

# Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

## A. Planning Context

### History

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The area of what is now Agoura Hills was first settled by the Chumash Indians. By the time of contact with Spanish settlers, the Chumash occupied an area that extended along the California coast from San Luis Obispo County into Los Angeles County, and east to the fringes of the San Joaquin Valley, as well as the Channel Islands. Present day Agoura Hills was occupied by the Ventureño branch of the Chumash, who were a Hokan speaking people. The Chumash were a hunter and gatherer group with a complex culture that included ownership of resources and property, a market economy, an extensive trading network, craft specialists, and large permanent population centers, or villages.

The permanent arrival of the Spanish in the late 1700s heralded the Spanish Colonial period in California, and El Camino Real traversed the area of what is now Agoura Hills. Spanish settlers established large ranches on property received from the King of Spain, where they grazed cows and sheep. Even into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, ranching was the area's dominant industry.

Under Spanish governance, a land grant was issued to Miguel Ortega for the over 17,000 acre Rancho Las Virgenes, a portion of which is now Agoura Hills. Upon Ortega's death, the grant was abandoned. Rancho Las Virgenes was later given to Jose Maria Dominguez as a Mexican land grant in 1834. Maria Antonia Machado del Reyes purchased the rancho from Dominguez, her uncle, in 1845. Maria Machado's husband, Jose Jacinto Reyes, was the son of Juan Francisco Reyes who served on the famous Juan Gaspar de Portola expedition. Maria and Jose Reyes' son, Jose Paulino, built the adobe home in approximately 1850, which was one of the first homes in the area. The Reyes' ownership continued into the next century, and from 1916 to 1983, the property transferred to owners who shared a common interest in preserving the landmark adobe home. The Reyes' adobe is now the Reyes Adobe Historical Site, situated along Reyes Adobe Road, which has preserved the artifacts and history of the families that have occupied the Reyes Adobe over time, as well as serving as a cultural landmark representing the California rancho period and its architecture.



*Reyes Adobe Historical Site*

By 1900, the area was being used as a popular stage stop for travelers along El Camino Real because of its natural spring at the foothills of Ladyface Mountain, the area's main defining feature. In the 1920s, Paramount Studios purchased a portion of the Rancho Las Virgenes, just south of what is now the City, with moviemakers using the backdrop of the Santa Monica Mountains for their films, and the community became known as "Picture City." However, in the late 1920s,

a group of residents asked to have a permanent post office established in the area, and the name “Agoura” was given. “Agoura” was derived from the last name of Pierre Agoure, a Basque rancher who had settled in the area in the 1870s as a shepherd.

Growth in population was slow in the community, due partly to a lack of water. However, in the late 1950s, the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District was established, and reliable water sources made the Agoura area more attractive for families and businesses. Further growth occurred as a result of the local highway becoming the Ventura Freeway at about this same time. During the late 1960s and the 1970s, expansion continued as large housing tracts and shopping areas, as well as schools, developed. The first housing tracts were in the Hillrise, Liberty Canyon, and Lake Lindero communities.

In 1982, residents voted in favor of Cityhood, and on December 8, 1982 Agoura Hills became the 83<sup>rd</sup> city in Los Angeles County. This was followed by a building moratorium by the new City Council until a new general plan and municipal code were in place. In 1987, the City adopted its first Municipal Code. The first General Plan was adopted by the City in 1985, and was the City’s first effort at creating a community distinct from the governance of Los Angeles County. In 1993, a comprehensive update to the General Plan was approved. The 1993 General Plan focused on managing growth in the still substantial undeveloped areas, and included several large transportation improvements, particularly at the Ventura Freeway interchanges. It also focused on shaping the design and identity of the City through calling out specific planning areas and districts, and the beginnings of resource conservation efforts were reflected in the 1993 General Plan.

## **Planning Context**

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This document is the first update of Agoura Hills’ General Plan in more than seventeen years and is the result of many hours of research and technical studies, the collective efforts of the elected and appointed decision-makers, individuals, and agencies who cumulatively guide and shape land use development and community conservation, and the engagement of numerous individuals throughout the community who have articulated their hopes and expectations for the City’s future.

