

**FOSTER CITY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE 2011**

# **Snapshot Workbook**

**Produced for the City of Foster City by  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING GROUP**

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## About the General Plan Update

A general plan is intended to announce a future vision for a city and guide the growth and development of the city. The Foster City General Plan is intended to be a statement of how the citizens of Foster City view their community, how they want it to be in the future and how they intend to deal with planning and development issues facing the community.

California Planning law requires every City to prepare and update the various required elements of a General Plan for the purpose of providing for the orderly development (and redevelopment) of the City. Foster City's General Plan was comprehensively updated in 1993 and has been amended several times since on a site-by-site basis as new opportunities have arisen. However, the data, background studies and goals, policies and programs have not been reevaluated since adoption in 1993.

City staff is preparing to update the Land Use and Circulation Element of the City's General Plan. This is the most complex and far reaching of the Plan's legally required Plan Elements. Metropolitan Planning Group, a local city planning consulting firm, is assisting the City in performing the necessary studies and gathering input from the community.



# Introduction

This is who we are.

This is a 2011 snapshot of where we live.

These are our challenges and opportunities. Here are strategies, policies, and programs that could be adopted to take Foster City where it wants to be in the next decades.

The Snapshot Report has been created to synthesize a range of complex issues into a highly accessible, user-friendly document. Community members, staff, and prospective businesses and residents alike will be able to turn to this report as a valuable reference. The Snapshot Report can be used throughout the General Plan update.

Earlier studies and reports prepared for the General Plan Update have been incorporated into this report:

- Community Profile
- Trends Analysis
- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis
- Issues and Constraints Background Report
- Climate Change Background Report



# SECTION 1: Community Profile

The Community Profile contains background information about the City of Foster City and is a comprehensive look at population, housing, land use, economic and transportation trends and information since incorporation. The Purpose of the Community Profile is to provide statistical information gathered from a variety of sources in a single publication. Intended users are any person, business or agency in need of socioeconomic data regarding Foster City.

The source information for the graphs and charts in the Community Profile is available at the Community Development Department, City Hall, 610 Foster City Boulevard, Foster City, CA 94404. In order to make the source information easier to use, a Technical Appendix to the Community Profile is available which contains the source information and some additional demographic information in spreadsheet format.

Additional specific information is also available from the various City Departments, as listed in Table 1-1 and on the City's web site at [www.fostercity.org](http://www.fostercity.org).

**TABLE 1-1:  
TELEPHONE NUMBERS FOR  
CITY DEPARTMENTS**

**City Clerk**

650-286-3251

**City Manager**

650-286-3220

**Community Development**

650-286-3225

**Corporation Yard\***

650-286-8140

**Financial Services**

650-286-3260

**Fire**

650-286-3350

**Human Resources**

650-286-3205

**Parks and Recreation**

650-286-3380

**Police**

650-286-3300

**Public Works/Engineering**

650-286-3270

\* Corporation Yard houses employees and services from both Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments



## Location

Foster City is located midway between San Francisco and San Jose on the western shoreline of the San Francisco Bay, east of U.S. 101, which provides convenient access to San Francisco and the San Francisco Airport to the north, and Santa Clara County and San Jose Airport to the south. The City is bisected by State Route 92 (the J. Arthur Younger Freeway), which runs between Half Moon Bay to the west and to Hayward and Highway 880 to the east via the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge. State Route 92 provides convenient access to the East Bay.

The City encompasses 12,345 acres, of which 9,726 acres are part of San Francisco Bay and Belmont Slough, and 2,619 acres are reclaimed marshland. This equates to approximately 4 square miles of land area.

Figure 1-1 shows the regional location of Foster City. Table 1-2 indicates the travel time from Foster City to various points of interest.



FIGURE 1-1: Regional Location Map

**TABLE 1-2: TRAVEL TIME FROM FOSTER CITY TO POINTS OF INTEREST**

	Cities	Transportation	Shopping	Recreation	Higher Education	Hospitals
<b>15 Minutes</b>	Redwood City* (*County Seat)	San Francisco Airport CalTrain San Mateo Millbrae BART San Carlos Airport	Bridgepointe Hillsdale Mall Tanforan Serramonte Colma Metro Center	Crystal Springs Reservoir Coyote Point Park SF State Fish & Game Refuge San Mateo Co. Fairgrounds	College of San Mateo Canada College	Mills Hospital San Mateo Co. General Hospital Peninsula Hospital Kaiser-Redwood City
<b>30 Minutes</b>	San Francisco Oakland San Jose Half Moon Bay	Oakland International Airport Hayward BART San Jose International Airport	Stanford Shopping Center Union Square-SF Stonestown Vallco Park Bayfair	Pacific Ocean Candlestick Park Oakland Coliseum Cow Palace Midpeninsula Open Space Golden Gate Nat'l Rec. Area Great America Shoreline Amphitheater AT&T Park	Menlo College College of Notre Dame San Francisco State University Stanford University Cal State East Bay DeAnza College Foothill College Santa Clara University	Stanford Medical Center Kaiser-Hayward Kaiser-South S.F. Kaiser Santa Clara
<b>45 Minutes</b>			Valley Fair Great Mall Santana Row	Golden Gate Fields Racetrack	San Jose State University University of S.F. Mills College UC Berkeley	UCSF Medical Center Kaiser – S.F.
<b>1-2 Hours</b>	Santa Cruz Sacramento Napa/Sonoma			Mt. Diablo State Park Big Basin Redwoods St. Park Alcatraz/Angel Island Sacramento Delta Pt. Reyes Nat'l Seashore Mt. Tamalpais State Park Six Flags Marine World	St. Mary's College UC Santa Cruz UC Davis	
<b>2-4 Hours</b>	Monterey/Carmel Mendocino Lake Tahoe/Reno San Luis Obispo			Monterey Bay Aquarium Pinnacles Nat'l Monument Clear Lake/Lake Berryessa Yosemite Nat'l Park	Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	

## History

Foster City had its beginnings as reclaimed marshlands devoted to dairy farming and evaporation ponds. At the turn of the century, the approximately 2,600 acres of tidal marshlands now occupied by Foster City were owned by Frank Brewer, and the land was called Brewer Island. Brewer eventually sold his land to the Leslie Salt Company and Schilling Estate Company.

During the late 1950s, T. Jack Foster, in association with Bay Area developer Richard Grant, purchased an option to acquire Brewer Island for the development of a complete community. In 1960, the California Legislature created the Estero Municipal Improvement District (EMID), the state's first such public agency. The District was granted most of the governing powers associated with an incorporated municipality, except the powers to zone and approve development, and certain police powers. The District was governed by a board of three directors representing the two landowners.

Because San Mateo County retained the authority to approve development permits, T. Jack Foster prepared a master plan for the development of Brewer Island (Foster City) and submitted it to the County in 1961. The plan envisioned a self-contained community with a variety of housing types, waterfront lots and parks, an internal lagoon for public recreation, marinas, offices, stores, industry, and public services. The City was to be developed as a cluster of nine residential neighborhoods (Areas 1-9 in Figure 1-2), a Town Center (Area TC in Figure 1-2), and an industrial area (Areas VP, C, L and PT in Figure 1-2). Most of the neighborhoods were planned for a variety of housing, from single-family homes on individual lots to high-density apartments. The Town Center was to be focused on an interior lake, and include a combination of community and regional commercial services, offices, entertainment establishments, and parks.

One of the more difficult aspects of the plan for the City was how to handle drainage in an area that was basically flat and at sea level. The engineering firm of Wilsey Ham developed a plan to raise the surface level of the island four to five feet and to dig a central drainage basin area that also would serve as a runoff storage area. This drainage basin is the Foster City Lagoon.

The County Board of Supervisors approved the Foster City plan and ground breaking for the first reclamation and development projects took place in August 1961. Due to the extensive fill, compaction, and construction of facilities that had to precede any building construction, three years passed before the first homes were completed.





The Estero Municipal Improvement District was authorized to issue over \$85.5 million in bonds in order to finance the improvements necessary for development of Brewer Island (the full \$85.5 million was not issued). The bonds provided enough funding to build the lagoon, water systems, sewer system, roads, bridges, and other necessary improvements.

At the end of 1964, 200 families had moved into Foster City. By 1966, the community had grown to 5,000 residents. As the City developed, residents came to realize that their lack of representation on the EMID Board made it difficult to affect Board decisions on development and taxation issues. In early 1967, residents reached a compromise with T. Jack Foster and Sons to introduce legislation increasing the Board's size from three to five. The two new directors would be elected by Foster City residents. The legislation also contained a provision for eventual transition of the Board to a full citizen representation by 1971. However, T. Jack Foster and Sons relinquished complete control of the Board to residents in 1970, a year prior to the statutory deadline. At that time, the EMID Board began incorporation proceedings.

Foster City was incorporated in April 1971, with the newly elected City Council assuming the powers of the EMID Board. Nearly seven years after the first families moved to Foster City, residents gained full control over municipal governance. Shortly after incorporation, Foster City's Master Plan was amended and adopted as the City's General Plan. New elements and amendments have periodically been approved over the years, however the basic concepts of the original plan have been maintained.

In 1972, the City opened a new City Hall. In 1974, the Recreation Center opened at Central Park on the shores of the Lagoon. In 1976, the fourth and last of the bridges crossing the Foster City lagoon system was completed and it was named the Bicentennial Bridge. A new Police Station located at 1030 East Hillsdale Boulevard was dedicated in March 1985.

*Note: A photo/text history of Foster City entitled, "A New Town Comes of Age: Foster City, California" was published in 1985. This 96-page book can be purchased at the Chamber of Commerce office, 1031 East Hillsdale Boulevard, Suite F, Foster City, 94404.*



**TABLE 1-3:  
FOSTER CITY NEIGHBORHOODS**

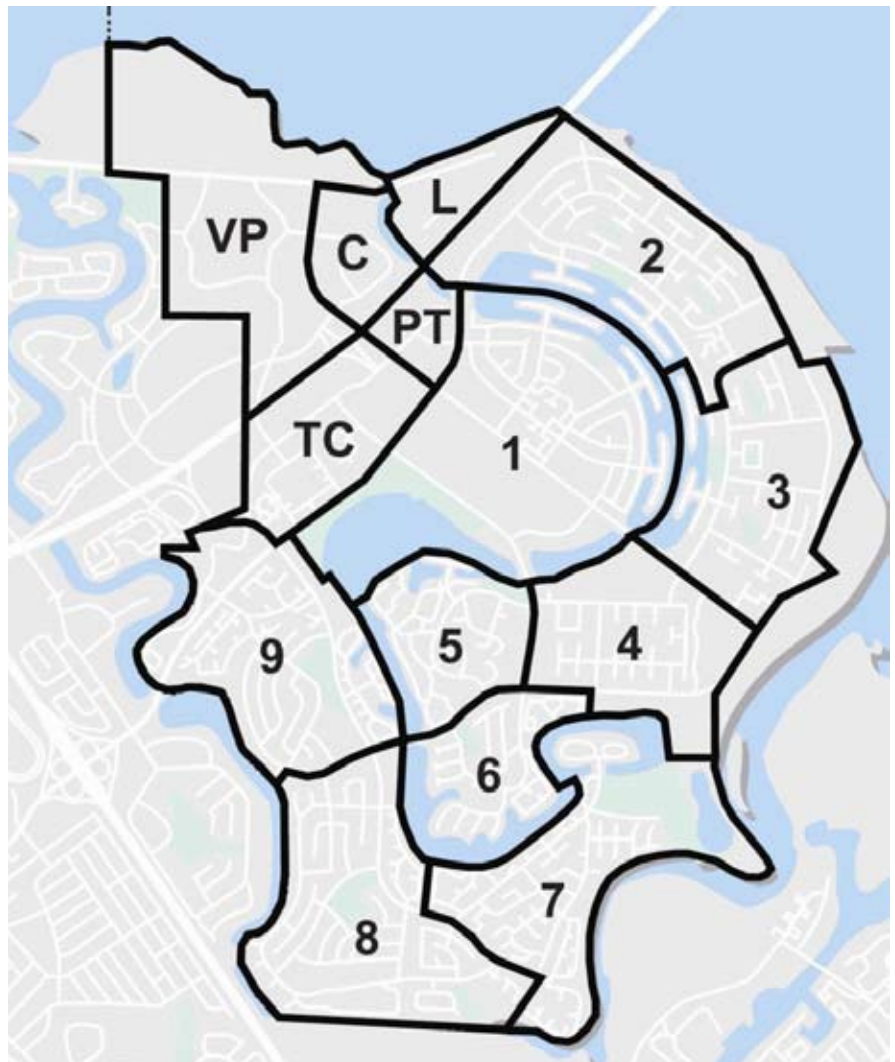
<b>Neighborhood 1</b>	Famous Ships
<b>Neighborhood 2</b>	Birds
<b>Neighborhood 3</b>	Fish
<b>Neighborhood 4</b>	Boats and Boat Parts
<b>Neighborhood 5</b>	Explorers
<b>Neighborhood 6</b>	Admirals
<b>Neighborhood 7</b>	Islands
<b>Neighborhood 8</b>	Neighborhood Bays
<b>Neighborhood 9</b>	Constellations and Stars
<b>Town Center (TC)</b>	No Theme
<b>Pilgrim/Triton (PT)</b>	No Theme
<b>Vintage Park (VP)</b>	No Theme
<b>Chess (C)</b>	No Theme
<b>Lincoln (L)</b>	No Theme

## Neighborhoods

The original plan for Foster City included nine neighborhoods, a “Town Center” area and an “Industrial” area. Almost all residential neighborhoods contain some mixture of single-family homes, two-story townhomes, and two- and three-story condominiums and apartments.

In early 1990, some minor modifications were made to neighborhood boundaries and the “Industrial” and “Town Center” neighborhoods were divided into smaller areas, resulting in fourteen neighborhoods.

Each residential neighborhood in Foster City is distinguished by street names found within the neighborhood. Most of the street names are derived from the marine nature of the City. Table 1-3 lists each neighborhood and its associated street theme (if applicable). The neighborhood boundaries are shown in Figure 1-2.



**FIGURE 1-2: Neighborhood Map of Foster City**

# Religious Institutions

Foster City is served by a wide range of religious institutions, as listed in the table below:

**TABLE 1-4: RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS**

<b>Bayside Community Church</b> 1401 Beach Park Boulevard	(650) 345-8992 <a href="http://www.baysidechurch.com">www.baysidechurch.com</a>
<b>Central Peninsula Church</b> 1005 Shell Boulevard	(650) 349-1132 <a href="http://www.cpcfc.org">www.cpcfc.org</a>
<b>Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints</b> 1000 Shell Boulevard	(650) 341-4374 <a href="http://www.mormon.org">www.mormon.org</a> <a href="http://www.lds.org">www.lds.org</a>
<b>Island United Church</b> 1130 Balclutha Drive	(650) 349-3544 <a href="http://www.iucfc.org">www.iucfc.org</a>
<b>Peninsula Sinai Congregation</b> 499 Boothbay Avenue	(650) 349-2816 <a href="http://www.peninsulasinai.org">www.peninsulasinai.org</a>
<b>St. Ambrose Episcopal Church</b> 900 Edgewater Boulevard	(650) 574-1369 <a href="http://www.stambrosefostercity.org">www.stambrosefostercity.org</a>
<b>St. Luke Catholic Church</b> 1111 Beach Park Boulevard	(650) 345-6660 <a href="http://www.saintlukefc.org">www.saintlukefc.org</a>





## Cultural

**Arts and Culture Committee** is a citizen advisory committee to promote art and culture in the community. Activities include workshops, contests, concerts, and monthly showings in the Museum Gallery located in the Recreation Center at 650 Shell Boulevard.

**Foster City Band** is comprised of people with diverse backgrounds who share the same love for music. For more information, contact (650) 345-3033.



**Foster City Community Chorus** is a mixed-voice group offering a variety of musical literature, which also includes folk and popular songs. For more information, contact (650) 513-5522 or [info@PeninsulaMusicalArts.org](mailto:info@PeninsulaMusicalArts.org).

**Foster City Public Library** is located at the corner of 1000 E. Hillsdale and Shell Boulevards in the Library and Community Center. The Library is a branch of the San Mateo County Library. For library hours and library services, contact (650) 574-4842 or [www.pls.lib.ca.us](http://www.pls.lib.ca.us).



**Hillbarn Theatre** located at 1285 East Hillsdale Boulevard presents a variety of community theater productions including musicals, comedies, and dramas. For information, contact (650) 349-6411 or [www.hillbarntheatre.org](http://www.hillbarntheatre.org).

**Peninsula Jewish Community Center** located at 800 Foster City Boulevard offers high-quality, multi-disciplinary arts programming and cultural opportunities. Intimate performances, lectures, art exhibits and workshops, featuring emerging and established artists and thinkers, strive to entertain, educate and enlighten. For more information, contact (650) 212-PJCC or [www.pjcc.org](http://www.pjcc.org).



**Viva La Musica!** Is a vibrant, 50-voice mixed choir with a classical and multicultural repertoire. The mission of the choir is to provide a vehicle that allows the member participants to strive for and achieve personal musical excellence, and that challenges and delights the audience with a high quality, diverse concert experience. For more information, contact (650) 349-9918 or [music@machutch.com](mailto:music@machutch.com).

## Annual Community Events

The City is one of the sponsors of two annual community events: the **Fourth of July Celebration** and the **City Birthday Party**. The Fourth of July Celebration is an all day event co-sponsored by the Lion's Club and includes fireworks, carnival rides, midway games, demonstrations, and other activities.

The City Birthday Party is held the first weekend in June and is co-sponsored by the Foster City Chamber of Commerce. The Birthday Party includes the Foster City Art and Wine Festival, carnival, midway games, demonstrations, and arts and crafts.

The Parks and Recreation Department offers many other events, classes and activities. During the summer, the Summer Concert Series offers free live music on Friday nights. The Family Fun Series typically includes a Family Fun Concert, a Family Overnighter in one of the City's parks, a Community Bike Ride, a Halloween Celebration and a Tree Lighting Ceremony.

**The Community Bike Ride** takes place annually on a Sunday in mid-September. The ride consists of three components: a long ride (approximately 11 miles), a short ride (approximately 2.5 miles) and a tot tricycle ride. On average, the bike ride has 175-225 participants each year.

**The Halloween Festival** is a one-day event held at the Recreation Center with a haunted house available to tour at The VIBE. The Halloween Festival includes games, face painting, arts and crafts, a costume parade with awards, a magic show and food sales. The recreation center is fully decorated for the event.

**The Tree Lighting Ceremony** occurs annually on the first Wednesday in December to celebrate the beginning of the holiday season. The event takes place at the Recreation Center and includes holiday music performed by a chorus, lighting of a tree on the lagoon, a craft project and visits with Santa for children.

Lagoon events are done in spring, summer and fall seasons. Regular events include the **Flight of the Bulls** sailing event at the beginning of May and the **Head of the Lagoon** rowing regatta put on by the Peninsula Aquatics Center Jr. Crew in November.

There are many more community events sponsored by the City. See [www.fostercity.org](http://www.fostercity.org) and the Leisure Update for more information.

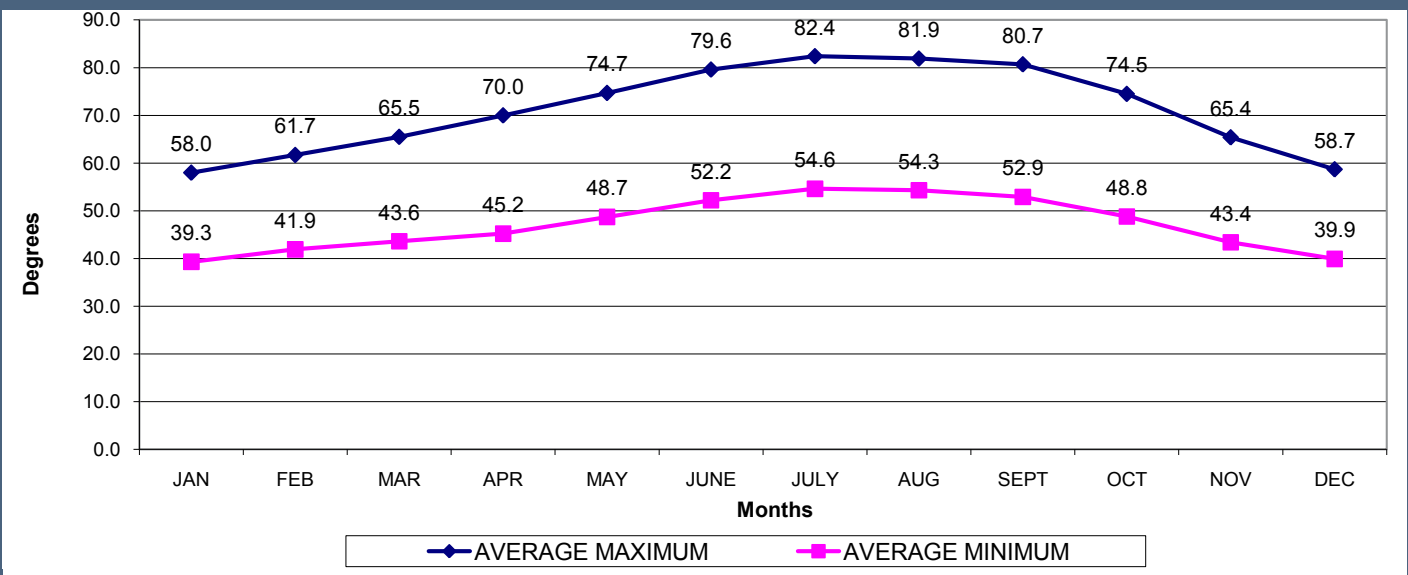


# Climate

Foster City enjoys a marine-like climate characterized by mild and moderately wet winters and by dry, cool summers. The daily and annual range in temperature is small. A few frosty mornings occur during the winter. Winter temperatures normally rise to the high fifties in the early afternoon.

The summer weather is dominated by a cool sea breeze. Low overcast often occurs for a few hours in the morning. Summer nights are comfortably cool, with minimum temperatures averaging in the fifties. The average minimum and maximum temperature range is 47.1°F to 71.1°F.

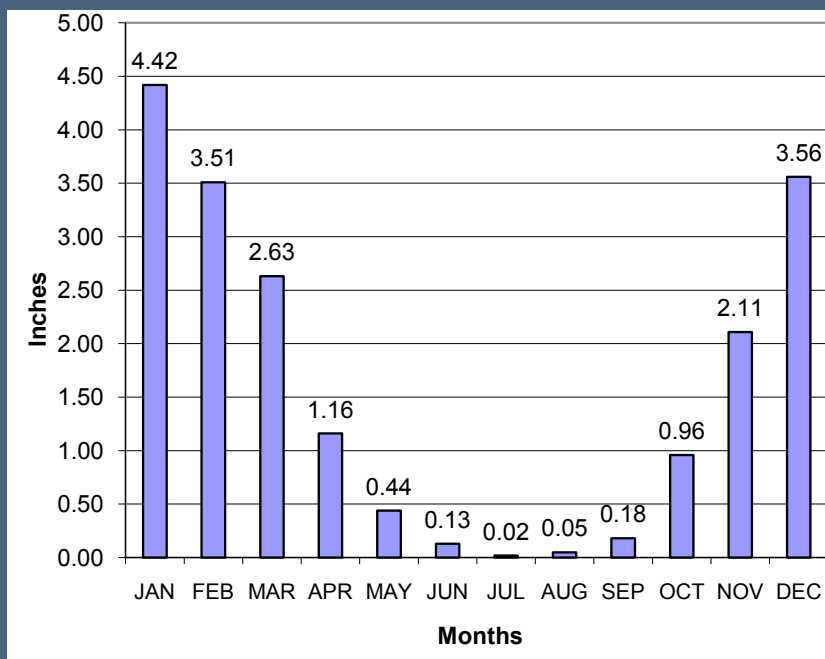
**FIGURE 1-3: Temperature Averages in Degrees Farenheit (1906-2009 Average)**



Source: Western Regional Climate Center, 2010

The average rainfall is less than 20 inches per year with the greatest amount occurring in December through February. Wind is from the west-northwest with an average speed of 10.5 miles per hour.

**FIGURE 1-4: Precipitation Normals in Inches (1906-2009 Average)**



Source: Western Regional Climate Center, 2010

# Education

There are currently four public schools in Foster City which are under the jurisdiction of the San Mateo-Foster City School District. Foster City is also within the San

Mateo Union High School District. Foster City High School students primarily attend either San Mateo or Hillsdale High Schools located in San Mateo.

**TABLE 1-5: ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS — PUBLIC**

**Audubon School**

841 Gull Avenue  
650-312-7500  
[www.smfc.k12.ca.us/audubon/home.htm](http://www.smfc.k12.ca.us/audubon/home.htm)

**Brewer Island Elementary School**

1151 Polynesia Drive  
650-312-7532  
[www.smfc.k12.ca.us/brewer\\_island/index.htm](http://www.smfc.k12.ca.us/brewer_island/index.htm)

**Bowditch Middle School**

1450 Tarpon Street  
650-312-7680  
[www.smfc.k12.ca.us/bowditch/](http://www.smfc.k12.ca.us/bowditch/)

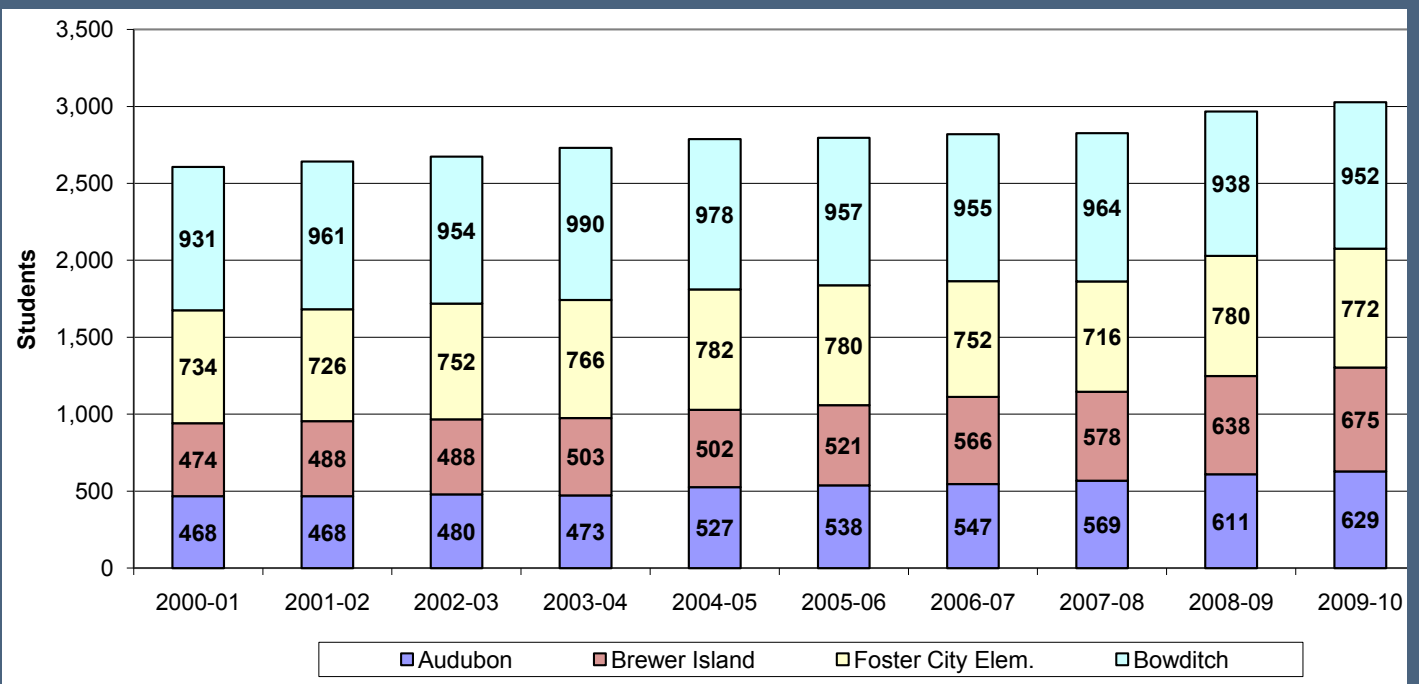
**Foster City Elementary School**

461 Beach Park Boulevard  
650-312-7522  
[www.smfc.k12.ca.us/fostercity/](http://www.smfc.k12.ca.us/fostercity/)

**Public School Enrollment**

Total public school enrollment has grown steadily over the past ten years, ranging from 2,607 in 2000-01 to 3,028 in 2009-10.

**FIGURE 1-5: Grades 1-8 Public School Enrollment (2000-01 through 2009-10)**



Source: San Mateo-Foster City Elementary School District, 2010

# School Test Results

The Academic Performance Index (API) is the cornerstone of California’s Public Schools Accountability Act. The purpose of API is to measure the academic performance and growth of schools. It is a numeric index (or scale) that ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 1000.

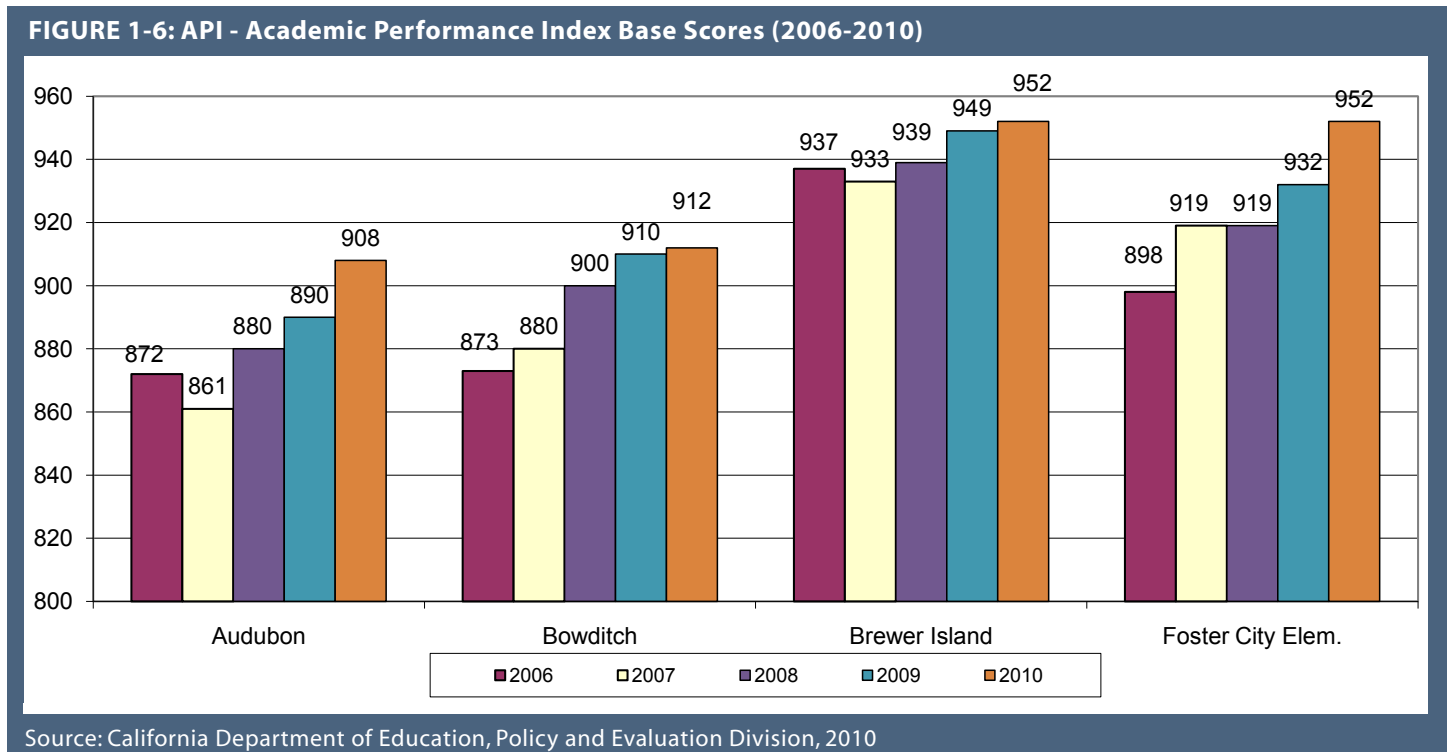
The API is calculated by converting a student’s performance on statewide assessments across multiple content areas into points on the API scale. These points are then averaged across all students and all tests. The result is the API. An API is calculated for schools, local educational agencies (such as school districts), and for each numerically significant subgroup of students at a school or a local educational agency.

The information that forms the basis for calculating the API comes from the results of the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program and the California High School Exit Examination.

More information is available on the API at: [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov).

## Academic Performance Index (API)

The chart below includes the API Base Scores for the four public schools in Foster City. For 2010, the District-wide median score was 846; the statewide median score for grades 2-6 was 800; and the statewide median score for grades 7-8 was 765.



**TABLE 1-6: ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS — PRIVATE**

There are two existing private schools, including:

**Kids Connection (K-5th grade)**  
 1998 Beach Park Boulevard  
 650-578-6690 [www.kc4us.com](http://www.kc4us.com)

**Jewish Day School of the North Peninsula (K-8th grade)**  
 800 Foster City Boulevard  
 650-591-4438 [www.wornickjds.org](http://www.wornickjds.org)

There are a multitude of after-school programs for elementary, middle school and high school children provided by the City, the School District or by private program providers.



## Child Care Centers

A wide variety of child care services are available, including family-size day care providers located throughout the City in residential areas, after school programs, and part- or full-time day care facilities. The largest day care facilities are listed in Table 1-7. In addition to these facilities, there are 16 licensed large (for 12 or more children) family day care providers in Foster City as of August 2010. More information is available from the Child Care Coordinating Council of San Mateo County at [www.sanmateo4cs.org](http://www.sanmateo4cs.org) or (650) 655-6770. Information regarding state licensing of day care providers is available from the California Department of Social Services. For more information, contact:

California Department of Social Services  
Community Care Licensing Division  
Child Care Program Office  
801 Traeger Avenue Suite 100  
San Bruno, CA 94066  
Phone: (650) 266-8843  
[www.cclcd.ca.gov](http://www.cclcd.ca.gov)



### TABLE 1-7: CHILDREN'S DAY CARE FACILITIES

#### **ALL ARE FRIENDS MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

1130 Balclutha Drive  
[www.allarefriends.org](http://www.allarefriends.org)  
650-266-8843

#### **CHAI PRESCHOOL**

499 Boothbay Avenue  
[www.chaischool.com](http://www.chaischool.com)  
650-345-2424

#### **CHALLENGE SCHOOL**

558 Pilgrim Drive, Suite A  
[www.challengeschool.us](http://www.challengeschool.us)  
650-574-6878

#### **FOSTER CITY PRE-SCHOOL**

1064-F Shell Boulevard  
[www.fostercitypreschool.com](http://www.fostercitypreschool.com)  
650-341-2041

#### **KIDS CONNECTION**

1970 Beach Park Boulevard  
[www.kc4us.com](http://www.kc4us.com)  
650-578-9697

#### **KINDERCARE LEARNING CENTERS, INC.**

1006 Metro Center Boulevard  
[www.kindercare.com](http://www.kindercare.com)  
650-573-6023

#### **LAKEVIEW MONTESSORI**

1950 Beach Park Boulevard  
[www.lakeviewmontessori.com](http://www.lakeviewmontessori.com)  
650-578-9532

#### **MARIN DAY SCHOOL-EFI CAMPUS**

301 Velocity Way  
[www.marindayschools.org](http://www.marindayschools.org)  
650-357-4250

#### **PENINSULA JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER PRESCHOOL**

800 Foster City Boulevard  
[www.pjcc.org/family/ece/ece-preschool.html](http://www.pjcc.org/family/ece/ece-preschool.html)  
650-378-2670

#### **SEA BREEZE SCHOOL**

900 Edgewater Boulevard  
[www.seabreezeschool.com](http://www.seabreezeschool.com)  
650-574-5437

## Governmental Services

The City Council has appointed one commission and several committees to advise it on matters of special interest, as listed below:

- Planning Commission
- Ad-Hoc Environmental Sustainability Task Force
- Audit Committee
- Information Technology Advisory Committee
- Parks and Recreation Committee
- Senior Citizen Advisory Committee
- Traffic Review Committee
- Youth Advisory Committee

For additional information regarding each advisory committee, call the City Clerk at (650) 286-3250, e-mail [clerk@fostercity.org](mailto:clerk@fostercity.org), or visit [www.fostercity.org](http://www.fostercity.org).

The following sections describe the principal governmental agencies providing services to Foster City: the Estero Municipal Improvement District, the City of Foster City, and the Foster City Community Development Agency. The members of the City Council serve as a policy-making body for all three governmental agencies. City voters elect council members to staggered terms of four years each. The City Council consists of five members, one of whom is elected by other council members in November each year to serve as Mayor for a one-year term. More information about the City Council, including City Council members, agendas and minutes is available at [http://www.fostercity.org/city\\_hall/council/](http://www.fostercity.org/city_hall/council/).

The City Council of Foster City meets on the first and third Monday evenings of each month at 6:30 P.M. in the Council Chambers at 620 Foster City Boulevard. These meetings are televised on local cable television, Comcast Channel 27, AT&T Channel 99 or live streaming at [www.fostercitytelevision.com](http://www.fostercitytelevision.com). All meetings of the City Council, Planning Commission, and any Committees are open to the public except when certain confidential personnel matters and legal items are discussed.

As the legislative branch of local government, the City Council makes final decisions on all major City policy matters. The Council adopts the ordinances and resolutions necessary for efficient governmental operations, approves the budget and acts as a board of appeals. The administrative responsibility of the City rests with the City Manager who is appointed by the City Council.

### ***Estero Municipal Improvement District***

The Estero Municipal Improvement District (EMID) was created in 1960 with a Board of Directors. The three original members of this Board were elected on the basis of “one vote per one dollar of assessed valuation” of land in the District. In other words, the more land owned, the larger the voting power, (such an arrangement was necessary because the “City” had no residents at the time).

EMID sold bonds to finance the major improvements needed for development of the City. The bonds were to be paid back through the levying of assessments on property based upon future development. EMID continues to provide water and sewer service to Foster City and water service to Mariner’s Island and is a separate legal entity with the City Council serving as its Board of Directors.

### ***City and EMID Budget***

Each year the City and EMID prepare and adopt a joint budget. A summary of the estimated revenues and expenditures are contained in Figure 1-7 and Figure 1-8, respectively.

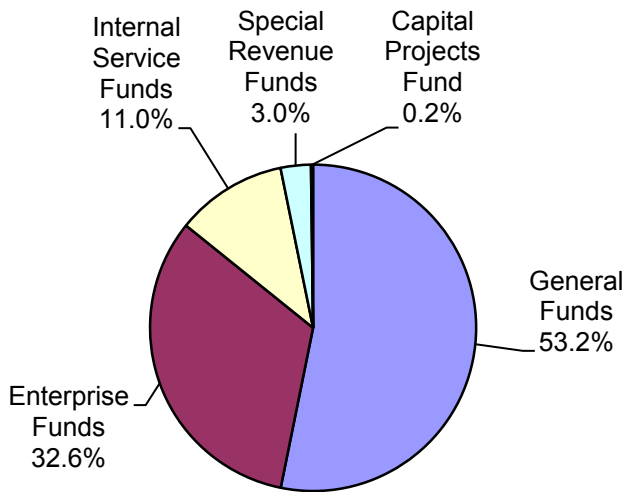


### Community Development Agency

Foster City's Community Development Agency was formed in 1981 to eliminate blight conditions that had become barriers to the City's full development. The redevelopment concept originated after World War II when public officials at the federal, state and local level were concerned with:

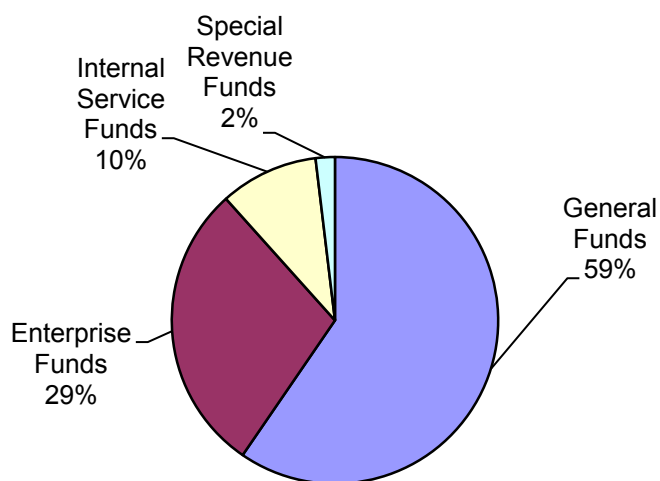
- The condition of existing housing stock;
- The lack of affordable housing for returning soldiers; and
- Blight and slums that had spread over an estimated one-fourth of urban America.

**FIGURE 1-7: City and EMID Revenues (FY 2010-11)**



Source: City of Foster City/EMID Revenues (FY 2010-11)

**FIGURE 1-8: City and EMID Expenditures (FY 2010-11)**



Source: City of Foster City/EMID Revenues (FY 2010-11)

The federal Community Redevelopment Act, adopted in 1945, gave cities and counties the authority to establish redevelopment agencies, to initiate urban renewal programs, and enabled the agencies to apply for federal grants and loans, which were primarily a result of the Federal Housing Act of 1949.

Foster City developed initially as a residential community; its commercial area development was delayed because of high land and construction costs. The City therefore relied heavily on property taxes to fund necessary community services. City officials recognized the need to expand and diversify the City's financial base, such as with increased sales tax. This became particularly important after Proposition 13 was adopted in 1978, restricting property tax revenue.

The Community Development Agency receives its funding from tax increment. The tax increment is the increase in property taxes after the "base year" - the year the Project Area was established. The tax increment is distributed to the Community Development Agency and other agencies, subject to negotiated agreements or pass through payments mandated by State Law. The Community Development Agency uses the funds to stimulate growth that would not otherwise occur, primarily through capital improvement projects such as street improvements, wastewater treatment, and lagoon-levee improvements. The agency is also obligated to spend a minimum of 20 percent of the tax increment funds it receives on low and moderate income housing.

Prior to the adoption of the first redevelopment agency project area in 1981 and the second and third project areas in 1999, underdeveloped land had inhibited economic growth and if allowed to continue would have potentially constituted a substantial financial drain on the community.

The second and third Project Areas established were the Marlin Cove Shopping Center and the Port O'Call Shopping Center (now the Miramar Apartments). Both shopping centers were failing with many vacancies, deteriorating buildings and site improvements and were having a negative effect on property values in their neighborhoods. Both shopping centers have been successfully redeveloped with attractive apartments, and in Marlin Cove, also retail and office.

The original Project Area is expected to reach its revenue cap in FY 2010-11, at which time the Community Development Agency will stop receiving tax increment from this large project area and the property taxes will be distributed as they are for property outside of any redevelopment project area. Revitalization of these underutilized areas has helped to relieve the tax burden the other areas of the community had previously shouldered.

To obtain more information about the Community Development Agency, please call (650) 286-3246 or email [CDA@fostercity.org](mailto:CDA@fostercity.org). Information is also available on the City's website [www.fostercity.org](http://www.fostercity.org).



**FIGURE 1-8: Map of Community Development Project Areas**

***City Departments and Services***

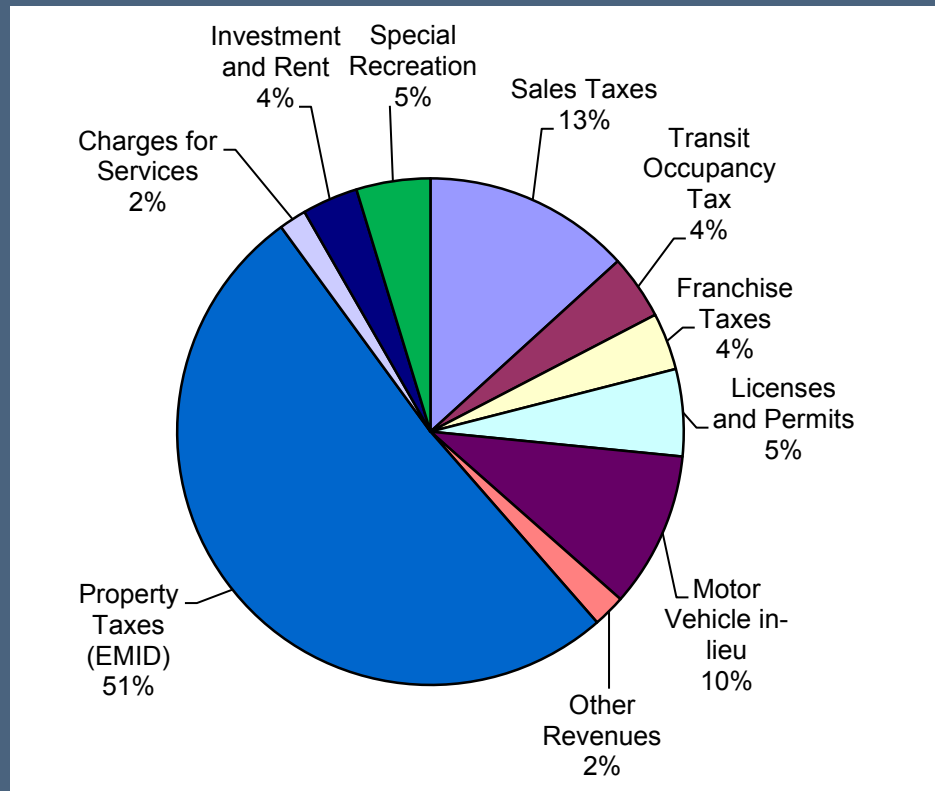
Foster City is a general law city as established by the California Government Code Section 34102 (rather than a charter city), and uses the council-manager form of government. A City Manager is appointed by and responsible to the City Council to serve as chief administrative officer overseeing personnel, development of the budget, proposing policy objectives, and general implementation of policies and programs adopted by the City Council.

