The General Plan

ESP 171 Urban and Regional Planning
Professor Susan Handy
4/7/16
Power at Local Level

**Default is power at state level**

- **Federal**
  - Federal government chooses NOT to take power

- **State**
  - States choose to delegate power to locals

- **Local**
# Types of Local Government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cities</th>
<th>Land within city boundaries</th>
<th>Created by residents</th>
<th>City Council makes decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>482 in CA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counties</th>
<th>Land within county boundaries but outside city boundaries</th>
<th>Created by state</th>
<th>Board of Supervisors makes decisions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>58 in CA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LAFCO** = county agency responsible for boundary decisions
Need for Regional Planning?
state > region > county

- Problems that don’t abide by local boundaries – e.g. air quality, congestion, housing, jobs, etc. – need collective action
- Multiple jurisdictions that each have own interests and priorities – e.g. maximizing tax revenues – need focus on greater good

Regional planning examples...
Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC)  
1969

California Coastal Commission (CCC)  
1976

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA)  
1969
Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

Long-Range Transportation Plan – federal requirement
Sustainable Communities Strategy – state requirement
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private land</th>
<th>Public land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal</strong></td>
<td><em>Indirect...</em></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State</strong></td>
<td><em>Indirect...</em></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional</strong></td>
<td><em>Direct and indirect...</em></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Local</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When someone says, “I’ve got a plan,” what do they mean?

A goal, a desired end, a vision of the future...
A way to get there, a sequence of steps...
The starting point, the current trajectory...
Planning

Where we are?

How do we get there?

Where are we going?

Where do we want to be?

“Community visioning”
Exercise 2: Look at the General Plan for your home town!
California Requirements

- Every city and county must adopt “a comprehensive, long-term general plan for physical development”
- Key characteristics:
  - physical plan
  - long-range plan
  - comprehensive
  - statement of policy
Planning, Zoning, and Development Laws

2010

December 10, 2010

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Arnold Schwarzenegger,
Governor

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF PLANNING AND
RESEARCH
Cynthia Bryant, Director

1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812

(916) 322-2318

www.opr.ca.gov
Milestones in California GP Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Cities and Counties authorized to prepare master plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>All cities and counties required to adopt master plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Land use and circulation elements required in general plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Safety, seismic safety, noise, scenic highway elements required. Zoning and subdivision approvals required to be consistent with General Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Planning statutes substantially revised. Seismic safety merged with safety element; scenic highway element dropped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>General Plan Guidelines required to include environmental justice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Changing requirements reflect changing concerns*
## Things that sound like “General Plan”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Comprehensive Plan</strong></th>
<th>More general term, often used in other states</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Master Plan</strong></td>
<td>Old term for general plan, now used for developments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area or Community Plans</strong></td>
<td>Part of the General Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Plans</strong></td>
<td><em>Tool for implementing the General Plan – more later</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Timing Requirements

- Initial adoption:
  - within 30 months of incorporation

- Adoption of updates:
  - usually every 10-15 years

- Adoption of amendments:
  - up to 4 times per year
Purpose of a City’s Plan

“... the comprehensive plan is supposed to be the supreme document guiding the future physical development of a community – the set of policies from which all decisions flow.” - F & S

– Expression of community “vision”
– Guide to decision making
Merced Vision 2015
General Plan
Executive Summary
“The Merced Vision 2015 General Plan envisions a growing community that preserves much of its small town flavor and social setting, a city that has an improved economy, adequate public services and cultural facilities, and a good overall quality of life for its residents. In 2015, people will have various transportation options. Parks and open spaces will link residential, commercial, and employment centers in such a manner as to provide an attractive pedestrian and bicycle alternative to driving.”
“At pace with the changing world, but still rural in nature, our vision of San Benito County in 2035 is of a positive and prosperous future, in which balance has been attained between business and residential growth without surrendering our rich natural resources, valuable agricultural assets, active country character, or our historic heritage.