The majority of Agoura Hills consists of stable, attractive neighborhoods and places that the community desires to protect and enhance, and for which goals and policies of the updated General Plan are intended to foster. The small-town, suburban feel of the community, the natural beauty of its hillsides and open spaces, the quality schools and public services, and the perceived safety of the City create a quality of life that attracts many residents to move to Agoura Hills. These aspects of the City are what residents value most, and are what they are most interested in preserving.

## PLANNING CONTEXT

This updated General Plan includes a comprehensive update of Land Use and Mobility goals and policies based on technical assessment and evaluation of land use and traffic data, and a substantive review and update of all other policies based on current information provided by City staff. The updated goals and policies in the entirety of the General Plan have been crafted to assure that they reflect the community's vision for its future.

There have been modest increases in the size of the City's population since the last General Plan update in 1993, and the community's concerns regarding protection of the natural environment remain high as well as its desires for sustainable growth and development in Agoura Hills. Sustainability is the capability to equitably meet the vital human needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. As expressed in the community survey conducted in 2006 for the General Plan update, one of the City's top resources was identified as its natural hillsides and open space setting.

A commitment to the conservation of natural resources ensures the ongoing availability of finite resources, such as a safe water supply, clean air, scenic vistas, and energy resources. This assurance contributes substantially to the physical and psychological health and well-being of the community and strengthens the vitality of the local and regional economic base.

Located in the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains on the western edge of Los Angeles County in the Conejo Valley, the City of Agoura Hills is characterized by rolling hills and a blend of semi-rural and suburban development. The City, which encompasses nearly 7 square miles, straddles the Ventura Freeway and is situated approximately 36 miles west of downtown Los Angeles as shown in Figure 1 (Regional Location). The City is known for its distinct neighborhoods, beautiful natural setting, and extensive recreational resources.

Basic land use patterns are well established in the City, with residential neighborhoods fully developed and limited opportunities for infill development remaining. Agoura Hills' neighborhoods are viewed as one of the community's most desirable features, and preservation of these neighborhoods remains a priority of the General Plan. Two specific plans that cover large areas of the community south of Agoura Road have been adopted, including Ladyface Mountain Specific Plan and the Agoura Village Specific Plan. Development of these Specific Plans and infill and reuse of other vacant or underutilized properties along Agoura Road represent the majority of potential new development and redevelopment in the community over the next 25 years as the General Plan is implemented.

The updated General Plan has been prepared to provide a meaningful guide for the future and fulfills statutory requirements. It is comprehensive—providing a framework for the City's physical, economic, and social development while sustaining natural environmental resources. It is long range—looking ahead to 2035, while at the same time presenting policies to guide day-to-day decisions.



## B. Framework for Planning— Vision Statement

The General Plan’s goals, policies, and implementation programs define a roadmap to sustain and nurture the qualities and character that contribute to Agoura Hills’ identity as a special community in a unique natural environment. Underlying these objectives is the vision below, which is reflected in goals throughout the General Plan, and which represents the community’s aspirations for its future.

*Agoura Hills is a special place surrounded by the Santa Monica Mountains where oak trees and rolling hills abound. Here we seek to preserve our City’s best qualities while striving to create a better community. The future Agoura Hills is an attractive City of growing sophistication that chooses to retain its small town look and feel. The City remains a safe place, where people live, work, play, and move about in an economically viable and environmentally sustainable community. Sensitive growth and economic development are means of perpetuating our quality of life. These are balanced with resource conservation, as the City’s semi-rural ranching past, rich history and unique neighborhoods are respected, and open spaces and surrounding hillsides are preserved. Agoura Hills is a place where its citizens have opportunities to engage in their community through recreation, social and civic activities, schools, and neighborhood organizations.*



## C. Purpose

The updated Agoura Hills General Plan has been prepared in compliance with the requirements of California Government Code Section 65300 et seq. The Plan is a policy document and much of its content is established by statutory requirements relating to background data, analysis, maps, and exhibits. The legal adequacy of the General Plan is critical, since many City actions and programs are required to be consistent with the Plan



# CITY of AGOURA HILLS General Plan Update

## Regional Location



### Legend

- City of Agoura Hills
- County Boundary
- Lake or Reservoir
- River or Stream
- Interstate or Highway



Source: ESRI, 2006.

