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# Introduction

San Jacinto is a scenic community located at the foothills of the San Jacinto Mountain range in western Riverside County. Founded in 1870 and incorporated on April 9, 1888, San Jacinto is one of Riverside County's oldest communities, with roots that stretch back to the earliest days of California. For over 100 years, the City has been home to a thriving agricultural industry as farmers and ranchers flocked to the fertile valley along the natural hot springs. Today—nearly 150 years later—San Jacinto is home to over 55,000 residents, with a growing business and manufacturing hub, and continues to celebrate its deep-rooted historic and cultural heritage, while looking to proactively embrace new opportunities for growth and economic development.

Looking forward, the City will continue to value its history as it is planning for a prosperous and sustainable future. New opportunities for residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development are envisioned alongside quality public services, facilities, and infrastructure. *Envision San Jacinto – General Plan 2040 (Envision San Jacinto)*—the City of San Jacinto's Updated General Plan—embodies the spirit of shared community opportunity. Through thoughtful planning, San Jacinto is prepared to make decisions that support the community's long-term goals.

*Envision San Jacinto* is a dynamic policy document that identifies the community's vision for the future and provides a framework to guide the City's long-term growth and development. The General Plan reflects the community's values and desires, and addresses important issues such as land use and urban design; economic development; mobility; resource conservation; public facilities and services; safety; public health; and sustainability. Although the General Plan may be updated periodically to reflect changing market conditions, new legislative requirements, and modern local opportunities, the intent of *Envision San Jacinto* is to lay the foundation for long-term decision-making that stands the test of time.

## Purpose of the General Plan

In California, all cities and counties are required to adopt a general plan. The general plan is a comprehensive policy document that shapes the long-term physical development of a jurisdiction’s planning area. The general plan must include seven state-mandated elements including land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety elements, as specified in Government Code Section 65302, to the extent that the issues identified by State law exist in the City’s planning area. Additional elements that relate to the physical development of the city may also be addressed in the general plan. The degree of specificity and level of detail of the discussion of each general plan element need only reflect local conditions and circumstances. *Envision San Jacinto* has been prepared consistent with the requirements of State law and addresses the relevant items addressed in Government Code Section 65300 et seq.

## General Plan Objectives

The General Plan is more than just the legal basis for all local land use decisions; it is the vision for how the City will evolve, reflecting the community’s objectives. The objectives of *Envision San Jacinto* include:

- Reflect the current goals and vision expressed by city residents, businesses, decision-makers, and other stakeholders;
- Protect and enhance San Jacinto’s unique history and character;
- Promote San Jacinto as a safe, vibrant, and family-friendly community;
- Proactively plan for and accommodate local and regional growth in a responsible manner;
- Encourage the revitalization of San Jacinto’s Main Street and other community activity centers;
- Allow for a range of housing options;
- Attract and retain businesses and industries that provide jobs for local residents;
- Create a more balanced jobs-housing ratio within the community;
- Continue to maintain and improve multimodal transportation opportunities;
- Maintain strong fiscal sustainability and continue to provide efficient and adequate public services;
- Address new requirements of State law; and
- Address emerging transportation, housing, and employment trends.

### ***What is a General Plan?***

The general plan serves as a “blueprint” for future development of a city or county. It establishes land use designations and policies to assist decision makers as they review proposals for new development or consider changes to city ordinances. The general plan addresses issues that impact the entire city, such as how land is used, where buildings are built, the locations of roads and parks, safety, noise, and more.



**A general plan is:**

**Comprehensive**

A general plan is comprehensive in nature, covering a wide range of topics such as land use, housing, economic development, infrastructure, public safety, recreation, and natural resources.

**Long Range**

A general plan provides guidance on achieving a long-range vision of the future for a city or county. To reach this envisioned future, the general plan includes goals, policies, and implementation programs that address both near-term and long-term needs. The City of San Jacinto’s General Plan looks ahead approximately 20 years—to the year of 2040. At the same time, the General Plan will provide policy direction that allows for flexibility to respond to changes in the marketplace and in technology, positioning the City for long-term success.

