

City of South San Francisco
Notice of Preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report
and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting
Proposed South San Francisco General Plan Update

Date: February 2, 2021

To: State Clearinghouse and Interested Public Agencies, Parties, and Organizations

From: Billy Gross, Senior Planner, City of South San Francisco

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed South San Francisco General Plan Update and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 at 3:00pm.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the City of South San Francisco (Lead Agency and/or City) will prepare a Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) for the proposed South San Francisco General Plan Update (proposed project). The Program EIR will address the potential physical and environmental effects of the proposed project for each of the environmental topics outlined in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City will use the Program EIR when considering approval of the proposed project. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the Project Description, location, and potential environmental effects of the proposed project are described in the attached materials.

45-DAY NOP COMMENT PERIOD: The City is soliciting comments from public agencies, organizations, and members of the public regarding the scope and content of the Program EIR, and the environmental issues and alternatives to be addressed in the Program EIR. In accordance with the time limits established by CEQA, the Notice of Preparation (NOP) public review period will begin on **February 3, 2021** and end on **March 22, 2021**. Please provide your written/typed comments (including name, affiliation, telephone number, and contact information) to Billy Gross via e-mail at billy.gross@ssf.net or to the address shown below by **5:00 p.m., Monday, March 22, 2021**. If you wish to be placed on the notification list for this proposed project, or need additional information, please contact:

Billy Gross, Senior Planner
City of South San Francisco
Planning Division
315 Maple Avenue
South San Francisco, CA 94080
Phone: 650.877.8535
Email: billy.gross@ssf.net

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING: The City of South San Francisco will hold a Public Scoping Meeting to: (1) inform the public and interested agencies about the proposed project; and (2) solicit public comment on the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the Program EIR, as well as the range of alternatives to be evaluated. The meeting will be held on **Wednesday, February 17, 2021**, starting at **3:00 p.m.** via a **Zoom meeting**.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ssf-net.zoom.us/j/89712978648?pwd=OWo5Y0laR25MY0FDYVJHbzFqb2RvQT09>

Meeting ID: 897 1297 8648

Passcode: 468274

One tap mobile

+16699006833,,89712978648#,,,,*468274# US (San Jose)

+12532158782,,89712978648#,,,,*468274# US (Tacoma)

Dial by your location

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

833 548 0276 US Toll-free

833 548 0282 US Toll-free

877 853 5257 US Toll-free

888 475 4499 US Toll-free

Find your local number: <https://ssf-net.zoom.us/j/89712978648?pwd=OWo5Y0laR25MY0FDYVJHbzFqb2RvQT09>

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Project Location

The project site is located in the City of South San Francisco, in San Mateo County, California (Exhibit 1). The City is located in a basin bounded by the San Bruno Mountains to the north, the Pacific Coast Ranges to the west, and the San Francisco Bay to the east. The City is bordered by the City of Brisbane to the north, Daly City, City of Pacifica, and the Town of Colma to the west, and the City of San Bruno to the south (Exhibit 2). San Francisco International Airport is located immediately to the south but falls within City and County of San Francisco's jurisdictional boundaries.

Existing Conditions

The City encompasses 31 square miles, approximately 5,000 acres, and is primarily built out with only about 3.4 percent of the land classified as vacant. Colma Creek flows in a west-east direction through the City from its origin in the San Bruno Mountains to its terminus in the San Francisco Bay. Regional access to the City is via highways and major roadways, including Interstate 280 (I-280), U.S. Route 101 (U.S. 101), and El Camino Real. In addition, the South San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) Station is also a gateway into the City, with approximately 3,400 passengers entering South San Francisco via this station on an average weekday.¹ Additionally, 452 passengers enter South San Francisco from Caltrain on an average week day.² SamTrans, a bus service that operates throughout San Mateo County and into parts of San Francisco and Palo Alto, has three bus lines that run through South San Francisco and serves approximately 24,077 passengers per day.^{3,4} The San Francisco Bay Ferry also provides public transit service to and from the City and other locations around the San Francisco Bay to approximately 7,671 passengers per day.^{5,6}

1.1.1 - Unincorporated Areas

The City has two unincorporated islands within its Sphere of Influence (SOI). One island is bound by I-280 on the west, Westborough Boulevard to the north, Orange Avenue roughly to the east, and Ponderosa Road to the south. Most of this area is owned by the City and County of San Francisco and is the site of the California Golf Club of San Francisco. Ponderosa Elementary School is also situated in this unincorporated island on land owned by the South San Francisco Unified School District (SSFUSD). The other island is roughly bound by Conmur Street to the west, Country Club Drive to the north, Alida Way to the east, and Northwood Drive to the south, and consists primarily of single-family residential uses and religious facilities on larger lots. Both islands are part of unincorporated San Mateo County and within the City's SOI.

