

**NORTH  
VENTURA**

**COORDINATED  
AREA PLAN**



**Working Group Meeting #1**

**Wednesday October 17, 2018**

**5:30 pm – 7:30 pm**

**Community Meeting Room**

**City Hall, Palo Alto**

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

1.	NVCAP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.....	1
2.	NVCAP PROJECT AREA MAP.....	3
3.	OVERALL PLANNING PROCESS.....	5
4.	PROCEDURE & GROUND RULES.....	7
5.	BROWN ACT FAQ .....	11
6.	NVCAP PROJECT SCHEDULE .....	13
7.	WORKING GROUP MEMBER LIST.....	14
8.	CITY STAFF LIST .....	16
9.	CONSULTANT LIST .....	18
10.	NVCAP RESOURCE LIST.....	22
11.	CHAPTER 19.10 PAMC COORDINATED AREA PLANS.....	26
12.	CALIFORNIA PLANNING GUIDE OPR PUBLICATIONS, DECEMBER 2005 EDITION....	32

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

**NORTH VENTURA COORDINATED AREA PLAN**  
**PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**  
**March 5, 2018<sup>1</sup>**

The North Ventura area is roughly bounded by Page Mill Road, El Camino Real, Lambert Avenue and the Caltrain tracks in Palo Alto and represents a rare opportunity within the City to plan proactively for a true transit-oriented mixed-use neighborhood. The project area includes one of the City's largest housing opportunity sites, which is currently occupied by Fry's Electronics, as well as a mix of small and large businesses and single family residences. The purpose of the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP) is to provide a vision for the future of this area. The group will address areas including policies, development standards, and design guidelines. The NVCAP should strengthen the neighborhood fabric and consider infrastructure needs, providing for a mix of land uses that take advantage of the proximity of the Caltrain station, the California Avenue area, and El Camino Real.

**NVCAP Goals**

1. Housing and Land Use  
Add to the City's supply of multifamily housing, including market rate, affordable, "missing middle," and senior housing in a walkable, mixed use, transit-accessible neighborhood, with retail and commercial services and possibly start up space, open space, and possibly arts and entertainment uses.
2. Transit, Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections  
Create and enhance well-defined connections to transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities, including connections to the Caltrain station, Park Boulevard and El Camino Real.
3. Connected Street Grid  
Create a connected street grid, filling in sidewalk gaps and street connections to California Avenue, the Caltrain Station, and El Camino Real where appropriate.
4. Community Facilities and Infrastructure  
Carefully align and integrate development of new community facilities and infrastructure with private development, recognizing both the community's needs and that such investments can increase the cost of housing.
5. Balance of Community Interests  
Balance community-wide objectives with the interests of neighborhood residents and

minimize displacement of existing residents and small businesses.

6. Urban Design, Design Guidelines and Neighborhood Fabric

Develop human-scale urban design strategies, and design guidelines that strengthen and support the neighborhood fabric. Infill development will respect the scale and character of the surrounding residential neighborhood. Include transition zones to surrounding neighborhoods.

7. Sustainability and the Environment

Protect and enhance the environment, while addressing the principles of sustainability.

**NVCAP Objectives**

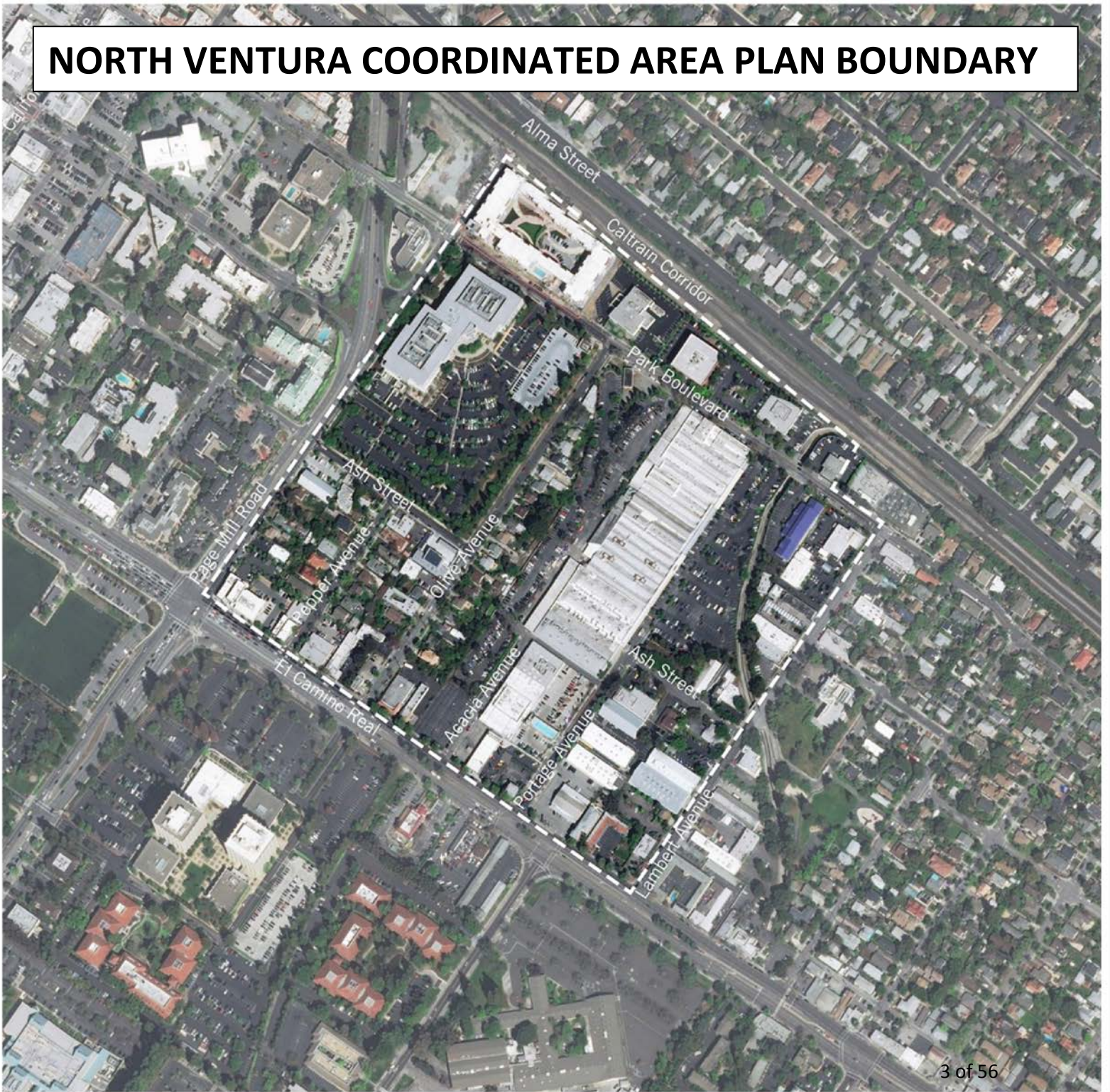
1. Data Driven Approach: Employ a data-driven approach that considers community desires, market conditions and forecasts, financial feasibility, existing uses and development patterns, development capacity, traffic and travel patterns, historic/cultural and natural resources, need for community facilities (e.g., schools), and other relevant data to inform plan policies.
2. Comprehensive User Friendly Document and Implementation: Create a comprehensive but user-friendly document that identifies the distribution, location and extent of land uses, planning policies, development regulations and design guidelines to enable development and needed infrastructure investments in the project area
3. Guide and Strategy for Staff and Decision Makers: Provide a guide and strategy for staff and decision-makers to bridge the gap between the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan and individual development projects in order to streamline future land use and transportation decisions.
4. Meaningful Community Engagement: Enable a process with meaningful opportunities for community engagement, within the defined timeline, and an outcome (the CAP document) that reflects the community's priorities.
5. Economic Feasibility: A determination of the economic and fiscal feasibility of the plan with specific analysis of market place factors and incentives and disincentives, as well as a cost-benefit analysis of public infrastructure investments and projected economic benefits to the City and community.
6. Environmental: A plan that is protective of public health and a process that complies with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.

---

<sup>1</sup> Approved by City Council on March 5, 2018



# NORTH VENTURA COORDINATED AREA PLAN BOUNDARY



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



## COMMUNITY PROCESS

### Project Initiation

**October- December 2018\***

- Background Conditions Study
- Working Group Meetings

### Community Engagement & Analysis

**January- April 2019**

- Community Engagement
- Visioning and Alternative Evaluation Workshops
- Development of Alternatives
- Comparison of Alternatives

### Draft CAP

**May- December 2019**

- Preferred Plan and Program
- Coordinated Area Plan Report
- Economic Analysis
- Draft & Final EIR

### Final CAP

**January- April 2020**

- PTC and City Council Hearings & Adoption

*\*Regular check-ins with City Council throughout the planning process*

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

## **NORTH VENTURA COORDINATED AREA PLAN WORKING GROUP ROLE AND GROUND RULES**

### **Role of the NVCAP Working Group (WG)**

The Working Group will consist of up to 14 community members appointed by the City Council to represent a diversity of interests and serve as an advisory body to City staff, the Architectural Review Board, the Planning & Transportation Commission and City Council. The group will help to shepherd the project through the planning process and will take on the following roles:

1. Discuss broad plan vision and goals
2. Conduct walking tours/site visits to visualize key issues and proposed plan policies
3. Review and respond to baseline data, analysis, recommendations, and presentations by staff, consultants, and property owners
4. Develop policy options consistent with the goals and objectives established by the City Council, refine land use and transportation options, and address key issues and trade-offs
5. Serve as a conduit and resource for larger community input (i.e., workshops, online engagement)

### **Ground Rules For WG Conduct and Decision Making:**

The following ground rules provide the basis for collaborative communication among WG members, other stakeholders, staff, and decision-makers. They are also intended to serve as boundaries for fair and civil behavior and group decision making.

1. **Meeting Procedure:** WG meetings are subject to the Brown Act, which set standards for public notice as to meeting time, date and location as well as items to be discussed and opportunities for public participation. Substantive issues will have higher priority than matters of procedural detail. The Facilitator has discretion in guiding discussion of items among WG members while allowing for appropriate public input. Staff may address the WG members at any time.
2. **Meeting Preparation:** WG members will receive meeting agendas and the materials that will be discussed in advance of each meeting. Members are responsible for reviewing these materials prior to the meeting, and for coming prepared for substantive discussions.
3. **Meeting dates, time, and location:** WG meetings will be held generally on the third Wednesday of the month from 5:30 to 8:30 pm at the Community Meeting Room at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Avenue.
4. **Problem Solving Approach:** Disagreements between participants will be regarded as problems to be solved rather than arguments to be won. At the discretion of the Facilitator, disagreements may be tabled for discussion and resolution at a later meeting.
5. **Decision-Making:** Decisions will be made by a majority of the voting members of the WG members who are present. A quorum for this process will be seven (7) members. No business can be conducted if fewer members than a quorum are present.