**Consistent**

A general plan must be internally (“horizontally”) consistent, meaning it cannot contradict itself. A general plan uses a consistent set of assumptions and projections to assess future demands for housing, employment, public services, and infrastructure and must fully integrate its separate parts and relate them to each other without conflict. Additionally, all adopted portions (elements) of a general plan have equal weight. None may supersede another, so the general plan must resolve conflicts among the provisions of each element. Finally, all other plans, ordinances, and policies must be consistent with the general plan. This “vertical” consistency helps resolve conflicts between local specific plans, the City’s Development Code, and the General Plan.

## Scope and Content of the General Plan

### General Plan Policy Document

The General Plan policy document contains the goals and policies that will guide future decisions within the City and identifies action items (implementation measures) to ensure the vision and goals of the General Plan are carried out. Two important documents support the General Plan: the Existing Conditions Report and the General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Both are intended to be used in conjunction with this General Plan and to serve as companions to this policy document.

The General Plan also contains a land use diagram, which serves as a general guide to the distribution of land uses throughout the City. The General Plan addresses all of the elements required by State law, in addition to a range of optional topics and elements that the City has elected to include. The table below identified the elements included in the General Plan and the corresponding requirement in State law.

### Relationship Between General Plan Elements and State Requirements

General Plan Elements		State Mandated								
		Land Use	Circulation	Conservation	Open Space	Noise	Safety	Housing	Environmental Justice	Optional Topics
Envision San Jacinto	Land Use	▲								
	Economic Development									▲
	Mobility		▲							
	Public Safety					▲	▲			
	Resource Management			▲	▲					▲
	Environmental Justice								▲	
	Housing (Separate Cover)							▲		
	Implementation	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲

### Organization of the General Plan Elements

Each element (i.e., chapter) of the General Plan is organized into a set of goals, policies, and implementation actions. Each goal is supported by a particular set of policies and actions to implement and achieve that goal. The final chapter of the General Plan (Implementation) includes a complete summary of each action that is identified in the various elements, accompanied by the City department responsible for implementing the action and the timing of implementation.



## Planning Process

The San Jacinto General Plan was originally adopted in 1985. Since then, substantial changes to the planning context of the city have occurred, including accelerated growth in the region and shifts in the community’s demographics, as well as new ways of thinking about sustainability, public health, and placemaking. In light of these changes, the city undertook a comprehensive update of the General Plan (*Envision San Jacinto*) as an opportunity to reassess and refine its long-term vision and identify the new challenges it will face, opportunities it will follow, and approaches it will use to make that vision a reality. The update process began in late 2018 and included the following steps.

## Public Participation

*Envision San Jacinto* was developed with extensive community input and reflects the community’s vision for San Jacinto. A summary of the community outreach and public participation process is provided below and a detailed summary is included as Appendix A.

### **Outreach Objectives**

Objectives established for the comprehensive outreach program were to:

- Conduct an open and transparent process.
- Engage the full spectrum of San Jacinto community members, residents, business owners, landowners, and other stakeholders in the General Plan Update process; enhance public awareness of the project and its importance.
- Gather meaningful community input, ideas, and feedback to shape the vision, alternatives, and policies to be included in *Envision San Jacinto*.
- Build a framework to develop community consensus throughout the process.
- Strengthen and expand relationships and trust between the City and community members.

### **Envision San Jacinto Outreach**

For all public workshops and meetings, the City of San Jacinto conducted extensive outreach, using a wide variety of methods and tools, to inform and encourage the community to participate in the update process. The following is a list of methods and tools used to inform the public of meetings, workshops, and the status of the work efforts.

- **General Plan Website:** The City maintains a website ([www.sanjacinto.generalplan.org](http://www.sanjacinto.generalplan.org)) devoted to informing the public about, and encouraging participation in, the update process. The website includes workshop materials, background information, and draft and final work products.
- **Focus Group Briefings:** The City held briefings with interested focus groups including representatives from the development community and community health and wellness stakeholders.
- **E-mail distribution list:** The list was developed and maintained over time, and included email contacts for agencies, organizations, stakeholders, and individuals.
- **Social Media:** The City regularly posted meeting notices and project updates to its social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor, LinkedIn, and Instagram.



- **Mailer:** To specifically solicit input from all members of the San Jacinto community, the City prepared and delivered a bilingual direct mailer to every single resident and business in San Jacinto (15,000 addresses) to advertise *Envision San Jacinto*, provide specific information on the Visioning Workshops, and direct stakeholders to the website for more information. At the Visioning Workshops, participants were polled to understand how they heard about the Workshops; the number one response was the direct mailer, and the City is proud to have provided every single resident and business owner with an invitation to participate in the program.

