

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Purpose of the General Plan.....	ii
General Plan as a Guide for the City	ii
State Requirements.....	ii
2.0 Organization of the General Plan.....	iii
Consistency	iii
3.0 General Plan Summary	iv
Overall City Goals	iv
Changes in the City	v
Summary of Elements.....	v
4.0 General Plan Update Process.....	vi
Baseline Report	vi
Land Demand Market Study	vi
General Plan Survey.....	vi
Planning Festival	vii
Workshops.....	vii
Ad Hoc Committee	vii
5.0 Environmental Review	vii

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Purpose of the General Plan

General Plan as a Guide for the City

The General Plan is the fundamental land use policy document of the City of Paso Robles. This plan was developed to address several areas within the City's Planning Area (which includes areas within City Limits, within the Sphere of Influence, and within the Planning Impact Area) that have distinct planning issues, constraints, and opportunities. It defines the framework by which the City's physical and economic resources are to be managed and used in the future. This General Plan's planning horizon is the year 2025. City decision-makers will use the plan as a blueprint for:

- *Choices about the use of land;*
- *Conservation and development of new housing;*
- *Provision of supporting infrastructure and public and human services;*
- *Protection of environmental resources;*
- *Protection of people and property from natural and man-made hazards;*
- *Allocation of fiscal resources;*
- *Population growth; and*
- *Expansion of City boundaries.*

The General Plan clarifies and articulates the City's intentions with respect to the rights and expectations of the community, including residents, property owners, and businesses. Through the Plan, the City informs these groups of its goals, policies, and standards, thereby communicating expectations of the public and private sectors for meeting community objectives.

State Requirements

California State law requires cities and counties to prepare and adopt a general plan. Relevant Government Code Sections include:

Government Code § 65300. Each planning agency shall prepare and the legislative body of each county and city shall adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan.

Government Code § 65300.5. The Legislature intends that the general plan and elements and parts thereof comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency.

Government Code § 65300.7. Requires planning agencies and legislative bodies to implement this article in ways that accommodate local conditions and circumstances, while meeting minimum requirements.

Government Code § 65302. The general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives,

principles, standards, and plan proposals. The plan shall include the following elements:

Land Use	Circulation	Open Space	Safety
Housing	Conservation	Noise	

Government Code § 65303. The general plan may include any other elements or address any other subjects which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county or city.

The State of California recommends that cities and counties update their General Plans every 5 to 10 years to respond to changing conditions, information and community concerns and objectives. Paso Robles' General Plan was last updated in 1991. The next update will occur in the year 2025.

2.0 Organization of the General Plan

The Paso Robles General Plan consists of eight elements:

- Land Use
- Circulation
- Housing
- Open Space
- Conservation
- Parks and Recreation
- Noise
- Safety

Each element contains a discussion of the relevant issues, goals and policies, and implementation measures. All elements have equal weight under the law and are designed to be consistent with each other.

The General Plan contains goals, policies, action items, and accompanying officially-adopted maps for each Element. This overall framework translates the City Council's vision into specific actions to be taken to ensure that Paso Robles is a balanced community.

- Goals are broad statements of the City's overall intent.
- Policies are specific statements of how the goals are to be achieved.
- Action Items are the actions to be taken in order to implement the goals and policies.

Consistency

Section 65300.5 of the California Government Code requires the General Plan and its Elements to be "an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies..." Each element is consistent with the other elements of the General Plan, supporting and complementing the Plan's goals and policies. For example, the Land Use Element must take into account the public safety hazard identification and evaluation in the Safety Element, the sensitive habitat and species, and desire of public and private open space identified in the Conservation, Open Space, and Parks and Recreation Elements, the transportation needs identified in the Circulation

Element, the housing needs identified in the Housing Element, and the Noise considerations outlined in the Noise Element. Decisions regarding the location of multi-family housing, for example, will be better informed when framed within data related to the City's safety hazards and emergency service provisions in the Safety Element.