Eight departments report to the City Manager, which include:

- The five line departments, so-called because they serve specifically to meet the needs of the citizens: Fire, Police, Public Works, Community Development, and Parks and Recreation; and
- The three support departments, which primarily serve to support the efforts of the line departments: City Clerk, Financial Services and Human Resources.

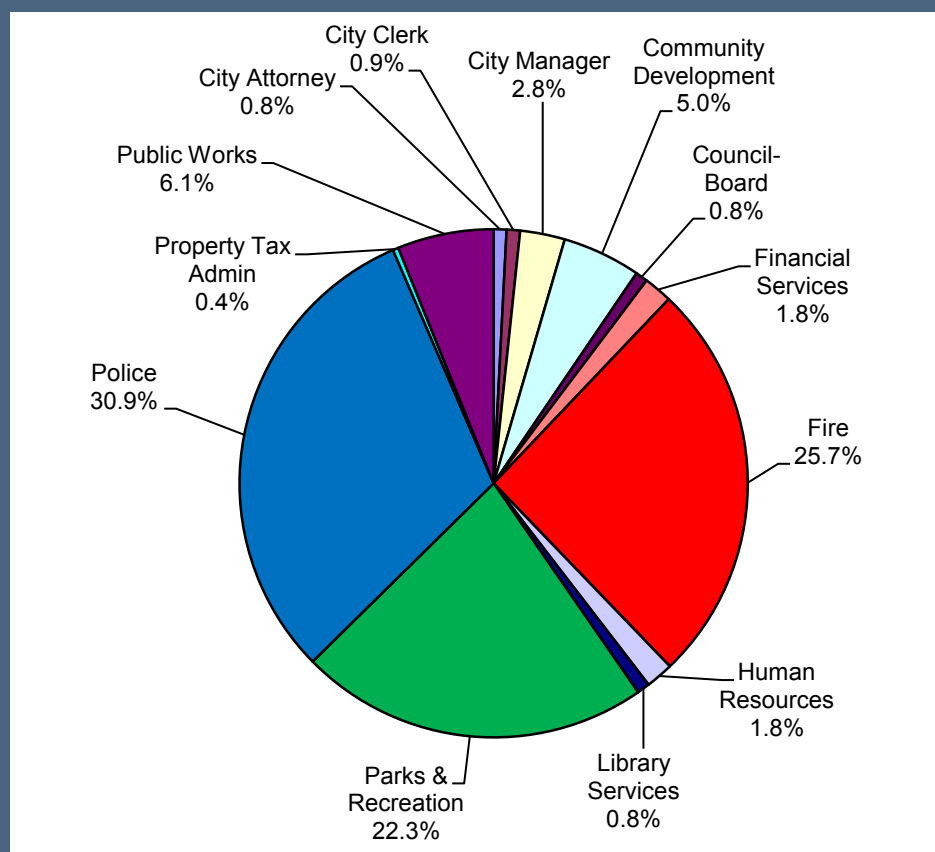
City departments are primarily funded from the General Fund as opposed to other special purpose funds. Figure 1-9 indicates the sources of revenues for

**FIGURE 1-9: General Fund Revenues (FY 2010-11)**



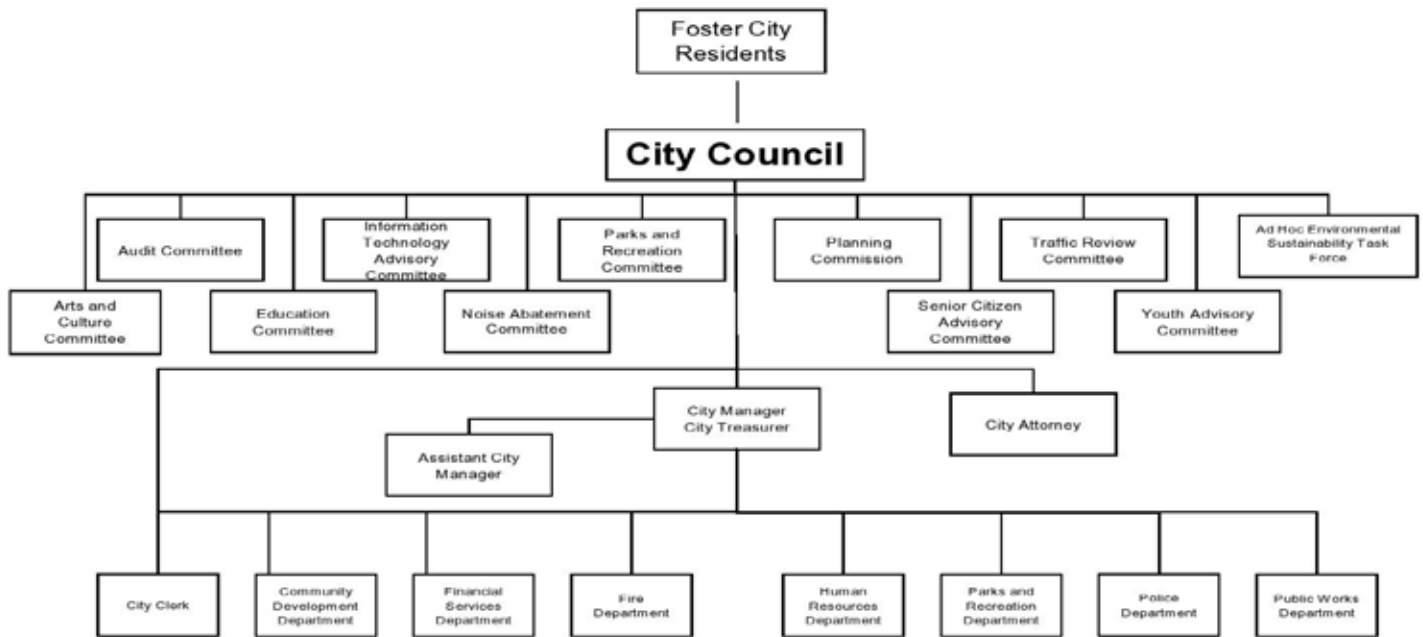
Source: City of Foster City/EMID 2010-11 Annual Budget

**FIGURE 1-10: General Fund Expenditures (FY 2010-11)**



Source: City of Foster City/EMID 2010-11 Annual Budget

**FIGURE 1-11: Foster City Organization Chart**



the General Fund. For Fiscal Year 2010-11 the estimated General Fund Revenues total \$27.7 Million. Figure 1-10 indicates each department's share of General Fund expenditures. For Fiscal Year 2010-11, total General Fund Expenditures totaled \$30.8 Million.

The City prepares a Five-Year Financial Plan as well as an Annual Budget. The Five-Year Financial Plan is based upon the strategies and Policy Calendar adopted by the City Council each year. The annual budget results in the actual appropriation of funds. The budget is the primary policy document adopted by the City Council each year. It describes the City's goals and details how resources are allocated to achieve these goals. In addition, the budget serves as the annual financial plan, an operational guide and a communications tool. For more information, see [www.fostercity.org](http://www.fostercity.org).

The following sections describe each City department and their responsibilities.

### *City Manager*

The City Manager is the chief administrative officer of the City and is responsible for providing direction and reviewing all phases of City/District operations. The City Manager is also responsible for ensuring that Council policy and established administrative practices are efficiently and effectively carried out within the fiscal and physical abilities of the various City/District departments

during normal operations as well as emergency situations. The City Manager is also responsible for public information, community relations, special projects and HR. For more information contact the City Manager at (650) 286-3220 or through email at [manager@fostercity.org](mailto:manager@fostercity.org).

### *City Clerk*

The City Clerk is responsible for Foster City's legislative history, official records, archives, Council Meeting agendas and minutes, municipal code book, and municipal elections. Additionally, the City Clerk is responsible for providing support services to the City Council, recording official records, and administering the appointing of members to the Citizen Advisory Committees and the Planning Commission.

In addition, the City Clerk administers campaign financing and conflict of interest laws, and implements changes in State election laws. For more information contact the City Clerk at (650) 286-3250 or through email at [clerk@fostercity.org](mailto:clerk@fostercity.org).

### *Financial Services Department*

The Financial Services Department is responsible for managing the City's funding. Its primary goal is to assure necessary and appropriate custody, control, use and reporting of city/district assets. The department also issues business licenses and manages the billing for utility services in the City/EMID.

In addition, the Financial Services Department monitors a prudent cash investment program in accordance with the City/District Investment Policy and State Law. The primary objectives for all city investments in priority order are safety, liquidity and return on investment. Investments are made with judgment and care considering the safety of our capital as well as the probable income to be derived.

For more information contact the Financial Services Department at (650) 286-3212 or through email at [finance@fostercity.org](mailto:finance@fostercity.org). For Accounts Receivable and Business Licenses, contact (650) 286-3262. For Utilities, contact (650) 286-3260.

### *Human Resources Department*

The City of Foster City maintains a workforce of 190 full-time and approximately 40 part-time employees in 79 different classifications. Services provided by the Human Resources Department include employee benefits, classification and compensation, workers compensation, recruitment and selection, labor and employee relations, employee training and development, and personnel record keeping. The department analyzes employee benefit programs to ensure that City sponsored benefits meet the needs of the workforce, and develops a comprehensive approach to employee recruitment with an emphasis on retention.

For more information contact the Human Resources Department at (650) 286-3205 or through email at [hr@fostercity.org](mailto:hr@fostercity.org). The City also has a Job Hotline which may be accessed at [www.fostercity.org](http://www.fostercity.org). or at (650) 286-3562.

### *Fire Department*

The Fire Department protects lives, property and the environment from fire and exposure to hazardous materials, offers programs which prepare our citizens for emergencies and provides nonemergency services, including fire prevention and related code enforcement, to residents and visitors of Foster City.



From one centrally located station, the Fire Department maintains an average response time of three to five minutes in the City. The Foster City Fire Department has been rated as a fire safety "Class 2" by the Insurance Services Office. Fire Protection ratings range from Class 10 (least desirable) to Class 1 (best).

The Fire Department employs 38 full-time personnel including Assistant Chief, Fire Marshal, Assistant Fire Marshal, Battalion Chiefs, Captains, Firefighters and administrative personnel. The Fire Chief position was combined as a contract position with the Fire Chief for the City of San Mateo, effective on July 1, 2010.

The Fire Department responds to more medical calls than all other emergency responses combined. For that reason, Foster City Fire Department participates with other Fire Agencies to provide Advanced Life Support (ALS) with a paramedic assigned to every fire engine. In addition, the Department participates in combined county-wide dispatching so that the closest engine will respond to



an emergency call, regardless of City boundaries. Engine-based paramedics ensure that ALS service is available faster than ever. A private ambulance transports patients to local hospitals.

All Captains and Firefighters are trained as emergency medical technicians and every engine is staffed with at least one paramedic daily, ensuring that the citizens of Foster City receive excellent ALS services by Fire Department paramedics.

The Fire Department provides safety education to the public including classes in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and disaster preparedness. School programs and tours of the fire station make students aware of fire danger in the home. Evacuation and disaster training is provided to businesses upon request.

The Department's divisions work in tandem to provide service to the community. The Administration Division, which includes the Office of the Fire Chief, provides program direction to all divisions and budget oversight for the Department. The Fire Prevention Division works to reduce the factors which contribute to the cause and spread of fire by consulting with the public, issuing permits, checking plans, inspecting for fire code compliance and developing and recommending new or modification to existing codes

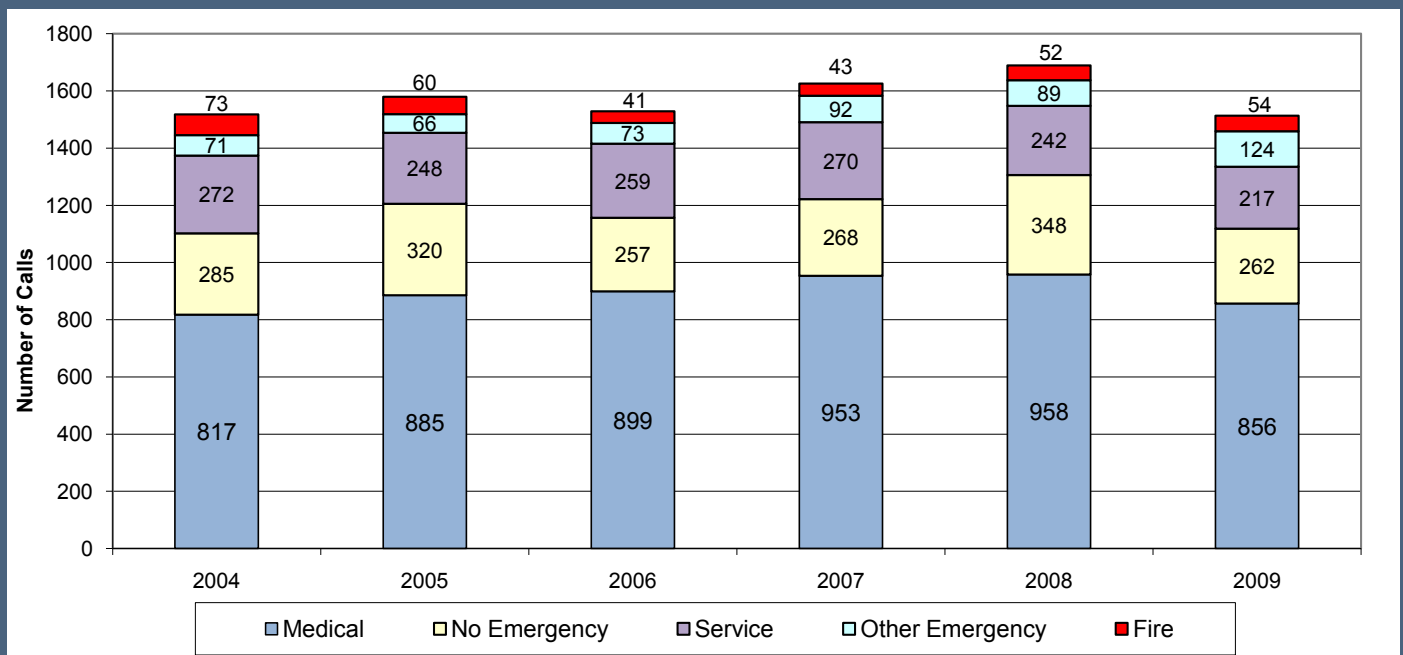
to the City Council. Operations Division personnel, trained in the most current and modern firefighting and medical techniques, respond to fire, medical, rescue, hazardous materials and citizen assist calls.

The Fire Department provides the following services for the City:

- Fire Prevention and Suppression
- Engine-Based Paramedic Program
- Certified Paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians
- Heart Defibrillation Program
- Hazardous Material Spills Response & Containment
- Home Inspections (upon request)
- Commercial/Industrial Inspection (by law)
- CPR Training for the Public
- Home Fire Safety and Earthquake Safety classes
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training

For more information, contact the Fire Department at (650) 286-3350 or through email at [fire@fostercity.org](mailto:fire@fostercity.org).

**FIGURE 1-12: Fire Department Calls (2004-2009)**



Source: Foster City Fire Department

*Police Department*

The Police Department organization consists of the Office of the Chief of Police, which commands the Administration and Field Operations Divisions. There are currently 36 sworn officers, 15 full time support employees and five volunteer reserve police officers.

Foster City has a very low crime rate and, year after year, is ranked one of the safest cities in California in which to live and work. Figure 1-13 compares crime rates in Foster City to San Mateo County and the State of California for 2008.

The Administration Division is responsible for criminal investigations, crime prevention, youth services, crime analysis, evidence and property control, budget preparation, press and community relations. It is also responsible for records processing and storage, computer

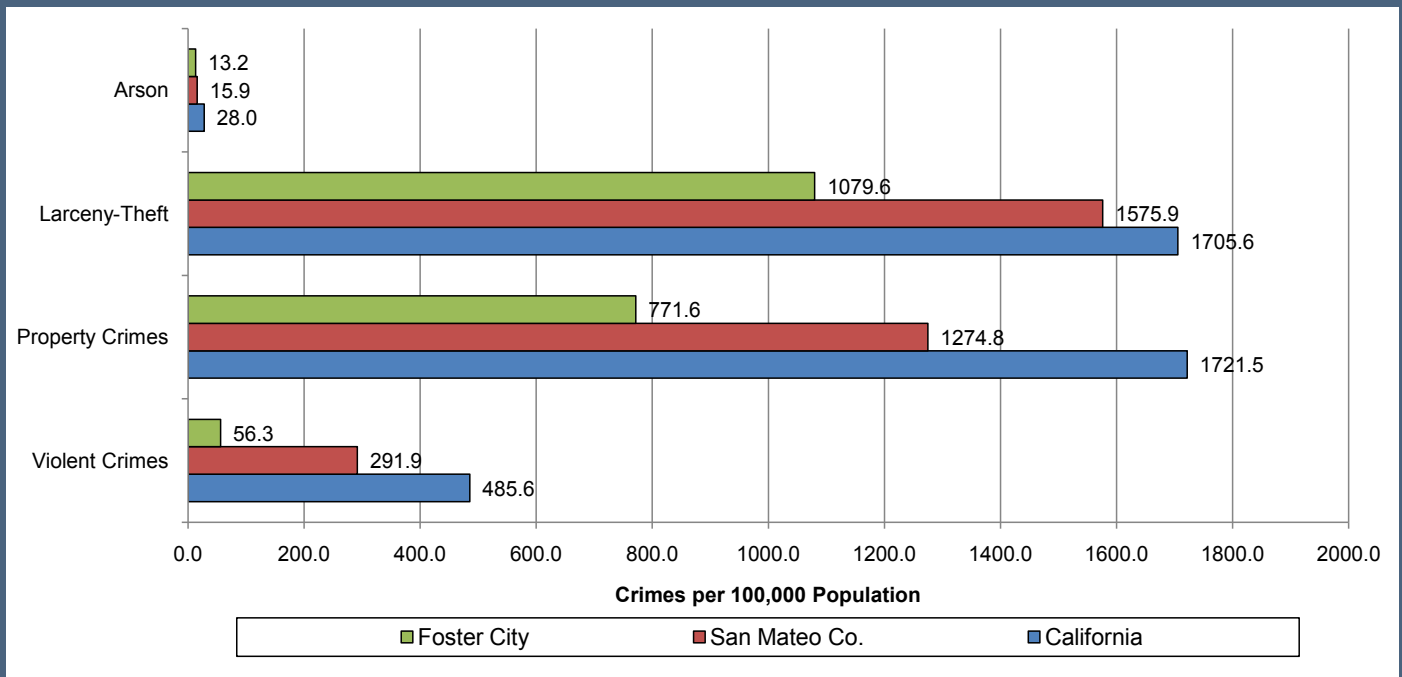
analysis and maintenance, radio communications and dispatch services for the Police Department.

The Field Operations Division consists of the uniformed officers who respond to calls for service and preliminary investigations. The division includes the traffic unit, the canine unit, the bicycle unit, field training officers, evidence technicians and community service officers.

Foster City consistently maintains one of the lowest crime rates in California.

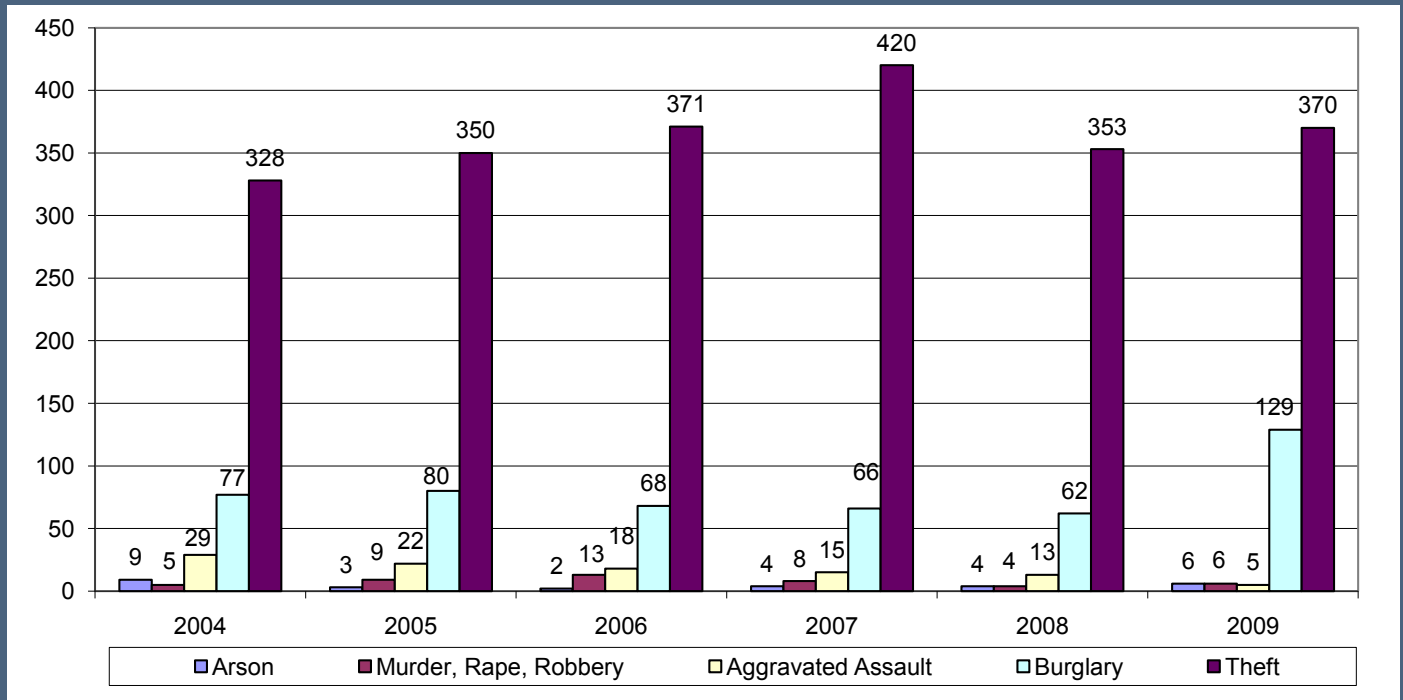
The Police Department is located at 1030 Foster City Blvd. For more information, please call the Police Department at (650) 286-3300 or email at [police@fostercity.org](mailto:police@fostercity.org). Additional information is also available on the City's website [www.fostercity.org](http://www.fostercity.org).

**FIGURE 1-13: Comparison of Crime Rates in California, San Mateo County & Foster City (2008)**



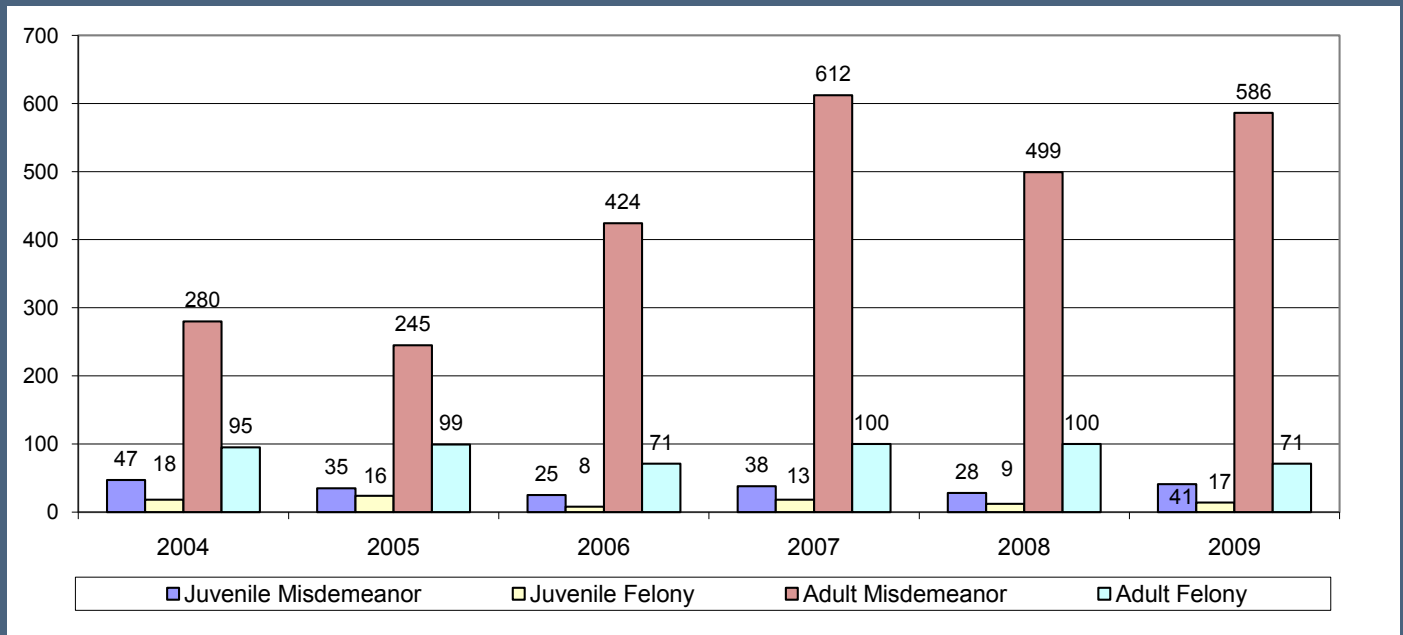
Source: California Office of the Attorney General

**FIGURE 1-14: Major Crimes in Foster City (2004-2009)**



Source: Foster City Police Department

**FIGURE 1-15: Arrests in Foster City (2004-2009)**



Source: Foster City Police Department

**TABLE 1-8: FOSTER CITY PARKS**

Park	Location	Acres
Arcturus Park	Arcturus Circle off of Polaris Ave.	0.75
Boat Park/Dog Park	Bounty Dr. and Foster City Blvd.	3.18
Boothbay Park	Boothbay Ave. and Edgewater Blvd.	11.21
Catamaran Park	Catamaran St. and Shell Blvd.	5.88
Edgewater Park	Edgewater Blvd. And Regulus St.	8.53
Erckenbrack Park	Niantic Drive	3.48
Farragut Park	Farragut Blvd. & Beach Park Blvd.	3.86
Gateshead Park	Baffin St. betw. Pitcairn & Edgewater	0.012
Gull Park	Gull Ave. betw. Mallard & Plover St.	3.14
Ketch Park	Betw. Schooner St. & Catamaran St.	1.60
Killdeer Park	Killdeer Ct. off of Gull Ave.	1.53
Leo J Ryan Park	E. Hillsdale Blvd. & Shell Blvd.	20.73
Leo Park	Leo Drive	0.015
Marlin Park	Marlin Dr. across from Pompano Cir,	3.13
Pompano Park	Pompano Circle	0.56
Port Royal Park	South end of Port Royal Ave.	3.98
Sea Cloud Park	Pitcairn & Sea Cloud Way	23.90
Shad Park	Between Shad Ct. & Bluefish Ct.	2.16
Sunfish Park	Between Mullet & Sunfish	2.41
Turnstone Park	Turnstone Court	1.53
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>102.72</b>

*Parks and Recreation Department*

The Parks and Recreation Department is located in the Recreation Center at 650 Shell Boulevard. The northern portion of the building includes the Foster City Senior Wing.

The mission of the Parks and Recreation Department is to create community through people, parks and programs. The Department consists of four divisions: Parks, Recreation, Buildings, and Vehicles. The Department's programs protect and monitor the environmental and economic resources, facilitate community problem solving and build upon community pride while providing a variety of parks and recreation services in the community.

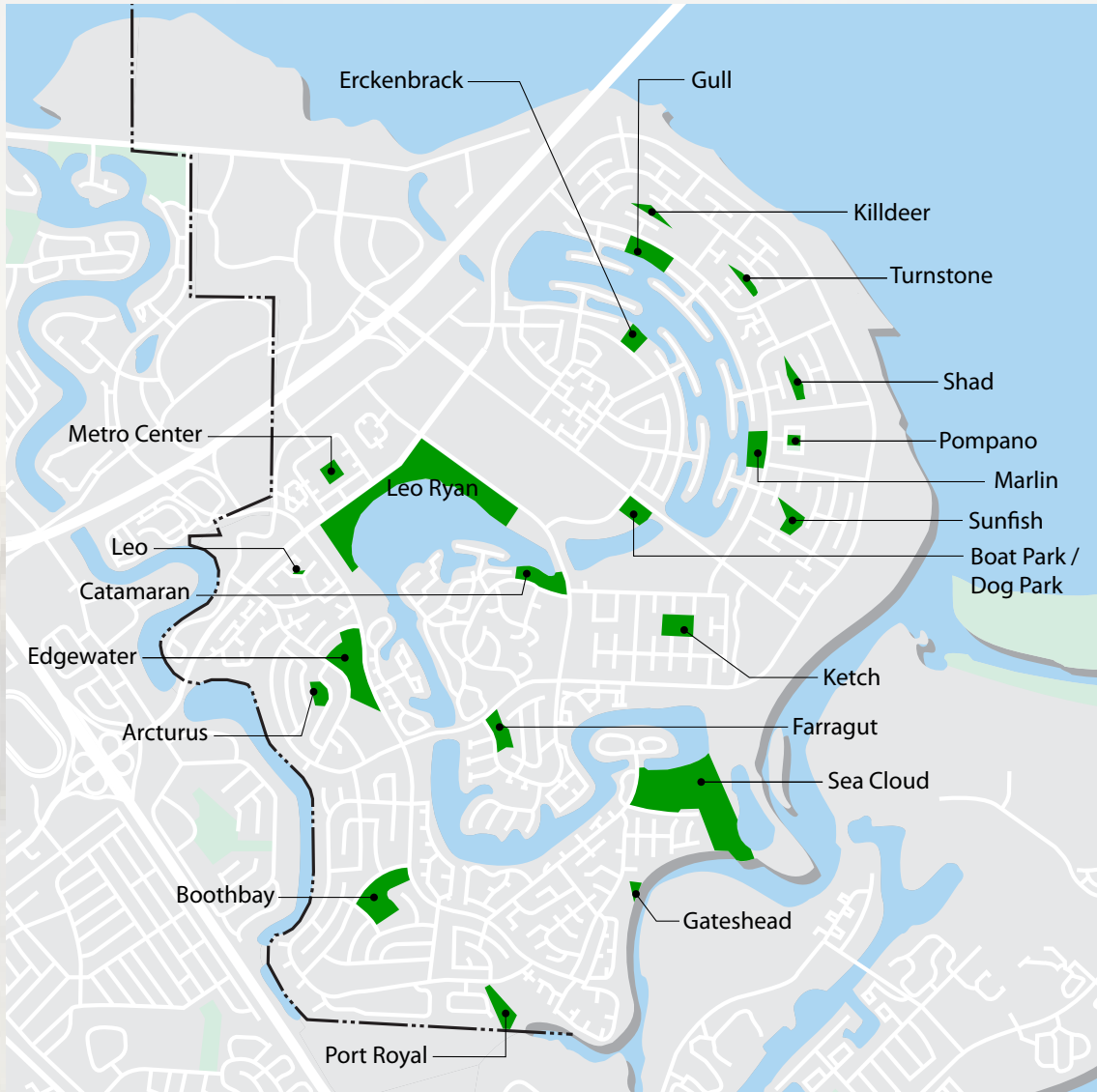
Foster City boasts of more than 100 acres of park and open space land including bike paths, dog exercise areas, a lighted softball field, numerous soccer and youth baseball fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, bocce ball courts, picnic facilities, par courses, and a wildlife refuge. In addition to the 102.72 acres of parks listed in Table 1-8, the City also has a pedway system that is located on the periphery of Foster City along the Belmont Slough and San Francisco Bay. The pedway is seven linear miles from start to finish.

The City's Teen Center, The Vibe, is located at 670 Shell Boulevard, at the south end of the Recreation Center parking lot. It includes drop in hours as well as programmed activities. The Skate Park is located adjacent to The Vibe.

For more information, please contact the Recreation Center at (650) 286-3380 or the Senior Wing at (650) 286-2585 or through email at [recreation@fostercity.org](mailto:recreation@fostercity.org).

The Parks and Recreation Department also has information on parks and classes offered through the Recreation Department on the City's website at [www.fostercity.org](http://www.fostercity.org).





**FIGURE 1-16: Map of Foster City Parks**

### Community Development Department

The Community Development Department serves to guide the physical development and redevelopment of the City while protecting and maintaining the quality of its physical environment. The department is located in the City Hall building and is organized into two divisions: the Planning / Code Enforcement Division and the Building Inspection Division. The Planning / Code Enforcement Division also manages the affordable housing programs of the Community Development Agency.

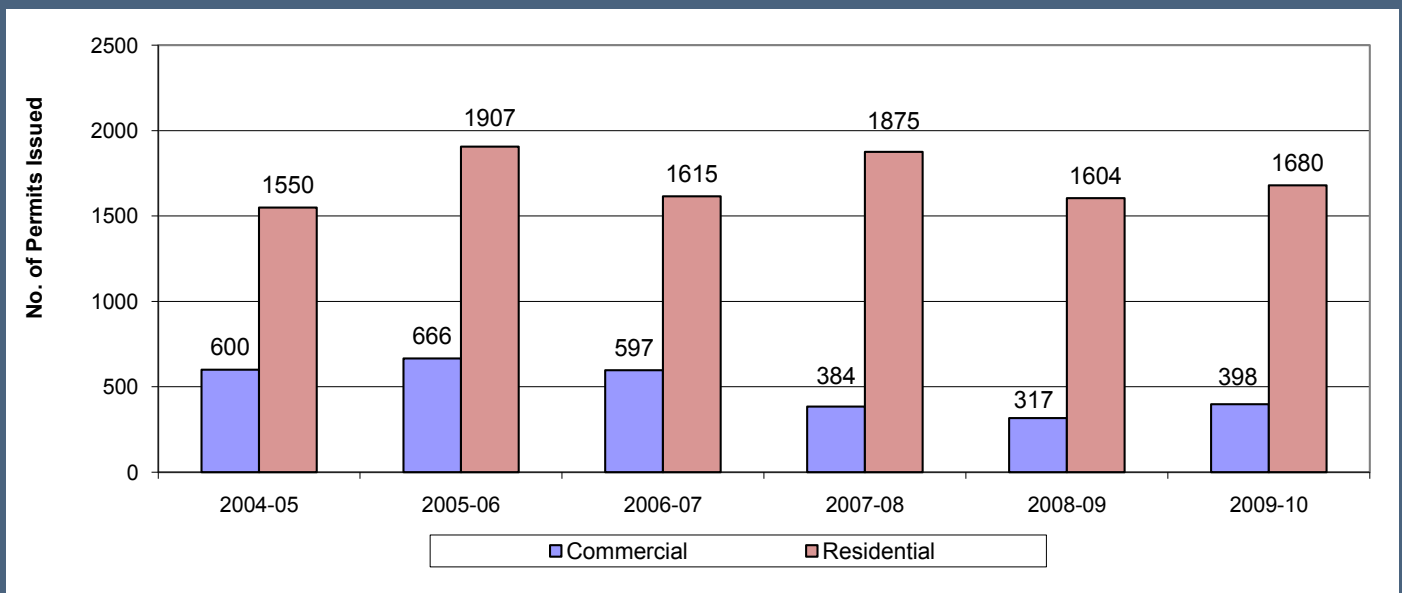
The Building Inspection Division is responsible for ensuring that all construction projects permitted within the City comply with the Uniform Building Codes, the Foster City Municipal Code and all other applicable codes and regulations.

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

The Code Enforcement program ensures that the standards and laws of the City are enforced to assure that the City's safety, health, welfare and aesthetic values are observed.

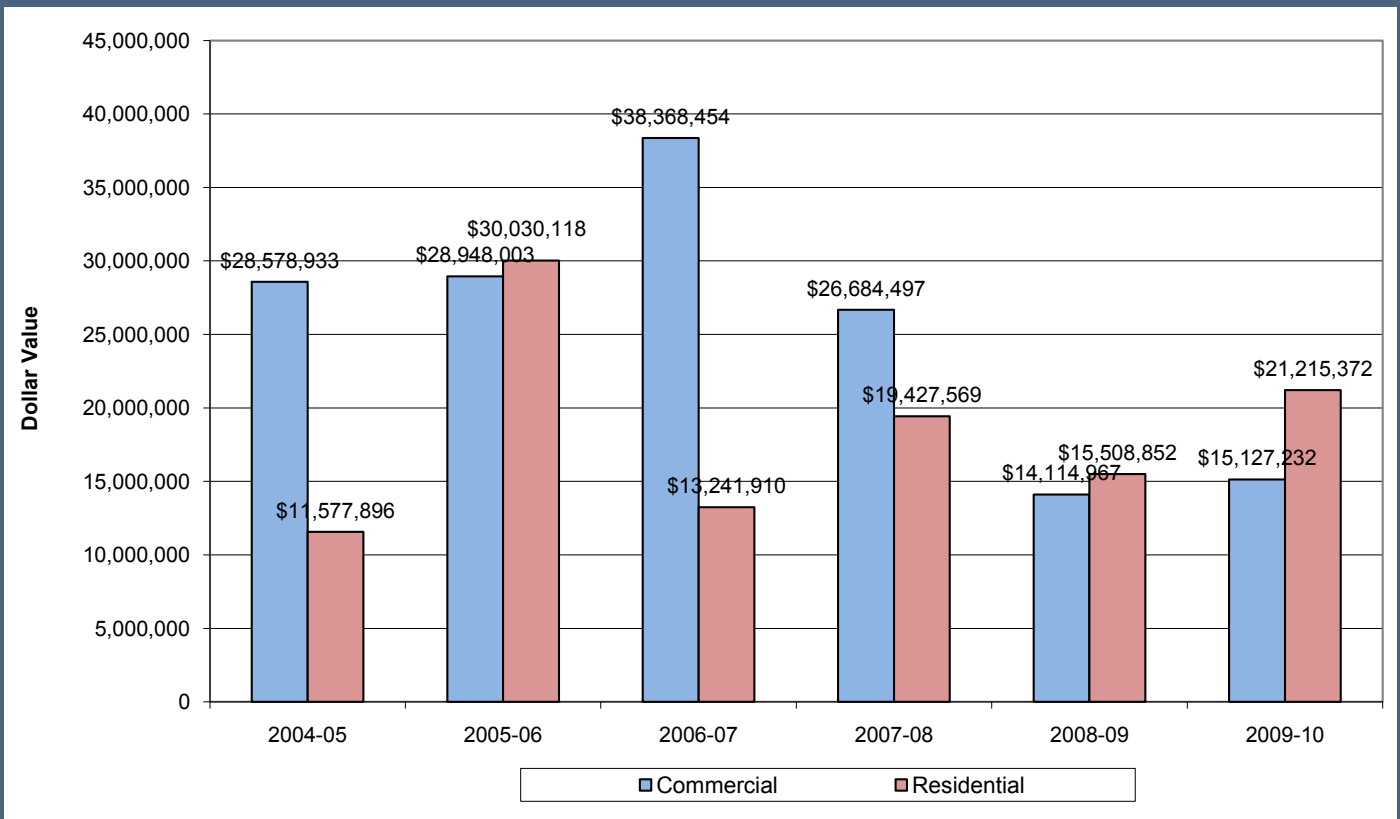
For more information, please contact the Community Development Department at (650) 286-3225 or through email at [cdd@fostercity.org](mailto:cdd@fostercity.org). Permits, forms and additional information are available on the City's website at [www.fostercity.org](http://www.fostercity.org).

**FIGURE 1-17: Building Permits Issued (FY 2004-05 to 2009-10)**



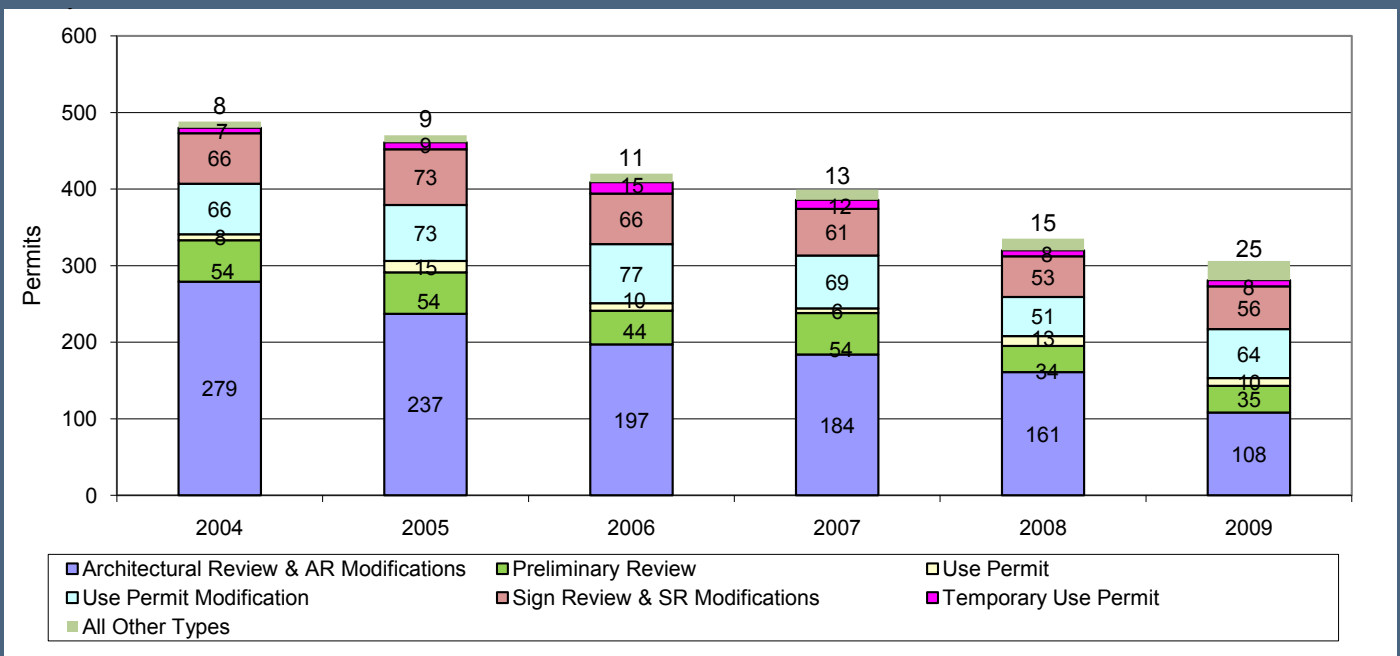
Source: Foster City Building Inspection Division

**FIGURE 1-18: Building Permit Valuation (FY 2004-05 to 2009-10)**



Source: Foster City Building Inspection Division

**FIGURE 1-19: Planning/Code Enforcement Division Permits Processed (2004-09)**



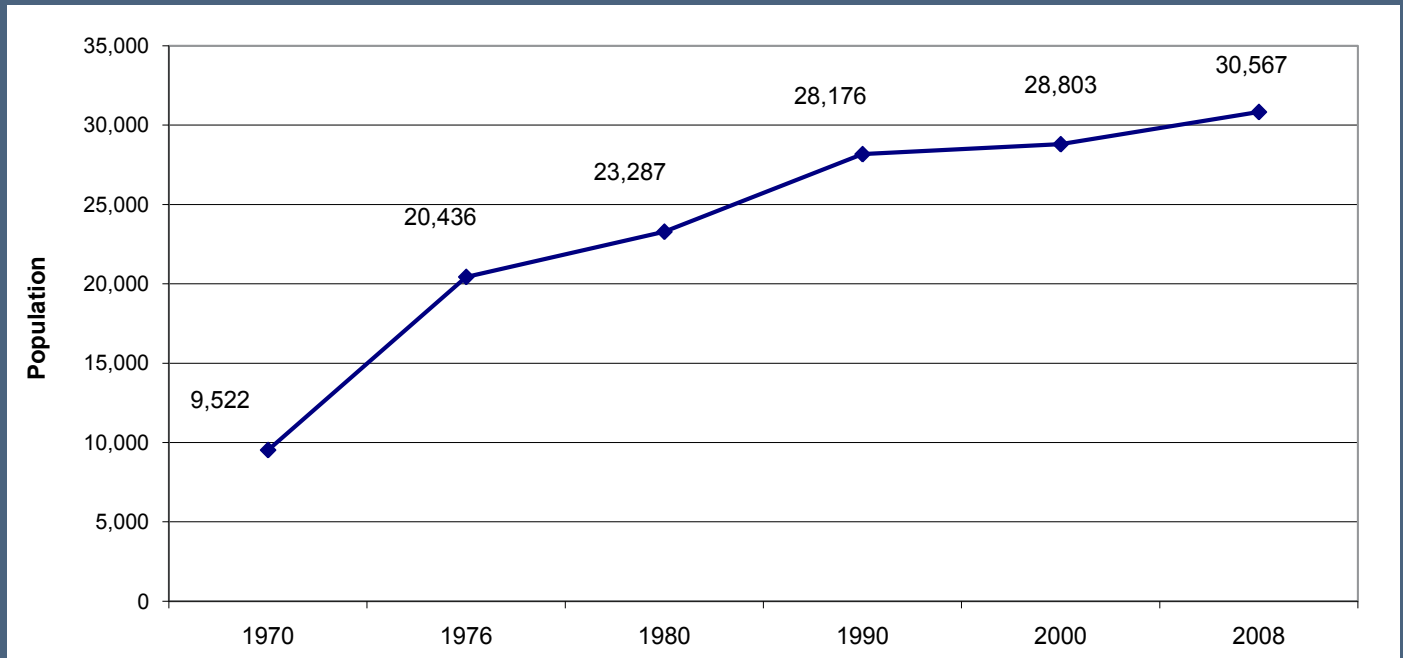
Source: Foster City Community Development Department

# Population

Foster City was virtually undeveloped in 1961, experienced significant population growth in the 1970s and 1980s, then grew at a much slower pace during the 1990s and to the present. Between 2000-2010, the City grew about

6.7 percent in population, consistent with the 6.7 percent growth in San Mateo County, but at a slower rate than the 14.1 percent growth in California. As of the 2010 Census, the population of Foster City was 30,567.

