



**CITY OF ELK GROVE
CITY COUNCIL & PLANNING COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

AGENDA TITLE: General Plan Update: City Council/Planning Commission Joint Session

MEETING DATE: February 25, 2016

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RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the City Council and Planning Commission receive the report and presentation and provide feedback on the updated vision for the General Plan as appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

The City has undertaken a comprehensive update to its General Plan. The General Plan is the City’s overarching policy document, or blueprint, for creating a thriving, well-balanced, and sustainable community. All future development and actions of the City must be consistent with the General Plan. Since initiation of the project, staff has been working on a number of tasks and components. This has included:

- A joint study session of the City Council and Planning Commission on June 1, 2015 to set the stage for the project, informing aspects of the scope and approach. Key issues and opportunities for the General Plan were also established, covering economic vitality; rural areas; regional goals and influences; infill development and outward expansion; neighborhood, district, and community identity; multimodal and active transportation; sustainable and healthy community; coordinated services, technology, and infrastructure; and open space and resource management.

- A one-day Citizen's Planning Academy, an educational workshop that introduced community members to the General Plan update and prepared community members for ongoing and productive participation in the process.
- Five mobile studios at community events between September and December 2015.
- Individual and group meetings with community members, community service providers, regional governmental agencies and nonresident interest groups (including non-profit and business interests).
- The community visioning workshop, which provided a forum for community members to come together to deliberate and provide input on the future of their community.

At their second joint study session on December 17, 2015, the City Council and Planning Commission reviewed the draft document *A Shared Community Vision*. This document outlined a draft community vision and accompanying supporting principles for each of the key issue areas. Modifications to the document were completed by staff based upon direction received, and the updated document is available on the project website.

The current phase of the General Plan Update focuses on the following steps:

- Exploring specific, focused topics in more detail with the community and gathering additional feedback on community desires;
- Further developing the supporting principles for each key issue area and beginning to connect the principles to concept goal and policy language that could be used in the new General Plan; and
- Beginning the process of developing the refreshed land plan.

The focus of this agenda item is to review draft materials related to each of the above steps with the City Council and Planning Commission, receive public comment, and take direction on potential changes. Further, staff will outline the approach for development of the land plan.

RECENT PUBLIC OUTREACH:

Staff facilitated two public workshops in late January and early February, which focused on the topics of transportation planning and growth strategies. Results of these workshops are summarized below; additional details are provided in Attachment 1. Staff is also preparing for outreach meetings with the neighborhood and homeowners associations, which will occur in March and help to inform the land use alternatives. An additional round of Mobile Workshops is also being planned.

Transportation Planning

At the transportation planning workshop, a number of key transportation terms were introduced to the participants, including:

- VMT – vehicle miles of travel
- LOS – level of service
- Origin & Destination – beginning and end of a trip
- Mobility – movement from place to place
- Accessibility – proximity to destinations
- Active Transportation – walking and biking

Changes in transportation and land use planning are occurring at the State and regional levels over the next several years. The most fundamental change deals with the transition from Level of Service (LOS) as a measure of traffic impacts to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Pending changes to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will prohibit the use of LOS as a metric for impacting the environment. Other metrics, including VMT, will be required. The concept is that vehicle emissions and other factors, which can be measured through VMT, are a more effective measurement of environmental impact than LOS. Development projects that do not directly decrease an area's VMT may have a potentially significant impact on the environment and require preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The General Plan Update can address this by establishing a common benchmark for the analysis and establishing a land plan that addresses VMT community-wide.

Through the outreach meeting, participants were asked to calculate their own VMT and to brainstorm in groups how VMT could be reduced as people travel to and from common local and regional destinations. Some common ideas that came from the discussion include expansion and enhancement of the City's public transit system, and improvements to pedestrian mobility (sidewalks and trails).

Growth Strategies

At the growth strategies workshop, 40 participants were asked four questions relative to growth in the community. The participants were grouped into four tables of approximately 10 people each.

The first exercise had meeting participants identify the outdoor recreation opportunities within and around the community that they frequent and think about how they travel to these locations. Some common locations were Wackford Community Center, Elk Grove Regional Park, and various parks and playgrounds.

Next, staff introduced three key terms relative to growth and development, which were as follows:

- **Infill:** New development on existing lots within the current City limits, often surrounded by existing development
- **Outward expansion:** New development in up to four study areas beyond the existing City limits
- **Growth management:** Regulatory strategies to influence how growth occurs through policies on density, mix of uses, and timing or phasing of development

Based upon these terms, the second exercise had each group identify important issues or concerns about infill development. For instance, how important was it that new infill development is of compatible density or height with surrounding uses? The top three responses by group were:

Group 1

1. Does the use improve the character of the neighborhood (if so, what is most important about the character)?
2. Is the use consistent with our local plans and laws?
3. How will the use impact parks and schools?

Group 2

1. Does the use improve the character of the neighborhood (if so, what is most important about the character)?
2. How will the use impact parks and schools?
3. Are densities, setbacks, or heights compatible with surrounding uses?

Group 3

1. Is the use consistent with our local plans and laws?
2. What does the market demand?
3. Are there utilities and infrastructure close by? And do they have capacity?

Group 4

1. Are there utilities and infrastructure close by? And do they have capacity?
2. Is the use consistent with our local plans and laws?
3. Does the use improve the character of the neighborhood (if so, what is most important about the character)?

The third exercise had the groups identify on a map sites around the City that they saw as opportunity sites. These were areas where changes to existing on-the-ground land uses could be anticipated. As opportunity sites, they would be differentiated from the rest of the City by the potential for modest enhancement or for wholesale transformation of the existing land use pattern. The results of this exercise have been incorporated into the *Character of Change* map described later in this report.

For the final exercise, each group played a “bucket game” where they worked as a team to assign projected growth (approximately 20,000 dwelling units and 20,000 jobs). Each group was provided four yellow chips, with each chip representing 5,000 dwelling units, and four white chips, with each chip representing 5,000 jobs. The groups were asked to allocate their chips into three buckets. The buckets were labeled as follows:

- Development in existing City limits (e.g., Laguna Ridge, SEPA, and infill sites);
- Development in Study Areas (areas south and east of the existing City as described later in this report); and
- Redirected growth, meaning the market demand was not accommodated in the City and was redirected elsewhere in the region.

Two groups were able to come to consensus on the exercise; the other two groups did not complete the activity within the timeframe of the workshop. The results of each group’s discussion are summarized below:

Group 1: This group put 75 percent of their white chips (15,000 jobs) and 50 percent of their yellow chips (10,000 dwelling units) in the study area bucket. The rest of the chips went in the existing City limits bucket (5,000 jobs and 10,000 dwelling units), with the caveat that there is enough police and fire protection to serve the increased population. No chips were allocated to the redirected growth bucket.

Group 2: This group chose to preserve the study areas as they were, allocating one yellow chip (5,000 dwelling units) to the redirected growth bucket and the rest to the existing City limits bucket (15,000 dwelling units and 20,000 jobs).

Group 3: This group did not reach consensus by the time all groups shared their results, but after further conversation a majority of participants felt that growth in the study areas was the most viable option. There was one strong dissenting opinion to keep all growth within the existing City limits. All participants agreed that redirecting growth seemed infeasible.

Group 4: This group also had not reached consensus by the time the entire room shared opinions. Creativity and putting jobs first were two overarching themes from this group.

ISSUE AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS:

Attachment 2 is the draft document *Issue and Policy Considerations*. For each of the nine supporting principles contained in *A Shared Community Vision* presented to the City Council and Planning Commission at the December 2015 Joint Study Session, the document suggests specific goals for incorporation into the updated General Plan, as well as policy objectives for each goal that will guide the development of specific policies and action items as the General Plan update process moves forward. The recommended goals are intended to establish a framework for how issues will be addressed in the General Plan update and may be refined as the General Plan update progresses. It is not a comprehensive or complete list of goals and policies; more will be added as the process moves forward. Regardless, the General Plan will be consistent with State law governing the content of general plans, and it will contain all mandatory elements for general plans, as required by State law. (See Gov. Code §§ 65301, 65302.)

For example, Chapter 3 of the *Issue and Policy Considerations* document recommends two goal-policy structures related to growth management. The first is a goal titled “Focused on Infill.” It is followed with five concept policy statements that support the outlined goal. The policy statements are

not provided at the level found in the General Plan – rather the concepts are outlined. Staff will use the feedback received at the meeting to adjust the approach, as necessary, and then begin developing the specific language to be included in the updated Plan.

LAND PLANNING:

One of the key issues of the General Plan Update is “infill development and outward expansion.” From this issue, the following draft supporting principle was developed and reviewed at the December 2015 Joint Study Session:

Development Fills in the Gaps

Unfinished, undeveloped gaps found throughout the City become opportunities to develop economically successful additions that provide added value to our community, as well as new job opportunities and lifestyle improvements. Existing small businesses are protected even as we invite in new businesses and different economic opportunities. New development plans are grounded by community needs and market demand, and are carried out efficiently and holistically. New housing built in a variety of shapes and sizes to meet the needs and desires of our diverse community also fills in the gaps.

Infill development is consistently executed with programs that address impacts and encourage innovative building solutions. A creative growth management strategy allows expansion to occur when economic need, community vision, and regional goals align. There is a strong system in place to guarantee that as the community accommodates new neighbors and new jobs, it continues to maintain and improve facilities and services, such as schools, roads, and parks.

The draft supporting principle includes language on infill development – capitalizing on both vacant and underutilized sites within the existing City limits. With this in mind, staff, through the public engagement process, has developed a draft Character of Change map (Attachment 3). This map highlights properties around the City, identifying them for:

- **Preservation (Preserve)** of existing character and function (e.g., the Rural Area, existing single family neighborhoods).
- **Enhancement (Enhance)** of key areas that could benefit from reinvestment. Examples include the older commercial corridors in the

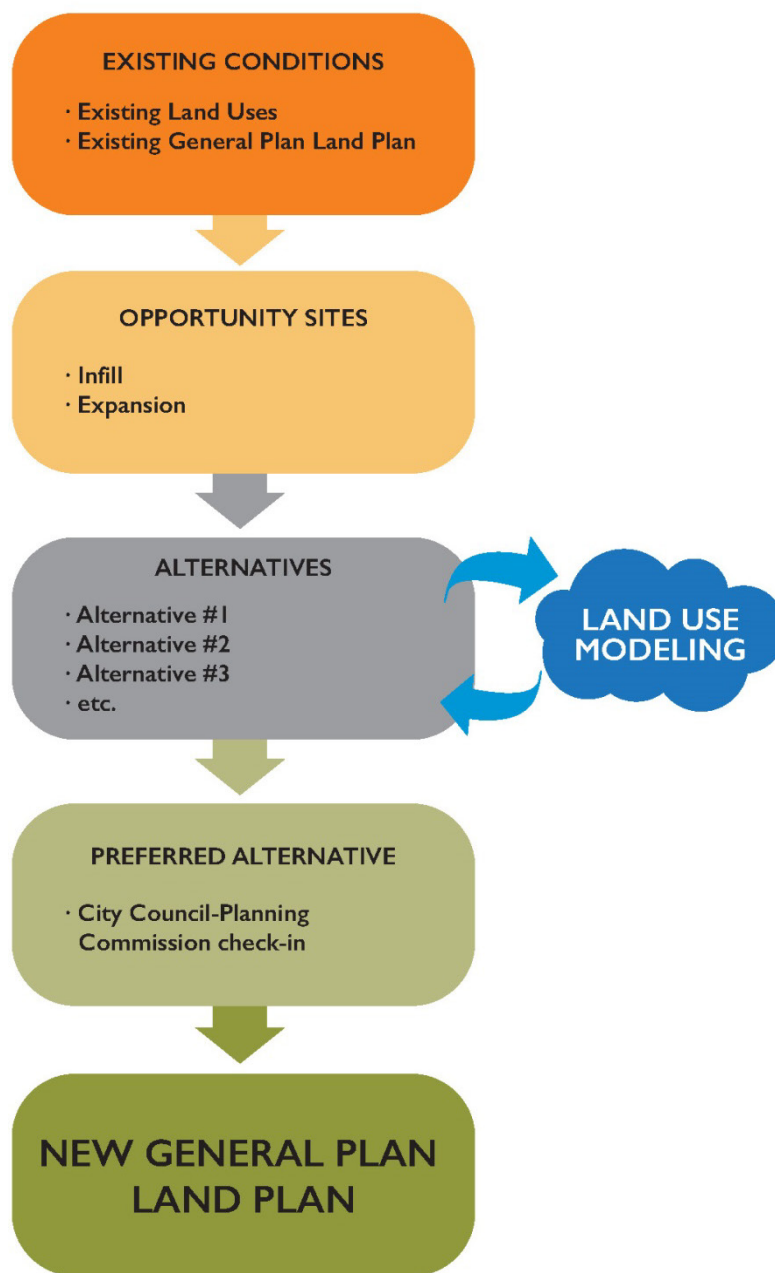
City, such as Elk Grove Boulevard east of State Route 99 and Elk Grove Florin Road.

