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# INTRODUCTION

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Elk Grove's incorporation and the creation of this General Plan represent the product of years of work on the part of residents and businesses in the community who saw the need for local control over the decisions which affected the quality of life in Elk Grove. The "Yes on J" campaign, which led to the successful vote for incorporation in March 2000, stressed increased law enforcement presence and local control.

The local control issue was in part a response to the rapid growth that had been occurring in Elk Grove for most of the 1990s. Construction of new housing has occurred at a pace of approximately 1,500 new homes per year, increasing the population of Elk Grove by approximately 4,000 persons per year. At the same time, the implementation of infrastructure improvements in particular lagged behind new development, and residents perceived that the quality of life was declining and that local control of planning and development was needed.



*A strong design for local control and improved police protection was expressed during the incorporation campaign.*

## TWO-TIERED PLANNING

In addition to planning for Elk Grove, this General Plan addresses a "Planning Area" outside the city limits. This Planning Area was defined during the process of applying to the Sacramento County Local Agency Formation Committee (LAFCO) for a Sphere of Influence; it represents the area which the City envisions may ultimately be included either in a Sphere of Influence or in the incorporated city limits.

While the City has no jurisdiction over the determination of land use policy in adjacent areas, it can advise the County on land use policy. Outside the city limits, therefore, this General Plan is purely advisory, although it does provide a statement of the uses the City desires in these areas.

Reflecting the limit of the City's authority to regulate land uses outside its current corporate boundaries, this General Plan provides land use and other policy direction in the following manner:

- For the area within the city limits, as shown in Figure 1, this General Plan provides a detailed Land Use Policy Map and other specific policies relating to land use and other issues.
- For the area outside the city limits, this General Plan provides land use designations at a more conceptual level; because the City does not have land use authority in these areas, detailed land use categories have not been assigned, and the policies of this General Plan with regard to other issues (circulation, housing, noise, etc.) are advisory only and are intended to be considered by the County of Sacramento in its review and approval of development projects and other matters in this larger "planning area."

The environmental analysis of this General Plan also reflects this two-tier approach, providing more specific impact and mitigation discussion for the area within the city limits and the proposed Sphere of Influence and addressing land uses outside this area under current (County of Sacramento) land use designations and policies and this General Plan's proposed policies.

### ROLE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan is a broad framework for planning the future of the City of Elk Grove. It is the official policy statement of the City Council to guide the private and public development of the City in a manner to gain the maximum social and economic benefit to the citizens. All other City codes and standards, including Specific Plans and Development Code, must be consistent with the General Plan.

Although this General Plan is expected to guide development until the year 2023 (a 20-year timeframe), changes to the Plan are expected to occur as circumstances change and the City's responds to these changes—or alters its vision for the future.

The California Government Code (Section 65302) requires that a general plan address seven basic topics (discussed in more detail later in this Chapter). These required topics are:

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

### TEN ELEMENTS OF THIS GENERAL PLAN

In addition to the required topics, State law allows each General Plan to address other issues important to the city. Elk Grove has chosen to organize this General Plan into ten Elements:

1. Land Use
2. Circulation
3. Housing
4. Economic Development
5. Public Facilities and Finance
6. Historic Resources
7. Parks, Trails, and Open Space
8. Safety
9. Noise
10. Conservation and Air Quality

