Ventura County General Plan Update

The County of Ventura is working on a comprehensive update to its General Plan for the first time since 1988. We are committed to keeping the update process open and accessible to anyone who wants to be involved and share ideas.

The General Plan Update will help shape the next 20 years of Ventura County’s growth and change. The outcome of the update will have a real impact on the quality of life in the County by addressing important questions such as:

- How can the County enhance public services and infrastructure?
- Where should new residential and commercial development be located?
- How will the County deal with its continuing water quality and quantity challenges?

A General Plan addresses these questions through the development of goals, policies, and programs covering a very broad range of issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPEN SPACE</td>
<td>Establishes measures for protecting and managing open space lands</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAZARDS AND SAFETY</td>
<td>Identifies potential hazards and develops policies and programs to manage them</td>
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<tr>
<td>PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE</td>
<td>Guides planning for infrastructure development and maintenance</td>
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<tr>
<td>WATER RESOURCES</td>
<td>Establishes measures to ensure water resources are sustainably managed</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOUSING</td>
<td>Identifies measures for meeting housing needs for all segments of the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>LAND USE</td>
<td>Establishes land use and development patterns</td>
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<tr>
<td>RECREATION</td>
<td>Guides planning for recreational opportunities and facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</td>
<td>Identifies economic development priorities to strengthen and diversify the County’s economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRANSPORTATION</td>
<td>Guides decisions for all transportation modes (autos, pedestrians, transit)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGRICULTURE</td>
<td>Establishes measures that protect and support agricultural lands and practices</td>
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Community Outreach

The County conducted extensive community outreach during summer 2016 to learn what people like most about the county, what challenges they see, and what ideas they have for addressing these challenges. To get feedback, staff from the County Planning Division held 12 community workshops throughout the county, set up a booth at the Ventura County Fair, and received input from an online questionnaire.

Outreach by the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Community Workshops</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop Participants</td>
<td>254</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Outreach Responses and Comments</td>
<td>4,725</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online Questionnaire Participants</td>
<td>135</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Fair Booth Participants</td>
<td>330+</td>
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</table>

Participant Distribution: by Location

What We Heard from the Public

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<tr>
<th>Top Five Responses from Community Outreach*</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I Love Most About Ventura County</td>
<td>Mountains and</td>
<td>Agriculture and Farms</td>
<td>Habitat and Natural</td>
<td>Beaches</td>
<td>Safe Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Open Spaces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Our Biggest Challenges</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Agriculture and Farms</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Public Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>What Could Make Our Community Better</td>
<td>Roads and Transit</td>
<td>Agriculture and Farms</td>
<td>Open Space &amp; Greenbelts</td>
<td>Wildlife &amp; Habitats</td>
<td>Economy and Jobs</td>
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*Reflects synthesis of 4,725 public comments.
**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is a General Plan?**

A general plan represents the community’s view of its future. It articulates its growth, development, and resource conservation priorities through the creation of goals, policies, and programs. California state law requires that each city and county adopt a general plan and that every general plan address the following seven topic areas (referred to as elements): circulation, conservation, open space, housing, noise, safety, and land use. The planning horizon for a general plan typically ranges from 15 to 25 years.

**Why is the County’s General Plan Update project necessary?**

The County’s current General Plan has a planning horizon through 2020. It has been revised over the years, but has not been comprehensively updated since 1988. Since then, there have been many important changes to state law that dictate what issues must be included in a general plan. For example, state law now requires that we address additional topics such as climate change and the design of streets to better accommodate pedestrians and bicycles. In addition, the Ventura County Board of Supervisors has directed that the updated General Plan contain three new elements: agriculture, water, and economic development. The County’s General Plan will have a 20-year planning horizon, through 2040.

**If my community is covered by an Area Plan, is it still covered by the General Plan?**

Yes. The General Plan Update provides policies for guiding growth and development in all of the unincorporated areas, including those areas covered by an Area Plan. However, Area Plans also include unique goals, policies, and programs that are specific to a given geographic area within the county. As part of this project, all Area Plans will be evaluated for consistency with the updated General Plan, but the project will not include a concurrent revision of the Area Plans.

