaluated by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, with the goal of improving its route, signage and connections to other city and regional trails. The City should work with the Council and the community in this rerouting effort, especially one that takes users through parks and makes connections to other trails, such as the Bay Trail, the Coastal Trail, and the proposed new cross-town corridor described below. The City should also assist the Ridge Trail Council in its efforts to improve signage along the route. See *Map 12: Regional Trails*.

New Cross-Town Corridor

A proposed corridor would connect wildlife habitats and allow hikers an urban wildlife trail experience through some of the City's most diverse natural areas. The corridor would begin in the Presidio, travel through Golden Gate Park, stop at Twin Peaks and Mt. Sutro, wind through Glen Park Canyon, then McLaren Park, and finally reach the San Francisco Bay in Candlestick Point Recreation Area. While the exact route of this proposed new corridor has yet to be determined, it could include an extension to connect with Lake Merced and opportunities to daylight historic creeks in an enhanced green corridor. The City should work with pertinent Federal, State, and local agencies along with the community to develop this new corridor.

POLICY 3.4
Encourage non-auto modes of transportation – transit, bicycle and pedestrian access—to and from open spaces while reducing automobile traffic and parking in public open spaces.

San Francisco's transit first policy, adopted by the Board of Supervisors as Section 8A.115 in the San Francisco Charter, emphasizes the importance of providing and prioritizing transportation via transit, walking, and bicycling for all trips in the city including to parks and open spaces. Non-auto transportation is especially important because many of the City's large parks are located far from dense population centers and high needs areas. While the City's extensive network of transit allows users to access all of the City's parks, crossing the City, especially on a weekend, can often entail multiple transfers and long waits because of less frequent service. The City should consider increased and/or express local bus service to major open space amenities particularly from high needs areas. The City should also explore the idea of a "Green Transit Program," a bus that delivers riders from the City's high needs areas to large parks. This service should be affordable and allow families an easy way to access the City's large open spaces. Additionally, the City should improve transit access to regional open spaces outside of San Francisco such as Marine Headlands, Mount Tam, Pacifica beaches, and the San Bruno Mountains.

Bicycle routes that serve to get riders to and around our open spaces also provide a key component of the city's non-auto transportation network. Many of the improvements in the City's Bicycle Plan address the need to connect people to open spaces. The City should prioritize bicycle improvements that provide both a connection to the City's open spaces and serve as the most heavily utilized routes. For example, the improvements suggested along the panhandle would improve access to the Panhandle and Golden Gate Park as well as facilitate this route as a commuter corridor for bicyclists. The City should also work to provide bicycle parking at entrances to park facilities and throughout large open spaces to promote increased bicycle usage. In August 2013, the Bay Area BikeShare was launched with 34 San Francisco locations. The City should consider expanding those locations to serve major parks and open spaces, like Golden Gate Park, that are on the City's bike network.

Heavy or fast traffic in and around public open spaces endangers pedestrians, limits access to open space, endangers plant and animal life and makes the open space less enjoyable to be in. Excessive parking spoils the user experience and untimed parking encourages non-park users to park, restricting availability of spaces for park visitors and residents alike. The following methods of reducing traffic in and around public open space are consistent with the urban design and transportation elements of the General Plan and should be applied where possible:

- Consider eliminating some roadway cut-throughs and ensure new roads are necessary for park access, not only as through-ways.
- Increase traffic calming on roads. Reduce the capacity of roads in public open spaces to encourage slower travel and provide safer routes for pedestrian and bicycle travel.
- Establish strict speed limits. Monitor speeds throughout the parks and ensure that strict speed limits are enforced.
- Study and implement, where appropriate, timed parking that supports typical-length visits to a park, but discourages all-day parking during the week.



Regional Trails

0 Miles 1

MAP 12

- San Francisco Bay Trail
- San Francisco Bay Trail (Proposed)
- California Coastal Trail
- Bay Area Ridge Trail
- Crosstown Trail

SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING DEPARTMENT

POLICY 3.5
Ensure that, where feasible, recreational facilities and open spaces are physically accessible, especially for those with limited mobility.

