

1 SETTING + ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN

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State of California Government Code section 65300.5 requires that the General Plan provide an “integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency.”

**Exhibit 1
Item 7-B, April 22, 2019
Planning Board Meeting**



1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Alameda General Plan (General Plan) is a statement of goals, objectives, policies and actions to guide and manage changes to the physical, economic, social, and environmental conditions in Alameda, California. This Alameda General Plan has been prepared to comply with the requirements of California Government Code Sections 65302 and 65303. The Government Code mandates that each California city and county have a comprehensive, long-range, internally consistent plan for its future development. The plan must address seven topics, usually referred to as elements. The required elements are land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, safety, and noise.

It reflects a diverse and wide range of citizens' preferences, needs and objectives, and it is:

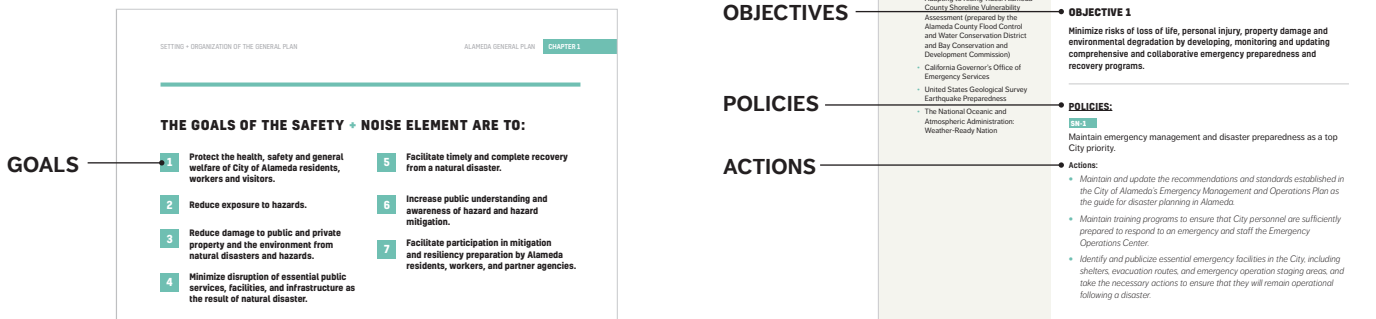
- **Forward-Thinking:** *The General Plan considers the past and present conditions and trends and looks forward to address how change should be managed, unique and valuable characteristics of the community should be protected, improved or enhanced, and where and how new community needs should be addressed.*
- **Comprehensive:** *The General Plan considers all major components of the community's physical, economic, social, and environmental development. The Plan considers the needs of the entire community and all neighborhoods and business districts.*
- **General:** *Because it is forward-thinking and comprehensive, the General Plan is general. It is specific enough to guide decision-making by elected officials, appointed officials, city staff, residents and business owners, but general enough to allow for unforeseen issues and challenges.*

- **Policy Guidance, not Regulatory:** The General Plan guides decision-making, it does not regulate. The City Council and Planning Board will use the General Plan when evaluating land use changes and making funding and budget decisions. It will be used by the Zoning Administrator and City staff to help regulate development proposals and make decisions on projects. The Alameda Municipal Code regulates the use of land and actions necessary to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare. The Alameda Municipal Code zoning and subdivisions codes are adopted to implement General Plan policies. All local land use regulations and codes are reviewed to ensure consistency with the General Plan.
- **Evolving:** The General Plan can and should be amended when necessary. Community needs and priorities change over time in response to changing community, regional, and global conditions. To ensure that the General Plan always reflects current community needs and priorities requires that the Plan be amended when necessary to reflect these changes. The City annually reviews the status of the General Plan to ensure that it reflects current community objectives and State requirements. Requests for amendments may be submitted by individuals or may be initiated by the City itself. Pursuant to State and local law, any proposed amendment to the General Plan must be considered at a noticed public hearing before the City of Alameda Planning Board, which would make a recommendation on the amendment to the Alameda City Council. Upon receiving the Planning Board's recommendation, the City Council will hold a public hearing to consider the amendment and make a decision on the proposed amendment.