¹ January 2020 Monthly Ridership Reports. 2020. Bay Area Rapid Transit. Website: <https://www.bart.gov/about/reports/ridership>. Accessed January 28, 2021.

² Caltrain. 2019. Caltrain 2019 Annual Passenger Count Key Findings. Website: <https://www.caltrain.com/Assets/Stats+and+Reports/2019+Annual+Key+Findings+Report.pdf>. Accessed January 28, 2021.

³ SamTrans. 2021. Ridership. Website: https://www.samtrans.com/about/Bus_Operations_Information/Ridership.html. Accessed January 28, 2021.

⁴ 8,788,180 riders divided by 365 days per year.

⁵ San Francisco Ferry Riders. 2021. San Francisco Bay Ferry. Website: <https://sfferryriders.com/sfbf/>. Accessed January 28, 2021.

⁶ 2.8 million riders divided by 365 days per year.

1.1.2 - Existing Land Use

Existing land use refers to the way land is currently being used in the City, or in other words, land uses that are currently (as of 2021) “on the ground.” Existing land uses are mapped in Exhibit 3 and Table 1 shows the approximate acreage of each type of land use in the City. As shown in Exhibit 3 and Table 1, the most prevalent land use in the City is Residential (occupying 39.8 percent of land area), followed by Industrial/ Research and Development (29.5 percent); Parks, Open Space, and Common Greens (9.9 percent); and Public/Institutional (6.6 percent). There are only about 150 acres of vacant land (3.4 percent of the City).

Table 1: Existing Land Use

Land Use Type	Acres	Area (%)
Within City of South San Francisco	4,226.1	94.8
Residential	1,773.5	39.8
Single-family Residential	1,506.5	33.8
Duplex/Triplex/Quadplex	66.5	1.5
Multi-family	183.4	4.1
Mobile Home Park	17.1	0.4
Commercial	250.5	5.6
Hotel	57.0	1.3
General Retail/Service	110.9	2.5
Auto Retail	43.2	1.0
Food Retail	32.9	0.7
Mixed Use (Commercial/Residential)	6.5	0.1
Industrial/Research and Development	1,313.7	29.5
Office	190.0	4.3
Biotech/Research and Development	322.1	7.2
Warehouse	639.5	14.4
Manufacturing/Processing	162.1	3.6
Parks, Open Space, and Common Greens	442.4	9.9
Public and Institutional	292.9	6.6
Vacant	153.1	3.4
Within Sphere of Influence	230.0	5.2
Single-family residential	41.4	0.9
Golf Course	183.4	4.1
Public and Institutional	4.7	0.1
Vacant	0.5	0.0

Land Use Type	Acres	Area (%)
Grand Total	4,456.1	100.0
Notes: 1. Totals do not include utilities and transportation infrastructure. 2. Totals may not add due to rounding		

Project Description

1.1.3 - Proposed Project

The proposed South San Francisco General Plan Update is a forward-looking document that will serve as the blueprint for the City's vision through the year 2040. The goals, policies, and actions in the proposed General Plan Update will serve as a compass for decision-makers and will shape future plans and actions of the City. This revised document will replace the 1999 General Plan and will inform updates to the City's Zoning Ordinance.

The Proposed Land Use Map for the General Plan Update is attached as Exhibit 4. The Proposed Land Use Map depicting only the changes from the Existing Land Use Map is attached as Exhibit 5. The General Plan Update anticipates approximately 14,324 net new housing units and approximately 13,352 net new employment opportunities by 2040.

The State of California requires that the General Plan contain seven mandatory elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. The City's Housing Element was certified in 2015 and is valid until 2023. The process to update the existing Housing Element is underway and is being conducted as part of this General Plan Update. The South San Francisco General Plan Update will include all of the State-mandated elements, as described below:

- **Land Use and Community Design**—This element provides a framework for the land use designations and the standards for density, intensity, and design, in order to maximize opportunities for residential infill development, encourage mixed-use residential, retail, and office uses near Caltrain and BART stations, and maintain the Downtown as the symbolic center of the City.
- **Planning Sub-Areas**—This chapter describes the vision, guiding policy and implementation actions for nine planning sub-areas within South San Francisco.
- **Transportation**—This element identifies the City's existing transportation system and contains policies and actions to provide increased access to mobility services, including transit, bike and pedestrian networks, access between neighborhoods, and traffic safety.
- **Economic Development**—This element describes the policies and actions to promote business diversification, create an innovation district, retain local businesses, promote early childhood development, and provide jobs training.
- **Health and Social Equity**—This element includes policies celebrating the cultural diversity of South San Francisco, access to health care and food, social equity and environmental justice concerns, and social services.

