

INTRODUCTION

The San Pablo 2035 General Plan, as updated, is a policy document for the long-range development of the City of San Pablo. It provides the direction for the future growth of the city, and articulates a vision of what San Pablo aspires to be. The Plan draws its ideas from residents, business owners, elected officials, other stakeholders, and City staff, and translates these ideas into a set of policies and actions for present and future generations. As a policy document, the Plan provides the legal basis for all zoning, subdivision, and related actions. It also provides the legal basis for City regulations and the initiation of public projects.

This chapter of the General Plan provides an overview of the document. It gives the reader a background of the planning process and an outline of current community conditions. Key themes and initiatives are highlighted, and summary tables provide an overview of anticipated future conditions.

1.1 Purpose and Process

PURPOSE

The San Pablo General Plan is a policy document mandated by State law to address issues related to physical development and conservation of city resources. The Plan embodies the expressed goals of residents, business owners, elected officials, and other stakeholders and establishes concrete and achievable actions within the planning period. Broad objectives such as "create more jobs", "promote quality of life" and "enhance neighborhood character" are translated into policies, maps, guidelines, and specific actions that are tangible and can be implemented. The Plan is designed for a range of users, from City staff to residents to visitors. It is written in simple language and covers a wide range of issues. Nonetheless, the General Plan cannot, and does not, aim

to be an all-inclusive document. Where greater specificity is needed, the City will rely on specific plans, the Zoning Ordinance, and subdivision and other regulations and standards to implement its policies.

Specifically, this General Plan aims to achieve the following purposes:

- Outline a long-range vision that reflects the aspirations of the community;
- Establish goals and policies to guide development and conservation decisions by the Planning Commission, City Council and City staff;
- Provide a basis for determining whether specific development proposals and public projects are in harmony with the City's long-range vision;
- Reflect San Pablo's current planning and economic development efforts;
- Allow City departments, other public agencies, and private developers to design projects that enhance the character of the community, promote public health, preserve environmental resources, and minimize hazards; and
- Provide the basis for establishing and setting priorities for detailed plans and implementing programs, such as the Zoning Ordinance, subdivision regulations, specific and area plans, and the Capital Improvement Program.

WHY UPDATE NOW?

The City of San Pablo adopted the 2030 General Plan in 2011. Since then, the city has undergone a number of changes in its demographics and built form. The legal environment governing land use, environmental preservation, housing, and other planning issues has also changed. A revision of the Plan is therefore necessary to eliminate any obsolete information and policies, and ensure legal conformity. The 2024 -2025 General Plan Update has occurred in two stages, with the first one incorporating the Sixth Cycle Housing Element for 2023 - 2031, along with updates to the Health Element to create a new Community Health and Environmental Justice Element, and minor changes to the Safety Element. The second stage involves more minor changes to all the other Elements, including incorporation of a new Area Plan for the Rumrill Corridor and further minor updates to the Safety and Noise Element.

The General Plan aims to address a range of challenges such as the need to manage growth sustainably, enhance the city's economy, and protect San Pablo's environment resources:

- *Managing growth sustainably.* Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. As San Pablo's population grows, and development pressure increases, it is becoming more difficult to strike the balance between different land use needs. Policies in the Plan will help ensure that economic and residential development do not come at the expense of livability, equity, and environmental sustainability. The updated Community Health and Environmental Justice also will help achieve this goal.
- *Enhancing the city's economy and competitiveness.* Enhancing the city's ability to attract jobs and investment will be crucial for San Pablo to remain competitive with other cities that have successful economic development programs in place. This effort will involve building a diversified job base, expanding education and training, cooperating with other cities, and developing regional attractions. Plan policies will help City staff and decision makers outline a path to achieve these goals.
- *Preserving environmental resources.* To ensure new development contributes to environmental quality, the Plan includes policies to facilitate infill development and protect open space. Land use and growth management policies ensure incompatible land uses do not exist next to each other and new developments mitigate any adverse impacts they may impose on the environment.

The San Pablo General Plan is forward-looking, expansive, and long-range. The adoption of this Plan Update is timely and will assist decision makers in the implementation of a long-range development program that meets the challenges of the present day and prepares the city for opportunities and challenges in the future.

PLAN PREPARATION PROCESS

Visioning, Collaboration, and Public Participation

The visioning phase of the 2035 General Plan process was initiated by the City of San Pablo in the Fall of 2008. The sharing of information and ideas between City staff, elected officials, consultants, and residents was central to the General Plan update process. The City Council appointed a General Plan Advisory

Committee (GPAC) to serve as representatives of the community during the preparation of the new Plan and provide input on evolving policies and products. At different stages of the plan-making process, residents, businesses, property owners, as well as non-profit groups and public agencies were invited to workshops and open houses to provide input and feedback.

The plan-making process involved City staff working closely with land use, traffic, market demand, and other consultants appointed by the City to analyze existing conditions and development opportunities. Interim reports were prepared at different stages of the process to document community feedback, findings of technical analyses, choices, and a proposed policy framework. These reports were reviewed by the GPAC, Planning Commission, and City Council, each of which in turn provided feedback to City staff and consultants to refine the Plan.

A community survey was prepared and analyzed at the end of 2008 in order to attract and solicit feedback from a wide audience. After understanding existing conditions and preliminary planning issues of concern, the first Community Workshop was held in April 2009 to establish a vision that would guide the General Plan. During this time residents provided feedback on what they like most about San Pablo and what they would like to see happen under the new plan.