### ***Visioning Workshops***

The City hosted three workshops (February and March 2019), addressing a different topic of focus each month. Each workshop was conducted in a bilingual environment (English and Spanish) to minimize barriers to participation. Each workshop included a brief overview of the General Plan, including why it's important and why the City is updating its Plan, some background information on the evening's topic, and a series of facilitated activities to solicit input on key topics or ideas.

#### Workshop 1: Values, Issues, and Opportunities

The first General Plan Visioning Workshop was held on February 21, 2019, at the San Jacinto Community Center from 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM. More than 50 residents attended this workshop. The focus of this Visioning workshop was to ask for input from residents on what they value in San Jacinto, what they see as challenges, and what their vision is for the future of the City. After a brief presentation on *Envision San Jacinto*, the consultant team facilitated three activities to help conduct this conversation. The first activity was to identify community assets and challenges facing San Jacinto; the second activity was to envision the future of San Jacinto; and the third activity was a mapping activity designed to highlight features of the city that residents value and areas that need attention or improvement.

#### Workshop 2: Transportation

The second workshop was held on March 12, 2019, at the San Jacinto Community Center from 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM. Approximately 30 people attended this event. The focus of the second Workshop was on transportation and mobility in San Jacinto, including how people get around (cars, walking, biking, transit) and regional transit connections. The presentation included background on existing conditions, such as existing traffic volumes, transit routes, and accident information. The group also reviewed existing commute patterns (where do people who live in San Jacinto go for work, and where do people who work in San Jacinto commute from). The workshop included several activities, interactive polling, small group brainstorming, and two mapping exercises designed to determine how and where residents live, work, and play.

#### Workshop 3: Land Use and Housing

The third and final workshop was held on March 28, 2019, at the San Jacinto Community Center from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM. Approximately 50 people attended this event. The focus of the last Workshop was on land use and housing opportunities. As part of the overview presentation, the group considered how local and regional socioeconomic trends shape land use planning in San Jacinto.

The topics explored in each Workshop along with summaries of the input provided by the community are provided in the Community Vision Guide (November 2019), which is available for review online at: [www.sanjacinto.generalplan.org](http://www.sanjacinto.generalplan.org).



### ***Pop-up Events***

To connect with a broad audience throughout San Jacinto, the City hosted two Pop-up Events in conjunction with the August 2019 Kool August Nights concert series where the project team was able to raise awareness about the General Plan Update and better understand what residents love most about living in the City. The *Envision San Jacinto* booth hosted three activities. The first asked attendees to answer the question “In 2040, I envision San Jacinto as...” on a small white board, and then pose for a Polaroid picture. Polaroids were then posted to a board at the booth. For the second activity, a word cloud in the shape of a heart was compiled from previous community input, and printed on a large board. Attendees were then asked to write what they love about San Jacinto in the space around the word cloud. The third activity asked attendees to identify what topic areas San Jacinto should prioritize as it plans for the future; options included parks and open space, community health, transportation, housing, safety, retail and entertainment, biking and walking, economic growth and job creation.

### ***Online Surveys and Polls***

In order to capture as much input from the community as possible, including input from those who may not have participated in in-person engagement opportunities, the project team designed an online survey that was open to all and available throughout the outreach phase of the project. The survey was administered online via the SurveyMonkey web platform. During the approximately ten-month time period that the survey was active, 84 responses to the 16 questions related to the General Plan update were received. The questions involved a wide range of response formats that are synthesized in the Community Vision Guide. The survey responses provide insight into the demographics and opinions of San Jacinto community members concerning goals and topics related to the update of the City’s General Plan.

### ***Stakeholder Focus Groups***

The project team organized a set of stakeholder interviews to facilitate a focused discussion around important issues in the community. Two focus groups were held on August 14, 2019, one focusing on the local development community, and the other on community health and wellness. Discussions were guided by a set of interview questions focusing on successes, challenges, needs, and best practices.

Participants in the local development community focus group included representatives from organizations including Cooper Development, Keller Williams, KZ Companies, Lee & Associates, Rich Development, and SVN. Participants in the community health and wellness focus group included representatives from organizations including Mount San Jacinto College, San Jacinto Unified School District, National Alliance on Mental Illness - Mt. San Jacinto, the Riverside University Health System - Public Health, and Valley-Wide Recreation & Park District.



