



ORANGE GENERAL PLAN  
GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
WORKSHOP #2  
March 10, 2005

Meeting Workbook

**PURPOSE**

This workbook provides the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) with a structure to undertake the general plan update process; to begin documenting community issues, opportunities, and constraints; and to formulate a vision for the future of Orange.

At upcoming committee meetings, we will build upon the materials provided in this workbook, as well as input received from the community at the April 2 and April 23 general plan community workshops, to review, discuss, and evaluate land use alternatives for focused areas of the City and ultimately, to recommend a land use plan and goals and policies for the updated general plan.

This first GPAC workshop has six key purposes:

- 1) To preview the overall general plan process and provide a phase I update (East Orange);
- 2) To document desired outcomes of the general plan update process;
- 3) To record community values by discussing the City's strengths and weaknesses;
- 4) To review, confirm, and expand on issues to be addressed within the general plan;
- 5) To begin developing a vision of ideal conditions for Orange's future; and
- 6) To receive community input.

At this GPAC workshop, as well as at 4 additional workshops scheduled throughout the next four months, members of the public, through public comment and interaction with the committee, will have the opportunity to describe the issues they feel most affect Orange's future, and should be addressed in the General Plan.

Remaining sections of this workbook provide background for GPAC members and the public regarding topics to be discussed at the workshop.

Committee members are encouraged to review this material and use the spaces provided to write comments or questions they would like addressed at the March 10, 2005 workshop.

**Notes:**

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## GENERAL PLAN BACKGROUND

### THE BLUEPRINT AND CONSTITUTION

Orange's general plan can be described as the city's "blueprint" for future development. It provides a snapshot of Orange today, a vision for the City's future, policy guidance for decision-makers, and a work program that outlines required steps to achieve the vision. California law requires every city to adopt a general plan "for the physical development of the city, and any lands outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning" (Government Code §65300).

The California Supreme Court has advised that the general plan is tantamount to a city's "constitution for future development". This constitution is made up of goals and policies upon which the Planning Commission and City Council will base future land use decisions. To illustrate its importance, all subdivisions, public works projects, development agreements, and zoning decisions in California general law cities (including Orange) must be consistent with the adopted general plan. In addition, State policy guidelines advise that preparation and adoption of a general plan should<sup>1</sup>:

- Identify community land use, circulation, environmental, economic, and social goals and policies as they relate to land use and development;
- Provide a basis for local government decision-making, including decisions on development approvals;
- Provide citizens with opportunities to participate in the planning and decision-making processes of their communities; and
- Inform citizens, developers, decision-makers, and other cities and counties of the plans that guide development within a particular community.

### LONG-RANGE EMPHASIS

The general plan is not the same as zoning. Although both designate how land may be developed, they do so in different ways. General plan policies and diagrams are long-term objectives. They identify types of development that will be allowed, spatial relationships among land uses, and general patterns of future development. Zoning regulates present development through specific standards regarding lot size, building setbacks, and list of allowable uses. In general law cities like Orange, land uses shown on the general plan diagrams are usually reflected on the City's Zoning Map as well. Development must not only meet the specific requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, but also the broader policies set forth by the general plan.

### REQUIRED CONTENT

State law requires that each city and each county adopt a general plan containing the following seven components or "elements": land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise,

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<sup>1</sup> Governor's Office of Planning and Research. [State of California General Plan Guidelines 2003](#).

and safety (Government Code Sections 65300 et seq.). Each jurisdiction is also free to adopt a wide variety of additional elements covering subjects of particular interest to that jurisdiction such as recreation, urban design, or public facilities.

Each general plan element consists of: (1) written text discussing the community's goals, objectives, policies, and programs; and (2) one or more diagrams or maps illustrating the general location of existing and desired future conditions. Each local government chooses its own general plan format. The plan may be relatively short or long, one volume or ten volumes, depending upon local needs. Most communities have adopted plans which consolidate the elements to some extent.

California law requires that local jurisdictions periodically update their plans to ensure currency and consistency. State law also requires that cities make copies of the general plan available to the public for reference.

## **APPROVING THE PLAN**

The process of adopting or amending a general plan requires public participation. Cities and counties must hold public hearings for such proposals. Prior to approval, hearings will be held by Planning Commission. The general plan must be adopted by resolution by City Council.

The State provides advisory review of the safety element, and maintains certification authority over the housing element. Adoption or revision of general plan elements is also considered a “project” under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which mandates preparation of environmental documentation describing the potential impacts of implementing the general plan.

## **THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS**

Orange’s general plan update process gives residents and business leaders a welcome opportunity to take a long-term perspective regarding those issues that affect quality of life in the community. Long-range objectives are determined by projecting conditions and needs into the future. The general plan then establishes policies for day-to-day decision-making based upon those objectives.

A general plan is comprised of a series of elements, or chapters, as specified in State law. For Orange, we will develop General Plan chapters that include:

- Land Use
- Historic Preservation
- Circulation
- Resources (Open Space and Conservation)
- Urban Design
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety and Noise
- Geologic and other Hazards
- Water Quality
- Economic Development
- Growth Management (required in Orange County per Measure “M”)
- Housing (a review of the 2001 update)



## DESIRED OUTCOMES OF THE GENERAL PLAN PROCESS

In this exercise, we will document desired outcomes of the general plan update process. What kind of benefits do you expect to see resulting from a new general plan? What positive outcomes might the City achieve as a result of the plan? Please take a few moments to document what you feel are the most important outcomes of this process.

