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1.0 | PURPOSE AND NATURE OF GENERAL PLAN

What is a general plan and why do we need one?

A general plan expresses a city's vision, and is a key document that guides and underlies decisions made about the city's future. It establishes strategies to achieve community goals pertaining to what will be developed and where; how people and traffic will get around; what various communities will look like; what areas will be preserved; and how public safety and other civic services will be provided. The role of the general plan is to act as a basis for rational decisions regarding a city's long-term physical development. It serves as a bridge between community values, visions and objectives, and decisions on physical development projects and resource allocations.

Legislative Authority

A general plan is based on legal requirements

The need to balance population and economic growth with environmental quality has long been a concern of Californians. As such, state law (California Government Code Section 65300) requires each city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the city and any land outside its boundaries that relates to its planning and operation.

The Chula Vista General Plan contains the state-mandated elements of land use; circulation; housing; conservation; open space; noise; and safety, as well as optional elements to address the economy and public services. Some elements are combined and re-titled to provide a better focus on the City's goals. Table 2-1 identifies the location of mandatory and optional elements in this General Plan. All elements are internally consistent and have equal legal status. For example, Land Use and Transportation Element policies are not superior to Public Facilities and Services Element policies.

Time for a change

Prior to this General Plan, Chula Vista's General Plan was last comprehensively updated in 1989. Since then growth in both the City and the region has placed demands on land uses, services and amenities found in Chula Vista. This updated General Plan allows the City to look at existing and projected conditions and formulate a way to achieve a shared vision of the future.

Table 2-1 State Law Mandatory and Optional General Plan Elements and Topics						
Element or Topic	Land Use and Transportation	Economic Development	Housing	Public Facilities and Services	Environmental	Growth Management
Mandatory Elements						
Land Use	X					
Circulation	X					
Housing			X			
Conservation					X	
Open Space					X	
Noise					X	
Safety				X	X	
Optional Elements/Topics						
Water				X		
Capital Improvements/ Public Facilities				X		X
Community Design	X					
Economic/ Fiscal Development		X				X
Parks and Recreation				X	X	
Energy				X		
Floodplain Management					X	
Local Coastal Plan	X					
Sustainable Development	X				X	
Transit-Oriented Development	X					



2.0 | GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

Come and tell us what's on your mind

Community participation is a priority in the planning process. The General Plan must represent the desires of the local residents and business owners and address the concerns most important to the community both now and in the future. The public's input and participation in the General Plan Update process is key to ensuring a shared vision and strategy for the City.

The first phase of the General Plan Update included community outreach, focus group sessions, and a Town Hall Meeting to gather public input. What should the City of Chula Vista look like in 2030? How should future growth be guided? Where should certain land uses be located? What roads, transit routes, and bikeways are needed? How can neighborhoods be revitalized? These were some of the questions asked as Chula Vista began to update the General Plan. More than 4,000 public comments were received. The City synthesized these to frame issues that the City addressed as part of the General Plan Update process. A second Town Hall Meeting was held to review preliminary land use and transportation concepts. A series of community meetings was then held in three different areas of the City to present and review more refined land use alternatives. These public forums helped define the final proposed General Plan Update.

Be a part of the process

Four citizens' advisory committees were created, consisting of an overall Steering Committee and three subcommittees tied to major topic areas: (1) Economic Development; (2) Environment, Open Space and Sustainable Development; and (3) Infrastructure and Services. The committees generally met at least monthly and encouraged public attendance and input. An early product from the citizens' advisory committees and outreach programs was creation of Chula Vista's Vision Statement and Themes, which have served as building blocks for this General Plan.



Focus of the General Plan Update

In 2005, the City of Chula Vista encompasses approximately 52 square miles within its boundaries. The General Plan Update addresses that land, plus an additional 39 square miles located outside the City boundaries, which, nonetheless, relate to the planning and operation of the City. This total area, called the General Plan Planning Area, is shown in Figure 2-1.



