

# I. Introduction & Purpose

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## OVERVIEW OF CONTENTS AND PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

Local governments have the primary responsibility for the planning and regulation of land uses. State law requires that each city and county prepare and adopt a “comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development” of the community. This general plan must cover all incorporated territory and should go beyond the city limits to include “any land outside its boundaries which...bears relation to its planning” (Government Code Section 65300, part of the State Planning and Zoning Law).

The General Plan is a document that should reflect the unique characteristics of the City of Rocklin.

As part of the General Plan update process, the City appointed a General Plan Advisory Committee, which met on a regular basis since the effort was initiated. The City Council and City staff committed time, attention and resources to the update effort to ensure that it resulted in an updated General Plan that reflects the views and vision of the City’s residents. This document is based on the recommendations of the General Plan Advisory Committee.

The first document produced as part of the update effort was the General Plan Background Report, followed by the Constraints, Opportunities and Options Report. Both reports and other documents relating to the General Plan Update process, and the City’s planning process generally, are available at the Community Development Department located on the first floor of the City’s Administration Building. These documents were also distributed to the Rocklin Branch Library. During the update, both reports were also available on the City’s website, [www.rocklin.ca.us](http://www.rocklin.ca.us).

The Background Report contained information concerning the physical and land use planning conditions for the City. The general purpose of the Background Report was to provide a “baseline” or description of existing conditions. The information presented in the Background Report and any subsequent updates will be used as the basis for the “Environmental Setting” portion of the Environmental Impact Report, prepared in conjunction with the updated General Plan.

A Public Opinion Survey of City residents was conducted in January 2002 by Godbe Research & Analysis to provide additional background information for the General Plan Update. The report and results are available in the Community Development Department. The Survey’s Executive Summary, consisting of pages 2 through 5 of the Survey Report, is included as Appendix A of the General Plan.

The Constraints, Opportunities and Options Report provided a means to summarize and proactively utilize information contained in the Background Report, the Public Opinion Survey and other sources. The Report contains a description and discussion of issues that appear pertinent to Rocklin’s future. The discussion focuses on constraints and opportunities present in

the planning environment, along with an overview of options available to address identified concerns.

In February 2005 the City also initiated the preparation of a land use planning document and form based zoning code that would apply specifically to Downtown Rocklin. Preparation of these documents involved an intensive public participation effort described later in this chapter. This work effort also included analysis related to the identification of existing assets and challenges as well as studies addressing economic feasibility, infrastructure, and parking.

The Rocklin General Plan consists of seven elements, as follows:

- Land Use Element
- Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element
- Circulation Element
- Community Safety Element
- Noise Element
- Public Services and Facilities Element
- Housing Element (Available as a separate document)

Chapter II of this General Plan presents a summary of all the goals and policies from six of the seven elements, making them easy for the reader to find (the Housing Element and its associated goals and policies are available in a separately bound document). The Action Plan, which consists of a series of individual action steps designed to carry out and implement the policies of the General Plan, is also included in Chapter II.

Chapter III presents background information on the City of Rocklin, including major physical features of the community, an overview of the City's history, and population information and growth trends.

Six of the seven General Plan elements are presented in their entirety in Chapter IV, in the order listed above (the exception being the Housing Element, which is available as a separate document). Within each element, there is an introduction, background information, and goals and policies. Some of the elements also include diagrams and tabular information that may contain standards such as acceptable noise exposure levels.

The final chapter, Chapter V, discusses implementation of the General Plan. It is followed by a glossary of technical terms used in the General Plan, and various appendices.

## **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

California State law requires each city to adopt a General Plan that describes the direction the city will take concerning its future development. As described in the State of California General Plan Guidelines (Governor's Office of Planning and Research, 2003):

The role of a community's general plan is to act as a "constitution;" a basis for rational decisions regarding a city's or county's long-term physical development. The general plan expresses the community's development goals and embodies

public policy relative to the distribution of future land uses, both public and private...

The General Plan must be comprehensive in nature: geographically comprehensive (covering the entire city as well as areas outside the city limits which bear a relation to the city's planning); and comprehensive with regard to addressing a broad range of issues. It must take a long-term perspective, typically looking 20 years into the future. The horizon year for this General Plan is 2030. Although projections indicate that buildout of land uses (particularly non-residential) will not occur until some time after 2030, for purposes of evaluating items such as traffic, the City has assumed that buildout of all residential development and non-residential development in Rocklin would occur within the 2030 timeframe for purposes of environmental analysis only.

The General Plan must also be "internally consistent." This means that all of the elements of the General Plan must be consistent with one another, and there must also be consistency within each element. Diagrams must be consistent with the text of General Plan elements. Finally, plans for specific areas of the City, both existing plans and those that may be adopted in the future, must be consistent with the General Plan. Examples of existing adopted plans for smaller geographic areas in the City include the Rocklin Redevelopment Plan, the Rocklin Civic Center Plan, the Rocklin Downtown Revitalization Plan, and the Front Street Historical Area Master Plan.