- **Transformation (Transform)** of vacant sites that are infill opportunities. These are both smaller sites, like the [Capital Nursery \(Capital Reserve\)](#) and [Stathos Cove](#) projects, and larger opportunities such as the Sheldon Farms property at Sheldon Road and Bruceville Road.
- **Transformation by implementing prior plans (Transform + Prior Planned)**. Examples include the [Southeast Policy Area \(SEPA\)](#) the [Lent Ranch Special Planning Area](#), the Elk Grove Triangle, and other planning areas or approved projects.

As the General Plan Update moves forward, staff will prepare a number of alternatives for how to treat these areas in terms of land uses, density, and character. Review of these alternatives will inform the final configuration of the General Plan (land use map, policies, or both). For example, properties identified on the map as “Preserve” and “Transform + Prior Planned” would likely not be considered for different land use designation(s) in the various alternative land plans; “Enhance” and “Transform” properties may be studied for possible re-designation. Therefore, the application of these four categories on the attached Character of Change map should be confirmed and agreed to at this stage.

Figure 1 outlines the land plan development process for the General Plan. At this point, the existing conditions of the City have been documented, both in terms of the existing General Plan land use designations and the existing uses on the ground. Additionally, a draft list of infill opportunity sites has been identified through the Character of Change map. Next, staff will begin developing alternative land plans and running them through a land use modeling exercise (using the Urban Footprint model promoted by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments), which will develop broad metrics about each scenario, such as VMT, community health, greenhouse gas emissions, jobs and household projections, and other factors or indicators. These alternatives will be reviewed by the City Council and Planning Commission at a future Joint Study Session, and will ultimately result in a preferred land plan that is incorporated into the General Plan.

Figure 1 – Land Plan Development Process



As part of this process, staff is exploring changes in the format of the land use plan (the list of land use designations and the accompanying land use map) whereby these character concepts would be carried forward into the Plan. What this means is that properties would not be identified with one of the nearly 25 existing land use designations, but rather by the character of the development. For example, residential neighborhoods are currently designated with categories such as Low Density Residential, Public Parks, Public Open Space, Public Schools, and, possibly, High Density Residential and Commercial. An alternative would be to describe the entire area as a “Residential Neighborhood” where all of these traditional

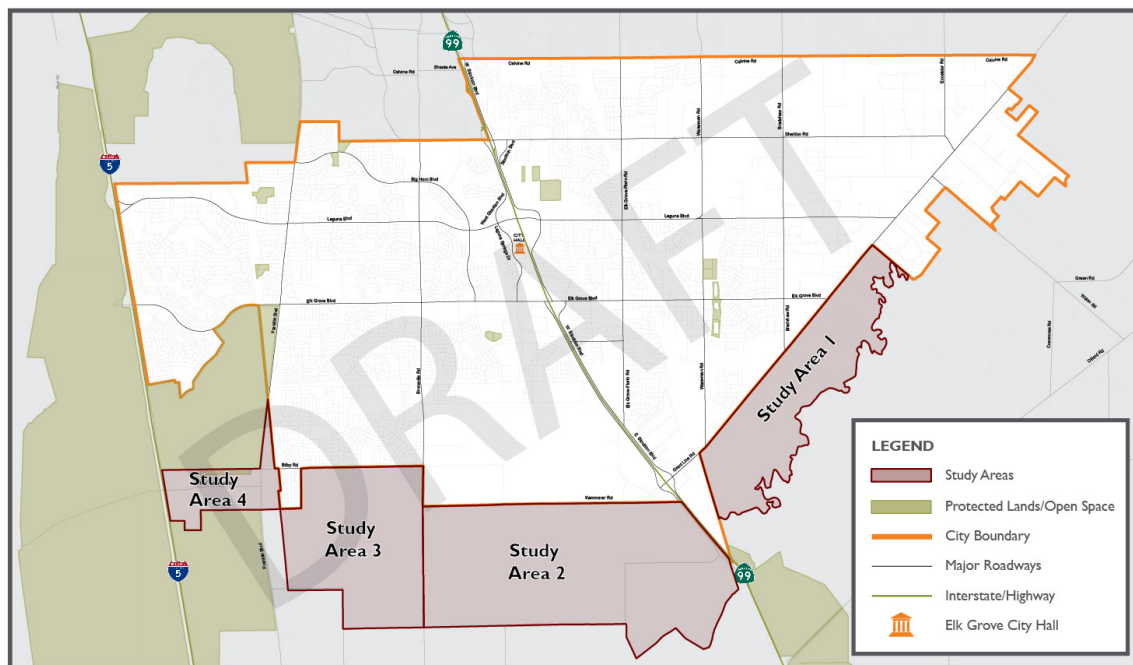
neighborhood functions occur. Staff will present more on this concept as part of the alternatives discussion and analysis at the April Joint Study Session. One possible outcome of this discussion is an expansion of the community plan system, as was used for SEPA, and/or future activities involving the preparation of corridor or area plans for specific areas of the City where reinvestment is identified in the General Plan.

Study Areas

The existing (2003) General Plan identifies a “Study Area” south and east of the existing City limits that is both inside and beyond the County’s Urban Services Boundary (USB), where the County anticipates urban services (water and sewer) are to be extended in the future. The 2003 General Plan does not include a land plan for these Study Areas, deferring them to a future planning process. As part of this General Plan Update, direction has been provided to consider how areas beyond the City limits relate to the City and to what extent they should be included in the updated policy documents and maps. This direction is consistent with State law, which calls for general plans to address any land outside a city’s boundaries which in the city’s judgement bears relation to its planning (Government Code §65300).

For purposes of the General Plan Update, staff has utilized the boundary of the 2013 Sphere of Influence Amendment application as the outer bounds, dividing the approximately 8,000 acre area into four sub-areas (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Study Areas



Through the land use alternatives analysis, the Council and Planning Commission will be asked to select some, all, or none of these study areas for inclusion in the General Plan. It is also possible that some land use planning may be included, identifying future possible land uses for these areas. No decisions have been made at this time, nor is staff seeking direction on this matter. Rather, it is meant to set the stage for this conversation at the April Joint Study Session.

Property Owner Requests

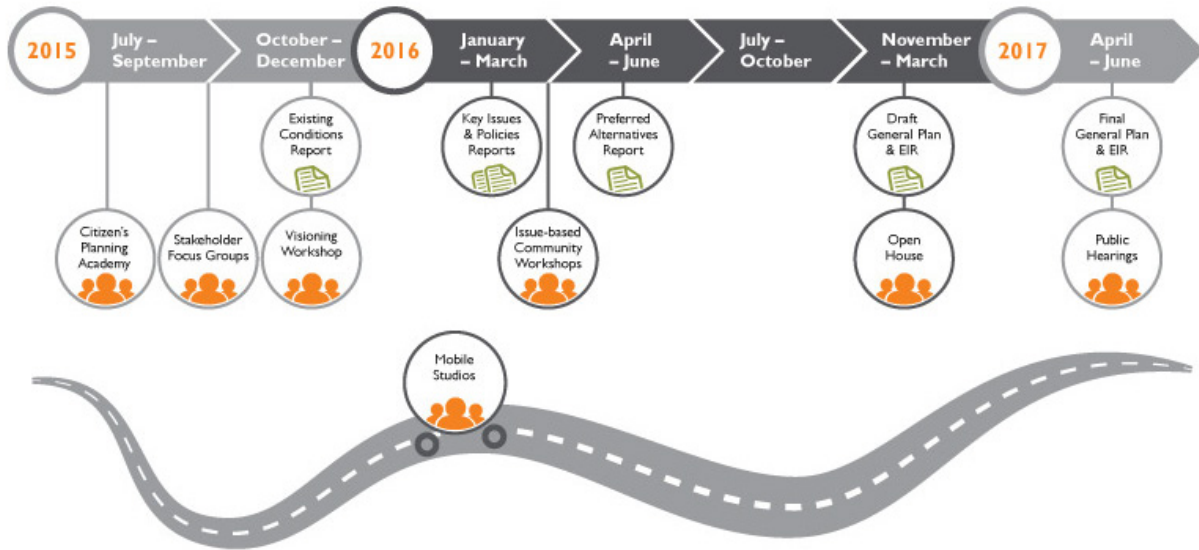
Staff is beginning to receive requests for changes to the land use map from specific property owners. As these requests come forward, staff is asking they be made in writing for review and consideration by the Council and Commission at a future Joint Study Session. While the General Plan Update is not the appropriate forum to discuss specific development projects, this is an opportunity to discuss how some sites fit within the larger context and establish a new or different direction on a case-by-case basis.

NEXT STEPS:

Immediate next steps in the General Plan Update are twofold. First, staff will be conducting outreach meetings with various neighborhood associations and homeowners associations, as well as a second round of Mobile Workshop Studios at various community events. This information will be utilized by staff, along with prior direction from the City Council and Planning Commission and the results of the fall public workshops, to develop land use alternatives.

The results of the land use alternatives will be presented to the City Council and Planning Commission at the next Joint Study Session, scheduled for **April 14, 2016**. At this meeting, the Council and Commission will be asked to review the alternatives and corresponding benchmark data and direct staff on components to include in a draft preferred land plan for the City. The review of these alternatives and selection of the preferred land plan (in June) is critical to meeting the overall project schedule and completing the update.

Figure 3 – Project Schedule



ATTACHMENTS:

1. Summary of Input on the General Plan to date
2. Issue and Policy Considerations
3. Character of Change Map

TOPIC WORKSHOP: TRANSPORTATION

January 28, 2016

Attendees: 12 community members signed an optional sign-in sheet.

The intent of this workshop is to collect community input on the following questions: **How can transportation planning support community health and sustainability? How can it improve the quality of life in Elk Grove?**

The workshop began with a short presentation covering background information about the project and specific details about transportation and mobility in Elk Grove. After the presentation, participants worked collaboratively through a series of small group activities.

Activity 1

The first group activity invited participants to calculate their personal VMT (vehicle miles traveled) and their household VMT. After completing their calculations, they compared their scores to regional data and discussed the results as a small group.

Activity 2

The second group activity provided participants with a set of reference maps showing common trip origins and destinations within Elk Grove with an overlay of transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and trail routes. Participants were then invited to discuss the following questions:

- *What do you think is preventing people from using transit to go to these top destinations?*
- *What can the City do to improve transit, pedestrian, or bike infrastructure linking these specific destinations?*
- *Where are most trips originating from? How can the City incentivize those travelers to use transit, walk, or bike more?*
- *In what other ways can residents reduce their VMT beyond using transit, biking, or walking?*

Participants put forth several ideas for ways to reduce household and personal VMT. Several ideas focused on driving less, such as running multiple errands in a single trip, having a designated “no driving day,” or avoiding driving during rush hour whenever possible. Other suggestions included ideas for walking more, such as walking to nearby locations or organizing a walking school bus.

Participants also provided many ideas for reducing non-motorized trips in Elk Grove. These ideas can be grouped into the following general categories:

- **Transit.** Ideas for transit-related solutions included incentivizing student ridership or reinstating the school bus system, providing seniors with discounted tickets and marketing transit at the Senior Center, and improving transit services in various ways (e.g., making transit faster, improving connections between services, incentivizing ridership, and promoting the transit routes better).
- **Bicycle/Pedestrian.** Ideas for bicycle and pedestrian solutions included improving roadway safety for cyclists; promoting bicycle/pedestrian culture through street closure events, bike sharing programs, and discounts for bicyclists; and generally improving infrastructure (e.g., expanding pathways, adding protected bike lanes and bike parking, and better pedestrian crossings).
- **Other.** Other ideas for reducing non-motorized trips in Elk Grove including traffic calming (e.g., lower speed limits, narrower streets), expanded carpool networks, and reevaluating the school system so that students do not have to travel as far to get to school.

Activity 3

The third group activity provided participants with a set of reference maps showing common trip origins and destinations outside of Elk Grove with an overlay of bicycle, pedestrian, trail, and transit routes.

