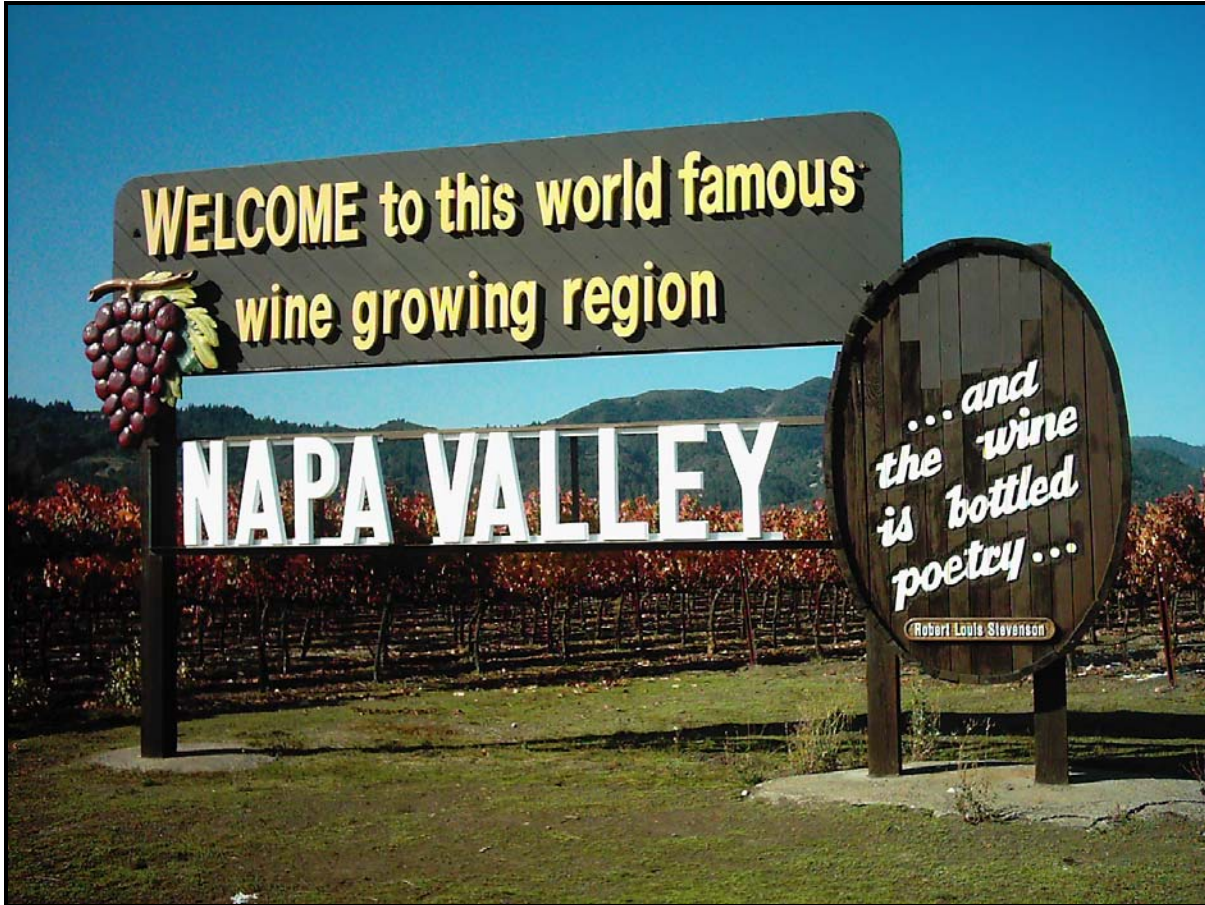




SUMMARY: A VISION FOR NAPA COUNTY

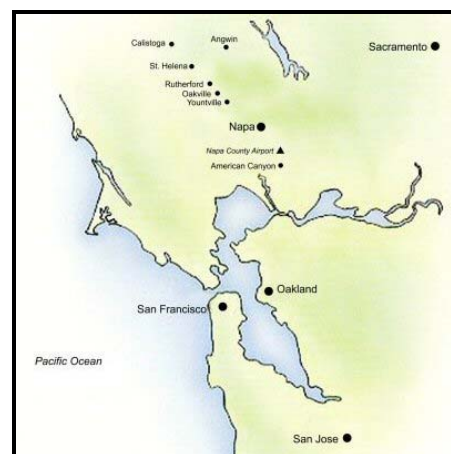


Welcome to Napa County!

