

Planning Commission 101: The Nuts and Bolts of Planning



Panelists

- » **David Early**, AICP, Senior Advisor, PlaceWorks
- » **Marc Roberts**, Former City Manager, City of Livermore
- » **Julia Malisos**,
Former Planning Commissioner, City of Mission Viejo

My Topics

- » Source of Power to Regulate Land Use
- » General Plans
- » Zoning
- » California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- » Role of the Planning Commission

Land Use Regulation

- » Arose from “good government” movements as a response to unsanitary urban conditions
- » Embodied desire to rein in private market excesses through government regulation
- » Based on local government’s Police Power: health, safety and welfare



Key Milestones -- Nationwide

- » 1909 Los Angeles imposes first zoning ordinance limiting industrial uses (not comprehensive)
- » 1916 New York imposes first comprehensive zoning ordinance
- » 1922 Standard State Zoning Enabling Act (SZEA)
- » 1926 Euclid v. Ambler – upholds constitutionality of zoning



Key Planning Milestones -- California

- » **California has long been a leader in planning and land use regulation:**
 - 1927 California passes law requiring that cities and counties have a Master Plan
 - 1928 Standard City Planning Enabling Act (SPEA)
 - Zoning and planning laws have changed faster in California than the rest of the country due to rapid growth

Land Use Regulation Today

- » **Only two plan types are defined in California law:**
 - **General Plans** lay out a jurisdiction's future development plans through a series of policy statements in text and map form
 - **Specific Plans** are a special set of development standards that apply to a particular geographical area
- » **Zoning provides detailed land use and design regulation.**
- » **Other planning documents include Master Plans, Area Plans, Vision Plans, etc., but these are not defined in the law.**

Policy Plans and Regulations

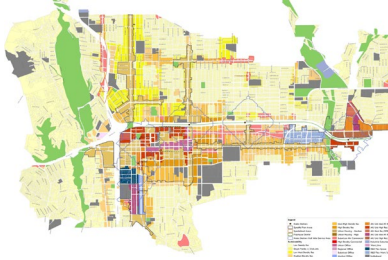


General Plans

- » Bedrock of California planning.
- » Required by State Law
- » The “constitution” for planning, development and conservation
- » Provides long-range vision (20-30 year horizon)
- » Basis for local land use decisions and other policies
- » Identifies important community issues
- » Sets the ground rules

Required General Plan Elements

LAND USE



HOUSING



CIRCULATION



CONSERVATION



OPEN SPACE



NOISE



SAFETY



AIR QUALITY



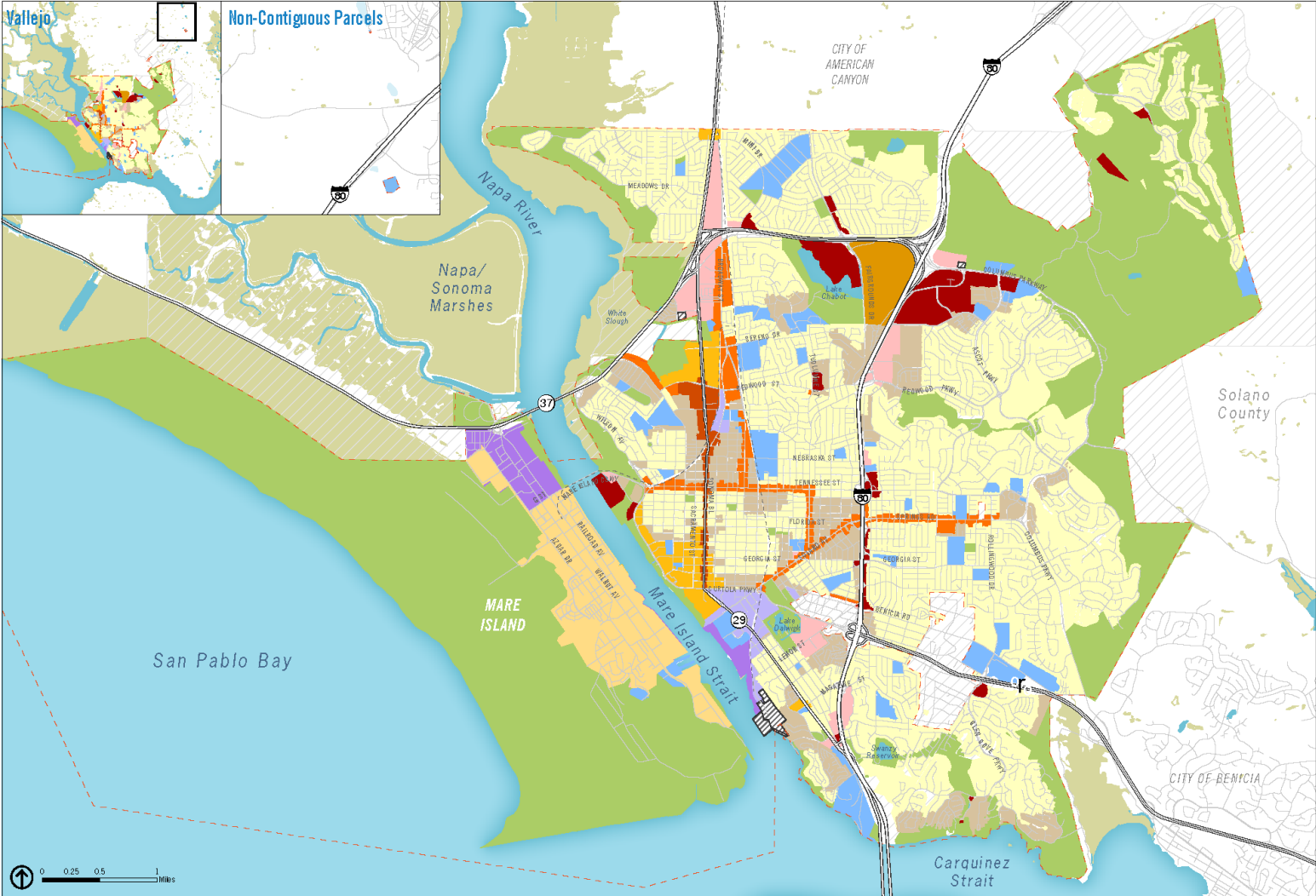
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