Community workshops attended by residents and stakeholders were an integral part of the General Plan Update process.

Evaluating Choices

The second phase of the update process began with City Council meetings followed by a workshop to present two Alternative Concept Plans for consideration. The Alternative Plans illustrate a range of choices—visions of the city in 2035—inspired by the concepts and desires articulated during GPAC meetings and public forum. Following the City Council meetings, the *Alternative Plan Workbook* was prepared in June 2009, detailing the alternative concepts.

Establishing a Preferred Plan and General Plan Goals and Policies

The third phase of the process involved refining alternative plans into a single *Preferred Plan* Concept based on community feedback. The Preferred Plan combines the most desirable aspects of the Alternative Concept Plans, with some modifications requested by the community and endorsed by the GPAC. The result was presented to the GPAC for review in August 2009. The adopted Preferred Plan Concept provided the basis for this General Plan.

The next step of the process involved establishing goals and policies that address the City's development goals. Community workshops and meetings involving the GPAC, City officials and staff, key stakeholders, and San Pablo residents were held to discuss each element of the General Plan. The GPAC also reviewed policy packets. Feedback from all parties was then incorporated to produce this General Plan.

The final step of the update process involved the preparation of this Draft San Pablo 2035 General Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for public review and adoption. The final EIR was prepared and certified on April 18, 2011. Documents, maps, and meeting agendas are available for public download via the City website.

San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

On September 19, 2011, the City adopted a Specific Plan for the San Pablo Avenue Corridor. This detailed document has guided the successful redevelopment of the Circle S area around the current City Hall and has helped to encourage new housing and commercial development elsewhere along the corridor.

2015 - 2022 Housing Element Update

As required by State Law, the City adopted a new Housing Element on April 6, 2015 that superseded the Housing Element prepared at the time of the 2035 General Plan. The 2015 -2022

Housing Element has now been superseded by the 2023-2031 Housing Element, which was adopted on March 18, 2024, and certified by the Housing and Community Development Department on May 20, 2024.

2024 – 2025 Housing Element and General Plan Updates

In 2020, the City began work on its Sixth Cycle Housing Element Update for 2023 – 2031, along with a number of updates to the General Plan, including the addition of a new Area Plan for the Rumrill Corridor, the addition of an Environmental Justice Element (consolidated with the Health Element to form the Community Health and Environmental Justice Element), required revisions and updates to the Safety and Noise Element, and minor revisions and updates throughout all the elements. The Land Use and Physical Design Element was also updated to incorporate the Rumrill Corridor Plan and updates to selected locations to better encourage housing development and job growth in San Pablo. The 2007 Specific Plan for 23rd Street will be superseded with this Land Use Element update as the Specific Plan no longer provides sufficient guidance for the development of this important commercial corridor. An extensive public engagement effort was undertaken for the Housing Element, General Plan Update, and Rumrill Corridor Plan, including community workshops, focus groups, surveys, pop-ups, and public presentations. These efforts are documented on the City's webpage and in the companion planning documents. The environmental effects of these updates were documented in two comprehensive addenda to the 2030 General Plan Environmental Impact Report.

For the 2024-25 update, a multifaceted, bilingual (English-Spanish) community engagement strategy was implemented to proactively engage local residents and businesses in the process. A dedicated project page was established on the City's website to serve as a one-stop portal for information on the process, and opportunities to participate in the process were promoted with fliers distributed at community events and via e-mail blasts and social media. The General Plan Update and Rumrill Corridor Plan were informed by a range of community engagement activities, including pop-up event outreach, a citywide survey, property/business owner forums, a block party and community meeting, and "reel polls" conducted via the City and the Police Department's social media channels. Additionally, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) composed of City staff from various departments and representatives of partner agencies met three times in the process to advise on technical aspects of the Corridor Plan, including

transportation, utilities, public services, and economic development.

I.2 Planning Context

This section describes the city's location, its planning boundaries, and its history, in order to establish the city's planning context and place in the region.

REGIONAL LOCATION

The City of San Pablo is located in the northwestern portion of Contra Costa County in the State of California. Although city limits do not extend to the shore, it is located just inland from the east side of San Pablo Bay. The city is surrounded on three sides by the City of Richmond and on its fourth by the unincorporated community of El Sobrante. Interstate 80 separates the city into east and west portions.

In terms of proximity to services, San Pablo is just minutes away from the Bay Area cultural and job centers of Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco. A number of large parks, including Wildcat Canyon Park and Hilltop Lake Park, are within close proximity to city borders. The city is well served by AC Transit, and close by to the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station in Richmond. The regional setting is depicted in **Figure 1-1**.

