Ventura County General Plan
Designing a Healthier Community

Social Determinants of Health Series
November 16, 2018
Ventura County | Resource Management Agency - Planning Division
What is a General Plan?

- Every city and county in California must have a general plan.
- Long-term policy framework for future growth, development, and resource management.
- Addresses County priorities, such as sustainability, healthy living, and quality of life.
- Guides budget decisions and priorities.
DID YOU KNOW?

A General Plan impacts your daily life and can help create a healthy community

Here are some examples...
A General Plan identifies what land uses go where.

Land uses include:

- Residential development
- Commercial and industrial development
- Open space and agricultural land
- Recreation areas and parks
- Solid waste facilities

Land use decisions directly impact our quality of life.
A General Plan impacts how people get around within the County

- Location of major thoroughfares and regional roads
- Transportation routes
- Bicycle paths
- Congestion management and parking demand

Transportation decisions directly impact our quality of life
A General Plan identifies how the County plans to address its housing needs:

- High density multi-family housing
- Emergency shelters
- Farmworker housing
- Senior housing
- Accessory dwelling units

Housing options and availability directly impact our quality of life.
All of these issues (and more!) can be addressed in a General Plan

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What is Healthy Community Design?

Planning and designing communities that make the healthy choice the easy choice
Healthy Community Design Principles

- Mixed-land use: homes, shops, schools, and work are close together
- Public transit
- Pedestrian and bicycle-friendly
- Housing for different incomes and different stages of life
- Green spaces and parks that are easy to walk to
- Safe public places for social interaction
- Fresh, healthy food outlets
Healthy Community Design Benefits

• Increase access to healthy food
• Easier to include physical activity into everyday life
• Increase social connectivity and sense of community
• Ensure social equity for all community members
• Promote good mental health
• Improve air and water quality
• Lower the risk of traffic-related injuries
General Plan Update – New Guiding Principle

Healthy Communities

Promote economic, social, and physical health and wellness by investing in infrastructure that promotes physical activity, access to healthy foods, supporting the arts and integrating Health in All Policies into the built environment.
How Would You Rate Ventura County as a Healthy Community?
What do you think makes a healthy community?

- Healthy Behaviors and Lifestyles: 64
- Low Crime / Safe Neighborhoods: 61
- Clean Environment: 57
- Access to health care (e.g. family doctor): 54
- Good Jobs and Healthy Community: 48
- Safe Places To Walk, Ride A Bicycle, Or Ride A Horse (Multi-Use Trails): 46
What do you think are the three most important health problems in our community?

- Aging problems (e.g., arthritis, hearing/vision loss, falls etc.): 51 responses
- Mental health problems: 45 responses
- Lack of good paying jobs: 40 responses
What do you think are the most important risky behaviors in our community?

(Beaviors which have the greatest impact on overall community health)
Overall Quality of Life

Rated Excellent or Good

- Overall quality of life in the County: 85%
- As a place to raise a family: 80%
- As a place to work: 63%
- As a place to retire: 62%
Survey Results – Highlights Related to Healthy Communities

- Improve local access to healthy foods
- Promote the use of alternative forms of transportation including transit, ride-sharing, walking and biking
- Build housing that is affordable to middle-income households
- Enhance services and programs to assist homeless residents
- Maintain and improve high quality parks, trails, and recreation facilities
- Pursue economic growth that enhances the County's quality of life and environmental sustainability
How Does the County Health Care Agency (HCA) Fit into the General Plan?

- Empower the community, promote health and emergency preparedness, and prevent disease, injury, and disability.
- Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts.

HCA Mission/Public Health Essential Services
Turning HCA Mission into Polices

**Safety Element**
Ensure hospitals and shelters are outside of the 100-year flood plain

**Circulation Element**
Provide pedestrian facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities and ensure that roadways address accessibility and universal design concepts

**Housing Element**
Surplus County-owned land shall be evaluated for lower-income housing
Examples of General Plan Policies

• Encourage the equitable availability of healthy, affordable food outlets within close proximity of all residences through land use policy and incentives

• Encourage greater community use of existing parks and open spaces by improving safety and access in and around parks and open spaces

• Allow for the development of additional recycling, anaerobic digestion, composting, and manufacturing facilities to help address food insecurity and food waste

• Promote a healthy built environment by designing buildings and sites for healthy living and working conditions, including enhanced pedestrian-oriented circulation, lighting, attractive and open stairs, and universal accessibility
WHERE CAN A PLAN TAKE US?
General Plan Update Project Schedule

1. Initiate Project
   COMPLETED

2. Prepare the Background Report
   COMPLETED

3. Affirm the Vision and Guiding Principles
   COMPLETED

4. Evaluate Alternatives
   Winter 2017 to Fall 2018
   COMPLETED

5. Prepare the Draft General Plan
   Fall 2018 to Spring 2019

6. Conduct Environmental Review
   Winter 2018 to Spring 2020

7. Prepare Final Documents and Adoption
   Winter 2019 to Spring 2020

Initiated in December 2015, scheduled for completion in Spring 2020
QUESTIONS?

Want to join our interested parties list?
Contact: clay.downing@ventura.org

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