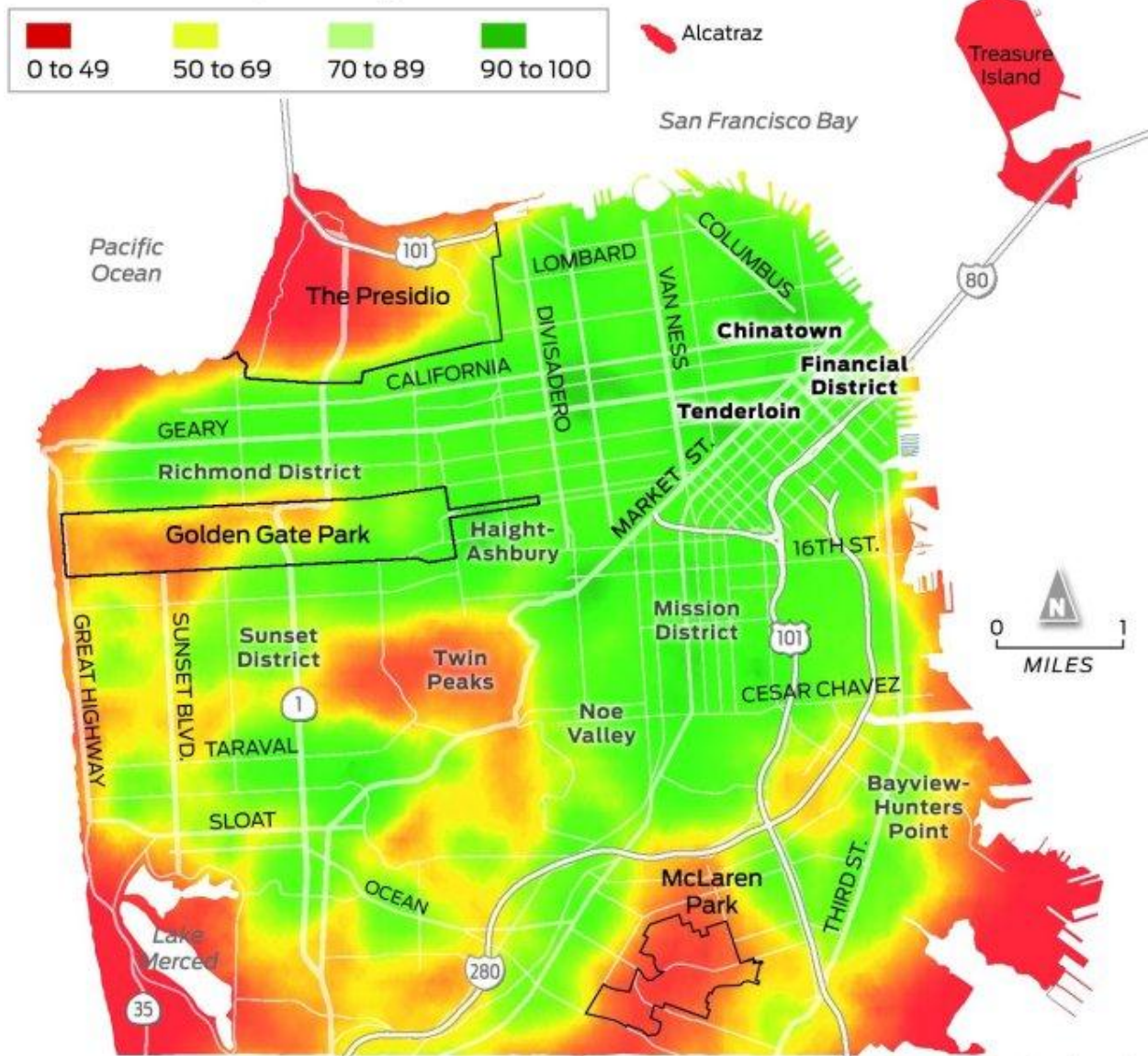


San Francisco neighborhoods by walk score

The city's most walkable neighborhoods are Chinatown, the Financial District and the Tenderloin, according to Walk Score.



