

Vision and Guiding Principles

SACRAMENTO GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Adopted by City Council on 11/22/05

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to set out a vision that captures the city's key values and aspirations for Sacramento's future. The Vision Statement paints a picture of what Sacramento will be twenty-five years from now. The second part of this document sets out Guiding Principles that flow from the Vision Statement. These principles establish policy benchmarks for the rest of the General Plan Update process. The principles, along with the issues identified in the *Planning Issues Report*¹, will be used to help define how growth will occur, as well as direct the development of land use alternatives and updated General Plan policies. The alternatives will be defined at a citywide scale and for targeted "areas of opportunity." The Vision and Guiding Principles are applicable to the context of the city as a whole as well as its community plan areas and neighborhoods. The Vision and Guiding Principles is informed by recently adopted City policy related to smart growth and sustainable development and an extensive community involvement program that includes public input from the first phase of town hall forums, focus group interviews, and the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), a 25-member citizen's committee appointed by the Mayor and City Council.

VISION STATEMENT

The guiding vision of the General Plan is that **Sacramento will be the most livable city in America.**

As California's capital, Sacramento will continue to play its traditional role in the region as the primary center of government, employment, and culture. Downtown Sacramento will vibrate with arts, culture, entertainment, and a 24-hour population.

The city's economy will continue to strengthen, diversify, and play a larger role in the global economy. Building on the skills of our workforce, Sacramento's economy will provide a broad range of jobs in all industry sectors, including those related to small and local businesses.

Every neighborhood will be a desirable place to live because of its walkable streets, extensive tree canopy, range of housing choices, mixed use neighborhood centers, great schools, parks and recreation facilities, and easy access to Downtown and jobs.

Sacramento will be linked to the rest of the region by an extensive, efficient and safe network of roadways, bridges, mass transit, bikeways, pedestrian trails, and sidewalks. It will be linked to the rest of California and the world by an international airport, conventional and high-speed passenger rail, interstate highways, and high-speed communication systems.

Sacramento will continue to celebrate its cultural and ethnic diversity and ensure the equitable treatment of all neighborhoods and groups. Sacramento will protect its historic and cultural

¹ The Planning Issues Report identifies major issue categories to be addressed in the new General Plan. Copies of the document are available from the Planning Division or on the Internet at www.sacgp.org.

resources and its natural environment and will increase access to its riverfront and open spaces for the enjoyment of its growing population.

Sacramento will promote the health and well-being of the community and will plan for the long-term safety of its citizens.

Finally, to help address the causes of global warming and the urban heat island effect, Sacramento will be a model of sustainable development in its planning, its use of urban heat island reduction measures, and its conservation of energy, water, and other natural resources.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Land Use

- Provide a diversity of neighborhood environments, from the *traditional*² downtown core to well-integrated new growth areas.
- Create a vibrant downtown that serves as a regional destination for the arts, culture, and entertainment while accommodating residents that live, work, and gather in the city center.
- Focus higher density developments and mixed-use projects in areas adjacent to transit stations, along transit corridors and commercial corridors, near job centers, and in strategic opportunity areas throughout the city.
- Use the existing assets of infrastructure and public facilities to increase infill and re-use, while maintaining important qualities of community character.
- Promote livable and well-designed neighborhoods that are walkable and complete, with a mix of uses and services to support improved health and the needs of families, youth, seniors, and a growing population.
- Utilize *sustainable development*³ and land use planning practices that provide for the needs of existing residents and businesses while preserving choices for future generations.

Community Design

- Create vibrant public places that serve as gathering places, town centers, and villages for the community.
- Promote the development of complete neighborhoods both in infill and new growth areas that foster a sense of place.
- Protect and replicate the pattern and character of Sacramento's unique and traditional neighborhoods.
- Promote designs for development that are compatible with the scale and character of Sacramento's existing neighborhoods.
- Locate and design buildings, streetscapes, and public spaces that contribute to walkable neighborhoods.
- Promote developments that foster accessibility and connectivity between areas and safely and efficiently accommodate a mixture of cars, transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

² The term traditional refers to the urban grid pattern that is characteristic of older central cities.

³ Sustainable development practices refer to the use of architectural and planning methods that address the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Specific examples include the use of solar panels for energy conservation, placing jobs near housing to reduce vehicle trips, and infill development in urban areas to reduce the consumption of agricultural land.

- Recognize and preserve those areas of the City with a ‘sense of place’ that are based largely upon their historical and cultural resources.

Housing

- Provide a mix of housing to meet the needs of current and future residents, including an equitable distribution of affordable housing, throughout the city.
- Include a mix of housing types within neighborhoods to promote a diversity of household types and housing choices for residents of all ages and income levels in order to promote stable neighborhoods.
- Work to end homelessness in Sacramento by providing affordable housing opportunities and services.

Mobility

- Develop a balanced, integrated, multi-modal transportation system that is efficient and safe with frequent service connecting every neighborhood to the rest of the city and the region.
- Provide a variety of transportation choices that promote accessible alternatives to the automobile including walking, bicycling, and taking transit.
- Expand and improve existing transit systems to encourage higher ridership that will lead to less dependence on the automobile and fossil fuels, and to better air quality.

