

The General Plan

A Short Primer

What is a General Plan?

- Land-use and development decisions made at the local level (city or county).
- State Law requires the adoption of a General Plan.
- The General Plan defines the type, amount and location of future growth and development.

General Plan and Zoning Are Not the Same

- Often confused: both regulate land uses; both have maps and text components.
- General Plan sets long-term, community-wide goals; guides development decisions.
- Zoning Ordinance establishes enforceable standards, on a parcel-by-parcel basis.
- If the General Plan is the blueprint, then Zoning is a tool for making the blueprint a reality.

General Plan Contents

- Summary of the Community's goals and objectives toward development
 - Maps and diagrams may be included
 - Vision, Assumptions
 - Strategies, Concepts, Objectives
- Seven mandatory elements
 - Optional elements may be included
 - Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The Seven Required Elements

- **Land use element:** designates the general location and intensity of housing, business, industry, open space, public buildings and grounds, and other land uses.
- Land use map (diagram) is a major piece.

The Seven Required Elements

- **Circulation element:** identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major roads, transportation routes, terminals, and public utilities and facilities. It must correlate with the land use element.

The Seven Required Elements

- **Housing element:** assesses current and projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community and region. It identifies local housing policies and the programs that implement those policies.

The Seven Required Elements

- **Conservation element:** addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources including water, forests, soils, rivers, and mineral deposits.

The Seven Required Elements

- **Open-space element:** details plans and measures for preserving open-space for natural resources, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, and the identification of agricultural land.

The Seven Required Elements

- **Noise element:** identifies and appraises noise problems within the community and forms the basis for distributing land uses.

The Seven Required Elements

- **Safety element:** establishes policies to protect the community from seismic, geologic, flood, and wildfire hazards.

General Plan & Consistency

- The General Plan forms the basis for land-use decisions.
- Subdivision and public works projects must be consistent with the General Plan.
- The General Plan must be internally consistent – all elements (and maps) must mesh with one another.

Amending the General Plan

- The Board of Supervisors must hold at least one public hearing prior to approving an Amendment to the General Plan.
- Advance notice must be published.
- Copies of the amended plan must be available to the public.
- Each of the seven required elements can be amended only four times per year. Optional elements can be amended at any time.

Community Plans

- Focus on a small area or neighborhood.
- Supplemental to the General Plan.
- Must be consistent with the General Plan.
- In El Dorado County: Meyers Community Plan.

Specific Plans

- Identify land uses for a portion of the community (county).
- Must be consistent with the General Plan.
- In El Dorado County:
 1. Northwest El Dorado Hills
 2. El Dorado Hills Specific Plan
 3. Bass Lake Hills
 4. Promontory
 5. Carson Creek
 6. Valley View

General Plan Amendment Considerations

- Considerations for Amendments:
 - Consistent with all other parts of the General Plan?
 - Does the amendment create a “ripple effect” necessitating other changes?
 - Are those other changes being considered?
 - Have any mitigation measures been incorporated?
 - In the public interest?

End: General Plan Primer

Start: El Dorado County General Plan

- 1996 General Plan EIR found deficient in 1999; County begins new General Plan.
- El Dorado County General Plan adopted on July 19, 2004.
- Upheld on referendum vote on March 8, 2005.
- Writ discharged in 2005 and settlement 2006.
- All General Plan documents on County web page.

Elements of EDC General Plan

- Includes the 7 mandatory elements plus two optional:
 - Parks and Recreation and
 - Economic Development Element
- Includes a unique statement of “Custom, Culture and Economic Stability”
- Statement of Vision
- Plan Assumptions
- Strategies
- Concepts

Custom, Culture and Economic Stability

- Recognizing public land provides economic and ecological value to the County, State, and Nation.
- 57 percent of County is National Forest.
- “The General Plan specifies the manner in which the historic culture, custom and economic importance of these lands can be sustained into the future.”

Statement of Vision

1. “Maintain and protect the County’s natural beauty and environmental quality, vegetation, air and water quality, natural landscape features, cultural resource values, and maintain the rural character and lifestyle while ensuring the economic viability critical to promoting and sustaining community identity.”
2. Where appropriate, encourage clustered development as an option to maintain the integrity and distinct character of individual communities, while protecting open space and promoting natural resource use.”

(plus six more)...

Plan Assumptions

1. Population growth for the County as determined by the State Dept. of Finance.
2. Auburn Dam not addressed in General Plan.
3. No jurisdiction over other Government Agencies.
4. Ag and Timber remain viable industries.
5. Water Supply, Housing, and Traffic assumptions.

Plan Strategies

1. Recognize urban growth in Community Regions.
2. Promote growth that retains natural resources and reduces infrastructure costs.
3. Encourage growth to reflect character and scale of the community.
4. Require new growth to fully fund its on-site services and fair share of off-site services.

Plan Concepts

- Community Regions is where growth will be directed and facilitated.
- Rural Centers is where growth and commercial activities will be directed to serve the larger Rural Regions.
- Rural Regions where resource based activities are located will be enhanced while accommodating reasonable growth.

General Plan Summary

- General Plan elements, including maps, address anticipated growth by:
 - Directing residential and commercial growth to the Community Regions.
 - Reducing potential residential and incompatible growth from the Rural Regions.
 - Encouraging economic development in a diverse and sustainable manner.

PS

General Plan's Official Name:

2004 El Dorado County General Plan

A Plan for Managed Growth and Open
Roads; A Plan for Quality Neighborhoods and
Traffic Relief

See it at:

<http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/Planning/GeneralPlanAdopted.html>

Questions

- Thank you