



PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 21264

HEARING DATE: MARCH 2, 2023

Project Name: Environmental Justice Framework and General Plan Introduction
Case Number: 2018-017026GPA
Initiated by: Planning Commission
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RESOLUTION ADOPTING AMENDMENTS TO THE SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL PLAN INTRODUCTION; ADOPTING THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE FRAMEWORK BY REFERENCE, ADOPTING FINDINGS, INCLUDING FINDINGS OF CONSISTENCY WITH THE GENERAL PLAN, THE EIGHT PRIORITY POLICIES OF PLANNING CODE SECTION 101.1, AND FINDINGS OF PUBLIC NECESSITY, CONVENIENCE, AND GENERAL WELFARE UNDER PLANNING CODE SECTION 340, AND ADOPTING ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT.

WHEREAS, Section 4.105 of the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco mandates that the Planning Commission (hereinafter “Commission”) shall periodically recommend to the Board of Supervisors for approval or rejection proposed amendments to the General Plan in response to changing physical, social, economic, environmental or legislative conditions; and,

WHEREAS, California Senate Bill 1000 (2016) amended Government Code §65302 to require cities and counties with “disadvantaged communities,” which the statute defines to include low-income areas that are disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation, to amend their General Plan to include policies that address environmental justice and reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities, promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process, and prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities. This update is required upon the completion or next revision of two or more General Plan elements after 2018; and,

WHEREAS, San Francisco contains several areas that are identified in the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 map created by the California Environmental Protection Agency and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment as “disadvantaged communities,” including portions of Bayview Hunters Point, South of Market, Treasure Island, and the Tenderloin. the Planning Department (hereinafter “Department”) conducted additional data analysis in accordance with General Plan Guidelines developed by the Governor’s Office of Planning Research. This analysis found that other areas experience elevated health risks, resulting in the creation of a local Environmental Justice Communities Map. The Environmental Justice Communities identified in the Environmental Justice Communities Map comprise about one third of the City’s land area with the highest cumulative environmental burdens, including all the disadvantaged communities as defined by state law and additional areas identified by the Planning Department. Environmental Justice Communities include portions of Bayview Hunters Point, Visitacion Valley, South of Market, Treasure Island, the Tenderloin, the Mission, Potrero Hill, Western Addition, Chinatown, Financial District, Outer Mission, and Oceanview/Merced/Ingleside.; and,

WHEREAS, the Commission in Resolution No. 20738 and the Historic Preservation Commission in Resolution No. 1127 directed the Planning Department (hereinafter “Department”) to incorporate policies that address racial and social equity into the General Plan; and,

WHEREAS, in compliance with State law, the City has amended the Safety and Resilience Element and the Housing Element of the General Plan to include environmental justice and racial equity objectives and policies; and,

WHEREAS, the Department analyzed additional demographic data in preparing the Environmental Justice Communities Map. The San Francisco Health Improvement Partnership’s 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment found significant health disparities across the city, with people of color and people residing in certain communities experiencing worse health outcomes. For instance, the study found that the City’s communities of color experience significantly higher rates of negative health outcomes including asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (hospitalization rates for Black San Franciscans are approximately 10 times higher than for White residents), cancer (rates for Black San Franciscans are 46 to 213 percent higher than City average), cardiovascular disease (American Indian San Franciscans are twice as likely to die of cardiovascular disease before the age of 65), and stroke. The impact of cardiovascular disease in San Francisco is higher among residents in the southeast half of the City, while rates of asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease are higher in the Tenderloin, SOMA, and Bayview Hunters Point neighborhoods; and,

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Environmental Justice Framework (hereinafter “EJ Framework”) identifies Environmental Justice Communities in San Francisco which incorporate the State’s designation of disadvantaged communities (as defined by California Government Code §65302) and include additional local data on health and social vulnerabilities, and identifies key policy priorities and strategies to further guide development of environmental justice objectives and policies; and,

WHEREAS, the Department led the preparation of the EJ Framework in coordination with multiple city agencies through a comprehensive community-based planning effort. The Department worked closely with community members and leaders, subject-matter experts, and City agencies; and,

