

DEFINING THE FUTURE



What is a General Plan?

Every city and county in California is required by state law to prepare and maintain a planning document called a general plan. A general plan is designed to serve as the jurisdiction's "constitution" or "blueprint" for future decisions concerning land use, infrastructure, public services, and resource conservation. All specific plans, subdivisions, public works projects, and zoning decisions made by the City must be consistent with the General Plan.

The current program is designed to update the City's 1993 General Plan. The General Plan update program will:

- Provide the public opportunities for meaningful participation in the planning and decision-making process;
- Provide a description of current conditions and trends shaping the City of Tulare;
- Identify planning issues, opportunities, and challenges that should be addressed in the General Plan;
- Explore land use and policy alternatives;
- Ensure that the General Plan is current, internally consistent, and easy to use;
- Provide guidance in the planning and evaluation of future land and resource decisions; and
- Provide a vision and framework for the future growth of the City.

A general plan typically has three defining features:

- **General.** As the name implies, a general plan provides general guidance that will be used to direct future land use and resource decisions.
- **Comprehensive.** A general plan covers a wide range of social, economic, infrastructure, and natural resource factors. These include topics such as land use, housing, circulation, utilities, public services, recreation, agriculture, biological resources, and many other topics.

- **Long-range.** General plans provide guidance on reaching a future envisioned 20 or more years in the future (the proposed General Plan will look out 25 years to the year 2030). To reach this envisioned future, the updated General Plan will include policies and actions that address both immediate and long-term needs.

How Can You Help?

Website (www.westplanning.com)

The General Plan website contains schedules for future meetings and provides a location to download documents prepared during the project.

Newsletters

During the General Plan update, a series of newsletters will be prepared to provide an overview of the progress being made and the direction being pursued.

Community Workshops

A number of community workshops will be held to gain input on issues and opportunities, alternative futures, and the General Plan documents. Dates will be posted on the website when they are available.

Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC)

The City has set up an advisory committee to help in the development of the General Plan. This advisory committee, the CAC, is designed to work with City staff and the General Plan consulting team on refining the new General Plan. While not a decision making body, the CAC's input is vital to preparing a plan that will work for the City. These meetings are open to the public and dates for each will be posted on the website.

Workshops / Hearings

Workshops will be held with the Planning Commission and the City Council throughout the development of the General Plan. At the end of the process, formal public hearings will also be held to consider the General Plan and environmental impact report.

General Plan Documents

The General Plan update process will culminate in approximately one and a half years, wrapping up in the Fall of 2006. As the General Plan is prepared, a number of major documents will be available for public review and comment. These documents are described below.

Background Report. This document provides a snapshot of the conditions, trends, and regulations that are influencing the City of Tulare today. Compiling this information will involve reviewing existing studies and documents (e.g. existing specific plans, master plans, special studies, environmental documents) and contacting appropriate agencies and organizations. The information on existing conditions will be used to better understand the issues facing the City and lead to the development of a plan that helps the City address each issue appropriately. This document will also be used as the existing conditions description used in the environmental impact report that will be prepared for the General Plan.

Issues and Alternatives Report. Based on public input from the community workshops, the CAC meetings, and direction from the Planning Commission and City Council, this document will provide a summary of the critical policy and program issues to be addressed in the General Plan. The report will

present alternatives approaches that can be used to address each issue. This document will be used by the City to provide direction on the focus of the General Plan update.

General Plan Summary. This document provides an overview of the General Plan and its component documents. This document provides a summary of the Planning Area, the focus of the General Plan's goals and policies, existing conditions, the key issues raised during the preparation of the General Plan, and environmental impacts associated with the General Plan.

Goals and Policies Report. This report is the essence of the General Plan. It contains the goals and policies that will guide future development within the City. It also identifies a full set of implementation measures that will ensure the policies of the General Plan are carried out.

Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The EIR prepared for the General Plan will meet the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Planning Commission and City Council will use the EIR during their consideration of the draft General Plan to understand the potential environmental implications associated with the General Plan.

What's Covered in the General Plan?

The City of Tulare General Plan will be organized into the following three topic areas, called "elements."