The City should ensure that recreational facilities and public open spaces are accessible to all San Franciscans, including persons with special recreational needs, where feasible. For example, the hilly topography of the City makes providing some paths ADA accessible difficult to achieve. People with special needs may include seniors, children (particularly the very young), and people with disabilities. In order to achieve this policy, park and recreation facilities should be planned and programmed for people with special recreational needs in mind. The following criteria should be followed when developing or renovating any new space:

- All parks and open spaces should comply with applicable requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the California Building Code.
- The City should utilize the US Access Board's recreation facilities and outdoor area accessibility guidelines as a best practice for design and construction.
- The City should also ensure that routes to and from the open spaces are accessible. For example, the route from the public transit stop to the park should be fully accessible.

POLICY 3.6
Maintain, restore, expand and fund the urban forest.

Trees and understory plantings in city parks, developed public open spaces, city streets and private property collectively form the urban forest. The urban forest contributes substantially to our quality of life and to the ecological functioning of our city. Trees and landscaping soften the urban environment, provide habitat, improve air quality, absorb carbon and mitigate stormwater runoff. Given these benefits, trees are an essential piece of the City's infrastructure. The urban forest requires consistent maintenance, funding and long-term planning to ensure its health and growth over time.

The SFRPD plants and maintains a variety of landscaping, including approximately 131,000 trees in city parks and other SFRPD open spaces. The Department of Public Works, Bureau of Urban Forestry (BUF) has permit jurisdiction over 105,000 trees and landscaping in the public right-of-way and provides maintenance along designated streets. Finally, property owners maintain trees within their property line as well as street trees and landscaping along their street frontage on streets not maintained by BUF.

The Planning Department, in collaboration with the Department of Public Works, is creating a plan to promote San Francisco's urban forest with a focus on street trees. The Urban Forest Plan - Phase 1: Street Trees (2014) identifies policies and strategies to proactively manage, grow and protect the City's street tree population. A corresponding planning effort is needed, focused on policies and recommendations pertaining to trees in parks and open spaces. The Urban Forest Plan - Phase 2: Trees in Parks & Open Spaces should be funded and carried out. Many of the city's trees and understory plantings in our parks have reached maturity and are in a state of degradation. A thorough tree replanting strategy in parks and open spaces that addresses not only hazardous trees, but also develops a comprehensive replanting strategy that includes a system-wide prioritization framework, should be pursued. In addition, a third phase of urban forestry planning (Urban Forest Plan - Phase 3: Buildings and Private Property) should be completed to present recommendations for trees and landscaping on private property as well as on building (i.e. living architecture, green roofs and walls). The completion of all three planning phases will produce a holistic vision for the City's urban forest.

Urban forestry planning in San Francisco requires a Citywide Street Tree Inventory and Parks Tree Assessment to gather the data needed to achieve a higher level of tree management and care. The Citywide Tree Inventory should include geographic location, tree species, size, age, and disease classes, and other related information for trees within the public right-of-way. A Parks Tree Assessment should evaluate the condition and needs of trees under SFRPD's maintenance purview. Upon completion of these studies, property owners should be encouraged to plant trees and landscaping fronting their property consistent with the City's Urban Forest Plan and DPW's tree and landscaping planting guidelines. Additionally, the City should seek long-term funding sources to maintain and expand the urban forest on streets and parks. Codes relating to planting and maintaining street trees and landscaping in public spaces, parks, along public right-of-ways and within private property should be rigorously enforced to in order to maximize the extent, health, and longevity of the City's urban forest.