WHEREAS, other City agencies, such as San Francisco Department of the Environment, San Francisco Department of Public Health, and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, have developed environmental justice programs in the City; and,

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission was the first city department, and utility in the country, to adopt an Environmental Justice Policy through SFPUC Commission Resolution No. 09-0170 on October 13, 2009; and,

WHEREAS, the EJ Framework sets out key policy priorities and strategies and represents the first citywide policy focused on advancing environmental justice across all City agencies; and,

WHEREAS, the Draft Ordinance would amend the Introduction to the General Plan (hereinafter “Introduction”) to incorporate the EJ Framework by reference and establish a commitment to integrate further policies into elements, area plans, and supporting documents to improve public health and other outcomes in Environmental Justice Communities; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed Introduction would articulate a contemporary vision guiding the City’s development and should outline the current challenges it faces; and,

WHEREAS, the current Introduction was last amended in 1996, (Resolution No. 14149) and does not reflect topics that have become central to planning in the intervening decades, such as racial and social equity and the climate crisis; and,

WHEREAS, the Draft Ordinance would holistically revise the Introduction to acknowledge San Francisco’s history more holistically, ground the General Plan in the present by referencing recent context-setting events such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the murder of George Floyd, incorporate themes from recent planning efforts such as the Housing Element, ConnectSF, the Safety and Resilience Element, establishment of Cultural Districts, and the EJ Framework. and create an invitation to revisit the text more frequently in the future; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments to the Introduction would render the Introduction more timely and more reflective of current community aspirations by updating references to State requirements, recent events, community input, and City actions including establishment of the San Francisco Office of Racial Equity and the Planning and Historic Preservation Commissions’ resolutions centering the Department’s work in racial and social equity; and,

WHEREAS, in 1986 the voters approved Proposition M which added eight Priority Policies to Section 101.1 of the San Francisco Planning Code (“Priority Policies”); and,

WHEREAS, in 1987 the Introduction was added to the General Plan duplicating the Priority Policies of Planning Code Section 101.1; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed amendments would remove the Priority Policies from the Introduction but retain them in Planning Code Section 101.1, thereby maintaining the requirement of a finding of consistency with the Priority Policies for any action that requires a finding of consistency with the General Plan; and,

WHEREAS, the Commission, at a duly noticed public hearing on January 26, 2023 and in accordance with Planning Code Section 340(c), initiated the General Plan Amendments for the EJ Framework and General Plan Introduction (hereinafter “Amendments”) by Planning Commission Resolution No. R-21238; and,

WHEREAS, the Commission conducted a duly noticed public hearing at a regularly scheduled meeting to consider adoption of the Draft Ordinance for the Amendments on March 2, 2023 and in accordance with Planning Code Section 340(d); and,

WHEREAS, the Commission has heard and considered the testimony presented to it at the public hearing and has further considered written materials and oral testimony presented on behalf of Department staff and other interested parties; and,

WHEREAS, all pertinent documents may be found in the files of the Department, as the Custodian of Records, at 49 South Van Ness Avenue, Suite 1400, San Francisco; and,

MOVED, the Commission has reviewed the Draft Ordinance for the Amendments; and,

FINDINGS

Having reviewed the materials identified in the preamble above, and having heard all testimony and arguments, this Commission finds, concludes, and determines as follows:

1. The Amendments identify Environmental Justice Communities in San Francisco, which incorporate the State’s designation of disadvantaged communities (as defined by California Government Code §65302) and include additional local data on health and social vulnerabilities.
2. The Amendments address environmental justice by identifying priorities for General Plan objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in Environmental Justice Communities, promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process, and prioritize improvements and programs that address community needs as required by California Government Code §65302.
3. **General Plan Compliance.** The Draft Ordinance for the Amendments is consistent with the following Objectives and Policies of the General Plan:

HOUSING ELEMENT

OBJECTIVE 1.A

ENSURE HOUSING STABILITY AND HEALTHY HOMES

POLICY 39

Support the repair and rehabilitation of housing to ensure life safety, health, and well-being of residents, especially in Environmental Justice Communities, and to support sustainable building practices.

POLICY 40

Enforce and improve planning processes and building regulations to ensure a healthy environment for new housing developments, especially in Environmental Justice Communities.

