

City of San Francisco

Market Street Reimagined / Ideas Competition Background Materials



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The Assignment

Summary of the Problem

Since 1839, Market Street has been the major spine of San Francisco. It runs diagonally at the intersection of the city's two street grids, stretching from the San Francisco Bay and the iconic Ferry Building through the Financial District, Tenderloin neighborhood, Theater District, Civic Center, Hayes Valley, South of Market and the Castro neighborhoods. The special conditions of the block geometry and historic architecture set it up with a unique identity. The roadway is a bike, transit, commercial loading, and taxi-only artery with regional and city transit lines (BART, Muni buses, light rail and streetcars) running both below and on the street. The City's iconic cable cars spring from Market Street bringing residents, commuters, and visitors up and through some of its most picturesque neighborhoods.

San Francisco has experienced the greatest lag nationwide in office workers returning to in-person work. With the Market Street corridor being San Francisco's major transit gateway to the City's primary office districts, this has created a negative ripple effect, with regional transit delivering less than half of the pre-pandemic daily population to this area. Not only are office vacancies at record levels, but service retail, parking garages, public transit, and convention bookings have all dropped significantly, hollowing out the previously busy Market Street area. With the decrease of workers, shoppers and shops, theater goers, and tourists in this zone, the former vitality and joy of the public realm is missing.

While Market Street has been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, it is brimming with possibilities. Market Street retains the fundamental elements that will allow it to again become one of the world's great boulevards. Lined with storefronts, wide sidewalks, and still home to robust transit and a large concentration of jobs, Market Street has many enduring strengths. Unique regional uses, such as theaters, transit, cable car service, and civic buildings, are along or just off the corridor. Market Street has the opportunity to capture and amplify the momentum of the city's comeback that is already being experienced in our vibrant and flourishing neighborhoods.

Description of the Study Area

Physical Description

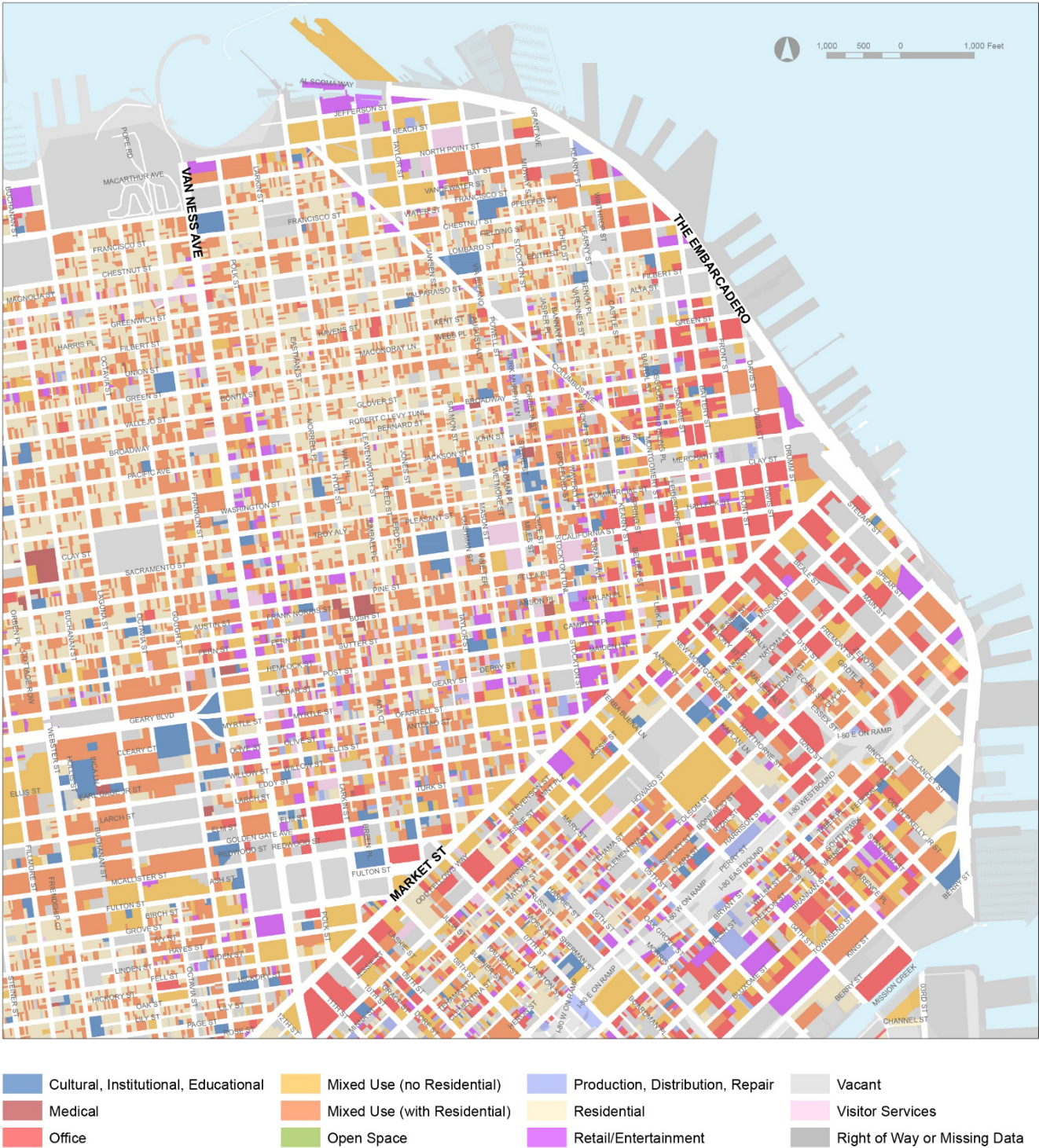
Study Area Location and Boundary

The study area boundary for the ULI Ideas Competition is the Market Street Corridor from Van Ness Avenue to the west and The Embarcadero to the east. This 2-mile stretch of Market Street is adjacent to many distinct neighborhoods including the Hub, Civic Center, Mid-Market, the Tenderloin, Union Square, SoMa, Yerba Buena, the City's historic financial district, the East Cut and the Waterfront. This segment of Market Street has a right-of-way width of 120 feet with 4, ~12-foot travel lanes (2 transit-only including streetcar tracks and 2 mixed-flow lanes), as well as bicycle facilities of one-way sharrows or ~5-foot buffered bikeways. The Muni system also includes overhead lines. Sidewalks are an average of 25-35 feet wide, narrower at loading areas. Market Street currently allows commercial vehicles, taxis, paratransit, and transit.



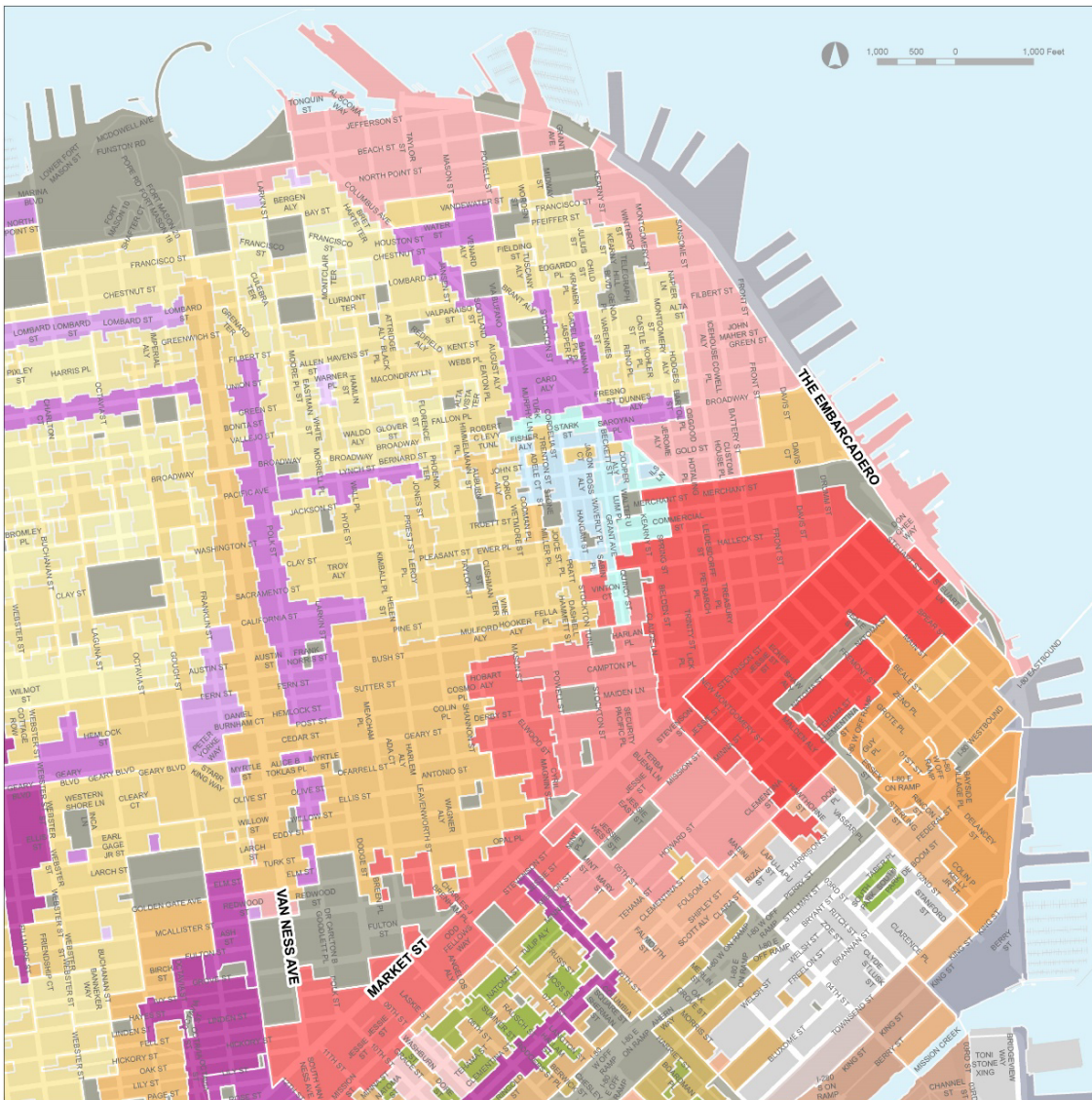
Land Uses within and Adjacent to the Study Area

The land uses along Market Street include office, retail, residential, cultural and educational institutions and hotels. The map below highlights the land use categories that exist today.



Existing Zoning

Zoning along Market Street is comprised of the C-3 zoning district, which includes C-3-G, C-3-R, C-3-O, and C-3-O (SD). These are the city's most permissive district, allowing a high degree of flexibility and diversity of uses at very high densities. The zoning currently allows for housing, as well as a wide range of commercial uses, including offices, laboratories, institutions, and medical facilities. Nearly all types of retail entertainment are allowed, including formula retail and there are no limitations on retail size. While office is not permitted on the ground floor, a new "[flexible workspace](#)" use was created in 2023 which allows for office on the ground floor if combined with a retail sales and service use or general entertainment use.

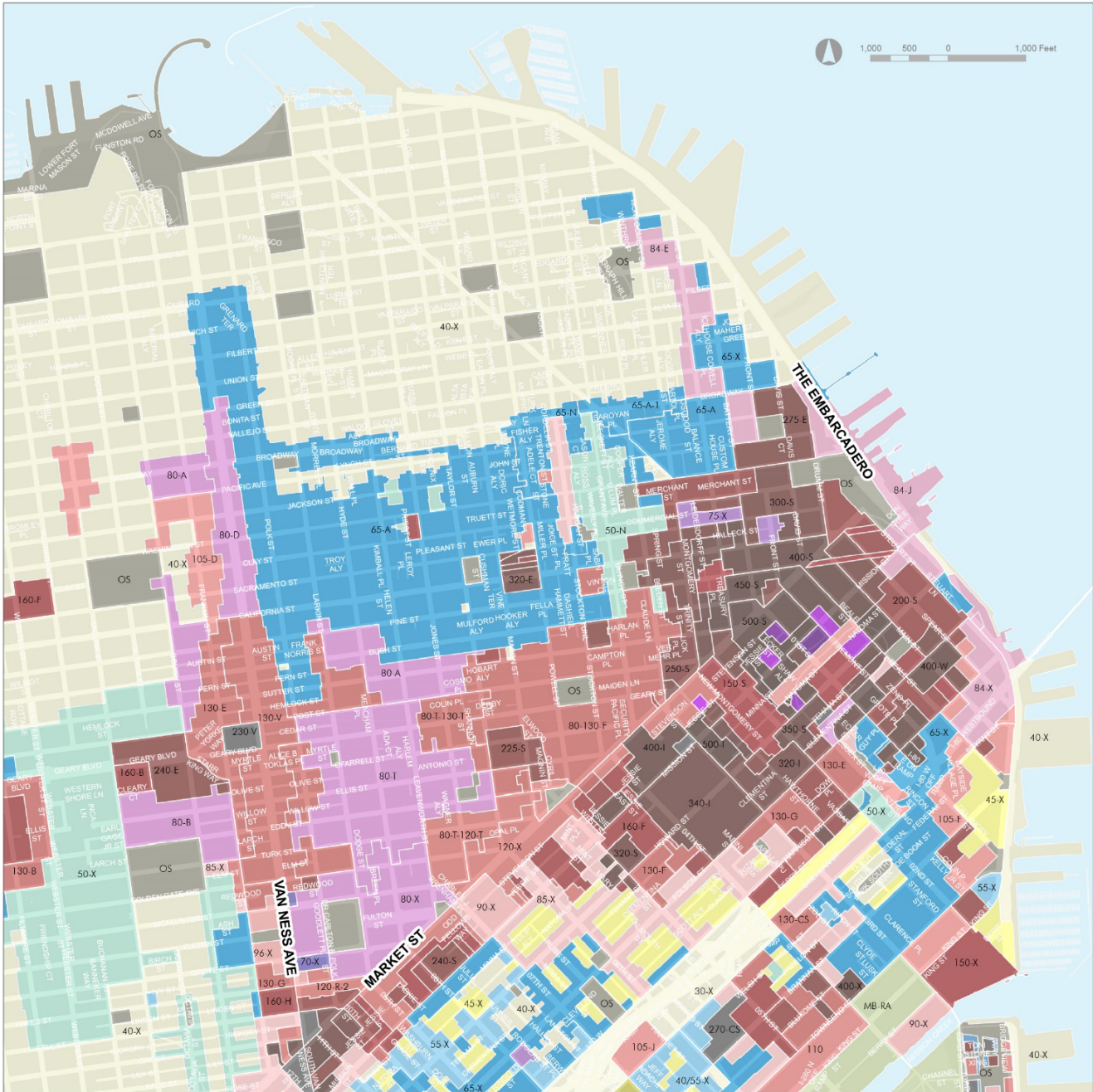


Study Area: Market Street (Van Ness Avenue to The Embarcadero)

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-------|-------|------|-------|--------|---------|------|--------|------|
| C-2 | C-3-S | M-1 | MUO | NC-S | RC-3 | RH DTR | RM-1 | SALI | WMUG |
| C-3-G | C-M | M-2 | MUR | NCD | RC-4 | RH-1 | RM-2 | SB-DTR | WMUO |
| C-3-O | CCB | MB-O | NC-1 | NCT | RCD | RH-1(D) | RM-3 | SPD | |
| C-3-O(SD) | CRNC | MB-RA | NC-2 | NCT-3 | RED | RH-2 | RM-4 | TB DTR | |
| C-3-R | CVR | MUG | NC-3 | P | RED-MX | RH-3 | RTO | UMU | |

Existing Heights

The height limits along Market Street range from 80'-590'. Height limits are organized to have smaller building heights along the smaller scale alleys. The eastern portion of Market Street closer to Downtown has the highest concentration of tall building heights which support large office buildings, hotels and some residential towers.



