

B. Overview of the General Plan

1. Purpose of the General Plan

The General Plan for the City of Palmdale has been prepared pursuant to California Code Section 65300, which requires that each city and county within the state “adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and of any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning”.

The General Plan serves as a foundation in making land use decisions based on goals and policies related to land use, transportation routes, population growth and distribution, development, open space, resource preservation and utilization, air and water quality, noise impacts, safety issues and other related physical, social and economic development factors. In addition to serving as a basis for local decision making, the General Plan established a clear set of development rules for citizens, developers, decision makers, neighboring cities and counties, and provides the community with an opportunity to participate in the planning and decision making process.

The purpose of this General Plan is to comply with state requirements, and to provide the City with a comprehensive, long-range policy guideline for future development.

2. Scope of the General Plan

In accordance with California Government Code Section 65302, the General Plan must contain discussion in the following areas: a) land use; b) circulation; c) housing; d) conservation; e) open space; f) noise; and g) safety. This General Plan contains elements addressing these areas, as well as a Public Service Element. In the future, it is the City’s intent to adopt elements for Community Design and Parks, Recreation and Trails. The issues of conservation and open space have been combined in the City’s Environmental Resources Element. Each of the elements contain diagrams and text setting forth goals, policies, actions and implementation measures for long-range physical development within the City’s incorporated boundaries and sphere of influence areas.

Development within the incorporated boundaries of the City will be directly guided by the goals and policies contained in the General Plan. As specified in Government Code Section 65300, the General Plan must also address “any land outside its boundaries which...bears relation to its planning”. Therefore, the General Plan has considered all land within the City’s adopted sphere of influence, as well as a three (3) square mile area bisected by Godde Hill Road (see Exhibit I-3). The General Plan functions as a

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means of formally communicating with the City's concerns and issues are in regards to development proposals, master planning of infrastructure, pre-zoning sphere areas prior to annexation, preservation of open space and resource conservation lands, and other related planning issues which may impact the orderly growth of the City.

In developing goals and policies for the City's General Plan, regional issues pertaining to transportation, housing, open space, infrastructure, coordination of emergency services, and other physical, social and economic concerns were considered.

3. Development of the General Plan

The City's General Plan has evolved from numerous studies and public hearings involving a Citizen Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission and the City Council. All issues and concerns identified during the public hearing process were evaluated and addressed. This input provided valuable assistance to staff and consultants in refining the document.

4. Citizen Input

California Government Code Section 65351 states that during preparation of the General Plan "...opportunities for the involvement of citizens...and other community groups" be provided "through public hearings and any other means the city...deems appropriate".

In accordance with state law and the recognition of the importance and value of citizen involvement, the City has created numerous opportunities for citizen participation throughout the General Plan development process.

As noted above, a 21-member Citizen Advisory Committee was established to review the General Plan Elements. The CAC met regularly from 1988 to 1989. Community ideas were exchanged and concerns and issues were identified and addressed during a number of advertised public meetings. Meeting dates, times and locations were published in the Antelope Valley Press, and notices were posted in three public areas in the City.

Between 1990 and 1991, the Planning Commission held 23 public meetings on the General Plan. In 1991, the planning process was interrupted due to the City's attention to other development issues, but public meetings before the Planning Commission resumed in March 1992. Earlier drafts of the General Plan maps and text were revised to address existing conditions in 1992, and the traffic model was run again based on revised land use assumptions. Between March and October, 1992 the Planning Commission held a total of 12 public meetings to review the final draft General Plan,

providing the community with an avenue for expressing ideas and concerns relating to the General Plan. The City Council began its formal review of the General Plan on November 19, 1992 and concluded a series of 7 hearings on January 25, 1993, on which date the Council certified the EIR and adopted the General Plan.

5. Adoption of the General Plan

On January 25, 1993, the City Council of the City of Palmdale adopted Resolution No. 93-10, certifying the Environmental Impact Report and approving the General Plan.

6. Consistency of General Plan Elements

The General Plan has been prepared in accordance with California Government Code Section 65300.5, which specifies that the "General Plan and elements...comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies". Consistency among the Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Environmental Resources, Safety, Noise, and Public Service Elements of the General Plan is reflected in the goals, policies, actions, implementation programs and maps contained therein.

7. Consistency with Zoning

Current zoning within the City may not be in conformance with the objectives, policies, land uses, and programs specified in the City's General Plan. Therefore, it is the intent of the City to prepare a revised zoning map and Zoning Ordinance for the City of Palmdale, which will be consistent with the General Plan's goals and policies.

8. Amending the General Plan

It is the intent of this General Plan to provide a flexible planning tool for the community to utilize in achieving its long-term goals. The General Plan must respond to changing community needs, values, and environmental conditions to ensure continued effectiveness of the plan. Monitoring of the Plan will be accomplished through annual reviews that will help in determining when revisions are necessary. State law permits up to four amendments a year; however, major updates to the plan will be undertaken every five to seven years to reflect new conditions, local attitudes and policy changes.

9. Implementing the General Plan

As specified in each of the following elements, implementation of the General Plan will occur in many forms. Through formulation and adoption of land use policies and regulations such as the City Zoning Ordinance, through the development review process conducted by the Development Advisory Board and the Planning Commission,

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through adoption of ordinances, specific plans, financing programs, enforcement actions, and other means, the City will implement the goals and policies contained in the Plan. In order to ensure implementation and provide a measure of compliance with the Plan's directives, each element outlines specific actions to be completed by the City. When the General Plan is updated—at five to seven year intervals—it is intended that these actions be reviewed to ascertain the City's success in meeting General Plan goals.