



# COUNTY OF VENTURA

## General Plan Update Work Program

### What is a General Plan?

Every city and county in California must have a General Plan, which is their long-term blueprint or “constitution” for future development. The General Plan represents the community’s view of its future and expresses the community’s development and resource management goals. The General Plan contains the goals and policies upon which the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission base their land use decisions. California State law requires that each city and county adopt a General Plan “for the physical development of the county or city and any land outside its boundaries that bears relation to its planning.” Typically, a General Plan is designed to address the issues facing the county for the next 15 to 25 years.



## CONTENTS:

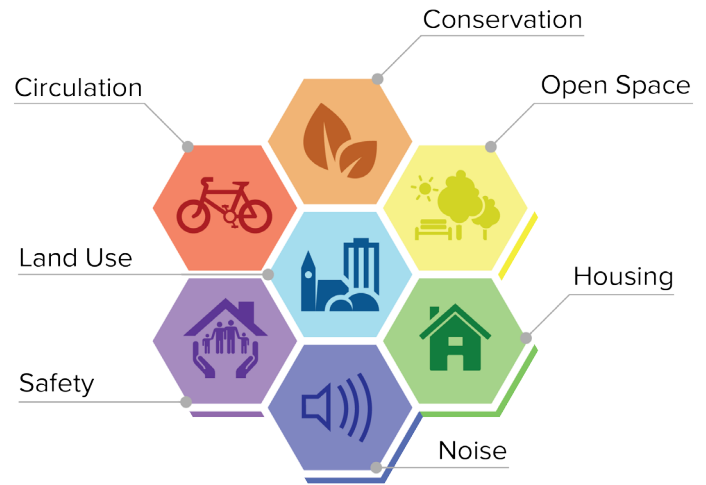
- What is included in the existing General Plan? ..... Page 2*
- Why update the General Plan? ..... Page 2*
- What are the legal requirements to update the General Plan? ..... Page 3*
- What is the difference between the General Plan, area plans, and the Zoning Ordinance? ..... Page 3*
- Why are we conducting stakeholder interviews and community meetings about the General Plan? ..... Page 4*

# What is included in the existing General Plan?

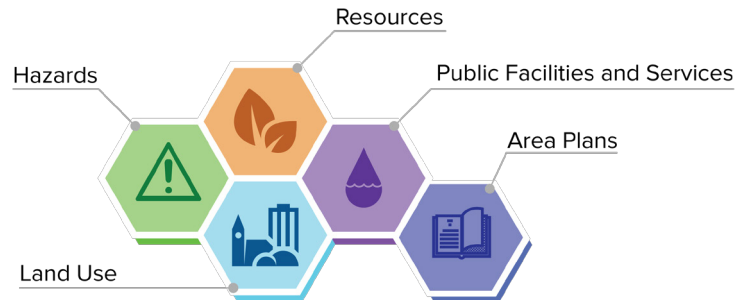
The General Plan is presented as a collection of “topical elements,” of which seven are mandatory. The seven State-mandated elements are: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. Each of the seven mandatory elements are required to be addressed by the general plan. However, State law allows local governments to organize and format their general plans however they desire and to prepare Area Plans, as long as the required topics or elements are addressed. General Plans may also address and emphasize other subjects of local importance or include Area Plans for more specific geographies. The current Ventura County General Plan addresses these topics as follows:

- Goals, policies, and programs that govern the entire unincorporated area of the County;
- Four Technical Appendices (Resources, Hazards, Land Use, and Public Facilities and Services) that provide background information in support of the General Plan’s goals, policies, and programs; and
- Ten Area Plans that govern specific geographic areas of the unincorporated county (Ahmanson Ranch, Coastal, El Rio/Del Norte, Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley, North Ventura Avenue, Oak Park, Ojai Valley, Piru, Saticoy, and Thousand Oaks).

## Required General Plan Topics



## Existing Ventura County General Plan Elements



# Why update the General Plan?



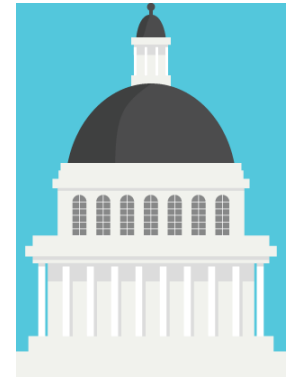
The last comprehensive update to the Ventura County General Plan was approved by the Board of Supervisors in 1988. Since that time, the County has amended the General Plan several times to address specific issues and to update Area Plans. When the last General Plan was adopted, the internet was not widely used and the youngest members of today’s workforce had not been born yet. New laws have passed that affect general plans and new planning strategies have been developed. These changes require a reevaluation of the existing General Plan and development of the vision for the County. The updated General Plan will likely look ahead to the year 2040 or 2050, so the update will not only bring policies and programs up to date, but also position Ventura County for the next 25 years.