- **Housing Element**—This element adopts a comprehensive, long-term plan to address the housing needs of the City and provide suitable, decent, and affordable housing for residents, as well as preserve and enhance existing residential areas. The 2015-2023 Housing Element was adopted in April 2015. The process to update the existing Housing Element is underway and is being conducted as part of this General Plan Update.
- **Sustainability and Climate Action**—This element includes an integrated policy framework for sustainability, greenhouse gas mitigation, and carbon sequestration. This includes goals and policies for: reducing greenhouse gas emissions such as carbon-free energy, decarbonized buildings, zero waste, fossil-fuel free transportation, and carbon sequestration. Given the cross-cutting nature of these issues, there will be points of integration with other policy frameworks, including Land Use, Safety, Conservation, and Social Equity, among others.
- **Public Facilities and Parks**—This element addresses the provision of public services and facilities, libraries, parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities and includes future infrastructure planning.
- **Open Space and Conservation**—This element identifies policies and actions to protect sensitive cultural and historic resources, improve water quality and stormwater management, address air quality, and enhance open space areas including Colma Creek and the shoreline.
- **Safety**—This element addresses seismic and geologic hazards, fire hazards, flooding, hazardous sites and materials, public safety services, and emergency management. The Safety Element also addresses strategies to address sea level rise and areas of inland flooding as well as considering how climate change could affect and potentially exacerbate the impacts associated with other hazards.
- **Noise**—This element includes policies and actions to reduce potential noise exposure to persons living and working in the City and protect sensitive land uses and historic structures from construction-related vibration.

The Vision and Guiding Principles for the South San Francisco General Plan Update were identified through a collaborative effort between the City and its residents and are described below.

Revised Citywide Vision Statement

South San Francisco is a place where everyone can thrive. Its high quality of life, diverse and inclusive community, livable neighborhoods and excellent services, culture of innovation, and environmental leadership ensure all people have an equitable opportunity to reach their full potential.

Guiding Principles

- Affordable, safe, attractive, amenity-rich neighborhoods
- High-quality and accessible services, facilities, and amenities for residents at all stages of their lives
- A safe, convenient, and accessible transportation network that is well-connected to the region
- A resilient community
- A prosperous downtown + local economy

1.2 - Environmental Impact Report

The City, as the Lead Agency under CEQA, will prepare a Program EIR for the proposed South San Francisco General Plan Update in accordance with CEQA, implementing the CEQA Guidelines, relevant case law, and City procedures. The General Plan Update is considered a “project” under CEQA and is therefore subject to CEQA review. As a policy document, the General Plan provides guidance and sets standards for several areas of mandatory environmental review for later “projects” that would be undertaken by local government and the private sector.

The Program EIR will evaluate potential environmental impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the General Plan Update. It will discuss how proposed General Plan Update policies may affect the environment, disclose potential impacts of the General Plan Update, propose mitigation measures to avoid and/or reduce impacts deemed potentially significant, identify reasonable alternatives, and compare the environmental impacts of the alternatives to the proposed project’s impacts. Pursuant to Section 15063(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, no Initial Study will be prepared. The Program EIR will evaluate the full range of environmental issues contemplated under CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, as described below:

- **Aesthetics**—This section will analyze potential impacts to aesthetics, including scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character and quality, and light and glare within the Planning Area.
- **Air Quality**—An air quality analysis will be prepared in accordance Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) requirements. A discussion of the General Plan Update’s contribution to regional air quality impacts will be included.
- **Biological Resources**—This section will address direct and indirect impacts to regulated waterways and wetlands, sensitive habitats and mature native trees, sensitive plants and wildlife, and wildlife movement corridors.
- **Cultural Resources/Tribal Cultural Resources**—The Program EIR will examine potential adverse impacts the proposed project would have on historical resources (or eligible historical resources), archaeological, and tribal cultural resources.
- **Energy**—This section will include a discussion of the potential energy consumption and/or impacts from implementation of the General Plan Update, with an emphasis on avoiding or reducing inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of energy.
- **Geology, Soils, and Seismicity**—This section will analyze potential impacts related to geology, soils, seismicity and paleontological resources from implementation of the General Plan Update.
- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**—The Program EIR will analyze the General Plan Update’s contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and potential impacts to climate change.
- **Hazards and Hazardous Materials**—This section will discuss potential exposure to hazardous substances resulting from activities within the Planning Area.

- **Hydrology and Water Quality**—The Program EIR will analyze impacts of the General Plan Update on drainage patterns and water quality within the Planning Area.
- **Land Use and Planning**—This section will summarize the City’s land use characteristics, including the overall land use pattern, and determine the potential environmental effects of the proposed General Plan Update related to Land Use and Planning.
- **Noise**—This section will analyze short-term impacts to noise sensitive receptors and long-term noise exposure.
- **Population, Housing, and Employment**—This section will analyze potential impacts to population, housing, and employment that could result from buildout of the General Plan Update.
- **Public Services and Recreation**—The Program EIR will analyze impacts on public services, including police, fire, and schools, as well as potential impacts on recreational and open space resources, from implementation of the General Plan Update.
- **Transportation**—The Program EIR will analyze the General Plan Update’s impacts on the circulation system, including Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) within the Planning Area, safe routes to schools, and all modes of transit.
- **Utilities and Service Systems**—This section will analyze the potential impacts associated with water supply, wastewater services, and other utilities and service systems.
- **Wildfire**—This section will analyze the potential impacts to wildfire risks, adopted emergency and evacuation plans, infrastructure, and land and drainage stability.

