Conservation Introduction

Foster City, 2025.

Purpose

The Conservation Element fulfills the State's requirements for a Conservation Element and articulates Foster City's long-term vision for conserving and managing its natural and cultural resources. Within this, it emphasizes environmental sustainability, community well-being, and climate resilience as central to the City's management of natural resources.

This Element outlines the city's environmental setting, highlights unique local resources, and establishes goals, policies, and implementation actions to support their protection, restoration, and sustainable use. It guides stewardship of wildlife movement and connectivity and wildlife habitat, the urban forest, surface and groundwater, and historic, cultural, and tribal resources. It also supports efforts to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in alignment with state mandates.

This Element is organized into four primary sections: *Requirements*, *Background*, *Goals and Policies, and Implementation Programs*. The *Requirements* section outlines legal requirements for the content of this element. The *Background* section provides existing conditions and key conservation considerations for Foster City. The *Goals and Policies* section defines the City's goals and policy direction for the conservation of natural resources. The *Implementation Programs* section outlines specific actions the City will take to achieve the vision set by the Goals and Policies.

Clarification of Terminology

The Conservation Element and the Parks and Open Space Element both address land and resource stewardship in Foster City, but each with a distinct purpose and emphasis:

Park: A developed public space designed primarily for recreation and community use. Parks typically include landscaping and features such as play areas, sports courts, athletic fields, picnic facilities, or community centers. They provide opportunities for physical activity, social connection, and access to nature within the built environment.

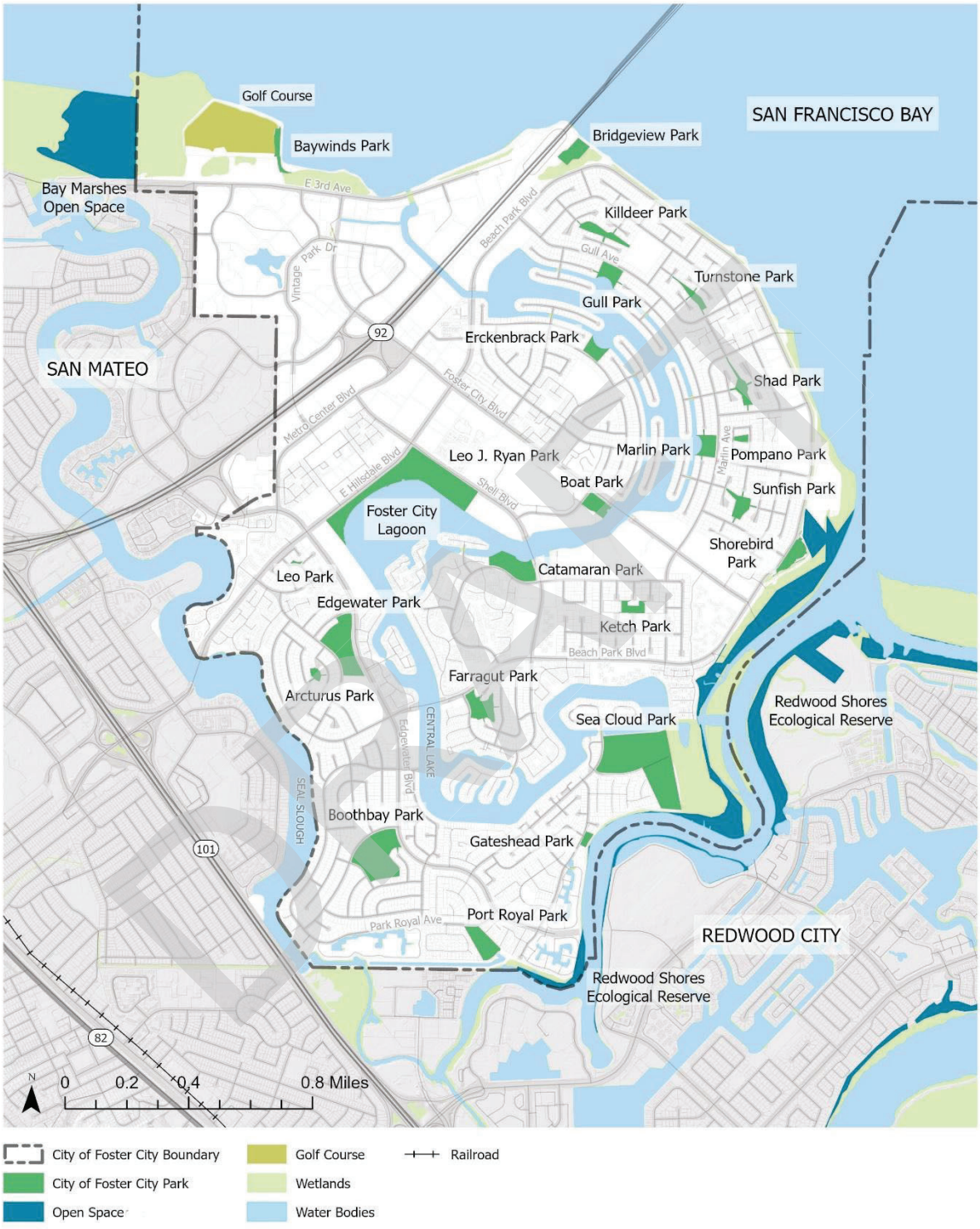
Open Space: Land that remains largely undeveloped, often preserved for its scenic, ecological, or buffering functions. Open space may support passive recreation, such as trails and viewpoints, and also contribute to habitat value, stormwater management, and climate resilience. While not always actively used, open spaces help define the character and environmental function of the city.

Conservation: The active management and protection of natural resources—including water, air, soil, vegetation, habitat, and wildlife— throughout the entire city, across all land types. Conservation is not limited to specific areas; it is a citywide approach applied to parks, open spaces, developed areas, waterways, and infrastructure. It includes efforts to restore habitat, enhance biodiversity, improve ecosystem health, and ensure the sustainable use of environmental resources for future generations.

While these categories differ in focus, they are deeply interconnected. Open space and parks often serve as the physical setting where conservation strategies are implemented. For example, a park may include restored habitat, and an open space corridor may function as both a scenic buffer and a wildlife pathway. Conservation provides the guiding framework that weaves these uses together, ensuring Foster City's green spaces support not only recreation and beauty, but long-term ecological health and resilience.