There are seven mandatory "elements," or subject categories, that must be included in the General Plan. These seven elements, or categories, do not exactly match the titles of the seven elements in the Rocklin General Plan; however, the Rocklin General Plan includes all seven mandatory subject categories, as well as two "optional" elements. The seven mandatory elements are land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise and safety. The Rocklin General Plan combines the open space and conservation elements and adds an optional recreation element to create the "Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element." The Rocklin General Plan also includes an optional "Public Services and Facilities Element" to place all goals, policies and discussion of the public services and facilities needed to serve new and existing development in one element.

It should be noted that there are a number of references in the General Plan to the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Rocklin. With the legislation passed by the state dissolving redevelopment agencies, the legal entity known as the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Rocklin no longer exists. However, ABX1-26 and the follow up clean up bill AB1484 did not void existing redevelopment plans, redevelopment project areas, or financing obligations. In addition, the Successor Agency to the Redevelopment Agency does continue to have some rights and legal authority to take limited actions in furtherance of the Rocklin Redevelopment Plan. Therefore, the City has not deleted the various references to redevelopment and the Redevelopment Agency in the General Plan, but rather acknowledges that certain formal references have been preempted by state law, while other policies and actions related to redevelopment generally, and the Rocklin Redevelopment Plan and Project area specifically, are still valid and should be included in the document.

## CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Public participation is essential to the formulation of a general plan that will be accepted and embraced by the community. The City of Rocklin has engaged the community in numerous ways in the process of updating the Rocklin General Plan:

- The City Council appointed the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), consisting of 18 members who live and/or work in the City of Rocklin, representing a cross-section of agencies, businesses and individuals in the community. The Committee met approximately once a month from November, 2001 through June, 2003 and took an active role in reviewing goals and policies for all seven elements, as well as individual land use requests. All meetings were noticed and open to the public, and public comment was solicited. Summary meeting notes were prepared following each meeting.
- A community opinion survey was conducted in January, 2002 to determine residents' level of satisfaction with City services. This random telephone survey was conducted by a professional polling firm using a methodology designed to be statistically valid. Specifically, the City of Rocklin was interested in using the survey research to:
  - gather unbiased, representative data on residents' opinions of local issues such as traffic and growth;
  - identify municipal services that residents value most;
  - determine residents' satisfaction with City programs and services;
  - identify needs that may be priorities for attention in the near future;
  - evaluate residents' overall satisfaction with traffic circulation in Rocklin;
  - determine the effectiveness of the City's communication with citizens *and*
  - gather additional attitudinal, demographic and behavioral information to profile Rocklin residents.
- A Town Hall meeting was held at City Hall in September, 2002 to describe the General Plan update process to the community and seek public input regarding the direction the General Plan should take on major issues facing the City of Rocklin. Notice was sent to interested parties, newspapers, City posting locations and a colorful large poster was distributed and placed at local businesses.
- During the General Plan Update 2001-2004, the City's website ([www.ci.rocklin.ca.us](http://www.ci.rocklin.ca.us)) provided links to all the documents prepared during the General Plan update process, the results of the community survey, as well as meeting agendas.

- In addition to the usual posting of public meeting notices, GPAC meetings and the Town Hall meeting were advertised with display newspaper ads and posting in non-traditional locations to promote public participation.
- In fall of 2004, a Draft General Plan Update document was published and presented to the Planning Commission and City Council at confirmation hearings on December 7, 2004 and January 25, 2005, respectively, to confirm that the work product prepared up to that time would be the preferred plan that should be studied in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project.
- In February 2005 the City initiated a new planning effort focusing on development of a land use and zoning strategy specifically for the Downtown Rocklin Area. The Downtown Rocklin planning effort was led by a 7 member Downtown Plan Committee and included intensive public participation. During “Downtown Immersion Week”, May 16, 2005 through May 19, 2005 the project consultants and City staff conducted numerous public meetings and events including:
  - Meeting with the Redevelopment Advisory Committee and Downtown Plan Committee
  - Meeting with the Heritage Park Committee and Front Street Historic Society
  - Public Workshop: Understanding Downtown Rocklin
  - Storefront Interviews
  - Business Development Focus Groups
  - Downtown Walking Tour
  - Developer Roundtable
  - Public Workshop: Designing the Future of Downtown Rocklin
  - Downtown Rocklin Vision Plan Studio
  - Public Workshop: Presenting the Draft Vision for Downtown Rocklin

These meetings and events were advertised in the local newspaper and on the City website. Direct notification was also provided to various community groups and stakeholders. Attendance levels at all of the events were extremely high.

