OPR General Plan Guidelines

A Presentation to the City of Fresno General Plan Review Committee

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• 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
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

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

- 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

Land Use Element

Introduction

The most fundamental decisions in planning begin with land use, what to do 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 thoughtfully, equitably, 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 than 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.

**Land Use Element**

- 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

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 100 in 2018 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 the 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.

Transit 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
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-pronged 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 modes 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) jurisdictions 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 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 SJAPCD’s guide to environmental justice in planning and development. Air quality policies throughout a general plan are universal.

Government Code 65302.3(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 sources, changes in 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

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 (A) land use, (B) conservation, (C) environmental justice and (D) 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 Plan 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, 2013) to include a climate change vulnerability assessment, measures to address vulnerabilities, and comprehensive hazard mitigation and emergency response strategies 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 impacts.

Government Code 65302(g):

(9) (1) A safety element for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismicity-induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, tsunami, landslide, and dam failure; slope instability leading to mass failures and landslides, subsidence, liquefaction; and other seismic hazards identified pursuant to Chapter 7.8 (commencing with Section 20950) 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)

- 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
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

- 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

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
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

- 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
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

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Related Resources:

www.opr.ca.gov
www.sgc.ca.gov
www.resilientca.org