Source: Walk Score

Todd Trumbull / The Chronicle

San Francisco and Oakland in top 10 most Walkable U.S. cities

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Hoofing it to shops and services is easy in San Francisco and Oakland, according to a survey being released today that ranks the two among the top 10 most walkable big cities in the country.

Among the nation's 50 largest cities, San Francisco was the second most walkable, after New York, and Oakland ranked 10th, said Seattle's Walk Score, which assigns numerical ratings on a scale of 1 to 100 that quantify how close any address is to amenities like grocery stores, restaurants, schools and parks. Being within one-quarter mile of destinations garners the highest ratings.

An independent report from CEOs for Cities showed that each Walk Score point was worth \$3,000 in home value.

"Since the MLS prohibits using the word 'walking' with marketing, Walk Score offers a nondiscriminatory interpretation, provided by a third party, of where the property is located in relation to stores, restaurants, public transportation," said Francine Di Palma, an agent with Pacific Union in San Francisco. "More buyers, young and old, want to be in an area where services and amenities are easily available and Walk Score assists with this."

Access to amenities

Dense neighborhoods with easy foot access to amenities have serious upsides for both society and the environment, experts said.

"As gasoline gets more expensive and as Americans begin to grapple seriously with what to do about climate change, we're seeing the end of the old American dream of big homes and easy driving, with a renewed focus on urban living as the ideal," said Gabriel Metcalf, executive director of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association think tank. "I think it's a great sign to see people caring about Walk Scores when they decide where to live."

Both San Francisco (Walk Score: 84.9) and Oakland (Walk Score: 68.2) are full of areas that offer lively destinations, Walk Score said.

"San Francisco has 31 neighborhoods we refer to as walkers' paradise with scores of 90 or higher," said Josh Herst, Walk Score CEO, citing Chinatown, the Financial District, Haight-Ashbury, North Beach, Pacific Heights, Telegraph Hill and Nob Hill as among them.

Oakland's most-walkable areas include Downtown, Civic Center, Chinatown, Lakewood, Old City, San Pablo Gateway, Piedmont Avenue and Waverly.

Homes near shopping

"Oakland has areas like Piedmont and Rockridge with a lot of single-family homes close together but also close to shopping areas," said Matt Lerner, Walk Score chief technology officer. "It's expensive because it's such a desirable form of housing with the benefits of single-family homes such as yards, but near to restaurants, grocery stores and coffee shops."

But more-affordable transit-oriented developments such as Fruitvale Village also ranked high, he said.

Started in 2007, Walk Score soon became ubiquitous in [real estate](#) ads, with agents touting properties' walkability. The company said more than 10,000 websites now feature its neighborhood information, which includes a suite of mapping and data services.

"It adds more information to what people are seeing online," said Shalene Rose, an agent with Caldecott Properties in Oakland. "These days, buyers can gain a lot of knowledge about a property before venturing out to actually see it. If they don't know the area that well, the Walk Score helps them know what type of neighborhood it is, and they can assess whether it's worth going to an open house."

Walk Score said its unique [proposition](#) is putting a quantitative rank on walkability.

"We try to make it very easy for people to compare the houses they're looking at," Lerner said. "One reason it's caught on is that it's very personal: Every house has a Walk Score."

Top 10 Walkable cities

Walk Score ranked the 50 largest U.S. cities by how easily residents can walk to amenities like shops, restaurants and parks, on a scale of 1 to 100.

1. New York (85.3)
2. San Francisco (84.9)
3. Boston (79.2)
4. Chicago (74.3)
5. Philadelphia (74.1)
6. Seattle (73.7)
7. Washington, D.C. (73.2)
8. Miami (72.5)
9. Minneapolis (69.3)
10. Oakland (68.2)

Source: Walk Score

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<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2011/07/20/BUUK1KCC67.DTL>

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