General Plan Content



Typical General Plan Land Use Plan



Typical General Plan Circulation Map



Source: City of Vallejo 1999 General Plan; Solano County, 2014; Fehr & Peers, 2016; PlaceWorks, 2016.

Housing Element

- » Updated based on schedule in State law (4 or 8 years)
- » Certified by the State's Department of Housing and Community Development
- » Annual report to the State on implementation
- » Required Contents
 - Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA)
 - Housing need by income category
 - Specific sites zoned for housing at appropriate densities
 - Policies to facilitate housing development
 - Actions to remove barriers to housing production

Zoning

- » **Ordinance that implements and is consistent with General Plan policies**
- » **Prescribes allowable land uses and development standards including:**
 - Building uses.
 - Building size (height, lot coverage and setbacks).
 - Landscaping.
 - Signs and billboards.
 - Parking requirements.
 - Other performance standards.

Zoning

» Traditional “Euclidean” Zoning

- Based on identification and separation of uses.
- Focuses on:
 - Uses
 - Intensity
 - Setbacks
 - Less emphasis on building form

Form Based Zoning

» Based on building form and design.

» Focuses on:

- Building design and mass.
- Building scale, type and context.
- Relationship of buildings to public space.
- Design of streets and public realm.

» Key Components

- Building form.
- Building frontage.
- Building type.
- Roadways.
- Public spaces.
- Architectural detail.

1 DETACHED HOME BUILDING TYPES

A detached home is a residential structure occupied by a single family.

Lot Dimensions

- Width: 30 ft. min, 80 ft. max.
- Depth: 150 ft. max.

Pedestrian and Vehicle Access

- The main entry to a home shall be through the front street facing façade.
- For homes served by an alley, vehicle access to the home shall be provided through the alley where possible.
- Vehicle garages may be attached to or detached from the main structure.

Landscape

- A pathway shall be provided from the public sidewalk to the front entry of the home.
- Maximum percentage of yard areas landscaped with irrigated turf: 50%
- Maximum amount of impervious surface in front and rear yard areas: 25%

Massing and Scale

- Building massing shall be oriented towards the front street.
- Building massing shall be varied through techniques such as recessed porches, bay windows, dormers and other variations in roof form and varying planes or setbacks.
- Façades shall be broken into smaller components through elements such as windows, wall insets, balconies, ledges, trim and stepped-back upper stories.
- Minimum setback of garage from primary front façade of home: 5 ft.

Detached Home - axonometric illustration

Detached Home - plan illustration

Illustrative views of detached homes

PERMITTED IN: NG



16 Draft Downtown Burbank Development Standards | City of Burbank

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Goals

- » Inform decision-makers about environmental effects.
- » Identify ways to avoid environmental damage.
- » Prevent avoidable environmental damage.
- » Disclose to the public why a project is needed, even if it results in environmental damage.

Certifying an environmental document does NOT approve the project or require later approval.

Types of CEQA Documents

» Exemption

- Available when project meets one of many criteria found in State law

» Negative Declaration (ND)

- If project found to have no significant effect on the environment.

» Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)

- Specifies revisions to project plans that can avoid or mitigate effects.

» Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

- If project would have significant effects that cannot be eliminated through redesign or mitigation.

Role of the Planning Commission

» Long Range Planning:

- Creation and amendment of plans and regulations

» Current Planning:

- Only for **discretionary projects**
- No role for **ministerial projects**

» For Discretionary Current Planning Projects:

- Project review
- CEQA review
- Project approval or denial



Thank You!

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