

# Introduction

The 2035 General Plan for San Joaquin County presents a vision for the County's future and a strategy to make that vision a reality. The Plan is the result of hundreds of hours of public meetings and the collective efforts of individuals from throughout the county who have articulated their hopes and expectations for the County's future.

The General Plan addresses the issues that must be resolved as San Joaquin County grows. It is comprehensive, providing a framework for the County's physical, economic, and social development and environmental resources preservation. It addresses all geographic areas in the unincorporated county. It is also long range. The plan looks ahead to 2035, while at the same time presenting policies to guide day-to-day decisions. It is general enough to respond to new trends and unexpected changes, but specific enough to inform residents, businesses, staff, and County decision-makers on how individual properties and County resources should be used and managed.

Finally, the 2035 General Plan is intended to be based on the County's historic role as an agricultural region. It recognizes that much of San Joaquin County is still rural with significant natural resources. Development and change will be incremental and will require collaborative efforts on the part of the County, property owners, and residents. The Plan also recognizes that the County's revenues and staff resources are limited, making it important to clarify priorities and invest strategically. Future development must occur in a way that makes the most of existing infrastructure and public facilities, minimizes impacts to agricultural and natural resources, expands opportunities for economic and job growth, restores and revitalizes unincorporated communities, and provides greater educational, recreational, and cultural opportunities to all San Joaquin County residents.

## WHAT IS A GENERAL PLAN?

### Purpose of this General Plan

The 2035 San Joaquin County General Plan is a legal document that serves as San Joaquin County's "blueprint" or "constitution" for all future land use, development, preservation, and resource conservation decisions. General plans must be comprehensive and long-term.

- **Comprehensive.** General plans are comprehensive both in their geographic coverage and in the range of subjects they address. In the case of the 2035 San Joaquin County General Plan, the geographic coverage is the County's Planning Area, which encompasses both incorporated and unincorporated territory that may directly or indirectly affect the County's future development or resource conservation. However, the County's general plan authority does not extend into the incorporated cities. Each city adopts and implements a general plan that covers land within its individual jurisdictions.
- **Long-Term.** General plans are long term in perspective. General plan time horizons vary, but typically range from 15 to 25 years into the future. In the case of this General Plan, the County has established the year 2035 as the Plan's time horizon.

### Legal Authority and Requirements

State law requires each county and city to prepare and adopt a general plan for its physical development (Government Code Section 65300). General plans must address seven topics (referred to as "elements"), including land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, safety, and noise as identified in State law (Government Code Section 65302), to the extent that the topics are locally relevant. In addition, the cities and counties within the jurisdiction of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District must also address air quality in their general plans. Jurisdictions within the Sacramento-San Joaquin Valley must also ensure their general plans are consistent with State laws regarding flood risk reduction (Government Code Sections 65865.5, 65962, and 66474).

Cities and counties may organize their general plans however they choose, and they may address all topics that the community deems relevant to its development, such as economic development, historic preservation, and urban design. Regardless of the format or issues addressed, all substantive parts of the plan must be consistent with

one another (i.e., internally consistent). For instance, the policies in the land use element must be consistent with those of the housing element, and vice versa.

San Joaquin County has organized its General Plan into four elements: Community Development; Public Facilities and Services; Public Health and Safety; and Resources. Under state law, once included in the General Plan, these elements carry the same weight of law as those that are legally mandated. Correspondence between the San Joaquin County 2035 General Plan elements and the legally-required general plan topics are shown in the table on the following page.

<b>General Plan Elements Required by State Law</b>										
<b>San Joaquin County General Plan Elements</b>		Land Use	Circulation	Housing	Conservation	Open Space	Noise	Safety	Air Quality*	Optional Elements
	<b>Community Development Element</b>	x		x	x	x			x	
	Land Use (LU)	x			x	x			x	
	County Areas and Communities (CP)	x							x	
	Housing (H)			x						
	Economic Development (ED)	x								
	<b>Public Facilities and Services Element</b>	x	x						x	x
	Transportation and Mobility (TM)		x						x	
	Infrastructure and Services (IS)	x	x							x
	<b>Public Health and Safety Element</b>						x	x		
	Public Health and Safety (HS)						x	x		
	<b>Resources Element</b>				x	x		x		
	Natural and Cultural Resources (NCR)				x	x				
	The Delta (D)				x	x		x		

*\*Air Quality is mandatory for cities and counties within the jurisdiction of the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.*

## IMPLEMENTING THE GENERAL PLAN

If the 2035 San Joaquin County General Plan is to serve its purpose effectively, it must be reviewed, maintained, and implemented in a systematic and consistent manner. This section includes an outline of the process for reviewing and updating the General Plan. This part also outlines requirements for implementing the General Plan consistent with its goals, policies, standards, and programs, and provides an overview of the types of actions or tools the County will use to implement the Plan's policies.

