

CONTENTS OF THE GENERAL PLAN

California State law requires all cities and counties to have a long-range plan for their physical development. A General Plan is, in its simplest form, a statement by local citizens of what is in the best interests of their community. A General Plan is the City's statement of its vision for its own future. This view of the future is a compilation of a system of basic community values, ideals, and aspirations as to how both its natural and manmade environments should be organized and managed.

The General Plan functions as a guide to the type of community that is desired for the future and provides the means by which the community may achieve that desired future. The plan expresses in text and in map form the organization of physical, economic, and social activities sought by the community to create and maintain a functional, healthful, and desirable place in which to live.

Local agencies, including cities and counties, are required by State law to adopt General Plans. Section 65300 of the California Government Code states:

Each planning agency shall prepare and the legislative body shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and of any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgement bears relation to its planning.

Section 65302 of the California Government Code requires that General Plans contain seven elements, or sections, addressing specified issues. However, a General Plan need not be organized into these seven elements, as long as the issues required by state law are discussed within the document. The seven elements required by the state are:

1. Land Use Element — designates the general distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings and grounds, and other categories of public infrastructure and private use.
2. Circulation Element — identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major roads, highways, railroad and transit routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and public facilities.