Land Use/Urban Growth Strategy. This element will cover land use types, distribution, and intensity; population and building density; existing specific plans; public land ownership; and future growth areas. This element will also provide a land use diagram that will direct future land uses within the Planning Area. The focus of this element will be on the future growth and physical development of the community.

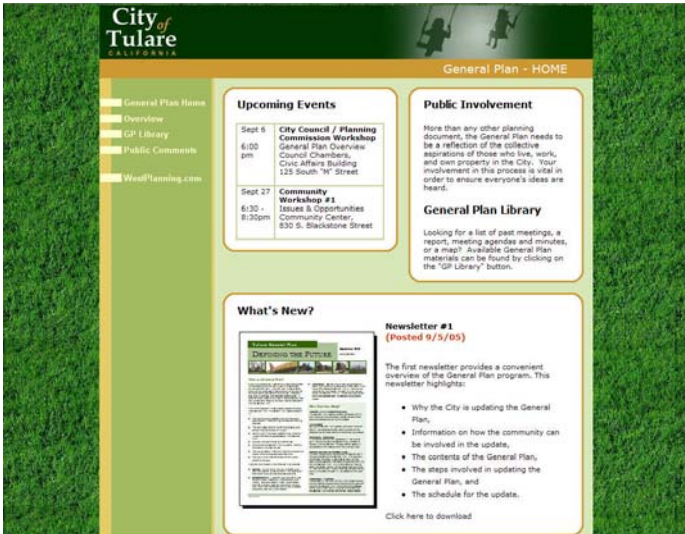
Circulation/Transportation. This element provides guidance on the movement of people and goods in and through the City. This element addresses roads and highways, transit, airports, bicycles, pedestrians, and the movement of goods.

Conservation and Open Space. This element addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources. This includes plans and measures for preserving open space and enhancing outdoor recreational opportunities (e.g. parkland). The element will also explore the managed production of resources, significant buildings and historic sites, water resources, and biological resources. Agricultural resources will be examined in conjunction with the City's farmland preservation programs and Williamson Act policies.

In addition to these elements, relevant information on the following topic areas will be examined for the background document: demographics, economic conditions, and air quality. Information collected from these areas will be incorporated into the General Plan elements presented above.

General Plan Website

The General Plan website provides a one-stop location to get the latest information on the General Plan program. The website will provide up-to-date information on upcoming events and will allow anyone to download copies of meeting minutes / agendas and documents / reports prepared for the General Plan.



www.westplanning.com

Schedule for General Plan Update

In the summer of 2005, the City approved a work program to prepare an update of the General Plan. This update program, scheduled to conclude in the Fall of 2006, will provide many opportunities for public input in the shaping of the final plan. An overview of the project schedule is included as an insert to this newsletter.

Keep Up To Date

During the General Plan update process, the City will maintain a mailing list of individuals who want to be kept informed on the latest program events. If you would like to be added to this list, please call, write, fax, or e-mail your request to:

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Steps in Updating the General Plan



General Plan Consulting Team

To help prepare a comprehensive General Plan update, the City hired a consulting team lead by Mintier & Associates and Matrix Design Group. The team dedicated to updating the General Plan includes expertise in general plan updates, planning and land use law, housing, transportation, environmental resources, economic development and fiscal assessment, and project management. A brief summary of the qualifications offered by the project team is provided below.

Mintier & Associates. The Mintier & Associates staff has not only worked on dozens of successful general plans, Larry Mintier, FAICP, the firm's principal, was the primary author of the original General Plan Guidelines for the State of California.

Matrix Design Group. Matrix Design Group brings to this project extensive experience in the management and preparation of general and specific plans in California and the Southwest. Richard Rust, AICP, is the Project Manager for the consulting team on the General Plan.

URS. URS provides professional consulting services in the areas of environmental planning, engineering, and landscape architecture to public and private sector clients throughout the United States.

Omni Means. Omni-Means is a multi-disciplinary engineering firm specializing in public works planning and design, civil engineering, transportation planning, traffic engineering, landscape architecture, and land surveying.

EPS. EPS's provides general plan experience in market analysis, public facilities and infrastructure financing, real estate financial feasibility analysis, fiscal impact analysis, and public services and facilities plans.

Visit the following website for up-to-date General Plan information

www.westplanning.com