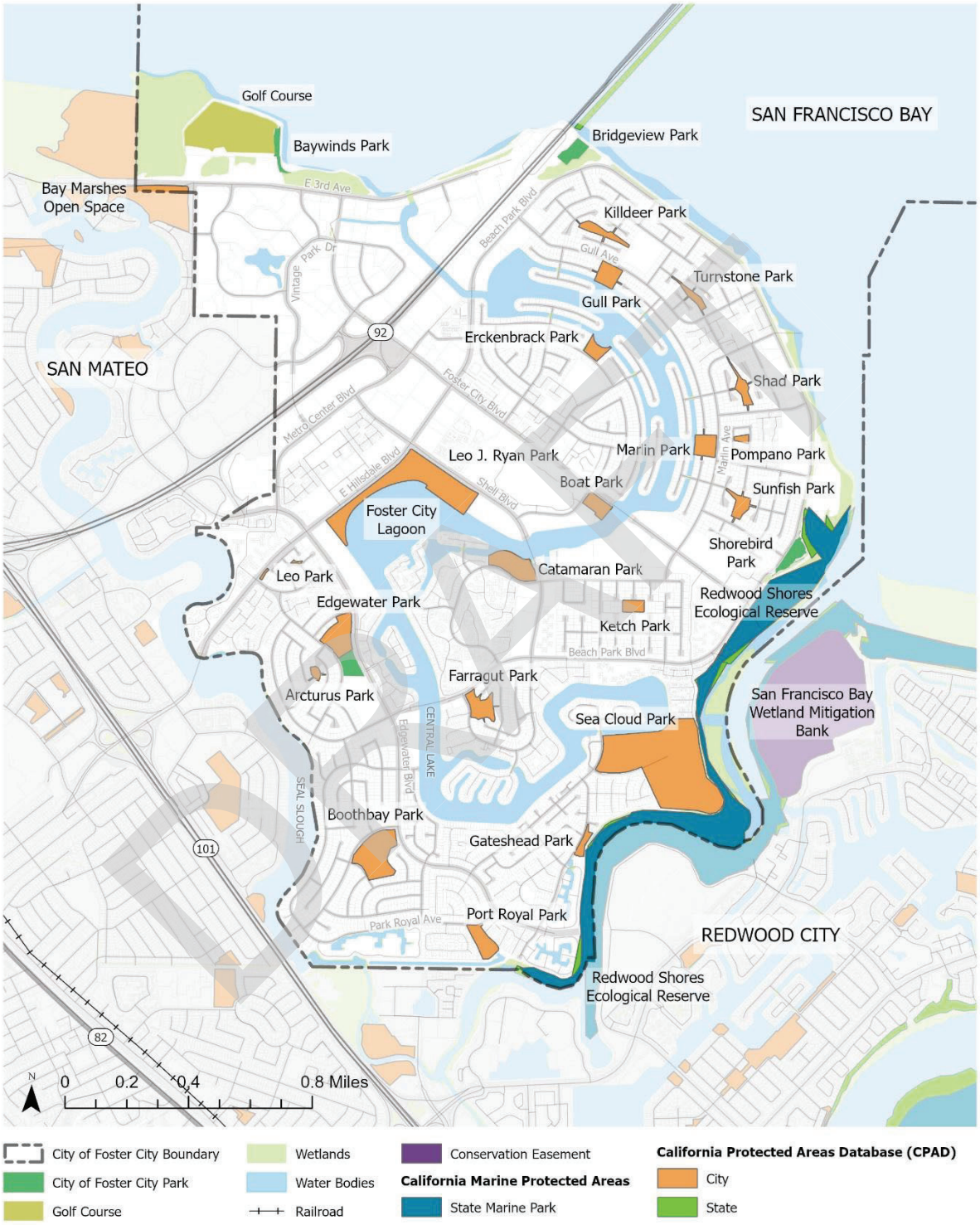
Figure 1 identifies the parks and open spaces within Foster City. Figure 2 identifies protection responsibilities for each type of park, open space, and conservation area.

Figure 1 Parks and Open Spaces



Data provided by City of Foster City, 2025; CPAD, 2023.

Figure 2 Protected Areas



Data provided by City of Foster City, 2025; CDFW, 2019; CCED, 2021; CPAD, 2023.

Legal Requirements

The Conservation Element of the General Plan is guided by State law, regional plans, and local priorities that collectively aim to preserve natural resources, support ecological health, and support the sustainable management of environmental systems. Key statutes and policies include the following:

California Government Code §65302(d) – Conservation Element Requirement

The primary legal foundation for the Conservation Element is Government Code §65302(d), which requires all general plans to include policies addressing the conservation, development, and use of natural resources. These include watersheds, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and other natural systems. The statute emphasizes that policies must reflect local conditions, support long-term resource management, and be coordinated with efforts to protect air and water quality.

California Air Resources Board (CARB) and BAAQMD Guidance

Statewide air quality policy is administered by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), which sets emission standards, regulates fuels and vehicles, and oversees programs aimed to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. At the regional level, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) prepares the Clean Air Plan to reduce pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions, with an emphasis on cumulative pollution burdens in disproportionately impacted communities. The Conservation Element supports these goals by promoting land use patterns and infrastructure that reduce vehicle emissions, increase urban greening, and limit exposure to harmful pollutants, particularly near homes, schools, and other sensitive land uses.

Senate Bill 1425 (2022) – Open Space Element: Updates

Senate Bill (SB) 1425 added Government Code §65565.5 to require that the Open Space Element prioritize the multi-benefit use of green spaces, particularly in historically underserved communities. The law directs jurisdictions to include plans and an action program in any update to address access to open space for all residents in a manner that considers social, economic, and racial equity, correlated with the environmental justice policies in the general plan, address climate resilience strategies such as flood mitigation and cooling, and to address rewilding opportunities. While most of the requirements of SB 1425 are met within the Parks and Open Space Element, many of the topics in this Element are closely related to the those covered within the Conservation Element.

Assembly Bill 1889 (2024) – Conservation Element: Wildlife and Habitat Connectivity

AB 1889 amended Government Code §65302(d), requiring jurisdictions to identify and analyze wildlife connectivity and movement corridors, and consider the impact of development on species movement and ecological resilience. Any impacts and barriers to wildlife movement are then required to be avoided, minimized, or mitigated to the extent feasible. It encourages alignment with State and regional agencies, conservation goals, and efforts in developing wildlife and habitat connectivity strategies.

Regional and Local Planning

In addition to meeting State requirements, the Conservation Element must align with several key regional and local planning efforts that support natural resource protection, habitat restoration, and climate resilience.