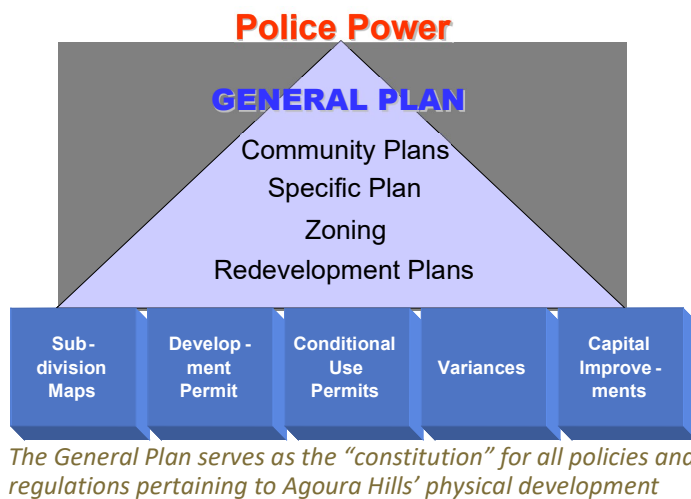


Figure 1

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## PURPOSE

State law requires each city and county to prepare and adopt a comprehensive long-range general plan for its physical development (California Government Code Section 65300). A comprehensive general plan provides a consistent framework for land use decision-making. The general plan and its maps, diagrams, and development policies form the basis for the City’s zoning, subdivision, and public works actions. Under California law, no specific plan, area plan, community plan, zoning, subdivision map, or public works project may be approved unless the City finds that it is consistent with the adopted general plan. The State General Plan Guidelines recommend that general plans be updated every five to ten years to ensure that they remain relevant. This is important not only to reflect local physical and demographic changes, but also broader changes in culture and technology.



The general plan must address the seven topics (referred to as “elements”) of land use, circulation, housing, open-space, conservation, safety, and noise (California Government Code Section 65302), to the extent that the topics are locally relevant. It may also include other topics of local interest, as chosen by the local jurisdiction (California Government Code Section 65303). Legislative changes integrated two elements presented in the previous Agoura Hills General Plan, Scenic Highways and Safety, into the Circulation and Safety Elements respectively.

A local jurisdiction may adopt a general plan in the format that best fits its unique circumstances (California Government Code Section 65300.5). In doing so, the jurisdiction must ensure that the general plan and its component parts comprise an integrated, internally consistent, and compatible statement of development policies. The City of Agoura Hills has chosen to adopt a general plan that consolidates the mandatory elements and re-organizes the content by common topic. Important themes are woven throughout the Plan rather than structured as independent topics, such as community livability, sustainability, and global warming. Correspondence between the Agoura Hills General Plan and the legally required general plan topics is shown in the following matrix:

Table 1 General Plan Topics								
Agoura Hills General Plan Chapters	Legally Required General Plan Topics							Optional Elements
	Land Use	Circulation	Housing	Conservation	Open Space	Noise	Safety	
<b>Community Development</b>								
Land Use	●							
Economic Development								●
Historic and Cultural Resources								●
<b>Infrastructure &amp; Community Services</b>								
Mobility		●						
Infrastructure and Utilities		●		●				
Police and Fire								●
Public Services								●
Parks and Recreation					●			
Education								●
<b>Natural Resources</b>								
Biological Resources				●	●			
Water Resources				●				
Water Quality				●				
Visual Resources		●		●	●			
Energy Conservation								●
Global Warming								●
<b>Community Safety</b>								
Wildland and Urban Fire Hazards								●
Flood Hazards					●			●
Geologic and Seismic Hazards					●			●
Hazardous Materials								●
Crime Prevention & Protection								●
Emergency Preparedness								●
Noise								●
Climate Change								●
<b>Housing (Under Separate Cover)</b>			●					
<b>Implementation Programs</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●



