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# Chapter One: Introduction

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## Introduction

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The Community Profile contains background information about the City of Foster City and is a comprehensive look at population, housing, land use, economic and transportation trends and information since incorporation. The Purpose of the Community Profile is to provide statistical information gathered from a variety of sources in a single publication. Intended users are any person, business or agency in need of socioeconomic data regarding Foster City.

The source information for the graphs and charts in the Community Profile is available at the Community Development Department, City Hall, 610 Foster City Boulevard, Foster City, CA 94404. In order to make the source information easier to use, a Technical Appendix to the Community Profile is available which contains the source information and some additional demographic information in spreadsheet format.

Additional specific information is also available from the various City Departments, as listed in Table 1 and on the City's web site at [www.fostercity.org](http://www.fostercity.org).

**Table 1: Telephone Numbers for City Departments**

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City Clerk	650-286-3251
City Manager	650-286-3220
Community Development	650-286-3225
Corporation Yard*	650-286-8140
Financial Services	650-286-3260
Fire	650-286-3350
Human Resources	650-286-3205
Parks and Recreation	650-286-3380
Police	650-286-3300
Public Works/Engineering	650-286-3270

\*Corporation Yard houses employees and services from both Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments

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# Community Profile

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## Location

Foster City is located midway between San Francisco and San Jose on the western shoreline of the San Francisco Bay, east of U.S. 101, which provides convenient access to San Francisco and the San Francisco Airport to the north, and Santa Clara County and San Jose Airport to the south. The City is bisected by State Route 92 (the J.Arthur Younger Freeway), which runs between Half Moon Bay to the west and to Hayward and Highway 880 to the east via the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge. State Route 92 provides convenient access to the East Bay.

The City encompasses 12,345 acres, of which 9,726 acres are part of San Francisco Bay and Belmont Slough, and 2,619 acres are reclaimed marshland. This equates to approximately 4 square miles of land area.

Figure 1 shows the regional location of Foster City. Table 2 indicates the travel time from Foster City to various points of interest.



Figure 01: Regional Location Map

# Chapter One: Introduction

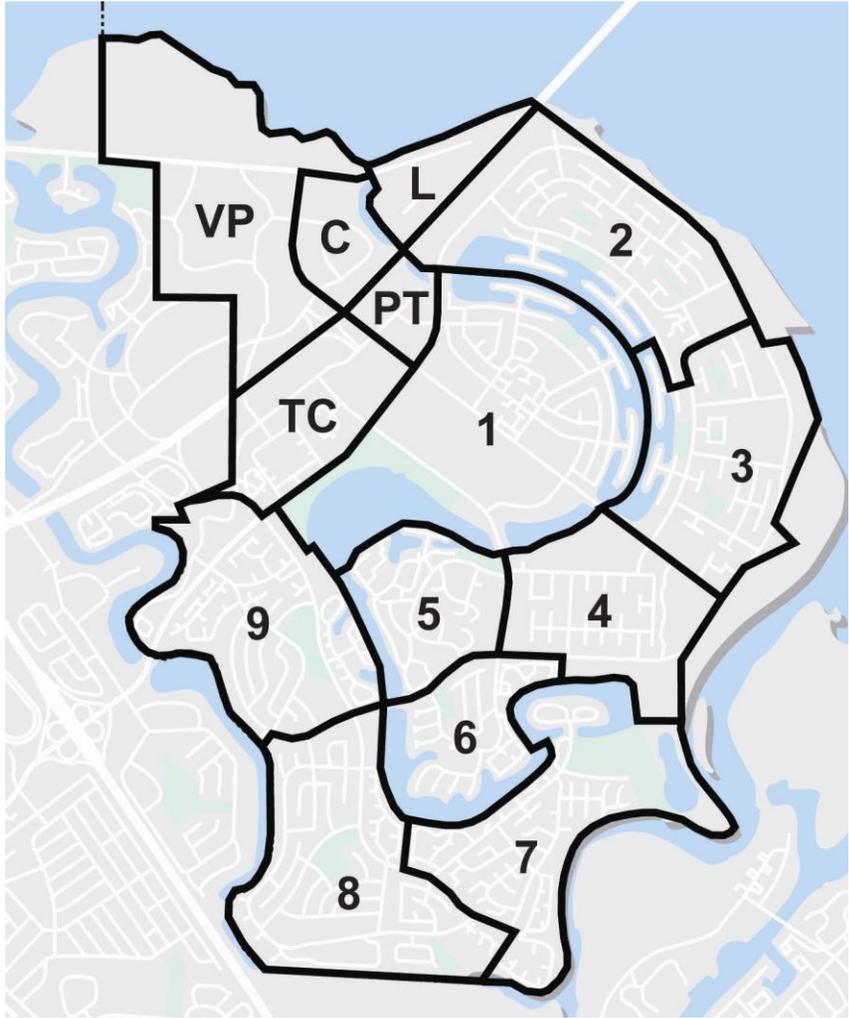
**Table 2: Travel Time from Foster City to Points of Interest**

