



III. MAJOR STRATEGIES

This section on Major Strategies identifies the principal objectives of the General Plan. This discussion is intended to provide a concise, very simplified statement of the central themes of the Plan. The Major Strategies are also intended to provide a broad framework for consistent interpretation and application of the Plan's individual goals and policies.

The Major Strategies of this General Plan establish the basic framework for planning in San José. The strategies also express the philosophy that the City should take a leadership role in the planning process, while encouraging community and private sector participation. All of the strategies are interrelated and supportive of each other. There is no hierarchy of importance intended by the order in which they are presented.

The Economic Development Major Strategy is designed to maximize the economic potential of the City's land resources while providing employment opportunities for San José's residents. The Growth Management Major Strategy addresses the need to balance the urban facilities and services demands of new development with the need to balance the City's budget. Infill development within urbanized areas is identified as an important means of controlling service costs through increased efficiency. The Downtown Revitalization Major Strategy emphasizes

the importance of a prominent and attractive Downtown as a catalyst that will bring new investment, residents, business visitors and new life to the center city.

The Urban Conservation/Preservation Major Strategy underscores the importance of protecting and enhancing San Jose's neighborhoods to promote residents' pride in the quality of their living environments. And the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary Major Strategy is directed to preserving the scenic backdrop of the hillsides surrounding San José, preserving land that protects water, habitat or agricultural resources, and offers recreational opportunities.

The Housing Major Strategy acknowledges the City's long time understanding of its role in the provision of housing to shelter its residents. The overall objective of the strategy is to provide a wide variety of housing opportunities to meet the needs of all the economic segments of the community in stable neighborhoods.

By promoting the conservation of natural and manmade resources, the Sustainable City Major Strategy seeks to ensure San Jose's ability to meet its future service needs while preserving its healthy living environment. ■

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Cities in metropolitan areas compete for economic development in order to increase their tax bases and generate the revenues necessary to provide facilities and services. The past trends and future projections for economic development indicate continued growth in metropolitan areas as a whole. It is vital, therefore, for San José to attract a large share of the areawide economic development. Otherwise, the City will face increasing pressures for housing and population growth without a solid financial base.

The City's economic development strategy strives to make San José a more "balanced community" by encouraging more commercial and industrial growth to balance existing residential development, by creating an equitable distribution of job centers and residential areas, and by controlling the timing of development. This concept is generally known as a jobs/housing balance. San José currently houses many more employed residents than it has jobs, therefore its existing jobs/housing balance is poor. This, in turn, makes it difficult to provide adequate urban services for its residents since residential use by itself does not generate sufficient revenues to cover service needs. Land uses that generate jobs do not require as many public services and typically

generate greater revenue than residential use. One of the purposes of the economic development strategy is to improve San José's jobs/housing balance and maximize its ability to provide adequate urban services to its residents.

Economic development is a fundamental priority for future growth not only in order to improve the City's financial position but also to provide employment opportunities for San José's residents. The City's land use and transportation policies are designed to create attractive locations for a variety of businesses and industries. One of San José's strengths is the amount of vacant land available for future development; approximately 3900 acres of planned commercial, office and industrial land are expected to be absorbed between 1990 and 2020. This planned acreage offers a variety of industrial lands to accommodate choice in location in order to improve the City's competitive position. Much of this vacant land is also well distributed along the primary north-south transportation corridors serving the City.

To maximize the economic potential of the City's land resources, programs and policies must be carefully orchestrated with market conditions in order to attract the desired types of development. Redevelopment projects in the Downtown Core Area and the



outlying industrial areas serve as a demonstration of the complexity of the economic development strategy. By creating an Office of Economic Development in 1986, the City has recognized the need to document the nature of the local economy, identify opportunities for expanding the community's economic base, promote a balance between basic industries and the service/supplier firms which support them, and actively market San José as a location for businesses and industrial facilities

Industrial redevelopment areas have been the driving force behind the City's economic progress in the past two decades. Industrial growth is providing significant financial support for the revitalization of Downtown. In future decades the Downtown Core Area is expected to be the catalyst for new private investment in the Central City area, including high rise residential development and the conversion of outmoded heavy industrial areas to new uses. These changes should improve land use compatibility and generate new revenues.