## Values and Guiding Principles

The following Values and Guiding Principles, developed to reflect the meaningful community input received at the Envision San Jacinto workshops, online surveys, from key community members and stakeholders, and elected and appointed officials, have guided the creation of the General Plan.

### Views of the Mountain

San Jacinto values the natural environment and the mountains that surround the City. The views of the mountains are a key feature in the community and highlight the City’s peaceful atmosphere while providing a unique visual backdrop.

### Small Town Feel

San Jacinto values the small-town feel of the community. Many people know their neighbors and interact at parks, at the grocery store, and about town. Although San Jacinto covers over 26 square miles, the community’s natural setting and residential neighborhoods lend a small town feel while allowing for new growth opportunities in undeveloped or underdeveloped areas of the community. People are involved with organizations and with City government. People enjoy their neighbors and feel that community leaders care about residents. The size of the City makes people feel safe and comfortable, and San Jacinto’s unique characteristics set it apart from other cities in the San Jacinto Valley.

### Affordability

San Jacinto values its relative affordability. Community members appreciate renting and owning homes that fit within their budget. Residents decide to call San Jacinto home because of the affordability of housing and many have stayed in the community because it is affordable and close to friends and family.

### Recreational and Open Space

San Jacinto values its recreation and open spaces. Recreation opportunities in the mountains and the Valley-wide Rec and Parks District are an asset to the City. The wide-open spaces and outdoor recreation opportunities build up a sense of community where people feel like they can define the “feel” of San Jacinto.

### Potential for Growth

San Jacinto values new development opportunities. With significant areas of vacant or underdeveloped land available, San Jacinto can proactively plan to accommodate a wide variety of residential development types including traditional single-family homes, townhomes, and apartments while promoting the expansion of commercial development to bring more jobs, goods, and services to the Valley. Future mixed-use development, especially in the Downtown Village area, represents an opportunity to bring housing closer to daily activities, thereby promoting a more vibrant walkable environment in key activity areas. Residents see San Jacinto as a City ready for growth and expansion and that other values like affordability, the small-town feel, and views of the mountain can attract new residents and businesses.



## Applying the General Plan

The General Plan is intended for use by a broad range of persons, including City decision-makers, City staff, developers, and community members, to serve the following purposes:

- To identify land use patterns, growth, transportation, environmental, economic, and community goals and policies as they relate to land use, conservation, development, and provision of community services and facilities.
- To articulate a vision and strategy for the future development of San Jacinto and its residents.
- To enable the City Council and Planning Commission to establish long-range land use, transportation, services, conservation, and growth goals and policies.
- To provide a basis for judging whether specific private development proposals and public projects are in harmony with these goals and policies.
- To inform citizens, developers, decision makers, and other jurisdictions of the policies that will guide development and conservation within San Jacinto.

The General Plan applies to lands in the incorporated area of the City, to the extent allowed by Federal and State law. Under State law, many actions, such as development projects, specific plans, master plans, community plans, zoning, subdivisions, public agency projects, and other decisions must be consistent with the General Plan. State law requires that the City's ordinances regulating land use be consistent with the General Plan. The Development Code, individual project proposals, and other related plans and ordinances must be consistent with the goals and policies in the General Plan.

### *Interpreting the General Plan*

In reading the General Plan, one should infer that the goals, policies, and implementation measures are limited to the extent that it is financially feasible and appropriate for the City to carry them out and to the extent legally permitted by Federal and State law. For example, policies and measures which indicate that the City will “provide,” “support,” “ensure,” or otherwise require or carry them out do not indicate an irreversible commitment of City funds or staff resources to those activities, but rather, that the City will support them when the City deems that it is financially feasible and appropriate to do so. In some cases, the City will carry out various policies and measures by requiring development, infrastructure, and other projects to be consistent with the policies and actions of the General Plan. In other cases, the City may include General Plan items in the Capital Improvement Program, annual budget, or other implementation mechanisms, as the City deems appropriate.

## Key Terms

**Goal:** A description of the general desired condition that the community seeks to create.

**Policy:** A specific statement that guides decision-making as the City works to achieve the various goals. Once adopted, policies represent statements of City regulations.

**Action:** An action, procedure, implementation technique, or specific program to be undertaken by the City to help achieve a specified goal or implement an adopted policy.



