

City of San Mateo

2026 Strategic Plan

September 2025


PALETTE
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

San Mateo's first citywide Strategic Plan is a tool to aid in the implementation and prioritization of the City's ten major Strategic Initiatives, which represent the City's Values and overall Mission. This Strategic Plan incorporates extensive community feedback collected since 2018, and will serve as a foundational document to help achieve a shared vision of the City's future.

The Strategic Plan will:

- Offer a comprehensive framework for City Council to use when making decisions for both immediate and long-term priorities.
- Allow the City to move in an intentional, strategic direction over a longer timeframe.
- Act as a tool to implement planning documents already adopted by Council in a systematic way.
- Integrate with the City's budget and Capital Improvement Plan processes.
- Help the City use its resources with the utmost efficiency and impact with budget constraints in mind.
- Be updated as needed to remain relevant to the community.

The following inclusive engagement of diverse perspectives helped shaped and inform the Strategic Plan:

Community Opinion Survey: In February 2025, the City of San Mateo conducted a statistically significant Community Opinion Survey to understand its residents' satisfaction, priorities, opinions, and concerns as they relate to city services, facilities, and policies. The results provided Council and staff with an analysis of San Mateo's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Community Conversations: The City held a series of meetings with diverse groups to gather community input that helped inform priorities and challenges for the City of San Mateo's underserved populations. Based on Census 2022 data, the Latino, Black, and Asian American and Pacific Islander communities represent 55% of the population and have historical underrepresentation and low participation rates in local government initiatives. These Community Conversations enabled the City to hear from these underrepresented groups and their input was incorporated into the Strategic Plan.

General Plan 2040: From 2018 to 2024, the City developed its General Plan 2040 document. It lays out the community's vision for how San Mateo will look, feel, and change over the next 15 years. Throughout the development of this document, the City conducted extensive community engagement to understand the community's thoughts on their values and vision for the future throughout the City and on a variety of topics, which were then critically analyzed and presented to a special General Plan Subcommittee, the Planning Commission, and the City Council for adoption.

At their March 14, 2025, half-day workshop, the City Council selected 10 Strategic Initiatives as the key focus areas for this Strategic Plan, and these were developed based on the community feedback heard through the Community Opinion Survey, the General Plan 2040 development process, the Community Conversations, and the budget development process.

MISSION AND VALUES

MISSION:

Cultivate a vibrant, safe community through collaboration, innovation, and sustainability.

VALUES:



Prosperity:

Cultivating a diverse and thriving economy with different types of homes, jobs, recreation, lifelong learning opportunities, and services for both current and future generations.



Inclusivity:

Striving to include everyone in community life and decisions for a shared, sustainable future.



Diversity:

Embracing diversity, arts, and culture, and respecting the experiences, contributions, and aspirations of people of all ages, abilities, incomes, and backgrounds.



Resiliency:

Leading in sustainability, making San Mateo strong and resilient by acting boldly to adapt to a changing world.



Integrity:

Ensuring transparency and accountability for our actions.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES FISCAL YEAR 2026/27:

- Climate Resiliency
- Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Housing

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

- Economic Development
- Healthy Community for All Ages
- Public Safety
- Land Use
- Organizational Health and Good Governance
- Community Engagement and Communications



PRIORITY INITIATIVE

Climate Resiliency

Proactively address a changing climate through the City's policies, projects, activities, and programs.

Goals

- Create a comprehensive climate resilience strategy to account for climate change impacts.
- Implement the Climate Action Plan to meet greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.
- Continuously evaluate opportunities to incorporate climate resilience into new City policies, projects, activities, and programs.
- Actively and continuously seek funding opportunities and partnerships to support climate resiliency needs.



PRIORITY INITIATIVE

Infrastructure

Maintain and continuously improve a resilient and sustainable City infrastructure system to meet the needs of all members of the community and plan for our continued vibrancy as the city grows.

Goals

- Create and implement an infrastructure management program for critical assets that includes proactive assessment, maintenance, and repair.
- Plan for the future of City infrastructure based on the changing needs of the community and with a focus on equity, accessibility, resiliency, and sustainability.
- Actively and continuously seek funding opportunities and partnerships to support infrastructure needs.



PRIORITY INITIATIVE

Transportation

Maintain and continuously improve a safe, multimodal, accessible, and efficient transportation network.

Goals

- Work toward a transportation system that prioritizes user safety, accommodates future growth, and maintains efficient and safe operations for all users.
- Seek funding opportunities and partnerships that accelerate transportation project implementation.
- Pursue initiatives that increase access to transit, improve east-west travel, and expand last mile connections.



PRIORITY INITIATIVE

Housing

Support all forms of housing and achieve greater housing equity and access for all residents.

Goals

- Implement the Housing Element to affirmatively further fair housing, meet the City's housing allocation, and retain certification.
- Strategically deploy housing funds and leverage outside funding and partnerships to meet the housing needs of the community.
- Focus on identifying and taking local actions that can contribute to reducing overall housing costs.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Economic Development

Create an environment that supports a thriving and diverse economy with opportunities that meet the needs of the entire community.

Goals

- Attract and retain a wide range of businesses to create a robust economy that supports employment opportunities within the San Mateo community and provides robust and predictable revenues.
- Create vibrant commercial areas Citywide by improving the customer experience, developing partnerships, and exploring creative enhancement opportunities.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Healthy Community for All Ages

Create and promote an environment that empowers all community members to thrive.

Goals

- Seek opportunities for City services and programs to support people of all ages and abilities for their mental, emotional, physical, and social well-being.
- Ensure greater access to the systems that support healthier lifestyles and increase well-being throughout all neighborhoods with a focus on equity priority communities.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Public Safety

Provide a safe and secure quality of life through professional and proactive police and fire services, and effectively prepare for future emergencies.

Goals

- Provide fire and emergency services through professionalism, collaboration, and public trust.
- Proactively protect and promote safety and well-being, with a focus on mental health, while serving San Mateo residents, businesses, and visitors.
- Develop a comprehensive approach to emergency preparedness.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Land Use

Utilize the General Plan 2040 to guide policy and permitting decisions that shape the physical environment.

Goals

- Complete a comprehensive Zoning Code update to implement the policies and actions in the General Plan 2040.
- Update the City's specific and area plans to be consistent with the City's General Plan 2040.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Organizational Health and Good Governance

Promote a high-performing and resilient organization by upholding the highest standards of integrity, customer service, and fiscal responsibility to effectively serve the community.

Goals

- Efficiently and effectively manage the City's resources to support financial health, operate with transparency, and provide services that are responsive to the community's needs.
- Continuously support our employees' professional development and wellness, and foster a healthy culture that attracts and retains a talented, innovative, and accountable workforce.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVE

Community Engagement and Communications

Build community by empowering the public to be informed and involved.

Goals

- Provide an accessible avenue for everyone in the community to have the ability to participate, be heard, and see the impact of their contributions.
- Inform, educate, and encourage feedback from all community stakeholders, and continue to learn and improve based on the community's needs.





CITY OF SAN MATEO
CALIFORNIA