OBJECTIVE 5.B

ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, CLIMATE, AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.

POLICY 13

Amplify and prioritize voices of American Indian, Black, and other people of color, and other disadvantaged communities, and embrace the guidance of their leaders throughout the engagement and planning processes for housing policy, planning, programs, and developments.

OBJECTIVE 5.A

CONNECT PEOPLE TO JOBS AND THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD WITH NUMEROUS, EQUITABLE, AND HEALTHY TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY OPTIONS.

The EJ Framework supports these Objectives and Policies of the Housing Element by prioritizing ensuring that housing supports public health. The EJ Framework includes a map of Environmental Justice Communities, which incorporate disadvantaged communities in San Francisco as required by California Government Code §65302 and includes additional local data on health and social vulnerabilities. These policies direct future programs and resources to address health disparities in Environmental Justice Communities. The EJ Framework identifies priorities for advancing Environmental Justice in the City. The Environmental Justice Communities identified in the EJ Framework overlap significantly with the City's predominantly Black, POC, and other disadvantaged communities. The EJ Framework supports amplifying and prioritizing these communities' voices by prioritizing participation of EJ Communities in decision-making processes; building capacity for diverse voices to engage; and centering environmental justice efforts in collaboration with American Indian communities and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. The EJ Framework prioritizes ensuring robust transportation connectivity and ensuring streets and transit are accessible and safe for all.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

POLICY 1.4

Prioritize the better utilization of McLaren Park, Ocean Beach, the Southeastern Waterfront and other underutilized significant open spaces.

POLICY 2.5

Encourage the development of region-serving open spaces in opportunity areas: Treasure Island, Yerba Buena Island, Candlestick and Hunters Point Shipyard.

POLICY 2.1

Prioritize acquisition of open space in high needs areas.

POLICY 1.10

Ensure that open space is safe and secure for the City's entire population.

POLICY 2.3

Provide recreational programs that are responsive to community needs and changing Demographics.

POLICY 1.8

Support urban agriculture and local food security through development of policies and programs that encourage food production throughout San Francisco.

POLICY 5.1

Engage communities in the design, programming and improvement of their local open spaces, and in the development of recreational programs.

POLICY 5.4

Reduce governmental barriers to community-initiated recreation and open space efforts.

The EJ Framework supports these Policies of the Recreation and Open Space Element by prioritizing the equitable distribution of public facilities including parks and open space. McLaren Park, the Southeastern Waterfront, Treasure Island, Yerba Buena Island, Candlestick Point and Hunters Point Shipyard are all located in Environmental Justice Communities identified in the EJ Framework, as are many of the “high needs areas” identified in the Recreation and Open Space Element. Other relevant priorities include ensuring that public facilities including parks and open spaces are accessible and safe for all, and offer diverse, flexible, and inclusive programming; increasing climate resilience and innovation in the food system and increasing nature-based food opportunities; increasing community participation in decision-making processes; and developing community partnerships.

SAFETY AND RESILIENCE ELEMENT

POLICY 1.1.2

During climate mitigation activities, prioritize investment and resources in Environmental Justice Communities, especially through existing community-based efforts.

POLICY 1.1.5

During response activities, the City should partner with non-governmental entities to respond to hazard impacts in Environmental Justice Communities.

POLICY 1.1.6

During recovery and reconstruction activities, rebuild in ways that remedy safety and resilience injustices in Environmental Justice Communities.

POLICY 1.2.1.

In all stages of safety and resilience, prioritize the needs of people most impacted by the adverse impacts of hazards.

POLICY 1.2.3

Prioritize documentation of historic, archaeological, and intangible cultural resources in the most vulnerable areas to the climate crisis, starting in Environmental Justice Communities.

POLICY 1.2.4

Prioritize funding for infrastructure maintenance and improvements in Environmental Justice Communities.

POLICY 2.2.2.

Examine the risk of flooding and evaluate adaptation actions that will protect people and the built and natural environments to help inform land use, capital investment, and other policies.

POLICY 2.2.3.

Seek sufficient funding to address climate hazards through all phases of mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and reconstruction.

