



## **MASTER PROGRAM DOCUMENT – LIABILITY**

**Revised Date: July 1, 2023**

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POOLED LIABILITY ASSURANCE NETWORK JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY (PLAN)  
MASTER PROGRAM DOCUMENT(MPD)  
FOR THE POOLED LIABILITY PROGRAM (PLP)

**ARTICLE I: DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions apply to this MPD:

1. **Administrator** shall mean the person responsible for the daily administration, management, and operation of the **Authority's** programs as defined in the Bylaws.
2. **Authority** shall mean the Pooled Liability Assurance Network Joint Powers Authority (PLAN).
3. **Board** shall mean the Board of Directors of the PLAN.
4. **Member Contributions** shall mean that amount to be paid by each **Participant** for each **program year** as determined by the **Board** in accordance with Article III, Section C of this MPD.
5. **Joint Powers Agreement** shall mean the agreement made by and among the public entities listed in Appendix A (**Member Entities**) of the **Joint Powers Agreement**, hereafter referred to as **Agreement**.
6. **Loss Experience** shall mean such amounts as are paid by the **Participant** or the **Authority** in settlement of claims, or in satisfaction of awards or judgments for liabilities imposed by law for **bodily injury, property damage, personal injury, public officials errors and omissions, sudden and accidental pollution**, as those terms are defined in the PLP Memorandum of Coverage (MOC) and to which that MOC applies.
7. **Limit of Coverage** shall mean the amount of coverage stated in the Declarations or certificate of coverage, or sublimits as stated therein or in the MOC for each **Participant** or **covered party per occurrence**, subject to any lower sublimit stated in the MOC.

8. **Participant** shall mean a **Member Entity**, which shall mean a signatory to the **Agreement** establishing the Pooled Liability Assurance Network Joint Powers Authority, who has elected to participate in the PLP.
9. **Program Year** shall mean that period of time commencing at 12:01 a.m. on July 1 and ending at 12:00 a.m. on the following July 1.
10. **Self-Insured Retention (SIR)** shall mean the amount that the **Member Entity** must pay (or cause to be paid) before **PLAN** is obligated to pay any amount under the terms of the PLP Memorandum of Coverage.
11. **Third Party Administrator (TPA)** shall mean the claims administrator for the **Authority** for the PLP.

## ARTICLE II: GENERAL

### A. AUTHORITY

1. The Pooled Liability Program (PLP) Master Program Document (MPD) is one of the **Authority's** governing documents. However, any conflict between the PLP MPD, the **Authority's Agreement**, the Bylaws, or the PLP MOC shall be determined in favor of the **Agreement**, the Bylaws, or the MOC, in that order.
2. The PLP MPD is intended to be the primary source of information, contain the rules and regulations, and serve as the operational guide for the conduct of the PLP.
3. The PLP has been organized under authority granted by, and shall be conducted in accordance with, the laws of the State of California.

### B. PURPOSE

The primary purpose in establishing a PLP is to create a method for providing coverage for legal exposures incurred by the **Participants** and the **Authority** as provided in the MOC and, if applicable, the excess coverage.

### C. PARTICIPATION

Any **Member Entity** may participate in the PLP. However, the terms and conditions which may be imposed on a **Participant** which desires to join the PLP may be different, depending upon payroll, number of employees, the size of the entity, its loss record, and other pertinent information.

### D. GOVERNANCE

Each **Participant's** appointed primary representative and one alternate representative shall be the representative for the PLP. The **Participant** will be entitled to one vote on all issues or decisions that involve the PLP, except that in the event of a coverage dispute, the representatives from the involved **Participant** shall be recused from the final deliberation and vote.