San José's industrial base includes industrial suppliers/services firms that are inextricably linked to the region's high technology manufacturing base. In combination, these industries fuel the San José economy. In order to retain, attract, and expand industrial supplier/services, specific industrial areas have been identified to accommodate these types of firms. It is critical to the City's economic viability to preserve the City's industrial areas that support these industries.

The combination of industrial areas, Downtown, regional and local centers, and other commercial and office development along major streets constitutes the City's economic base. Through the year 2020, the City will continue to support development and revitalization of these non-residential areas which are essential to the economic health of the community. Through tax

increment financing and the formation of benefit assessment districts, the City supports both localized and citywide capital improvements which are essential to attract and serve economic development. The success of the other major strategies of the General Plan depends to a great extent on the success of economic development in San José. ■



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GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The City of San José is a municipal corporation formed to deliver a broad mix of services to the citizens and property owners of the community. The General Plan reflects a serious interest in the effects of urban development on the City's operating and capital budgets and vice-versa. All land use decisions have an effect on future City tax revenues on the costs of delivering services, and on the City's quality of life. Even though the direct relationship of an individual development decision to an individual budget program or the City's quality of life is not readily discernible an overall impact is clearly experienced over time on both. As long as the City continues to grow in population and housing units, the operating and capital budgets will have to deal with increased service demands. The purpose of a growth management strategy, therefore, is to find the delicate balance between the need to house new population and the need to balance the City's budget, while providing acceptable levels of service.

The General Plan gives direction to the growth the City will experience in the future. Where and when growth occurs has major implications for service levels and for the costs of operating the City. The location of growth in the City is established by the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary (G/UGB) which defines the City's ultimate limits to urban expansion. The G/UGB is described in more detail in the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary Major Strategy but, in essence, this Boundary ensures that all new development will be prudently located to achieve the most efficient use of urban facilities and services. The G/UGB, in conjunction with the Urban Service Area boundary, reinforces other General Plan policies which encourage infill development within urbanized areas where urban facilities and services are already available, thus

minimizing the cost of providing urban services.

The need to accommodate housing development is created by the economic development strategy and the normal increase of population in the City. Industrial and commercial development seek a labor force to fill the employment opportunities being created. In order to attract high technology industry or Downtown banks and hotels, San José must continue to plan for some new housing development. There is a delicate balance between these land uses; insufficient housing resources can detract from economic development and a surplus of housing production can place great strain on the City's financial capacity to deliver services. In addition to balancing residential with commercial and industrial uses in order to balance service demands and revenue sources, the location of housing is also critical to minimizing service costs.

The Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary, Urban Reserve, and Urban Service Area policies of the General Plan are designed to encourage compact, efficient infill development and discourage more costly development at the edge of the City. Infill development of housing on the scattered vacant sites available in the urbanized area has been the City's growth management strategy since the early 1970's. In the future, the recycling of underutilized or blighted properties through privately sponsored redevelopment is likely to become more significant. As land values increase and with the increased attractiveness of sites near employment centers or on transit routes, new infill opportunities may be created. New housing developments in these types of locations could be very advantageous for the City if the new facilities and services required are minimal.

The Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary, Urban Reserve and Urban Service area

policies help to ensure that urban services provided by the City to existing neighborhoods will not be reduced by the service demands of new urban development at the fringe of the City. Level of service policies for transportation, sanitary sewerage and sewage treatment facilities also provide a measure of protection for existing neighborhoods from any increased services required by infill development. New development is expected to pay for the infrastructure required to support it. A significant part of the costs for such infrastructure as arterial streets, sewers, storm drains, parks, fire stations and libraries are funded by fees and charges paid by new development. ■

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Downtown San José is vital to the City's long term economic and social well-being. Most of the time, revitalization is considered in terms of the economic and financial benefits to the City. While Downtown economic development is certainly important, Downtown's perceived identity and image as the heart of San José is equally significant.

General Plan policies specifically address the Downtown. Located near the geographic center of the City, Downtown is a uniquely accessible area at the hub of transit systems, freeways and arterial streets. The high-rise character of Downtown development makes it a landmark for the entire City. The diversity of land uses and architecture in Downtown establishes it as the most urban of the City's neighborhoods. Downtown is the site of civic events, parades and public celebrations.

