



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Introduction describes the purpose of the General Plan, topics and organization and how this plan is put into action.



INTRODUCING THE SUNNYVALE GENERAL PLAN

The City of Sunnyvale has a colorful history spanning over 100 years since its incorporation in 1912. It began as a train stop in the agricultural promised land known as “The Valley of Hearts Delights” and with planning and foresight has transitioned into its current form as a desirable residential community and strategically located high-tech job center known as the “Heart of Silicon Valley.”

The Sunnyvale General Plan has been a fundamental tool in guiding the City through change and growth. It addresses the physical development of the City and, when used together with a larger body of City Council policies, provides direction for decision-making on City services and resources. It is both a long-range and a strategic planning document, containing long-term goals and policies for the next 10-20 years and strategic actions for the next five to ten years.

The past has shown us that change is constant and will occur whether planned for or not. While the future cannot be forecasted with certainty, the General Plan provides guiding goals and policies that have been selected to be both transforming yet realistic and practical so that Sunnyvale successfully emerges as a vibrant, innovative and attractive community in which both residents and businesses can thrive.

Topics in the General Plan

The state requires all cities to prepare and maintain a General Plan. Seven elements (topics) are required by state law: land use, circulation (transportation and utilities), housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. Communities can rename or combine these required elements as they choose, as long as there is consistency within and among the documents. Communities may also incorporate within their General Plan other matters which are believed to be of particular local concern.

Sunnyvale’s General Plan consists of a Community Vision and five supporting chapters addressing the physical development of the City. These chapters group related topics together such as Land Use and Transportation, Community Character, Safety and Noise, and Environmental Management. The Housing Element is the only portion of the City’s General Plan that has requirements for periodic updating and certification by the State of California. The following is a summary of the topics found in this General Plan. Mandated elements are noted.

“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably will themselves not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will not die.”

— Daniel H. Burnham

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|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chapter 1 | Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of General Plan organization and topics• Environmental Justice Policies |
| Chapter 2 | Community Vision <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sunnyvale History• Community Conditions• Assets and Issues• Citywide Vision Goals• Balanced Growth• Looking Forward |
| Chapter 3 | Land Use and Transportation
(state-mandated Land Use, Open Space and Circulation Element, transportation section) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land Use• Transportation• Economy• Open Space |
| Chapter 4 | Community Character <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design• Heritage Preservation• Library• Arts• Recreation |
| Chapter 5 | Housing
(state-mandated Housing Element) |
| Chapter 6 | Safety and Noise
(state-mandated Safety and Noise Elements) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hazards and Disaster Preparedness• Police, Fire and Emergency Services• Noise |
| Chapter 7 | Environmental Management
(state-mandated Conservation Element and Circulation Element, public utilities section) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water Supply• Wastewater Collection and Treatment• Urban Runoff• Air Quality• Solid Waste |

These elements address the areas within the boundaries of the City, including the sphere of influence (see Figure 1-1, Sunnyvale Planning Area).

The Consolidation of the General Plan

In 2011, the General Plan was assembled from 22 separate General Plan elements and sub-elements that were adopted at different times. This consolidated and streamlined General Plan contains all necessary goal and policy language to address the required elements in a concise and easy-to-use fashion. Goals reference the year of the original adoption.

How to Use the General Plan

The General Plan provides both basic information about our community and goals and policies to help us achieve our desired future. The General Plan can be understood on a broad citywide level and on an individual level. Citywide, the General Plan provides demographic information, including population, housing, transportation and public works improvements that describe the City's residents and businesses and future changes that will affect them. Land use plans, growth areas and projections and future infrastructure improvements are described. On an individual level, the General Plan also can provide information specific to a resident or business. Individuals can find general types of uses that are permitted in and near a home or business, long-range plans and changes that may affect a neighborhood or business area and actions the City will take to retain and improve the quality of life in Sunnyvale.

This General Plan is organized around a set of goals. **Goals** are long-range, broad and comprehensive targets. They are not necessarily measurable or achievable in the lifespan of this General Plan; rather, they describe the overall future outcome the community would like to achieve. Each goal is accompanied by a context for the goal, related community conditions, future trends or issues and supporting policies.

Policies indicate ways to achieve the goal. Policies are focused and specific instructional guidelines. This General Plan contains an Executive Summary of only goals and policies for ease of use.

