



Turning the General Plan Into Action

This Chapter describes the implementation process for the General Plan. Discussion includes the general responsibilities of the City, other public agencies and private organizations. It describes the primary implementation tool for the land use proposals, which will be administration of the Zoning Ordinance through the Zoning Map. It also outlines a process for neighborhood-level planning, which includes Future Focus Areas development and neighborhood conservation and improvement efforts.



7.1 IMPLEMENTATION

7.1.1 Related Studies

Several background reports were prepared as part of the General Plan Update process. Two working papers analyzed the local economic market, and opportunities and challenges, respectively. In addition, several reports were prepared summarizing findings from community outreach activities. A list of relevant reports and publication dates is provided below.

- Working Paper #1: Population, Demographics, Employment and the Real Estate Market (September 2008)
- Working Paper #2: Opportunities and Challenges (September 2008)
- Community Workshop #1 Summary (August 2008)
- Community Workshop #2 Summary (August 2008)
- Community Workshop #3 Summary (November 2008)
- Stakeholders Interview Report (July 2008)
- Housing Stakeholders Interview Report (August 2008)
- Community Survey Report (November 2008)

7.1.2 Environmental Impact Report

A comprehensive Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared in conjunction with this General Plan, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). An EIR is a detailed analysis of the potential environmental effects of a plan or development project. It identifies alternatives to the proposed plan and presents ways to reduce or avoid potential environmental effects. Mitigations have been incorporated into the General Plan as policies.

7.1.3 General Plan Amendments

State law limits the number of times a general law city can amend each mandated element of its general plan to no more than four times per year, although each amendment may include more than one change. This restriction does not, however, apply to charter cities like the City of Santa Clara. In addition, amendments that

update optional elements (such as Historic Preservation), allow development of affordable housing, or comply with a court decision may have multiple amendments in a year. While the City may amend the General Plan as it chooses within the parameters of State law, in practice, consolidation of amendments may serve to streamline the process for General Plan amendments. Note that changes to Appendices are managed as General Plan Amendments.

In order to maintain internal consistency within the General Plan, updates to the safety and conservation elements (Section 5.10: Environmental Quality) may also require amendments to the General Plan Housing Element (Appendix 8.12). Additional review of flood hazards and safety (consistent with AB 162) may affect land use and Housing Element Goals and Policies, as well as the inventory of land suitable for development. Any proposed development, plan or funding of improvements that conflict with the Land Use Diagrams, Transportation and Mobility Diagrams or text should include a General Plan Amendment in order to evaluate the implications of the proposal as well as to ensure the required internal consistency for the Plan. As part of the prerequisites to graduate from one phase to the next, the City will re-examine the Plan, in its entirety, and propose appropriate policy and land use amendments in order to address changing conditions, community priorities, and regulatory requirements.

7.1.4 Responsibilities for Implementation

Implementing the General Plan will involve the City Council, the Planning Commission, other City boards and commissions, the City Manager, City departments and the community throughout the public participation process. The City also will need to consult with Santa Clara County, adjacent cities and other public agencies about implementation proposals that affect their respective areas of jurisdiction. The principal responsibilities of City officials and staff for Plan implementation are briefly summarized below. Details on their powers and duties are documented in the Santa Clara City Charter and Municipal Code.

City of Santa Clara

City Council

The City Council is responsible for the overall policy direction of municipal affairs; it acts as the legislative body and is responsible for adoption of the General Plan and any amendments to it. The



City Council's role in implementing the General Plan is to set implementation priorities and approve the updated Zoning Ordinance, Capital Improvement Program and budget to carry out the Plan. The City Council also acts as the Redevelopment Agency and, in this capacity, will help finance public facilities and improvements needed to implement the Plan. (Redevelopment Areas include Bayshore North and University, which will expire during the Plan horizon—in 2026 and 2016, respectively.) The Council also approves development projects consistent with the General Plan. The City Council appoints the City Manager, the Planning Commission, and other boards and commissions established under the Municipal Code.

City Manager

The City Manager, who is the Chief Executive Officer of the City, is responsible for the administration of the City in accordance with City Council policy and Charter requirements. The City Manager has overall responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the Plan. The City Manager prepares and submits the City budget to the Council and advises on the future financial needs of the City. In addition, the City Manager's Office has direct responsibility for the negotiation and administration of all agreements with the City and its agencies, as well as for the administration and supervision of the City's emergency services operations.

