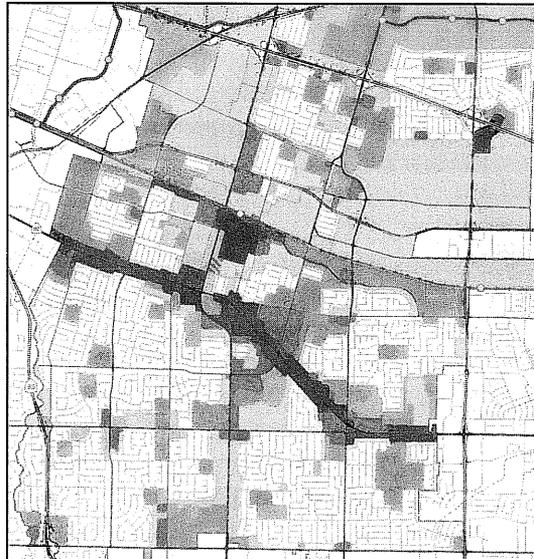


# Land Use and Transportation Element

CITY OF SUNNYVALE GENERAL PLAN



The Land Use and Transportation Element  
complies with California Government Code Section 65302  
and was adopted by the Sunnyvale City Council  
by resolution number 181-97 on  
November 11, 1997



Community Development and Public Works Departments

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# A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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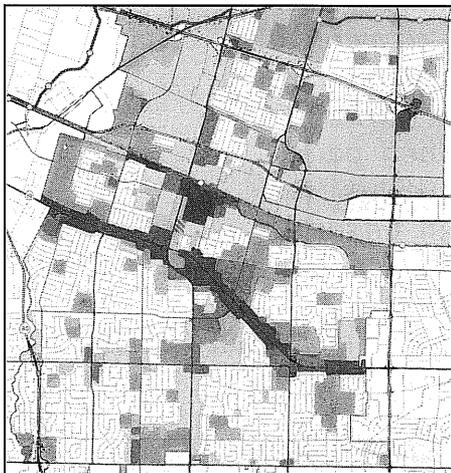
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**L**and use and transportation have an affect on virtually all other elements of the General Plan. Decisions on the use of land determine the character of the community, its economic vitality, and the future demand for services. Therefore, it is essential to have a firm base from which to identify and consider land use and transportation issues. While providing this information, the General Plan also articulates the community's vision for the future through a description of goals, policies, and actions. Since the first General Plan was adopted for Sunnyvale in 1957, the City has expressed its goals for the future with emphasis in four broad areas:

- ◆ Appropriate housing
- ◆ A strong economy
- ◆ Transportation efficiency
- ◆ Community character



The City's general desire for a strong economy, efficient transportation, appropriate housing and community character are comprehensive and interwoven concepts. They have a timeless quality and continue to provide a solid platform for the City's land use and transportation goals.

The Land Use and Transportation Element uses these concepts as the foundation for the City's future land use and transportation goals, policies, and implementation strategies. Since Sunnyvale is part of the region, these factors are further influenced by changes in population, jobs, and transportation that take place in both the region and the City. The Land Use and Transportation Element acknowledges a regional context for local decisions; how local decisions affect regional facilities and how regional growth affects the City's plans for the future.

---

## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

---

The Land Use and Transportation Element is part of the Sunnyvale General Plan. The General Plan is a set of long-term goals and policies that guide local government decisions. Land use and transportation are significantly linked and provide the foundation for the physical development of the community. The General Plan provides guidance regarding the location, type, and intensity of land uses within the community. These factors drive the demand for transportation resources.

---

### The Vision for Sunnyvale

*Looking forward, Sunnyvale is a dynamic community with a strong positive image and identifiable community character consisting of varied and attractive residential and business/industrial neighborhoods. All neighborhoods are served by a viable, convenient transportation system. A strong economy supports the desired level of City services. The city has a variety of housing served by diverse and well-maintained parks, open space and recreational facilities. Within the region, Sunnyvale is an active participant in ensuring and sustaining its high quality of life.*

---

## CHAPTER 2 - COMMUNITY CONDITIONS

---

Sunnyvale's history is presented from a land use and transportation perspective, followed by a discussion of community conditions in 1995. The community conditions include: community setting, population, demographics, economics conditions, land uses and development patterns, and the transportation system.