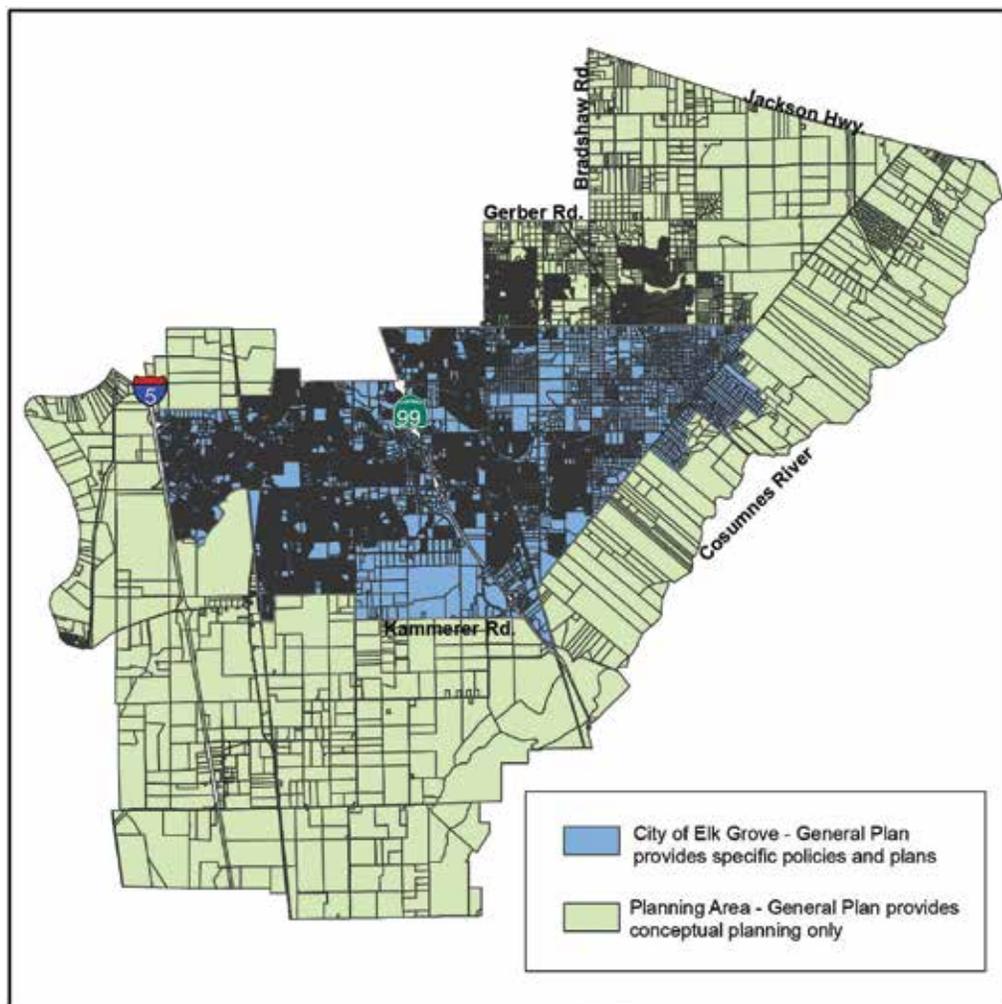
These Elements address all of the topics required by State law, as well as the optional topics of Economic Development, Historic Resources, and Finance.

Each of the ten Elements of the General Plan is related to the achievement of the Vision for Elk Grove and the City's goals; in addition, many of the policies and action items in each Element are interrelated with policies and actions in other Elements—this General Plan is a comprehensive, coordinated document.

The City of Elk Grove is an ever-changing dynamic entity. Periodic review and possible amendment of the General Plan to adjust to changing conditions and City priorities is required. This General Plan, while prepared with a time horizon of at least 20 years in mind, is not unchangeable—as circumstances or the City's desires change, this Plan may be amended.

Under State law, City ordinances regulating land use must be consistent with the General Plan. The Zoning Code, Specific Plans, and individual project plan proposals must be consistent with the goals, policies, and standards contained in the General Plan. In addition, all capital improvements and public works projects must be consistent with the General Plan.

Figure 1: Planning Area



### THIS PLAN ANTICIPATES FUTURE WORK

This General Plan, while providing detailed policies to guide City growth and decision-making, is not intended to answer every question which will be faced by the City over the lifetime of the Plan. Nor is it intended to be a step-by-step guidebook for its own implementation.

In both of these regards, this General Plan anticipates that future work will be needed to fully implement this Plan. This may include:

- The creation and adoption of more detailed plans
- The creation of procedures and standards, including updated Public Works standards for public facilities
- The adoption of ordinances, including updates to the Elk Grove Zoning Code
- The creation and adoption of Capital Improvement Plans
- The adoption of new or updated funding mechanisms

Some of these actions may occur in the short term; others are expected to be developed over the long term as the need arises. Where possible, these future steps are shown in the various Elements of this General Plan as “Action Items.”

### USE OF THE PLAN

The General Plan is intended to be used by a broad range of persons, including:

- The City Council and Planning Commission in decision-making activities;
- City staff in development programs and projects;
- The development community in preparing development proposals; and
- Residents and citizens seeking to understanding the future of Elk Grove and the type of development which may occur in the future.

This General Plan will be used (as discussed in the Land Use Element) as the basis for a comprehensive update of the Elk Grove Zoning Code and other City documents which provide standards for the development of public and private projects.

### PREPARATION OF THE PLAN

Citizen participation played an important role in preparing the Elk Grove General Plan. Because the General Plan needs to reflect community goals and aspirations, citizens were involved with issues identification and goal formulation. The public and various civic and professional organizations were consulted during the Plan preparation stage whenever possible. Numerous public meetings were held to discuss the Plan, and additional public involvement occurred during the public hearing process. Highlights of this process included three Visioning meetings, held in October and November 2001, at which participants used maps and written comments to define their vision for the future of Elk Grove.