- 6. Clear and Timely Communication:** Every participant is responsible for communicating his or her position on issues under consideration. Each participant is also encouraged to clearly state their intentions and concerns at the earliest possible time in the course of the discussions. To move an agenda item forward, the Facilitator may limit the time each member is allowed to speak or limit the discussion to high-level “deal breaker” issues. The Committee’s focus should be on ideas/concepts and not on wordsmithing.
- 7. Information Sharing:** Relevant information plays an important role in the development of informed consensus. At the same time, too much information or information of limited relevance can cause confusion and slow down the process. Where individual members wish to share written or printed information with the group as a whole, such information should be provided to City Staff by 5:00 pm at least one week prior to any scheduled meeting to allow for duplication and/or distribution prior to the meeting.
- 8. E-mail Communication:** Electronic communications shall be guided by the same general protocols for communication, problem solving and negotiation that are followed when the group is in general face-to-face sessions. All email correspondence shall be directed through the City Staff at least 48 hours in advance of meetings if possible. WG members may not communicate in person, over the phone, or via email with a majority of WG members. Doing so may constitute a violation of the Brown Act requirements for open and transparent meetings. Compliance with the Brown Act also requires that members of the group refrain from commenting about the group’s activities on social media that may be viewed by a majority of WG members.
- 9. Participation and Observation by Members of the Public:** All WG meetings are open to the public and all observers are welcome. Members of the public will have an opportunity to address the WG during each meeting for a period of time established by the Facilitator. Separate workshops are geared to soliciting a broader public dialogue where public input is encouraged. Members of the public are encouraged to submit written materials in advance of the meetings via the City Staff.
- 10. Attendance:** Working Group members are required to attend a minimum of 75% of the regularly scheduled meetings. If members do not attend the minimum meetings, they may be replaced. When members cannot attend a meeting of the WG, they should communicate their views to staff prior to that meeting; however, members must be physically present to vote on decisions.
- 11. Timely adjournment of evening meetings:** To encourage public participation, evening meetings of WG will be organized, agendaized, and run so as to finish at a reasonable hour. If the WG finds its evening meetings habitually running past 8:30PM, staff will shorten the agendas, if necessary, to expedite WG discussion and action on items.
- 12. Conflicts of Interest:** WG members are not considered to be “public officials” as defined in §82048 of the California Government Code, because the WG is a purely advisory body with no decision making authority whose substantive recommendations will be reviewed, modified and amended, as appropriate, by City officials. Therefore, WG members are not subject to the State Political Reform Act and its disclosure provisions (Government Code §§ 81000 et seq.).
- 13. Speaking for the WG:** Only if the WG has duly authorized a WG member shall the member speak for the WG at any non-WG public hearing, on social media, or in the press. When speaking in public, members may identify themselves as members of the WG, and may report on any formal actions (motions) adopted by the Committee. However WG members may not

Speak for the WG or characterize and report on discussions of the WG unless explicitly authorized to do so by the group.

**Participant Roles:**

1. **City of Palo Alto Role:** The City of Palo Alto convenes NVCAP process and is the agency with the responsibility of writing the Coordinated Area Plan. In this regard, it will rely on the WG to provide input and recommendations for the document that are responsive to neighborhood and community goals, conditions and aspirations.
2. **Group Roles & Responsibilities:** The following points are offered as examples of behavior consistent with constructive dialogue, mutual respect and a commitment to collaboration:
  - a Offer respect of and civility to different viewpoints and attention when others speak.
  - b Share the responsibility of ensuring the success of the process and the quality of recommendations.
  - c Make our best good faith effort to work towards reaching an agreement.
  - d Represent the perspectives, concerns, and interests of agencies or constituencies whenever possible to ensure that agreements and recommendations developed by the group are acceptable to the organizations, agencies, or constituents being represented.
  - e Ask questions of each other for clarification and mutual understanding.
  - f Verify assumptions when necessary and avoid characterizing the motives of others.
  - g Acknowledge and try to understand others' perspectives.
  - h Stay focused on the task at hand and share airtime with others.
  - i Refrain from distracting others through side conversations; silence all cell phones during meetings.
  - j Concentrate on the content of discussions and allow the Chair or the Facilitator to focus on how to promote productive discussion.
3. **Subcommittees:** If the Facilitator determines that a specific topic or agenda item requires a higher level of analysis and focus than allowed for during its meetings, he/she may appoint an ad hoc subcommittee to address specific information needs, refine options or resolve differences of opinion outside of its regular meetings. Subcommittees are not empowered to make decisions in place of the group as a whole, but rather to frame and refine issues and information needs for resolution by the WG. They must number fewer members than a quorum of the full WG. Subcommittees are limited duration groups in that they exist only as long as it is necessary for them to accomplish their task.
4. **City Attorney:** Specific legal issues are to be directed through City Staff for a response from the City Attorney.
5. **The Facilitator:** The Facilitator shall work with City Staff to plan meeting agendas and conduct efficient meetings.



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

## THE BROWN ACT

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

[The Brown Act or “Open Meeting Law”](#) is officially known as the Ralph M. Brown Act and is found in the California Government Code § 54950 *et seq.* The Brown Act was enacted in 1953 to guarantee the public’s right to attend and participate in meetings of local legislative bodies, and as a response to growing concerns about local government officials’ practice of holding secret meetings.

#### **Who is governed by the Brown Act?**

The Brown Act applies to most elected and appointed local agency bodies, which the Act refers to as “legislative bodies”. The North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan Working Group (Working Group) is covered by the Brown Act.

#### **What does the Brown Act require?**

The Brown Act requires that all meetings of legislative bodies be conducted in a public forum and be open to the public. Cal. Gov. Code §54953(a). Some additional requirements include: (1) public notice of the time and place of the local agency body’s general meetings, (2) posting an agenda describing the matters the body will address, usually 72 hours prior to the general meeting, (3) providing the agenda packet to members of the public upon request, (4) allowing members of the public to address the body on agenda items and (5) recording all votes taken on motions.

#### **What is a meeting?**

A “meeting” is broadly defined under the Brown Act and occurs whenever a majority of the body’s members discuss working group business. This requirement means that members must be very careful about discussing working group business with other members.

#### **Are there exceptions to the Brown Act?**

Conferences and similar gatherings open to the public, publicly noticed community meetings, meetings of other legislative bodies, and purely social or ceremonial events are exempt from the Brown Act. However, if a majority of the Working Group members are present at one of these functions, they may not discuss amongst themselves business of the working group.

Also, the Brown Act does not prohibit a member of the working group from talking to any other person who is not a member.

### **What is a Serial Meeting?**

The Brown Act prohibits serial meetings – a series of communications between individual members of the body, including through intermediaries or other means (i.e., email), that result in a majority of the members discussing, deliberating, or taking action on a matter of agency business. Beware of “daisy chain” (i.e., member A speaks to member B who speaks to member C) and “spoke and wheel” communications (i.e., member A speaks to members B and C).

### **Does the Brown Act apply to Emails/Social Media/Blogging?**

The Brown Act applies to any form of communication – whether it is in-person, over the telephone, by email, or through other online and social media sources. For this reason, working group members should refrain from communicating with one another through email. For example, the “reply all” feature on email could constitute a violation of the Brown Act if it included a majority of the members and contained information that was within the body’s subject matter jurisdiction. Members should also refrain from communicating on blogs where a majority of other members participate.

### **What are the consequences of violating the Brown Act?**

The Brown Act is generally enforced through civil lawsuits brought by private citizens. Violations can also be criminally prosecuted, but the prosecutor must prove a knowing violation of the Brown Act with the intent to deprive the public of information to which the public is entitled.

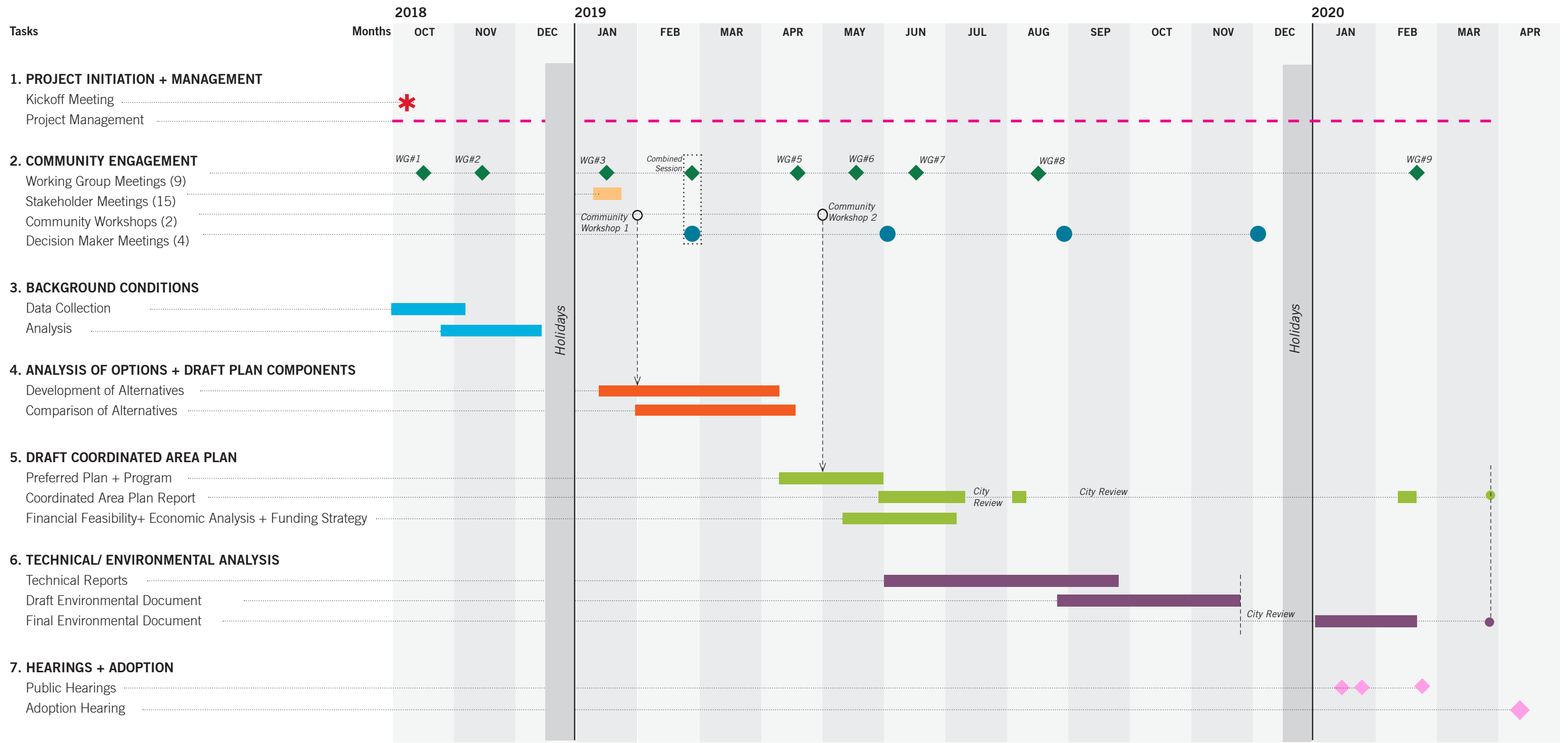
### **Additional questions?**

Feel free to contact the City at [NVCAP@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:NVCAP@cityofpaloalto.org)

# NORTH VENTURA COORDINATED AREA PLAN

## PROPOSED SCHEDULE

OCTOBER 17, 2018



- Legend**
- ◆ Community Working Group Meeting
  - Community Workshop
  - Decision Maker Meeting
  - Stakeholder Meetings
  - ◆ Public Hearings

Notes: All milestones and dates are subject to modification.  
Regular check-in meetings to be held with City Council throughout the process.