The Program EIR will evaluate potential growth-inducing impacts and cumulative impacts of the proposed project, including the effects of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects in the vicinity (CEQA Guidelines §§ 15126.2, 15130).

As described above, the Program EIR will also identify and examine a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project, including, but not limited to, a No Project Alternative (CEQA Guidelines §15126.6)

1.3 - Purpose

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] § 15082), the City has prepared this NOP to inform agencies and interested parties that a Program EIR will be prepared for the proposed South San Francisco General Plan Update. The purpose of an NOP is to provide sufficient information about the General Plan Update to allow agencies and interested parties the opportunity to provide a meaningful response related to the scope and content of the Program EIR, including mitigation measures that should be considered and alternatives that should be addressed (CEQA Guidelines 14 CCR § 15082(b)).

1.4 - Environmental Review Process

Following completion of the 45-day NOP public review period, the City will incorporate relevant information into the Program EIR, including results of public scoping and technical studies. Subsequently, the Program EIR will be circulated for public review and comment for a 45-day public review period.

The City requests that any potential Responsible or Trustee Agency responding to this notice do so in a manner consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b). All parties that have submitted their names and email or mailing addresses will be notified throughout the CEQA review process.

A copy of the NOP (in full color) can be found on the project website at <https://shapessf.com/> and on file at the City of South San Francisco, Economic and Community Development Department, 315 Maple Avenue, South San Francisco, CA 94080.

If you wish to be placed on the mailing list or need additional information, please contact Billy Gross, Senior Planner, Planning Division, City of South San Francisco, at 650.877.8535 or billy.gross@ssf.net.

1.4.1 - Effects Found not to be Significant

Agriculture and Forestry

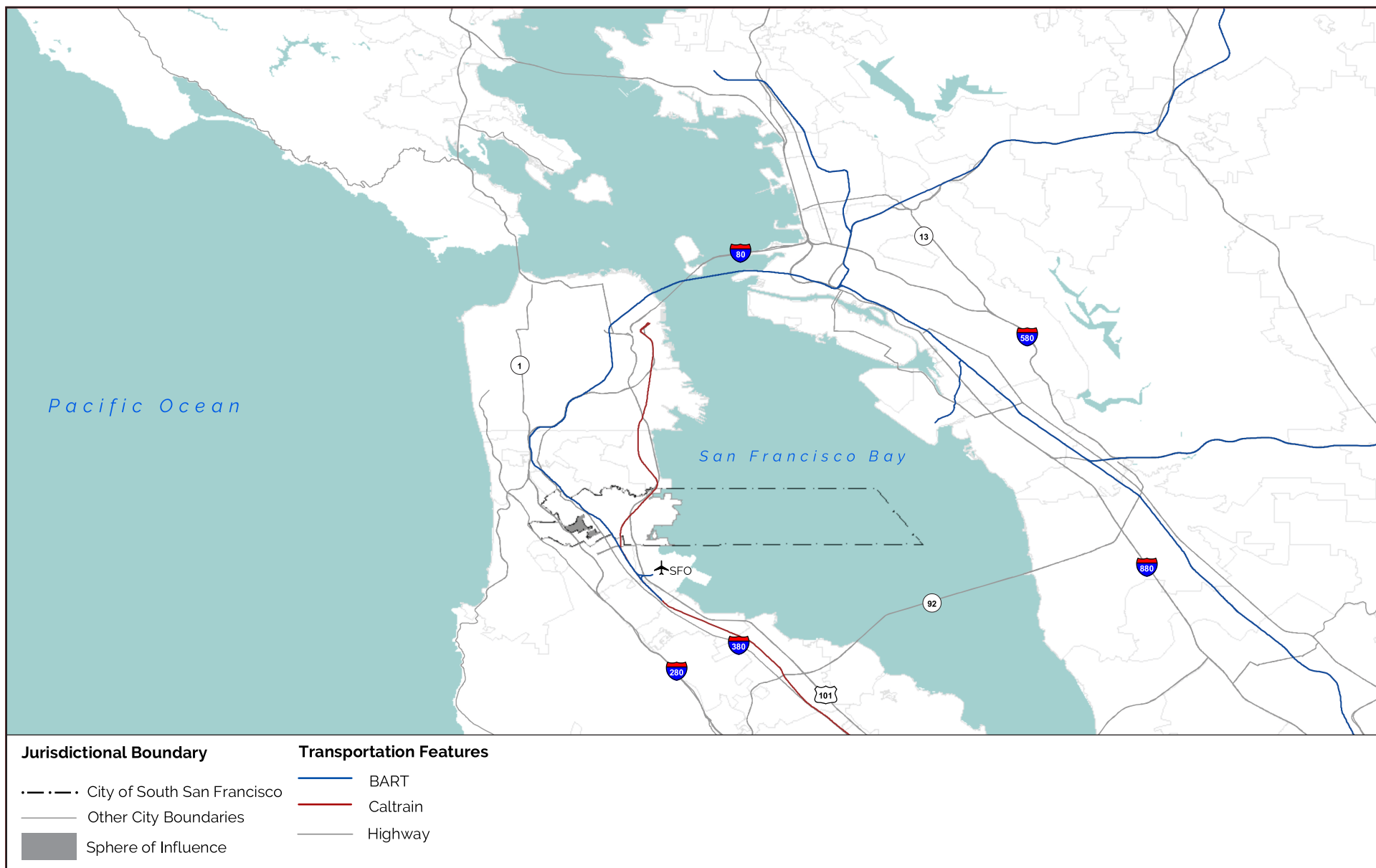
The Planning Area is located within an urban environment. No existing agriculture or forestry land use activities occur within the Planning Area boundaries, and none of the Planning Area is designated as relevant for agriculture or forestry resources by the City of South San Francisco or by the State of California.⁷ These conditions preclude the possibility of loss of agricultural or forest resources; therefore, this issue will not be analyzed further by the Program EIR.