This General Plan is intended to ensure the preservation of the qualities and features that make the county a world-renowned place.

TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE, unincorporated Napa County will be home to world-famous wines and a residential population smaller than most Bay Area cities and towns. The County's scenic beauty, valuable agricultural resources, and quality of life are reinforced by longstanding commitments to agricultural preservation, resource conservation, and urban-centered growth. While other Bay Area counties have experienced unprecedented development and urban infrastructure expansion over the last four decades, Napa County's citizens have conscientiously preserved the agricultural lands and rural character that we treasure.

The County has led the nation in innovative agricultural preservation strategies, and it intends to remain a leader in moderating and directing growth in ways that minimize resource consumption and make unincorporated Napa County a



Napa County is part of the larger San Francisco Bay region.



sustainable rural community. Napa will continue to be a place with abundant natural resources, a vibrant agriculture-centric economy, an enviable quality of life, and a responsible and inclusive government.

The goals, policies, and implementation actions of this General Plan are collectively intended to achieve this community vision and guide future decisions related to land use and development. This General Plan ensures that every important land use decision will be scrutinized and assessed for its potential to affect the quality of life, the environment we live in, and the ability to farm, process agricultural products, and get those products to market.

Many issues will become apparent during implementation of this Plan; some can be foreseen now, while others are less clear and will need to be dealt with as part of the ongoing process of implementing the Plan. For example, our efforts to address climate change currently focus on minimizing our contribution to greenhouse gases. As science continues to contribute more to the knowledge about the impacts of climate change, we will need to address impacts that are relevant to Napa County, which may include changes in river levels, water supplies, energy needs, or farming strategies.

In this situation, as in others that may arise, Napa County must respond to change and to internal and external factors in proactive ways, identifying issues before they become crises and developing innovative ways to respond on its own and in cooperation with other local and regional governmental agencies. As a result, this General Plan presents a policy framework that can and should be adjusted or adapted as needed over time.

AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION AND LAND USE

In 2030, Napa County will remain a world-famous grape-growing and wine-making region, with a viable and sustainable agricultural industry. The Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Element contains goals and policies related to agriculture and agricultural, watershed, and open space lands; urban-centered growth; residential, commercial, industrial, and public-institutional uses; growth management; and interagency cooperation. This element also contains the official Land Use Map of Napa County and text derived from Measure J, the agricultural preservation initiative approved by County voters in 1990. Collectively, the maps, goals, policies, and action items of this element ensure that Napa County will remain a leader in agricultural preservation, maintain a slow growth rate, and direct development to existing urbanized areas.

Descriptions and policies specific to unique geographic areas of the County were added to this element in the 2008 General Plan Update, which also:

- Re-designated about 230 acres of Industrial land immediately south of the City of Napa as a “Study Area,” indicating the need for additional study to determine the appropriateness of the area for non-industrial uses. (Approximately 20 acres at the Napa Pipe site were subsequently identified as a housing site in the 2009 Housing Element Update.)
- Depicted a growth boundary for the City of American Canyon for the first time and re-designated the nearby Hess Vineyard from “Industrial” to “Agriculture, Watershed & Open Space.”

The 2008 General Plan Update retained the growth management system derived from Measure A, approved by County voters in 1980 and readopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2004, and also laid the groundwork for future updates to the Housing Element by articulating a variety of land use strategies for meeting the County’s housing needs over time (Policy AG/LU-30).



The Growth Management System (Policy AG/LU-119) was simplified as part of the 2009 Housing Element Update without substantively changing the annual limit on residential building permits.

CIRCULATION

What are Napa County's "existing urbanized areas"?

The General Plan's commitment to urban-centered growth and use of terms like "designated urbanized areas" raises the question—what do we mean by these terms?

The simple answer is that when the General Plan refers to urban or urbanized areas, it is referring to the four cities and one town within the County (City of Napa, City of St. Helena, City of Calistoga, Town of Yountville, and City of American Canyon) plus the non-agricultural areas designated on the official Land Use Map and contained in the Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Element.

