

**COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

ANNUAL REPORT

2025

CITY OF FOSTER CITY



MISSION STATEMENT

OUR MISSION

The Community Development Department is committed to planning, maintaining, and improving the quality of life and public safety of Foster City in keeping with the vision of the City Council in the General Plan and other measures that reflect the City's heritage as a Master Planned community.

DEPARTMENT DESCRIPTION

The Community Development Department is organized into three Divisions:

1. Planning and Code Enforcement Division
2. Building Inspection Division
3. Housing and Sustainability Division **(NEW)**



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

"As I reflect on the last year, I am grateful for my team for their incredible hard work and dedication to the Foster City community. The team has continued to show up for the community with unwavering commitment—even while we were short-staffed.

I am also grateful to the City Council, the Planning Commission, the City Manager's office, Foster City department's and above all, the Foster City Community for their continued support and trust.

Together, we are making a meaningful impact."

SOFIA MANGALAM, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR



PLANNING PERMITS ACTIVITY SUMMARY



The Planning/Code Enforcement Division is responsible for long-term planning regarding growth and development of the City, reviewing and processing applications for all land use and development proposals, and maintaining the appearance of the community.

- *Updated Municipal Code Chapter 17.78 Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), ensuring the City is consistent with the State's requirements for ADU developments.*
- *Conducted numerous webinars on ADUs/Junior ADUs for HOAs, the School district, private schools, multi-family property owners, and religious institutions, allowing these stakeholders to learn about ADUs and ask staff questions.*
- *Established dedicated appointment-based office hours for residents and applicants seeking information or assistance with ADUs.*
- *Completed entitlements for major projects, including a new 180,000 square foot, five-story, R&D building within the Gilead campus at 335 Lakeside Drive and a health science university located in an underutilized office building at 989 E. Hillsdale Boulevard.*
- *Continued to facilitate Interdepartmental Evaluation Committee (IDEC) meetings to review a range of major and minor permits and events, ensuring streamlined, collaborative decision-making across City departments.*
- *Issued the Request for Proposals (RFP) for Real Estate Market Analysis to assess market trends and cycles, demographic trends, supply and demand dynamics, and economic indicators to evaluate future needs of the City.*



HIGHLIGHTS

OBJECTIVE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

In 2024, the City launched a citywide initiative to engage the community in modernizing its single-family design guidelines, policies, and applicable zoning regulations into a comprehensive, objective framework. Through a community survey, multiple Planning Commission study sessions, and public engagement events, staff evaluated existing regulations, design guidelines, city-wide policies, and the design review process.

This effort resulted in the development of the Single-Family and Two-Family Objective Design and Development Standards, which were approved by the City Council on December 15, 2025 (second reading of the Ordinance - January 2026). The new standards translate community values into clear, measurable criteria, improving consistency, streamlining permit review, and reducing reliance on subjective interpretation –helping minimize project delays and unexpected costs for homeowners.

Learn more about this at: <https://engagefostercity.org/single-family-objective-design-and-development-standards>



WELCOMED NEW BUSINESSES

Successfully facilitated and welcomed new businesses in the City, including Toast in Town (Foster Square), Samuel Meritt University and Osaka Marketplace (Edgewater Shopping Center).

CODE ENFORCEMENT: YEAR IN REVIEW



CODE ENFORCEMENT

The City's code enforcement program is primarily implemented through a combination of neighborhood drive-throughs and a complaint-driven basis. Complaints may be submitted by mail, phone, e-mail, online complaint app, or in person at City Hall.

- A total of 199 code enforcement cases were opened for violations, including 141 property maintenance, 32 work without permit, 13 zoning violations, three (3) food-vending-related, three (3) home occupation violations, two (2) sign-related, two (2) animal-related, two (2) smoking, and one (1) noise complaint.*
- Continued the use of door hangers to address minor code violations, such as overgrown weeds and improperly stored trash bins. These hangers provide notices when homeowners are unavailable during site visits.*
- On July 1, 2025, staff initiated the permitting process for the City's Tobacco Retailer Program, requiring all tobacco retailers in Foster City to obtain and maintain a valid Tobacco Retailer Permit for each retail location.*



BUILDING PERMITS ACTIVITY SUMMARY



The Building Inspection Division is responsible for ensuring that all construction projects permitted within the City comply with the California Building Code, the Foster City Municipal Code, and all other applicable codes and regulations.