## E. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. The PLP shall provide liability coverage for the **Participants** utilizing an optimum mix of risk retention and risk transfer. The PLP shall provide various **retained limits** for the **Participants**, provide a risk sharing pool for losses above individual **retained limits** up to the **Authority's Limit of Coverage** and obtain excess coverage for the amount of the loss which exceeds the Authority's Limit of Coverage for the risk sharing pool. Additionally, the PLP shall provide for the sharing of operating costs and payment of the excess coverage by charging all **Participants** their share of such costs.
2. Although the PLP is provided to the **Participants** under those terms and conditions which prevail at the time the **Participant** joins the PLP, the **Board** shall have the right to alter, from time to time, the terms and conditions of the excess coverage and the pooled underlying coverage in response to the needs and abilities of the PLP and the **Participants**, as well as in response to availability of coverage from outside sources.
3. The **Authority** offers participation in a risk sharing pool, covering losses of **Participants** in accordance with the MOC adopted by the **Participants**. The assets of the pooled program shall be maintained at all times as the assets of the **Participants** collectively. The assets may be disbursed only pursuant to the provisions of this MPD, and no **Participant** shall have an individual right to exercise control over said assets.
4. The PLP will provide coverage under the terms and conditions set forth in the MOC. The amount of coverage to be pooled and/or purchased is at the discretion of the **Board**.

## ARTICLE III: PROGRAM ELEMENTS

### A. PROGRAM YEARS

1. Each **program year** shall be accounted for separately. The income and expenses of each **program year** shall be accounted for separately from any other **program year's** income or expenses.
2. A **program year** shall not be closed until at least ten years of age if, at such time the **Board** authorizes closure, being convinced that all known claims for the year are closed and the probability of further claims being discovered is minimal. Any closed years, however, may be reopened if deemed necessary and approved by the **Board**.

### B. RETAINED LIMITS

1. The PLP shall annually establish the **limit of coverage** for the pool. The underlying coverage of the PLP shall provide **Participants retained limits** of various amounts per occurrence. The **Participants** may annually select their **retained limits** from the options offered. The amount of each loss, including expenses, which is less than the **retained limit** chosen by the applicable **Participant**, shall be paid by the **Participant**.
2. A **Participant** may increase its **retained limit** at the inception of a **program year** upon thirty (30) days' advance written notice, or may reduce its **retained limit** upon approval by the **Board**. The **Board**, with a two-thirds vote, and by providing 60 days' advance written notice to the **Participant**, may require a **Participant** at the inception of the **program year** to take a **retained limit** different than the **Participant's retained limit** in the expiring **program year**.
3. The amount of each loss, including expenses, which is less than the **retained limit** chosen by the applicable **Participant**, shall be paid by the **Participant**. If a **Participant** directly pays any claim within its **retained limit**, such **Participant** shall report all payments to the **Authority** to ensure better claims control and actuarial analysis.



### C. MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

1. The **Administrator**, in conjunction with an actuary, shall establish rates and **Member Contributions**, subject to **Board** approval, adequate to fund the actuarially determined losses in the pooled layer of the PLP at the appropriate **Board**-determined confidence level, including estimated attorney fees and other claims related costs, the cost of excess coverage, and the projected administrative costs, including retirement of debt, if any, of the PLP.
2. The annual **Member Contributions** for each **Participant** shall be calculated by applying the **Participant's** estimated annual payroll to 1) the funding level as determined by the actuary and recommended by the **Administrator**, adjusted for individual **Participant's loss experience**, relative risk and **Participant retained limit** and/or the cost of any purchased primary insurance or reinsurance, and 2) a charge for the administrative and claims servicing expenses of the PLP as determined by the **Administrator** and approved by the **Board**. The cost of purchased excess coverage shall be passed through to each **Participant** based upon population, without consideration of payroll or experience modification, and included in the Member Contributions. After the end of the **program year**, adjustments from estimated to actual payroll may be made. Debit adjustments shall be billed to the **Participant**, and credit adjustments will apply to the next year's billings. An annual audit of a **Participant's** payroll may be conducted by the Authority.
3. The administrative expenses charged to each **Participant** shall be calculated as follows: Thirty three percent of the amount calculated is allocated equally to each **Participant**. Of the remaining sixty seven percent, one-third is calculated based upon outstanding reported claims greater than \$1 (i.e. excluding claims closed without payment) and two-thirds is calculated based upon paid losses from the prior five completed years;

### D. EXPERIENCE MODIFICATION

1. Each **Participant** shall be evaluated each year for an experience modification adjustment that shall be applied to the **Member**