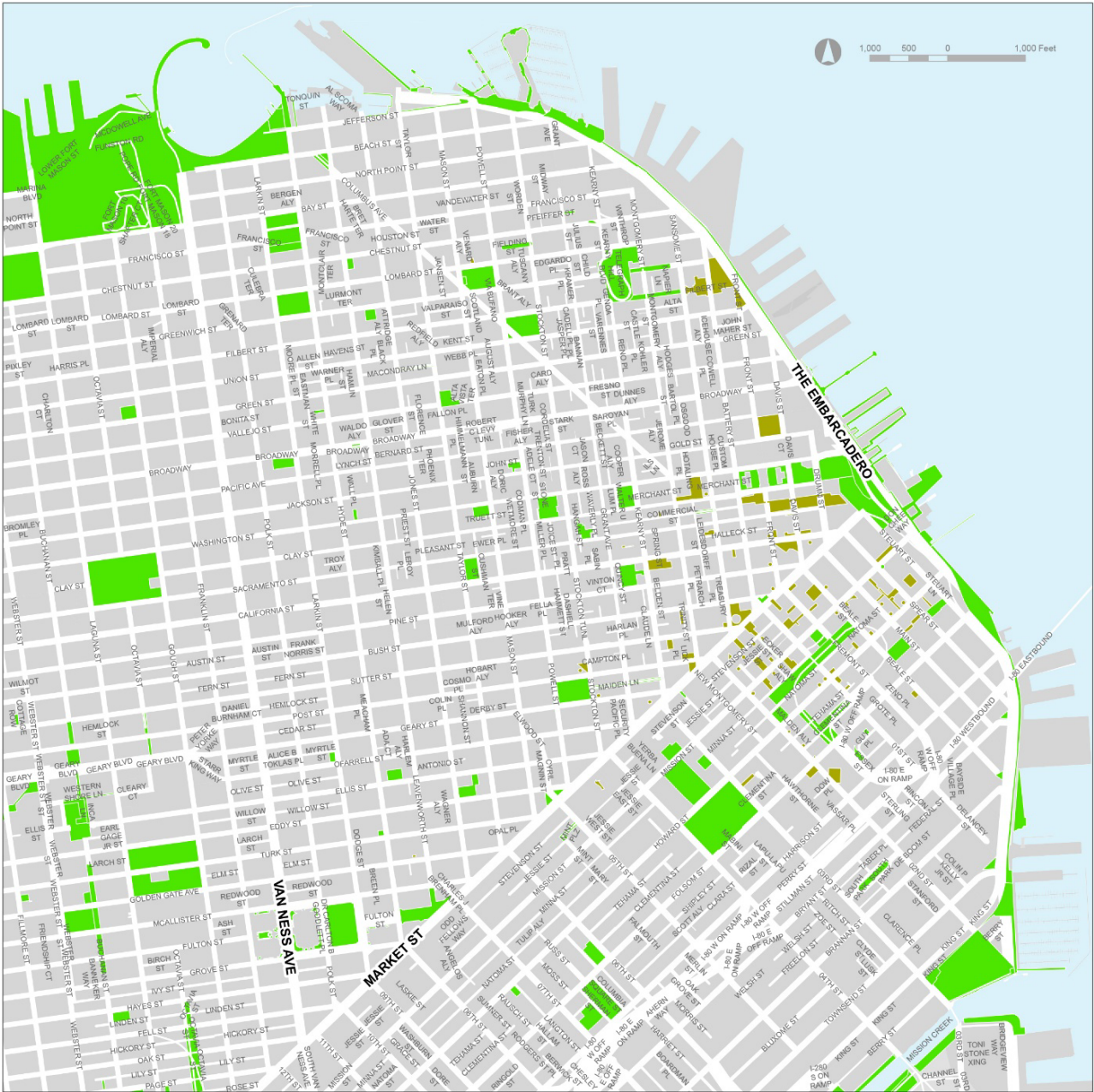
Historic Districts

The map below illustrates the historic districts that intersect with Market Street. This includes the Uptown Tenderloin Historic District (shown in light green), Mint-Mission Conservation District (shown in brown), Kearny-Market-Mason-Sutter Conservation District (shown in yellow) and the New Montgomery-Mission-Second Street Conservation District (shown in purple).



Parks, Open Spaces, Trails, Waterfront

The study area includes both publicly owned and operated open spaces and Privately Owned Public Open Spaces (POPOS). Civic Center Plaza and UN Plaza towards the western boundary are surrounded by many of San Francisco's largest government and cultural organizations and includes a new skate park and regular programming and activities. The Embarcadero is the study area's easternmost boundary which is directly adjacent to the waterfront and includes a pedestrian promenade with opportunities to enjoy views of the San Francisco Bay.



Study Area: Market Street (Van Ness Avenue to The Embarcadero)

- Public/Open Space
- POPOS

Other notable public spaces that touch Market Street include Hallidie Plaza which is adjacent to Powell Street Station and Mechanics Plaza at the corner of Bush and Market Street. Other parks adjacent to the study area include the recently-built elevated Salesforce Park, Union Square, which is the heart of San Francisco's premiere shopping district and a popular tourist destination, and Yerba Buena Gardens, which is a cultural, entertainment and visitor hub.

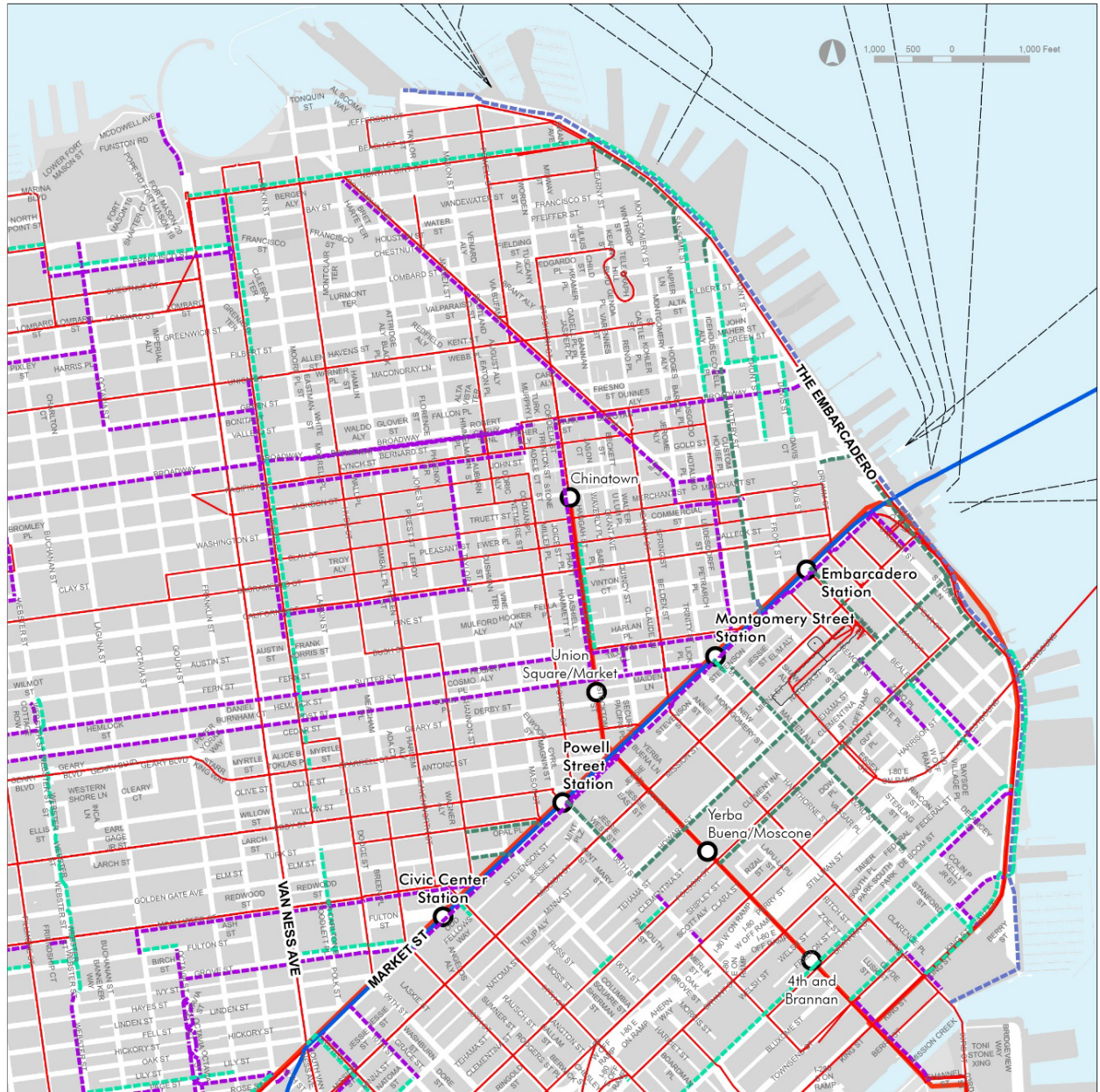
Schools

There are two public elementary schools adjacent to the study area - Tenderloin Community School on Turk and Polk Streets and Bessie Carmichael Elementary School on 7th Street and Harrison. Other schools adjacent to the study area include the International School of San Francisco on Oak and Franklin which serves kindergarten thru 12th grade, De Marillac Academy on Golden Gate and Leavenworth which serves 4th thru 8th grade, Presidio Knolls School, a preschool thru 8th grade Mandarin immersion school on 10th Street and Folsom, and Compass Virtual School, a k-12 charter school, provide instruction primarily online.

Academy of Art University has its main campus at 180 Montgomery Street. The private college has nearly 8,000 students, many of whom live within or near the study area in either their own apartments or at one of over forty school-owned dormitories. Other higher education facilities include the University of Pacific (UOP) San Francisco with 728 students is located at 155 5th Street. Golden Gate University's main campus, which is home to over 5,000 students, is located at 536 Mission Street. Several universities have smaller satellite campuses east of Market Street in the East Cut neighborhood including San Francisco State and the University of San Francisco.

Transportation and Access

Market Street is the City's busiest pedestrian street, bicycle thoroughfare and transit corridor. Market Street is well-served by public transit, including numerous bus lines, the historic F car line, cable cars, and Muni metro and BART run underground. There are five transit stations along Market Street - Embarcadero, Montgomery, Powell, Civic Center and Van Ness. Ferry access to the north and east bay is from the Ferry Building located at the eastern terminus of Market Street. For a more detailed description of the study area's transportation amenities, see the *Transit* section.



Study Area: Market Street (Van Ness Avenue to The Embarcadero)



Vacant Land

The map below illustrates vacant parcels along and adjacent to Market Street. Data from the Office of the Assessor-Recorder

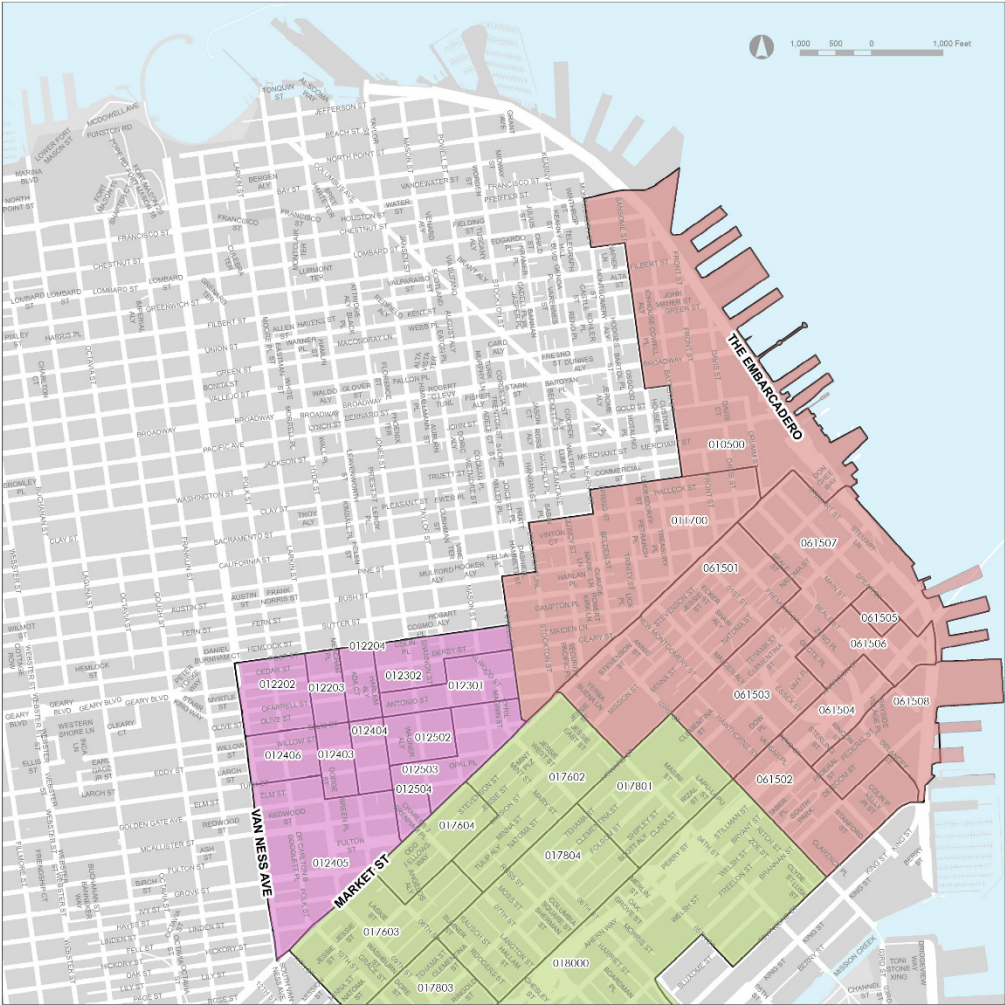


Demographics

Population Trends

In 2022, the most recent year for which the San Francisco Planning Department completed its Neighborhood Socioeconomic Profiles, San Francisco had a total population of 851,036 people. This total population is lower than the 2019 population of nearly 875,000, representing a loss of over 23,000 residents.

The study area, Market Street from Van Ness Avenue to the Embarcadero is adjacent to many neighborhoods – including the Hub, Civic Center, Mid-Market, the Tenderloin, Union Square, Yerba Buena, South of Market (SoMa), the Financial District, and the East Cut. The demographic data used for this analysis compiles census-tract-level data from the 2022 American Community Survey for three analysis neighborhoods South of Market (SoMa), Tenderloin, and the Financial District. These neighborhoods represent a geography much larger than the study area.



Census Tracts and Analysis Neighborhoods

- Census Tracts
- Analysis Neighborhoods**
 - Financial District - South Beach
 - South of Market
 - Tenderloin

The Tenderloin analysis neighborhood includes Civic Center, home to City Hall and other government buildings, as well as cultural facilities including museums and theatres. The Tenderloin neighborhood is home to many seniors, families, people with disabilities, and approximately 3,500 children (Census 2022). The Tenderloin has long served as a welcoming haven, providing safety and solidarity to people seeking community and a sense of belonging, including immigrant families, refugees, and the LGBTQ+ community. It is also a sanctuary for the city's artists and creatives, who contribute to its dynamic cultural scene.

