



1

OPR General Plan Guidelines

A Presentation to the City of Fresno General Plan Review Committee

January 21, 2020

Erik de Kok, AICP
Senior Planning Advisor
Governor's Office of Planning and Research



Office of Planning & Research (OPR)

2

- State Land Use Policy
- General Plan Guidelines
- CEQA Guidelines
- Military Liaison
- Technical Advisories
- Interagency Coordination
- Executive Initiatives
- Within OPR:
 - Strategic Growth Council
 - Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program
 - Technical Advisory Council
 - Adaptation Clearinghouse
 - CEQA Clearinghouse





Background

3

- Every city and county in California is required to have a General Plan- a long term vision for their future growth and development;
- The Office of Planning and Research provides guidelines for cities and counties on general plans, including statutory requirements and non-statutory guidelines;
- General Plan Guidelines were updated comprehensively in 2017 to reflect new laws, requirements, resources, and research;
- Incorporate State planning priorities with local needs: Promote infill and compact development, protect natural and working lands, develop in an efficient manner
- Increased focus on consistency requirements with other planning activities and General Plan (specific plans, area plans, etc)
- Periodic updates of the General Plan Guidelines will be completed



General Plan Guidelines

4

Required Elements

- Land use
- Circulation
- Housing
- Conservation
- Open Space
- Noise
- Safety
- Air Quality*
- Environmental Justice*

New Chapters

- Public Engagement
- Healthy communities
- Climate Change
- Economic Development
- Social Equity/Resilience



Community Engagement and Outreach

5

3

Community Engagement and Outreach

Designing Healthy, Equitable, Resilient, and Economically Vibrant Places

"Cities (and counties) have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody."

—Jane Jacobs

Introduction

Robust and inclusive community engagement is a vital component of drafting and updating a general plan. State law requires the planning agency to provide opportunities for the involvement of the community. Such involvement should include public agencies, public utility companies, community groups, and others through hearings or other appropriate methods (§ 65551). The law also requires that a jurisdiction make a diligent effort to include all economic groups when drafting, adopting and implementing its housing element (§ 65583(c)(8)). For the purposes of this chapter, the term "update" will refer to adoption of new general plans as well as amendments to existing plans.

By law, cities and counties must hold at least two public hearings before adopting a general plan: one by the planning commission and another by the legislative body (either the city council or the board of supervisors) (§65353(a), §65355). Government Code section 65351 requires that during the preparation or amendment of a general plan, the planning agency must provide opportunities for community input through public hearings and any other means the planning agency deems appropriate. Specifically, Government Code section 65351 requires that the planning agency shall "provide opportunities for the involvement of citizens, California Native American tribes, public agencies, public utility companies, and civic, education, and other community groups." Government Code section 65357 requires that copies of the documents adopting or amending a general plan, including the diagrams and text, shall be made available to the public. The courts have found a general plan amendment invalid when it was not made available to the public (*City of Poway v. City of San Diego* (1991) 229 Cal.App. 3d 847, 861.) Most planning departments, however, conduct more than the minimal number of hearings. Many jurisdictions undertake extensive outreach that exceeds the minimum statutory requirements. The spectrum of community engagement ranges from informing and consulting the public to involving, collaborating, and ultimately empowering local communities.¹

- ❑ Design process to include engagement from start to end
- ❑ Advisory boards and novel ways to integrate partners
- ❑ Culture and equity considerations
- ❑ Data/resources
- ❑ Tools



Land Use

6

4

Land Use Element

Introduction

The most fundamental decisions in planning begin with land use: what to put where. Land use planning envisions the future of a city or county and interacts with all other elements of planning. At its best, the land use element will reflect the community's vision; promote thoughtful, equitable, and accessible distribution of different land uses, including residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and open space; and align well with other general plan elements. Planners can also use the land use element as a tool to improve [public health](#), reduce infrastructure costs, enhance [local economies](#), and address long-term environmental issues such as [climate change](#) and water resources.