---

## CHAPTER 3 - ISSUES

---

This chapter addresses a wide range of policy issues, including land use policy that affect transportation and transportation policy issues. The discussion points include:

- ◆ the jobs/housing ratio
- ◆ development standards in industrial zoning districts
- ◆ residential development
- ◆ high density residential zoning districts
- ◆ diverse land uses
- ◆ planned development combining districts
- ◆ the variety of transportation modes
- ◆ neighborhood traffic engineering
- ◆ the connection between land use and transportation (how to address roadway capacity)

Neighborhood integrity is a cornerstone of land use planning in Sunnyvale. The land use decisions and choices for transportation in the future have differing and profound effects on community character. Both the land use and transportation opportunities available to the community and the choices individuals make regarding these options are key elements of the current and future demands on land use and the transportation system.

The ability of the City to provide roadway capacity, provide other transportation services, and/or influence transportation demand to support planned land use are primary policy issues. Roadway capacity is a key issue related to traffic generated by various types of land uses. When the forecasted trips exceed the desired capacity of the roadway system there are several options available: land use actions and physical modifications through capital improvements. However, the funding of large-scale capital projects remains a major challenge.

---

## **CHAPTER 4 - MAJOR FACTS, FINDINGS AND ASSUMPTIONS, AND COMMUNITY CONDITION INDICATORS**

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This chapter summarizes major facts, findings, assumptions and community condition indicators for Sunnyvale. The community condition indicators are updated annually.

---

## CHAPTER 5 - GOALS, POLICIES AND ACTION STATEMENTS

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The goals and policies related to “The Neighborhoods” have been divided in four land use types:

- ◆ residential
- ◆ industrial
- ◆ commercial
- ◆ public and quasi-public

“The City” is divided into four major concepts:

- ◆ efficient transportation
- ◆ appropriate housing
- ◆ strong economy
- ◆ community character

“The City as Part of the Region” has two categories:

- ◆ transportation
- ◆ land use

The goals and policies emphasize several important points, including:

- ◆ the relationship between Sunnyvale and the region
- ◆ the key concept of neighborhood integrity
- ◆ the balance of various land uses in Sunnyvale
- ◆ the importance of an effective, safe, and convenient transportation system.
- ◆ the value of maintaining and creating an attractive, positive, image, and human-scale development
- ◆ the need for a variety of housing options
- ◆ the importance of a strong local economy to support services and a mix of jobs and commercial activities.

The Land Use and Transportation Element of the General Plan provide the foundation for the identification, development , and implementation of land use and transportation policies for the City of Sunnyvale.

---

# CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

---

This Land Use and Transportation Element is part of the Sunnyvale General Plan. The purpose of this element is to guide the land use and transportation decisions that the City makes over the coming years, ensuring these decisions support achievement of the community's vision for Sunnyvale's future.

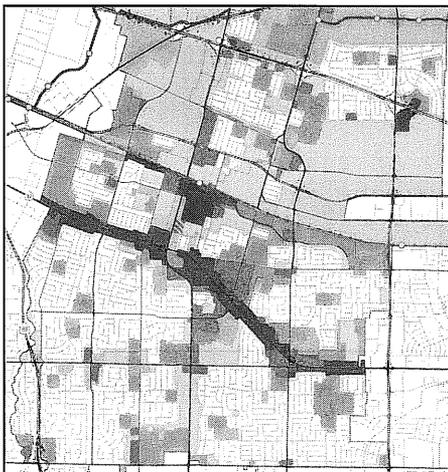
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## WHAT IS THE GENERAL PLAN?

---

The General Plan is a set of long-term goals and policies that guide local government decisions. The General Plan has been used primarily to guide land development decisions. However, in 1980 the City of Sunnyvale, recognizing the importance of integrating all aspects of local government management into the General Plan, expanded the plan to include a more comprehensive approach to

planning. City activities as diverse as seismic safety, the arts, and fiscal planning are now included in the Sunnyvale General Plan. Moreover, the City's budget, known as the Resource Allocation Plan, ties service levels directly to the policies and priorities established in the General Plan elements.



California state law requires that each local jurisdiction adopt and maintain a General Plan, including at least the following elements: land use, circulation (transportation), housing,

conservation, open space, noise, and safety. In keeping with state requirements, these elements are always addressed by the Sunnyvale General Plan through a series of documents called Elements or Sub-Elements.