The Alameda General Plan has ten chapters or “elements”. Each chapter or element addresses a different subject matter and identifies the community’s **goals** in respect to that subject matter while setting forth a series of **policies**, and in some cases, **actions** to achieve those goals. **Policies** in each element are identified by a policy number and two letters, which identify the element and the policy (such as “SN-1”, which means **Safety and Noise Element Policy Number 1**). Using a consistent numbering system allows for easy reference and helps ensure that the General Plan does not include conflicting policies, which could confuse consistent decision-making and hinder progress toward achieving community objectives. Throughout the General Plan additional information is located under of the page called “**spotlights**”. This information is intended to help explain certain policies or programs in the City relevant to the element’s subject matter.

GRAPHIC GUIDELINES FOR THE GENERAL PLAN

Using excerpts from the General Plan, here is a guide to the graphics that signal the important concepts included in the General Plan: **Goals, Objectives, Policies, Actions and Spotlights**.



THE ALAMEDA GENERAL PLAN IS ORGANIZED AS FOLLOWS:

1 SETTING + ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL

Setting and Organization of the General Plan introduces the General Plan objectives and purposes, and the major themes that run through all the elements of the Plan.

2 THE LAND USE ELEMENT

The Land Use Element establishes the policies for the use, development, and preservation of land in Alameda, including lands in residential neighborhoods, business areas, mixed use areas, parks, and conservation areas.

3 THE CITY DESIGN ELEMENT

The City Design Element provides policies to enhance Alameda's design quality and maintain its strong architectural and visual character.

4 THE TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

The Transportation Element provides policies to maintain and improve mobility and transportation choices. Policies address the use and design of streets, transportation systems management programs, transit services and facilities, pedestrian routes, bikeways, and movement of goods. The element is organized by modes of travel (e.g., bicycles, transit, autos, etc.) and transportation issues (e.g., traffic safety, parking, etc.). Maps identify the city's existing and future circulation systems.

5 THE HOUSING ELEMENT

The Housing Element provides policies related to the maintenance, improvement, and expansion of housing opportunities in Alameda. The Housing Element provides an inventory of housing opportunity sites to accommodate the City's regional and local housing needs.

6 THE OPEN SPACE + CONSERVATION ELEMENT

The Open Space and Conservation Element includes policies for management of types of open space lands and sets out policies for conservation of both natural and cultural resources.

7 THE PARKS RECREATION, SHORELINE ACCESS, SCHOOLS, AND CULTURAL FACILITIES

The Parks and Recreation, Shoreline Access and Development, Schools and Cultural Facilities Element provides policies for the preservation, enhancement, and expansion of these critical community facilities.

8 THE SAFETY + NOISE ELEMENT

The Safety and Noise Element identifies the policies and strategies necessary to reduce the risk of death, injuries, property damage, environmental degradation, economic and social dislocation, and excessive and harmful noise from the natural and man-made hazards and noise affecting the community.

9 THE ALAMEDA POINT ELEMENT

The Alameda Point Element contains site-specific policies regarding land use, transportation, open space, cultural resources, and health and safety to address the redevelopment of the former Alameda Naval Air Station.

10 THE NORTHERN WATERFRONT ELEMENT

The Northern Waterfront Element contains site-specific policies regarding land use, transportation, open space, and cultural resources, and health and safety to address the redevelopment of the former maritime industrial areas along the Alameda – Oakland Estuary.

S SPOTLIGHT

ALAMEDA MILESTONES

- **1776**
Settlement by non-natives began. Alameda derived its original name, “the Encinal,” from the stands of native oaks.
- **1849**
The California Gold Rush brings Americans and Northern Europeans to San Francisco Bay.
- **1851**
William Worthington Chipman and Gideon Aughinbaugh purchased the Encinal.
- **1853**
The name “Alameda,” meaning “grove of poplar trees,” was given to the City as a poetic gesture upon popular vote.
- **1872**
3 separate settlements, the Town of Alameda, Encinal and adjacent lands, and Woodstock, were established.
- **1902**
Tidal Canal was completed and Alameda became an island. Shipyards and Neptune Beach were realized.
- **1920-1930**
Era of civic building, followed by political scandal and corruption.
- **1940**
During WWII, The Naval Air Station was commissioned and the City’s population reached 89,000.
- **1970-1990**
300 homes built per year and approval of the last large residential project on Bay Farm Island.
- **1996**
Closure of NAS Alameda Naval Station. City loses over 16,000 jobs.
- **2000-2010**
Adoption of Alameda Point General Plan Element. Bay Port Neighborhood developed at the NAS Alameda.
- **2019**
Alameda’s population is 80,000 with an estimated 25,000 jobs.