In 2030, Napa County will have a rational transportation system that prevents sprawl and its attendant impacts. The Circulation Element contains goals and policies related to the transportation system, including the extent and condition of the roadway system, as well as alternative modes of travel. This element also contains the official Circulation Map, which shows the desired road network within the unincorporated County.

Collectively, the maps, goals, policies, and action items in this element ensure that residents and visitors to Napa County will have transportation choices: roads will provide the highest level of service feasible while maintaining their rural character, transit will serve the general public and special needs populations, and energy-efficient modes such as walking and bicycling will be safe, attractive, and efficient. Transportation decisions will correlate with urban-centered growth policies and seek to reduce the percentage of work-related trips made by commuters driving alone. Specifically, the element:

- Encourages new residential and commercial development to concentrate within existing urbanized areas where sufficient densities can support transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.
- Calls for increasing the safety and attractiveness of alternative transportation modes and development of 40 miles of additional bike lanes.
- Commits the County to becoming a model for local employers by implementing programs to reduce drive-alone commute trips during rush hour.

The 2008 General Plan Update included a new map and list of desired roadway improvements that will be implemented by the County and other agencies as funding becomes available. Capacity increases are proposed only in the southern part of the County where most of the new housing and jobs are anticipated; improvements elsewhere are focused on safety and accessibility, maintaining the County's rural character.

COMMUNITY CHARACTER

In 2030, Napa County will retain its rural character and outstanding quality of life. The Community Character Element contains goals and policies related to aesthetics, views, arts and culture, historic and archaeological resources, noise, odors, and light and glare. Collectively, the goals, policies, and action items ensure that the rural character of Napa County will be retained and enhanced with spectacular views, rehabilitated historic buildings, and a dark nighttime sky. Policies are provided to ensure the compatibility of



land uses, while acknowledging that the sights, sounds, and smells associated with wine-making, agriculture, and agricultural processes are accepted by the community as integral to the County's character.

The 2008 General Plan Update used the old noise element and scenic highways element as a jumping off place, and created this new "character" element to address a much wider array of topics than before. The County's commitment to preserving views from designated scenic roadways was carried forward, and a new policy was added allowing owners of designated historic buildings to propose new commercial uses as long as the buildings are rehabilitated and maintained in accordance with strict historic preservation standards.

CONSERVATION

In the future, the Napa River will be increasingly clean and healthy, native species will thrive, and Napa County's environment will be safeguarded and sustainable. The Conservation Element contains goals and policies related to open space conservation, natural resources, surface and ground water supplies, water quality, climate protection, and sustainable practices for environmental health. Collectively, the goals, policies, and action items of this element ensure that Napa County's abundant natural areas and extraordinarily high biodiversity will be preserved and enhanced, that the County's air, water, and terrestrial habitats will be protected, and that Napa County will do its part to conserve energy and address local contributions to global climate change. The health of the Napa River will be improved through a variety of strategies, including ecological stewardship projects and completion of "Living River" flood control projects. Specifically, the element:

- Confirms that the County will use agricultural zoning, acquisition, and voluntary conservation easements to preserve open space, biodiversity, and continuous habitat in cooperation with local agencies, non-profits, and landowners.
- Prioritizes the use of available groundwater for agricultural and rural residential uses, rather than urban uses.
- Ensures that discretionary projects will be required to assess and mitigate their potential impacts on our natural environment.

The 2008 General Plan Update revised the Conservation Element in several ways, adding important new policies and addressing the new subject of global climate change. Revisions specifically:

- Acknowledge the state's regulatory focus on sediment in the Napa River, adding policies focused on controlling erosion, improving water quality, and encouraging ecological stewardship.
- Mitigate potential losses of significant biological communities and oak woodlands countywide by avoiding their removal or requiring their restoration/replacement, or preservation of like habitat at a 2:1 ratio within Napa County.
- Commit the County to undertake significant monitoring and planning efforts, including development of watershed management plans, basin-level implementation strategies, and periodic updates to the County's groundwater ordinance.
- Address greenhouse gas emissions by requiring development of an emissions inventory and reductions or offsets such that emissions are equivalent to year 1990 levels by the year 2020.
- Promote "green building" and energy conservation practices to the private sector and integrate those same practices into County operations.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the future, Napa County's agricultural economy will continue to thrive. The Economic Development Element contains goals and policies related to the County's agricultural economy, the role of tourism and other business sectors, and the County's labor force. Collectively these goals and policies are intended to preserve the economic viability of agriculture and ensure that tourism and other industries do not compete with agriculture.