*Participants at one of three Visioning Workshops held in 2001*

To provide guidance to staff in the preparation of the General Plan, as well as a forum for the discussion of issues and policies, the City Council created a five-member General Plan Advisory Committee (comprised of the five members of the Planning Commission), which met monthly (occasionally several times each month) for more than a year. The GPAC assisted in the identification and refinement of planning issues, and in the development of a preferred land use policy map.

Citizen groups and individuals participated in preparation of the General Plan through attendance at General Plan Advisory Committee meetings and at General Plan public study sessions and public hearings.

Finally, the Draft General Plan and its supporting documents received extensive review at public hearings held before the City of Elk Grove Planning Commission and City Council. Public testimony concerning the Draft General Plan was received prior to Plan adoption.

Elk Grove General Plan Element and California Government Code Section References	Contents Required by State Law (Excerpted from the California Government Code)	Topics Discussed in Element
<p><b>Land Use Element</b> Government Code Section 65302(a)</p>	<p><i>“A land use element which designates the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of the uses of the land for housing, business, industry, open space, including agriculture, natural resources, recreation, and enjoyment of scenic beauty, education, public buildings and grounds, solid and liquid waste disposal facilities, and other categories of public and private uses of land. The land use element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the plan. The land use element shall identify areas covered by the plan which are subject to flooding and shall be reviewed annually with respect to those areas. The land use element shall designate, in a land use category that provides for timber production, those parcels of real property zoned for timberland production pursuant to the California Timberland Productivity Act of 1982, Chapter 6.7 (commencing with Section 51100) of Part 1 of Division 1 of Title 5.”</i></p>	<p>Provides City policies for the use and development of land for public and private uses. Defines land use categories and includes the Land Use Policy Map, which illustrates the City’s land use policies. General distribution and intensity of land uses for housing, commercial uses, institutional uses, public facilities, and open space. Urban design is also discussed in this element.</p>
<p><b>Circulation Element</b> Government Code Section 65302(b)</p>	<p><i>“A circulation element consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the plan.”</i></p>	<p>The Circulation Element provides City policies for all types of transportation in Elk Grove: vehicles (auto and truck), light and heavy rail, public transit, bicycling, pedestrian, and air. The Circulation Element includes master plans for roadways, bicycle transit, and other transit modes, and defines the level of service (or level of congestion) which the City will seek to maintain on roadways. Also addresses congestion management requirements pursuant to Government Code Section 65088 et seq.</p>

Elk Grove General Plan Element and California Government Code Section References	Contents Required by State Law (Excerpted from the California Government Code)	Topics Discussed in Element
<p><b>Housing Element</b> Government Code Section 65583</p>	<p><i>The housing element shall consist of an identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, financial resources, and scheduled programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. The housing element shall identify adequate sites for housing, including rental housing, factory-built housing, and mobile homes, and shall make adequate provision for the existing and projected needs of all economic segments of the community.” [excerpt]</i></p>	<p>Provides the City’s policies related to providing safe and affordable housing for all of the City’s current and future residents. Identifies developmental constraints, and includes policies and action programs for providing adequate housing.</p>
<p><b>Economic Development Element</b> Optional Element as discussed in Government Code Section 65303</p>	<p><i>No requirements in State law</i></p>	<p>The Economic Development Element provides City policy on the creation of a more vibrant, diverse economy in Elk Grove, including the creation of new jobs and commercial opportunities. This Element provides a framework for the City’s overall economic development program, identifying which types of businesses the City should seek to attract, how the City can attract these uses (through incentives, infrastructure programming, land use policies, etc.), and how this effort should be coordinated among various City departments.</p>
<p><b>Public Facilities and Finance Element</b> Government Code Section 65302(b)</p>	<p><i>“A circulation element consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and <b>other local public utilities and facilities</b>, all correlated with the land use element of the plan.” [emphasis added]</i></p>	<p>This Element addresses a variety of public facilities--generally, the “infrastructure” which is needed to support existing and future development (water, sewer, parks, schools, etc.). This Element also addresses how those public facilities provided by the City will be financed, addressing for example the so-called “zipper street” issue. This Element will also provide overall City policy regarding the City’s finances, including how the City will provide funding for public facilities and infrastructure.</p>
<p><b>Historic Resources Element</b> Optional Element as discussed in Government Code Section 65303</p>	<p><i>No requirements in State law</i></p>	<p>This Element will address how the City will preserve and enhance the many historic structures which exist in Old Town and other portions of the community. This Element summarizes the historic resources which exist Elk Grove and provides policies and action items to help provide additional protections for these resources, potentially including City review of alterations to historic buildings.</p>

