



Memorandum

Date: August 15, 2023

For: Lawrence Henriquez, Project Manager
Department of Public Works, 315 Maple Avenue,
South San Francisco, CA 94080
City of South San Francisco

From: Marya Samuelson, Senior Environmental Planner

Subject: South San Francisco Bridge Preventive Maintenance Program Project
Categorical Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act

Introduction

This memorandum is provided as confirmation that the maintenance improvements on nine bridges throughout South San Francisco that are part of the Bridge Preventative Maintenance Program (BPMP) (project), is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Categorical Exemptions, Section 15301, Existing Facilities (Class 1).

As specified in CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Categorical Exemptions, Section 15301, the exemption is negated by an exception under any of the following circumstances:

- a) **Location.** Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment, be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply in all instances, except where the project may impact an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.
- b) **Cumulative Impact.** All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time, is significant.
- c) **Significant Effect.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.
- d) **Scenic Highways.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified Environmental Impact Report (EIR).
- e) **Hazardous Waste Sites.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.
- f) **Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Background

Project Background

The City of South San Francisco (City), in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), proposes to conduct bridge maintenance improvements on several bridges as part of its BPMP due to deterioration of the bridge decks, joint seals, barriers/railings, and/or concrete surfaces (project). Other improvements of work proposed would consist of minor repair and rehabilitation of railings, repair concrete spalling, adding cathodic protection to reinforced concrete columns, injecting concrete cracks with epoxy, and the replacement of some concrete barriers. The purpose of the project is to extend the life of the City's bridges by performing certain activities that have been pre-approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The City is located in San Mateo County. The project includes nine bridges: Colma Creek Bridge at Produce Avenue (Bridge #35C0021), Colma Canal Bridge at Linden Avenue (Bridge #35C0031), San Bruno Canal Bridge at North Access Road (Bridge #35C0047), Colma Creek Bridge at Spruce Avenue (Bridge #35C0078), Colma Creek Bridge at Chestnut Avenue (Bridge #35C0079), Colma Creek Bridge at Utah Avenue (Bridge #35C0101), San Bruno Bridge at North Access Road (Bridge #35C0046), Dunman Way over Hickey Boulevard (Bridge #35C0032), and Oyster Point Boulevard over Caltrain and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) (Bridge #35C0173) (project area) (please refer to **Attachment A**, Project Location).

The project is listed in the Metropolitan Transportation Commission Federal Transportation Improvement Program 2023 on Page 83 of the 2020/21 – 2025/26 Highway Bridge Program. The General Plan is the local government's long-term blueprint for the community's vision of future growth and consists of the following elements: Land Use; Planning Sub-Areas; Transportation; Parks, Public Facilities, and Services; Economic Development; Open Space and Conservation; Health and Safety; and Noise. The City is in the process of updating the existing General Plan with *Shape SSF 2040*. Through *Shape SSF 2040*, the City seeks to implement the following principles: Affordable, Safe, Attractive, Amenity-Rich Neighborhoods; High-Quality and Accessible Services, Facilities, and Amenities for Residents at All Stages of Their Lives; A Safe, Convenient, and Accessible Transportation Network Well-Connected to the Region; A Resilient Community; and A Prosperous Downtown + Local Economy (City of South San Francisco, 2020).

The City is the CEQA lead agency and Caltrans, under the authority delegated by the FHWA, is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) lead agency for the project. Construction for the project is anticipated to begin in May 2025.

Existing Bridges

In a valley situated between San Bruno Mountain to the north, Santa Cruz Mountains to the west and south, and San Francisco Bay to the east, the City is generally flat with a few notable landforms including Sign Hill Park and San Bruno Mountain. The project area includes Colma Creek and San Bruno Creek, which are tidally influenced streams that flow to San Francisco Bay. Within the project area, the banks of Colma Creek and San Bruno Creek are moderately sloped toward the top of the bridges. The slope gradually becomes steeper from top of bank to the mud streambed exposed at low tide. The surrounding area is primarily developed, including roads, highways, concrete barriers, and the San Francisco Bay Trail. Vegetation in and around the project area includes a mix of native and non-native communities including ornamental landscaping in the developed areas and native species and non-native along Colma Creek and San Bruno Creek.

Findings and Conclusions

a. Location.

A Class 1 exemption is defined as the operation, repair maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The project is a safety project that would improve bridges within the project areas by repairing railing, concrete barriers, cleaning impacted joints, replacing the joint seals, cleaning the bridge deck and treating the bridge deck surface, and sealing and repairing extensive cracks. Since this project is minimally altering, upgrading, and adding safety devices to an existing public facility, the project classifies as a Class 1 Existing Facility exemption (CEQA Guidelines, Article 19, Categorical Exemptions, Section 15301). The project is not Class 3, 4, 5, 6, or 11 exemption applicable; therefore, this exception would not apply.

b. Cumulative Impact.

This exception applies when, although a particular project may not have a significant impact, the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant. In this case, the project would not result in any impacts that are cumulatively considerable; therefore, this exception would not apply.

c. Significant Effect.

This exception applies when, although the project may otherwise be exempt, there is a reasonable possibility that the project would have a significant effect due to unusual circumstances. The project would not include any permanent right of way acquisition, impact an environmentally sensitive area, require full road closures, create excessive noise, encroach on wetlands or waterways, alter the views from the adjacent roadways or the existing visual setting, or encroach on tribal land. The City will also undertake avoidance and minimization measures during project activities to reduce environmental impacts during construction. There is not a reasonable possibility that the project could have a significant effect on the environment; therefore, this exception would not apply.

d. Scenic Highways.

A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. The project includes improvements that are minor and would not be perceivable after construction. The project is not within the state or county scenic highways system (California Department of Transportation, 2023). Therefore, this exception would not apply.

e. Hazardous Waste Sites.

This exception applies when a project is located on a site listed as a hazardous waste site under Government Code Section 65962.5. According to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) GeoTracker database and the California Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC), there are sites within a half-mile of the project area as described below.

Colma Creek Bridge at Produce Avenue (Bridge #35C0021), there are 79 total hazardous waste/materials sites. Hazards included 64 Permitted Underground Storage Tank (UST) sites, including 56 closed cases and eight open cases. There are also two Leaking Underground Storage Tanks (LUST), with both being open cases. In addition, there are 13 Cleanup Program Sites, with six closed cases and seven open cases within a half-mile of the project area (State Water Resources Control Board, 2023) (please refer to **Attachment B**, Hazardous Waste Sites).