1.2 A BRIEF HISTORY OF ALAMEDA

Alameda in its natural state was a peninsula covered by a dense forest of coastal live oak. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish and Mexicans it was inhabited by Coastal Miwoks who sustained themselves through hunting, fishing and gathering. Settlement by non-natives began in 1776 after Luis Peralta divided part of his large East Bay land grant, the Rancho San Antonio, among his four sons. Alameda derived its original name, “the Encinal,” from the large stands of native oaks (“encino” means “oak” in Spanish) on the Main Island. The name “Alameda,” meaning “grove of poplar trees,” was given to the City as a poetic gesture upon popular vote in 1853.

In 1849, the California Gold Rush brought Americans and Northern Europeans to the San Francisco Bay. Many made their fortunes in supplying goods and services to the region’s burgeoning population. Among these were two young entrepreneurs, William Worthington Chipman and Gideon Aughinbaugh, who purchased the Encinal from Antonio Maria Peralta for \$14,000 in 1851, the year after California became a state. They subdivided the land and sold tracts for residences and orchards. By 1872, three separate settlements, the Town of Alameda, Encinal and adjacent lands, and Woodstock, were established in the east, central and western sections of the peninsula. The Town of Alameda was granted a charter by the State Legislature in 1854; incorporation of all peninsula settlements under one local government occurred in 1872.

Early growth of residential, commercial and industrial areas depended upon water and rail transportation and an excellent climate. (See Figure 1-1, Alameda and Surrounding Areas in 1908) The City’s industrial waterfront and small commercial districts (“the stations”) were developed in conjunction with rail improvements, while neighborhoods of Victorian homes and beach resorts were built attracting tens of thousands of weekend visitors. Major shipyards and Neptune Beach (the “Coney Island of the West”) were established along the northern and southern shores to take advantage of the island’s coastal assets. In 1902, the Tidal Canal was completed and Alameda became an island.

In the decades between 1920 and 1970 the City witnessed cycles of boom and bust. Following an enlightened era of civic building during the 1920s, Alameda endured difficult years of political scandal and corruption through the 1930s. The entry of the United States into World War II focused the City’s attention on the war effort. During World War II, shifts ran around the clock at the Alameda Naval Air Station (commissioned in 1940) and in the City’s shipyards, and the City’s population reached an all-time high of 89,000.



Figure 1.1: Alameda and Surrounding Areas in 1908

By 1973 concern about the replacement and ultimate loss of Victorian homes by boxy apartment buildings and the prospect of apartment developments on Bay Farm Island led to passage of initiative Measure A. This measure prohibited approval of multiple dwelling units within the City. Despite this restriction, an average of 300 homes per year were built between 1970 and 1990, mainly on Bay Farm Island.

In 1991 the City adopted a General Plan for the period 1990 through 2010, and in 1993, the Federal Government announced that it would be closing NAS Alameda, which had occupied the western third of Alameda since the 1940's. The departure of the Navy by 1996 resulted in a loss of over 16,000 jobs in Alameda, but also provided an opportunity for the community to re-envision a future for the western third of the island. That planning effort resulted in a Community Reuse Plan for the NAS lands in 1996, which envisioned new mixed-use, waterfront communities and neighborhoods with over 300 acres of waterfront open space, parks, and conservation areas. The Alameda Landing/ Bayport General Plan Amendment was adopted in 1999.

During the first decade of the 2000's, the Alameda community continued to plan for the future of the former Naval Air Station, the changing economic conditions along its northern waterfront and commercial main streets, and the increasing need for affordable housing. The Alameda Point General Plan Element was adopted in 2003 and updated in 2014, the Northern Waterfront Element was adopted in 2007, and comprehensive Housing Element updates occurred in 2005; 2012, and 2014, and a comprehensive Safety and Noise Element update was adopted in 2016.

By 2019, Alameda has grown to be a vibrant mixed-use community with a population of approximately 79,000 individuals and an estimated 25,000 jobs. Alameda does not have any freeways or a BART Station, but it has added two ferry terminals and is beginning construction on a third.



1.3 LOOKING AHEAD: ALAMEDA IN 2040

Located at the center of a growing and changing San Francisco Bay Area, Alameda's next 20 years will be a period of change presenting both challenges and opportunities for the Alameda community.

