



# I - INTRODUCTION



# I INTRODUCTION

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>General Plan</b> .....	<b>2</b>
Purpose .....	2
The Planning Area.....	2
Organization and Use.....	4
Annexations and Pre-zoning .....	6
<b>Community participation</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>The Vision for Rancho Cordova</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Rancho Cordova in 2050 .....	9

# I INTRODUCTION

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# I INTRODUCTION

## VISION STATEMENT

In “Building a City”, Rancho Cordova will:

- Have a place in the region as a vibrant destination;
- Control its destiny, including the establishment of meaningful boundaries;
- Become a catalyst for change and an example to other cities nationwide of excellence and innovation in government;
- Avoid the pitfalls of other cities, standing on the shoulders of past planning and city-building efforts, and gathering together the best ideas and programs from around the nation and around the world;
- Intentionally seek change in both land use and the scope of the City’s operations to effect profound improvement in the City; and
- Have measurable fiscal success and be able to provide the services and functions that make Rancho Cordova a desirable place to live, work, and play.

## INTRODUCTION

Rancho Cordova is no ordinary City and this is no ordinary General Plan. The residents and leaders of this community dare to dream of a brighter future and have set out to “Build a City”. This General Plan serves as the blueprint to build this City.

Rancho Cordova incorporated in July 2003 with a desire for local control over land uses and services. The City is centrally located in the Sacramento region with a strong job base and an older housing stock that cannot house all of the City’s workforce. Rancho Cordova is rich in history and community pride with a diverse population. As the City grows from a population of 50,000 to more than 300,000 in the Planning Area, the City is focused on maintaining a balanced and unified community, enhancing the City’s existing neighborhoods and services, and becoming a vibrant destination place in the region.



# I INTRODUCTION

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## GENERAL PLAN

### PURPOSE

California law requires each city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan to guide the physical development of the incorporated city and land outside city boundaries that bears a relationship to its planning activities. The General Plan serves as a blueprint for future growth and development; the blueprint to “Build a City”. As such, the plan contains policies and programs designed to provide decision makers with a solid foundation for land use and development decisions. The General Plan organizes the desires of Rancho Cordova residents with respect to the physical, social, economic, and environmental character of the City.

In accordance with California Government Code Section 65302, a General Plan must address the issues of land use, circulation, housing, noise, safety, conservation, and open space. The General Plan also addresses topics of special and unique interest, including urban design, economic development, air quality, historic and cultural resources, infrastructure, services, and finance. These topics are optional, but reflect issues that are important to the community.

According to state law, the General Plan is the primary document the City utilizes to regulate land use. Consequently, the Zoning Ordinance, Specific Plans, and individual public and private development proposals must be consistent with the General Plan goals, policies, and standards. This General Plan is the policy guide for the development (both public and private) of the City of Rancho Cordova. It is the basis for all land use decisions, including subdivisions, capital improvements, development agreements, and many other actions that must be consistent with this plan. The General Plan identifies the City’s land use, circulation, environmental, economic, and social goals and policies. It provides a basis for local government decision-making. Additionally, it informs citizens, developers, and decision-makers, as well as other jurisdictions and public agencies, of the ground rules that guide development within the City.

