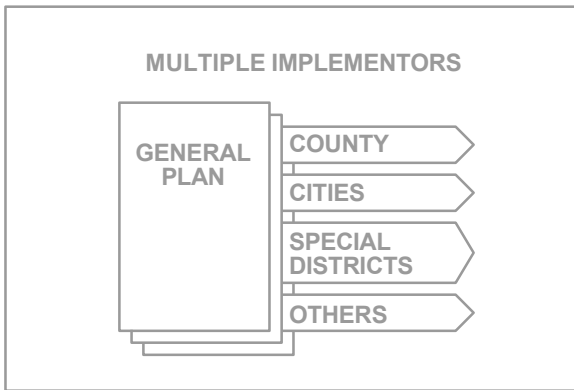


Various Amendments to the County's General Plan for Consistency with
the 2023-2031 Housing Element Update

Amendments to the Executive Summary of the County's General Plan
(Part 1, Book A, Page A-5)



- Empower the residents of these areas to participate directly in the elections and decisions of the surrounding cities, whose decisions are most likely to impact them and whose services and facilities they are often already using or dependent upon.

The Plan acknowledges, however, that annexation of lands within some of the larger urban unincorporated areas may not occur for some time or is otherwise infeasible. In the meantime, the County is obligated to exercise its land use authority to assure conformity of development within these areas with that of surrounding areas, development proposals within these areas must conform to the uses allowed in the surrounding Where feasible, the County will be guided by the relevant city's general plan.

In addition, where unincorporated urban areas are in need of revitalization, the Plan proposes cooperative planning efforts that involve the residents and property owners of the area, the County, and the surrounding city.

[See the Urban Unincorporated Areas "General Land Use Management" Chapter.]

MULTIPLE IMPLEMENTORS OF THIS GENERAL PLAN

Although this document is, technically, the County's General Plan, it is not intended for implementation by the County alone.

Successful implementation of its policies will depend upon the voluntary, supportive actions of many different agencies – particularly the county's fifteen cities who are primarily responsible for development within the county's urban areas.

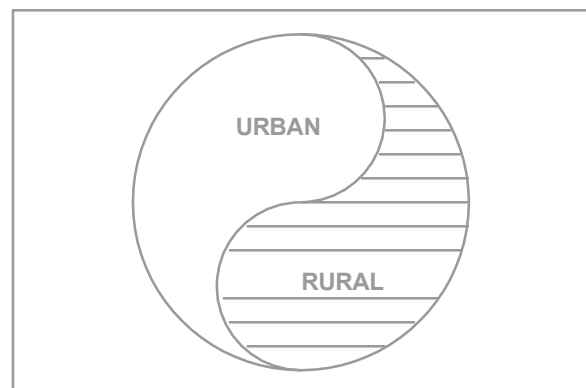
Although it is not legally required that the land use decisions of the cities conform to the County's General Plan, most of the county's cities have policies in their general plans that are very similar to those in this General Plan. Consequently, implementation of their own plans will also contribute to implementation of the County's General Plan.

Achieving the Plan's vision will also require supportive actions by local special districts and agencies (such as the Santa Clara Valley Water District, the Congestion Management Agency, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, and the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority) as well as various regional, state, and federal agencies.

URBAN AND RURAL FUTURES ARE INTERRELATED

The General Plan recognizes that the future of the county's urban and rural areas are inseparable. Unless, for example, we provide for sufficient housing within existing urban areas affordable to households of all income levels, the pressures to build in the hillsides and in prime agricultural areas will only increase. Consequently, we must collectively devote as much attention and energy to developing livable urban communities within a framework of compact development, that meet the needs of our growing population, as we do to the preservation of the county's scenic open space lands.

Unless we focus on effective implementation of both the urban and the rural policies of this Plan, neither is likely to be fully successful.



