

1.6 EXISTING PLANS AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Mountain View General Plans

The City of Mountain View was incorporated in 1902, and this General Plan Update will be the sixth in the City's history. The following are brief synopses of the previous five General Plans, which together demonstrate how planning policy in the City has developed over time.⁴

- 1946 – The City's first General Plan provided guidance to the City as it shifted from an agricultural community to a small town.
- 1958 – The second General Plan addressed the town's development in light of an industrial boom that brought new growth to the City and the Santa Clara Valley.
- 1968 – The third General Plan sought to balance housing and employment and planned for substantial development in the North Bayshore Area.
- 1982 – The fourth General Plan focused on planning for a mature, full-service city with a balance of land uses and high-quality public services and facilities.
- 1992 – The fifth General Plan acknowledged that Mountain View was a great city that offered its community exceptional housing choices, employment opportunities and business climate. Three key themes were interwoven throughout the Plan, which set the stage for the goals, policies and actions within: celebration, diversity and evolution. The Plan sought to build on community members' existing pride of place and high quality of life, and to consciously prepare for a future in which new development would reflect changing needs and social contexts. It created a policy framework intended to ensure that "the benefits of new vitality [would] not come at the expense of existing quality."⁵

The 1992 General Plan established that Mountain View had fully moved beyond its agricultural past and its primary period of development, and thus was entering the next phase in its history – renewal and redevelopment. This plan addressed key policy areas in community development, circulation, residential neighborhoods and environmental management in which targeted improvements and coordinated, comprehensive planning could strengthen the overall quality of life in the City.

Regional Plans

Mountain View recognizes that its development and success are integrally connected to the growth and development of the Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Bay Area more broadly. As such, the City seeks to participate in the continuing evolution of the region through effective planning and partnership with neighboring cities and regional

⁴ City of Mountain View. (1992). The Mountain View General Plan. Mountain View, CA.

⁵ Ibid.

initiatives. Following is a brief summary of the regional plans and initiatives with which Mountain View is involved.

- California High-Speed Rail Project. This project represents one of the most significant mass transit projects in California's history and is proposed to travel through Mountain View between San Francisco and San Jose. The proposed route will have impacts on the City that will need to be carefully considered and designed for as the project moves forward.
- Bay Trail. Adopted by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) in 1989, the Bay Trail is a regional initiative to create a public, multi-use trail that connects the communities surrounding the San Francisco Bay. Discussion of the Bay Trail through Mountain View is included in Chapter 10 Parks, Recreation and Open Space.
- FOCUS. FOCUS is a regional development and conservation strategy that seeks to encourage the development of complete communities, compact land use, accessible public transportation, resource conservation and climate protection in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. It is a joint initiative that involves ABAG, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC). In Mountain View, the Whisman Station Area has been designated a FOCUS Priority Development Area (PDA).
- The Grand Boulevard Initiative. This initiative is a cooperative planning effort between private and public entities who are dedicated to improving the performance and design of the El Camino Real corridor, and increasing safety and livability for those living and working in the communities through which it travels.
- Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). Mandated by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and administered through ABAG, the RHNA is a process that determines housing need in each City and county in the nine-county Bay Area. Housing need and affordability levels are allocated to each jurisdiction which then must incorporate them into their Housing Elements and General Plans. Current RHNA figures include the years 2007-2014. The City is updating its Housing Element concurrently with the General Plan Update.⁶
- Transportation 2030. Adopted in 2005, Transportation 2030 is a long-range transportation plan implemented by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). MTC is a California regional transportation planning agency and the Bay Area's metropolitan planning organization (MPO) under federal guidelines. It is responsible for updating regional transportation plans, screening local requests for transportation funding, and planning for compact

⁶ BAE is the consultant leading the Housing Element Update for the City. Highlights from initial work completed for the Housing Element Update are included in Chapter 6 Housing.

growth, in coordination with other regional planning agencies. At the time of this report, Transportation 2030 included key Mountain View projects, such as enhancements to the Stevens Creek Trail and traffic signal system upgrades.

Other Plans

Other plans which have been completed may have implications on the City's General Plan Update. These plans are covered in more detail in the following chapters:

Chapter 2 Land Use

- Existing City of Mountain View Zoning Code. The City Zoning Code describes allowable development density location, use, parking and several other regulations.
- Precise Plans. Mountain View has 37 Precise Plans that function in coordination with the Mountain View General Plan and Zoning Code to provide detailed and tailored planning and design regulations for key areas of the City. They provide detailed specifications of the types of uses, relationship to surrounding areas, intensity of use, circulation, design criteria, procedures for development review and special conditions for development occurring within the Precise Plan areas. Some notable Precise Plans that have an impact on the wider community include the San Antonio Center, South Whisman, Mayfield, and Downtown Precise Plans. Figure 2-1 illustrates the locations of Precise Plan boundaries in Mountain View.
- NASA Ames Development Plan. This plan provides guidance for land use and development of the NASA Ames Research Center. Although the NASA Ames Research Center is on federally-owned and operated land, it falls within Mountain View's planning area and sphere of influence and will have significant impacts on the City in the next 20 years.

Chapter 3 Urban Design

- Design Guidelines. Design guidelines for specific development types such as rowhouses, townhouses, and small-lot single-family ensure that property owners, developers, and the City adhere to high-quality standards and that new improvements have a cohesive character.
- Precise Plans. The City's Precise Plans provide more detail regarding potential development in particular areas and provide specific design guidelines to ensure high-quality developments. Precise Plans coordinate improvement initiatives for both public and private environments to achieve and maximize positive results within neighborhoods.