A significant focus of the previous General Plan was approximately 23,000 acres of Otay Ranch, in the eastern part of the city. Consistent with adopted plans, Otay Ranch is developing on track and is a vital, dynamic part of Chula Vista. The City continues to look at Otay Ranch as it refines visions and goals for an eastern urban center and a multi-institutional university center. However, this 2005 General Plan focuses more on the western portion of the City, where existing land uses, urban patterns of development, and open space offer challenges and opportunities to accommodate future growth, implement advances in transportation, and maintain and enhance the quality of life so important to Chula Vista residents.

Chula Vista Planning Area



Figure 2-1



3.0 GENERAL PLAN ORGANIZATION

Chula Vista’s General Plan is organized into the following chapters. The relationship between the chapters is shown in Figure 2-2.

1. Preface	Sets the stage for the General Plan document.
2. Introduction	Explains the purpose, process and contents of the General Plan.
3. Chula Vista In Perspective	Provides a regional setting, brief history of Chula Vista, and a profile of 2004 City demographics and statistical information.
4. Vision and Themes	Expands on the community’s core values that serve to guide the General Plan’s goals and objectives.
5. Land Use and Transportation Element	Describes the land use plan and circulation pattern for the City’s future growth.
6. Economic Development Element	Details methods to establish the long-term vitality of the local economy and shape future economic development.
7. Housing Element	Provides an understanding of the housing needs of the community and actions necessary to fulfill them.
8. Public Facilities and Services Element	Focuses on public infrastructure, public safety, and health and human services that support the community and allow it to operate efficiently. This element also addresses development of the City’s park system and recreation facilities.
9. Environmental Element	Addresses the long-range conservation, preservation, and enhancement of Chula Vista’s open space and natural environment, including the role of the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP).
10. Growth Management Element	Directs the pattern and pace of development through specific goals, policies, and standards.
11. General Plan Implementation	Describes the plans, programs, and procedures that will allow the City to put the General Plan into action and to achieve its vision, goals, and objectives.



The City's vision and themes give focus to the General Plan

A standardized format is used throughout the General Plan. Each element contains introductory text describing how it implements the Vision and Themes and how it relates to other elements, plans, and policies. An overall goal(s) is stated and topic areas are identified (the Land Use and Transportation Element has multiple goals). Each topic is discussed, followed by an objective and policies. A goal is a broad statement that guides action. An objective is a statement of a desired end. A policy is a rule or course of action that indicates how an objective will be achieved.

State law requires housing elements to be updated every five years. The Chula Vista Housing Element was approved in 2000 and amended in 2002. The next five-year update is due by July 1, 2005. The current Housing Element as of 2004 is, therefore, included in this General Plan.