	<b>Cities</b>	<b>Transportation</b>	<b>Shopping</b>	<b>Recreation</b>	<b>Higher Education</b>	<b>Hospitals</b>
<b>15 Minutes</b>	Redwood City* (*County Seat)	San Francisco Airport CalTrain – San Mateo Millbrae BART San Carlos Airport	Bridgepointe Hillsdale Mall Tanforan Serramonte Colma Metro Center	Crystal Springs Reservoir Coyote Point Park SF State Fish & Game Refuge San Mateo Co. Fairgrounds	College of San Mateo Canada College	Mills Hospital San Mateo Co. General Hospital Peninsula Hospital Kaiser-Redwood City
<b>30 Minutes</b>	San Francisco Oakland San Jose Half Moon Bay	Oakland International Airport Hayward BART San Jose International Airport	Stanford Shopping Center Union Square-SF Stonestown Vallco Park Bayfair	Pacific Ocean Candlestick Park Oakland Coliseum Cow Palace Midpeninsula Open Space Golden Gate Nat'l Rec. Area Great America Shoreline Amphitheater AT&T Park	Menlo College College of Notre Dame San Francisco State University Stanford University Cal State East Bay DeAnza College Foothill College Santa Clara University	Stanford Medical Center Kaiser-Hayward Kaiser-South S.F. Kaiser Santa Clara
<b>45 Minutes</b>			Valley Fair Great Mall	Golden Gate Fields Racetrack	San Jose State University University of S.F. Mills College UC Berkeley	UCSF Medical Center Kaiser – S.F.
<b>1-2 Hours</b>	Santa Cruz Sacramento Napa/Sonoma			Mt. Diablo State Park Big Basin Redwoods St. Park Alcatraz/Angel Island Sacramento Delta Pt. Reyes National Seashore Mt. Tamalpais State Park Six Flags Marine World	St. Mary's College UC Santa Cruz UC Davis	
<b>2-4 Hours</b>	Monterey/Carmel Mendocino Lake Tahoe/Reno San Luis Obispo			Monterey Bay Aquarium Pinnacles Nat'l Monument Clear Lake/Lake Berryessa Yosemite National Park	Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	

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# Community Profile

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**Figure 02: Neighborhood Map of Foster City**

## History

Foster City had its beginnings as reclaimed marshlands devoted to dairy farming and evaporation ponds. At the turn of the century, the approximately 2,600 acres of tidal marshlands now occupied by Foster City were owned by Frank Brewer, and the land was called Brewer Island. Brewer eventually sold his land to the Leslie Salt Company and Schilling Estate Company.

During the late 1950's, T. Jack Foster, in association with Bay Area developer Richard Grant, purchased an option to acquire Brewer Island for the development of a complete community. In 1960, the California Legislature created the Estero Municipal Improvement District (EMID), the state's first such public agency. The District was granted most of the governing powers associated with an incorporated municipality, except the powers to zone and approve development and certain police powers. The District was governed by a board of three directors representing the two landowners.

