



STAFF REPORT

AGENDA NO: 11a

MEETING DATE: May 4, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

Date: May 4, 2026

From: Neda Zayer, Community Development Director

Subject: Presentation and Discussion of the Bayfront Specific Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council receive the presentation and provide feedback.

BACKGROUND

The presentation will provide a high-level overview of the planning process, background information on existing conditions within the plan area, and a focused discussion on the vision and goals for the bayfront, along with key elements and anticipated outcomes of the Specific Plan.

The staff report below provides more detailed background information on the Specific Plan process and key components for reference. The presentation that will be provided at the meeting has been attached for reference and includes topics and questions that will be discussed at the meeting.

In 2015, the City of Burlingame initiated a multi-year process focused on a community-led effort to update the City's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, called "Envision Burlingame." The City Council adopted the 2040 General Plan in 2019 and the Zoning Ordinance in 2021. With the adoption of the 2040 General Plan, the former Bayfront Specific Plan, first adopted in 2004, and former North Burlingame/Rollins Road Specific Plan, also first adopted in 2004, were repealed and superseded by the 2040 General Plan.

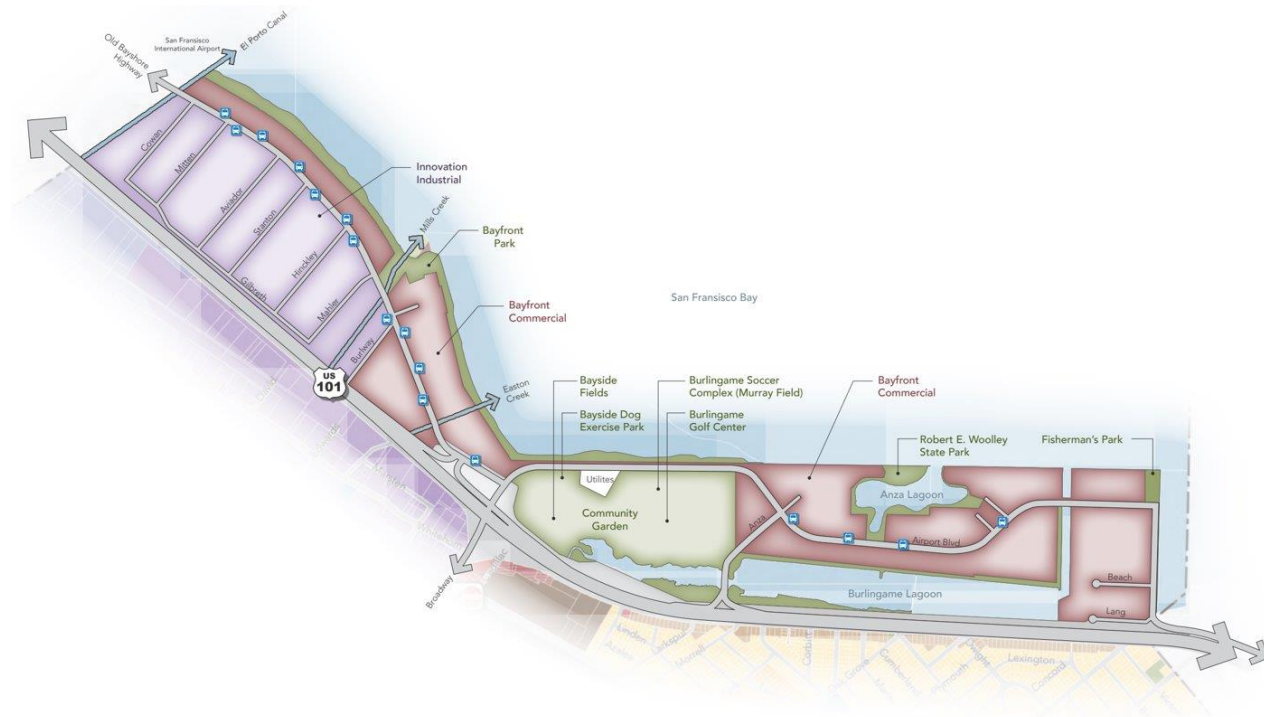
The 2040 General Plan increased the allowable development intensity within the Bayfront Commercial zoning district from a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.0 to a 3.0, prompting significant redevelopment interest in the bayfront area. Approximately three million square feet of office and R&D space is now entitled in the bayfront area, with several projects already completed.

Burlingame's bayfront comprises roughly 2.5 linear miles along the San Francisco Bay and serves as a major economic hub, containing 11 hotels, regional office facilities—including META Reality Labs—and various industrial and logistics businesses that benefit from proximity to San Francisco International Airport (SFO). The area also includes key recreational and open-space assets such as the Bay Trail, City sports fields, and the new Topgolf facility.

In light of these factors, on December 1, 2025, the City Council authorized the execution of a contract with Raimi and Associates to prepare a Bayfront Specific Plan. The Raimi and Associates consultant team, comprised of approximately 20 members across six firms, was selected based upon their experience, approach to urban design and community engagement, and overall expertise.

The Bayfront Specific Plan will establish a long-term vision for the next 10 to 20 years for the Plan area (Figure 1 below) and guide future development. It will provide more precise direction than a general plan by establishing regulations, development standards, and requirements for land use, infrastructure, and public improvements.

Figure 1: Bayfront Specific Plan Area



Specific Plan Key Components

A specific plan is a detailed planning document for a defined geographic area that guides future development and implementation. It provides more precise direction than a general plan by establishing regulations, development standards, and requirements for land use, infrastructure, and public improvements. Specific plans offer greater certainty and consistency for development and can streamline future project approvals.