Sharing the Tenderloin's southern border with Market Street is the SoMa analysis neighborhood. SoMa which has always been a uniquely mixed-use area in San Francisco. The garment industry as well as printing and publishing and auto repair have long had a presence in SoMa. Over time more housing and office have been developed in SoMa creating a need for infrastructure and services to support a growing population. The neighborhood's urban form is generally defined by wide streets with larger lots and alleys with smaller lots. As the manufacturing and shipping industries decreased their domestic footprint in the middle of the 20th century, SoMa became home to more permanent residents, the largest group of which being Filipinos, who still have a significant cultural and commercial presence in the neighborhood.

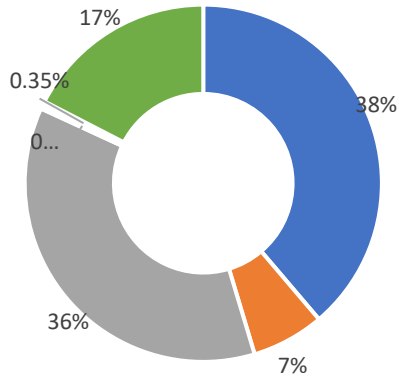
The Financial District / South Beach analysis neighborhood, located at the eastern end of the study area, includes San Francisco's primary job center. To the south are Transbay and Rincon Hill, high density residential neighborhoods and South Beach a bayside residential neighborhood with access to Caltrans and the waterfront. North of Market Street are the Embarcadero Center office towers and Golden Gateway Commons. The area includes notable buildings such as the Transamerica Pyramid, the Ferry Building, and Salesforce Tower. Extending north and south along the Embarcadero waterfront, the area includes offices, restaurants and numerous tourist destinations such as the Exploratorium and the ferry landing for Alcatraz Island.

Population Size and Distribution

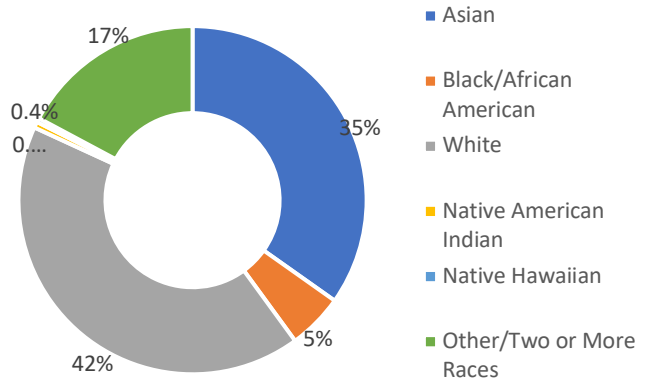
Roughly 80,000 people, 9.3% of San Francisco's total population, live within the three analysis neighborhoods – SoMa, Tenderloin, and the Financial District. The gender distribution of the analysis neighborhoods is approximately 42.5% female and 57.5% male. This makes the population of these neighborhoods proportionally more male than the city overall.

The three analysis neighborhoods feature a higher concentration of Asian residents than the concentration of Asian residents Citywide, and a lower concentration of African American residents than the concentration of African American residents Citywide.

Race: Analysis Neighborhoods that are in and Adjacent to the Study Area



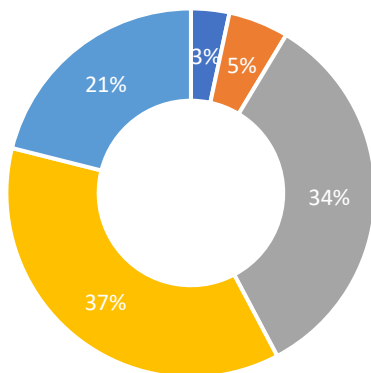
Race: San Francisco



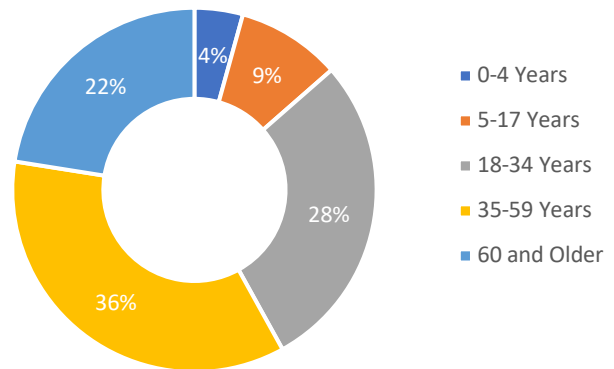
Age Distribution, Number of Households, Household Size

Compared to the city, the three analysis neighborhoods have a higher proportion of people ages 18-34 years old (34% vs. 28%) reflecting a concentration of early career adults, and fewer school-aged children (5% vs. 9%). The analysis neighborhoods have a higher concentration of foreign-born persons compared with the city overall (42% vs. 38%).

Age: Analysis Neighborhoods that are in and Adjacent to the Study Area

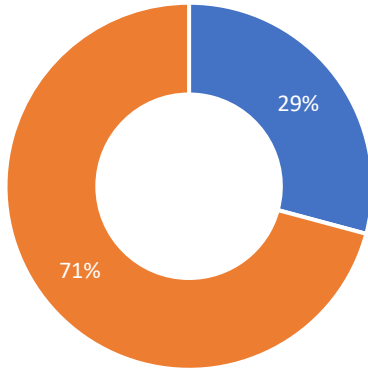


Age: San Francisco

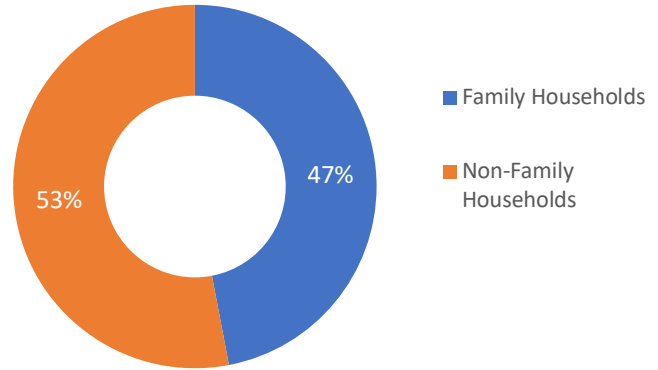


The three analysis neighborhoods contain about 44,200 households, of which 29% are family households. This is a lower percentage than the City overall. The analysis neighborhoods also feature a larger percentage of single-person households (about 57%) compared to the City overall (about 37%). Average household size is lower in the analysis neighborhoods (1.7) compared to the San Francisco average (2.3).

Households: Analysis
Neighborhoods that are in and
Adjacent to the Study Area



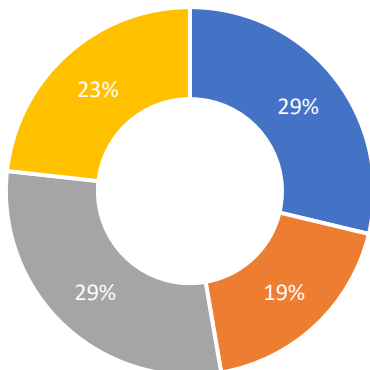
Households: San Francisco



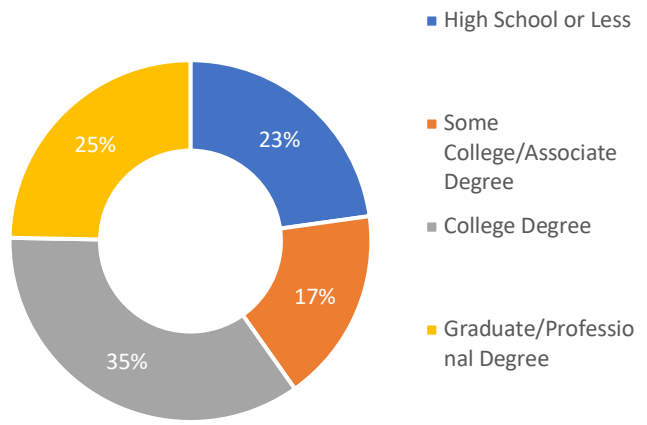
Educational Levels

The analysis neighborhoods have a higher proportion of college degree holders than San Francisco overall.

Education: Analysis
Neighborhoods that are in and
Adjacent to the Study Area



Education: San Francisco



Economics of the Study Area

Employment Types and Trends

Following a precipitous drop in employment in 2020 due to the pandemic, total employment in the San Francisco-Redwood City-South San Francisco Metropolitan Division (MD), the smallest geography for which recent data is available, has rebounded and stood at just under 1.2 million jobs as of December 2024. While this represents a slight decrease in overall employment of 3.8 percent from pre-pandemic levels in January of 2020, the impacts of the pandemic have varied widely across industries.

Of the five industry sectors with the highest employment in the MD, office-based jobs in professional and tech fields have grown markedly from pre-pandemic levels, with employment in the Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services sector growing by 16 percent and the Information sector that includes the tech industry growing by 18 percent. Meanwhile, the MD's tourism economy that is heavily concentrated in San Francisco remains hard-hit from the pandemic, with almost 20 percent fewer jobs in the Accommodation and Food Services sector at the end of 2022 than in January of 2020.¹

In spite of the growth in the tech and professional services sectors, the significant shift in these sectors to remote and hybrid work formats has had a ripple effect through the ecosystem of restaurants and bars, service businesses, and entertainment venues that had grown up around office-generated foot traffic Downtown. While office attendance has recovered gradually since the spring of 2022, as of March 2023 weekly office attendance in San Francisco was hovering between 40-45 percent of what it was before the pandemic². This loss of foot traffic has contributed to persistent strain on many Downtown businesses, with employment in December 2022 8.4 percent down in Retail Trade, 6.4 percent down in Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and almost 1 percent down in other services compared with before the pandemic.

| <i>Employment by Industry</i> | <i>Jan 2020</i> | <i>Dec 2024</i> | <i>% change</i> |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Health Care and Social Assistance | 115,800 | 130,500 | 12.7% |
| Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services | 206,700 | 214,600 | 3.8% |
| Finance and Insurance | 60,300 | 61,800 | 2.5% |
| Information | 103,500 | 105,600 | 2% |
| Utilities | 4,900 | 4,900 | 0% |
| Other Services | 41,000 | 40,600 | -1% |
| Wholesale Trade | 24,100 | 23,200 | -3.7% |
| Arts, Entertainment, and recreation | 20,400 | 21,600 | -5.9% |
| Administrative and Waste Services | 67,300 | 61,800 | -8.2% |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 46,800 | 410,000 | -12.4 |

¹ California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, for the San Francisco-Redwood City-South San Francisco Metropolitan Division, Dec 1, 2022.

² City & County of San Francisco, Office of the Controller. Status of the San Francisco Economy: February 2023.

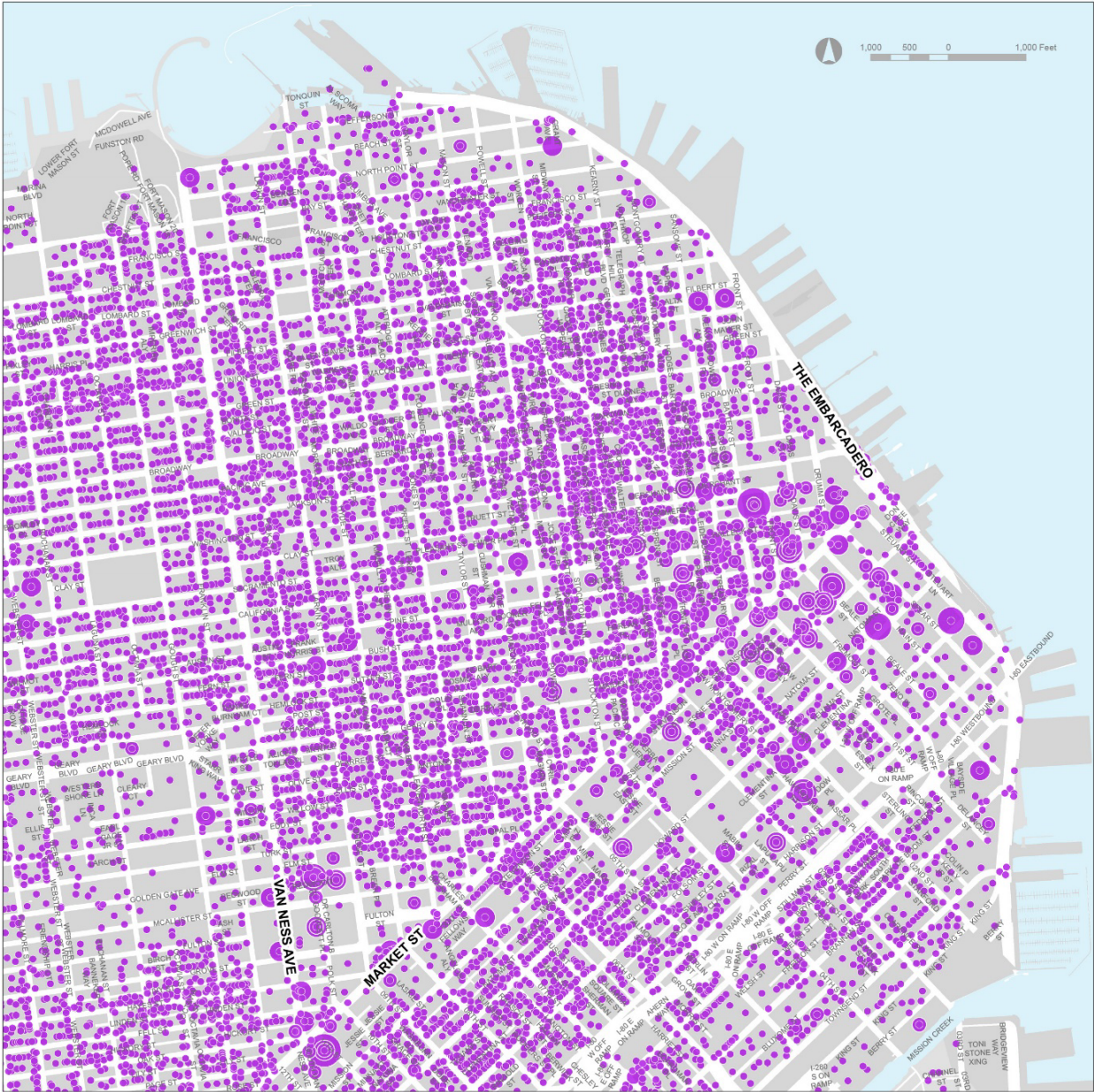
| | | | |
|---|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Real Estate and Rental and Leasing | 23,600 | 20,600 | -12.7% |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 122,200 | 106,100 | -13.2% |
| Retail Trade | 78,100 | 67,100 | -14.1% |
| Manufacturing | 39,700 | 34,000 | -14.4% |
| Mining, Logging, and Construction | 45,900 | 39,000 | -15% |
| Management of Companies and Enterprises | 25,700 | 17,900 | -30.4% |
| Total | 1,190,500 | 990,300 | -16.8% |

Source: California Employment Development Department, Labor Market Information Division, for the San Francisco-Redwood City-South San Francisco Metropolitan Division, Nov 1, 2024.

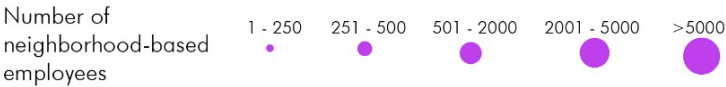
Current economic recovery data is available <https://sf.gov/resource/2022/san-francisco-economic-recovery-dashboards>

Major Employers

Market Street connects many of the City’s major job centers. The area around Market and Van Ness and Civic Center has the highest concentration of city office buildings. Civic Center is home to cultural performance institutions such as the San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Symphony, as well as the Asian Art Museum, Bill Graham Civic Auditorium and the Main Branch of the San Francisco Public Library. Civic Center and SoMa are both home to clusters of State and Federal office buildings.