Participants were then invited to discuss the following questions:

- *What do you think is preventing people from using transit to go to these top destinations? What can the City do to improve transit or bike infrastructure linking these specific destinations? Which destinations should the City prioritize for transit links? For cycling links?*
- *In what other ways can we reduce regional VMT beyond using transit, biking, or walking?*

Participants provided many ideas for reducing non-motorized trips between Elk Grove and the rest of the region. These ideas can be grouped into the following general categories:

- **Transit.** Ideas for transit-related solutions included adding light rail and improving bus connections to light rail; incentivizing transit use by reducing parking rates at stations or having employers offer perks; and improving buses by making them faster.
- **Other.** Other ideas included adding more carpool lanes and coordinating carpooling through NextDoor.com; creating more opportunities for people to work and play in Elk Grove (or telecommute); and providing more education about the benefits of driving less and walking, bicycling, or taking transit more.

TOPIC WORKSHOP: GROWTH STRATEGIES

February 1, 2016

Attendees: 28 community members signed an optional sign-in sheet.

The intent of this workshop was to collect community input on the following questions: **How can we effectively manage future growth while also conserving important natural resources and providing ample civic amenities?**

The workshop began with a short presentation covering background information about the project and General Plan outreach that has been conducted to date. After the presentation, participants worked collaboratively through a series of small group activities, which were interspersed with additional presentations.

Activity 1

The first group activity invited participants to review maps showing roadways, parks, and schools and to indicate where they like to play outdoors in Elk Grove. Participants drew on the maps and shared their answers as part of a small group icebreaker activity.

Activity 2

After a brief recap of the community vision as established through the first phase of outreach for this project, participants were invited to partake in a second activity. In small groups, participants were invited to identify potential infill locations and ways to evaluate infill possibilities.

The following ideas were put forth as infill opportunities:

- **Economic Center.** Create a mall in the center of town, build out areas close to transit, and consider ways to create more jobs in Elk Grove.
- **Parks and Recreation.** Create small parks with benches or dog parks.
- **Housing.** Consider ways to help the homeless and create cohousing opportunities.

The highest rated infill criteria were:

1. Does the use improve the character of the neighborhood? If so, what is most important about the character?
2. Is the use consistent with our local plans and laws?
3. Are densities, setbacks, or heights compatible with surrounding uses?
4. How will the use impact parks and schools?
5. Are sufficient water supplies available?

A few groups also wrote in their own priorities, including “what does the market demand?” and “environmental sustainability.”

Activity 3

After a presentation about projected growth, housing demand, and existing vacant land, participants were invited to discuss the services and amenities they think are most important in order to maintain quality of life in Elk Grove.

Activity 4

Finally, participants were given an overview of anticipated population growth through 2050, as well as the amount of jobs and dwelling units that must be developed by then to accommodate this new population. There are three buckets – one for development inside of the existing City limits, one for development in the study areas outside of the City limits, and one for growth management (blocking growth inside of Elk Grove, distributing to other areas). Job and population growth accommodations from developments that were already approved or planned were allocated in the first (infill development). Participants had 4 yellow chips (each representing 5,000 dwelling units) and 4 white chips (each

representing 5,000 jobs) to allocate. The figure below represents the votes from each group. Bucket 1 is for infill, Bucket 2 is for growth in the strategy areas, and Bucket 3 is for growth management.

Group 1: This group put 75 percent of white chips (15,000 jobs) and 50 percent of yellow chips (10,000 dwelling units) in the study area bucket. The rest of the chips went in the infill bucket (5,000 jobs and 10,000 dwelling units), with the caveat that there is enough police and fire protection to serve the increased population. No chips were allocated to growth management strategies.

Group 2: This group chose to preserve the study areas as they were, allocating one yellow chip (5,000 dwelling units) to growth management strategies and the rest to infill development (15,000 dwelling units and 20,000 jobs).

Group 3: This group didn't reach consensus by the time all groups shared their results, but after further conversation a majority of participants felt that Bucket 2 was the most viable options. There was one strong dissenting opinion to keep all growth within the existing City. All participants agreed that Bucket 3 (growth management), seemed infeasible.

Group 4: This group also hadn't reached consensus by the time the entire room shared opinions. Creativity and putting jobs first were two overarching themes from this group.

City of Elk Grove

ISSUES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS REPORT

for the General Plan Update

February 2016

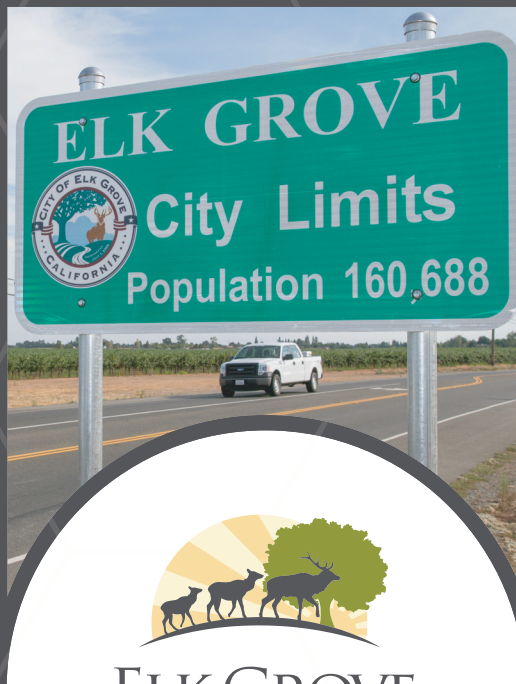


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This chapter describes the background, purpose, and organization of this Issues and Policy Considerations Report, prepared to support the City of Elk Grove General Plan update.

I.1 BACKGROUND

A general plan is a State-mandated document that provides guidance to decision-makers regarding the allocation of resources and determination of the future character of development in counties and cities. It is the official statement of the jurisdiction regarding the extent and types of development needed to achieve the community’s physical, economic, social, and environmental goals. Although the general plan consists of individual sections, or “elements,” that address a specific area of concern, it also embodies a comprehensive and integrated planning approach.

The City of Elk Grove General Plan articulates the City’s intentions with respect to the rights and expectations of the general public, property owners, prospective investors, and businesses. Through the General Plan, the City informs the public of its goals, policies, and development and conservation priorities, thereby communicating the City’s intention of meeting the Plan.

Under state law, each County and City General Plan must contain the following seven elements:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Housing
- Conservation
- Open Space
- Noise
- Safety

California Government Code Section 65303 permits local jurisdictions to formulate other elements, which, in the “judgment of the legislative body,” relate to the physical development of a region. These optional elements are as binding as a mandatory element, once adopted.

I. INTRODUCTION

The City's current General Plan was adopted in 2003, three years after the City's incorporation. Various elements have been amended to address changes in legislation or to respond to specific requests for development, but the Plan has not been comprehensively revised since 2003. Some of the data, analyses, and policies in the current General Plan do not reflect current conditions in the City, which has roughly doubled in population since incorporation. Thus, an update of the General Plan is necessary to reflect the current vision of how to accommodate future growth, as well as what resources to protect and how quality of life is protected within the City over the next 25 years. This General Plan update is an opportunity for the City to assess how Elk Grove has changed and grown over the last 13 years and to better define the values, identity, and direction of Elk Grove in the future.

The current Elk Grove General Plan includes the following elements:

GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS



I.2 PURPOSE OF THE ISSUES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS REPORT

The Issues and Policy Considerations Report builds on the information collected and issues identified through the previous phases of the General Plan update process, including:

Emerging themes from the community engagement process to date, which included a series of outreach activities designed to solicit input from the community and other interested parties on topics relevant to the General Plan update.

Existing Conditions Report, which provides a current snapshot of existing conditions in the Planning Area identified for the General Plan update, including inside the existing City limits and additional study areas beyond the City limits, by describing the current conditions and priority issues relevant to the General Plan and summarizing the physical, social, and economic information required to update the Plan.

A Shared Community Vision, which outlines the unified vision statement for the City of Elk Grove and identifies a series of supporting principles on topics relevant to the General Plan and the desired outcomes for Elk Grove in the future.

Key topic areas and issues from these efforts are incorporated into the discussion in this Issues and Policy Considerations Report and are used to inform the initial stages of goal and policy development for the General Plan update.

The directives and recommendations outlined in the report will be supplemented by and considered in the Key Policies Working Paper and the Land Use and Circulation Alternatives, which will be prepared in the next phase of the update process. Policies and alternatives drafted based on the identified directives will be refined and approved by City staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council.

I. INTRODUCTION

I.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE ISSUES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS REPORT

The Issues and Policy Considerations Report is organized into ten chapters, as follows:

Chapter 1, Introduction. Provides an overview of the General Plan update and the purpose and organization of the report.

Chapter 2 through Chapter 10, Principle Chapters. The principle chapters are dedicated to one of the identified supporting principles developed for the shared community vision and are organized as follows:

Introduction: Summarizes the supporting principle and identifies the issue covered in the chapter.

Directives: Identifies relevant topic areas and provides specific directives for the implementation of the supporting principle through the recommended goals and policies. The directives will also inform potential amendments to the map components of the General Plan and are intended to offer guidance in confirming areas for conservation or preservation or in identifying areas of potential transformation during the next steps of the General Plan update process.

Considerations: Summarizes key issues identified through community outreach to date and other influencing factors that need to be addressed through the updated General Plan, including:

- State and/or federal regulations that have been enacted since the adoption of the current General Plan.
- Physical constraints as identified primarily through the Existing Conditions Report prepared for the General Plan update.
- Policies developed through other planning efforts approved subsequent to the adoption of the current General Plan or through other ongoing planning efforts being prepared concurrently with the General Plan update.

Recommendations: Suggests specific goals for incorporation into the updated General Plan, as well as policy objectives for each goal that will guide the development of specific policies and action items as the General Plan update process moves forward. The recommended goals are intended to establish a framework for how issues will be addressed in the General Plan update and may be refined as the update progresses.

Figure 1 illustrates how community input, existing physical and regulatory conditions, and the supporting principles informed the formulation of directives and recommended goals.

FIGURE I: GOAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



2. REGIONAL ROLE

OUR REGIONAL NEIGHBORS KNOW US & OUR CONTRIBUTIONS

Elk Grove occupies a prominent place in the regional dialogue. The City's identity and brand are clear in the minds of its neighbors. Our contributions to the region continue to strengthen that identity and include recreational opportunities, higher education, job centers, and quality neighborhoods. City officials engage with other cities and Sacramento County to plan and build for an ever more dynamic region. The City's employment potential within the regional economy is fulfilled. New businesses have emerged, providing new employment centers that support technology and build from our agricultural roots. Both housing and jobs are available in the community, providing flexible opportunities for many lifestyles.

The Regional Role chapter is focused on addressing Elk Grove's identity in and contribution to the greater Sacramento region. Moving Elk Grove forward as a prominent member of the region as detailed in the supporting principle is a major focus for the goals, policies, and action items to be proposed in the updated General Plan.

2.1 DIRECTIVES

The following topic areas have been identified as contributing factors to the City's success in establishing its place in the region.

- Identification of Elk Grove's role
- Regional engagement

How these topic areas are expressed through the goals and policies of the General Plan will influence how this supporting principle is implemented. To establish a basis for developing goals, policies, action items, and maps for the updated General Plan, the following directives have been identified.

Reference Economic Vitality (Chapter 4) for additional considerations and directives related to Elk Grove's economic role in the region, including the creation of regional job centers and regional retail destinations.

Reference Community Identity (Chapter 5) for additional considerations and directives related to Elk Grove's identity and brand.

Identification of Elk Grove's Role

- Establish an understanding of the role that Elk Grove plays in the larger Sacramento region from the perspective of the community and the region. This role can be established through:
 - Market research. Understand the current regional knowledge and perception of Elk Grove and identify underserved market demands that can be filled.
 - Consistent voice. A public relations strategy for businesses, visitors to the City, and residents.

2. REGIONAL ROLE

- Identify the ongoing contributions that Elk Grove makes to the region through community resources, worker skill sets, geography, diversity, and culture.

Regional Engagement

- Communicate Elk Grove’s role in the region to other local communities and regional entities.
- Coordinate with other local communities and regional entities on topics that affect Elk Grove. Topics may include:
 - Employment centers. Elk Grove can provide major employment centers that contribute to the overall regional goals.
 - Jobs/housing ratio. Providing housing across income levels and lifestyles provides options for employers and employees to live in proximity to work or in an area that increases accessibility to work.
- Participate in regional projects and activities to ensure that Elk Grove’s role is being represented.
 - Regional projects. Elk Grove participates actively in business attraction, sustainability, growth, preservation, and other common regional efforts.