Mineral Resources

No activities related to mineral resources occur within the Planning Area boundaries, and none of the Planning Area is designated as relevant for mineral resources by the City of South San Francisco Zoning Ordinance or by the State of California.⁸ These conditions preclude the possibility of impacts on mineral resources; therefore, this issue will not be analyzed further by the Program EIR.

⁷ California Important Farmland: 1984-2018. 2018. Website: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/ciftimeseries/>. Accessed December 11, 2020.

⁸ California Department of Conservation, California Geological Survey Information Warehouse: Mineral Land Classification. 2015. Website: <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/informationwarehouse/index.html?map=mlc>. Accessed December 11, 2020.



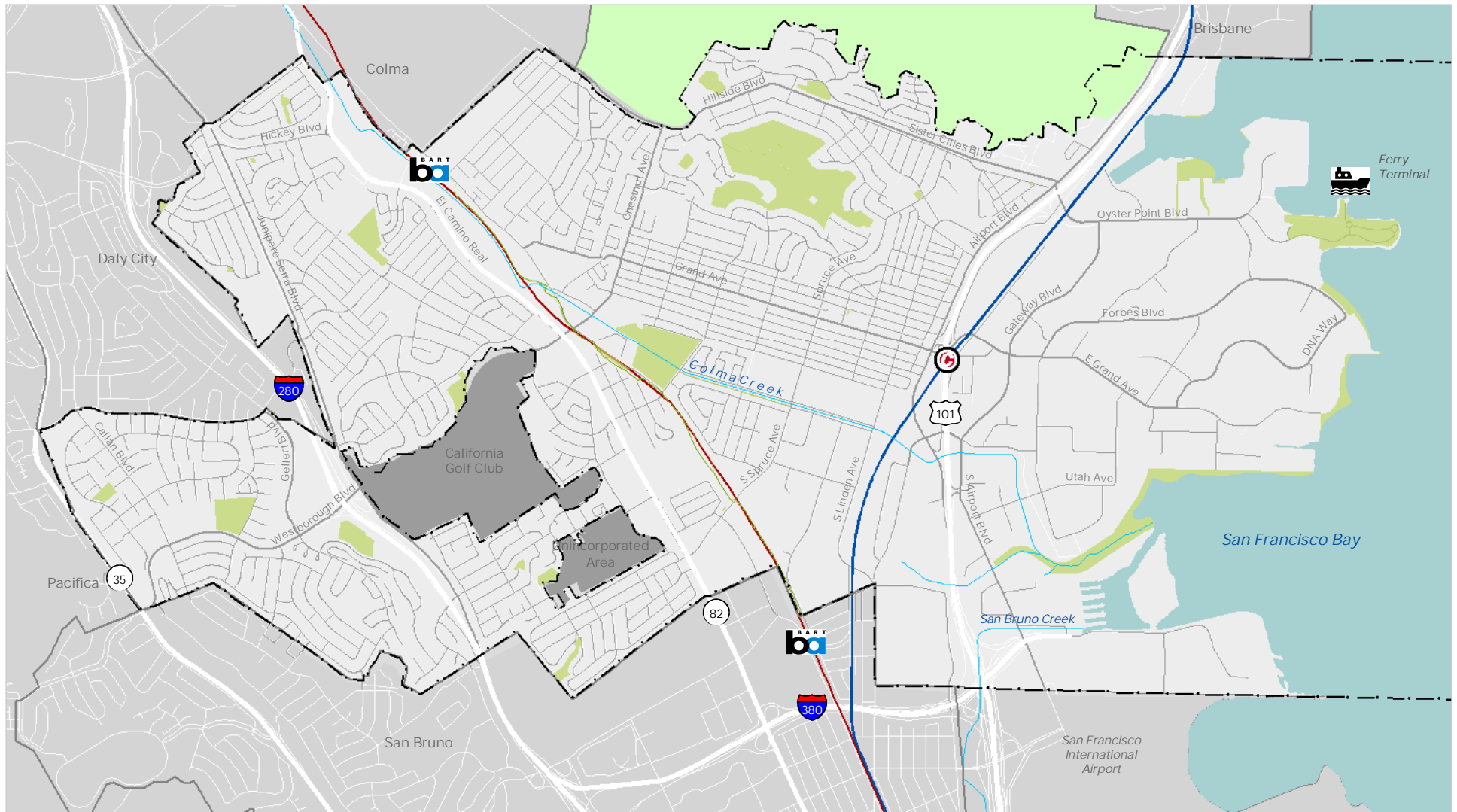
Source: Raimi + Associates, November 2019.