A prominent and attractive Downtown is a catalyst that will bring new investment, residents, business visitors and new life to the center city. The neighborhoods and industrial areas surrounding the Downtown area also need to go through a revitalization process to counter the trends of deterioration and economic decline. The Downtown Strategy Plan, adopted in 1992, guides development in the Downtown Core, and the neighborhoods that frame it, through the year 2010. The Strategy Plan identifies a development strategy which is economically and physically realistic and which encourages significant private investments with public assistance where appropriate. The objective for Downtown represents a strategy for renewal that begins symbolically in the center city and continues outward. As the City grows there will be more emphasis on revitalization of older neighborhoods, business districts and employment centers throughout the City. ■

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URBAN CONSERVATION/ PRESERVATION

San José is a young City when measured by the relative age of its neighborhoods and housing stock. Yet, most of the City planned for 2020 already existed in 1990. The General Plan recognizes the importance of sustaining viable neighborhoods because there is no practical way to replace the City's housing stock, or its other physical assets.

There is a need to conserve these irreplaceable assets through a combination of public policies and private initiative. The City is more than a collection of structures. Residents have a need to belong to a neighborhood or an area with community identity that promotes civic pride and a concern for the community. The development of neighborhood participation through citizen organizations and local improvement activities is essential to maintaining San José's quality of life.

The Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary, the Urban Service area and the level of service level policies all support the conservation of existing neighborhoods, both mature and newly developing. Infill development is tempered by the consideration of protecting nearby areas from adverse impacts. The General Plan goals for employment and a sound tax base recognize that neighborhood conservation takes substantial resources. An overall level of economic stability enables individual citizens to maintain their neighborhoods and enables the City to maintain current levels of services. Clearly in a time of economic prosperity and increasing fiscal resources, the City would be able to improve services to existing neighborhoods. At a minimum, however, the City will strive to maintain adequate levels of service for existing neighborhoods by avoiding development at the fringe of the City which could divert these services.

Preservation of specific structures or special areas is a part of the urban conservation strategy. The objective of preservation goes beyond saving an individual structure or even a group of structures that may have architectural or historic significance. At a strategic level, preservation activities contribute visual evidence to a sense of community that grows out of the historical roots of San José's past. Historic and architectural structures add inestimable character and interest to the City's image. ■

THE GREENLINE/URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY

The Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary is a strategy to define the ultimate perimeter of urbanization in San José. Besides setting limits to urban development as described in the Growth Management Strategy, the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary is intended to develop clearer identity for San José by defining where the City begins and ends and to preserve valuable open space resources. The natural environment and resources surrounding the area within the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary are the inspiration for this strategy.

The Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary reflects the strong, long-standing commitment of both the City of San José and the County of Santa Clara that urban development should only occur within the Urban Service Areas of cities where urban development can safely and reasonably be accommodated and where urban services can efficiently be provided. Lands outside of the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary are identified as those that are intended to remain permanently rural in character and that should remain under the jurisdiction of the County. Both jurisdictions are committed to the success of this arrangement and will continue to develop and implement consistent land use plans and development policies for lands of mutual concern both within and outside of the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary. This commitment is reflected in the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary goals and policies of both General Plans.

The key elements of the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary are the hillsides, the baylands and the rural/agricultural area in the south Coyote Valley. These multiple-use lands are all valuable and productive but not for urbanization. The open space lands preserved under the Greenline/Urban

Growth Boundary Strategy serve as environmental preserves for the protection of wildlife habitat, watersheds, and natural ecosystems. Open space lands also serve recreational purposes ranging from nature trails and bikeways to playgrounds and golf courses.

The hillsides are the most extensive and visually prominent feature addressed as part of the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary strategy. Planned uses in the hillsides include valuable watersheds, wildlife habitat areas and rangelands for agriculture and grazing. In addition, the Bay Area Ridge Trail is envisioned to run along the ridges of the hillsides which surround the City. The Hillside and Greenbelt Assessment Study, completed in 1986, was an important step in the creation of a permanent Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary. The study emphasized the purchase of as much open space land as the public is willing to support. In 1992 the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority was approved by the State Legislature. This new agency adopted a Five Year Plan in 1996 to address the acquisition, development and maintenance of surrounding open space lands. The Five Year Plan will reinforce the separation between urban and rural lands which is the primary function of the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary.