Blueprint Preferred Scenario Principles

- *Housing options*
- *Transportation choices*
- *Mixing land uses*
- *Compact development*
- *Conserving natural resources*
- *Utilizing existing assets*
- *Quality design*

2.2 CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the directives identified in Section 2.1, a number of factors may influence the goals and policies of the updated General Plan and, ultimately, the City’s success in achieving the vision as expressed by the supporting principle. These influences include state and/or federal regulations, physical constraints, or policies developed through other efforts beyond this General Plan update. Following is a summary of the existing conditions and issues to be addressed through the goals and policies of the updated General Plan relative to Elk Grove’s role in the region.

Sacramento Region Blueprint

The Sacramento Region Blueprint is a comprehensive visioning process that was developed for the six counties in the larger Sacramento region: Sacramento, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba. The Blueprint process engaged policymakers and citizens to create a regional vision of growth and to provide a cohesive framework that defines alternative management solutions for regional growth-related issues. The planning process involved a comprehensive overview of transportation, housing, land use, economic development, and environmental conditions to identify a preferred growth scenario to the year 2050.

In December 2004, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) Board of Directors adopted a Blueprint Preferred Scenario for growth, which promotes compact, mixed-use development and more transit choices as an alternative to low-density development, with a specific focus on land use and transportation planning. Since the Blueprint was adopted, SACOG and its members have focused on implementing the identified principles that came out of the Blueprint Preferred Scenario.

The Blueprint does not supersede a local jurisdiction's land use authority but is intended to provide various land use guidelines to improve quality of life in the region using a "toolbox" of implementation measures. It is, however, anticipated that some state and/or federal funding sources may be tied to a local agency's consistency with the Blueprint Plan. For example, the most recent SACOG Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) integrates the Blueprint as the land plan basis for the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) (with some adjustments for local general plan data). Ultimately, the products of the Blueprint process are intended to be used by local governments in the Sacramento region. In particular, the principles and implementation strategies are recommended for use in the preparation of general plan updates and future general plan amendments.

Employment Centers

Within the metro regional context, Elk Grove is often considered a bedroom community, with a large number of residents who live in the community but work elsewhere. Of those who reside in Elk Grove, more than 90 percent work outside the City limits, with the majority commuting into Sacramento, according to 2013 Census data. This leads to a low jobs/housing ratio compared to neighboring jurisdictions of similar size. The City will need to continue to encourage nonresidential development to provide opportunities for increased employment activities. Designating space for employment centers to act as hubs and provide space for innovation should be a central component of a comprehensive economic development strategy.

2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the directives and considerations identified above, the following goals are recommended for consideration as part of the updated General Plan. In addition to the specific goals identified, policy objectives are provided for each goal that will guide the development of specific policies and action items as the General Plan update process moves forward.

GOAL: A CLEAR AND ESTABLISHED ROLE IN THE REGION

- Develop a consistent voice in order to clarify Elk Grove's role in the region.
- Promote Elk Grove's role in and contribution to the region.

2. REGIONAL ROLE

GOAL: STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH REGIONAL PARTNERS

- Communicate with other local communities and entities in the region.
- Participate in regional planning for and implementation of the Sacramento Regional Blueprint.

GOAL: A NEW REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT CENTER

- Invest in technology and infrastructure needs to attract large-scale industries to the City.
- Ensure Elk Grove remains a business-friendly community.

3. GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

DEVELOPMENT FILLS IN THE GAPS

Unfinished, undeveloped gaps found throughout the City become opportunities to develop economically successful additions that provide added value to our community, as well as new job opportunities and lifestyle improvements. Existing small businesses are protected even as we invite in new businesses and different economic opportunities. New development plans are grounded by community needs and market demand, and are carried out efficiently and holistically. New housing built in a variety of shapes and sizes to meet the needs and desires of our diverse community also fills in the gaps.

Infill development is consistently executed with programs that address impacts and encourage innovative building solutions. A creative growth management strategy allows expansion to occur when economic need, community vision, and regional goals align. There is a strong system in place to guarantee that as the community accommodates new neighbors and new jobs, it continues to maintain and improve facilities and services, such as schools, roads, and parks.

The Growth Management Strategy chapter addresses striking a desirable balance between growth—and the requisite increase in jobs, development, and amenities—and the preservation of existing structures, resources, and community character. These items are not necessarily in direct competition, but can become so if growth is not managed carefully and aligned with community desires and values, as expressed by the above supporting principle.

3.1 DIRECTIVES

The following topic areas have been identified as contributing factors to the success of the City in achieving its vision for growth and growth management in the Elk Grove community.

- Infill development
- Comprehensive growth management strategy
- Infrastructure and public service provision

Reference Regional Role (Chapter 2) and Economic Vitality (Chapter 4) for additional considerations and directives on the jobs/housing ratio in Elk Grove and providing jobs in a growing region.

Reference Healthy Living (Chapter 9) for additional considerations and directives on maintaining services at expected levels as Elk Grove's population grows.

How these topics are expressed through the goals and policies of the General Plan will influence how this supporting principle is implemented. To establish a basis for developing goals, policies, action items, and maps for the updated General Plan, the following directives have been identified.



Infill Development

- Prioritize completion of unfinished projects and development projects on vacant or underutilized lots in the City limits.
- Establish incentives and clear development parameters for infill projects.

Comprehensive Growth Management Strategy

- Direct new development to specific locations within urbanized portions of the City (i.e., not into the Rural Area).
- Annex additional land into the City as appropriate where a market demand has been established and where the proposed project implements the community vision and regional growth objectives.
- Implement a specific bundle of strategies that work together to focus growth in areas identified for change. These may include:
 - Growth incentives in some areas and preservation incentives in others.
 - Transferrable development rights or clustering of development as tools for preservation or conservation of open space.
 - Offering, or partnering with other organizations to offer, conservation easements for agricultural areas of value at risk of development.
 - Establishment of growth boundaries and phasing schedules.
- Establish clear development parameters for annexations.

Infrastructure and Public Service Provision

- Require developers to fund and/or complete infrastructure improvements concurrent with or prior to occupancy of new development projects.
- Establish clear standards for infrastructure development responsive to the needs of the area being served.
- Establish and maintain minimum service thresholds for public services and infrastructure.
- Establish funding mechanisms for the expansion of public services and infrastructure to ensure new development is carrying its cost burden.

3.2 CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the directives identified in Section 3.1, a number of factors may influence the goals and policies of the updated General Plan and, ultimately, the City's success in achieving the vision as expressed by the supporting principle. These influences include state and/or federal regulations, physical constraints and economic constraints, or policies developed through other efforts beyond this General Plan update. Following is a summary of the issues to be addressed through the goals and policies of the updated General Plan relative to the growth management strategy for Elk Grove.

Varied Service Needs

The original development of Elk Grove is located on the eastern side of State Route (SR) 99, while the west side of town encompasses newer commercial and residential development. The Sheldon area contains the rural and agricultural land in the City and is an area which lacks the infrastructure typically found in an urban or suburban community, such as sidewalks and widened, improved roads. Residents on the east side have historically indicated that they value preserving the rural feel of their community. The west side of the City, in addition to hosting more recent and urban-style development, contains the majority of civic uses, such as community centers, libraries, and City Hall. It also contains most commercial and community services, such as theaters and grocery stores.

Jobs and Greenfield Development Pressure

As noted in Regional Role (Chapter 2), Elk Grove is considered a bedroom community, with a large number of residents who live in the community but work elsewhere and a low jobs/housing ratio compared to other jurisdictions of similar size in the region. Additional development of commercial, office, and retail uses is a potential method for increasing the jobs/housing ratio and achieving the resulting benefits of a reduced commute time for residents who are then able to work locally and enjoy more amenities and entertainment close by. However, development trends favor greenfield development over infill development, primarily because of lower relative development costs. Improving the jobs/housing ratio and meeting the directives of the supporting principle may require specific policies that promote infill growth or prioritize infill over greenfield development without deterring new businesses from locating in the City.

Infill, as used in this report, refers to development of vacant and/or underutilized parcels within the current City limits.

Greenfield, as used in this report, refers to development of land beyond the current City limits.

Agricultural Conversion

Rural areas, cropland, and irrigated pasture make up roughly 34 percent of the Planning Area. Although these areas are not directly used for outdoor recreation or considered natural communities, they still provide an appreciated nonurban outdoor setting and can act as habitat for wildlife, including special-status species such as Swainson's hawk. The rural and agricultural fringe around the urban center of the community is threatened not only by urban development but also by conversion to orchards and vineyards with low habitat value. Recent agricultural trends have shown increased conversion of cropland and pastures to cash crops such as vineyards and orchards. Agricultural conversion fragments open space areas and removes important foraging habitat for Swainson's hawk and other species. Growth threatens these open spaces and should be addressed as part of a comprehensive growth management strategy.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the directives and considerations identified above, the following goals are recommended for consideration as part of the updated General Plan. In addition to the specific goals identified, policy objectives are provided for each goal that will guide the development of specific policies and action items as the General Plan update process moves forward.

GOAL: FOCUSED ON INFILL

- Identify areas to allow for growth and transformation through identification of targeted infill opportunity sites.
- Identify areas to preserve, including land resources important to local identity and the economy such as rural and agricultural areas or historic, cultural, and visual resources.
- Prioritize developments in infill areas with existing, available infrastructure capacity.
- Establish concurrency measures for new development that require adequate infrastructure to be financed and constructed by new development concurrent with or before occupancy of new development.
- Establish incentives for development occurring within the existing City limits or in targeted infill locations.

GOAL: EXPANSION WITH PURPOSE

- Identify potential expansion areas to allow for growth and transformation.
- Identify areas to preserve, including land resources important to the local identity and economy such as rural and agricultural areas or historic, cultural, and visual resources.
- Develop criteria for evaluating the annexation of land to the City. Criteria should consider whether a market demand has been established and whether the proposed project implements the community vision and regional growth objectives.
- Phase new development outside the current City limits to occur where public services and infrastructure exist or may be extended to serve the public interest with minimal impact.
- Establish concurrency measures for new development that require adequate infrastructure to be financed and constructed by new development concurrent with or before occupancy of new development.
- Provide incentives for land to remain in agricultural production.

4. ECONOMIC VITALITY

OUR ECONOMY THRIVES & NEW BUSINESS ADDS VALUE

Major employment centers make their home in Elk Grove, providing employment opportunities and stimulating ancillary businesses as well. We continue to invite businesses that are competitive in the region and set the stage to attract these businesses by providing resources and amenities they need. Old and new businesses together improve our lives by providing new jobs as well as convenient places to get amenities and entertainment. Elk Grove has a diverse economy that builds from our heritage, but also invites in new and changing industries. Higher education and technical training are available to our community members as they pursue diverse job opportunities in these new industries. The City is leading the way in innovative technology infrastructure, technical education opportunities, sports activities and entertainment, and a safe and crime-free environment. These features attract business and provide a better quality of life for individuals and families of all incomes, ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Growth and development in the City is built with mindfulness of historic resources and identity. These businesses bolster the community by providing jobs, services, goods, and recreational opportunities for residents.

The Economic Vitality chapter is focused on addressing economic development in the community of Elk Grove, as expressed by the above supporting principle.

4.1 DIRECTIVES

The following topic areas have been identified as contributing factors to the success of the City in achieving its vision for economic vitality in the community.

- Business retention and expansion
- Business attraction
- Economic diversity
- Economic infrastructure
- Showcasing Elk Grove's assets

Attracting new businesses is linked to regional dynamics and the City's reputation and identity. Reference Regional Role (Chapter 2) for additional considerations and directives regarding regional employment centers.

Reference Community Identity (Chapter 5) for additional considerations and directives on community identity.

How these topic areas are expressed through the goals and policies of the General Plan will influence how this supporting principle is implemented. To establish a basis for developing goals, policies, action items, and maps for the updated General Plan, the following directives have been identified.

Business Retention and Expansion

- Provide an opportunity for existing businesses to continue and to expand as needed.



4. ECONOMIC VITALITY

Business Attraction

- Promote Elk Grove and the benefits offered by the City as an attractive option for new businesses to locate in the community. Benefits include:
 - A community that offers a variety of housing options for all income levels.
 - A variety of activities that support and showcase the diversity of lifestyles in Elk Grove.
 - High quality schools, parks, and trails.
 - Safe neighborhoods.
 - An educated and skilled workforce.

Economic Diversity

- Recognize that small and local businesses are important to the local economy and provide support for new businesses to be established and thrive in the community.
- Support larger businesses, with the knowledge that they are also important to the local economy and may attract regional opportunities, including a way to showcase the vibrancy and heritage of the community.
- Facilitate development of regional shopping and employment centers through technological investments and incentives.
 - Regional shopping and business centers will help establish Elk Grove's place in and contribution to the larger regional economy.