<p><b>Elk Grove General Plan Element and California Government Code Section References</b></p>	<p><b>Contents Required by State Law (Excerpted from the California Government Code)</b></p>	<p><b>Topics Discussed in Element</b></p>
<p><b>Parks, Trails, and Open Space Element</b> Government Code Section 65560</p>	<p>(a) "Local open-space plan" is the open-space element of a county or city general plan adopted by the board or council, either as the local open-space plan or as the interim local open-space plan adopted pursuant to Section 65563.</p> <p>(b) "Open-space land" is any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open-space use as defined in this section, and which is designated on a local, regional or state open-space plan as any of the following:</p> <p>(1) Open space for the preservation of natural resources including, but not limited to, areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species; areas required for ecologic and other scientific study purposes; rivers, streams, bays and estuaries; and coastal beaches, lakeshores, banks of rivers and streams, and watershed lands.</p> <p>(2) Open space used for the managed production of resources, including but not limited to, forest lands, rangeland, agricultural lands and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber; areas required for recharge of ground water basins; bays, estuaries, marshes, rivers and streams which are important for the management of commercial fisheries; and areas containing major mineral deposits, including those in short supply.</p> <p>(3) Open space for outdoor recreation, including but not limited to, areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lakeshores, beaches, and rivers and streams; and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open-space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors.</p> <p>(4) Open space for public health and safety, including, but not limited to, areas which require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality and water reservoirs and areas required for the protection and enhancement of air quality.</p>	<p>Although the City does not provide park and recreation services, this Element describe the policies the City will implement to cooperate with the Elk Grove CSD to ensure that park and recreation facilities are available. This Element also addresses the issue of Open Space, which could include a variety of lands whose long-term use involves remaining undeveloped.</p>
<p><b>Safety Element</b> Government Code Section 65302(g)</p>	<p>"A safety element for the protection of the community from any unreasonable risks associated with the effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, tsunami, seiche, and dam failure; slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides; subsidence, liquefaction and other seismic hazards identified pursuant to Chapter 7.8 (commencing with Section 2690) of the Public Resources Code, and other geologic hazards known to the legislative body; flooding; and wild land and urban fires. The safety element shall include mapping of known seismic and other geologic hazards. It shall also address evacuation routes, peak load water supply requirements, and minimum road widths and clearances around structures, as those items relate to identified fire and geologic hazards. Prior to the periodic review of its general plan and prior to preparing or revising its safety element, each city and county shall consult the Division of Mines and Geology of the Department of Conservation and the Office of Emergency Services for the purpose of including information known by and available to the department and the office required by this subdivision."</p>	<p>A number of potential safety hazards exist in Elk Grove, including the Suburban Propane facility, several rail lines, and potential flooding. This Element will define how the City will deal with all o these issues, both in this Element and through land use and other policies in other element of the General Plan, and how the City will cooperate with other agencies (such as the Elk Grove CSD) which provide public safety services.</p>

<p><b>Elk Grove General Plan Element and California Government Code Section References</b></p>	<p><b>Contents Required by State Law (Excerpted from the California Government Code)</b></p>	<p><b>Topics Discussed in Element</b></p>
<p><b>Noise Element</b> Government Code Section 65302(f)</p>	<p><i>A noise element which shall identify and appraise noise problems in the community. The noise element shall recognize the guidelines established by the Office of Noise Control in the State Department of Health Services and shall analyze and quantify, to the extent practicable, as determined by the legislative body, current and projected noise levels for all of the following sources:</i></p> <p><i>(1) Highways and freeways.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Primary arterials and major local streets.</i></p> <p><i>(3) Passenger and freight on-line railroad operations and ground rapid transit systems.</i></p> <p><i>(4) Commercial, general aviation, heliport, helistop, and military airport operations, aircraft overflights, jet engine test stands, and all other ground facilities and maintenance functions related to airport operation.</i></p> <p><i>(5) Local industrial plants, including, but not limited to, railroad classification yards.</i></p> <p><i>(6) Other ground stationary noise sources identified by local agencies as contributing to the community noise environment.</i></p> <p><i>Noise contours shall be shown for all of these sources and stated in terms of community noise equivalent level (CNEL) or day-night average level (Ldn). The noise contours shall be prepared on the basis of noise monitoring or following generally accepted noise modeling techniques for the various sources identified in paragraphs (1) to (6), inclusive. The noise contours shall be used as a guide for establishing a pattern of land uses in the land use element that minimizes the exposure of community residents to excessive noise. The noise element shall include implementation measures and possible solutions that address existing and foreseeable noise problems, if any. The adopted noise element shall serve as a guideline for compliance with the state's noise insulation standards.</i></p>	<p>Noise, or “unwanted sound” is a byproduct of modern life, generated by the vehicles, machines, and other items which are part of our everyday lives. The Noise Element defines the level of noise which is acceptable in different types of areas (residential, office, industrial, etc.) and how the City will achieve those noise levels.</p>
<p><b>Conservation and Air Quality Element</b> Government Code Section 65302(d)</p>	<p><i>“A conservation element for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources. That portion of the conservation element including waters shall be developed in coordination with any countywide water agency and with all district and city agencies which have developed, served, controlled or conserved water for any purpose for the county or city for which the plan is prepared. Coordination shall include the discussion and evaluation of any water supply and demand information described in Section 65352.5, if that information has been submitted by the water agency to the city or county.”</i></p>	<p>This Element addresses the conservation of limited resources, including land, energy, etc., as well as measures the City will implement to improve air quality in Elk Grove and the region. This Element’s policies are closely tied to policies in other Elements (particularly Land Use and Circulation) to address how the City, through its land use policies, its review of projects, and its own operations, can conserve natural resources and reduce impacts on air quality. This Element contains a broad range of strategies intended to encourage the use of alternative transportation to both reduce traffic on local roadways and decrease air pollutant emissions from private vehicles.</p>

## ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the Elk Grove General Plan consists of ten elements which together satisfy—and exceed—the content requirements of State general plan law (see Table 1).

A number of documents support the General Plan, but are not adopted as parts of the Plan. The General Plan Background Report and the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) are integral to this General Plan. However, because it is intended to provide up-to-date information, the Background Report is specifically intended to be updated as necessary to reflect new information, changes in the master plans adopted by other agencies (such as the Elk Grove Community Services District and the Elk Grove Unified School District), and other information. Amendments to the Background Report are not considered an amendment to this General Plan, and do not require approval by City decision-makers.

The organization of the General Plan in these three volumes (Background Report, Policy Document, and EIR) is illustrated below. Together, these documents comprise the Elk Grove General Plan.

The ten General Plan elements and the Land Use Policy Map provide the goals and policies for the long-term development of the City. Each Element provides a brief summary of the topics it covers, with references to the Background Report and other documents where necessary to assist the reader in locating other sources of information.

## AMENDMENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN

Recognizing the dynamic nature of the General Plan, State law provides for periodic review of the document to ensure that it is consistent with the conditions, values, expectations, and needs of the community. The General Plan Guidelines note:

*“The General Plan is a dynamic document because it is based on community values and an understanding of existing and projected conditions and needs, all of which continually change. Local governments should plan for change by establishing formal procedures for regularly monitoring, reviewing, and amending the General Plan.”*



*This General Plan is arranged in three volumes, which combine to form the entire General Plan*

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The General Plan will be amended from time to time as City objectives become more defined or shift, or as State law dictates. In addition, periodic revision of the Housing Element to reflect housing need numbers for Elk Grove is required.

The primary objective of the Plan—to establish a vision for the future City—will continue to shape citywide policies and programs well into this century.

## COMMUNITY PLANS

Prior to incorporation, the Elk Grove community was governed by the Sacramento County General Plan which included the Elk Grove Community Plan and the Franklin-Laguna Community Plan planning documents, first approved in the late 1970s. These documents provided some limited policy direction and a land use map which frequently differed from the land use map of the General Plan or the zoning map—and in some cases were not consistent with either.

With the adoption of the 2003 General Plan, the need for these specific Community Plans was no longer necessary. Therefore, the General Plan did not incorporate the Elk Grove Community Plan and the Franklin-Laguna Community Plan, which are no longer in effect.

As the City continues to grow and develop, the City may identify the need to establish new community plans for specific areas where more detailed policies than are available in this General Plan are necessary for successful development. New community plans will be established as part of this General Plan. Specifically, the City has prepared and adopted the Southeast Policy Area Community Plan, which will guide development in the Southeast Policy Area.

## THE ELK GROVE ZONING CODE

The Elk Grove Zoning Code is the primary implementation tool for both the General Plan. Many of the Goals, Policies, Objectives, and Action Items in this General Plan will be achieved through the use of the Zoning Code to direct and regulate public and private development.

All of the standards in the Zoning Code (and the Zoning Map) are required by state law to be consistent with and to implement the General Plan. As noted in the Land Use Element (and other elements of this General Plan), the adoption of this General Plan is intended to be followed by a comprehensive update to the Zoning Code and the rezoning of properties to be consistent with the General Plan Land Use Policy Map.

## GLOSSARY

A glossary of planning and technical terms is included as an Appendix to this Plan.