Amendments to the Growth and Development Chapter of the
County's General Plan

(Part 2, Book A, Pages B-1 *et seq.*)

Summary

CHALLENGES TO MANAGING URBAN GROWTH

Perhaps the pre-eminent challenge facing Santa Clara County as a whole over the next decade and into the 21st century will be successfully managing and accommodating urban growth. Problems of traffic congestion, housing supply and affordability, and many others are intrinsically related to the most fundamental policies and decisions to be made concerning the amount, rate, location and patterns of urban growth.

The following points provide an overview of conditions as we enter the 1990s:

- Santa Clara County will continue to grow in population and employment through the 1990s, although at lower rates than in recent decades.
- The overall quality of life in the county will be significantly affected, for better or worse, depending upon how and where future growth is accommodated.
- For a variety of reasons, most of the county's future growth should be accommodated within existing urban areas, rather than by expanding into non-urban areas.
- Through the strategies and policies for managed, balanced growth, Santa Clara County can provide a better balance of urban land uses, more affordable housing, an improved overall transportation system, and enhanced livability of our communities.

STRATEGIES FOR ACCOMMODATING FUTURE URBAN GROWTH

On a countywide scale, this Plan proposes a three-part strategy for managing and accommodating urban growth. That overall growth management strategy includes the following concepts, or "strategies," which form the outline of sections within this chapter:

Strategy #1: Promote Compact Urban Development Patterns

Sub-strategies:

- A) Manage Urban Expansion
- B) Make More Efficient Use of Existing Urban Areas

Strategy #2: Achieve More Balanced Urban Growth and Development

Strategy #3: Improve Coordinated, Countywide Planning

These strategies are based in part on Santa Clara County's past experience with rapid, uncontrolled urban growth and its quality of life impacts. They reflect the principles of balanced growth and sustainable economic development. The strategy for urban growth management articulated in this chapter recognizes the value of a growing, diversifying economy and population, but also the need to accommodate that growth without sacrificing overall quality of life. Overall quality of life need not be compromised by growth if that growth is well managed.

In this regard, the strategies and policies of this chapter are designed to promote the goals contained within the theme of Managed, Balanced Growth of the Vision Statement of this General Plan. Directly or indirectly, nearly every goal for the future of Santa Clara County expressed within the Vision Statement is related in some way to our ability to manage and accommodate urban growth. Whether one is concerned with the fiscal condition of our local governments, with open space preservation, retaining agricultural lands, housing affordability, traffic congestion, or a variety of other important concerns, the prospects for improvement are diminished in the absence of effective strategies for managing and accommodating growth.



Urban Service Areas: Definitions And Explanations

State law defines an 'Urban Service Area' (or USA) as all developed, undeveloped, or agricultural lands, either incorporated or unincorporated, within a city's Sphere-of-Influence, which are served by urban facilities, utilities, and services or which are proposed to be served by urban facilities, utilities, and services during the first five years of an adopted capital improvement program of a city, if the city adopts that type of program for those facilities, utilities, and services. [Govt. Code Sect. 56080]

In other words, a city's USA boundary should provide through some combination of redevelopment, infill or expansion, sufficient land or development potential to accommodate five years of projected urban growth. The USA boundary location may be amended as needed over time to allow annexation of lands deemed necessary to accommodate projected urban growth. LAFCO, the Local Agency Formation Commission, has ultimate authority over this and other boundary changes.

A city's policies for managing Urban Service Area boundaries controls the timing and location of future urban expansion under its jurisdiction. Depending on the local situation, these policies encourage infill of existing vacant lands as well. (The total amount and rate of growth is determined not by the location of the USA boundary but by the cities' general plans, infrastructure capacity, or in some cases geographic constraints, among the various factors involved).

The Urban Service Area boundary differs in concept from a city's Sphere of Influence, or SOI. As strictly defined by state law, the SOI delineates the probable ultimate physical area of a local governmental entity, such as a city or special district. State law requires that all governmental entities have a defined SOI boundary. Unlike the USA boundary concept, which delineates those areas a city intends to annex and provide with services in a five year time period, the SOI concept has no temporal dimension. In addition, local application of SOI boundaries varies throughout the state of California.