Colma Canal Bridge at Linden Avenue (Bridge #35C0031), there are 89 total hazardous waste/materials sites. Hazards included 72 Permitted UST sites, including 62 closed cases and 10 open cases. There are also two LUST, with both being open cases. In addition, there are 15 Cleanup Program Sites, with seven closed cases and eight open cases within a half-mile of the project area (State Water Resources Control Board, 2023) (see **Attachment B**, Hazardous Waste Sites).

San Bruno Canal Bridge at North Access Road (Bridge #35C0047), there are 24 total hazardous waste/materials sites. Hazards included 16 Permitted UST sites, including 13 closed cases and three open cases. In addition, there are eight Cleanup Program Sites, with five closed cases and three open cases within a half-mile of the project area (State Water Resources Control Board, 2023) (see **Attachment B**, Hazardous Waste Sites).

Colma Creek Bridge at Spruce Avenue (Bridge #35C0078), there are 55 total hazardous waste/materials sites. Hazards included 44 Permitted UST sites, including 39 closed cases and five open cases. There are also two LUST, with both being open cases. In addition, there are nine Cleanup Program Sites, with five closed cases and four open cases within a half-mile of the project area (State Water Resources Control Board, 2023) (see **Attachment B**, Hazardous Waste Sites).

Colma Creek Bridge at Chestnut Avenue (Bridge #35C0079), there are 30 total hazardous waste/materials sites. Hazards included 18 Permitted UST sites, including 13 closed cases and five open cases. There are also one LUST, that is an open case. In addition, there are 11 Cleanup Program Sites, with five closed cases and six open cases within a half-mile of the project area (State Water Resources Control Board, 2023) (see **Attachment B**, Hazardous Waste Sites).

Colma Creek Bridge at Utah Avenue (Bridge #35C0101), there are 51 total hazardous waste/materials sites. Hazards included 45 Permitted UST sites, including 37 closed cases and eight open cases. In addition, there are six Cleanup Program Sites, with three closed cases and three open cases within a half-mile of the project area (State Water Resources Control Board, 2023) (see **Attachment B**, Hazardous Waste Sites).

San Bruno Bridge at North Access Road (Bridge #35C0046), there are 46 total hazardous waste/materials sites. Hazards included 38 Permitted UST sites, including 31 closed cases and eight open cases. In addition, there are eight Cleanup Program Sites, with four closed cases and four open cases within a half-mile of the project area (State Water Resources Control Board, 2023) (see **Attachment B**, Hazardous Waste Sites).

Dunman Way over Hickey Boulevard (Bridge #35C0032), there are a total of seven hazardous waste/materials sites. Amongst these all are Permitted UST sites, including six closed cases and one open case (State Water Resources Control Board, 2023) (see **Attachment B**, Hazardous Waste Sites).

Oyster Point Boulevard over Caltrain and UPRR (Union Pacific Railroad) (Bridge #35C0173), there are 21 total hazardous waste/materials sites. Hazards included 14 Permitted UST sites, including 13 closed cases and one open case. In addition, there are seven Cleanup Program Sites, with four closed cases and three open cases within a half-mile of the project area (State Water Resources Control Board, 2023) (see **Attachment B**, Hazardous Waste Sites).

Since the project area for each of the nine bridges is not located on a site listed as a hazardous waste site under Government Code Section 65962.5, this exception would not apply.

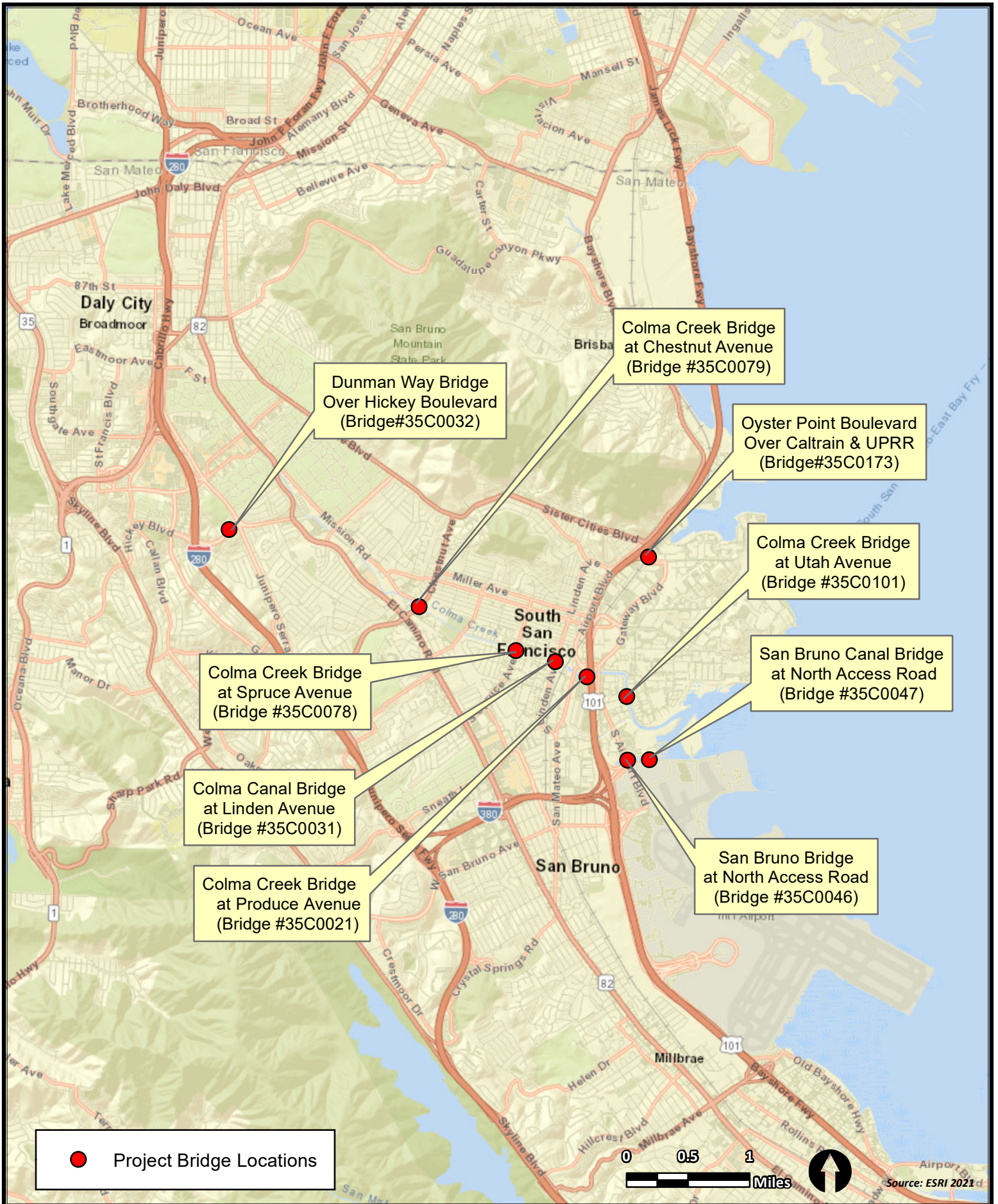
f. Historical Resources.