The land use element can also help resolve conflicts and identify trade-offs in land use decisions. For example, increasing density may result in a higher population, but it can also help enhance water supply reliability, reduce long-term costs of infrastructure maintenance, improve water use efficiency, land conservation, housing and transit options, and equity. Designating "least-conflict" areas for solar development may increase energy independence and generate local economic benefits while also preserving valuable agricultural lands. Pursuing [urban infill](#) projects may require higher intensity development directed at a limited number of parcels varying in suitability, but infill may also allow for more accessible transit and walkability thus reducing vehicle miles traveled and subsequent greenhouse gas emissions. Identifying and resolving such issues in the land use element can result in development patterns that are predictable, coherent, and reflect community values.

Gov. Code § 65302 (a) A land use element that designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, greenways as defined in Section 816.52 of the Civil Code and other categories of public and private uses of land. The location and designation of the extent of the uses of the land for public and private uses shall consider the identification of land and natural resources pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (d). The land use element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan. The land use element shall identify and annually review those areas covered by the plan that are subject to flooding identified by flood plain mapping prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or the Department of Water Resources. The land use element shall also do both of the following:

(1) Designate in a land use category that provides for timber production those parcels of real property zoned for timberland production pursuant to the California Timberland Productivity Act of 1982 (Chapter 6.7 (commencing with Section 51100) of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 5).

- ❑ Expanded information on form-based codes
- ❑ Examples of land use maps and diagrams
- ❑ Expanded information on school siting
- ❑ Military compatibility
- ❑ New section on waste management
- ❑ Live links and examples



Circulation

7

4

Circulation Element

Introduction

The circulation element is not simply a transportation plan, but rather a strategy addressing infrastructure needs for the circulation of people, goods, energy, water, sewage, storm drainage, and communications. By [statute](#), the circulation element must correlate directly with the [land use](#) element, but also has direct relationships with other elements. The provisions of a circulation element affect a community's physical, social, and [economic](#) environment, as well as its [health](#). The passage of SB 1000 in 2016 requires local governments to address [environmental justice](#) considerations related to circulation—such as access to transportation systems, air quality related to transportation, delivery routes and transit options for nutritional food access, and promotion of physical activity—upon the next revision of two or more elements in their general plan after January 1, 2018.

Government Code Section 65302 (b)

- (1) A circulation element consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, any military airports and ports, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the plan.
- (2) (A) Commencing January 1, 2011, upon any substantive revision of the circulation element, the legislative body shall modify the circulation element to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways for safe and convenient travel in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, or urban context of the general plan.
- (B) For purposes of this paragraph, “users of streets, roads, and highways” mean bicyclists, children, persons with disabilities, motorists, movers of commercial goods, pedestrians, users of public transportation, and seniors.

Transportation systems are essential to any city or county and its economy, and can be designed to enhance opportunity and improve equity. However, the implementation and maintenance of infrastructure and resources is costly, impacts the environment, and affects human health. Transportation planning in California is rapidly changing, driven by a number of key factors:

- An increasing focus on access to destinations (connectivity) rather than just mobility, and transportation solutions involving proximity that better accomplish livability and environmental goals

- Updated guidance on LOS and VMT, including new safety appendix
- Extended discussion on relationship to land use
- New section on considerations of trade-offs
- Expanded guidance on parking, active transportation, and complete streets, with links to resources



Air Quality

8

4

Air Quality

Introduction

Chronic exposure to air pollutants is a serious health risk to millions of California residents, particularly the young, elderly, and people with heart disease and respiratory problems. Safeguarding public health has been the primary focus of federal and state air quality legislation and activities for many years. Air pollution also impacts local economies by damaging agricultural crops, natural vegetation, buildings, and other exposed materials. In addition, the economic health of an area may be affected adversely if insufficient air quality improvement triggers more stringent federally mandated air pollution controls. Air pollution also can impair visibility and obscure views. Cities and counties should strive to reduce emissions for the benefit of both their own residents and those of other communities in their region and the state as a whole. Air quality can be greatly improved through a multi-prong approach.