## D. Process

The update of the Agoura Hills General Plan involved a process that included a number of elected and appointed officials, residents, and public agencies; the compilation, review, and analysis of substantial amounts of technical data, the preparation of documents that summarized this information; and the input and feedback from community residents and stakeholders in the following steps. A General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) was appointed by the City Council to assure ongoing community involvement in the update process. The GPAC met throughout the process to provide feedback to City staff and the consultants, and was instrumental in the development of the updated General Plan. The ten-member GPAC was comprised of two City Council members, two Planning Commissioners, and five “at large” resident representatives from various areas of the City.



The overall update process can be summarized in the following key steps:

- Resident Survey Regarding General Plan Topics
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Background Data Collection
- Conservation and Transition Area Identification
- Traffic and Fiscal Impact Analyses
- Goals, Policies, and Implementation Programs
- Draft General Plan
- Environmental Impact Report

These steps are described below.

1. A **Resident Survey** was the start of the General Plan update process in the summer of 2005 when a survey of the community was conducted to define the issues and topics to be addressed in the updated General Plan. To ensure that the General Plan revision for the City of Agoura Hills reflects the values, priorities, and concerns of all residents—not just those who actively participate in meetings—the City developed and distributed a General Plan survey to all households in the City and commissioned an independent firm to review, analyze, and summarize the data and ensure that the study demographics reflect those of the resident population as a

whole. The survey findings represent statistically reliable measures of residents’ opinions on a number of key issues to be addressed in the Plan. Respondents were invited to participate by mail-in responses or online via the City’s website from the summer of 2005 through December 2005. The survey included resident responses in the areas of land use, circulation, housing, open space, design, and governmental services.

2. **Stakeholder Interviews** were conducted in March 2006 when 17 Agoura Hills residents, business owners, and representatives of special interests groups participated in interviews facilitated by the City’s General Plan consultant. The interviews were conducted as part of the visioning process for the City’s update of the Land Use and Circulation Elements for the General Plan and were conducted as a series of six small-group sessions that included individuals representing the following community groups:
  - Schools
  - Open Space/Environmental
  - Religious/Cultural/Sports
  - Homeowners’ Associations
  - Business Representatives
  - Residents

The interviews were designed to help determine residents’ opinions in the following areas to inform the preparation of the updated General Plan:

- What gives Agoura Hills its character
  - What should the community look like in 10 to 20 years
  - What should change; how it should change
  - What should stay the same
  - What is valued but not found within the community at this time
3. **Background Data** regarding the existing conditions, trends, and projected future conditions for the City’s land use resources, and economic/market conditions were compiled and analyzed. These data served three purposes:
    - As the basis for the articulation of planning issues to be addressed by Plan policy, incorporating all studies required by state law
    - As measures to test the impacts of alternative growth and development scenarios
    - As input for the statutory “Existing Setting” section of the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

As the database contains extensive written narrative, tables, and numerous maps, it is physically incorporated into a separate volume that legally is a component of the General Plan and EIR. A brief overview of pertinent baseline and projected conditions is presented in the relevant sections of the General Plan.