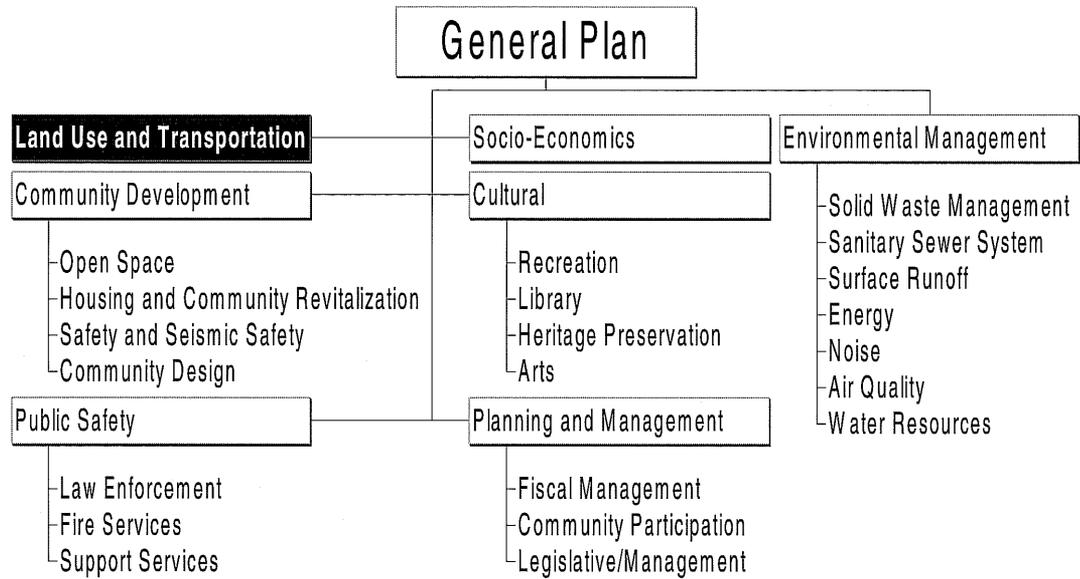
Combining the former Land Use Sub-Element and the Transportation Element into one document represents a revision to the organization of the Sunnyvale General Plan. This unification reflects the recognition that land use and transportation are so interconnected that they should be discussed in one document. In one sense we are returning to an earlier model: Sunnyvale's first General Plan, adopted in 1957, focused on land use and transportation. This plan effectively updates and incorporates the General Plan amendments completed since the adoption of the Land Use Element in 1984 and the Transportation Element in 1981. This document contains largely similar policies to the earlier documents; any substantial policy changes are addressed in detail in Chapter 3 and included as part of the environmental review.

---

## **INTERRELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ELEMENTS AND SUB-ELEMENTS**

---

Land use and transportation provide the foundation for the physical development of the community. All other General Plan elements and sub-elements are strongly influenced by the basic patterns and intensities of land uses in the community and by the transportation network that serves these uses. For example; preservation of open space, development of housing and parks, and community design standards (all sub-elements of the General Plan) are important aspects of land use planning. Access to all parts of the community is provided by the transportation network. Consequently, the transportation network affects the arrangement and character of the community.

**Figure 1.1: Sunnyvale General Plan Elements and Sub-Elements**

## LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

### Interrelationship

Land use and transportation are significantly linked. The General Plan provides guidance regarding the location, type, and intensity of land uses within the community. These factors drive the demand for transportation resources. Only within the last two decades, however, have land use and transportation planners recognized the exponential impact of this linkage.

For example, a new freeway may be built to alleviate traffic congestion at peak commute times on the existing roadway system. The new freeway may temporarily alleviate existing traffic congestion, but the access provided by the freeway may stimulate new residential and commercial development in formerly undeveloped areas. As new development expands, the freeway fills up with traffic created by the new development. The freeway becomes more congested and another freeway is proposed to alleviate the congestion—and the cycle repeats itself. While in earlier times this scenario would have been applauded as progress, this is not always the case in today's complex environment, where issues such as suburban sprawl and air and water pollution must also be considered.

Another land use and transportation link is the relationship between commuting costs (as measured in time and dollars) and land value. Since most people prefer a short work commute, a good job base makes a community a more desirable place to live. However, as the community builds out, land for residential development becomes more scarce, causing residential land values to increase. As a result, housing prices increase, and fewer people are able to afford to live in the community. Thus many people must find housing in other communities and commute to work. The increased number of commuters puts a strain on the local and regional roadway system and on the commuters themselves. Living closer to work becomes more desirable. Again people try to find housing in the community, causing further increases in land values—and the cycle repeats itself.