This exception applies when a project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. There is a Section 4(f) resource in the vicinity of the project area. A portion of the

San Francisco Bay Trail is located within 50 feet of two of the bridges but would not be impacted by the proposed improvements of the project. Since the project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, this exception would not apply.

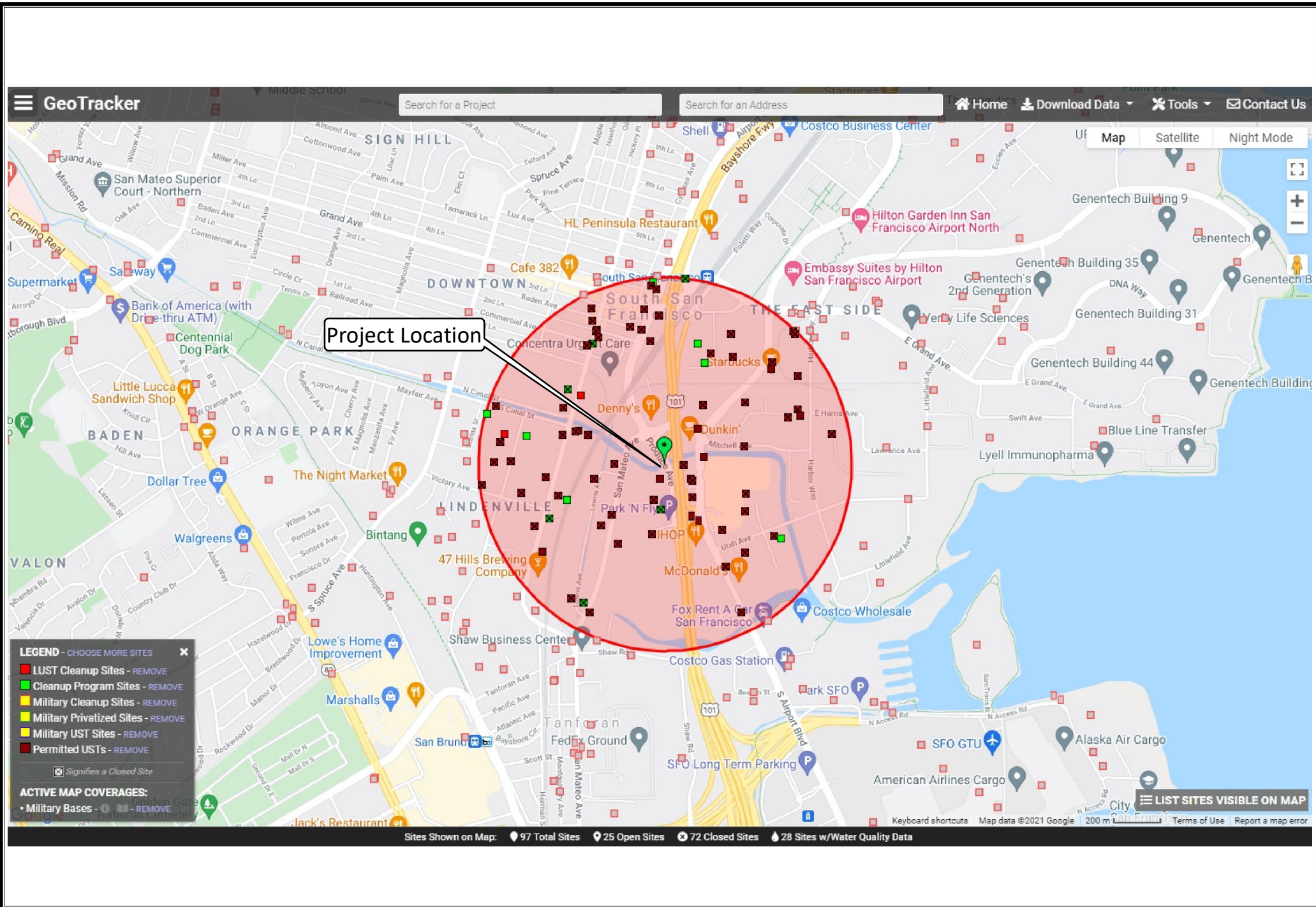
- California Department of Transportation. (2023). *California State Scenic Highway System Map*. Retrieved from <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2e921695c43643b1aaf7000dfcc19983>
- City of South San Francisco. (2020). *Shape SSF 2040 General Plan- Community Vision for the Future*. Retrieved from <https://shapessf.com/vision/>
- State Water Resources Control Board. (2023). *Hazardous Waste and Materials Geotracker*. Retrieved from <http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov>.