The horizon year for the 2035 General Plan (with the exception of the Housing Element) is 2035. This reflects the 20-year planning period for the General Plan. It is not a target or goal for build-out and the County may continue using and implementing the Plan beyond this time frame.

Carrying out the General Plan following its adoption requires a multitude of separate actions and ongoing programs involving virtually every County department and many other public agencies and private organizations. The legal authority for these actions and programs rests on two essential powers of local government: corporate and police powers. Local governments rely on corporate power to collect money through bonds, fees, assessments, and taxes, and spend money to provide services and facilities. Local governments use police power to, among other things, regulate the use of property (e.g., zoning) and building construction (e.g., building codes) in order to promote public health, safety, and welfare. The General Plan provides the formal and legal framework for the exercise of these powers by the County.

The Community Development Director has the authority to make formal interpretations of the General Plan text, policies, and diagrams, subject to appeal to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. Decisions, as well as projects approved by the County, are not required to be consistent with every goal and policy in this General Plan. The Plan accommodates a wide range of interests and includes a clear and comprehensive set of principles to help guide land use and development decisions. In doing so, the General Plan sets forth many goals and policies addressing a broad range of topics. The Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors rely on the General Plan to determine whether a proposed project is in harmony or agreement with the County's goals and policies. No project or decision is expected to satisfy every General Plan policy, nor does State law impose such a requirement.

Implementation programs related to the goals and policies can be found in Part 4, Administration and Implementation. Goals, policies, and implementation programs contained in regional, community, and specific plans are more geographically specific and should be reviewed along with the General Plan goals and policies.

It should be noted that the abbreviations following each policy and program refer to the type of tools or actions the County can use to carry out the policies. These eight types of tools and actions are listed below and explained in detail in Part 4, Administration and Implementation.

- Regulation and Development Review (RDR)
- Plans, Strategies, and Programs (PSP)
- Financing and Budgeting (FB)
- Planning Studies and Reports (PSR)
- County Services and Operations (SO)
- Inter-governmental Coordination (IGC)
- Joint Partnerships with the Private Sector (JP)
- Public Information (PI)

## REVISING AND AMENDING THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan is intended to be a living document. As conditions and needs change, the County will need to revise and amend the General Plan to eliminate or modify policies and programs or update diagrams. The General Plan must be flexible to respond to changing conditions and at the same time specific in guiding day-to-day land use and development decisions.

To ensure that the policies and proposals of the general plan are systematically implemented, State law since the early 1970s has increasingly insisted that the actions and decisions of each local government concerning both its own projects and the private projects it approves are consistent with its adopted General Plan. The courts have supported and furthered this trend through their interpretations of State law.

Amendments to the General Plan may also be necessary to conform to State and Federal laws passed after adoption of the General Plan. The County will initiate some of these proposals itself; others will be initiated by property owners and developers. State law limits general plan amendments to four times per year, but each amendment can include multiple changes.

Amendments to the General Plan generally include substantive changes to the boundaries or location of any land use designation or circulation improvements within the Plan, or changes to the text, figures, or tables applicable to the goals, policies, and implementation programs contained in the Plan.

Similar to the adoption of the General Plan, general plan amendments are subject to environmental review, public notice, and hearing requirements, and must not result in inconsistencies with the rest of the Plan. Exceptions to this rule include amendments that allow development of affordable housing or comply with a court decision.

## GENERAL PLAN RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS AND REGULATIONS

There are several State statutes and local and regional plans that influence land use and other policy decisions in San Joaquin County.