**NORTH VENTURA COORDINATED AREA PLAN  
WORKING GROUP CONTACT LIST**

Name	Category
Angela Dellaporta	Working Group
Carolyn "Cari" Templeton	Working Group
Gail Price	Working Group
Heather Rosen	Working Group
Kirsten Flynn	Working Group
Lund Smith	Working Group
Rebecca Parker Mankey	Working Group
Siyi Zhang	Working Group
Terry Holzemer	Working Group
Tim Steele	Working Group
Yunan Song	Working Group
Alexander Lew	Architectural Review Board Member
Doria Summa	Planning & Transportation Commissioner
Keith Reckdahl	Parks & Recreation Commissioner
<b>Alternates</b>	
Lakiba Pittman	Working Group Alternate
Waldek Kaczmariski	Working Group Alternate



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



**NORTH VENTURA COORDINATED AREA PLAN  
CITY STAFF LIST**

Contact	Department	Email	Subject
Pamela Boyle Rodriguez	PW	<a href="mailto:Pamela.BoyleRodriguez@CityofPaloAlto.org">Pamela.BoyleRodriguez@CityofPaloAlto.org</a>	Storm water
O'Kane, Kristen	CSD	<a href="mailto:Kristen.O'Kane@CityofPaloAlto.org">Kristen.O'Kane@CityofPaloAlto.org</a>	Community Services
Lum, Patty	PD	<a href="mailto:Patty.Lum@CityofPaloAlto.org">Patty.Lum@CityofPaloAlto.org</a>	Police
Rainey, Nathaniel	OES	<a href="mailto:Nathaniel.Rainey@CityofPaloAlto.org">Nathaniel.Rainey@CityofPaloAlto.org</a>	Office of Emergency Services
George Hoyt	Building	<a href="mailto:George.Hoyt@CityofPaloAlto.org">George.Hoyt@CityofPaloAlto.org</a>	Building
Evon Ballash	Building	<a href="mailto:Evon.Ballash@CityofPaloAlto.org">Evon.Ballash@CityofPaloAlto.org</a>	Building
Claudia Keith	CMO	<a href="mailto:claudia.keith@cityofpaloalto.org">claudia.keith@cityofpaloalto.org</a>	Communications
Mike Nafziger	PW	<a href="mailto:Mike.Nafziger@CityofPaloAlto.org">Mike.Nafziger@CityofPaloAlto.org</a>	Public Works
Monique LeConge Ziesenhenn	Library	<a href="mailto:Monique.leconge@cityofpaloalto.org">Monique.leconge@cityofpaloalto.org</a>	Library
Jose Jovel	Utilities	<a href="mailto:Jose.jovel@cityofpaloalto.org">Jose.jovel@cityofpaloalto.org</a>	Water, Gas, Wastewater
Henry Nguyen	Utilities	<a href="mailto:Henry.nguyen@cityofpaloalto.org">Henry.nguyen@cityofpaloalto.org</a>	Electrical
Tom Ting	Utilities	<a href="mailto:Tom.ting@cityofpaloalto.org">Tom.ting@cityofpaloalto.org</a>	Electrical
Walter Passmore	PW/UF	<a href="mailto:Walter.passmore@cityofpaloalto.org">Walter.passmore@cityofpaloalto.org</a>	Urban Forest
James Henrickson	Fire	<a href="mailto:James.henrickson@cityofpaloalt.org">James.henrickson@cityofpaloalt.org</a>	Fire
Jarrett Mullen	Transportation	<a href="mailto:Jarrett.Mullen@CityofPaloAlto.org">Jarrett.Mullen@CityofPaloAlto.org</a>	Transportation
Yaqueline Perez	CSD/Youth	<a href="mailto:aquelin.Perez@CityofPaloAlto.org">aquelin.Perez@CityofPaloAlto.org</a>	Youth liaison

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



## **NORTH VENTURA COORDINATED AREA PLAN CONSULTANT LIST**

**GEETI SILWAL, AICP, LEED® AP BD+C**  
**Principal in Charge [Perkins+Will]**

As Head of the Urban Design practice of Perkins+Will's West Coast Region, Geeti Silwal brings almost 20 years of experience as a lead urban designer/planner working nationally and internationally with cities/public agencies to develop visions and implementation guidelines for livable and sustainable environments. Building and revitalizing communities, she lays deep emphasis on placemaking, identity building, vibrancy, connectivity, accessibility, and social justice. Planning holistically for regenerative urban ecosystem, her experience covers a vast breadth of scales, including regional plans, downtown revitalization plans, and urban mixed-use infill projects.

**NIBEDITA DAS, LEED AP® ND**  
**Senior Project Manager [Perkins+Will]**

Nibedita (Nivi) has over 16 years of cumulative experience in urban design, planning entitlements, and architecture in United States, India and Southeast Asia with primary focus on sustainable and climate responsive design. She has more than a decade of project management experience in progressively complex projects, working with and assembling multidisciplinary project teams. Her diverse portfolio of public and private sector projects includes Specific Plans, public outreach, corporate campus planning, master planning new communities, infill and redevelopment plans, and design guidelines.

**KRISTEN HALL, AICP, LEED® AP ND**  
**Senior Urban Planner, Senior Associate [Perkins+Will]**

Kristen Hall is an urban designer and planner who specializes in complex urban infill projects focusing on the creation of sustainable, resilient, and adaptive communities. Through her experience both locally and internationally she has worked across many different scales and contexts to design masterplans, write guidelines, coordinate public outreach, and create implementation strategies. Kristen's core area of expertise is delivering projects that require innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and stakeholder engagement.

**RACHAEL CLEVELAND**  
**Landscape Architect [Perkins+Will]**

Rachael's work is informed by her fascination with urban ecology and her enthusiasm for user-centered landscape design solutions. Prior to joining Perkins+Will, she worked on the renovation of the Monterey

Conference Center and on the new Computer Science & Engineering Building II at the University of Washington. She has participated in NYC's Rebuild By Design competition as part of the Interboro Team, collaborated with Israeli-based design firm SAYA on border landscapes, and developed a coastal forest resilience plan with Anne Penniman Associates.

**DAHLIA CHAZAN, AICP, LEED AP®**

**Associate Principal [Arup]**

Dahlia is an urban planner specializing in comprehensive planning, transportation planning, public participation, sustainability planning, and transit-oriented developments, with more than fifteen years of experience. Dahlia often works with "built-out" communities in urban, suburban, and rural contexts, identifying creative ways to use limited land resources to meet community desires, support a range of transportation choices, and bolster economic development. Dahlia's planning experience focuses on real-world solutions that communities can implement through zoning, design guidelines, and other tools. Dahlia is also a Palo Alto native.

**PAUL BEATTY**

**Project Engineer [Arup]**

Paul is a senior transportation planner with over 18 years of experience across the USA, UK, Ireland, Australia, and the Middle East, specializing in the development of innovative, multi-modal, sustainable transport strategies. With a keen interest in how transportation directly impacts on our health and wellbeing, our economy and our environment, his focus lies in creating environments that prioritize pedestrians, bicyclists and transit, as well as managing demand for private vehicle trips and parking. Paul is passionate about making cities safer, healthier, more inviting and more efficient. Paul leads the transportation component of the Plan development, including the development of a recommended roadway network, sustainable transportation improvement strategies and trip and parking generation.

**DAVE JAVID, AICP, LEED AP®**

**Principal Outreach Specialist, Founder [Plan to Place]**

As founder of Plan to Place, Dave has over 15 years of experience leading a wide range of planning and outreach efforts of varying scale. Dave's experience managing the Community Engagement process for many relevant projects, including the Diridon Station Area Community Engagement, Downtown San Mateo Specific Plan and Los Altos Downtown Vision Plan, has provided him invaluable insight on the opportunities and the challenges of meeting the cities' needs and communities' expectations. Dave will lead the Plan to Place team in support of the project team in preparing and implementing the community engagement strategy for the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan project.

**SUJATA SRIVASTAVA**

**Principal [Strategic Economics]**

Sujata Srivastava has over 17 years of experience in urban economics consulting. She specializes in real estate market analysis, economic development, and fiscal impact analysis, with a focus on planning for transit-oriented development and infill development. Ms. Srivastava has developed methodologies for estimating the demand for housing and jobs near transit, as well as measuring the economic feasibility



and community benefits of intensified development near transit stations. Sujata will oversee the market and economic analysis that will inform the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan project.

**DEREK BRAUN**

**Senior Associate [Strategic Economics]**

Derek Braun specializes in managing analyses of market opportunities and demand, employment and industry trends, development feasibility, and the economic and fiscal impacts of development and transit investments. With over nine years of experience at Strategic Economics, Mr. Braun has performed analyses and provided strategic guidance to clients in a wide variety of market contexts across the United States. Derek will manage the market and economic analysis that will inform the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan project.

**SHANNON GEORGE**

**Principal Project Manager [David J. Powers & Associates]**

Shannon George is a Principal Project Manager for the company. She has over 19 years of experience in preparing environmental documents for a wide range of public and private projects, including residential, commercial, mixed-use development, General Plan Amendment, flood control, and projects focusing on cultural resources and historic buildings. As a Principal Project Manager, Ms. George will manage the preparation of environmental documents required under California and Federal laws including Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs), Initial Study/Negative Declarations (IS/ND), and Environmental Assessments (EA). Shannon will provide oversight of the project, address issues, and be responsible for QA on the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan project.

**SIMON NORTH, PE, LEED AP®**

**Lead Civil Engineer, Vice President [BKF]**

Simon has worked on a wide variety of residential, commercial, industrial, mixed use, education and healthcare projects in the San Francisco Bay Area. Simon's responsibilities have included taking projects from the conceptual stage through to development of final contract documents, specifications, cost estimates and support services through construction. Simon will lead the BKF team in support of the project team in civil engineering efforts for the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan project.