FIRSTCARBON
SOLUTIONS™



0 3 6 12 Miles

Exhibit 1 Regional Context Map



Jurisdictional Boundary

- City of South San Francisco
- Other City Boundaries
- Sphere of Influence

Transportation Features

- BART
- Caltrain
- Highway
- Arterial
- Local Street

Legend

- Streams
- Centennial Way Trail
- Parks/Open Space
- San Bruno Mountain State and County Park

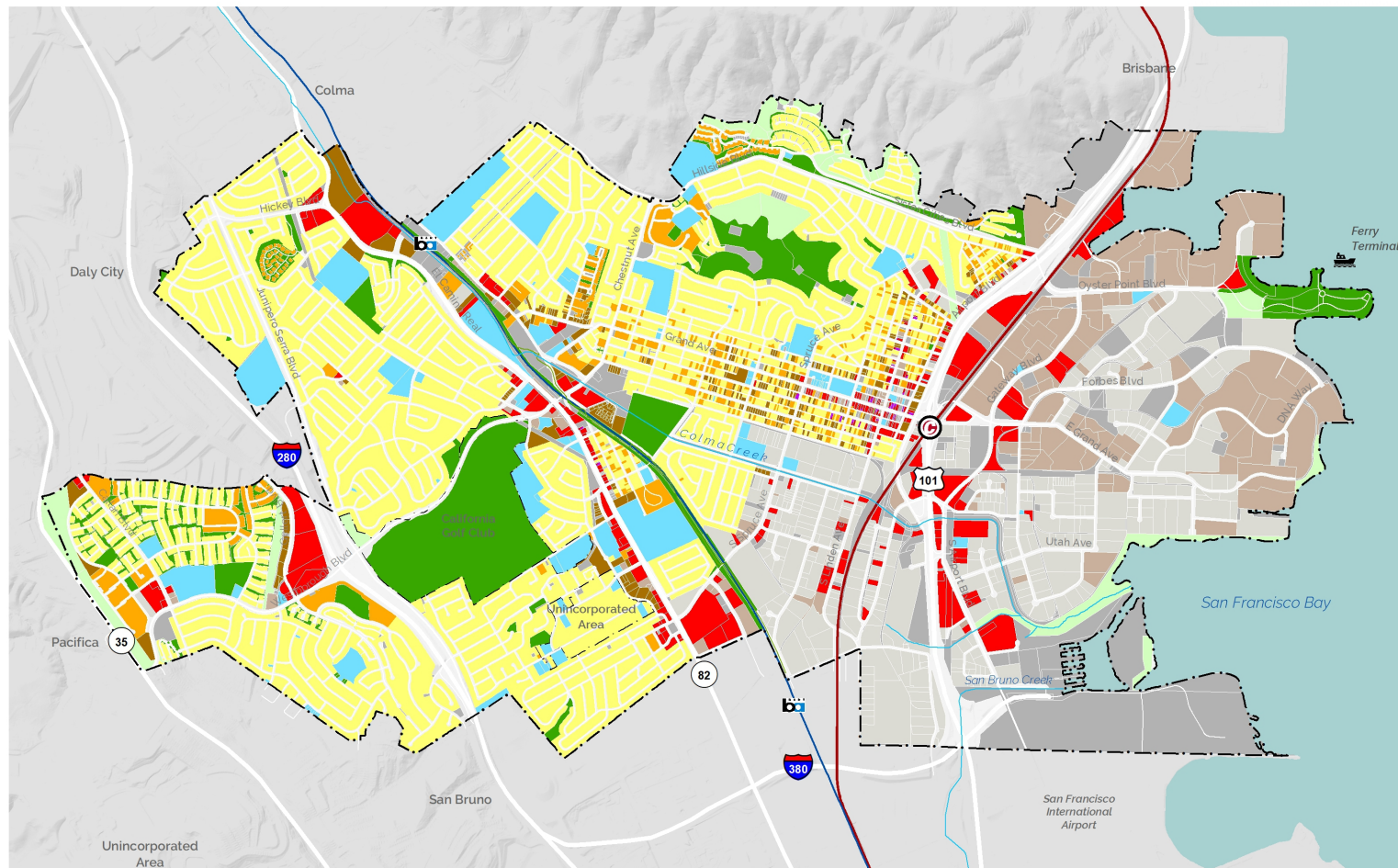
FIRSTCARBON
SOLUTIONS™



50000006 • 12/2020 | 2_local_vicinity.mxd

Exhibit 2 Local Vicinity Map

CITY OF SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
NOTICE OF PREPARATION



Jurisdictional Boundary

- City of South San Francisco
- Other City Boundaries
- Sphere of Influence

Transportation Features

- BART
- Caltrain
- Highway
- Arterial
- Local Street

Existing Land Use

- Single-Family Residential
- Duplex, Triplex, Fourplex
- Multifamily Residential
- Retail and Services

- Mixed Use
- Office, R&D, Biotech
- Industrial
- Public and Institutional

- Parks and Common Greens
- Open Space
- Vacant/Utilities/Transit

0 0.5 1 Miles



June 2020

Source: Raimi + Associates, June 2020.

