

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2024



CITY OF FOSTER CITY

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# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



**SOFIA  
MANGALAM**

Community Development  
Director

As I approach my two-year mark as the City's Community Development Director, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve this wonderful community. Reflecting on 2024, I can confidently say this has been one of the most challenging yet rewarding years for our team.

Despite our modest size—a dedicated group of 17 staff members—we have achieved significant milestones, from advancing housing initiatives to ensuring compliance with sustainability goals. This report captures our collective accomplishments and serves as a testament to our shared vision for Foster City.

Together, we continue to embrace challenges, drive progress, and uphold the values that make Foster City a thriving and resilient community.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude towards the City Council, the Planning Commission, the City Manager's office, Foster City departments and above all, the Foster City Community for making all of this possible.



# DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

## OUR MISSION

The Community Development Department is committed to planning, maintaining, and improving the quality of life and public safety in Foster City. Guided by the City Council's vision, the General Plan, and other key measures, we uphold the City's heritage as a master-planned community.

## DEPARTMENT FUNCTIONS

- The Planning/Code Enforcement Division is responsible for long term planning regarding growth and development of the City, for reviewing and processing applications for all land use and development proposals, and for maintaining the appearance of the community.
- The Building Inspection Division is responsible for ensuring that all construction projects permitted within the City comply with the California Building Code, the Foster City Municipal Code and all other applicable codes and regulations.
- The Housing Division administers the City's housing programs, including monitoring affordable housing units throughout the City, working to create more affordable housing opportunities, and implementing the City's affordable housing regulations.
- The Sustainability Division seeks to maintain a healthy environment including clean air, clean water and a living area free from pollution in which resources are used wisely to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

# PLANNING

2024 was a pivotal year for the Planning Division.

## Adoption of Housing Element 2023-31

A significant highlight was the [Department of Housing and Community Development's \(HCD\) certification of the City's Housing Element Update 2023-31 in April 2024](#). This milestone followed over three (3) years of dedicated effort and extensive public engagement, which began in 2020 through numerous City Council and Planning Commission meetings. Chapter 8, Housing Goals, Policies, and Programs, forms the City's housing policy roadmap and includes over 106 programs that the City needs to implement over eight (8) years.

## Housing Element 2023-31 Implementation

2024 marked the second year of implementation of the Housing Element. The Planning Division advanced numerous programs through initiatives such as rezoning, code amendments, workshops, financial incentives, streamlining the development process, newsletters, monitoring, and evaluation of existing policies.

- January: Adoption of a new [chapter 17.96, Multifamily and Residential Mixed-Use Objective Design and Development Standards](#), in the Foster City Municipal Code (FCMC).
- February: Establishment of the City's first [Local Housing Trust Fund](#).
- March: Submission of the Annual Progress Report for the General Plan and Housing Element to HCD before the April 1, 2024, deadline.
- August: Adoption of four (4) [pre-reviewed detached Accessory Dwelling Unit \(ADU\) designs](#) for the use of residents.
- September: Prepared [Housing Element Implementation Roadmap](#) to guide planning and manage priorities for implementation of the Housing Element policies and programs.
- October: Adoption of Senate Bill 9 (SB 9) compliant ordinance for [Urban Lot Splits and Two-Unit Developments](#) in Single-Family Zoning Districts.
- November: Approval of zoning code amendments to 13 FCMC chapters.



City of  
FOSTER CITY

2023 - 2031 Housing Element Update



Prepared for:  
City of Foster City  
Adopted May 22, 2023  
Revisions Adopted March 20, 2024

URBAN  
PLANNING  
PARTNERS  
INC.