Local jurisdictions have responsibility for land use planning and can also significantly affect the design, creation, and management of development and the local circulation system. While air pollution is a regional issue, local governments have an opportunity to address air quality issues through general plans, development ordinances, local circulation systems, transportation services, and other plans and programs. As such, they are uniquely positioned to contribute to the local air district's efforts to achieve and maintain compliance with state and federal air quality standards. Supporting mode shift through improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities and support for transit, building infrastructure for zero emission vehicles, reducing parking, and promoting infill development can help reduce emissions and improve air quality. Cities and counties within the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) jurisdiction are required by state law to include air quality measures in their general plans. The SJVAPCD developed the *Air Quality Guidelines for General Plans* to assist these cities and counties in meeting these requirements. The document provides additional goals, policies, and programs for adoption in general plans that will reduce vehicle miles traveled and improve air quality. In addition to statutory requirements for air quality measures in the San Joaquin Valley, cities and counties that have identified disadvantaged communities, as defined by SB 1000, must also incorporate air quality into their general plans. For more information on the environmental justice requirements, see the EJ section. Regardless of statutory requirements, the benefits of adopting an air quality element or implementing air quality policies throughout a general plan are universal.

Government Code 65302.1(c):

The adoption of air quality amendments to a general plan to comply with the requirements of subdivision (d) shall include all of the following:

- (1) A report describing local air quality conditions including air quality monitoring data, emission inventories, lists of significant source categories, attainment status and designations, and applicable state and federal air quality plans and transportation plans.

- Divided into 2 sections, for SJV (required) and all other communities
- Extended section on considerations and mitigation strategies for air quality near high volume roadways
- New focus on air quality in disadvantaged communities, and environmental justice



Safety

9

4

Safety Element

Introduction

The goal of the safety element is to reduce the potential short and long-term risk of death, injuries, property damage, and economic and social dislocation resulting from fires, floods, droughts, earthquakes, landslides, climate change, and other hazards. Other locally relevant safety issues, such as airport land use, emergency response, hazardous materials spills, and crime reduction, may also be included. Some local jurisdictions have chosen to incorporate their hazardous waste management plans into their safety elements.

The safety element directly relates to topics also mandated in the (1) land use, (2) conservation, (3) environmental justice and (4) open-space elements, as development plans must adequately account for public safety considerations and open space for public health and ecological benefits often incorporate areas of increased hazard risk. The safety element must identify hazards and hazard abatement provisions to guide local decisions related to zoning, subdivisions, and entitlement permits. The safety element should also contain general hazard and risk reduction strategies complementary with those of the [Local Hazard Mitigation Plan \(LHMP\)](#). Ideally, the LHMP will be incorporated into the safety element as outlined below in accordance with provision of [Assembly Bill 2140, General Plans: Safety Element \(Hancock, 2006\) \(Gov. Code § 65302.6\)](#).

The recent introduction of climate risk to the discussion of the safety element, adds a focus on longer term preparation of a community for a changing climate. Policies in a safety element should identify hazards and emergency response priorities, as well as mitigation through avoidance of hazards by new projects and reduction of risk in developed areas. As California confronts mounting [climate change](#) impacts, local governments are now required, in accordance with [Senate Bill 379, Land Use: General Plan: Safety Element \(Jackson, 2015\)](#) to include a climate change vulnerability assessment, measures to address vulnerabilities, and comprehensive hazard mitigation and emergency response strategy as explained further in this section ([Gov. Code § 65302\(g\)\(4\)](#)). Policies may include methods of minimizing risks, as well as ways to minimize economic

Government Code 65302(g):

- (g) (1) A safety element for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, tsunami seiche, and dam failure; slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides; subsidence; liquefaction; and other seismic hazards identified pursuant to Chapter 7.8 (commencing with Section 2690) of Division 2 of the Public Resources Code, and other geologic hazards known to the

- Updates per recent legislation and advisories
- Better coordination with local hazard mitigation plans (AB 2140)
- New section on Climate Adaptation and Resilience, as per SB 379 (2015)
- Direct coordination with other resources, including CalOES, Cal-Adapt, Adaptation Planning Guide, ICARP



Safety Element – Adaptation (SB 379)

10

- Climate change adaptation is now required in Safety Elements
- Specific requirements:
 - Assess community vulnerability to climate change impacts
 - Develop goals, policies and objectives
 - Include feasible implementation measures
 - Implement measures
- OK to use separate adaptation plan, climate action plan or other plan
- Timing and triggers:
 - Update safety element at next LHMP update, OR by 1/2022 if no LHMP;
 - Housing Element update trigger to align updates (fire and flood);
 - Review and update every 8 years (SB 1035)



