

Roadmap to Downtown San Francisco's Future



Fact Sheet

San Francisco is the economic hub for the Bay Area. With a \$250 billion annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (2022), San Francisco accounts for more than one quarter of the nine-county Bay Area economy – 79% of which stems from office-based industries concentrated in Downtown (2021) areas including the Financial District, Embarcadero waterfront, East Cut, SoMa, Yerba Buena, Mid-Market, and Union Square, as well as the emerging office cluster in the Mission Bay.

As the gateway to the Asia-Pacific, Downtown San Francisco serves as a global anchor for national and international companies. Prior to the pandemic, the Downtown area provided nearly 70% of the jobs in San Francisco and generated the majority of the City's tax base and revenue. The pandemic caused a shift to hybrid work patterns in business centers across the country, including San Francisco, that has impacted Downtown's business ecosystem that was built up to support office-based businesses and workers, including our small businesses.

In order to position San Francisco for the future, the City is putting forward policies that respond to new economic trends and challenges, while continuing to invest in the strengths and assets that are the core pillars of San Francisco's competitiveness.

Developing a Recovery Plan

As the implications of COVID-19 on economic patterns began to emerge, Mayor London Breed and her administration began the work to develop a plan for economic recovery. The Mayor put forward a vision for San Francisco's future Downtown that consisted of five key priorities:

- An economically diverse and resilient job engine
- A welcoming clean and safe environment
- A dynamic destination active at all hours, every day
- A world class transportation experience
- An equitable economy that supports full participation by all

Through broad coordination across City Departments and input from representatives from employers, small businesses, tourism, developers, the Arts and Culture community, along with other Downtown stakeholders, Mayor Breed developed the "**Roadmap to Downtown San Francisco's Future**," a comprehensive plan that positions Downtown San Francisco for its next chapter.

The Roadmap to Downtown San Francisco's Future is a plan comprised of nine strategies with nearly fifty specific initiatives, that collectively address San Francisco's new economic context and advance a new vision for the role of Downtown into the future.

Strategy 1: Ensure Downtown is clean, safe, and inviting focused on smart and strategic investments that increase public safety and improve street conditions in a coordinated, efficient, and effective manner.

- Support businesses, residents, and visitors with an **enhanced public safety presence**.
- Continue and grow **Healthy Streets coordinated response** programs to improve street conditions.

Strategy 2: Attract and retain a diverse range of industries and employers focused on identifying and recruiting strategic sectors that support San Francisco's resilience.

- Support businesses recovery with ongoing **tax relief and incentives** in key sectors.
- **Explore business tax reform** to adapt to shifting work patterns.

Strategy 3: Facilitate new uses and flexibility in buildings focused on maximizing the ability to update and adapt office buildings to meet the needs of new interested tenants.

- Amend the Planning Code for **flexible zoning Downtown** for the widest range of activities and uses.
- Prepare a **housing conversion analysis** to identify the feasibility of office-to-residential conversions.

Strategy 4: Make it easier to start and grow a business focused on creating transparency, streamlining processes, and building out systems to support new business opening in San Francisco.

- Provide **direct business recovery assistance** including grants and loans.
- Expand the **First-Year Free** program to reduce permit costs for new business ventures.

Strategy 5: Grow and prepare our workforce focused on preparing San Franciscans for growing industry sectors, as well as new ways to unlock housing production and ensure the city has adequate housing to meet the demands of a growing labor force.

- Implement the Mayor's Housing for All strategy to **deliver housing for our workforce**.
- Provide **industry-informed training programs** that target resources to employers' shifting needs.

Strategy 6: Transform Downtown into a leading arts, culture, and nightlife destination focused on creating an entertainment zone and seeding new businesses, events, activities, and experiences for a more vibrant Downtown.

- Designate an **Arts, Culture and Entertainment (ACE) Zone** with targeted programs and incentives.
- Continue supporting **public space events and activations** that showcase local talent and culture.

Strategy 7: Enhance public spaces to showcase Downtown focused on investing in enhancing and expanding plazas, alleyways, and other public space to improve people's experience of Downtown.

- Complete the transition of **Shared Spaces** outdoor dining to a permanent program.
- Continue adding **new design elements in public spaces** to showcase the Downtown environment.

Strategy 8: Invest in transportation connections focused on maintaining access to Downtown by every mode of transportation available while continuing to improve the reliability, efficiency, and quality of service.

- Make it easy for workers, residents, and visitors to travel Downtown with **improved Muni connections**.
- Provide **faster trips to Downtown** with ongoing Muni Forward improvements on key lines.

Strategy 9: Tell our story focused on proactive marketing campaigns to emphasize our strengths and reclaim our brand as a premiere world city.

- Promote a national **visitor attraction campaign** in targeted markets.
- Launch the **Heart of SF social media campaign** to amplify a narrative around SF's evolving identity.