Study Area: Market Street (Van Ness Avenue to The Embarcadero)



Downtown San Francisco is the epicenter of not just San Francisco's economy, but that of the entire Bay Area. Downtown San Francisco contains nearly two-thirds of the city's office space, and over half of the city's jobs.

The areas directly adjacent to Market Street are home to dozens of companies with over one hundred employees, and several that have over five hundred. Some of the notable businesses in the area include financial firms – such as Golden Gate Capital, Blackrock Global Investors, Bank of America, Bank of the West, and Wells Fargo; technology companies, such as Facebook and Twitch; and legacy clothing companies such as Levi's and The Gap. Pacific Bell Telephone Company and the United States Postal Service also each have over one thousand employees in the study area. Most of the new office space built in the last twenty years has been south of the study area, predominantly in SoMa.

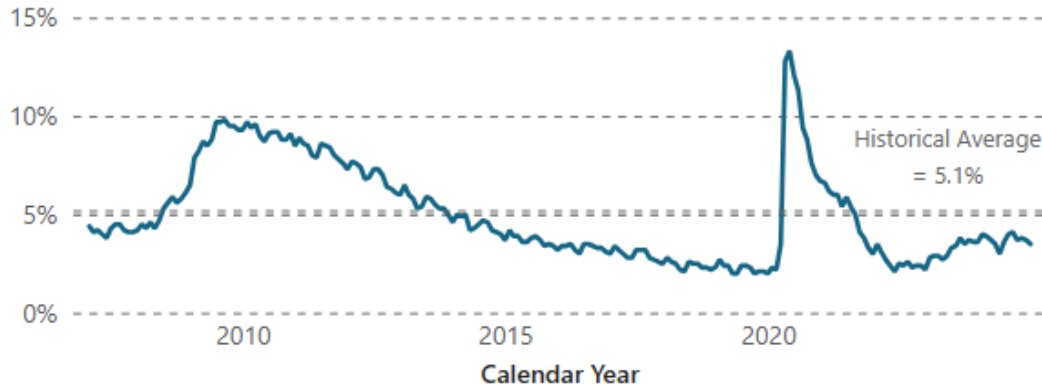
Unemployment

Unemployment in San Francisco peaked at 13.3 percent in May of 2020, at the height of COVID-19 shelter-in-place closures, but has quickly rebounded as the economy reopened. As of May 2022, the overall unemployment rate in San Francisco reached a very low 2.1 percent and was at 3.5 percent as of December 2024. This rate is slightly above pre-pandemic unemployment levels of between 2.0 and 2.7 percent in 2019, but below the historical average of 5.1%.

Overall participation in the labor force, however, has been somewhat slower to recover, with 552,100 San Franciscans employed or actively looking for work in January of 2025, compared with the pre-pandemic high of 590,000 recorded in January of 2020³.

Taken together, the unemployment and labor force participation data illustrate that overall demand for workers has remained strong in the city's post-pandemic reopening, while the labor market itself remains tight as some San Franciscans have not returned to the labor force or may have left the city altogether. Furthermore, the employment by industry trends described above indicate that these trends have been uneven across industries, with tech and professional services jobs leading job growth and tourism and service-based industries still below pre-pandemic employment levels.

SF Unemployment Rate



³ Source: California Employment Development Department for San Francisco County, December 2022

Income Data

The median household income in San Francisco has continued to grow since the pandemic, increasing from \$113,400 in 2019 to \$136,400 in 2022, a 17 percent increase over four years. Household incomes in the neighborhoods adjacent to the study area remain roughly 23 percent lower than the median income for the city overall, at \$104,769 versus \$136,360 in 2022.

Median Household Income

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2022 | %change |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Analysis Neighborhoods that are in and Adjacent to Study Area | \$88,642 | \$100,646 | \$104,769 | 18% |
| San Francisco | \$113,432 | \$119,187 | \$136,360 | 20% |

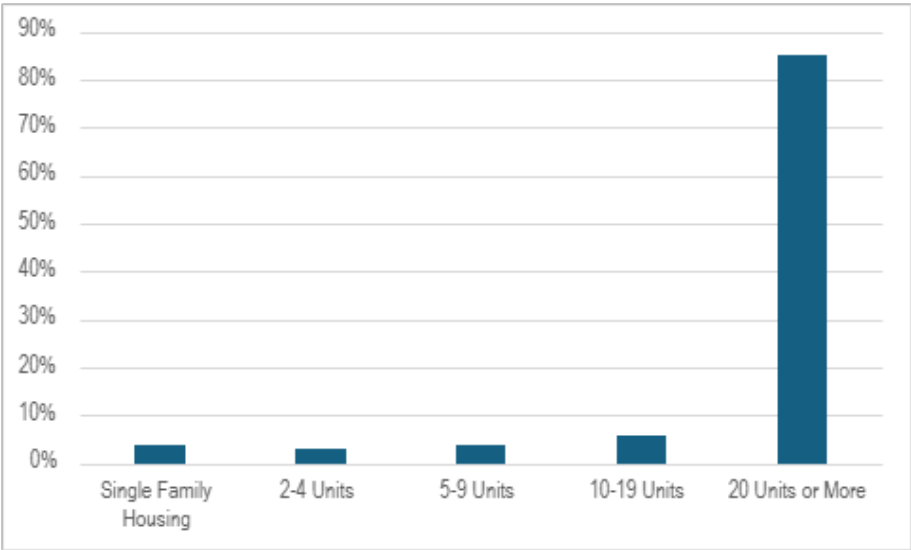
Housing Market

Housing Stock

Large buildings – those with 20 or more units – contain 85% of the residential housing stock in the analysis neighborhoods that are in and adjacent to the Study Area. No building type with fewer than 20 units contains more than 5% of the area's housing stock. Tall building heights are permitted along Market Street (see height map for specific heights) which can accommodate a significant number of residential units and help to make larger buildings more economical.

Housing Typologies in Analysis Neighborhoods that are in and Adjacent to the Study Area

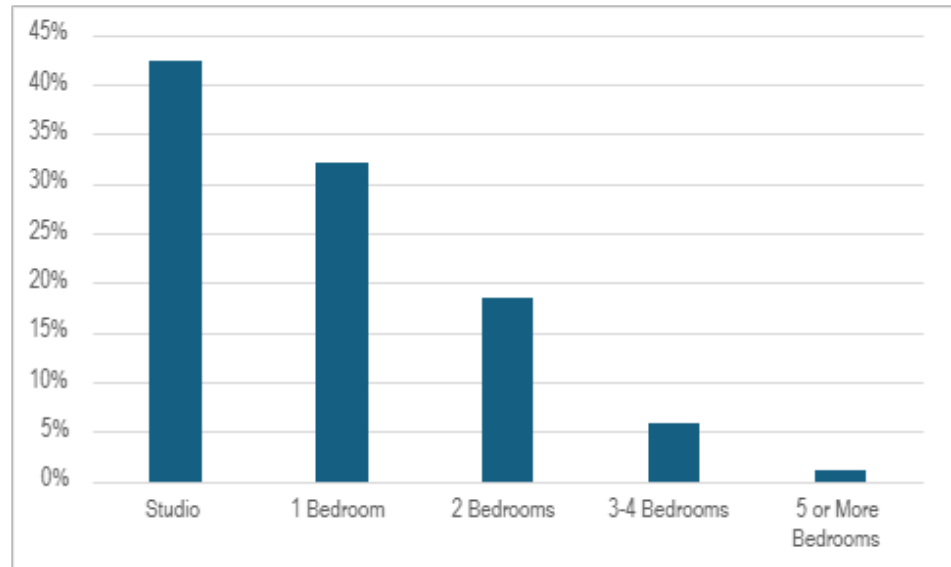
Source: 2022 ACS



As is shown in the table below, studios, one-bedrooms, and two-bedroom apartments comprise 88% of the total residential units in the analysis neighborhoods that are in and adjacent to the study area. Smaller unit sizes are generally more financially feasible, as their market value is higher on a per-square-foot basis than larger units. High land values, as well as the permissive regulations on density, create incentives to construct units with fewer bedrooms.

Unit Sizes in the Analysis Neighborhoods that are in and Adjacent to the Study Area

Source: 2022 ACS



San Francisco Housing Market Conditions and Trends

As the economy and population of San Francisco and region continues to grow and the housing crisis becomes more pronounced, so have the housing needs of the city, especially for groups that continue to face barriers to housing.

Housing Costs and Overcrowding

In the last decade, home values have generally continued to increase with single-family homes having a higher median home value compared to condominiums and co-ops and the median of all homes. Despite the economic instability around the COVID-19 pandemic, home values in San Francisco rose or remained stable in 2020, reporting a median of over \$1.4 million. Home prices have doubled in a span of 10 years and tripled over the last 20 years. The median value for single-family homes was close to \$1.5 million while condos and co-ops were \$1.2 million. To afford the median home, a household would need to make about \$290,000 per year and would need at least 10% of the value as a down payment, making homeownership affordable to only high-income households or those with existing wealth.

Prices

Home values have consistently been on the rise in San Francisco, except during a nationwide fall in home prices during the Great Recession from 2008-2012. While median home prices in San Francisco have always been higher than the median price in the United States and California at large, San Francisco home prices have increased far faster than the rest of the state and county. By 2020, the median home value had quadrupled since their price in 1996, speaking to an acute home affordability crisis in the city. The fastest increase in values occurred after the Great Recession, from 2012-2018. The median value of single-family homes roughly matched overall median home values until 2016, when single-family home values remained consistently higher than the overall median.

Home values have not increased equally across the city. While the Marina and Inner Richmond report the highest median home values in 2021, both at over \$2 million, they report a 60-92% change in home

values from 2010-2021. While these are steep changes, the Inner Sunset, Haight-Ashbury, Castro/Upper Market, Noe Valley, Glen Park, Twin Peaks, Excelsior, Outer Mission, and Bayview-Hunters Point report the highest change in home values during this time.

Rents

San Francisco's apartment rents are growing, despite a broader softening trend. Rental data and rental listing sites, such as Zumper, report median rents over \$3,153 a 1-bedroom rental and \$4,277 for a 2-bedroom apartment as of March 2025. The ACS reports median rents in San Francisco \$2,419 2019-2023. The ACS reported median rents are considerably lower than reported median rents from rental listing sites because Zumper and other rental listing sites list and report on current apartment rentals, while the ACS reports median rent for all renters including long-time, rent-controlled and affordable housing residents.

Housing Cost Burden

There are over 127,000 renter households in San Francisco who are considered cost burdened, defined as spending over 30% of household income on rent. Cost burden is considered a leading indicator of housing insecurity should a health emergency or loss of income occur. Cost-burdened households are less likely to have savings to help in times of emergency and also have less money for food, health care, transportation, and other essential needs because so much of their income is going toward housing. About 35% of renters in San Francisco are cost burdened. As discussed more below, the vast majority of burdened renters are low income, especially ELI households. Similarly, most cost-burdened owners are among low-income groups. However, owner cost burden affects a broader range of incomes than rent burden. More than half of burdened renters experience severe rent burden, paying more than 50% of income in rent (over 44,000 renter households). Of these severely burdened renters, over 28,000 are extremely burdened, meaning they pay over 70% of their income on rent. Severely burdened renters are particularly vulnerable to displacement as their limited remaining income after paying rent makes it difficult to save or to cover expenses when work is lost, or emergencies arise. Severely burdened renters are overwhelming low income, particularly ELI and VLI households. There are also 19,000 severely cost burdened owners, the majority of whom are also low income.

Potential rent burden is concentrated in areas of the city with more low-income renters, including Chinatown, Tenderloin, Western Addition, South of Market, Bayview Hunters Point, Visitacion Valley, Portola, Excelsior, and Oceanview, and Lakeshore. The Lakeshore area surrounds San Francisco State University and has a substantial number of student renters. Moderate-income renters and even some above-moderate-income renters also experience rent burden. However, severe rent burden is overwhelmingly concentrated among the lowest income renters.

One-person households are the most severely impacted by rent burden. Nearly half of one-person households experience rent burden and the majority of those experiencing rent burden are individuals living alone. Households with children also have elevated rates of rent burden and are the next largest group of cost-burdened households. Related adults experience a similar rate of rent burden as the city overall. Couples also report rent burden at a lower rate than most other groups.

RHNA for San Francisco

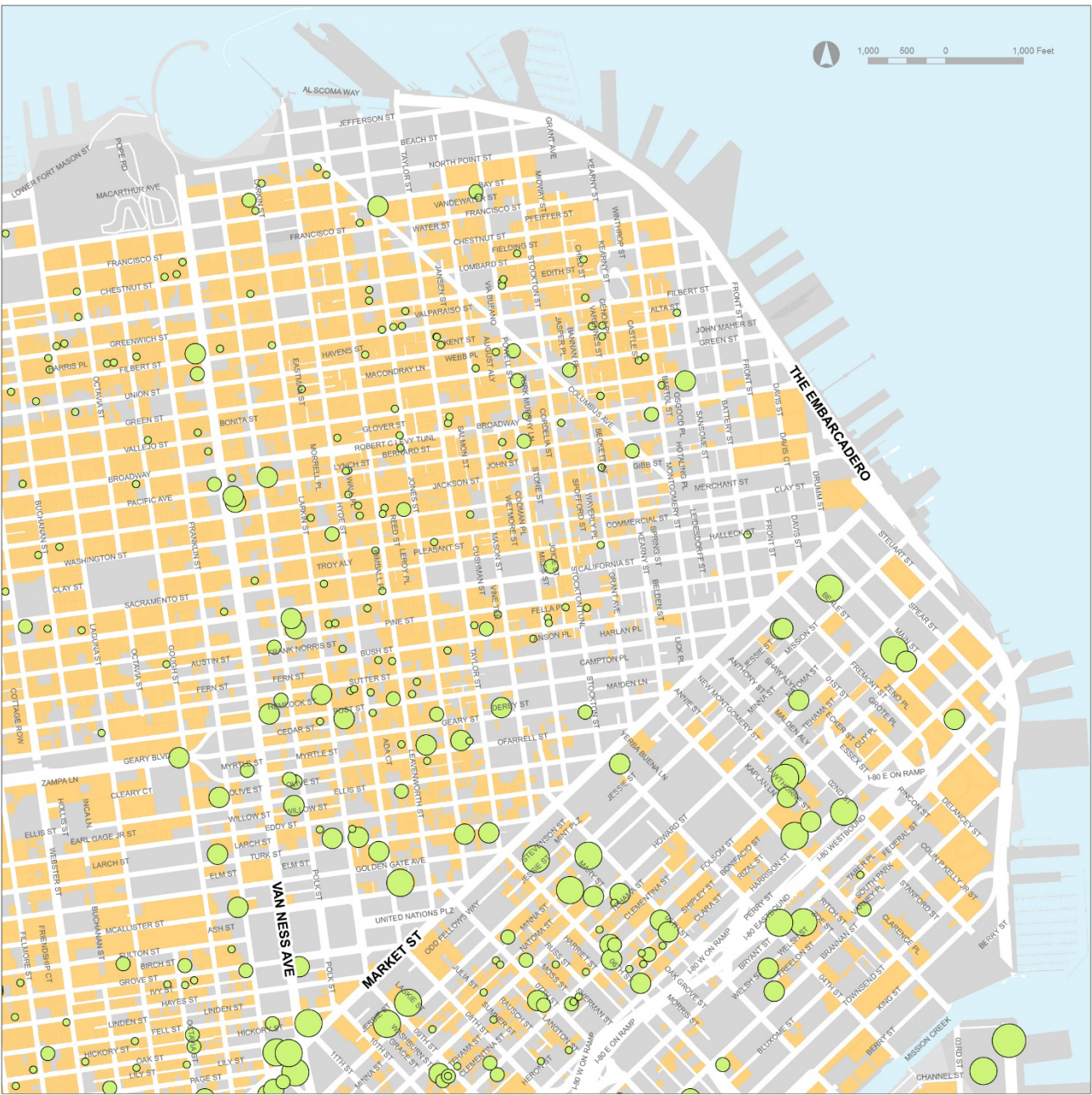
The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is responsible for determining the regional housing need for each Council of Governments, which is the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) in the San Francisco Bay Area. The regional housing need is based on a

forecast of population, households, and jobs developed by the California Department of Finance with input from regional agencies. New for the 2023-2031 RHNA cycle, the targets also address existing needs such as housing cost burdens, overcrowding, and vacancy, which has increased the RHNA for the Bay Area and other regions.