## PROCESS

4. Areas of **Conservation and Transition** were identified by the GPAC as a means to maintain and enhance the character and quality of life in existing neighborhoods and areas that would not be subject to change, and to focus growth and change in the community to areas that were in need of revitalization to accomplish economic, fiscal or community service objectives consistent with residents vision for long-term growth. Twelve community subareas and districts were identified as areas of transition, and the updated General Plan includes goals that express specific intentions for use, design, character, and implementation that uniquely apply to and differentiate each area. Other goals and policies were identified to preserve and enhance the substantial natural environment, open space resources, and diverse residential neighborhoods which contribute to the high quality of life of enjoyed by Agoura Hills residents.
5. A preliminary **Land Use and Development Plan** was identified by GPAC in consideration of review and assessment of the areas of conservation and transition and the background research and analyses. The transition areas principally focused on opportunities for re-use and improvement of commercial and business park districts and implementation of planned development in several mixed-use districts in the community. The land use plan was evaluated for its **comparative traffic and fiscal impacts**. The latter estimated the costs of public services to support the land uses and expected revenues. Cumulative effects on the fiscal balance of the City were assessed.
6. **General Plan goals, policies, and implementation programs** were updated based on the review of existing policies for their consistency with the selected land use plan; reflection of current issues and community needs; understandability; effectiveness in previous applications; practicality and feasibility; embodiment of state-of-the-art planning practices consistency with current legislation and court decisions; and reflection of community values and City Council policy decisions.
8. The **Draft Updated General Plan** was published incorporating an overview of background data, goals, policies, and implementation programs for each Plan element/topic. The Draft General Plan was made available for public review and comment in writing or oral testimony at Planning Commission and City Council hearings.
9. A **Draft EIR** was prepared in accordance with the substantive and procedural requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). From the date of publication, the DEIR is circulated for a 45-day period for public review and comment. Responses to all comments are prepared and incorporated into the Final EIR, which is reviewed and certified by the City Council.
10. The Planning Commission and City Council will conduct **public hearings** on the Draft General Plan and EIR. In consideration of the public input, the Commission will make recommendations to the City Council regarding the Plan's content and certification of the Final EIR. The City Council will consider the Commission's input and conduct additional public hearings. Based on these, the Council makes its final recommendations and adopts the General Plan with changes, if necessary, and certifies the Final EIR.

11. The **adopted Agoura Hills General Plan** will be published and the goals, policies, and programs contained herein implemented.

## E. How to Use the General Plan

The City of Agoura Hills General Plan is intended for use by all members of the community.

***If you are an Agoura Hills resident***, the General Plan indicates the general types of uses that are permitted around your home, the long-range plans and changes that may affect your neighborhood, and the policies the City will use to evaluate development applications that might affect you and your neighbors.

The Plan indicates how the City of Agoura Hills will attract businesses providing goods and services to meet your daily needs, while contributing revenue to help fund police, fire, recreation, street maintenance, and other services that sustain the quality and livability of your neighborhood. It defines how the City will attract new jobs, providing opportunities for you to work near where you live.

The Plan also informs you regarding how the City plans to improve mobility infrastructure, continue to provide adequate parks, schools, police, fire, and other public services, protect valued open spaces and environmental resources, and protect you from the risks of excessive noise, earthquakes, fires, and other natural hazards. Cumulatively, the Plan identifies the actions the City will take to ensure that the City and your neighborhood retain its economic value and remain a great place to live.

***If you are an Agoura Hills business***, the Plan outlines the measures the City will take to encourage your future success. Expectations of the City's business districts are spelled out, while policies ensure that business operations will be compatible with other businesses and nearby residential areas.

***If you are interested in developing land within the City*** or moving your residence or business to the City, the Plan will introduce you to the community. To familiarize yourself with the General Plan, the Land Use and Economic Development goals and policies are useful starting points. However, it is important to review maps and policies throughout this document and the Agoura Hills Municipal Code to get a complete perspective on how and where development may take place.

The General Plan is also a tool to help City staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council make land use and public investment decisions. It provides the framework for the City's Zoning Ordinance. It identifies the economic development, mobility and infrastructure improvements, community services, and environmental programs needed to sustain Agoura Hills' quality of life. Future development decisions must be consistent with the Plan. Finally, the Plan

## HOW TO USE THE GENERAL PLAN

is intended to help other public agencies, from Caltrans to the local school district, as they contemplate future actions in Agoura Hills.

While the Plan’s narrative text and maps frame the key proposals, the essence of the Plan lies in its goals, policies, and implementation measures. These are declarative statements that set forth the City’s approach to various issues. Goals, policies, and implementation measures are described as follows:

- **Goals** describe ideal future conditions for a particular topic, such as traffic congestion or sustainability. Goals tend to be very general and broad.
- **Policies** provide guidance to assist the City as it makes decisions relating to each goal. Some policies include guidelines or standards against which decisions can be evaluated.
- **Implementation Measures** identify the specific steps to be taken by the City to implement the policies. They may include revisions of current codes and ordinances, guidelines, plans and capital improvements, programs, financing, and other measures that should be assigned to different City departments after the General Plan is adopted.