OBJECTIVE 4

PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE BIODIVERSITY, HABITAT VALUE, AND ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF OPEN SPACES AND ENCOURAGE SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES IN THE DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT OF OUR OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

San Francisco is a heavily urbanized city, which nonetheless has a rich variety of plant and animal communities. Among these are coastal scrub, grassland, oak woodlands, marsh, and stream-side habitats and their associated wildlife. Some of these habitats hold species found nowhere outside of the Bay Area. The City also has significant landscaped areas, such as conifer plantings in Golden Gate Park. By providing food and shelter for migratory and resident birds, butterflies, and insects they too play a major role in supporting San Francisco's biodiversity. Biodiversity includes the variety of living organisms, the genetic differences among them, and the communities and ecosystems in which they occur. Maintaining biodiversity requires genetic diversity, species diversity, and habitat diversity. San Francisco can be a leader in creating new and more sustainable open spaces by ensuring that all open spaces, including new and renovated park spaces, are developed in a way that enhances and works with local biodiversity.

POLICY 4.1
Preserve, protect and restore local biodiversity.

San Francisco's ecological communities include freshwater and tidal wetlands, riparian areas, grasslands, coastal prairies, oak woodlands, coastal scrub, dunes, rock outcroppings and our designed landscapes. Some of these areas serve as habitat for unique species including many rare and endangered species, such as the red-legged frog, snowy plover, and mission blue butterfly. Yet San Francisco continues to lose species diversity due to isolation and fragmentation of habitats and invasive species.

Parks and open spaces in San Francisco include both native and non-native species, both of which can contribute to local biodiversity. The City should employ appropriate management practices to maintain a healthy and resilient ecosystem which preserves and protects plant and wildlife habitat, especially rare species which are the primary contributors to local biodiversity.

Restoring some ecosystems would also help enhance local biodiversity. Wetlands and riparian areas, for example, provide habitat, biological benefits, and resource-efficient methods for treating storm water runoff in addition to serving recreational uses. However, many of San Francisco's wetlands have been buried by development and little of the original wetlands have survived in San Francisco. A number of restoration projects have recently been completed or are underway, including projects at Crissy Field, Heron's Head, Pier 94, Mountain Lake and Lake Merced. The City should continue to support the monitoring and restoration of these wetlands.

The long-term vision for the City should also include conserving and restoring hydrological resources, including riparian communities, seeps, springs, creeks, ponds, and lakes; and exploring the feasibility of day lighting creeks that are completely or partially buried, for example Islais Creek, Yosemite Creek and Mission Creek. In order to ensure the preservation and restoration of our local biodiversity, the City should increase awareness of the benefits of all ecological communities as well as how the public should and should not interact with these areas.

POLICY 4.2
Establish a coordinated management approach for designation and protection of natural areas and watershed lands.

San Francisco's natural areas are the undeveloped remnants of the historical landscape which contain rich and diverse plant and animal communities. Following the adoption of the 1986 Recreation and Open Space Element, the SFRPD exacted policies to develop a Natural Areas Program to manage the 530 acres of parks and portions of parks that constitute natural areas. The mission of the program is to restore and enhance remnant natural areas and to develop and support community-based stewardship of these areas. Policies governing access and appropriate use and enjoyment of protected natural areas should ensure that the natural resource values are not diminished or negatively affected by public use.

In addition to the SFRPD-owned land, there are a number of natural areas under the jurisdiction of other city, state and federal agencies and in private ownership. The long-term ownership and management of these lands is uncertain because these properties are not under rules and restrictions that would prevent them from being sold and/

or developed. The City should ensure that a comprehensive inventory of all natural areas owned by city agencies other than the Recreation and Park Department and by private landholders is developed, in order to preserve the City's biodiversity and natural areas more holistically. This inventory should include promoting habitat corridors among open spaces and natural areas. The following criteria should be used to determine what constitutes a significant natural resource area worthy of protection:

- The site is undeveloped and relatively undisturbed, and is a remnant of the original natural landscape and either supports a significant, diverse, or unusual indigenous plant or wildlife habitat, or contains rare geological formations, or riparian zones.