“Walkable neighborhoods, parks and public lands, business districts, and job centers are linked to one another by a sensibly-sized, well-maintained transportation network, suitable for foot, bicycle, auto, bus, or sometimes horse. Connection to distant destinations is readily available by auto, bus, train, or plane, or ‘virtually’ by way of enhanced telecommunications.”
# Required Elements of a General Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land Use</strong></td>
<td>general location and intensity of different land uses (e.g. housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Circulation</strong></td>
<td>general location and extent of existing and proposed major roads, other transportation facilities (transit, bike/ped), public utilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong></td>
<td>assessment of current and projected housing needs for all economic segments of community; affordable housing issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservation</strong></td>
<td>conservation, development, and use of natural resources – water, forests, soils, rivers, and mineral deposits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open-space</strong></td>
<td>preserving open-space for natural resources, managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, identification of agricultural land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Noise</strong></td>
<td>assessment of noise problems in community, distribution of new noise-sensitive land uses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety</strong></td>
<td>policies and programs to protect community from risks associated with seismic, geologic, flood, and wildfire hazards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- Can use different names and/or combine elements
- Any particular issue may be addressed in more than one element
Example: Where does local food production go?

FIGURE 6. LOCATION OF GENERAL PLAN POLICIES AND PROGRAMS THAT FACILITATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTS.

Source: Annual Planning Survey Results 2012, Governor’s Office of Planning and Research
Optional Elements of a General Plan (numbers of cities and counties in 2003)

- Parks and Recreation (194)
- Economic (123)
- Public Facilities (114)
- Design (113)
- Air Quality (101)
- Seismic (94)
- Scenic Highways (89)
- Growth Management (85)
- Historic Preservation (82)
- Transportation (67)

In 2011...
- Bicycle (84)
- Climate change (49)

See the 2013-14 Annual Planning Survey Results for an update
https://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/2013-14_APS.pdf.82815125911
CHAPTER 2
Sustainable Development and Environmental Justice

All statutory references are to the California Government Code unless otherwise noted.

This chapter addresses the incorporation of environmental justice into the general plan. While environmental justice is not a mandatory topic in the general plan, there is a strong case for its inclusion. Federal and state anti-discrimination statutes, which have a long history, apply to planning as they do to other policy areas. As discussed below, environmental justice issues are often related to failures in land use planning. Planning policies that promote livable communities and smart growth can be tools for achieving environmental justice. In keeping with that idea, this chapter begins with a discussion of sustainable development. Sustainable development provides a context for understanding how environmental justice fits into land use planning. This chapter concludes with a discussion of transit-oriented development, which has important implications for environmental justice and sustainable development.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Sustainable development encompasses established planning and advocates a proactive development. The basic concept of meeting the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is defined as promoting the social, economic, and environmental. For action aimed at promoting environmental sustainability will result in decreased environmental degradation. Ensuring that such action occurs in a way that is often a bottom-line development look like the cities that are developing sustainably. Thus, basic building block of urban design and is characterized by walkability, mixed-use development, and mixed-income housing. Walkability is a function of compactness and density. Attention to streetscape and public space is a key design element in creating desirable places to live. Such neighborhoods, also known as neo-traditional or new urbanist development, are more likely to support efficient transit systems. The character and function of each neighborhood is then placed properly within its regional setting. This approach to planning, from the neighborhood to the regional level, is often referred to as smart growth.

Sustainable development goals and policies include the following:

- Decrease urban sprawl.
  - Promote compact, walkable, mixed-use development.
  - Promote infill development.
  - Restore urban and town centers.
  - Limit non-contiguous (leapfrog) development.
  - Promote transit-oriented development.

- Protect open space and working landscapes.
  - Conserve prime agricultural lands.
  - Conserve lands of scenic and recreational value.
  - Use open space to define urban communities.