A simple response to these complex situations would be to approve no further development. But when there is a need for housing or access to jobs, denying potential new residents access to housing and jobs may begin to undermine the economic base of the community and the region. Do we have to choose between a healthy environment and our economic well-being? Or can we find creative solutions through better resource management, development of alternative land use and transportation strategies, and the application of new technologies? Such questions reveal the necessity for this element.

---

### Purpose of This Element

Transportation and land use planning are important components of any city and a necessary part of a city's long-term and short-term plans. The physical infrastructure, modes of movement, and existing and needed capacity of transportation shape a city just as land use choices affect the demand and development of transportation facilities. Thus, transportation and land use influence the future of a city and its citizens. Poor transportation and land use planning can paralyze and inhibit a city's vitality and diminish its charm. Sunnyvale's Land Use and Transportation Element outlines the City's goals and identifies the careful steps and actions needed, ensuring that the City's transportation system facilitates the movement of people and goods. It also ensures the wise use of land for present and future Sunnyvale residents and employees.

---

## GENERAL PLAN LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION MAP

---

Sunnyvale's General Plan Land Use and Transportation Map has four major land use categories:

- ◆ Residential
- ◆ Commercial
- ◆ Industrial
- ◆ Public/Government Facilities

Each of these categories is divided into subcategories, based on density and land use type. The various land use categories are applied to geographic land areas within the community, to indicate which land uses the City believes will be the most appropriate at that location.

In making these decisions, the City must consider which land uses will best serve the public interest, while allowing property owners reasonable property use. Maintaining this balance has always been a primary function of land use planning.

---

## GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

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### Land Use

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#### *Zoning*

Land uses indicated on the General Plan Land Use Map are implemented by regulations found in the Zoning Chapter of the Municipal Code (Title 19). To indicate the relationship between these two documents, the term *General Plan* is used for the policy document that is basically conceptual, providing the broad framework for land uses within the City. The term *Zoning Code* refers to organized and codified legal regulations that are very specific and detailed. Zoning provides a legal mechanism for local government regulation of the land uses described in the General Plan Land Use Map.

In addition to providing specific regulations related to minimum lot size, building heights, setbacks, lot coverage, etc., for each zoning district, the Zoning Code also lists the uses that would be acceptable or could be considered in each district, as well as those that would be considered unacceptable. For some uses, further regulations are established. For example, floor area ratios (FARs) have been established in industrial zones and some residential zones, to respond to specific concerns about land use intensity in these districts. Zoning regulations designate the process to be used when a permit must be applied for in order to consider approval of a particular land use in a district. A table illustrating the relationship of the Sunnyvale General Plan land use categories with zoning categories is located in Appendix A.

---

*Subdivision Map Act and Subdivision Code*

A subdivision is any division of land for the purpose of sale, lease, or finance. The Subdivision Map Act regulates subdivision throughout the state. The goals of the Subdivision Map Act are as follows:

- ◆ To encourage orderly community development by providing for the regulation and control of the design and improvement of a subdivision with proper consideration of its relationship to adjoining areas.
- ◆ To ensure that areas within the subdivision that are dedicated for public purposes will be properly improved by the subdivider so that they will not become an undue burden on the community.
- ◆ To protect the public and individual transferees from fraud and exploitation.

The Map Act allows cities some flexibility in the processing of subdivisions. Sunnyvale controls this process through the subdivision regulations in the Municipal Code (Title 18). These regulations ensure that minimum requirements are adopted for the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare; and that the subdivision includes adequate community improvements, municipal services, and other public facilities. Sunnyvale's subdivision provisions support the Subdivision Map Act and, in so doing, also support implementation of the City's General Plan.

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*Special Plans*

The City approved several major land use plans between 1984 and 1994. These plans include the Downtown Specific Plan, Futures Study, Precise Plan for El Camino Real, Southern Pacific Corridor Specific Plan, Lockheed Site Master Use Permit, and 101/Lawrence Site Specific Plan. All of these plans oversee the redevelopment, or more extensive development, of their respective planning areas. These plans act as powerful tools for implementing the goals and policies of the Land Use and Transportation Element through the regulation of density, height, and other design standards. Appendix B contains a brief description of these individual plans.

---

*Capital Budget*

Within Sunnyvale, the General Plan serves as the foundation of all the City's planning and budgetary actions, and it forms the basis of the Planning and Management System. Each element of the General Plan articulates long-range policy direction, which is translated into action statements through legislative action and budget allocations. The budget implements the goals of the General Plan.

