

# CHAPTER

# 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **I**NTRODUCTION TO OAKLEY

The City of Oakley is among California's youngest cities, but the community and its historic character date to the late 1800's. The City's location on the flanks of the San Joaquin River Delta, not far north and east of the slopes of Mount Diablo and separated from the more rapidly developing central and western portions of Contra Costa County, has allowed the community to grow slowly and peacefully as the neighboring San Francisco Bay Area and other portions of Contra Costa County have experienced rapid urbanization. Oakley has small town charm and sense of community, affordable prices for land and housing, a growing population of professional and skilled workers, and a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. Within this diverse community, rural and suburban lifestyles coexist with remaining agricultural activities. Figure 1-1 – Regional Location, depicts Oakley's general location within the State and within Contra Costa County.

Recognizing the importance of guiding its destiny, members of the community joined efforts and, on November 3, 1998, the community formally voted for the incorporation of the City of Oakley. On July 1, 1999 the City of Oakley was officially incorporated. The primary reasons for incorporation were to control the quality and pace of development, and to improve law enforcement services in Oakley. Since incorporation, the City now provides or directs a majority of municipal

services, has improved law enforcement services, has become proactive in land use planning and economic development, and has provided the opportunity for civic engagement at a more local level.

Development of this General Plan has been among the City's major efforts toward establishing and promoting a community that reflects the values and character of local residents. This General Plan provides the fundamental blueprint for Oakley through the year 2020.

At the time of incorporation, the City of Oakley automatically adopted the Contra Costa County General Plan, as well as the County Zoning Code and other County regulations. These County regulations allowed the City to operate as policy documents were prepared for the new City. Within this document, that first interim General Plan is referred to as the City adopted County General Plan, and it remained in force until the formal adoption of this General Plan.

### **Community Goals and Vision**

The City's mission statement is a clear reflection of the values that led the community to incorporate: "The City of Oakley exists to build and enhance a quality community and to serve the public in a friendly, efficient, responsive manner." In addition to the Mission Statement, the City's Vision Statement further defines the

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most basic goals and values of the City: “By 2007, the City of Oakley will be recognized as a model of civic participation and a vibrant delta community where families live, work, play, shop and visit.”

Through a strategic planning process, the City Council adopted the following goals for the period of years 2000 through 2003. These are overall community goals and are not presented in order of priority:

- ❑ Attract and retain businesses to the City
- ❑ Complete and begin ongoing implementation of a General Plan
- ❑ Create a functioning and vital Downtown, including a Civic Center
- ❑ Ensure financial stability
- ❑ Maintain a friendly, efficient, responsive, easily accessible City
- ❑ Organization with a high level of civic participation
- ❑ Develop and begin implementation of a comprehensive parks and recreation program

### Overview of General Plans

Within California, all counties and incorporated cities are required by law to adopt a General Plan. State law is quite specific on the topics that must be addressed within the General Plan. The chapters, or Elements, of the Plan must address various State-mandated topics, but the organization of the Elements is at the discretion of each jurisdiction. Additionally, the State recognizes that each jurisdiction may face unique issues and authorizes the adoption of optional Elements that address issues of local concern.

### Requirement for Internal Consistency

The General Plan must fully integrate its separate parts and relate them to each other without conflict. Internal consistency applies as much to figures and tables as to the General Plan text. It also applies to data, analysis, and policies. All adopted portions of the General Plan, whether required by state law or not, have equal legal weight. No Element may supercede another.

### Organization of this General Plan

This Oakley 2020 General Plan addresses the State-mandated requirements through the following Elements:

Land Use Element  
Circulation Element  
Growth Management Element  
Economic Development Element  
Open Space and Conservation Element  
Parks & Recreation Element  
Health & Safety Element  
Noise Element  
Housing Element

The organization of material within each Element is at the discretion of the local jurisdiction. Each Element of this General Plan has been organized as follows: a brief Introduction that describes the Element’s content and mandatory components; a Goals, Policies and Programs section that establishes the policies and regulations the will govern land uses and activities within the City; and, a Setting section that provides supporting data that relates specifically to the policy statements. This Plan is intended to be concise and easily understood. While substantial technical data was collected to support this planning effort, the majority of the data is contained within separate reports and is not reproduced herein. Technical reports on cultural and historic resources, biological resources and public facilities such as water service, wastewater treatment and drainage have been prepared to support this General Plan and are available through the City for readers seeking more detailed information.