PLANNING BOUNDARIES

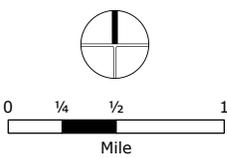
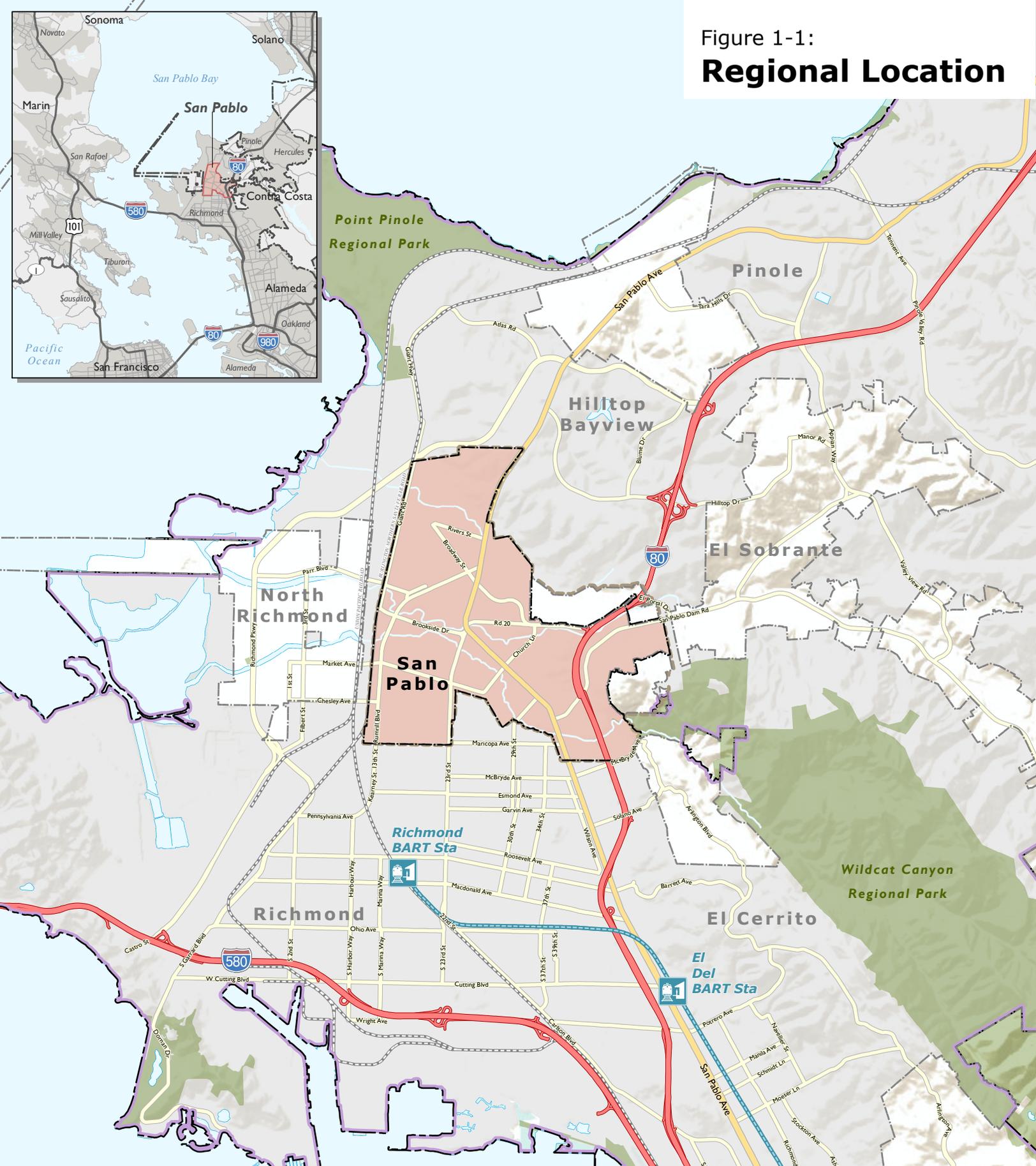
City Limits

San Pablo's city limits encompass approximately 1,667 acres (2.6 square miles) of incorporated land or 87 percent of the Planning Area (**Figure 1-2**). The existing city limits include residential, commercial and industrial developments as well as public facilities, including parks and schools.

Sphere of Influence

The Sphere of Influence (SOI) is a planning boundary outside of an agency's jurisdictional boundary (that is city limit line) that designates the agency's probable future boundary and service area. The Contra Costa County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) has jurisdiction over defining San Pablo's SOI and acts on annexations and approval of service contracts outside city limits. The purpose of the SOI is to ensure the provision of efficient services while discouraging urban sprawl and the premature conversion of agricultural and open space lands by preventing overlapping jurisdictions and duplication of services. In November