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission acts in an advisory capacity to the City Council in matters pertaining to the physical development of the City, including land subdivisions and zoning as prescribed by ordinance. The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing and recommending adoption or amendment of the General Plan; zoning and subdivision ordinances and regulations; resource conservation plans; and other programs and legislation needed to implement the General Plan. The Planning Commission may also prepare and recommend adoption of specific plans, neighborhood plans or special plans, as needed for General Plan implementation.

City Attorney's Office

Services of the City Attorney's Office are provided to the City Council, City boards and commissions, City Manager and City departments on matters regarding City business. The City Attorney's Office represents and advises the City Council and all City officers in all matters of law pertaining to their offices. The

City Attorney represents the City and Agency in litigation and reviews all legal documents, including ordinances, resolutions, leases, contracts and deeds, and approves each as to form. The City Attorney's Office also assists with the preparation of development agreements with private parties on behalf of the City Council and the Redevelopment Agency.

Planning and Inspection Department

The Planning and Inspection Department's Planning Division has primary responsibility for administering the laws, regulations and requirements that pertain to the physical development of the City. Specific duties related to General Plan implementation include preparing zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments, design guidelines, reviewing development applications, conducting investigations and making reports and recommendations on planning and land use, zoning, subdivisions, design review, development plans and environmental assessments. The Planning Division has a lead role in implementing the policies of the Land Use, Public Facilities and Services, and Environmental Quality sections.

The Housing and Community Services Division of the Planning and Inspection Department administers State and federal grants to the City of Santa Clara and the Redevelopment Agency Affordable Housing Fund. Community Development Block Grants are used to promote affordable housing, rehabilitate substandard housing, build new park facilities, provide neighborhood improvements, remove barriers to the handicapped and fund public services for low and moderate-income residents. These services are provided through non-profit, delegate agencies under third party contracts with the City. The Redevelopment Agency Affordable Housing Fund is used to create and retain affordable housing in the City for very low to moderate-income households.

The Building Inspection Division of the Department is responsible for regulating the Building and Housing code standards to safeguard the life, health, property and public welfare by controlling and inspecting the design and construction of all buildings and structures within the City.

Finance Department

The Finance Department administers the financial affairs of the City and Redevelopment operations, including City-owned public utilities. The Department is responsible for general



accounting, the preparation of audits and administration of fiscal controls and policies. It manages cash flow, investments and the issuance and maintenance of outstanding debt; and participates in budget and financial planning activities, and financial administration of contracts. The Department produces the Annual Budget, the Annual Capital Improvement Budget and the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, conducts revenue forecasts, and prepares periodic and annual comprehensive financial reports for the City, its Agencies and Corporations and the annual State Controller Reports.

Public Works Department

The Public Works Department is responsible for the executive and administrative direction of the Engineering Department and Building Maintenance Division, including administration of the Public Works portion of the City's Capital Improvement Program. The Department is responsible for design and construction of storm drains, sanitary sewers, sidewalks, streets, bridges, overpasses and the traffic network. The Department also provides construction management services for the City's capital programs. The Department works with the Street and Automotive Services Department to implement the maintenance and resurfacing of City streets. The Department will have some implementation responsibilities for portions of the Land Use; Mobility and Alternate Transportation Modes; Public Facilities and Services; and Environmental Quality Sections.

Parks and Recreation Department

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for developing and managing the City's parks and recreation activities as well as the operations of the City-owned community centers, golf courses and cemeteries. The Department also operates the Community Recreation Center, Senior Center, Walter E. Schmidt Youth Activity Center and Teen Center. The Parks and Playgrounds Division is responsible for operating and maintaining the City's park areas. Facilities include picnic areas, playgrounds, tennis courts, ball fields, soccer parks, swimming pools and neighborhood park buildings. The Recreation Division offers sports, fitness, arts, day camp, many special interest programs and activities at City pools. The Department works cooperatively with public agencies (schools, churches, youth agencies, Chamber of Commerce, service clubs, etc.) in coordinating recreation services within the City. It will have primary responsibility for the parks needs assessment as well as for implementing related policies in Section 5.9.1 of the Public Facilities and Services Section of the Plan.