**Contributions.** The calculation of the adjustment shall include the actual **loss experience** of the individual **Participant** as it relates to the average **loss experience** of the group as a whole. Such **loss experience** shall not consider loss years that are more than five years old. The losses shall be valued as of December 31. For example, when calculating ex-mod for 2022/23, loss data from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021, valued at December 31, 2021 would be considered. The criterion that shall be used is the relationship of actual average **loss experience** over the period being rated as it relates to the average payroll for the same period. Losses considered for loss experience calculation shall be capped at \$250,000 per Occurrence. A credibility factor will be applied, such that the Experience Modification will be balanced against annual payroll, with 90% loss weighting applied to the highest payroll **Participant** and 20% applied to the smallest payroll **Participant** and all other **Participants** subject to a sliding scale weighting based upon the **Participant's** payroll in relation to the high and low payroll figures. The change in experience modification from year to year shall be capped at plus or minus thirty (30) percent.

## E. DIVIDEND AND ASSESSMENTS

### 1. DIVIDENDS

- a) At the end of each **fiscal year**, a dividend calculation shall be performed for all open **program years**. Each year thereafter there shall be an additional dividend calculation made until such time as the **program year** is closed. Any dividends available to be declared and returned to the **Participants** will be at the discretion of the **Board** provided that the total dividend to be distributed from all qualifying **program years** shall not reduce the total equity for all **program years** below a discounted 90% confidence level.
- b) Calculation
  - i. Dividends may not be declared from a **program year** until five years after the end of that **program year**.

- ii. Dividends may be declared only at such time as the PLP has equity, with liabilities actuarially stated discounted at a 90% confidence level. The calculated amount shall represent the maximum dividend available to be declared.
- iii. The dividend shall be reduced if any of the five succeeding program years (after the five years eligible for dividend calculation) have negative equity, in which case the **Board** will transfer equity between **program years** as it deems necessary pursuant to Section 2. (b) below, to re-establish an appropriate level of funding for the program year(s) with negative equity.
- iv. Dividends may only be declared if the equity at the expected confidence level is five times the **Limit of Coverage**.

## 2. ASSESSMENTS

- a) Assessments may be levied on the **Participants** for the risk sharing layer of any **program year(s)**, as approved by the **Board**, at such time as an actuary finds that the assets of the PLP, held for those program year(s), do not meet the expected discounted losses of the PLP. Each **Participant's** share of the assessment shall be allocated based upon the **Member Contributions** collected for the self-insured layer of each respective **program year** being assessed. If such assessment is not sufficient to relieve the pool of its actuarially determined deficit in the year of the assessment, such assessment shall be levied each subsequent year until the actuarially determined deficit is relieved. The timing of payment shall be determined by the **Board** at the time of assessment.
- b) Equity from the risk sharing layer may be exchanged between eligible **program years** if sufficient funds are available. The transfer of equity will be performed so that the individual **Participant's** share of equity is separately applied so as to maintain the integrity of each **Participant's** balance.

## F. EXCESS COVERAGE

1. The **Board** shall ensure that each **program year** is provided with excess liability coverage for the **Participants**. It is the intent and purpose of the **Authority** to continue to provide such coverage to the **Participants**, provided that such coverage can be obtained and is not unreasonably priced. This coverage may be obtained from an insurance company, by participating in another pool established under the Government Code as a joint powers authority, or offered through another PLP pooling procedure. If the coverage is purchased from an insurance company, such insurance company shall have an A.M. Best Rating Classification of A or better and an A.M. Best Financial Rating of VII or better or their equivalents.
2. Premiums for such coverage shall be paid by the PLP from the proceeds received as **Member Contributions** from the **Participants**
3. The **Board** may, from time to time, alter excess coverage based on insurance market conditions, available alternatives, costs, and other factors. The **Board** shall place excess coverage with the two competing objectives of security and minimizing costs to the PLP as a whole.

## ARTICLE IV: ADMINISTRATION

### A. BOARD

1. Discussion of developments and performance of the PLP may occur as part of any scheduled **Board** meeting.
2. The **Board** shall have the responsibility and authority to carry out and perform all functions and make all decisions affecting the PLP, consistent with the powers of the **Authority** and not in conflict with the **Agreement**, the Bylaws, or the MOC.

