



# SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA



## THE CITY

Sometimes referred to as The Bay Area or The Bay, the San Francisco Bay Area is a metropolitan area that lies along the San Francisco Bay in northern California covering an area of approximately 22 789 square kilometres (8 798 square miles). This nine-county area consists of cities of various size including three large cities that stand out; San Francisco, San Jose, and Oakland. Of these three, San Francisco is often referred to as 'The City' because San Francisco was historically the first major population center in the area, and also because of its densely urbanized character in comparison to the other two cities. San Francisco is the 4th largest metropolitan statistical area and the 14th largest city in the United States, with an estimated population of 7.15 million in the San Francisco Bay Area and more than 6 million in the San Francisco metropolitan area. It is the second most densely populated area in the United States, with 15 000 people per square mile, this compares to New York City, ranked first with 24 000 people per square mile, and Los Angeles, ranked third with roughly 7 000 people per square mile.



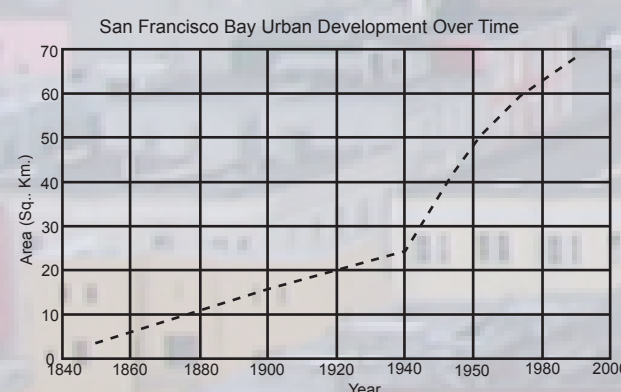
10 MAY 1973 Landsat MSS False Colour Composite RGB, (2,4,1)



22 APRIL 2004 ASTER False Colour Composite RGB, bands (2,3,1)

San Francisco has been selected host city for World Environment Day 2005, the first time ever in North America. 2005 is also the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, which was founded at the 1945 charter convention in San Francisco. Its selection fits the theme for World Environment Day 2005: "Green Cities: Where the Future Lives," given the city's effort to promote a well-planned, clean, healthy and safe environment.

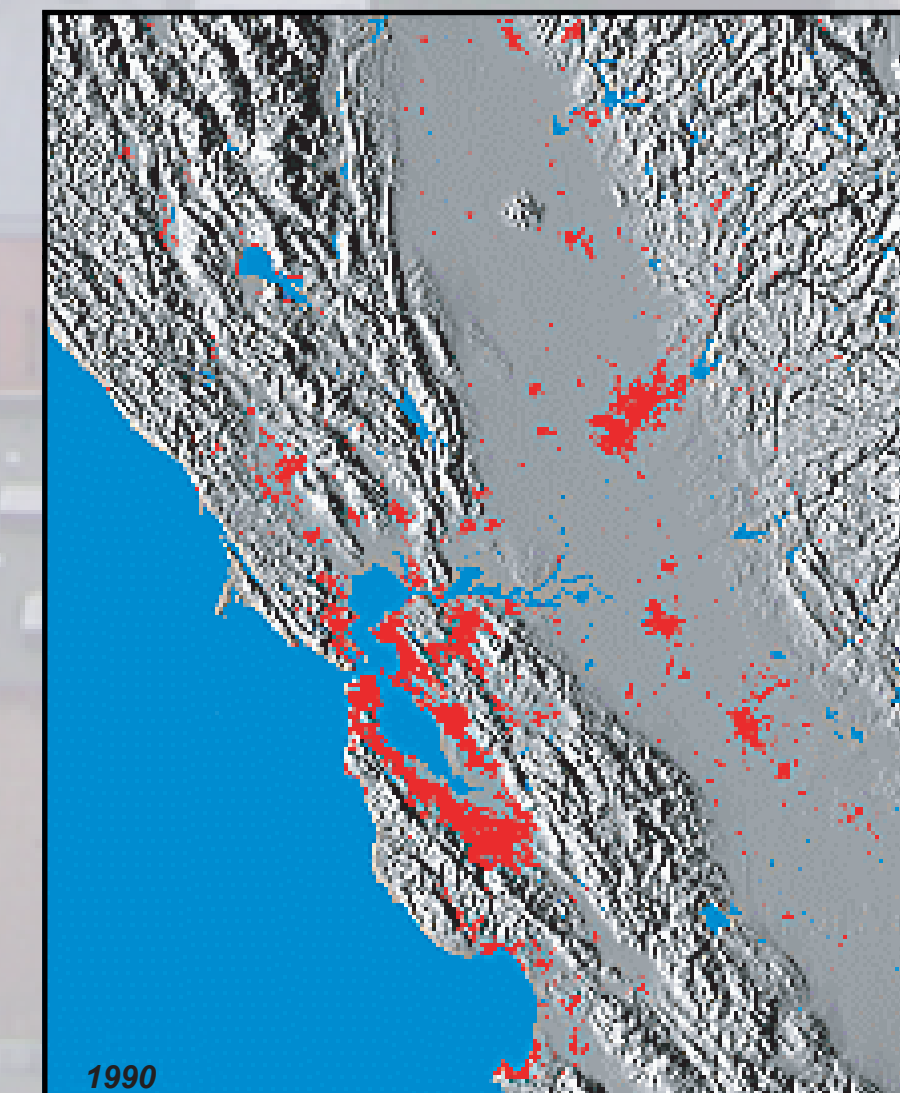
*A key feature of city of San Francisco is the preservation of its urban forests. In both images, the Urban Forests are clearly visible and distinct. The city has an Urban Forest Council whose mission is to guide the stewardship of San Francisco's trees by promoting a healthy and sustainable urban forest that benefits all San Franciscans while ensuring public health and safety.*