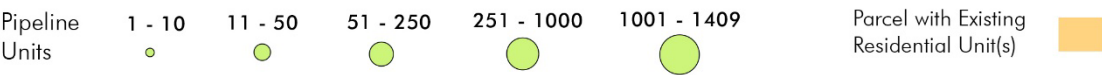
Based on HCD's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) methodology, San Francisco's portion of the RHNA has been set at 82,067 for the 2023-2031 period with a distribution by income group very similar to the region. The total RHNA for San Francisco increased 184% compared to the 2015-2023 period, whose targets were largely unmet for low- and moderate-income groups. While the bulk of the increase is attributable to the overall increase in the total RHNA for the region, the higher RHNA is also attributable to higher forecasted growth in San Francisco, as well as relatively high scores for job proximity and access to higher opportunity areas compared to the region. The higher RHNA targets mean that San Francisco will need to do more to produce and preserve housing across all income groups. The 10,258-unit annual target is twice the highest year of housing production in the last forty years. Given this, San Francisco will need to employ a variety of strategies to achieve RHNA targets. Identifying additional funding for affordable housing production and preservation will be crucial to meet targets for lower income units. Zoning changes will be important to not only meet RHNA targets but also to ensure housing opportunities are more widely distributed throughout the city, particularly in higher resource areas. Lowering development costs will be critical to support housing production across income groups. This could be achieved through innovative construction methods such as modular and mass timber, examining fees and other government-imposed costs, and providing simpler, more consistent, and/or streamlined permitting processes. The policies and actions of the draft San Francisco Housing Element 2022 Update and the accompanying Sites Inventory and Analysis of Governmental and Non-Governmental Constraints describe how San Francisco can do more to meet housing needs.

Current and Planned Residential Development

The map below shows the residential development pipeline.



Study Area: Market Street (Van Ness Avenue to The Embarcadero)



Commercial Development Conditions and Trends

Office

The majority of the San Francisco's overall office space, approximately two-thirds, is clustered in the Central Business District (the Financial District north and south of Market Street)^[1]

Office spaces appear in different typologies which vary by geography. Many of the older office buildings are in designated historic districts, in particular the New Montgomery-Mission-Second Street Conservation District, located south of Market Street, and the Market Street Theatre and Loft Historic District, located primarily between 6th and 7th Streets. The Civic Center Historic District also includes several office buildings that help define the north side of Market Street between 7th Street and 9th Street. At the eastern end of the study area, the Ferry Building and several adjacent piers are contained in the Port of San Francisco Embarcadero Historic District and the Central Embarcadero Piers Historic District.

Newer office towers flank both sides of Market Street and are concentrated at either end of the study area, in the Financial District east of Montgomery, and from 9th Street west to Van Ness Avenue. As of February 2025, 29.4% of office space within the study area was available for lease, with 18.2% vacant, based on CoStar data. Class B and C buildings had slightly higher amounts of space available for lease (31%) than Class A buildings (29%).

The citywide overall office vacancy rate (including both direct and sublease vacancy) in the last quarter of 2024 was 34.2%, up from 24.1% at the end of 2022 and up from 19.9% at the end of 2021. A significant amount of sublease space became available in late 2022, with layoffs in the tech sector being a contributing factor.^[3] According to Kastle Systems Data, office occupancy in the San Francisco metro area was 41.5% in February 2025, down from 46% in March 2023, and remains lower than most major metro areas.^[4]

While long term trends for office demand are uncertain, market observers have pointed to emerging post-pandemic trends including a “flight to quality”, with rents in top tier buildings in particular remaining strong. On the other hand, Cushman and Wakefield predicts that “Top-tier buildings will outperform the market as tenants prioritize locations and amenities, while upgraded and recently traded mid-tier buildings will draw more price sensitive tenants.”^[5] Even though office rents in San Francisco have declined, especially compared to large run-ups in rent prior to the pandemic, rents remain higher than in competing locations.^[6]

Cushman and Wakefield also note that total San Francisco leasing activity in 2024 reached the highest annual level recorded since 2019, with almost half of leasing activity during the year coming from the tech sector including AI companies.

[1] 2018 San Francisco Commerce & Industry Inventory, San Francisco Planning Department, January 2020

[2] Data on office buildings within the study area based on CoStar data downloaded 3/17/2023, unless otherwise noted

[3] Q4 2024 San Francisco Office MarketBeat, Cushman & Wakefield, 2025

[4] Kastle Systems Weekly Occupancy Report, March 3, 2025

[5] Q4 2024 San Francisco Office MarketBeat, Cushman & Wakefield, 2025

[6] NAI NorCal Office Market Report, San Francisco, 2/23/2023

Hospitality

The map below shows hotels adjacent to the study area. Hotels along Market Street between the Embarcadero and Fourth Street include the Hyatt Regency, Palace Hotel, Four Seasons, and Hotel Zelos. The Mid-Market area includes the Timbri Hotel, Proper Hotel, and YOTEL San Francisco. The Hotel Whitcomb between 8th and 9th Streets closed to the public in March 2020 at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Numerous additional hotels are located throughout the Financial District and SoMa, to either side of the Study Area.

Citywide, hotel performance declined in the last quarter of 2024. The average hotel occupancy in November 2024 was 58.6%, down from 71.1% in June 2024 and 62.3% in February 2025.^[1] This compares to average hotel occupancy in 2019 just under 80%.

[1] Hotel Occupancy Rate, Controller's Office of Economic Analysis



Retail

Market Street contains an extensive amount of ground floor retail space within other properties, both office buildings as well as residential buildings.

To the north of Market Street is the Powell Street retail corridor and the Union Square shopping district. Union Square has been struggling somewhat with high retail vacancies since even before the pandemic. In February 2024, Macy's announced the closure of 150 stores nationwide, including its 400,000 SF flagship store in Union Square. Despite high retail vacancy rate, premium ground floor space can still command rents over \$500 per sq ft per year.^[2] In 2025, the City of San Francisco partnered with New York-based Biederman Redevelopment Ventures Corporation (BRV) to program and activate Union Square. BRV will deliver 200 days of programming during the year in 2025, including arts and crafts, performances and activities for kids.

The San Francisco Centre between 4th and 5th Streets has struggled with retail vacancy and the loss of large retail tenants. In May 2023, Nordstrom announced the closure of its 300,000 SF department store. In March 2025, Bloomingdale's is scheduled to close its 330,000 SF department store, the largest anchor in the mall. Toward the western end of the study area, the Whole Foods Market at 8th Street stopped operating in 2023, and The Market grocery in the former Twitter building closed in early 2025 after several years of decreased sales.

One block west of San Francisco Centre, IKEA opened in August 2023 on Market and 5th Streets along with an indoor food hall, Saluhall. To the south of the study area, the Metreon Mall home to restaurants, a movie theater, Target and other retail was listed for sale in late 2024, however leasing at the Metreon is strong with 92% occupancy at the time. At the eastern end of the study area are the retail and restaurant spaces within the Ferry Building as well as adjacent Pier 1.5 and Pier 5.

The decline in both office occupancy and tourist visits during the pandemic has had a clear effect on the study area's retail and restaurant businesses. NAI NorCal reported in early 2023 that since March 2020, "approximately 4,000 businesses in the submarkets clustered around the Financial District have closed, with only 1,800 business openings during the same period."^[3]

San Francisco's overall retail vacancy rate increased to 7.7% in the fourth quarter of 2024, up from 6.4% at the end of 2023. For the first time in two years, the City had a positive net absorption of 65,700 square feet retail space Q4 2024.^[4]

[1] Data on retail buildings within the study area based on CoStar data downloaded 3/17/2023, unless otherwise noted

[2] Q4 2024 San Francisco Retail MarketBeat, Cushman & Wakefield, 2025

[3] NAI NorCal Retail Market Report, San Francisco, 2/23/2023

[4] Q4 2024 San Francisco Retail MarketBeat, Cushman & Wakefield, 2025

Transportation

Market Street is San Francisco's civic spine, connecting water to hills, businesses to neighborhoods, cultural centers to recreational opportunities. The movement of people and goods has dominated its design and use since its beginning.

Car-free since 2020, the Van Ness to Embarcadero section of Market Street is the backbone of Muni's frequent and reliable transit service and safe biking and rolling trips to downtown San Francisco. 15 Muni routes operate here for at least a portion of their route and bike count data shows that people take between 1,000 and 1,500 bike trips every day in each direction. While Market Street was among the slowest corridors in the Muni system before 2020, travel times have been reduced by up to 14% and it is as safe and reliable for transit as it has ever been. And while historically Market Street has been one of the highest severe injury corridors in San Francisco, especially for crashes involving pedestrians and bicycle riders, since 2020, the street has seen a 40% sustained drop in crashes.

Transit

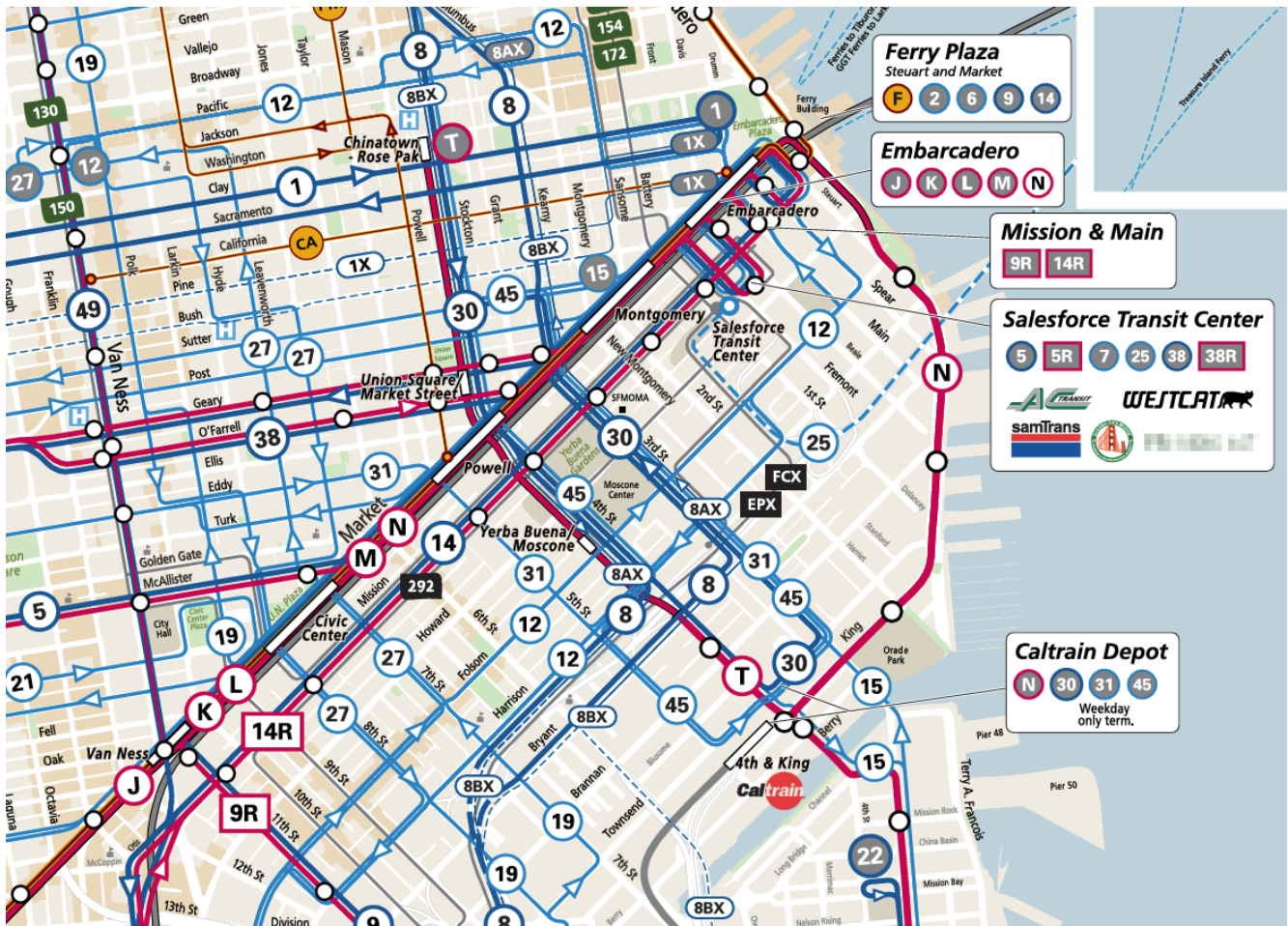
"Transit-first" has been official policy in San Francisco for over fifty years, making it one of the few American cities where automobile independence is viable and convenient. The study area is one of best-served, most-transit rich areas in the country with abundant local, regional, national, and international connections. Multiple authorities and systems have stops either along or immediately adjacent to Market Street, including:

- Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART): Greater Bay Area Regional rail service with connections to San Francisco and Oakland international airports.
- San Francisco Municipal (SFMTA) Metro Light Rail, Bus, Cable Cars, and Streetcars provide local transit service throughout San Francisco. Light rail runs in a subway under Market Street, the recently opened Central Subway running north-south just west of the study area, and along the waterfront both north and south of Ferry Building. These rail lines, along with 15 Muni bus routes, connect the Study Area to every part of the city. Historic cable cars serve and terminate in the study area with routes along California Street and Powell Street.
- Amtrak: Thruway Bus Service connects the San Francisco Ferry Building to Emeryville and Oakland Jack London Square Train Stations, with rail service throughout California and nationwide.
- AC Transit: AC Transit serves the western portions of Alameda and Contra Costa counties and operates "Transbay" routes from the Salesforce Transbay Transit Center across San Francisco Bay to areas in Alameda County and other parts of the East Bay.
- SamTrans: SamTrans provides bus service throughout San Mateo County and into portions of both San Francisco and Palo Alto. SamTrans also operates commuter shuttles to BART stations and community shuttles.
- Western Contra Costa County Transit (WestCAT): WestCAT is a public transit service in western Contra Costa County. WestCAT's Lynx express route offers convenient services from the Hercules Transit Center to the Salesforce Transbay Transit Center with freeway express lane access and Bay Bridge priority.

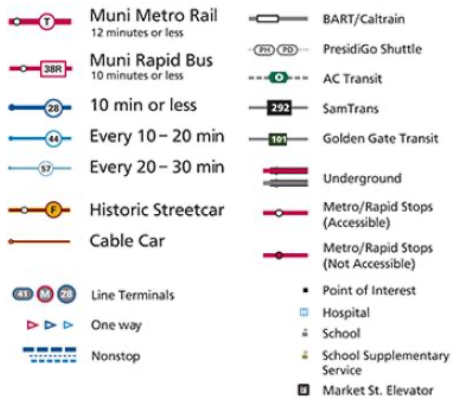
- Golden Gate Transit: Golden Gate Transit serves the North Bay region of the San Francisco Bay Area. It connects San Francisco to Marin and Sonoma Counties and also provides limited service to Contra Costa County.
- Ferry Service from the Ferry Building at the foot of Market Street to Treasure Island, Oakland, Alameda, Bay Farm Island, Sausalito, Tiburon, Angel Island, Larkspur, Richmond, and Vallejo.