- Protect environmentally sensitive lands.
  - Conserve natural habitat lands.
  - Preserve habitat connectivity.
  - Minimize impact to watershed functions, including water quality and natural floodways.
  - Avoid natural hazards.

- Create strong local and regional economies.
  - Encourage jobs/housing balance.
  - Provide adequate housing for all income levels.
  - Encourage the expansion of telecommunications infrastructure.
  - Provide a fair and predictable land use planning process.

- Promote energy and resource efficiency.
  - Support energy- and resource-efficient industries.
  - Promote waste reduction programs, such as recycling.
Consistency Requirements

• Within plan...
  – equal status among elements
  – consistency between elements – *example to follow*
  – consistency within elements
  – text and diagram consistency
  – area plan consistency

• With state plans...  e.g. Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Land Use Elements
The land use element should, consistent with §65302(a), address each of the following issues to the extent that it is relevant:

- Distribution of housing, business, and industry
- Distribution of open space, including agricultural land
- Distribution of mineral resources and provisions for their continued availability
- Distribution of recreation facilities and opportunities
- Location of educational facilities
- Location of public buildings and grounds
- Location of future solid and liquid waste facilities
- Identification of areas subject to flooding
- Identification of existing Timberland Preserve Zone lands
- Other categories of public and private uses of land.
Residential
Commercial
Industrial
Open space
Other...
Creating the Land Use Plan

**Growth forecasts:**
Number of additional people, households, jobs

**Developable Land:**
Map layers for existing development, infrastructure, natural features

**Land Use Map:**
Areas where new development can go
Yolo County Population Projections

Source: California Department of Finance
If you build it, will they come?
Consistency Issue Example - Land Use and Circulation Elements

What if planned transportation system can’t handle traffic from planned development?

Possibilities...

– Expand roadway capacity?
– Move development to areas with capacity?
– Adopt policies to reduce vehicle trips?
– Reduce amount of development allowed?

More on this later... Traffic Impact Studies
Housing Elements
Housing Element starts with Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA)

- **State determines:**
  - Current and future housing needs for state
  - Share of needs that each region is responsible for

- **Regional Council of Government (COGs) determines:**
  - Current and future housing needs for region
  - Share of needs that each city is responsible for

- **City determines how to house its share:**
  - In Housing Element of General Plan

- **State certifies city’s Housing Element**
Housing Element

LAND INVENTORY ASSESSMENT

Analysis of Land Inventory
- Suitability of lands (physical, environmental, location, parcel size)
- Public facilities
- Appropriateness of zoning and development standards for low- and moderate-income housing needs
- Zoning & development standards for a variety of housing types

\[\downarrow\]

Determination of Adequate Sites
Does the land inventory identify adequate sites to accommodate the locality’s share of the regional housing need in total and by income level?

\[\leftrightarrow\]

YES
No further action required to identify adequate sites.

\[\leftrightarrow\]

NO
Locality will need to include a program to identify adequate sites in its housing element.
Provide a Variety of Housing Needs  
Assure Healthy Neighborhoods with Nearby Schools, Parks, Greenbelts and Shopping  
Maintain a Balanced Transportation System which Promotes Alternative Modes  
Minimize Farmland Conversion  
Support a Vital Downtown  
Create Safe and Functioning Pedestrian, Bicycle and Transit Mobility  
Provide Healthy Living with Clean Air and Compatible Noise Levels  
Preserve Prime Farmland  
Provide Infrastructure and Services  
Efficiently Conserve Energy and Resources  
Reduce Driving  
Assure Fiscal Stability  
Be a Compact City Surrounded by Farmland and Habitat  
Assure Good Vehicular Access and Safety  
Connect the Greenway System  
Create Compatibility with Existing Land Uses

Study and Identification of Potential Housing Sites in Davis

Recommendations of the General Plan Update Steering Committee

Approved by the Steering Committee on March 20, 2008
Davis’ Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)

Very low income level, 31 units, Low income level, 119 units, Moderate income level, 163 units, and Above moderate income level, 185 units. In total, 498 units of new housing have been allocated to the City of Davis for the 7½ year period from January 2006 through June 2013, which is the planning period for the new Housing Element. An allocation of 1,400 units was given to U.C. Davis, based on the university’s plans to develop the West Village Project. If annexed, this allocation of 1,400 units would be added to the City’s allocation.