3.0 General Plan Summary

This document is the City of El Paso de Robles' General Plan, which has been updated and revised after a lengthy and comprehensive public participation process. The General Plan is the City's statement of policies for guiding decisions over the next 20 years (to the Year 2025) about Paso Robles physical form and development. It provides direction to decision-makers who must balance competing community objectives, which sometimes present trade-offs.

The City Council has an adopted "mission statement," reflecting their vision for the future of Paso Robles. The City is to be a balanced community where the great majority of the residents can live, work, and shop.

Overall City Goals

GOAL 1: In order to enhance Paso Robles' unique small town character and high quality of life, the City Council supports the development and maintenance of a balanced community where the great majority of the population can live, work and shop.

GOAL 2: Strengthen the City's economic base through business retention and recruitment, including provisions for "head-of-household" jobs and increased retail sales, transient occupancy taxes, and property tax revenues.

GOAL 3: Establish Paso Robles as the North County commercial retail center, based on providing neighborhood and service commercial development in proportion to population growth, downtown commercial revitalization, and regional commercial development.

GOAL 4: Strive to ensure that City services and facilities are maintained at current levels and/or in accordance with adopted standards.

The geographic area of the General Plan includes properties within:

- The existing City limits as of January 1, 2003 (approximately 18.7 square miles, comprising a total of 11,985 acres).
- The existing Sphere of Influence (approximately 1,078 acres beyond the City Limits) and Potential Expansion Areas.
- The Planning Impact Area within the unincorporated areas surrounding the City (approximately 62.3 square miles, comprising a total of 39,990 acres).

Changes in the City

An important component of the General Plan update is the vision of allowing development on a portion of the existing Sphere of Influence, totaling about 266 acres. In addition, the General Plan update envisions an amendment to the City's Sphere of Influence to include expansion areas, which would accommodate primarily residential land uses and total about 243 acres.

In addition to allowing buildout of the expansion areas, the General Plan Update allows for buildout of vacant and under-developed lands within the City limits. Policies contained in the General Plan Update are directed at improving the livability of existing neighborhoods and supporting local planning efforts to improve the community.

The physical changes envisioned by the General Plan are described primarily within the proposed Land Use and Circulation Elements. The Housing Element, Open Space and Conservation Element, Park and Recreation Element, Noise Element, and Safety Element do not involve physical changes to the City, except to the extent that the policies of these elements are carried forward through the Land Use Element.

Summary of Elements

A summary of the contents of each Element of the General Plan is presented below.

Land Use: The General Plan Land Use Element establishes a planned land use pattern and long-range policies to guide growth within the City's corporate boundary and Sphere of Influence. These policies are specifically intended to preserve and enhance the quality of the community through appropriate land use planning. The General Plan land use designations guide the general distribution, location, and extent of the various types of land uses in the City and expansion areas.

Circulation: The General Plan Circulation Element identifies the general network of streets in the City and addresses future facility needs for all modes of transportation.

Housing: The General Plan Housing Element is intended to update the 1994 Paso Robles General Plan Housing Element, and addresses the City's housing needs through a planning period ending July 2008. The Housing Element contains policies that guide the City to meet the existing and projected housing needs of all economic segments of the community.

Conservation: The General Plan Conservation Element is primarily concerned with the protection of natural resources important to Paso Robles, including biological resources, air quality, water and mineral resources, as well as energy. Its goals also address the protection of public services, historic resources and the scenic qualities of the area. Its effect on the built environment is to minimize development in areas that could affect such resources.

Open Space: The General Plan Open Space Element addresses the land use issues of agriculture, recreation, enjoyment of scenic beauty and, to some extent, the use of public lands. Policies in the Open Space Element are specifically intended to preserve and enhance the

quality of the community through appropriate preservation and management of open space within and surrounding Paso Robles.

Parks and Recreation: The General Plan Parks and Recreation Element contains an inventory of park lands within the Planning Area and specific issues that are of concern to Paso Robles are addressed.

Noise: The Noise Element of the General Plan is a planning document which provides a policy framework within which potential noise impacts may be addressed during project review and long range planning.

Safety: The General Plan Safety Element includes discussion and policies that promote community safety measures. These include conventional police, fire, paramedic and health services; disaster planning, safe buildings and site design with eyes and ears oriented to the public streets, protection from natural hazards including earthquakes and landslides and an ample supply of safe, well-designed parks, open space, trails and pathways.