The Economic Development Element was added to the General Plan in the 2008 General Plan Update.

HOUSING

In the future, Napa County will be known for its successful strategies aimed at increasing the supply of housing available to people at all income levels. The Housing Element contains a detailed housing needs assessment and goals, policies, objectives, and programs designed to address the housing needs of unincorporated Napa County. The element recognizes that while Napa County's conservative stance on growth prevents housing from sprawling into agricultural areas, it also makes it difficult for the County to meet its housing needs and ensure that housing is affordable to the workforce, and in particular to low-income households and special needs populations such as the elderly, disabled, and homeless.

Unlike the other elements of the General Plan, the Housing Element must be updated on a regular basis and certified by the state. Statutory requirements are detailed and subject to frequent legislative adjustments in Sacramento.

The 2004 Housing Element Update provided the information and analysis required by statute, identified 14 sites that were zoned for high density multi-family housing, and memorialized agreements with the cities of Napa and American Canyon whereby the two cities accepted some of the County's state-mandated housing requirements in exchange for annexations and/or other considerations. The Housing Element was the only element that was not updated in the course of the 2008 General Plan Update, and was instead updated in 2009. The 2009 Housing Element Update eliminated three of the sites identified for high density housing in the prior version, and instead identified 20 acres of the approximately 150-acre Napa Pipe site as a location for high-density housing.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

In the future, Napa County will have an increasing number of trails and a wide variety of recreational opportunities aimed at allowing residents and visitors to experience our world-famous scenic beauty and our natural areas. The Recreation and Open Space Element contains goals and policies related to the protection of open space for recreation and other purposes, with an emphasis on publicly accessible open space. This element was added during the 2008 General Plan Update to address topics that had previously been found within the Land Use and Conservation Elements.

Collectively, the maps, goals, policies, and action items contained within the Recreation and Open Space Element ensure that Napa County's wealth of natural open spaces are increasingly protected and made accessible to residents and visitors, with scenic trails and bikeways connecting population centers to nature-based parks, environmental education facilities, and regional trails. Specifically, the element calls for:

- Increasing the amount of public open space accessible for nature-based recreation and education.



- Planning for and reserving land for recreational facilities, including a list of specific priorities to be further refined in a future Park and Recreation Plan.
- Coordinating the voluntary sale or donation of open space lands or easements by willing owners and partnering with other agencies, including the new Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District.
- Expanding parks and trails into a network of off-road bicycle and pedestrian paths connecting population centers in incorporated and unincorporated areas to parks and regional trails such as the Bay Area Ridge Trail.
- Ensuring that trails are located, maintained, and used in a manner that is compatible with agriculture and private property (Policy ROS-10).

What is “open space”?

Open space is a term that describes lands that support an array of features, activities, and amenities, both measurable and intangible, which derive from and directly depend on the land’s sustainable natural resources. Features and activities associated with open space include agriculture, recreation, scenic views and vistas, natural habitats, archeological sites, and ecological functions related to water quality and air quality. Open spaces can be publicly or privately owned, actively used or maintained as preserves, and temporary or permanently dedicated to a particular use. Different kinds of open space are addressed in various locations in this General Plan. (See the Recreation and Open Space Element for more information.)

SAFETY

In the future, Napa County will maintain its focus on minimizing risk and maximizing preparedness. The Safety Element contains information about potential natural and human-caused hazards, incorporating by reference the County’s Hazard Mitigation Plan. The element contains goals and policies aimed at improving public safety, including policies about preparedness, response, and recovery. Policies highlight the role of outreach, education, and intergovernmental coordination, and articulate strategies for reducing risks associated with earthquakes, floods, fires, and other hazards. The 2008 General Plan Update incorporated policies related to human-caused hazards for the first time.