Current and planned major infrastructure projects will continue to improve transit service to the Study Area. These projects include (but are not limited to):

- ConnectSF Transit Strategy: The Transit Strategy describes the major capital projects and programs that will help our city's transit system meet the existing and future travel needs of residents, workers, and visitors. https://connectsf.org/wp-content/uploads/ConnectSF_Transit_Strategy_FINAL-20211209-1.pdf
- Muni Forward: Since launching in 2014, Muni Forward has established the Muni Rapid network, created new connections, given Muni riders priority on congested streets and enhanced safety along Muni routes. This led to more people taking transit and record levels of rider satisfaction. This is a long-range, on-going program to enhance the safety, reliability, and frequency of Muni transit service. <https://www.sfmta.com/projects/muni-forward>
- Better Market Street: Revitalization of Market Street from Octavia Boulevard to The Embarcadero – reestablishing the street as a premier cultural, civic and economic center of San Francisco. The new design aims to create a comfortable, universally accessible, sustainable, and enjoyable place that attracts more people on foot, bicycle and public transit.
- Caltrain Electrification: Will improve Caltrain system performance and curtail long-term environmental impacts by reducing noise, improving regional air quality, and lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Electrification improvements include converting diesel-hauled trains to electric trains, increasing service to six trains per peak hour per direction, and maintaining operating speeds up to 79 mph.
- The Portal/Downtown Extension (DTX): will bring California high-speed rail and Caltrain regional services from the 4th and King Station to the Salesforce Transbay Transit Center.
- Pennsylvania Avenue Extension (PAX): aims to move the surface-running Caltrain corridor underground south of 4th/King to reduce grade crossing conflicts and speed travel.
- Link21: a mega-regional study evaluating concepts and costs/benefits for a second Transbay rail crossing from the East Bay through downtown San Francisco and South of Market, using either BART or standard gauge (eg Caltrain) technology, to provide more capacity, greater redundancy/resiliency, and expand ridership by serving new transit markets and destinations.



San Francisco Transit Map



Government

Government

Local and Regional Government

San Francisco is California's only combined City and County, meaning this unified local government is responsible for both City functions (fire, police) and typical County functions (transit/transportation, social and health services). This structure also makes San Francisco uniquely eligible for certain federal and state funding streams that normally would go to Counties and then be passed through to Cities. San Francisco government is physically headquartered one mile west of the study area at City Hall and nearby office buildings and facilities in the Civic Center area.

San Francisco is situated within the 9-county Bay Area region, which falls under the purview of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), which is headquartered just south of the study area in the Rincon Hill neighborhood. In 2022, MTC/ABAG also launched the first regional housing finance entity in California, the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA), which will have the ability to raise and expend revenue at a regional level for affordable housing and housing stabilization programs.

The Port of San Francisco, which manages the waterfront including the historic piers, public promenade and other open spaces, along with several development lots on the land-side of the Embarcadero, is headquartered across the Embarcadero from the study area at Pier 1, just north of the Ferry Building.

San Francisco's adopted budget for fiscal year 2024-25 totals \$15.9 billion. More than half of this, \$9 billion, comes from self-supporting activities by the City's enterprise departments that bring in revenue for services, including the Port, Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA), the Airport, Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and others. The remainder, \$6.9 billion, is comprised of the City's General Fund that relies primarily on City taxes and fees for revenue and is used to fund public services such as public health, police and fire services, parks and recreation, and public works.

The primary funding sources for the City's General Fund for the FY 24-25 budget year are local taxes (65% of General Fund revenue), state and federal funds (19.2%), and City licenses, fees, and general charges for services (5.6%).⁴

State and Federal Government

The study area is adjacent to major federal office buildings, including the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco and HUD's Region IX Headquarters and San Francisco regional office. Additional federal and state agencies lease office spaces throughout the downtown, though the heaviest concentration of federal and state offices and facilities is at the western end of the study area in and around the Civic Center area.

⁴ <https://www.sf.gov/sites/default/files/2024-07/AAO%20FY2024-25%20%26%20FY2025-26%20-%20FINAL%207.31.24.pdf>

San Francisco is working in partnership with the Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA), a state-chartered entity responsible for the Salesforce Transit Center, to apply for a major New Starts grant in 2023 from the US Department of Transportation for the Downtown Rail Extension project, known as The Portal, that plans to bring California High-Speed Rail service to the Salesforce Transit Center by 2032.

Legislation

Local Legislation

Housing for All

Launched in 2023, the Housing for All plan implements San Francisco's 2022 Housing Element, which was certified by the State on February 1, 2023 and commits the City to allowing an additional 82,000 new homes by 2031. The ongoing plan continues to speed up permitting for new housing development citywide and Downtown.

Commercial to Residential Adaptive Reuse and Downtown Economic Revitalization

In 2023, the City passed legislation [\[BF 230371\]](#) to facilitate conversion of commercial buildings to housing, and ensure that Downtown zoning allows for maximum flexibility of uses and activities in support of a vibrant mixed-use environment. The legislation establishes the [Downtown Adaptive Reuse Program](#) and includes changes to both the Planning Code and the Building Code. The legislation would eliminate otherwise applicable development controls that can be challenging for existing buildings to meet, such as Lot Coverage, Open Space, Streetscape and Pedestrian Improvements, Dwelling Unit Exposure, Bicycle Parking, and Dwelling Unit Mix. The legislation also removes the limitations on office in Union Square, principally permits Senior Housing, Residential Care Facilities, Outdoor Entertainment, Open Recreation Areas, Animal Hospitals, and Trade Schools in the C-3 zoning district, and principally permits Laboratory, Life Science, Agricultural and Beverage Processing, and Animal Hospitals in C-2 zoning districts.

Development Impact Fees and Requirements for Non-Residential to Residential Conversion Projects

March 2025, the City passed legislation [\[BF 240927\]](#) which waives the inclusionary housing requirements and development impact fees for certain commercial adaptive reuse projects. More information about current development impact fee rates can be found here https://sfplanning.org/sites/default/files/forms/Impact_Fee_Schedule.pdf

Entertainment Zones

Entertainment Zones (EZ) are designated areas in San Francisco where people can purchase to-go drinks from local bars and restaurants and enjoy them outside in common spaces like plazas, sidewalks, and streets during certain hours. In 2024 the City passed legislation to allow for the creation of entertainment zones. The City has since implemented four entertainment zones including on Front Street, at Thrive City, the 11-acre community gathering space surrounding Chase Center, Cole Street in Cole Valley and Harlan Place and Mark Lane Downtown. Additional Entertainment Zones have been adopted with implementation to follow.

<https://www.sf.gov/departments--san-francisco-entertainment-zones>
<https://www.sf.gov/information--entertainment-zone-management-plans>

State Legislation

New Legislation

Below is a list of recently enacted State housing laws that hold relevance to San Francisco's downtown.

Assembly Bill 529 Adaptive Reuse Projects (Gabriel, Haney)

AB 529 would add local policies that facilitate adaptive reuse of office to housing to the criteria for a State "pro-housing" designation that gives extra preference to jurisdictions for certain State funding programs. San Francisco already has this designation, but this proposed change could potentially benefit San Francisco should it adopt such supportive programs. This bill would also direct the California Building Standards Commission to update State Existing Building Code to support adaptive reuse projects. This law went into effect on January 1, 2024.

Assembly Bill 1551 Planning and zoning: development bonuses: mixed-use projects. (Santiago)

AB 1551 extends, until January 2028, a prior law that offered State Density Bonus Law benefits to a commercial project that includes affordable housing. This law went into effect on January 1, 2023.

Assembly Bill 2011 Affordable Housing and High Road Jobs Act of 2022 (Wicks)

[AB 2011](#) provides a ministerial, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)-exempt approval pathway for qualifying multifamily projects on commercial zoned land that pay prevailing wages and meet specified affordable housing targets. The law went into effect July 1, 2023. [AB 2243](#) Housing development projects: objective standards: affordability and site criteria (Wicks) amended AB2011 and took effect January 1, 2024

Assembly Bill 2234 Planning and zoning: housing: post-entitlement phase permits. (Rivas)

AB 2234 takes many of the concepts of the existing Permit Streamlining Act and applies those to "post-entitlement housing development permits" such as building, demo, excavation, and grading permits. The law establishes review and response timelines that local agencies must adhere to when presented with such permits. Failure to comply with these timelines constitute violations to the Housing Accountability Act, exposing the local jurisdiction to potential fines and attorney's fees. This law went into effect on January 1, 2023.

Assembly Bill 2334 State Density Bonus Law Amendments (Wicks)

Updates the definition of "maximum allowable residential density" for the purpose of determining the "base density" to which bonus density may be added, in an effort to clarify rules and maximize housing potential. The legislation also provides 100% density bonus and some automatic height increases to 100% affordable housing projects located in a very low vehicle travel area. This law went into effect on January 1, 2023.

Assembly Bill 2488 Downtown revitalization and economic recovery financing districts: City and County of San Francisco (Ting)

Authorizes the City of San Francisco to establish a special Financing District for commercial-to-housing conversion projects that would reinvest incremental property tax revenue to offset a significant share of development costs for these projects. This law went into effect on January 1, 2025.

Assembly Bill 2580 Historical resources (Wicks)

AB 2580 requires local governments to monitor how new historic designations could impact their ability to meet housing needs under existing state law, and report new historic buildings and districts to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) during the Annual Progress Report of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment process

Assembly Bill 1893 Housing Accountability Act: housing disapprovals: required local findings (Wicks)

AB 1893 increases liability for local jurisdictions to review eligible projects, broadens eligibility for projects subject to the Housing Accountability Act and Further defines builders remedy projects

Senate Bill 76 Alcoholic beverages: music venue license: entertainment zones: consumption (Wiener)

In 2023, California passed SB 76 allowing cities to create entertainment zones where bars and restaurants can sell alcohol for alcohol for consumption in designated areas like streets or sidewalks

Senate Bill 937 Development projects: fees and charges (Weiner)

Shifts the timing of impact fee payment for many housing projects. Now these impact fees will not be paid until first certificate of occupancy. This law went into effect on January 1, 2025.

Proposed Legislation

Assembly Bill [253](#) (Ward, Quirk-Silva, and Rivas)

Sets timeframes for the Building Department to review project application and would allow 3rd party review if the City does not meet timelines.

Assembly Bill [507](#) (Haney)

Aims to streamline adaptive reuse of existing buildings for housing.

Senate Bill [79](#) (Weiner)

Would provide ministerial review for housing projects near transit.

Assembly Bill [87](#) (Boerner)

Potential changes to projects that are eligible to apply the State Density Bonus

Senate Bill [92](#) (Blakespear)

Would require State Density Bonus projects to comply with two-thirds housing requirement

Senate Bill [607](#) (Weiner)

Would exempt rezoning consistent with Housing Element from CEQA and changes to infill development.

Private Sector Involvement

In addition to public agencies, there are several organizations and private institutions that are active in and adjacent to the study area.

Financial Institutions, Foundations and Major Corporations

Given that Market Street crosses the economic and employment center of San Francisco, there are several major corporations, specifically financial institutions with over one hundred employees, including Union Bank, Bank of the West, Wells Fargo, First Republic, Goldman Sachs, Deutsche Bank, UBS, Bank of America, Navient, and Citibank.

San Francisco's technology sector is also well represented, with Twitch, Facebook, Mozilla, Amazon, and Click Labs each company having over 500 employees. Salesforce, San Francisco's largest private employer, is located just south of the study area.

There are also several major clothing and consumer goods companies with central offices adjacent to Market Street. These include Sephora, as well as the long-time headquarters of The Gap and Levi Strauss & Co.

Tourism and the service industry has always been a huge part of San Francisco's economy and the City's largest concentration of hotels is near Market Street, with the Hyatt and the Ritz-Carlton each having over five hundred employees.

The philanthropic sector is well represented with office along and adjacent to Market Street including Asia Foundation, Horizons Foundation, James Irvine Foundation, San Francisco Foundation, US Energy Foundation, and the Zellerbach Family Foundation.

In addition to the many large corporations noted above, there are many business-promoting organizations that are active in the study area. These organizations, listed below, are involved in policy advocacy, event planning, capacity-building, activating and cleaning the public realm, and marketing aimed at creating a vibrant, welcoming, and business-friendly San Francisco.

- Advance SF
- Building Owners & Managers Association (BOMA SF)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Community Benefits District
 - o Civic Center CBD
 - o Downtown Partnership
 - o East Cut CBD

- Mid-Market CBD
- Tenderloin CBD
- Union Square Alliance
- West SoMa CBD
- Golden Gate Restaurant Association
- Hotel Council
- Market Street Arts
- Mid Market Business Association
- San Francisco Heritage
- San Francisco Travel
- SPUR

Cultural Institutions

Market Street connects the City's largest concentrations of cultural institutions. At the western edge of the study area is Civic Center, home to cultural performance institutions including the San Francisco Ballet, San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Symphony, the Asian Art Museum, Bill Graham Civic Auditorium and the Main Branch of the San Francisco Public Library. At the center of the study area, south of Market Street is Yerba Buena, currently home to SFMOMA, Museum of the African Diaspora, Children's Creativity Museum, and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. North of Market Street is the City's theater District including the Orpheum Theatre, Curran Theatre, Golden Gate Theatre, San Francisco Playhouse, and American Conservatory Theater's Geary Theater. Other performance venues include The Warfield, A.C.T.'s Strand Theater, and CounterPulse.

The study area is also the site of many of San Francisco's most distinguished activities and events. With two of the city's largest farmer's markets taking place at the Ferry Building three times each week at the and the Heart of City Farmers Market takes place twice a week on Fulton and Larkin. Embarcadero Plaza (formerly Justin Herman Plaza), given its prominent location at the foot of Market Street, is one of the city's key sites chosen in the city for many planned and unplanned civic celebrations and events, ranging from winter holiday ice skating to marches and protests. Union Square, Yerba Buena Gardens and Civic Center which are in the western portion of the study area are significant public spaces that host a range of cultural and community activities. Both the annual Pride Parade and the Chinese New Year Parade pass through the study area, as do the San Francisco Marathon and Bay-to-Breakers running races.

The City of San Francisco's Cultural Districts program, established in 2018 and funded through Proposition E, serves to protect and preserve historic businesses, cultural resources, urban form and architecture. There are two recognized Cultural Districts that are adjacent to Market Street - Compton's Transgender Cultural District, the nation's first Transgender District and SOMA Pilipinas Cultural District. See map below.



Current Plans & Studies

Street and Open Space Projects

Better Market Street

The Better Market Street Project proposes a complete makeover of 2.2 miles of Market Street, from Steuart Street to Octavia Boulevard. In addition to addressing key safety needs and providing a protected bicycle lane, the multi-agency project will replace and upgrade aging infrastructure – including traffic signals, streetlights, streetcar tracks, BART ventilation grates, overhead wires and underground utilities and repaving the roadway from curb to curb. The project aims to improve the speed and reliability of surface Muni service. Additionally, the Better Market Street plan will ensure that all transit stops, curb ramps and paving meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and will construct larger center boarding islands.

Phase 1 completed in February 2025 included installing new traffic signals, building sidewalk bulb-outs to shorten crossing distances and replacing worn out pavers at street corners, repaving the curb lane and intersections, planting new street trees and installing new street furniture.