Population Growth and Housing:

By 2040, the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area is projected to add 1.1 million jobs, 2.1 million people and 660,000 homes, for a total of 4.5 million jobs, 9.3 million people and 3.4 million homes. The increase in population and jobs creates housing pressures and challenges and economic opportunities in cities at the center of the Bay Area, including Alameda. Housing shortages and employment growth will also continue to contribute to worsening congestion on the regional freeway and transit systems, including Alameda's connecting network of streets, roads, and transit systems.

Alameda is required to provide for its share of the growing regional housing need, and Alameda's rate of growth over the next 20 years will be largely dictated by this regional housing need allocation. Depending on regional economic conditions, the City's regional housing obligation will result in the construction of approximately 5,000 to 6,000 new units over the next 20 years. The new housing will result in approximately 11,000 to 12,000 additional residents living in Alameda in 2040 --a 14% increase in population over the next 20 years, matching the 1940 population of 89,000.

The additional residents will be primarily located in Alameda's two designated priority development areas at the former Naval Air Station property and the former industrial lands along the northern waterfront in Alameda. Locations for additional housing elsewhere in the City of Alameda are limited to accessory units in single family neighborhoods and a limited number of mixed use opportunity sites along the Park Street and Webster Street corridors. Therefore it may be assumed that Alameda's existing historic neighborhoods and commercial main streets will look very similar in 2040 as they do today.



Transportation and Climate Change:

Over the next twenty years, transportation and climate change will likely be the two main issues confronting the Alameda community. Given that the Bay Area population and regional freeway congestion are both projected to increase over the next 20 years, improving transportation choices for Alameda residents and businesses will continue to be a primary focus of community discussions and City and regional decision-making and action. These discussions, decisions and actions will also be influenced by the community's increasing understanding and concern about the impacts of climate change and sea level rise in Alameda. Flood protection, green-house gas emission reductions through changes in travel choices are increasingly important issues for community discussion and City decision-making and investments over the next 20 years.

This General Plan provides a policy framework to guide these future decisions to meet the communities objectives and priorities, as articulated in the following Themes of the General Plan.



Job Growth and Employment:

Over the next 20 years, the San Francisco Bay Area is expected to remain a global leader and center for the development of new technologies, research, development, and innovation. The growing Bay Area economy is expected to create opportunities for business and job growth in Alameda and increased on-island employment opportunities for Alameda residents. Alameda has the available land and capacity to support 10,000 -13,000 new jobs during the next twenty years. Most of the new jobs will be located at Alameda Point, which has over 100 vacant acres zoned for commercial use. A significant number of new jobs may also locate along the Northern Waterfront and in the Harbor Bay Business Park.



1.4 THEMES OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan's policies reinforce five broad themes:

An island: Arriving in Alameda is an event – a journey across or through the water that clearly establishes the City's boundaries and identity. General Plan policies strengthen the awareness of the City's island setting by making the shoreline more visible and accessible.

Small town feeling: Alameda has always been a quiet, predominantly residential community, an ideal urban/suburban community created in an era when commutes were by rail or ferry. General Plan policies manage change to retain Alameda's small town feeling.

Respect for history: The City's rich and diverse residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional architecture is continually gaining recognition as an irreplaceable asset. The General Plan emphasizes restoration and preservation of these historical assets as essential to Alameda's economic, social and cultural environment.

Preparing for Climate Change and Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Alameda, with its island geography, is uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Anticipated sea level rise, rising ground water levels, and increased coastal flooding due to high tides and storms have the potential to significantly impact the quality of life for every Alameda resident. For these reasons, the General Plan policies support citywide goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through changes in travel behavior, energy use choices, and construction requirements. Policies also support actions necessary to prepare for rising seas through infrastructure improvements, expansion of natural conservation areas, marshes, and wetlands, and flood protection strategies and regulations.



The General Plan emphasizes restoration and preservation as essential to Alameda's economic and cultural environment.



De-emphasis of the automobile: In a city where almost every street is a residential street, it is not surprising that increased traffic is seen as a major threat to the quality of life. The General Plan commits Alameda to vigorous support of transit improvements, ferry service, reduction of peak-hour use of single-occupant vehicles, bicycle safety improvements, and an enjoyable and safe pedestrian environment.

Multi-use development on the Northern Waterfront and Alameda Point: General Plan policies direct major new employment opportunities, maritime businesses and new housing to meet regional housing needs to the Alameda Point and Northern Waterfront priority development areas.