General Plan policies for public and private development beyond the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary support this open space preservation strategy. Urban Design policies discourage street patterns that may increase development pressures in non-urban areas. The Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary and its supporting policies seek to prevent urban development in hazardous areas especially those areas with significant exposure to geologic or fire hazards (e.g., the hillsides). By discouraging the expansion of urban services, particularly sanitary sewers, the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary and the Urban Service Area policies reduce

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development pressures beyond the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary. Natural Resource policies and policies for recreational uses protect riparian habitats and the natural environment as well as encourage development that is sensitive to open space objectives. Allowable development, as defined by the Non-Urban Hillside land use designation and the Hillside Slope Density Formula, further supports the open space preservation strategy by promoting low-intensity and non-urban uses for lands beyond the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary.

The Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary reflects the fact that planning for San José's urbanization has reached a logical, practical limit. It also provides a greater degree of certainty for residents and property owners as to the City's expectation and intentions regarding urban development. Future development, infill, revitalization and conservation will be focused on the area planned for urbanization.

Community recognition that San José will not continue expanding outward indefinitely will encourage the reallocation of financial resources and political energy toward improving the quality of life. In this sense, the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary strategy calls for renewed commitment to a cohesive identity for San José. ■

HOUSING

One of the key functions of a city is the provision of housing to shelter its residents. The City of San José does not directly construct housing for its residents, since most housing is built by the private sector. However, effective housing policies and programs can facilitate the production of housing. The City's overall housing objective is to provide a wide variety of housing opportunities to meet the needs of all the economic segments of the community in neighborhoods which are stable and have adequate urban services. To achieve this objective, the City's housing strategy includes careful planning for residential land uses at appropriate locations and densities. The strategy seeks to maximize housing opportunities on infill parcels already served by the City and to consider the addition of new residential lands only when the City is confident that urban services can be provided. Currently, the City has adequate sites to accommodate housing through the Housing Element cycle. The housing strategy also seeks to provide sufficient housing opportunities for new workers in order to encourage and support continued economic development. In addition, The City's Housing Department partners with the development community and provides it with the subsidies and assistance in order to facilitate the production, rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable units for lower- and moderate-income households. The Housing Department also implements programs for the homeless and those with special needs.

The essential components of the housing strategy include:

- The land use and housing policies of the General Plan.

- The affordable housing programs, policies, and services administered by the City's Housing Department.

The General Plan identifies the City's goals and policies for maintaining and increasing housing opportunities to meet current and projected housing needs. These goals and policies are not just found in the housing sections of the Plan but are woven throughout the integrate Plan and influence the City's land use and development decisions. The technical information supporting the City's housing goals and policies is found in Appendix C: "Housing" of this General Plan. The Plan identifies policies and programs to eliminate housing discrimination, to encourage the creation and preservation of housing affordable to extremely low-, very low-, low- and moderate-income households, to improve permit processing, and to encourage City participation and cooperation with other public and private entities to improve housing opportunities. The Plan also allows considerable flexibility in allowing increased residential densities and vertical mixed use

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development to expand affordable housing opportunities.

The City of San José Consolidated Plan and the Housing Department's 5-Year Housing Investment Plan identify the specific programs the City intends to implement to encourage the production and maintenance of affordable housing. These programs identify the resources available to the City and describe how the City will maximize the use of these limited financial resources to conserve, rehabilitate, and increase the supply of the City's affordable housing stock. The General Plan, the City of San José Consolidated Plan, and the Housing Department's 5-Year Housing Investment Plan support and cross-reference each other to create a comprehensive and detailed housing strategy.

San José has found that adequate urban services are critical to forming a healthy and safe living environment. The Housing Major Strategy works with the Growth



Management Major Strategy to encourage infill development, allowing the City to provide services to its residents more efficiently by using its existing infrastructure and without overwhelming the City's fiscal resources. The housing strategy, therefore, tends to encourage new housing within the City's existing Urban Service Area and higher density residential development particularly near transit facilities. This is exemplified by the designation in the place of Transit-Oriented Development Corridors and Housing Initiative Special Strategy Areas. These Areas foster pedestrian-oriented, high density residential or mixed residential/commercial development to support transit use. Both of these Special Strategy Areas have already increased the City's potential housing supply and capacity.