Attachment A Project Location



Attachment A. PROJECT LOCATION South San Francisco BPMP Project

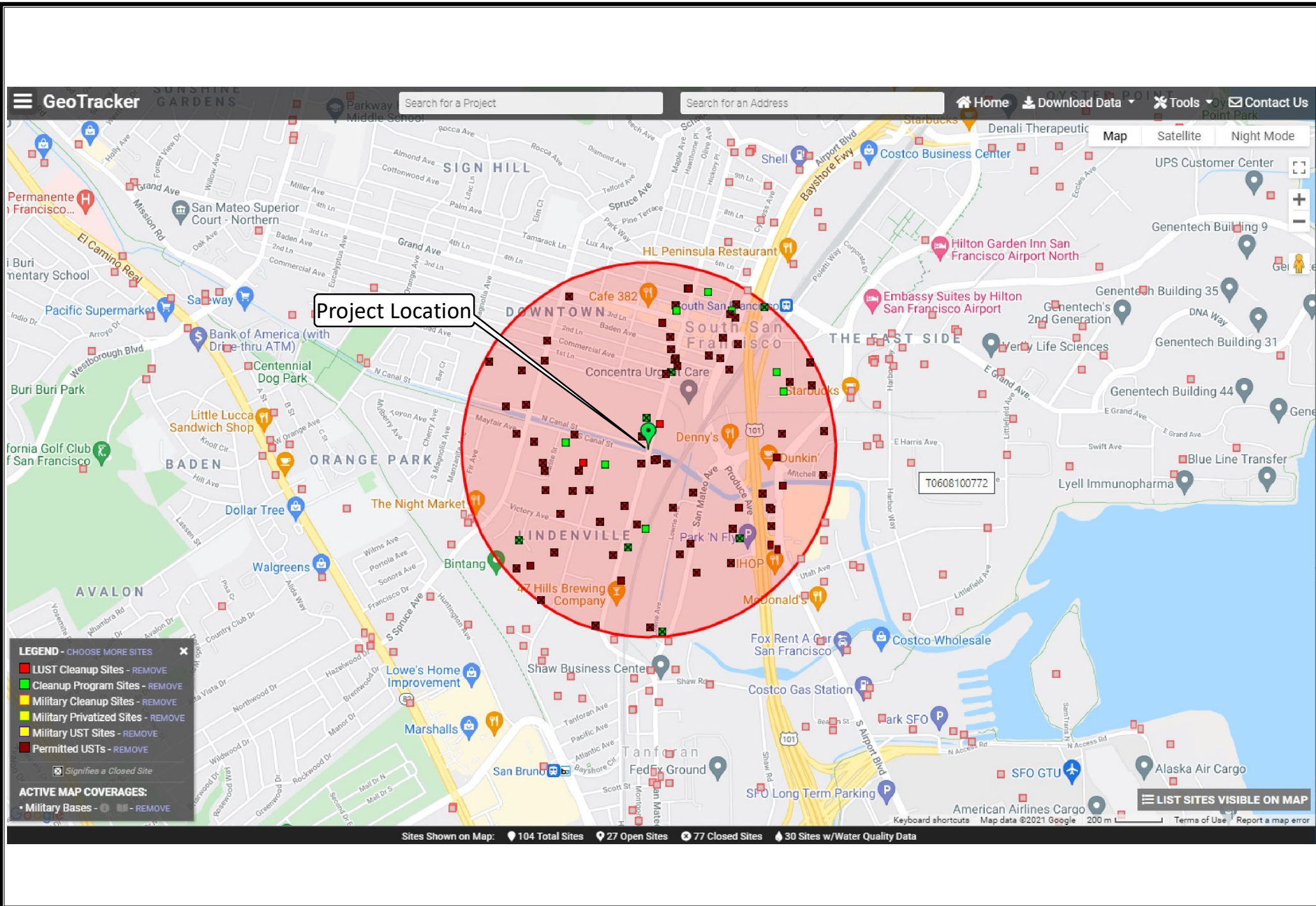
Attachment B Hazardous Materials Sites



Sources: CA State Water Resources Control Board 2021; ESRI 2021.

ATTACHMENT B. HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES WITHIN ONE-HALF MILE (Bridge # 35C0021 – Produce Ave.)