The diagram on the following page is intended to serve as a “reader’s guide” to the goals and policies of the General Plan.

A simple numbering system is used to facilitate use of the General Plan. This enables the reader to distinguish each topic’s goals, policies, and implementation programs. Each Plan topic is assigned a letter(s). For example, Land Use is “LU,” Mobility is “M,” and so on. Goals are assigned a second order number, i.e., the first goal for Land Use is numbered as “LU-1” and the second is “LU-2.” Policies are assigned a third order number, with the first policy relating to the first Land Use goal being numbered as “LU-1.1” and the first policy relating to the second goal numbered as “LU-2.1.”

All General Plan policies are followed by a set of numbers in parentheses. These numbers reference applicable measures that will be undertaken by the City to implement the policy. There are ten implementation categories, which are generally organized by the topics covered in the General Plan. Each category contains multiple implementation measures that include programs, projects, or other activities that are assigned a second number. The first program listed in category “2,” for example, is numbered “2.1,” while the second measure is numbered “2.2.”



**PHOTOGRAPHS AND DIAGRAMS**  
Graphical illustration of an example of the intent of the goals and policies.

**SECTION HEADER**  
The header identifies the chapter (if on an even-numbered page) or topic (if on an odd-numbered page).

**GOAL NUMBERING**  
Each goal number starts with the element acronym and is followed by the number of the goal (e.g., NR 1 = Natural Resources Element, first goal).

**GOAL TITLE**  
Each goal contains a leading title in bold for a quick reference to the goal text.

**GOALS**  
Each goal has one or more policies associated with the goal.

**POLICY TITLE**  
Each policy contains a leading title in bold for a quick reference to the policy text.

**POLICIES**  
Each policy is associated with a specific goal.

**IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM TAG**  
Each policy is followed by a set of numbers in italics/parentheses that identifies the tool or action the City will use to implement the policy. These measures are detailed in Chapter 6.

**CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**BUSINESS PARK DISTRICT/WEST OF REYES ADOBE ROAD**

**Goal LU-25**  
**Business Park with Supporting Uses.** An economically viable and well-designed business park offering high quality jobs and incorporating a diversity of uses to minimize the need for employees to travel off site.

**Policies**

LU-25.1 **Supporting Uses.** Encourage the development of limited ancillary uses that support existing businesses and their employees, such as restaurants, personal services, and financial institutions, to lessen the need to travel off-site for these during the work day.

LU-25.2 **Cohesive Site Development.** Require that new buildings, pedestrian walkways, and open spaces be located and designed to promote connectivity with, and to complement the quality and character of existing development, while achieving a cohesive and integrated project.

**PLANNED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT/LADYFACE MOUNTAIN SPECIFIC PLAN (WEST END)**

**Goal LU-26**  
**Business Park and Natural Open Spaces.** An economically viable business park that is scaled and designed to reflect its natural setting at the base of Ladyface Mountain, while providing high-quality jobs and incorporating a diversity of uses that minimize the need for employees to travel off site.

**Policies**

LU-26.1 **Supporting Uses.** Allow and encourage the development of limited ancillary uses that support existing businesses and their employees, such as restaurants, personal services, and financial institutions, to lessen the need to travel off-site for these during the work day.

LU-26.2 **Site Development.** Require that buildings be located and designed to reflect the area's hillside topography and natural landscapes, with building footprints conforming to topographic contours, setbacks of upper stories to conform to slope, and orientation to preserve view corridors.