The budget structure is parallel to the General Plan structure but is further divided into programs, service delivery plans, and activities. Within the Department of Community Development, for example, the implementation of the General Plan is achieved through land use studies, an extensive land use data base, development review standards in the Sunnyvale Municipal Code, and the programs related to neighborhood preservation, housing, and economic development. Since the orientation of the budget is the allocation of resources to meet program outcomes, the budget is called the Resource Allocation Plan (RAP).

---

## CEQA

CEQA is the acronym for the California Environmental Quality Act. It encourages the protection of all aspects of the physical environment. The CEQA review process analyzes proposed developments for their potential impacts on the physical environment. In situations where there are no feasible alternatives, CEQA requires identification of mitigation measures to reduce, eliminate, or compensate for negative impacts. For example, some traffic mitigation measures may require capital improvements, while other measures may mandate bicycle facilities or trip reduction programs. The most common traffic mitigation measures require improvements to roadway and intersection capacity. There is further discussion of environmental mitigation at the end of Chapter 2.

---

## Design Guidelines

Sunnyvale has City-Wide and Industrial Design Guidelines. The City adopted these documents to improve the overall image and aesthetic quality of Sunnyvale. Used in conjunction with the Zoning Code, the City-Wide and Industrial Design Guidelines put proposed projects through a systematic design review. Drawn from the goals and policies of the General Plan, and most specifically from the Community Design Sub-Element, the City-Wide and Industrial Design Guidelines serve as effective tools to direct site and building design issues.

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## Transportation

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### *Regional Transportation Plans*

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) is the designated Congestion Management Agency (CMA) in Santa Clara County. The VTA produces two planning documents that affect the implementation of Sunnyvale's General Plan. The Congestion Management Program (CMP) is a biennial document that sets performance standards for regional roadway, transit, and other transportation modes. The CMP also contains requirements for promoting alternative transportation uses consistent with air pollution control measures. In addition to the CMP, the SCTVA has a long-term planning document, which is updated about every

three to four years; the T2010 Plan is the SCTVA's most recent version of this planning document. The CMP and T2010 Plans serve as tools for maintaining service levels and initiating capital improvements for major roadways and transit, supporting the City's short- and long-term General Plan goals.

---

*Countywide Deficiency Plan*

Local agencies are not able to affect large-scale improvements on freeways, expressways, and state roadways that are not owned or controlled by them. This situation led to State legislation that Congestion Management Agencies prepare Countywide Deficiency Plans (CDPs) for such regionally controlled facilities. Part of the 1990 legislation defines deficiency planning and includes the identification of ways to address local impacts on regional transportation systems. Deficiency planning will allow development to continue to occur while addressing, on a larger scale, region-wide impacts. Since the early 1990s, the VTA, acting as the Congestion Management Agency, has been working on the development of a CDP for Santa Clara County. Major components of the CDP are the identification of needed capital improvements and how these improvements would be funded over time.

---

*Capital Improvement and Operating Budget*

The ability of the City to provide roadway capacity or other transportation facilities to support planned land use is a primary policy issue. The staging and funding of needed transportation capital improvements is necessary to facilitate orderly and comprehensive development and, in turn, to implement the goals and policies of the General Plan. The operating budget also establishes performance standards for the operation and maintenance of City roadways, bikeways, and sidewalks.

The Department of Public Works has several operating programs that are directly or indirectly related to operation and maintenance of the transportation system, including Traffic Engineering, Street Maintenance, Street Landscaping, and Development Review. An infrastructure replacement program has also been initiated to monitor and anticipate replacement needs for major components of the transportation system.

---

*Conditional Approval for Development*

The City's development requirements for some developments are approved subject to "conditions of approval." Such conditions apply to projects whether or not they require environmental review per CEQA. Typical conditions of approval for transportation enhancements include requiring improved pedestrian access, as well as traffic flow enhancements.

---

*Bicycle Plan*

The City adopted its most recent Bicycle Plan in 1993. This plan is consistent with and implements action statements in the General Plan. The Bicycle Plan provides guidance for developing bicycle facilities in Sunnyvale. As a planning tool, the Bicycle Plan will continue to support the General Plan objectives for bicycle planning in Sunnyvale.

---

## **HOW THE GENERAL PLAN PROCESS HAS WORKED**

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Sunnyvale's first General Plan was adopted in 1957, revised in 1963, and revised again in 1972. In the early 1980s, the City began its current practice of printing separate elements and sub-elements to the General Plan. The earlier General Plan documents focused on land use and circulation planning, the planning basics at that time. They were short, simple, and to the point.