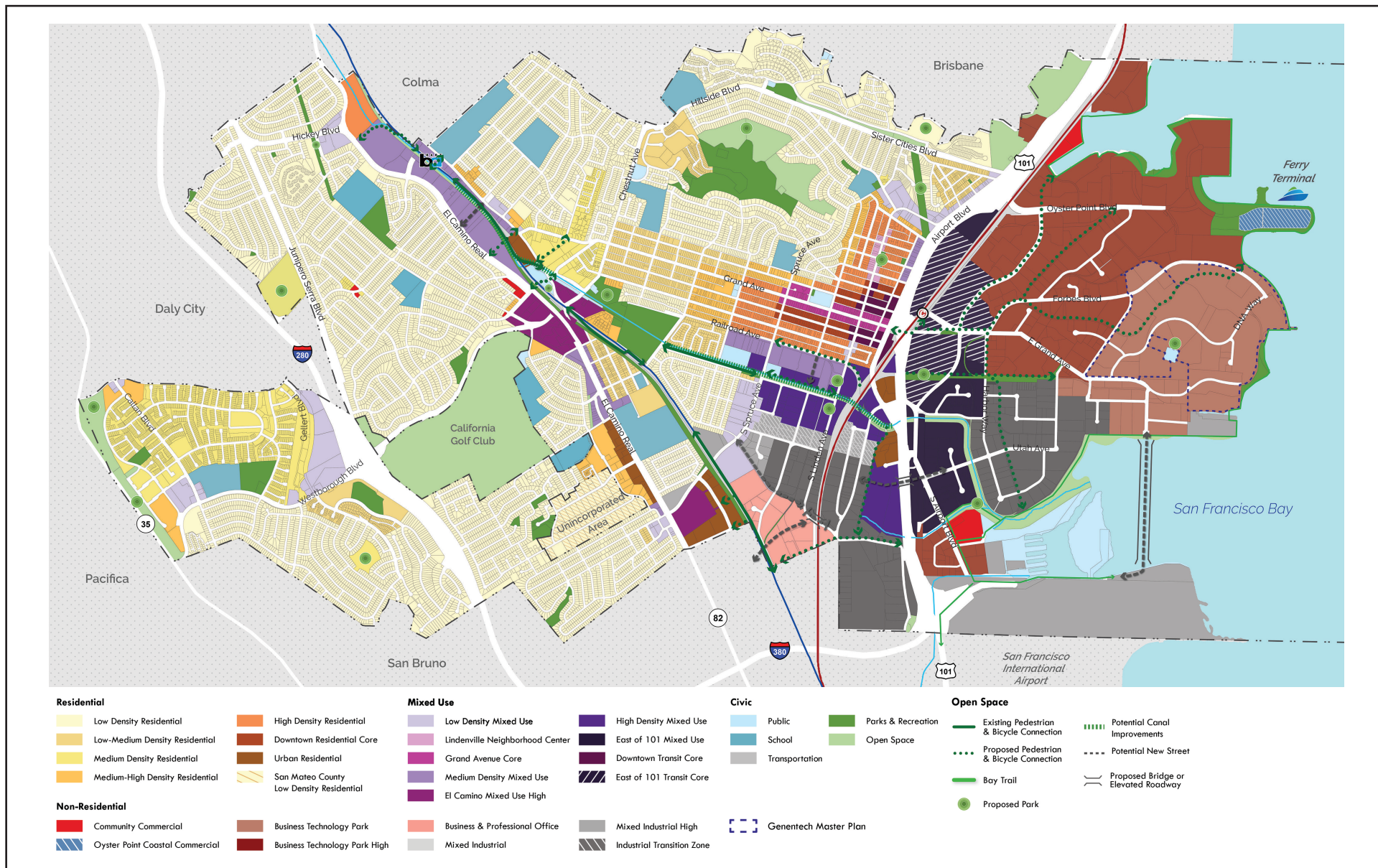
FIRSTCARBON
SOLUTIONS™



50000006 • 12/2020 | 3_existing_LU.cdr

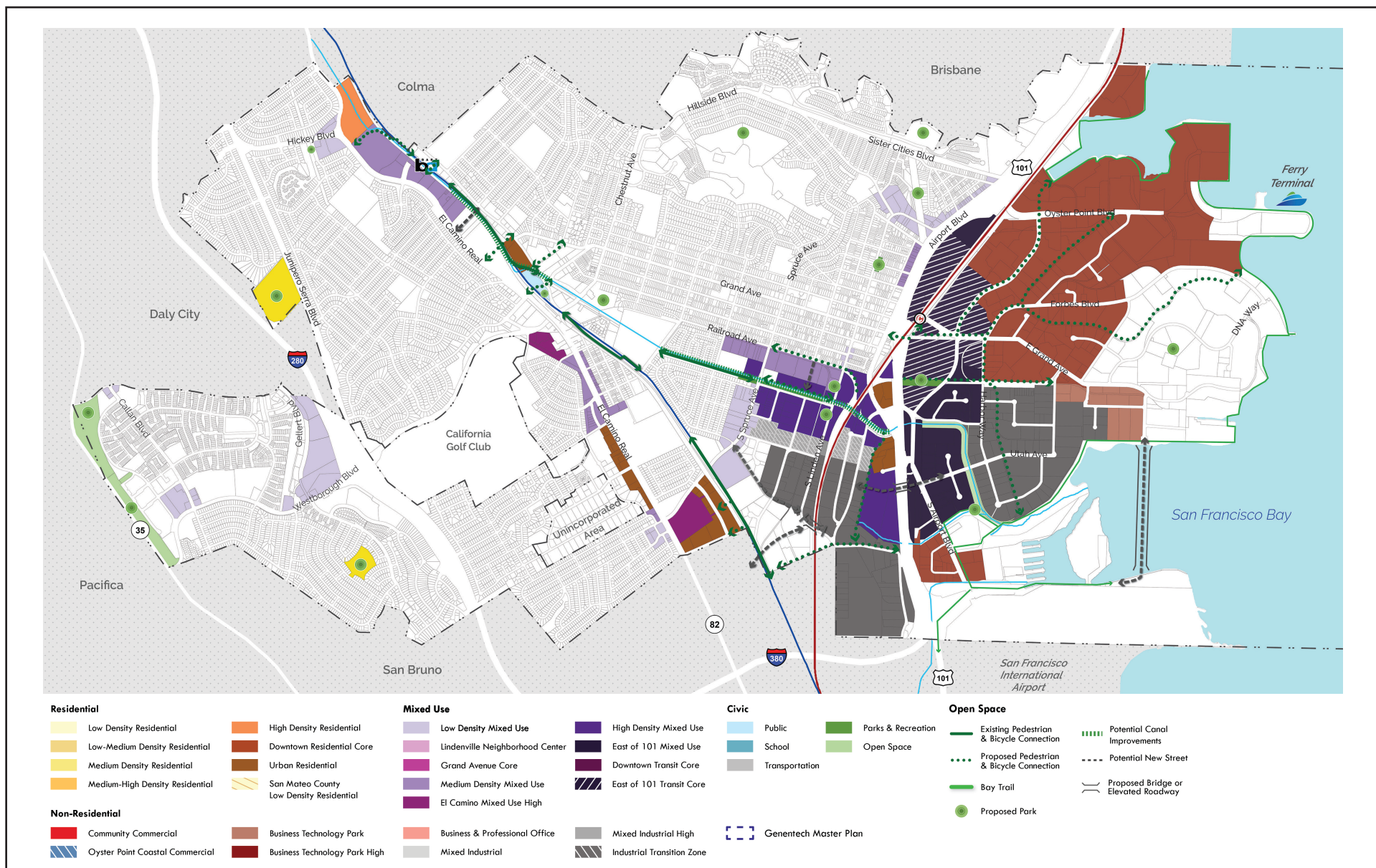
Exhibit 3 Existing Land Use Map

CITY OF SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
NOTICE OF PREPARATION



Source: Raimi + Associates, October 2020.





Source: Raimi + Associates, October 2020.