- Following the Downtown Plan Immersion Week, the consultant and staff completed preparation of the initial planning documents for the Downtown Rocklin Plan including the Draft Downtown Rocklin Plan Regulating Code and Implementation Strategy. These documents were reviewed for conceptual approval by the Downtown Plan Committee on January 11, 2006. The documents were reviewed by the Rocklin Redevelopment Advisory Committee on January 13, 2006 and by the City Council and Planning Commission at a joint meeting held on January 31, 2006. All meetings were conducted as public hearings. At the direction of the City Council and the Planning Commission, key portions of the Downtown Rocklin Plan including land use densities and intensities have been incorporated into the General Plan Update. The more detailed components of the Downtown Plan Regulating Code and Implementation Strategy would be processed as separate planning documents.
- Updates to the technical data contained within the 2004 Draft Plan were completed in 2008.

- Additional public hearings before the Planning Commission and the City Council will be held on the Draft General Plan and Downtown Rocklin Plan prior to final adoption.

## ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental Justice is defined in state planning law as the fair treatment of all races, cultures, and income with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies (Section 65040.12(e)).

The City's goal is to provide a healthy and equitable environment for all citizens. Rocklin is committed to identifying issues related to the consequences of development on disadvantaged groups, and ensuring the fair treatment of people, regardless of ethnicity or socio-economic standing. The City believes that community involvement is essential to achieve this goal, and for effective development within the City. As outlined in the introduction to the General Plan<sup>1</sup>, the City has provided a number of opportunities for citizen involvement in the planning process and the City will continue to encourage public participation and public comment on future development plans.

It is the intent throughout the land use planning process to ensure that land uses are compatible in the community, that residential neighborhoods and schools are protected from excessive noise, harmful air emissions and hazardous materials, and that community facilities are distributed equally. The City strives to identify and analyze Environmental Justice issues in all phases of the land use planning process and the General Plan incorporates the Environmental Justice concepts discussed above. Policies included in the General Plan to balance the impacts and benefits resulting from development for all races, cultures and incomes include the revitalization of Central Rocklin, redevelopment of blighted areas, support of mixed use development and infill development, and encouragement to provide a variety of residential land uses that will meet the future needs of the city.

As one example, the large area designated as High Density Residential within the northwestern portion of the City near Highway 65 has been partially developed to provide opportunities for low and very low income housing within the community. Placement for the development was chosen for its proximity to primary transportation corridors and commercial facilities, as well as community amenities of parks, schools, open space, and pedestrian and bike trails. To remediate impacts of surrounding land uses, a buffer commercial and professional land use zone has been established between the High Density Residential area and Highway 65 to minimize adverse effects such as excessive noise and harmful air emissions. Proximity to community amenities and buffering of residential land uses are land use policies applied consistently throughout the City to lessen impacts of development on residential neighborhoods.

Environmental Justice is a factor to be considered throughout the planning process in every community, even though specific Environmental Justice issues, such as language barriers, may not be directly applicable to Rocklin. Demographic data from Census 2000 reveals that 88.3% of the Rocklin community is white, the median income is in excess of \$64,000\* and only 4.5% of

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<sup>1</sup> A discussion of citizen participation can be found on page 1-3 of the General Plan.

the population is determined to be at poverty status.<sup>2</sup> In light of the homogenous make-up of ethnicity in Rocklin, combined with the high median income, and low percentages of poverty levels, substantive Environmental Justice issues are unlikely to arise within the Rocklin Community in the near term. However, by considering issues of Environmental Justice throughout the planning process for future development, the City will continue to ensure the fair treatment of all races, cultures, and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

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<sup>2</sup> Source: Census 2000, Summary files 1 & 3.

\* Note – The State Department of Housing and Community Development indicates the 2008 median income for a family of 4 in Rocklin is \$71,000.

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that the City consider the environmental impacts of individual projects before approving them. This includes the General Plan. As part of the General Plan process, therefore, the City has prepared and circulated for public review an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that discusses potentially significant impacts, mitigation measures that could be implemented to avoid or minimize such impacts, and the level of significance of the impact after all feasible mitigation measures have been imposed. The EIR, therefore, is an important part of the decision-making process, providing important information concerning the potential environmental impacts of the overall approach to growth and physical development that is eventually adopted in the General Plan.

## SUPERSEDED PLANS

This General Plan supersedes the following plans:

- The 1991 City of Rocklin General Plan and Land Use Diagram and subsequent amendments approved prior to adoption of this General Plan
- The North Rocklin Circulation Element (1994)
- The Rocklin Circulation Element Update – Southeast Rocklin Area (1993)

It should also be noted that many components of the Rocklin Civic Center Plan (1996) have been incorporated into various elements of this General Plan, specifically, policies that apply in a broader City context. A brief overview of the Rocklin Civic Center Plan and a listing of Goals and Policies that remain particular to the Rocklin Civic Center Plan area are presented in the text portion of the Public Services and Facilities Element (Chapter IV-F). The Rocklin Civic Center Plan goals and policies are also included in Chapter II. Revisions to the Rocklin Civic Center Plan considered necessary to eliminate inconsistencies and overlap with the Rocklin Downtown Plan have already been reflected in the 2011 General Plan Document. These changes will be made formally within the Rocklin Civic Center Plan document either concurrently with or following adoption of the 2011 General Plan.