- The site contains rare, threatened, or endangered species, as identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or California Department of Fish and Wildlife, or contains habitat that has recently supported and is likely again to support rare, threatened, or endangered species.

- The site is adjacent to another protected natural resource area and, if protected from development, the two areas together would support a larger or more diverse natural habitat.

Given constraints on the City's financial resources, public acquisition for all natural areas that are in private ownership may not be an option. However, if such an area is at risk of loss through development, the site should be examined as a candidate for open space acquisition. Relative importance of the site as a natural area should also be assessed. If the area is not to be publicly acquired, the Planning Commission may require any development that is approved on the site to preserve the most important portions of the area, if found feasible and consistent with the Planning Code.

Once the significant natural resources outside the jurisdiction of RPD are identified, the City should develop a management plan for these natural areas. Many of the properties are currently managed by the City, State or Federal agencies whose mission is not consistent with the preservation of natural areas. In these cases, consideration should be given to joint management through a conservation district or a governmental entity that controls the management of these areas.

POLICY 4.3
Integrate the protection and restoration of local biodiversity into open space construction, renovation, management and maintenance.

The City should work to protect and enhance biodiversity throughout the parks and open space system. When parks and open spaces are renovated and new spaces are planned or acquired the City should work to ensure that these spaces are environmentally sustainable, from construction to management. New buildings and park features should protect and help restore local biodiversity. Appropriate criteria should be applied to different open spaces depending on the sensitivity of the habitat, the proposed uses, and the amount of space the new or renovated project will provide. However, certain key requirements, which the City is currently working on, will be applied to all new and renovated open spaces:

- **Soil conservation.** In order to conserve and to use local soil, a cut fill balance will be maintained where feasible to minimize the need to transport soil to or from the project site.

- **Native and drought-tolerant plants.** The City is working to replace invasive and water-intensive species and species of minimal habitat value with species that fit better with San Francisco's natural environment. Just as the City restores degraded areas with local native plants for wildlife habitat and biodiversity in natural areas, habitat and biodiversity should be considered along with traditional landscaping objectives of aesthetics and cultural value throughout our park system and in the streetscape. Drought-tolerant non-native plants can also contribute to the thriving of local biodiversity and meet many of these overall goals. To provide native and drought-tolerant plants, the City should continue to work with private entities and City agencies to encourage native and drought-tolerant plant nurseries.

- **Lighting.** Park lighting should be environmentally efficient and provide safety and security to park users, while being as limited as possible in order to protect wildlife in natural areas from the impacts of light pollution.

- **Habitat and Wildlife.** Where appropriate, utilize materials and design spaces, facilities and buildings in a manner that provides habitat for local and migrating wildlife.

- **Construction and Siting:** Utilize green building practices, local materials, services and supplies; site new structures in locations that minimize disruption of the natural environment; and mitigate impacts during constructions phases.

- **Waste management:** The City should continue to enforce the no feeding of wildlife provision of the Park Code and manage recreational facilities to minimize wildlife access to human garbage.

- **Stormwater management** The City should continue to creatively solve for the management of stormwater runoff in our dense urban landscape. Managing the city's storm-water runoff in an environmentally-sensitive manner, such as using bioswales or through creek restoration could provide an increasingly biodiverse habitat.

POLICY 4.4
Include environmentally sustainable practices in construction, renovation, management and maintenance of open space and recreation facilities.

The City has been working to develop more sustainable practices in the development or renovation of their park and recreational facilities. Below are a number of programs that highlight efforts throughout the City.