**FIGURE 1-20: U.S. Census - Foster City Population Growth (1970-2008)**



Source: U.S. Census, 1970-2010

## Ethnicity

Over the years, the population of Foster City has become increasingly diverse. The white population declined from approximately 73.5 percent in 1990 to 50.5 percent in 2008. This compares to the 2008 figures of 61.3 percent white in San Mateo County and 56.4 percent white in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

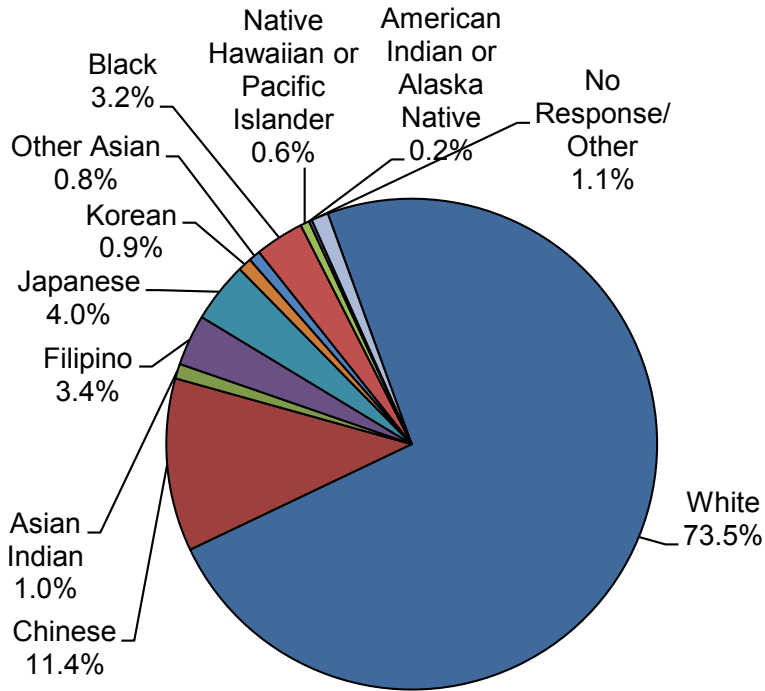
As indicated in Figures 1-22 and 1-23, the largest increase since 1990 was of people identifying themselves as Asian. The total Asian population has grown from 22.0 percent in 1990 to 42.3 percent in 2008. Specifically, between 1990 and 2008, the Chinese population has grown from 11.4 percent to 16.8 percent, Asian Indian from 1.0 percent to 8.6 percent, Filipino from 3.4 percent to 6.9 percent and Korean from 0.9 percent to 2.6 percent.

### Note about the Census Data:

As of this writing, detailed data from the 2010 Census has not been released. The U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2008 remains the most detailed data source at this time.

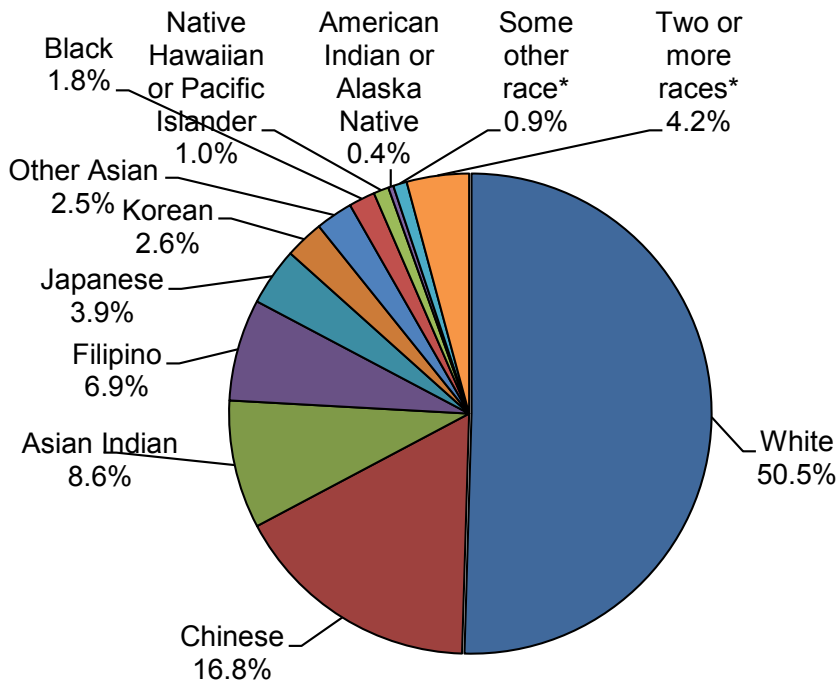


**FIGURE 1-21: Persons by Race (1990)**



Source: U.S. Census, 1990

**FIGURE 1-22: Persons by Race (2008)**



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2008

**TABLE 1-9: PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS BY RACE (1990-2008)**

	1990	2000	2008
White	73.5%	59.3%	50.5%
Black	3.2%	2.1%	1.8%
Chinese	11.4%	16.3%	16.8%
Asian Indian	1.0%	5.7%	8.6%
Filipino	3.4%	3.3%	6.9%
Japanese	4.0%	4.6%	3.9%
Korean	0.9%	1.2%	2.6%
Other Asian	0.8%	1.4%	2.5%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%
Some other race (category added in 2000)		1.2%	0.9%
Two or more races (category added in 2000)		4.1%	4.2%
No Response/Other	1.1%		
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.1%

Source: U.S. Census, 1970-2000; U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2008

### ***Household Size***

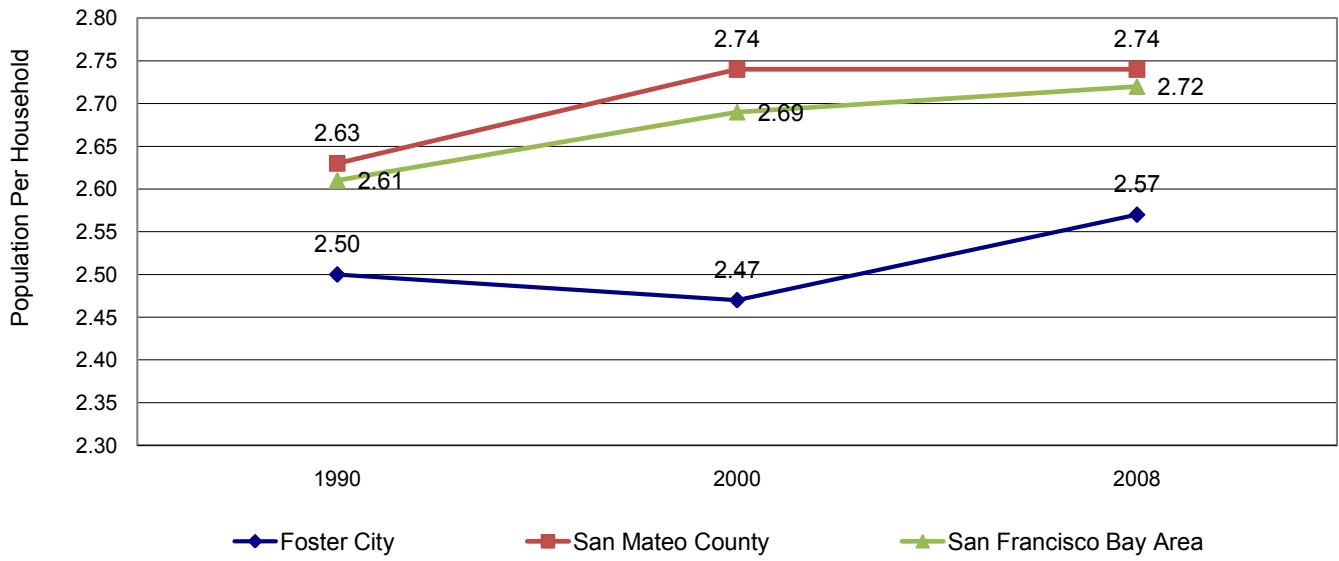
The household size in Foster City declined up to 2000 and then showed an increase between 2000 and 2008. This echoes trends in the County and Bay Area toward larger household sizes. Foster City's household size declined from 2.50 in 1990 to 2.47 in 2000, then increased to 2.57 in 2008. The household size for San Mateo County increased from 2.63 to 2.74 for 2000 and 2008. The household size for the Bay Area increased from 2.61 in 1990 to 2.69 in 2000 to 2.72 in 2008.

### ***Household Types***

The U.S. Census Bureau has two major categories of households: family and non-family. A family household consists of the householder and other people related through marriage, birth, or adoption. A non-family household consists of a householder who either lives alone or exclusively with persons unrelated to the householder.

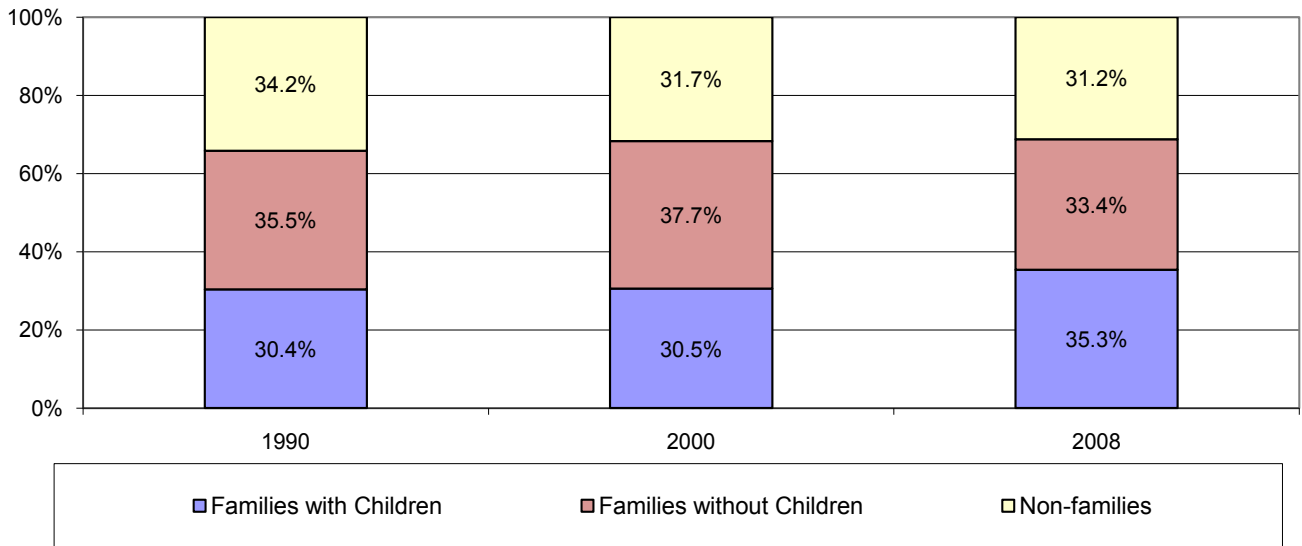
The percentage of families with children stayed fairly constant between 1990 and 2000 at approximately 30 percent and then increased to 35.3 percent in 2008. The percentage of families without children did increase from 35.5 percent in 1990 to 37.7 percent in 2000 and then declined to 33.4 percent in 2008. The percentage of non-families declined from 34.2 percent in 1990 to approximately 31 percent in 2000 and 2008.

**FIGURE 1-23: Persons per Household (1990-2008)**



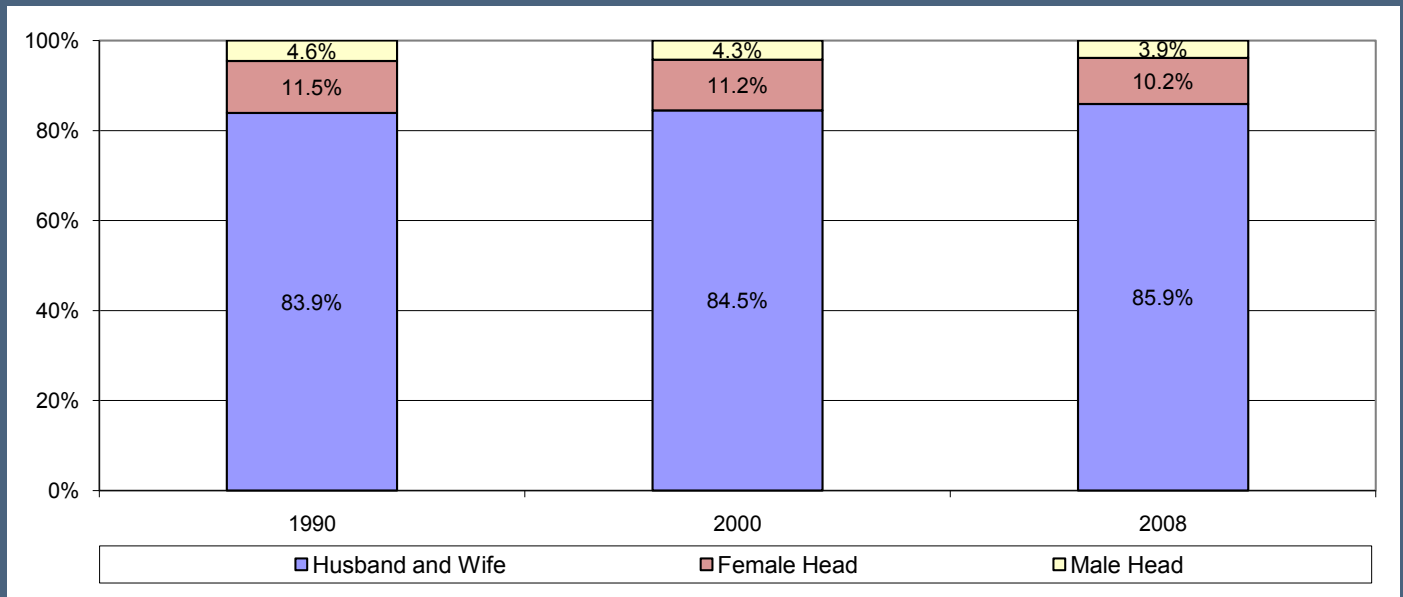
Source: U.S. Census, 1970-2000; U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2008

**FIGURE 1-24: Household Types (1990-2008)**



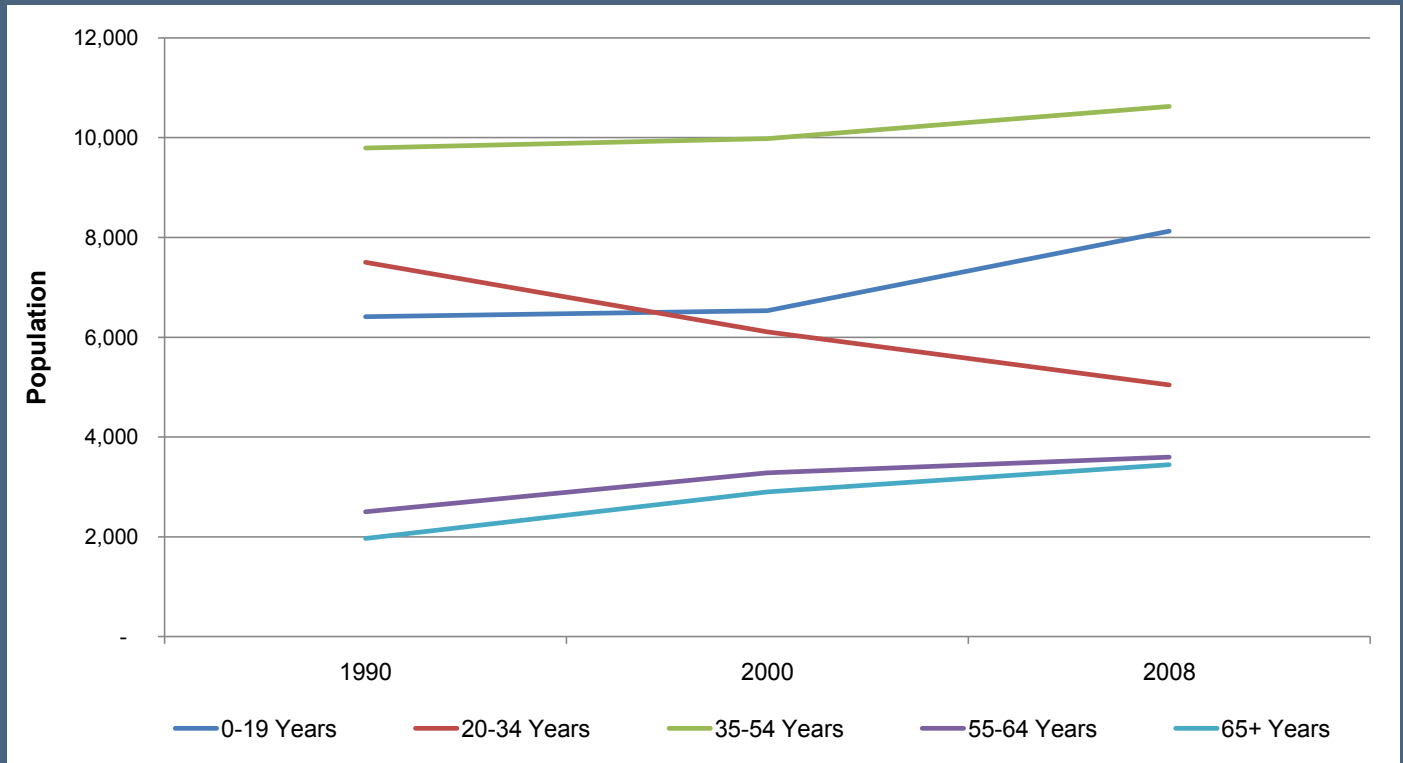
Source: U.S. Census, 1970-2000; U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2008

**FIGURE 1-25: Percentage of Families by Type (1990-2008)**



Source: U.S. Census, 1970-2000; U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2008

**FIGURE 1-26: Population by Age (1990-2008)**



Source: U.S. Census, 1970-2000; U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2008

### Family Types

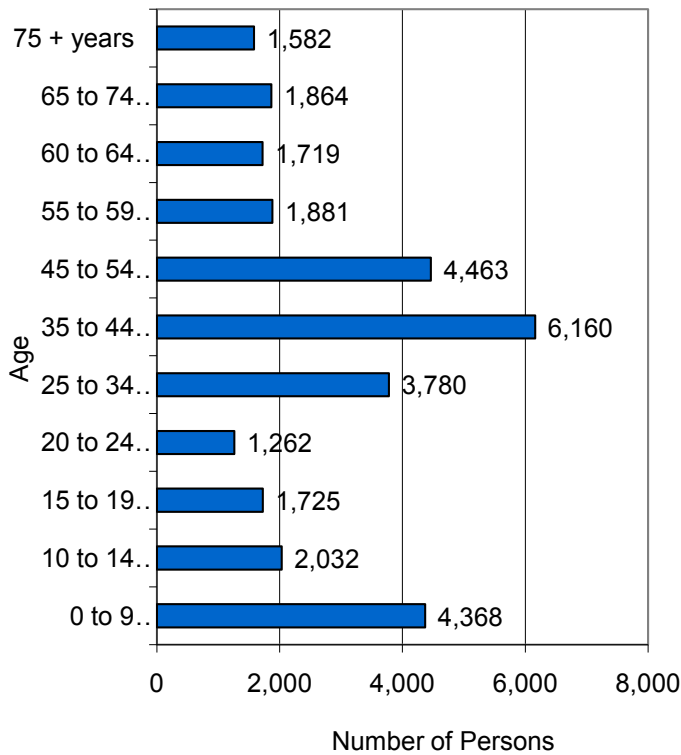
The Census Bureau classifies families into three categories: husband-wife married couple, female householder with no husband present, and male householder with no wife present. Compared to the total number of families, the proportion of husband-wife (or married couple) families increased from 83.9 percent in 1990, to 84.5 percent in 2000 and 85.9 percent in 2008. The proportion of female-headed families decreased from 11.5 percent in 1990, to 11.2 percent in 2000 and 10.2 percent in 2008. The proportion of families headed by a male with no wife present decreased from 4.6 percent in 1990, to 4.3 percent in 2000 to 3.9 percent in 2008.

### Population by Age

In 2008, the largest age group was people ages 35 to 44 years old, followed by 45 to 54 years old and then the 0 to 9 year old group.

The most dramatic shifts since 1990 were a significant increase in the 0-9 year old group from 22.8 percent to 26.3 percent of the population and a decline in the 20-34 year old group from 26.6 percent to 16.4 percent. The 35-54 year old group remained nearly constant at about 34 percent. The 55-64 year old group increased from 8.9 percent in 1990 to 11.4 percent in 2000 and 11.7 percent in 2008. The 65+ group increased from 7.0 percent in 1990 to 10.1 percent in 2000 and 11.2 percent in 2008.

**FIGURE 1-27: Population by Age (2008)**



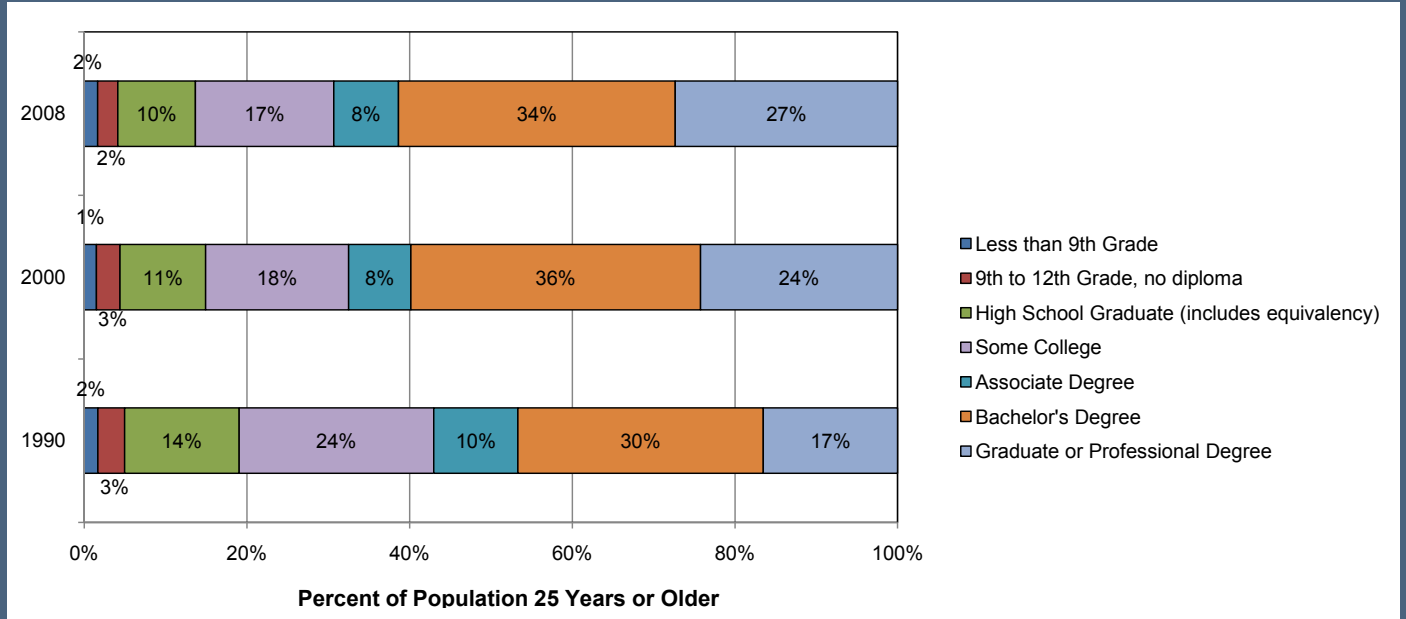
Source: U.S. Census, 1970-2000; U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2008

## Educational Attainment

The highest educational level attained has grown steadily. In 1990, 47 percent of all Foster City residents over the age of 25 had a bachelor's degree or higher. In 2000, this

percentage increased to 60 percent and to 61 percent in 2008. This percentage is much higher than San Mateo County where 43 percent of the population has obtained a Bachelors degree or higher in 2008.

**FIGURE 1-28: Educational Attainment, 25 years or older (1990-2008)**



Source: U.S. Census, 1970-2000; U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2008

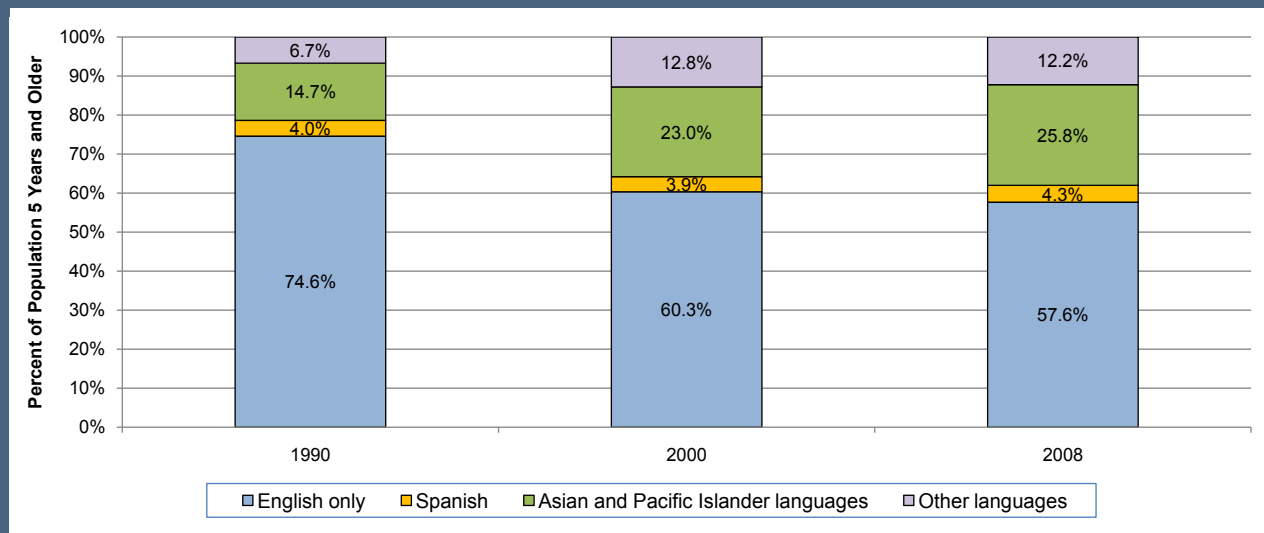
## Language Spoken at Home

The primary language spoken at home has shifted since 1990. Of the people 5 years and older, 74.6 percent spoke English at home in 1990 compared to 57.6 percent in 2008, with the largest increase in Asian languages from 14.7 percent in 1990 to 25.8 percent in 2008. The percentage of those who speak English less than "very well" increased from 9.1 percent in 1990 to 14.0 percent in 2000 and then dropped to 13.3 percent in 2008.

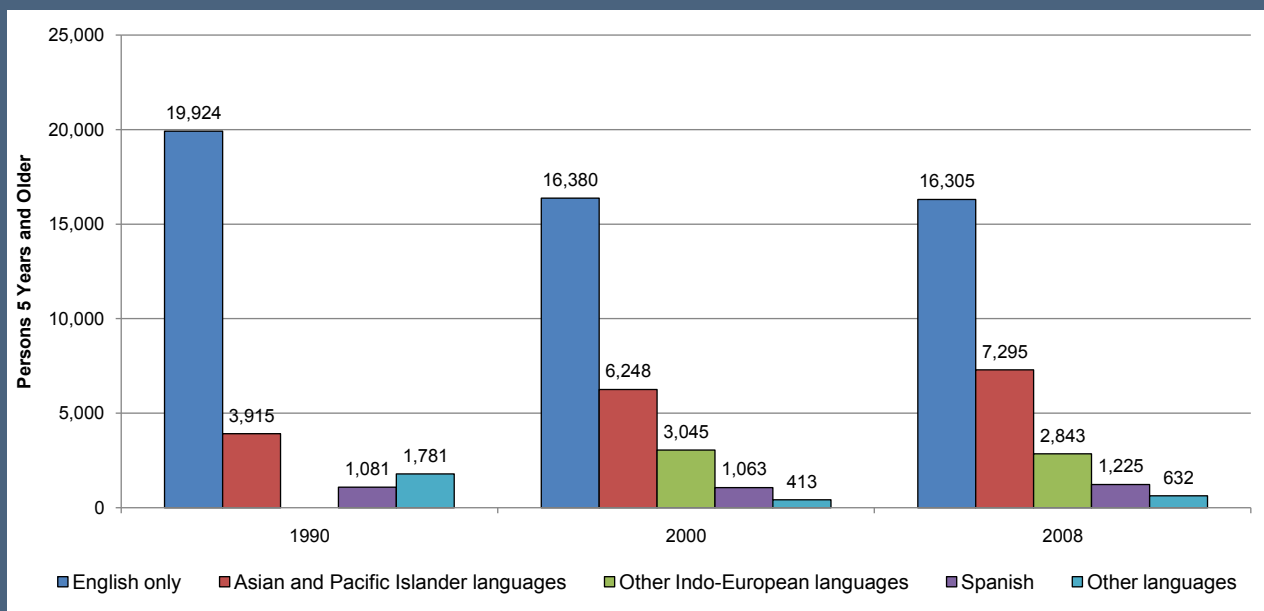
Figure 1-30 shows the number of people 5 years and older who speak various languages at home for 1990, 2000 and 2008.

Figure 1-31 shows, for 2008, the percentage of the population (5 years and older) by their language spoken at home for people who speak English less than "very well" in both Foster City and San Mateo County. In Foster City, the largest group who speak English less than very well includes 9.2 percent who speak an Asian language at home. In San Mateo County, the largest group who speak English less than very well includes 8.9 percent who speak Spanish at home. Overall, 13.3 percent of the population over 5 years old in Foster City speak English less than very well, compared to 18.0 percent in San Mateo County.

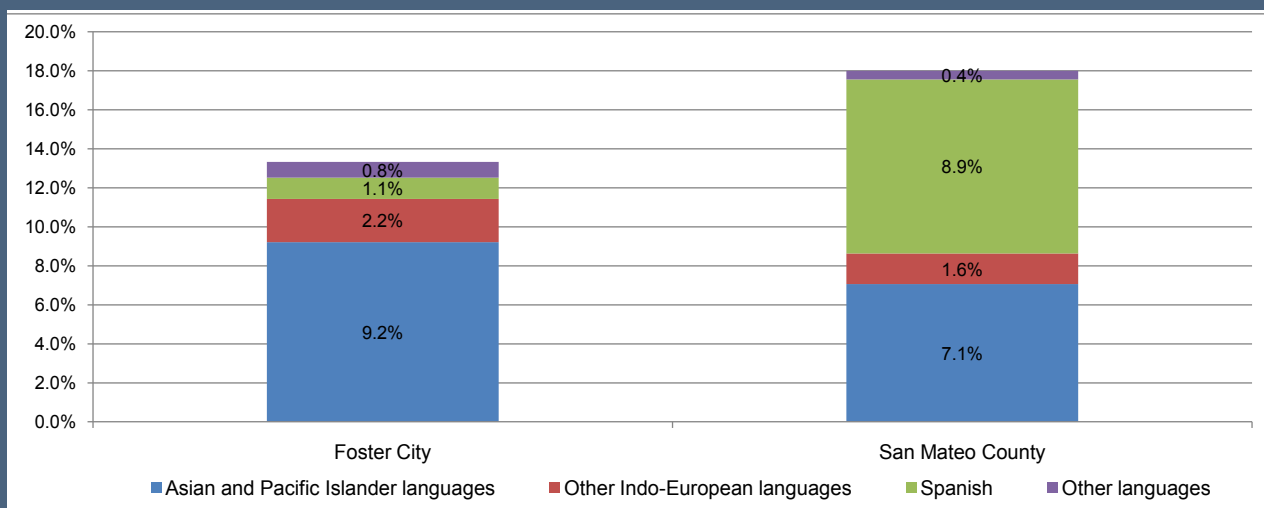
**FIGURE 1-29: Language Spoken at Home for Percent of Population 5 Years and Over (1990-2008)**



**FIGURE 1-30: Language Spoken at Home for Persons 5 Years and Over (1990-2008)**



**FIGURE 1-31: Language Spoken at Home for Persons 5 Years and Over Who Speak English Less than "Very Well" (2008)**



Source: U.S. Census, 1970-2000; U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2008

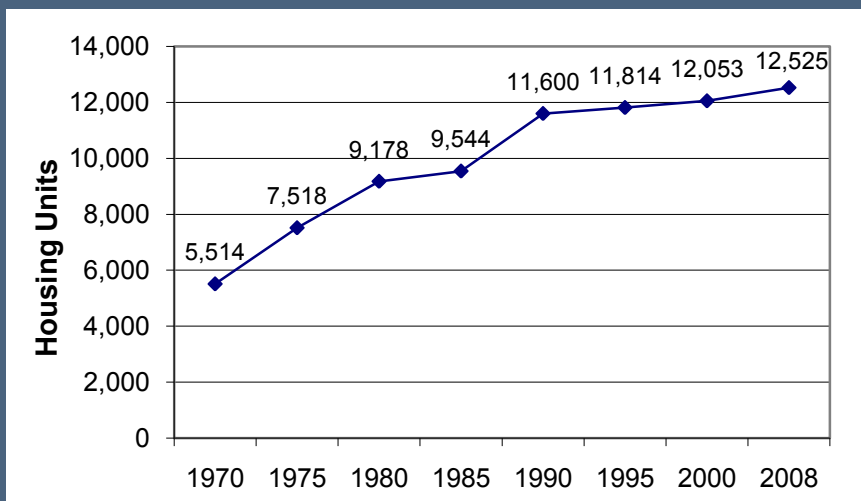


# Housing

## Housing Unit Growth

Housing unit growth from 1970 to 1990 was rapid, compared to growth from 1990 to 2008. Growth averaged 314 units per year between 1970 and 1990 with an average of 25 units per year between 1990 and 2000. Additional housing unit growth is projected as the City endeavors to provide its fair share of the housing needs in the region, as calculated by the Association of Bay Area Governments, consistent with State requirements.

FIGURE 1-32: Housing Unit Growth (1970-2008)

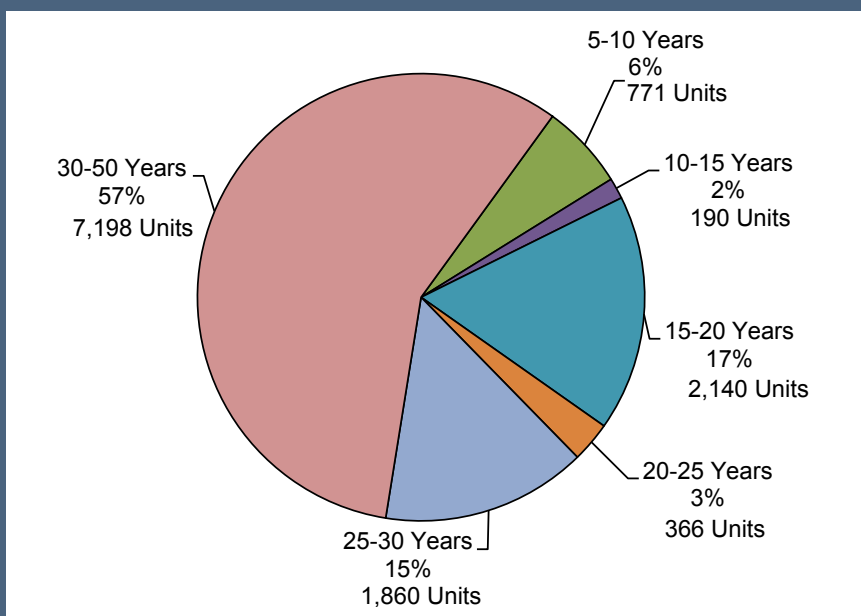


Source: Community Development Department

## Age of Housing

The age of Foster City's housing is illustrated in the chart below, with 57 percent of the homes between 30-50 years old. The first homes in Foster City were completed in 1963.

FIGURE 1-33: Age of Housing (2008)



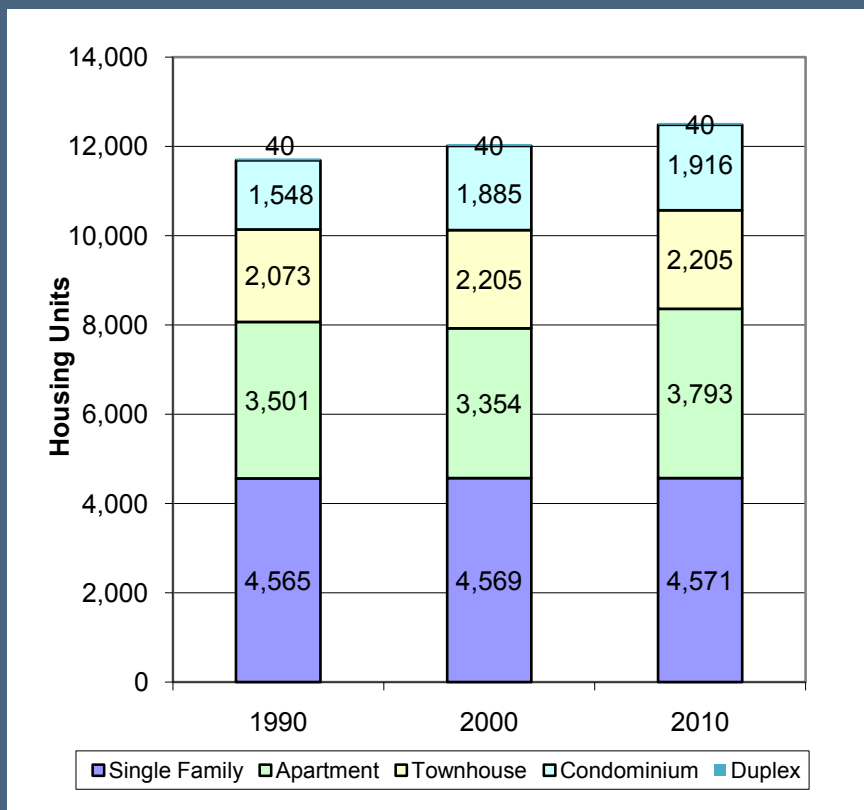


## Housing Mix

The diversity of housing types and sizes in the City provides a mix and range of choices. The original plan for Foster City included a mix of housing types. The projected amount of single-family housing was largely built prior to 1980, with the proportion of multifamily housing continuing to grow after 1980, consistent with the original Foster City Master Plan.

Of the total 12,525 housing units in 2010, single-family detached housing comprises the largest single type of housing in the City with 4,571 units or 36.5 percent. Multi-family comprises 63.5 percent of the housing in Foster City, including 3,793 apartments, 2,205 townhouses, 1,916 condominiums and 40 duplex units.

FIGURE 1-34: Housing Mix (1990-2010)



Source: Community Development Department

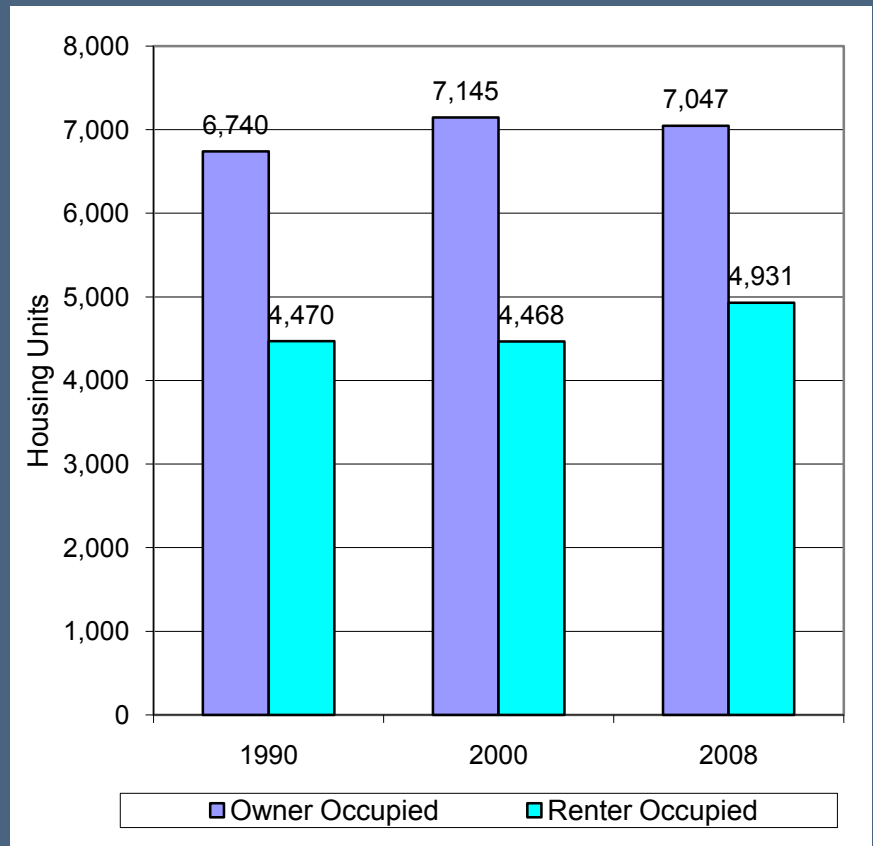




### Renter / Owner Occupancies

The number of renter and owner occupied housing units is shown in Figure 1-35. The percentage of owner and renter occupied housing has remained almost constant from 1990 to 2008 with 60 percent to 62 percent owner-occupied housing.

**FIGURE 1-35: Owner and Renter Occupied Housing (1990-2008)**

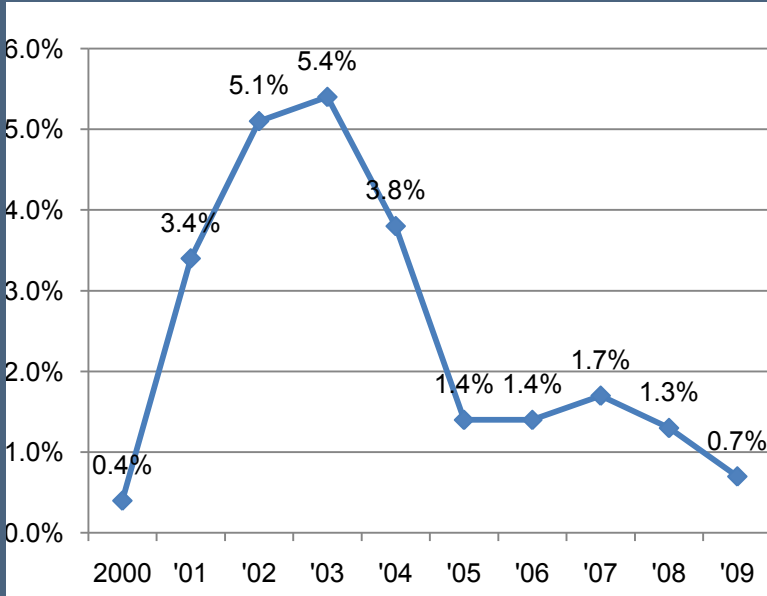


Source: U.S. Census (1990-2000), U.S. Census American Community Survey (2008)

## Rental Housing

A measure of housing availability is the vacancy rate. The generally accepted ideal vacancy rate is 4.5 percent to 5.0 percent, which indicates a good balance between supply and demand in the housing market to allow normal turnover among households. As indicated in Figure 1-36, the rental vacancy rate in Foster City rose from 0.4 percent in 2000 to 5.4 percent in 2003 but has decreased since then to 0.7 percent in 2009.