Santa Clara County is unique in that it is the only county to have employed the USA

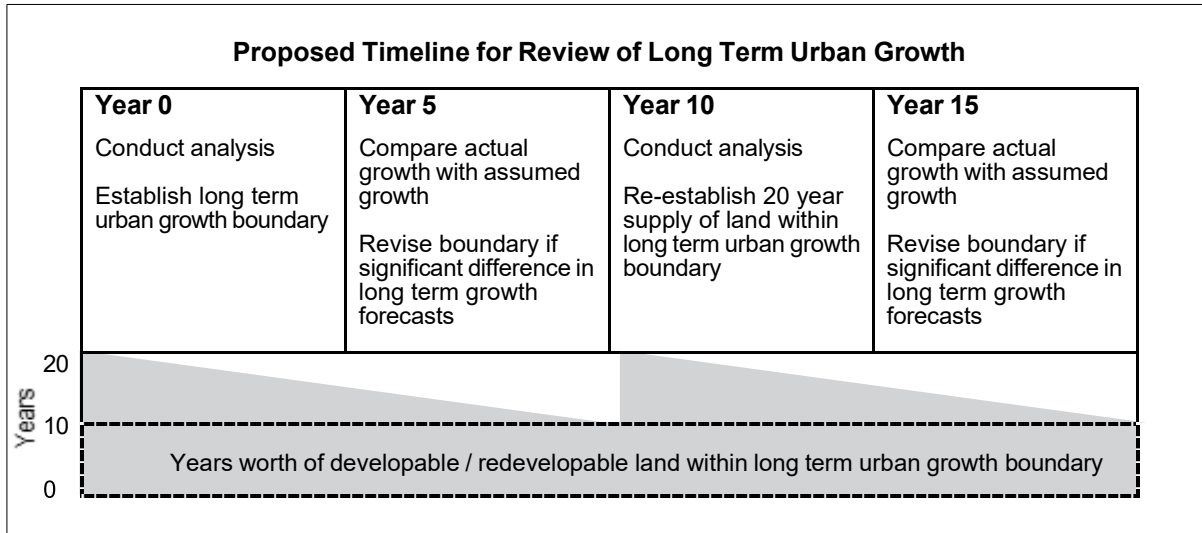
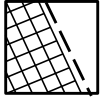
concept to manage urban growth, minimize urban sprawl and efficiently provide urban services. Furthermore, portions of the system of USA boundaries in Santa Clara County function as the "probable ultimate physical" boundary of a city. For example, the City of San Jose has through its General Plan established a "Greenline Strategy" which fixes the probable ultimate physical boundaries of the city at the location of its existing USA boundary, with minor exceptions, such as the Urban Reserves. San Jose's USA contains far more than five years worth of development potential, and its redevelopment and infill policies are intended to create additional development potential over time without actual physical expansion.

In Santa Clara County, SOI boundaries function primarily to delineate those areas over which cities may extend long range planning authority, but which are not intended for annexation and urban development. For all the cities, SOI is still a useful planning tool, because it provides each city with the authority to review development proposals in unincorporated areas for consistency with the land use policies outlined in each city's general plan.

The currently delineated USA boundaries in Santa Clara County were determined primarily by the following factors or criteria:

- the amount of vacant land supply within cities and development potential remaining with the cities;
- the exclusion of lands generally unsuited for urban development and densities, including those characterized by steep slopes, geologic, seismic, flood and fire hazards, and those for which there is limited access;
- the need to protect valuable natural resources, such as wildlife habitat, riparian corridors; and
- the high costs of providing and maintaining certain areas with urban services, particularly areas with geologic or other natural hazards.

Currently by state law, cities of Santa Clara County may annex lands within their USA boundaries without LAFCO review if the proposals meet certain conditions. This procedure is referred to generally as "city-conducted" annexations.



- For the general public, long term growth boundaries would provide:
 - i greater assurance that important natural resource areas and critical hazard areas will be protected from urbanization, and
 - ii additional assurance that extending urban development into new areas will not result in reductions of urban service levels received by existing neighborhoods.