LU-26.3 **Development Clustering and Location.** Require that buildings be clustered to minimize grading and modifications of the natural

2-38

City of Agoura Hills General Plan



**PAGE NUMBER**  
Shows the chapter and page number (e.g., 4-2 = Chapter 4, page 2).

**POLICY NUMBERING**  
Continuing from the goal numbering, the policy number is shown as the last number, supporting the goal it follows (e.g., Policy NR 1.2 = second policy under the Natural Resources Element, first goal).



## F. General Plan Organization

The General Plan is organized into seven chapters. The first chapter presents information about the Plan’s legislative requirements, applications, organization, process for preparation, and overarching themes that guide all goals, policies, and programs. The following four chapters comprise the Plan’s “elements.” Each presents an overview of its scope, summary of conditions and planning issues, goals, and policies. The sixth chapter describes the broad actions that implement the Plan’s policies, and a glossary of terms is presented in the final chapter.

An overview of the Plan’s chapters is provided below.

1. **Introduction** describes the General Plan process and introduces the reader to the document.
2. **Community Conservation & Development** presents goals and policies pertaining to how existing development is to be maintained and enhanced and new development is to occur. Its components address:
  - a. Land Use (LU) defines where lands are to be conserved and where growth will be targeted, and specifies the types, densities, and design characteristics of uses to be permitted with a map depicting their distribution.
  - b. Economic Development (ED) specifies strategies for business retention and attraction.
  - c. Historic and Cultural Resources (HR) defines processes for the preservation of the City’s historic and cultural buildings and sites.
  - d. Housing (H). Though the Housing Element is an integral part of this General Plan, it is separately bound due to the separate schedule for its update required by state law.
3. **Infrastructure and Community Services** presents goals and policies for the provision of infrastructure and services that support residents and businesses.
  - a. Mobility (M) provides for the movement of people and goods, including autos, transit, bicycles, and other modes. It addresses key issues such as trip reduction, parking, traffic safety, and neighborhood traffic calming.
  - b. Infrastructure and Utilities (U) addresses the provision of public infrastructure, including water, sewer, storm drainage, solid waste, electricity, natural gas, and telecommunications.
  - c. Community Services (CS) addresses the provision of services to meet the needs of residents including recreation and park facilities, recreation programs, trails, police and fire, education, and libraries.
4. **Natural Resources** (NR) provides for the management of open space and conservation of the City’s biological resources, mineral resources, water resources, visual resources, air quality and energy conservation.

5. **Community Safety (S)** prescribes strategies for the protection of the public health and safety of residents, businesses, and visitors to the City, addressing wildland and urban\_fire hazards, flood hazards, geologic and seismic hazards, crime prevention and protection, hazardous materials, disaster preparedness, and climate change. Policies to mitigate potential impacts of noise are presented in the Noise (N) section.
6. **Implementation Program** describes the measures to be taken by the City to carry out the goals and policies defined by the General Plan.
7. **Glossary** defines the terminology used in the General Plan.

## G. Related Documents

In addition to goals, policies, and implementation measures presented in this document, the General Plan includes an Appendix that summarizes the General Plan policies addressing climate change. All supporting background data, analyses, and technical reports are available upon request from the City or are posted on the City's website.

An environmental impact report (EIR) has been prepared for the General Plan in accordance with the substantive and procedural requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR is a separate document that describes environmental conditions in the City, assesses the possible effects of the General Plan, identifies actions that will be undertaken to reduce these impacts, and evaluates the comparative impacts of alternatives to the General Plan. Most of the EIR's mitigation measures have been incorporated as policy into the General Plan and, consequently, the Plan is generally considered to be "self-mitigating."

The document is considered a "program level" EIR, meaning that it examines the general nature of impacts at a citywide scale. The findings of the EIR help determine the appropriate level of environmental review that should be performed when subsequent projects consistent with the Plan are proposed. Although the EIR will be certified by the City Council, it is not adopted as a policy document.

## H. Implementing and Amending the Plan

After the General Plan is adopted, it will be implemented through a variety of ordinances, programs, and activities. These measures are described in Chapter Seven and referenced by applicable policies for each topic "Element." It will be especially important to review local land use regulations and procedures to ensure that they are consistent with the General Plan. The zoning map must be consistent with the General Plan Land Use Plan and the Zoning Code must be consistent with the land use classification system and the stipulated density/intensity and design and development policies.