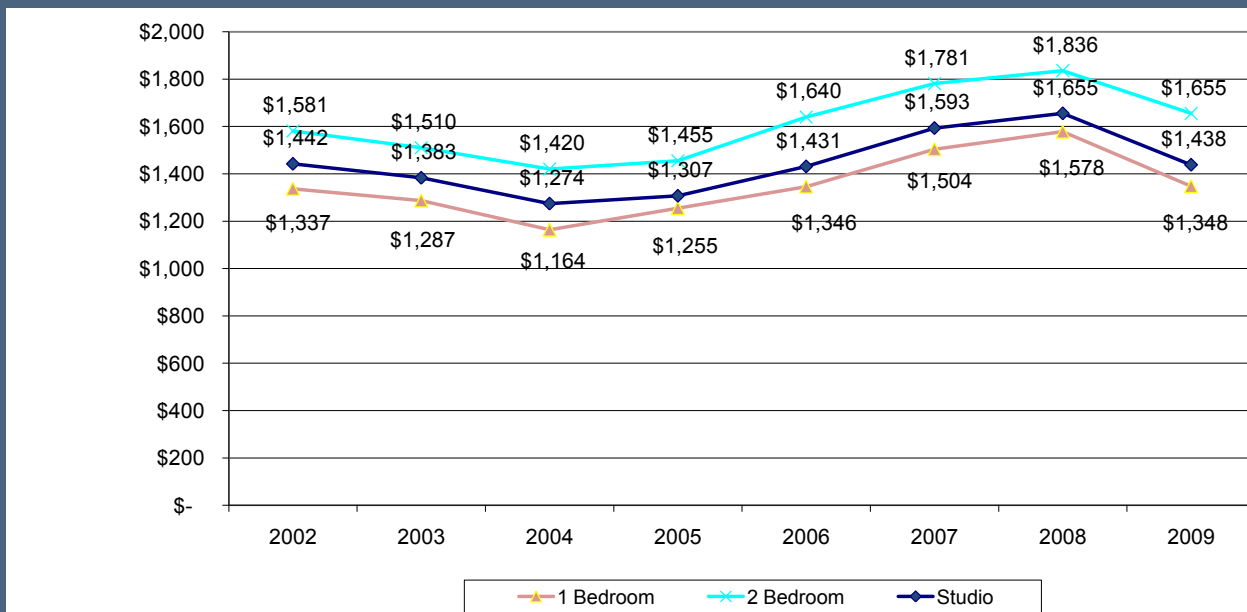
**FIGURE 1-36: Rental Vacancy Rates (2000-2009)**



Source: RealFacts

Rents dropped between 2002 to 2004 and then rose gradually to 2008, followed by a drop in 2009. In 2009, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment was \$1,438.

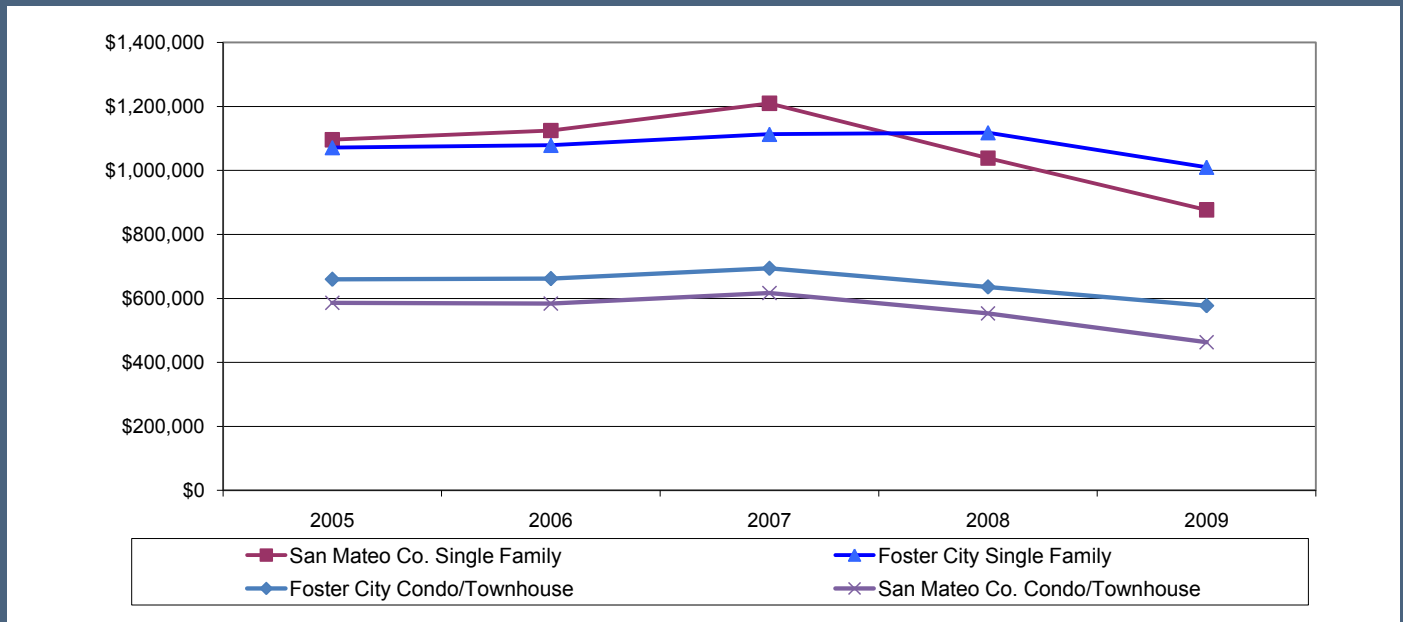
**FIGURE 1-37: Average Apartment Rents (2000-2009)**



Source: RealFacts



**FIGURE 1-38: Average Housing Sales Prices (2005-2009)**



Source: San Mateo County Association of Realtors

**Ownership Housing**

Sales prices for ownership housing increased between 2005-2007 but then declined between 2007-2009, although single-family house prices did not decline as much as the prices in San Mateo County. In 2009, the average sales price for a single family home in Foster City was \$1,010,108 and for a condominium/townhouse was \$577,266.

**Affordable Housing**

Every city and county in California is required to have a Housing Element that contains the jurisdiction’s policies and programs related to housing for its citizens. The original Master Plan, on which the City’s General Plan is based, included provisions for a variety of housing types and prices. State law also requires each jurisdiction to include provisions for housing that is affordable to low-

and moderate-income households. Affordable housing is defined as housing that costs no more than 30 percent of the household’s gross income. The income limits for households in the very low, low and moderate income categories are based on the median income for the County and are contained in Table 1-10. As of 2010, the City has 293 affordable units in affordable housing programs. The four basic affordable housing programs are: new unit construction, existing unit purchase, rehabilitation, and first-time homebuyer. For more information about eligibility for affordable housing, contact the Community Development Department at 650-286-3225 or [cdd@fostercity.org](mailto:cdd@fostercity.org). Information on affordable housing programs is also available on the City’s website at [www.fostercity.org](http://www.fostercity.org).

**TABLE 1-10: AFFORDABLE HOUSING INCOME LIMITS (2010)**

Income Category	Household Size (Number of Persons)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 or more
Extremely Low	\$22,600	\$25,800	\$29,050	\$32,250	\$34,850	\$37,450	\$40,000	\$42,600
Very Low Income	\$37,650	\$43,000	\$48,400	\$53,750	\$58,050	\$62,350	\$66,650	\$70,950
Lower Income	\$60,200	\$68,800	\$77,400	\$86,000	\$92,900	\$99,800	\$106,650	\$113,550
Moderate Income	\$83,500	\$95,450	\$107,350	\$119,300	\$128,850	\$138,400	\$147,950	\$157,500

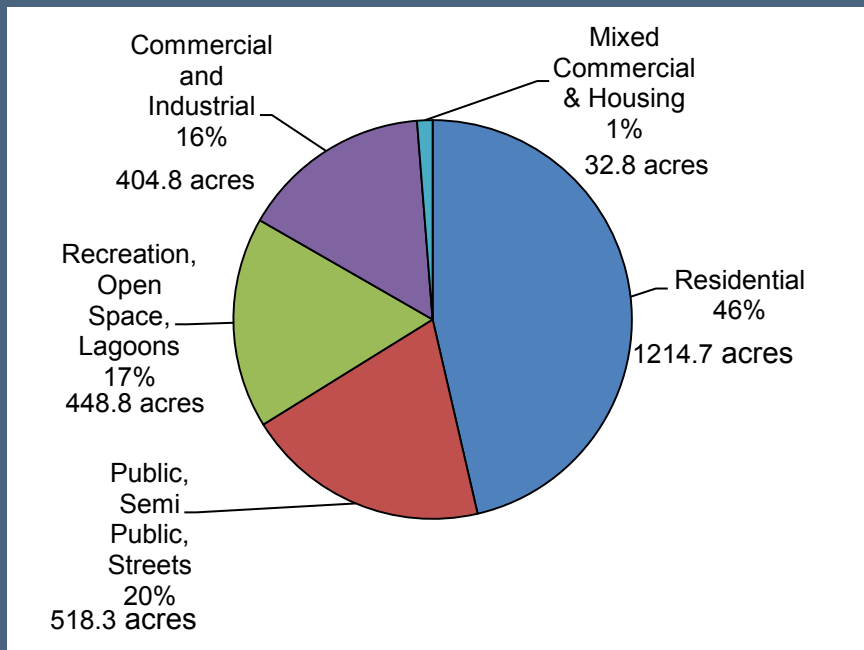
Source: California Department of Housing and Community Development

# Land Use

## Existing Land Use

The distribution of land uses as provided in the Foster City General Plan is shown in Figure 1-39. Since construction during the early years of Foster City was largely residential, the City has actively pursued commercial and light industrial development to achieve a more balanced mix of uses. Commercial, office, and industrial development not only provides a healthy and stable tax base, it also provides job opportunities within the City, which in turn can help reduce commuting by residents of Foster City and nearby communities.

**FIGURE 1-39: General Plan Land Use (Acres) (2010)**

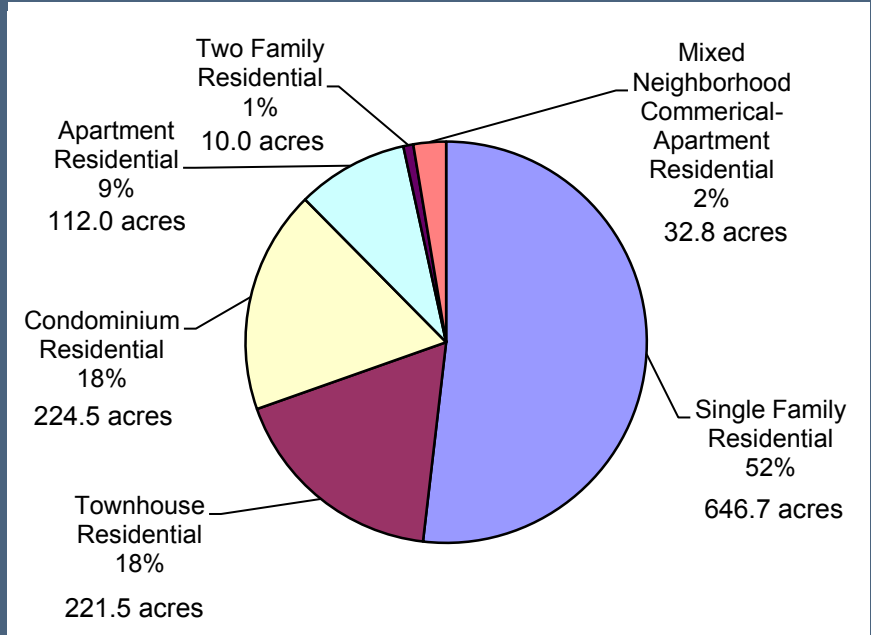




### Residential Land Use

The majority of the residential land in the City is designated for single-family detached units (52%) as indicated in Figure 1-40. Condominiums and townhouses each comprise about 18 percent. Apartments comprise about nine percent. Land designated for two-family dwellings or duplexes comprises less than one percent of the residential land.

**FIGURE 1-40: General Plan Residential Land Use (Acres) (2010)**





### Commercial and Industrial Land Use

Foster City’s commercial and industrial lands are nearly built out and, at the same time, some are undergoing redevelopment. The primary office area is Metro Center, which hosts the 22-story Metro Tower, as well as buildings hosting VISA International and Sony Computer Entertainment. Nearby on East Hillsdale Boulevard is the eight-story Parkside Towers.

The primary industrial/research and development lands are in Vintage Park, Chess-Hatch and Lincoln Centre. In Vintage Park, Gilead Sciences has received approval to expand its existing campus by removing some buildings and adding larger buildings.

In the Pilgrim-Triton area, currently an industrial/research and development area, plans have been approved for removal of the single-story office / industrial buildings and construction of a mixed use commercial/residential development. The first phase is under construction.

**TABLE 1-11: EXISTING, APPROVED AND PROJECTED COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL SQUARE**

	Office	Industrial/ Research & Development	Commercial	Hotel	Total
Existing	3,531,558	1,987,588	626,345	320,513	6,466,430
Approved*	266,000	303,430	30,000	0	599,430
Projected	601,000	0	98,300	0	699,300
Total	4,398,558	2,291,018	754,645	320,513	7,764,734

\*Includes developments that have received General Development Plan approval, but may not have received Use Permit approval.

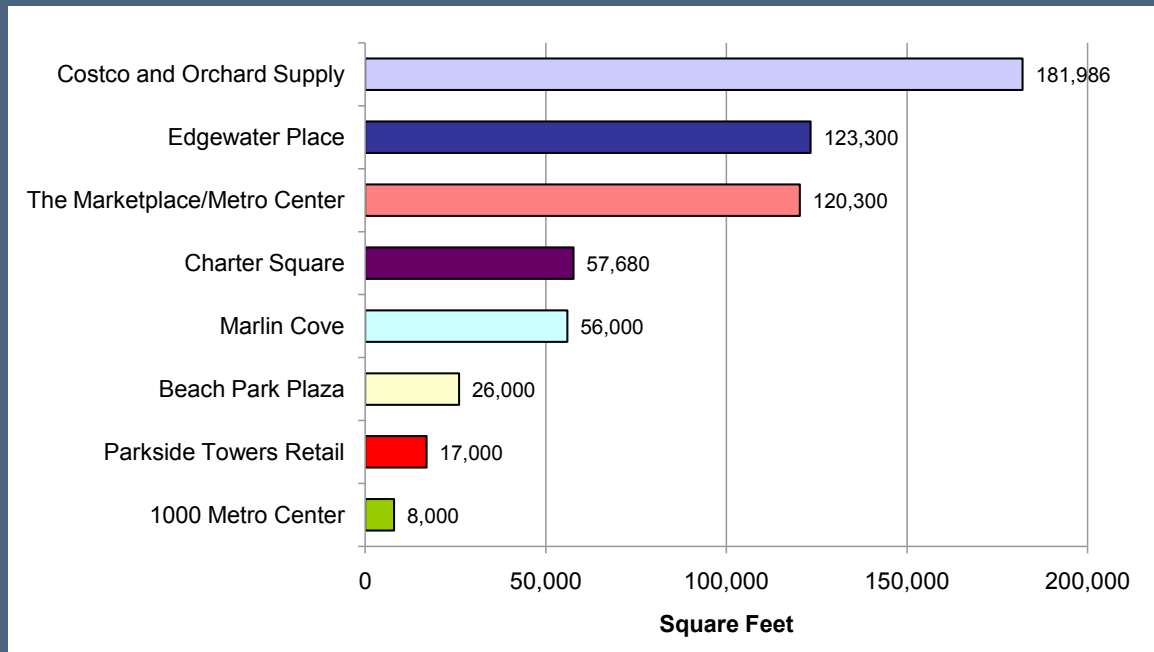
Source: Foster City Community Development Department

## Shopping Centers

Foster City currently has six retail shopping areas: five neighborhood commercial centers and a more regional-serving retail area along Metro Center Boulevard that includes a Costco Wholesale and Orchard Supply Hardware Store.

The five existing neighborhood commercial centers are located throughout the residential neighborhoods. The centers are intended to provide every City resident with convenience and close access to retail shopping which provides goods and services meeting their everyday needs.

**FIGURE 1-41: Size Comparison of Shopping Centers in Foster City by Square Feet (2010)**



Source: Community Development Department

**FIGURE 1-42: Shopping Center Map**





## Economic Profile

Foster City is recognized for its close proximity to major transportation centers in the Bay Area such as the San Mateo Bridge, State Route 92, Highway 101, and the San Francisco Airport.

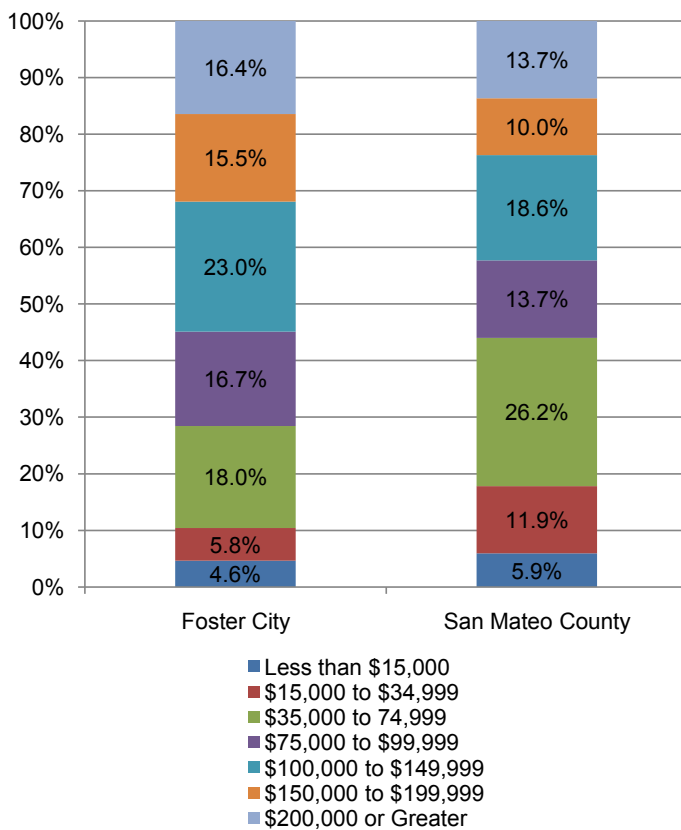
Foster City is attractive to businesses due to its location, amenities, strong economy, and skilled labor force. Several major corporations are located within Foster City, including Gilead Sciences, Applied Biosystems (part of Life Technologies), Electronics for Imaging, VISA International, Innovant, Sony Computer Entertainment and Quinstreet.

### Income

The median household income in Foster City in 2008 was \$107,448, compared to \$84,684 for San Mateo County. The distribution of household income by income category is shown in Figure 1-43. More than half of the households (54.9%) in Foster City had an income over \$100,000, compared to 42.3 percent in San Mateo County.

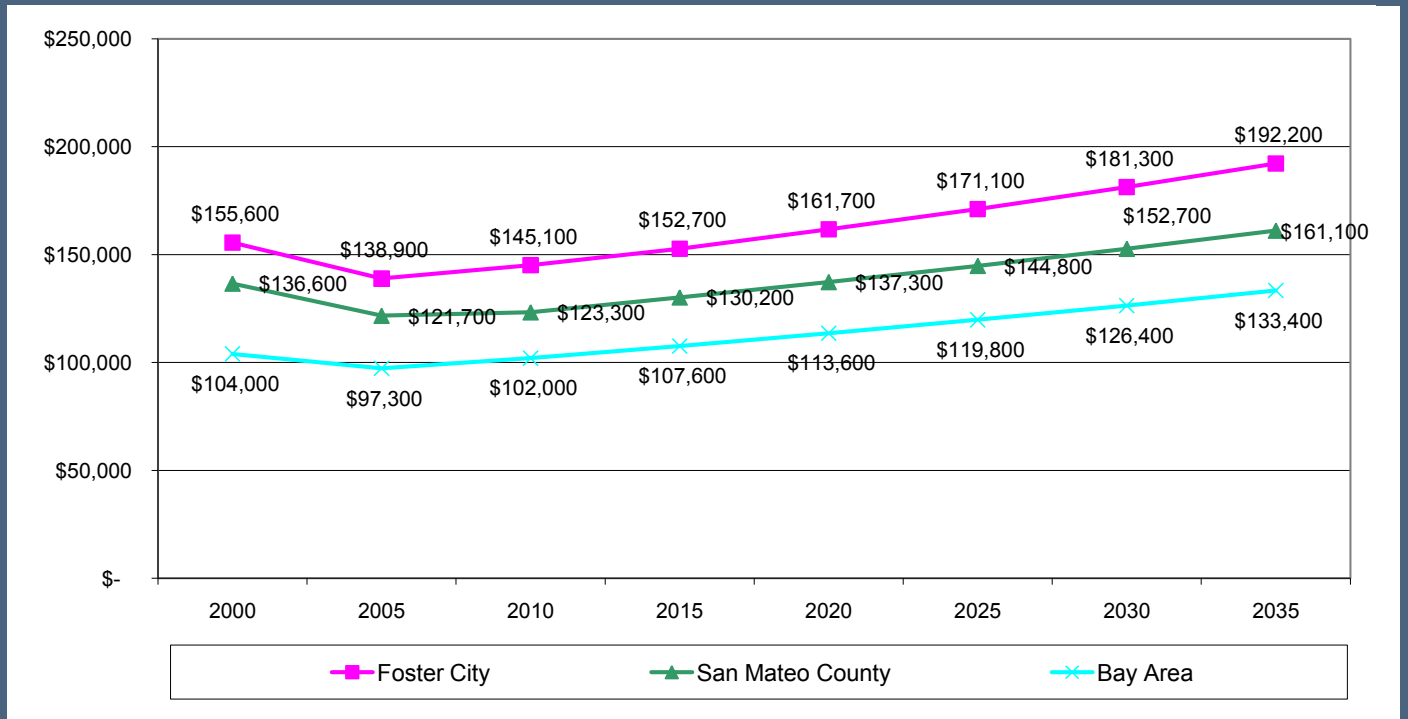
Foster City is projected to maintain a relatively high household income compared to San Mateo County and the Bay Area, as shown in Figure 1-44.

**FIGURE 1-43: Percentage of Households per Income Category (2008)**



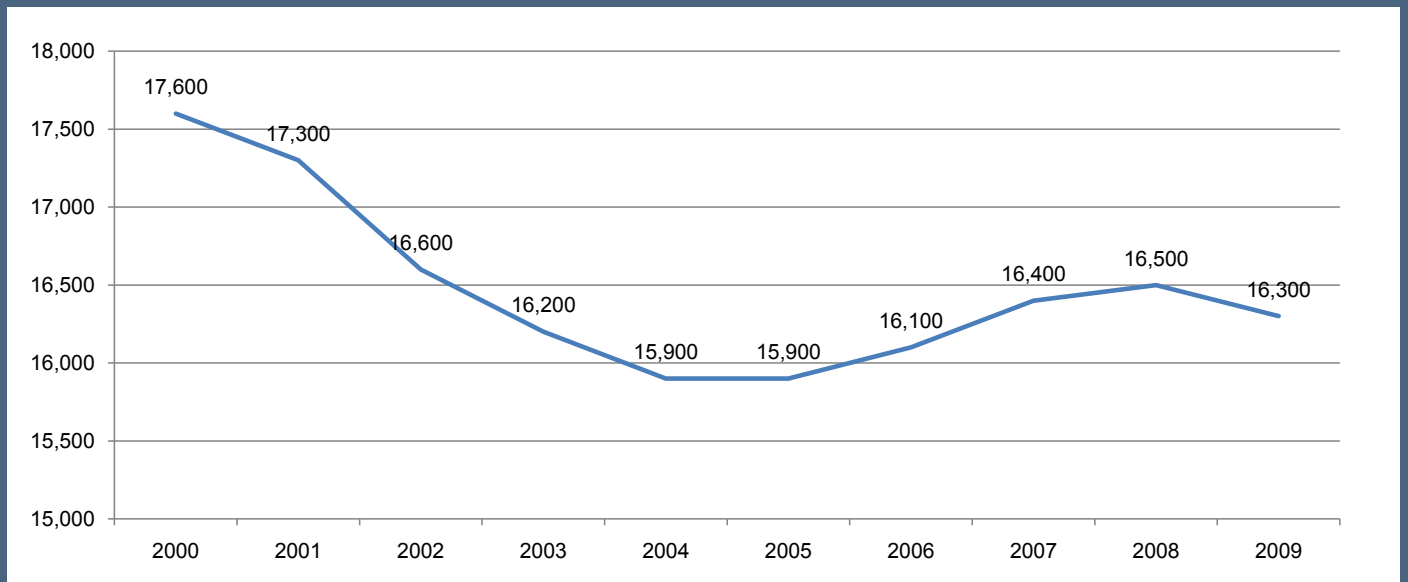
Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2008

**FIGURE 1-44: Projected Mean Household Income (2000-2035)**



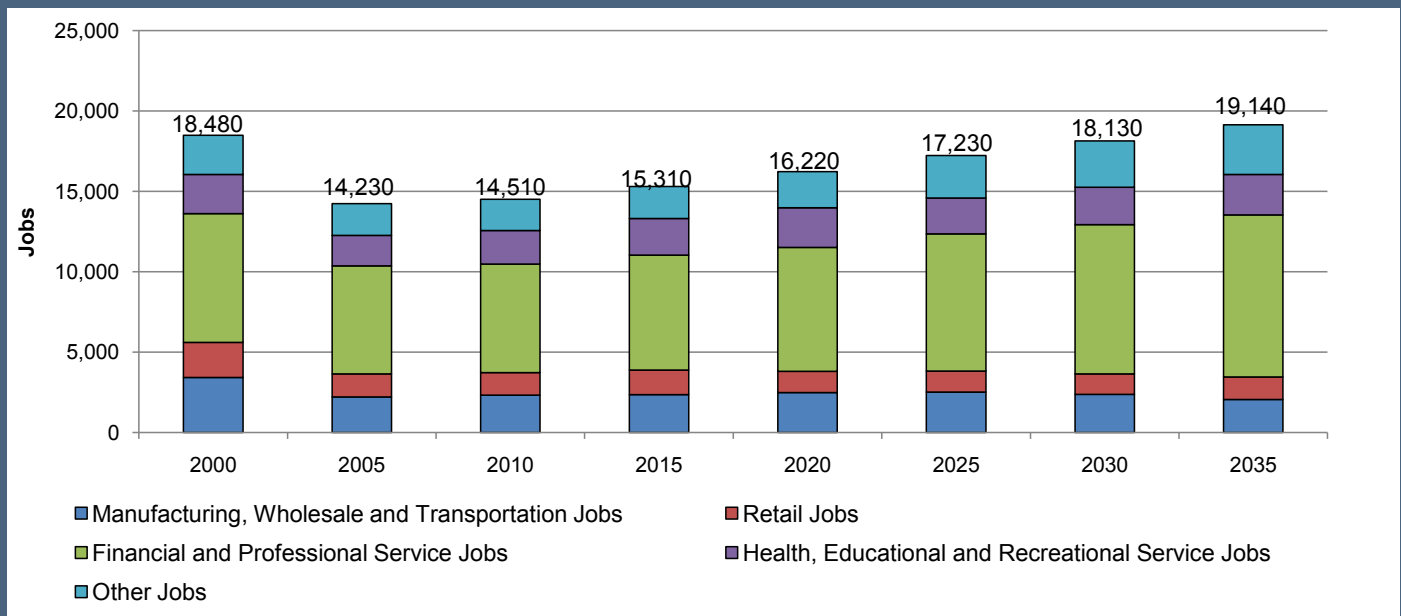
Source: Association of Bay Area Governments, Projections and Priorities: Building Momentum, 2009.

**FIGURE 1-45: Foster City Resident Labor Force (2000-2009)**



Source: California Employment Development Department

**FIGURE 1-46: Projected Jobs (2000-2035)**



Source: Association of Bay Area Governments, Projections and Priorities: Building Momentum, 2009.

### **Labor Force**

The resident labor force is defined as the population sixteen years of age or older, having the potential for active work for wages. The labor force declined since 2000 to a low of 15,900 in 2004-2005, then increased to 16,500 in 2008 but dropped to 16,300 in 2009.

### **Jobs**

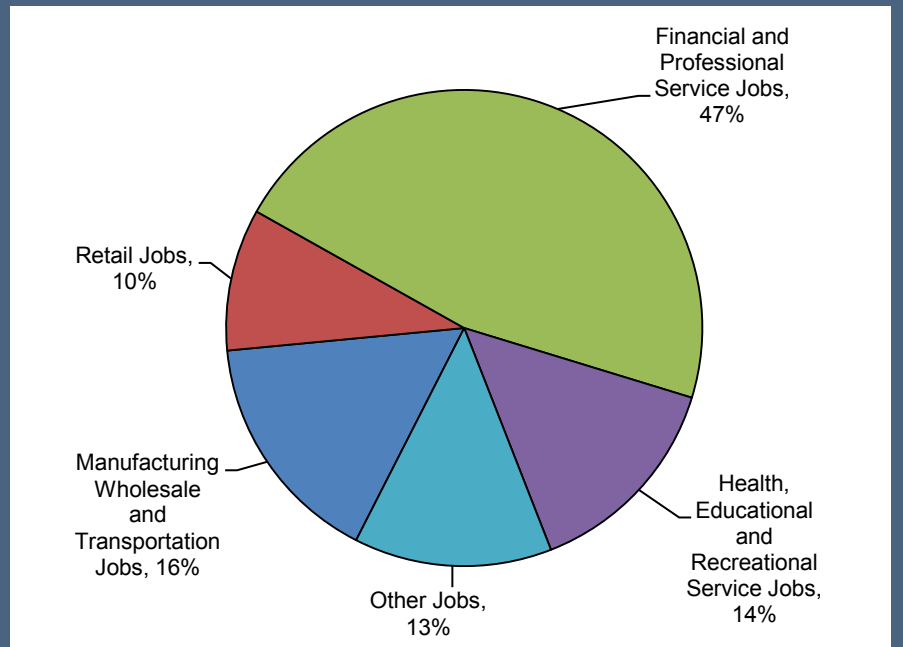
During the initial stages of Foster City's growth, development was primarily residential. However, starting in 1980 several industrial and office complexes began construction. The original Foster City Master Plan called for office and industrial development north of East Hillsdale Boulevard. The context of the original master plan has been followed and most of the employment centers are located in the northern and northeastern portions of the city. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) has projected that the number of jobs in Foster City will increase from 14,230 in 2005 to 19,140 in 2035, with most of the growth in the Financial and Professional Service Jobs sector.

### Jobs and Occupations by Sector

The largest jobs sector in Foster City jobs is the Financial and Professional Service Sector at 47 percent. This is followed by Manufacturing, Wholesale and Transportation sector with 16 percent of jobs, then Health, Education and Recreational Service sector with 14 percent of jobs.

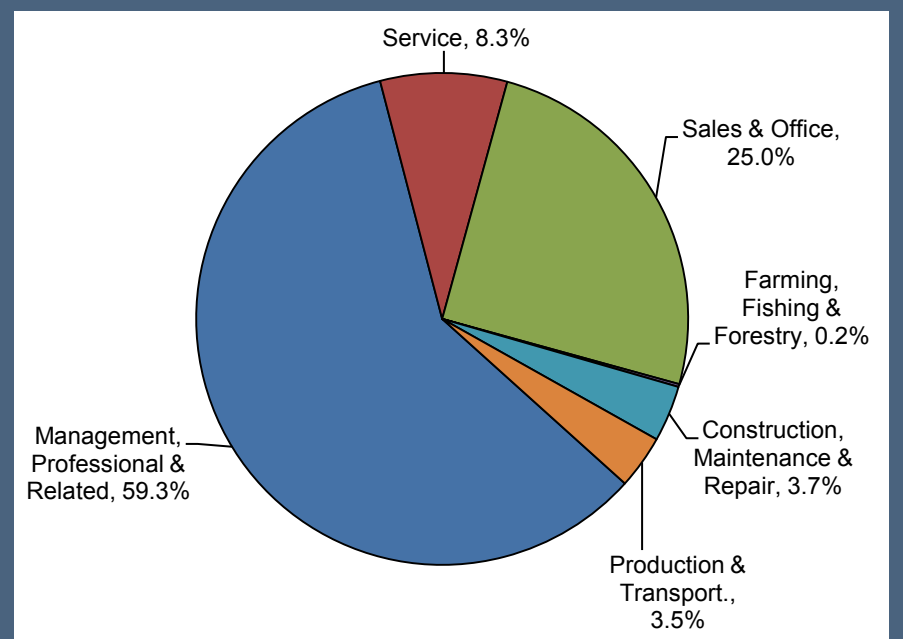
For Foster City residents, the largest percentage in occupations is in the management, professional and related category at 59.3 percent.

**FIGURE 1-47: Jobs by Sector (2010)**



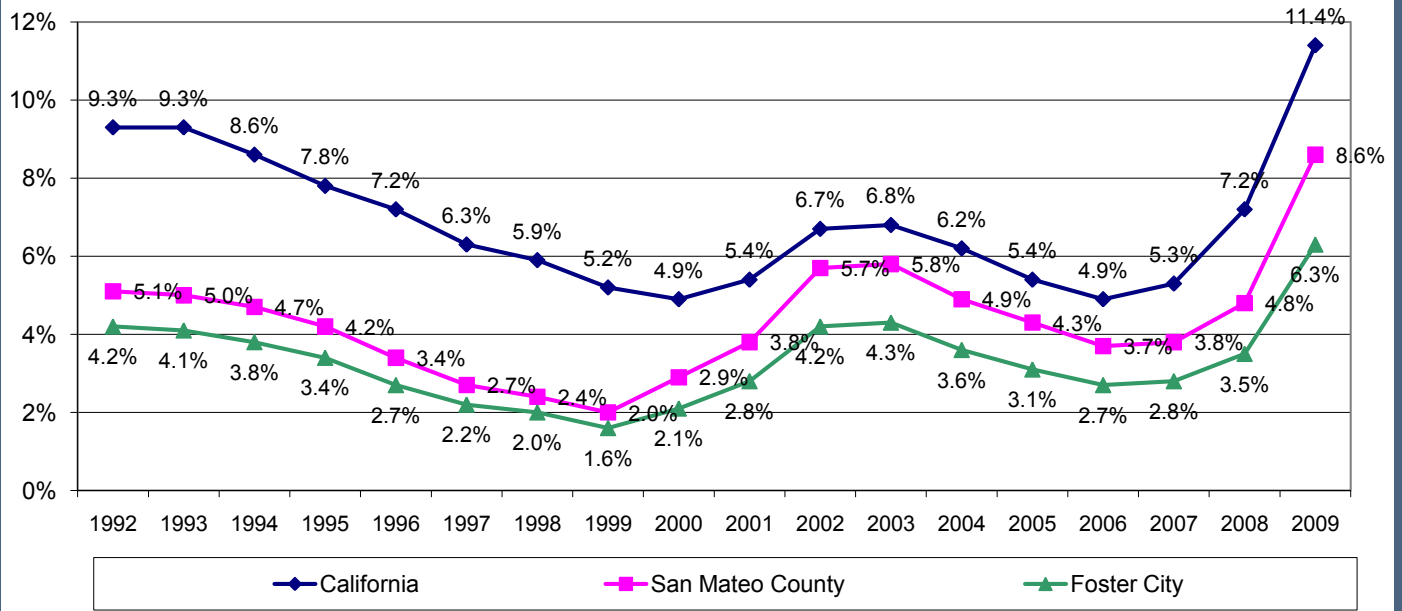
Source: Association of Bay Area Governments, Projections and Priorities: Building Momentum, 2009.

**FIGURE 1-48: Occupations of Foster City Residents (2008)**



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2006-2008

**FIGURE 1-49: Unemployment Rate (1992-2009)**



Source: California Employment Development Department

**Unemployment Rate**

The unemployment rate for Foster City residents has been historically lower than the unemployment rate for the State of California and San Mateo County. The lowest rates were in 1999, with Foster City’s unemployment rate at 1.6 percent and San Mateo County’s at 2.0 percent. The State’s rate was at its lowest in 2000 and 2006 at 4.9 percent. The highest unemployment rates were in 2009 with Foster City at 6.3 percent, San Mateo County at 8.6 percent and the State at 11.4 percent.

## ***Businesses in Foster City***

### *Major Employers in Foster City*

The largest employer in Foster City is Gilead Sciences, a bio-pharmaceutical company with 3,447 employees in 2009. The second largest employer in Foster City is Applied Biosystems (now owned by Life Technologies), a biotechnology company, which employs approximately 1,675 people.

### *Foster City Businesses with Business Licenses*

In 2010, there were 1,187 businesses in Foster City with active business licenses, including home occupations. The largest percentage of businesses, 18 percent, are in the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services category. These businesses include lawyers, accountants, architects and professions where a high level of knowledge and training is required.

The second largest category is the Administrative, Support, and Waste Management and Remediation Services category, with 12.9 percent of the City's businesses. Businesses within this category include employment centers, consulting firms, and any business that provides support to another business.

Figure 1-50 illustrates the percentage of businesses in each classification. These classifications are defined by the North American Industry Class System (NAICS). This system is used by the United States, Canada, and Mexico as an index for statistical reporting of all economic activities.

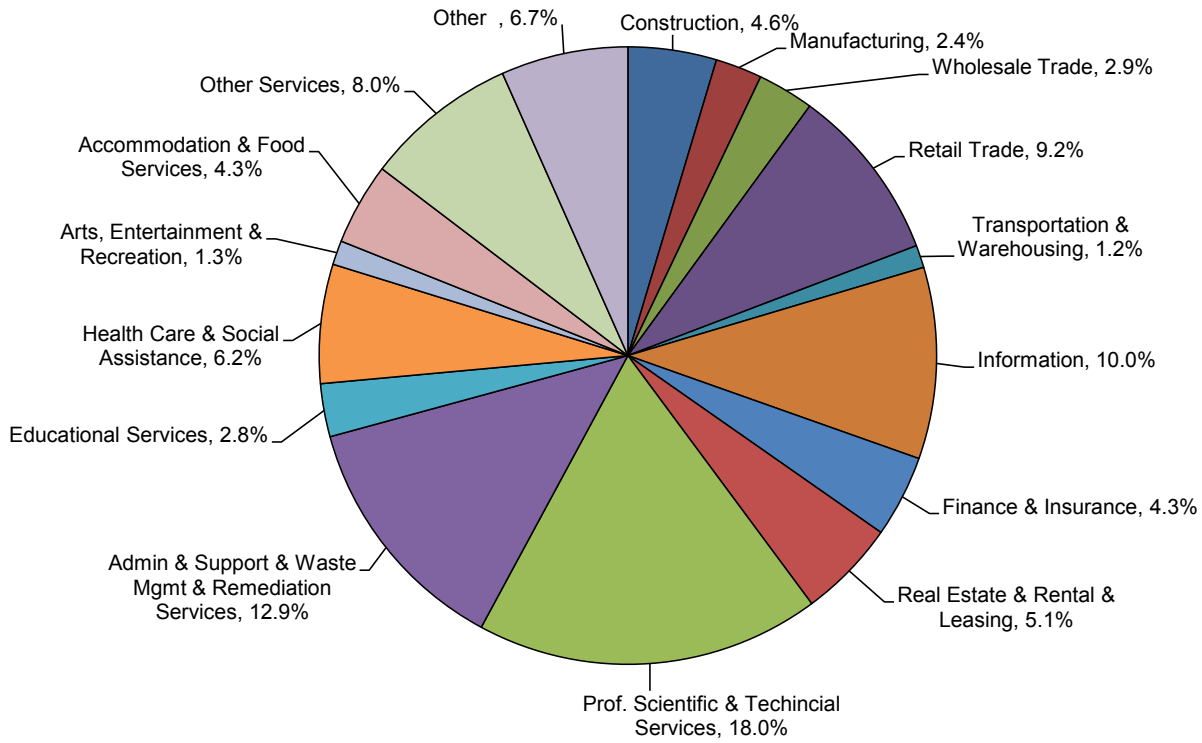
Figure 1-51 shows the percentage of employees reported in each of the classifications. Here, the largest percentage of employees, 27 percent is in Retail Trade. The second largest percentage is in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, with 16 percent of the employees.

**TABLE 1-12: MAJOR EMPLOYERS IN FOSTER CITY (2009)**

<b>Business</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>	<b>Products</b>
Gilead Sciences, Inc.	3,447	Corporate Headquarters/ Biopharmaceuticals
Applied Biosystems, LLC	1,645	Instruments and Software for Genetic and Biological Purposes
Electronics for Imaging, Inc.	1,361	Designs and Markets Printing Products
VISA U.S.A. Inc.	1,233	VISA Company Headquarters
Innovant LLC	1,020	Furniture systems for offices
Sony Computer Entertainment	734	Computer Games
Quinstreet, Inc.	537	Online marketing services and technology
IBM Corporation	298	Computer technology and information technology consulting

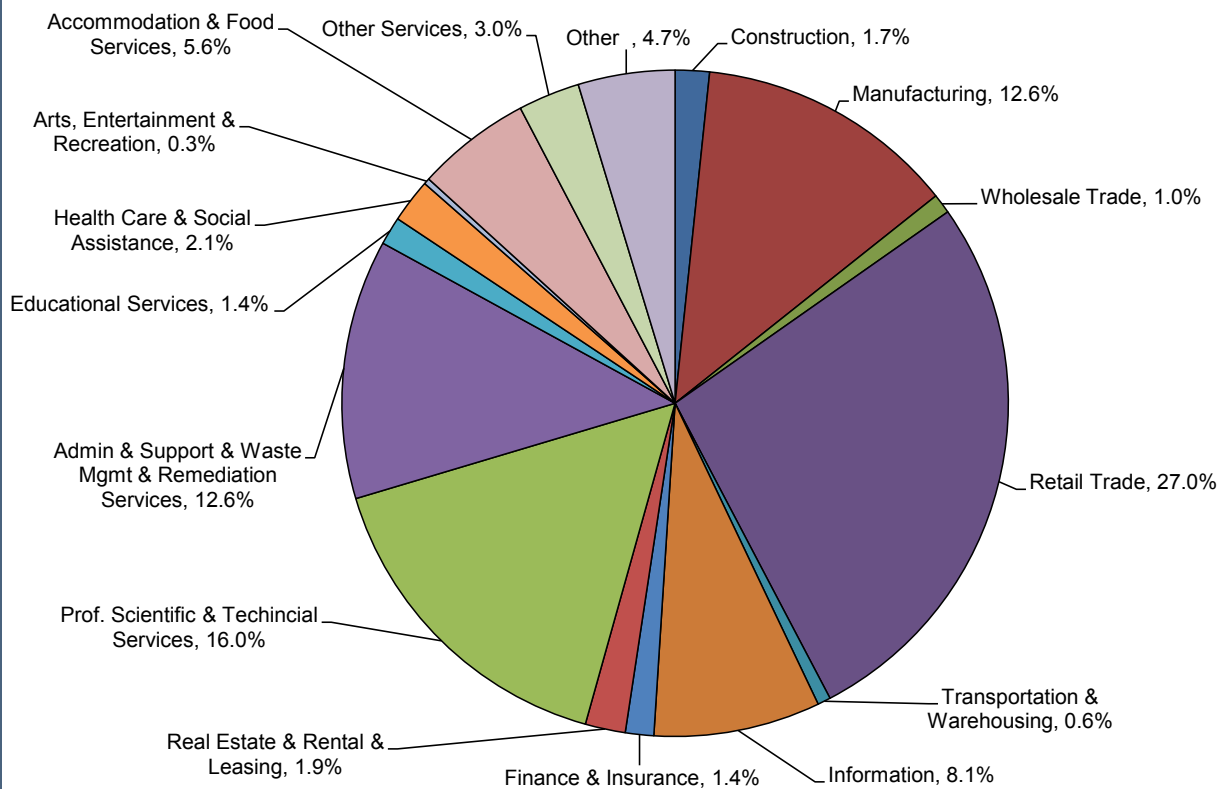
Source: Foster City Business License Data, 2010

**FIGURE 1-50: Foster City Businesses by North American Industry Class System (NAICS) Code**



Source: Foster City Financial Services Department, 2010

**FIGURE 1-51: Foster City Employees by North American Industry Class System (NAICS) Code**



Source: Foster City Financial Services Department, 2010

*Major Office and R&D Centers in Foster City*

The largest office center in Foster City is VISA with about 940,000 square feet and the second largest office / Research and Development (R&D) center is Vintage Park. Vintage Park is home to Gilead Sciences and Electronics for Imaging and has approximately 750,000 square feet of light industrial and office space.