# What are the legal requirements to update the General Plan?

State law requires Ventura County to maintain a General Plan to address land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. While there is no requirement that the General Plan be updated in a certain time frame or in connection with a specific event, State law requires that the General Plan take a long-term perspective and that cities and counties periodically review and update their General Plans to address changing circumstances and priorities.

State law also requires that the General Plan be internally consistent. This means that policies in one chapter or element of the Plan may not conflict with policies in another chapter, element, or area plan. This is important, for example, when planning where future land uses will go and what types of infrastructure and services will be needed to serve those uses.

Finally, as the long-term blueprint or constitution for all future development, any decision by the County affecting land use and development must be consistent with the General Plan and Area Plans. It is the County's responsibility to determine whether proposed land use development approvals are consistent.

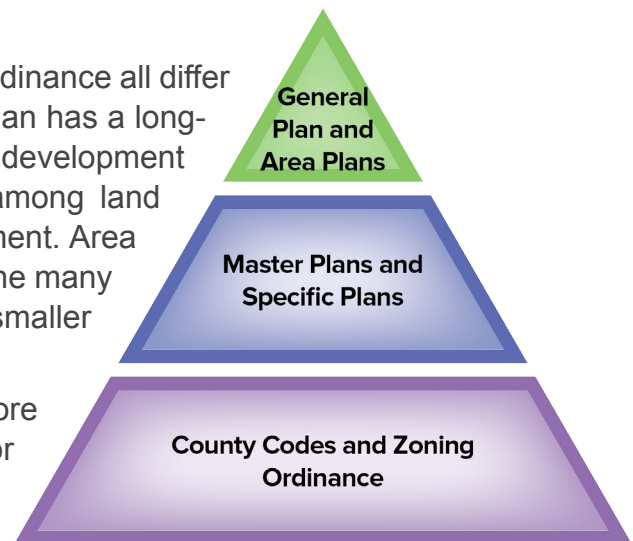


# What is the difference between the General Plan, Area Plans, and the Zoning Ordinance?

The General Plan, Area Plans, and the Zoning Ordinance all differ in the level of detail they include. The General Plan has a long-term, countywide outlook. It identifies the types of development that will be allowed, the spatial relationships among land uses, and the general pattern of future development. Area Plans are part of the General Plan and address the many of same topics as the General Plan, but focus on smaller geographic areas of the county.

Master Plans and Specific Plans set forth more detailed direction, timing, and financing for development or for the provision of infrastructure and services. These plans implement and must be consistent with the General Plan and Area Plans. The County Zoning Ordinance implements General Plan and area plan policies through more detailed development regulations, such as specific use types and building standards or infrastructure improvements and financing.

State law requires that Master and Specific Plans and Zoning be consistent with diagrams and policies in the General Plan and Area Plans. Development must not only meet the specific requirements of adopted Master and Specific Plans and the Zoning Ordinance, but also be found to be consistent with the broader policies set forth in the General Plan and Area Plans.



## Why are we conducting stakeholder interviews and community meetings about the General Plan?

The County has initiated a project to review the currently-adopted Ventura County General Plan and prepare a General Plan Update work program to consider contemporary planning themes, address current legal requirements, and reflect the needs and concerns raised within Ventura County. As part of this project, we are talking to County Supervisors, Planning Commissioners, County Agency staff, and community leaders about their expectations for the General Plan Update. We will also hold three community workshops to gather community input on expectations for the General Plan Update. Following the interviews and meetings, we will develop General Plan Update work program options for consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

### Community Workshops

#### **Workshop #1**

- Date: Wednesday, April 22, 2015
- Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
- Location: East Community Room, Thousand Oaks Sheriff's Substation  
2101 E. Olsen Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360

#### **Workshop #2**

- Date: Thursday, April 23, 2015
- Time: 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm
- Location: Pacific Conference Room, County Government Center's Hall of Justice  
800 S. Victoria Ave, Ventura, CA 93003

#### **Workshop #3**

- Date: Thursday, April 23, 2015
- Time: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
- Location: Casitas Springs Community Center  
8437 Edison Drive, Ventura, CA 93001