**California Assembly Bill 32.** The General Plan has been designed to meet the requirements of AB 32, in particular the requirement for local jurisdictions to address sustainability, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, and climate change adaptation. These topics are addressed by policies and programs throughout the General Plan, rather than in a single section.

**Delta Protection Plan.** The General Plan has been prepared consistent with State law, which requires it to incorporate and be consistent with direction contained in the 2010 Delta Protection Plan. The Delta Protection Plan guides projects impacting land use, agriculture, natural resources, water, levees, and utilities and infrastructure. General plans and development projects must be consistent with the Delta Protection Plan, and both are subject to review by the Delta Protection Commission.

**Airport Land Use Plans.** State law requires general plans to be consistent with adopted airport land use plans. The San Joaquin County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) is responsible for maintaining and implementing airport land use plans for the public airports within the county. The 2035 General Plan has been developed consistent with adopted airport land use plans, and includes programs for regular review and updates, as necessary, to maintain consistency with new or amended airport land use plans. Development projects within the jurisdiction of the ALUC, must also be consistent with adopted airport land use plans.

**2014 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy.** Prepared by SJCOG with assistance from member jurisdictions and stakeholders, the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) "Valley Vision San Joaquin" will be the first Regional Transportation Plan in San Joaquin County to include a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), the result of the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (i.e., SB 375). The SCS will coordinate future transportation projects and land use strategies to prioritize a multi-modal investment plan covering a 27-year period extending out to 2040.

The RTP is a long-range transportation plan that guides the region's transportation improvements over a minimum of 20 years and is updated every four years. Using growth forecasts and economic trends projected out over the Plan's time frame, the

RTP considers the role of transportation in the broader context of economic, environmental, and quality-of-life goals for the future, identifying regional transportation strategies to address our mobility needs. While the SCS land use scenario has no land use authority in San Joaquin County jurisdictions, SB 375 allows CEQA streamlining for projects in the county that are deemed consistent with the SCS.

**City General Plans.** Each city in San Joaquin County has control over the land use and development decisions within its city limits. In turn, each city has its own adopted general plan to guide these decisions. The County is committed to coordinating and cooperating with the Cities in those fringe areas which the Cities proposed for future annexations, but which are located within the unincorporated territory under County jurisdiction.



## GENERAL PLAN ORGANIZATION

The 2035 San Joaquin County General Plan is divided into two volumes: Volume 1 – General Plan Policy Document and Volume 2 – General Plan Background Report.

### **Volume 1: Policy Document**

#### **Part 1. Introduction**

Part 1 includes an introduction to San Joaquin County; explains what the General Plan is, how it is organized, and how it is used; and reviews the process that was used to develop the General Plan.

#### **Part 2. Overview of San Joaquin County**

Part 2 summarizes the existing and future conditions affecting development in San Joaquin County. It identifies the issues and the assumptions to be addressed in managing and developing the County's key resources. The issues are divided into the following six topics:

- Natural Environment
- Built Environment
- Institutional Environment
- People of the County
- Key Assumptions for the Plan
- The General Plan as a Response to Change

**Part 3. Goals and Policies**

Part 3 includes all of the Countywide goals and policies that are the heart of the 2035 San Joaquin County General Plan. These goals, policies, and programs address a broad range of topics required by State law and those that address unique local concerns. The Countywide goals, policies, and programs are divided into four topical chapters, or “elements”, for easy reference. The elements are further broken down into sections, as seen below:

- Community Development Element
  - Land Use (LU)
  - County Areas and Communities (CP)
  - Housing (H)
  - Economic Development (ED)
- Public Facilities and Services Element
  - Transportation and Mobility (TM)
  - Infrastructure and Services (IS)
- Public Health and Safety Element
  - Public Health and Safety (HS)
- Resources Element
  - Natural and Cultural Resources (NCR)
  - The Delta (D)

**Part 4. Administration and Implementation**

The Administration and Implementation part of the General Plan contains procedures for maintaining and carrying out the General Plan in a systematic and consistent manner. The Administration and Implementation part of the General Plan is organized as follows:

- Introduction
- General Plan Maintenance and Monitoring
- General Plan Consistency in Implementation
- Categories of Implementation Actions/Tools
- Specific Implementation Programs

**Volume 2: General Plan Background Report**

The 2035 San Joaquin County General Plan Background Report is a “snapshot” of San Joaquin County’s trends and conditions. The report provides a detailed description for a wide range of topics within the Planning Area, such as existing communities, demographics and economic development, land use, climate change, agriculture, housing, transportation and circulation, public services and utilities, natural resources, the delta, scenic resources, recreation and cultural resources, safety, and noise. The report provides decision-makers, the public, and local agencies with context for making policy decisions. Unlike the Policy Document, the Background Report is policy-neutral. Its purpose is to create a foundation or context for making policy decisions.