Economic Infrastructure

- Capitalize on the existing human capital in Elk Grove and make opportunities for higher education and training more accessible.
- Identify gaps in business services, which may include:
 - Gaps in the accessibility of certain businesses and/or services to residents.
 - Gaps in the market by type of businesses available in Elk Grove, such as within emerging technology markets.

Showcasing Elk Grove's Assets

- Recognize the breadth and types of businesses necessary to support a particular market (e.g., agricultural production).
- Facilitate businesses that promote and support Elk Grove's culture and showcase some of the existing opportunities within the community that may be unique to the area.

4.2 CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the directives identified in Section 4.1, a number of factors may influence the goals and policies of the updated General Plan and, ultimately, the City's success in achieving the vision as expressed by the supporting principle. These influences include state and/or federal regulations, physical constraints and economic constraints, or policies developed through other efforts beyond this General Plan update. Following is a summary of the issues to be addressed through the goals and policies of the updated General Plan relative to economic vitality.

Jobs/Housing Ratio

Elk Grove is the second largest City in Sacramento County and in the Sacramento-Roseville-Arden-Arcade Metropolitan Statistical Area. Elk Grove is a bedroom community, with a large number of residents who live in the community but work elsewhere and comparatively little commercial or industrial activity in the City that provides employment. This leads to a low jobs/housing ratio compared to neighboring jurisdictions of similar size.

As of 2015, there are 30,287 jobs in the City, compared to 53,531 housing units. Within the larger Planning Area, there are 30,432 jobs compared to 61,728 housing units. This results in a jobs/housing ratio of 0.56 in the City and 0.49 in the larger Planning Area. The City's jobs/housing ratio is much lower than is considered ideal by general planning or regional standards.

What is a jobs/housing ratio?

The jobs/housing ratio is the number of jobs to the number of homes in a specific geographic area. It is generally considered ideal to have one job per employed resident or 1.5 jobs per housing unit.

The target jobs/housing ratio established by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments is 1.4 for the region, which aims for approximately 1.5 jobs for every household.

4. ECONOMIC VITALITY

Supporting balanced and diverse business growth locally can increase the level of commercial and industrial activity in the City and improve opportunities for residents to work in the community and/or have improved accessibility to their place of work. Attracting new businesses to a traditionally bedroom community, however, can require significant upfront investment and incentives to reduce risk for potential employers.

Telecommunication and Information Services

To ensure Elk Grove's competitiveness for businesses and technologically focused residents, the City promotes advanced technologies such as fiber optic Internet and Citywide information services. These technologies can be a significant incentive to companies and potential residents looking to relocate to Elk Grove.

Agritourism

An increased awareness of the rural-urban connection has been developing over the last decade and can be seen reflected in many movements such as the farm-to-fork movement and an increase in community gardens and local farmers markets. The commitment to the preservation of agricultural and rural lands in the eastern portion of the City provides an opportunity to showcase this aspect of Elk Grove's heritage through goals and policies facilitating and supporting agritourism activities.

What is agritourism?

Agritourism focuses on economic or educational activities that support the local agricultural environment and highlight a community's accessibility to local agricultural resources, such as farmers markets, community gardens, farm-to-fork partnerships, micro-farming, and wineries.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the directives and considerations identified above, the following goals are recommended for consideration as part of the updated General Plan. In addition to the specific goals identified, policy objectives are provided for each goal that will guide the development of specific policies and action items as the General Plan update process moves forward.

GOAL: BALANCED AND DIVERSE ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Protect small and existing businesses and allow them to grow.
- Attract larger employers that will help establish Elk Grove's niche in the regional economy.
- Create an economic atmosphere that provides a wide range of job opportunities at all levels.

GOAL: A COMPETITIVE JOB MARKET

- Capitalize on human resources by supporting innovative strategies for local talent.
- Invest in job training and education resources.
- Invest in technology and business infrastructure.
- Provide diversity in housing types and create places to support a variety of lifestyles and incomes.
- Invest in and maintain identified quality of life factors such as schools, parks, public safety, and services.

GOAL: BUSINESSES SHOWCASE THE ELK GROVE CULTURE

- Promote innovations in technology across all industries.
- Foster locally sustainable farming practices and movements.
- Allow market-specific businesses in context-appropriate locations.

5. COMMUNITY IDENTITY

CITY CORE, HERITAGE & WELL-KNOWN NEIGHBORHOODS

The City includes a civic core that offers central gathering spaces that all community members enjoy and feel welcome in. The City and community organizations partner to foster the civic core to be both thriving and safe. Successful projects and annual events enhance vitality and camaraderie in this space.

Old Town Elk Grove continues to protect and showcase our heritage for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike.

All of our neighborhoods are built around our top-notch parks and schools. Preservation and change in our neighborhoods are guided by values of diversity, neighborly spirit, and small-town character.

The Community Identity chapter focuses on identifying, preserving, and enhancing the legacy and culture of Elk Grove that unify the community. The supporting principle above provides the vision that will direct the creation of goals, policies, and action items for the updated General Plan.

5.1 DIRECTIVES

The following topic areas have been identified as contributors to the character and culture of the Elk Grove community.

- A welcoming and thriving civic core
- Preservation of Old Town as a showcase for community heritage
- Neighborhoods anchored by parks and schools
- Neighborhood preservation and change guided by community values

How these topic areas are expressed through the goals and policies of the General Plan will influence how this supporting principle is implemented. To establish a basis for development of goals, policies, action items, and maps for the updated General Plan, the following directives have been identified.

A clear community identity plays a role in economic development. Reference Economic Vitality (Chapter 4) for additional considerations and directives related to attracting and maintaining a diverse economy and targeting businesses that showcase Elk Grove.

Rural and agricultural areas represent an important part of Elk Grove's heritage. Reference Rural and Agricultural Heritage (Chapter 6) for additional considerations and directives related to the role these areas play in Elk Grove's identity and economy.

Reference Community Services (Chapter 10) for additional considerations and directives on community events and "third spaces" that can help foster community identity in Elk Grove.

5. COMMUNITY IDENTITY

A Welcoming and Thriving Civic Core

- Engage in a community visioning process to identify the civic core boundaries and key components.
- Provide attractive and highly visible wayfinding and informational signage to highlight areas of cultural importance.
- Foster partnerships between the City and business and nongovernmental organizations to leverage:
 - A variety of successful projects and events that draw people of all interests, ages, and locations to Elk Grove.
 - A variety of businesses and organizations that contribute to the City’s vitality and character.

Preservation Old Town as a Showcase for Community Heritage

- Ensure the preservation of historical buildings and resources in Old Town.
- Ensure renovations and additions to Old Town are aesthetically compatible with existing structures.

Neighborhoods Anchored by Parks and Schools

- Provide safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access and facilities from neighborhoods to parks and schools.
- Ensure every neighborhood is located within walking distance of a park.
- Partner with the Cosumnes Community Services District to ensure parks continue to serve as a focal point of the community.

Neighborhood Preservation and Change Guided by Community Values

- Ensure neighborhoods exhibit the physical characteristics that reflect the values of the community.
- Preserve and enhance the identity of existing neighborhoods.

5.2 CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the directives identified in Section 5.1, a number of factors may influence the goals and policies of the updated General Plan and, ultimately, the City's success in achieving the vision as expressed by the supporting principle. These influences include state and/or federal regulations, physical constraints and economic constraints, or policies developed through other efforts beyond this General Plan update. Following is a summary of the issues to be addressed through the goals and policies of the updated General Plan relative to community identity.

Community and Neighborhood Identity

A recurring concern among residents and other participants in the General Plan update process has been a lack of a clear and compelling common identity for Elk Grove. Deciding how the City would like to be viewed by the region, as well as giving voice to its various internal community and neighborhood identities, can provide direction and cohesion to the appearance, character, and land use of Elk Grove.

Different priorities exist in different parts of the City based on demographic, land use, and infrastructure differences. While some communities in Elk Grove may favor limited development and amenities in favor of retaining all rural amenities, other communities desire a more urban feel and related amenities and activities. By bringing these diverse community priorities together under a single identity while maintaining their own unique values and character, the City can create a greater sense of investment and participation in Elk Grove as a whole.

Historic Resources

Historic resources are physical representations of our history and culture, and are important to identify and protect. Resource types include early ranches, transportation features, cemeteries, cultural landscapes, and agricultural, residential, educational, commercial, industrial, social, and municipal properties. The City can continue to protect these resources through California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Section 106 (of the National Historic Preservation Act) environmental review of development and redevelopment projects.

In addition to preservation, embracing and emphasizing these historical features is important to maintaining the historical identity of the Planning Area. Working with historical societies, displaying informational signage in areas of historic or cultural significance, and encouraging and facilitating events and participation that highlight the historical character of Elk Grove are ways to promote the resources and the stories they tell.

5. COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Balancing Development with Visual Resources

An important aspect of the community of Elk Grove is its rural feel and bucolic vistas, and parks with green lawns, trees, and pleasing design—in short, visual character as well as actual recreational or natural community habitat value. New development, built incorrectly, could intrude on these existing visual resources and scenic vistas. Design of development projects, including infrastructure and utilities, should be considered to minimize visual impact. In order to determine impacts to visual resources, a definition and baseline must be established. The General Plan should include policies that clearly define these local resources and provide a method of identifying and protecting them.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the directives and considerations identified above, the following goals are recommended for consideration as part of the updated General Plan. In addition to the specific goals identified, policy objectives are provided for each goal that will guide the development of specific policies and action items as the General Plan update process moves forward.

GOAL: A STRONG, MARKETABLE IDENTITY

- Define key characteristics that define the City and its neighborhoods.
- Ensure planning decisions reflect and reinforce Elk Grove’s identity.
- Foster community events that bring people together and provide identity such as festivals, farmers markets, and other community events.
- Identify important visual characteristics and resources and establish standards for protection.

GOAL: A DEFINED CIVIC CORE

- Identify planning boundaries for the civic core.
- Intensify and refine uses in the civic core.
- Establish marketing and design standards for the civic core.

GOAL: A CELEBRATED HERITAGE AND CULTURE

- Identify, preserve, and enhance areas of cultural and historical significance.
- Establish design standards for historic resources and locations.

- Partner with and support local organizations such as the Old Town Elk Grove Foundation, the Farm Bureau, local historic societies, tribes, and multicultural groups that provide cultural events and community gathering opportunities.

GOAL: A CITY THAT EXHIBITS THE CHARACTER OF ITS COMMUNITIES

- Design neighborhoods in proximity to and with access to parks and schools.
- Place infrastructure and facilities to ensure effective, convenient, and safe use.
- Tailor design standards to each land use type and neighborhood identity.
- Foster a small-town feel while allowing for growth and economic vitality.

6. RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

PROTECTING OUR FARMING HERITAGE & RURAL LIFE

We celebrate the rural area and its heritage, and balance that heritage with other needs, services, and lifestyles desired in Elk Grove. The rural area is valued in our community for its aesthetic and cultural value, as well as the economic and educational opportunities agriculture provides. Our commitment to maintaining the Rural Area is clear and codified in core planning documents through programs that preserve the aesthetics and style of our rural heritage. Agricultural producers and other land uses remain good neighbors, each with desired services and infrastructure needs fully met.

The Rural and Agricultural Heritage chapter is focused on ensuring that the character of Elk Grove, based on a legacy of agriculture and a rural backdrop, is preserved as expressed by the above supporting principle. Implementation of this principle will rely on the goals, policies, and action items incorporated in the updated General Plan.

6.1 DIRECTIVES

The following topic areas have been identified as contributing factors to the success of the City in achieving its vision for rural and agricultural heritage in the community.

- Provision of rural housing and infrastructure options as a lifestyle choice
- Good relations between agricultural production and other uses
- Honoring farming heritage

How these topic areas are expressed through the goals and policies of the General Plan will influence how this supporting principle is implemented. To establish a basis for development of goals, policies, action items, and maps for the updated General Plan, the following directives have been identified.

Establishing rural and agricultural areas as a resource to be maintained and supported affects the City's development capacity. Reference Growth Management Strategy (Chapter 3) for additional considerations and directives on addressing and managing anticipated growth in Elk Grove.

Agriculture can play an important role in the City's economic strategy and showcase Elk Grove's farming heritage. Reference Economic Vitality (Chapter 4) for additional considerations and directives regarding economic development strategies for Elk Grove.

The rural area is an established community that contributes to the identity of Elk Grove. Reference Community Identity (Chapter 5) for additional considerations and directives regarding the establishment of community and neighborhood identity and protection of historic and visual resources.

6. RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

Provision of Rural Housing and Infrastructure Options as a Lifestyle Choice

- Retain the built and natural character of the rural community, including low-density, farm-style housing and open spaces.
- Balance the preservation of rural areas and the associated lifestyle and visual benefits with the development needs of the community in land use and economic development decisions.
- Identify service needs in the rural areas that reflect rural values.
- Develop design standards specific to the rural area while recognizing that it is part of a larger community.

Good Relations Between Agricultural Production and Other Uses

- Provide protections for active agriculture located in and adjacent to the City.
- Continue to enforce the Agricultural Activities Chapter (14.05) of the Municipal Code that guarantees the right to continue agricultural operations by limiting the circumstances under which agriculture may be considered a nuisance.
- Implement development standards requiring provision of appropriate buffers between any new land uses that may conflict with agricultural operations.

Honoring Farming Heritage

- Celebrate and integrate Elk Grove's farming heritage into the economic strategy for the City.
- Promote community engagement with agriculture. Promotional activities may include:
 - Farmers markets
 - Community gardens
 - Harvest events
 - Farm-to-fork dining

6.2 CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the directives identified in Section 6.1, a number of factors may influence the goals and policies of the updated General Plan and, ultimately, the City's success in achieving the vision as expressed by the supporting principle. These influences include state and/or federal regulations, physical constraints and economic constraints, or policies developed through other efforts beyond this General Plan update. Following is a summary of the issues to be addressed through the goals and policies of the updated General Plan relative to the rural and agricultural areas.

Development Pressure

A number of factors are expected to result in increasing development pressure that could result in conversion of agricultural land in and around Elk Grove to residential or commercial use. As the region's economy grows, so too do its population and service demands. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments' (SACOG) most recent forecast predicts the region will accommodate 303,000 new homes and 361,000 new jobs by 2035. It is expected that housing prices will also continue to increase with growth and increased demand. With available land and valuable assets such as a strong school system, Elk Grove is expected to experience some of that growth. Land sold for new housing or commercial development will become more lucrative than agricultural operations. Without specific measures to alter this dynamic, agricultural land in and around Elk Grove may be converted to other uses. This would eliminate numerous aspects of the rural character discussed in the supporting principle. Conversion of agricultural land, some of which may be prime farmland, has economic consequences as well, as agriculture remains an important industry locally and in the region.

Elk Grove is projected to have a population of 207,663 in 2035, an increase of 44,103 people over the current (2015) population.

Land Use Conflict

Land in agricultural production is located adjacent to residential and commercial uses in Elk Grove. While many residents value rural living, agricultural production uses can still conflict with other land uses. Typical causes of conflict include noise from harvest or production equipment, poor air quality from dust, or odors produced by livestock.

6. RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the directives and considerations identified above, the following goals are recommended for consideration as part of the updated General Plan. In addition to the specific goals identified, policy objectives are provided for each goal that will guide the development of specific policies and action items as the General Plan update process moves forward.

GOAL: AN ESTABLISHED, PROTECTED, AND SUPPORTED RURAL AREA

- Establish and retain rural area land use designations on the General Plan Land Use Map.
- Support the rural area as a key feature of the community's identity.
- Identify service needs in the rural area that reflect rural values.
- Develop design standards that retain the visual character of the area but provide for needed services.

GOAL: INTEGRATED AND SUSTAINED AGRICULTURE

- Create and foster agricultural and farming-related community activities and events such as 4-H competitions, community gardens, farmers markets, and farming festivals.
- Work with local farmers to develop educational programs on agricultural processes and products.
- Develop protections for existing farmland at risk of conversation in or near the City.
- Update land use regulations to identify and support agricultural activities.

7. PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

OUTDOOR RECREATION IS RIGHT OUTSIDE OUR DOOR

Our parks and trails are high quality and highly valued. We continue to enhance and maintain our recreational open spaces so that they are safe, connected, and accessible to all. Our trails connect easily to other trails and parks in the region, and community gardens are a source of local food and local involvement.



The Parks, Trails, and Open Space chapter addresses preservation, enhancement, and maintenance of parks, trails, and open space resources in Elk Grove, as expressed by the above supporting principle.

7.1 DIRECTIVES

The following topic areas have been identified as contributing factors to the City's success in achieving its vision for outdoor recreation and natural resources in keeping with the character of Elk Grove.

- Provision and quality of parks
- Trails offering local and regional connectivity
- Preservation of natural and open space habitat

Reference Growth Management Strategy (Chapter 3) and Rural and Agricultural Heritage (Chapter 6) for considerations and directives addressing conservation of agricultural resources.

Reference Healthy Living (Chapter 9) for additional considerations and directives addressing conservation of natural open space and habitat resources.

How these topic areas are expressed through the goals and policies of the General Plan will influence how this supporting principle is implemented. To provide a basis for development of goals, policies, action items, and maps for the updated General Plan, the following directives have been identified.

7. PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

Provision and Quality of Parks

- Ensure that policies and standards reflect community expectations for provision of parkland.
- Design parks and open spaces for both passive and active recreation opportunities.
- Maintain the high level of safety, cleanliness, and well-kept amenities of Elk Grove’s 96 existing parks.
 - Promote investment in amenity upgrades.
 - Coordinate with service providers to maintain parks.
 - Maintain recreational infrastructure such as playgrounds, basketball courts, and running tracks.
- Work with the Cosumnes Community Services District (CCSD) to ensure parks owned and/or operated by the CCSD are well maintained.

Active vs. Passive Open Space

Open space can be divided into two main categories:

- *Active: For organized recreation, sports, exercise, active play*
- *Passive: Relaxation, habitat, natural scenery*

Any park or open space in Elk Grove may include both types of open space, and both have value to the community.

Trails Offering Local and Regional Connectivity

- Plan for and install a more extensive system of walking, hiking, and biking trails to provide greater accessibility and enhanced opportunity for recreational users of local and regional open spaces.
 - Key connective open spaces include the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, Cosumnes River Preserve, Bufferlands, greenbelts, and waterways.
- Continue to aggressively implement and update the adopted Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan.
- Continue to consult regularly with the Trails Committee on development projects adjacent to or encompassing planned trails and bikeways that are identified in the General Plan, the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan, or other City Council–approved master plans in regard to features such as:
 - Connectivity with other trails.
 - Pedestrian facilities and bikeways.
 - Trail and pedestrian ingress/egress to a project site.
 - Trail placement and design.
 - Trail signage and striping.

Preservation of Natural Open Space and Habitat

- Identify key open space areas for preservation, particularly those that contribute to increased connectivity between existing or planned open space systems.

7.2 CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the directives identified in Section 7.1, a number of factors may influence the goals and policies of the updated General Plan and, ultimately, the City’s success in achieving the vision as expressed by the supporting principle. These influences include state and/or federal regulations, physical constraints and economic constraints, or policies developed through other efforts beyond this General Plan update. Following is a summary of the issues to be addressed through the goals and policies of the updated General Plan relative to parks, trails, and open spaces.

Coordination with Other Agencies

Several organizations and agencies are vested with ownership, maintenance, and planning responsibilities over outdoor and recreational resources that are important to the Elk Grove community. Many of the recreational facilities in the City, including parks, community centers, playing fields, and playgrounds, are operated by the CCSD. The CCSD is an independent agency with its own plans and funding. Similarly, many of the regional parks and open spaces adjacent to Elk Grove that provide both habitat and additional recreational opportunities are preserved and maintained by Sacramento County. Coordination and partnership with these agencies is essential for Elk Grove to preserve its high quality open spaces and realize transformative plans to provide connections among them.

Ongoing Parks and Trails Maintenance and Improvements

Parks in Elk Grove are plentiful and of high quality. The City and the CCSD have a commitment to expand park locations but will also need to provide ongoing maintenance and operational services to the parks. Ensuring that adequate funding is available is important to the long-term preservation of the 96 existing parks serving Elk Grove. The trail system will also require maintenance and continued expansion, and trail connectivity should be a focus when allocating funds and approving development projects.

Wildlife Corridors

Connectivity between open space areas is an essential element of species conservation. Wildlife corridors are present in a variety of habitats, linking areas of suitable wildlife habitat that are otherwise separated by changes in vegetation, rugged terrain, or human disturbance. Several parts of the Planning Area may serve as movement corridors for local and regional wildlife. The open space areas adjacent to the Planning Area (e.g., the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, the Cosumnes River Preserve, and the Bufferlands) facilitate regional and migratory wildlife movement. Wildlife movement likely extends into

7. PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

the agricultural and rural areas adjacent to these open space areas. In addition, drainages and associated riparian corridors located throughout the City can facilitate local wildlife movement. Wildlife corridors should be maintained to preserve connections between open space areas and to reduce the negative impacts of fragmentation on species that use these habitats. Corridors surrounded by urban development, such as Laguna, Whitehouse, and Elk Grove creeks, should be given particular attention.

7.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the directives and considerations identified above, the following goals are recommended for consideration as part of the updated General Plan. In addition to the specific goals identified, policy objectives are provided for each goal that will guide the development of specific policies and action items as the General Plan update process moves forward.

GOAL: PLENTIFUL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES THAT ARE SAFE, CLEAN, AND HIGH QUALITY

- Review and confirm park provision standards to reflect community expectations.
- Coordinate land use and management of parks and facilities with all other public agencies that provide park and open space facilities or recreation programs.
- Promote investment in and upgrades to park infrastructure and services within the City's limited role under the Memorandum of Understanding with the CCSD.

GOAL: A CONNECTED OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

- Identify and complete key connections in the trails system.
- Invest in and upgrade park infrastructure and services.
- Explore additional trail and path connections between parks, greenbelts, waterways, and regional open spaces to enhance access and recreational opportunities for the community.

8. MOBILITY

MOVING AROUND ANYWHERE, ANY WAY

Our residents, workers, and visitors need to move about efficiently, and have a variety of ways to do so. Connected transportation networks, regional coordination, and public and active transportation options are priorities for our community. Connected and mobile community members have the ability to travel within the City and to other places in the region by a variety of methods, with seamless transitions between modes and regions. Our community has roadways in place that allow efficient movement and safe travel spaces for all modes of getting around. The infrastructure and facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users are clean, safe, and well maintained, and walkways and bike lanes are continuous and complete with convenient connections to local and regional transit.

The Mobility chapter addresses all modes of transportation for moving within and outside the community of Elk Grove, as expressed by the above supporting principle.

8.1 DIRECTIVES

The following topic areas have been identified as contributing factors to the success of the City in achieving its vision for transportation and circulation in the community:

- Locally and regionally connected transportation networks
- Continuous and complete pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
- Clean, safe, and well-maintained facilities
- Roadways that allow efficient movement and safe travel spaces for all modes of travel

The feasibility of alternative transit options such as public transit and pedestrian accessibility relies on adequate density and proximity to facilities. Reference Growth Management Strategy (Chapter 3) for additional considerations and directives related to land use patterns.

Mobility includes active bicycle and pedestrian transportation modes. Reference Parks, Trails, and Open Space (Chapter 7) for additional considerations and directives for trail connectivity and access.

How these topic areas are expressed through the goals and policies of the General Plan will influence how this supporting principle is implemented. To provide a basis for development of goals, policies, action items, and maps for the updated General Plan, the following directives have been identified.

8. MOBILITY

Locally and Regionally Connected Transportation Networks

- Identify areas of opportunity for providing transit and active transportation connections to existing local and regional networks.
- Continue to provide a basis for the City to require new development projects to pay their fair share toward roadway and intersection improvements that reduce traffic congestion in the community (i.e., level of service and Roadway Impact Fee).
- Reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled by providing additional locations to attract employment to Elk Grove and promoting transportation demand management techniques.

Continuous and Complete Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure

- Ensure effective and safe travel for pedestrians and bicyclists on major corridors and routes to trip-generating locations such as homes, schools, parks, commercial centers, and job centers.
- Design street infrastructure with pedestrian and bicycle travel in mind, providing facilities, parking, and stoplight detection where needed.

Clean, Safe, and Well-Maintained Facilities

- Provide sufficient and secure bicycle parking near all commercial and transit locations.
- Work toward complete streets standards on all main roads other than in the rural area.
- Prioritize and accommodate travel modes that are compatible with surrounding development intensity and character.
- Provide full bus shelters that are clean and well lit.

Roadways That Allow Efficient Movement and Safe Travel Spaces for All Modes of Travel

- Provide bike lanes appropriate to the level of safety and bicycle traffic present.
- Work toward sidewalks in all areas of pedestrian travel other than in the rural area.
- Ensure stoplight and crosswalk signals are highly visible, conveniently placed, and detect or are timed for active transportation users of all ages and abilities.