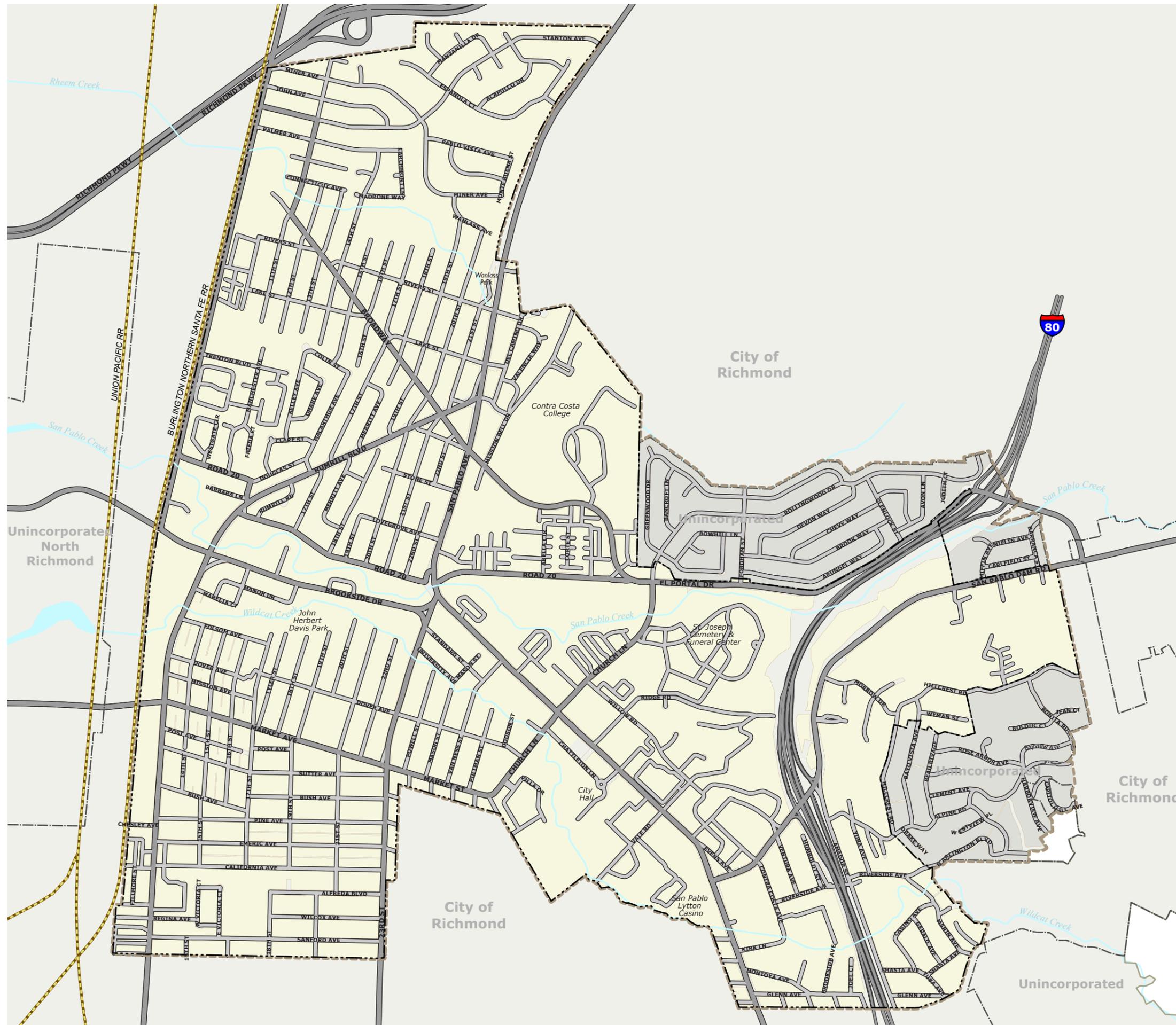
Figure 1-1:
Regional Location



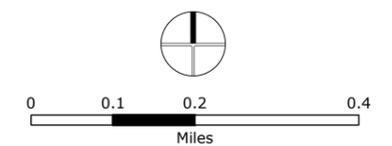
-
- City of San Pablo
-
- Urbanized Land
-
- Sphere of Influence
-
- Open Space
-
- Interstate Highway
-
- San Pablo Avenue
-
- BART Rail
-
- Railroad
-
- Major Road

SOURCE: City of San Pablo, 2024; Contra Costa County GIS, 2024; Dyett & Bhatia, 2024

Figure 1-2:
Planning Area Boundaries



-  City Limits
-  Sphere of Influence
-  Urban Limit Line
-  Unincorporated
-  Major Roads
-  Minor Roads
-  Railroads



SOURCE: City of San Pablo, 2024; Contra Costa County GIS, 2024; Dyett & Bhatia, 2024

2009, the Contra Costa Local Agency Formation (LAFCO) adopted a new SOI for the City of San Pablo in conjunction with the Municipal Services Review report. The city's SOI boundary now incorporates an additional 228 acres, including the Rollingwood residential area located along El Portal Drive and I-80 at the city's northeastern border, and the Hillside neighborhood, which is adjacent to the northern boundary of Alvarado Park at the eastern edge of the city. Urban and Built-up land is the most common land category found within the City SOI.

Urban Limit Line

The primary purpose of an Urban Limit Line (ULL) is to limit the extent to which urban development occurs within a specific time period. The ULL is a requirement established under the Contra Costa Transportation Improvement and Growth Management Program (Measure J). The City has adopted the Contra Costa County mutually-agreed-upon ULL as its own. The ULL includes all land within the City's Planning Area.

Planning Area

According to State law, the City can establish a Planning Area that consists of land within the city and, "any land outside its boundaries which, in the planning agency's judgment, bears relation to its planning." The San Pablo Planning Area encompasses approximately 1,895 acres, or about 2.96 square miles. (**Figure 1-2**). More specifically, the Planning Area extends north along San Pablo Avenue to Richmond Country Club, northeast to the Rollingwood residential area, east towards Alvarado Park near San Pablo Dam Road, west towards Giant Road and the Union Pacific Railway tracks, and south towards Costa Avenue. The Planning Area includes land that has relevance for long-term development or conservation. The Planning Area also includes open space on hillslopes next to San Pablo Dam Road and several creeks that traverses San Pablo from west to east. The Planning Area has been defined with the intention of focusing future growth on land contiguous to the city and encouraging urban infill. Being included in the Planning Area does not necessarily mean the City is considering annexation. The Rollingwood residential area comprising 85 acres of low-density residential land is within the City's Planning Area but outside of the city limits.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SAN PABLO