## HOW TO USE THE GENERAL PLAN

The County General Plan is intended for use by all members of the community including residents, businesses, developers, County staff, and decision-makers. The organization of the General Plan allows users to find topics or sections that interest them and to quickly review county policies. All of the policies are interrelated and should be considered together when making planning decisions.

### **Residents**

For San Joaquin County residents, the General Plan indicates the general types of uses that are permitted in their neighborhoods, the long-range plans and changes that may affect communities, and the policies the County will use to evaluate development applications. The General Plan indicates how the County will attract businesses that provide goods and services to meet daily needs and new jobs that are closely matched to educational skills and that lessen the need to commute to work. The General Plan informs residents how the County plans to improve transportation infrastructure, continue to provide adequate public services, and protect valued open spaces and natural resources.

### **Businesses**

For San Joaquin County businesses, the General Plan outlines the measures the County will take to protect investments and encourage future success. Expectations for county business areas are spelled out, while policies ensure that business operations will be compatible with other businesses and nearby residential areas.

### **Developers**

For developers within the county, the General Plan introduces the community, provides background information, and outlines development policies. It is important to review all maps and policies throughout the General Plan. In addition, developers should also review the Background Report and the San Joaquin County Development Title to get a complete perspective on how and where development may occur.

### **County Staff**

The General Plan is used by County staff to determine if proposed development and public facilities projects are consistent with County policies. The General Plan establishes standards for internal County plans (e.g., infrastructure master plans) and operations. The General Plan is used by County staff as the basis for making

recommendations to decision-makers. The General Plan also provides short- and long-term implementation programs for which staff are responsible.

**Decision-Makers**

The General Plan is a tool to help the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission, and other boards and commissions make land use, environmental, and other decisions. All development decisions must be consistent with the General Plan. The General Plan is also intended to help other public agencies, such as the cities in the county, ALUC, SJCOG, Caltrans, and school districts, as they contemplate future actions in the unincorporated areas of San Joaquin County.

## GOALS AND POLICIES READERS' GUIDE

The General Plan contains goals and policies that will be used by the County to guide future land use, economic development, and environmental protection decisions. A goal is a statement that describes in general terms a desired future condition or “end” state. Goals describe ideal future conditions for a particular topic and tend to be very general and broad. A policy is a clear statement that guides a specific course of action for decision-makers to achieve a desired goal.

**GOAL NUMBERING**  
Each goal starts with the element acronym and is followed by the letter identifier of the goal.

**GOALS**  
Each goal has one or more policies associated with the goal. A goal states the ultimate purpose of an effort in a way that is general in nature and immeasurable. Each section (topic area) of the plan has only one goal.

**POLICY NUMBERING**  
Continuing from the goal letter, the policy number is shown as the last number, supporting the goal it follows.

**POLICY TITLE**  
Each policy contains a leading title in bold for a quick reference to the policy text. Policy titles are not part of the policy direction.

**POLICIES**  
Each policy is associated with a specific goal. A policy is a specific statement guiding action and implying clear commitment.

**IMPLEMENTING ACTION TAG**  
Each policy is followed by a set of letters in italics/parenthesis that identifies the type of tool or action the County will use to implement the policy. See Part IV for details on the types of tools the County will use to implement the General Plan.

