

## 9 IMPLEMENTATION

The 2030 General Plan provides specific policy guidance for the implementation of plan concepts in each of the Plan elements. This framework establishes a basis for coordinated action by the City, adjacent jurisdictions, Tulare County, and regional and State agencies. This chapter describes the implementation process in general terms and the major actions to be undertaken by the City; the implementing policies in each element of the Plan provide details that will guide program development.

The Annual Progress Report on the General Plan is the fundamental reference for monitoring the implementation of the General Plan, from the time of General Plan adoption through to City buildout. The Annual Progress Report, and its companion Five-year Progress Review serve as oversight documents for City leaders and stakeholders. Further, these reports serve as the vehicle for establishing priorities and for programming resources for continued implementation of the General Plan.

The first priority in implementing the General Plan will be updating and administering the Zoning Ordinance through the Zoning Map and Text. The City's current Zoning Ordinance will need to be updated and amended to be consistent with the General Plan's policies and to add new zoning districts and modify existing districts to reflect designation on the Land Use Diagram. The Subdivision Ordinance also should be amended to add additional requirements for land dedication for schools and parks, trails and waterway

corridors, and reservation of sites for the community facilities, consistent with current State law.

The Capital Improvement Program will be the primary means of scheduling and funding infrastructure improvements of citywide benefit. Based on the recommendations made in the General Plan for new streets, a new parks and recreation master plan, and updates to the City's master plans for waterways and trails, sewer, water, and stormwater management systems, the City's development and impact fees will need to be reviewed in order to determine whether any changes are necessary. Special assessment districts or other means of financing improvements benefiting specific areas, such as employment centers adjacent to the Airport and new neighborhoods may be established.

In many areas, General Plan implementation will depend on actions of other public agencies and of the private sector, which will fund most of the development expected to occur in the Planning Area. The General Plan will serve a coordinating function for private sector decisions; it also provides a basis for action on project master plans and individual development applications, found to be consistent with the General Plan. The City will adopt procedures for making findings for General Plan conformity decisions prior to adoption of new zoning regulations and a new Zoning Map. These may take the form of interim zoning regulations.



*The Capital Improvement Program will be the primary means of scheduling and funding infrastructure improvements of citywide benefit. (Top)*

*The Subdivision Ordinance should be amended to add requirements for land dedication for schools and parks, trails and waterway corridors. (Bottom)*

## 9.1 RESPONSIBILITIES

Implementing the General Plan will involve the City Council, the Planning Commission, other City boards, committees and commissions, and City departments. The City also will need to consult with Tulare County and other public agencies about implementation proposals that affect their respective areas of jurisdiction. The principal responsibilities that City officials and staff have for Plan implementation are briefly summarized below; details on their powers and duties are in the Visalia Municipal Code.

### City Council

The City Council is responsible for the overall management of municipal affairs; it acts as the legislative body and is responsible for adoption of the General Plan and any amendments to the General Plan. The City Council is also responsible for approving and administering the zoning and subdivision ordinances to implement the General Plan. The Council also may adopt area plans and specific plans, as needed for General Plan implementation.

The City Council appoints the City Manager who is the chief administrator of the City and has overall responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of the Plan. The City Council also appoints members to the City's two standing commissions established under the Municipal Code and to advisory committees. The City Council's role in implementing the General Plan will be to set implementation priorities; approve zoning map and text amendments, and subdivision maps consistent with the General Plan; and approve a Capital Improvement Program and budget to carry out the Plan.

### Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is responsible for preparing and recommending adoption or amendment of the General Plan, zoning and subdivision ordinances and other regulations, resource conservation plans, and programs and legislation needed to implement the General Plan. The Planning Commission also may prepare and recommend adoption of design guidelines and specific plans, developer-initiated master plans, neighborhood plans or special plans, as needed for Plan implementation. Finally, the Commission is responsible for development project review, as specified in the zoning ordinance, and for other implementation actions, as specified in the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

### Community Development Department

The Community Development Department is responsible for the general planning; development review functions undertaken by the City; affordable housing and administration of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and related State and federal grants and entitlements; and the Neighborhood Preservation Program.