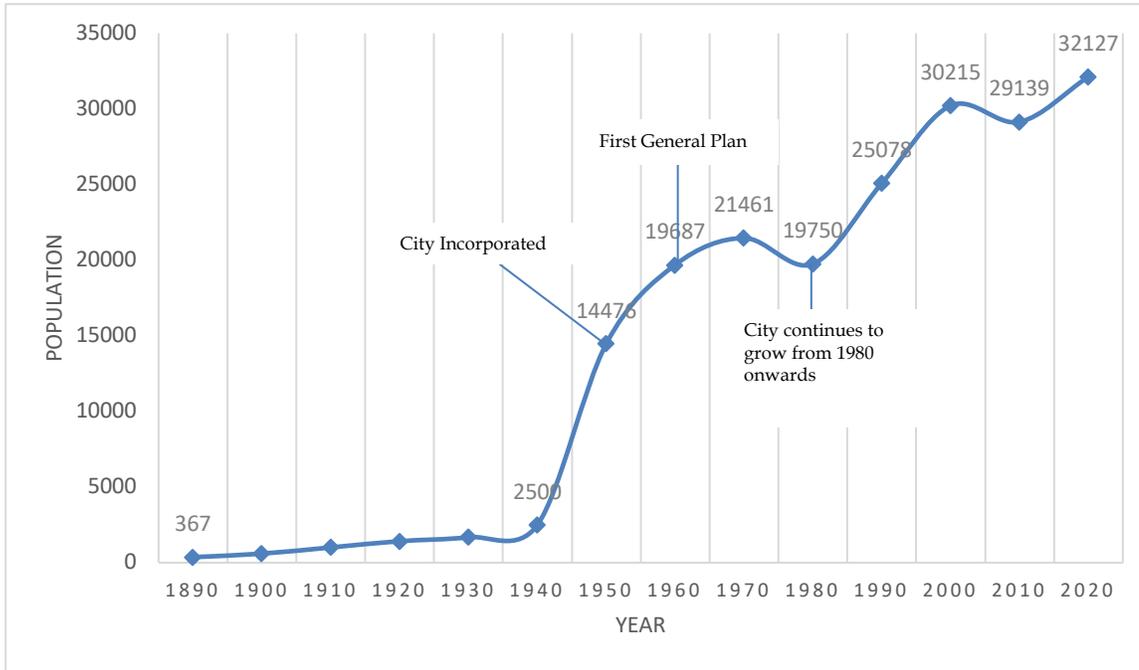
Today's San Pablo was originally occupied by the Cuchiyun band of the Ohlone indigenous people. Archaeologists have dated artifacts from the area to be at least three thousand years old. The Ohlone people who lived in the village at San Pablo called themselves the Huchuin.

In the 1770s, the Spanish arrived in the San Francisco Bay and founded a mission there. As the Spanish outpost gradually expanded in size, parties were sent out to explore the East Bay. The first written record of San Pablo was in 1811 when a priest by the name of Ramon Abella renamed the Huchuin land to "Point San Pablo." In 1815, a farm was started in the San Pablo area to provide food for the mission in San Francisco. The farmstead was owned by Francisco Castro, who employed indigenous people to raise grain, fruit trees, and cattle.

In 1823, Francisco Castro petitioned the government of Mexico for a land grant and was given 17,000 acres which included the future towns of Richmond, El Cerrito, and San Pablo. After Castro's death, the agricultural land that included San Pablo continued to be cultivated by Castro's family until the 1850s, when European American settlers began to develop a town around San Pablo Creek. San Pablo was an important community during the gold rush years because of its location on the major overland route to the gold fields.

In 1854, San Pablo was instituted as a township. An influx of Portuguese, Irish, Italian, and Japanese immigrants settled in the area. During this period, a well-developed agricultural and nursery industry flourished in the vicinity of San Pablo, along with a growing number of homes and businesses. By 1906, San Pablo looked like an established small town. There were Western Union Telegraph lines, saloons, a post office, a train station, and a school that stood on what is now the corner of Market and 21st Street. The town's population was still small compared to the numbers we know today, numbering less than 1,000 at this time.

Figure I-3 San Pablo’s population from 1890 to 2020



Source: Historical Population of California, Census 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020; Department of Finance, 2009.

San Pablo’s population began to grow more rapidly during the 1940s and 1950s, owing to returning veterans from World War II and highway construction in California. Many homes were built in San Pablo in the Old Town neighborhood during this time. In 1940, San Pablo’s population was just 2,500. By 1950, it had increased to approximately 14,500. This rapid and unplanned growth brought with it poor infrastructure and increasing unemployment.

In 1948, San Pablo residents voted to incorporate to give the local government more power to exercise control over housing construction and planning. The city’s first Master Plan was developed shortly following incorporation. A decade and a half later, these planning efforts paid off. The city saw major development in the form of Brookside Hospital, Contra Costa College, and El Portal Shopping Center.

In 1960, the first General Plan was adopted by the City. This plan divided the city into nine residential districts and identified development densities for each. During this decade, a large number of Mexican and Central American immigrants began to settle in San Pablo. This continued the rapid rise in population and consequent need for schools and other public services. By this time, the city had become mostly urbanized with the majority of the agricultural land replaced by urban uses.



View of San Pablo Avenue at the Wildcat Creek crossing, 1941.

The population growth in San Pablo began to slow down in the 1970s and 1980s even while the city continued to develop. In 1976, the city won the All American City award, a national award that was given in recognition of San Pablo's initiatives to improve the city. In part as a result of the 2030 General Plan, a second All American City award was granted to San Pablo in 2014, in recognition of its efforts to improve the health of its residents. By the time of the 2020 Census, San Pablo's population had grown to 32,127, with the addition of several new homes and apartments.