4.0 General Plan Update Process

Baseline Report

The first step in the General Plan update process was to inventory and assess the existing conditions in the City of Paso Robles. The Baseline Report was prepared to document existing conditions of land use, traffic, natural resources, safety, noise, and public services. The Report showed that 2,218 additional single-family (SF) and 1,164 additional multi-family (MF) homes can be accommodated on undeveloped and underdeveloped land within the City limits.

Land Demand Market Study

The Land Demand Market Study included an analysis of the demand and capacity for future development of residential, commercial and industrial land. The Study found that even with the intensification of currently underdeveloped residentially-designated lands, generally in the downtown area, the City will not be able to accommodate residential demand through General Plan buildout without additional annexations or land use redesignations. The City currently maintains an adequate existing land supply within City limits to accommodate demand for commercial and industrial land through General Plan buildout in 2025.

General Plan Survey

A Citizen Involvement Survey was mailed to every household in the city in early 2002 and over 3,000 responses were received (a 30% response rate - much higher than the approximately 20% return rate for the 1991 survey). The survey gave citizens of Paso Robles the unique opportunity to express their opinion on what should and should not be planned for between now and 2025. The survey results reflected their vision for the future of Paso Robles to be a place to live, work, and shop.

Planning Festival

Another unique opportunity for the community to participate in the General Plan Update process was at the Planning Festival held in April 2002. The Planning Festival was scheduled to convey the Baseline Report findings and survey results, explain the parameters of the General Plan program, and to receive input from community members regarding their concerns and vision for the future. Community members were asked to identify what they like and dislike about the City and to brainstorm on ways to achieve goals for the community.

Workshops

Workshops were held with the City Council and Planning Commission in order to obtain input from community members and discuss specific issues. The workshops were held in 2001 and 2002. A series of five (5) public workshops were held, including three (3) topical workshops (land use/spheres/annexation, housing/traffic circulation, and the balance of the elements) and two (2) workshops at different outreach locations to present the General Plan Alternatives. In August 2002 the Planning Commission held an additional public workshop, considered a series of four (4) alternatives, and formulated its recommendation to the City Council.

Ad Hoc Committee

The Ad Hoc Committee for the General Plan Update is comprised of Council members and Planning Commissioners. The Ad Hoc Committee's role was to provide input on formulation of the recommended text for the Update.

5.0 Environmental Review

In accordance with the Statutes and Guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the City's Procedures for Implementing CEQA, a Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the 2003 General Plan Update. CEQA allows a Program EIR to be used to review a series of actions that may be characterized as one large project.

Use of a Program EIR provides the City Council and Planning Commission with the opportunity to consider broad policy alternatives and Program-wide mitigation measures when the City has greater flexibility to address environmental issues and/or cumulative impacts on a comprehensive basis.

The Draft General Plan Update (Summary) and the Draft EIR were circulated for public review and comment, and public workshops were held. Public comments on the Draft EIR were reviewed and responded to, and revisions to the EIR were made in response to public comments received where appropriate. Following completion of the Final EIR, a Public Hearing Draft of the proposed 2003 General Plan Update was prepared for review and consideration by both the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Public hearings of the Planning Commission and City Council were held in November and December, 2003 to review/consider the Final Program EIR, public testimony, and the Public Hearing Draft of the 2003 General Plan Update.

At the conclusion of the Public Hearing process, the City Council approved the 2003 General Plan Update with changes and findings of overriding considerations. This action was taken after the City Council certified the Program EIR as to its compliance with the provisions of the CEQA Statutes and Guidelines and the City's Procedures for the Implementation of CEQA. The EIR mitigation measures included in the Program EIR were used as a basis for the 2003 General Plan Update, and were incorporated into goals, policies, and/or action items, as appropriate.

Subsequent activities that are a part of implementing the 2003 General Plan Update will be reviewed and evaluated to determine whether or not:

- Additional environmental review is required; or
- The activity was adequately addressed and feasible mitigation measures were identified in the Program EIR.