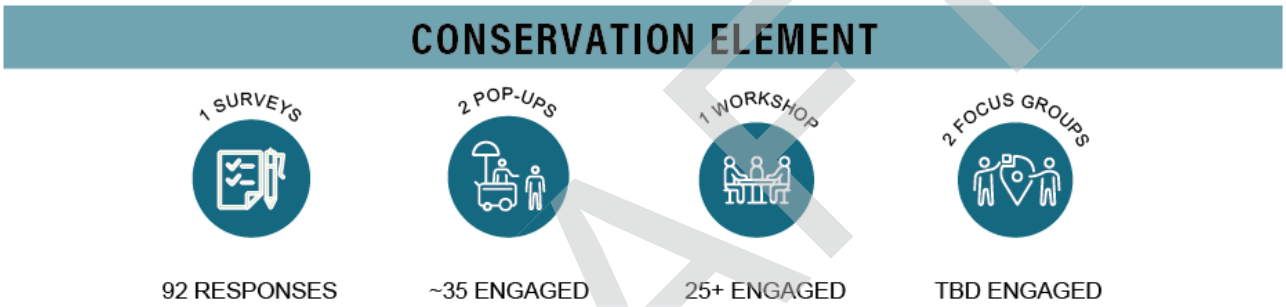
- **The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Basin Plans (Basin Plans)** establish water quality objectives, identify beneficial uses of water bodies (such as habitat or recreation), and include strategies to control pollution and manage watershed health. These Basin Plans are legally enforceable by the RWQCB and guide stormwater discharge permitting and waterway protection at the local level.
- The **San Mateo County Sustainable Streets and Green Infrastructure Plan** provides a framework for integrating green infrastructure—such as rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable pavements—into street design and public projects. It helps cities meet stormwater permit requirements while improving water quality, habitat, and streetscape aesthetics.
- **OneShoreline**, the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District, coordinates regional adaptation efforts related to sea level rise, tidal flooding, and shoreline ecosystem restoration. Its work supports integrated infrastructure projects that reduce flood risk while enhancing natural habitat.
- In compliance with SB 18 (Gov. Code § 65352.3), the City contacted all California Native American tribes identified by the Native American Heritage Commission as traditionally and culturally affiliated with the area. No responses requesting consultation were received.

This regional and local framework ensures that the Conservation Element is grounded in practical, science-based strategies that address both ecological function and community well-being.

Background

The process for updating the Conservation Element included a comprehensive assessment of existing conditions; evaluating the city's natural resources, habitat areas, water and air quality, and energy infrastructure; and identifying opportunities to enhance ecological health and climate resilience. In addition, the analysis evaluated future considerations on sea level rise, groundwater rise, extreme heat, and air quality, and highlighted opportunities to enhance biodiversity, carbon sequestration, and equitable access to green space. As shown in Figure 3, community outreach was conducted in coordination with the Parks Master Plan (discussed further in the Parks and Open Space Element), ensuring that the voices of residents and stakeholders guided the direction of this Element. Together, the assessment and engagement serve as the foundation for the goals and policies of the Conservation Element.

Figure 3 Community Engagement Overview



** Note: Conservation Focus Groups will be conducted in August of 2025, and number engaged subsequently added.*

The public engagement process for the Conservation Element update was designed to gather input on key issues such as species preservation, habitat conservation, and water quality, while ensuring alignment with the ongoing Parks Master Plan update. A key tool in this effort was a dedicated project website that provided ongoing updates and hosted the Community Priorities Survey, which built on the Parks Master Plan survey by focusing on natural resources and conservation topics. This survey gathered valuable feedback from a diverse range of residents, with particular emphasis on underrepresented communities, helping shape policies related to biodiversity, open space access, and environmental equity. Pop-up events were also used to engage the community directly, allowing them to provide input on conservation priorities while also participating in the broader parks-related discussions.

Biological Resources

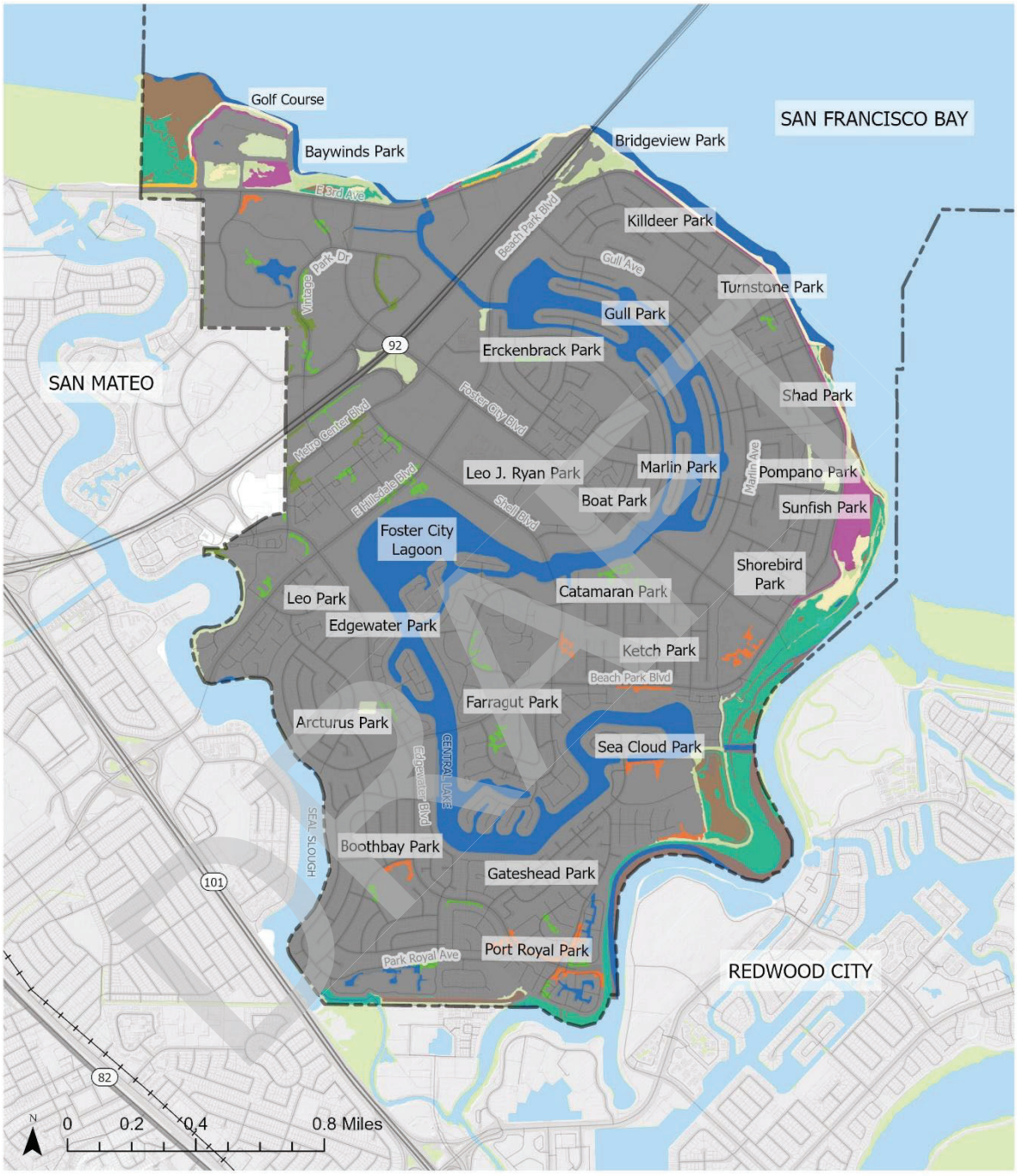
Despite its highly urbanized setting and origins as reclaimed marshland, Foster City continues to support a mosaic of natural habitats. Key ecological areas include tidal wetlands, mudflats, and the centrally located lagoon system, which together provide important habitat for migratory birds, small mammals, and aquatic species. The San Francisco Bay also borders the city to the north and east and is the largest estuary on the West Coast, supporting a rich diversity of wildlife and plant species. It provides critical habitat for migratory birds, fish nurseries, and endangered species such as the Ridgway's rail and salt marsh harvest mouse. As shown in Figure 4, vegetation mapping has identified several habitat types within the city, including salt marsh, non-native forest, and native herbaceous communities. Notably, 21 special-status animal species and six plant species have been observed or are presumed present,

including the endangered Ridgeway's rail and salt-marsh harvest mouse, both dependent on the city's remaining tidal marshes.