### Contra Costa County Measure C

In November 1988, the voters of Contra Costa County approved Measure C, thereby approving both Transportation Improvement and Growth Management Programs and authorizing a 0.5% sales tax to fund associated improvement projects. In order to receive local street maintenance and improvement funds under Measure C, the County and each city in the County is required to develop a Growth Management Element as part of their General Plan. The Growth Management Element and

the Circulation Element of this General Plan provide the required framework for compliance with Measure C.

### **Planning Horizon and Planning Area**

General Plans are required to establish a planning horizon and a Planning Area. The planning horizon, or the date through which this Plan could reasonably guide Oakley, is year 2020. However, it is typical for developing cities to update their General Plans every ten years as development occurs and conditions change. The Planning Area for this General Plan is the incorporated City limits, plus two areas generally east of the City referred to as proposed expansion areas. The incorporated City limits include approximately 8,064 acres, while the proposed expansion areas include an additional 2,700 acres.

In addition to the incorporated City limit boundary, a Sphere of Influence (SOI) boundary was established for Oakley at incorporation. In the case of a newly incorporated city such as Oakley, the City limit and the SOI boundary are identical. If Oakley wishes to expand its City limit, it must submit a request to the Contra Costa County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) to expand its SOI. If the LAFCo approves the expansion of an SOI, then the City could seek annexation of the additional land, thereby expanding the City boundary.

In the case of Oakley, Contra Costa County has approved urban intensity development immediately east of the City (Cypress Lakes) that will significantly affect Oakley. In the interest of guiding such development, the City will seek annexation of these lands. Contra Costa County LAFCo has directed the City to include within the General Plan any areas that it may seek to include within the City's SOI. Under this direction, the City has included approximately 2,700 acres east of Oakley within its Planning Area to support an application to LAFCo in the event the City seeks to expand its SOI.

### **Related Planning Activities**

This General Plan will be implemented in concert with various programs already underway by the City. Such programs include, but are not limited to, the following:

#### **Oakley Redevelopment Agency**

The Oakley Redevelopment Plan was established prior to incorporation of the City and is now administered under the direction of the Oakley Redevelopment Agency. The Redevelopment Agency will implement the Oakley Redevelopment Plan, thereby enhancing existing land uses within Oakley, with the aim to provide employment and goods and services for members of the community, as well as enhancing and improving underutilized land within the Redevelopment Area.

#### **Oakley Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

The City has worked diligently over the past two years to develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan tailored to the specific needs of the community. Proceeding in tandem with the General Plan, it is anticipated that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will be adopted soon after the General Plan.

#### **Long Range Circulation Plan**

Prior to initiation of the General Plan, the City had initiated a Long Range Circulation Plan to identify specific road improvement projects and to ensure adequate funding sources to complete identified improvements. The Long Range Circulation Plan and its associated Fee Study will be adopted following the General Plan.

#### **Downtown Revitalization Plan**

The City clearly recognizes the need to enhance Oakley's downtown and to create a more vital community center. One of the major constraints to achieving this goal will be resolved with the ultimate Highway 4/Main Street realignment, as well as the Highway 4 Bypass. Both of these projects will enhance pedestrian circulation and create a safer and more pedestrian-friendly downtown.

### **Environmental Review**

Adoption of a General Plan is considered a “project” under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As such, the potential impacts of adoption of the General Plan must be identified and analyzed. For the Oakley 2020 General Plan, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared.

From the outset, it was the City’s intention to create a self-mitigating Plan. This strategy required the City to consider potential impacts and incorporate policies and programs within the General Plan that would reduce potential impacts to level of less than significant.

With regard to the CEQA analysis, it is significant to note that the City adopted County General Plan that this document replaces provided greater development potential than this General Plan. This reduction in development potential reflects first that the County had established urban land use designations for most

of the Oakley Planning Area and secondly that under this Plan a substantial development area located north of the Contra Costa Canal within the City has been converted from residential uses to Delta Recreation, a predominantly open space designation.

### **Subsequent Actions**

While adoption of the General Plan represents a major milestone for the City of Oakley, additional concurrent and future planning efforts will be required. As noted above, the City is currently engaged in numerous planning efforts that are anticipated for adoption following the General Plan. Additionally, the City must amend the City adopted County Zoning Ordinance and Zoning Map to achieve consistency with this General Plan. The amendment and adoption of a Zoning Code and Zoning Map prepared specifically for Oakley will be a substantial and important undertaking that will clearly identify specific uses and standards for development within Oakley.