

Planning Solutions

KEY AREAS OF COMMUNITY PLANNING

❖ General Plan

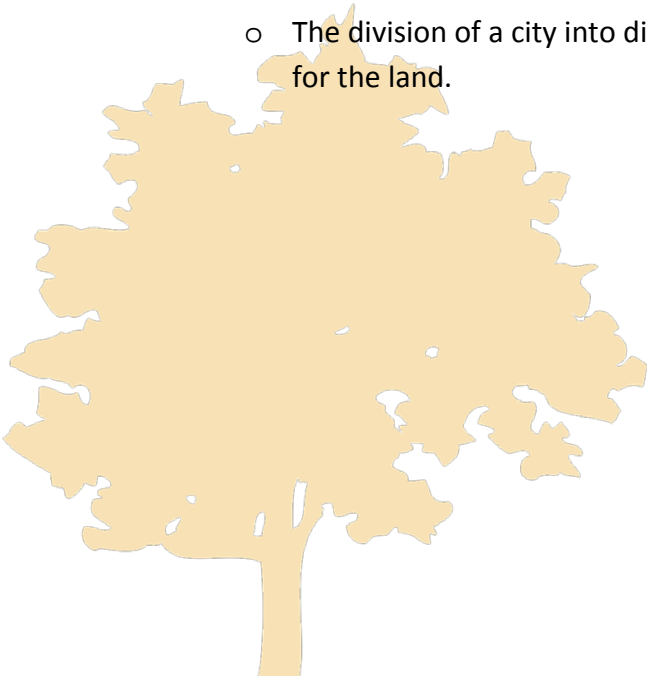
- A blueprint of a city, county or other planning area which establishes goals, policies and zones for different types of development, uses, traffic patterns, and future development, this plan is expected to guide the growth and land development for both the current period and the long term.
- More information can be found at the California Office of Planning and Research, http://opr.ca.gov/s_generalplanguidelines.php

❖ Community Plan or Specific Plan

- A set of guidelines that establishes guidance and rules for development in a specific geographic area.

❖ Zoning

- The division of a city into districts where only certain specified uses are allowed for the land.



ELEMENTS OF PLANNING

All general plans must contain seven mandated sections or "elements" including: Circulation, Conservation, Housing, Land Use, Noise, Open Space, and Safety.

Circulation/Mobility Element: Identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major roads, transit routes, terminals, and public utilities and facilities. It must correlate with the Land Use Element.

Conservation Element: Addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources including water, forests, soils, rivers, and mineral deposits.

Housing Element: Guides the determination of housing needs and establishes policy that facilitates the development of housing for all economic segments in the City. It is the only element that must undergo mandated updates every five years.

Land Use Element: Lays out the general patterns of development throughout the City, including the distribution of real estate, open space and recreational land, schools, and waste facilities. This is one of the broadest elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Noise Element: Identifies and appraises noise problems within the community and influences the distribution of land uses.

Open Space Element: Details plans and measures for preserving open space for natural resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, and agriculture.

Safety Element: Addresses facilities that handle acutely hazardous materials and are fixed in location to a single site; and gas pipelines which are considered to be fixed in location to a corridor. Establishes policies to protect the community from natural and manmade hazards (e.g. seismic, geologic, flood, wildfire, and toxic materials hazards).

Other Elements included in Community or Specific plans: Historic Preservation, Arts and Culture and/or Urban Design Element.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS AND POLICIES

❖ National City Amortization Ordinance

- Establishes a reasonable period of time for the operator of a *nonconforming land use* to recoup their investment before the nonconforming use must be terminated.
- Nonconforming Land Use – a land use that is inconsistent with the zoning for the area
 - E.g. an industrial use within a residentially zoned area
- Reasonable Period of Time – depends on the consideration of many factors.
 - E.g. investment, impact to the neighboring uses, distance from schools.
- When to use amortization to terminate a nonconforming land use:
 - Amortization is appropriate when an existing, conforming land use becomes a nonconforming use as a result of a zoning change.
- A zoning change can occur when there is an amendment or full update to the General Area Plan or within a Community Plan/Specific Area Plan.

❖ Truck Routes

- Ordinance that establishes the designation of truck routes to divert traffic away from the residential area and keep diesel traffic within the industrial area.

❖ Affordable Housing

- **Housing Overlay Zones (HOZs)** provide a package of incentives to developers who include in their projects homes that people can afford. HOZs encourage production of affordable homes rather than requiring it. They are called “overlay” zones because they layer on top of established base zoning regulations, leaving in place opportunities for property owners to develop within these existing rules. Rather than imposing restrictions, HOZs present developers with more choices by offering additional benefits to projects that increase the supply of homes that people can afford. HOZ incentives may include increased density, relaxed height limits, reduced parking requirements, fast-tracked permitting, and exemptions from mixed-use requirements. In order to qualify for these incentives, developments must include a certain percentage of homes for lower income households, generally between 25% and 100% of the units.

http://www.publicadvocates.org/sites/default/files/library/affordable_housing_overlay_zone_fact_sheet_7-27-10.pdf