Foster City's biological resources face ongoing challenges from habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and urban runoff. Shoreline habitats are often constrained by levees and adjacent development, limiting their ecological function and the ability of species to migrate or adapt to environmental change. These pressures are compounded by climate-related stressors such as rising sea levels and shifting precipitation patterns.

Within this complex landscape, areas along Belmont Slough, Seal Slough, and underutilized park edges offer potential for habitat restoration and rewilding. These efforts could strengthen native biodiversity, improve habitat connectivity, and help restore key ecosystem services. In addition, Foster City's extensive park system presents a valuable resource for targeted naturalization and improved linkages between natural areas to support wildlife movement and expand urban habitat in meaningful ways.

Figure 4 Vegetation and Land Cover



Wildlife Connectivity

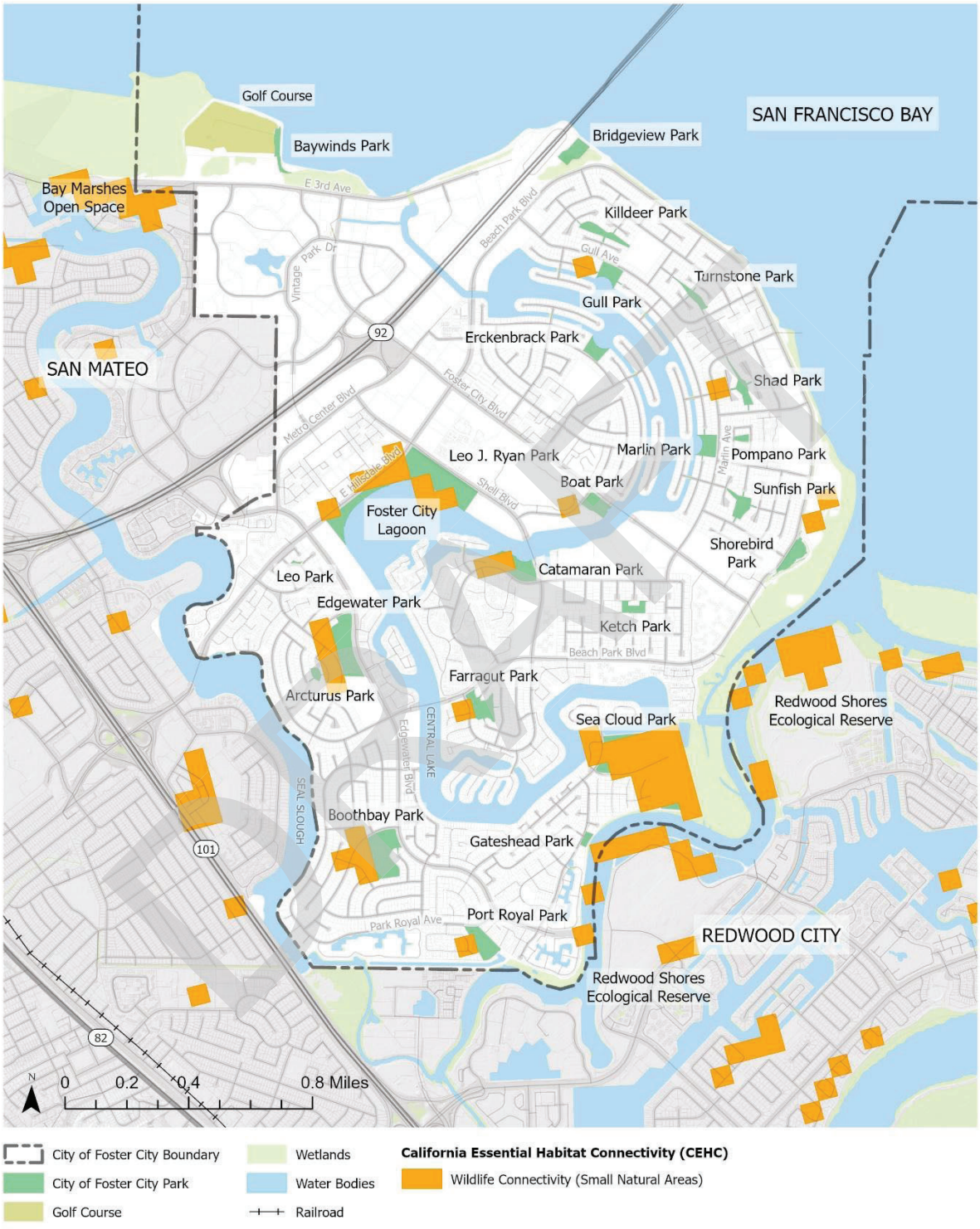
Wildlife movement in Foster City is shaped, and often limited, by urban infrastructure such as roads, levees, and dense development. Natural movement corridors are limited, typically confined to narrow greenways, fragmented shoreline edges, and the lagoon system. While the lagoon offers aesthetic and recreational value to residents and visitors as well as some habitat potential, its channelized design, steep edges, and proximity to human activity reduces its habitat value for many species.

Recognizing the importance of habitat connectivity, State law (AB 1889) now requires cities and counties to assess and enhance habitat connectivity for wildlife through their general plans. In Foster City, barriers to wildlife movement include:

- Highway 92, which disrupts north–south continuity
- Urban lighting, which interferes with the behavior of nocturnal species
- Recreational activity, which can fragment habitats and deter sensitive wildlife

As shown in Figure 5, much of Foster City is either urban or suburban, and therefore wildlife corridors and nursery sites are not present in much of the city. Wildlife connectivity areas are fragmented, and green spaces are often landscaped for recreation rather than habitat value, reducing their ecological function. However, with strategic design and targeted improvements, these spaces can support both human and ecological needs. Enhancing shoreline habitats, planting suitable vegetation, and implementing wildlife-friendly infrastructure such as culverts or buffer zones can create pathways for wildlife movement and better contribute to a resilient and biodiverse city.

Figure 5 Wildlife Connectivity Areas



Data provided by City of Foster City, 2025; Caltrans and CDFG, 2025.

Coastal Resources

Foster City, 2025.

Foster City's shoreline borders the San Francisco Bay and includes estuarine and brackish marshes, particularly near Belmont Slough and the Redwood Shores Ecological Reserve. These areas serve as vital feeding and nesting grounds for numerous bird species, including some species of special concern. The Redwood Shores Ecological Reserve, a protected 268-acre salt marsh, supports sensitive species such as the Alameda song sparrow and Ridgeway's rail and serves as a critical ecological buffer against urban development.

