

Purpose & Contents

Introduction

Each California city and county is required to prepare a general plan to provide comprehensive, long-term guidance “for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning” (see Government Code Section 65300). The General Plan is a comprehensive plan for development and conservation in the unincorporated areas of Yuba County. The cities of Marysville and Wheatland have their own general plans. General plans must provide an integrated, internally consistent statement of policies. A general plan is often compared to a “constitution” for development, the policy basis for all land use decisions.



Purpose

The 2030 General Plan Update process provides the necessary information and analysis to allow decision makers and the public to identify consensus goals for the future. The General Plan also identifies the policies and actions that are necessary to achieve these goals between the present and 2030, while also fulfilling legal requirements in California for comprehensive planning. The combined narrative and diagrammatic information in the General Plan represents the County’s overarching policy direction for physical development and conservation. The General Plan puts decision makers, County staff, property owners, property developers and builders, and the general public on notice regarding the County’s approach to managing land use change. Basic functions of the General Plan include:

- **A clear vision for the future.** The General Plan describes the desired future of Yuba County. Based on consensus developed during the Update process, the General Plan establishes the vision for the type, amount, character, and location of development, priorities for conservation, and the overall quality of life that should be enjoyed locally.



- **Guide for decision making and proactive measures.** The General Plan provides educational material and background information to help the reader understand planning issues and provide context to help the reader understand the policy guidance. A thorough understanding of the policy guidance in the General Plan will help the County in daily and longer-term decision making that moves toward the General Plan's goals. The County will review the General Plan in correlation with decisions on private development projects, public investments, and other important decisions, making any necessary revisions to plans and projects to achieve consistency with the General Plan. The General Plan process offers the County the opportunity to plan proactively, based on the vision for Yuba County, rather than simply reacting to individual development proposals. The General Plan describes several areas where proactive measures must be taken on economic development, community revitalization, and other priority areas in order to achieve Countywide planning goals.
- **Legal requirement.** The General Plan has been prepared to fulfill the requirements of State law and guidelines adopted by the California Office of Planning and Research. State law not only requires adoption of the General Plan, but also that zoning, subdivision regulations, specific plans, capital improvement programs, and other local measures be consistent with the General Plan. The General Plan provides the framework for the County to exercise its land use entitlement authority in unincorporated areas.

The framework for land use change provided in the General Plan allows the County and other public service providers (such as the community services districts, public utility districts, fire districts, water and irrigation districts, and school districts) to plan for services and facilities consistent with the Plan. The General Plan is also the basis for all other planning efforts, such as specific plans, community plans and redevelopment plans.

General Plan Contents

The General Plan consists of the following chapters and elements:

- Vision for the 2030 General Plan
- Purpose and Contents (this chapter)
- Context
- General Plan Update Process
- Community Development Element
- Public Health & Safety Element
- Natural Resources Element
- Housing Element (adopted separately and provided under separate cover)
- General Plan Implementation

State law specifies that each general plan address seven issue areas, known as "elements," which must be consistent with one another. According to OPR's General Plan Guidelines, topics from different elements may be combined, but all must be addressed within the general plan. The seven required elements include:

1. **Land use:** The land use element must designate the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses of land. The land use element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan.
2. **Circulation:** A circulation element consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the plan (Yuba County's 2030 General Plan



- addresses non-transportation related public facilities and infrastructure in the Community Development Element).
3. **Open space:** The open-space element details plans and measures for the preservation of open space for natural resources, for the managed production of resources, for outdoor recreation, and for public health and safety.
 4. **Conservation:** A conservation element for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources. The conservation element may also cover: reclamation of land and waters; prevention and control of the pollution of streams and other waters; regulation of the use of land in stream channels and other areas required for the accomplishment of the conservation plan; prevention, control, and correction of the erosion of soils, beaches, and shores; protection of watersheds; the location, quantity and quality of the rock, sand and gravel resources; and, flood control.
 5. **Housing:** The housing element provides standards for the improvement of housing and the provision of adequate sites for housing to meet the needs of all economic segments of the community.
 6. **Noise:** The noise element shall identify and appraise noise problems in the community. The noise element shall address noise sources, such as highways and freeways; primary arterials and major local streets; passenger and freight on-line railroad operations and ground rapid transit systems; commercial, general aviation, heliport, helistop, and military airport operations, aircraft overflights, jet engine test stands, and all other ground facilities and maintenance functions related to airport operation; industrial plants, including, but not limited to, railroad classification yards; and, other ground stationary noise sources identified by local agencies as contributing to the community noise environment.
 7. **Safety.** A safety element for the protection of the community from risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, tsunami, seiche, and dam failure; slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides; subsidence, liquefaction and other seismic hazards, and other geologic hazards known to the legislative body; flooding; and wild land and urban fires. The safety element shall include mapping of known seismic and other geologic hazards. It shall also address evacuation routes, peakload water supply requirements, and minimum road widths and clearances around structures, as those items relate to identified fire and geologic hazards.





YUBA COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

Yuba County’s 2030 General Plan combines the seven mandatory topic areas and addresses optional elements in four elements, organized as follows:

YUBA COUNTY 2030 GENERAL PLAN ELEMENT	MANDATORY ELEMENTS/TOPICS	OPTIONAL ELEMENTS/TOPICS
Community Development Element	Land Use, Transportation	Community Design; Infrastructure, Facilities & Services; and Economic Development
Public Health and Safety	Safety, Noise	Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Emissions & Climate Change, Healthy Communities
Natural Resources Element	Open Space, Conservation	
Housing Element	Housing	

The Elements of the General Plan present some background and context to help the reader understand the focus and content of goals, policies, and actions. Goals are a description of a future desired state. Policies are a decision-making guide. Actions are proactive measures or programs that will be undertaken, as necessary, to achieve General Plan goals.

The 2030 General Plan is supported by a substantial amount of public outreach and input, analysis of existing conditions and trends, and comprehensive analysis of different alternatives to County growth patterns. The 2030 General Plan was also developed in careful coordination with comprehensive environmental analysis, the results of which are summarized in a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (under separate cover).