**ASHLEY STANLEY, PE**

**Civil Engineering Project Manager [BKF]**

Ashley has been working in the Bay Area for 10 years planning, designing, and facilitating construction of the civil aspects of mixed use infill developments, multi-family residential, commercial, industrial and senior housing developments. She also has experience preparing feasibility analyses for the planning stages of projects, and assisting development teams through entitlements, environmental reviews, planned development zoning, and tentative map stages. Her duties include project management, preparation of construction documents, including site grading and utility design, and specifications. Ashley will manage the BKF team in support of the project team in civil engineering efforts for the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan project.

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

## **NORTH VENTURA COORDINATED AREA PLAN LIST OF RESOURCES\***

**1. City of Palo Alto Planning and Community Environment Webpage**

[Planning and Community Environment Department](#)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pln/default.asp>

**2. North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan Project Webpage**

[NVCAP](#)

[https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pln/long\\_range\\_planning/area\\_plans\\_and\\_studies/plans\\_and\\_studies\\_under\\_development/north\\_ventura\\_coordinated\\_area\\_plan/default.asp](https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pln/long_range_planning/area_plans_and_studies/plans_and_studies_under_development/north_ventura_coordinated_area_plan/default.asp)

**3. Comprehensive Plan**

[2030 Comprehensive Plan](#)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/62915>

**4. Zoning Code**

[Palo Alto Municipal Code](#)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/clk/municode.asp>

**5. Citywide Planning Documents and Area Plans**

[SOFA I & SOFA II](#)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/25608>

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/3607>

[Parks Master Plan](#)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/64161>

[Urban Forestry Master Plan](#)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/36187>

[Local Hazard Mitigation Plan](#)

<http://resilience.abag.ca.gov/wp-content/documents/2010LHMP/PaloAlto-Annex-2011.pdf>

**6. Design Guidelines**

[El Camino Real Design Guidelines](#)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/19040>

[South El Camino Real Design Guidelines](#)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/19041>

**7. Transportation Plans**

[Bicycle + Pedestrian Plan](#)

<https://cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/31928>

[Rail Corridor Study](#)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/38025>

[Grand Boulevard Palo Alto](#)

[https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pln/transit/transportation\\_projects/grand\\_boulevard\\_palo\\_alto.asp](https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/depts/pln/transit/transportation_projects/grand_boulevard_palo_alto.asp)

[Connecting Palo Alto](#)

<https://pagradesep.com/>

**8. Housing**

[Housing Element](#) (2015-2023)

<https://cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/37935>

[Affordable Housing Overlay](#)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/65180>

[Housing Work Plan](#)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/63027>

**9. Related Ordinances**

[Annual Office Limit Ordinance](#) (Ordinance # 5439)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/51037>

[Citywide Office and R&D Development Cap](#) (Ordinance # 5446)

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?t=56923.09&BlobID=66534>

## **10. Technical Resources**

[BuildingEye](#)

<https://paloalto.buildingeye.com/planning>

## **11. Outside Agency Documents**

[Grand Boulevard Initiative](#)

<https://grandboulevard.net/>

[Caltrain General Information](#)

<http://www.caltrain.com/main>

[Caltrain Electrification](#)

<http://www.caltrain.com/projectsplans/CaltrainModernization.html>

[VTA](#)

<http://www.vta.org/>

[SamTrans](#)

<http://www.vta.org/>

[2018 Stanford General Use Permit](#)

<https://gup.stanford.edu/>

[California Planning Guide: An Introduction to Planning in California](#) (Governor's Office of Planning Research 2005 Edition)

[http://opr.ca.gov/docs/California\\_Planning\\_Guide\\_2005.pdf](http://opr.ca.gov/docs/California_Planning_Guide_2005.pdf)

[California High Speed Rail](#)

<http://www.hsr.ca.gov/>

\*Links to all the above documents are available at the project website in the [NVCAP Resources Page](#) section.



THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

## Palo Alto Municipal Code

## **Chapter 19.10 COORDINATED AREA PLANS**

---

## Sections:

- 19.10.010 Purposes.
- 19.10.020 Initiation.
- 19.10.030 Procedures.
- 19.10.040 Contents of coordinated area plans.
- 19.10.050 Coordinated development permit required.
- 19.10.060 Development must be consistent with coordinated area plan.

### **19.10.010 Purposes.**

This chapter establishes procedures for preparation of coordinated area plans. This chapter is intended to achieve, and shall be implemented to accomplish, the following purposes:

- (a) To create enhanced opportunities for building a sense of community through public involvement in planning processes which are designed not only to satisfy constitutional due process requirements, but also to provide residents, and business and property owners with early, meaningful opportunities to help shape the physical components of their neighborhoods and community.
- (b) To emphasize and enhance architectural qualities, public improvements, and site design by providing a graphic, visual linkage between policies and programs established in the Comprehensive Plan and specific development entitlements and public improvements.
- (c) To facilitate physical change by each of the following methods:
  - (1) Accelerating and coordinating the planning process within selected areas so that private development and re-use can proceed under streamlined city review processes.
  - (2) Encouraging rational private investment by providing specific, dependable information about the design requirements, development standards, and uses allowed on a particular site.
  - (3) Analyzing and considering the economic environment so that the planning process works in conjunction with the marketplace, rather than independent of it.
  - (4) Coordinating and timing public infrastructure investment to facilitate desirable private land uses.

(d) To assure Palo Alto's environmental quality by using the Comprehensive Plan Environmental Impact Report to focus environmental review on area and site-specific issues and changed circumstances.

(e) To facilitate orderly and consistent implementation of the city's Comprehensive Plan and development regulations.

(Ord. 4454 § 2 (part), 1997)

### **19.10.020 Initiation.**

Coordinated area plans shall be initiated as set forth in this section.

(a) **Initiation.** Coordinated area plans shall be initiated by motion of the city council, upon its own initiative or upon request of the planning commission. Planning commission or council action may be based upon the request of any person or the director of planning and community environment. The council will consider support or opposition from residents, and property and business owners, but such support or opposition shall not compel or preclude council action. The council will further consider whether the area has been identified in the comprehensive plan for coordinated area planning.

(b) **Minimum Area Size.** Coordinated area plans may be prepared for any area that includes more than one parcel.

(c) The city may from time to time establish application forms, submittal requirements, fees, and such other requirements, administrative guidelines and regulations as will aid in the efficient preparation and implementation of coordinated area plans.

(Ord. 4454 § 2 (part), 1997)

### **19.10.030 Procedures.**

Coordinated area plans shall be prepared in accordance with the procedures set forth in this section.

(a) **Council Goals and Policies.** Council will establish goals, objectives, and a schedule for each coordinated area plan at the time the plan is initiated or shortly thereafter. The goals and objectives will be supplemental to existing Comprehensive Plan policies and programs. Council may establish goals, objectives, and a schedule during preliminary review pursuant to Chapter 18.97.

(b) **Community Involvement.** Each coordinated area plan will be prepared pursuant to a program for city-facilitated interaction between residents, business and property owners, and other interested persons. The program shall contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

(1) **Working Group Formation.** The city council shall appoint a seven-to-fourteen-member working group comprising residents, business and property owners, and persons representing broader community interests including, but not limited to, environmental, community design, and business perspectives. The working group shall be advisory to the staff, planning

commission, and city council. The working group shall be assisted by a city-designated facilitator who may be a consultant.

(2) Working Group Tasks. The working group shall assist staff in preparing a draft coordinated area plan that contains each of the components set forth in Section 19.10.040. The working group shall, at a minimum, accomplish each of the following tasks to facilitate preparation of the coordinated area plan:

(A) Initial Public Meeting. The working group shall conduct an initial public meeting to accomplish the following:

- (1) Establish the general parameters of the plan;
- (2) Conduct environmental scoping;
- (3) Identify any known public infra-structure needs and plans;
- (4) Explain any known private development proposals;
- (5) Introduce staff and consultants to the public;
- (6) Identify additional important participants;
- (7) Identify any other relevant constraints and opportunities.

(B) Regular Public Meetings. The working group shall conduct regular meetings. The working group may also form subcommittees to meet from time to time to address particular issues or components of the coordinated area plan. All working group or subcommittee meetings shall be open to the public, with notice provided to property owners and other persons who have expressed an interest in the matter to the city. At least one regular meeting during the first half of the scheduled working group tasks will be conducted as a joint meeting with the city council. The city council may direct additional or revised goals and objectives during or following such meeting(s).

(C) Community Update Forum. The working group will schedule and notice at least one community update forum designed to keep the larger community informed of progress on the plan, and to seek the ideas and advice of the larger community regarding the content of the coordinated area plan.

(c) Schedule. Coordinated area plans, including review and action by the planning commission and city council, will generally be completed within twelve to fifteen months of the initial public meeting of the working group.

(d) Public Hearings. The coordinated area plan shall be considered at public hearings before the planning commission and city council prior to adoption. Notice of the public hearings, initial meeting and community update forum(s) shall be given in the same manner required by law for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

(e) Planning Commission and Other Board and Commission Advice and Recommendation. The planning commission shall make a recommendation to the city council upon each coordinated area plan. The director of planning and community environment may seek advice of any other city board or commission if such advice is deemed desirable.

(f) Adoption. coordinated area plans shall be adopted by ordinance upon a determination of the city council that the public interest, health, safety and general welfare will be served by the plan, and that the plan is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The city council shall also consider the manner in which the proposed coordinated area plan will integrate with and be implemented by the capital improvement program. The city council may approve, reject or modify all or part of the coordinated area plan.

(g) Amendments. An ordinance adopting a coordinated area plan may establish procedures for amendments of the plan, including but not limited to procedures authorizing minor amendments by the director of planning and community environment.

(h) Fees. As part of the ordinance adopting a coordinated area plan, the city council may impose a coordinated area plan fee upon persons seeking governmental approvals which are required to be consistent with the coordinated area plan. The fees shall be established so that, in the aggregate, they fully recover but as estimated do not exceed, the cost of preparation, adoption, and administration of the coordinated area plan, including costs incurred pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act. The fee charged will be reasonably prorated to take into account the applicant's relative benefit derived from the plan.

It is the intent of the city council to charge persons who benefit from coordinated area plans for the costs of developing those plans which result in savings to them by reducing the cost of documenting environmental consequences and advocating changed land uses which may be authorized.

The city council may require a person who requests adoption, amendment, or repeal of a coordinated area plan to deposit with the city an amount equal to the estimated cost of preparing the plan, amendment, or repeal prior to its preparation.

(Ord. 4454 § 2 (part), 1997)

#### **19.10.040 Contents of coordinated area plans.**

Each coordinated area plan shall contain at least the following components.

(a) The distribution, location, and extent of land uses, including, but not limited to, industrial, office, commercial, residential, public facilities and open space, within the area covered by the plan. The land uses established by the plan may be supplemental to or different from the uses permitted and specified in the city's zoning districts. For retail commercial and professional office designations, the coordinated area plan shall also include the preferred and allowable uses, their respective orientation, articulation, and floor area ratio. For housing designations, the coordinated area plan shall also include density, floor area ratio, orientation, setbacks, and graphical design prototypes.

(b) The proposed distribution, location, and extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other public improvements proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan.