Foster City has made significant investments in engineered flood protection systems, including recent upgrades to its levee system, which play a critical role in safeguarding the community from storm surge and sea level rise. These infrastructure improvements represent an essential layer of protection for residents and assets. At the same time, this flood protection infrastructure can constrain natural ecological processes and limit the inland migration of wetlands, which play a vital role in preserving local ecological integrity by providing habitat for diverse wildlife, serving as temporary resting areas for migrating species, filtering water pollutants, and offering natural flood protection. As climate change accelerates, coastal ecosystems face increasing stress from rising groundwater, saline intrusion, and greater exposure of infrastructure. The continued loss of tidal marshes would reduce habitat availability and diminish the shoreline's natural ability to buffer wave energy and filter pollutants.

Regional planning efforts, such as those led by BCDC and OneShoreline, recognize the importance of complementing traditional infrastructure with natural systems, such as tidal marshes and mudflats, to strengthen shoreline resilience. By restoring degraded habitat and integrating nature-based features into levee design, Foster City can build on its recent investments to ensure long-term ecological and community resilience.

Climate Considerations

Climate change presents significant risks to Foster City's biological resources. Rising temperatures, shifts in precipitation patterns, and sea level rise pose risks to habitat health, food and water availability for

wildlife, while potentially limiting access to necessary wildlife connectivity and migration corridors. Low-lying shoreline habitats face potential inundation in the future, which would result in the loss of critical wetlands, biodiversity corridors, and coastal buffer zones. Urban green spaces, such as parks and vegetated areas along the lagoon and coastline, can serve as important refuges and movement corridors for wildlife. However, they currently offer limited climate resilience opportunities due to sparse tree canopy and fragmented natural areas.

Adapting to climate change requires a multifaceted strategy that includes nature-based solutions such as wetland restoration, permeable surfaces, and urban forestry. These solutions can help preserve biodiversity and support species resilience, as well as other benefits such as mitigating flooding, reducing urban heat, and supporting habitat migration. In addition, the city is exploring a citywide tree canopy study, which, when paired with surface heat mapping and social vulnerability data, could guide future investments in climate-resilient green infrastructure and improve neighborhood-level adaptation strategies.

Water Resources

Foster City, 2025.

Foster City maintains a network of engineered lagoons and canals designed primarily for stormwater management, flood control, and community recreation. These water features also provide secondary habitat for birds and aquatic species and are not used for potable water supply. The city's drinking water is entirely imported via the Estero Municipal Improvement District, supplied by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission's Hetch Hetchy system. While Foster City does not currently utilize local groundwater for its municipal supply, it remains vulnerable to regional groundwater-level fluctuations driven by climate change. The development of this Element included coordination with EMID, and review of and alignment with applicable water supply, water quality, and groundwater management plans.

Water Quality

Drinking water quality in Foster City is high, with the Estero Municipal Improvement District meeting or exceeding all State and federal standards. Water is treated at regional facilities before distribution and is continuously monitored. However, water quality issues are more pronounced in the city's lagoon system, where elevated bacteria levels, especially enterococci, have led to periodic beach closures. These issues are largely attributed to wildlife waste, stormwater runoff, and overgrown aquatic vegetation.

To address lagoon water quality, the City has adopted a Lagoon Management Plan, emphasizing routine monitoring, vegetation control, and public education. The city also participates in regional programs to prevent stormwater pollution and maintain compliance with the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. While efforts are underway, water quality in the lagoon and shoreline areas will remain a concern until planned actions for improving runoff management, enhancing ecological buffers, and managing urban wildlife populations are implemented.

Water Supply

Foster City's water supply is entirely imported through the Hetch Hetchy system, managed by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. During normal years, supply is projected to be adequate through 2045. However, in single and multiple dry years, demand is projected to outpace supply, with deficits exceeding 800 million gallons annually by 2045 under drought conditions. In the event of a water shortage, the Estero Municipal Improvement District would implement its Water Shortage Contingency Plan which outlines a suite of water demand reduction measures of varying severity designed to protect health and safety, minimize economic disruption, and preserve environmental and community assets. Nonetheless, the City is vulnerable to regional supply constraints, especially as climate change increases the frequency of dry periods.

Given this dependency, continued participation in regional conservation programs, alternative supply planning, and demand management will be essential. The Estero Municipal Improvement District's Urban Water Management Plan identifies the need for coordinated planning with regional partners and highlights the importance of preparing for worst-case drought scenarios. While recycled water is not currently used, it presents potential opportunities to supplement current and future water supplies and serve as an emergency backup option as climate risks evolve.

Climate Considerations

Climate change poses several risks to Foster City's water infrastructure and management systems. Rising sea levels may compromise the lagoon's drainage function, particularly during high tides or storm events. Higher average temperatures could increase lagoon evaporation and elevate potential for harmful algal blooms. This increased potential is driven by higher concentrations of contaminants and warmer water temperatures that promote algal growth, threatening habitat quality and recreational use. Additionally, altered precipitation patterns are expected to intensify stormwater runoff, potentially degrading lagoon water quality and overwhelming existing infrastructure. Groundwater rise is also projected to threaten buried infrastructure due to rising sea levels, leading to potential seawater intrusion, and contribute to inland flooding. Although the city is not dependent on groundwater as a water source, rising water tables could affect public utilities, natural open spaces, and impact natural and landscaped vegetation.

To proactively address these risks, Foster City can continue to implement targeted adaptation strategies such as strengthening of levees, improved lagoon circulation, shoreline wetland restoration, and

integration of green stormwater infrastructure. Proactive monitoring of groundwater conditions, in collaboration with regional agencies, will be critical for planning for future risks. Ensuring the continued function of the lagoon as both a flood control and ecological system will be essential in the face of climate variability and sea level rise.

Air Quality

Air quality in Foster City is significantly influenced by regional emissions, increasing wildfire smoke frequency due to climate change, and local traffic. The city currently lacks comprehensive, localized air quality monitoring infrastructure to track these impacts accurately and instead relies on nearby stations for data, which may not accurately reflect localized conditions. Indoor air quality trends in public buildings are also not well-documented, leaving gaps in understanding the full scope of exposure.

Emerging challenges for air quality in Foster City include increased wildfire smoke events, rising temperatures, and cumulative pollution from nearby urban centers. High temperatures can increase the formation of ground-level ozone, while inversions can trap pollutants close to the ground, leading to increased concentrations of harmful substances. Low-cost sensor deployment, improved building ventilation systems, and cumulative exposure mapping can better assess air quality risks. Coordinated efforts with Bay Area Air Quality Management District and regional grant programs may support these actions and contribute to healthier environments for vulnerable populations.