This chart portrays urban growth that starts in 1850 during the California gold rush and continues up to the turn of the century. The growth rate increases slightly up to World War II. In the years after the war, the growth rate shows a dramatic increase that continues through the 1950's, 1960's, and into the 1970's. Although still increasing, the growth rate appears to have slowed slightly during the 1980's, compared to the growth boom experienced after World War II.

### Historical Timeline:

- Some **10 000 to 20 000** years ago, the Bay area was inhabited by Ohlone (a Miwok Indian word meaning "western people"), composed of forty or so culturally diverse native tribes that lived in the coastal area between Point Sur and the San Francisco Bay.
- 1542**-Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo sailed along the coast near San Francisco and discovered the Farallones (16 Nov.).
- 1766-The United States of America declared its Independence from Britain on 4 July and the Mission of San Francisco de Asis was officially dedicated on 9 October.
- 1846**-As the Mexican-American War unfolded, the United States took possession of a portion of California that included San Francisco (7 July).
- 1850**-California grew as the discovery of gold in 1848 drove people westward. As a result of this growth institutions were established and in 1850 the California Legislature created the original counties, including San Francisco (18 Feb.). Later, California became the 31st state admitted to the Union (9 Sep.).
- 1906-The Great Earthquake, magnitude 8.25 on the Richter scale, struck on 18 April 1906 at 5:12 a.m. It lasted for 49 seconds. The Great Fire that followed caused more damage than the earthquake, destroying about 28 000 buildings, killing about 3 000 and leaving 225 000 homeless.
- 1945**-The United Nations World Charter of Security was signed in San Francisco (26 June), as the world began its road to relative peace.
- 1989**-An earthquake (magnitude 7.1) occurred along the San Andreas fault (17 October). The tremor collapsed a section of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge.
- 1992** The population of San Francisco in 1992 was 728 921.
- 2000**-Non-white ethnic groups and the Hispanic group reached more than 50 per cent of the total population of 776 733, making San Francisco a city of rich cultural and ethnic traditions.



Skyline of the city

Credit: MorgueFile

Background Photo Credit: MorgueFile

A historical perspective of urban development for the San Francisco Bay region. The image maps of urban extent dramatically convey the spatial patterns and rates of urban land use change experienced between 1850 and 1990. Courtesy USGS.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on these maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Created at UNEP/GRID-Sioux Falls, May 2005