These earlier documents tell us how past community residents and leaders envisioned their community. Did they get what they wanted? Do present day residents want essentially the same thing or, given the constraints of current conditions, is a different Sunnyvale preferred by the year 2010? Answers to these questions help to define a vision of the future.

In reviewing these older plans, some significant continuities can be identified. One ongoing assumption was that Sunnyvale would continue to grow in population. The 1957 plan estimated that Sunnyvale's 1980 population would be 120,000, while the 1972 plan suggested that housing for 152,400 people would be needed by 1990. The actual population in 1980 was almost 108,000, and

the actual population in 1990 was about 117,000. All of these earlier plans visualized a City with a strong employment base. All had similar ideas about where and how the community should be commercially developed.

These past plans differ primarily in their perspectives on the kinds of housing that should be provided. For example, the 1957 plan suggested that the City should "have a large proportion of single family homes" and should "curb multifamily development." By 1963, more multifamily development was being encouraged, to accommodate the demand for housing created by a strong job market. One reason for this difference, when both plans used similar population estimates, is that in 1957 the General Plan estimated a future land area of approximately 30 square miles, including some of present day Cupertino and Santa Clara. Sunnyvale's land area has never reached that size. Later plans were based on estimated land areas of 24 to 25 square miles. The estimates were also based on the much larger average household sizes of the mid-1950s. These smaller land area estimates could not provide the projected housing needs without increasing the number of multifamily units.

The 1957 General Plan contained a very brief discussion of circulation, which focused on the streets and highway system in the City. At that time no local bus service was available, although the 1957 plan contained the comment that "As the City grows, some type of local bus service should be provided." The 1963 plan was even more brief in its description of circulation, noting the regional plans for the rapid transit system that would become BART, but not indicating a need for a local transit system. These plans reflected the bias at that time toward the use of the private automobile as the primary means of transportation. Air pollution, long commutes, and traffic congestion as a way of life had not yet become realities. Bicycles were used by children for recreation, and consequently were not provided for as part of the roadway system. It was assumed that providing for the automobile was the primary function of local transportation planning. This assumption resulted in the development of a street and highway system that now efficiently moves many automobiles around and through the City, but reinforces reliance on the automobile and makes retrofitting the system for alternative means of transportation more difficult.

These past planning efforts were generally successful, in that the vision they described for Sunnyvale has, in many ways, become a reality. Sunnyvale today is a balanced community with a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial development, and a strong employment base. There has always been emphasis on strong neighborhood identity. Sunnyvale values cohesive neighborhoods throughout the City. Several of the planned neighborhoods have been built. El Camino Real has been generally successful as a commercial strip, several neighborhood shopping centers have been developed, and Sunnyvale's downtown is still considered the City's commercial core. All three of the earlier general plans emphasized the aesthetic appearance of the City, resulting in the development of a strong public and private landscaping program.

However, when reviewing the earlier plans, it can be seen that not all problems were easily resolved. For example, there has been an ongoing "push-pull" between keeping Sunnyvale's suburban feel in its residential development while still providing enough housing for our strong job base. The question of how to achieve the proper balance between these two conflicting desires is still a challenge.

In today's environment, planning efforts can no longer be based solely on the needs and priorities of the local jurisdiction. It is now recognized that local land use and transportation decisions often have regional impacts. This recognition has resulted in an effort to develop cooperative relationships among local jurisdictions, in order to solve regional problems and promote a healthy physical and economic environment within the region. The development of cooperative regional relationships has been especially important to transportation planning activities. Since local jurisdictions tend to compete with each other for economic development as well as for state and federal funds for local projects, the successful development of regional strategies is another major challenge for the future.

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## **THE GENERAL PLAN: A STRATEGIC DOCUMENT FOR THE FUTURE**

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The General Plan is both a long-range (10-20 years) and a strategic (5-10 years, typically) planning document that optimizes the use of limited resources by selecting from various possible alternatives or actions.

The planning process starts with the formation of goals. Policy makers prioritize the goals. Next, the process turns to the development of alternative implementation plans. Policy makers compare and select from these implementation approaches. Through the creation, analysis, and choice of alternatives, this strategic planning process attempts to optimize resources for the realization of the City's goals.