- **Water conservation, recycling/reuse, and stormwater mitigation.** The SFPUC has developed a recycled water program with the North San Mateo County Sanitation District to use recycled water for three golf courses: Lake Merced Golf Club, Olympic Club, and San Francisco Golf Club. The SFPUC is also working on a treatment facility for recycled water on the city's west side. One of the primary uses of this recycled water would be to irrigate parks and open spaces in City property such as Golden Gate Park. The Recreation and Parks Department is the biggest user of water in the city, with an annual total usage of 691 million gallons of water. It is therefore critical to conserve potable water and promote alternative water resources such as recycled water and stormwater capture, especially for uses such as irrigation. Expanding the use of recycled water and considering other innova-tive treatments to capture and reuse stormwater runoff are being pursued by the SFPUC, the Recreation and Park Department, and the Office Community Investment and Infrastructure. Impervious surfaces are being limited or retrofitted to utilize pervious surfaces and innovative methods for capturing and reusing storm water, such as cisterns. Support for these efforts should continue, as they offer an easy and effective solution to water conservation and to potential water shortages caused by drought, earthquakes, or decline in the snow pack.

- **Energy production and efficiency.** The City's open spaces could serve as a source of energy for the City. For example, new or renovated buildings could utilize solar panels or other alternative energy sources. The SFRPD has also been a leader in the City in trying to reduce their energy usage. The goal is to realign the records so that meters are tied to park names and building names in order to have greater control of energy reduction measures. Currently, meter numbers are tied to physical addresses only with multiple meters and multiple addresses in one property.

- **Composting and Mulching.** The City has had a composting program since 1996. SFRPD is one of the leading partners and one of the biggest producers of green waste in the City. The recycling of this waste is used not only in city parks and in community gardens throughout the City, but is provided to farms and house-holds for use in their private gardens.

- **Integrated Pest Management.** The City of San Francisco follows the award-winning Integrated Pest Management ordinance. The law requires that when the City is managing unwanted insects, rodents, birds, weeds, or other organisms for buildings & landscapes that the City follow a series of requirements including: how integrated pest management (IPM) is implemented, limitations on pesticide products, exemptions to the Reduced Risk Pesticide List (that may be used as a last resort), posting and notification for pesticide treatments, recordkeeping and data requirements, and accountability. The program must be followed by all city agencies and any city agency that leases land from the city.

- **Historic Preservation** Appropriate repair and retrofitting of existing historic resources is an inherently sustainable strategy and ensures that the character and integrity of significant historic resources is maintained. Adaptive reuse, such as for new programming, accessibility, life and safety, and systems upgrades, is a strategy that can be used to conserve materials, minimize impacts to the environ-ment, promote a sense of place, and improve livability.

OBJECTIVE 5

ENGAGE COMMUNITIES IN THE STEWARDSHIP OF THEIR RECREATION PROGRAMS AND OPEN SPACES

Residents can be a major asset in addressing open space needs, providing oversight, maintenance and stewardship. They can be instrumental in ensuring that recreation and open space activities are rooted in local needs and can offer a community-based solution to public sector gaps, particularly in times of budget constraints.



POLICY 5.1
Engage communities in the design, programming and improvement of their local open spaces, and in the development of recreational programs.

The most successful public spaces are those that respond to the needs of their users. Statistics, maps and figures can only go so far in determining a community's need – they can explain proximity to open space, they can describe type of open spaces that are missing (hiking trails, sports fields, playgrounds, etc.), but they cannot identify the components of open space design which will most reflect their user community.

Open space designs and improvement plans, recreational programs, partnerships for new concessions, and other park additions should always include community participation. The level and intensity of community outreach and engagement may differ based on project type, ranging from written notifications, to community meetings and workshops, to design charrettes. Outreach and engagement efforts should start at the initial project stage, which provides the opportunity to learn about the local community's recreation and open space needs, and continue throughout the project. The City should strive to actively engage community members throughout the process by using a variety of community engagement tools.

A diversity of recreation programs is typically needed to serve the recreation needs and interests of San Franciscans. The City should consider many tools and criteria when developing recreation programs. Some useful tools include but are not limited to:

1. the City Survey from the Controller's Office, which provides an overview of park usage, park quality, and park programming from residents;
2. intercept surveys, which provides observational park usage;
3. user surveys from recreation programming participants;
4. facility-based input to provide neighborhood feedback on recreation programming; and,
5. emerging technologies that survey existing and potential park users including residents, workers, and visitors.