- Continued to review plans and provide daily inspections for residential and commercial development, ensuring compliance with building codes and health and safety standards.
- Updated Building Codes:
 - Amended Municipal Code Chapter 15.46 Electric Vehicle Charging Station to comply with state laws.
 - Updated Municipal Code Chapter 15.24 by the San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department (SMCFD).
 - Formally established the Planning Commission to serve as the Board of Appeals to hear and decide appeals of decisions made by the Building Official.
- Conducted plan checks and inspections for major development and tenant improvement projects, including:
 - Osaka Marketplace at Edgewater Shopping Center
 - New Research & Development building at 331 Lakeside Drive and 335 Lakeside Drive
 - Samuel Merritt University at 919 E Hillsdale Blvd.
- Revised Master Fee Schedule: Implemented flat fees for the most common residential permit items, such as re-roofs, window replacements, and bathroom and kitchen remodels, creating a predictable and transparent cost structure for homeowners.
- Created an online [Building Permit Fee Estimator](#), providing a preliminary cost projection for construction permits, calculating fees based on your project's scope, valuation (cost of labor/materials), and type (residential, commercial).



YEAR IN REVIEW

217
ONLINE HOUSING QUERIES

\$30,000
PROVIDED IN EMERGENCY RENT RELIEF

450
ATTENDEES AT THE EARTH DAY EVENT

162
PEOPLE ENGAGED IN GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

110
TIERS IN THE SUSTAINABLE LIVING GUIDE

HOUSING INITIATIVES

The Housing Division continued its commitment to fostering affordable housing and reducing displacement.

- *Staff continued administering affordable housing programs, including 426 units at Marlin Cove, Miramar, One Hundred Grand, the Plaza, the Triton, Alma Point, Metro Center, the Pilgrim, and the Existing Unit Purchase Program.*
- *Responded to inquiries from Community/Property Managers regarding the administration of the Below Market Rate (BMR) program, including, but not limited to, rental rates, utility allowances, alleged fair housing violations, reasonable accommodation requests, recertifications, occupancy requirements, annual income projections, waitlist, new applications, and more.*
- *Oversaw property management of 28 city-owned units.*
- *Updated Municipal Code Chapter 17.90 “Below Market Rate Inclusionary Housing Program”, adding sections for “Just Cause Evictions”, “Tenant Relocation Assistance”, and “Registry of Below Market Rate Units”.*
- *Onboarded Tolemi, the Rental Registry Program for Below Market Rate units.*
- *Held the City’s second Fair Housing and Anti-discrimination workshop on September 24, 2025, in partnership with Project Sentinel.*



HOUSING INITIATIVES

- Pursued grant opportunities to expand housing opportunities, including San Mateo County Measure K, and were granted \$35,000 from the County of San Mateo's Measure K program for an emergency rent relief program for BMR tenants at risk of displacement. The program helped 15 very low-income tenants stay in their homes.
- Issued an RFP for the management of an affordable ADU program. Through this program, eligible homeowners can access interest-free financing in exchange for renting their ADUs to low-income households for 10 years.
- City Council approved an agreement with Habitat for Humanity Greater San Francisco, Inc. for the Home Rehabilitation Program to issue loans (minimum \$25,000, maximum \$75,000) and provide construction services to lower-income homeowners. (COMING SOON!)
- City Council approved an Agreement with Rebuilding Together Peninsula for the Minor Home Repair Program to manage construction and administer grants (max \$5,000) for minor home repairs for very low-income homeowners. (COMING SOON!)



SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

- Advanced implementation of Foster City's 2024 Climate Action Plan (CAP), which serves as the City's strategic framework for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate change.
- Developed the Climate Action Plan Dashboard to track progress toward sustainability goals. The dashboard is hosted on the City's Sustainability webpage at sustainable.fostercity.org.
- Prepared a Sustainable Living Guide that provides residents with practical actions to reduce emissions, conserve energy and water, and live more sustainably. Developed a companion children's version of the Sustainable Living Guide to support early environmental education and family engagement.
- Collaborated with the Citizens Sustainability Advisory Committee (CSAC) to plan and participate in multiple sustainability events throughout the year:
 - Hosted an Earth Day event with more than 400 attendees and 14 participating organizations, including the San Mateo County Office of Sustainability, Gilead Sciences, Peninsula Clean Energy, and Recology.
 - Supported sustainability efforts at the Fourth of July Pancake Breakfast by working with event organizers to reduce single-use items and encourage recycling and composting.
 - Staffed a sustainability booth at Summer Days events, connecting with hundreds of community members and providing education on proper waste sorting using earth-friendly prizes.
- Developed a pilot solar permit outreach campaign to inform residents who previously installed rooftop solar about electrification opportunities, supporting the City's broader climate and energy goals.