8.2 CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the directives identified in Section 8.1, a number of factors may influence the goals and policies of the updated General Plan and, ultimately, the City's success in achieving the vision as expressed by the supporting principle. These influences include state and/or federal regulations, physical constraints and economic constraints, or policies developed through other efforts beyond this General Plan update. Following is a summary of the issues to be addressed through the goals and policies of the updated General Plan relative to mobility.

Addressing Complete Streets

Pursuant to California Government Code Section 65302(b)(2)(A), the circulation element of the General Plan is required to plan for a balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, users of public transportation, individuals with disabilities, and seniors. Local jurisdictions must identify how the jurisdiction will accommodate the needs of all users of streets, roads, and highways for safe and convenient travel in a manner that is suitable to the rural, suburban, and/or urban context of the general plan. Jurisdictions that include all or a combination of rural, suburban, or urban areas should consider different policies, standards, and implementation measures contextually sensitive to each setting when modifying the circulation element.

Consistency with Local and Regional Transportation Plans and Projects

The City has several recently completed and ongoing projects relating to transportation and transit and is cooperating with regional transit plans, as listed below. The intent and vision of these ongoing efforts should be reviewed, considered, and incorporated as appropriate to achieve a unified and consistent outcome.

- **Rural Roads Mobility Project:** In 2007, the City adopted the Rural Road Policy (a value-based approach for incremental rather than ultimate road improvements) and a corresponding Rural Road Development Standards document with unique road improvement design standards for the City's rural area. Those documents referred to the General Plan and Bikeway Master Plan for on- and off-street improvements, but required that any such improvements be done in keeping with the policy and standards for the area. In July 2014, in response to some community interest in increased mobility for non-vehicular modes, the City commenced an 18-month outreach effort intended to understand the need and/or desire for bike, pedestrian, and equestrian improvements within the public right-of way in the rural area. Outreach included a mail survey to the nearly 1,600 homes in the rural boundaries, two community workshops with over 70 residents in attendance, and support of a neighborhood-led outreach effort looking at 10 specific street segments in the rural area. With the exception of one segment along Excelsior Road, the results were clear that the rural community is not interested in any on-street bike, pedestrian, or equestrian improvements at this time. Specifically, the benefits of such improvements are

8. MOBILITY

extremely limited in this area, and impacts to people, animals, property, and the rural lifestyle are significant.

- **Comprehensive Operational Analysis:** The City was awarded a competitive grant from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to conduct a Comprehensive Operational Analysis of the City's local and commuter transit services. The analysis includes assessment of e-tran's current local and commuter services, current performance metrics and the system's performance, and comparable transit system case studies; potential market demand for transit services; public outreach; analysis of the City's local and commuter route schedules and services; and financial analysis involving possible system changes.
- **Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan.** The City has adopted a Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan that identifies existing facilities, opportunities, constraints, and destination points for bicycle users, pedestrians, and trail users. The plan also includes goals and supporting policies for planning and implementation of bikeway, pedestrian, and off-street multi-use trail facilities within the public right-of-way.
- **Blue Line Extension:** The Sacramento Regional Transit District recently completed a light rail extension project that for the first time connects the Elk Grove area to the regional light rail system via a stop at Cosumnes River College. Additional transit connections to the station are expected. The City desires to further extend the light rail line on a north-south alignment through the City to access the Southeast Policy Area and a future multimodal transportation facility.

Establishing VMT Thresholds of Significance

California Public Resources Code Section 21099 (as modified by Senate Bill (SB) 743 (2013)) fundamentally changes transportation impact analysis as part of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Changes include elimination of auto delay, level of service (LOS), and other similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion as a basis for determining significant impacts in many parts of California (if not statewide). According to the legislative intent of SB 743, these changes to current practice were necessary to more appropriately balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Draft modifications to Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines focus on transportation impacts related to vehicle miles traveled (VMT), induced travel, and traffic safety. Current proposals offered by the Governor's Office of Planning and Research focus on proposed projects achieving a 15 percent reduction in VMT from baseline conditions without the project.

The General Plan will need to reflect this shift from LOS thresholds to VMT thresholds for roadway function through its goals and policies. Existing state law permits the City to retain an LOS standard in the General Plan, but the standard cannot be applied as a measure of transportation system performance in CEQA analysis. Elk Grove's existing low-density land use pattern and anticipated future growth rate could prove a challenge to VMT reduction goals without a substantial increase in employment opportunities within the City.

Providing Efficient and Connected Transit

Providing transit service for residential and commercial areas and connecting local transit to regional transit is called out as a local priority in both the Laguna Ridge Specific Plan and the Southeast Policy Area Strategic Plan, but additional efforts could be focused on to ensure residents have adequate access to a variety of travel options. Connecting to commuter transit options such as Amtrak and Sacramento Regional Transit can greatly increase mobility for residents and employees, and aid significantly in achieving VMT goals for the region.

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) lists transportation choices, mixed-use development, and compact development as goals for the Sacramento region. Integrating these goals into the updated General Plan can provide a wide range of options for commuters and visitors, increasing mobility in the region, drawing businesses and future residents, and reaching state and regional goals.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the directives and considerations identified above, the following goals are recommended for consideration as part of the updated General Plan. In addition to the specific goals identified, policy objectives are provided for each goal that will guide the development of specific policies and action items as the General Plan update process moves forward.

GOAL: THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM MEETS RESIDENT, EMPLOYEE, AND VISITOR NEEDS

- Identify different land use types in the community and establish appropriate location- and context-specific standards to meet complete streets requirements and promote safe travel for all modes.
- Recognize the needs of all segments of the population, including youth and the elderly, and provide increased opportunities for their mobility.
- Establish VMT thresholds and strategies that support VMT reduction, including increased densities and improved accessibility in targeted areas.

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- Work with transit providers to expand transit options for commuters connecting to major employment centers.
- Identify and plan for goods movement in the transportation network, including rail service.

GOAL: A CONNECTED AND CONVENIENT TRANSIT SYSTEM

- Coordinate connections between local and regional transit systems.
- Offer bus routes and schedules that meet the needs of users.
- Improve maintenance to provide clean, safe, and welcoming facilities.

9. HEALTHY LIVING

CLEAN, GREEN PRACTICES & HEALTHY LIVING

Sustainable practices are at the forefront of environmental concerns in Elk Grove. Organizations, businesses, and residents all desire a city that is adaptive to and resilient against climate change, is a leader in conservation, and embraces innovations in green technologies. The City layout and land uses promote healthy living, with healthy grocery options and destinations nearby that people can get to by walking and biking.

The City's residents and businesses recognize the importance of responsible resource use, and they work together to conserve and use water and energy to their full potential.

The Healthy Living chapter addresses sustainability and healthy living options in Elk Grove, as expressed by the above supporting principle.

9.1 DIRECTIVES

The following topic areas have been identified as contributing factors to the success of the City in achieving its vision for providing healthy living options and sustainability and conservation of resources.

- Resiliency
- Green technologies
- Land use patterns that promote healthy living
- Responsible resource use

Reference Growth Management Strategy (Chapter 3) and Rural and Agricultural Heritage (Chapter 6) for additional considerations and directives related to conservation of agricultural lands.

Reference Mobility (Chapter 8) for additional considerations and directives on increasing alternative modes of transportation and reducing vehicle miles traveled.

How these topic areas are expressed through the goals and policies of the General Plan will influence how this supporting principle is implemented. To provide a basis for development of goals, policies, action items, and maps for the updated General Plan, the following directives have been identified.

9. HEALTHY LIVING

Resiliency

- Continue to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by implementing sustainability programs.
- Anticipate and prepare for climate change impacts and resulting hazards.
- Promote development in areas less vulnerable to flooding.

Green Technologies

- Promote and encourage innovative green technology development.
- Promote renewable energy sources, including solar, wind, and biomass.
- Adopt and showcase new technologies as an example for the community.

Land Use Patterns That Promote Healthy Living

- Facilitate access to food and active transportation options.
- Utilize zoning and design standards to maximize active transportation use, food access, and sustainable development and to minimize single-occupant vehicle use and leapfrog development.
- Minimize noise and safety impacts through design standards for development.

Responsible Resource Use

- Maximize water and energy conservation and water recycling to make the best use of limited resources.
- Increase renewable resource use in all available areas through leadership, ordinance, and development projects.
- Ensure that all government buildings and projects maximize use of renewable energy, water conservation, and recycling.
- Maintain City facilities in a manner that minimizes resource consumption (e.g., lower energy use with modern and well-maintained HVAC, lower resource consumption by keeping pavements maintained and minimizing reconstruction).

9.2 CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the directives identified in Section 9.1, a number of factors may influence the goals and policies of the updated General Plan and, ultimately, the City's success in achieving the vision as expressed by the supporting principle. These influences include state and/or federal regulations, physical constraints and economic constraints, or policies developed through other efforts beyond this General Plan update. Following is a summary of the issues to be addressed through the goals and policies of the updated General Plan relative to healthy living and sustainability.

New State Legislation

In addition to ensuring all legal requirements are met in the General Plan update, deadlines must be considered to remain in compliance. These include the State-mandated Zero Net Energy standards for 2020, Title 24 requirements, waste diversion and water conservation requirements, and the City's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. General Plan policies should guide City actions toward compliance with these and other related requirements.

Increase in Severity and Frequency of Extreme Weather Events

In light of changing climate conditions, the frequency of extreme heat days is expected to more than triple by 2040. Populations especially vulnerable to extreme heat include the elderly and youth, who may also have a greater need for public facilities and services. During the summer months, the community could experience high demand for safe, air-conditioned cooling centers or recreation centers. The elderly population may also face greater vulnerabilities, especially when such residents have limited transport options or are dependent on public transportation.

Should the City experience a shift to more extreme and more frequent severe storms, hazardous events may increase beyond their historic frequency or intensity. For instance, more regular storm events could result in more frequent flash flooding events, putting further pressure on the existing levee system. More regular storm events or flash floods could also heighten the potential for soil expansion in the Planning Area, with potential to increase the likelihood of levee failure. Extended periods of drought will continue to strain available water supplies, forcing greater conservation. Such changing weather patterns could further complicate the City's ability to prepare for existing vulnerabilities, exacerbating current pressures on infrastructure and resources.

Flood Risks and Flood Management Considerations

Certain portions of Elk Grove and surrounding areas outside the City are located within the 100-year or 200-year floodplain. To comply with recent state legislation (Senate Bill 5, Assembly Bill 162) and newly released California Department of Water Resources planning guidelines requiring 200-year floodplain mapping and flood mitigation strategies, the City will implement new zoning requirements that limit new development from occurring without adequate levels of flood protection. Part of the flood management

9. HEALTHY LIVING

system includes drainage ways that also provide suitable conditions for the establishment of freshwater marsh habitats for an array of species. The City will need to maintain a balance between flood management and habitat preservation.

Energy Efficiency and Conservation

As the City grows, energy use will increase. While state standards will help to achieve more efficient energy use, in the absence of a comprehensive, local energy efficiency strategy, the City may be missing an opportunity to further develop appropriate local solutions for energy conservation. By establishing local energy conservation standards and incentives and working with the building and real estate industry, the City can comply with mandatory state energy efficiency standards while becoming a leader in energy efficiency, conservation, and technology.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

Elk Grove is currently meeting state requirements for waste diversion and will need to continue efforts in order to remain in compliance as the regulations are continually adjusted. As the City grows, the contract service provider and available waste disposal and recycling centers may become overwhelmed. The City must carefully monitor impacts on these services and ensure new development pays its fair share of needed expansions in waste service.

Water and Wastewater

To ensure adequate water supply, the City should continue to eliminate water use inefficiencies and maintain ongoing communication with its three water suppliers to ensure sustainable supply. In addition, the City should encourage continued development and use of recycled water from the Regional Sanitation plant.

To maintain compliance with Elk Grove's NPDES permit, the City should focus on enhancing and maintaining naturalized methods of stormwater management. The increase of development, in some instances, requires mitigation to reduce impervious surfaces and thereby reduce flow of pollutant waters to nearby streams. Low-impact development technologies, such as rain gardens and permeable pavements, can reduce the impacts of stormwater on waterbodies.

Increased Exposure to Potential Hazards

With changes in land use, community exposure to hazards is likely to increase due to a higher concentration of activities in the Planning Area. A transition to mixed uses and higher levels of density will result in more residents and employees living or working in closer proximity to a variety of land uses. Such transitions in land patterns and densities may heighten exposure to air pollution from vehicular traffic or exposure of residents to byproducts from industrial processes. Developing new homes and businesses will also result in additional roadway activity as residents and workers travel between

destinations. Higher levels of roadway use could exacerbate transportation-related fatalities, including vehicular collisions at at-grade railway crossings or contamination from the transport of hazardous materials. As urbanization continues, residents may also face higher levels of exposure to byproducts and chemicals from current or past agricultural operations.