Energy Resources

Foster City has implemented a range of initiatives that provide a strong foundation for further opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve energy resilience through upgrades to its parks, public buildings, and community infrastructure. Existing municipal facilities, including - community centers powered by Peninsula Clean Energy's 100 percent carbon-free electricity program, ECO100, can further reduce electricity use and light pollution through energy efficiency upgrades like LED lighting, motion sensors, timers, and renewable-powered water management systems. In areas where conventional grid connections are costly or impractical, solar-powered lighting offers a low-maintenance, renewable solution. Energy conservation also supports broader climate and sustainability goals, particularly when paired with smart building materials and all-electric systems in future facility upgrades or new construction.

The City is also well-positioned to expand on-site renewable energy and support clean transportation infrastructure. A recent feasibility study identified municipal buildings, such as the library and forthcoming recreation center, as viable sites for photovoltaic (PV) systems. These, along with potential solar canopies over parking lots or maintenance buildings, could be paired with battery storage to improve emergency preparedness and grid reliability. Parks and civic buildings are also key locations for expanding EV charging infrastructure, particularly through public-private partnerships. Education and community engagement will play a central role in cultivating support for these initiatives, using public spaces as platforms for demonstrations, signage, and workshops that promote energy literacy and sustainable living practices.

Engagement Results for Conservation

During the development of the Conservation Element, residents shared priorities and perspectives on the natural resources and conservation strategies for Foster City through pop-up events, focus group discussions, a workshop, and a survey. Key findings from these activities are summarized below.

Community Priorities Survey

A critical component of community input was the Community Priorities Survey conducted in June 2025 via online questionnaire. The Foster City community expressed strong support for enhancing parks, trails, and natural spaces, with a focus on comfort, connectivity, and safety. Amenities such as restrooms, shade, seating, and wildlife viewing platforms were identified as top priorities for improving trail use. The Levee Pedway is frequently used by residents, and there is significant interest in expanding trail and bike lane connections. Conservation emerged as a clear community value, with most respondents rating it as very or extremely important and voicing strong support for rewilding efforts like native habitat restoration and pollinator-friendly landscaping. While enthusiasm for rewilding was high, some concerns were raised about pests, upkeep, and potential changes to recreational spaces.

Survey participants identified key environmental concerns, including sea level rise, storm flooding, water scarcity, and poor air quality. Residents placed a high value on open spaces that offer opportunities to connect with nature, support biodiversity, provide shade, and reduce climate-related risks. The most desired improvements included more walking and biking paths, increased tree cover, and restoring natural areas with native vegetation. There was also strong support for integrating green infrastructure, such as rain gardens and wetlands, and expanding educational features and access for all ages and abilities.

The community supported a wide range of strategies to protect open space and natural resources, including stronger zoning regulations, public-private partnerships, volunteer maintenance programs, and development incentives. Residents expressed a clear desire for the Foster City Lagoon to support both active and passive recreation, along with aesthetic and community uses. In terms of climate communication, respondents wanted more information on local flood risks, sea level rise, and ways to prepare for climate impacts. Overall, the results reflect a community that values nature, recognizes the urgency of climate adaptation, and is eager to engage in shaping a more sustainable and resilient future.

Community Engagement Takeaways

Key themes emerged from the outreach and engagement process:

Support for Rewilding with Thoughtful Design

- There is strong community interest in rewilding efforts that restore native habitats, support pollinators, and enhance the ecological function of parks and open spaces.
- At the same time, many want these naturalized areas to be designed and maintained in ways that remain usable, safe, and visually appealing – balancing ecological goals with everyday recreation and comfort.
- Concerns were raised about the potential to attract nuisance wildlife such as geese, as well as the need for clear upkeep and visibility. The feedback

underscores a desire for rewilding that enhances, rather than limits, the public's experience of open space.

Naturalized and Functional Open Spaces

- Community members want parks and open spaces to feel more ecologically rich while remaining comfortable and accessible, with amenities like shade, seating, and natural materials integrated into the landscape.
- There is interest in expanding tree cover and using native vegetation to provide cooling, habitat value, and a more natural aesthetic across the city's open spaces.
- Some suggested that conservation-oriented spaces still need to accommodate daily use, such as keeping restrooms open longer and providing places to rest, so that naturalized areas remain welcoming and inclusive.

Concern for Climate Risks

- Sea level rise, stormwater flooding, water scarcity, and declining air quality were repeatedly raised as major concerns.
- Open space is seen as a critical tool for addressing climate impacts, offering functions like cooling, habitat protection, and stormwater infiltration.
- Community members want more communication from the City about local flood risks, sea level rise adaptation, and practical steps households can take to prepare.

Sustainable Open Space

- There is strong backing for strategies like zoning protections, green infrastructure, and developer incentives that prioritize open space and ecological function.
- Volunteer programs and partnerships with local organizations are viewed as effective ways to support ongoing restoration and stewardship.
- People value the Foster City Lagoon as a space for both active and passive recreation, and want it protected for future generations.

Conservation Goals, Policies and Programs

Biological Resources

Goal C-1 **Natural habitat is protected and restored to support native biodiversity, improve ecological function, and enhance the resilience of open spaces.**

Policy C-1.1 ***Wildlife Habitat****. Protect and enhance Foster City's existing habitats, including tidal wetlands, mudflats, and urban forests, to support native biodiversity and ecological health.*

Policy C-1.2 ***Habitat Protection****. Promote the restoration and naturalization of degraded or underutilized areas, particularly along the shoreline and coastal trails, through native vegetation planning and habitat enhancement.*

Policy C-1.3 ***Support Biodiversity.*** *Implement maintenance strategies that prioritize native vegetation and manage detrimental invasive plant and animal species in natural habitat areas. Allow non-native plants only if they support aesthetics or habitat without harming biodiversity. Select vegetation that attracts desirable species and discourages those that pose nuisance or ecological risks.*

Goal C-2 **Ecological connections between fragmented habitats are strengthened to facilitate wildlife movement, support species adaptation, and minimize the impacts of urban development on biodiversity.**

Policy C-2.1 ***Habitat Connectivity.*** *Improve connectivity between fragmented parks, shoreline areas, and natural spaces to support wildlife movement through restored corridors and green infrastructure.*

Policy C-2.2 ***Wildlife Movement Design.*** *Incorporate wildlife-friendly infrastructure, such as underpasses, vegetated buffers, and light controls into public infrastructure and land use planning.*

Policy C-2.3 ***Movement Mitigation.*** *Assess and mitigate barriers to wildlife movement caused by roads, levees, and urban development.*

Policy C-2.4 ***Connectivity Partnerships.*** *Coordinate with regional partners, including OneShoreline, to support connectivity and flood resilience through multi-benefit projects.*

Policy C-2.5 ***Habitat Improvements.*** *Identify and prioritize habitat improvements that benefit migratory species, including birds and small mammals, in accordance with AB 1889.*

Goal C-3 Foster City's natural systems are resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Policy C-3.1 ***Climate Conscious Shoreline Management.*** *Integrate sea level rise, flooding, and extreme weather considerations into shoreline habitat management and restoration.*

Policy C-3.2 ***Nature-Based Solutions.*** *Implement nature-based solutions, such as wetland buffers and marsh migration zones, to protect both ecological and human systems.*

Policy C-3.3 ***Ecological Transitions.*** *Ensure conservation strategies account for sea level rise, saltwater intrusion, and climate-driven shifts in habitat type, extent, and species composition.*

Goal C-4 A community-wide ethic of environmental stewardship is fostered by engaging residents, regional partners, and organizations in the protection and enhancement of local natural resources.