HIGHLIGHTS

PARKS & OPEN SPACE ELEMENT AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT

On November 3, 2025, Foster City adopted updates to the Parks & Open Space Element and the Conservation Element within an ambitious one-year timeline, along with meeting the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1425 and Assembly Bill (AB) 1889, advancing shoreline resistance, habitat connectivity, and equitable access to parks and open space.

Community Engagement was a critical part of the process. At the beginning of the process, the consultant developed a strategic Engagement Plan that aligns with the Parks Master Plan engagement efforts, does not duplicate prior efforts, and identifies areas where the City can partner with the Parks Master Plan engagement. The City undertook a series of engagement activities to inform the updates to its Parks and Open Space Element and Conservation Element. These efforts were designed to capture a wide range of community voices, from residents who regularly use the City's parks to regional organizations focused on conservation and resilience. Engagement activities included a community priorities survey, two pop-up events, a joint workshop, two focus groups, a formal consultation with local tribes under SB18, and a public comment period.



Chapter 5: Parks and Open Space Element

Adopted November 3, 2025



Chapter 8: Conservation Element

Adopted November 3, 2025





Osaka Marketplace Grand Opening



HIP Housing Adopt-a-Family



Halloween Celebrations



Administrative Professional Day



Thanksgiving Potluck



Employee Appreciation Celebrations



Community Center Steel Beam Signing



Welcoming our Building Official

THE MIGHTY CDD TEAM



MAIRA BLANCO
SENIOR PLANNER



PAIGE BOONE
PERMIT TECHNICIAN



VANESSA BRANNON
SR. MANAGEMENT ANALYST



FARIDA DANISH
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT



BECKI HANAN
SR. MANAGEMENT ANALYST



NORI JABBA
HOUSING & SUSTAINABILITY
MANAGER



CHUCK VENOOK
CHIEF
BUILDING OFFICIAL



LAE KHINE
PLANS EXAMINER



THAI-CHAU LE
PLANNING MANAGER



JAY MARLETTE
BUILDING INSPECTOR



KEVIN MCGILL
ASSISTANT PLANNER



CHARLENE SOLIS
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT



HELEN TELFER
SENIOR PLANNER



LOOKING AHEAD

- 1. Housing Element Implementation:** Continue to advance 108 Housing Element programs that address housing needs, streamline processes, and foster inclusivity.
- 2. Single-Family and Two-Family Objective Design and Development Standards:** Begin working on part 2 of the standards for Eichler homes, waterfront properties, and HOA properties.
- 3. CAP Implementation:** Continue advancing initiatives outlined in the CAP 2024 Update, with a focus on reducing GHG emissions and advancing sustainability.
- 4. Review of Development Projects:** Proposed Gilead Campus Expansion – up to 800,000 square feet of research and development (R&D) in the Chess Drive/Hatch Drive area.
- 5. Loans and Grants:**
 - a. Administer the Foster City Emergency Rent Relief Program.
 - b. Administer the grants (max \$5,000) for minor home repairs for very low-income homeowners.
 - c. Administer the Home Rehabilitation Program to issue loans (minimum \$25,000, maximum \$75,000) and provide construction services to lower-income homeowners.
- 6. Reach Codes:** Initiate work on Reach Codes for commercial construction projects.



CONTACT US

For your convenience, a variety of business services are available online, by phone, and via email.

Permits can be submitted via our online portal <https://permit.fostercity.org/etrakit/>

For more information, please visit us at <https://www.fostercity.org/commdev>

Planning	Phone: 650-286-3225 Email: planning@fostercity.org
Code Enforcement	Phone: 650-286-3238 Email: codeenforcement@fostercity.org
Building	Phone: 650-286-3227 Email: building@fostercity.org
Housing	Phone: 650-286-3230 Email: housing@fostercity.org
Sustainability	Phone: 650-286-3354 Email: sustainable@fostercity.org