<http://www.bettermarketstreetsf.org/about.html>

Embarcadero Plaza and Sue Bierman Park Renovation Project

Embarcadero Plaza is in San Francisco's Financial District at the end of Market Street, and across from the Ferry Building. The City, Downtown Partnership and the BXP are partnering to develop and construct a redesign of the plaza.

<https://sfrecpark.org/1819/Embarcadero-Plaza-and-Sue-Bierman-Park-R>

Market Street Prototyping Festival

The Market Street Prototyping Festival showcased 30 installations built by designers, community groups, and students. The Festival aimed to use community-led design to make the Market Street a more vibrant and engaging destination. Through collaboration and rapid experimentation, the Prototypes in the Festival aimed to catalyze conversations around a variety of large-scale urban challenges. Festivals were held in 2015 and 2016 and built on the opportunity of piloting and implementing engaging public space installations for the Better Market Street project.

<https://groundplaysf.org/projects/2016-market-street-prototyping-festival/>

Powell Street

The Powell Street streetscape design reimagines a three-block stretch of Powell Street with practical and aesthetic upgrades to welcome residents and visitors, offer a more enjoyable transit experience and spur economic development in the area. This includes new sidewalks, streetscape elements, and decorative lighting. The proposal celebrates and centers the iconic cable cars as well as Powell's beautiful historic

architecture. The design has been led by San Francisco-based firms Field Operations and SITELAB Urban Studio, in collaboration with the City and Union Square Alliance.

<https://visitunionsquaresf.com/powell-street-improvement-project>

Safer Taylor Street

In collaboration with the Tenderloin community, the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) developed a new vision for Taylor Street between Market Street and Sutter Street that improves transportation safety and livability for all users of this corridor. The project was approved by the SFMTA Board of Directors and construction began in mid-2022. The project reached Substantial Completion in January 2025.

<https://www.sfmta.com/projects/safer-taylor-street>

Sixth Street Pedestrian Safety Project

The Sixth Street Pedestrian Safety Project will create a safe and inviting place for people to get around on 6th Street. The project led by Public Works and SFMTA will include streetscape elements such as sidewalk widening, corner bulb-outs, pedestrian scale lighting, and signalized pedestrian crossings. The project will also include the installation of new street trees, paving and street furnishings.

<https://sfpublicworks.org/sixthstreet>

Waterfront Resilience Program

The Waterfront Resilience Program led by the Port of San Francisco works to ensure the waterfront, and its critical regional and citywide assets, are resilient to hazards - and increasingly accessible to everyone it serves. In 2024, the Port of San Francisco, with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, drafted flood and seismic resilience adaptation strategies for the 7.5 miles of Port's Waterfront (from Fisherman's Wharf to Heron's Head). The final plan is expected in late 2025.

[Waterfront Resilience Program | SF Port](#)

Active Transportation Plans

The Biking and Rolling Plan

March 4, 2025, the SFMTA Board unanimously adopted San Francisco's first update the City's Bike Plan in 16 years. A major step forward in creating safer, better-connected and more accessible streets for all, the new plan directs SFMTA future investments in the biking and rolling network, support facilities, programs, and policies for the next 10-15 years. This new planning effort includes all devices that can legally use the biking and rolling network and elevates the voices and needs of equity priority communities. <https://www.sfmta.com/projects/biking-and-rolling-plan>

Pedestrian Safety: Vision Zero

Everyone in San Francisco deserves to feel safe on city streets. Every year in San Francisco, about 30 people lose their lives and over 500 more are severely injured while traveling on city streets. These deaths and injuries are unacceptable and preventable, and San Francisco is committed to stopping further loss of life. That's why our municipal transportation agency joined city leaders in 2014 to adopt a policy called Vision Zero, with the goal of eliminating all traffic deaths in San Francisco. Vision Zero SF centers human life and commits city agencies to build better and safer streets, educate the public on traffic safety, enforce traffic laws, and adopt policy changes that save lives.

<https://www.sfmta.com/vision-zero-sf>

Public Realm Plans

Civic Center Public Realm Plan

The Civic Center Public Realm Plan, in coordination with other City initiatives, sets forth a 100-year vision to implement community-supported capital improvements that will address the inequities of access to open space and amenities for some of our most vulnerable populations. It creates a roadmap for continued investment in the area through capital upgrades, ensuring Civic Center's streets and public spaces continue to serve existing neighborhoods and adjacent new development.

<https://www.civiccentersf.org>

Downtown SF Partnership Public Realm Action Plan (PRAP)

The Public Realm Action Plan is a roadmap for how to activate and program the streets and open spaces Downtown. The Plan was completed in 2022 by SITELAB urban studio and commissioned by the Downtown SF Partnership, the community benefit district serving the Financial District and Jackson Square. The Plan identifies six near activation projects including the Landing at Leidesdorff completed in 2023 and includes a mural honoring Captain Leidesdorff, public art and cultural programming. The Downtown Gateway, located at the foot of California and the terminus for the California Street cable car will include a new gateway sign, tables and chairs and new signage to celebrate the cable car and neighborhood.

<https://ctycms.com/ca-downtown-sf/docs/220727-downtown-sf-public-realm-action-plan-dsfp-sitelab-final-lowres.pdf>

East Cut Community Benefit District's Street Life Plan

The East Cut Community Benefit District's Street Life Plan was created to develop both realistic and ambitious project proposals that re-imagine the way the community experiences the public realm.

<https://www.theeastcut.org/placemaking/>

Maiden Lane Vision Plan

Maiden Lane is one of the oldest streets in San Francisco and plays host to many Union Square retailers and attractions. In 2024, area stakeholders in collaboration with the City and Union Square Alliance,

visioned and implemented near term streetscape improvements including new decorative paving along the street's two block length. Following this, stakeholders will create a comprehensive vision for a range of long-term streetscape improvements, which may include upgrades to paving, lighting, plantings and street furnishings. The goal of this effort is to provide a more vibrant, enjoyable, and unique experience for visitors and merchants alike.

Moscone Pedestrian Corridor

The Yerba Buena Community Benefits District has selected bionic to create a comprehensive Moscone Center Pedestrian Corridor Plan.

<https://ybcbd.org/news/rfp-for-moscone-center-pedestrian-corridor/>

Yerba Buena Street Life Plan

The Yerba Buena Street Life Plan 2019 is a guide to public realm improvements in Yerba Buena. The Plan was commissioned by the Yerba Buena Community Benefits District.

<https://yerbabuenacommunitybusiness1.app.box.com/s/h6qlqvd46yocxy35bdvdmibffqbr8fd3>

Street and Open Space Guidelines / Requirements

Better Streets Plan

The Better Streets Plan adopted in 2010, creates a unified set of standards, guidelines, and implementation strategies to govern how the City designs, builds, and maintains its pedestrian environment.

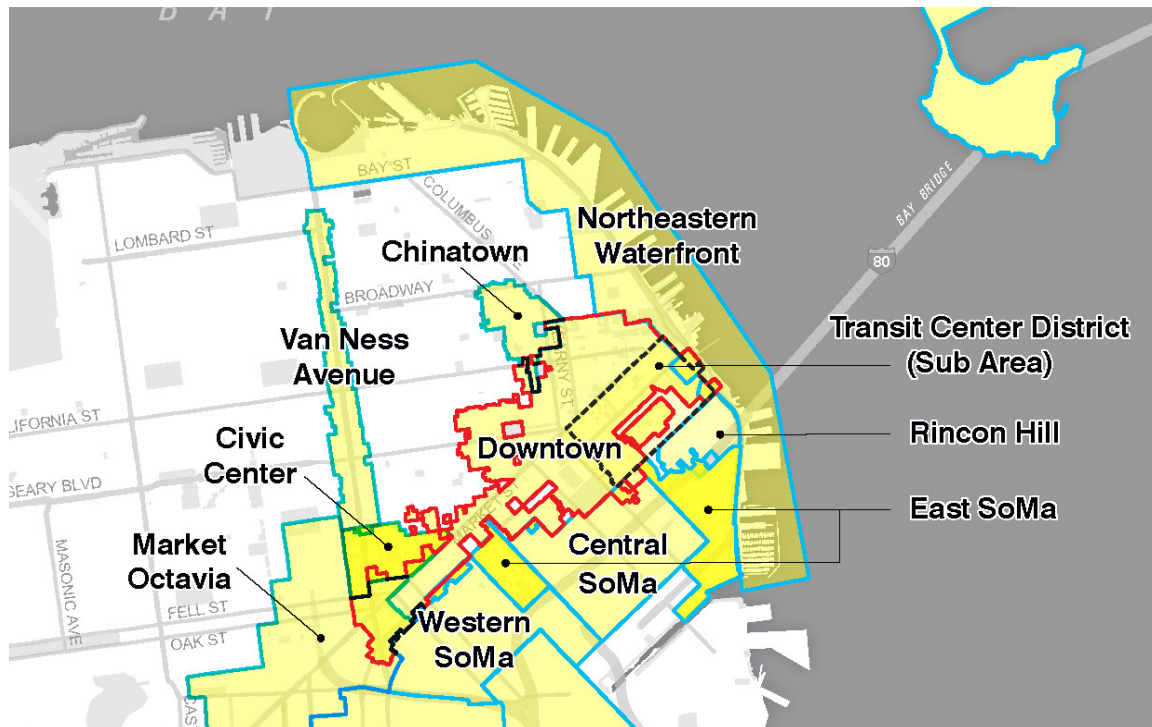
<https://sfbetterstreets.org/index.html>

POPOS

POPOS are publicly accessible spaces in forms of plazas, terraces, atriums, small parks, and even snippets which are provided and maintained by private developers. POPOS mostly appear in the Downtown office district area, as POPOS are required for commercial development of a certain size in the C-3 zoning district (Downtown).

<https://sfplanning.org/privately-owned-public-open-space-and-public-art>

Land Use and Urban Design Plans



The map above shows the Area Plans that intersect with the Study Area.

The Downtown Plan

The Downtown Plan adopted in 1985 was developed in response to office growth outside the financial district. Downtown was spilling into the adjacent neighborhoods, especially North Beach, Chinatown, and Tenderloin, and the zoning in these neighborhoods as well as downtown was very flexible. At the time the Plan was widely praised as an ambitious effort to manage growth, and to address impacts to housing, transportation, and the loss of historic buildings.

The Downtown Plan helped to center employment growth in the C-3 district, the area shown in red. Despite its relatively small size in relation to the rest of the city it contains the majority of San Francisco jobs. The Plan supported housing in and adjacent to downtown, set ambitious transportation goals and established new requirements and fees to create citywide benefits for arts, childcare, open space, and affordable housing.

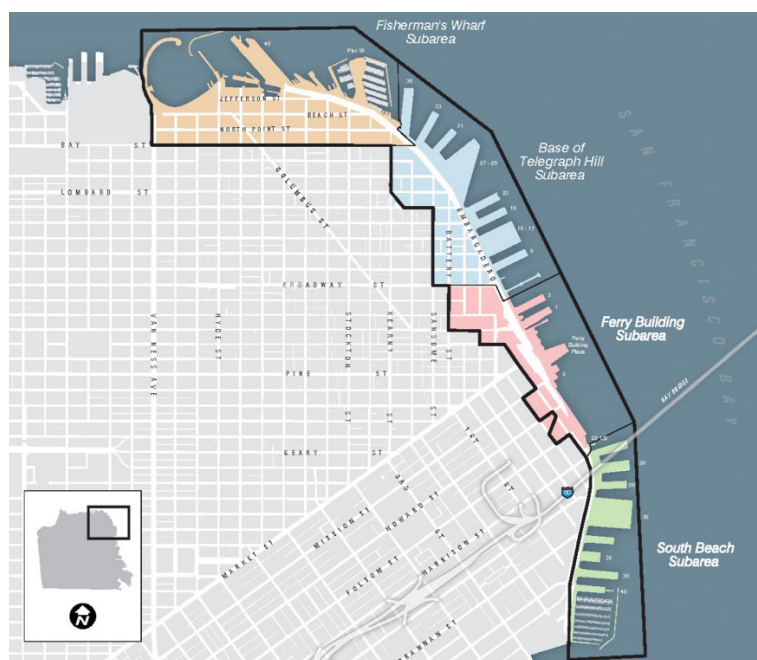
The Northeastern Waterfront Area Plan

The Northeastern Waterfront Plan adopted in 1970 and updated 1997 includes objectives and policies designed to contribute to the waterfront's environmental quality, enhance the economic vitality of the Port and the City, preserve the unique maritime character, and provide for the maximum feasible visual and physical access to and along the Bay. In the aftermath of the Embarcadero freeway removal, new unobstructed waterfront views from Downtown San Francisco and adjacent areas combined with the

landscaping, lighting, public art and other pedestrian improvements have reinvigorated public interest in revitalizing the waterfront. While there is substantial demand for a variety of uses on the Northeastern Waterfront, the type and magnitude of new uses should reflect what is desirable from the broadest public interest point of view. There is a demand for additional commercial and tourist-related development, however it must be carefully balanced against the need for maritime uses, recreation and open space, the needs of new resident populations in the Northeastern Waterfront and the community desire not to replicate or compete with other tourist areas in the City.

Where piers are sound, shipping, and related maritime uses are maintained as long as they remain viable. Commercial and recreational maritime operations (e.g. cruise, excursions, ferries, historic ships, recreational boating), and fishing industry facilities at Fisherman's Wharf are maintained and expanded. On lands no longer needed exclusively for maritime purposes, new maritime mixed-use developments provide improved and expanded commercial and recreational facilities, open spaces and public access. Combined with revenue-generating, water-oriented activities and attractions, these projects increase public enjoyment of the waterfront. On inland areas, predominant uses are residential and commercial, including: offices, neighborhood-oriented retail and service businesses, and community and cultural facilities. With removal of the Embarcadero Freeway, the waterfront is re-integrated with the fabric of the City and reestablished as the eastern edge of the City. Subsequent Embarcadero roadway improvements, link the Northeastern Waterfront with other portions of the shoreline via rail transit and pedestrian and bicycle ways. An authentic maritime character and strong sense of historic continuity combined with increased visibility of the natural attributes of the Bay reinforce the special identity of the area.

The Plan includes general objectives and policies for Land Use, Transportation, and Urban Design and specific objectives and policies for four geographic subareas and the Embarcadero Corridor. The Ferry Building Subarea (Pier 5 through Rincon Park) intersects with the Study Area.