### B. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Executive Committee shall have the responsibility and authority to carry out and perform all other functions and make all other decisions affecting the PLP, provided that such functions and decision are consistent with the powers of the **Authority** and are not in conflict with the **Agreement**, the Bylaws, or the MOC.
2. The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice a year to review the developments and performance of this PLP. The Executive Committee shall review, study, advise, make recommendations to the **Board**, or take any action which the Committee believes to be in the best interests of the PLP and its **Participants**, provided that such action is not prohibited by law or is not an action reserved unto the **Board**.

### C. ADMINISTRATOR

The Administrator shall be responsible for:

1. The overall operation of the PLP;
2. Monitoring the status of the PLP and its operations, the development of losses, the program's administrative and operational costs, service companies' performance, and brokers' performance;
3. Assisting the **Board** in selecting brokers, actuaries, auditors, and other service companies;

4. Promoting the programs to prospective new participants;
5. Preparing, distributing, and maintaining all records of the PLP, including its MPD and MOC as these may be amended from time to time; and
6. Preparing Certificates of Coverage and Waivers of Subrogation as may be required by the **Participants** in the PLP.

#### D. DUTIES OF THE LITIGATION MANAGER

The Litigation Manager shall:

1. Control and oversee the administration and management of all general liability claims including those in litigation and shall have the authority to settle any claim as set forth herein, subject to the provisions of Article V or to reserve rights or deny coverage for a claim, subject to the **Participant's** right to appeal such coverage determinations.
2. Perform a monthly review of claims files including the new claims that are likely to exceed fifty percent (50%) of the **retained limit** of the involved **Participant** as well as those claims for which a **Participant** or the **Board** has requested a specific review;
3. Review, at least quarterly, all open claims in excess of the involved **Participant's retained limit** and, if necessary, recommend action to be taken on such claims;
4. Report to the **Board** or Executive Committee at each meeting summarizing the active claims that are of general interest to **Participants**, claims for which a **Participant** or the **Board** or Executive Committee has specifically requested a review, and also review monthly claims reports and report to the **Board** or Executive Committee any significant trends that may be developing;
5. Monitor the reporting of formal tort claims and any action to be taken as recommended by the Liability Claims Procedures Manual;

6. Assist the **Participants** in training their personnel on the statutory government tort claims filing process, including the legal effect of taking (or not taking) certain actions on the formal claim;
7. Advise, where needed, on the setting and changing of reserves for all liability claims;
8. Report to any excess insurance, reinsurance company, or excess pool, all claims that meet the reporting requirements of such excess insurance, reinsurance company, or excess pool, or that will likely exceed the Authority's **retained limit**;
9. Provide guidance to the **Third Party Administrator** on the management of complex or "problem" claims;
10. Review the performance of the **Third Party Administrator**;
11. Advise and assist the **Administrator** in the selection of a **Third Party Administrator**;
12. Recommend the amount of money to be paid on particular claims for settlement;
13. Answer inquiries from **Participants** regarding liability claims or procedures;
14. Establish, monitor and continually update a panel of outside defense attorneys and law firms who have demonstrated proficiency in defending liability actions against public agencies, including a list of attorneys who have demonstrated special expertise in certain areas of litigation;
15. Assist the **Participant** and the **Third Party Administrator** in the selection of the appropriate defense attorney and/or law firm, for claims within the **Participant's retained limit**;
16. Assist in the selection of defense counsel for each claim where the ultimate net loss, as defined in the MOC, is at least fifty percent (50%) of the involved **Participant's retained limit**;

17. Advise, where needed, on the selection of defense counsel in claims where litigation is anticipated but not yet filed;
18. Have the authority to approve or deny the assignment of any claim, whether or not in litigation, to any law firm where the **Participant's** in-house or contract city or town attorney has been or is presently employed, or any law firm which has any form of contractual relationship with the **Participant**;
19. Continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the panel defense firms and the overall management of the litigated claims, including, but not limited to, requiring the subject defense firm and/or individual defense attorney to submit their total legal billings on any one file for an independent legal bill audit as more fully outlined in the current Litigation Management Program Resolution; and
20. Provide other services as may reasonably be requested by the **Board**, Executive Committee, or a **Participant**.