City Council  
Ordinances

7



New Municipal Code  
Chapters

3



Planning Commission  
Meetings

17

# PLANNING CONTD.

- A comprehensive update of the Sign Ordinance was completed, adding a new [Chapter 17.59 Sign Control](#) to Title 17 of FCMC. This addition provides greater clarity and direction for applicants seeking sign permits in the City.
- Planning staff processed a wide range of permits, including 55 Architectural Review Permits, 10 Rezoning, 21 Sign Permits, seven (7) Temporary Use permits, 73 Use Permits, and eight (8) Zoning Compliance letters.
- Established a [Pre-Approval Design program for ADUs/JADUs](#). Under this program, designers/architects/engineers can submit construction documents for review to be part of Foster City's Pre-Approved ADU/JADU Design Gallery.
- Planning staff kicked off a Citywide initiative to modernize the City's single-family design guidelines, policies, and applicable zoning code regulations into one comprehensive document called: "[Single-Family Objective Design and Development Standards](#)." A Community Input survey soliciting feedback was held, followed by a [Planning Commission Study Session](#) on July 18, 2024.
- Staff conducted numerous webinars on the topic of ADUs/JADUs for the benefit of HOAs, the School district, private schools, multi-family property owners, and religious institutions to allow these stakeholders to learn about ADUs and ask staff questions.
- Planning staff supported the City Manager's Office and Finance Department in updating the business license tax ordinance. This involved onboarding consultants, conducting outreach meetings and coordinating efforts to engage the community. [Measure V, a proposal to update city's business license tax](#) was approved by Foster City's voters.
- The Planning Division continued to facilitate Interdepartmental Evaluation Committee (IDEC) meetings to review numerous major and minor permits and events, ensuring streamlined and collaborative decision-making across City departments.



Planning Applications  
Received

**180**



Planning Applications  
Approved

**175**



IDEC Meetings

**24**

# CODE ENFORCEMENT

The City's code enforcement program is primarily implemented through a combination of neighborhood drive-throughs and a complaint-driven basis. Complaints can be submitted by mail, phone, e-mail, [online complaint app](#), or in person at City Hall.

- A total of 122 code enforcement cases were opened, including 81 property maintenance violations, 36 work without permit violations, two (2) sign-related violations, one (1) animal-related case, one (1) zoning violation, and one (1) noise complaint.
- Staff introduced the use of door hangers to address minor code violations such as overgrown weeds and improperly stored trash bins. These hangers provide notices when homeowners are unavailable during visits.
- A new webpage and application materials were developed for the recently adopted [Sidewalk Vending Program](#). The program was successfully implemented at major community events, including Summer Days and the Tree Lighting Ceremony.
- Staff published a dedicated webpage and application forms for the [Tobacco Retail Permit](#).

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Planning/Code Enforcement Division  
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(650) 286-3228  
[codeenforcement@fostercity.org](mailto:codeenforcement@fostercity.org)

**Courtesy Notice of Code Violation**

The intent of this notice is to inform you of a code violation witnessed on your property located at \_\_\_\_\_ in Foster City and to open a line of communication to work with you to bring the property in to compliance with Foster City standards. Please contact the officer listed below to discuss this in greater detail.

Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
Officer/Contact: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_ AM/PM

**Code Violation(s):**

- Trash Bins: Store trash bins behind the gate or in the garage so they are not visible from the public right of way except on scheduled trash collection day(s).
- Weeds: Trim/remove overgrown weeds/tall grass from front yard and/or adjacent sidewalk
- Overgrown Bush: Trim back bush/hedge so no portion encroaches/covers a portion of the adjacent sidewalk.
- Stored household items/Refuse/Debris: remove all household items/refuse/debris that has been stored for more than 48 hours.
- Trailer/RV/Boat: Remove recreational vehicle and/or trailer that has been stored in front yard for more than 72 hours.
- Other: See back side of notice for details



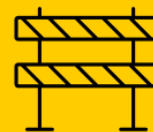
SeeClick Fix  
Complaints

**202**



Opened Code  
Enforcement Cases

**122**



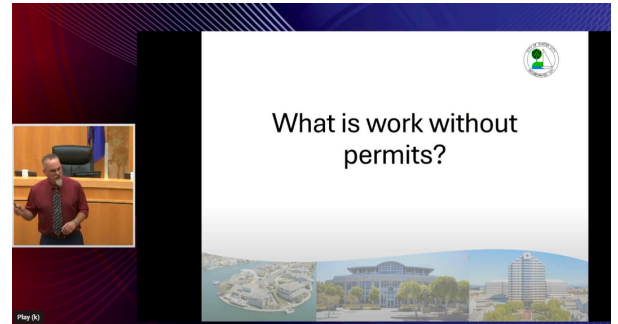
Stop Work  
Orders

**36**

# BUILDING

The Building Inspection Division focused on modernizing processes and supporting sustainability through the following initiatives:

- Building Division staff continued to review plans and provide daily inspection services for residential and commercial development, ensuring compliance with building code health and safety standards.
- Completed onboarding of [SolarAPP+](#), a web-based platform that automates solar permitting.
- Two informational workshops were hosted to educate residents:
  - [Building Permits 101](#) (May 8): Covered the basics of the permitting process.
  - [Work Without Permits](#) (July 24): Highlighted the risks and potential consequences of unpermitted work.
- In March, staff presented findings from an [electrical capacity study](#) to the City Council. The study was conducted to support the potential adoption of local Energy Reach Codes aimed at enhancing energy efficiency and sustainability.
- Initiated a [comprehensive addressing verification and assignment system](#) for apartment units to ensure 911 emergency systems, the United States Postal Service, law enforcement agencies, firefighters, utility companies, property assessors, title companies, public works, building permits, and inspections.



Building Permits  
Received

**1607**



Building Permits  
Approved

**1301**



Permits Finaled

**1,020**



# HOUSING

The Housing Division continued its commitment to fostering affordable housing and reducing displacement.

- Staff continued [administering affordable housing programs](#), including 433 units at Marlin Cove, Miramar, One Hundred Grand, the Plaza, the Triton, Alma Point, Metro Center, the Pilgrim, and the Existing Unit Purchase Program.
- Responded to inquiries from Community/Property Managers regarding the administration of the Below Market Rate (BMR) program, including, but not limited to, rental rates, utility allowances, alleged fair housing violations, reasonable accommodation requests, recertifications, occupancy requirements, annual income projections, waitlist, new applications, and more.
- Oversaw [property management of 28 city-owned units](#).
- Presented the 2024 Asset Management report for City-owned Workforce Housing to the City Council.
- Completed a comprehensive update of [BMR Administrative Procedures and Guidelines \(Rental and Ownership\)](#).
- Pursued [grant opportunities](#) to expand housing opportunities, including San Mateo County Measure K and State 2024 Local Housing Trust Fund Program Notice of Funding Availability (awaiting award announcement for State).
- Hosted numerous training sessions for property managers on BMR housing guidelines and income certifications.
- Held the City's first [Fair Housing and Anti-discrimination workshop](#) for the public in partnership with Project Sentinel.
- Staff conducted City Council study sessions on the [Anti-Displacement Strategy](#) and [Rental Registry program](#).
- Responded to 220 housing inquiries via the City's online portal.
- Completed installation of [two \(2\) EV chargers](#) at City-owned Workforce Housing and secured \$11,000 rebate through Peninsula Clean Energy for the chargers.
- Staff held a roundtable discussion on cooperative ventures with for-profit and non-profit developers and affordable housing services providers to learn more about the challenges associated with and potential opportunities for developing additional housing in Foster City.



BMR Units

**433**



Housing Queries

**220**



Land Use Subcommittee Meetings

**4**

# SUSTAINABILITY

## Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2024 Update

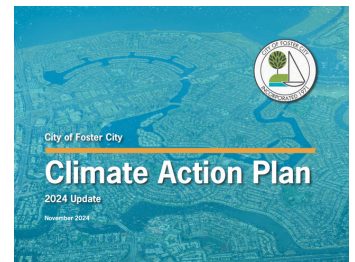
Foster City's CAP is an integral component of the General Plan's Land Use and Circulation Element. The CAP provides a comprehensive framework to address and mitigate the impacts of climate change locally, underscoring the City's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable development.

The City's first CAP, adopted in 2016, required updating to reflect new state legislation, evolving priorities, and updated policies on environmental sustainability and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction. While an initial effort to update the CAP was paused during the pandemic, 2024 marked significant progress:

- April: Staff presented the [draft CAP framework](#) to the City Council.
- November: The City Council [adopted the final CAP 2024 Update](#) and the associated CEQA Negative Declaration.

The Citizens Sustainability Advisory Committee (CSAC) advises the City Council on sustainability issues related to environmental, economic, and social sustainability. In 2024, CSAC collaborated with City staff on various community engagement activities, including:

- **Earth Day Fair:** Attracted 200+ attendees. Promoted the Earth Day theme "Planet vs. Plastics" through interactive displays and activities focused on recycling and reuse.
- **Summer Days Festival:** Educated visitors on sustainability topics, promoting water refill stations and reusable bottles.
- **Clean Air Day:** Organized interactive activities and booths centered on clean air and clean technology including bike repair services, electric vehicle displays, induction cooktop demonstrations, leaf rubbing art, and plant planting activities.