POLICY 3.1.7

Starting with properties associated with Environmental Justice Communities, expand life safety and functional recovery considerations to increase the likelihood that historically valuable architecture and structures will survive all hazards, and encourage the adaptive reuse of historic structures.

POLICY 3.1.11

For existing housing and building stock, provide training, guidance, and assistance to build resilience against extreme heat, poor and hazardous air quality, and flooding, especially in Environmental Justice Communities and other vulnerable people.

POLICY 3.2.2.

Research and maintain information about all hazards, including adverse impacts on vulnerable communities.

POLICY 3.2.3.

Coordinate interagency Citywide efforts to assess the City's vulnerabilities to multiple hazards, such as poor air quality, flooding, and extreme heat.

POLICY 3.2.8

During retrofits and new construction, prioritize building practices that emit lower greenhouse gasses and build resilience to multiple hazards at once, especially in Environmental Justice Communities.

POLICY 3.3.1

Reduce the risk of all hazards to community facilities and lifeline infrastructure, starting with Environmental Justice Communities.

POLICY 3.3.3

Conduct capital planning to advance resilient infrastructure prioritizing life safety and functional recovery, as well as the needs of Environmental Justice Communities and other vulnerable people.

OBJECTIVE 3.4

SPECIFIC HAZARDS. IDENTIFY AND PURSUE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS THAT MITIGATE AND SAFEGUARD AGAINST MULTIPLE HAZARDS ACROSS MULTIPLE ASSETS, ESPECIALLY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES AND OTHER VULNERABLE PEOPLE.

POLICY 3.4.4

Develop a plan for supporting Environmental Justice Communities and other vulnerable people during Sheltering-in-Place activities, to protect from poor and hazardous air quality, pandemic, and other hazards.

POLICY 4.4.3

Form effective and clear partnerships with non-government bodies, such as community organizations, institutions, private companies, and development partners to reach all people, especially Environmental Justice Communities and other vulnerable people.

POLICY 5.2.1

Work collaboratively with nonprofit and community partners to assist Environmental Justice Communities and other vulnerable people during and immediately after a disaster to ensure resumption of social services.

POLICY 6.1.1.

Support actions to mitigate the spread of homelessness pre-disaster and increase the likelihood that the City's stock of lowest-cost housing will survive post-disaster.

POLICY 6.1.3

Repair damaged neighborhoods in a manner that facilitates resident return and minimizes long-term displacement, prioritizing Environmental Justice Communities and other communities disproportionately impacted by housing disparities.

OBJECTIVE 6.3

EQUITABLE INVESTMENT. PURSUE PLANS AND STRATEGIES THAT WOULD EQUITABLY REBUILD SAN FRANCISCO FOR EVERYONE, STARTING WITH ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES

The EJ Framework supports these Objectives and Policies of the Safety and Resilience Element by identifying the Environmental Justice Communities they refer to, and by identifying priorities to enhance safety and resilience in these communities. Relevant priorities identified in the EJ Framework include: Prepare for seismic hazards, other natural disasters, and the climate crisis; Expand nature-based solutions, green infrastructure, & urban greening; Invest in resilient public utility systems and affirm access to water, power, and sanitation as a human right; Ensure public access to data & information; Empower community planning for climate resilience and justice; Distribute public facilities equitably; Work to undo past harms; Prioritize participation of EJ Communities in decision-making processes; Develop community partnerships to expand city's reach.

4. **Planning Code Section 101 Findings.** The Draft Ordinance is consistent with the eight Priority Policies set forth in Section 101.1(b) of the Planning Code in that:

1. That existing neighborhood serving retail uses be preserved and enhanced and future opportunities for resident employment in or ownership of such businesses enhanced.

The Amendments would help preserve and enhance neighborhood serving retail uses and future opportunities for employment. The EJ Framework prioritizes healthy and resilient environments, healthy food access, and equitable and green jobs, ensuring a robust customer, ownership and employee base for neighborhood serving retail uses in Environmental Justice Communities.

2. That existing housing and neighborhood character be conserved and protected in order to preserve the cultural and economic diversity of our neighborhoods.