Today, San Pablo continues to attract new residents from all over the country. Its central location combined with affordable home prices and proximity to outdoor recreation areas and placement along I-80 make it one of the most desirable places to live in the San Francisco Bay Area.

I.3 General Planning Requirements

State law requires each California municipality to prepare “a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgment bears relation to its planning.” State requirements call for general plans that “comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency.”

The City’s General Plan is considered by many to be its “Constitution” for development – it creates the framework within which decisions are made on how and where to grow, on land use, transportation, housing, open space, conservation, safety and noise. California's tradition of allowing local authority over land use decisions means that cities have considerable flexibility in preparing their general plans. Cities may organize general plan elements in any order or combination they wish. Additionally, it allows cities to include optional elements in their general plans, such as economic development or community design, as long as the mandated elements are covered.

All elements, whether mandated or optional, have equal legal status. The content of general plans and rules for their adoption and subsequent amendment are established by the California Government Code. Together, State law and judicial decisions establish three overall guidelines for general plans:

- *The General Plan Must Be Comprehensive.* This requirement has two aspects. First, the general plan must be geographically comprehensive. That is, it must apply throughout the entire incorporated area and it should include other areas that the City determines are relevant to its planning. Second, the general plan must address the full range of issues that affect the city's physical development.
- *The General Plan Must Be Internally Consistent.* This requirement means that the general plan must fully integrate its separate parts and relate them to each other without conflict. “Horizontal” consistency applies both to figures and diagrams as well as general plan text. It also applies to data and analysis as well as policies. All adopted portions of the general plan, whether required by State law or not, have equal legal weight. None may supersede another, so the general plan must resolve conflicts among the provisions of each element.

- *The General Plan Must Be Long-Range.* In order to avoid incremental planning decisions which may occur over many years, and may eventually conflict with each other, the General Plan must be long range. The General Plan is intended to take a long-term view of development and considers issues that may impact the community for the next ten or twenty years.

The City of San Pablo’s 2035 General Plan includes the following elements required by State law: Land Use, Circulation, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, Safety, and Environmental Justice. It also includes a Growth Management Element, as mandated by Measure J passed by residents of Contra Costa County in 2004. Finally, several optional elements that address local concerns are included: Parks, Schools, Public Facilities and Utilities, and Community Health. The Housing Element is published as a separate document. **Table 1.3-1** outlines how the required elements and optional elements correspond with the Plan chapters.

Table 1.3-1 Correspondence Between Required Elements & General Plan Elements

<i>Required Element</i>	<i>General Plan Element</i>
Land Use	Chapter 3: Land Use & Physical Design
Growth Management	Chapter 4: Growth Management
Circulation	Chapter 5: Circulation
Open Space Conservation	Chapter 7: Open Space & Conservation
Environmental Justice	Chapter 8: Community Health & Environmental Justice
Safety	Chapter 9: Safety & Noise
Noise	Chapter 9: Safety & Noise
Housing	Contained in separate volume.

I.4 General Plan Themes and Key Initiatives

Key themes for the 2035 General Plan were identified and endorsed by the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), based on input by the public, key stakeholders, and City staff. As the Plan took shape, these ideas were further refined. The maps and policies in the General Plan are structured around the following key initiatives:

- *Economic Development.* The proposed General Plan supports economic development through the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized sites. The General Plan Land Use Diagram supports new employment generating uses along major transportation corridors as well as smaller scale neighborhood commercial centers dispersed throughout the city to provide a range of employment opportunities for local residents.
- *Pedestrian and Bicycle-Friendly Community.* The creation of a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly community is a chief objective of the Plan. Plan policies aim to enhance San Pablo's urban character with diversified, mixed-use neighborhoods and pedestrian and bicycle access to parks, schools, and neighborhood retail.
- *Community Facilities.* The General Plan responds to community desires for family-oriented community facilities through new land use designations, such as Mixed-Use Center South that allows community uses to develop among residential and retail development, and direction for impact fees to fund improvements.
- *Health and Safety.* The Plan aims to improve community health and safety through greater cooperative efforts with the Police Department as well as through multi-modal transportation planning, encouraging healthy living through food strategies, equitable job and housing opportunities, and safety through community design.
- *Parks and Open Space.* Parks and open space are a critical part of the city's livability, but do not yet meet the needs of the city's population. The Plan calls for future parks and public open space throughout the Planning Area and the development of a network of trails along San Pablo, Wildcat, and Rheem creeks to provide recreational areas in close proximity to neighborhoods.



A key theme of the Plan is to create more parks for San Pablo residents to enjoy.

I.5 Development Under the General Plan

This section describes future “buildout” potential under the General Plan. Buildout refers to the hypothetical situation where all anticipated development under the General Plan has occurred. For this General Plan, the buildout year is 2035. What this means is that the General Plan has designated adequate land to accommodate anticipated housing and job needs in San Pablo through 2035. For a more detailed analysis of General Plan buildout, refer to the Land Use and Physical Design Element in Chapter 3.

METHODOLOGY AND ASSUMPTIONS

In order to determine the total housing, population, and additional employment expected by 2035, a detailed set of assumptions was developed, as presented in **Table 1.5-1**, and **Table 1.5-2**. These assumptions include the proportion of residential and non-residential mix in mixed-use areas; densities of residential districts; intensities of non-residential districts; and employment multipliers (i.e., square feet per job).

The estimate for additional low-density residential housing units includes both new units developed on infill sites as well as accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on existing single-family lots. The average household size is assumed to be 3.1 for an average household and 1.5 for an ADU.