(c) A program of implementation measures including development regulations, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out the plan. This program shall be

specifically coordinated with the city's capital improvement program ("CIP"), and may include CIP revisions necessary to implement the plan.

(d) Standards and criteria by which development will proceed, if needed.

(e) Specific architectural and site design objectives and requirements, including but not limited to the scale of streets, building orientation, placement and design of public and private parks or plazas, courtyards, arcades, porches, walls, fences, trellises, sidewalk treatments, and parking configuration. Design guidelines that are specific to the conditions of the area shall be included to address each land use type, streets, parks, and any public facilities. Specific objectives and requirements may be adopted in addition to, or in lieu of, existing zoning and design requirements. The coordinated area plan shall include preliminary elevations and information regarding facades, roofs and building materials.

(f) A determination of the economic and fiscal feasibility of the plan with specific analysis of market place factors and incentives and disincentives to the desired development product, as well as a cost-benefit analysis of public infra-structure investments and projected economic benefits to the city and community.

(g) Environmental review, provided that to the maximum extent feasible the Comprehensive Plan Environmental Impact Report shall be used as a master or tiered EIR in order to streamline and focus environmental review of the coordinated area plan.

(Ord. 4454 § 2 (part), 1997)

#### **19.10.050 Coordinated development permit required.**

A coordinated development permit shall be required before any building or structure is erected, constructed, enlarged, altered on the exterior, placed or installed on any site located within an area subject to an approved coordinated area plan.

(Ord. 4454 § 2 (part), 1997)

#### **19.10.060 Development must be consistent with coordinated area plan.**

No coordinated development permit shall be issued, nor shall any building or structure be erected, constructed, enlarged, altered on the exterior, placed, installed or moved within an area subject to an approved coordinated area plan except upon a finding that the resulting building or structure is consistent with the coordinated area plan.

(Ord. 4454 § 2 (part), 1997)

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

---

Arnold Schwarzenegger, *Governor*

# California Planning Guide: An Introduction to Planning in California

---



**Governor's Office of Planning and Research**  
1400 Tenth Street  
P.O. Box 3044  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 445-0613

Sean Walsh, *Director, OPR*

Terry Roberts, *Director, State Clearinghouse*

Shauna Pellman, *Planning Intern*

December 2005 Edition

---



**Table of Contents**

**INTRODUCTION**..... i

**THE PLANNING PROCESS** ..... 1

**Groups Involved in Planning** ..... 1

**Public Involvement** ..... 1

**ANNEXATION AND INCORPORATION**..... 2

**Sphere of Influence** ..... 2

**Annexation** ..... 2

**Incorporation**..... 2

**THE GENERAL PLAN**..... 3

**The Seven Required Elements** ..... 4

**Consistency** ..... 4

**Adopting and Amending the Plan** ..... 5

**Community Plans** ..... 5

**Specific Plans** ..... 5

**ZONING** ..... 5

**Rezoning** ..... 6

**Variances** ..... 8

**Conditional Use Permits** ..... 8

**SUBDIVISIONS** ..... 9

**Tentative Map** ..... 9

**Final Map**..... 9

**PROJECT APPROVAL PROCESS** ..... 9

**Permits** ..... 9

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)** ..... 10

        Project ..... 10

        Lead Agency ..... 10

        Analyzing Projects ..... 10

        Negative Declaration and Mitigated Negative Declaration ..... 11

        Environmental Impact Report (EIR) ..... 11

        Project Approval ..... 11

**The Permit Streamlining Act** ..... 12

**COMMON PLANNING TERMS** ..... 13-17

**SOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION** ..... 18

**FIGURES**

**Figure 1: Sample of a Zoning Map**..... 7

**Figure 2: Simplified CEQA Flow Chart** ..... 12

## INTRODUCTION

The *California Planning Guide* is an introduction to the planning process in California. It explains the basic tools used in the planning process including the General Plan, zoning, and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In addition, this publication provides a very general overview of several complex planning laws. Readers should refer to the text of these laws for a complete and detailed understanding of their specific provisions. This planning guide focuses on planning from the perspective of cities and counties, although there are numerous other agencies involved in land use planning decisions. Additional sources of information are provided at the end of this publication.

The Governor's Office of Planning and Research is responsible for the administration of the California Environmental Quality Act and provides technical assistance to local planners, community residents, and state agencies and departments on planning in California. This planning guide is part of a series of technical memos and advisories intended to inform planning professionals and the general public.

The *California Planning Guide* is an update of a 1989 publication written by Antero Rivasplata, whose contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

Please feel free to reproduce all or part of this document. You need not secure permission; we ask that you print it accurately and give credit to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

## THE PLANNING PROCESS

Planning is the process of deciding how a community uses its land and other resources. The planning process involves analyzing the environmental and socioeconomic impacts of development and infrastructure projects. Planning decisions usually require local political approval, and reflect the desires and interests of the community. Local and state laws define the process for making planning decisions. (Government Code Sections 65000-66037).

The State delegates most local land use and development decisions to cities and counties. State law requires that each incorporated city and county adopt "a comprehensive, long-term general plan for [its] physical development." This general plan is the foundation for community decisions that will affect the future location of housing, business, industry, roads, parks, and other land uses, protect the public from noise and other environmental hazards, and conserve natural resources. Each community's elected legislative body, upon recommendation of their planning commission, implements its general plan through its zoning, subdivision, and other ordinances.

There is no requirement that adjoining cities or counties have identical, or even similar, plans and ordinances. Each city and each county adopts its own general plan and development regulations. In turn, each is solely responsible for the planning decisions made within its jurisdiction.

### Groups Involved in Planning

In most communities, the city council or board of supervisors appoints one or more groups to consider planning issues. Some of the more common planning groups are:

- **The Planning Commission**, which considers general plan and specific plan amendments, zone changes, major subdivisions, conditional use permits, and variances.
- **The Zoning Adjustment Board**, which may also consider conditional use permits, variances, and other minor permits.
- **The Architectural Review or Design Review Board**, which reviews projects to ensure that they meet community aesthetic standards or follow community design guidelines.

Often these appointed groups have the power to approve projects, subject to appeal to the council or board of supervisors. In some cities and counties, these appointed groups simply advise the elected officials on the projects that they review, leaving actual project approval to the city council or board of supervisors.

### Public Involvement

State planning laws require cities and counties to involve the public before making certain planning decisions. Members of the public can be involved in planning in a variety of ways. They can vote for local government officials who support their vision of the community; contact local officials about planning issues; participate in a neighborhood group; learn from and

#### The Brown Act

Cities and counties must provide advance public notice of the hearings and meetings of their councils, boards, and other groups. Meetings and hearings, with some exceptions, must be open to the public (Government Code Sections 54950 - 54963 and 65090 et seq.).

educate others in the community about planning issues; and participate in government sponsored planning meetings, focus groups, and public hearings.

Many local planning issues require a public hearing before the issue can be approved by the local legislative body or appointed commissions. A public hearing is open to everyone, and offers the opportunity to learn about an issue and to express one's opinion about the issue. The agency holding the hearing must provide public notice of the hearing at least ten days in advance. Interested persons can request to be on the agency's mailing list to receive information about specific projects.

---

## **ANNEXATION AND INCORPORATION**

Annexation (the addition of territory to an existing city or special district) and incorporation (creation of a new city) are controlled by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) established in each county by state law. A LAFCO is made up of elected officials selected by their counties, cities, and, in some cases, special districts. LAFCO duties include: (1) establishing the spheres of influence that designate the ultimate service areas of cities and special districts; (2) studying and approving requests for city annexations; and, (3) studying and approving proposals for city incorporations (Government Code Section 56000 et seq.).

### **Sphere of Influence**

The sphere of influence designates the physical boundaries and service area of a city or special district. Each county's

LAFCO is responsible for establishing a sphere for each city and special district in the county. The purpose of the sphere is to act as a benchmark for future annexation decisions.

Cities cannot establish their own sphere of influence. The LAFCO has sole responsibility for doing this. However, a city may request that the LAFCO amends its sphere. Some cities use their sphere of influence as a boundary for their general plan.

### **Annexation**

When the LAFCO receives an annexation request, it will convene a hearing to determine the merits of the proposal. Annexations may be requested by affected landowners or by a city.

The LAFCO will deny, approve or conditionally approve annexation proposals based on its policies and state law. For example, annexation cannot occur unless the LAFCO has adopted a sphere of influence for the city seeking the annexation and the area proposed to be annexed is within the city's sphere. The LAFCO members tentatively approve requests for annexation hearings, and, if necessary, an election. Annexations which have been passed by a vote of the inhabitants or which have not been defeated by protest (in those instances where no election was required) must be certified by the LAFCO and meet all its conditions before they become final. The LAFCO, not the city, has final responsibility for the annexation process.

### **Incorporation**

When a new city is proposed to be formed, the LAFCO studies the financial feasibility of the proposed city, its financial impact on

the county and special districts, and the provision of public services. If the proposal is not financially feasible, the LAFCO can terminate the proceedings. If the proposed city appears to be feasible, LAFCO will refer the proposal (and a set of conditions to be met upon incorporation) to the county board of supervisors for a public hearing on the subject. Incorporation proceedings are terminated if the supervisors receive protests from a majority of the voters residing within the proposed city boundaries. If they do not receive a majority protest, an election will be held on the question of whether to create the city and to elect city officials.

plan to establish a clear view of the community's future.

The general plan must contain at least seven components (called *mandatory elements*) addressing a set of basic planning issues (Government Code Section 65302). Each city and county determines the relative importance of these issues to their local circumstances and decides how they are to be discussed in the general plan. They may also voluntarily adopt additional elements, called *optional elements*, covering subjects of local interest. Some examples of optional elements include: air quality, recreation, community design, or public facilities.

Although general plans are not required to follow a standard format, many contain similar features. Some of the things to look for in the written portion of a general plan are goals (abstract and general expressions of community values), objectives (specific intermediate steps in attaining a goal), policies (specific statements that guide decision making), and implementation programs (descriptions of how the goals, objectives, and policies are to be put into action). Many plans also contain background information about the community, such as population projections, traffic levels, natural hazards, community history, and housing characteristics.

---

## THE GENERAL PLAN

The general plan is a community's blueprint for future development. It describes a community's development goals and policies. It also is the foundation for land use decisions made by the planning commission, city council, or board of supervisors.

A general plan consists of at least two parts. It must contain a written text describing the community's goals, objectives, and policies for development. It must also contain a map (or maps) and diagrams illustrating the generalized distribution of land uses, the road system, environmental hazard areas, the open space system, and other policy statements that can be illustrated (Government Code Section 65302). The maps and diagrams must work together with the written portions of the

### The General Plan and Zoning Are Not the Same

A general plan is a set of long-term goals and policies that the community uses to guide development decisions. Although the plan establishes standards for the location and density of land uses, it does not directly regulate land use.