**3.4** SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE  
**RESOURCES ELEMENT**

**NCR-3.8** → **Support Sufficient River Flows**  
The County shall support properly timed, sufficient flows of rivers to maintain healthy fisheries. (PSP) (Source: Existing GP, Water Resources and Quality, Water Resource Management, Policy 10, modified)¶

**NCR-3.9** → **Require Water Projects to Mitigate Impacts**  
The County shall require water projects to incorporate safeguards for fish and wildlife and mitigate erosion and seepage to adjacent lands. (RDR) (Source: Existing GP, Water Resources and Quality, Water Resource Management, Policy 11)¶

**NCR-3.10** → **Coordination for Waterway Protection**  
The County shall coordinate with city, State, and Federal agencies to implement policies regarding protection and enhancement of waterways and levees. (IGC) (Source: Existing GP, Public Facilities, Recreation, Implementation 10)¶

**Mineral Resources**  
Mineral resources within San Joaquin County consist primarily of sand and gravel aggregate, with limited mining of peat, gold, and silver. In the past, placer gold deposits have been found in many San Joaquin County rivers and creeks. These deposits were dredged for gold by independent operators in the years following the 1849 gold rush. Peat soil removal occurred during the 1970s and 1980s. The only mining operations existing in 2008 within the County are related to sand and gravel aggregate operations. Recognizing and documenting mineral resources is imperative to guarantee further economic development of county assets. The focus of this goal section is to encourage the efficient use of economically important mineral and aggregate extraction, while also protecting the community from the adverse effects of mining. ¶

**GOAL-NCR-4**  
To provide for the production of mineral resources while protecting people, property, and the environment from hazards caused by resource extraction. (Source: Existing GP, Extractive Resources, Objective 2, modified)¶

**NCR-4.1** → **Mineral Resource Protection**  
The County shall require mineral deposits of significant quantity, value, or quality, as identified and updated by the State Division of Mines and Geology reports as MRZ-2 Mineral Resource Zones, to remain in agricultural or open space uses until the extraction of the resources, unless the immediate area has been committed to other uses. (RDR) (Source: Existing GP, Extractive Resources, Policy 1, modified)¶

**NCR-4.2** → **Discretionary Permit to Protect Mineral Resources**  
The County shall require all new development in areas of significant sand and gravel deposits, as identified by the State Division of Mines and Geology, to obtain a discretionary permit, conditioned to protect the resources. (RDR) (Source: Existing GP, Extractive Resources, Implementation 2, modified)¶

**NCR-4.3** → **Land Use Compatibility**  
The County shall ensure that mineral extraction and reclamation operations are compatible with land uses both on-site and within the surrounding area, and are performed in a manner that does not adversely affect the environment. (RDR) (Source: New Policy, Consultants)¶

**NCR-4.4** → **Concurrent Reclamation**  
The County shall encourage reclamation of mining sites concurrent with extraction activities rather than after extraction has been

3.4-6 → → BIR Draft - January 2014

# IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS READERS' GUIDE

To help ensure that necessary actions are taken to implement the General Plan, Part 2 of the General Plan includes a number of implementation programs. Implementation programs identify the specific steps to be taken by the County to implement the goals and policies of the Plan. They may include revisions of current codes and ordinances, capital improvements, programs, financing, and other measures that are assigned to different County departments after the General Plan is adopted. The types of tools or actions the County can use to carry out its policies and implementation programs generally fall into eight categories. These are explained in detail in Part 4, Administration and Implementation, along with the specific implementation programs.

**TABLE NUMBER AND NAME**

Each section begins with a new table number and section name.

**IMPLEMENTING ACTION TAG**

Each implementation program is followed by a set of letters in italics/parenthesis that identifies the type of tool or action the County will use to implement the program. See Part IV for details on the types of tools the County will use to implement the General Plan.

**TIMELINE**

Identifies an estimated time frame for when the implementation program will be completed. Implementation programs may not be completed as indicated due to budget or resource constraints.

Community Development Element Table 4.1: Land Use <sup>a</sup>		2015 - 2016 <sup>a</sup>	2017 - 2020 <sup>a</sup>	2020 - 2035 <sup>a</sup>	Annual <sup>a</sup>	Ongoing <sup>a</sup>
<b>Program LU-A: Development Title Consistency.</b> The County shall update the Development Title to ensure consistency with the General Plan Land Use Diagram and the policies in the General Plan. (RDR) (Source: New Program) <sup>a</sup>						
Implements Which Policy(ies) <sup>a</sup>	LU-1.1 <sup>a</sup>	X <sup>a</sup>	○ <sup>a</sup>	□ <sup>a</sup>	□ <sup>a</sup>	X <sup>a</sup>
Responsible Department(s) <sup>a</sup>	Community Development <sup>a</sup>					
Supporting Department(s) <sup>a</sup>	N/A <sup>a</sup>					

**IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

Specific action(s) the County will take to implement the General Plan.

**RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT(S)/ SUPPORTING DEPARTMENT(S)**

Identifies which County department(s) are responsible to see the specific implementation is completed and which County department(s), if necessary, will support the responsible department.

**SUPPORTING POLICY(IES)**

Identifies which policy(ies) the implementation program supports.

## HOW THE GENERAL PLAN WAS PREPARED

San Joaquin County initiated a comprehensive update of its 2010 General Plan in June 2008. The update program focused on preparing a revised plan that reflects the County's changing economic and demographic conditions while retaining the community's values and desires.

### Public Outreach

When a general plan is written or amended, State law requires that the planning agency provide opportunities for public involvement through public hearings or other methods. Since public input is vital to the successful implementation of any general plan, San Joaquin County made a considerable effort to involve the public throughout the process. The public provided County staff and the General Plan consultants with direction at key points throughout the General Plan Update effort. Public input, especially in terms of community values, served as the foundation from which County staff and the Consultants developed goals, policies, and programs.

The General Plan outreach program included community workshops, focus group meetings, Board of Supervisors/Planning Commission Study Sessions, a General Plan Update website, and printed and electronic newsletters. The details of these outreach efforts are described below.

#### Community Workshops

San Joaquin County held three series of community workshops during the General Plan Update process. Each series included 14 workshops at different locations throughout the County. Summaries of each of the workshops can be found on the General Plan Update website.

The first workshop series, held October and November 2008, helped kick off the General Plan Update process. Diverse groups of people attended 14 workshops across the county to offer their input on what they liked and didn't like about their communities and what important issues should be addressed in preparing the General Plan. The workshops presented an overview of how general plans work and gathered input on the assets, issues, and opportunities in the county.

In August and September 2009 San Joaquin County held the second set of General Plan workshops. Over 14 workshops County staff gained input on the Vision and Guiding Principles for the General Plan Update. The guiding principles represent the County's core values and establish benchmarks for the General Plan goals and



policies. Based on the input received during the workshops, staff prepared the Vision and Guiding Principles document, which guided the remainder of the General Plan Update.

The third and final workshop series was held in March, April, and May 2011. This series focused on gathering community feedback on the alternative growth scenarios outlined in the Alternatives Report. Each workshop began with a presentation by the General Plan Update consultants, who provided an overview of the General Plan update process and described the four growth alternatives that were released for public review in March 2011. Following the presentation, workshop attendees participated in interactive exercises designed to solicit feedback on the growth alternatives.

The input gathered at the community workshops was essential to the General Plan Update process. Residents, business owners, and other community members provided invaluable feedback that helped shape the vision and direction of the County General Plan.

### **Focus Group Meetings**

During the General Plan Update, the County engaged local stakeholders and professionals with expertise and experience in specific issues for focused discussions. These focused discussions were organized around five topics: Agriculture; Natural Resources and the Delta; Land Use, Housing, and Economic Development; Transportation and Circulation; and Services, Utilities, and Safety. Each of the five Focus Groups consists of 12-20 members who provide technical and policy input to County staff and the Consultants. The focus groups met twice during the General Plan Update.

On May 28 and June 3, 2009, the first of four sets of Focus Group meetings for the Plan Update took place. Each meeting began with a greeting from County staff, followed by a short overview presentation by Mintier Harnish, the General Plan Update consultants. The consultants presented an overview of the Update process and the role of the Focus Groups members. Focus Group members then explored, in an open discussion, the issues and opportunities that the General Plan Update should address and be included in the Issues and Opportunities Report. The meetings were open for public observation and several community members also provided comments.

On March 29 and 31, 2011, the County held the second round of Focus Group meetings to discuss the General Plan Update Alternatives Report. Each meeting began with a greeting from County staff, followed by a short overview presentation by the General Plan Update consultant. The consultants presented the status of the Update process and the purpose of the Alternatives process. Focus Group members then explored, in an open discussion, different growth options and implications and preferences for how the County should grow and develop in the future. The meetings were open for public observation and several community members also provided comments.