Specific duties related to General Plan implementation are primarily the responsibility of the Planning Division and include:

- Preparing zoning and subdivision ordinance amendments and design guidelines for Council approval;
- Preparing the annual progress report on the General Plan and conducting the five-year progress review;

- Reviewing development applications, conducting investigations and making reports and recommendations on planning and land use, zoning, subdivisions, development plans and environmental controls (engineering and building divisions also are within the Department, which ensures coordination among these functions); and
- Coordinating activities with Visalia school districts related to school sites.

The Engineering Division of the Community Development Department is responsible for planning, design and development of public infrastructure projects; traffic and transportation engineering; providing engineering support to the Planning Division for private development project and subdivision infrastructure review, emergency management technical services, and surveying. The Department also handles the review of current development applications, subdivision maps, grading permits, public improvement plans, encroachment permits, development in the flood zone, and sewer permits. It also does construction inspection for permits it issues and is responsible for the design and construction of capital improvement projects.

The Building Division of the Community Development Department, under the supervision of the Building Official, administers the Building Code, issues building permits and inspects new construction for compliances with Code requirements.

### Parks and Recreation Department

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for managing the City's recreation services as well as managing urban forestry, parks and open spaces, the

golf course, library, and sports complexes. Specific implementing responsibilities are established in the Parks, Schools, Community Facilities & Utilities Element of the General Plan. The Department also will be preparing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to implement the General Plan.

### Public Works Department

The Public Works Department provides Street Maintenance, Solid Waste, and Wastewater Services. The Streets Division is responsible for street sweeping, rehabilitation, and pavement management (repair and restoration). The Solid Waste Division manages household and municipal solid waste, recycling, household hazardous waste, and construction/demolition waste management, as well as site plan review regarding solid waste facilities. The Wastewater Division is responsible for the operation and administration of the city's wastewater treatment plant, as well as city storm drain maintenance. Specific implementing responsibilities are established in the Circulation; Parks, Schools, Community Facilities & Utilities; and Noise & Safety elements of the General Plan.

### Police and Fire Departments

Within the City, responsibility for public safety is assigned to the Police and Fire Departments. The Police Department is responsible for preventing crime and maintaining law and order; while the Fire Department is responsible for fighting urban and wildland fires as well as emergency response and rescue. Both departments coordinate with the County and State on mutual aid. Specific implementing responsibilities under the General Plan are established in the Safety & Noise Element of the General Plan.



*The Streets Division is responsible for street sweeping, rehabilitation, and pavement repair and restoration, as here on Ben Maddox Way. (Top)*

*The Fire Department is responsible for fighting urban and wildland fires as well as emergency response and rescue. (Bottom)*



The City has two standing commissions and six advisory committees to assist in General Plan implementation and other responsibilities assigned to them by the City Council.

## Other Commissions and Committees

The City has two standing commissions and six advisory committees to assist in General Plan implementation and other responsibilities assigned to them by the City Council. These include:

- *Citizen's Advisory Committee* – acts as a liaison between the general public and the City Council concerning community issues.
- *Disability Advocacy Committee* – advises the City on the needs of disabled people. The committee promotes physical, social, communication and attitudinal access for every citizen of Visalia.
- *Environmental Committee* – heightens environmental awareness and conservation in Visalia. Issues addressed include air quality, hazardous waste, recycling, water conservation and all other natural resources.
- *Historic Preservation Committee* – administers and carries out the standards and specifications of the Historic Preservation Ordinance. Promotes historic preservation including encouraging building owners to initiate preservation efforts. The Committee facilitates building identification and seeks to preserve Visalia's historic structures.
- *North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee* – serves as a liaison between the City and the North Visalia community. It is a forum for citizen complaints, problems and provides recommendations to the City Council.
- *Parks & Recreation Commission* – advises the City Council and City staff in matters pertaining to parks, playgrounds and recreation centers.