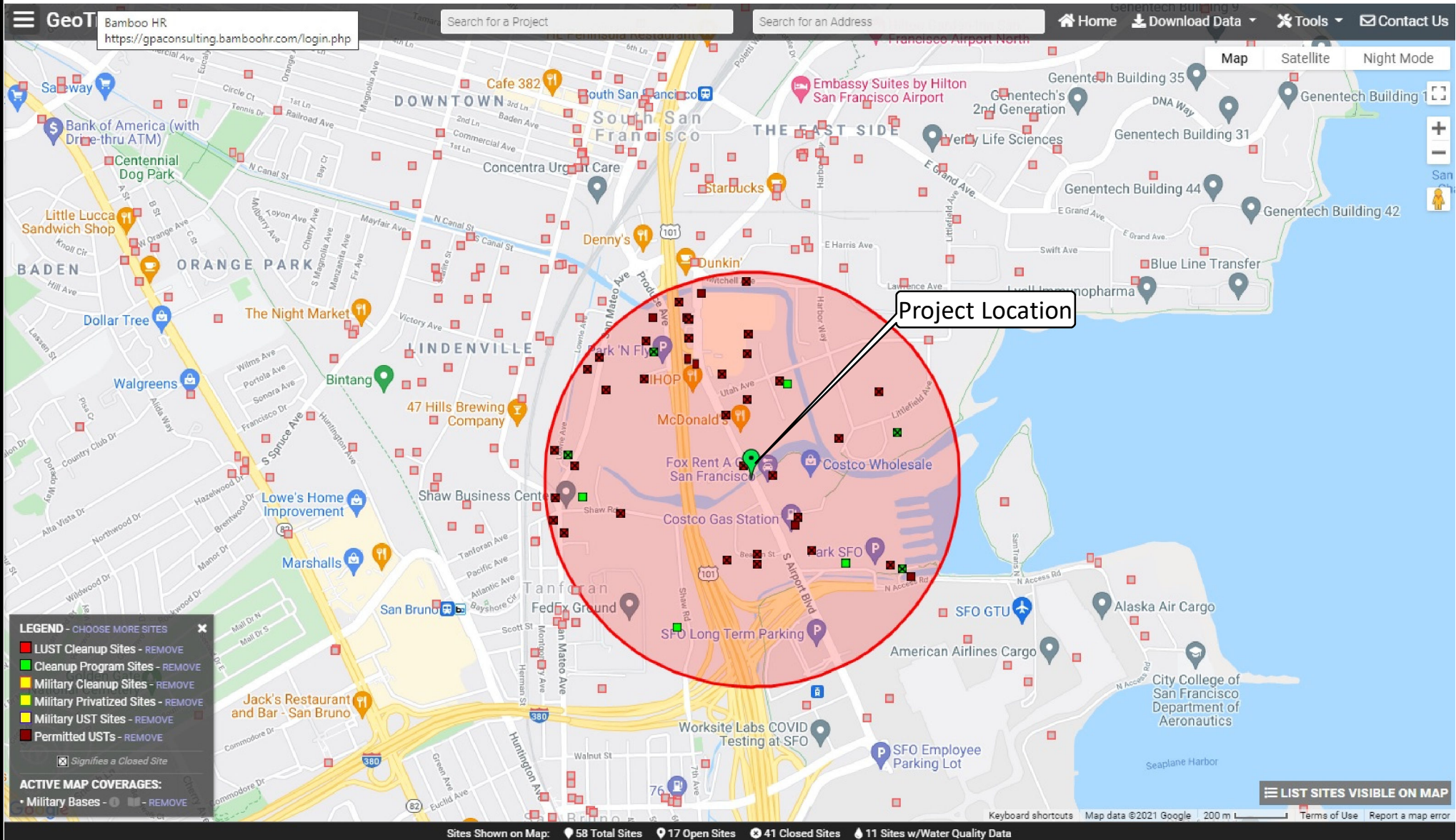
South San Francisco BPMP Project



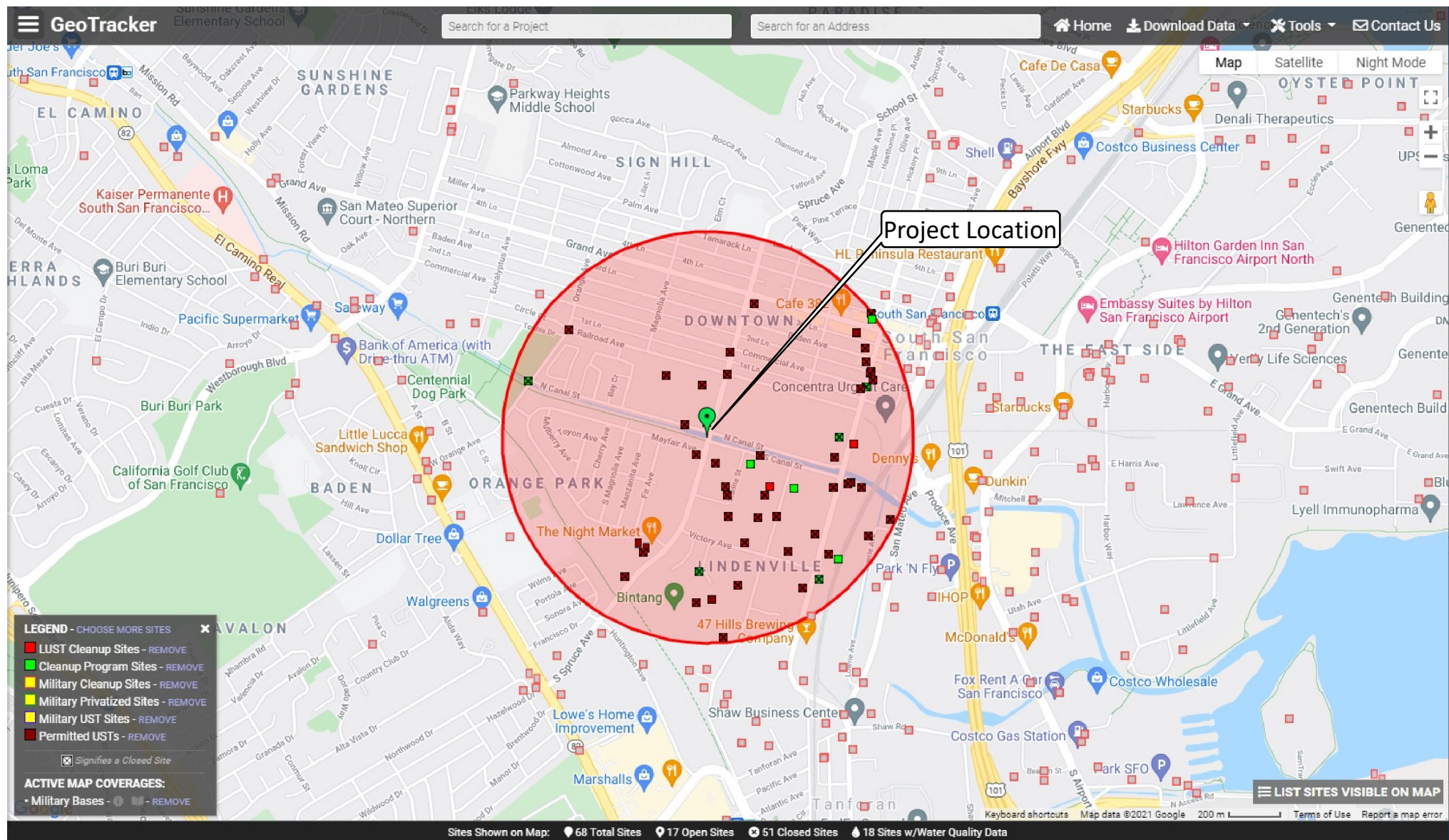
Sources: CA State Water Resources Control Board 2021; ESRI 2021.

ATTACHMENT B. HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES WITHIN ONE-HALF MILE (Bridge # 35C0031 – Linden Ave.)