### THE PLANNING AREA

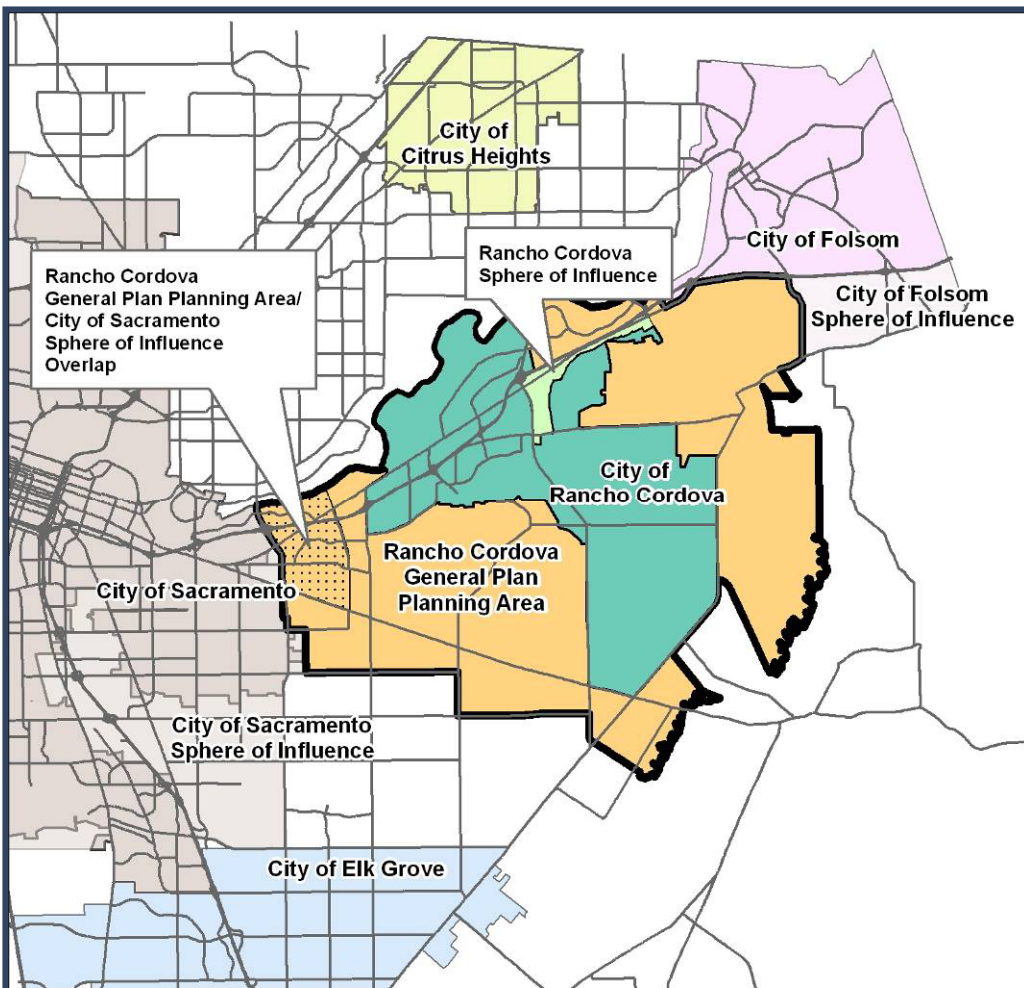
The General Plan for the City of Rancho Cordova addresses all land both within the City limits and an area beyond the City that bears relation to the City’s planning efforts. This area is referred to as the General Plan Planning Area and is illustrated in Figure I-1. Roughly speaking, the General Plan Planning Area is defined as the City plus the developed areas of

# I INTRODUCTION

Rosemont, Larchmont, and Gold River, and the undeveloped areas south of Jackson Highway and east of Grant Line Road.

The area outside of the current City limits represents an area that the City of Rancho Cordova has an interest in guiding land use and circulation decisions for and is envisioned as the area into which the incorporated City boundaries may eventually expand. Currently, Sacramento County has jurisdiction and land use authority over land outside of the City limits that is within the General Plan Planning Area. Additionally, the cities of Sacramento and Folsom have General Plan Planning Area boundaries that overlap the boundaries of Rancho Cordova General Plan Planning Areas. Through policy direction and implementation of this General Plan, it is the City's intent to enter into agreements for cooperative land use and circulation planning for areas outside of the City's jurisdiction that have an impact on the City of Rancho Cordova.

FIGURE I-1  
CITY OF RANCHO CORDOVA AND GENERAL PLAN  
PLANNING AREA



# I INTRODUCTION

## ORGANIZATION AND USE

State law requires that certain topics, or elements, be covered in the General Plan. These include land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, safety, and noise. Additional topics may be covered at the discretion of the City, provided that all topics are elements are consistent with one another. Rancho Cordova has elected to include twelve elements in the General Plan. Table I-1 lists these elements and shows how they relate to the State requirements.

Each of the City's twelve Elements includes the following components:

- **Vision Statement.** The Vision Statement reflects the community's desires for the City's future relative to each individual element.
- **Introduction and Purpose.** This section briefly explains what the Element is intended to do and the reason for the particular Element.
- **Related Plans and Programs.** This section highlights significant plans and programs that are related to a particular element and explains the relationship of such to the City's General Plan.
- **Issues and Considerations.** This section briefly explains the setting of the topic of the element and outlines those real and perceived problems and concerns identified by the community, as well as desires for change or growth.
- **Goals, Policies, and Actions.** The goals are overall statements of community desires and are comprised of broad statements of purpose or direction. The policies serve as guides to the decision makers in reviewing development proposals and making other decisions that affect the future growth and development of the City. Actions are the implementation steps necessary to ensure the goals and policies are carried out.

The General Plan also includes several maps and tables that help to express and describe the vision, objectives, or key components of the plan. The Implementation Chapter establishes an implementation matrix identifying responsible parties, time frame, and funding sources for each of the action items from all of the City's General Plan Elements. The Implementation Program is reviewed annually to update specific actions, schedules, responsible parties and measures to ensure that General Plan goals, policies and plans are implemented. The Glossary provides a set of definitions for technical terms used in the Plan.