The Bayfront Specific Plan will address the following key components:

1. **Zoning and Development Standards:** The Specific Plan process will evaluate existing and allowable uses in the Plan area and determine whether adjustments are needed based on the City’s evolution, proposed development, and the community’s long-term vision. It will include thoughtful engagement with stakeholders and the public to identify the uses most needed and desired in the area.

2. **Transportation:** The Plan area is bound by Highway 101 to the south, which divides the area from the remainder of Burlingame. In addition, there is only one access point, Broadway, from the Plan area across Highway 101 within city limits. This presents a transportation access and circulation challenge for the existing and future businesses and users of the area. A multi-modal transportation analysis of the area will be done to understand the transportation impacts and develop solutions to serve the area given the geographical constraints.
3. **Economic Analysis:** The Plan area is a significant economic base and opportunity area in Burlingame. Given this, an economic assessment of the area that includes major clusters, employment, and economic impacts will be performed as part of the Specific Plan effort. Potential economic costs/benefits of key parcels will be assessed as well as revenue impacts if hotel properties were redeveloped or lost. The assessment will help aid in identifying the highest and best uses for the area, emerging trends and businesses, and how to protect and build upon the economic vitality of the area.

In addition, information on different financing mechanisms the City could consider during Specific Plan implementation will be included, specifically to fund the infrastructure improvements and sea level rise fortification needs of the Plan area beyond the use of development impact fees.

4. **Streetscape and Open Space Design:** A comprehensive streetscape and open-space design will be developed for the Plan area to strengthen placemaking, create distinctive public spaces, and better connect and activate the Bay Trail. The design will incorporate and expand upon the existing Old Bayshore Highway Feasibility Study to look for ways to maximize the benefits and use of the public realm.
5. **Sea Level Rise Adaptation:** The bayfront area consists largely of imported fill and includes low-lying properties vulnerable to flooding and sea-level-rise hazards. Because Burlingame's shoreline is protected by a hard-edge seawall rather than natural wetlands, its exposure is heightened. The Specific Plan will integrate and build upon the OneShoreline project through design and policy strategies that guide future development and infrastructure improvements while creating a natural and inviting environment to enhance the Bay Trail.

Project Approach

The process of preparing the Specific Plan is structured into four key phases, with community engagement integrated at major milestones throughout the process which is expected to take approximately two and a half to three years to complete.

1. **Background and Existing Conditions Analysis:** This phase has begun and will result in a series of reports covering existing conditions, analysis of opportunities and weakness in the Plan area to be used to develop materials to help guide discussions.
2. **Alternatives and Analysis:** This phase of work will explore the goals and long-term vision of the project in collaboration with the community, stakeholders, and decision makers. This phase will be where the majority of the community discussions will occur and key topics and issues will be resolved.

3. **Plan Preparation:** This phase of work will begin with summarizing the direction from City Council into an outline of the preferred plan elements. Following confirmation of the plan elements, the team will develop the Specific Plan.
4. **Environmental Analysis (CEQA):** An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is anticipated for this project that will tier from the 2019 General Plan EIR. An EIR can take between 9-12 months to prepare, which accounts for a significant part of the project schedule, and begins after the Alternatives and Analysis phase is complete.

Community Outreach and Engagement

A detailed outreach and engagement strategy incorporating the activities outlined below has been prepared to be used throughout the process which includes meeting formats, objectives, schedules, activities, materials, and approaches. It will be continuously refined as the process unfolds to address emerging needs, adapt approaches, or adjust strategies as some topics may require more engagement or discussion, and others may be more straightforward.

- **Community Advisory Committee with City Council Subcommittee:** A twelve-member Community Advisory Committee (CAC) composed of key stakeholders, property owners, and community members was selected by City Council on February 17, 2026. The CAC will meet to discuss key topics and be a sounding board for ideas and direction. Currently there are four CAC meetings identified in the schedule with the Consultant Team.
- **Technical Advisory Committee:** Discussions will be held with a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) consisting of City staff and key government stakeholders such as OneShoreline, the San Francisco Bay Conservation & Development Commission (BCDC), the San Francisco International Airport (SFO), the San Mateo County Transportation Authority (SMCTA), and other relevant agencies. The TAC will provide detailed technical input/feedback on key project deliverables and help ensure alignment between the Specific Plan and other local and regional planning efforts. Currently there are four TAC meetings identified in the schedule with the Consultant Team.
- **Stakeholder Meetings:** During the project initiation phase, informal stakeholder meetings will be conducted with specific property owners, elected or appointed officials, public agencies, and community leaders within the plan area to get insight into issues, concerns, and opportunities. Currently 12 stakeholder meetings are identified in the scope and schedule.
- **Property Owner Meetings:** In addition to the CAC meetings and the stakeholder meetings, up to four property owner and developer group meetings are identified.
- **Community Meetings:** Two community meetings are planned during the Specific Plan process to define existing conditions, key strategies, and review and discuss alternatives. Each two-hour meeting will include an opening presentation followed by interactive exercises. These could be virtual or in-person meetings and are intended to be extensions of CAC meetings that are organized to support larger participation.

The first Community Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 10, 2026, at the Burlingame Community Center.

- **Community Survey:** An online survey will be conducted to reach a broader audience within

the city. The survey will be developed to receive feedback on the outline of concepts and proposed changes in the Plan area.

- **City Council and Planning Commission Study Sessions:** City Council study sessions are proposed at key junctures in the project to provide regular updates to the City Council on the project.

In addition, a joint Planning Commission/City Council study session will be held in the future. This session will provide an opportunity for the Planning Commission and City Council to provide direction on the potential changes and modifications within the Plan area.

Exhibit:

- PowerPoint Presentation