## ARTICLE V: CLAIMS ADMINISTRATION

### A. CLAIMS PROCEDURES MANUAL

1. A Liability Claims Procedures Manual (Manual) including reporting procedures, forms, and other pertinent information shall be adopted by the **Board** and provided to all **Participants**.
2. All **Participants** shall follow the procedures stated in the Manual, as well as any changes thereto.

### B. CLAIMS AUDIT

1. At least once every two years, the adequacy of claims adjusting for both the **Authority** and the **Participants** shall be examined by an independent auditor who specializes in claims auditing.
2. The Executive Committee shall approve the claims auditor. The costs of such claims audit shall be paid by the **Authority**.
3. The claims audit report shall address the issues of both adequacy of claims procedures and accuracy of claims data. The report shall be filed with the **Authority** and sent to each **Participant**.

### C. CLAIM SETTLEMENT AUTHORITY

1. Each **Participant** shall have settlement authority for all claims, including attorney fees and other costs, which do not exceed 100% of the **Participant's retained limit**. The Litigation Manager will review these claims from time to time and may offer a recommendation to the **Participant's Third-Party Administrator** and the **Participant** regarding settlement. This provision does not apply to claims for bodily injury or personal injury with bodily injury component for Medicare eligible or beneficiary claimants; **Participants** shall immediately notify the Litigation Manager once a claimant has been identified as Medicare eligible or a Medicare beneficiary.

2. The Litigation Manager shall have the authority to settle any claim with an ultimate net loss equal to or less than two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) in excess of the **retained limit** of the **Participant**.
3. The Executive Committee shall have the authority to settle any claim with an ultimate net loss equal to or less than the **Limit of Coverage** for the risk sharing pool layer, combined with any reinsurance retention of the **Authority**. However, such authority shall only apply to those claims where the ultimate net loss, as defined in the PLP MOC, is in excess of the settlement authority given to the Litigation Manager and above the **retained limit** of the **Participant** involved.
4. The **Board** retains unto itself the authority to approve settlement of all other claims. However, the Executive Committee shall periodically review such claims and may make recommendations to the Board.

#### D. DISPUTES REGARDING MANAGEMENT OF CLAIM

1. Any matter in dispute between a **Participant** and the **Third Party Administrator** shall be called to the attention of the **Administrator** and heard by the Executive Committee whose decision may be appealed to the **Board** within thirty (30) days of the Committee's decision. If no appeal is filed, the decision of the Executive Committee shall be final.
2. When an appeal has been filed, the **Board** shall meet to hear the appeal. The decision of the **Board** will be final.
3. Where the Litigation Manager has the right to, and does, select legal counsel, the **Participant** for which such counsel was selected may appeal the selection to the Executive Committee. The decision of the Executive Committee shall be binding and final with no further right of appeal to the **Board**.

## ARTICLE VI: PARTICIPATION

### A. ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION

#### 1. ELIGIBILITY

- a) A new applicant must commit to at least three full **program years** of participation in this PLP.
- b) Any **Member Entity** may apply to participate in the PLP by providing an adopted resolution of its governing body and such other information/materials as may be required. The applicant's resolution shall commit the applicant to three full **program years** of participation in the PLP, if accepted, and consent to be governed for liability coverage in accordance with the MPD, the MOC and other documents and policies adopted by the **Board**. The resolution may also state the **retained limit** desired by the applicant.
- c) The application for participation shall be submitted at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the last **Board** meeting of the **program year** to ensure the **Board** has adequate time to review and evaluate the acceptability of the applicant. It is recommended that an applicant only enter the PLP at the commencement of a new **program year**. If an applicant chooses to enter the PLP at any other time, the **Member Contributions** for the remainder of the **program year** will be pro-rated. The new **Participant** will begin coverage on the date that is mutually acceptable to the new **Participant** and the **Board**; however, the new **Participant** will be required to share losses with the other **Participants** of the PLP for the entire **program year**.

## 2. APPROVAL OF APPLICATION

The **Board** shall, after reviewing the resolution and other underwriting criteria, determine the acceptability of the exposures presented by the applicant and shall advise the applicant in writing of its decision to accept or reject the request within 10 days after the decision has been made.