**PLEASE LIST YOUR EXPECTATIONS FOR THE GENERAL PLAN PROCESS.**

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## DOCUMENTING GENERAL PLAN ISSUES

This section of the workbook provides a brief description of several major issues identified at this stage in the planning process through a combination of input received from discussions with the City Council, discussions with City staff, and focus group interviews held for the General Plan. Issues are general statements describing a need, concern, opportunity, or desire to be addressed by the General Plan.

Spaces are provided to allow members of the GPAC and community to clarify, refine, or add to the issues identified to date by community members, City staff, and CBA. Issues are organized roughly by general plan element, although several issues may cross into one or more element.

### LAND USE

- **Affordable Housing**
  - Strong demand for affordable housing exists throughout the region.
  - The impacts of providing affordable housing must be discussed, in addition to development of appropriate design standards for multi-family housing.

Comments:

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- **Demographic Change**
  - The City needs to recognize the changing demographics of residents and be prepared to deal with impacts and opportunities related to those changes.
  - Take advantage of community diversity.

Comments:

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- **Land Use Relationships and Connections**
  - Enhance walkability.
  - Take advantage of natural amenities.

**Comments:**

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- **Old Towne Density**
  - Some feel that higher densities in the urban core would enhance the retail areas and reduce the need to drive.
  - Others feel that the essential character of Old Towne would change and not be true to historical precedent.

**Comments:**

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- **Over Development**
  - The character of the City is changing, and the changes are not always for the better.
  - The City is following its neighbors' lead by increasing residential densities.
  - This is not the vision that many residents and businesses have for Orange.

**Comments:**

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- **Secondary Effects of Planning**
  - Public health
  - Public safety
  - Social interaction/integration

**Comments:**

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## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- **Historic Preservation**
  - The City needs to expand upon preservation of historic structures and encourage the establishment of more historic neighborhoods such as the Cypress Barrio and the three Eichler tracts.

**Comments:**

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## CIRCULATION

- **Parking**
  - Growth and diversity of the Old Towne retail district will be compromised unless adequate parking can be provided.

**Comments:**

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- **Safe Routes to Schools**

- Develop options and strategies that improve student and driver safety.

Comments:

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- **Traffic and Rail Impacts**

- Increasing traffic congestion will continue to impact Orange's quality of life.
- Expected growth in rail transit may double within the life of this plan.
- Increased traffic and rail delays impact the ability to get around the City, connections to the region, and delivery of public services such as fire and police.

Comments:

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## RESOURCES

- **Environmental Sustainability**

- Existing patterns of urban and suburban development impair our quality of life.
- The symptoms are: more congestion and air pollution resulting from our increased dependence on automobiles, the loss of open space, urban heat, the need for costly improvements to roads and public services, and a diminished sense of community.
- By drawing upon the best from the past and the present, we can plan communities that will more successfully serve the needs of those who live and work within them and improve the overall quality of life for citizens.

Comments:

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▪ **Need for More Parks**

- Community demand for more open space exists.
- More active recreational places that feature versatile, lighted multi-use facilities are needed.

**Comments:**

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▪ **Recreation Marketing**

- Orange provides a wide range of services and recreation programs.
- Many residents are not familiar with the range of services and activities available.
- Better marketing of existing programs is needed.

**Comments:**

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▪ **Creek Connection**

- Completion of a trail network that links the City's open spaces should be a key goal of the General Plan.
- The Santiago Creek trail system is the heart of this network.
- Review and implementation of the Trails Master Plan and a revival of rails-to-trails efforts should be considered.

**Comments:**

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## URBAN DESIGN

- **Human Habitat**

- The public realm should be planned principally for use by people.
- Everybody should be able to enjoy a great experience in the public realm.

**Comments:**

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- **Neighborhood Identity**

- The City has been aggressive in developing and maintaining an image for the Old Towne District. This focus has provided a distinctive identity that separates Orange from many other Orange County cities.
- Establishing neighborhood identities beyond the City's core area is needed. Creation of such neighborhood identities should be addressed in this plan.

**Comments:**

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- **Public Spaces**

- The built environment should be a backdrop to public spaces.
- Focus on creating a better place.

**Comments:**

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## PUBLIC SAFETY AND NOISE

- **Crime**
  - Recognize the impacts of crime and gang activity, and develop programs and policies to mitigate the impacts.

**Comments:**

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- **Noise**
  - Freeway and train-related noise impacts to residents and businesses impair quality of life.

**Comments:**

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Plaza District**
  - The Plaza District lacks centralized management.
  - Orange wishes to attract and retain desired businesses, as well as remain competitive with other Central Business Districts in the region.

**Comments:**

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- **Small Business**

- Orange needs to become more competitive in the region in attracting and retaining small businesses by providing incentives and easing expansion regulations.

**Comments:**

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## GROWTH MANAGEMENT

- **City and School District**

- The City and Orange Unified School District should continue to work toward greater collaboration in order to deal with issues they both share, such as the joint use of facilities.

**Comments:**

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- **Hospital Expansion**

- Orange's two largest medical institutions plan to expand during the life of this plan and need to retrofit facilities that fail to meet new state seismic regulations.

**Comments:**

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## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE – FROM ISSUES TO VISION

Input received from the GPAC regarding the community's values and key issues facing Orange today will be used to craft a Community Vision for the future. This vision will become the foundation of the General Plan and is an expression of what the City wants to be in the future. It will express Orange residents' strongest values for the future, and will guide future development within the community.

We will begin the process of drafting the vision at the conclusion of this GPAC meeting, and will refine the vision at upcoming community workshops on April 2 and April 23. A draft Community Vision will be presented to the GPAC for consideration at the next meeting on May 5.