Table 1.5-1 Population and Housing Assumptions

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Gross Acreage of Opportunity Sites</i>	<i>Residential Mix</i>	<i>Housing Density (du/ac)</i>
Low Density Residential	4.8	100%	8.0
Medium Density Residential	3.2	100%	18.0
High Density Residential	17.3	100%	30.0
Mixed Use Center North	2.7	70%	60.0
Mixed Used Center South	16.1	20%	32.0
Mixed Use Center West	3.5	75%	60.0
Commercial Mixed Use	28.6	50%	20.0
Residential Mixed Use	25.6	65%	14.0
Employment Mixed Use	0.75	25%	12.0

¹ Average household size assumed to be 3.1 persons per household, with 1.5 persons per ADU household.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2010 and 2025.

Table 1.5-2 Job Assumptions

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Gross Acreage of Opportunity Sites</i>	<i>Non-Residential Mix</i>	<i>Building Intensity (FAR) ¹</i>	<i>Employment Intensity² (Sq ft per Job)</i>	<i>Potential Buildup Space³ (Sq ft)</i>
Mixed Use Center North	2.7	30%	0.50	400	47,000
Mixed Use Center South	16.1	80%	0.70	400	491,900
Mixed Use Center Old City Hall Site	4.46	30%	0.50	400	32,000
Mixed Use Center West	3.5	25%	2.48	Various ⁴	373,250
Commercial Mixed Use	28.6	50%	0.50	400	390,200
Residential Mixed Use	9.9	35%	0.20	345	74,800
Neighborhood Commercial	13.3	100%	0.32	430	13,600
Regional Commercial	25.6	100%	0.32	510	334,000
Entertainment District Overlay	10.1	100%	0.60	600	264,000
Employment Mixed Use	0.75	75%	0.60	700	27,660

¹ A building FAR or Floor Area Ratio, is used to calculate the total floor area of buildings on a lot based on the size of the lot.

² This factor is used to calculate the number of jobs a certain type of land use will accommodate. For example, the Industrial Mixed Use land use is expected to create 1 job per 500 square feet of floor area.

³ Calculated on a “net” basis, after deducting land uses for rights-of-way and easements.

⁴ Assumes 300 square feet per retail/restaurant job; 1,000 square feet per grocery store job; and 120 square feet per job in a 44,000 square-foot commercial kitchen.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2010, 2018, and 2025.

POPULATION AND RESIDENTIAL UNITS

Table 1.5-3 summarizes buildout for the proposed General Plan by population, households, and housing units. Based on development trends, regional growth forecasts, and assumptions for future growth, it is estimated that the San Pablo Planning Area will accommodate approximately 34,950 people at buildout in 2035, an increase of about 8.5 percent over the 2010 population estimate of 32,200.² Residential growth is anticipated primarily within the City limits. Over a 20-year period, this represents an annual growth rate of 0.4 percent. The population increase will be driven primarily by regional economic growth and migration.

Table 1.5-3 Population, Housing Units, Households, and Jobs at Buildout (2035)¹

	2010	Additional	Buildout (2035)	Percent Annual Growth
Population ²	32,200	2,750	34,950	0.4
Households	9,680	940	10,620	0.5
Housing Units	10,520	990	11,510	0.5
Jobs	5,900	2,610	8,510	1.8

¹ Existing and projection numbers rounded to the nearest ten.

² Buildout population calculations assume 3.1 persons per household and 1.5 persons per secondary unit.

Source: Association of Bay Area Governments, 2009; City of San Pablo, 2010 and 2018; Dyett&Bhatia, 2025.

As shown in **Table 1.5-3**, San Pablo's approximately 10,520 housing units (9,680 households) existed in the San Pablo Planning Area in 2010. The households increased to 9,847 in the 2020 Census, but the housing unit count had dropped to 9,941. The 2035 General Plan will accommodate an additional 990 housing units (940 households) beyond the 2010 level. Most of the new residential developments are expected to be developed along major roads, notably San Pablo Avenue, 23rd Street, and Rumrill Boulevard. In total, San Pablo is expected to have 11,510 housing units (10,620 households) by 2035.

JOBS

As shown in **Table 1.5-3**, San Pablo will add approximately 2,610 jobs to reach a total of 8,510 jobs at buildout. Over a 20-year period, this represents an average annual growth rate of about two percent.

² This population estimate (34,950) is higher than the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) population projection based on year 2007 data (32,600 in 2030) and lower than the same projection based on 2009 data (36,700 in 2030).

The mix of new jobs by land use type during the planning period is shown in **Table 1.5-4**. The Mixed-Use Center South land use category (at the Circle S site around the current City Hall) would accommodate about 36 percent of these new jobs while the Commercial Mixed Use land use category would accommodate about 26 percent. The other land uses under the proposed General Plan would accommodate the remaining 38 percent of new jobs.

Table 1.5-4 Additional Jobs by Land Use Type		
<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Jobs</i>	<i>Percent of Total</i>
Mixed Use Center North	100	4
Mixed Used Center South	690	1
Mixed Use Center Old City Hall Site	80	29
Mixed Use Center West	180	7
Commercial Mixed Use	700	26
Residential Mixed Use	140	5
Neighborhood Commercial	100	4
Regional Commercial	130	5
Entertainment District Overlay	440	16
Employment Mixed Use	50	2
Total	2,610	100
Totals may not add up due to rounding.		

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2010, 2018, and 2025.