**TABLE 1-13: MAJOR OFFICE AND R&D CENTERS IN FOSTER CITY**

Commercial Center	Address	Total Sq Ft
Visa I-IV	800-900 Metro Center Blvd.	940,000
Vintage Park	Various	750,000
Metro Tower	950 Tower Lane	526,264
Parkside Towers	1015 E. Hillsdale Blvd.	386,181
Lincoln Centre	200-800 Lincoln Centre Drive	369,774
Bayside Towers	4000 and 4100 E. Third Ave.	279,396
Metro Center	919 & 989 E. Hillsdale Blvd.	278,436
R & B Commerce Park	551 Pilgrim & 1151 Triton Drive	229,000
Century Plaza	1065 E. Hillsdale Blvd.	115,511
Lincoln Center	101 Lincoln Centre Dr.	105,112
Foster City Executive Park	1125 E. Hillsdale, 551 Foster City Blvd., 550 & 558 Pilgrim Drive	61,500

Source: Foster City Community Development Department, 2010

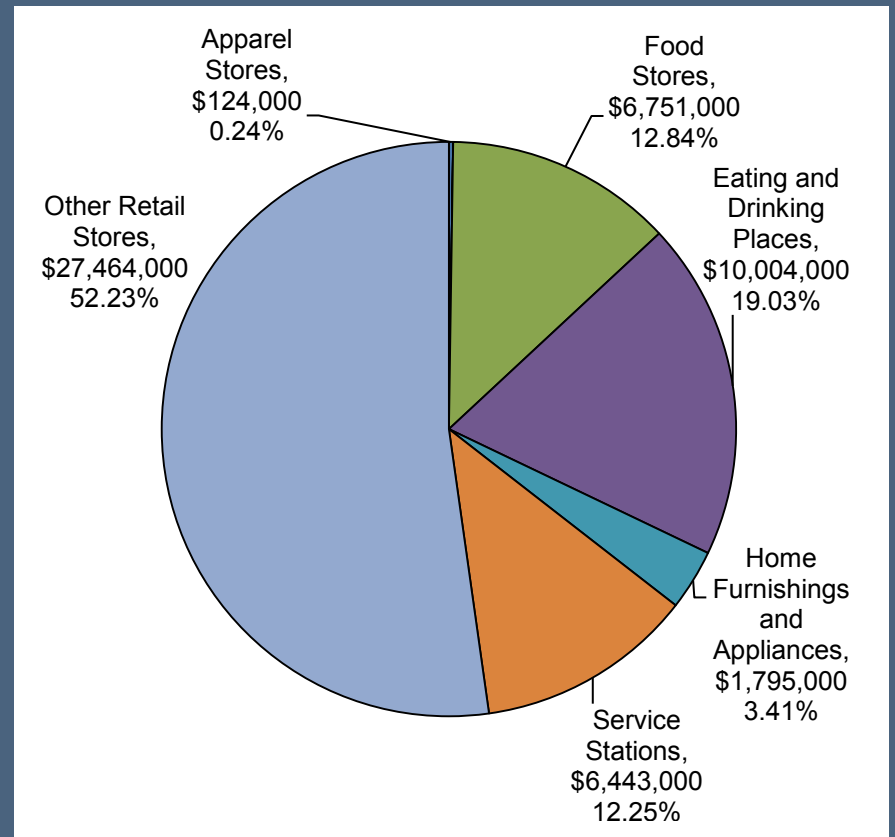




### Taxable Sales

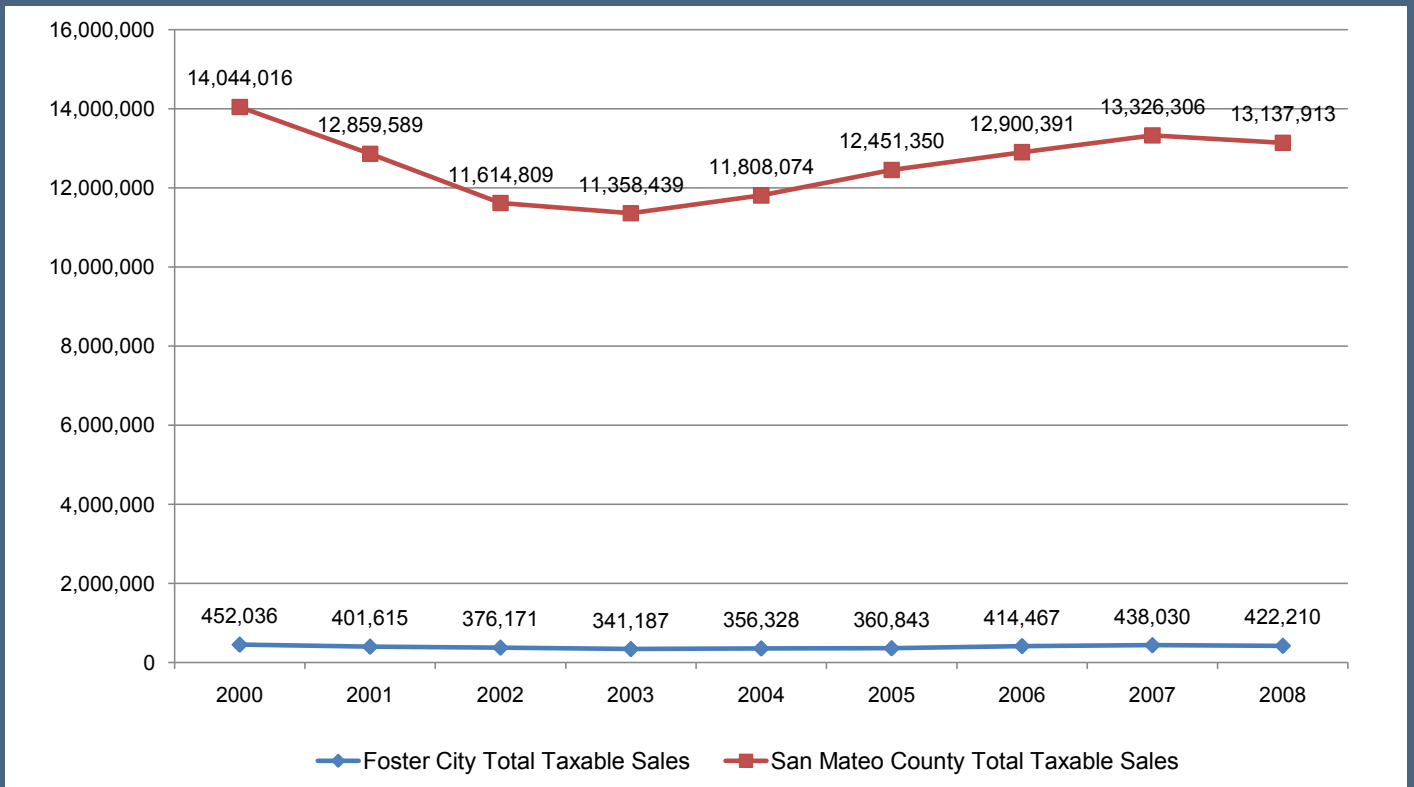
In the second quarter of 2009, the largest category for taxable retail sales in Foster City was “other retail” business. The next highest sales tax revenues were generated from restaurants located within the City. As indicated in Figure 1-53, Foster City’s total taxable sales has remained relatively constant when compared to San Mateo County, which decreased from 14.04 million in 2000 to 11.4 million in 2004 and then increased to 13,326,306 in 2008.

**FIGURE 1-52: Retail Taxable Sales by Category: 2nd Quarter 2009**



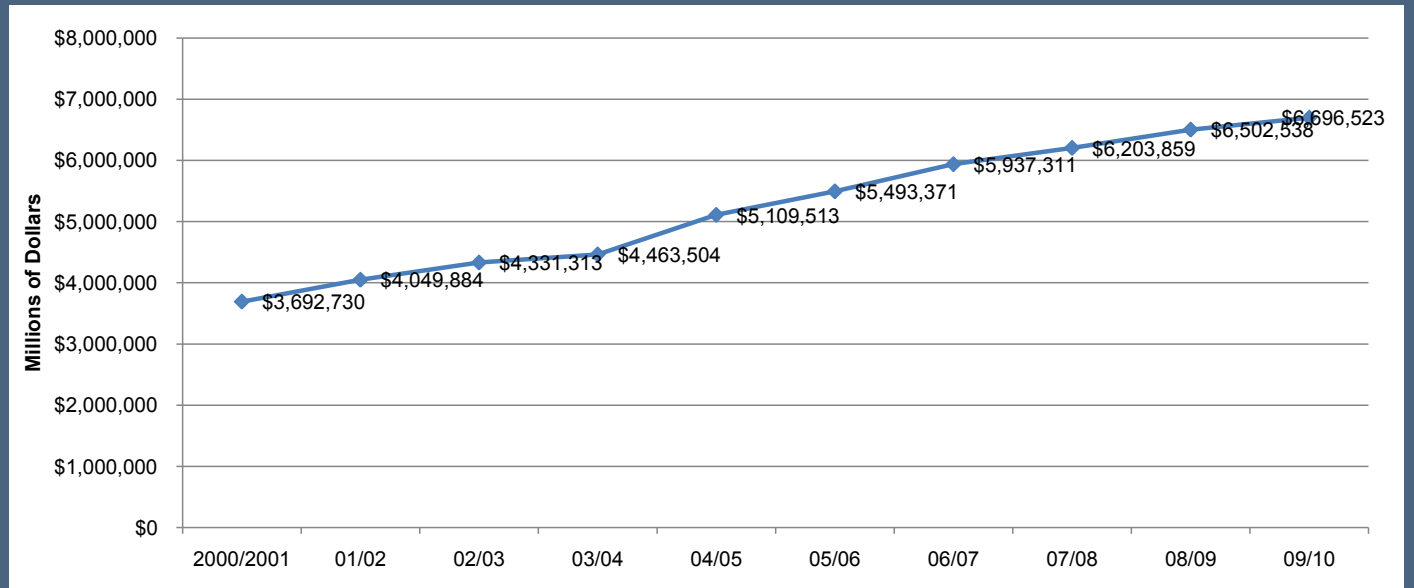
Source: California State Board of Equalization

**FIGURE 1-53: Total Taxable Sales: Foster City and San Mateo County (2000-2009)**



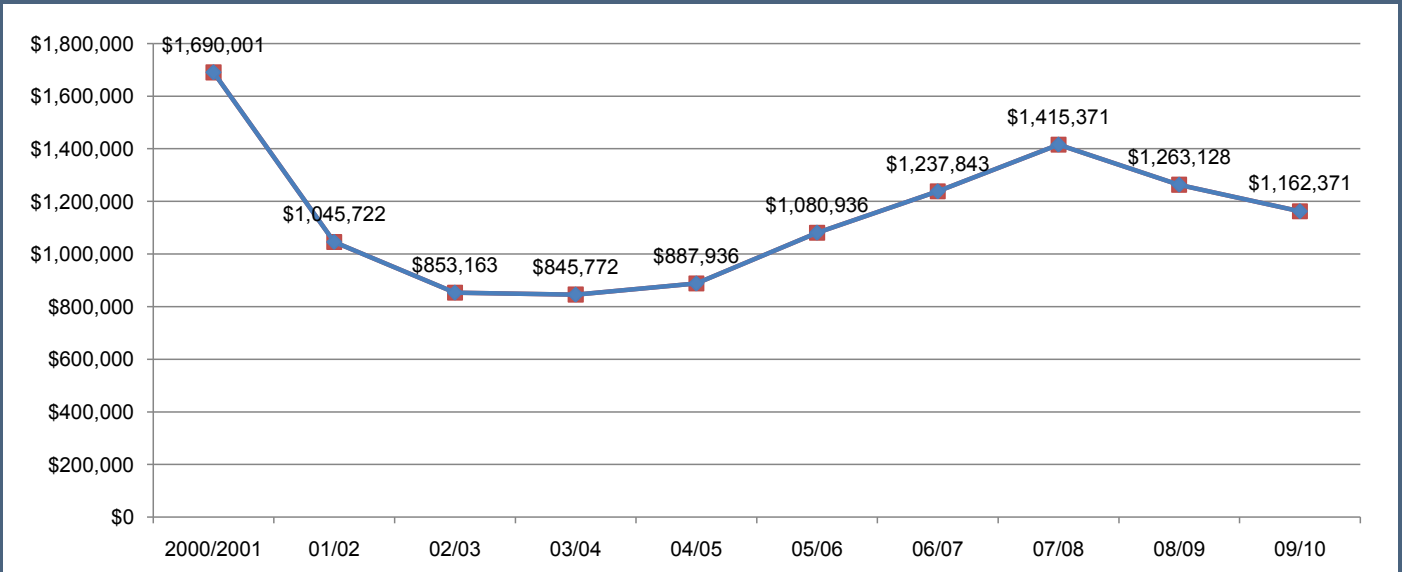
Source: California State Board of Equalization

**FIGURE 1-54: EMID Assessed Valuation (Fiscal Year 2000-01 to 2009-10)**



Source: Foster City Financial Services Department, 2010

**FIGURE 1-55: Transient Occupancy Tax Revenues (Fiscal Year 2000-01 - 2009-10)**



Source: Foster City Financial Services Department, 2010

### **Assessed Valuation**

Property tax is based on the assessed value of a property, as determined by the County Assessor. The City of Foster City does not collect property taxes from the residents. Instead, the Estero Municipal Improvement District (EMID), established prior to incorporation of the City, collects the “city’s” share of the property taxes.

Foster City has had a steady increase in assessed valuation despite the recession in recent years.

### **Transient Occupancy Tax**

Currently, there are two hotels in Foster City. The Crowne Plaza is located at 1221 Chess Dr. and the Courtyard by Marriott is located at 1050 Shell Blvd. The Crowne Plaza has 350 rooms and employs approximately 300 people. The Courtyard by Marriott has 147 rooms and employs approximately 50 people.

The transient occupancy tax is a tax assessed on the rent paid for a hotel room. The transient occupancy tax was adopted in 1983 by the City Council prior to the construction of hotels in Foster City. The transient occupancy tax generates revenue for the City’s General Fund. The current rate is eight percent of the rent charged for the hotel room.

# Transportation

## *City Shuttle Services*

In order to provide an alternate form of transportation to Foster City residents and employees, the City has started several shuttles to serve the population. These shuttles provide transportation around town and connect to major transportation hubs in the Bay Area.



### *Foster City Connections Shuttle*

The City, working with the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance, provides the Foster City Connections Shuttle to Foster City Residents and employees. The shuttle provides service in Foster City and to the Hillsdale Shopping Center and the Bridgepointe Shopping Center in San Mateo. The Foster City Connections Shuttle operates Monday through Friday (excluding holidays) 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. The shuttle operates two routes, the Red Line and the Blue Line.



The Blue Line serves the western portion of the City and the Bridgepointe Shopping Center. Route stops include: Recreation Center, Charter Square Shopping Center, Edgewater Place Shopping Center, Sea Cloud Park, Harbor Cove Apartments, and the Bridgepointe Shopping Center.



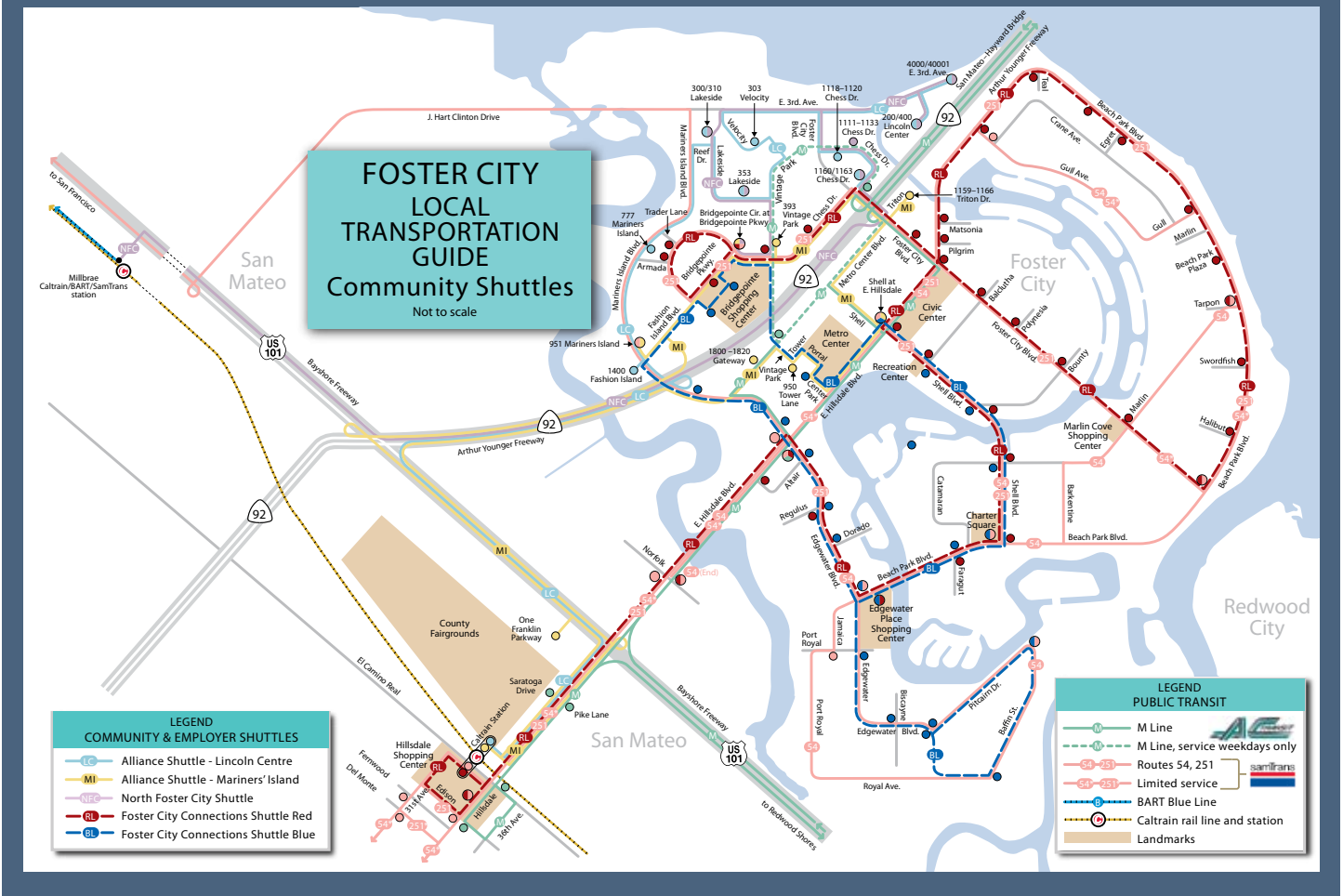
The Red Line shuttle stops are the same as the SamTrans Route 251 bus stops, although as of 2010 the Red Line provides service in the eastbound direction only. The Red Line and SamTrans Route 251 provide connections to the Hillsdale Caltrain Station. Route stops include: Library/Community Center, Beach Park Plaza Shopping Center, Marlin Cove Shopping Center, Bridgepointe Shopping Center, Foster City Recreation Center, Edgewater Place Shopping Center, and the Hillsdale Shopping Center.

For more information on routes and schedules for the Connections Shuttle, go to [www.fostercity.org/transportation](http://www.fostercity.org/transportation).

### *North Foster City (Millbrae) BART Shuttle*

The Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance; in conjunction with several employers, provides shuttle service to the Millbrae Intermodal (BART and Caltrain) Station Monday through Friday during commute hours. For more information on the BART connection shuttles, please go to the City's website at [www.fostercity.org/transportation](http://www.fostercity.org/transportation).

Figure 1-56: Foster City Local Transportation Guide Route Map (2010)



### Employer Shuttles

Several Foster City employers operate a shuttle service to and from the Caltrain Station in San Mateo. The shuttles are available Monday through Friday during the commute hours only.

For more information on the employer shuttles, please go to the City's website at [www.fostercity.org/transportation](http://www.fostercity.org/transportation).

### Senior Express

The Senior Express Shuttle is an on-demand service for Foster City residents who are age 55 and older. The service includes a pick-up at the residence and drop off at a designated stop. For fee information and reservations, please call the Senior Wing at the Parks and Recreation Department at 650-286-2585.



### ***Alternate Modes of Transportation***

In addition to the City Shuttles, there are other transportation options available. These options include SamTrans, Caltrain, AC Transit and BART.

#### *SamTrans*

SamTrans operates a bus service throughout Foster City and the San Francisco Peninsula, interconnecting with virtually all other public transit agencies in the Bay Area. SamTrans runs three routes in Foster City. The three routes are Route 54, Route 251, and Route 359. For more information on the routes and schedule, please go to [www.samtrans.com](http://www.samtrans.com).



#### *Caltrain*

Caltrain provides commuter rail service between San Francisco and Gilroy along the San Francisco Peninsula. The closest Caltrain station is located 3 miles from Foster City on Hillsdale Blvd. and El Camino Real in San Mateo. Foster City residents and employees can connect to the Caltrain station by car or by SamTrans Route 251, employer shuttles, the Foster City Connections Shuttle, or the Senior Express Shuttle.

For more information on Caltrain schedules or connection options, please go to [www.caltrain.com](http://www.caltrain.com).



#### *AC Transit Line M*

The transbay service links the transit center at the Hayward BART Station with the Hillsdale Caltrain Station in San Mateo and Redwood Shores. Line M operates via Highway 92 (the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge) to serve commercial/business centers at Bridgepointe and Metro Center, the Foster City Library/City Hall, and via East Hillsdale Boulevard, the Hillsdale Caltrain station and Hillsdale Mall.

In the East Bay, the schedule was revised in late 2010 to eliminate non-peak direction trips to Redwood Shores. For more information on the routes and schedule, please go to [www.actransit.org](http://www.actransit.org).



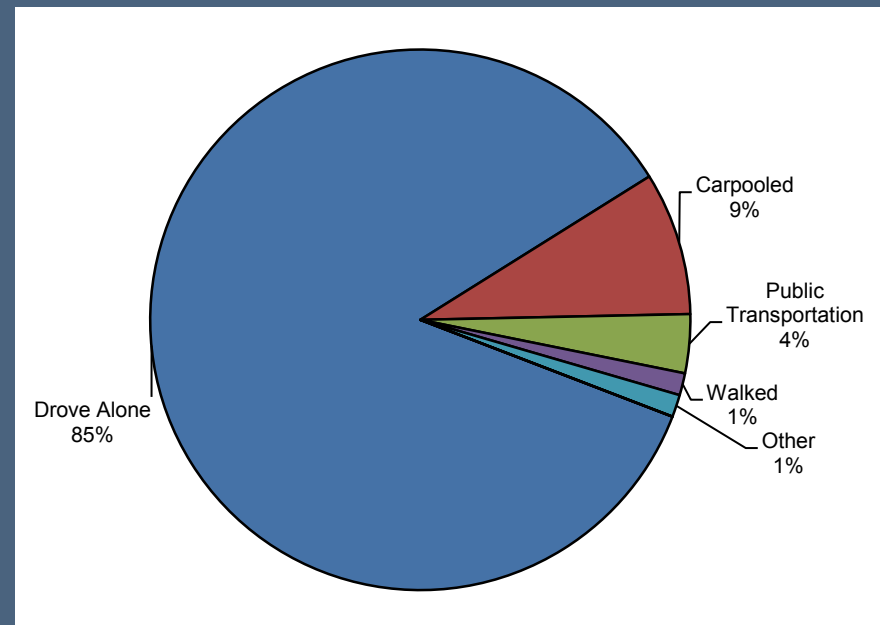
#### *BART*

The nearest BART station is the Millbrae Station, which also provides a connection to Caltrain. Access to the Millbrae Station is provided by the North Foster City Shuttle, SamTrans Route 359, or by transferring from Caltrain. BART provides access to San Francisco Airport, Downtown San Francisco and the East Bay.

### Transportation to Work - Mode

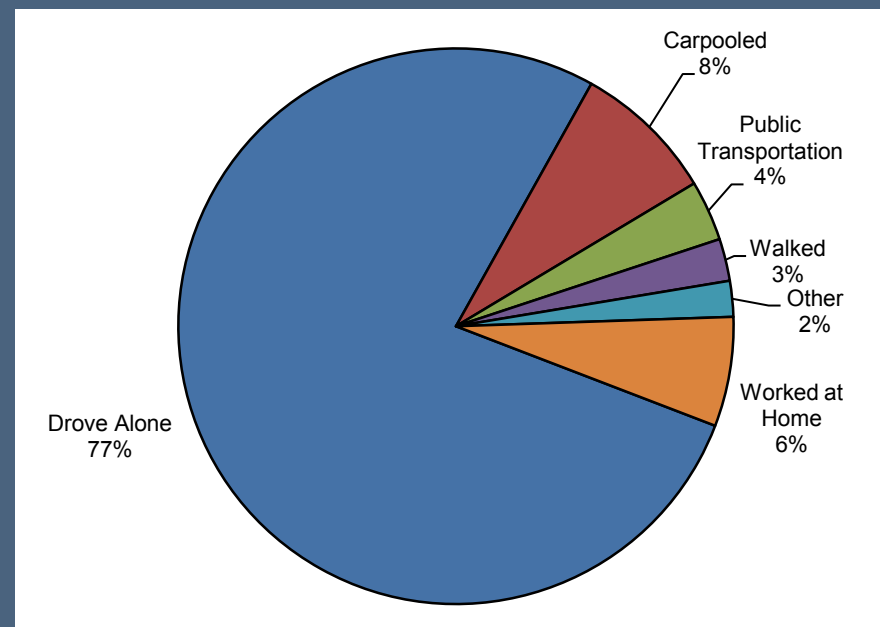
In 2008, 77 percent of Foster City residents drove alone to work and 8% carpooled. Compared to 2000, the percentage carpooling has decreased slightly from nine percent to eight percent; the percentage taking public transportation has stayed the same at four percent and the percentage who walked has increased from one percent to three percent.

**FIGURE 1-57: Transportation Mode to Work (2000)**



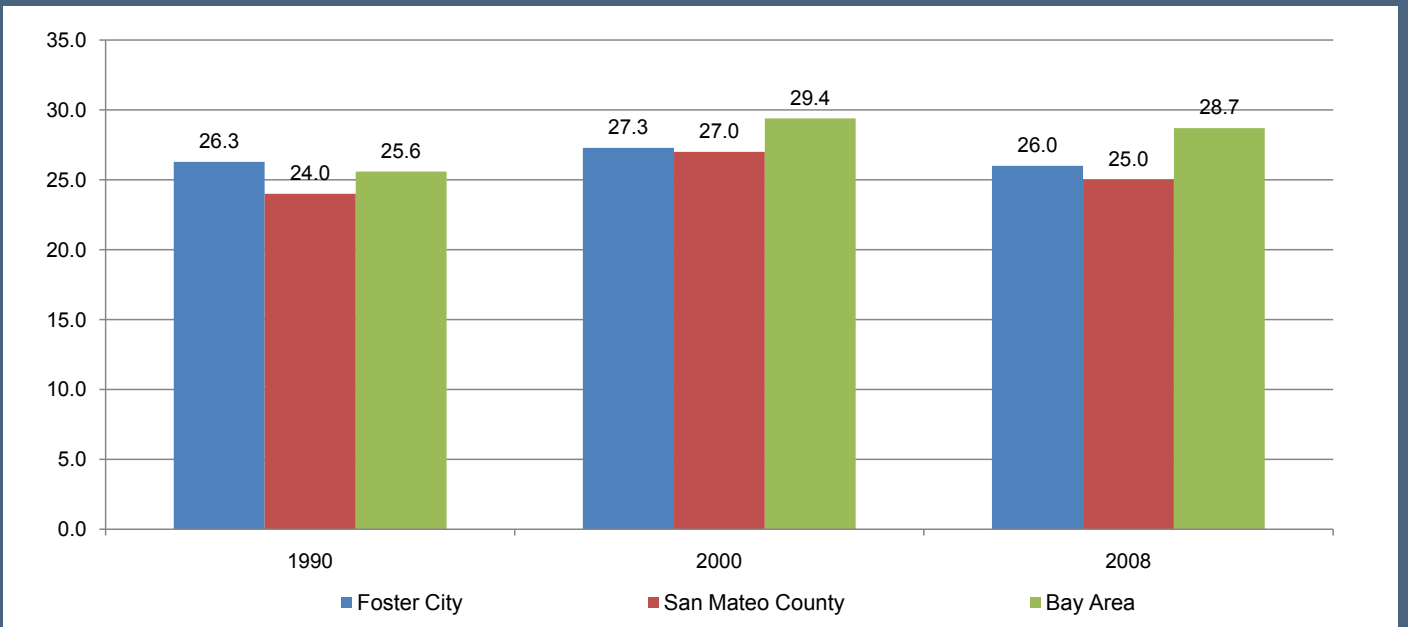
Source: U.S. Census, 2000

**FIGURE 1-58: Transportation Mode to Work (2008)**



Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2008

**FIGURE 1-59: Mean Travel Time to Work (1990-2008)**



Source: U.S. Census 1980-2000, U.S. Census American Community Survey 2008

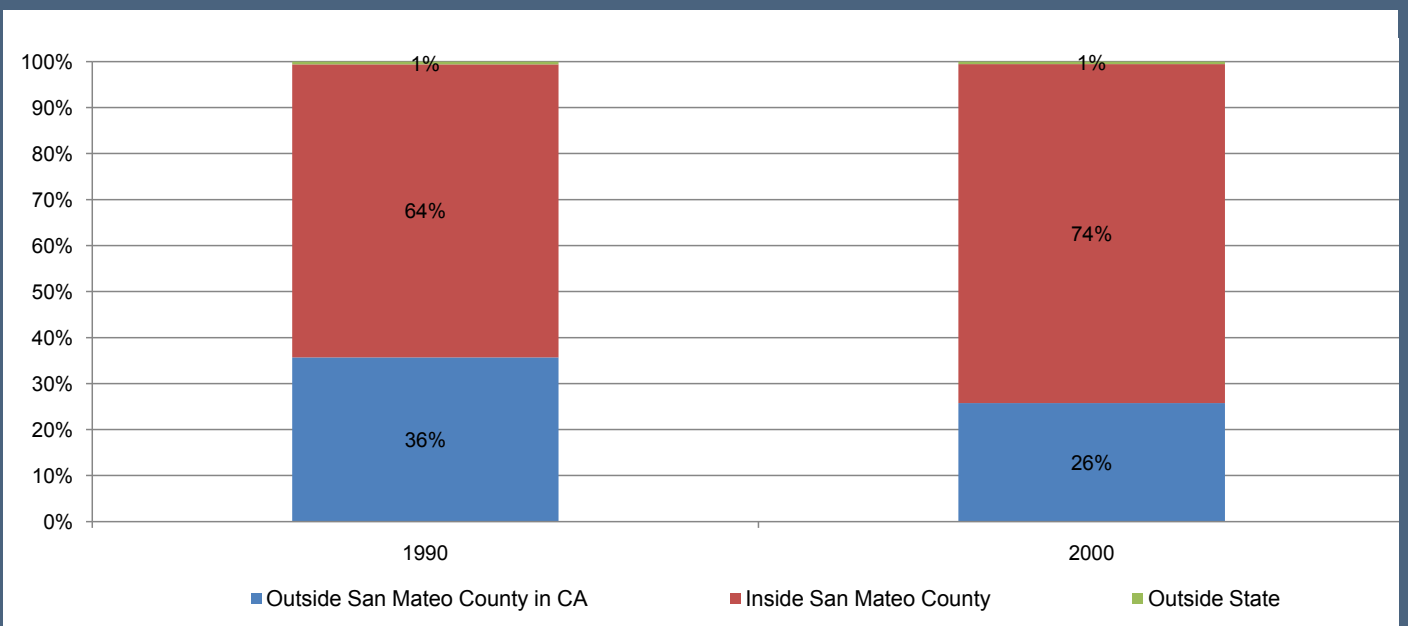
**Travel Time to Work**

In 2008, the mean travel time to work for Foster City workers was 26.0 minutes. This number was slightly more than San Mateo County as a whole (which had a mean travel time of 25 minutes) but less than the Bay Area average of 28.7 minutes. Travel times increased between 1990 and 2000 but have decreased slightly since 2000.

**Residents' Place of Work**

The percentage of residents who work within San Mateo County has increased from 64 percent in 1990 to 74 percent in 2000. In 2000, the percentage of residents who traveled outside of San Mateo County for work declined from 36 percent to 26 percent. The percentage of residents who work outside the state remained constant at one percent.

**FIGURE 1-60: Foster City Labor Force by Place of Work (1990-2000)**



Source: U.S. Census 1990-2000



# SECTION 2: Trends Analysis

The Trends Analysis identifies local, regional, and national trends and issues that are applicable to the update of the Land Use and Circulation Element. Trends and issues are put in perspective with Foster City's physical, demographic, economic, and locational conditions.

Some of the trends are quantifiable, such as changes in population characteristics. Other trends are less quantifiable and more cultural or social in nature such as trends in businesses, retailing, live/work, technology, and transportation.



## Demographic Trends

### Population

Foster City experienced the greatest rates of population growth in the 1970s and 1980s. By 1990, most of the residential land was developed, and there has been minimal population growth since.<sup>1</sup>

**TABLE 2-1: POPULATION**

Year	Population	10-year Increase
1970	9,522	
1980	23,287	244%
1990	28,176	21%
2000	28,803	2%
2010	30,567	6%

### Ethnicity

While Foster City population growth has been relatively minimal since 1990, there have been changes to the ethnic composition of residents.<sup>2</sup> The proportion of residents who are white or black has declined, while the proportion who are Asian has increased. The Asian Indian population has been the fastest growing, increasing seven-fold from 1.0 percent to 8.6 percent from 1990 to 2008.

**TABLE 2-2: ETHNICITY**

	1990	2000	2008	Percent Change 1990-2008
White	73.5%	59.3%	50.5%	-31%
Black	3.2%	2.1%	1.8%	-44%
Chinese	11.4%	16.3%	16.8%	47%
Asian Indian	1.0%	5.7%	8.6%	760%
Filipino	3.4%	3.3%	6.9%	103%
Japanese	4.0%	4.6%	3.9%	-3%
Korean	0.9%	1.2%	2.6%	189%
Other Asian	0.8%	1.4%	2.5%	213%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.6%	0.6%	1.0%	67%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	100%
Some Other Race (category added 2000)		1.2%	0.9%	
Two or More Races (category added 2000)		4.1%	4.2%	
No Response/Other	1.1%			
Total	100%	100%	100%	

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census, 1990-2010

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census, 1990-2000 and U.S. Census American Community Survey 2008. 2010 Census data for detailed ethnicity is not yet available.

## Age

Since 1990, Foster City has seen increases in the proportion of children and teens (aged 0-19 years), older adults (aged 55-64 years), and seniors (65+ years). The proportion of middle-aged adults (aged 35-54 years) has remained relatively constant, while the proportion of young adults (aged 20-34 years) has declined.<sup>3</sup>

Interestingly, the proportion of residents who are childbearing age (primarily the 20-34 years cohort) has decreased, yet the the school population has increased. Some possible explanations may include larger families, single-parent households, and/or children raised by grandparents. It is also possible it is a demographic or reporting oddity that will be better explained with next round of census data. Some demographic data for “places” like Foster City will be out in May of this year, and additional data will be released in June.

**TABLE 2-3: AGE OF POPULATION**

	1990	2000	2008	Percent Change 1990-2008
0-19 years	22.8%	22.7%	26.3%	3.5%
20-34 years	26.6%	21.2%	16.4%	-10.2%
35-54 years	34.8%	34.6%	34.4%	-0.4%
55-64 years	8.9%	11.4%	11.7%	2.8%
65+ years	7.0%	10.1%	11.2%	4.2%

## Household Types

The percentage of families with children increased five percent over the past decade, after having declined during the 1980s and remaining flat through the 1990s.<sup>4</sup>

**TABLE 2-4: HOUSEHOLD TYPES**

	1990	2000	2008	Percent Change 1990-2008
Families with Children	30.4%	30.5%	35.3%	5%
Families without Children	35.5%	37.7%	33.4%	-4%
Non-Families (single, or more than one unrelated)	34.2%	31.7%	31.2%	-1%

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census, 1990-2000 and U.S. Census American Community Survey 2008. 2010 Census data for age distribution is not yet available.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census 1980-1990 and U.S. Census American Community Survey 2008



### School Enrollment

Total school enrollment has grown steadily over the past ten years, from 2,607 students in all Foster City schools in the 2000-01 academic year to 3,028 students in 2009-10.<sup>5</sup>

**TABLE 2-5: FOSTER CITY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**

	2000-01	2009-10	Percent Increase
Audubon	468	629	34%
Brewer Island	474	675	42%
Foster City Elementary	734	772	5%
Bowditch	931	952	2%
	2,607	3,028	16%



### School Performance

Over the past five years, academic performance in Foster City schools as measured by the Academic Performance Index (API) has increased.<sup>6</sup>

**TABLE 2-6: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDEX (API)**

	2006	2010	Percent Increase
Audubon	872	908	4%
Brewer Island	937	952	2%
Foster City Elementary	898	952	6%
Bowditch	873	912	4%



<sup>5</sup> San Mateo-Foster City Elementary School District, 2010

<sup>6</sup> California Department of Education, Policy and Evaluation Division, 2010

## Employment

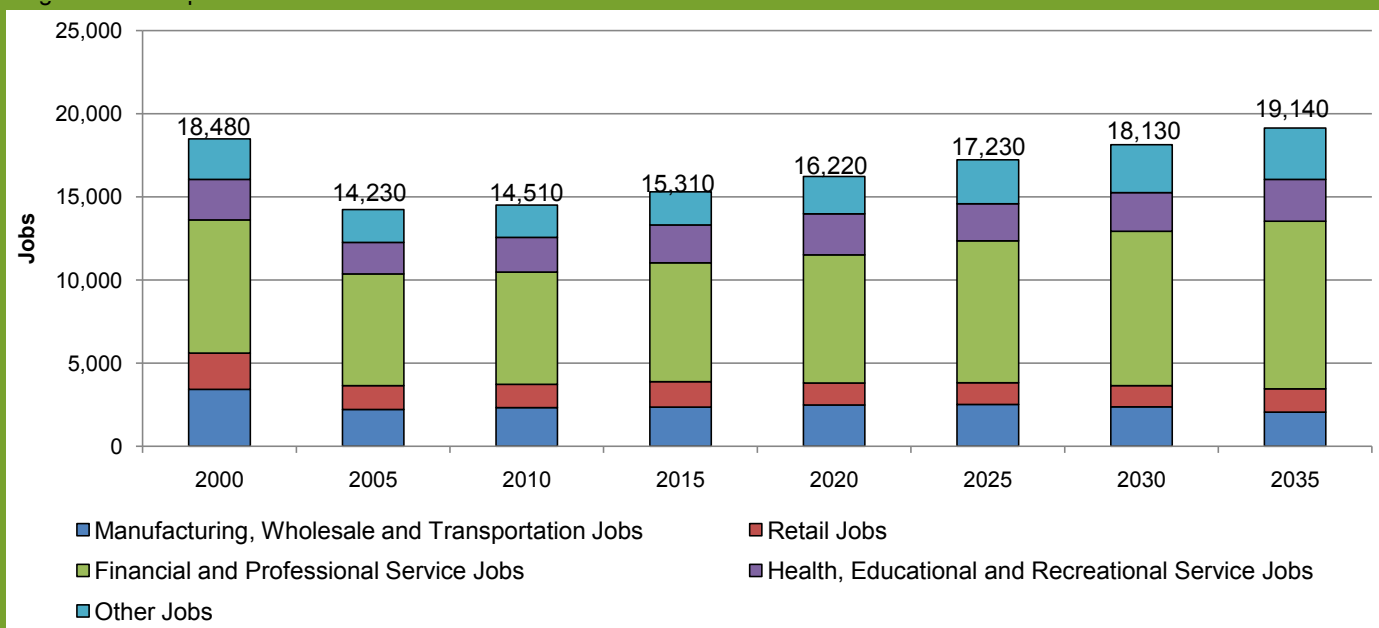
Employment growth is forecast to return in San Mateo County by 2011. Total wage and salary jobs are not forecast to reach the 2000 peak until the next decade.<sup>7</sup> Between 2010 and 2015, the principal job creation occurs in the professional services, transportation and warehousing, construction, information, and retail trade sector. The largest employment losses come in the financial sector, which loses nearly 2,000 jobs, or 10 percent of the workforce from 2010 to 2015.<sup>8</sup>



**TABLE 2-7: EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS**

Year	Jobs	5-Year Change
2000	18,480	
2005	14,230	-23%
2010	14,510	2%
2015	15,310	6%
2020	16,220	6%
2025	17,230	6%
2030	18,130	5%
2035	19,140	6%

**FIGURE 2-1: Projections of Jobs by Sector in Foster City (2000-2035)**



Source: Association of Bay Area Governments, Projections and Priorities: Building Momentum, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Association of Bay Area Governments, Projections and Priorities: Building Momentum, 2009.

<sup>8</sup> California Department of Transportation 2011 county-by-county forecasts:

[http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ote/socio\\_economic.html](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ote/socio_economic.html)



"Smart Growth" emphasizes compact, livable neighborhoods.



Other important components of compact neighborhoods include mixed-use development, inclusion of affordable housing, and provision of well-designed parks and open spaces.



Transit-oriented development is often oriented to regional rail transit, but can also be served by Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) as illustrated above.

## Economic and Social Trends

### "Smart Growth"

"Smart growth" is an urban planning and transportation approach based on the concept of concentrating growth in compact, walkable urban centers to avoid sprawl. Smart growth advocates compact, transit-oriented, walkable, bicycle-friendly land use, including neighborhood schools, "complete streets" (see discussion of complete streets later in this chapter) and mixed-use development with a range of housing choices. Smart growth is intended to provide an alternative to urban sprawl, traffic congestion, disconnected neighborhoods, and urban decay. Smart growth values long-range, regional considerations of sustainability over a short-term focus.

Transportation and community planners began to promote the idea of compact cities and communities in the early 1970s. The cost and difficulty of acquiring land (particularly in already developed areas) to build and widen highways caused some politicians to reconsider basing transportation planning on motor vehicles. In more recent years smart growth has been considered a means for responding to climate change and scarcity of energy and natural resources.

Growth is "smart growth" to the extent that it includes the following elements:

### Compact Neighborhoods

Compact, livable neighborhoods are a critical element of reducing urban sprawl and protecting the climate. Such a tactic includes adopting strategies and policies that focus housing and job growth into urban centers and neighborhood business districts, to create compact, walkable, and bike- and transit-friendly hubs. This sometimes requires local governmental bodies to implement policy and code changes that allow increased height and density, and regulations that reduce minimum parking requirements in favor of emphasizing walking, cycling, and transit use. Other important components of compact neighborhoods include mixed-use development, inclusion of affordable housing, and provision of well-designed parks and open spaces.

### Transit-Oriented Development

Transit-oriented development (often referred to as "TOD") is defined as a residential or commercial area designed to maximize access to public transport. Mixed-use, compact neighborhoods tend to use transit at all times of the day so there is considerable overlap between TOD and compact neighborhoods. Many cities striving to implement better TOD strategies seek to secure funding to create new public transportation infrastructure and improve existing services. Other measures might include regional cooperation to increase efficiency and expand services, moving buses and trains more frequently through high-use areas, and pricing parking so to encourage people to utilize transit.

### *Pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly design*

Biking and walking instead of driving can reduce emissions, save money on fuel and maintenance, and foster a healthier population. Pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly improvements include bike lanes on main streets, an urban bike-trail system, bike parking, pedestrian crossings, and associated master plans.

### *Infill development*

Infill development is the use of land within an already developed area for further construction, especially as part of a community redevelopment or growth management program or as part of smart growth. It focuses on the reuse and repositioning of obsolete or underutilized buildings and sites, urging densification to reduce the need for automobiles, encourage walking, and ultimately save energy.

### *Applicability to Foster City*

As a master-planned community, Foster City incorporates a number of smart growth principles. Throughout the city, development is relatively compact compared to other suburban communities, and most residents live within walking distance of at least some services. There is a wide range of housing types, along with a mix of uses including commercial uses and employment. There is an extensive, well-used bicycle network, and well-designed parks and open spaces are abundant.

Some recent development proposals in Foster City embody smart growth principles on a project scale:

The Pilgrim-Triton project will include housing (both market rate and subsidized/affordable), live/work units, retail space, offices, and open space. The Mirabella project that had been proposed adjacent to the civic center had included senior housing units in a continuing care retirement community with retail and a public plaza. Although the project stalled in the economic downturn, the City has issued a Request For Proposals for the site with hopes of attracting a similar type of mixed-use development that incorporates smart growth principles.

The potential to further pursue smart growth planning in Foster City is limited by the scarcity of available vacant land. The Mirabella project site is the last remaining sizable vacant site in the city. The Pilgrim-Triton development is a redevelopment of previously developed properties, and future smart growth development would require similar infill redevelopment of previously developed parcels.



Pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly improvements include bike lanes on main streets, an urban bike-trail system, bike parking, pedestrian crossings, and associated master plans.



Infill development provides the opportunity to make more intensive use of scarce land as part of growth management program. The example above illustrates a supermarket with housing on the upper floors above.



In Foster City the Pilgrim-Triton project includes aspects of Smart Growth such as a mix of uses and pedestrian-oriented design.



BRT typically involves high-frequency service, dedicated bus-only lanes, and station platforms similar in design to rail transit facilities.

Foster City also faces the challenge of availability of transit to fulfill the transit-oriented aspect of smart growth. Additional intensification of development is not viable if it cannot be served by adequate transportation, and Foster City has already been reaching the upper threshold of accommodating automobiles at peak travel periods. Foster City is not situated along major fixed-route regional transit such as Caltrain and BART, so buses and shuttles must be relied on for transit.

