



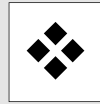
General Plan Introduction

Purpose of the General Plan

All cities in California are required to prepare and adopt a general plan. The California Government Code defines specific purposes and content requirements for general plans. At the same time, the Foster City General Plan is intended to do much more than merely meet legal requirements. It is intended to be a statement of how the citizens of Foster City view their community, how they want it to be in the future, and, most importantly, how they intend to deal with the planning and development issues facing the community.

The General Plan identifies policies and programs addressing the development and redevelopment of land, preservation of parks and open spaces, provision of housing for current and future residents, conservation of natural resources, improvement of the circulation and transportation system, control of noise and protection of life and property from hazards. Additionally, the General Plan assures that tax money is generated to provide the high levels of public services and maintenance of public facilities and infrastructure the citizens of Foster City expect.

The Foster City General Plan addresses these issues and responds to the many changed conditions in the region, county and city since the majority of the City's existing general plan was adopted in **1993** ~~1974~~. Although the character of Foster City has been established by past land use decisions, there are still many decisions to be made



GENERAL PLAN TIMEFRAME

The General Plan covers the time period from **2004-2020** ~~1990-2005~~. It establishes policies for maintaining the community's existing quality of life **up to the year 2020** ~~through build-out of the City (over the next five to seven years) and longer term~~. The three primary concerns of the General Plan during this timeframe are:

■ **Maintain the Existing Quality of Life**

Protect the integrity and quality of residential neighborhoods and commercial areas by establishing goals, policies and implementing regulations that:

- Assure property maintenance and quality design.
- Protect waterways and the community's water-orientation.
- Continue to emphasize that Foster City is a "master-planned" community with a balance of residential, commercial and recreational uses.

■ **Achieve a Successful City Growth "Build-Out"**

Address near-term land use and other development issues that achieve the following:

- Establish policies for **redevelopment and** vacant lands that consider long-term City needs and infrastructure capacity;
- Reinforce Metro Center as the **hub of the City's commercial community** ~~downtown and major focal point for Foster City~~.
- Address long-term housing, employment and City fiscal needs.

■ **Plan for Potential Renovation and Longer-Term Community Needs**

Plan for long-term city needs to:

- Assure long-term maintenance and preservation of community character, pride and identity.
- Consider the need for flexibility in responding to potential changing economic conditions that may affect neighborhood shopping centers and other commercial areas.
- Maintain the high quality condition of the City's housing stock and infrastructure.

over the next 15 years.

State Law Requirements for General Plans

State law requires that a general plan be an integrated, internally consistent document that includes background data supporting the proposed objectives, policies, standards and actions of the plan. Subject areas that must be covered are land use, circulation, housing, safety, open space, conservation and noise. The code also permits

STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL PLANS

Government Code §65300, §65300.5 and §65302 state:

"Each planning agency shall prepare and the legislative body of each county and city 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 judgement bears relation to its planning. Chartered cities shall adopt general plans which contain the mandatory elements specified in Section 65302.

In construing the provisions of this article, the Legislature intends that the general plan and elements and parts thereof comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency.

The general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals. The plan shall include the following elements:

- (a) A land use element
- (b) A circulation element
- (c) A housing element
- (d) A conservation element
- (e) An open space element
- (f) A noise element
- (g) A safety element"

In ~~§65302.4~~ **65301(c)** state law deals further with the matter of General Plans responding to local conditions, stating:

"The general plan shall address each of the elements specified in Section 65302 to the extent that the subject of the element exists in the planning area. The degree of specificity and level of detail of the discussion of each such element shall reflect local conditions and circumstances."

local agencies to adopt optional elements to reflect and accommodate local conditions and circumstances.

To assist local governments in meeting these responsibilities, Government Code §65040.2 directs the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to adopt and periodically revise guidelines for the preparation and content of local general plans. The Guidelines are advisory only. Yet, as the only official document interpreting and explaining the requirements of

California planning law, the Guidelines establish standards for assessing the adequacy of local general plans.

State law, court decisions and the Guidelines place extreme importance on consistency of the plan elements and the direct correlation between the data collected and policies formulated. In this respect, the updated General Plan includes the following parts:

■ **Goals and Policies:** Goals, policies, plan proposals and standards have been developed and grouped by the plan elements. Goals are the ideals to strive for, or the desired state of things. Policies establish a recognized community position on a particular issue. General Plan policies are set forth both as written text and as policy maps, such as the Land Use Plan. These are complimentary; written policies set forth the basic approach to be taken while the policy maps show the intended spatial application of the policies.

■ **Implementing Programs:** Specific actions have been identified that the City will try to undertake to implement the Plan. For example, zoning must be consistent with the land use designations in the Plan. The Plan will also need to be updated periodically to remain relevant as a policy document.

■ **Background Information:** Information has been collected, analyzed and documented on specific subjects to provide a basis for selected policies. Background data is provided in each of the Plan Elements (such as Land Use and Circulation, Housing, etc.), technical appendices and the Foster City Community Profile.

