EXPANDING HOUSING CHOICE
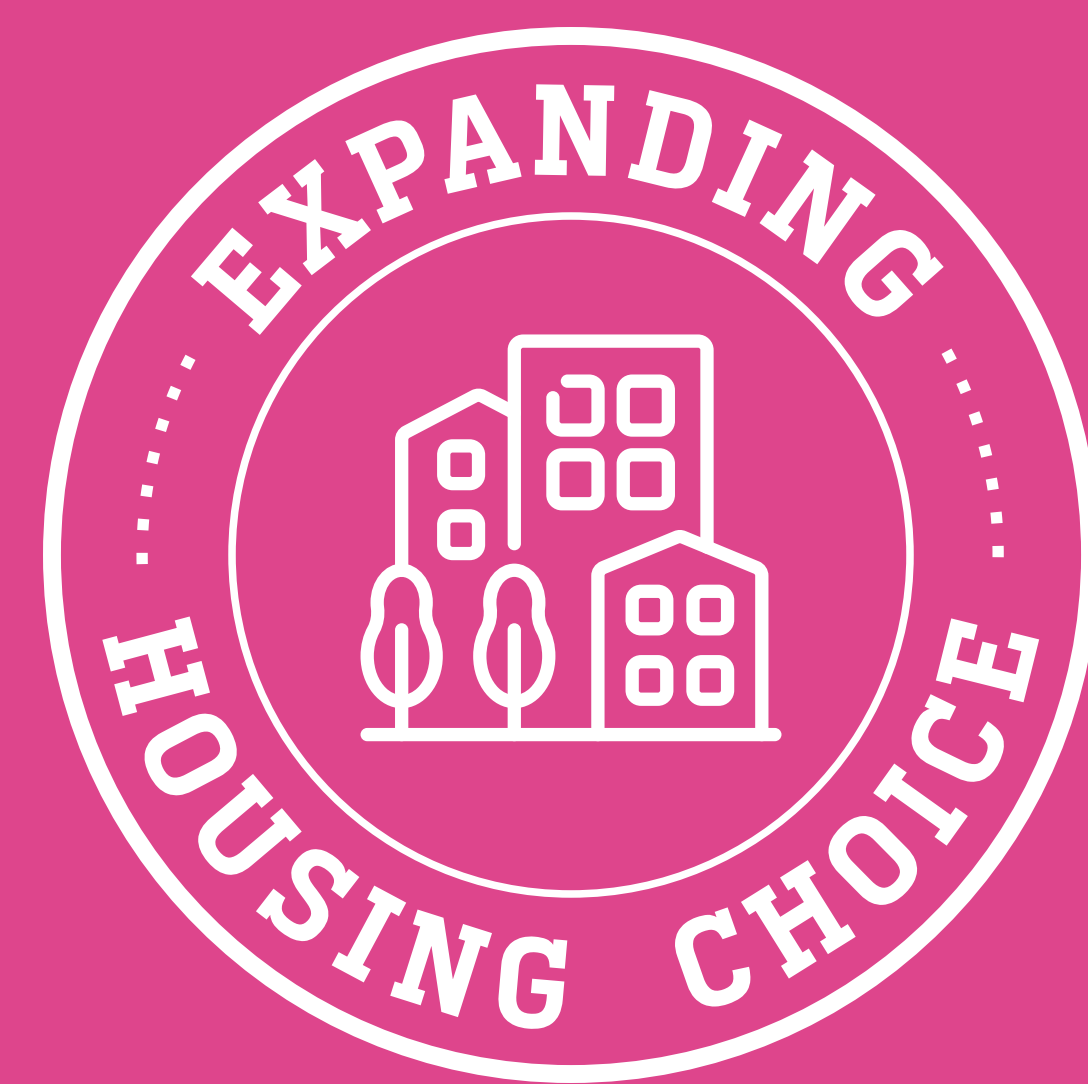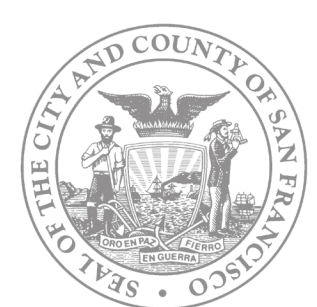
CULTURAL HERITAGE & URBAN DESIGN: INTEGRATING NEW HOUSING WHILE ENHANCING NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

As we grow to welcome new neighbors, we need to identify and strengthen the places that are significant to our diverse communities. At the same time, we need tools to ensure that new buildings are designed to consider what makes for great neighborhoods. This station describes current and future strategies that are being developed to address Cultural Heritage and Urban Design.