Chapter 4 Transportation

- Metropolitan Transportation Commission Regional Transportation Plan. The Regional Transportation Plan is a 20-year plan that is updated every three years to reflect new planning priorities and changing projections of future growth and travel demand.

- Santa Clara County Congestion Management Program. Administered by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, the Congestion Management Program is the County's blueprint to reduce congestion and improve air quality.
- Mountain View Senior Advisory Task Force Report: Senior Transportation. The Senior Advisory Task Force advises the City Council on issues related to seniors. Presented to the Transportation Committee in March 2009, the Senior Advisory Task Force Report: Senior Transportation highlights many of the key transportation issues for seniors in Mountain View.
- 2008 Bicycle Transportation Plan. In support of the 1992 General Plan's goals and policies regarding making it easier and safer for people to bicycle in Mountain View, the 2008 Bicycle Transportation Plan was developed to provide an overview of existing bikeways and bicycle support facilities as well as planned improvements.
- Pedestrian Master Plan. The City is currently applying for grant funding from Valley Transportation Authority Community Design and Transportation (CDT) grant funds to fund a citywide Pedestrian Master Plan. The project is proposed to survey major connections to and between transit, community activity centers, schools and other gathering areas for pedestrian facilities and establish accessibility standards.

Chapter 5 Demographics and Economics

- 2008 Mountain View Retail Leakage Study. This study, recently completed by CB Richard Ellis, provides an analysis of the City's ability to capture the retail spending of its community and those of neighboring jurisdictions. The retail leakage analysis provides a synopsis of the health of retail activity in the City and highlights retail markets and sectors that may need assistance.
- City of Mountain View Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan. Recently completed by the City, this five-year economic development plan details strategies and actions for maintaining the City's fiscal health and the vitality of its business environment.

Chapter 6 Housing

- Draft Housing Needs and Constraints Report. Currently being developed as part of the Housing Element Update, the Housing Needs and Constraints Report examines the existing demands, needs, and constraints to providing housing in Mountain View.

Chapter 7 Cultural Resources

- Citywide Historic Resources Survey. This 2008 historic architectural survey completed by Carey and Co. documents many of the cultural resources still existing in the City.

Chapter 8 Public Facilities and Services

- City of Mountain View 2008 Recreation Plan. This plan includes policy and implementation recommendations in the following three categories: programs and services, recreational facilities and athletic facilities. It also recommends a 10-year, phased implementation strategy that prioritizes improvements and strategies to address program and services needs, as well as recreational and athletic facility needs.

Chapter 9 Infrastructure

- Wastewater Master Plan, Water Master Plan and City of Mountain View Storm Drainage Master Plan. The City's Public Works Department and consultant team are in the midst of conducting studies to document the current state of the systems, identify future capacity analysis, and provide suggestions for capital improvements.

Chapter 10 Parks, Recreation and Open Space

- 2008 City of Mountain View Parks and Open Space Plan. This plan presents a long-range vision and detailed analysis of open space and park needs, as well as land constraints and other issues relating to parks and open space planning.

Chapter 11 Health

- Santa Clara County Community Health Assessment, 2007. This 2007 report from the Santa Clara Community Benefits Coalition identifies opportunities and challenges for government agencies, community organizations and health care organizations to improve the health and quality of life in the County.
- Castro School Service Area (CSSA) Community Health Report, 2002. A joint report from the Santa Clara County Public Health Department and Healthy Ventures of Mountain View, this report identifies areas of high concern, such as safety, education and health based on community input.
- California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS). This is a service and survey provided by the California Department of Education to school districts to collect information on health risks facing students. The survey provides data to inform local decision-makers and to provide key findings related to substance use, violence and safety, as well as indicators of the positive behaviors and attitudes of students.
- Senior Advisory Task Force Final Report. This report highlighted data on the desires and needs of seniors in Mountain View, helped the City become more knowledgeable about local seniors and better able to represent them. The report identified key issues that are most significant to seniors in the community related to active living and healthy eating.

Chapter 13 Sustainability

- Environmental Sustainability Task Force (ESTF) Final Report. The ESTF issued a report in 2008 that includes recommendations for making Mountain View more environmentally sustainable.

- Sustainability Action Plan. In response to the ESTF Report, the Council Environmental Sustainability Committee prioritized key recommendations into a Sustainability Action Plan, which was adopted in March 2009.

In addition, other regional, County and local plans will be considered and consulted as appropriate throughout the General Plan Update process.

1.7 LEGAL AND REGULATORY CONTEXT

California state law requires that every city and county adopt a general plan to provide guidance to policy-makers as they make decisions relating in areas such as resource conservation, development and the physical form of the city, and public safety. Typically, cities and counties will update a general plan every 10 to 20 years to ensure that it remains relevant to current conditions and community concerns.

State law mandates that all general plans include the following seven elements: Land Use; Circulation; Housing; Open Space; Conservation; Noise; and Safety. These elements address the ways in which a city plans to improve infrastructure, transportation and circulation patterns; provide adequate public safety services; protect valued open spaces and environmental resources; and minimize risks posed by hazards, such as earthquakes, flooding, fires and noise. In addition, cities may include other optional elements to address local planning issues, such as sustainability, urban design, health, cultural resources, and public facilities. As a city's primary policy document, local ordinances and codes must conform to the general plan's policy directions and implementation recommendations.

To the greatest extent possible, general plans should also reflect their regional context and coordinate with regional planning initiatives. In the San Francisco Bay Area, a number of agencies have been established to target regional planning issues that overreach the boundaries of individual municipalities. These issues include air quality, transportation and housing.