

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 interest 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 State 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 judgment bears relation to its planning.

Section 65302 of the California Government Code requires the General Plan contain seven elements, or sections, addressing specific 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 the 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.
3. Housing Element – identifies existing and projected housing needs and establishes goals, policies and programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing to meet the needs of all economic segments of the community.

4. Conservation Element – provides for the conservation, development, and use of natural resources, such as water, forests, soils, rivers, lakes, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, and minerals.
5. Open Space Element – details plans and measures for the preservation of open space for natural resources, for the managed production of resources, for outdoor recreation, and for public health and safety.
6. Noise Element – examines noise sources, yielding information to be used in setting land use policies for compatible uses and for developing and enforcing a local noise ordinance.
7. Safety Element – establishes standards and plans for the protection of the community from flood, geologic and seismic hazards.
8. Growth Management Element – mandates that growth and development be based on the City's ability to provide an adequate traffic circulation system and related public facilities.

CURRENT VILLA PARK GENERAL PLAN

The City's General Plan was last comprehensively updated in 1991. That plan did fulfill all current requirements of State planning law, with the exception of the Housing Element. However, the City Council and staff determined that a comprehensive revision should be initiated. It is the intent of the 2008 General Plan revision to achieve the following objectives:

- Update the data contained in the previously adopted elements.
- Maintain internal consistency among all elements of the General Plan.
- Revise Goals, Policies and Programs as needed to reflect changing conditions.
- Incorporate new provisions and requirements of State law.

BACKGROUND

Villa Park's Rural Heritage

In the early 1960s, the residents of Villa Park felt that the character of their distinctive community was being threatened. As a result, the established families of the community organized the City's incorporation to preserve its rural atmosphere and to save the area from what they felt were unwelcome zoning practices from the eastward expansion of City of Orange. On January 11, 1962 the City was officially incorporated.

Prior to incorporation and for decades after communities throughout Orange County, fueled by a burgeoning regional economy, were experiencing sprawling growth resulting from pressures for development from the larger core cities. Previously distinct cities were blending together into undistinguishable and crowded suburbs. Villa Park was perhaps the first city in the region to act to protect its single-family residential community and rural small-town heritage. In 1962 the City Council established a master land use plan which has been embraced by its residents for the past 40 years. Continuing the City's historic past, this General Plan update will preserve the quality and integrity of Villa Park's rural single family community for the next 25 years. Critical to maintaining the "Hidden Jewel" of Villa Park will be the continued cooperation of the City with the County and neighboring municipalities by proactively planning for compatible and consistent development and land uses, promoted by the various policies and goals stated within the plan.

Community Character & Identity

Villa Park is the smallest overall city in Orange County and most people who know it think of it as a friendly small town. The City's small-town character, with its intrinsic unique qualities, is important to Villa Park's identity. Key elements that characterize Villa Park's small-town qualities are its stable, established, and friendly neighborhoods, the mixture of housing types and sizes, local award-winning schools, a traditional neighborhood shopping center, lack of street lights, sidewalks, and presence of a city-wide recreational trail system. Villa Park maintains a significant and unique resource in its active volunteer community whose participation in civic affairs is visible throughout the City in almost every aspect. Such residential spirit and energetic participation distinguishes the community from other surrounding suburban cities.

Description of Population

According to a comparison of the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census data, the population of Villa Park declined six (6%) percent from 6,299 in 1990 to 5,932 in the year 2000. Recently, for 2007, the population estimate by the State of California Department of Finance reports Villa Park's population as 6,251. Villa Park is essentially built out and the consistency in population is indicative of few new housing units and very stable population demographics.

Additional population characteristics described in the 2000 census and the 2007 State of California Department of Finance are listed in **Table I-1**, entitled Villa Park Population Characteristics.

**Table I-1
VILLA PARK POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS**

	1990 US Census		2000 US Census		2007*
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Median Age (Years)	N/A		43.3		N/A
Age Distribution					
Under 5 Years	251	4%	243	4.1%	N/A
5-19	1,465	23.3%	1,378	23.2%	N/A
20-44	1,978	31.4%	1,517	25.6%	N/A
45-64	2,172	34.4%	1,922	32.4%	N/A
65 and Over	433	6.9%	872	14.7%	N/A
Total	6,299	100%	5,999	100%	6,251
Total Housing Units	1966		1,929		2,021
Average Household Size	3.30		3.07		3.17
Average Family Size	N/A		3.22		N/A

*State of California, Department of Finance

Villa Park will add relatively few primary housing units in the next twenty-five years and therefore its population will remain very stable. Fluctuations will more so come from changes in family size or demographic. Changes that include larger family sizes within primary residential units are expected. Additionally, the construction of secondary dwelling units for either family or rental use will add residents. Overall, the City will remain well under 7,000 residents based on its size and land use constraints.