Because San Mateo County retained the authority to approve development permits, T. Jack Foster prepared a master plan for the development of Brewer Island (Foster City) and submitted it to the County in 1961. The plan envisioned a self-contained community with a variety of housing types, waterfront lots and parks, an internal lagoon for public recreation, marinas, offices, stores, industry, and public services. The City was to be developed as a cluster of nine residential neighborhoods (Areas 1-9 in Figure 02), a Town Center (Area TC in Figure 02), and an industrial area (Areas VP, C, L and PT in Figure 02). Most of the neighborhoods were planned for a variety of housing, from single-family homes on individual lots to high-density apartments. The Town Center was to be focused on an interior lake, and include a combination of community and regional commercial services, offices, entertainment establishments, and parks.

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# Chapter One: Introduction

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One of the more difficult aspects of the plan for the City was how to handle drainage in an area that was basically flat and at sea level. The engineering firm of Wilsey and Ham developed a plan to raise the surface level of the island 4 to 5 feet and to dig a central drainage basin area that also would serve as a runoff storage area. This drainage basin is the Foster City Lagoon.

The County Board of Supervisors approved the Foster City plan later in 1961, and ground breaking for the first reclamation and development projects took place in August. Due to the extensive fill, compaction, and construction of facilities that had to precede any building construction, three years passed before the first homes were completed.

The Estero Municipal Improvement District was authorized to issue over \$85.5 million in bonds in order to finance the improvements necessary for development of Brewer Island (the full \$85.5 million was not issued). The bonds provided enough funding to build the lagoon, water systems, sewer system, roads, bridges, and other necessary improvements.

At the end of 1964, 200 families had moved into Foster City. By 1966, the community had grown to 5,000 residents. As the City developed, residents came to realize that their lack of representation on the EMID Board made it difficult to affect Board decisions on development and taxation issues. In early 1967, residents reached a compromise with T. Jack Foster and Sons to introduce legislation increasing the Board's size from three to five. The two new directors would be elected by Foster City residents. The legislation also contained a provision for

eventual transition of the Board to a full citizen representation by 1971. However, T. Jack Foster and Sons relinquished complete control of the Board to residents in 1970, a year prior to the statutory deadline. At that time, the EMID Board began incorporation proceedings.

Foster City was incorporated in April 1971, with the newly elected City Council assuming the powers of the EMID Board. Nearly seven years after the first families moved to Foster City, residents gained full control over municipal governance. Shortly after incorporation, Foster City's Master Plan was amended and adopted as the City's General Plan. New elements and amendments have periodically been approved over the years, however the basic concepts of the original plan have been maintained.

In 1972, the City opened a new City Hall. In 1974, the Recreation Center opened at Central Park on the shores of the Lagoon. In 1976, the fourth and last of the bridges crossing the Foster City lagoon system was completed and it was named the Bicentennial Bridge. A new Police Station located at 1030 East Hillsdale Boulevard was dedicated in March 1985.

*Note: A photo/text history of Foster City entitled, "A New Town Comes of Age: Foster City, California" was published in 1985. This 96-page book can be purchased at the Chamber of Commerce office, 1031 East Hillsdale Boulevard, Suite F, Foster City, 94404.*

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# Community Profile

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## Neighborhoods

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The original plan for Foster City included nine neighborhoods, a "Town Center" area and an "Industrial" area. Almost all residential neighborhoods contain some mixture of single-family homes, two-story townhomes, and two- and three-story condominiums and apartments.

In early 1990, some minor modifications were made to neighborhood boundaries and the "Industrial" and "Town Center" neighborhoods were divided into smaller areas, resulting in fourteen neighborhoods.

Each residential neighborhood in Foster City is distinguished by street names found within the neighborhood. Most of the street names are derived from the marine nature of the City. Table 3 lists each neighborhood and its associated street theme, if applicable. The neighborhood boundaries are shown in Figure 2.

**Table 3: Foster City Neighborhoods**

Neighborhood	Street Name Theme
1	Famous Ships
2	Birds
3	Fish
4	Boats and Boat Parts
5	Explorers
6	Admirals
7	Islands
8	Bays
9	Constellations and Stars
Town Center	No Theme
Pilgrim/Triton	No Theme
Vintage Park	No Theme
Chess	No Theme
Lincoln	No Theme