Policy C-4.1 ***Public Awareness.*** *Increase public awareness of urban wildlife, habitat conservation, and sustainable coexistence through education and outreach.*

Policy C-4.2 ***Community Stewardship.*** *Encourage community participation in habitat restoration, monitoring, and stewardship activities.*

Policy C-4.3 ***Conservation Partnerships.*** *Partner with regional agencies, nonprofits, and academic institutions to advance conservation and resilience objectives.*

Water Resources

Goal C-5 Water resources are efficiently managed to ensure a sustainable, high-quality water supply for the community while promoting conservation, reducing demands, and protecting water systems from climate change.

Policy C-5.1 ***Water Quality Risk Prevention.*** *Address water quality risks associated with climate change, including warming temperatures, increased turbidity, and the potential for algal blooms in the lagoon and stormwater systems.*

Policy C-5.2 ***Water Quality Maintenance.*** *Support ongoing maintenance and timely replacement of aging lagoon, stormwater, and water infrastructure to protect ecological function and recreational use.*

Policy C-5.3 ***Pollution Reduction.*** *Improve lagoon circulation and implement pollution control measures to maintain water quality and mitigate contamination from urban runoff and other sources.*

Policy C-5.4 ***Water Quality Programing.*** *Expand participation in regional water quality programs, including the San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program, to better manage stormwater runoff and protect the San Francisco Bay.*

Policy C-5.5 ***Water Quality Monitoring.*** *Incorporate regular monitoring and public reporting of water quality conditions into city operations to support data-driven decision-making and transparency.*

Goal C-6 Foster City maintains a secure and sustainable water supply to support current and future community needs.

Policy C-6.1 ***Water Reliability.*** *Collaborate with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission to improve long-term water reliability, conservation strategies, and demand forecasting, especially under future drought conditions.*

Policy C-6.2 ***Supplemental Water Supply.*** *Encourage the Estero Municipal Improvement District (EMID) to explore alternative or supplemental water supply options and regularly update reliability assessments in response to climate trends.*

Policy C-6.3 ***Water Neutrality.*** *Implement and enforce the 2023 Water Neutrality Ordinance to ensure that new development and redevelopment do not increase overall water demand.*

Policy C-6.4 ***Water Conservation.*** *Integrate water conservation, reuse, and efficiency measures into new development, infrastructure upgrades, and public education initiatives.*

Air Quality

Goal C-7 Foster City is a healthy and climate-resilient community through reduced air pollution and improved air quality.

Policy C-7.1 ***Land Use Alignment.*** *Align Foster City's land use, transportation, and development decisions with air quality thresholds and best practices established by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) and California Air Resources Board (CARB).*

Policy C-7.2 ***Air Quality Mitigation.*** *Incorporate air quality mitigation strategies into land use planning by requiring vegetative buffers, enhanced filtration systems, and site design strategies to reduce exposure near major transportation corridors and pollution sources.*

Policy C-7.3 ***Complete Streets.*** *Encourage smart growth and complete streets principles that integrate air quality protection measures, such as shade trees and green infrastructure.*

Policy C-7.4 ***VMT Reduction.*** *Prioritize transportation and mobility improvements that reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and emissions, including expansion of pedestrian, bicycle, and electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure.*

Policy C-7.5 ***Regional Air Quality Coordination.*** *Enhance regional coordination and compliance with BAAQMD programs and participate in local implementation of Spare the Air and other outreach initiatives.*

Goal C-8 Foster City's neighborhoods are healthy, resilient, and equitable, with clean air and access to green spaces for all residents.

Policy C-8.1 ***Greening Air Improvements.*** *Expand urban greening strategies that improve air quality and reduce urban heat, including targeted tree canopy expansion and the use of vegetated buffers in high-exposure areas.*

Policy C-8.2 ***Tree City.*** *Pursue Tree City USA designation and adopt a citywide tree ordinance that guides planting, removal, and long-term care of public trees, with a focus on air quality and shade equity.*

Policy C-8.3 ***Air Quality Co-Benefits.*** *Design public parks and open spaces to maximize air quality benefits while supporting climate adaptation and equitable access to green space.*

Policy C-8.4 ***Air Quality Engagement.*** *Promote public awareness and engagement on air quality topics through education programs, signage, and collaboration with regional partners.*

Energy Resources

Goal C-9 Foster City's public facilities and infrastructure operate sustainably with low-energy use and resilient systems that support a clean and climate-ready future.

Policy C-9.1 ***Improved Energy Efficiency.*** *Improve energy efficiency in parks, public buildings, and community centers through lighting upgrades, smart controls, and design strategies that reduce both electricity consumption and light pollution.*

Policy C-9.2 ***Renewable Energy Expansion.*** *Expand the use of on-site renewable energy systems, particularly photovoltaic (PV) installations and battery storage, on City-owned facilities where cost-effective.*

Policy C-9.3 ***EV Charging.*** *Support the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in public parks, community centers, and City parking lots to enable a transition to clean transportation.*

Policy C-9.4 ***Low-Carbon Construction.*** *Promote all-electric systems and low-carbon construction practices in the design and retrofit of new municipal facilities.*

Policy C-9.5 ***Energy Outreach.*** *Use public spaces, such as parks, libraries, and community centers, as platforms for energy-related education, outreach, and engagement.*

Policy C-9.6 ***Energy Efficiency in Green Infrastructure.*** *Integrate energy efficiency and renewable energy into green infrastructure projects to enhance co-benefits for climate resilience, water conservation, and long-term cost savings.*

Implementation Programs

Number	Program	Lead Department	Supporting Department(s)	Timeframe	Implementing Policy(ies)
C-a	Explore opportunities for habitat restoration and naturalization within the existing parks system through the following steps: ▪ Assess and map high-potential sites (e.g., degraded park edges, canal embankments, underutilized shoreline areas); ▪ Integrate habitat strategies into the next Parks Master Plan update or as part of implementation actions; ▪ Develop guidance for incorporating native habitat elements into future park renovations, new park development, and routine maintenance; and ▪ Coordinate with restoration partners, schools, and community groups for implementation and stewardship.	Community Development	Parks and Recreation	Long-term	C-1.1, C-1.2, C-1.3
C-b	Seek funding for a long-term maintenance plan for restored and naturalized habitat areas that includes seasonal invasive species removal, native plant reestablishment, irrigation reduction, and trash/debris removal. Consider pilot programs with community stewardship groups to assist with hands-on maintenance and monitoring.	Community Development	Parks and Recreation	Long-term	C-1.1, C-1.2
C-c	Design and introduce educational signage at key natural areas (e.g., Belmont Slough, shoreline parks) with clear, engaging content about native ecosystems, local wildlife, and restoration goals. Include multilingual content, maps, and QR codes linking to informational websites. Encourage stewardship behaviors through signage, like staying on trails and avoiding disturbance of wildlife.	Parks and Recreation	Community Development	Mid-term	C-1.3
C-d	Continue to explore suitable levee-adjacent zones to retrofit with ecotone features that support both flood protection and habitat enhancement. Engage with OneShoreline, regional restoration partners, and permitting agencies to align with long-term sea level rise adaptation planning and pursue funding for design and implementation.	Public Works	Parks and Recreation	Long-term	C-1.3