**There are nine Area Plans within the county:**

- Coastal Plan
- El Rio/Norte
- Lake Sherwood/Hidden Valley
- North Ventura Avenue
- Oak Park
- Ojai Valley
- Piru
- Saticoy
- Thousand Oaks

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**WHAT IS THE NEXT STEP?**

We are completing Phase 2 of the project. We have completed the Background Report, which is currently available for comment. For more information about how to review this document and provide your input, visit vc2040.org/review.

1. **Initiate Project**
   (Winter to Spring 2016)

2. **Prepare the Background Report**
   (Fall 2016/Winter 2017)

3. **Affirm the Vision and Guiding Principles**
   (Spring 2017)

4. **Evaluate Alternatives**
   (Winter 2017)

5. **Prepare the Draft General Plan**
   (2018)

6. **Conduct Environmental Review**
   (2019)

7. **Prepare Final Documents and Adoption**
   (Spring 2020)
Who is involved in updating the General Plan?

It is important that the General Plan Update reflect the input from many different people and advisory bodies. The County has a team of staff members within the Planning Division who are working on all aspects of the General Plan update. In addition, the County has established a Technical Advisory Committee consisting of in-house County subject-matter experts. There is also a consultant team that includes subject-matter experts in fields such as water, energy, climate change, transportation, and land use and development policy. Additionally, the County formed local Focus Groups to provide technical and policy input on draft general plan documents. Focus Group participants include representatives from existing boards and commissions, as well as local and regional stakeholders with expertise in given issue areas. There are seven Focus Groups:

- Agriculture
- Climate Change
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Open Space/Recreation
- Transportation
- Water

Other advisory bodies will also be involved, including the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee and the six Municipal Advisory Councils located throughout the county.

At every stage of the General Plan Update process, the public will have the opportunity to participate and share ideas and comments.

What is the difference between the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance?

A general plan sets forth long-term policies that guide future development. A zoning ordinance implements general plan policies through development regulations, such as allowed uses for a given zone, and building standards, such as height limits and building placement. These standards are applied through the issuance of permits, which are regulated through the zoning ordinance. State law requires that the zoning ordinance be consistent with maps and policies in a general plan.

How will pending projects be affected by the General Plan Update?

Projects with completed applications that have been, or will be, submitted prior to approval of the updated General Plan (anticipated in spring 2020), will be evaluated for consistency with the existing General Plan. However, any subsequent changes that may be made to a development project after General Plan adoption will be subject to the new provisions of the 2040 General Plan.

HOW CAN I STAY INFORMED ABOUT THE PROJECT?

- **Check the General Plan Update project website:**
  The website includes a broad range of information and will always have the most current details about upcoming activities.

- **Sign up for the Interested Parties List** to receive emails related to upcoming meetings, workshops, hearings, and documents that are out for public review. Subscribe by going to: vc2040.org/subscribe-for-more-information/

- **Attend hearings** for the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission. Information about hearings will be available on vc2040.org and will be emailed directly to you if you sign up as an interested party.

- **Attend workshops and presentations** hosted by County Planning Division staff throughout Ventura County at key points throughout the project. Information about these workshops is available at vc2040.org. A notice will also be emailed directly to you if you sign up as an Interested Party.

- **Review and comment on documents** created as part of the General Plan Update. Draft documents that are available for public review and comment will be accessible online using vc2040.org. A hard copy of documents out for public review will also be available for viewing at the public Planning Counter at the County Government Center at 800 S. Victoria Ave. in Ventura.

- **Contact General Plan Update staff members.** Contact information is available at vc2040.org.

Sí tiene preguntas sobre Plan General, póngase en contacto con Susan Curtis a Susan.Curtis@ventura.org o 805-654-2497.