Since the first General Plan was adopted for Sunnyvale in 1957, the City has expressed its goals for the future with emphasis in four areas:

- ◆ Community Character
- ◆ Appropriate Housing
- ◆ Efficient Transportation
- ◆ Strong Economy

Although these concepts are quite broad and do not articulate a detailed vision for the future, they are helpful in testing the relative importance of various policies and alternatives. Consequently, they have worked well in a strategic planning environment.

These goals also have other important characteristics. In many instances they produce conflicting as well as complementary interests. An example is the balance between strong job growth and maintaining acceptable levels of traffic flow. As an economy grows and jobs are added, the demand for transportation services also increases. Inadequate transportation facilities can be a disincentive for economic expansion in a particular region. On the other hand, as industries develop, a combination of a growing tax base and roadway mitigation measures may result in the ability to increase roadway capacity. Thus, the concepts of a strong economy and efficient transportation can support or hinder each other in different situations.

As a package, the City's general desire for a strong economy, efficient transportation, appropriate housing, and community character are comprehensive and interwoven concepts. They have a timeless quality and can continue to provide a solid platform for the City's land use and transportation goals. The Land Use and Transportation Element uses these concepts as the foundation for the City's future land use and transportation goals, policies, and implementation strategies.

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## VISION

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A “vision” for Sunnyvale helps the community to understand and reach consensus on its desired goal for the given planning period. In essence, it is the distillation of all the goals and policies it has expressed.

*Looking forward, Sunnyvale is a dynamic community with a strong positive image and identifiable community character consisting of varied and attractive residential and business/industrial neighborhoods. All neighborhoods are served by a viable, convenient transportation system. A strong economy supports the desired level of City services. The City has a variety of housing served by diverse and well-maintained parks, open space and recreational facilities. Within the region, Sunnyvale is an active participant in ensuring and sustaining its high quality of life.*

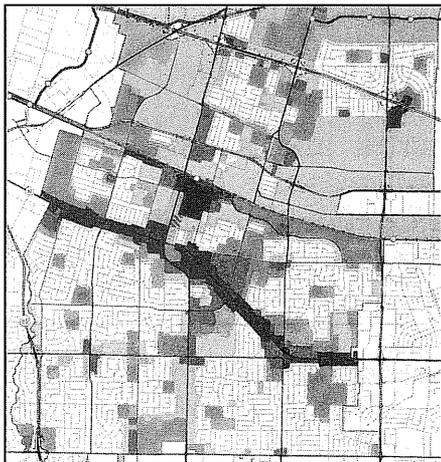
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## CHAPTER 2 - COMMUNITY CONDITIONS

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**T**his chapter provides the history as well as an overview of the community conditions found in Sunnyvale in the base year 1995. Sunnyvale's history is presented from a land use and transportation perspective, followed by a focused discussion of the community conditions that existed in Sunnyvale in 1995. The community conditions to be reviewed include the following:

- ◆ Community setting
- ◆ Population demographics
- ◆ Economic conditions
- ◆ Land uses and development patterns
- ◆ Transportation system



Outside of the natural environment where it is located, a city's people, land development patterns, and transportation system are perhaps the most important components in giving a city its form and character. Therefore, the strengths, potentials, and limitations of our human, land use, and transportation resources are noted. The policy issues examined in Chapter 3 are based on the information provided here.

The Land Use and Transportation Element uses demographic data from several sources. Census data from 1970, 1980, and 1990 are used to show historic trends over time. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) provides reports on the nine county Bay Area region every two years. These reports focus on current and projected population and employment at city and county levels in the Bay Area. ABAG uses sophisticated modeling tools to develop their projections, which are reviewed by the region's city and county governments before publication. The most recent ABAG report is "Projections '96," which uses 1995 as a base year. ABAG data are used to suggest trends for the future. Another significant source of data used in this chapter is the City's Automated Land Information System (ALIS). ALIS is an extensive database used to track each parcel of land in Sunnyvale. In Chapter 2, unless otherwise indicated, 1995 is the base year for data from ALIS.

In some cases, Census data and ABAG data may have slightly different values. They also have different base years. Thus, in assembling the data used in this chapter, each analysis uses one data source throughout, to ensure consistency for that evaluation. Also, data sources are chosen based on which would provide the most current information. Consequently, the ABAG and ALIS data sources are used whenever possible, since they are more current than the last U.S. Census in 1990.