Higher density infill housing also promotes the efficient use of land and reduces the pressure to build more housing at the fringe of the City, thus helping to support the Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary strategy. The City is currently preparing a comprehensive update of the General Plan to identify vacant or underutilized sites suitable for high density housing and mixed-use development within the Transit-Oriented Development Corridors and elsewhere.

Continued economic growth in the City and the region could be adversely affected by an inadequate supply of housing which would make it difficult to attract new employers and workers. To support the Economic Development Major Strategy and attract new employers and workers, San José needs to provide a variety of housing opportunities designed to meet the housing needs of working households at an affordable cost.

The Housing Major Strategy is designed to promote housing opportunities but will not of itself build any housing. To meet the challenge of actually producing the housing needed in San José, the City needs the

cooperation of the housing development and financial communities to find ways to implement the housing opportunities provided by the City. San José's housing strategy cannot solve the County's or the region's housing problems. The strategy encourages regional cooperation, but other communities must do their share to increase housing opportunities. The state and federal governments should also be involved in providing financial and other types of assistance to meet the housing needs of those segments of the community that cannot or will not be served by the private sector. ■

SUSTAINABLE CITY

The Sustainable City Major Strategy is a statement of San Jose's desire to become an environmentally and economically sustainable city. A "sustainable city" is a city designed, constructed, and operated to minimize waste, efficiently use its natural resources and to manage and conserve them for the use of present and future generations. San José acknowledges that it exists within both a regional and global environment. Its decisions regarding natural resources will have impacts outside the City's jurisdiction, and the decisions of others in the region and beyond will impact the City's ability to meet its future needs. San José will encourage and participate in cooperative/regional efforts intended to improve the quality of air and water and to conserve land, soil, water, energy and ecosystems such as the Bay, forests, riparian corridors, fisheries, grasslands, etc.

The strategy seeks to reduce traffic congestion, pollution, wastefulness, and environmental degradation of our living environment. By conserving natural resources and preserving San José's natural living environment, the concept of sustainability becomes a means of encouraging and supporting a stronger economy and improving the quality of life for all who live and work in San José.

As the City's guide for growth and development, the General Plan is a unique tool for ensuring that future planning efforts minimize impacts on resource consumption and help maintain the City's overall quality of life. The successful creation of a more sustainable urban form will also help ensure that the City is able to maintain the infrastructure and services necessary to sustain San Jose's economy and quality of life.

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The City operates many programs that promote the wise use of natural resources and are intended to move San José towards sustainability. These programs include recycling, waste disposal, water conservation, transportation demand management, transportation systems management, energy efficiency, and preventive maintenance of the built environment. In addition, the City also oversees hazardous materials storage, offers toxic waste minimization and pollution prevention programs, and is responsible for wastewater treatment and reclamation. The City also requires new development and substantial improvements to be designed so as to be protected from flood damage and to minimize adverse flooding impacts on other properties, while enhancing recreational opportunities and wildlife habitats and water quality. The Sustainable City Major Strategy is intended to support all of these efforts by ensuring that the urban form is designed and built in a manner consistent with the objectives of efficient resource use and environmental protection.

General Plan policies specifically address issues related to efficiency in resource consumption. Green Building and site design policies improve energy, water efficiency, and reduce consumption and waste. Water resources policies address the need for the conservation and protection of watershed and groundwater recharge areas. Air quality policies require the City to regulate the sources of air pollution and monitor the cumulative impacts of development on air quality. The Greenline/Urban Growth Boundary, the Urban Service Area and the Natural Resource policies promote the efficient use of land and prevent urban sprawl, conserve open spaces and preserve pristine natural habitats. In addition, the General Plan's continued emphasis on land use related issues such as achieving a relative job/housing balance and orienting development around transit

facilities contributes to sustainability by shortening trip lengths and helping to increase the availability and convenience of transit, biking and walking. This conserves energy and improves water and air quality.

By promoting the importance of conservation and preservation of natural resources in the City, the Sustainable City Major Strategy works with the other major strategies of the General Plan to ensure that San José will be able to provide urban services to its residents in the most efficient manner possible, and that the City will have its best chance to sustain adequate level of services into the future. ■