GHG Reduction Aim by 2030

**49%**



CAP Implementation Actions

**65**



CSAC Meetings

**11**

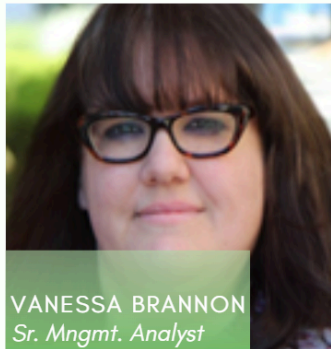
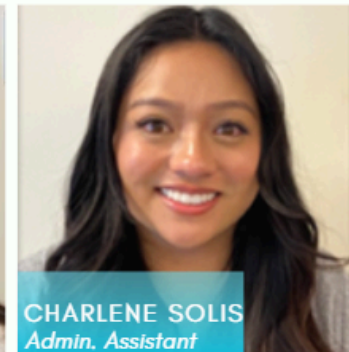


# STAFF TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS

Staff training and certification remained a priority, with numerous professional development opportunities provided throughout the year.

- \* The CDD Director Sofia Mangalam attended the Municipal Management Association of Northern California (MMANC) Annual Conference.
- Plans Examiner Amanda Zulaica and Senior Building Inspector Bob Bardsley attended the California Building Officials (CALBO) Annual Conference.
- Housing Coordinator Nori Jabba attended the Annual San Mateo County Progress Seminar, Nonprofit Housing Association (NPH) Annual Conference, and Housing Industry Foundation (HIF) Annual Conference.
- Senior Management Analyst Vanessa Branon attended the California Climate and Energy Collaborative Forum.
- Planning Manager Monica Ly and Senior Planner Helen Gannon attended the Cal Cities Webinar “New Laws Impacting Cities.”
- \* Plans Examiner Amanda Zulaica obtained International Code Council (ICC) Plumbing Plans Examiner Certification.
- Senior Building Inspector obtained ICC Commercial Mechanical Inspector and Building Plans Examiner certification.
- Building Inspector Jay Marlette obtained ICC Commercial Electrical Inspector Certification and ICC Commercial Building Inspector Certification.
- Code Enforcement Officer Marcel Stevenson completed California Association of Code Enforcement Officers (CACEO) Module II for Code Enforcement.

# THE TEAM



together we  
achieve great  
things!

# LOOKING AHEAD

As we look back on 2024, we reaffirm our commitment to fostering Foster City's growth and sustainability while preserving the City's unique character. Our accomplishments this year reflect the dedication of staff, the City Council, and the community in advancing shared goals. The year ahead brings exciting opportunities to build on this momentum, with new programs and strengthened partnerships paving the way for continued progress.



With these ambitious initiatives, 2025 promises to be a year of meaningful progress.

## Major Initiatives for 2025

- 1. Adoption of Updates to the Parks and Open Space Element:** Enhancing our green spaces to meet community needs and support environmental sustainability.
- 2. Adoption of Updates to the Conservation Element:** Strengthening policies to protect natural resources and promote sustainable practices.
- 3. Housing Element Implementation:** Continuing to advance programs that address housing needs, streamline processes, and foster inclusivity.
- 4. Adoption of Single-Family Objective Design Standards:** Finalizing comprehensive design standards to modernize and streamline single-family housing regulations.
- 5. Climate Action Plan Implementation:** Moving forward with initiatives outlined in the CAP 2024 Update, focusing on GHG emissions reduction and sustainability.
- 6. Asset Management Report for Existing Unit Purchase Program (EUPP):** Delivering the annual report to ensure effective management of City-owned six (6) EUPP units.
- 7. Onboarding New Rental Registry Software:** Implementing advanced software to enhance the management of Below Market Rate (BMR) units.
- 8. Implementation of Three (3) City NOFAs:**
  - Funding Program for Affordable Housing Developers.
  - ADU/JADU Financial Incentive Program.
  - Lower-Income Homeowner Rehabilitation Loans.
- 9. Review of Development Projects:** Construction of a five-story, ± 181,000 square foot new technical development center at 335 Lakeside Drive on the Gilead Campus.

# CONTACT US



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