San Francisco is renowned for its cultures, histories, and traditions. Whether specific buildings and open spaces, or community festivals, art, and other cultural practices, San Francisco's history, culture, and rich urban environment are core to our identity and what attract so many people to this place.

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EXPANDING HOUSING CHOICE

Celebrating Our Cultural Heritage: SF SURVEY

As part of protecting our cultural heritage, the Planning Department has begun the **San Francisco Citywide Cultural Resources Survey (SF Survey),** a multi-year effort to identify and document places and resources of cultural, historical, and architectural importance to San Francisco's diverse communities.

Cultural resources include **tangible aspects** of our environment, such as buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts, as well as i**ntangible aspects**, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, festivals, and traditional crafts.

SF Survey strives to collaborate with communities to amplify diverse voices and to ensure the decision-making process is inclusive and representative. The Planning Department aims to ground this work with community knowledge to support a more comprehensive and equitable understanding of what should be valued and protected.

SF Survey Goals & Outcomes

Project Goals

- Work with communities in sustaining cultural heritage through identification of cultural resources.
- Develop comprehensive and standardized procedures for environmental and project review.

Expected Outcomes

- Recognition of cultural heritage through a publicly-accessible and interactive website.
- Standardized environmental and project review regarding historic resources.
- Identification of sites eligible for historic tax incentives, legacy business registry, or local landmarking.

How Are SF Survey and Expanding Housing Choice Related?

SF Survey and **Expanding Housing Choice** are two independent but complementary efforts, which will ensure that we can identify and celebrate cultural resources while growing neighborhoods with new housing.

The SF Survey effort is prioritizing fieldwork and engagement in the neighborhood commercial zoning districts slated for zoning changes, to support the goal of standardizing project review while uplifting cultural heritage.
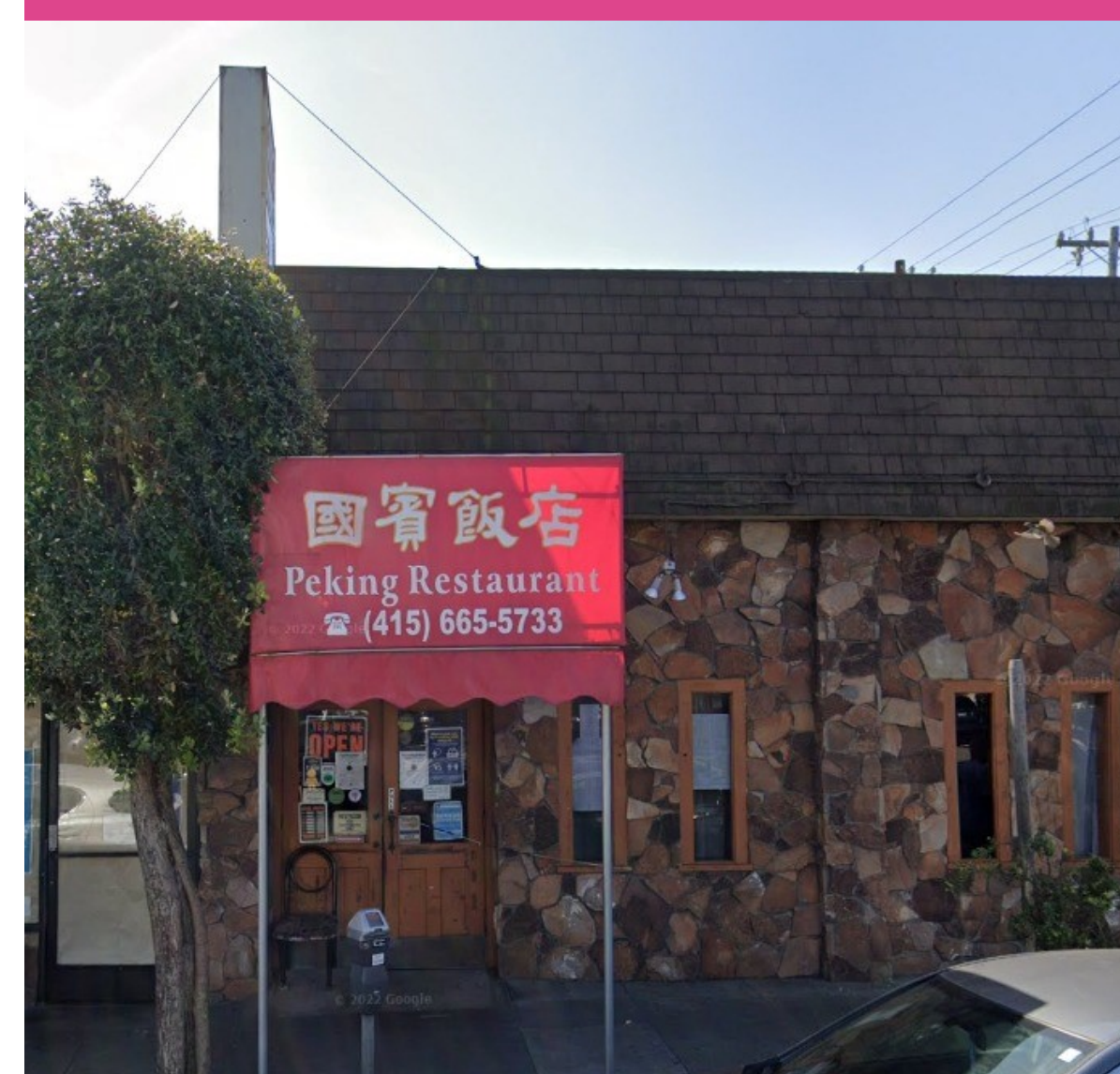
Timeline & Getting Involved