- *Transit Advisory Committee* – researches and analyzes the community's continuing transit needs, reviews operations, markets the transit program and makes recommendations about the business affairs of the transit system.
- *Waterways and Trails Committee* – advises on matters related to the Bikeway Master Plan and the Waterway and Trail Master Plan. The Committee also advocates for policies, programs, and projects that enhance bicycle and pedestrian opportunities, reviews projects, and advocates to secure additional resources.

In addition, the City appoints one representative to the Delta Vector Control Board. The General Plan does not envision any substantive change in the responsibilities assigned to these committees.

## 9.2 THE PLAN & REGULATORY SYSTEM

The City will use a variety of regulatory mechanisms and administrative procedures to implement the General Plan. Overall responsibility for plan implementation is vested in the Planning Agency, consisting of the City Council and the Community Development Director. The General Plan requires consistency between the General Plan and the zoning ordinance to ensure that Plan policies will be implemented and that environmental resources earmarked for protection in the Plan will be preserved. Other regulatory mechanisms, including subdivision approvals, building and housing codes, capital improvement programs, and environmental review procedures also will be used to implement Plan policies. All project approvals should be found consistent with the General Plan.

## Zoning Regulations

The City's Zoning Ordinance will translate plan policies into specific use regulations, development standards, design standards and performance criteria that will govern development on individual properties and development sites. The Zoning Ordinance also includes citywide regulations for landscaping, on-site parking and loading, signs, riparian corridors and affordable housing density bonus provisions among other regulations. The General Plan establishes the policy framework, while the Zoning Ordinance prescribes standards, rules and procedures for development along with criteria and findings required for acting on project applications. The Zoning Map will provide more detail than the General Plan Land Use Diagram.

The General Plan calls for several new zoning districts. Regulations for these districts will be established as part of the comprehensive zoning update to be undertaken following adoption of the General Plan. The use regulations and development standards for existing zoning districts will need to be amended to conform to Plan policies. Density and intensity limits, consistent with the Plan's land use classifications, also will need to be updated. For purposes of evaluating General Plan consistency, the density of proposed projects will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole number, as appropriate.

The City will bring both the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map into conformance with the General Plan as the first priority task. When the General Plan is subsequently amended, the Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map may also need to be amended to maintain consistency between the documents.

During the transition period while new zoning is being developed, the City will use "General Plan Conformity Findings" (see Table 9-1) to provide criteria for determining whether a proposed project is consistent with the General Plan. Factors that will be evaluated to make General Plan Conformity determinations include: site suitability for the proposed use, compatibility with adjacent uses, neighborhood economic vitality and the need for the proposed use; and the proposed density and intensity of development.

### *Consistency Between the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance*

As mentioned above, Visalia will implement many General Plan policies through the City's Zoning Ordinance. Zoning must be consistent with the General Plan if the City's land use, housing, and open space policies are to be realized. A fundamental link between the General Plan and zoning is land use/zoning consistency. **Table 9-1** shows how zoning districts in Visalia are consistent with the land use designations of this General Plan. In some areas, new zoning districts are needed (shown in *italics*). In others, the existing zoning will need to be amended (\*), as prescribed by the implementing policies in this Plan or may be eliminated as duplicative, such as the C-C, C-N, C-SO, C-CM, C-R, C-DT, C-H, C-S, OG, PA, and OC.