South San Francisco BPMP Project



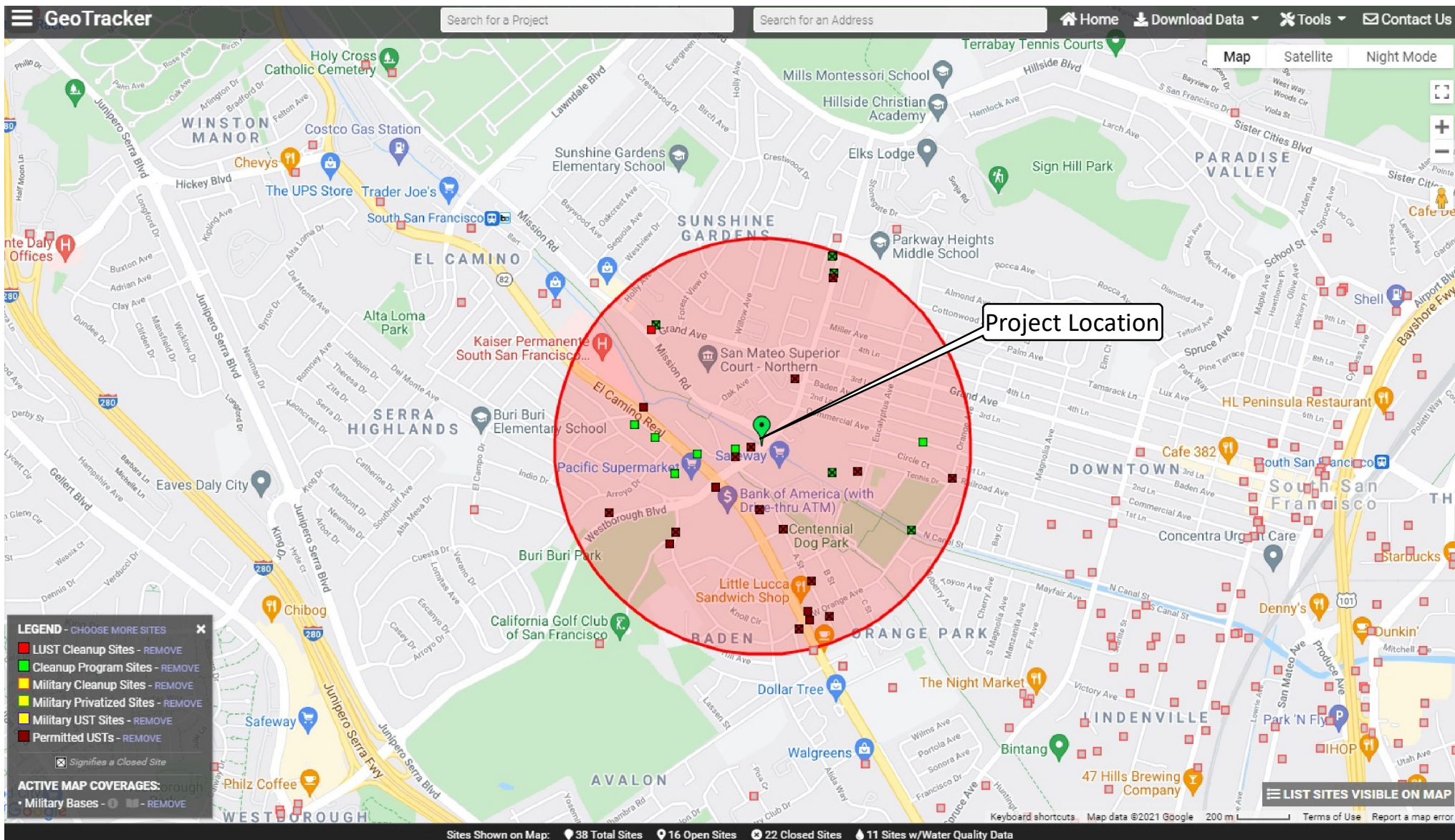
Sources: CA State Water Resources Control Board 2021; ESRI 2021.



Sources: CA State Water Resources Control Board 2021; ESRI 2021.

ATTACHMENT B. HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES WITHIN ONE-HALF MILE (Bridge # 35C0078 – Spruce Ave.)

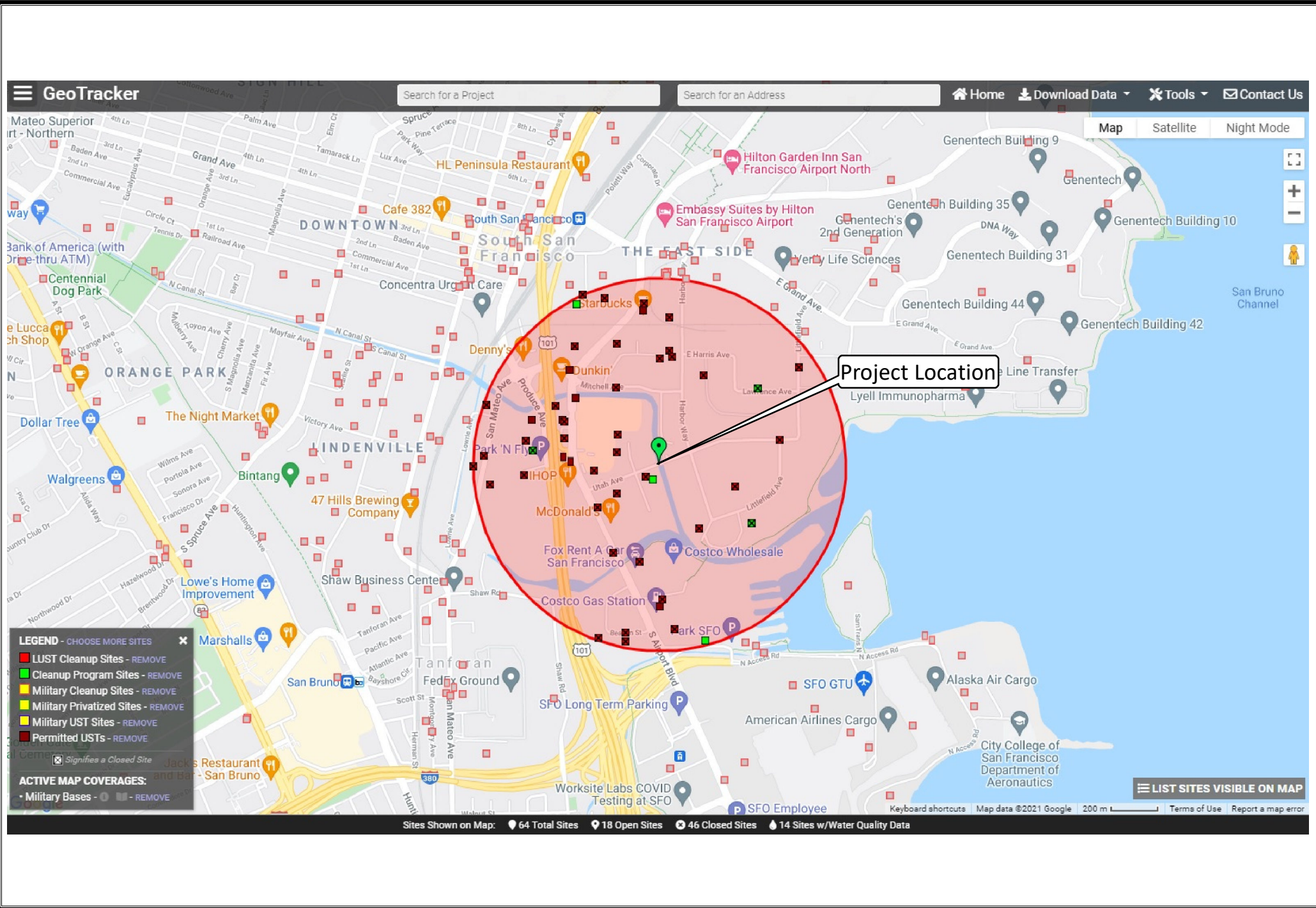
South San Francisco BPMP Project



Sources: CA State Water Resources Control Board 2021; ESRI 2021.