The organization of the General Plan allows users to easily locate issues of interest and quickly obtain a perspective on the City's policies on the subject.



## II LAND USE

**TABLE I-1  
ELEMENTS OF THE GENERAL PLAN AND RELATIONSHIP TO STATE LAW**

	Topics Required by State Law							Optional Topic
	Land Use	Circulation	Housing	Conservation	Open Space	Noise	Safety	
Land Use	X			O	O			
Urban Design	O							X
Economic Development	O							X
Housing			X					
Circulation		X						
Open Space, Parks, and Trails		O			X			
Infrastructure, Services, and Finance		O						X
Natural Resources	O			X				
Cultural and Historic Resources	O							X
Safety	O						X	
Air Quality	O	O						X
Noise	O	O				X		

*Notes:*

*X - Indicates that this element directly addresses the State required topic*

*O - Indicates that information in this element is related to the State required topic*

# I INTRODUCTION

## ANNEXATIONS AND PRE-ZONING

This General Plan addresses all land both within the City limits and an area beyond the City that bears relation to the City's planning efforts - the General Plan Planning Area. It is intended to be an area that the City has an interest in guiding land use decisions by the County of Sacramento and is envisioned as the area that the incorporated City boundaries may eventually expand.

Included within the Planning Area, but outside the City limits, is the City's Sphere of Influence. The Sphere of Influence is the probable physical boundaries and service area for the City, as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). The Sphere of Influence boundary includes all City lands and unincorporated lands that may be annexed as part of the ultimate development of the City.

Any annexation of land into the City of Rancho Cordova would need to be consistent with the policies of this General Plan and approved by LAFCo. As part of the process of annexation the land in question will be prezoned. Any prezoning applied to an annexation area needs to be consistent with this General Plan.

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION



Over the last two years, the General Plan Team has engaged the community and its decision makers in more than 50 workshops, stakeholder meetings, study sessions, and public hearings to understand the vision and desires for Rancho Cordova and to develop the blueprint to build that future City. Hundreds of residents, employees, business owners, and other stakeholders have spent countless hours sharing ideas, expressing views, debating policies, and making hard decisions with the intent of creating a General Plan that is right for Rancho Cordova. Public participation on the development and review of the City's General Plan is summarized below.

- **Visioning Workshops.** The General Plan Team facilitated four Visioning Workshops throughout the community to introduce the General Plan project, provide context for Building a City, and to solicit input on desires for the future of Rancho Cordova.

# I INTRODUCTION

- **Surveys.** Three individual surveys were prepared for the General Plan as listed below. Each of the surveys was distributed at public and stakeholder group meetings and made available electronically on the City’s website.
  - A General Plan Survey to better understand who lives here and why, as well as the likes and dislikes of the existing community (translated in Spanish and Russian).
  - A Visual Preference Survey to better understand community preferences on urban design and community form.
  - A Downtown Survey to better understand the desired role and targeted uses of a new Downtown Rancho Cordova.
- **Stakeholder Meetings.** The General Plan Team facilitated or attended several stakeholder meetings with property owners, Economic Development Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Neighborhood Associations, Local Community Organizations, Habitat 2020, Building Industry Association, SMUD, Air Quality District, and Walk Sacramento on a variety of topics during the development and review of the Draft General Plan.
- **General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) Meetings.** The GPAC held ten meetings on a variety of General Plan topics including the context of a future City and corresponding land use considerations, the “Building Block” concept (neighborhoods, villages, and districts), and the potential creation of a Downtown. The Committee also discussed housing issues, policies, and programs. In an effort to allow careful consideration of issues for each of the 12 General Plan Elements, the GPAC split into two groups for the identification of key issues the elements should solve and the review of preliminary goals and policies and diagrams (including the Land Use Map and conceptual land use plans for several Planning Areas). On April 20, 2006 the GPAC provided final comments and recommendations on the Draft General Plan for consideration and action by the Planning Commission and City Council.
- **Planning Commission Public Hearings.** As General Plan Advisory Committee members, the Planning Commissioners were engaged in the development and review of the General Plan. The Planning Commission held public hearings April 13, 2006 regarding the adequacy of the Draft General Plan EIR and June 8, 2006 to provide a formal recommendation to the City Council on the project.
- **City Council Study Sessions, Meetings, and Hearings.** The City Council held 22 meetings on the General Plan and adopted Interim General Plan documents



# I INTRODUCTION

including the Vision Book, Draft Land Use Map Book, and Draft Circulation Plan. In April 2006, the City Council conducted two day-long study sessions with the Planning Commission to review all 12 elements of the Draft General Plan. In May 2006, the City Council provided final policy direction to staff and directed staff to proceed with required analysis prior to adoption of the General Plan and certification of the EIR.