Zoning, on the other hand, is regulatory. Under the zoning ordinance, development must comply with specific, enforceable standards such as minimum lot size, maximum building height, minimum building setback, and a list of allowable uses. Zoning is applied lot-by-lot, whereas the general plan has a community-wide perspective.

## The Seven Required Elements

1. **Land use element:** designates the general location and density of housing, business, industry, open space, public buildings and grounds, waste disposal facilities, and other land uses.
2. **Circulation 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.
3. **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.
4. **Conservation element:** addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources including water, forests, soils, rivers, and mineral deposits.
5. **Open-space element:** details plans and measures for preserving open-space for natural resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, and for agriculture.
6. **Noise element:** identifies and appraises noise problems within the community and influences the distribution of land uses.

**What's so special about the housing element?**

The Housing element is the only part of the General Plan that is required to be updated on a particular time schedule. The element must be revised every five years to reflect current housing needs and projections. The Department of Housing and Community Development reviews and certifies these elements for statutory compliance (Government Code Sections 65583-65590).

7. **Safety element:** establishes policies to protect the community from natural and manmade hazards (e.g. seismic, geologic, flood, wildfire, and toxic materials hazards.)

## Consistency

The general plan is the basis for all local land use decisions. Zoning (except in most charter cities), subdivisions, and public works projects can only be approved when they are consistent with the general plan. An action, program

or project is consistent with the general plan if, considering all its aspects, it will further the goals, objectives and policies of the plan and not obstruct their attainment.

Not only must all local land use be consistent with the general plan, the plan itself must be internally consistent.

Each part of the general plan, be it a goal, policy or map/diagram, must mesh with all of the other parts of the plan. For instance, the land use element must not contain statements or assertions that conflict with the housing element. Similarly, the location of a major highway on the land use element diagram must match its location on the circulation element diagram as well.

**Charter Cities**

All of California's largest cities are charter cities, which mean they have been incorporated under their own laws rather than state laws. Charter cities are exempt from the requirement that zoning be consistent with the general plan unless the charter city requires such consistency by its own charter or ordinance, or the city has a population over two million. Although charter cities have broader powers to enact land use regulations than do general law cities, the consistency exemption applies only to zoning, and not to subdivision map approval, public works construction, or other land use approvals.



## **Adopting and Amending the Plan**

The process of adopting or amending a general plan requires public participation. Cities and counties must hold public hearings for such proposals. Advance notice of the place and time of the hearing must be published in the newspaper (when there is no paper, notice must be posted in the vicinity of the project site) and also mailed directly to the involved property owners. State planning law also requires that cities and counties consult with California Native American tribes prior to adopting or amending the general plan. Copies of the adopted or amended plans must be available for public purchase within two days after a final decision.

Each of the general plan's seven required elements can be amended only four times per calendar year. More than one change may be considered at each of these four opportunities. Optional elements can be amended at any time.

The planning commission, and the city council or county board of supervisors, must each hold at least one public hearing prior to approving or amending the plan. The commission usually holds its hearing first and makes specific recommendations to the council or board. A recommendation for approval must be made by a majority of the total membership of the commission.

The council or board will take final action on the proposals at their hearing. Approvals must be made by a majority of the total membership of the council or board. If they make substantial changes to any planning commission recommendations, those items must be sent back to the commission for further study and recommendations before a final decision is made. The commission will

have 40 days in which to make any further recommendations.

## **Community Plans**

A *Community plan* focuses planning efforts on a smaller area or neighborhood. A community plan is part of the local general plan. It addresses issues pertinent to a particular area or community within the city or county and supplements the policies of the general plan. Accordingly, it must be consistent with the general plan in all respects.

## **Specific Plans**

A *specific plan* implements, but is not technically a part of, the local general plan. Specific plans describe allowable land uses, identify open space, and detail infrastructure availability and financing for a portion of the community. In some jurisdictions, specific plans also take the place of zoning. These specific plans must be consistent with the general plan. In turn, zoning, subdivision, and public works decisions must comply with the provisions of the specific plan. Specific plans are adopted and amended in the same manner as general plans.

---

## **ZONING**

The distribution of residential, commercial, industrial, and other zones must be based on the pattern of land uses established by the community's general plan. Zoning maps illustrate how all uses are distributed geographically.

Zoning is adopted by ordinance and carries the weight of local law. Land may be put

only to those uses allowed by the zoning designation assigned to it. For example, if a commercial zone does not allow 5-story office buildings, then no such building could be built on land with a commercial zone designation.

The zoning ordinance regulates land uses within the community. It assigns each piece of property to a zone which describes the rules under which that land may be used. These classifications, such as "R-1" for single-family residences or "C-1" for neighborhood commercial uses, cover in specific terms the range of uses that are allowed in the general plan.

**Overlay Zones**

Overlay zones provide an additional layer of standards. They are often set up to protect natural and cultural areas such as historic districts, residential enclaves, wetlands, water fronts, and scenic views.

A typical zoning ordinance describes numerous zone classifications and development standards for each. Each of these zones identifies allowable uses and sets standards such as minimum lot size, maximum building height, and minimum front yard depth. In most local ordinances, development of allowable uses does not require a public hearing. Increasingly, however, communities are requiring a public review of the project's design before a building permit is issued.

In many communities, the planning commission is not the only body responsible for making zoning decisions. A board of zoning adjustment or a zoning administrator may be appointed to consider use permit and variance requests. Building design may be

subject to approval by a design review or architectural review board. Public notice of zoning hearings must be given at least 10 days before the hearing by advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation and by direct mailing to the owners of property located within 300 feet of the proposal's boundaries.

**Form-based Code**

In 2004, Assembly Bill 1268 was passed allowing the use of *form-based codes*. This bill changed planning law to allow form and design to be expressed in a community's Land Use Element and Zoning Ordinance. Traditional zoning creates zones that allow certain building uses. Form-based code is more flexible about building uses in each zone, and more stringent about design elements such as architecture, landscaping, and ways of making streets and sidewalks bike and pedestrian friendly.

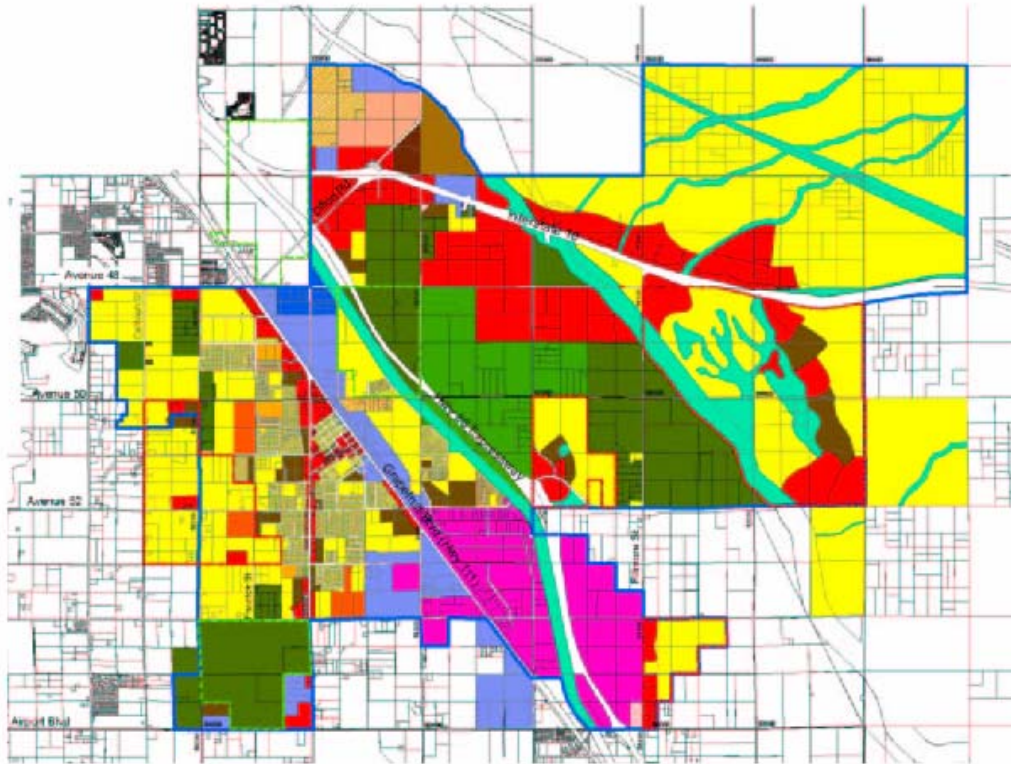
## Rezoning

If a landowner proposes a use that is not allowed in that zone, then a change of zone (rezoning) is required for that use to occur. The local planning commission and the city council or county board of supervisors must hold public hearings before property may be rezoned. The council or board is not obligated to approve requests for rezoning and, except in charter cities, must deny such requests when the proposed zone conflicts with the general plan.



Figure 1: Sample of a Zoning Map

City of Coachella\*



**Legend**

- City Boundary
  - Specific Plan Boundary
  - Tribal Land
- ZONING**
- A-R. AGRICULTURAL RESERVE
  - A-T. AGRICULTURAL TRANSITION
  - A. AGRICULTURE
  - C-E. COMMERCIAL ENTERTAINMENT
  - C-G. COMMERCIAL GENERAL
  - C-N. COMMERCIAL NEIGHBORHOOD
  - C-T. COMMERCIAL TOURIST
  - C-T. PUD. COMMERCIAL TOURIST. PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT
  - M-AW. MANUFACTURING AUTO WRECKING
  - M-H. MANUFACTURING HEAVY
  - M-S. MANUFACTURING SERVICE
  - O-S. OPEN SPACE
  - R-E. RESIDENTIAL ESTATE
  - R-MH. RESIDENTIAL MOBILE HOME
  - R-M. RESIDENTIAL MULTIPLE FAMILY
  - R-M, 4300. RESIDENTIAL MULTIPLE FAMILY, 4300
  - R-O-6000. RESIDENTIAL OVERLAY 6000
  - R-PUD. RESIDENTIAL PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT
  - R-S. RESIDENTIAL SINGLE FAMILY
  - T. TRANSPORTATION

\* Reprinted with permission from the City of Coachella.

## Variances

A variance is a limited waiver of development standards allowed by the zoning ordinance. It may be granted, after a public hearing, in special cases where: (1) strict application of the zoning regulations would deprive property of the uses enjoyed by nearby lands in the same zone; and (2) restrictions have been imposed to ensure that the variance will not be a grant of special privilege.

A variance does not permit a use that is not otherwise allowed in that zone (for example, a commercial use may not be approved in a residential zone by variance). Economic hardship alone is not sufficient justification for approval of a variance.

Typically, variances are considered when the physical characteristics of the property make it difficult to use. For instance, in a situation where the rear half of a lot is a steep slope, a variance might be approved to allow a house to be built closer to the street than usually allowed.