Water and Sewer Utilities Department

The Department of Water and Sewer Utilities is a utility enterprise which provides the planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation of the City's water production, distribution, metering and water quality monitoring. The Department is responsible for the administrative functions to operate and maintain a sanitary sewer collection system which conveys wastewater to the jointly owned San José-Santa Clara Water Pollution Control Plant for treatment and disposal. The Department also works with the Public Works Department to coordinate the engineering for conveyance capacity and other related projects on the sanitary sewer collection system. The Department operates and maintains a recycled water system which provides water for landscape irrigation, industrial use, cooling towers, and dual-plumbed buildings. It will have the primary responsibility for implementing goals and policies related to the potable water supply, recycled water and water conservation included in Section 2.10: Environmental Quality of this General Plan.

Streets and Automotive Services Department

The Streets and Automotive Services Department has maintenance and repair responsibilities for City streets, City vehicles, City street trees, public right-of-way landscaping, creek and bicycle trails, traffic engineering equipment, storm drain systems, urban runoff pollution control programs, street sweeping, solid waste collection, waste recycling programs, processing and disposal, household hazardous waste collection and disposal and landscape maintenance on non-park City-owned properties.

Police Department

The Police Department provides law enforcement, policing services and communications dispatch to the City of Santa Clara. The Police Department is responsible for preventing crime and maintaining law and order. In conjunction with the Fire Department, the Police Department is responsible for implementing public safety policies described in the Public Facilities and Services component of the General Plan.

Fire Department

The mission of the Santa Clara Fire Department is to protect the community from injury and loss due to natural and man-made disasters. The Fire Department assists other City departments in recovery operations, conducts fire and hazardous materials



inspections, and offers public education programs on fire prevention. The Department provides highly trained and equipped emergency personnel to respond to incidents of fire, chemical release, medical emergency, earthquake, flood or other natural or man-made disasters. The Department is responsible for implementing public safety policies described in the Public Facilities and Services, and Environmental Quality components of the General Plan.

Silicon Valley Power

The City of Santa Clara owns and operates the municipal electric utility, Silicon Valley Power (SVP). SVP serves over 50,000 residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal customers within the City. It owns, operates and participates in the production of more than 510 megawatts of electricity. SVP can supplement this power through purchase agreements for an additional 261 megawatts of capacity. SVP is responsible for many of the energy conservation and consumption policies in the General Plan and for those summarized in Appendix 8.13: Community Sustainability and Health Goals and Policies Matrix.

Other Boards, Commissions and Committees

The City has established a number of other boards, commissions and committees, some of which will be involved in Plan implementation in their respective areas of expertise. These may include the Board of Library Trustees, Cultural Advisory Commission, Civil Service Commission, Historical and Landmarks Commission, International Exchange Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Senior Advisory Commission, Youth Commission, and Housing Rehabilitation Loan Committee. The General Plan does not envision any substantive change in the responsibilities assigned to these boards and commissions. They will be administering new or amended regulations adopted pursuant to Plan policies, and their actions will need to be consistent with the General Plan.

Community at Large

The City offers multiple opportunities for public participation in the decision-making process for development approval. Initially, applicants are encouraged to solicit input and feedback on preliminary ideas as part of their due diligence. Once a formal application is on file, the City also provides open communication with interested parties in addition to meeting the requirements for public notification and public hearings.

Regional, State, Federal and Private Agencies

Santa Clara Unified School District

The Santa Clara Unified School District, led by the School Board, manages most of the public schools in the City. The District is responsible for projecting student enrollment and meeting school facility needs. Joint-use of school facilities to help meet parks and recreation needs, as discussed in the Public Facilities and Services component of the General Plan, requires coordination between the SCUSD, other school districts and the City.

Santa Clara County

Santa Clara County provides a variety of services to unincorporated portions of the County as well as the 15 cities within it. Services include roads, parks, law enforcement, emergency response services and libraries. The County has jurisdiction over the expressway network, including Lawrence, San Tomas/Montague and Central Expressways. The County also delivers many State services, such as foster care, public health care, social services, jails and elections. The City of Santa Clara has opportunities to collaborate with, and benefit from, these County services, particularly in terms of housing, social service programs and emergency management.