Connecting with and engaging the community will expand opportunities to honor community heritage, facilitate participation in broader arts and cultural activities, and ensure that facilities and programs are appropriate for park users and reflect community character.

Community representation can be continued as the park evolves by including plans that promote volunteer projects derived from the interest and abilities of the community, under the direction of park staff.

POLICY 5.2
Increase awareness of the City's open space system.

San Francisco's open spaces offer residents, visitors and workers many opportunities for recreating and relaxing. The enormous variety of spaces offers a range of options for the user, from a small plaza where downtown workers sit to enjoy their lunch, to large parks where hikers can walk through a redwood grove, to the numerous classes and programs offered by the Recreation and Park Department for families.

The City should coordinate efforts to increase awareness of all City-owned open spaces and promote an increased use and activation of underutilized spaces, which are often underused simply because people are unaware of all the amenities offered. The Recreation and Park Department should continue to enhance its presence on the internet, social media, and emerging technology. All City agencies owning public open spaces should also use emerging technologies to increase awareness of public open spaces. Ideally, the City should create a holistic platform that includes information (hours of operation, permitted activities, community stewardship opportunities, etc.) on all publicly-owned parks and open spaces regardless of the owning agency.

Open spaces also provide an opportunity to increase public understanding of and appreciation for San Francisco's unique natural heritage. Larger open spaces, such as natural areas and parks, as well as smaller landscaped areas, such as POPOS and street parks, may present opportunities to build awareness and understanding of ecology and the natural world through design elements such as demonstration gardens, educational signage, and interpretive artwork. The City should continue to explore creative partnerships with community groups, educational institutions, and cultural organizations to expand environmental education programs and provide opportunities for community-based stewardship and conservation. Such programs should target youth and high-needs areas in particular.

POLICY 5.3
Facilitate the development of community-initiated or supported open spaces.

Publicly-owned and managed open spaces, such as those managed by the SFRPD, are only one component of the City's open space network. Informal, community-organized open spaces, such as community gardens, green opportunities on street corners or along undeveloped street right-of-ways, and opportunities on private or underutilized (vacant) property, provide great opportunities for recreation and open space.

Community organizing around engaged urban revitalization, such as the creation of parks and open space, can have tangible social benefits too. It fosters a sense of responsibility, and encourages residents to take initiative in affecting their own environment. Creation of a community space can support the coming together of a neighborhood, facilitating social interactions and further increasing participation in future planning efforts.

The City should look for opportunities to expand the development of street parks, urban plazas, community gardens, improved streets, and shared school playfields (as described in Objective 3). An evaluation of public property potential, vacant and underutilized properties, and even private property where agreements with owners could be facilitated, would aid in identifying open space opportunities. While gaining access to private property is often a challenge, as owners may want to preserve development potential in the future, it may be possible to structure conditions that allow for temporary use as open space. A formal authorization agreement between the property owner, City, and community could regulate limited-term public use, allowing vacant private properties to serve as a positive community asset without detriment to existing or future building rights.

The City should support community-initiated efforts both administratively and financially by promoting and expanding programs like the Community Challenge Grants and Community Opportunity Fund. The City should also broaden communities' awareness of ways to develop or improve their own neighborhood spaces, the need for open space, and opportunities for them to respond to such needs. Education programs, which can be held in schools, within nonprofit programs, or even as seminars at neighborhood organizations, allow residents to tap into strategies for designating, financing and developing urban open space.

Various nonprofit organizations already provide technical assistance and support, broadening knowledge about what communities can do; organizing seminars, which aid community groups in understanding how to get a project started; providing planting lists and advice on their websites; and holding volunteer days to help implement work. Communities may also have physical needs for maintenance support and tools. Tool lending libraries that assist park volunteers in cleanups, landscape improvements, and community tree plantings, all help support the development of open space and should be supported.