ACHIEVING THE VISION

This General Plan is intended to express the community’s vision and provide County policy-makers with the guidance they need to make wise decisions in support of that vision and accepted community values.

Ensuring that the vision expressed by this General Plan is achieved will require conscientious effort on the part of citizens and County officials. In order to organize this effort, the General Plan includes an Implementation Plan, which contains action items or “next steps” from every element except the Housing Element, since that element contains its own implementation program and quantified objectives.

Monitoring progress during General Plan implementation will be important if we want to achieve the community’s vision, since the policies and actions in the Plan may have to be adjusted from time to time in order to be effective. As a result, the Plan embraces the concept of “adaptive management,” whereby monitoring data is collected and used to determine which policies and practices are effective and which



policies and practices should be adjusted or abandoned. This continual process of measurement and adjustment is critical to the long-term success of this Plan.

Sustainability is commonly defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The principle is often divided into three categories that must each be sustainable in order for a system to be sustainable as a whole: environmental stewardship, economic viability, and social equity (known as the “Three Es” of sustainability). Environmental sustainability in particular has taken on greater urgency as governments have recognized their role in conserving and renewing resources to minimize contributions to climate change and reduce our dependency on limited resources.

How does this General Plan make Napa County more sustainable? The longstanding urban-centered growth and agricultural land preservation traditions of Napa County foreshadowed today’s focus on sustainability and smart growth by over twenty-five years. This General Plan, which derives from those principles, promotes sustainability via policies in every element.

Common Elements of Sustainability	Some of the Supportive General Plan Policies
<p>Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce resources locally to minimize energy loss and transport costs • Efficiently use resources such as water, land, and energy • Use primarily renewable resources such as solar energy and recycled water • Preserve habitat and species diversity 	<p>AG/LU-17: timber harvesting guidelines AG/LU-22-24: urban-centered growth AG/LU-39: reuse of industrial sites AG/LU-36&37: business central, near transportation AG/LU-123:locate schools to minimize busing CIR-1: residential and commercial development supports transit options CIR-3: housing near services CIR-23: parking should minimize excess vehicle trips CIR-26-37: alternative modes of transportation CON-1-33: habitat and resource conservation, stewardship CON-68-74: energy conservation and local production ROS-1: preserve habitat</p>
<p>Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support local business to maintain a local economy • Provide a range of employment • Cultivate a skilled workforce • Become aware of the true cost of goods and services, including internalizing the cost of repairing any damage their production has cost to humans or the environment • Support businesses that conserve and renew natural and human resources • Maintain a balance between jobs and housing 	<p>AG/LU-7: promote economic viability of agriculture AG/LU-39: reserve appropriate land for industry AG/LU-42: jobs/affordable housing balance E-8: diverse, well-located, efficient, high paying business E-9: business in remote urban centers E-12: housing, transportation, and economy E-14: workforce education, development E-19: institute local preferences in bidding process</p>
<p>Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide affordable and diverse housing types that allow a range of households and workers to remain local • Treat all people fairly • Ensure spatially equitable access to needs such as parks, schools, grocery stores, and medical services 	<p>AG/LU-30-31: affordable housing AG/LU-106: non-discrimination AG/LU-119: 15% affordable housing minimum E-17: child care in proximity to jobs ROS-25: recreation for all income levels</p>



Where can I learn more about the role of local government in sustainability? Several Internet resources provide perspectives on how local governments can alter their policies to make their jurisdictions and their own operations more sustainable. Here are a few useful resources:

Ahwahnee Principles, The Local Government Commission

<http://www.lgc.org/ahwahnee/principles.html>

Sustainability Guidelines for Mendocino County

<http://www.co.mendocino.ca.us/planningteam/gpu/>

American Planning Association Policy Guide on Planning for Sustainability

<http://www.planning.org/policyguides/sustainability.htm>

Marin Countywide Plan Update 2001 Interim Guiding Principles

<http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/CD/main/fm/index.cfm>

Locally, readers are urged to consult the Napa County League of Government's *Principles for Creating a Healthy, Vital and Sustainable Napa County*, adopted by the League's Community Development Strategy Task Force in May 2004.