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is an independent special district that is responsible for county-wide transportation planning and specific roadway improvements. VTA also provides bus, paratransit and light rail operations within the County, and serves as the region's Congestion Management Agency (CMA). As the CMA, VTA sets the State and federal funding priorities for improvements affecting Congestion Management Program facilities, which include U.S. 101; State Route (SR) 237; Interstate 280; Lawrence, San Tomas and Central Expressways; Great America Parkway; El Camino Real; and Stevens Creek Boulevard.

Association of Bay Area Governments

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is the regional association of governments that includes all counties and cities, including the City of Santa Clara, in the nine-county Bay Area. ABAG does not have authority over land use in the City of Santa Clara; however, in recent years ABAG has been working toward a land use vision for the region. In particular, ABAG supports growth in the inner urban ring of the Bay Area,



which includes the City of Santa Clara, as opposed to adding development in the outlying portions of the region. To that end, ABAG, along with three other regional agencies, initiated the FOCUS program to provide funds for Priority Development Areas (PDA) that have a high level of transit accessibility and potential for redevelopment. The Santa Clara Station Focus Area and the Lawrence Caltrain Station area, the El Camino Real Focus Area and the Stevens Creek Boulevard Focus Area all have the potential to be designated by ABAG as PDAs, as discussed in Chapter 6: Local and Regional Planning Context.

Metropolitan Transportation Commission

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) serves as both the regional transportation planning agency (a State designation) and as the region's metropolitan planning organization (a federal designation). MTC is responsible for the Regional Transportation Plan, a comprehensive plan covering transit, roads, airports, ports, rail, bicycle and pedestrian facilities. It also administers funds to local jurisdictions and transit agencies based on the Regional Transportation Plan. MTC has several grant programs including:

- The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The federal stimulus package, which is being distributed in part through MTC, provides funding for improvements to existing local streets.
- The New Freedom Program. A federal initiative, which is being distributed in part through MTC, provides grants in large urban areas for new capital and operational projects aimed at reducing, beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, transportation barriers faced by individuals with disabilities.
- Transportation for Livable Communities. Supports projects that enhance community vitality and promote walking, bicycling and transit use.
- Housing Incentive Program. Assists housing construction near transit hubs.
- Low Income Flexible Transportation. Funds services that assist low-income residents travel to and from work, school and other essential destinations.

Railroad Owners and Operators

Several rail lines run through Santa Clara. Union Pacific runs freight trains on tracks through the City's industrial areas, adjacent to Lafayette Street and to the Agnew Village. Approximately ten to 12 freight trains pass through the City on a daily basis. In addition to rail freight operators, the Joint Powers Board/Caltrain right-of-way manages the track near the Santa Clara Station for commuter rail services. Rail lines are consulted on any proposed crossings and relevant noise mitigations that the City might pursue. During the horizon of this General Plan, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) will likely be extended to the City. The Santa Clara Transit Station will be the terminus of BART's South Bay extension.

California Department of Transportation

The Department of Transportation, or Caltrans, is the State agency that owns and operates freeways and State routes that provide access to, and through, the City, including Interstates 280 and 880, U.S. 101 and SR 237 and 82 (El Camino Real). Particularly along El Camino Real, where changes are envisioned in the General Plan, coordination between the City and the Caltrans is necessary.

California Environmental Protection Agency

The California Environmental Protection Agency is charged with developing, implementing and enforcing the State's environmental protection laws that ensure clean air, clean water, clean soil, safe pesticides and waste recycling and reduction. It includes the following sub-agencies that have authority related to specific environmental elements in Santa Clara:

- Department of Toxic Substance Control
- Water Resources Control Board
- Integrated Waste Management Board
- Air Resources Board



7.2 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The City will use a variety of regulatory mechanisms and administrative procedures to implement the General Plan. The Zoning Ordinance serves as one of the primary implementation tools. Other regulatory mechanisms, including the Subdivision Ordinance, building and housing codes, capital improvement programs and environmental review procedures, are also used to implement Plan policies. These should all be reviewed periodically to comply with the Plan. Development projects and other discretionary actions should be consistent with the Plan as criteria for approval.