POLICY 5.4
Reduce governmental barriers to community-initiated recreation and open space efforts.

The high cost of permitting requirements, combined with the time to complete them, can be a significant

disincentive to community efforts. Recognizing this, San Francisco's street regulating agencies have streamlined permitting processes for street landscaping and reduced fee requirements. However, significant hurdles still exist to creating major changes to properties or to the public right-of-way. Because of the potential for conflicts with parking, traffic, transit, and adjacent uses, it is difficult to streamline major improvement processes. Yet, Portland has established a model ordinance, the "Intersection Repair" ordinance, which was intended to facilitate neighborhood improvements to streets, including major interventions like developing public gathering places in a street intersection. The City should study how to improve the delivery of public street improvements, and examine the lessons from places like Portland to examine what aspects can be facilitated.

Liability is another barrier. In San Francisco, improvements that convert private property to publicly accessible, or even private improvements to public property, typically require that the party contributing the improvements indemnify the City of all liability, which can bring the additional financial burden of insurance. The City needs to make a concerted effort to limit such liability concerns, and balance good public policy with legal caution. In particular, the City should pursue legislation to address the issue of public liability in situations of joint use or joint development of public properties, so that the liability may be equitably shared by multiple agencies (such as the agreement between the SFUSD and the Recreation and Park Department to allow public access to some schoolyards).

POLICY 5.5
Encourage and foster stewardship of open spaces through well-run, active volunteer programs.

Individual participation in stewardship of public open spaces brings obvious improvements to our parks – greener plantings, better maintenance, and an overall feeling of ownership which can deter destructive behavior. Stewardship activities also provide benefits for the individuals by encouraging appreciation of the space, stimulating more outdoor activity, and promoting long-term civic engagement.

The SFRPD has a wide-ranging volunteer program which creates opportunities to participate in gardening and ecological restoration projects, recreational programming, park planning, and fundraising. The program also fosters group sponsorship through weekly, ongoing work parties that provide ongoing stewardship of a park or area.

The Department of Public Works runs a number of parallel programs, such as Adopt A Street, Streets Park Program, and the Community Clean Team, to facilitate neighborhood stewardship efforts on San Francisco's streets, parks and schools.

The Port has also developed successful partnerships with organizations (like Literacy for Environmental Justice to assist with maintenance and education at Heron's Head Park), and Kayaks Unlimited (for stewardship of Islais Landing).

But more resources are necessary to realize the full potential of volunteer programs, expanding the breadth and depth of volunteer opportunities as well as overall participation rates. The City should work to expand these partnerships for stewardship of parks and open spaces, and could help coordinate all volunteer opportunities – whether City or nonprofit sponsored – into an online, easy-to-access calendar, or create a volunteer database with up-to-date schedules and opportunities. The City should also explore ways to share ongoing maintenance of parks and open spaces with individual stewardship organizations or through inter-departmental coordination.

OBJECTIVE 6

SECURE LONG-TERM RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT FOR OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION, AND RENOVATION, OPERATIONS, AND MAINTENANCE OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND OPEN SPACE

Securing resources for the maintenance and renovation of existing open spaces and providing funding for the acquisition of new open spaces has been a challenge for the City. The City must recognize the costs associated with open space maintenance, renovation, and acquisition and ensure that their funding mechanisms address these major expenditures.

POLICY 6.1
Pursue and develop innovative long-term funding mechanisms for maintenance, operation, renovation and acquisition of open space and recreation.