However, there are trends in bus and shuttle transit such as employer shuttles (discussed elsewhere in this paper) and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). BRT is a term applied to a variety of public transportation systems using buses to provide faster, more efficient service than an ordinary bus line, often achieved by making improvements to existing infrastructure, vehicles and scheduling. The goal of BRT is to approach the service quality of rail transit while still enjoying the cost savings and flexibility of bus transit. BRT typically involves high-frequency all-day service, dedicated bus-only lanes to allow buses to bypass traffic congestion, and preferential treatment of buses at intersections involving the extension of green time or actuation of the green light upon detection of an approaching bus. Given sufficient densities, a BRT in Foster City could provide an efficient and reliable connection to regional transit such as Caltrain or BART.

### ***Residential Renovations and Additions***

As peninsula neighborhoods have aged and property values have risen over the years, there has been interest on the part of many single family dwelling owners to expand their homes with second story additions, or tear them down to build new, larger homes. While this trend is also seen in older neighborhoods throughout the country, the high property costs and the modest sizes of many smaller homes on the Peninsula has made the trend particularly prevalent locally.

There are numerous reasons why a homeowner may wish to expand or replace an existing home:

- There may be a desire to remain in the neighborhood, particularly if the neighborhood has positive qualities and if friends are nearby. A remodeling or rebuilding project allows a homeowner to have a home more suited to their needs without moving to a different neighborhood or city.
- A large-scale remodel is considered a method to add to the value of a house. Even a smaller remodeling project such as a new kitchen or bathroom can increase a home's resale value substantially.
- Sometimes growing families need an extra bedroom and bath, and remodeling is cheaper than buying new.
- There may be a desire to accommodate extended family members, who may either live in the house or live elsewhere but visit frequently.
- Depending on the scale of the project, staying in place and remodeling an existing home can allow retention of a historically lower tax assessment under Proposition 13, as opposed to selling and moving to another home with a higher assessment.



While remodeling and rebuilding projects can contribute benefits to the homeowner and neighborhood, there are also potential problems. The enlarged and newly built homes can cause conflicts in terms of size, privacy, shadows, and architectural styles that may not be consistent with surrounding homes. Derisive terms such as “Monster Houses,” “McMansions,” “blockbusters,” and “starter castles” have been used by critics to describe homes that are particularly out of character with their surrounding neighborhood.

On the Peninsula, neighborhood protection has been a priority for decades, and a number of cities have design standards and guidelines that specifically address second story additions. For example, San Mateo, Burlingame, Palo Alto, Mountain View, and Los Gatos each have highly detailed, descriptive standards and guidelines that address the many intricacies of single family additions and rebuilding projects. Among the issues commonly addressed:

- Site planning to reinforce the neighborhood’s existing patterns, particularly with regards to setbacks.
- Neighborhood compatibility for height, mass and scale.
- Architectural form, massing, roof lines, and design elements.
- Placement of second story windows and decks for privacy.

Foster City has had its own share of additions, as well as a few rebuilding projects. However, a critical distinction with neighboring communities is the size of existing homes relative to the size of the lots. In neighboring communities, older homes may be relatively small compared to the size of the lot, so in theory there is room for expansion. In Foster City’s residential neighborhoods, conversely, homes are often already built close to or up to the minimum lot setbacks, and yards are already relatively small. This presents challenges for expanding an existing home since there is relatively little or no yard area to expand into. Some applicants have requested variances to setback requirements to allow expansion into setback areas, but allowing exceptions would have policy implications and could impact quality of life.

Given the challenges for expanding outward, a more feasible alternative for Foster City homeowners might be to add a second story addition to an existing single story home, or enlarge the second story of an existing two-story home. This presents compatibility issues in terms of size, privacy, shadows, and architectural styles. Many Foster City neighborhoods have distinctive architectural styles, so decisions would need to address whether to allow deviations or require consistency.

The update of the Land Use & Circulation Element provides an opportunity to modify or refine policy on this emerging issue. Policies can provide rationale and formalize the City’s position on yard encroachments, view impacts and size of additions and provide a basis for changes to the existing residential design guidelines for additions and rebuilding projects.



Examples of homes with second-story additions in Foster City.

### Senior Housing

As the American population ages, development of senior housing strategies and services have been critical to meeting the needs of a growing senior community. From 1990 to 2008, the largest population increase on the national level was seen in the 55-64 year range, up 59.3 percent from less than two decades earlier.

**TABLE 2-8: POPULATION INCREASES ON A NATIONAL LEVEL <sup>9</sup>**

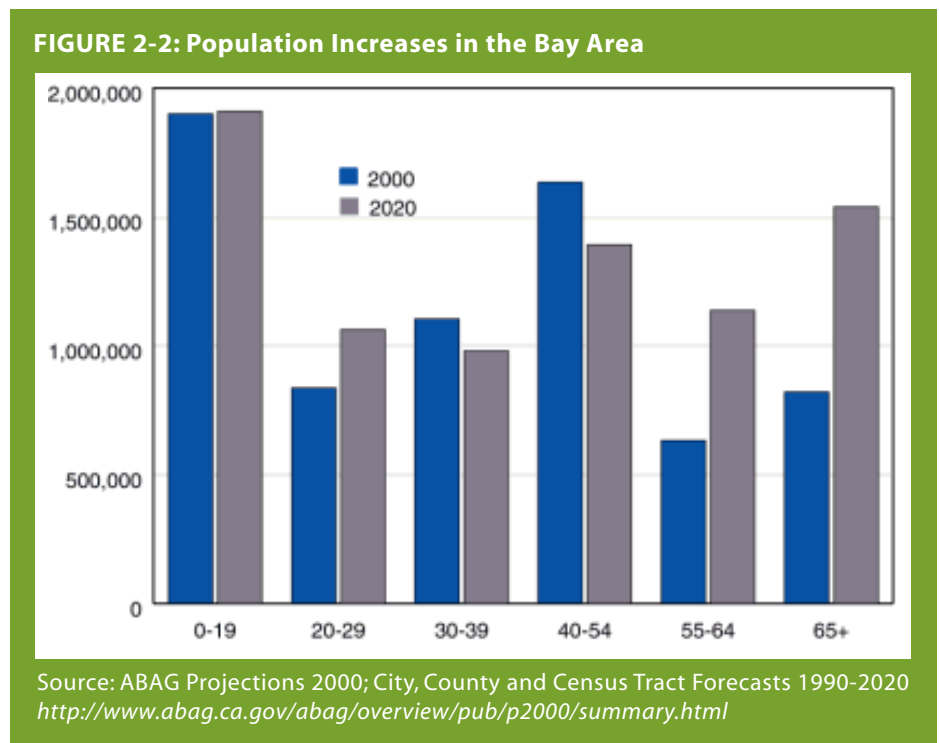
	1990	2000	2008	Percent Change 1990-2008
0-19 years	71,321,886	80,473,265	82,640,086	15.9%
20-34 years	62,196,244	58,855,725	61,990,546	-0.3%
35-54 years	62,801,989	82,826,479	86,873,195	38.3%
55-64 years	21,147,923	24,274,684	33,686,181	59.3%
65+ years	31,241,831	34,991,753	38,869,716	24.4%

Foster City has shared this trend. In 2008, nearly 23 percent of Foster City residents were 55 years of age or older – a seven percent increase since 1990. <sup>10</sup>

**TABLE 2-9: OLDER ADULTS AND SENIORS IN FOSTER CITY**

	1990	2000	2008	Percent Change 1990-2008
55-64 years	8.9%	11.4%	11.7%	2.8%
65+ years	7.0%	10.1%	11.2%	4.2%

It is anticipated that from 2000 to 2020, in the Bay Area, the largest population shift will occur in the 65+ years and older range.



<sup>9,10</sup> U.S. Census, 1990-2000 and U.S. Census American Community Survey 2008

To meet the increased demand in senior housing, a number of senior housing options are available. These options include:

### *Retirement Living*

Also known as Adult Communities, most retirement living neighborhoods or developments are restricted to seniors older than 55 years of age. Many of these retirement neighborhoods focus around common interests such as golf or tennis, and are designed for individuals who want a private lifestyle at home, have minimal health concerns, but want to enjoy their retirement with others.

### *Independent Living*

For seniors who do not require medical care, independent living arrangements takes care of providing balanced meals, laundry services, and basic household chores. Independent living provides the opportunity for a private lifestyle at home, usually in the form of single family homes, townhouses, and duplexes, with the opportunity to participate in group activities at a centralized location.

### *Assisted Living*

For seniors who can remain independent in some respects but cannot live on their own safely, assisted living facilities provide amenities which include prepared meals, laundry, transportation services, medicinal assistance, emergency call service, and licensed nursing. Assisted living usually takes the form of apartment complexes and converted homes.

### *Continuing Care*

Continuing care communities, also known as life-care communities, provide a wide range of housing and service choices as a senior's needs and health changes. This type of community eliminates the need to move to a new community at a later age by including provisions for an increased level of medical services as needed. Continuing care takes the form of a wide array of housing options ranging from single family homes to nursing facilities, depending on the level of care required.



Examples of senior housing developments: Metro Center Senior Homes in Foster City (left), and Agesong in Emeryville.



Geographical area served by Beacon Hill Village, a pioneering age-in-place “village” in Boston, MA.

## Senior Age-in-Place / “Virtual Village” Programs

In focus groups conducted for the General Plan Update, participants routinely remarked that they would like to continue to reside in Foster City as they age. Some of these individuals have lived in Foster City for many years (even decades) and would like to remain in the community through their senior years. If necessary, they would change dwellings to accommodate physical limitations such as stairs or proximity to services.

A senior living development such as the Mirabella project that had been planned would be appealing to some existing residents who wish to remain in the community in a supportive environment. Some focus group attendees had reserved units at Mirabella, and would welcome a similar type of development if it were to be available in the future. There are also senior apartments in the Metro Center development, but not enough units to accommodate future demand based on population trends.

“Age in place” is a concept that has been gaining interest nationally as the large Baby Boomer population demographic ages. The desire to remain in one’s existing community as one ages has been expressed in communities across the country. AARP research shows that 90 percent of people want to grow old in their home and community.<sup>11</sup>

While moving to a senior housing development within the community would be one option, people have been looking at alternatives that would allow them to remain in their existing homes but with access to the types of supportive services that would be found in a senior living situation. Transportation if one can no longer drive or does not wish to drive, access to health care, services, and companionship are some of the considerations that need to be arranged as one ages.

Age-in-place programs are sometimes referred to as “Virtual Retirement Villages” or “Villages” for short, referring to a pioneering age in place program called Beacon Hill Village established in the Beacon Hill neighborhood of Boston, Massachusetts. The “village” is not a place or physical structure, but a collection of neighbors working together. The concept was started in 2001 when neighbors in Boston’s Beacon Hill Village neighborhood decided to band together to help each other with services, social activities, and more, allowing them to live independently in their own homes. Beacon Hill Village has become a model for age-in-place programs across the country, and there are now more than 50 Villages in the U.S.

<sup>11</sup> ‘Villages’ let elderly grow old at home, USA Today, July 26, 2010

A Village is a community based membership organization run by the users to provide a variety of services and programs to the members. Some Villages have age requirements, while others do not. Essentially, it is a concierge style service where one phone call can access any service. A board of directors oversees the Village, usually with members of the Village on the board. Beyond provision of services, villages also arrange social and cultural events.

A Village will have preapproved vendors for services who have been screened and qualified, and usually offer a discount to Village members. Services might include home maintenance, transportation, yard work, odd jobs, house cleaning, meal preparation and delivery, legal assistance, telephone check-ins, and healthcare providers. Annual dues are determined but are typically in the range of \$600-900 for singles and \$900-1200 for couples. Membership dues cover most, if not all, of the expenses. Some Villages fundraise annually to help keep dues low. Others fundraise only the amount needed to get the Village up and running and rely on membership dues after that. Some villages have paid staff members; others are run completely by volunteers. As nonprofit organizations, villages are typically operated by boards of directors that design and administer daily operations.

Organizing and operating such a village takes perseverance and time. Establishing a Village in Foster City would start with community outreach to educate and recruit the public. Generally establishing a Village needs to be a grass roots movement with the end users creating the Village, not the board of directors or a group of vendors. The next step would be to set up a focus groups to conduct demographic studies, establish a budget, write a business plan, and develop a handbook. Then the Village would need to establish a board, work with Community Foundations for funding, and establish the Village itself.

Currently the nearest Virtual Retirement Villages to Foster City are Avenidas Village in Palo Alto, which was formed in 2007, and San Francisco Village which was formed in 2009. Reston, Virginia, a master-planned community outside Washington D.C. contemporary with Foster City, has been working on establishing a village program since last year. Given the physical and demographic similarities between Foster City and Reston, the Reston village endeavor could serve as a model for Foster City.



Avenidas Village is a local virtual retirement village, headquartered in this building in Downtown Palo Alto.



"Lifestyle centers" emulate the feeling of a downtown Main Street with storefronts oriented to streets and sidewalks.

## Retail Trends

The original master plan for Foster City was influenced by the "neighborhood unit" concept, where cities were comprised of a series of neighborhood units, each with its own school, park, and shopping facilities. The neighborhood unit concept first emerged in the 1920s and was popularized through the remainder of the century. Shopping and services for neighborhood units are typically accommodated in neighborhood shopping centers such as those found interspersed throughout Foster City.

In recent decades, retail trends have evolved in ways that can be at odds with the neighborhood unit concept. Supermarkets and other "anchor" retailers such as pharmacies and general merchandise stores have steadily shifted away from small, neighborhood-oriented stores in favor of fewer, larger stores that serve several neighborhoods or communities. "Big box" retail has also shifted retail sales away from neighborhood shopping centers. Retailers have also increasingly put an importance on high visibility to a large range of potential customers, with a preference for locating in highly visible locations adjacent to busy highways and arterial roadways rather than in less visible neighborhood locations.

As anchor retailers consolidate and move away from neighborhood shopping centers, their departure can have devastating effects on the business of the remaining shopping center tenants. In Foster City, the former Port O' Call Shopping Center and Marlin Cove Shopping Center each suffered when the anchor tenants moved to new locations elsewhere, and both shopping centers were ultimately redeveloped.

In the past two decades there has also been a shift in shoppers' preferences away from shopping centers in favor of "main street" environments that emulate the experience of a downtown. In these main street-style configurations (sometimes referred to by the trade term "lifestyle centers"), stores are oriented directly to surrounding streets rather than parking lots, or are oriented towards internal roadways that are designed to have the appearance of a public streets. Wide sidewalks are provided in front of stores, and are outfitted with shade trees, benches, and outdoor dining. The concept is to provide an environment that is perceived to be more varied and lively than what might be associated with a shopping center. Main street / lifestyle centers have been particularly popular in suburban locations where traditional downtown districts did not originally exist.

Like the shift of anchor stores away from neighborhood shopping centers, the shift in preference towards street-oriented downtown-style environments has presented a challenge to neighborhood shopping centers. Many neighborhood shopping centers, such as Foster City's Charter Square, were designed with stores oriented around a series of internal pedestrian walkways and courtyards, with the parking removed to the edges of the center. While the internal walkways and courtyards were designed to provide a pleasant refuge for shoppers, over time they have come to be seen as isolated from activity and less desirable from a retailing perspective. In such instances, retailers have preferred to locate in storefronts facing the parking lots rather than facing internal spaces. Storefronts facing internal spaces can be difficult or impossible to lease.

These trends – anchor retailers consolidating into fewer, larger locations, together with shoppers' preferences towards main street environments – have been seen in neighborhood shopping centers throughout the country. There are generally two different directions neighborhood shopping centers take in response to the changes:

### *Redevelopment*

An increasing number of neighborhood shopping centers that have lost their anchor tenants and/or are considered to have an obsolete layout have been redeveloped with new configurations and/or land uses. A dated shopping center with inwardly-oriented stores surrounded by parking may be partially or completely demolished and replaced with new street-oriented spaces. Alternatively, the commercial land use may be replaced by an entirely new land use, such as in with Foster City's Port O' Call Shopping Center where the entire shopping center was replaced with a multifamily residential development. Another option is to retain commercial uses but add additional uses, such as at Marlin Cove where a large shopping center was replaced with a newer, more contemporary shopping center together with apartments and offices.

### *Retenancing*

The other scenario is a shift to a more unconventional mix of tenants, such as ethnic-oriented businesses, arts business, and community organizations. While in some instances these shifts can be indicative of a center's decline, in other cases it can lead to a type of renaissance where the shopping center gains new purpose and is reinvigorated. There are examples of shopping centers that have been successfully retenanted with an appealing range of ethnic restaurants; other examples include art galleries and community performance spaces that would not be able to afford the rents of a downtown or prime-commercial location.



Marlin Cove (above) and the former Port O' Call Shopping Center in Foster City were redeveloped as reconfigured mixed use and residential respectively.

## *Employer Shuttles*

### *Links to Regional Transit*

Foster City has a number of employee shuttles providing linkages from some of the City's larger employers to regional transportation such as Caltrain and BART. The shuttles are typically operated through the ALLIANCE shuttle program sponsored by employers. Shuttle service includes:



Foster City employee shuttle.

Foster City-Lincoln Centre Caltrain – This shuttle runs between the Hillsdale Caltrain Station and businesses in the Lincoln Centre Area in North Foster City during commute hours.

Mariners' Island Caltrain – This shuttle runs between the Hillsdale Caltrain Station to the businesses in the San Mateo and Foster City border areas during commute hours.

North Foster City – This shuttle runs between the Millbrae Intermodal BART & Caltrain Station and businesses in the North Foster City Area during commute hours.

In terms of private shuttles, Visa has company-operated shuttles that go to Caltrain and to their San Francisco offices. Visa is the only FC business that operates private shuttles currently.

Additionally, there are also a number of vanpools in operation at some of the larger employers. Typically, vanpools are organized through Enterprise Vanpool. The arrangement involves leasing a van to a designated driver, who then coordinates the pool.

### *Employer Point-to-Point Shuttles*

During commute hours, steady streams of motor coaches can be seen heading down Highways 101 and 280, shuttling employees between major Silicon Valley employers and population centers in San Francisco and the East Bay where concentrations of their employees live. In recent years, there has been significant growth of shuttle operations, especially private employer-provided regional shuttles which provide direct service to the employment site from either residential neighborhood stops, or from a major transit hub (e.g. BART, Muni, or Caltrain station). Major employers include Google, Yahoo!, Apple, Genentech, LinkedIn, Facebook, eBay, and others from the Peninsula and South Bay (Silicon Valley).

In the mornings, each shuttle follows a local route through San Francisco and the East Bay, picking up riders at a number of designated locations and then expressing down the freeways directly to the employer's campus in the South Bay. The routine is then repeated in reverse at the end of the work day. Typically each shuttle serves only one employer, so except for the local stops in the residential areas the service is door-to-door. The coaches are late-model and fitted with amenities such as spacious seating, wi-fi internet, and restrooms.



Employers offer point-to-point shuttle services for a range of other reasons, including:

- To address rising commute times due to increased traffic congestion;
- To fill service gaps and other inadequacies in traditional local and regional transit;
- To recruit and retain a highly skilled workforce who may value living in an urban center and thus be attracted by an easy commute to the distant site away from the main urban core;
- To increase the productivity of employees by offering wi-fi service on shuttle buses;
- To discourage driving due to a shortage of on-site parking spaces; and
- In some cases as a response to mandatory planning stipulations as a condition of original site development.<sup>12</sup>

Many of the Silicon Valley employment centers served by the point-to-point shuttles are not particularly well connected to regional mass transit, located well away from Caltrain and BART. In this respect there are similarities to Foster City's employment centers, which are convenient to regional highways but not particularly convenient to regional mass transit. While some employers offer shuttles to Caltrain like those found in Foster City, the point-to-point shuttles offer an added measure of convenience and amenities for employees. For employers, the shuttles offer both a transportation demand management option as well as a recruitment perk.

To be feasible, point-to-point shuttles require a large enough pool of employees travelling between two destinations. Large technology companies such as Google, Yahoo, and Apple each have a large enough "critical mass" of employees travelling from San Francisco or the East Bay, but it is unknown whether such a critical mass currently exists for employers in Foster City. However, in the future the point-to-point model might offer a possibility for accommodating growth of larger employers in Foster City as a more appealing alternative to the local Caltrain and BART shuttles.



Employer shuttles for Yahoo! (top) and Genentech employees.

<sup>12</sup> Phone interviews with regional shuttle providers, as reported in the San Francisco County Transportation Authority report "Strategic Analysis Report: The Role of Shuttle Services in San Francisco's Transportation System."



Business incubators and virtual offices offer the benefits of networking and mentoring with low overhead costs.

## *Business Incubators and Virtual Offices*

The concept of a business incubator is for start-up entrepreneurs to set up shop in a single location, known as an “incubator.” Rent is discounted or free, and each business has access to legal professionals, business consultants, and investors who help them overcome the obstacles that all new ventures face. Then, properly nurtured, the businesses would be transition into the real world as fully formed companies.

Incubators were particularly popular in the late 1990s, as thousands of entrepreneurs flooded into high-tech incubators such as Idealab in Pasadena and the Austin Technology Institute. After a brief downturn when the tech economy crashed in the early 2000s, incubators have returned. What is significant is that many of them have been quietly reinventing the way they nurture start-ups and are now much more accessible to entrepreneurs looking for expert advice at bargain prices.

The significant change in business incubators from the 1990s is that they increasingly are going “virtual,” no longer requiring companies to set up shop on-site. Instead they are focusing on connecting a wide swath of local entrepreneurs with top-notch experts and mentors. Virtual incubators have lower overhead, which often translates into cost savings for entrepreneurs. And since they offer exposure to a wider network of companies, they tend to attract more skilled experts. A virtual incubator can allow a start-up access to business plan consulting and legal services for as little as one-tenth the cost of arranging the services independently.<sup>13</sup>

Establishing a virtual incubator could be an option for encouraging entrepreneurship in Foster City. There may be opportunities to nurture spin-offs from existing large employers, as well as possibilities to develop new business sectors that are not currently represented but where there is market potential. Where the last generation of incubators focused almost exclusively on technology businesses, the new breed is more likely to welcome a variety of companies.

<sup>13</sup> Darren Dahl, “Percolating Profits: A new generation of ‘virtual’ business incubators is jump-starting start-ups nationwide.” *Inc. Magazine*, February 1, 2005

## Sustainable Retrofits

When Foster City was planned in the 1960s, it represented the state-of-the-art in city planning and architectural design. As its neighborhoods developed over the next forty years, each has in turn represented progressive trends in development, from zero-lot line detached homes such as Whaler's Island and the attached rowhouses of Cityhomes, to mixed use commercial developments such as Vintage Park and Metro Center.

As a development ages, there inevitably comes a time when a significant retrofit is necessary. For residential developments, this may entail replacement of roofing and siding, windows, landscaping, or hardscapes. However, the technologies and materials that were state-of-the-art when the project was originally built may not be anymore, particularly with respect to energy efficiency and sustainability. The City may be asked to consider a wider variety of replacement materials in order to improve energy efficiency and sustainability that may not be as consistent with the original building design.

Concerns about resource depletion and global warming are changing the dynamics and scope of the building code profession in the United States, with more and more jurisdictions across the country adopting measures to encourage (or require) "green" building features in new construction and in the renovation projects of existing structures. The use of green building ordinances is gaining greater acceptance as a means to counteract these problems. The development and adoption of green building ordinances at the local level is an effective way to implement changes in the construction process when done in a manner that includes participation by a variety of stakeholders and utilizes a range of private sector resources.

The City of Rohnert Park in Sonoma County provides an interesting case study for Foster City. Rohnert Park is contemporary with Foster City, developed with similar planning principles and has a building stock with similar characteristics. In 2005, Rohnert Park joined the other eight cities in Sonoma County in agreeing to pursue the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions throughout the community to 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2015 (after having already set the goal the previous year of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by city government operations by 20 percent of 2000 levels). Following a great deal of research and collaborative effort, city staff succeeded in developing a Green Building Ordinance which was subsequently adopted by the Rohnert Park City Council effective July 1, 2007.



As a development ages, there inevitably comes a time when a significant retrofit is necessary. This presents an opportunity to improve a structure's energy and resource efficiency.

Rohnert Park's ordinance is mandatory rather than voluntary, so that it places less of a demand on city resources and results in greater numbers of green buildings. While there are multiple voluntary green building programs in use across the United States, there are few that require the mandatory use of green building features. Rohnert Park modeled its ordinance after one adopted by the City of Pleasanton, which saved a great amount of time during the initial development process.

One of the most important lessons learned during the development of Rohnert Park's Green Building Ordinance was the value of the public process. The more opportunities people were given to be heard, the more the ordinance gained in public support.

Rohnert Park staff held several public meetings with the City Council and Planning Commission, including a Sustainability Workshop that attracted individuals with interests focused on concerns such as water conservation, transportation, solid waste management and universal design, as well as green building advocates. This workshop led to the creation of a new "Sustainability" title in the city's Municipal Code which, once established, will contain the requirements for most issues related to the subject. This outreach and involvement is not unlike that of the Environmental Sustainability Task Force in Foster City.

Rohnert Park is also a useful reference in the relationship of its green building ordinance to the update of its General Plan. At a previous council meeting in 2006 when staff presented an update on the development of a green building ordinance, Council included direction to consider the inclusion of a Sustainability Element when the next General Plan update is done. Along these lines, Foster City could pursue the recommendations of the Environmental Sustainability Task Force including development of a green building ordinance, together with either adding sustainability components to the Land Use & Transportation Element, or creating a new Sustainability Element.

## Complete Streets

The term “complete streets” refers to roadways designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users – not just motorists. The concept is to provide parity between pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and public transport users of all ages and abilities rather than have one mode favored over the others.

The California Complete Streets Act (Assembly Bill 1358) mandates complete streets goals, policies, and programs be included in General Plans. Commencing January 1, 2011, upon any substantive revision of the circulation element, cities must modify the circulation element to provide for complete streets. This refers to a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways for safe and convenient travel.

The State has provided an update to the Circulation Element section of the 2003 General Plan Guidelines to meet the requirements of Assembly Bill 1358. The guidelines specify that the circulation element be modified to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways. The statute defines all users of streets, roads, and highways as bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, pedestrians, users of public transportation, and seniors.

The concept of a complete street varies by context depending on whether the environment is urban, suburban, or rural. This could include policies and implementation measures for both retrofitting and developing streets to serve multiple modes and the development of multimodal transportation network design standards based on street types appropriate to the urban context.



“Complete streets” are designed to enable safe, attractive, and comfortable access and travel for all users – not just motorists.

In general, Foster City streets have been designed to accommodate a range of users, so the concept of complete streets is not unfamiliar. Refinements over the years such as the addition of bicycle lanes and the reduction of speed limits to accommodate small electric vehicles has furthered the concept of complete streets for suitable for multiple users. The State's updated General Plan Guidelines identifies policy areas for complete streets, many of which are already included to some extent in the existing Foster City General Plan such as:

- The availability of a mix of transportation modes to meet community needs;
- Consideration of bicycle lanes and/or shared lanes as a standard street design principle;
- The consideration of transit accessibility as a standard street design principle;
- Traffic calming;
- The accessibility and accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian traffic on major thoroughfares;
- The development and improvement of transit and paratransit services;
- The connectivity of pedestrian and bicycle routes between homes, job centers, schools and facilities, and other frequently visited destinations;
- The provision of bicycle parking;
- The development of street tree, green median, and landscape standards for pedestrian and bicycle paths and trails;
- The inclusion of street trees as a street design standard.

The Guidelines also acknowledge a linkage between land use and transportation, with suggestions of policy areas that relate to complete streets. Those that are applicable to Foster City include:

- The creation of land use patterns, such as mixed use overlay districts, that allow frequently visited destinations to be accessible by multiple transportation modes;
- The availability of transportation infrastructure needed to accommodate increased density and transit oriented development.

New concepts that could be further developed to implement complete streets include:

### *Sharrows*

A sharrow is a roadway that is shared by both cars and bicycle, rather than having separate bicycle lanes. The roadway has special “sharrow” arrow markings to alert cars to take caution and allow cyclists to safely travel in these roadway. Sharrows are typically incorporated where the roadway does not have sufficient width for a bicycle lane, but there is a need or desire to make accommodations for bicycles.



Sharrow

### *Bicycle Boulevard*

A bicycle boulevard is a low-speed street which has been optimized for bicycle traffic. Bicycle boulevards discourage cut-through motor vehicle traffic, but typically allow local motor vehicle traffic. They are designed to give priority to cyclists as through-going traffic, with a distinctive look and/or ambiance so that cyclists are aware of the bike boulevard and motorists are alerted that the street is a priority route for bicyclists. The design elements are intended to appeal to casual, risk-averse, inexperienced and younger cyclists who would not otherwise be willing to cycle with motor vehicle traffic. Compared to a bike path or rail trail, a bicycle boulevard is also a relatively low cost approach to appealing to a broader cycling demographic. Existing roadways with high levels of bicycle traffic can be retrofitted to become bicycle boulevards.



Bicycle Boulevard

### *Green Streets*

Green Streets transform impervious street surfaces into landscaped green spaces that capture stormwater runoff and let water soak into the ground as plants and soil filter pollutants. Green Streets convert stormwater from a waste directed into a pipe, to a resource that replenishes groundwater supplies. They also create attractive streetscapes and urban green spaces, provide natural habitat, and help connect neighborhoods, schools, parks, and business districts.



Green Street

The update of the Land Use and Circulation Element provides the opportunity to develop these concepts through goals, policies, and programs.



## Using the Trends Analysis in the General Plan Update

This chapter has identified trends and issues that are applicable to the update of Foster City's Land Use and Circulation Element. Some of the trends represent obligatory requirements that must be accounted for in the Land Use and Circulation Element, such as Complete Streets.

Other trends such as Virtual Retirement Villages and Virtual Business Incubators are emerging trends that city leaders may or may not wish to pursue further based on whether they are considered to be in the interest of the community. Trends such as sustainability and retrofits are issues that have already been investigated by the community, and for which the update of the Land Use and Circulation Element provides an opportunity to officially incorporate into the City's long-term planning.



# SECTION 3:

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project, business venture, or entity such as a municipality. It involves specifying the objectives of the entity and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieve those objectives.

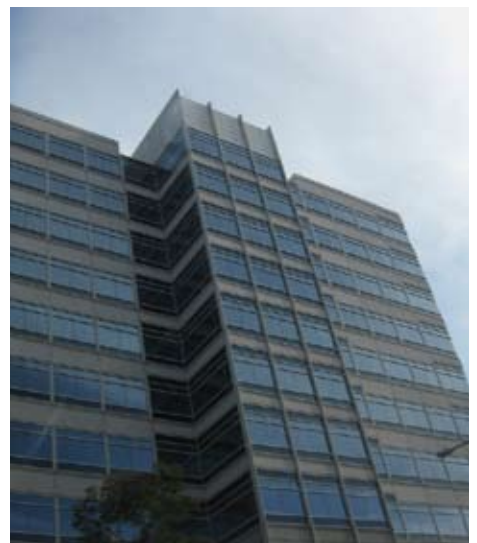
Performing a SWOT analysis for a city helps to develop a strategic plan that maximizes the municipality's strengths, minimizes its weaknesses, takes advantage of opportunities and limits its threats. Along with its internal benefits, a city can use its SWOT analysis to market to potential residents and prospective businesses.

For the purposes of a SWOT analysis for a city, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats can be characterized as:

- Strengths: characteristics of the city that give it an advantage over others in the area for particular criteria.
- Weaknesses: characteristics that place the city at a disadvantage relative to others in the area for particular criteria.
- Opportunities: external chances to better achieve stated objectives.
- Threats: external elements that could cause trouble for the city.

Identification of SWOTs can help establish a framework for future planning efforts including policy development and development review.

The SWOT analysis in this paper builds upon the findings in the Focus Groups and Stakeholders Interviews, as well as the Trends Analysis conducted for the update of the Land Use and Circulation Element of the Foster City General Plan. It provides a summary of analysis and findings together with recommendations for near- and long-term opportunities for Foster City.



## Quality of Life Indicators

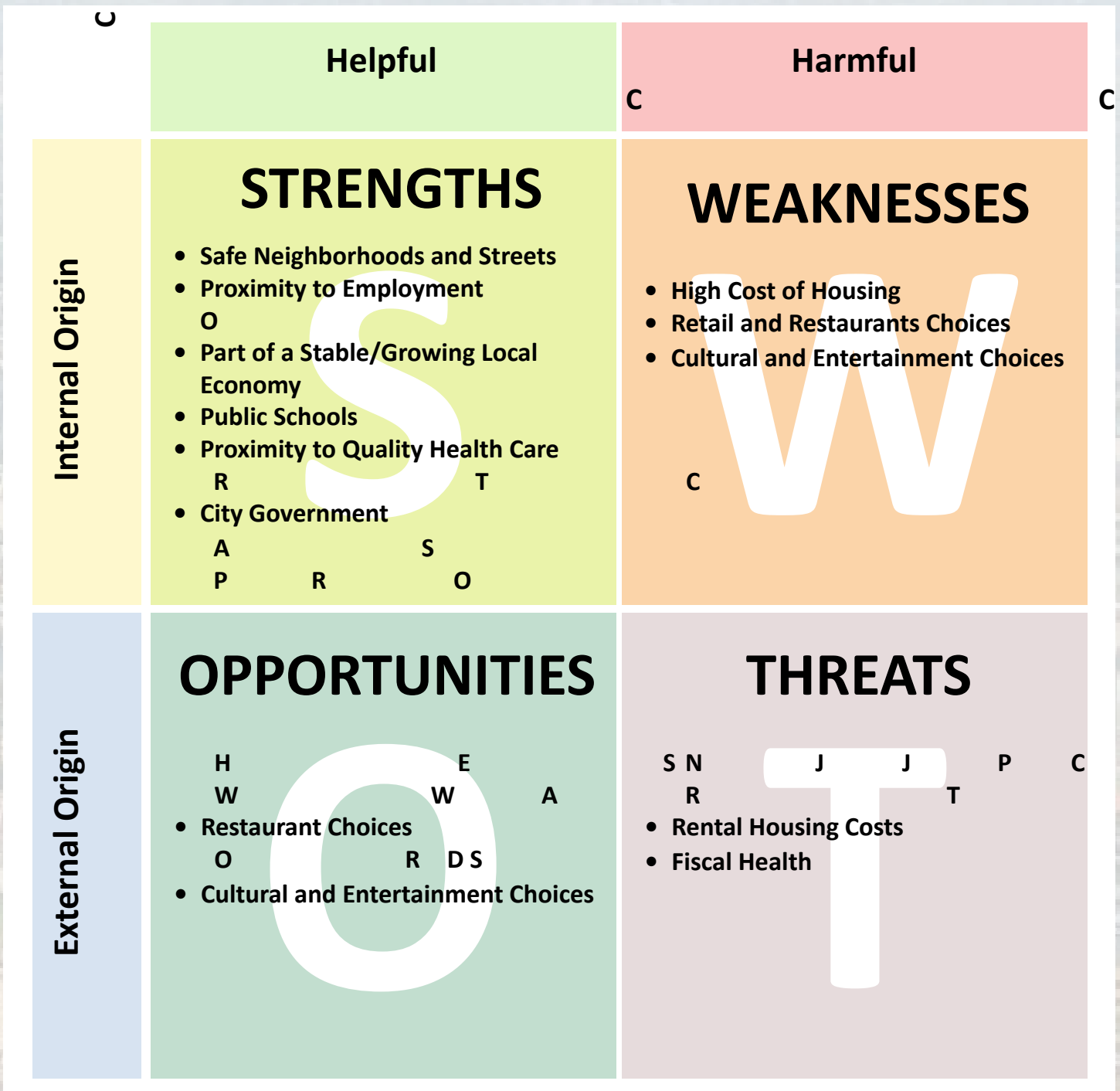
An important aspect of this analysis is establishing criteria for determining strengths, which is related to overall goals for the General Plan. The Planning Commission kick-off meeting established a set of “Quality of Life Indicators” used to gauge how strongly Foster City performs in respect to a range of quality of life measures:

- Safe neighborhoods and streets
- Proximity to employment opportunities
- Proximity to *high-quality/high income* employment opportunities
- Part of a stable/growing local area economy
- Safe and academically successful public schools
- Proximity to good quality health care
- Reasonable traffic and commute times
- Functional City government that provides a wide range of good public services
- Attractive setting/natural environment
- Weather
- A range of housing choices at reasonable prices
- Proximity to a wide range of retail/restaurant services
- Proximity to recreational opportunities/public parks/open space
- Proximity to cultural, artistic and entertainment opportunities
- Proximity to religious institutions

Where quantifiable data is available, Foster City was compared to neighboring communities to identify where Foster City is stronger, weaker, or threatened relative to its neighbors, and what opportunities exist.

Figure 3-1 provides a summary of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats for the Quality of Life indicators, plotted on a chart to identify internal or external attributes, and whether or not they contribute to meeting the City’s objectives.

**FIGURE 3-1: Summary of the Quality of Life Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats**



### *Safe Neighborhoods and Streets*

Foster City has a reputation for being a safe community with a low crime rate, which is confirmed by crime statistics.<sup>1</sup> Of nearby cities, Foster City has the lowest rates of violent and property crimes, and has the second-lowest rate of larceny-theft and arson. Foster City crime rates are also significantly lower than San Mateo County as a whole. Foster City's safe neighborhoods and streets are community *strengths*.

**TABLE 3-1: CRIME RATES (PER 100,000 POPULATION)**

	Population 2008 <sup>1</sup>	Violent Crime Rate	Property Crime Rate	Larceny-Theft Rate	Arson Rate
Foster City	30,836	17	233	326	4
San Mateo	91,457	360	1,100	1,766	17
Belmont	24,571	25	299	242	3
San Carlos	28,465	20	262	369	12
Redwood City	71,405	250	1,178	1,447	9
San Mateo County	693,113	2,167	9,463	11,698	118

Source: California Attorney General's Office; www.ag.ca.gov; U.S. Census American Community Survey, 2008 (Population at time of reporting period)



### *Proximity to Employment Opportunities*

The Peninsula functions as an employment region. It is not unusual for residents of a given city to work in a nearby municipality. When seeking a job, individuals will typically look throughout the entire Peninsula rather than within one specific jurisdiction. Therefore, proximity to employment opportunities should be judged on an area or regional scale rather than a local scale.

### *Total Number of Jobs*

The total number of Jobs per Capita in Foster City falls in the middle of the range compared to other nearby communities.<sup>2</sup> Foster City has approximately 0.47 jobs per resident, determined by the number of employed residents divided by the total population, which is comparable with the City of San Mateo and San Mateo County as a whole. San Carlos and Redwood City both have higher jobs per capita, and Belmont has fewer jobs per capita.



This might be considered a *threat* if San Carlos and Redwood City are considered better locations for establishing or growing businesses. However, both of those communities have sizable industrial zones that serve the larger area beyond their respective city boundaries, and businesses will often cluster together in such specialized zones. Foster City indirectly benefits from the availability of jobs in nearby jurisdictions because they are relatively close by and would be available to Foster City residents. Given the proximity of jobs close by, overall this can be considered a *strength*.

<sup>1</sup> California Attorney General's Office; www.ag.ca.gov

<sup>2</sup> Building Momentum - Projections and Priorities 2009, ABAG

**TABLE 3-2: TOTAL NUMBER OF JOBS**

	Ag/ Natural Resources	Manufact/ Wholesale/ Trans	Retail	Financial/ Prof Service	Health/ Ed/ Rec Service	Other	Total	Jobs per Capita
Foster City	0	2,320	1,400	6,760	2,080	1,950	<b>14,510</b>	0.47
San Mateo	160	3,320	5,870	15,480	14,960	7,170	<b>46,960</b>	0.51
Belmont	40	1,380	770	1,880	3,010	1,290	<b>8,370</b>	0.34
San Carlos	40	5,040	1,500	4,200	3,620	3,250	<b>17,650</b>	0.62
Redwood City	110	8,450	5,360	17,760	13,680	11,220	<b>56,580</b>	0.79
San Mateo County	1,900	73,940	33,840	90,990	93,420	52,230	<b>346,320</b>	0.50

Source: Building Momentum - Projections and Priorities 2009, ABAG

### *Unemployment Rate*

The unemployment rate in Foster City is lower than all neighboring communities except San Carlos.<sup>3</sup> This could be considered a favorable indicator of proximity to employment opportunities relative to nearby communities, and hence a *strength*.

**TABLE 3-3: UNEMPLOYMENT (2008-2009)**

	2008	2009
Foster City	3.5%	6.3%
San Mateo	3.8%	6.8%
Belmont	4.1%	7.3%
San Carlos	3.2%	5.8%
Redwood City	4.8%	8.5%
San Mateo County	4.8%	8.6%
State of California	5.7%	9.2%

Source: California Employment Development Department

### *Home-Based Businesses*

Business licenses for home-based businesses are not tracked separately from other businesses, so an exact number of home-based businesses is not available. The Economic Development Survey developed as part of the General Plan Update is intended to provide tracking for the future. In the first round of survey responses received, nearly half of all respondents indicated they were a home-based business.<sup>4</sup> There are positive aspects of home-based businesses such as additional daytime population patronizing local businesses, and additional tax revenues spent on business expenses within the City. Because home-based businesses are required to maintain the residential character of the home and neighborhood, they do not have typical commercial impacts, provided they comply with requirements. Given the positive qualities, home-based businesses can be considered a *strength*.

<sup>3</sup> California Employment Development Department

<sup>4</sup> Of the 153 survey responses received in the first returns, 68 were commercial facilities, 69 were home-based businesses, and 16 were out-of-town businesses conducting business within Foster City.



## Proximity to High-Quality/High Income Employment Opportunities

### Median Household Income

Median Household Income, when cross-referenced with Unemployment Rate and Travel Time to Work, can give a representation of proximity to High Quality/High Income Employment. Foster City has the highest Median Household Income of all neighboring cities, with the exception of San Carlos.<sup>5</sup> The high median household income, relatively low unemployment rate, and comparable travel time to work suggests that Foster City residents have good Proximity to High Quality/High Income Employment Opportunities. This is a *strength*.

**TABLE 3-4: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2000 and 2008)**

	2000	2008
Foster City	\$95,279	\$107,448
San Mateo	\$64,757	\$82,401
Belmont	\$80,905	\$101,992
San Carlos	\$88,460	\$112,282
Redwood City	\$66,748	\$74,433
San Mateo County	\$70,819	\$84,684

U.S. Census 2000; American Community Survey 2006-2008.

### Financial/Professional Services Jobs

Another indicator of Proximity to High Quality/High Income Employment Opportunities is the number of jobs in typically higher-paying job sectors per capita. Among its neighboring cities, Foster City has one of the highest numbers of Financial/Professional Services jobs per capita, higher than all neighboring communities except Redwood City.<sup>6</sup> In terms of Proximity to High Quality/High Income Employment Opportunities, this is a *strength*.

**TABLE 3-5: FINANCIAL/PROFESSIONAL SERVICES JOBS**

	Financial/ Professional Service	Per Capita
Foster City	6,760	0.22
San Mateo	15,480	0.17
Belmont	1,880	0.08
San Carlos	4,200	0.15
Redwood City	17,760	0.25
San Mateo County	90,990	0.13

Source: Building Momentum - Projections and Priorities 2009, ABAG

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census 2000; American Community Survey 2006-2008.

<sup>6</sup> Building Momentum - Projections and Priorities 2009, ABAG

### Health/Education/Recreation Service Jobs

Foster City has a concentration of biotech jobs, with large biotech employers such as Gilead and Life Technologies. While these businesses represent some of the largest single employers in Foster City, when taken within the context of the City's residential population, the per capita number of Health/Education/Recreation Service jobs is lower than neighboring cities.<sup>7</sup> This is partly explained by the large medical facilities in San Mateo and Redwood City, but could also indicate a further *opportunity* for Foster City to tap into a job sector currently represented more strongly in neighboring communities.

**TABLE 3-6: HEALTH/EDUCATION/RECREATION SERVICE JOBS**

	Health/Ed/Rec Service	Per Capita
Foster City	2,080	0.07
San Mateo	14,960	0.16
Belmont	3,010	0.12
San Carlos	3,620	0.13
Redwood City	13,680	0.19
San Mateo County	93,420	0.13

Source: Building Momentum - Projections and Priorities 2009, ABAG

<sup>7</sup> Building Momentum - Projections and Priorities 2009, ABAG



**Part of a stable/growing local area economy**

As noted above in the discussion of Proximity to Employment Opportunities, the Foster City unemployment rate is lower than most neighboring cities, and lower than San Mateo County and the State. The statistics do not provide direct explanation for why the rate is lower than the other communities, but the higher than average household income suggests that Foster City residents are employed in higher-paying jobs in strong job sectors. This is a *strength*.

Commercial vacancy rates are another indicator of the local economy. In the third quarter of 2010 Foster City / San Mateo Office Vacancy Rates and Research & Development (R&D) were lower than neighboring cities and San Mateo County, and Industrial Vacancy Rates were lower than neighboring cities and San Mateo County except for Belmont/San Carlos.<sup>8</sup> This is also a *strength* because Foster City’s industrial and R&D areas have consistently stayed occupied.