Engagement focused on the Citywide Historic Context Statement began in 2020 and is still in process. At the end of 2022, engagement kicked off for two other SF Survey components:

- Fieldwork, Research, and Evaluation
- Draft Findings

The team welcomes feedback throughout the SF Survey process. For more information visit: **https://sfplanning.org/sfsurvey**

Peking Restaurant (Legacy Business)

Earthquake Refugee Shack, Landmark No. 171

Richmond Branch Carnegie Library, Landmark No. 247

All photos above by SF Planning

Local Cultural Resources

Here are a few examples of known cultural resources in the neighborhoods where Expanding Housing Choice is focused:

- Richmond Branch Carnegie Library, Landmark No. 247
- Earthquake Refugee Shack at 1227 24th Avenue, Landmark No. 171
- Peking Restaurant Legacy Business at 1375 Noriega Street

CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE METHODOLOGY (RESEARCH APPROACH)

FIELDWORK, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION

FINDINGS AND ADOPTION

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2020 2021 2022 2023 2024 2025 2026 2027

CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

FUTURE

Graphic Source: SF Planning

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Objective Design Standards: Ensuring That New Housing Supports Neighborhood Quality

Design standards set clear objectives that the public and sponsors can follow to ensure new housing is consistent with fundamental principles of quality neighborhood design.

Under Development: Objective Design Standards for Corridors

In parallel with Expanding Housing Choice, the Planning Department is engaging community members and stakeholders to develop **Objective Design Standards for Corridors** focused on mid-rise development (e.g., 65-85', or roughly 6-8 stories). The goals include:

- Create high-quality housing that enhances neighborhood life.
- Set clear rules and expectations, to provide predictability for both developers and community.