One of the key goals of this Plan is to ensure that the policies and programs have adequate resources and that a consistent source of funding for operations and maintenance is secured. The City has the responsibility to provide necessary funding for well-maintained recreational facilities and open space. To overcome the challenge of the City's diminishing resources and increasing costs and in order to meet existing funding challenges, the City should pursue different innovative financing mechanisms.. These strategies should help the City realize the monetary benefits provided by parks and open space and invest those benefits into the park system. The City should continue to pursue sustainable mechanisms to overcome the funding challenges. Below is a list of different mechanisms commonly used in cities as public finance strategies for parks and open spaces. Many of these funding strategies have been already used in San Francisco. The City should evaluate these mechanisms and their effectiveness on an on-going basis.

- **General Obligation bonds:** RPD has been using general obligation bonds as a long-term capital planning strategy. These bonds focus on the basic, critical needs of the park system, reducing earthquake safety risks and renovating rundown parks, pools, recreation centers, and playgrounds. In order to ensure that each bond efficiently addresses the needs of communities, RPD should continue to assess the results of each bond and their cost-efficiency in order to enhance the structure, process, and efficiency of future bonds.

- **Public-private partnerships:** The City has used public private partnerships since the park system was founded. Support from private entities and individuals can enable the park system to provide services and recreation opportunities to San Franciscans. The City is continuing to develop public-private partnerships to increase open space amenities and funding opportunities. Such facilities can range from mobile food vendors to larger concessions operating in park facilities. Such opportunities can provide a reliable source of funding for park improvements and maintenance, while ensuring that they benefit park users, address their needs and concerns, and protect the public interest. Responsible agencies should develop these opportunities through an appropriate outreach and engagement process as outlined in Objective 5. Additionally, these agreements should:

  - Maintain and enhance public access to recreation and park services; and
  - Maintain transparency and accountability to the public; and
  - Support the park or open space through financial and/or physical improvements

- **Grants:** Granting agencies such as federal and state agencies and foundations provide innumerable financial help and support to the city. The city agencies should continue to proactively pursue grant opportunities.

- **Local Fundraising:** The City's vast network for park groups and active community organizations provide a wealth of knowledge and resources that can help support the city's open spaces. The City Budget should prioritize adequate resources and consistent funding source for operating and maintaining open space.

- **Citywide Impact Fees to Fund Recreation Facilities and Open Space.** Development impact fees are fees the City charges developers in connection with approval of a development project for the purpose of defraying all or a portion of new public facility needs related to the development. These fees can be used to acquire and develop new recreational facilities and open spaces and for capital improvements to existing open spaces. Development impact fees that provide revenue for recreation and open space are in effect in a number of City neighborhoods, but not citywide. The City has developed an initial nexus study to demonstrate the impact of new development on open space.

- **Park Improvement Districts.** An innovative approach, similar to the Community Benefits District (CBD) used in many of San Francisco's neighborhood commercial districts, is a Park Improvement District. A Park Improvement District is a public-private partnership in which businesses and/or residents in a defined area elect to pay an additional tax in order to fund improvements and maintenance for the park. The parks are maintained by the City, but this additional funding provides supplemental funds to cover needed improvements and maintenance overseen by a neighborhood-elected board

of directors. This concept could be piloted to determine its effectiveness.

- **Voluntary Contributions.** Many cities provide the option to voluntarily contribute a small amount of money specifically earmarked for open space. Such a contribution option would be added to residents' utility bills to fund improvements to open space.

- **Tax Revenue Options.** In some cities, decision makers have pursued the option of an additional tax contribution earmarked for open space, usually via an additional property tax on residential and/or commercial owners. The creation of a new tax requires a two-thirds majority vote by the electorate and provides a consistent source of funding. The money can be used for acquisition, maintenance, or capital improvements.

- **Community Facilities Districts.** In Mission Bay and Hunters Point Shipyard, Community Facilities Districts (or CFD), or special tax districts, will be used to help fund the on-going maintenance of the new open space facilities. The South Beach area also has a CFD that helps fund the maintenance of some small public plazas.

RPD and other public agencies responsible for recreation and open space in the City should continue analyzing how such funding options could be applied in San Francisco for recreation and open space maintenance, operations, renovation and acquisitions.