Translating the General Plan into Action

Goals and policies are used by the community, staff and decision-makers to guide decisions relating to the physical development of the City including land use, infrastructure and related budgetary decisions. Future development decisions must be consistent with the General Plan. To assist community members and decision-makers, goals and policies are referenced in all staff reports and findings related to the development of the City. Goals and policies are also carried out through two types of activities: sub-policies and implementation programs.

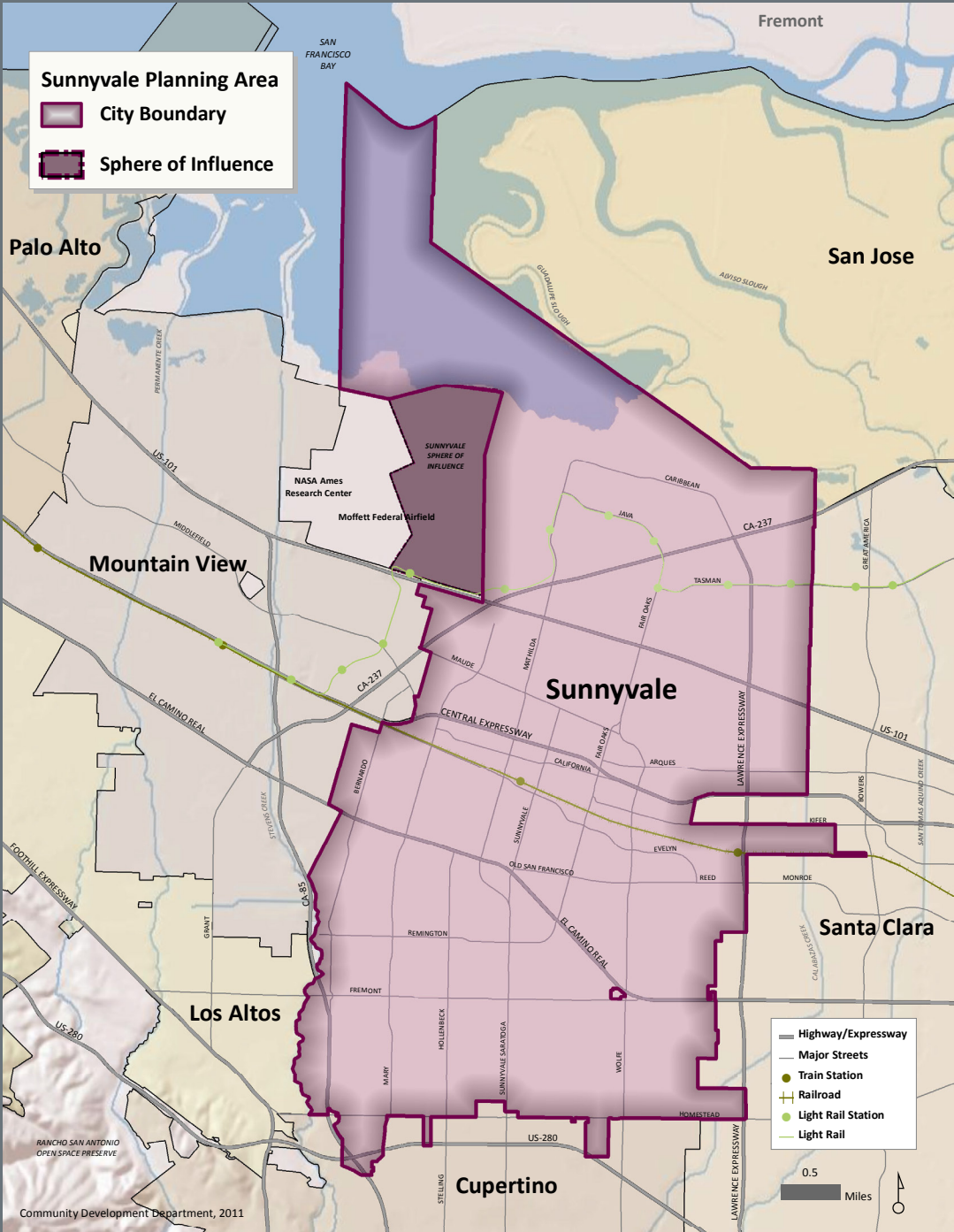
Sub-policies provide more specific directions and actions to further articulate and achieve the goals and policies. They are the critical link between long-range planning and current decision making. Sub-policies are not needed for each policy and can be short-range or longer-term actions. Sub-policies, when applicable, are listed below each related policy as a bullet.