ATTACHMENT B. HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES WITHIN ONE-HALF MILE (Bridge # 35C0079 – Chestnut Ave.)

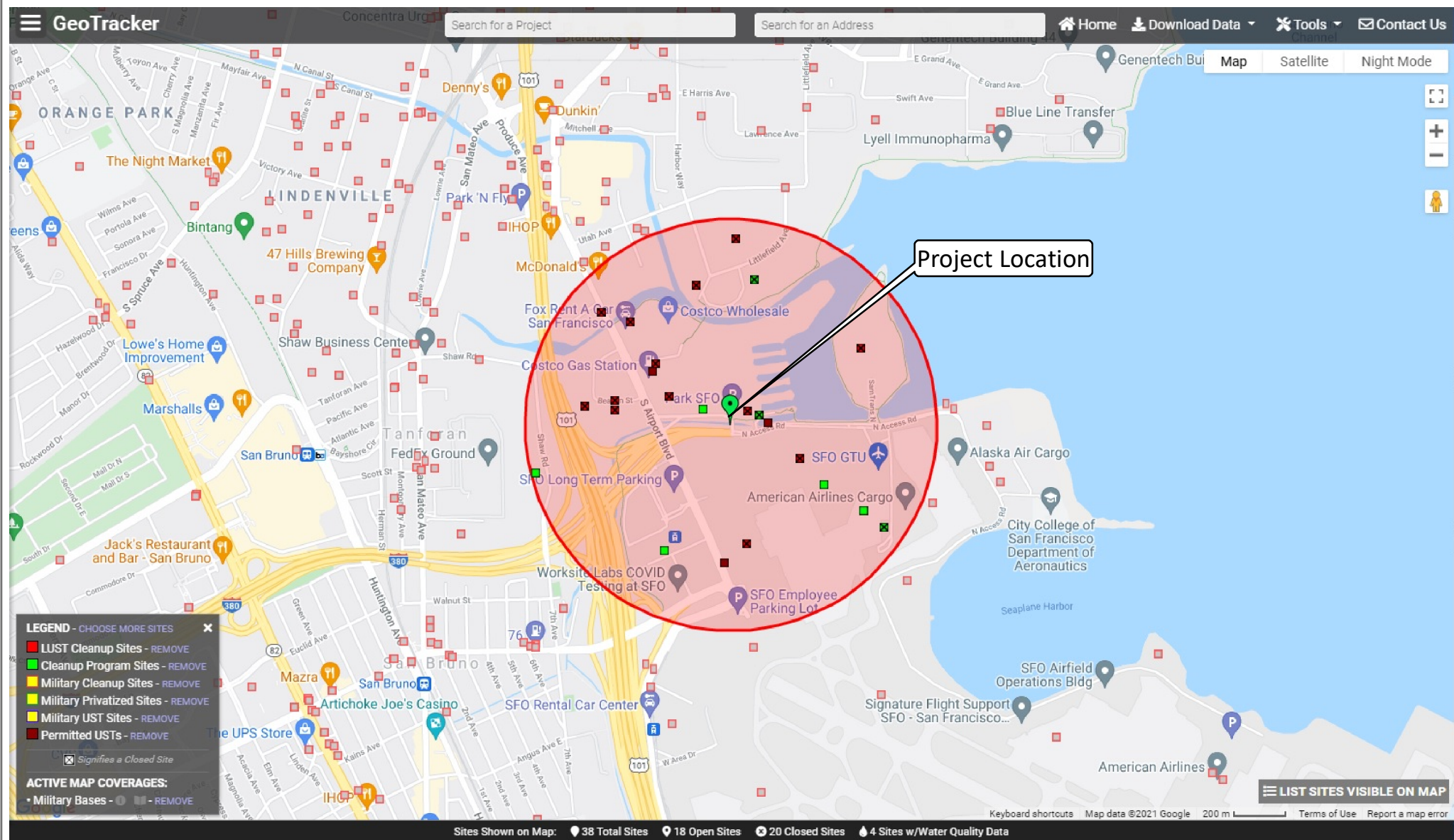
South San Francisco BPMP Project



Sources: CA State Water Resources Control Board 2021; ESRI 2021.

**ATTACHMENT B. HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES WITHIN ONE-HALF MILE
(Bridge # 35C0101 – Utah Ave.)**