**TABLE 3-7: OFFICE VACANCY RATES**

	Q3 2010
Foster City	7.4%
San Mateo	19.4%
Belmont/San Carlos	35.0%
Redwood Shores	11.4%
San Mateo County	17.7%

Source: San Francisco Peninsula Research & Forecast Report, Colliers International, Q3 2010

**TABLE 3-8: RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT (R&D) VACANCY RATES**

	Q3 2010
San Mateo/Foster City	5.1%
Belmont/San Carlos	22.4%
Redwood City	19.2%
San Mateo County	19.4%

Source: San Francisco Peninsula Research & Forecast Report, Colliers International, Q3 2010

**TABLE 3-9: INDUSTRIAL VACANCY RATES**

	Q3 2010
San Mateo/Foster City	10.1%
Belmont/San Carlos	3.4%
Redwood City	12.1%
San Mateo County	10.6%

Source: San Francisco Peninsula Research & Forecast Report, Colliers International, Q3 2010

<sup>8</sup> San Francisco Peninsula Research & Forecast Report, Colliers International, Q3 2010



### ***Safe and Academically Successful Public Schools***

The Academic Performance Index (API) of Foster City public elementary and middle schools is higher than other schools in the San Mateo-Foster City Elementary District, as well as neighboring communities. Both Foster City and neighboring districts also have higher API numbers than the State as a whole.<sup>9</sup> This is a *strength*.

Foster City does not have a public high school (which some residents consider a weakness). High school students are assigned to schools in the San Mateo Union High School District. API numbers specific to Foster City high school attendees are not available, but the API numbers for the San Mateo Union High School District are higher than both the neighboring Sequoia Union High School District (which includes students in Belmont, San Carlos, Redwood City, and other communities), as well as the State as a whole. Additionally, between 2009 and 2010, all API scores have increased in the area, which indicates that the schools are constantly improving. High test scores attract families to this area, including Foster City. This is one factor that promotes home ownership in the City and maintains high property values. This is a *strength*.



**TABLE 3-10: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDEX (API) (2010)**

<b>Elementary Districts:</b>	<b>2009 API</b>	<b>2010 API</b>
Average of F.C. Schools	920	931
San Mateo Foster City El. Dist.	836	846
San Carlos Elementary Dist.	896	899
Belmont-Redwood Shores El.	896	904
California	780	790

<b>High School Districts:</b>	<b>2009 API</b>	<b>2010 API</b>
San Mateo Union High School	920	931
Sequoia Union High School	836	846
California	896	899

Source: California Department of Education; [www.api.cde.ca.gov](http://www.api.cde.ca.gov)

<sup>9</sup> California Department of Education; [www.api.cde.ca.gov](http://www.api.cde.ca.gov)



### **Proximity to Good Quality Health Care**

Looking at physicians and surgeon offices, Foster City has fewer providers per capita than neighboring communities.<sup>10</sup> San Mateo and Redwood City have considerably more medical offices per capita, most likely as a result of the large hospital complexes in those communities. However, medical offices tend to cluster close to hospitals; likewise, hospitals are often located in districts zoned to accommodate medical uses, so other medical uses will also locate in the same zone. It is unclear whether having a special “medical zone” in Foster City would attract additional medical providers, given the tendency for medical offices to cluster near hospitals.

Taking a wider view, Foster City is in an area that is well served by a range of health care practitioners and facilities. Large health care centers have regional service areas, and people will travel longer distances for a specific provider or specialty. There are several major medical facilities within twenty miles of Foster City, including several that are considered among the top facilities in the country. For example, Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Redwood City is approximately seven miles from Foster City and takes approximately 15 minutes by car. Also, a new Kaiser facility is being constructed at the former Bay Meadows site in San Mateo, and will be less than ten minutes from Foster City by car, once completed. Mills Peninsula Medical Center in Burlingame is approximately 20 minutes away. Additionally there are nearly 2,000 medical office listings within Foster City, San Mateo, Belmont, San Carlos, and Redwood City.

Given the regional nature of health care, it is less important for there to be facilities within the City limits as it is to have a range of quality facilities in the area close by. On an area scale, Proximity to Good Quality Health Care is a *strength*.

**TABLE 3-11: PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS**

	Physicians & Surgeons	Physicians & Surgeons per 1000 residents
Foster City	4	0.13
San Mateo	187	2.04
Belmont	18	0.73
San Carlos	21	0.74
Redwood City	111	1.55

Source: Valley Yellow Pages Physicians & Surgeons category. Through the progression of the General Plan Update, as more reliable data becomes available this data source will be replaced.

<sup>10</sup> Valley Yellow Pages Physicians & Surgeons category.

## Reasonable Traffic and Commute Times

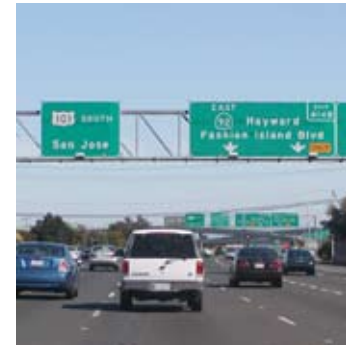
### Level of Service

Overall, roadways and intersections in Foster City function well. Intersection and freeway facility operations are evaluated using a term called Level of Service (LOS) which is a qualitative measure of capacity and operating conditions directly related to vehicle delay. LOS is given a letter grade – A through F – with LOS A representing very short delays and LOS F representing very long delays. With the exception of three separate locations during peak periods (at: Chess Drive/SR 92 Ramps, Foster City Blvd/Triton Drive/Metro Center Blvd, and East Hillsdale Blvd/Edgewater Blvd), Foster City intersections operate at LOS thresholds deemed to be locally-acceptable, using industry standards.<sup>11</sup> This is a *strength*.



### Travel Time to Work/Commute Times

Travel Time to Work is a logical indicator of commute times. Foster City and its neighboring communities have very comparable Travel Time to Work statistics,<sup>12</sup> though Foster City commute times are slightly longer. This could be attributed to Foster City's somewhat isolated location relative to the rest of the Peninsula (which has both positive and negative impacts on quality of life), as well as fewer access points. However, the difference is not significant and is comparable to San Mateo County as a whole.



Taking a wider view, the Foster City commute and that of its neighboring cities is shorter than other parts of the Bay Area. For example, mean travel time from home to work in Alameda County is 27.9 minutes, Marin County is 28.4 minutes, Solano County is 29.4 minutes, and Contra Costa County is 32.1 minutes. Outlying communities have even longer commutes: the mean travel time to work in Antioch is 39.8 minutes and Tracy is 42.1 minutes.<sup>13</sup> Foster City is centrally located between major employment areas. From this perspective, overall commute times are a *strength* provided area traffic does not become significantly worse and regional transit options are maintained or expanded. Notably, commute times in the region have consistently gone down since 2000, which could reflect a number of variables including the higher unemployment rates, or an increase in telecommuting. If area traffic becomes worse and/or transit services are reduced, commute time could become a *threat, however, this would be a regional problem, not just focused in Foster City*.

**TABLE 3-12: MEAN TRAVEL TIME TO WORK (IN MINUTES)**

	2000	2008
Foster City	27.3	26.0
San Mateo	25.5	23.4
Belmont	27.1	25.8
San Carlos	26.1	25.7
Redwood City	25.0	23.1
San Mateo County	27.0	25.0

Source: U.S. Census 2000; American Community Survey 2006-2008.

<sup>11</sup> Foster City Multi-Project Traffic Analysis – Final Report, December 2008. All intersections operate at a Level of Service (LOS) of D or better, except during peak periods at: Chess Drive/SR 92 Ramps, Foster City Blvd/Triton Drive/Metro Center Blvd, and East Hillsdale Blvd/Edgewater Blvd

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Census 2000; American Community Survey 2006-2008.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Census 2000; American Community Survey 2006-2008.

### **Functional City Government That Provides a Wide Range of Good Public Services**

There are fewer measures readily available for gauging functional City government than there are for other Quality of Life indicators. In focus group meetings for the General Plan Update, individuals generally gave high marks to the City’s municipal government and programs.

#### *Public Employees Per Capita*

Number of public employees per capita is one measure of level of government service. Foster City is lower in number of public employees per capita, than San Mateo and Redwood City.<sup>14</sup> This may indicate fewer services or programs, but could also indicate a more efficient personnel structure. In focus groups and surveys, respondents did not widely criticize the City’s services or programs, so the efficient personnel structure seems a likely explanation and would be a *strength*.

Belmont and San Carlos were not included in this comparison because they share police and fire departments, making a direct comparison difficult. Redwood City has their own police and fire departments, and Foster City and San Mateo recently consolidated management of their Fire Departments and currently have a shared Fire Chief managing both departments.



**TABLE 3-13: PUBLIC EMPLOYEES**

	Public Employees	Public Employees per 1000 residents
Foster City	190	6.23
San Mateo	960	10.49
Redwood City	833	11.67

Source: City of Foster City Human Resources Department, Silicon Valley Mercury News 2010 Public Employee Salaries listings (<http://www.mercurynews.com/salaries/bay-area/2010>). Includes all individuals listed as receiving public compensation comprising the following departments: Administrative Services, City Clerk, City Council/Planning Commission, City Manager’s Office, Community Development, Financial Services, Fire, Human Resources, Library, Parks & Recreation, Police, and Public Works.

#### *Fiscal Health*

In terms of fiscal health, as we enter the 2011-2012 Fiscal Year budget cycle, Foster City’s financial condition continues to be relatively strong, with a General Fund reserve of over 63 percent of annual operating expenditures. As a reference, other peninsula cities have been struggling to maintain a 25 percent reserve level. However, Foster City faces a deficit of nearly \$2.6 million for FY 2011-2012, with a five-year outlook of an additional \$2.8 million.<sup>15</sup> The amount of money the City has in reserves can be viewed as a *strength*, in comparison to other cities, however, the deficit amount remains a *threat*.

<sup>14</sup> Silicon Valley Mercury News 2009 Public Employee Salaries listings

<sup>15</sup> City of Foster City “Mid-Year Financial Review for FY 2010-2011” City Council staff report, January 31, 2011

There are some aspects of the Governor's proposed State Budget for FY 2011-2012 that could represent additional threats to Foster City. First, there are proposed realignments of various fire, criminal justice, and health and social services to the local level. Sales taxes and an extension of the existing vehicle license fee would help pay for those services.

Especially significant to Foster City, the Governor's budget also proposes the elimination of redevelopment agencies, whereby future tax increment not under contractual, legal obligation would revert back to taxing agencies, and any surplus housing funds would be transferred to local housing authorities. The City/District/Agency has taken steps to help ensure the Agency's financial resources go to the benefit of the project areas within Foster City.<sup>16</sup> The outcome of the City's efforts will depend upon the adoption of a California State Budget. Due to the uncertainty of this outcome, this is a *threat*.

### ***Attractive Setting and Natural Environment***

Attractive setting and natural environment is highly subjective, but in focus group meetings for the General Plan Update, individuals gave it higher marks than any other Quality of Life indicator. Respondents to the online survey also frequently cited the attractive setting as a factor that attracted them to move to Foster City, and frequently ranked it as one of the City's greatest assets. Foster City has been intentionally designed to be aesthetically pleasing, from site planning to design of parks and open spaces, and to the design quality of buildings and developments. Overall, although subjective, the attractive setting and natural environment can be considered a *strength*.

### ***Weather***

Weather is another subjective indicator. Some people prefer mild weather with moderate variation between seasons, as is found on the Peninsula and in Foster City; other people may prefer hot, dry weather, or prefer a wider variation between seasons. The Peninsula and Foster City have a climate characterized by mild and moderately wet winters and by dry, cool summers. The daily and annual range in temperature is small, with winter temperatures ranging from an average low of 39 degrees to an average high of 58 degrees, and summer temperatures ranging from an average low of 54 degrees to an average high of 82 degrees. In focus group meetings, individuals gave weather high marks so it could be considered a *strength*.

While Foster City weather is similar to that of neighboring communities, a distinction is that Foster City experiences strong afternoon breezes in the spring and summer months. These breezes are less pronounced in other neighboring Peninsula communities. The breezes are also subjective: while some people may dislike them, others consider them to have a "cleansing" aspect on the air, and find them invigorating. Depending on one's preference, this aspect of Foster City's weather could either be considered a *strength* or a *weakness*. The wind also provides an *opportunity* for promoting wind-related recreational activities such as sailing and windsurfing.



<sup>16</sup> City of Foster City "Mid-Year Financial Review for FY 2010-2011" City Council staff report, January 31, 2011



## A Range of Housing Choices at Reasonable Prices

Foster City has the highest average rents and sales prices in the area. Foster City is known to have low crime, good public schools, and well maintained homes and neighborhoods, which allows for a premium on rents and sales prices.

### Mix of Housing Types

Overall, Foster City has a good mix of housing types, with about 36 percent of the units being single family detached units, 21 percent single family attached, seven percent in structures of two to four units, and 36 percent in structures with five or more units.<sup>17</sup> This is a more diverse mix than neighboring communities, allowing Foster City to accommodate a wide range of household types and facilitating housing for a diverse population. In this respect, it is a *strength*.

**TABLE 3-14: HOUSING TYPES**

	Single Family Detached	Single Family Attached	2-4 Units Multifamily	5+ Units Multifamily
Foster City	36%	21%	7%	36%
San Mateo	44%	10%	6%	40%
Belmont	59%	6%	2%	33%
San Carlos	70%	5%	4%	20%
Redwood City	48%	15%	6%	29%

Source: American Community Survey 2006-2008

### Rental Housing

While rents in Foster City are generally among the highest in the County for various size units, a good portion of market rate rental housing is affordable to moderate income households.<sup>18</sup> Being able to accommodate moderate income households can be considered a *strength*. However, rents are also subject to increases with relatively short notice when the rental market is under pressure; this long-term uncertainty for tenants is a *threat*.

**TABLE 3-15: AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL RENTS**

	Studio	Single Bedroom	Two Bedroom	Three Bedroom
Foster City	\$ 1,410	1,751	1,931	3,666
San Mateo	\$ 1,225	1,638	1,971	3,397
Belmont	\$ 1,104	1,393	1,653	2,080
Redwood City	\$ 869	1,558	1,876	3,451

Source: Foster City 2007-2014 Housing Element

<sup>17</sup> Foster City 2007-2014 Housing Element

<sup>18</sup> Foster City 2007-2014 Housing Element

### Ownership Housing

Even with reduced prices for condominiums due to the market downturn, market rate for-sale housing is affordable only to above moderate income households. The median price for a single family home in Foster City in 2008 was \$1,079,000, and the median price for a common interest development in Foster City in 2008 was \$680,000.<sup>19</sup> While high property values are a strength from an investment perspective, and by some a positive indicator of neighborhood quality, the relatively high costs represent a *weakness* in terms of a *range of housing choices at reasonable prices*.

**TABLE 3-16: AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL SALES PRICES**

	Single Family Homes	Condominium/ Townhomes
Foster City	\$ 1,079,000	680,000
San Mateo	\$ 800,000	480,500
Belmont	\$ 920,000	601,000
San Carlos	\$ 986,500	567,000
Redwood City	\$ 800,450	515,000

Source: Foster City 2007-2014 Housing Element

<sup>19</sup> Foster City 2007-2014 Housing Element

### ***Proximity to a Wide Range of Retail/Restaurant Services***

Foster City was master-planned with neighborhood shopping centers interspersed through the community to serve local shopping and dining needs. The concept was to have stores and restaurants within close proximity (ideally, within walking distance) of each neighborhood.



### ***Supermarkets and Convenience Markets***

The number of supermarkets and convenience markets in Foster City per capita is the lowest among area communities.



**TABLE 3-17: SUPERMARKETS AND CONVENIENCE MARKETS**

	Supermarket Listings	Supermarkets per 1000 residents
Foster City	4	0.13
San Mateo	37	0.40
Belmont	6	0.24
San Carlos	4	0.14
Redwood City	29	0.41

Source: Valley Yellow Pages: Grocers & Markets – Retail category. Includes supermarkets and convenience markets.

Overall, Foster City supermarkets are contemporary, well maintained, and offer a variety of choices including specialized ethnic options. Given the decent number of markets and the variety of choices, they can be considered a *strength*.



### ***Restaurants***

While Foster City has numerous restaurants throughout town, it has the lowest number per capita compared to area communities. San Carlos has the most restaurants per capita in the area.

**TABLE 3-18: RESTAURANT LISTINGS**

	Restaurant Listings	Restaurants per 1000 residents
Foster City	30	0.97
San Mateo	180	1.97
Belmont	34	1.38
San Carlos	65	2.28
Redwood City	137	1.92

Source: Valley Yellow Pages Restaurants category.

Some restaurants are locally-oriented, while others are more regionally-oriented. Most Foster City restaurants are oriented either to the local resident population or to the local weekday employee population. When viewed from the perspective of dining opportunities within the incorporated limits of the City, the relatively low number of restaurants suggests a *weakness*.





However, within the local area beyond the Foster City limits, there is wide range of both locally- and regionally-oriented restaurants, including some notable fine dining choices in San Mateo and Burlingame. Compared to many residents living in adjacent cities, Foster City residents may actually be closer to more dining options. It can take less than ten minutes of driving time to reach downtown San Mateo, and about 15 minutes to get to restaurants in San Carlos. Foster City has had mixed success with regionally-oriented restaurants in the past, but given the convenient location and large weekday employment (including higher income professionals), there may additional *opportunities* for restaurants in Foster City.

### *Apparel Listings*

Apparel stores and outlets are more oriented to a regional market than supermarkets and restaurants. Therefore, apparel listings tend to be clustered in the regional commercial centers. With its regional shopping centers, San Mateo has the highest number of apparel listings per capita, closely followed by San Carlos. So although Foster City has very few apparel stores within its City limits (which could be considered a *weakness*), there are a wide range of choices in neighboring San Mateo. Compared to many residents living in San Mateo considering driving time and distance, Foster City residents are actually closer to shopping options such as Hillsdale Mall or Bridgepoint Shopping Center located in San Mateo. Given the regional nature of apparel stores and the concentration of establishments in neighboring communities, attracting more apparel stores does not appear to be a viable opportunity for Foster City.

**TABLE 3-19: APPAREL OUTLETS**

	Apparel Listings	Apparel Listings per 1000 residents
Foster City	2	0.06
San Mateo	27	0.30
Belmont	0	0.00
San Carlos	10	0.35
Redwood City	14	0.20

Source: Valley Yellow Pages Clothing Retail, Men's Furnishings and Clothing Retail, Women's Apparel Retail categories.



*Retail Taxable Sales and Permits*

Foster City and Belmont both have relatively modest retail taxable sales per capita and retail permits per capita compared to San Mateo, San Carlos, and Redwood City. Increasingly, the economics of retail relies on a regional draw from several communities, and San Mateo, San Carlos, and Redwood City each have distinct regional retail markets. Although the regional nature of retail is an explanation and constraint, from Foster City’s fiscal perspective this is a *weakness*. Fortunately, the City has other revenue sources that can compensate.

**TABLE 3-20: RETAIL STORES TAXABLE SALES**

	2009 Taxable Sales (in	Sales per capita
Foster City	\$ 205,027	\$ 6,740
San Mateo	\$ 1,118,849	\$ 11,591
Belmont	\$ 153,099	\$ 5,834
San Carlos	\$ 426,797	\$ 14,804
Redwood City	\$ 961,033	\$ 12,353

Source: Taxable Sales in California Annual Report (2009), California Board of Equalization; Population Estimates (2009), California Department of Finance, www.dof.ca.gov

**TABLE 3-21: RETAIL STORES PERMITS**

	Retail Permits	Retail Permits per 1000 residents
Foster City	364	11.97
San Mateo	1,993	20.65
Belmont	355	13.533
San Carlos	712	24.70
Redwood City	1,193	15.33

Source: Taxable Sales in California Annual Report (2009), California Board of Equalization; Population Estimates (2009), California Department of Finance, www.dof.ca.gov

### ***Proximity to Recreational Opportunities/Public Parks/Open Space***

Foster City was master-planned with neighborhood and community parks interspersed through the City to serve neighborhood and community needs. The concept was to always have a park within each neighborhood, or within close proximity. The result is one of the highest park acreages per capita in the area, approximately twice that of San Mateo and Belmont and exceeded only by San Carlos. A high ratio of parks and open space per capita allows Foster City residents and employees opportunities for recreation, adding to their quality of life, health and wellness. This is a *strength*.



**TABLE 3-22: PARK ACREAGE**

**Park Area (excludes open space)**

	Park Area (acres)	Acreage per 1000 residents
Foster City	103.00	3.34
San Mateo	192.00	2.10
Belmont	41.73	1.70
San Carlos	143.00	5.02
Redwood City	182.40	2.55

Sources: Foster City General Plan Parks and Open Space Element; San Mateo per City staff; Belmont per City staff; San Carlos per City of San Carlos website; Redwood City per City staff.



**Proximity to Cultural, Artistic and Entertainment Opportunities**

Cultural, artistic, and entertainment attractions tend to be regionally-oriented rather than locally-oriented. Foster City has a community theater (the Hillbarn Theater) and a theater company (Bay Area Educational Theater Company on Chess Drive), though it does not have movie theaters (which are particularly regional in nature). On a per-capita basis, this is a *strength*, with only Redwood City having more performing arts and more theaters per capita. So although Foster City having more performing arts and more theaters per capita. So although Foster City does not have a movie theater within the City limits (a *weakness*), there is a facility with twelve screens nearby in San Mateo, and an additional 20 screens in Redwood City.



**TABLE 3-23: MOVIE THEATERS AND PERFORMING ARTS VENUES**

	Theater Listings	Theaters per 1000 residents
Foster City	2	0.06
San Mateo	3	0.03
Belmont	0	0.00
San Carlos	1	0.04
Redwood City	5	0.07

Source: Valley Yellow Pages Halls, Auditoriums & Ballrooms, Movie Theaters, Theater Companies, and Dance Companies categories

Cultural and entertainment venues have been an interest of many in Foster City, and there appear to be *opportunities* to pursue further. The North Peninsula Jewish Center has proposed a Cultural Arts Center, and at various times cultural and entertainment facilities have been proposed as part of development of the City-Owned 15-Acres of Property Adjacent to the Foster City Government Center. The City also puts on annual events including a Chinese New Year Celebration, the Polynesian Festival, Fourth of July Celebration and the Art and Wine Festival. Developing cultural and entertainment venues is challenging but may continue to be an opportunity for the future.

### ***Proximity to Religious Institutions***

Foster City has religious institutions situated throughout the City. However, on a per capita basis it has relatively fewer religious institutions per capita than neighboring communities so this could be considered a relative *weakness, due to sheer numbers*. Redwood City has the most religious institutions per capita, while Belmont has the fewest. Foster City religious institutions represent a wide range of religious denominations, however, and given the ease in travelling within the City each institution would be relatively easily accessible to most residents.

**TABLE 3-24: RELIGIOUS INSTITIONS**

	<b>Religious Institutions</b>	<b>Religious Institutions per 1000 residents</b>
Foster City	7	0.23
San Mateo	68	0.74
Belmont	8	0.33
San Carlos	16	0.56
Redwood City	63	0.88

Source: City of Foster City Community Profile; Google Earth listings

# Community Perception



To gain insight, a Quality of Life Indicators ranking exercise was performed by a series of focus groups for the General Plan Update and through an online survey. Participants in each focus group and in the survey were asked to score how well Foster City achieves each of the Quality of Life Indicators on a scale of 1-10, with a score of 1 indicating “Low/Poor,” 5 indicating “Average,” and 10 indicating High/Excellent. The survey was also available online for people who did not attend a focus group. In total, 281 people completed this exercise.<sup>20</sup> The intent was to compare community perceptions of the City’s strengths and weaknesses with the quantifiable data and professional assessment in this report, and in particular see where the community’s perceptions match the data and where there is disparity.

To provide context for the scores, the **highest** score, when averaged, was **9.17** (Focus group average score for “proximity to recreational opportunities/public parks/open space”). The **lowest** score was **6.46** (online survey average score for “a range of housing choices at reasonable prices”). All of the other indicator scores were between these high and low values.

Table 3-26 provides a summary of scores for the Quality of Life Indicators from each focus group and from the online survey.

**TABLE 3-25: COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS**

	Businesses & Employers	Civic Groups & Religious Institutions	Environmental Sustainability & Transportation	General Topics	Parks & Recreation	Residents	Youth	Weighted Average	Online Survey
Safe neighborhoods and streets	9.00	8.00	9.00	7.67	9.71	8.86	9.00	8.94	8.99
Proximity to employment opportunities	8.60	6.50	8.40	7.00	7.43	7.14	7.17	7.60	7.71
Proximity to high-quality/high income employment opportunities	8.60	6.50	8.40	8.00	8.43	7.71	6.83	7.94	7.61
Part of a stable/growing local area	8.40	4.00	7.80	6.50	7.14	6.80	n/a	7.15	7.48
Safe and academically successful public schools	8.20	6.00	7.80	8.33	7.43	7.57	8.83	7.83	7.76
Proximity to good quality health care	8.60	8.00	8.20	7.33	7.43	8.00	n/a	7.95	7.70
Reasonable traffic and commute times	7.80	7.00	7.80	6.67	6.43	6.71	n/a	7.08	7.23
Functional city government that provides a wide range of good public services	9.00	10.00	8.20	9.00	8.86	7.43	8.67	8.52	7.56
Attractive setting/natural environment	9.20	n/a	9.00	9.67	9.57	8.86	8.83	9.15	8.64
Weather	n/a	n/a	8.20	9.00	8.29	8.14	7.83	8.23	7.98
A range of housing choices at reasonable prices	7.60	6.00	7.40	6.33	6.00	5.50	n/a	6.90	6.46
Proximity to a wide range of retail/restaurant services	6.80	5.50	7.80	6.33	8.29	6.71	7.33	7.23	6.75
Proximity to recreational opportunities/public parks/open space	n/a	9.50	9.40	9.33	9.86	7.86	9.50	9.17	8.69
Proximity to cultural, artistic and entertainment opportunities	6.40	5.50	8.20	6.33	7.43	7.43	7.33	7.22	7.11
Proximity to religious institutions	n/a	7.50	9.00	7.50	8.86	8.00	7.50	8.26	7.67

<sup>20</sup> 36 people participated attended in-person focus groups, 245 completed an on-line survey version of the focus group questions.

### ***Safe Neighborhoods and Streets***

As noted earlier, Foster City has a reputation for being a safe community with a low crime rate. This is reflected in the survey scoring: on a scale of 1-10, the focus groups' average score for Safe Neighborhoods and Streets was 8.94, and online respondents had an average score of 8.99. For the online respondents, this was the highest scoring quality of life indicator, and the third highest ranked for the focus groups. The community perception of low crime is consistent with the data.

### ***Proximity to Employment Opportunities***

As noted previously, the Peninsula functions as an employment region. When seeking a job, individuals will typically look throughout the entire Peninsula rather than within one specific jurisdiction.

The focus groups' average score for Proximity to Employment Opportunities was 7.60, and online respondents had an average score of 7.71. These scores are relatively high compared to other indicators, reflecting a sense that proximity to employment opportunities is quite good despite the challenges of the economic downturn.

### ***Proximity to High-Quality/High Income Employment Opportunities***

Foster City has a reputation for high quality employers, including some prominent financial and biotech firms. Foster City is also part of a region known nationally (in fact, internationally) for its concentration of high skill employment. With that context, the focus groups' average score for Proximity to High Quality/High Income Employment Opportunities was 7.94, and online respondents had an average score of 7.61. These scores are slightly higher than the scores for Proximity to Employment Opportunities, indicating a perception that Foster City is slightly stronger in proximity to high quality/high income employment than it is more general employment.

### ***Part of a Stable/Growing Local Economy***

Given the economic downturn, one might anticipate a pessimistic view of the local economy. However, overall the community's perception was fairly high: the focus groups' average score for Part of a Stable/Growing Local Economy was 7.15, and online respondents had an average score of 7.48. However, the score was as low as 4.00 for one of the focus groups, reflecting that some members of the community remain concerned about the economy in general. The relatively low office vacancy rates in Foster City compared to neighboring communities and Foster City's relatively low unemployment rate may be factors in the generally favorable assessment for this indicator.

### ***Safe and Academically Successful Public Schools***

The Academic Performance Index (API) of Foster City public elementary and middle schools is higher than other schools in the San Mateo-Foster City School District, as well as neighboring communities and the State as a whole. Although API numbers specific to Foster City high school attendees are not available, the numbers for the San Mateo Union High School District are higher than both the neighboring Sequoia Union High School District (which includes students in Belmont, San Carlos, Redwood City and other communities, as well as the State as a whole. Community perception is consistent with this data, with the focus groups' average score for Safe and Academically Successful Public Schools 7.83, and the online respondents with an average score of 7.70. While some community members have expressed concern over school crowding and the possible need for another elementary school, there appears to be an overall understanding that school quality is good.

### ***Proximity to Good Quality Health Care***

Although Foster City has fewer medical providers per capita than most neighboring communities, health care is more regional in nature and people expect to travel some distance to reach facilities. The Mid-Peninsula and San Mateo County overall are well served with medical facilities.

The focus groups' average score for Proximity to Good Quality Health Care was 7.95, and online respondents had an average score of 7.70. These scores suggest that community perception is that Foster City has reasonably good proximity to quality health care, despite the fact that there are relatively fewer medical facilities within the City limits compared to neighboring communities. Most likely Foster City residents understand the regional nature of health care, and that while there are relatively fewer facilities within the City limits, they are reasonably close to facilities in neighboring communities.

### ***Reasonable Traffic and Commute Times***

By objective measures, Foster City has reasonable traffic and commute times compared to neighboring communities. However, traffic was frequently mentioned as a concern in both the focus groups and online survey. The focus groups' average score for Reasonable Traffic and Commute Times was 7.08, and online respondents had an average score of 7.23.

While these scores are still fairly high on a scale of 1-10, they are among the lowest scores compared to other quality of life indicators. This indicates that Foster City residents are less satisfied with traffic and commute times *compared to* other aspects of the community. Traffic and commute times appear to be a frustration for community members, but not so critical to warrant a lower survey score.



### ***Functional City Government That Provides a Wide Range of Good Public Services***

In focus group meetings, individuals generally gave high marks to the City's municipal government and programs. The focus groups' average score for Functional City Government that provides a Wide Range of Good Public Services was 8.52. The online respondents were a bit more critical, with an average score of 7.45. This is the only instance where there is a noticeable difference between the scores from the focus groups and those of the online respondents.

### ***Attractive Setting/Natural Environment***

Attractive setting and natural environment is highly subjective, but in focus groups individuals gave it higher marks than any other Quality of Life indicator with an average score of 9.15. Respondents to the online survey also frequently cited the attractive setting as a factor that attracted them to move to Foster City, and frequently ranked it as one of the City's greatest assets with an average score of 8.64. From community members these are among the highest scores of all quality of life indicators.

### ***Weather***

Weather is another subjective indicator, but community members expressed a generally favorable view. The focus groups' average score was 8.23, and online respondents had an average score of 7.98.

### ***A Range of Housing Choices at Reasonable Prices***

Although Foster City offers a wide range of housing choices, it has the highest average rents and sales prices in the area. Given the high costs, it should not be surprising that it is a concern of community members. The focus groups' average score for A Range of Housing Choices at Reasonable Prices was 6.90, and online respondents had an average score of 6.46. Focus group and survey comments also indicate that people understand that the high housing costs is a regional issue, but it remains a concern of community members nevertheless.

### ***Proximity to a Wide Range of Retail/Restaurant Services***

While Foster City has numerous restaurants throughout town, it has the lowest number per capita compared to area communities. In focus groups and the online survey, respondents often expressed a desire for a greater number and range of choices within the City. Retail is regional in nature, and neighboring San Mateo overshadows Foster City with its two large regional shopping centers.

The focus groups' average score for Proximity to a Wide Range of Retail/Restaurant Services was 7.23, and online respondents had an average score of 6.75. These are among the lowest scores of all quality of life indicators for both the focus groups and online respondents. Focus group and online comments indicate community perception that shopping and dining options in Foster City are relatively weak. However, in focus group conversations participants acknowledged that there is a wide range of choices in San Mateo and the larger area.

### ***Proximity to Recreational Opportunities/Public Parks/Open Space***

The focus groups' scored Proximity to Recreational Opportunities / Public Parks / Open Space the highest of all quality of life indicators with an average score of 9.17. Online respondents had an average score of 8.69, second only to Safe Neighborhoods and Streets. Participants in both the focus groups and online survey frequently cited parks and recreation opportunities as a factor that attracted them to move to Foster City, and frequently ranked it as one of the City's greatest assets.

### ***Proximity to Cultural, Artistic and Entertainment Opportunities***

Cultural, artistic, and entertainment attractions tend to be regionally-oriented rather than locally-oriented. Foster City has a community theater and a theater company, which is notable for a city of its size. While there had once been a small movie theater at Edgewater Place, there are no longer movie theaters within the city limits.

The focus groups' average score for Proximity to Cultural, Artistic and Entertainment Opportunities was 7.22, and online respondents had an average score of 7.11. These are among the lower scores for both groups among the quality of life indicators, though not the lowest. The low scores may be on account that programming at the Hillbarn theater is seasonal with a few productions each year, as opposed to a movie theater with multiple screens and continuously changing programming. The nearest movie theater is approximately four miles away in downtown San Mateo, so although there is not a theater within the City limits there is a venue close by.

### ***Proximity to Religious Institutions***

Foster City has religious institutions situated throughout the City. However, on a per capita basis it has relatively fewer religious institutions per capita than neighboring communities.

The focus groups' average score for Proximity to Religious Institutions was 8.26, and online respondents had an average score of 7.67. For focus group participants, this was a relatively high ranking (ranked 5th out of 15 total rankings) despite the data, while for online survey participants the ranking was further towards the bottom of the range (ranked 10th out of 15 total).

# Policy Recommendations

Policy recommendations in this section are drawn from the Quality of Life Indicators discussion as well as community input from the focus groups and online survey. Recommendations also build upon the Trends Analysis background report prepared prior to this SWOT Analysis background report.

## Strengths

As described in the Quality of Life Indicators discussion, Foster City has recognized strengths in:

- Safe neighborhoods and streets
- Proximity to employment opportunities
- Part of a stable/growing local economy
- Academically successful public schools
- Proximity to quality health care
- Reasonable traffic and commute times
- Functional City government that provides a wide range of good public services
- Attractive setting
- Parks and recreational opportunities

In addition, the Trends Analysis background report identified strengths that the General Plan could build upon such as:

- **Smart Growth** – As a master-planned community, Foster City has been a pioneer of the “smart growth” concept. Continuing well thought-out development that provides connections to services should be a goal of the City.
- **Employer Shuttles** – The ALLIANCE shuttle program sponsored by employers is an existing asset that could be expanded to serve further employment growth in the future.
- **Complete Streets** – Foster City’s circulation system has been designed to accommodate the range of transportation “modes”: automobiles, bicycles, pedestrians, and transit. The existing General Plan includes a number of goals and programs to support the range of modes.

In the update of the Land Use and Circulation Element of the General Plan, the City may consider new goals and policies that respond to strengths identified in this paper and the Trends Analysis such as:

- **Promote ease of doing business; City government has clear procedures and permitting processes.** Policies could emphasize these qualities of City government as assets to the community and business climate, with consideration given to identifying opportunities for further refinements to build on this strength.





- **Develop policies that encourage the redevelopment of school sites to accommodate demand.** Policies can recognize the academic success of Foster City schools and their role in Foster City being an attractive choice for families. Expansion of an existing school, or redevelopment at higher student densities in multi-story buildings, is important for maintaining the success with rising enrollments.
- **Explore creative solutions to future transportation needs.** While current traffic and commute times are good overall, goals and policies can explore transportation options for the future such as additional employer shuttles as an integral component of employment growth, and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to connect Foster City to rail lines.
- **Maintain and enhance the parks and recreation offerings.** Policies can continue to emphasize parks and recreation as a top City priority.
- **Master planned aspect of the community and Smart Growth.** Policies can emphasize promoting the master planned aspect of the community as an asset for attracting businesses and residents alike, and for pursuing Smart Growth objectives in future land use and circulation decisions.
- **Destinations within walking distance such as religious institutions, parks and open space, and shops.** Policies can emphasize the importance of maintaining a base level of viable neighborhood-serving uses or attractions at shopping centers or in redeveloped areas.
- **Large number of home-based businesses.** Policies can not only address the compatibility of Home Occupations (Policy LUC-49) but also reinforce the positive aspects such as additional daytime population patronizing local businesses, and additional tax revenues spent on business expenses within the City.
- **Diverse, multicultural population.** Policies can recognize the legacy of Foster City as an open community from its inception, and promote further multicultural understanding through events such as a cultural fair, movie nights/movies in the park, etc., or adding cultural elements to existing events such as the Art and Wine Festival/City Birthday.

### ***Weaknesses***

As described in the Quality of Life Indicators discussion, Foster City has issues with:

- High cost of housing.
- Less range of retail and restaurants compared to neighboring communities.
- Fewer cultural, artistic, and entertainment opportunities than neighboring communities.
- Schools perform well but some are crowded.

In addition, the Trends Analysis identified potential weaknesses that the General Plan could build upon such as:

- **Senior Housing** – The senior-aged population is growing, but there may not be sufficient housing provisions to accommodate future needs.
- **Renovations and Additions** – Many homeowners are looking to expand their homes, but expansion opportunities are limited on some lots. Second-story additions can have potential conflicts with existing neighborhood character.
- **Transportation** – Foster City is not situated along regional rail lines and the bus transit network is not strong, so opportunities for transit-oriented development are limited.

In the update of the Land Use and Circulation Element of the General Plan, the City may consider new goals and policies that respond to potential weaknesses identified in this paper and the Trends Analysis such as:

- **Isolated location makes it difficult for viable retail opportunities.** Policies could consider promotion of retail through coordinated advertising campaigns and wayfinding signage programs.
- **Enhance existing retail centers.** Policies can support and give direction to the potential reconfiguration or redevelopment of Charter Square or other centers to have better visibility for retail.
- **Need for additional senior housing/senior housing options.** Policies can continue to encourage senior housing through incentives. Policies and programs could also help initiate age-in-place programs as an additional choice for seniors.
- **Transit requires creative solutions.** As noted above in “strengths,” creative solutions to future transportation needs need to be explored to compensate for Foster City not being located along regional transit lines.
- **City process is difficult for some applicants.** While some businesses and residents laud the City for its processes, others find some processes difficult. This includes homeowners seeking to renovate their homes. Policies could consider identifying opportunities for further refinements to address the needs of those who have more difficulty with completing current processes.
- **School crowding.** While many of the decisions related to schools are under the auspices of the San Mateo / Foster City School District rather than the City, the General Plan could establish or refine policies related to land designated for schools. Policy LUC-64 (City Services and Buildings) should be revised to reflect the City Council policy action that the 15 acres adjacent to City Hall will not be set aside for

future school facilities. However, new policies in the General Plan could promote higher density student populations or multiple school uses on existing sites, to encourage the school districts to expand or redevelop existing school sites.



### **Opportunities**

The Quality of Life Indicators suggests a number of potential opportunities for Foster City including:

- Health and education sector jobs: additional medical and research facilities
- Weather: wind activities such as wind surfing and small scale energy production
- Office and R&D space: new office campuses or expanded uses
- Cultural and entertainment choices: cultural arts center
- Parks and recreation opportunities: unique new parks, concessions



In addition, the Trends Analysis background report identified potential opportunities that the General Plan could build upon such as:

- **Senior Age-in-Place Programs** – Opportunities to create a service networks that allows seniors to remain in their homes as they age.
- **Retail Trends** – Reconfiguring obsolete retail centers to provide visibility to tenants and a “sense of place.”
- **Business Incubators and Virtual Offices** – Facilitating the growth of new business and employment sectors.



In the update of the Land Use and Circulation Element of the General Plan, the City may consider new goals and policies that respond to potential opportunities identified in this paper and the Trends Analysis such as:

- **Business incubator space and/or programs; virtual offices to support smaller businesses.** Policies could encourage the formation of incubator programs and/or virtual offices either through direct City action, or through incentives and promotion by other organizations.
- **Reconfigure existing shopping centers. Consider mixed use with affordable housing. Focus neighborhood shopping centers on services rather than retail.** Goals and policies can continue to encourage mixed use development (Goal LUC-H, Policy LUC-18). Perhaps also a policy to re-evaluate restrictions on the amount and type of retail and services permitted in shopping centers. Each center has its own program and list of allowed/not allowed uses. Some of them were established to encourage retail over services or not duplicate services already provided elsewhere.

- **Programs to promote sustainability in private improvements, such as re-roofing, solar, etc. Encourage the use of technology to improve sustainability, e.g., irrigation controls coordinated with the weather.** Policies can call for creating options and criteria for design review that allows for new materials and technologies.
- **Encourage residents and workers to spend money in Foster City.** A policy could encourage the creation of an informational directory or website, together with a “Buy Foster City” publicity campaign. In addition, although the City is not involved in selecting tenants for commercial centers, a policy or program could facilitate a market study to identify types of businesses that are likely to be supported by business employees and residents. The market study could be helpful to commercial center owners, or to prospective businesses looking to tailor their business to customer demand.
- **City can show leadership in solar use and sustainability in public buildings.** Finances allowing, the City could have a policy that requires public building projects to showcase resource conservation technology.
- **Seniors “virtual village” program for seniors to age in place. Ideally a senior virtual village needs to be organized and run by the users themselves.** However, City policy could encourage the creation of a senior virtual village or other support system, and the City could facilitate organizational meetings to get the program initiated.
- **Destination Park project.** General Plan policy could describe and identify provisions for the Destination Park concept on Beach Park Boulevard.
- **Werder Pier site (but not the pier itself) to redevelop as a park, including a structure for concessions.** Policies and action programs could facilitate the acquisition of the Werder Pier site for park use. Policies could encourage concessions at the Werder Pier park and other parks.
- **Specific Plan or Precise Plan that includes multiple properties and potential projects so that each individual project could have more simplified environmental review.** Policies could consolidate potential redevelopment properties into plan areas with a program environmental review, allowing tiering of environmental review for individual development projects.
- **Live/work or loft housing units.** Policies could encourage a range of housing units, including some less conventional choices such as live/work units or lofts.



- **Cultural and entertainment.** The North Peninsula Jewish Center has proposed a Cultural Arts Center, and at various times cultural and entertainment facilities have been proposed as part of development of the City-Owned 15-Acres of Property Adjacent to the Foster City Government Center. Developing cultural and entertainment venues is challenging but may continue to be an opportunity for the future.
- **Wind Opportunities.** Sailing and windsurfing are existing recreational activities that take advantage of brisk afternoon winds. Policies can encourage other positive responses to wind conditions, possibly including small-scale power generation.

### **Threats**

The Quality of Life Indicators suggests some potential threats for Foster City including:

- Total number of jobs per capita
- Reasonable traffic and commute times
- Rental housing costs

In addition, the Trends Analysis identified potential threats that the General Plan could respond to such as:

- **Retail Trends** – Changes in retailing are causing some existing Foster City shopping centers to struggle.
- **Transportation** – Foster City’s roadway system is close to capacity at peak hours, which threatens employment growth in the future. The *Foster City Multi-Project Traffic Analysis* (December 2008) identifies eight recommended improvement / mitigation measures to accommodate existing conditions, and four additional measures to accommodate potential future projects.<sup>21</sup> Each of the proposed improvements is currently being designed and the City of Foster City Department of Public Works staff is working with CalTrans to obtain approval of improvements to the ramps and traffic lanes on State Route 92.<sup>22</sup>

In the update of the Land Use and Circulation Element of the General Plan, the City may consider new goals and policies that respond to potential threats identified in this paper and the Trends Analysis such as:

- **The structural deficits that the City is facing pose serious financial challenges.** Policies should provide guidance for evaluating trade-offs between City program costs and benefits. (This topic is investigated in greater detail in the *General Plan Land Use and Circulation Element Future Land Use Planning and Economic Development Issues and Constraints background report*.)

<sup>21</sup> Foster City Multi-Project Traffic Analysis (December, 2008), Table 26A.

<sup>22</sup> Engineering Feasibility Study (May 2009)



- **State-related financing decisions can impact the quality of life in Foster City. The Governor has discussed no longer allowing Redevelopment Agencies (RDA's), which could impact the City's resources.** This issue is ongoing, but policies can be in place to protect City assets or promote revenue enhancing projects.
- **Some employers seem to be seeking locations with better transit access.** Some participants in the Businesses and Employers Focus Group commented that some some employers seek locations with access to transit. Policies can outline opportunities to improve transit and access to regional transit. Policies can also outline a campaign that highlights the positive aspects of Foster City as a business location to potentially counter concerns of transit access.
- **Employees from outside Foster City are commuting from longer distances.** Policies that encourage a range of housing options and including affordable housing can allow employees to live closer to their jobs.
- **Some of the shopping centers are not attractive and need to be reconfigured/remodeled.** Goals and policies can continue to encourage mixed use development (Goal LUC-H, Policy LUC-18). Additional polices could outline in greater detail a desired approach for mixed use redevelopment of neighborhood shopping centers.
- **Bus service is very limited and may be cut further.** Policy LUC-54 calls for coordination with SamTrans to improve the transportation system.