## THE VISION FOR RANCHO CORDOVA



Rancho Cordova will be known as a vibrant community where people love to live, work and play. Rancho Cordova is not a suburb, not simply an employment center – it is a City, a regional destination place. A healthy mix of land uses, including public spaces, services, culture, open space and recreation, in addition to well-planned roadways, public transportation routes and trails will be emphasized in the City’s land use pattern. An integrated network of neighborhoods, villages, and districts will be emphasized as building blocks for the community’s growth and revitalization.



The City will have a unifying image and identity that reflects the pride in the community history and the desire for a brighter future. The quality of the built environment will be reflected in the character of the neighborhoods, the walkable streets, the unified architectural details and landscaping, and the dynamics of the public spaces. Vibrant mixed-use projects will be designed for activity at the core of villages, districts, and transit stations. Residential neighborhoods will include a diverse range of housing types that create a strong sense of community and identity in a walkable environment.



All areas of the City will be served by public transit and easily accessible from the City’s trail system. Civic spaces will provide a gathering place for socializing, playing, and experiencing culture and music. Parks, schools, and other community assets will be built into the neighborhoods and scaled and designed as active neighborhood centers.



Downtown will be centrally located with compact mixed-use and transit-oriented development, where residents and visitors can live, work, shop, dine, and be entertained. The Downtown will be a lively and safe place to gather during the day, at night, and on the weekends. The Downtown skyline will be visible from surrounding jurisdictions.

# I INTRODUCTION

Open spaces and creek corridors will provide connections to the American River Parkway, Cosumnes River, the local trail system, and other regional amenities in the area. Residents will be able to walk from their homes to a local bus stop and ride transit to and from work. Recreational opportunities will be available throughout the community with trails, parks, and athletic facilities.



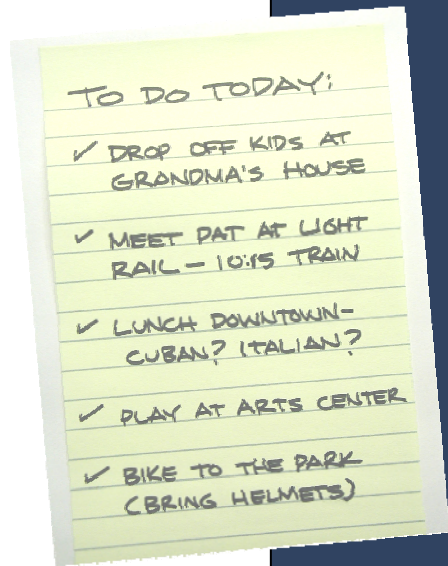
All age groups will be represented in the community. There will be support services and activities for the young and old. Rancho Cordova will be known for its multi-cultural presence in the region. It will embrace the many cultures that define the community and its history. The community's history will be proudly displayed through cultural events and public exhibits.



## RANCHO CORDOVA IN 2050

What will the City of Rancho Cordova be like in 2050? Here are examples of life in the community as it is envisioned by the residents and the City's decision-makers:

- Rancho Cordova will be easy to get around in. A wide variety of travel will be available, from light rail to personal vehicles to bicycling and walking. Traffic will be reduced, and drivers will find it easy to reach destinations in Rancho Cordova and outside the city.
- People will feel safe working, living, and playing in our community. Young people will have many options for activities, providing safe, healthy alternatives to crime and gang activity.
- The city will have an identifiable look and feel. You will know immediately that you are in Rancho Cordova—the quality of the built environment, the character of the neighborhoods, and the dynamics of the City's public spaces will be a draw for persons throughout the region.



# I INTRODUCTION



- Rancho Cordova will be a city full of open spaces and opportunities for exercise and recreation. Trails and open spaces will be integrated into the City's neighborhoods, linking people with shopping areas, public areas ... and with other people. Civic gathering places will be focuses of activity, places where the community comes together to meet, to hear music and see plays, and to experience other cultures. Schools and parks will be integral parts of the community, providing additional opportunities for recreation, arts, or just peace and quiet.
- Rancho Cordova will be a multicultural city that recognizes and celebrates the many cultures that make up its neighborhoods. The City's public spaces and commercial areas will be important places for making connections with the people, foods, and ideas of other cultures and nationalities.
- The City will be an exciting place for residents of all ages. The City's population will be older than it is today, with more maturing households, and the City will respond by providing a wider range of housing opportunities.
- Rancho Cordova will have an identifiable downtown—a place where people gather to work, shop, enjoy a meal, and take part in civic and cultural events. Everyone will know where the downtown is, and the downtown will be a place that helps bring together the City's residents.