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## HISTORY

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### Land Use

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Perhaps the first land use plan prepared for Sunnyvale was the land development plan proposed by Sunnyvale pioneer W. E. Crossman in 1898. After he had purchased 200 acres from Martin Murphy's son Patrick, he began to promote his "City of Destiny" in publications distributed throughout California and the nation. Crossman envisioned a community that included both factories and small agricultural enterprises such as truck farms and orchards. He laid out a street pattern that featured a commercial area extending south from the railroad station and established one acre lots for residential development. After the 1906 earthquake, he was successful in drawing Sunnyvale's earliest industrial development, Hendy Iron Works, away from San Francisco. His vision of a community with an economic base featuring both agriculture and industry essentially set

the land use pattern of distinctive residential, industrial, and commercial neighborhoods for the community for the next 50 years.

Following World War II, Sunnyvale grew rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s, as did other communities in the Santa Clara Valley. This growth strongly imprinted Sunnyvale with the development styles popular at that time. During 1954, for example, approximately 4,400 residential units were constructed. Most of these were located in new residential planned neighborhoods, modeled on the suburban pattern that was popular at that time—low-rise ranch style homes in tracts that featured cul-de-sacs and curvilinear streets designed to avoid through traffic. Residential development patterns became more dense and urban in the 1970s and 1980s, however, as the demand for housing and the cost of land increased.

Sunnyvale has never been a "bedroom community" and has always provided a mix of commercial, agricultural, and industrial land uses, as well as residential land uses. Therefore the City has always had a strong employment base, which has continually stimulated the need for housing.

By 1995, almost 98% of the net land area in the City contained some form of development. Residential neighborhoods are marked by one-mile spaced arterial streets (resulting from the one-mile square unit of agricultural parcels), with few other streets that are continuous over long stretches. This pattern established logical, strong neighborhood units. Approximately two-thirds of the City's dwelling units are located south of the Southern Pacific railroad corridor, while manufacturing and office uses are concentrated north of that corridor. The City's major commercial neighborhood is the four mile spine along both sides of El Camino Real. In addition to this commercial strip, Sunnyvale has a downtown, composed of a regional shopping mall and adjacent commercial blocks, including the Murphy Station Heritage Landmark District and the Town and Country development. Neighborhood shopping centers are scattered throughout the City. With almost 98% of the land area at least partially developed, from 1995 onward most future development activity will involve redevelopment of existing underdeveloped sites and sites where business expansion or changes in use require new additions or extensive renovations. This factor will be an important consideration in developing land use and transportation policies for the future.

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## Transportation

When Martin Murphy established the railroad route through his Bayview Ranch in 1864, it could be said that he became Sunnyvale's first transportation planner. As was typical of most early transportation activities, this action was not a part of a systematic plan. It was part of the process of exploration, discovery, and demand for access to new lands. The transportation development that both led and followed this demand for land access was basically opportunistic, and proceeded on an as needed rather than systematic basis.

The first formal City-wide transportation plan for Sunnyvale was part of the 1957 General Plan. At that time, transportation planning was called *circulation*, a term used to describe the movement of people and goods within a defined geographical area. In a sense, circulation implied a closed loop, a system where outside linkages were of secondary importance. But since 1957, regional, national, and international linkages have become increasingly important for businesses and residents. By 1981 the term *transportation plan* had supplanted the term *circulation* in the City's General Plan documents.

As Sunnyvale's population has grown and changed, and as the City's land area has been developed, the task of providing and maintaining a successful transportation system has become more complex. There are more people and goods moving in and out of the City, and there are expectations of ever increasing efficiency and convenience for all forms of transportation. Since 1957, the difficulty and complexity of transportation planning has increased exponentially. The historical separation of land uses contributing to Sunnyvale's "suburban" character and the emergence of Sunnyvale as a regional job center have resulted in a congested street and highway system.

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## COMMUNITY SETTING

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### Geographic Location

Located at the southwest end of San Francisco Bay, Sunnyvale is part of the solid band of urban development that surrounds the Bay. The City occupies 24 square miles and extends approximately 8.5 miles from the Bay to the north, to Junipero Serra Freeway (SR-280) to the south. Sunnyvale is bounded on the west by Mountain View and Los Altos, on the south by Cupertino, and on the east by Santa Clara and San Jose. A large portion of the northern part of the City lies within the "Golden Triangle," the high tech industrial area defined geographically by three major transportation facilities: SR 101, SR 237, and SR 880. Figure 2.1 shows Sunnyvale's regional location as the "Heart of Silicon Valley."

Figure 2.1: Regional Location Map