Northeast Waterfront Plan Sub-areas

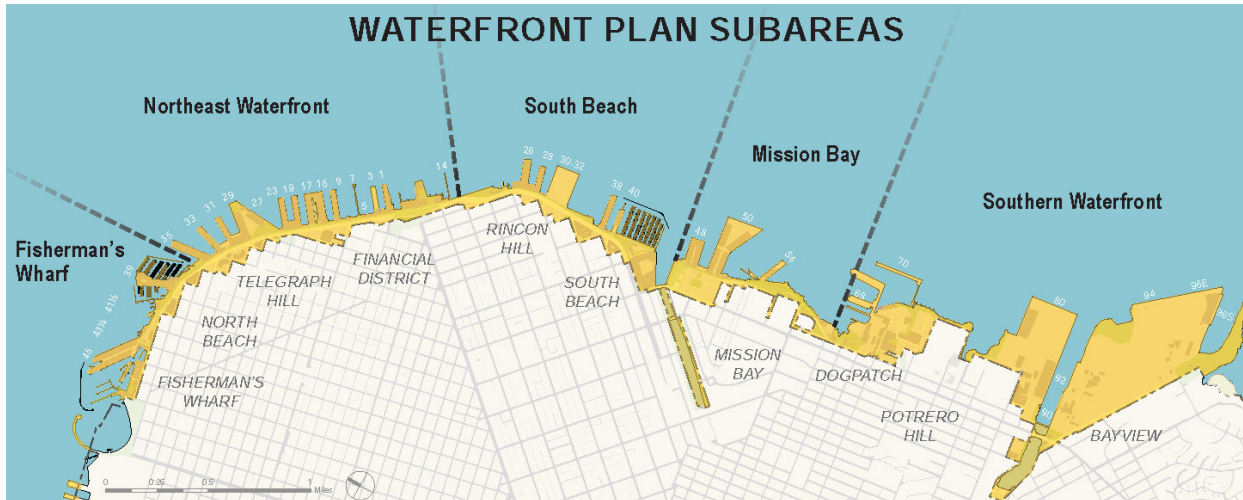
Port Waterfront Plan

The Port of San Francisco Waterfront Plan adopted in 1997 and currently being updated governs the use, design, and improvement of the 7½ miles of pier and shoreline properties that stretch from Fisherman's Wharf to India Basin that are managed and operated by the Port. In June, the Port published the 2019 Draft Waterfront Plan, a comprehensive update following a 3-year public process. This Draft Waterfront Plan guides the protection and improvement of maritime and non-maritime activities, development, and stewardship programs along this urban waterfront for the benefit of San Francisco and California residents and visitors. It includes new goals and policies to ensure an equitable, safe, sustainable, and resilient waterfront, and partnerships to build understanding of and support for improvements over the next 10-20 years. The Plan's goals and policies also support other Port and City efforts underway, including the Embarcadero Seawall and Waterfront Resilience Program.

The Draft Plan includes Goals and Policies for:

- **A Maritime Port:** Preserve and enhance the Port's diverse maritime portfolio to meet the current and future needs of cargo shipping, cruise, ferry and water taxis, excursion boats, fishing, ship repair, berthing, harbor services, recreational boating, and other water-dependent activities.
- **Urban Design and Historic Preservation:** Design new developments of exemplary quality, highlight visual and physical connections to the City and Bay, and respect and preserve the waterfront's rich historic context and adjacent neighborhoods.
- **An Environmentally Sustainable Port:** Limit the impacts of climate change, improve the ecology of the Bay and its environs, and ensure healthy waterfront neighborhoods by meeting the highest standards for environmental sustainability, stewardship, and justice.
- **Diversity of Activities and People:** Host a rich array of commercial, entertainment, civic, open space, and recreational activities that complement a working waterfront, increase economic opportunities, and provide destinations for all to enjoy.
- **A Financially Strong Port with Economic Access for All:** Ensure that new investment stimulates the revitalization of the waterfront and supports a financially secure Port enterprise, equitably providing new jobs, revenues, public amenities, and other benefits for the Port and for residents of the City and State.
- **A Resilient Port:** Strengthen Port resilience to hazards and climate change effects while protecting community, ecological, and economic assets and services, with a focus on the Port's unique historic, maritime, and cultural assets.
- **Public Access and Open Space along the Waterfront:** Complete, enhance, and enliven the network of parks, public access, and natural areas along the San Francisco waterfront and Bay shoreline for everyone to use and enjoy.
- **Transportation and Mobility for People and Goods:** Ensure that the waterfront is accessible and safe for all users through sustainable transportation that serves the needs of workers, neighbors, visitors, and Port maritime and tenant operations.

- **Partnering for Success:** Strengthen Port partnerships and community engagement to increase public understanding of Port and community needs and opportunities, and to help complete improvements that achieve Waterfront Plan goals.



SF Port Waterfront Plan Subareas



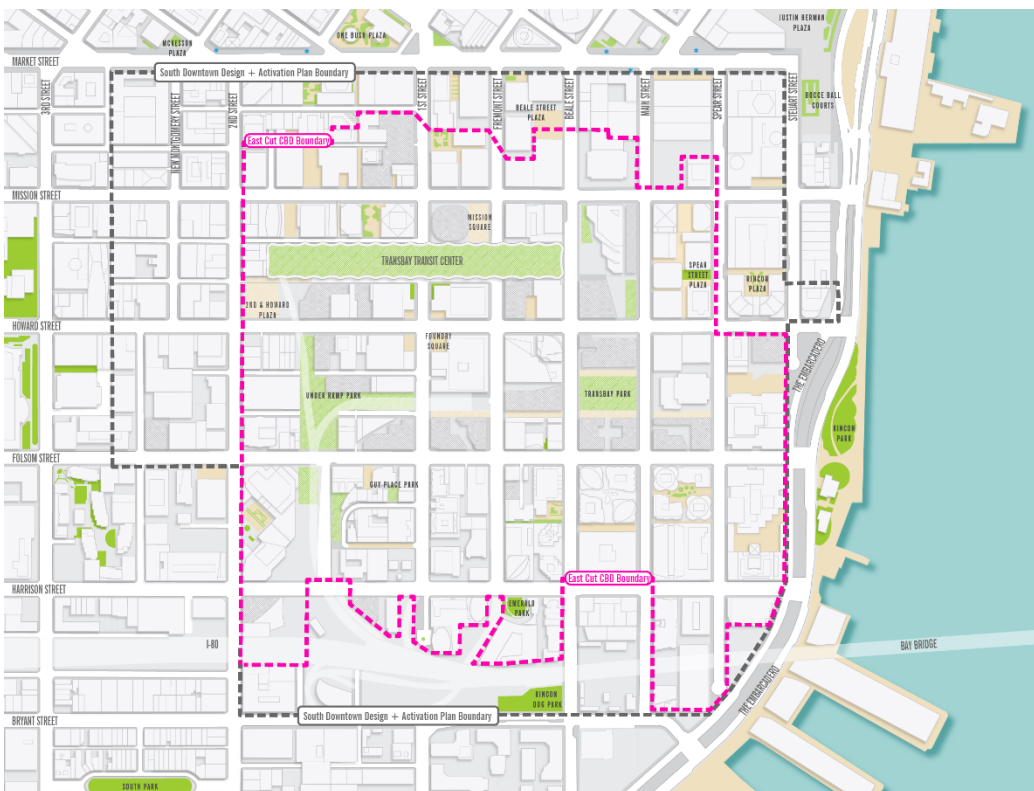
The Port of San Francisco

South Downtown Design + Activation Planning Process

The South Downtown Design and Activation (Soda) planning process completed in 2020 was a partnership between The East Cut Community Benefits District (CBD) and City agencies to identify a comprehensive community vision for the public realm of San Francisco's South Downtown – the Transit Center District and Rincon Hill.

The South Downtown Area (see map, below), is roughly 30 city blocks bounded by Market Street, The Embarcadero, Bryant Street and 2nd Street has been transformed following the adoption of the Rincon Hill Area Plan, the Transbay Redevelopment Plan and the Transit Center District Sub-Area Plan. Twenty years ago, much of the area was characterized by light industrial land uses, surface parking lots, and streets dominated by private automobiles. Today it is a high-density mixed-use neighborhood, and there is an opportunity to re-imagine the streets and public spaces to serve residents, workers, and visitors while meeting community expectations for a safe, resilient and vibrant public realm.

The working vision for this area includes concepts for design, activation and stewardship of neighborhood streets and publicly accessible open spaces to foster vibrant streets and open spaces, support high performing transit operations, and encourage active transportation choices for the people who live, work and visit the district. Streetscape concepts that were developed via the Soda process will serve as a starting point for future City-sponsored streetscape projects, while ideas for activation and stewardship of publicly accessible open spaces will be spearheaded by The East Cut Community Benefit District (CBD).

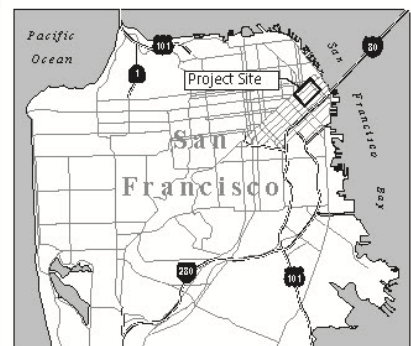
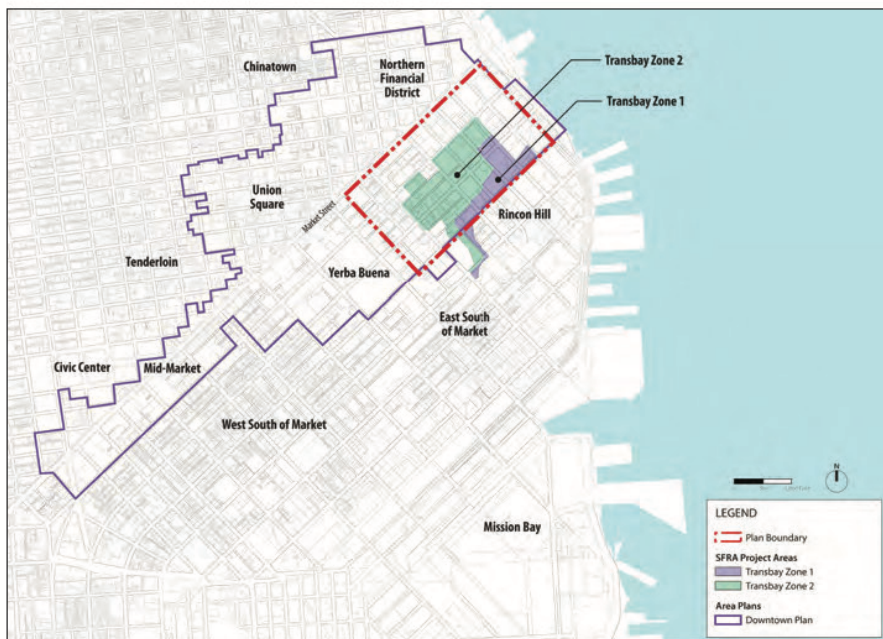


South Downtown Design and Activation (SODA) Plan Location

The Transit Center District Plan

The Transit Center District Plan, a sub-area of the Downtown Plan consists of approximately 145 acres centered on the Transbay Transit Center, situated between the Northern Financial District, Rincon Hill, Yerba Buena Center and the Bay. The boundaries of the Transit Center District are roughly Market Street on the north, Embarcadero on the east, Folsom Street on the south, and Hawthorne Street to the west. The Plan adopted in 2012 builds on the City's 1985 Downtown Plan, which envisioned the area around the former Transbay Terminal as the new heart of downtown. The removal of the Embarcadero Freeway, along with the adoption of plans for the Transbay Redevelopment Area and Rincon Hill, helped to facilitate the transformation of an area directly south of downtown and create a new high-density residential neighborhood with over 8,000 new housing units. Serving millions of users annually, the new Salesforce Transit Center is a local and regional transportation hub located below the four block Salesforce Park.

The premise of the Transit Center District Plan is to continue the concentration of additional growth where it is most responsible and productive to do so—in proximity to public transit. The increase in development capacity as part of the Plan provided additional revenue to fund transit and other infrastructure improvements in the District. The Transit Center District Plan includes policies related to land use, urban form, public realm, transportation, historic preservation and sustainability. The plan also includes mechanisms for development to contribute to new infrastructure in the Plan area and lays out specific public improvements that would be funded by private development. Increased development around downtown transit and increased revenues for public projects are core goals of the Plan, but these policies are shaped by the values and principles of place-making essential to maintaining San Francisco's unique and livable character. This necessitates balancing increased density with the quality-of-place considerations that define the downtown and the city.

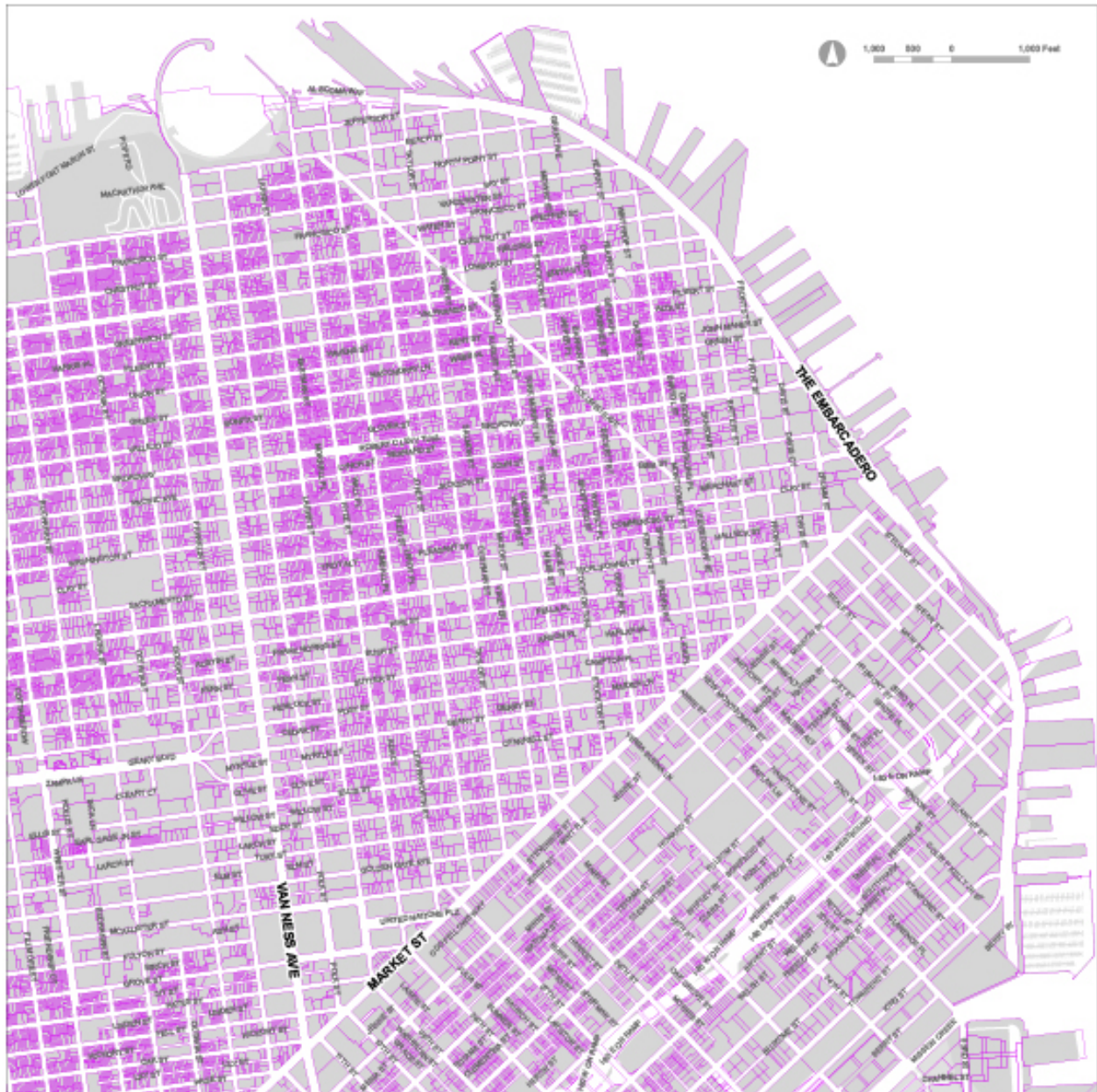


Transit Center District Subarea Plan Location

Additional Maps

Parcel Map

The parcels fronting Market Street are comprised of small and large parcels. There are clusters of larger parcels around Civic Center, the Powell Street Station and at the eastern portion of the Study Area. Parcel sizes are smaller around Union Square, the core financial district and the Tenderloin.



Aerial Map

The map below shows Market Street and its relationship to adjacent neighborhoods including Civic Center, Mid-Market, Union Square, Yerba Buena, SoMa, the Financial District, the East Cut and the Waterfront.