How the Foster City General Plan is Organized

The Foster City General Plan is intended to be useful to all its readers and still contain all necessary information and policies. To accomplish this objective, the plan is structured around ten separate, but highly interrelated, sections. Each chapter is intended to convey a different level of information depending on what the reader wants to know, as listed on the following page:

- (1) Introduction

- (2) Summary
- (3) Land Use and Circulation Element
- (4) Housing Element (~~adopted 2001 1992~~)
- (5) Parks, Open Space and Conservation Element
- (6) Noise Element
- (7) Safety Element (~~to be added~~)
- ~~(8) Residential Neighborhoods Conservation Element (to be added)~~
- ~~(9) Implementing Program Priorities (to be added)~~
- (8) Economic Development Element (to be added)**

~~The General Plan includes two new sections: a Residential Neighborhoods Conservation Element and Implementing Program Priorities. The Residential Neighborhoods Conservation Element provides greater specificity on neighborhood issues and the Implementing Program Priorities establishes relative priorities among all General Plan programs. Technical Appendices have been prepared for various elements which include background data, inventories, projections and other background information to provide a basis for the policies contained in the Plan elements.~~

The General Plan will include one new section, the Economic Development Element. The Economic Development Element will discuss current economic conditions in the City and will focus on promoting economic growth, retention and development in the City.

In addition to the requirements of California Planning and Zoning Law, the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) are also applicable to the preparation and adoption of a general plan. The General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will address the potential environmental impacts of the updated General Plan.

Implementation of the General Plan

Implementation programs which are a key to achieving the goals of the Plan are listed in each element. All of the programs in the General Plan will require some type of follow-up action; either further study, ordinance adoption, special funding consideration or other public review. The details concerning each program will be evaluated at that time.

GENERAL PLAN CONTENTS

Introduction

Introduces the reader to the purpose of the Plan, State law requirements and how the Plan is structured.

Summary of the Plan

Identifies the major goals and key policy features of the Plan intended as a brief overview - or "vision" - of the City's future.

Land Use and Circulation Element

Identifies where and how residential, commercial, office, industrial, recreational or institutional activities take place and the interrelationship between land use and circulation. Included are recommendations regarding the location and general scheduling of transportation improvements.

Housing Element

Establishes targets for new housing and protection of existing housing.

Parks, Open Space and Conservation Element

Identifies and protects key natural environment and recreation features.

Noise Element

Evaluates noise sources and provides standards to reduce noise impacts.

Safety Element

Addresses hazards which must be considered in order to assure a safe and healthy community (to be added).

Economic Development Element

Addresses economic conditions and establishes programs and policies to promote economic growth.

~~**Residential Neighborhoods Conservation Element**~~

~~Provides greater specificity on important planning issues facing each residential neighborhood (to be added).~~

~~**Implementing Program Priorities**~~

~~Groups all of the General Plan programs into implementation priority categories - intended to be updated annually (to be added).~~

The "timeframes" listed with each program in the elements are suggestions only - and are expected to be modified ~~in the Implementing Program Priorities~~ **and** in each Annual Report on the General Plan (described below). Modifications to the timeframes will not require a General Plan Amendment.

~~The list in the Implementing Program Priorities section establishes "higher priority" programs based~~

~~on community needs, immediate health and safety concerns, pressing development issues or opportunities, and legal mandates which must be fulfilled.~~

~~The list of program priorities will:~~

- ~~(1) Highlight actions the City is committed to undertaking immediately after the General Plan's adoption;~~
- ~~(2) Establish priorities when future decisions are made concerning the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the budget;~~
- ~~(3) Provide greater assurance for businesses, developers and the community concerning future plans and improvements;~~
- ~~(4) Identify both short-term and long-term solutions consistent with future development needs; and,~~
- ~~(5) Allow easy updating consistent with changing priorities, funding capability, etc.~~

The General Plan also recommends the preparation of an **Annual Report** on the General Plan. The Annual Report will evaluate General Plan programs to establish each year's work priorities.

The primary instrument for implementing the General Plan is the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance includes various land use districts consistent with the General Plan. Each parcel of land in the community is designated with one of those districts. Written regulations establish standards for design review, minimum lot size, building height and setback limits, lot coverage, parking, and other development parameters within each land use zone. Property maintenance is also a key City regulation intended to implement the goals and policies in the General Plan to assure the preservation of existing development quality.

Future Review and Amendment of the Plan

Any interested citizen may submit a request to have a proposed amendment of the plan considered. State law restricts the number of amendments to four each calendar year, although each amendment may encompass a series of individual changes to

RELATED GENERAL PLAN DOCUMENTS

Community Profile

The Community Profile provides an overview and detailed statistics regarding population and selected conditions in the City.

Technical Appendices

Technical Appendices have been prepared for each element of the General Plan. They include data, inventories, projections, and other information related to the City to provide a basis for policy formulation contained in the Plan elements.

General Plan EIR

The General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will address the potential environmental impacts of the updated General Plan.

~~Future Studies to be Conducted After Plan Adoption~~

~~The General Plan calls for a number of special studies that will supplement information contained in the General Plan and which may also result in future amendment of the Plan.~~

the Plan. The City Council, by resolution of a majority of its members, may also initiate a proposed amendment at any time it deems suitable or appropriate.

Plan amendments will be considered by the Planning Commission, which will make a recommendation to the Foster City City Council. Since General Plan Amendments are legislative actions, the final decision is made by the City Council following a public hearing. General Plan amendments will be published as follows:

- **Policy and Text Changes:** Changes to the policies and other text of the plan shall be published on pages which may be inserted in the appropriate locations as replacement pages or additional pages in the applicable element. The effective date of the last adopted amendment shall be referenced on the pages with changes or additions. Changes in the timeframes of implementation programs will not require a General Plan Amendment.

- **Map Changes:** Amendments to the land use plan maps and other policy and informational maps shall be published on pages which may be inserted in the document; periodic revisions of the original document maps shall incorporate all of these

changes which have accumulated since the previous revision. The date of the amendment shall be noted on the map for each area amended.

Although this general plan anticipates future growth until the year 2020, staff anticipates that ~~A~~ a comprehensive review and revision of the plan will be undertaken within ~~at least every ten~~ **five** years, ~~following the first such review expected to occur in 1998.~~