■ **Criteria for Delineating Long Term Urban Growth Boundaries**

There are a number of criteria, or factors, which would need to be included in the methodology of delineating long term urban growth boundaries including:

- population and economic forecasts for growth;
- estimates of the total land supply needed to accommodate forecasted growth;
- types of development to be accommodated, whether only residential, or also commercial, industrial, and all other types of land uses;
- the desired density of development within existing urban areas (infill) and within expansion areas to promote transit use, air quality, housing affordability;
- types and location of natural resource areas to be protected from urban development;

- types and location of natural hazard areas to be avoided, as well as geologic, topographic, and other physical constraints to urban development;
- contiguity of future urbanization to existing urban areas;
- fiscal capacity of local governments to provide needed levels of urban services, as well as available infrastructure capacity and limitations; and
- the duration of the boundaries (20 years), the frequency of review, and re-establishment procedure set forth under the guidelines approved by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and local jurisdictions.

■ **Adoption Alternatives and Enforcement**

There are three basic alternatives by which long term urban growth boundaries might be adopted and enforced. These are as follows:

- Cities could individually delineate and adopt growth boundaries. Some cities have already adopted similar types of planning boundaries for their own purposes.
- The County and an individual city could mutually define and adopt an urban growth boundary and the policies for land use within and outside of the boundary line.
- The County and a collection of cities could enter into a mutual process for defining and adopting such boundaries.

Absent state law requiring long term urban growth boundaries, such boundaries can be effective only if subscribed to and adopted by cities. The cities must be directly involved in the delineation and adoption of these boundaries. In addition, school districts and various other major special districts are directly impacted by the long-term growth decisions of the cities, and these governmental agencies should also be involved in the process of delineation and adoption in some way to prevent unforeseen adverse impacts on the services these agencies provide.

Regardless of the adoption procedure used to establish the boundary, a regional or subregional governing body should be designated to enforce adherence to the long term urban growth boundary and to administer periodic reviews of the boundary. For instance, the Santa Clara County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) might adopt local policies regarding the establishment, enforcement and review procedures for urban growth boundaries over time.

■ Review of Long-Term Urban Growth Boundaries

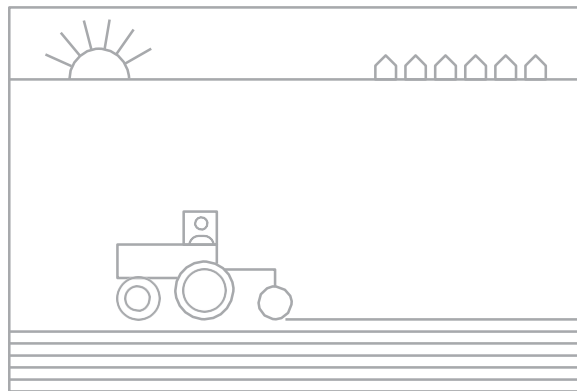
Long-term growth boundaries should initially contain 20 years of urban growth potential, whether accommodated through infill patterns, urban expansion, or a combination of approaches, depending on the particular circumstances of a jurisdiction. However, they must also allow for flexibility if the assumptions and growth projections under which the boundaries were established are not borne out.

The “timeline” for the long-term urban growth boundary would provide two junctures for review of the boundary location. Five years after the 20-year boundaries are delineated, there should be an initial check primarily to determine if the basic growth projections are in keeping with current conditions. Barring major differences between the current and projected levels of population and economic growth, the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) would remain in its original location until the 10 year review. However, new information regarding any of the criteria originally employed in locating the UGB could potentially require a more extensive

review and possible revision if the information were significantly different from original conditions.

For example, were new information to reveal the presence of a previously unknown fault line or other natural hazard affecting lands within the UGB, changes to the location of the boundary might be warranted to the extent necessary to correct the situation. Conversely, were growth rates to exceed projections and require additional land supply within the UGB, a change to the boundary might be needed to correct for the deficiency. However, any five-year revision to the location of the UGB, for whatever purpose, would have to include all factors or criteria employed in establishing the boundary, weighing growth factors, environmental factors, as well as various planning principles.