The new districts include RN Residential Neighborhood, DMU Downtown Mixed Use District, CMU Commercial Mixed Use District, NC Neighborhood Commercial, RC Regional Commercial, SC Service Commercial, O Office, I Industrial, CO Conservation District, PR Parks and Recreation, and AHO Affordable Housing Overlay District. The City also

may choose to consolidate the “planned zones” in the current zoning ordinance, integrating provisions into new districts that correspond with the Land Use Diagram designations, and create a separate stream-

lined procedures for planned development, or eliminate planned zones that are no longer needed, such as the P- C-C, P-C-SO, P-C-CM, P-C-DT, P-C-H, and P-C-S. This will facilitate administration and ensure

**Table 9-1: Consistency Between the Plan and Zoning**

<i>New General Plan Land Use Designations</i>	<i>Previous General Plan Land Use Designations</i>	<i>Consistent Zoning District</i>
<b>Residential</b>		
Very Low Density Residential	RA	*R-A, *R-20
Low Density Residential	RLD	RN, *R-1-12.5, *R-1-6
Medium Density Residential	RMD	*R-1-4.5, *R-M-2
High Density Residential	RHD	*R-M-3
<b>Mixed Use</b>		
Downtown Mixed Use	C-DT	DMU
Commercial Mixed Use	CSO	CMU
Neighborhood Commercial	NC	NC, *P-C-NC
<b>Office, Commercial, Industrial</b>		
Regional Commercial	RRC	RC; *P-C-R
Service Commercial	CS	SC, *P-C-S
Office		O, *P-PA, *P-OC, *P-OG
Light Industrial	I-L	*I-L, *P-I-L
Industrial	I-H	I; *P-I-H, *I-H
Business Research Park	BRP	*BRP
<b>Other</b>		
Agriculture	A	A
Conservation	C	CO
Parks/Recreation	C	PR
Civic/Institutional	PI	QP
Reserve	R	

Source: Dyett & Bhatia, 2012

a closer link with Plan policies because new zones will mirror classifications on the Land Use Diagram. Planned development still would be permitted, but with a more flexible process that would be “findings-driven” and have specific criteria for approval.

### Subdivision Regulations

No subdivision of land may be approved under California law and the City’s subdivision regulations unless its design and proposed improvements are found to be consistent with the General Plan, including the open space plan. Dedication of land for park facilities will be required for subdivisions above a certain size, consistent with the policies and standards prescribed by the General Plan. The subdivision regulations also can require dedication of land for elementary schools, riparian habitat and reservation of land for fire stations, libraries, bike paths, transit facilities, and other public facilities.

After adoption of the General Plan, the City’s subdivision regulations will need to be amended to conform to Plan policies and explicitly require findings of consistency with the General Plan as a condition of approving parcel maps and tentative maps. Reservation requirements for bus turnout facilities and bike and pedestrian facilities also will need to be added to carry out Plan policies. The subdivision ordinance should require connection between new streets and existing streets and ensure right of way dimensions are provided, consistent with City standards. Facilitating use of solar energy with north-south lot layouts and roof orientations that enable installation of collector systems will also be encouraged. The ordinance update also should address State requirements for solar access easements as appropriate for Visalia.

### Building and Housing Codes

No building permit may be issued under California law (Government Code Section 65567) unless the proposed development is consistent with the City’s open space plan and conforms to the policies of the Parks, Schools and Public Facilities and the Open Space and Conservation Elements.

To provide an administrative mechanism to ensure consistency with the General Plan, the City may establish a requirement for zoning permits or other forms of zoning clearance before building and grading permits are issued. The City does not currently have this specific type of clearance.

## 9.3 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT & PROGRAMMING

The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) includes a list of public works projects that the City intends to design and construct in coming years. Under California law, the City Council, acting as Planning Agency, has responsibility for reviewing the CIP to determine whether it conforms to the General Plan. Specifically, the Government Code requires the Council to review for conformity with the General Plan CIP projects requiring any of the following actions:

- Acquisition of land for public purposes;
- Disposition of land;
- Street vacations; and
- Authorization or construction of public buildings or structures.



*The subdivision ordinance should require connection between new streets and existing streets, wherever possible. (Top)*

*The Capital Improvements Program (CIP) includes a list of public works projects that the City intends to design and construct in coming years. (Bottom)*

The City Council also has the authority to comment on CIPs prepared by the Visalia Unified School District and other school districts, and utility providers. These CIPs, and any annual revision proposed to them, are to be forwarded to the City at least 60 days prior to adoption for the City's review for consistency with the General Plan.