The Amendments would help conserve and protect existing housing and neighborhood character. The EJ Framework prioritizes safe, healthy and affordable homes, protecting vulnerable tenants, and empowering neighborhoods in Environmental Justice Communities.

3. That the City's supply of affordable housing be preserved and enhanced.

The Amendments would help preserve and enhance affordable housing. The EJ Framework prioritizes addressing housing affordability and availability in Environmental Justice Communities.

4. That commuter traffic not impede MUNI transit service or overburden our streets or neighborhood parking.

The Amendments would not impede MUNI transit services, overburden streets, or neighborhood parking. The EJ Framework prioritizes ensuring adequate, accessible, and safe transit in Environmental Justice Communities.

5. That a diverse economic base be maintained by protecting our industrial and service sectors from displacement due to commercial office development, and that future opportunities for resident employment and ownership in these sectors be enhanced.

The Amendments would not permit office development where it is not currently permitted. The EJ Framework prioritizes fostering a robust network of work & entrepreneurship, promoting pathways for workers' empowerment and self-determination, and facilitating the just transition of the city's economy and workforce, thus expanding employment and business ownership opportunities in Environmental Justice Communities.

6. That the City achieves the greatest possible preparedness to protect against injury and loss of

life in an earthquake.

The Amendments would enhance preparedness to protect against injury and loss of life in an earthquake. The EJ Framework prioritizes increasing climate resilience in Environmental Justice Communities.

7. That landmarks and historic buildings be preserved.

The Amendments would have no impact on landmarks or historic buildings.

8. That our parks and open space and their access to sunlight and vistas be protected from development.

The Amendments would help protect parks and open spaces. The EJ Framework prioritizes adequate public facilities including parks in Environmental Justice Communities.

Analysis of applicable General Plan Objectives and Policies has determined that the proposed action is, on balance, consistent with the General Plan as it is proposed to be amended.

5. **Planning Code Section 340 Findings.** The Commission finds from the facts presented that the public necessity, convenience, and general welfare require the proposed amendments to the General Plan as set forth in Section 340(d).
6. **Environmental Findings.** The Commission finds the Environmental Review has been completed prior to the Commission taking action on this Draft Ordinance. The Department has determined that the EJ Framework and the proposed amendments to the Introduction are not defined as a project under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15378 and 15060(c)(2) because they would not result in a direct or indirect physical change in the environment. The EJ Framework and the proposed amendments to the Introduction articulate broad visions and priorities to guide city policy objectives. They do not identify specific future city policies and do not approve, fund, or authorize implementation of any specific projects. New and amended City policies and any implementation project will be reviewed and approved over time and follow protocols and best practices for adoption, which may require additional public review, review by City decision-makers, and/or environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act. As a result of those reviews, there may be alternatives and mitigation measures developed that may be implemented as well; and,

NOW, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission hereby adopts the Draft Ordinance for the Amendments as described in this Draft Resolution; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission incorporated changes described by staff at the public hearing on March 2, 2023, including the following: 1) minor revision to the Environmental Justice Communities Map legend text from “top 30% of burdened area” to “top one-third of burdened area” and 2) additional supplemental material, the User Guide to the Environmental Justice Communities Map, offering guidance for different use cases by City agencies; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission hereby submits the Draft Ordinance for the Amendments to the Board of Supervisors for its approval pursuant to Planning Code Section 340(d); and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission directs the Department to update the General Plan’s Land Use Index to reflect the Amendments once the Draft Ordinance has been adopted and these amendments are final if necessary; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission directs the Department to include hyperlinks to General Plan elements, area plans, Land Use Index, the EJ Framework, Commission resolutions, local and State laws and other items discussed in the Introduction and EJ Framework when posting the Introduction and EJ Framework on the Department website once the Draft Ordinance has been adopted and these amendments are final, and to maintain these hyperlinks in good working order; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission directs the Department to update the Environmental Justice Communities Map of the EJ Framework from time to time as new data become available.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted by the Commission at its meeting on March 2, 2023.

Jonas P. Ionin
Commission Secretary

AYES: Braun, Diamond, Imperial, Koppel, Moore, Tanner

NOES: None

ABSENT: Ruiz

ADOPTED: March 2, 2023