7.2.1 Zoning Regulations

Under California law, strict consistency between the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance is not required for charter cities like the City of Santa Clara. General Plan policies do, however, commit the City to zoning and other regulations that support the General Plan. Consistency is an important component for Plan implementation. Without it, there is no assurance that the City can achieve its vision or that environmental protection measures will be implemented. The City's Zoning Ordinance translates General Plan policies into specific use regulations, development standards and performance criteria in order to govern development on individual properties. While the General Plan establishes the policy framework, the Zoning Ordinance prescribes the rules and procedures for development. The Zoning Map is part of the Ordinance and should be updated as project proposals are approved.

7.2.2 Subdivision Regulations

Under the California Subdivision Map Act, no subdivision of land may be approved unless it is consistent with both the relevant zoning district and the General Plan land use classification and other applicable policies in the General Plan. The City's Subdivision Regulations supplement and implement the Subdivision Map Act.

7.3 NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

7.3.1 Changes to Existing Focus Area Plans

The General Plan establishes land uses and Focus Area Plans for six Focus Areas: El Camino Real, Downtown, Santa Clara Station, Stevens Creek Boulevard, Lawrence Station, and Tasman East. To implement General Plan policies for each Focus Area, additional planning efforts may be required in order to provide guidance for future development projects. These planning efforts may include streetscape plans, master plans or revisions to existing plans, such as for the Downtown Core. Specific components of these planning efforts would vary by Focus Area and would be defined during the planning process. Depending on the extent of land use changes or potential environmental impacts, a General Plan amendment or additional environmental review may be required, and should be approved by City Council.

7.3.2 Future Focus Area Comprehensive Plans

Focus Area comprehensive plans are required prerequisites for new residential development in the Future Focus Areas, as described in Chapter 5. The purpose of these plans and the prerequisite requirements ensure that new neighborhoods are self-sufficient, with easy access to retail, services and public amenities. Comprehensive planning will also ensure that adequate public services and facilities are provided in tandem with new development so that they are available to current and future residents. The location and boundaries of each Future Focus Area are identified on Figure 5.4-1. These areas include Central Expressway, De La Cruz, and Great America Parkway. The required content and implementation process for Future Focus Area comprehensive plans is described in the policies in Section 5.1: Prerequisites and in Section 5.4.7: Future Focus Areas Goals and Policies.

Preparation

The City will coordinate planning efforts for each Future Focus Area and determine the appropriate time for plan preparation. One or more property owners may request early initiation of planning. Alternatively, the City may choose to initiate the plan preparation. A work program should be prepared to complete the plan, including a schedule for preparation and a program for public participation. Ample opportunities for the involvement of citizens, public agencies, public utilities and other community groups should be provided.



Approval

Comprehensive plans for the Future Focus Areas should be approved before any rezoning, consistent with the long-range General Plan vision and policies. While these comprehensive plans could be adopted by the City prior to initiation of the appropriate General Plan phase, actual development should not proceed until the appropriate phase has begun. For example, development in the Great America Parkway Future Focus Area is not identified until Phase III, which begins in 2025. A comprehensive plan for that Focus Area could be approved a year or two prior to 2025 to provide development certainty, but entitlements should wait until 2025 in order to be consistent with the General Plan.

Environmental Review

The General Plan land uses and assumptions identified for the Future Focus Areas have been analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report for this General Plan. However, additional environmental review may be required for the subsequent Future Focus Area comprehensive plans based on changing conditions as well as on any alternate or varying circumstances.

7.3.3 Neighborhood Improvement Plans

Neighborhood Improvement Plans may be privately initiated for the benefit of existing neighborhoods in the City. These plans are intended to provide a means for existing neighborhoods to work toward improving their neighborhoods. This may be in the form of neighborhood design guidelines, or other similar planning tools that will work in conjunction with other City guidelines, plans and regulations, to help define and preserve individual neighborhood character.

Neighborhoods should identify an organizational structure that is best suited to represent their goals and objectives. Such organizations could include a neighborhood association, co-op, development corporation, neighborhood watch group, or a committee of neighbors. Effective neighborhood planning requires opportunities, formal and informal, for neighborhood leaders to meet among themselves to discuss implementation strategies for their Neighborhood Improvement Plan. The City can provide information, particularly with respect to consistency with the City's General Plan, that will assist neighborhoods in their planning efforts.