Objective Design Standards are required by the state and will be used as part of by-right (e.g., ministerial) review processes.
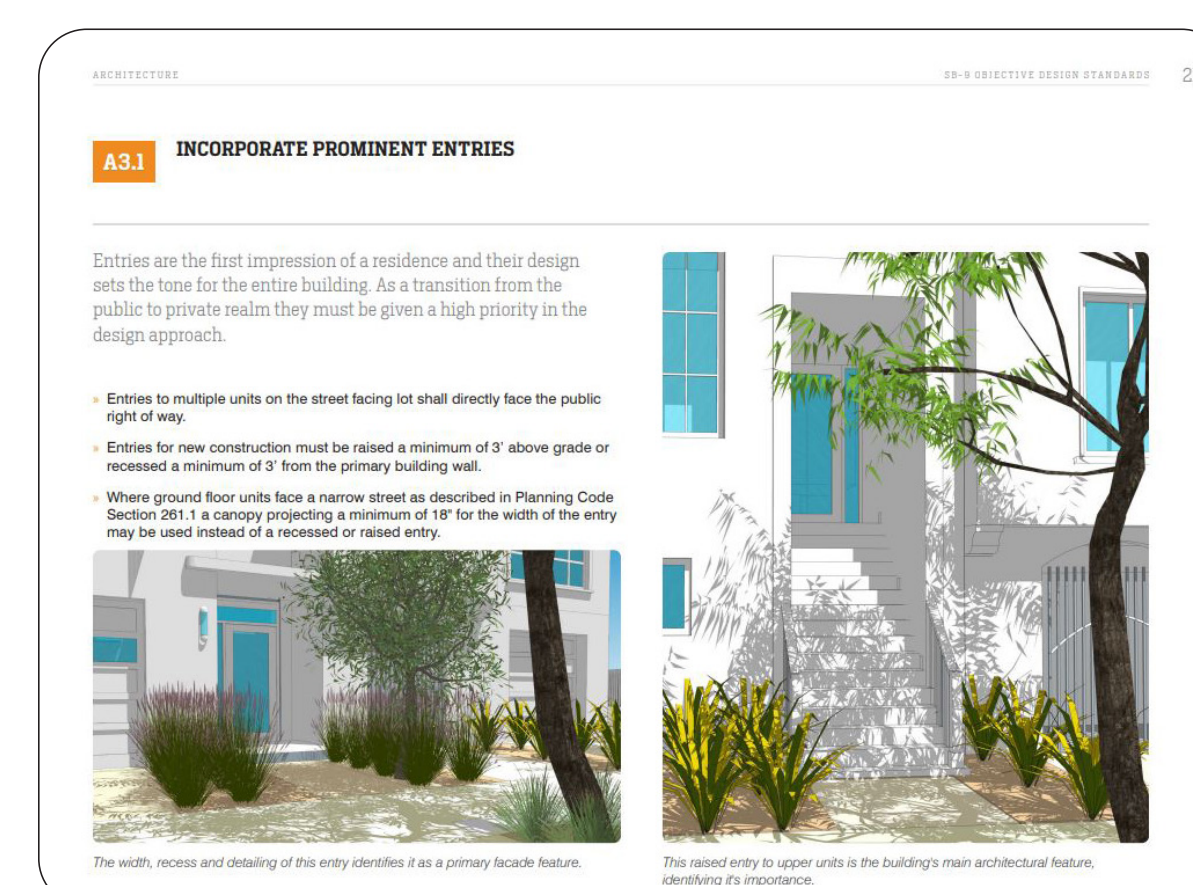
Building On Existing Design Guidelines

The current design review process relies on discretionary design guidelines, including the:

- Urban Design Guidelines,
- Residential Design Guidelines
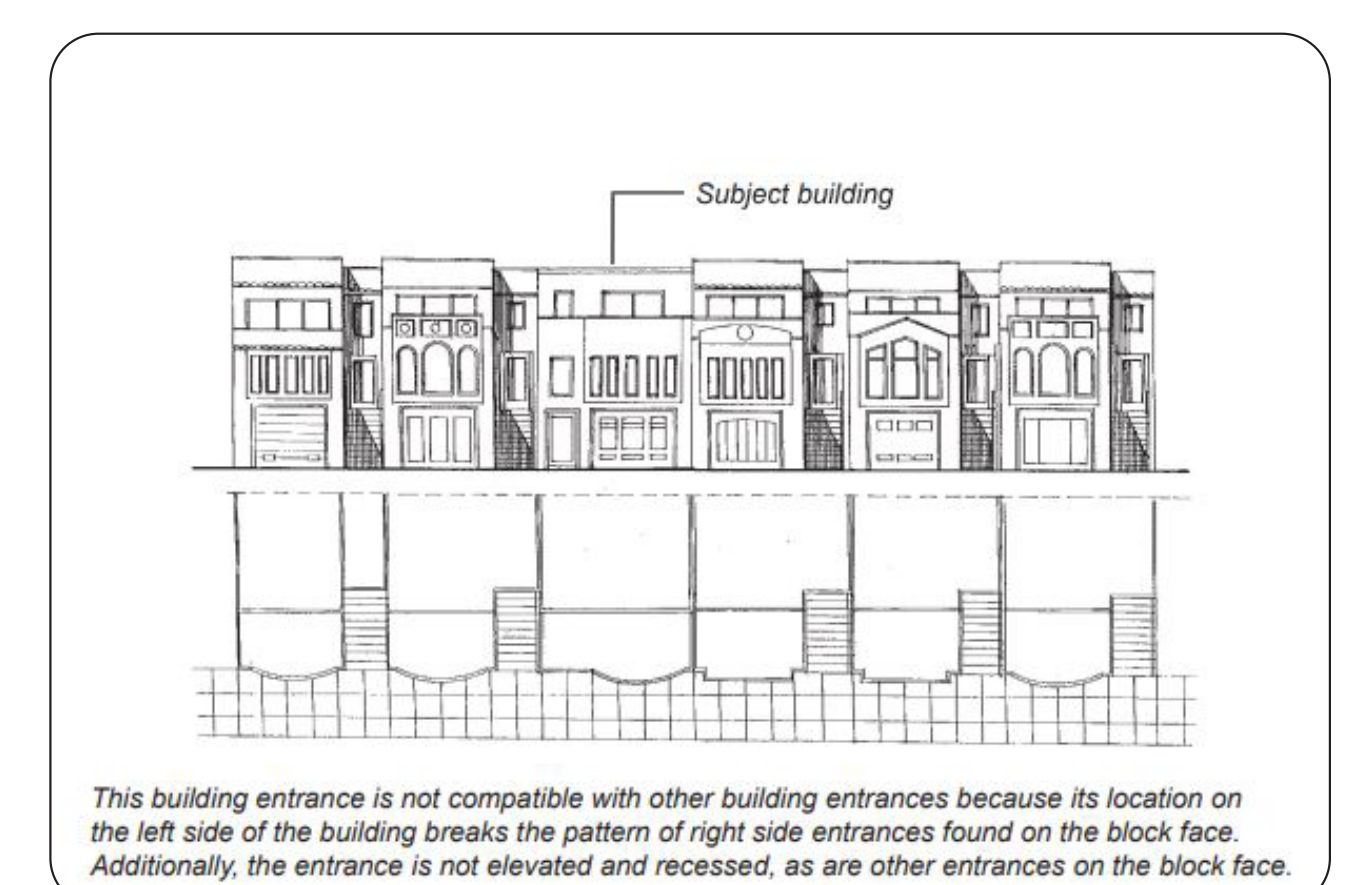- and neighborhood and subject-specific guidelines.