## Conditional Use Permits (CUPs)

Some types of land uses are only allowed upon approval of a conditional use permit (also called a CUP or special use permit) after a public hearing. These uses might include community facilities (i.e., hospitals or schools), public buildings or grounds (i.e., fire stations or parks), temporary or hard-to-classify uses (i.e., Christmas tree sales), or uses with potentially significant environmental impacts (i.e., hazardous chemical storage or surface mining). The local zoning ordinance specifies the uses for which a conditional use permit is required, the zones they may be allowed in, and the public hearing procedure.

A CUP imposes special development requirements to insure that the use will not be detrimental to its surroundings. Requirements might include, for example, additional landscaping, soundproofing, limited hours of operation, additional parking, or road improvements. A CUP does not rezone the land.

### What is Smart Growth?

Smart Growth is development that serves the economy, the community, and the environment. It changes the terms of the development debate away from the traditional growth/no growth question to “how and where should new development be accommodated.” Smart Growth answers these questions by simultaneously achieving:

- Healthy communities that provide families with a clean environment. Smart growth balances development and environmental protection – accommodating growth while preserving open space and critical habitat, reusing land, and protecting water supplies and air quality.
- Economic development and jobs that create business opportunities and improve local tax base; that provide neighborhood services and amenities; and that create economically competitive communities.
- Strong neighborhoods which provide a range of housing options giving people the opportunity to choose housing that best suits them. It maintains and enhances the value of existing neighborhoods and creates a sense of community.
- Transportation choices that give people the option to walk, ride a bike, take transit, or drive.

## **SUBDIVISIONS**

In general, land cannot be subdivided in California without local government approval. Dividing land for sale, lease or financing is regulated by local ordinances based on the state Subdivision Map Act (commencing at Government Code Section 66410). The local general plan and the zoning, subdivision, and other ordinances govern the design of the subdivision, the size of its lots, and the types of improvements that will be required as conditions of approval.

There are basically two kinds of subdivisions: (1) parcel maps, which are limited to divisions resulting in fewer than 5 lots (with certain exceptions), and (2) subdivisions (or tract maps), which create 5 or more lots.

Tract maps and, where provided by local ordinance, parcel maps are approved in two stages.

### **Tentative Map**

Upon receiving an application for a tentative subdivision map, the city or county staff will examine the design of the subdivision to ensure that it meets the requirements of the general plan and the subdivision ordinance. An environmental impact analysis must be done and an advertised public hearing held before a tentative map is considered for approval. If approved, the map will be subject to conditions that the subdivider must meet within a specific time period. While these conditions are being met, no lots have been officially approved.

### **Final Map**

When all of the conditions set out in the approved tentative map have been satisfied,

and compliance certified by city or county officials, the city council or county board of supervisors will approve a final map. Unlike a tentative map, which can be denied if it does not meet city or county standards, the final map must be approved (with some exceptions) if it substantially complies with the previously approved tentative map. The subdivider may now record the map at the County Recorder's office.

Subdivision approval is conditioned upon the subdivider providing public improvements such as streets, drainage facilities, water supply or sewer lines to serve the subdivision. They may also be required to dedicate park land to the community. These improvements must be installed or secured by bond before the city or county will grant final map approval and allow the subdivision to be recorded in the county recorder's office.

Lots within the subdivision cannot be sold and are not legal divisions of land until a final map has been recorded. The subdivider has at least two years (and with extensions, usually more) in which to comply with the improvement requirements, gain final administrative approval, and record the final map.

---

## **PROJECT APPROVAL PROCESS**

### **Permits**

Most projects require one or more permits, depending upon state and local codes and regulations. Generally speaking, permits fall into two categories: *discretionary* and *ministerial*. A discretionary permit is subject to the evaluation, judgment, and approval or denial by the local planning

authority or other permitting agencies. A ministerial permit is not subject to discretion. Rather, the approval of a ministerial permit is automatic if it meets certain pre-determined requirements. Typically, small projects such as renovating a kitchen or building a fence are ministerial. Ministerial projects are not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

**What are discretionary projects?**

Discretionary projects require the public agency to exercise judgment or deliberation when deciding to approve the project.

**What are ministerial projects?**

Ministerial projects receive automatic approval if certain conditions are met. For example, a local planning department might automatically issue a building permit if a project meets specified building criteria.

**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

The California Environmental Quality Act (commencing at Public Resources Code Section 21000) requires local and state governments to consider the potential environmental effects of a project before making a decision on it. CEQA's purpose is to disclose the potential impacts of a project, suggest methods to minimize those impacts, and discuss project alternatives so that decision-makers will have full information upon which to base their decision.

Project

A project, as defined by CEQA, is any action that has the potential for a direct or indirect impact on the environment. A

project can be any of the following: 1) an activity of a public agency, 2) an activity of someone who receives assistance, such as grants or loans, from a public agency, 3) an activity that involves receiving a lease, permit, or other permission for use that is issued by a public agency (California Code of Regulations 15378).

Lead Agency

The agency with the principal responsibility for issuing permits to a project, or for carrying out the project, is called the *lead agency*. As such, this agency is responsible for determining whether or not a project will significantly impact the environment and, when necessary, for analyzing the project's possible environmental impacts (or contracting for this work to be done under its direction). The planning department is usually the lead agency in local planning matters.

**What is a Lead Agency?**  
The primary public agency that is responsible for carrying out a project. (California Code of Regulations Section 15367).

Analyzing Projects

Analyzing a project's potential environmental impacts is a multi-step process. Many minor projects, such as single-family homes, remodeling, and accessory structures are exempt from the CEQA requirements. Exempt projects require no environmental review.

When a project is not exempt, and therefore, subject to review, the lead agency prepares an *initial study* to assess the potential adverse environmental impacts. If the project will not cause any significant impacts on the environment or if it has been redesigned to eliminate any significant impacts, a *negative declaration* is written. If

significant environmental impacts are identified, then an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be written before the project can be considered by decision makers. Upon approval of a project for which a negative declaration is adopted or an EIR certified, the city or county must also adopt a monitoring program to ensure that the mitigation measures will be completed as required.

Both negative declarations and EIRs are objective, informational documents. They neither approve nor deny a project. Environmental analysis must be done as early as possible in the process of considering a project and must address the entire project. The CEQA Guidelines describes the different types of EIRs that may be prepared.

### Negative Declaration and Mitigated Negative Declaration

A Negative Declaration (ND) describes why a project will not have any significant impacts on the environment. A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) describes a project that has incorporated changes, or *mitigation measures*, to ensure that there will be no significant impacts resulting from the project. The ND and the MND can be used only when significant impacts are totally eliminated. CEQA requires that NDs and MNDs be made available for review by the public and other agencies prior to approval of the project. The review period (a minimum of 20 days) allows concerned citizens and public agencies to comment on the contents and adequacy of the environmental

**What is Mitigation?**  
Measures taken to eliminate, avoid, rectify, compensate, or reduce environmental impacts.

document prior to its adoption.

### Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

An EIR discusses the proposed project, its environmental setting, its probable impacts, feasible means of reducing or eliminating those impacts, its cumulative effects in the context of other development, and feasible alternatives to the project. As opposed to NDs and MNDs, an EIR may conclude that there is no feasible way of eliminating all significant impacts, even after consideration of mitigation measures and alternatives to the project. Similar to Negative Declarations, CEQA requires a draft EIR to be made available to the public and public agencies for review. The review period is a minimum of 30 days, and allows citizens and agencies to comment on the document before its certification. The final EIR must incorporate written responses to the comments submitted by reviewers.

- EIR Contents**
- Project description
  - Environmental Setting
  - Impacts
    - Growth inducing
    - Cumulative
  - Mitigation measures

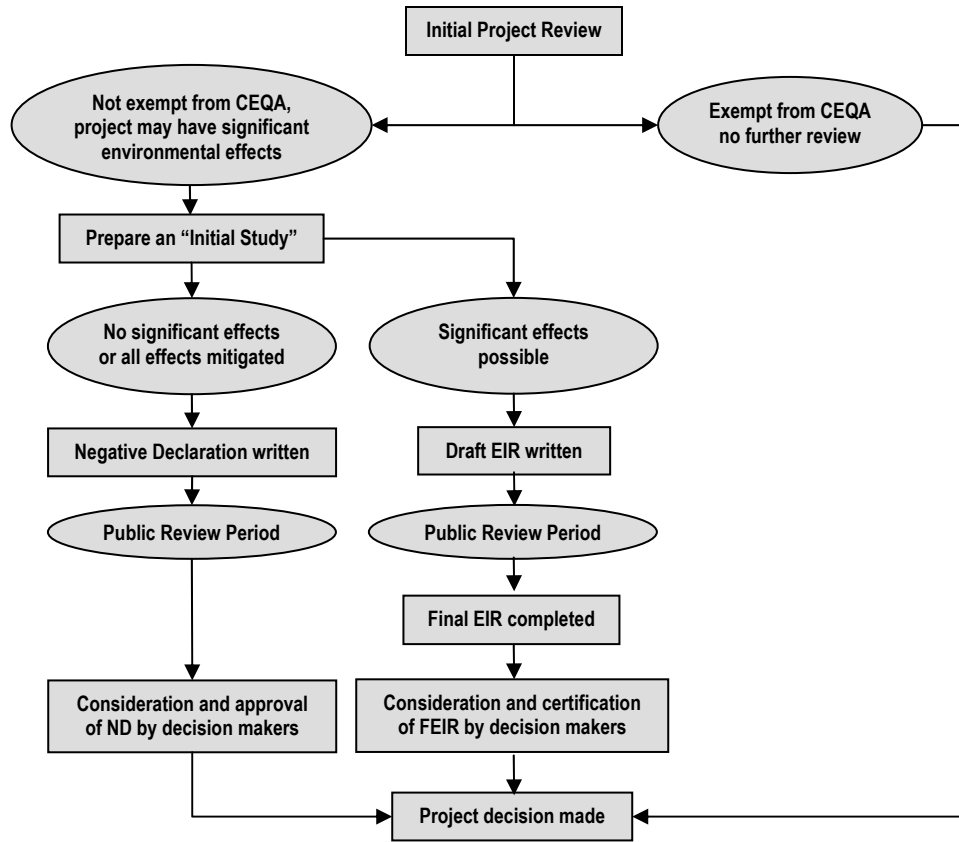
### Project Approval

Before the lead agency approves a project, it must certify the adequacy of the Negative Declaration, Mitigated Negative Declaration, or EIR. If its decision to approve a project will result in unavoidable significant environmental impacts, the lead agency must state, in writing, its overriding reasons for granting the approval. In addition, when mitigation measures are adopted as a result of a Mitigated Negative Declaration or EIR, the lead agency must enact a program for reporting on or monitoring the implementation of those measures



**Figure 2: Simplified CEQA Flow Chart**

**Note:** This chart illustrates the three common paths for project processing under CEQA. Processing times and the level of complexity of Negative Declarations and EIRs are not the same



**The Permit Streamlining Act**

State law sets time limits for governmental action on some types of private development projects (see Government Code Sections 65920-65963.1). Failure to act within those time limits can mean automatic approval of a project under certain circumstances. The Permit Streamlining Act (PSA) applies to discretionary projects which are *adjudicative* in nature. An adjudicative decision applies existing policies and regulations to a particular situation. Use permits, subdivisions, and variances are all such

actions subject to the PSA. The PSA does not apply to the adoption or amendment of a general plan or a zoning ordinance.