JOBS/EMPLOYMENT BALANCE

Jobs/employment balance represents the ratio of the number of jobs to the number of employed residents in a given area. San Pablo’s jobs-to-employed-residents’ ratio would be one-to-one if the number of local jobs in the city equaled the number of employed residents. In theory, a perfect 1.0 ratio could result in no one commuting in or out of the city to find work. In reality, this balance is more of a planning technique than a regulatory tool, and successful plan implementation must ultimately recognize the myriad considerations that influence where people choose to live and work.

As shown in **Table 1.5-5**, the current jobs-to-employed-residents’ ratio in San Pablo is 0.46, which means most working adults travel out of the city to work. During the planning period that runs through 2035, the General Plan will add more jobs than population. As a result of these projections, the jobs/employment ratio should improve to 0.51, with the potential for reducing commuting for work and ameliorating peak hour traffic congestion.

Table 1.5-5 Jobs to Employed Residents Ratios

	2010	Buildout
Jobs ¹	5,900	8,510
Employed Residents ²	12,880	16,630
Ratio	0.46	0.51

¹ Jobs here refer to local jobs only.

² An employed resident is defined as a resident with a job, regardless of where the job is.

Source: ABAG 2009, Dyett & Bhatia 2010.

1.6 Plan Organization

This section describes the organization of the San Pablo 2035 General Plan and the structure of guiding and implementing policies. The Plan is organized as follows:

1. **Introduction.** This chapter includes the General Plan purpose, process, and key initiatives, planning context, State requirements, development projections, and requirements for administration of the Plan.
2. **Economic Development.** This chapter sets out goals and policies on job creation, marketing, improving business climate, maintaining fiscal health, and other efforts to enhance the city's economy.
3. **Land Use & Physical Design.** This chapter provides the physical framework for land use and development in the city. It also includes urban design policies to improve the city's visual quality and livability.
4. **Growth Management.** This chapter addresses the topic of sustainability and establishes policies to ensure new development pays its fair share of the costs associated with growth. The element is consistent with requirements under the Measure J Growth Management Program administered by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority.
5. **Circulation.** This chapter includes policies, programs, and standards to maintain efficient circulation. It identifies future street and traffic improvements, and addresses alternative transportation modes and parking to enable a multi-modal circulation system.
6. **Parks, Schools, Community Facilities & Utilities.** This chapter outlines policies relating to parks and recreation, schools, and community facilities. It also addresses local utilities, such as water supply, sewerage, solid waste management, and recycling.

7. **Open Space & Conservation.** This chapter includes policies relating to open space, land resources, habitat and biological resources, water quality, air quality, and historic and archaeological resources and conservation.
8. **Community Health & Environmental Justice.** This chapter describes the relationship between planning and the natural, physical, and social environment, public health, and quality of life; reviews current health conditions and determinants in San Pablo; and sets forth policies to improve the environmental and social conditions for health and provide protection from environmental hazards.
9. **Safety & Noise.** This chapter addresses the risks posed by seismic and geologic hazards, flooding, and hazardous materials. It also includes policies on police, fire, and emergency services and policies to limit the impacts of noise sources throughout the city.
10. **Implementation & Monitoring.** This chapter includes details on the manner in which the Plan is implemented.

POLICY STRUCTURE

Each chapter of the General Plan includes brief background information to establish the context for policies in the chapter. This background material is neither a comprehensive statement of existing conditions nor does it contain adopted information.

This background information is followed by two sets of policies, which together articulate a vision for San Pablo that the General Plan seeks to achieve:

- *Guiding Policies* are the City's statements of its goals and philosophy.
- *Implementing Policies* represent commitments to specific actions. They may refer to existing programs or call for establishment of new ones.

Policies provide guidance for development review, infrastructure planning, community facilities and services, and protection for the city's resources by establishing planning requirements, programs, standards, and criteria for project review. Explanatory material or commentary accompanies some policies. The use of "should" or "would" indicates that a statement is advisory and not binding; with details to be resolved in General Plan implementation. Where the same topic is addressed in more than one chapter, sections and policies are cross-referenced.

I.7 Administration of the General Plan

The General Plan is intended to be a dynamic document and the administration of the Plan reflects that. As such, it may be subject to more site-specific and comprehensive amendments over time. Amendments may be needed to conform to State or Federal law passed after adoption. They also may be a need to eliminate or modify policies that may become obsolete or unrealistic over time due to changed conditions, such as the completion of a task or project, development on a site, or adoption of an ordinance or plan.

AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL PLAN

State law limits the number of times a jurisdiction can amend its general plan to generally no more than four times in one year for a mandatory element, although each amendment may include more than one change. This restriction does not apply to optional general plan elements, or if the amendment is necessary to allow for the development of workforce housing or to comply with a court decision.

ANNUAL REPORT

The California Government Code requires City staff to “provide an annual report to the legislative body on the status of the general plan and progress in its implementation” (Government Code Section 65400(b)). This report must also be submitted to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (now titled the Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation or ICL) and the Department of Housing and Community Development. It must include an analysis of the progress in meeting the city's share of regional housing needs and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to maintenance, improvement, and development of workforce housing (Government Code Section 65583, 65584).

In addition, any mitigation monitoring and reporting requirements prescribed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) identified in the General Plan EIR should be addressed in the annual report because they are closely tied to plan implementation. Finally, the annual report should include a summary of all general plan amendments adopted during the preceding year and an outline of upcoming projects and general plan issues to be addressed in the coming year, along with a work program.

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