At ten years from the time the UGB was delineated, a comprehensive review would be undertaken to re-establish a supply of vacant or redevelopable land sufficient to accommodate 20 years of projected urban growth and development. The review methodology must incorporate the procedures and criteria by which the boundary lines were originally delineated. By evaluating the urban growth boundary at ten years rather than fifteen, when only 5 years of urban land supply remains available, cities will be able to make optimum use of the UGB as a mechanism for long term infrastructure planning and urban services provision.

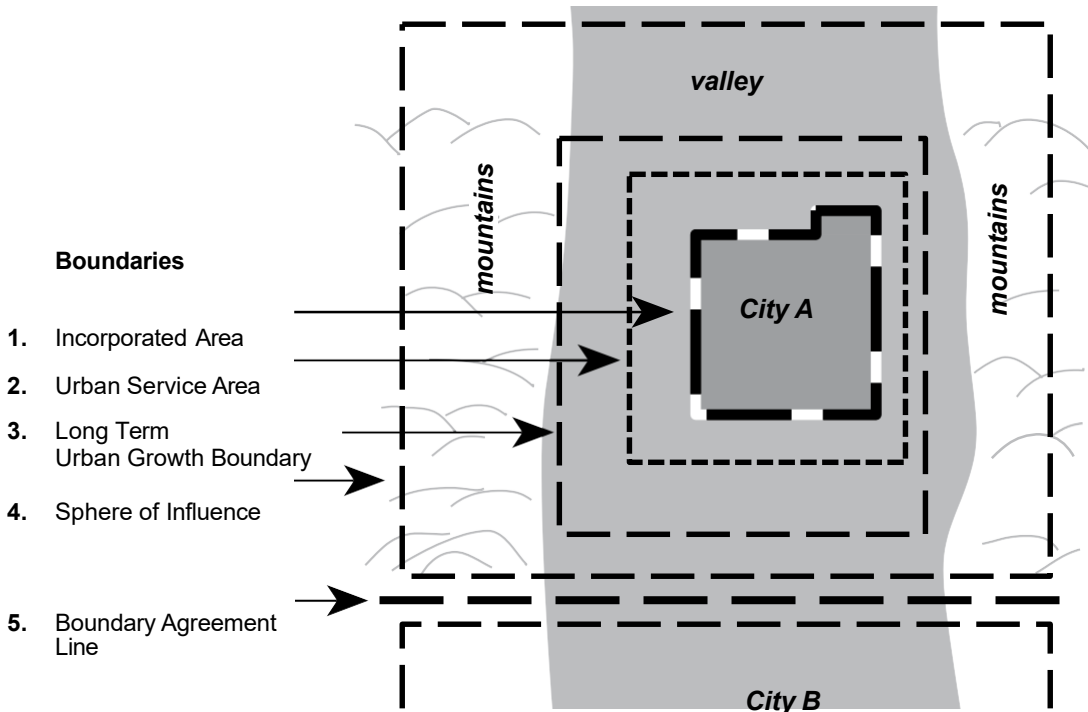




Glossary of Jurisdictional and Growth Management Boundary Terms

Boundary	Definition / Description
1. Incorporated Area Boundary	"City limits"; Delineates lands currently annexed to city.....
2. Urban Service Area (USA) Boundary	Delineates areas currently provided with urban services, facilities, and utilities or proposed to receive such services within 5 years
3. Long Term Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)	Delineates areas appropriate for and likely to be needed for urban purposes within the next 20 years.....
4. Sphere of Influence (SOI) Boundary	In Santa Clara County, generally defined as city's planning area (i.e. area covered by general plan); often includes hillside areas the city has designated for non-urban uses and does not intend to provide with urban services. (State defines as the probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of the city.).....
5. Boundary Agreement Line	Delineates limits beyond which a city will not be allowed to annex territory.