Sphere of Influence —
A geographic area established by the Santa Clara County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) as "a plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local government agency." (Government Code Section 56076)

The online version of the General Plan provides easy-to-use links to other sections of the document, supporting information, and outside agencies and programs. Please visit Sunnyvale.ca.gov and search for "General Plan" to view the online version of this document.

Figure 1-1:
Sunnyvale Planning Area

Sunnyvale covers 22.8 square miles with a sphere of influence of approximately 1.2 miles.



Implementation programs are longer-range procedures, programs or activities that also carry out the goals and policies. Implementation programs can be included in Sunnyvale Municipal Code regulations, specific plans, capital improvement projects, or subdivision ordinances, as examples. A list of implementation programs is located in Appendix A.

Public Participation

This General Plan was consolidated with input from the community and an Advisory Committee made up of City Boards and Commissions members. Any future amendments of the General Plan will be subject to further community input and public hearings.

Steps Forward

Future incremental updates of the General Plan may be needed as community conditions change. Approximately every 10 years a comprehensive update of this document is undertaken, updating the community's conditions and all the goals, policies, and actions within the document.

Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice (EJ) policies promote fair treatment and meaningful participation of people of all cultures, races, and incomes. They improve the health and overall well-being of vulnerable and at-risk communities through reductions in pollution exposure, equitable and inclusive public engagement, increased access to healthy foods, increased prevalence of healthy homes, improved air quality, and increased physical activity.

The City has implemented goals and policies that address pollution exposure, public services, public health, housing, civic engagement, and climate change at a broad, citywide level. There are several policies that are specifically aimed at addressing EJ. As discussed in the environmental justice screening analysis (Appendix H), there are opportunities to further address issues of equity in the City. The policies listed below will be incorporated into the appropriate General Plan Chapter (depicted at the end of the policy) when said Chapter is next updated. At that time, this list will be amended, and ultimately removed, once all have been integrated into the appropriate Chapter.

- **Goal EJ-1:** Prioritize the needs of designated low-income communities within Sunnyvale that bear high pollution burden according to CalEnviroScreen 3.0 (Figure 7-10), to ensure equitable outcomes. (Community Vision)
- **Policy EJ 1.1:** Conduct outreach with communities that are low-income and/or bear a high pollution burden (as identified in the Environmental Justice Screening Analysis), for development and redevelopment projects, to promote equitable and inclusive community engagement in the local planning processes.(Community Vision)
- **Policy EJ 1.2:** Encourage the phasing out of non-conforming land uses from residential communities, especially for communities that are low-income and/or bear a high pollution burden, as identified in the Environmental Justice Screening Analysis. (Land Use and Transportation)

- **Policy EJ 1.3:** Prioritize the development of public facilities (e.g., schools, libraries, community resources centers) in low-income and high pollution burden bearing communities. (Land Use and Transportation)
- **Policy EJ 1.4:** Evaluate new or improved public transportation infrastructure (e.g., public transit routes, sidewalks, bicycle facilities) in low-income and high pollution burden bearing communities. (Land Use and Transportation)
- **Policy EJ 1.5:** Apply “universal design principles” in the design and review of development and redevelopment projects so that new development is accessible to all people. Universal design is the design of buildings or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, ability, or other factors. Examples of universal design are , ADA compliant pathways and sidewalks, accessible pedestrian signals, and strategies that allow residents to age in place. (Land Use and Transportation)
- **Policy EJ 1.6:** Support the development and preservation of healthy food establishments, grocery stores, and local food growers, particularly in communities that lack access to healthy food. (Land Use and Transportation)
- **Policy EJ 1.7:** Support existing specialty markets and facilitate the establishment of new culturally derived markets within walkable distances to low-income communities. (Land Use and Transportation)
- **Policy EJ 1.8:** Continue to create programs or informational campaigns regarding healthy eating habits and food choices, and the availability of food assistance programs. (Land Use and Transportation)
- **Policy EJ 1.9:** Prioritize the development of recreational facilities, parks, and open space in low-income and high pollution burden bearing communities. (Land Use and Transportation)