Cal-Adapt.org and the Adaptation Planning Guide

11

The screenshot shows the Cal-Adapt website at beta.cal-adapt.org. The header includes the 'cal-adapt' logo and navigation links for Tools, Data, Resources, Blog, About, and Help. The main content area features a large background image of a snowy mountain range with the text 'Exploring California's Climate Change Research' and a sub-headline: 'Cal-Adapt provides a view of how climate change might affect California. Find tools, data, and resources to develop adaptation plans and build applications.' Below this are four interactive tiles: 'Annual Averages Extreme Heat' (yellow sun icon), 'Annual Averages' (blue sun icon), 'Annual Averages' (blue water droplets icon), and 'Snowpack' (blue snowflake icon). At the bottom, there are buttons for 'Climate Tools', 'Download Data', and 'Find'.

The cover of the 'CALIFORNIA ADAPTATION PLANNING GUIDE' features a light blue background with a white grid pattern. The title is in large, bold, white capital letters. Below the title is a collage of four images: a group of people in a meeting, people working in a field, a person digging in the soil, and a landscape with a fire in the background. At the bottom, the text 'PLANNING FOR ADAPTIVE COMMUNITIES' is written in large, bold, blue capital letters. Logos for Cal EMA, the California Department of Water Resources, and FEMA are visible in the bottom right corner.



SB 1000 (Leyva, 2016)

Environmental Justice

12

- Requires cities and counties with any disadvantaged communities to incorporate environmental justice related goals, policies, and implementation programs into their general plans
- Can be a separate element or integrated into other elements
- Must happen upon adoption or revision of two or more elements on or after January 1, 2018



Environmental Justice

13

4

Environmental Justice Element

Introduction

Over 9 million Californians are exposed to and at risk from high pollution, according to the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment's Cal EnviroScreen tool. In addition to examining environmental hazards, Cal EnviroScreen and other tools look at assets that help protect communities from poor health. Legislation adopted in 2016, Senate Bill 1000, now requires both cities and counties that have disadvantaged communities to incorporate environmental justice (EJ) policies into their general plans, either in a separate EJ element or by integrating related goals, policies, and objectives throughout the other elements. This update, or revision if the local government already has EJ goals, policies, and objectives, must happen "upon the adoption or next revision of two or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018."

Government Code Section 65302(h)

- (1) An environmental justice element, or related goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, that identifies disadvantaged communities within the area covered by the general plan of the city, county, or city and county, if the city, county, or city and county has a disadvantaged community. The environmental justice element, or related environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives integrated in other elements, shall do all of the following:
 - (A) Identify objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by means that include, but are not limited to, the reduction of pollution exposure, including the improvement of air quality, and the promotion of public facilities, food access, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity.
 - (B) Identify objectives and policies to promote civil engagement in the public decisionmaking process.
 - (C) Identify objectives and policies that prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.
- (2) A city, county, or city and county subject to this subdivision shall adopt or review the environmental justice element, or the environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives in other elements, upon the adoption or next revision of two or more elements concurrently on or after January 1, 2018.
- (3) By adding this subdivision, the Legislature does not intend to require a city, county, or city and county to take any action prohibited by the United States Constitution or the California Constitution.

- Reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by:
 - Reducing pollution exposure, including improving air quality
 - Promoting public facilities
 - Promoting food access
 - Promoting safe and sanitary homes
 - Promoting physical activity
- Promote civic engagement in the public decision-making process
- Prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities



Climate Change

14

8

Climate Change

Designing Healthy, Equitable, Resilient, and Economically Vibrant Places

“California, as it does in many areas, must show the way. We must demonstrate that reducing carbon is compatible with an abundant economy and human well-being. So far, we have been able to do that.”

—Governor Jerry Brown

Introduction

The impacts of climate change pose an immediate and growing threat to California's economy, environment, and to public health. Cities and counties will continue to experience effects of climate change in various ways, including increased likelihood of droughts, flooding, wildfires, heat waves and severe weather. California communities need to respond to climate change both through policies that promote adaptation and resilience and by significantly reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. For requirements related to climate adaptation please see the [Safety Element](#).