Economic Development

- Promote the City as the civic, cultural, and economic hub of the region and the Central Valley.
- Promote strategic development of vacant, underutilized, and infill land, especially along transportation and commercial corridors, to improve the city’s economic outlook.
- Create and maintain a broad range of jobs that are accessible to all residents that provide opportunities for advancement.
- Improve the jobs-housing balance by siting housing near employment centers.
- Develop a vibrant 24-hour downtown that is a destination for the region and California.
- Work with educational institutions to promote the skill and talent of Sacramento’s workforce in order to attract high quality jobs.
- Develop the city’s waterfront to provide a world class urban experience for residents, workers, and visitors.
- Focus investment and revitalization in distressed neighborhoods.

Public Health and Safety

- Foster safe neighborhoods through good community and environmental design that promotes a mix of uses, active streets, improved air quality, and security.

- Improve coordination among residents and businesses and police, fire, planning, transportation, and other City departments to address security issues and achieve safe neighborhoods.
- Minimize Sacramento's vulnerability to natural and manmade disasters and strengthen the City's emergency response capabilities including improving flood protection through the strengthening of our levees and modernizing Folsom Dam.
- Promote exercise and activity by all age groups through the development of walkable neighborhoods and recreational facilities and programs.
- Promote opportunities for community education and involvement through volunteerism and civic engagement.

Environmental Resources

- Encourage sustainable levels of energy and resource consumption through efficient land-use, transportation, building design, construction techniques, waste management, and other infrastructure systems.
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural resources, and environmentally-sensitive areas to maintain community identity.
- Preserve and protect important historic and cultural resources that serve as significant, visible reminders of the City's social and architectural history.
- Improve and expand the urban forest that contributes to the uniqueness of Sacramento: the City of Trees.
- Continue to improve air and water quality to ensure a healthy community and region.
- Continue to ensure the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

Parks and Recreation

- Maximize public access to and use of the Sacramento and American Rivers and the City's other open space resources.
- Expand and improve existing pedestrian paths and bikeways to promote health, recreation, and connectivity between neighborhoods.
- Provide innovative parks and recreational and sports facilities for all of Sacramento's existing and new neighborhoods.
- Promote Sacramento as a cultural destination with arts and open space amenities throughout the city.

Services and Facilities

- Provide quality public services, facilities, and infrastructure that are distributed equitably throughout the city.
- Support high quality education and schools.
- Promote joint-use of public facilities to optimize the use of public funds.
- Develop facilities, services, and partnerships to help end homelessness.

DEVELOPMENT OF VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The initial public participation components of the General Plan Update (GPU) process, which includes the GPU Focus Group interviews, GPAC interviews, and the first round of Town Hall Forums, have engaged a broad representation of Sacramento's public in thinking about what Sacramento's future can be and ways to achieve it. The Town Hall Forums provided participants an opportunity to identify on survey forms what they felt are the five most important issues to be addressed in the updated General Plan. In addition to issues, public input also provided insight to what participants in the process value.

Across all 14 forums, the five most highly ranked issues are as follows (note that issues 4 and 5 were ranked the same):

1. Safe neighborhoods
2. Mixed-use and higher density developments around light rail stations and along commercial corridors
3. Distribution of affordable housing throughout the City
4. Protection of agricultural land and open space, and improving streetscape quality
5. Amount of affordable housing; improving air quality; and expanding the light rail system

A Planning Issues Report was also prepared that defined key issues brought forward in the first phases of the General Plan Update. The report was based on early input from Focus Group interviews, GPAC Interviews, the Town Hall Forums, the Technical Advisory Committee, Planning Staff, and the Technical Background Report (TBR). The Planning Issues Report and other General Plan documents are available at the General Plan website (www.sacgp.org). The Issues Report identifies 14 key issues to be addressed in the update. These issues include:

- Smart growth
- Sustainability
- Affordable housing
- Mixed-use, higher density development/infill
- Economic development
- Level of Service for roadways
- Service standards for public facilities
- Alternative transportation modes
- Public safety/crime/police service
- Air quality
- Open space/farmland protection
- Natural resource protection
- General Plan implementation
- Streamlined permit processing

Many of the top issues and values identified in the Town Hall Forums were also key ones identified in other sources. All of these issues and values are reflected in the Vision for Sacramento's future or as Guiding Principles.

The Vision and Guiding Principles also reflect recently adopted City policy. These include such policy statements as the City's Strategic Plan (2005), Infill Strategy (2002), Smart Growth Principles (2001), Civic Standards (2001), Economic Development Strategy Framework (2000),

and existing General Plan (including the Preservation Element, 2000, and the Housing Element Update 2003).

Thus, the Vision Statement and Guiding Principles have been informed by public input during the first phase of Town Hall Forums, by key information in the Planning Issues Report, and by existing City policy.