## CLIMATE CHANGE

The General Plan is intended to be a dynamic document and must be periodically updated to respond to changing community needs. An annual review of the Plan is required to ensure that it remains relevant. Moreover, any of the Plan's mandatory elements may be amended up to four times a year. Requests for amendments may be submitted by individuals or initiated by the City itself. The most common type of amendment is to change the land use designation for a particular property. Policy and text amendments also may occur. Any proposed amendment will be reviewed to ensure that the change is in the public interest and would not be detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare. Environmental review is typically required for General Plan amendments.

# I. Climate Change

The issue of global climate change has received greater attention from governments around the world in recent years. Global climate change refers to the change in the average weather of the earth that may be measured by changes in wind patterns, storms, precipitation, and temperature.

Human activities associated primarily with the use of carbon-based fossil fuels have led to changes in the composition of the atmosphere. The combustion of carbon-based fossil fuels creates greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), which has caused the earth's atmosphere to absorb more heat from the sun. The concentration of green house gases in the atmosphere has significantly increased as a result of combustion of fossil fuels primarily associated with automobile use and energy production. Scientists have already observed some of the negative effects of climate change, and expect more changes in the future. Governments, organizations, and private citizens all over the world are looking for ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to create a better future.

In 2006, the California State Legislature took a proactive role in addressing the challenges of climate change with the adoption of the California *Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006*, Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32). AB 32 focuses on reducing GHG emissions in California. AB 32 requires the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the state agency charged with regulating statewide air quality, to adopt rules and regulations that would achieve GHG emissions equivalent to statewide levels in 1990 by 2020.

A key theme of the City of Agoura Hills' General Plan is sustainability. The General Plan, inherently through its goals and policies, takes steps to address the challenging issue of climate change by reducing GHG emissions, improving energy efficiency, reducing the urban heat island effect, recycling, and managing water use. The General Plan will reduce GHG emissions primarily through land use patterns that support public transit, increased opportunities for pedestrians, bicycle, and transit-use, and through requirements for "green building" practices and alternative energy systems. Policies also address adaptation to climate change, such as increasing flood protection.



The sources, impacts of, and solutions to climate changes are complex. Climate change and GHG emissions reduction are addressed in the Safety Element and throughout policies and programs of the General Plan. Appendix A, General Plan Policies Addressing Climate Change, includes a table that summarizes, by topic area, Agoura Hills General Plan policies that address climate change, in addition to those in the Climate Change section of the Safety Element.

## J. Public Involvement

The General Plan planning process involved a broad spectrum of the community during key phases in development of the document as well as ongoing public input through the active engagement of the General Plan Advisory Committee. The public and stakeholders were provided the opportunity for involvement throughout the planning process from the initial identification of the issues and topics to be addressed in the General Plan update, to input on a land use framework for the conservation and transition areas of the City.

In an effort to continually involve interested parties in the planning process to obtain valuable feedback, other methods of public outreach over the course of the project included the following:

- Appointment of GPAC for ongoing involvement in preparation of the Draft General Plan (December 2004/ongoing)
- General Plan Resident Survey (Summer 2005 through December 2005)
- Stakeholder Interviews (March 2006)
- “Big Ideas” Community Meeting (December 2006)
- Maintaining a mailing list used for notification of community meetings, Planning Commission and City Council meetings regarding the General Plan (ongoing)
- Periodic status updates on the General Plan posted on the City website (ongoing)
- A public scoping meeting to receive public input regarding topics and issue to analyze in the EIR process (May 2009)
- Publication of a “General Plan Update Fact Sheet” for posting on the City’s website and notification of availability to the General Plan mailing list (July 2009)
- A public information meeting to provide feedback on key items of the Draft General Plan (July 2009)
- Planning Commission and City Council Study Sessions on the Draft General Plan (Fall 2009)
- Planning Commission and City Council public hearings to adopt the Draft General Plan and certify the EIR (Winter 2010)