Number	Program	Lead Department	Supporting Department(s)	Timeframe	Implementing Policy(ies)
C-e	Explore opportunities to better understand and improve ecological connectivity across the city. This may include studying ecological connectivity and mapping of habitat patches, identifying barriers (e.g., roads, fences, lighting), and evaluating where enhancements could support multi-species movement, especially along Belmont Slough, lagoon edges, and gaps between open spaces. Where feasible, consider coordination with regional experts and agencies to assess general habitat needs and potential improvements over time.	Community Development	Parks and Recreation	Mid-term	C-2.1, C-2.2, C-2.3, C-2.5
C-f	Encourage the inclusion of wildlife-supportive features into infrastructure and discretionary development projects where appropriate. These features may include safe road crossings, native vegetative buffers, wildlife-friendly fencing, down-shielded lighting, and mitigation measures for existing barriers.	Community Development	Parks and Recreation	Ongoing	C-2.2, C-2.3, C-2.5
C-g	Assess local habitat mitigation opportunities (e.g., offsetting development impacts) and create a grant funding strategy targeting AB 1889, Wildlife Conservation Board, and Proposition 1 programs. Design packaged projects with detailed scopes, cost estimates, and co-benefits to enhance competitiveness for funding.	Community Development	Parks and Recreation	Mid-term	C-2.1, C-2.5
C-h	Coordinate with OneShoreline, San Mateo Resource Conservation District, nonprofit organizations, and research institutions on joint grant applications, technical studies, and pilot projects that advance shared conservation goals, consistent with this Conservation Element.	Community Development	Parks and Recreation	Long-term	C-4.3
C-i	Enhance the City's water quality monitoring program to include indicators influenced by climate change, such as water temperature, turbidity, algal growth, and bacteria levels. Encourage the installation of real-time sensors at key locations in the lagoon system and stormwater outfalls, and use this data to inform water quality advisories, infrastructure upgrades, and restoration planning.	Public Works		Mid-term	C-5.1
C-j	Consider capital improvement project phasing to minimize disruption and align with sea level rise adaptation efforts.	Public Works	Parks and Recreation	Long-term	C-5.2

Number	Program	Lead Department	Supporting Department(s)	Timeframe	Implementing Policy(ies)
C-k	Continue to implement targeted strategies to reduce non-point source pollution, such as installing pet waste stations in parks, increasing street sweeping near outfalls, and adding trash capture devices in key storm drains. Coordinate these efforts with the Integrated Adaptive Canada Goose Management Plan to reduce the impacts of the goose population on water quality. Seek to pair these efforts with a multilingual public education campaign on pollution prevention, lagoon protection, and green infrastructure.	Parks and Recreation/Public Works	Community Development	Ongoing	C-5.3
C-l	Support increased City participation in regional water quality initiatives, such as the San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program. Identify City staff to represent Foster City in interagency meetings and explore co-funding or joint implementation of stormwater retrofits.	Public Works	Community Development	Mid-term	C-5.4
C-m	Encourage the Estero Municipal Improvement District to explore use of alternative water sources such as greywater or direct potable reuse to support the city's long-term water reliability and sustainability goals.	Public Works/Community Development		Long-term	C-6.2
C-n	Explore additional opportunities to establish partnerships with local and regional agencies and organizations to develop a public outreach campaign to increase awareness of existing water conservation programs and provide education on water conservation, targeting residents, schools, and businesses.	Public Works	Community Development	Long-term	C-6.4
C-o	Develop a set of planning and design guidelines for locating sensitive land uses (e.g., schools, senior housing) near high-traffic roadways. The guidelines should recommend best practices such as building orientation, MERV-13 or higher HVAC filtration, vegetated screening, and site layout strategies to reduce pollutant exposure. Integrate these standards into development review and environmental review processes where feasible.	Community Development	Public Works	Mid-term	C-7.1, C-7.2
C-p	As part of future maintenance projects, identify opportunities to install vegetative buffers, such as hedgerows, or bioswales between roads and sensitive land uses. Prioritize high-performing vegetation species suited to pollution absorption and local climate when installing new landscaping in these areas.	Public Works	Community Development	Ongoing	C-7.2, C-7.3

Number	Program	Lead Department	Supporting Department(s)	Timeframe	Implementing Policy(ies)
C-q	Review and enhance the City's Complete Streets and public realm guidelines to include stormwater planters, permeable paving, and native landscaping as standard components of street design to support air quality, active transportation, and neighborhood cooling, particularly in areas with higher pollution exposure.	Public Works	Community Development	Long-term	C-5.1, C-5.3, C-7.3, C-7.4
C-r	Support ongoing coordination with BAAQMD to ensure the City's plans and policies generally align with regional air quality standards and emission reduction targets. Participate in updates to the Clean Air Plan and pursue grant funding to implement local air quality improvement projects.	Community Development	Parks and Recreation/Public Works	Annual	C-7.5
C-s	Conduct a tree inventory and prioritize new plantings near schools and major roads where vegetation can mitigate air quality and urban heat impacts.	Parks and Recreation	Community Development	Mid-term	C-8.1, C-8.3
C-t	Pursue the development of a tree ordinance that governs planting, maintenance, and removal of City-owned and potentially private trees, including a permit system, replacement ratios, and performance standards. Align ordinance goals with air quality, climate, and equity outcomes.	Parks and Recreation	Community Development	Short-term	C-8.2
C-u	As part of future updates to the Climate Action Plan, update audits of energy use in existing municipal buildings to evaluate efficacy of energy conservation measures. Implement upgrades such as LED lighting, motion sensors, timers, and smart ventilation and irrigation systems in buildings, restrooms, pathways, and sports facilities.	Community Development	Parks and Recreation/Public Works	Mid-term	C-9.1, C-9.6
C-v	Advance photovoltaic installations at City-owned buildings and parking lots based on the recent feasibility study, beginning with priority sites like the Library/Community Center and planned Recreation Center. Explore solar canopies over large, paved areas and pair installations with battery storage for emergency backup and energy cost optimization.	Community Development	Parks and Recreation/Public Works	Long-term	C-9.2, C-9.6
C-w	Identify opportunities to install EV charging stations at high-traffic public facilities such as community centers, parks, and libraries that are accessible to all residents.	Community Development	Parks and Recreation/Public Works	Long-term	C-9.3