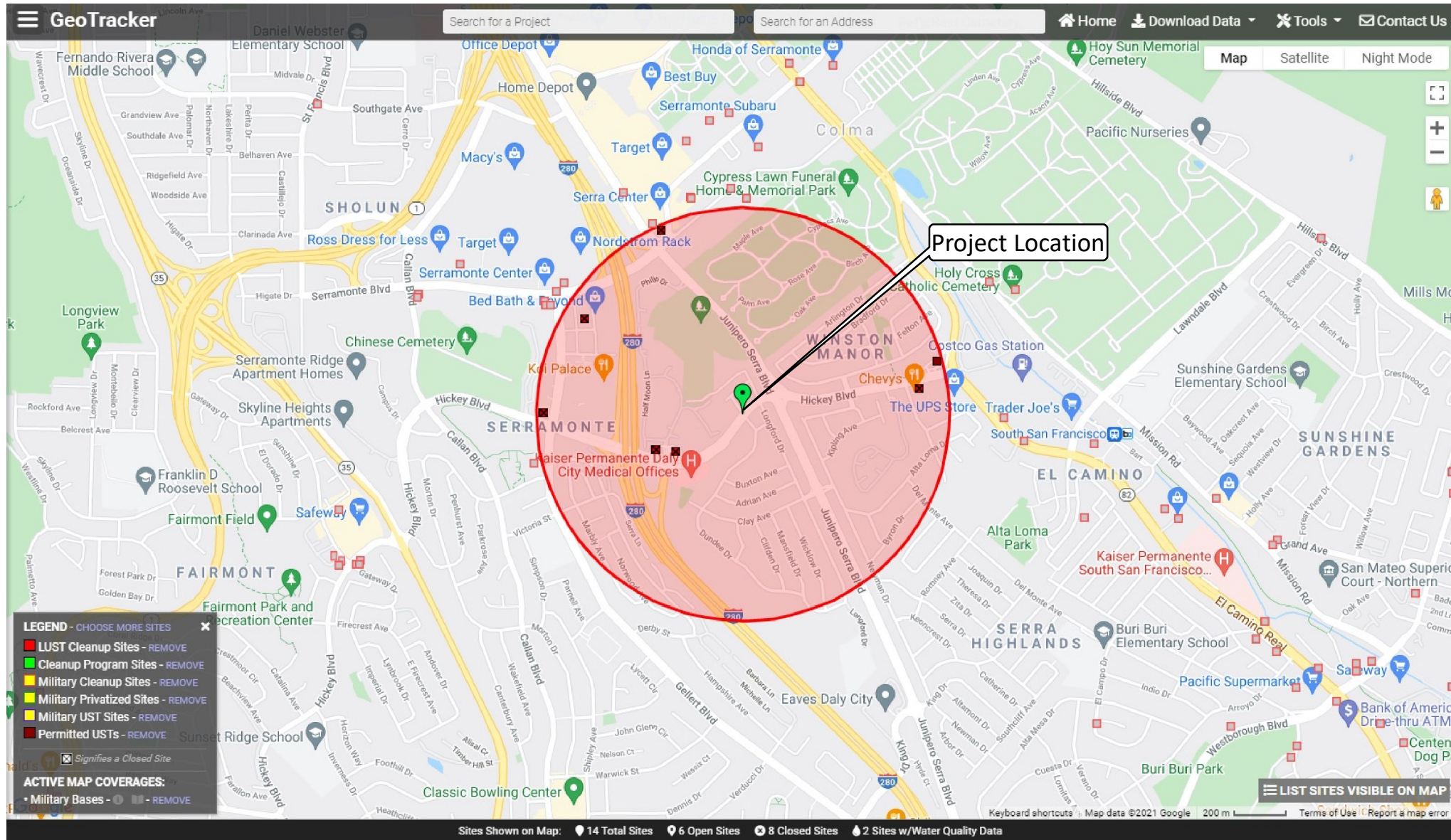
South San Francisco BPMP



Sources: CA State Water Resources Control Board 2021; ESRI 2021.

ATTACHMENT B. HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES WITHIN ONE-HALF MILE (Bridge # 35C0047 – North Access Rd.)

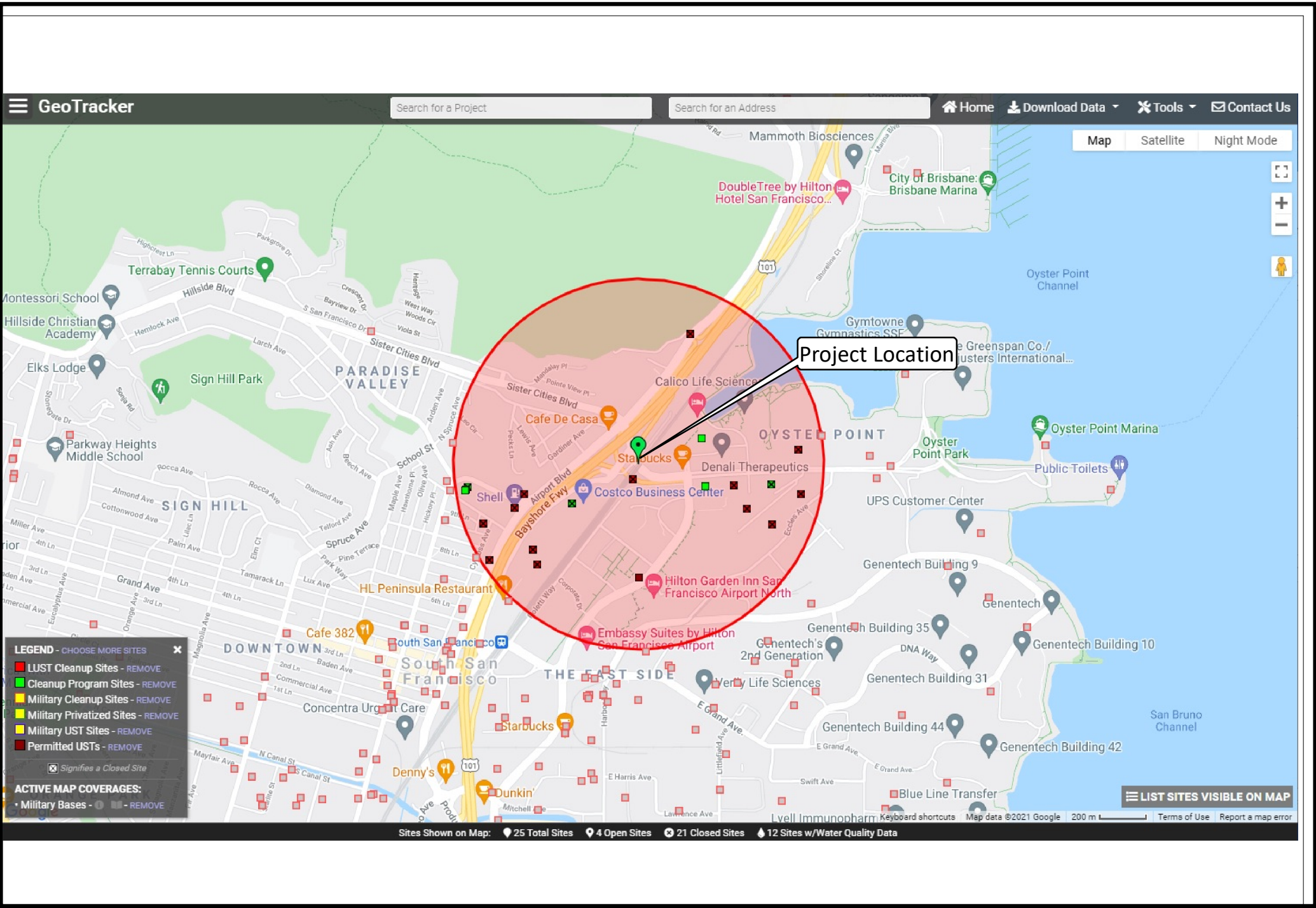
South San Francisco BPMP Project



Sources: CA State Water Resources Control Board 2021; ESRI 2021.

**ATTACHMENT B. HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES WITHIN ONE-HALF MILE
(Bridge # 35C0032 – Dunman St.)**

South San Francisco BPMP Project



Sources: CA State Water Resources Control Board 2021; ESRI 2021.