One Percent Growth Cap Numbers of Units

This City Council resolution sets an annual cap of approximately 260 “base” units per year, plus “exempt” units, which include affordable housing units and accessory dwellings. Production of housing units at the cap levels would provide approximately 325 units per year (after incorporating the actual housing units built in 2006) for the 7½ year time period from January 2006 through June 2013, as follows:

1. “Base” units, 1,800
2. “Exempt” units, 506
3. Total units, 2,306 (307/year)

The types of units to be planned (such as local employees, seniors, ownership, rental, income levels, other categories) is informed by the local housing needs analysis conducted for the Housing Element Update.

Required to add 498 new units in 7 ½ years

Policy to cap at 260 units per year
### Important Factors for Evaluating Sites (from Workshop #1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Factors Identified (In Priority Order By Number of Dots)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Overall proximity to community facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Acres of prime agricultural soils converted to urban use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Opportunity to provide for identified housing needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Water supply and distribution issues; Sanitary sewer collection issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The site either maintains or “leaps over” an Urban Agricultural Transition Area (UATA) designated in the City’s General Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Opportunity to promote higher density housing in downtown and in neighborhood centers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Opportunity to contribute to the City’s open space system consisting of connected “greenways.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bicycle mobility issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mobility connections, connecting neighborhoods and bike paths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Fire department services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Impacts of new development traffic on existing neighborhoods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Potential to encourage walk-ability, and access to walk-able and bike-able amenities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Best locations for student and university employee housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Proximity to Amtrak transportation hub.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Potential of providing for housing types and styles not now available in Davis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transit Corridor - Anderson Road

Rationale for Recommended Site Ranking Category and Number (including Key Principles)

9.1 Close to UC Davis, shopping and transit.
9.2 Would promote pedestrian, bicycle and transit mobility.
9.3 Planning would improve vehicular and pedestrian safety along the corridor.
9.4 Could improve corridors urban design and identity.

Countering Views to Recommended Site Ranking Category and Number

9.5 Potential for disjointed development.
9.6 First phase may not be built by 2013.
9.7 Safety concerns, including near Chavez School.

Recommended Land Use and Design Considerations, Requirements or Conditions, and Any Additional Information that May Be Needed for Site Development

9.A A coordinated site plan would be needed for a "pilot project" for an initial block and would be desirable for the entire corridor.
9.B Consider whether some of the existing right-of-way could be utilized to improve the site plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Lots fronting on Anderson Road between Russell Boulevard and Radcliffe Drive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Size (Gross / Net Assumption)</td>
<td>14 ac / 14 ac overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended General Plan Overall Residential Density Category (net density range including density bonus)</td>
<td>High (16.8-30 du/ac)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Potential Number of Housing Units Range Per General Plan Category</td>
<td>235 - 420 du in corridor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steering Committee Recommendation</td>
<td>23 du in first block as a pilot project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommended Actions and Responsibilities

Action 9.1 City invites property owners to discuss possibilities and determine interest, including interest in a “pilot project” for an initial block.
Action 9.2 General Plan amendment, rezoning.
Oeste Ranch (With On-Site Ag Mitigation)

Rationale for Recommended Site Ranking Category and Number (including Key Principles)
37.1 Would not contribute to compact urban form and efficient infrastructure and services. Would involve major new infrastructure including sewer trunk lines.
37.2 Would impact ag land, habitat, and scenic resources.
37.3 Distances to community facilities and downtown would promote car travel and not be conducive to bicycle and pedestrian mobility.
37.4 Does not need to be considered for development prior to 2013.