## B. PARTICIPANT DUTIES

1. The **Participants** shall provide payroll, using the State DE-9 form, and all other requested information in conformance with the policies adopted by the **Board**.
2. The **Participants** shall disclose activities not usual and customary in their operation.
3. The **Participants** shall at all times cooperate with the **Authority's Administrator**, Litigation Manager, **Third Party Administrator**, and loss control personnel, regarding underwriting activities of the **Authority**.
4. Each year the **Authority** shall bill **Participants** for a liability **Member Contributions** for the next **program year**. The billings shall be due and payable in accordance with the Bylaws.
5. Billings may be made to **Participants** for a **program year** found to be actuarially unsound. All billings for payments to bring a **program year** into an actuarially sound condition are due and payable upon receipt.
6. Former **Participants** in the PLP shall be required to pay all applicable billings for the **program years** in which they participated. Delinquent billings, together with penalties and interest, shall be charged and collected from the **Participant** in accordance with the Bylaws.
7. Penalties and interest shall be charged against any amounts delinquent in accordance with the Bylaws.

## C. TERMINATION

### 1. VOLUNTARY TERMINATION

- a) A **Participant** shall not be permitted to withdraw from the PLP prior to the end of its commitment period of three full **program years**, and shall be obligated for payment of Member Contributions for these three years.
- b) A **Participant** which has maintained its participation in the PLP for three full **program years** may terminate its participation if, at least six months before the next **program year**, a written request to terminate participation is received from the **Participant**.
- c) Any **Participant** seeking to terminate its participation without proper and timely notice shall be responsible for the full cost of the next **program year's** premium. The notice will be deemed effective for the **program year** following the year in which the additional premium is paid.

## 2. INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION

- a) The **Board** may initiate termination of a **Participant** from the PLP for the following reasons:
  - i. Termination as a **Member Entity** of the **Authority**;
  - ii. Declination to cover the **Participant** by the entity providing excess coverage;
  - iii. Nonpayment of Member Contributions, premiums, assessments, or other charges;
  - iv. Frequent late payment of Member Contributions, premiums, assessments, and/or other charges, subject to interest and penalty charges;
  - v. Failure to timely provide requested underwriting information;
  - vi. Consistent poor loss history relative to the pool;
  - vii. Substantial change in exposures which are not acceptable in

this PLP; and/or

- viii. Financial impairment that is likely to jeopardize this PLP's ability to collect amounts due in the future.

The Board's determination of the existence of any of these conditions shall be final.

- b) The **Board** shall have the authority, upon a two-thirds approval, to authorize a termination notice be sent to a **Participant**. Such notice shall be sent at least 60 days prior to the effective date of termination.

### 3. CONTINUED LIABILITY UPON TERMINATION

Termination of participation, whether voluntary or involuntary, in future **program years** does not relieve the terminated **Participant** of any benefits or obligations of those **program years** in which it participated. These obligations include payment of assessments, retrospective adjustments, or any other amounts due and payable.

## **ARTICLE VII: TERMINATION AND DISSOLUTION OF THE PLP**

The PLP may be terminated and dissolved any time by a vote of two-thirds of the **Participants**. However, the PLP shall continue to exist for the purpose of disposing of all claims, distributing assets, and all other functions necessary to conclude the affairs of the PLP.

Upon termination of the PLP, all assets of the PLP shall be distributed only among the **Participants**, including any of those which previously withdrew pursuant to Article VI, in accordance with and proportionate to their **Member Contributions** and assessments paid during the term of participation. The **Board** shall determine such distribution within six months after the last pending claim or loss covered by the PLP has been finally resolved and there is a reasonable expectation that no new claims will be filed.

## **ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENTS**

This MPD may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of the **Participants** present and voting at the meeting, provided prior written notice, as provided within the **Agreement**, has been given to the **Board**.



## APPENDIX A

City of American Canyon

Town of Atherton

City of Benicia

City of Burlingame

City of Campbell

Town of Colma

City of Cupertino

City of Dublin

City of East Palo Alto

City of Foster City

City of Half Moon Bay

City of Hillsborough

City of Los Altos Hills

Town of Los Gatos

City of Millbrae

City of Milpitas

City of Morgan Hill

City of Newark

City of Pacifica

Town of Portola Valley

Town of Ross

City of San Bruno

City of San Carlos

City of Saratoga

City of South San Francisco

City of Suisun City

Town of Tiburon

Town of Woodside