Increase in Noise Levels

Continued population growth and economic development would increase the number and types of noise sources in the Planning Area. The primary source of increased noise levels will continue to be motor vehicles operating on arterials and secondary roadways. However, an increase in the number and type of stationary noise sources can also be expected, as new developments would require HVAC and other stationary noise generators.

New development would be required to install noise-reducing features and verify the effectiveness to meet required noise levels. Reducing noise levels in existing development is a greater challenge than in new development due to the cost associated with retrofitting existing buildings with noise-reducing features. Further, it is unknown whether the proper attenuation would be achievable at every impacted property.

Preservation and Maintenance of Natural Open Space and Habitat

The City has identified valuable open spaces in and surrounding Elk Grove. Some of these places provide important habitat for wildlife, including grassland, riparian areas, woodlands, streams, seasonal wetlands, vernal pools, and freshwater marshes. Preserving these spaces as habitat is important in meeting community needs and responding to federal and state laws requiring protection of habitat and species.

9.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the directives and considerations identified above, the following goals are recommended for consideration as part of the updated General Plan. In addition to the specific goals identified, policy objectives are provided for each goal that will guide the development of specific policies and action items as the General Plan update process moves forward.

GOAL: A RESILIENT COMMUNITY

- Identify existing programs to expand and new programs to implement to manage resource use efficiently and responsibly, including water conservation and water recycling, waste diversion and recycling, energy use and conservation, and stormwater and flood management.
- Support programs and infrastructure improvements to facilitate a reduction in vehicle miles traveled.

9. HEALTHY LIVING

- Prevent new development in areas of flood risk until adequate progress has been made to achieve an urban level of flood protection through local conservation and drainage programs, along with regional flood protection infrastructure improvements.
- Regularly review new data on the effects of climate change and adjust programs to respond to potential risks.

GOAL: INNOVATIVE, GREEN, AND CLEAN TECHNOLOGY

- Identify standards for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in strategic locations.
- Incentivize small-scale renewable energy and attract opportunities for microgrid and storage facilities.
- Incorporate the use of green infrastructure into standard designs.
- Update development standards to include restoration of natural flood control.

GOAL: HEALTHY BY DESIGN

- Establish density and intensity requirements that support healthy lifestyles, including alternative mobility options.
- Integrate land uses to provide increased opportunities for daily necessities to be located within walking distance of most residences.
- Review and revise noise standards to minimize impacts on existing and new uses and encourage design solutions that are compatible with surrounding development.
- Identify strategic natural open space and agriculture areas as an integral part of the community that provide value-added benefits including habitat for protected species.

10. COMMUNITY SERVICES

SERVICES FOR THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS

Safety and services are important to all members of our community, and services for youth, seniors, and disadvantaged families are provided. Entertainment and social centers create a thriving and diverse economy and give residents a place to shop, play, and relax.

The City ensures that important services in our community, including social, housing, transportation, health, and education, are available and efficiently obtainable for community members that choose or need them to thrive.

The Community Services chapter addresses public services that provide assistance for community members to meet basic needs and to improve quality of life, as expressed by the above supporting principle.

10.1 DIRECTIVES

The following topic areas have been identified as contributing factors to the success of the City in achieving its vision for complete and effective community services provision in Elk Grove.

- Consideration of all demographics
- Adequate community entertainment and gathering spaces
- Direct or indirect access to social, housing, transportation, health, and education services

Reference Community Identity (Chapter 5) for additional considerations and directives related to public spaces and events.

Reference Mobility (Chapter 8) for additional considerations and directives on increasing alternative modes of transportation.

How these topic areas are expressed through the goals and policies of the General Plan will influence how this supporting principle is implemented. To provide a basis for development of goals, policies, action items, and maps for the updated General Plan, the following directives have been identified.

Consideration of all Demographics

- Assess and address the differing needs of youth, the elderly, and disadvantaged families. Elderly citizens may require additional transportation and health services, while youth require after-school programs and disadvantaged families require job training programs. The City should identify differing needs and then determine the gaps that need to be filled.
- Emphasize the needs of low-income and ethnically diverse populations in Elk Grove.

10. COMMUNITY SERVICES

Adequate Community Entertainment and Gathering Spaces

- Provide additional gathering opportunities, both through adequate public spaces and recurring events (such as farmers markets or festivals).
 - Adequate public spaces: community centers, plazas, public parks, community gardens.
 - Adequate public events: farmers markets.
 - Both public and private “third places” should be developed.

What is a third place?

A third place is the social surroundings separate from the two usual social environments of home (first place) and the workplace (second place). Examples of third places would be environments such as cafés, clubs, or parks. These spaces are arguably essential for civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and community identity.

Direct or Indirect Access to Social, Housing, Transportation, Health, and Education Services

- Coordinate with local, county, and state service providers regularly to ensure services continue to be available and information is up to date.
- Provide single-stop shops online or at in-person service centers to help people learn about and access services provided by multiple providers in one location
- Provide social services directly where services are not being provided or are being inadequately provided by other agencies and organizations.
- Improve efficiency and ease of access to services.
- Provide additional services desired by residents, including additional higher education facilities, more transitional housing and homeless services, and low-interest housing and rehabilitation loans.

10.2 CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to the directives identified in Section 10.1, a number of factors may influence the goals and policies of the updated General Plan and, ultimately, the City’s success in achieving the vision as expressed by the supporting principle. These influences include state and/or federal regulations, physical constraints and economic constraints, or policies developed through other efforts beyond this General Plan update. Following is a summary of the issues to be addressed through the goals and policies of the updated General Plan relative to community services.

Coordination Between Service Providers

The majority of social services, broadly including low-income housing, job training, and health care, are provided at the county level. Services are also housed within multiple agencies including the County of Sacramento, the Sacramento Regional Transit District, the Cosumnes Community Services District, and the Elk Grove Unified School District, as well as the City of Elk Grove. Understanding which services are provided by each provider can be confusing for community members. Access to some critical services, generally based in Sacramento, can also be difficult for residents because of travel distance.

By serving as a connector between service providers and residents, the City can facilitate and improve community access to services.

Identifying Needs

The demographics of the City provide important information about specific needs of the community. Elk Grove is a family-oriented city, and close to 30 percent of the population is made up of youth under the age of 20. High quality schools, community centers with after-school activities for entertainment and learning, and outdoor facilities are especially important for the younger members of Elk Grove.

The needs of seniors are equally important to consider. Like many other cities and bedroom communities, the older population is increasing over time. Those aged 65 or older made up 15 percent of the population in 2015 compared to 10 percent just 5 years earlier. The relative increase in the number of seniors will require more attention to seniors' service needs. Examining the shifting demographics for Elk Grove can help plan for the types of services most needed in the community.

Funding Availability

Many services that are needed by residents, such as housing, health care, and job assistance, have limited funding streams. Limited resources and high demand may result in long wait lists and wait times, and poor service for community members. In general, services provided to Elk Grove residents are available and of high quality, but ongoing and additional funding is important as the City continues to grow and change.

What are examples of senior-specific needs?

- *Door-to-door transportation assistance*
- *Cooling centers*
- *Nearby healthcare providers*
- *ADA accessible sidewalks*

10. COMMUNITY SERVICES

10.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the directives and considerations identified above, the following goals are recommended for consideration as part of the updated General Plan. In addition to the specific goals identified, policy objectives are provided for each goal that will guide the development of specific policies and action items as the General Plan update process moves forward.

GOAL: SERVICES MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS

- Promote the development of a one-stop shop for frequent services needs of residents that collocates all services provided in one location.
- Facilitate regular meetings between service providers and City staff.
- Conduct studies of changing demographics to anticipate needs and adjust services accordingly.

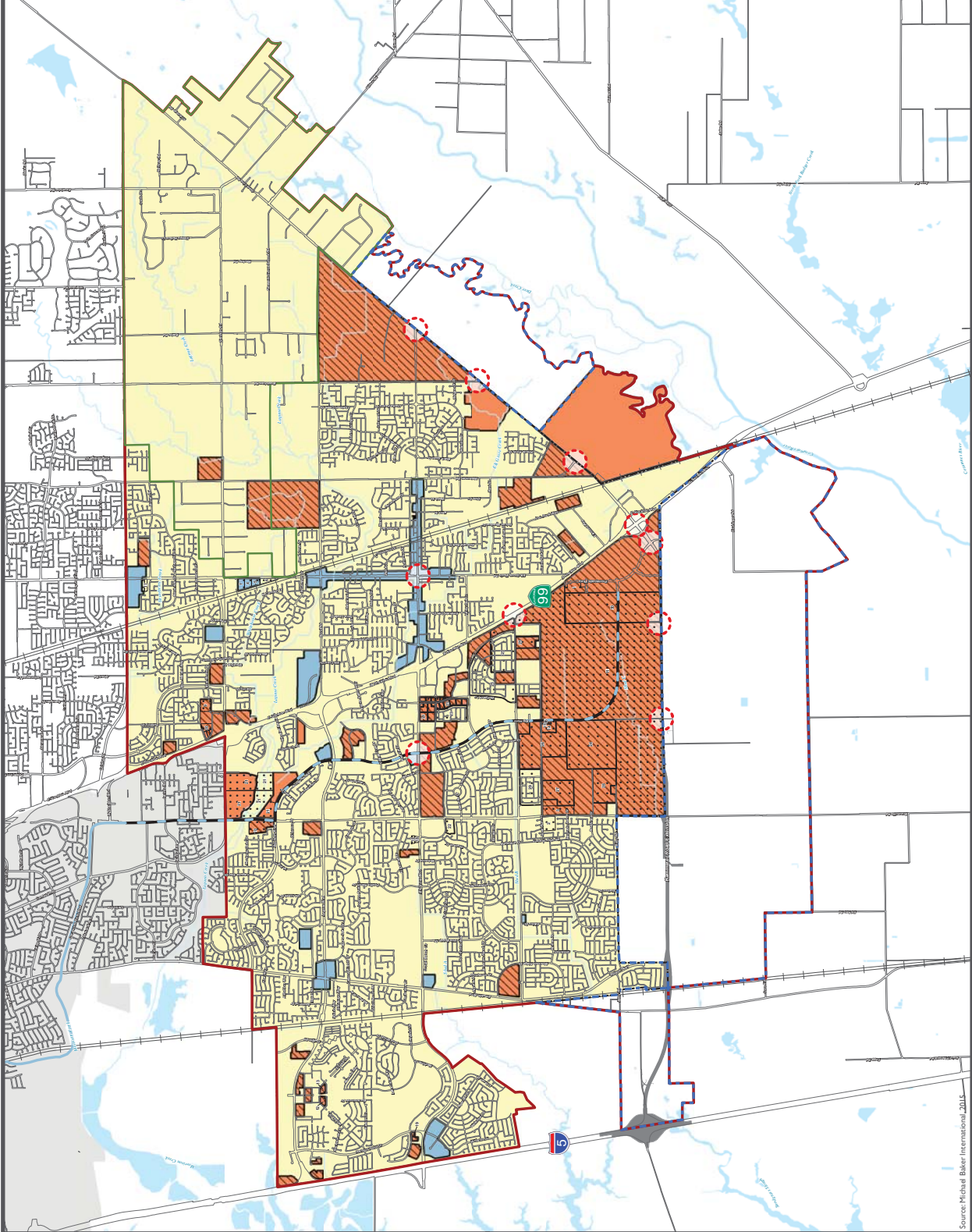
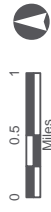
GOAL: COMMUNITY GATHERING SPACES FOR ALL RESIDENTS

- Identify new and expanded spaces in the City for dynamic public interaction such as plazas, community gardens, or farmers markets.
- Coordinate with nonprofits and business groups to hold seasonal events such as concerts in the park and holiday festivals.

**ELK GROVE
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**
February 2016

LEGEND

- Planning Area Boundary
- Study Area
- Important Intersection
- Housing Inventory Site (# on map)
- Kammerer Road Extension Project
- Rural Area
- Elk Grove City Limits
- City of Sacramento
- Union Pacific Rail Line
- SACRT Rail Lines
- Existing Blue Line
- Blue Line Extension (Enhance Opportunity)
- Opportunity Sites**
- Preserve
- Enhance
- Transform
- Transform + Prior Planned



**Character of Change Map
Draft 2.25.16**

Source: Michael Baker International, 2015

Document Path: T:\GIS\Growth\Projects\General Plan Update\GIS\Growth\Opportunity Sites Draft 1\172015_92141.MXD