### **Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors Study Sessions**

The County facilitated a series of joint and individual study sessions with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors throughout the Update process. These study sessions allowed the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors an opportunity to provide direction to County staff and the General Plan Update consultants at key points in the process. They also provided an opportunity for members of the public to provide comments to the County decision-makers in open public sessions.

### **Public Hearings**

The County will hold formal public hearings with the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors to consider the General Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

### **Project Webpage**

The County posted General Plan Update information, meetings schedules, and documents at [www.sjcgpu.com](http://www.sjcgpu.com). This webpage provided a one-stop location to get the latest information on the progress of the process. The webpage provided background information on the general plan update process, frequently asked questions, up-to-date information on upcoming events, and allowed residents to download copies of meeting minutes/agendas and documents/reports.

### **Newsletters**

During the General Plan Update, the County published three newsletters that provided an overview of the Update status and progress. The newsletters were posted on the General Plan Update webpage and distributed throughout the community and at the community workshops.

## **Milestone Documents**

### **Issues and Opportunities Report**

The Issues and Opportunities Report summarizes the key issues and opportunities that have major policy implications for San Joaquin County. The purpose of the Report is to focus community attention on key physical, environmental, economic, cultural, social, and planning-related issues and opportunities. Accompanying the Report is a Community Profile summary that provides a profile of defined rural communities, urban communities, and city community areas (i.e., unincorporated "fringe" areas adjacent to city limits).

### **Alternatives Report**

On March 3, 2011, the County published the General Plan Update Alternatives Report and the Alternatives Report Technical Appendices. The Alternatives Report describes four growth alternatives that present different future development patterns to accommodate growth in the County through 2035. The purpose of the alternatives is to stimulate a discussion concerning future growth options and to help residents, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Supervisors determine a philosophy and course of action to guide future development within the County.

### **Recommended Alternative Whitepaper**

The Planning Commission Recommended Alternative whitepaper is the result of community input on the Alternatives Report and direction by the Board of Supervisors to prepare recommendations on a preferred growth alternative. The Planning Commission Recommended Alternative is based on professional experience and expertise of County staff and the General Plan Update Consultants and community feedback gathered during five focus group meetings, 14 community workshops, a community survey, and study sessions with the Planning Commission. The whitepaper describes how the Planning Commission Recommended Alternative was developed, details its key features, and evaluates its potential impacts. It also identifies and provides options to address four major policy issues that influence the Planning Commission Recommended Alternative. The Board of Supervisors will use the Planning Commission Recommended Alternative to refine the County's approach to growth and development, and prepare the updated General Plan policies and land use and circulation diagrams.

**Land Use Designation Change Summary**

The Final Land Use Designation Change Request Summary is an inventory of property owner requests to change the land use designations of their properties as part of the General Plan Update. The Summary provides information on each request received to date and evaluates whether it is consistent with the Recommended Alternative. The summary also includes Planning Commission and County Staff recommendations for each request, and the Board of Supervisors direction on whether the change requests should be carried forward as part of the General Plan Update.

**Draft Policy Document**

The 2035 San Joaquin County General Plan Policy Document contains the goals, policies, and implementation programs that guide the County's future land use and environmental decisions. The Policy Document is the culmination of all the work and input received in the Issues and Opportunities report, Alternatives Report, Alternatives Whitepaper, and Background Report.

*The Policy Document will replace Volumes I and II of the 2010 General Plan.*

**Draft Background Report**

The Background Report is a compendium of information (i.e., a "snapshot") of existing conditions in the County. It provides a detailed description of a wide range of topics within the County, such as demographic and economic conditions, land use, public facilities, and environmental resources. The report provides decision-makers, community members, and local agencies with context for making policy decisions. Unlike the Policy Document, the Background Report is intended to be policy-neutral. It is not intended to provide policy direction or recommendations.

*The Background Report will replace Volume III of the 2010 General Plan and be used as the existing setting section of the General Plan environmental impact report (EIR).*

**Environmental Impact Report**

Prepared consistent with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) analyzes the potential significant environmental impacts of the proposed General Plan policies and programs and identifies measures to mitigate those impacts. The EIR, to the greatest extent feasible, also evaluates the cumulative impacts, growth-inducing impacts, and irreversible significant effects on the environment of subsequent projects. The EIR is not part of the 2035 General Plan.