## Using the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis in the General Plan Update

The Quality of Life Indicators can be measured on a regular basis to gauge how strongly Foster City performs in respect to a range of quality of life measures over time. General Plan goals, policies, and programs can promote and reinforce strengths, address and seek improvement of weaknesses, prioritize and encourage opportunities, and take proactive measures to limit threats.



The community involvement process engaged for the SWOT analysis has produced a substantial number of potential policies for the update of the Land Use and Circulation Element. While there has been a wide range of thoughtful insight and creative ideas, there is a need to identify the most promising (and pressing) issues to guide the prioritization of policies and programs to make best use of available resources. Decision-makers should engage in prioritization exercises to achieve a consensus on which of the many potential policy options should be investigated further, and ultimately included in the updated Land Use and Circulation Element for use as the official long-range planning policy.

## **SWOT Source List**

### *Focus groups*

M-Group conducted seven focus groups with a range of community groups and representatives to gain background and insight into near- and long-term Foster City planning issues. M-Group met with the Planning Commission on August 31, 2010 to review the list of focus groups and the questions to ask each group. The focus groups included:

- Youth – October 20, 2010
- Civic Clubs and Religious Institutions – October 26, 2010
- Environmental Sustainability and Transportation – October 28, 2010
- General Topic Group – November 9, 2010
- Residents – November 3, 2010
- Businesses and Employers – November 9, 2010
- Parks & Recreation – January 5, 2011

36 people participated attended in-person focus groups, 245 completed an on-line survey version of the focus group questions.

### *Data Sources*

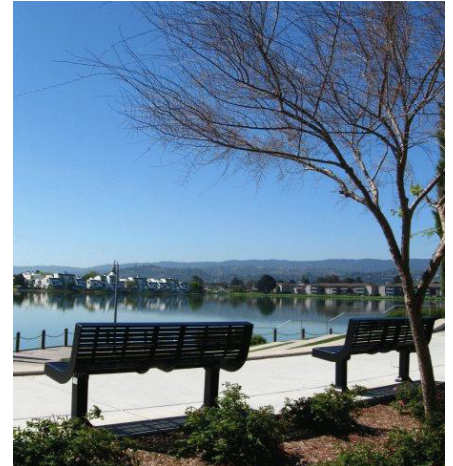
- Building Momentum - Projections and Priorities 2009, ABAG
- California Attorney General's Office; [www.ag.ca.gov](http://www.ag.ca.gov)
- California Department of Education; [www.api.cde.ca.gov](http://www.api.cde.ca.gov)
- California Employment Development Department
- City of Foster City "Mid-Year Financial Review for FY 2010-2011" City Council staff report, January 31, 2011
- Foster City 2007-2014 Housing Element
- Foster City Multi-Project Traffic Analysis – Final Report, December 2008.
- Foster City Engineering Feasibility Study – Final Report, May 2009
- San Francisco Peninsula Research & Forecast Report, Colliers International, Q3 2010
- Silicon Valley Mercury News 2010 Public Employee Salaries listings
- U.S. Census 2000; American Community Survey 2006-2008.
- Valley Yellow Pages\*

\* Through the progression of the General Plan Update, as more reliable data becomes available, this source will be replaced.



# SECTION 4: Issues and Constraints

As the City seeks to increase and strengthen its economic, sales and property tax, and jobs base, allow existing businesses to expand within the City, and respond to its regional fair share housing needs and obligations, it will be faced with issues and constraints that will be influential with respect to the City's ability to (re)develop properties throughout the City. The most serious issues and constraints will challenge the City's ability to approve new land development projects and policies and programs should be included (with subsequent follow-up study) in the updated Land Use and Circulation Element of the City General Plan and its supporting Work Program.





## City and District Infrastructure

### *Traffic Tolerance*

The decision to allow (re)development will likely be driven less by market opportunities than by traffic impacts (real and imagined) and community (political) reaction to those impacts. The City's future (re)development potential will be affected by the City's tolerance for weekday, peak hour traffic. The City will have to determine what level of service trade-offs it will make in order to allow properties to redevelop at higher densities and intensities.



### *Potable Water Availability*

The availability of potable water to serve the City's existing population (daytime/workforce and business and residential uses) and related land uses will be a challenge to the Estero Municipal Improvement District as regionally an increase in population and related supporting land uses (residential; industrial; commercial; recreational) put increased pressure on available supplies. The ability to additionally serve an expansion in the number of commercial and industrial firms that want to locate into or expand within the City's limits (which the City wants to encourage) and meet their water needs, without causing a diminution of water for existing residents and businesses will add to the problem of providing an adequate supply of water. This is a growing State wide problem and may become a significantly limiting growth factor.



### *Sewer System Capacity*

The key component parts of the Estero Municipal Improvement District's sewer collection and treatment system consist of the sewer lateral lines (privately owned/maintained); sewer main lines (publicly owned/maintained); lift stations (required because the City is approximately four feet below sea level); and a 25 percent shared ownership in the San Mateo Sewer Treatment Plant. This very complex system is finite with regard to its ability to process sewage flow and expensive and time consuming to expand. Similar to EMID's water delivery system, the ability to serve commercial and industrial firms that want to locate into or expand within the City's limits may become a constraint to new development locating within the City or to the expansion plans of existing businesses.



## Other Issues and Constraints

### ***Financial Ability to Maintain City/District Infrastructure***

As of the beginning of 2011 the City of Foster City and the Estero Municipal Improvement District have planned, constructed and maintained an extensive infrastructure network that supports the variety of land uses in the City at a very high and dependable level of service. The condition and reliability of infrastructure is an important element in how residents and residential neighborhood groups view the quality of life in their neighborhood.

Once constructed and accepted as public infrastructure, the ongoing operations and maintenance costs associated with the improvements or facilities that were constructed to serve or allow the construction of a particular land development project become the responsibility of the public entity/city. It therefore becomes essential that the public entity develop, maintain and fund the ability to service and as needed, repair the infrastructure over time as well as to plan for its future capital improvements and operational needs.

### ***Parking Availability (Chess Drive/Hatch Drive Area)***

Off-street parking availability for new projects is limited in this areas because the area was developed with and currently is predominantly comprised of small land parcels held in multiple ownerships. On most parcels there is not enough land area to justify the costs of razing the site, replacing old infrastructure, constructing a new building and related infrastructure; additionally, there is not enough land area on these small parcels to provide an adequate amount of off-street parking for a more intense land use than previously existed. Possible solutions such as aggregating smaller parcels into one large parcel, or creating a parking assessment district, must be identified to support redevelopment in this area.





### ***Building Scale, Bulk, and Intensity (“Neighborhood Fit”)***

Aside from the perceived impact of additional traffic on neighborhood and arterial streets, how a proposed land development or redevelopment project “fits” its site and neighborhood will (continue to) be the most critical aspect related to the redevelopment of property in the City. Such issues are frequently the cause and focus of opposition to new development and the primary reason at the end of a long and costly permitting process for the project being denied. While densification of a property is inevitable if it is to redevelop and add to the vibrancy of an area, the development of policies intended to guide how the issues of building height, bulk, and overall scale relative to the other developed properties in the immediate area will be addressed can mitigate some (not all) of the reasoned opposition and provide greater certainty to property owners, neighbors, City decision makers, and City staff.

### ***Management of Large-Scale Public and Private Construction Projects (Minimizing Neighborhood Impacts and Avoiding Complaints)***

Because Foster City is substantially “built-out” and much of the land in the City is developed with buildings and sites that are  $\pm 35$  to 40 years old, future economic and residential growth will likely be a result of the redevelopment and/or intensification of existing sites. Candidate sites that have the potential to redevelop and/or intensify are located throughout the City, including within residential neighborhoods (e.g. existing church properties; multifamily/apartment complexes) or along the edges of commercial zoning districts that abut residential zoning districts (e.g. shopping centers; buildings and sites in the commercial-office zoning district). Because of the close proximity of candidate redevelopment sites to residential neighborhoods and in order to avoid legitimate complaints from residents that, if not quickly addressed or occur too frequently could weaken the policy making environment for other such projects.



# SECTION 5: Climate Change

Global climate change is a change in the average weather of the Earth that may be measured by wind patterns, storms, precipitation and temperature. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has reached consensus that continued greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at or above current rates would cause further warming. Warming would induce many changes in the global climate system during the 21st century that would very likely be larger than those observed during the 20th century.<sup>1</sup> Reductions in the emissions of greenhouse gases are necessary if the extent and impact of climate change is to be minimized.

Foster City has already recognized this as an important issue and made significant progress in analyzing the issue and developing proposed actions in the “Sustainability Action Plan” prepared by the Environmental Sustainability Task Force. The General Plan can also be a tool in this effort and is a logical place to include the goals and policies of the community for guiding development and shaping the environment.



<sup>3</sup> Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2007) “Summary for Policymakers,” Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report. Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, p. 13. <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg1/ar4-wg1-spm.pdf>



## Climate Change Regulatory Background Relevant To General Plans <sup>2</sup>

Local, state and federal agencies have set reduction targets for GHG emissions in the near and long term. Changes in state regulations require that environmental impacts reports include an analysis of compliance with these targets, as well as mitigation measures and monitoring to include “feasible means, supported by substantial evidence and subject to monitoring and reporting, of mitigating the significant effects of greenhouse gas emissions.” These reduction targets will affect Foster City’s community and municipal operations, requiring reductions in single-occupant vehicle travel, increases in alternative energy use and more efficient development overall. The following information summarizes the current regulations related to GHG emission reductions that are relevant to General Plans.



### *State Reduction Targets for Greenhouse Gases (Executive Order S-3-05)*

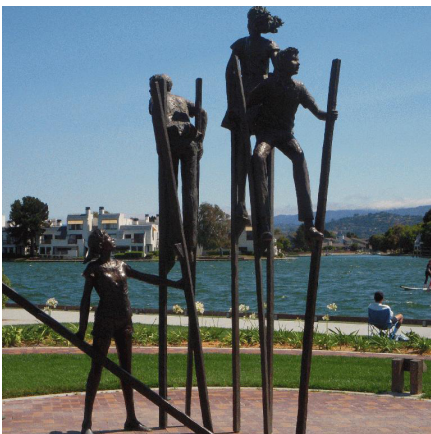
In June 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger established California’s GHG emissions reduction targets in Executive Order S-3-05. The Executive Order established the following goals: GHG emissions should be reduced to 2000 levels by 2010; GHG emissions should be reduced to 1990 levels by 2020; and GHG emissions should be reduced to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.



### *Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Assembly Bill 32)*

California’s major initiative for reducing GHG emissions is outlined in Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), the “Global Warming Solutions Act,” passed by the California State legislature on August 31, 2006. This effort aims at reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, a reduction of approximately 25 percent, and then an 80 percent reduction below 1990 levels by 2050.

The cornerstone of the AB 32 program is the development and adoption by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) of a Scoping Plan that identifies specific reduction strategies, implementation mechanisms, and timelines.



In addition to reducing GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, AB 32 directed CARB and the newly created Climate Action Team (CAT) to identify a list of discrete early action GHG reduction measures that can be adopted and made enforceable by January 1, 2010. In June 2007, CARB approved a list of 37 early action measures. The CARB adopted additional early action measures in October 2007 that tripled the number of discrete early action measures.

<sup>2</sup> Much of this discussion is taken from the Chess-Hatch Master Plan Final EIR, LSA Associates, September 2009, Appendix , p. 259-262

CARB approved a Scoping Plan on December 11, 2008 that outlines the main state strategies for meeting the 2020 deadline. The Scoping Plan does several things:

- Specifies the target level of greenhouse gas emissions that must be achieved by 2020 and estimate the levels that would occur in the absence of measures to reduce emissions – the “business-as-usual” scenario. The difference represents the quantity of emissions that must be reduced by the measures in the plan.
- The Plan identifies a mix of strategies to achieve the mandated reductions, and estimates the emission reductions that can be expected from each strategy or measure.
- The Plan provides the general direction for the implementation of key strategies, recognizing that the details of the requirements will be developed through the public rulemaking process.

The Scoping Plan identifies measures and strategies in 19 basic categories. The greatest contribution comes from the transportation sector. The electricity sector is the second largest contributor.

The Scoping Plan discusses two primary ways in which local governments can achieve direct greenhouse gas emissions (i.e., reductions that do not result from improved land use planning). Local governments can take actions to reduce energy use at their own facilities, increase their recycling, reduce their waste and water use, reduce the energy used in the handling and treatment of waste and water, and reduce the carbon emissions from their vehicle fleets and from trips to and from their facilities. Similarly, local governments can adopt policies that support reductions in these same areas by businesses and residents within their communities.<sup>3</sup>

### **Senate Bill 375**

Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), which was signed into law on October 1, 2008, provides emissions-reduction goals and provides incentives for local governments and developers to follow new conscientiously planned growth patterns. SB 375 enhances the CARB’s ability to reach AB 32 goals by directing CARB to develop regional greenhouse gas emission reduction targets to be achieved from the automobile and light truck sectors for 2020 and 2035. Regional planning agencies are also required to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) that will constitute the land use element of the Regional Transportation Plan and meet the GHG reduction targets set by CARB. SB 375 also provides incentives for creating attractive, walkable and sustainable communities and revitalizing existing communities. It also encourages the development of more alternative transportation options, to promote healthy lifestyles and reduce traffic congestion.

<sup>3</sup> Climate Change Scoping Plan, California Air Resources Board, December 2008.  
[http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/scopingplan/document/adopted\\_scoping\\_plan.pdf](http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/scopingplan/document/adopted_scoping_plan.pdf)



Additionally, SB 375 modified Housing Element Law to achieve consistency between the land use pattern outlined in the SCS and Regional Housing Needs Assessment allocation. The legislation also substantially improved cities' and counties' accountability for carrying out their housing plans.

### **CEQA Guidelines Amendments**

To assist public agencies in the mitigation of GHG emissions or analyzing the effects of GHGs under CEQA, amendments to the State CEQA Guidelines were approved in December 2009.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4.c requires lead agencies "to consider feasible means, supported by substantial evidence and subject to monitoring and reporting, of mitigating the significant effects of greenhouse gas emissions."

Section 15183.5 provides guidance on tiering and streamlining the analysis of GHG emissions. It provides that lead agencies may analyze and mitigate the significant effects of GHG emissions at a programmatic level, such as in a general plan or a separate plan to reduce GHG emissions. Project-specific environmental documents may rely on an EIR containing a programmatic analysis of GHG emissions. It further provides that a plan to reduce GHG emissions may be used in a cumulative impacts analysis. Such a plan, in order to qualify projects for a streamlined environmental review, must do the following:

- Quantify GHG emissions, both existing and projected;
- Establish a level, below which the contribution to GHG emissions would not be cumulatively considerable;
- Identify and analyze the GHG emissions resulting from specific actions or categories of actions anticipated within the geographic area;
- Specify measures or a group of measures, including performance standards, that substantial evidence demonstrates, if implemented on a project-by-project basis, would collectively achieve the specified emissions level;
- Establish a mechanism to monitor the plan's progress toward achieving the level and to require amendment if the plan is not achieving specified levels;
- Be adopted in a public process following environmental review.

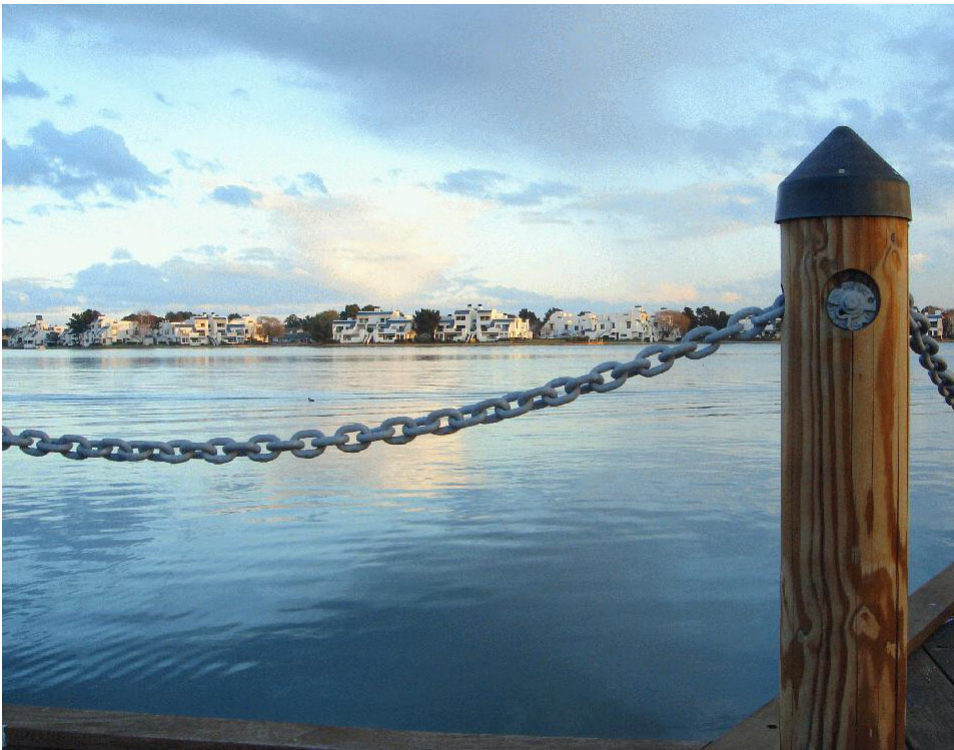
## Local Efforts To Date

Foster City has recognized that climate change and sustainability as a whole are important issues facing the community. The City is already taking steps to make the City more sustainable. The following identifies what the City is doing to identify climate change contributions and reduce the City's impact on the environment.

### *Environmental Sustainability Task Force*

In 2008, the City Council adopted a Policy Calendar Item to "Prepare and Commence Implementation of a Community-Wide Environmental Sustainability Action Plan and a City Operations Environmental Sustainability Action Plan, Including Compliance with AB 32 and SB 375." In February 2009, the Ad Hoc Environmental Sustainability Task Force (ESTF) presented a completed Sustainability Action Plan (SAP) to the City Council.<sup>4</sup> The SAP included a summary of the results of a community-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory for Foster City using baseline data for 2005 that will help the City evaluate the community's progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions over time. In addition to addressing climate change and reducing GHG emissions through changes in energy use and fuel consumption, the ESTF's SAP made recommendations about water conservation, air and water pollution prevention, solid waste source reduction and recycling.

The City Council extended the term of the ESTF to June 30, 2012 and also reauthorized a part-time intern position to support the work of the ESTF. The ESTF has begun work on implementation of some of the measures in the SAP.



<sup>4</sup> Recommended Sustainability Action Plan, Foster City Ad Hoc Environmental Sustainability Task Force, February 2009.

## Gilead Sciences & Chess-Hatch Environmental Impact Reports

The Gilead Sciences Corporate Campus Master Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) <sup>5</sup> (July 2009) and Chess- Hatch Master Plan EIR <sup>6</sup> (September 2009) both included extensive sections on Global Climate Change, including scientific and regulatory background, estimates of GHG emissions from the projects and proposed mitigation measures.

**TABLE 5-1: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REDUCTION STRATEGIES – EXAMPLE FROM GILEAD SCIENCES EIR**

Strategy	Mitigation Measure	How Goal or Policy Would Reduce GHG Emissions
<p><b>Energy Efficiency:</b> Maximize energy efficiency building and appliance standards, and pursue additional efficiency efforts including new technologies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comply with the updated Title 24 standards for building construction;</li> <li>• Provide a landscape and development plan for the project that takes advantage of shade, prevailing winds, and landscaping;</li> <li>• Install efficient lighting and lighting controls/ systems. Use daylight as an integral part of lighting systems in buildings;</li> <li>• Install light colored “cool” roof areas;</li> <li>• Install energy efficient heating and cooling systems, appliances and equipment, and control systems;</li> <li>• Install efficient lighting and controls for new outdoor lighting (e.g., fluorescent or LED, dusk to dawn sensors);</li> <li>• Consider developing an On-Site Renewable Energy System that consists of solar, wind, geothermal, biomass and/or bio-gas strategies. This system should reduce grid-based energy purchases and provide at least 2.5 percent of the project energy cost from renewable energy. Such a strategy can include installation of photovoltaic panels, wind turbines, and solar and tankless hot water heaters;</li> <li>• Install light colored “cool” pavements for pathways, plazas, and sidewalks, where appropriate given the characteristics of those areas;</li> <li>• Incorporate ENERGY STAR or better rated appliances and electrical equipment; and</li> <li>• Design all office buildings to exceed California Building Code’s Title 24 energy standards, as follows:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase insulation such that heat transfer and thermal bridging is minimized to the extent consistent with the overall safe and healthy functioning of the building; and</li> <li>- Limit air leakage through the structure or within the heating and cooling distribution system to minimize energy consumption to the extent consistent with the overall safe and healthy functioning of the building.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design all laboratory buildings to exceed California Building Code’s Title 24 energy standards as follows:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase insulation such that heat transfer and thermal bridging is minimized to the extent consistent with the overall safe and health functioning of the building;</li> <li>- Limit air leakage through the structure of with in the heating and cooling distribution system to minimize energy consumption to the extent consistent with the overall safe and health functioning of the building; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use combined heat and power in appropriate applications.</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> Gilead Sciences Corporate Master Plan Final Environmental Impact Report, LSA Associates, July 2009, State Clearinghouse Number 2008122064.

<sup>6</sup> Chess-Hatch Master Plan Final Environmental Impact Report, LSA Associates, September 2009, State Clearinghouse Number 2008122065.

**TABLE 5-1: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REDUCTION STRATEGIES – EXAMPLE FROM GILEAD SCIENCES EIR**

Strategy	Mitigation Measure	How Goal or Policy Would Reduce GHG Emissions
<p><b>Green Building:</b> Expand the use of green building practices to reduce the carbon footprint of California’s new and existing inventory of buildings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design, construct and operate all newly constructed office buildings as equivalent to “LEED Silver” or higher standards (e.g., “LEED Gold”);</li> <li>• Design, construct and operate all newly constructed laboratory buildings as equivalent to “LEED Certified” or higher standards (e.g., “LEED Silver”), if such standards for laboratory buildings are in place at the time of Specific Development Plan/Use Permit approval;</li> <li>• Use locally produced and/or manufactured building materials for construction of the project, subject to consideration of quality, cost, and availability;</li> <li>• Develop a sustainability design checklist based upon green building rating systems to guide significant facility renovation projects by deploying newer construction and operating practices that conserve energy, water and materials while providing a reasonable return on investment; and</li> <li>• Incorporate “Green Building Materials,” such as those materials which are resource efficient, have recycled content, and/or are manufactured in an environmentally friendly way, including low Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) materials.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design all laboratory buildings to exceed California Building Code’s Title 24 energy standards as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase insulation such that heat transfer and thermal bridging is minimized to the extent consistent with the overall safe and health functioning of the building;</li> <li>- Limit air leakage through the structure of with in the heating and cooling distribution system to minimize energy consumption to the extent consistent with the overall safe and health functioning of the building; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use combined heat and power in appropriate applications.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Water Use Efficiency:</b> Continue efficiency programs and use cleaner energy sources to move and treat water.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create water-efficient landscapes within the development and/or landscape with native and drought-tolerant plants;</li> <li>• Install water-efficient irrigation systems and devices such as soil moisture-based irrigation controls, timers, and/or drip irrigation;</li> <li>• Design buildings to be water-efficient. Install water-efficient fixtures and appliances, including low-flow faucets, dual-flush toilets, and low-flow urinals;</li> <li>• Restrict watering methods (e.g., prohibit systems that apply water to non-vegetated surfaces) and control runoff; and</li> <li>• Consider using reclaimed water for landscape irrigation within the project, if reclaimed water is made available by the City.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Recycling and Waste:</b> Increase waste diversion, composting, and commercial recycling. Move toward zero waste.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use best efforts to reuse and recycle construction and demolition waste (including, but not limited to, soil, vegetation, concrete, lumber, metal, and cardboard);</li> <li>• Provide adequate interior and exterior storage areas for recyclables;</li> <li>• Provide employee education about reducing waste and available recycling services; and</li> <li>• Provide adequate storage areas for green waste, to the extent needed in light of the actual operations of the facility.</li> </ul>	

**TABLE 5-1: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REDUCTION STRATEGIES – EXAMPLE FROM GILEAD SCIENCES EIR**

Strategy	Mitigation Measure	How Goal or Policy Would Reduce GHG Emissions
<p><b>Regional Transportation-Related Greenhouse Gas Targets:</b> Local governments must develop regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for passenger vehicles.</p>	<p>Specific regional emission targets for transportation emissions do not directly apply to this project. However, the proposed project would continue the extensive offerings in Gilead Science’s Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program already in place. The specific measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guaranteed Ride Home program (all carpool, vanpool, and transit participants);</li> <li>• Shuttle service to the nearby rail station;</li> <li>• Carpool incentive program;</li> <li>• Bike to work program;</li> <li>• Rebates for vanpool participants;</li> <li>• Commuter checks;</li> <li>• Vanpool program;</li> <li>• Bicycle racks and lockers, and other on-site amenities; and</li> <li>• Try Transit Free program.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Measures to Reduce High Global Warming Potential (GWP) Gases:</b> CARB has identified Discrete Early Action measures to reduce GHG emissions from the refrigerants used in car air conditioners, semiconductor manufacturing, and consumer products. CARB has also identified potential reduction opportunities for future commercial and industrial refrigeration.</p>	<p>New refrigerant systems installed at the project site (after implementation of the reduction of GWP gases) shall comply with future CARB rules and regulations as these new rules and regulations are implemented by the agency.</p>	



### Existing Policies in the General Plan

As identified in the Gilead Sciences and Chess Drive EIRs, there are a number of existing General Plan goals and policies that would reduce GHG emissions. These are outlined in Table 5-2:

**TABLE 5-2: EXISTING GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES THAT WOULD REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

Goal or Policy	Goal or Policy Text	How Goal or Policy Would Reduce GHG Emissions
Goal LUC-B	Promote Proper Site Planning, Architectural Design and Property Maintenance. Ensure high quality site planning and architectural design for all new development, renovation or remodeling and require property maintenance to maintain the long-term health, safety and welfare of the community.	Good site planning and architectural design take advantage of the site to reduce energy use, such as solar access to reduce heating costs and breezes to reduce cooling costs. High quality architecture can also use more sustainable building materials.
Goal LUC-H	Encourage Mixed Use Projects. Encourage mixed use projects, with the residential portion of mixed use projects built at the maximum allowed densities to reduce trips to, from and within the City.	Mixed use projects can reduce automobile trips by providing destinations within walking distance.
Goal LUC-I	Provide for Diversified Transportation Needs. Develop, improve and maintain a circulation system which provides efficient and safe access for private vehicles, commercial vehicles, public transit, emergency vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.	A diverse transportation system can encourage people to use transit, bicycles and walking and reduce automobile trips.
Goal LUC-J	Maintain Acceptable Operating Conditions on the City's Road Network. Maintain acceptable operating conditions on the City's road network at or above Level of Service D and encourage the maximum effective use of public and private vehicles, reduce the growth in peak hour traffic volumes and reduce single passenger trips.	Reducing single passenger automobile trips will generate less greenhouse gas emissions as well as help maintain acceptable levels of service.
Policy LUC-18	Mixed Use Residential/Commercial Projects. The City will encourage housing production by allowing mixed use residential/commercial projects to be built with the residential portion of mixed use projects built at the maximum allowed densities to reduce trips to and from and within the City. In allowing higher residential densities for mixed use projects, the project must comply with the goals and policies of the General Plan, including Policies LUC-15 (Density of Residential Projects) and LUC-16 (Provision of Affordable Housing).	Mixed use projects can reduce automobile trips by providing destinations within walking distance. Higher density projects make the use of transit more feasible, which also reduces automobile trips.
Policy LUC-52	Transportation Systems Management (TSM). The City will participate in an ongoing joint effort with several neighboring cities to adopt and enforce a Traffic Systems Management (TSM) program. The program shall require the participation of all future and existing commercial and industrial employers.	TSM programs encourage employees to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips.
Policy LUC-53	Bicycle Routes and Pedestrian Paths. Maintain a system of bicycle routes and pedestrian paths, which will include separate bicycle lanes and posted bicycle routes. Pedestrian pathways and easements shall be maintained, either by the City, or, in the case of private ownership, according to a maintenance agreement or landscaping district agreement applicable to the pathway/easement.	Improved bicycle routes and pedestrian paths will encourage people to use these modes instead of the automobile.
Policy LUC-54	Coordination with SamTrans. The City shall work with SamTrans in defining new routes and improving the public transit and transportation system.	More efficient transit routes will encourage people to use transit instead of automobiles.

**TABLE 5-2: EXISTING GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES THAT WOULD REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (CONTD)**

Goal or Policy	Goal or Policy Text	How Goal or Policy Would Reduce GHG Emissions
Policy LUC-59	Bicycle Parking. Secured bicycle parkings shall be encouraged for all commercial and industrial buildings. The City will continue to allow required parking to be reduced by one space for every eight bicycle parking spaces provided, per Chapter 17.62 of the Municipal Code.	More convenient bicycle parking will encourage people to use bicycles instead of automobiles.
Goal PC-C	Maintain and Improve the City's Pedway and Bikeway System. Maintain and improve the pedway system that surrounds the City and the walkway system that provides safe access to parks, schools and other streets.	An attractive and safe pedway and walkway system will encourage people to walk instead of use automobiles.
Goal PC-F	Provide Adequate Open Space to Serve Existing and New Development. Assure the provision of adequate open space to serve existing and new development and preserve existing open spaces with public access easements within private commercial developments.	Preservation of open space will provide plants that use carbon dioxide.
Goal PC-G	Protect and Conserve Natural Resources. Protect and conserve wildlife habitat, energy resources, land resources, air quality, and the quality and quantity of water resources.	Preservation of resources includes many aspects that will make the community more sustainable and also reduce energy use and air emissions that generate greenhouse gas emissions.
Policy PC-9	Bikepath System. Develop a Foster City bikepath system to connect major work, shopping, school, civic and recreational destinations throughout the City.	A convenient bikepath system will encourage people to use bicycles rather than automobiles to reach their destination.
Policy PC-11	Pedway and Bikeway System Maintenance and Improvement. Continue to maintain, expand and improve the existing walkway and pedway system.	An attractive and safe pedway and walkway system will encourage people to walk instead of use automobiles.
Policy PC-28	Air Quality. Reduce the impact of development on local air quality.	Reducing impacts on local air quality will also reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
Policy PC-29	Energy Conservation. Promote energy conservation in existing and new development (see Housing Element).	Reducing energy consumption will reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are generated to make electricity.
Policy H-A-4-a	Air Quality Impacts. When site-specific development is proposed and/or a Rezoning application is processed, potential air quality impacts from project traffic shall be studied, and mitigation measures to ensure compliance with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District standards in effect at the time shall be recommended if necessary.	Reducing air quality impacts will reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
Policy H-B-3	Encourage Energy Conservation in Housing. Encourage adoption of energy conservation measures and promote energy conservation programs that provide assistance for energy conservation improvements.	Reducing energy consumption will reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are generated to make electricity.

Source: Gilead Sciences Corporate Master Plan Final Environmental Impact Report, op. cit., p. 273.

# Options For Integrating Climate Change Into General Plan

We recommend three basic options for the City to consider regarding how to integrate consideration of climate change into the General Plan:

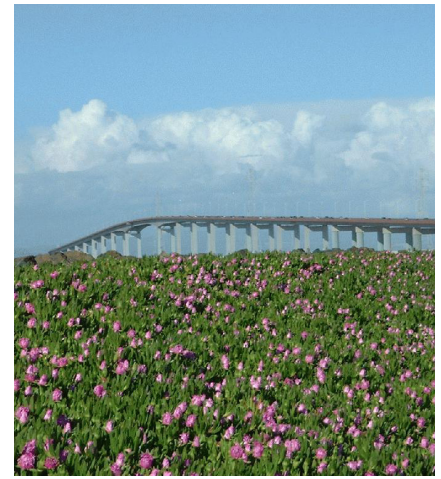
- Reference Climate Change goals and policies in a Matrix to clearly show how the City is complying with the regulations.
- Reference Climate Change related items in a Sustainability Section/Element and/or Matrix and Require a Climate Action Plan as a Near-term Mitigation Measure.
- Reference Climate Change Items in a Sustainability Section/Element and/or Matrix and Adopt a Climate Action Plan simultaneously.

These are described in more detail below:

## 1. Reference Climate Change Items in a Matrix

Include goals, policies and implementation measures related to climate change and sustainability throughout the General Plan and reference in a summary matrix. An example of this approach is the Redwood City General Plan adopted in October 2010.<sup>7</sup> The plan includes a small section on Sustainability and highlights the items that relate to sustainability with an icon in the body of the Plan and also in tables that summarize policies and implementation actions. Redwood City has a separate “Community Climate Action Plan”<sup>8</sup> that encourages residents and local businesses to take steps to reduce greenhouse gases. Their plan, however, does not appear to meet the requirements to qualify for the CEQA streamlining authorized by the recent CEQA Guideline amendments.

The environmental impact report (EIR) for the General Plan update will be required to quantify baseline and projected greenhouse gas emissions, determine if they are significant and mitigate the impacts to the extent feasible. The mitigation measures should also include specific measures to be applied to new projects, which could be patterned after the mitigation measures applied to the Gilead Sciences project (see Table 4-1). If the projected emissions do not exceed the threshold of significance (e.g., the Bay Area Air Quality Management District’s suggested GHG efficiency metric of 6.6 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent per service population [residents plus workers] per year (6.6 MT CO<sub>2</sub>e/SP/yr)), then the City may be able to conclude that the impacts of the plan are adequately mitigated to a less than significant level. This would provide a basis for subsequent development projects to be able to rely on the analysis in the General Plan EIR. If the City cannot find that the impacts will be adequately mitigated, then it is likely that subsequent development projects will be required to prepare an EIR, even if all other impacts are mitigated to less than significant levels.



<sup>7</sup> Redwood City General Plan, October 2010. [http://www.redwoodcity.org/phed/planning/generalplan/FinalGP\\_Docs.html](http://www.redwoodcity.org/phed/planning/generalplan/FinalGP_Docs.html)

<sup>8</sup> Redwood City, Community Climate Action Plan. [http://www.redwoodcity.org/manager/initiatives/climate%20protection/Verde/Final%20CCAP%20Documents/CCAP\\_Final\\_3-25-10.pdf](http://www.redwoodcity.org/manager/initiatives/climate%20protection/Verde/Final%20CCAP%20Documents/CCAP_Final_3-25-10.pdf)



## **2. Reference Climate Change Items in a Sustainability Section/Element and/or Matrix and Require a Climate Action Plan as a Near-term Mitigation Measure**

Include goals, policies and actions related to climate change and sustainability throughout the General Plan and/or a Sustainability Element and require a Climate Action Plan as a near-term mitigation measure. Both Union City and Santa Clara are examples of this approach. Union City included an Environmental Sustainability Element that referenced other parts of the General Plan related to achieving environmental sustainability and included in the Element a comprehensive policy framework to guide the City's green efforts. They adopted a Climate Action Plan in November 2010 that includes the items required to qualify for the CEQA streamlining. Santa Clara recently adopted a General Plan and included preparation of a Climate Action Plan as a near-term mitigation measure.



The environmental review for a General Plan revision must include a quantified analysis of the general plan's climate change-related effects<sup>9</sup>, and this analysis can provide the quantified estimates of existing and projected emissions for a concurrent or subsequent Climate Action Plan to meet the requirements for CEQA streamlining. The additional cost of preparing a Climate Action Plan in addition to the cost of the General Plan EIR may be the basis on which the City determines whether to prepare a Climate Action Plan to secure the CEQA streamlining benefits for subsequent projects.



## **3. Reference Climate Change Items in a Sustainability Section/Element and/or Matrix and Adopt a Climate Action Plan Simultaneously**

Include goals, policies and actions related to climate change and sustainability throughout the General Plan and/or a Sustainability Element and adopt a Climate Action Plan at the same time as the General Plan. San Carlos recently prepared a Climate Action Plan<sup>10</sup> associated with a General Plan update and received an Innovation in Green Planning Award from the Northern California Chapter of the American Planning Association. The goals, policies and implementation measures contained in the Climate Action Plan are referenced in the General Plan with a graphic that "Denotes synergy with the Climate Action Plan."



This approach is consistent with the technical guidance from the Attorney General's Office which recommends that "if a city or county intends to rely on a Climate Action Plan as a centerpiece of its mitigation strategy, it should prepare the Climate Action Plan at the same time as its general plan update and EIR...we strongly urge agencies to incorporate any Climate Action Plans into their general plans to ensure that their provisions are applied to every relevant project."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup>"Climate Change, the California Environmental Quality Act, and General Plan Updates: Straightforward Answers to Some Frequently Asked Questions," California Attorney General's Office, September 1, 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Climate Action Plan, City of San Carlos, October 2009. [http://www.cityofsancarlos.org/generalplanupdate/whats\\_new\\_/climate\\_action\\_plan\\_\\_\\_adopted.asp](http://www.cityofsancarlos.org/generalplanupdate/whats_new_/climate_action_plan___adopted.asp)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

The City of San Carlos website includes comments on the integration of the two documents:

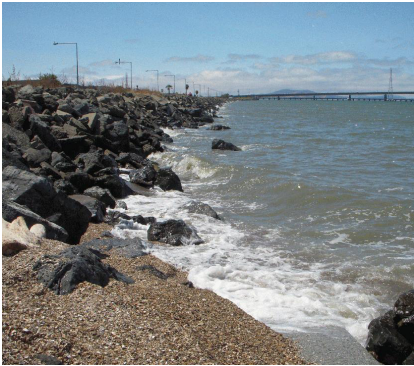
*The Climate Action Plan (CAP) was prepared to inform the General Plan primarily for the preparation of the Environmental Management Element. The CAP is a policy document with specific implementation measures and is meant to be considered in context with other General Plan programs and policy priorities. By preparing the CAP in parallel to the General Plan, the Goals, Policies and Actions in the General Plan are based on greenhouse reduction strategies and climate adaptations. The CAP was prepared to inform the General Plan primarily for the preparation of the Environmental Management Element. However, the CAP is also reflected in the Land Use, Housing, Parks and Recreation and Community Safety and Services Elements, in other words, throughout the General Plan.*

*The reduction measures are projected through 2030 with 2020 serving as an interim target. A recommended five-year Climate Action Plan update process and its relation to the General Plan are depicted below. This will ensure that the CAP is continuously up to date.*



**TABLE 5-3: SUMMARY OF OPTIONS FOR INTEGRATION OF CLIMATE ACTION GOALS AND POLICIES IN THE GENERAL PLAN**

OPTION	PRO	CON
Reference Climate Change Items in a Matrix	Simplest approach.	Does not provide the Plan that will allow CEQA streamlining per Section 15183.5 of the State CEQA Guidelines.
Reference Climate Change Items in a Sustainability Section/Element and/or Matrix and Require a Climate Action Plan as a Near-term Mitigation Measure	The analysis and mitigation measures required for the General Plan Environmental Impact Report can be incorporated into the Climate Action Plan.	Requires the City to follow through to prepare the Climate Action Plan in order to qualify for CEQA streamlining.
Reference Climate Change Items in a Sustainability Section/ Element and/or Matrix and Adopt a Climate Action Plan Simultaneously	Easier to link the General Plan and the Climate Action Plan and can be addressed in one EIR.	More effort required at the same time as preparation of the General Plan to prepare the Climate Action Plan



## Recommended Approach and Goals, Policies And Implementation Measures For Consideration

The recommendation is that Foster City take the second approach discussed above if the additional cost of preparing the Climate Action Plan is acceptable, in addition to the cost of the General Plan EIR. This option would address climate change/sustainability in all the relevant elements of the General Plan, include sustainability as a central theme of the General Plan, and incorporate a section and/or matrix correlating the climate change objectives with the applicable policies and implementation measures. Then, following adoption of the General Plan, the City would prepare a Climate Action Plan that will build on the policy framework laid out in the General Plan and the analysis of greenhouse gas emissions and mitigation measures that will be required in the EIR for the General Plan. This will provide the City with CEQA streamlining benefits when reviewing future development projects.

If the cost of preparing the Climate Action Plan is not acceptable, then the City should proceed with the first option – to include goals, policies and implementation measures related to climate change and sustainability throughout the General Plan and reference in a summary matrix.

The “Model Policies for Greenhouse Gases in General Plan” also includes a “worksheet” with links to examples of the policies and programs adopted by various agencies. The CAPCOA recommendations are further analyzed in the later CAPCOA report, “Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures.

## Resources

California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, "CEQA and Climate Change," January 2008.  
<http://www.capcoa.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2010/05/CAPCOA-White-Paper.pdf>

California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, "Quantifying Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Measures," August 2010.  
<http://www.capcoa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/CAPCOA-Quantification-Report-9-14-Final.pdf>

California Air Pollution Control Officers Association, "Model Policies for Greenhouse Gases in General Plans," June 2009.  
[http://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/ilgbackup.org/files/resources/CAPCOA\\_Model\\_Policies\\_for\\_Greenhouse\\_Gases\\_in\\_General\\_Plans\\_-\\_June\\_2009.pdf](http://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/ilgbackup.org/files/resources/CAPCOA_Model_Policies_for_Greenhouse_Gases_in_General_Plans_-_June_2009.pdf)

California Attorney General's Office. "Climate Change, the California Environmental Quality Act, and General Plan Updates: Straightforward Answers to Some Frequently Asked Questions," September 1, 2009.  
[http://ag.ca.gov/globalwarming/pdf/CEQA\\_GP\\_FAQs.pdf](http://ag.ca.gov/globalwarming/pdf/CEQA_GP_FAQs.pdf)

California Attorney General's Office. "Sustainability and General Plans: Examples of Policies to Address Climate Change," January 22, 2010.  
[http://ag.ca.gov/globalwarming/pdf/GP\\_policies.pdf](http://ag.ca.gov/globalwarming/pdf/GP_policies.pdf)

California Climate Action Network, Institute for Local Government, "Best Practices Framework, Version 6.0," February 2010.  
[http://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/ilgbackup.org/files/BestPracticesFramework\\_v6.3\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.ca-ilg.org/sites/ilgbackup.org/files/BestPracticesFramework_v6.3_FINAL.pdf)

California Office of Planning and Research, "Cities and Counties Addressing Climate Change," Revised 11/10/10.

City of San Carlos, Climate Action Plan, October 2009. [http://www.cityofsancarlos.org/generalplanupdate/whats\\_new\\_/climate\\_action\\_plan\\_\\_\\_adopted.asp](http://www.cityofsancarlos.org/generalplanupdate/whats_new_/climate_action_plan___adopted.asp)

CoolCalifornia.org, Climate Action Planning (website), including Tips for Preparing a Climate Action Plan and Climate Action Plan template.  
<http://www.coolcalifornia.org/article/tips-to-develop-a-climate-action-plan>

Redwood City, Community Climate Action Plan. [http://www.redwoodcity.org/manager/initiatives/climate%20protection/Verde/Final%20CCAP%20Documents/CCAP\\_Final\\_3-25-10.pdf](http://www.redwoodcity.org/manager/initiatives/climate%20protection/Verde/Final%20CCAP%20Documents/CCAP_Final_3-25-10.pdf)

Redwood City, General Plan, October 2010. [http://www.redwoodcity.org/phed/planning/generalplan/FinalGP\\_Docs.html](http://www.redwoodcity.org/phed/planning/generalplan/FinalGP_Docs.html)

StopWaste.org, Climate Action Plan Template, 2007  
<http://www.stopwaste.org/home/index.asp?page=516#ACCPA>





# Next Steps

This workbook and input from the community provides material for identifying issues and developing informed policies for the update of the Land Use and Circulation Element.

Each chapter of this workbook builds upon one another, beginning with the community profile and measures of quality of life, to the identification of different trends in the community, to the determination of what is a strength, weakness, opportunity, or challenge, and to the long-range issue of climate change. The workbook identifies areas where the City excels and where it relies on the regional market to provide services or other opportunities. It also provides suggestions of areas where policies could address existing conditions or future areas of interest.

The Land Use and Circulation update process will be overseen and guided by the Planning Commission. Commission members will provide direction and feedback at key points throughout the process and make a recommendation to the City regarding the Draft Land Use and Circulation Element.

The overall Land Use and Circulation Element update process is as follows:

- Develop DRAFT Goals and Policies and Programs
- Planning Commission Study Session / DRAFT Goals, Policies and Programs
- Amend DRAFT Goals, Policies and Programs as directed by Planning Commission
- 30-day public review period / DRAFT Goals, Policies and Programs
- 2nd Planning Commission Study Session / DRAFT Goals, Policies and Programs - Receive comments from the public; receive tentative approval from the Planning Commission
- Develop DRAFT Amended Land Use and Circulation Element (including DRAFT Goals, Policies and Programs)
- Planning Commission Study Session / DRAFT Amended Land Use and Circulation Element
- Amend DRAFT Amended Land Use and Circulation Element as directed by Planning Commission
- 30-day public review period / DRAFT Amended Land Use and Circulation Element
- Planning Commission Public Hearing / DRAFT Amended Land Use and Circulation Element - Receive comments from the public; receive recommendation for City Council approval from the Planning Commission
- City Council Public Hearing / DRAFT Amended Land Use and Circulation Element