The Objective Design Standards will build on these documents. It will develop clear, quantifiable requirements that developers and architects can follow when designing housing.

Sample Objective (SB9) Design Standard

Graphic Source: SF Planning

Sample Design Guidline

Subject building

This building entrance is not compatible with other building entrances because its location on the left side of the building breaks the pattern of right side entrances found on the block face. Additionally, the entrance is not elevated and recessed, as are other entrances on the block face.

Existing Design Guidline

NATIONAL

NEIGHBORHOOD

SITE SPECIFIC

CITYWIDE

SUBJECT SPECIFIC

Celebrating Diverse Housing & Buildings

Until the mid-1900s, our zoning rules allowed for more flexible uses and building types. There are many examples of taller buildings scattered throughout neighborhoods that would not be allowed under today's rules.

17th St. & Geary Blvd. – Richmond District

Photo: SF Planning Department

Steiner St. – Pacific Heights

Photo: Redfin

W. Portal & 15th Ave. – West Portal

Photo: SF Planning Department

California St. & Broderick St. – Pacific Heights

Photo: SF Planning Department

Objective Design Standards for Corridors: What We Are Working Towards

The Objective Design Standards for Corridors will create quantifiable minimum requirements for new developments to address key topics, such as:

Site Design:

- Massing that informs the overall shape of the building (including potential stepbacks to adjacent lower buildings and addressing how the building relates to the street and sidewalk).

- Active & inviting ground floors for storefronts and residential lobbies.

Architecture:

- Building articulation of visible facades (such as bays, balconies, and sunshades)

- Building materials and overall detailing

Public Realm:

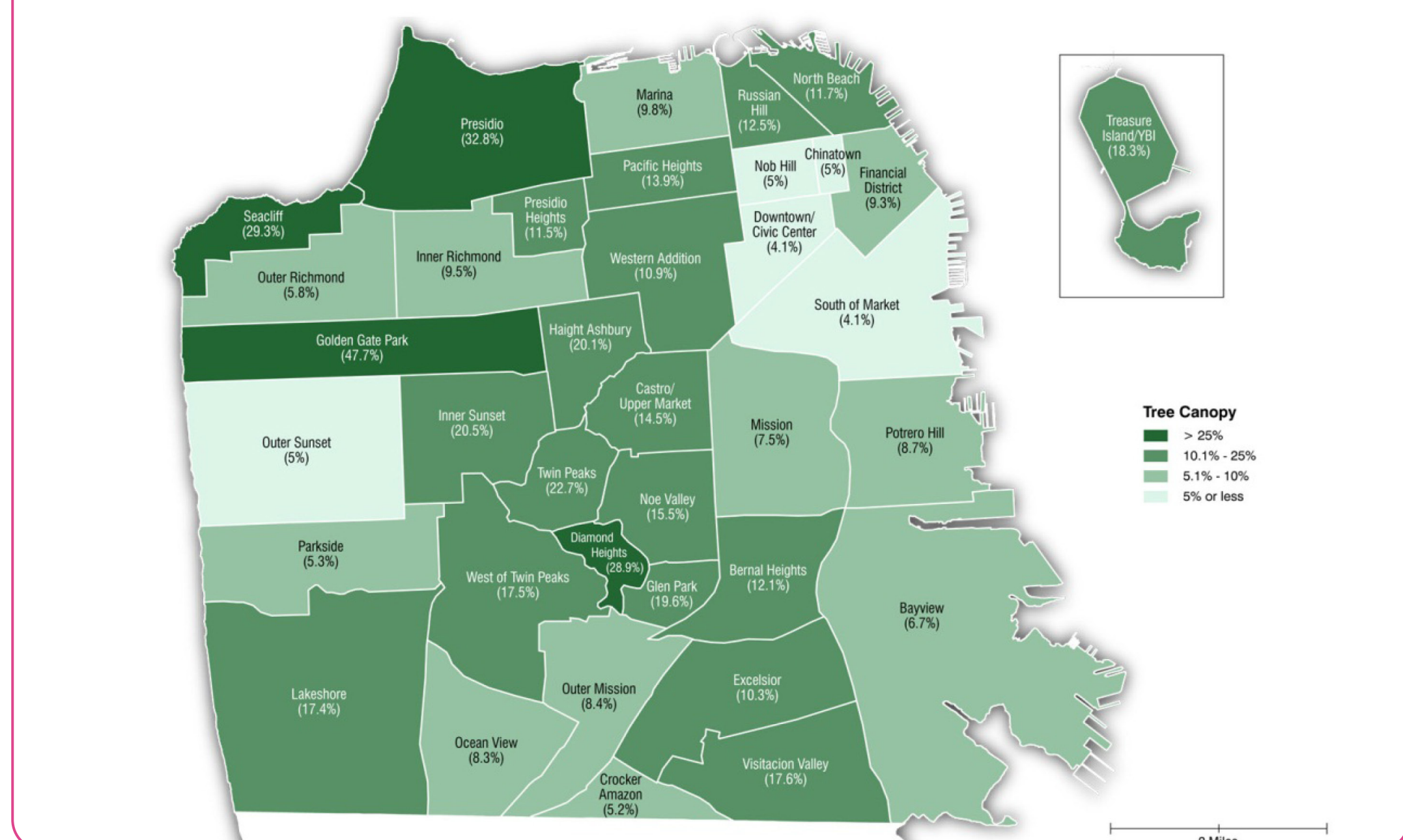- Streetscape qualities, including street trees, benches, and other amenities

Neighborhood Greening: Opportunities to Plant Street Trees & Enhance Urban Nature

New developments are subject to requirements for planting street trees and providing green landscaping in front yards. These requirements will help enhance urban nature, which can improve neighborhood livability and public health, help slow climate change, and build resilience to extreme heat and weather events. San Francisco has one of the smallest street tree canopies compared to other major US cities – just 13.7%, compared to 24% in New York and 30% in Portland.

Levels also vary substantially across the city. For example, **Outer Sunset's canopy coverage is 5% — the 3rd lowest in the city, just above Downtown and SoMa.**

Photo Source: Five88 David Baker Architects, SF Planning Department, AvalonBay Communities.Inc

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Community Priorities for Cultural Heritage

Please provide feedback on SF Survey and preserving cultural heritage.

You may use a post-it to provide feedback on this board or write in your *Event Guide*.

Which places, people, events, or traditions are important to you and/or have shaped your community?

What aspects of San Francisco's history should be identified and/or celebrated?

Any other questions or feedback?

Community Priorities for Urban Design

Please provide feedback on urban design priorities and the upcoming Objective Design Standards for Corridors.

You may use a post-it to provide feedback on this board or write in your *Event Guide.*

What are some examples of taller buildings and places that you like?

What do you like about them?

Of the design concepts discussed here, which are the most important to you? (example: building stepbacks, ground floor design, etc.)

Any other questions or feedback?

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