

Chapter III. General Plan Principles

Introduction

These General Plan Principles establish the foundation for the entire Plan. They apply across all topical areas and describe the future envisioned by the community. The goals, policies, measures, and actions in Chapters 4 through 10 support these Principles.

Principle 1: Balanced and Smart Growth

The Burlingame community recognizes the need to grow in a manner that supports inclusivity and access while protecting established neighborhoods and community assets. General Plan policies guide future development and investments in a manner that is thoughtful, sustainable, and reflective of local values. The following are the tenets of this Plan Principle.

- Allow growth to occur in targeted areas where supportive physical and community infrastructure are available or can readily be provided, and where such growth contributes to the positive qualities and characteristics that define Burlingame.
- Maintain a balance of ownership and rental housing, with opportunities for people of all income ranges to live in Burlingame.
- Base land use decisions on the ability of the multimodal transportation network to support growth.
- Ensure that new commercial, office, and industrial development can accommodate the evolving nature of how buildings are used and business is conducted.

Principle 2: Community Character/Urban Forest

Burlingame’s physical character is defined by its cherished tree groves and urban forest, distinct neighborhoods and business districts, and historic structures and resources. The City should ensure that these features are respected and enhanced, with streetscape and architectural styles sensitive to long-established forms and features.

- Ensure that trees continue to be an integral character-defining feature of our streetscapes, neighborhoods, and business districts.
- Recognize the distinct qualities of Burlingame’s many and varied neighborhoods and business districts, and require that new development respond to and respect the desired character-defining features of these places.
- Protect the character and quality of Burlingame’s historical buildings, neighborhoods, districts, and landscapes.
- Be receptive to modern design approaches that complement the Burlingame aesthetic and are harmonious with their surroundings.
- Protect and expand the City’s urban forest and tree groves as aesthetic, historical, and environmental resources.

Principle 3: Connectivity

For Burlingame residents and visitors to access the full range of services and amenities the City offers, meaningful connections must be provided that can be safely navigated by all modes of travel. The mobility concepts, goals and policies in this General Plan seek to improve connectivity and access by realizing the following.

- Ensure provision of a well-defined multimodal transportation network that accommodates a range of travel choices and connects Burlingame to the region.
- Provide safe, convenient, and comfortable vehicular and pedestrian connections across Highway 101, linking the Bayfront with the rest of the City.

- Develop and maintain safe and easy-to-use bicycle and pedestrian travelways citywide, with an emphasis on providing connections from neighborhoods to local schools, parks, shopping, and entertainment.
- Ensure the provision of “first-mile” and “last-mile” connections to and from transit stations, providing safe and effective access between transit and destinations.

Principle 4: Economic Diversity and Vitality

The City of Burlingame recognizes the importance of a diverse economic base to providing sustainable, reliable revenue to the City and access to economic opportunity for residents. A combination of small, local “mom-and-pop” businesses should co-exist alongside larger regional and national enterprises. The goals and policies of the General Plan ensure the City accommodates and supports a mix of commercial activity while providing the flexibility to adapt to a dynamic economic environment.

- Support and encourage the operations of local, independent businesses equally to businesses that are regionally and nationally owned.
- Accommodate a mix of businesses that collectively works to maintain a stable tax base and revenue stream for the City.

Principle 5: Healthy People, Healthy Places

The health and safety of the City’s residents and its natural environment are fundamental to the many goals of this General Plan. Burlingame continues to plan for community resilience and the physical and social health through all policies, guided by the following Plan Principles.

- Provide unique recreation experiences in parks, open spaces, and public plazas citywide.
- Promote development approaches that emphasize nonmotorized and pedestrian access.

- Incorporate high-quality, energy-efficient, and sustainable design into all new development.
- Preserve and enhance open spaces, natural resources, and environmentally sensitive areas, including the Bay and the local creek system.
- Maintain and enhance public safety through community and environmental designs that promote secure, active, and safe streets and neighborhoods.
- Celebrate and accommodate arts, culture, and diversity.

Principle 6: Education

Residents value Burlingame for the opportunities it offers, including access to high-caliber education for all ages. Burlingame is committed to fostering educational opportunity for all residents, while promoting high-quality education for K-12 students.

- Promote productive partnerships with local schools and other educational institutions, and recognize that high-quality education contributes to overall community success and health.
- Support programs that provide enrichment and life-long learning.

Principle 7: Civic Engagement

Envision Burlingame is built on the foundation of community engagement, and the City is committed to building on this legacy to implement the General Plan and foster healthy civic dialogue for all issues of public interest. The following statement illustrates this Principle.

- Maintain an environment that always welcomes and encourages productive public discourse on issues shaping Burlingame's future.