Countering Views to Recommended Site Ranking Category and Number
37.5 The site size has the potential to provide on-site ag mitigation and a variety of housing types.

Recommended Land Use and Design Considerations, Requirements or Conditions, and Any Additional Information that May be Needed for Site Development
37.A The costs and responsibilities of the required major sewer trunk line must be determined.
37.B Adequate fire response must be confirmed.
37.C Details of the ag mitigation are needed including the conditions of the mitigation and the established legal structure for maintaining open space uses, including ag mitigation.
Steering Committee Process Summary

- City Council Appointment of Steering Committee
- Community Workshop #1: Identify Possible Sites for Analysis and Site Evaluation Criteria
- Community Workshop #2: Directions for Potential Housing Site Priorities, Overarching Goals, and Principles for Site Rankings
- Final Report from Steering Committee on Recommended Housing Sites
- Planning Commission and City Council Public Hearings on the Draft Housing Element and Identification of Other Follow-up Actions Related to the Steering Committee’s Final Report

January 2007
May 2007
January 2008
April 2008
May-June 2008
General Plan Process

“a long, expensive, messy, often frustrating, often exciting process.”

– F&S
Vacaville General Plan on Tuesday!
## Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning Staff</td>
<td>Prepares plan, May hire consultant(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
<td>Approves plan, Sends it to city council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Council</td>
<td>Adopts the plan (Legislative act!)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Roles - continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consultants</th>
<th>For smaller cities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For technical work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courts</td>
<td>Enforcement of state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>planning laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>Public hearings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advisory committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workshops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Same ideas?**
- **New ideas?**
- **If someone challenges...**
- **Whose vision...?**
e.g. Update to Davis Transportation Element – 2011-2013

- City staff
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAG)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REPRESENTATIVE</th>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Berg</td>
<td>Bicycle Advisory Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted Parks</td>
<td>Safety and Parking Advisory Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paul Philley</strong></td>
<td>Planning Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Susan Handy</strong></td>
<td>Transportation Planning &amp; Policy (ITS-UC Davis)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bob Grandy</strong></td>
<td>Traffic/Civil Engineer (Fehr &amp; Peers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olin Woods</td>
<td>Regional Transportation Planning (SACOG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoff Straw</td>
<td>Transit (Unitrans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Rutheiser</td>
<td>Business Community (DDBA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lars Anderson</td>
<td>Sustainability (Climate Action Team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine Roberts Musser</td>
<td>Senior Citizen Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Steve Tracy</strong></td>
<td>DavisBicycles!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Davis Transportation Vision

Davis will be a place where people have safe and convenient options for accessing destinations in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.
Davis Transportation Goals

1. Davis will provide a comprehensive, integrated, connected transportation system that allows users to choose between different modes of transportation.

2. The Davis transportation system will evolve to improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions, and improve public health by encouraging usage of clean, energy-efficient, active (i.e. human powered), and economically sustainable means of travel.

3. Davis will provide a safe and convenient Complete Street network that meets the needs of all users, including children, families, older adults, and people with disabilities.

4. Davis will strengthen its status as a premier bicycling community in the nation by continuing to encourage bicycling as a healthy, affordable, and low-impact mode of transportation accessible to all users and abilities and by continuously improving the bicycling infrastructure.
After the TAG...

• Reviewed by advisory commissions
  • Bicycle Advisory
  • Safety and Parking
  • Business & Economic Development
  • Planning

• Approved by city council 12/13
Do they work?

Do they do more than fulfill a legal requirement?

Or does it “sit on the shelf”?
How to make it happen?

How to bring the vision to fruition?
Exercise 2 due Tuesday!

http://www.ci.brea.ca.us/docs/BreaGeneralPlan.pdf

http://www.sacgp.org/
Next week!

**Tuesday**
Fred Buder, Vacaville

**Thursday**
Zoning!

*Keep reading!*