### **How to Read San Jacinto’s General Plan**

As the guide for future development and desired conditions, residents, property owners, and business owners should also familiarize themselves with how to read this document. Each element contains a brief introduction, several goals and related policies, and a description of related actions to help implement the City’s vision.

### **Goals**

A goal in the General Plan is the broadest statement of community values. It is a generalized ideal which provides a sense of direction for action. Goals are overall statements of desired future conditions.

### **Policies and Implementation**

The essence of the General Plan is contained within its policies. Policies are statements which further refine the goals, and guide the course of action the City must take to achieve the goals in the plan. It is important to note that policies are guides for decision makers, not decisions themselves. Policies and implementation measures must be clear to be useful. However, policies may range in terms of commitment of resources, importance, and expected results. Therefore, it is important for readers to understand the distinctions between various levels of policy and implementation action. The following is a list of common terms used in policies and implementation measures, and how to interpret its usage in the General Plan. In cases where other terms are used (and not defined below), an equivalent to the closest applicable term can be used.

**Shall:** Absolute commitment to the policy or action, and indicate that the policy must be adhered to in all cases.

**Should:** Policy will be followed in most cases, but exceptions are acceptable for good reasons.

**Ensure:** Policy indicates that the City plays a role in making sure something happens, often times in partnership with other agencies or as part of other City programs and processes.

**Encourage:** Policy is highly recommended and/or desired, and should be pursued when feasible.

**Allow:** Policy will be supported within certain parameters and certain guidelines.

**Coordinate:** Policy will occur in conjunction with another entity, and the City will carry its share of the responsibility.

**Explore:** Effort will be taken to investigate the subject at hand, to discover whether or not further commitment is relevant.

**Consider:** Policy may or may not be followed, depending upon the results of analysis that will be completed.

**Limit:** Effort will be taken to keep the subject within certain limits, or will at least make undesired change more difficult.

**Restrict:** Effort will be taken to keep the undesired action to a minimum.



### **Amending the General Plan**

The General Plan is not static, but rather is a dynamic and multi-faceted document that defines and addresses the changing needs of the City. It is based on an on-going assessment and understanding of existing and projected community needs. The City’s decision-makers have broad discretion in interpreting the General Plan and its purposes, and are allowed to weigh and balance the various goals and policies when applying them. Recognizing the need for the General Plan to remain current and reflective of local issues and policies, State law allows the City to periodically amend the General Plan to ensure that it is consistent with the conditions, values, expectations, and needs of its residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. The General Plan may be amended in accordance with State law. While specific findings may be applied on a project-by-project basis, at a minimum the following standard findings shall be made for each proposed General Plan amendment:

1. The amendment is deemed to be in the public interest;
2. The amendment is consistent and/or compatible with the rest of the General Plan;
3. The potential impacts of the amendment have been assessed and have been determined not to be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare; and
4. The amendment has been processed in accordance with the applicable provisions of the California Government Code, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the City’s Municipal Code.

City-initiated amendments, as well as amendments requested by other parties, are subject to the same basic process described above to ensure consistency and compatibility with the General Plan. This includes appropriate environmental review, public notice, and public hearings, leading to an official action by the City Council.

### **Timing**

Under state law, mandatory elements of the General Plan may be amended up to four times in each calendar year. The City Council or any citizen may initiate consideration of a General Plan Amendment. State law further requires that the Housing Element be reviewed and updated at least once every eight years.

### **Exemptions**

The State Legislature has recognized that occasions arise which require the local jurisdiction to have some flexibility in amending the General Plan. As set forth in the California Government Code, the following are exempt from the General Plan amendment schedule:

- Amendments to optional elements.
- Amendments requested and necessary for affordable housing (Section 65358(c)).
- Any amendment necessary to comply with a court decision in a case involving the legal adequacy of the general plan (Section 65358(d)(1)).
- Amendments to bring a general plan into compliance with an airport land use plan (Section 65302.3).

### **Annual Reporting**

Given the long-term nature of the General Plan, it is critical to periodically evaluate its effectiveness and to document the implementation status of the various policies and actions that it contains. State law provides direction on how cities and counties can maintain the General Plan as a useful policy guide. State law also requires the City to annually report "the status of the plan and progress in its implementation" (California Government Code Section 65400(b)) to the City Council.

The Implementation Element identifies each measure to be carried out by the General Plan, the timing of the measure, and the responsible City department for addressing implementation.



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