General Plan Organization

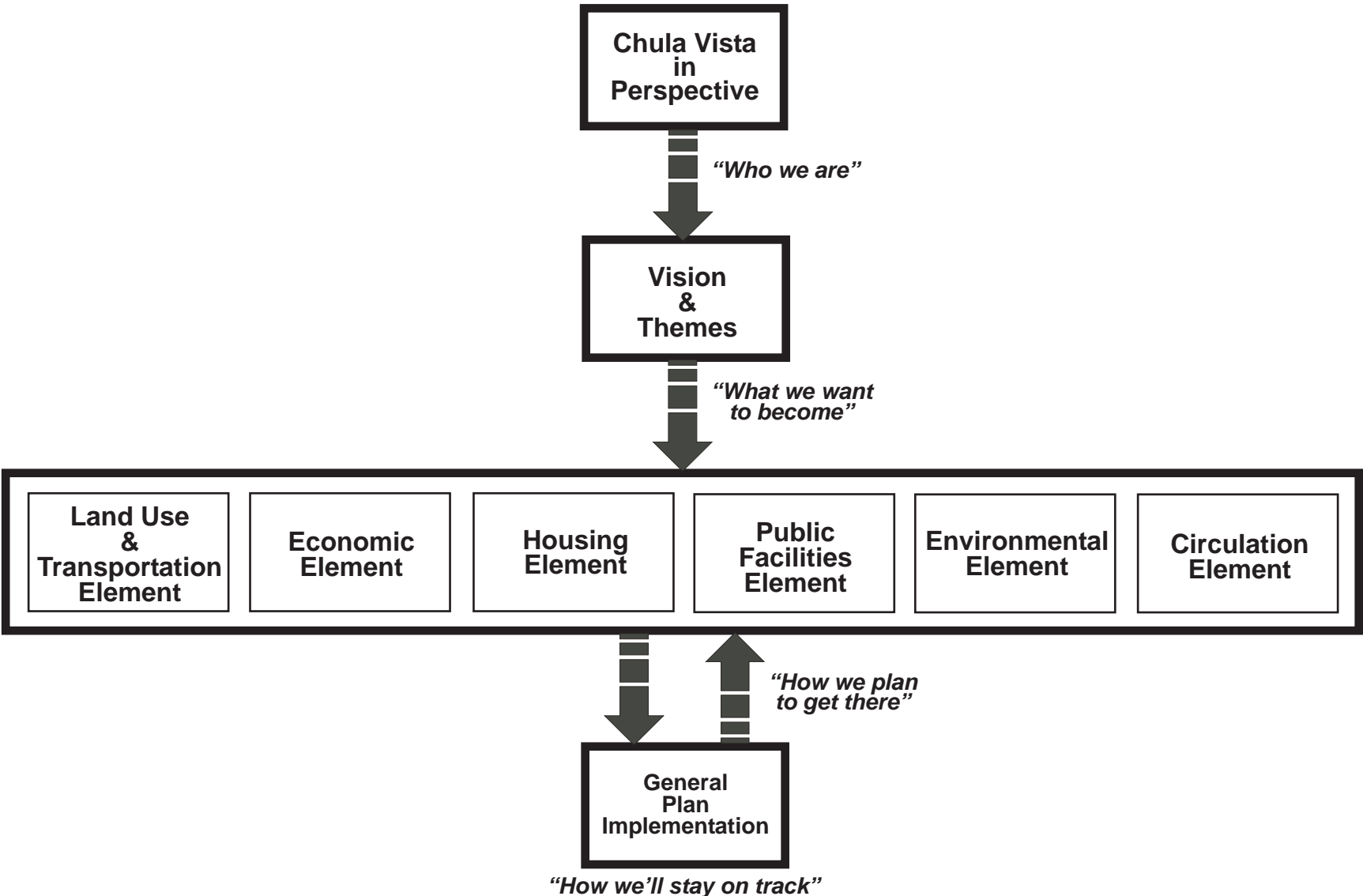


Figure 2-2



4.0 | Related Documents

Other documents are directly linked to the general plan

As a guide for development, the General Plan must illustrate what life will be like here in the future. The document must be comprehensive and inclusive, yet engaging and precise. A great deal of information goes into researching and updating the General Plan. Much of this information is contained in additional, separately bound documents, including the following:

Chula Vista Economic Development Strategy (EDS)

The EDS is the product of a 21-month highly interactive planning effort undertaken by City staff; a consultant (Economics Research Associates, ERA); the City's Economic Development Commission; and a 29-member Steering Committee. Adopted by the City Council in March 2003, the EDS frames general plan issues, visions and land use and transportation alternatives.

General Plan Update Draft Vision and Goals Report

Preparing a general plan requires many volunteer hours from dedicated individuals. Outreach efforts gathered community input on likes; dislikes; hopes; and fears about the City, both present and future. This document, summarizing the community's vision, serves as a base from which the overall General Plan takes shape.

Resource and Issues Reports

Areawide studies were prepared as part of an existing conditions analysis. These studies focused on specific issues, services and programs affecting the General Plan Update, including land use; transportation; public facilities and services; and biological resources. Additional reports were prepared for less traditional focus areas, including health and human services, childcare, and arts and culture. A demographic and housing profile provides population data and forecasts for use in the General Plan Update.

Chula Vista General Plan Update Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

The Program EIR analyzes potential environmental impacts resulting from implementation of the General Plan. Where environmental impacts are identified, the Program EIR requires mitigation measures to reduce the impacts.