While climate change is global, the effects and responses occur substantially at the local level, and impacts and policies will affect the ways cities and counties function in almost every aspect. Cities and counties have the authority to reduce (GHG) emissions, particularly those associated with land use and development, and to incorporate resilience and adaptation strategies into planning. For example, the interplay of general plans and CEQA requirements is particularly critical in evaluation of GHG emissions and mitigation. For this reason, specific guidance is provided on how to create a plan to reduce GHG emissions that meets the goals of both CEQA and general plans. To this end, this chapter summarizes how a general plan or climate action plan can be consistent with [CEQA Guidelines section 15183.5 \(b\)](#), entitled Plans for the Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions. This chapter can also be used to update older plans so they comply with the criteria in [Section 15183.5 \(b\)](#) and associated CEQA streamlining opportunities.

- Guidance on CEQA streamlining for GHG emissions
- Step by step guidance on emissions inventory and climate action plans
- Supporting information and resources on adaptation planning
- List of additional resources with live links



Climate Change – Plans to Reduce GHGs

15

- CEQA Guidelines § 15183.5
 - Provides pathway for project-level GHG analysis streamlining, if a community adopts a "plan for the reduction of greenhouse gases"
 - Project must be consistent with the qualified plan, which could be a climate action plan, general plan, or other plans
- Qualified plan should contain at least the following components:
 - GHG emissions inventory using accepted protocols
 - Set a local GHG reduction target in line with State targets
 - Forecasting
 - Establish GHG reduction measures
 - Monitor and update over time
 - Adopt in a public process following environmental review



Implementation and CEQA

16



Image by Urban Advantage, SANDAG

- Partnering with other agencies
- Sections on zoning, codes, and other implementation tools
- Sections on financing tools for infrastructure
- Detailed guidance on CEQA process for general plans

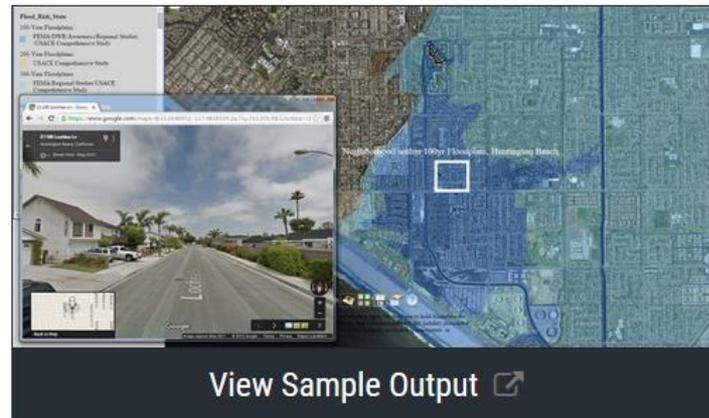
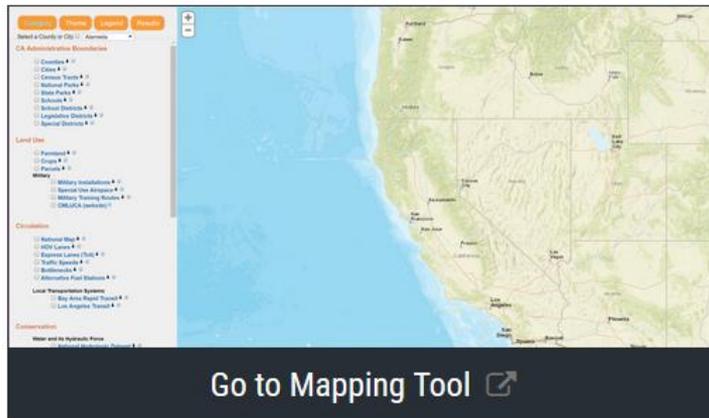


Vision for the GPG- A Suite of Tools

17

General Plan Guidelines Data Mapping Tool

The General Plan Guidelines Online Mapping tool draws data sets from multiple sources, allowing users to incorporate local, regional, and state wide data as available into local general plans without cost. Additional data will be added as it becomes available.





Contact Info

18

Erik de Kok, AICP
erik.dekok@opr.ca.gov

Related Resources:

www.opr.ca.gov

www.sgc.ca.gov

www.resilientca.org