Generally speaking, the public agency must take action on private development projects within 180 days of the date upon which the project's final EIR is certified. This period is 60 days when a negative declaration is adopted or the project is exempt from CEQA. A project may be automatically approved under the PSA if the agency fails to make a decision within the time limit and the developer takes certain actions to provide public notice.

## COMMON PLANNING TERMS

### Terms used in this guide are in bold

#### Accessory Use

An activity or structure that is incidental to the main use of a site.

#### **Building Envelope**

The space remaining on a site for structures after all building setback, height limit, and bulk requirements have been met.

#### Capital Improvement Program

A timetable for the installation of permanent public structures, facilities, roads, and other improvements based upon budget projections.

#### **CEQA**

The California Environmental Quality Act (see Public Resources Code section 21000). CEQA requires that private and public projects' potential adverse effects upon the environment be reviewed by decision-makers.

#### **Charter City**

A city which has been incorporated under its own charter rather than under the general laws of the state. Charter cities have broader powers than do general law cities.

#### Cluster Development

Development which is clustered in a portion of a site, leaving the remainder in open-space. The amount of development allowed equals the amount that would have otherwise been allowed on the entire site.

#### COG

Council of Governments. California's 25 COGs are regional planning agencies concerned primarily with transportation planning and housing; they do not directly regulate land use. Elected officials from each of the cities and counties belonging to the COG make up its governing board.

#### **Community Plan**

A portion of the local general plan that focuses on a particular area or community within the city or county. Community plans supplement the contents of the general plan.

#### **Conditional Use Permit (CUP)**

A permit authorizing a use not routinely allowed on a particular site, subject to a public hearing. If approval is granted, the developer must meet certain conditions to harmonize the project with its surroundings.

#### Dedication

A grant of private land to a public agency for public use. Dedications are often used to obtain roads and parkland needed to serve a project.

#### Density Bonus

An increase in the allowable number of residences granted by the city or county in return for the project's providing low- or moderate-income housing. (see Government Code section 65915)

#### **Design Review Board**

A group appointed by the city council to consider the design and aesthetics of development within all or a portion of the community.

Development Agreement

A binding contract between a developer and a city or county establishing the conditions under which a particular development may occur. The local government "freezes" the regulations applicable to the site for an agreed upon period of time. (see Government Code section 65864)

Development Fees

Fees charged as a precondition to construction or development approval. The most common are: (1) impact fees (such as parkland acquisition fees, school facilities fees, or street construction fees) related to funding public improvements necessitated in part or in whole by the development; (2) connection fees (such as water fees) to cover the cost of installing public services to the development; (3) permit fees (such as building permits or grading permits) for the administrative costs of processing development plans; and, (4) application fees (rezoning, variance, etc.) for the administrative costs of reviewing and hearing development proposals.

Downzone

A change of zoning to a more restrictive zone (for example, from multi-family residential to single-family residential).

**EIR**

Environmental Impact Report. A detailed review of a proposed project, its potential adverse impacts upon the environment, measures that may avoid or reduce those impacts, and alternatives to the project.

Easement

The right to use property owned by another for a specific purpose. Power line easements are a common example.

Eminent Domain

The right of government to take private property for public use upon the payment of just compensation to the owner. This is also called condemnation (condemnation can also mean the closing of an unsafe structure by a public agency to protect the community safety).

Exaction

A fee or dedication required as a condition of development permit approval.

**Final Map Subdivision**

The final map must be filed before the tentative map expires. Approval of the final map is ministerial if all of the conditions of approval attached to the tentative map have been met.

Findings

The legal "footprints" which an agency must leave to bridge the analytical gap between the raw data considered by the agency and its ultimate decision. They expose its mode of analysis of facts, regulations, and policies.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

A measure of development intensity. FAR is the ratio of the floor area of a building to the area of its site. For instance, both a two-story building that covers an entire lot and a four-story building that covers 1/2 of a lot have FARs of 2.

General Law City

A city incorporated under and subject to the general laws of the state.



**General Plan**

A statement of policies, including text and diagrams, setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals, for the future physical development of the city or county. (see Government Code section 65300)

**"Granny" Housing**

An accessory dwelling for one or more elderly persons that is attached to or separate from a main residence. Government Code section 65852.1 allows cities and counties to approve such units in single-family neighborhoods.

**Growth Management**

A local program limiting the rate of community growth. Growth management strategies vary, but they can include capping the annual number of building permits, relating allowable development intensity to certain levels of infrastructure service or limiting the location of new development.

**Impact Fees**

See *Development Fees*.

**Infrastructure**

A general term for public and quasi-public utilities and facilities such as roads, bridges, sewer plants, water lines, power lines, fire stations, etc.

**Initial Study**

An analysis of a project's potential environmental effects and their relative significance. An initial study is preliminary to deciding whether to prepare a negative declaration or an EIR.

**Initiative**

A ballot measure which has qualified for election as a result of voter petition. At the local level, initiatives usually focus on changes or additions to the general plan and zoning ordinance. The initiative power is reserved for the public by the California Constitution.

**Inverse Condemnation**

The illegal removal of property value through excessive government regulation. Legal advice should be sought before proceeding in cases of potential inverse condemnation.

**LAFCO**

The Cortese/Knox Act (see Government Code section 56000) establishes a Local Agency Formation Commission in each county. A LAFCO is made up of elected officials from the county, cities, and, in some cases, special districts. It administers the state law governing city incorporation and annexation proposals.

**Mitigation Measure**

The California Environmental Quality Act requires that when an environmental impact or potential impact will occur, measures must be proposed that will eliminate, avoid, rectify, compensate for or reduce that effect.

**Moratorium**

A halt to new development or the issuance of permits. Moratoria are often imposed while a new general plan or zoning ordinance is written or when sewer or water facilities are inadequate to serve additional development. (See Government Code section 65858)

**Negative Declaration**

A negative declaration is written when a project is subject to CEQA, but will not have a significant effect upon the environment. The negative declaration describes why the

project will not have a significant effect and may propose measures that avoid all possible effects.

**Nonconforming Use**

A land use which does not meet current zoning requirements.

**Overlay Zone**

A zone which is superimposed upon other zoning. Overlay zones are used in areas which need special protection (as in a historic preservation district) or have special problems (such as steep slopes or flooding). Development of land subject to an overlay must comply with the regulations of both zones.

**Parcel Map**

A minor subdivision resulting in fewer than 5 lots.

**Planned Unit Development (PUD)**

Land use zoning which allows the adoption of a set of development standards that are specific to a particular project. PUD zones usually do not contain detailed development standards; those are established during the process of considering proposals and adopted by ordinance upon project approval.

**Referendum**

A voter challenge to legislative action taken by a city council or county board of supervisors. If enough voters' signatures are filed before the legislative action becomes final, the council or board must either rescind its decision or call an election on the issue. The California Constitution guarantees the public's power of referendum.

**School Impact Fees**

Fees imposed on new developments to offset their impacts on area schools.

**Setback**

The minimum distance required by zoning to be maintained between two structures or between a structure and a property line.

**Specific Plan**

A plan addressing land use distribution, open space availability, infrastructure, and infrastructure financing for a portion of the community. Specific plans put the provisions of the local general plan into action (see Government Code section 65450).

**Sphere of Influence**

A plan for the "probable physical boundary and service area of a local agency" as approved by the LAFCO. It identifies the area available to a city for future annexation. However, unless another arrangement has been made, the city has no actual authority over land outside its city limits.

**Spot Zoning**

The zoning of an isolated parcel in a manner which is inconsistent or incompatible with surrounding zoning or land uses, particularly if done to favor a particular landowner. A conditional use permit is not a spot zone.

**Strip Development**

Commercial and high-density residential development located adjacent to major streets. This type of development is characterized by its shallow depth, street-oriented layout, lack of unified design theme, and numerous points of street access. It impedes smooth traffic flow.

**Tentative Subdivision Map or Tentative Map**

The map or drawing illustrating a subdivision proposal. The city or county will conditionally approve or deny the proposed subdivision based upon the design depicted on the tentative map.

**Tract Map**

See *final map subdivision*.

**Transportation Systems Management (TSM)**

A program coordinating many forms of transportation (car, bus, carpool, rapid transit, bicycle, etc.) in order to distribute the traffic impacts of new development. Instead of emphasizing road expansion or construction, TSM examines methods of increasing road efficiency.

**Variance**

A limited waiver from the requirements of the zoning ordinance. Variance requests are subject to public hearing and may only be granted under special circumstances.

**Zoning**

Local codes regulating the use and development of property. The zoning ordinance divides the city or county into land use districts or "zones", illustrated on zoning maps, and specifies the allowable uses within each such zone. It establishes development standards such as minimum lot size, maximum structure height, building setbacks, and yard size.

## SOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

*The reader is encouraged to refer to the following sources for a better understanding of planning in California.*

**California Environmental Quality Act: Statutes and Guidelines** (Resources Agency) *The CEQA Guidelines describe the requirements for evaluating environmental impacts. Available online at <http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/>*

**California Land Use and Planning Law**, by Daniel J. Curtin Jr., (Solano Press, Pt. Arena, California), revised annually. *A look at the planning, zoning, subdivision, and environmental quality laws that is illustrated by references to numerous court cases.*

**The General Plan Guidelines** (Governor's Office of Planning and Research, Sacramento, California). *The Guidelines discuss local planning activities and how to write or revise a general plan. Available online at <http://www.opr.ca.gov/publications/>*

**Growth Within Bounds: Report of the Commission on Local Governance for the 21st Century**, 2000. *Recommendations on future local governance options, including LAFCO reform. Available online at <http://www.opr.ca.gov/publications/>*

**Guide to California Planning**, by William J. Fulton (Solano Press, Point Arena, California). *A lively, well-written discussion of nearly every aspect of planning in the State.*

**Subdivision Map Act Manual**, by Daniel J. Curtin, Jr., (Solano Press, Pt. Arena, California). *A practitioner's guide to the Map Act, including pertinent legal precedents.*

### California Statutes

Full text of the following California Statutes may be found on the Official California Legislative Information website: [www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html)

<b>CEQA</b>	Public Resources Code Sections 21000-21178
<b>LAFCO Law</b>	Government Code Sections 56000-57550
<b>Planning and Zoning Law</b>	Government Code Sections 65000-66037
<b>General Plans</b>	Government Code Sections 65300-65404
<b>Specific Plans</b>	Government Code Sections 65450-65457
<b>Zoning</b>	Government Code Sections 65800-65863.13
<b>Permit Streamlining Act</b>	Government Code Sections 65920-65963.1
<b>Subdivision Map Act</b>	Government Code Sections 66410-66499.58