Hypothetical Relationships Among Jurisdictional and Growth Management Boundaries



■ **Augmenting Long-Term Urban Growth Boundaries**

Portions of some long term urban growth boundaries may coincide with boundaries which cities have established as permanent limits beyond which they do not ever intend to extend urbanization. In such instances, additional tools or methods may be needed to assure that lands outside these boundaries in fact remain permanently in non-urban uses. These may include various forms of public acquisition of land or easements, transfer of density or development rights, or other mechanisms. In other instances, where lands lying outside an urban growth boundary may eventually be needed for urban uses beyond the 20-year time horizon of the boundary, property tax abatement by means of Williamson Act contracts may be appropriate.

■ **County Land Use Policy in Relation to Long-Term Urban Growth Boundaries**

Finally, once long-term urban growth boundaries have been established, it should be the policy of the County to maintain rural unincorporated lands within these boundaries in large parcels. This will help ensure that when the time comes for them to be incorporated into the urban area, they can be efficiently developed as large, well-planned neighborhoods with adequate community facilities and amenities rather than as a series of small, unrelated subdivisions.



C-GD 19

The County, cities, and other affected governmental entities within Santa Clara County should establish long term urban growth boundaries for the purposes of:

- a. providing clear indication of the desired direction, location, and extent of long term urban expansion;
- b. providing adequate protection for natural resource and hazard areas from urbanization; and
- c. ensuring efficient urban services provision.

C-GD 20

If adopted, long term urban growth boundaries should initially include sufficient land supply to accommodate the projected needs for urban land in various uses for a period of 20 years.

C-GD 21

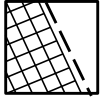
Long term urban growth boundaries should not include:

- a. important natural resource areas;
- b. natural hazard areas; or
- c. land supply in excess of that needed for projected urban growth

C-GD 22

Long term urban growth boundaries (UGBs) containing a 20 year supply of available land for urban development should be reviewed periodically to determine if there is a need to revise their location.

- 1. Initial review of the growth projections and other factors or criteria on which an UGB has been established should occur after five years.
- 2. Revisions to the existing location of an UGB may be warranted if projections prove substantially out of keeping with current conditions and projections five years after initial delineation. New information concerning other factors may also warrant revising the UGB's location to the extent necessary to correct the given situation.
- 3. Ten years following the delineation of an UGB, a comprehensive review should occur in order to re-establish a 20-year supply of land within the UGB.



Implementation Recommendations

C-GD(i) 5

Define and initiate a process for mutually delineating long-term urban growth boundaries for the cities of Santa Clara County. The procedures should include the following:

- a. identification of affected governmental entities;
- b. research and implementation of a methodology for estimating land supply needs and land supply monitoring;
- c. identification of areas to be excluded from urban development on the basis of natural resource or hazard protection; and
- d. manner in which long-term urban growth boundaries will be adopted by affected cities and the County, as well as the means of enforcement and frequency of assessment.

CONTROLLING THE FORMATION OF SPECIAL DISTRICTS AND NEW CITY INCORPORATIONS

■ **Special Districts**

Special districts and special assessment districts are governmental entities created for the purpose of providing one or more services within a specified geographic area. Services provided by such entities vary greatly in scope and extent of territory served. For example, a special district may be formed among a group of property owners for the purpose of providing a particular type of needed service, such as water supply or sewage disposal. In other cases, the district may include several cities or counties, such as the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) or the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD).

Reasons for strictly regulating the creation of special districts and assessment districts include:

- The need to certify that adequate revenues will be available to the district to provide funding for its service(s).

- The need to limit the number of single-purpose districts, both to make inter-governmental coordination of service providers more feasible, and to ensure that service provision in general does not become so fragmented that accountability suffers.
- The need to uphold the basic policies of the County and cities regarding location of urban development.

With regard to the latter, special districts pose several potential problems. Without policies and regulations to control formations, water supply and sewage disposal districts could be created in order to foster development in locations where it would otherwise not be allowed. Such development could in turn create the need for additional or higher levels of public services than have been planned for the area. In order to prevent urban development from occurring in urban transition areas or on unincorporated lands where it otherwise would not be appropriate, the County generally prescribes lower levels of urban services than would be available within cities.

As with other governmental organization and boundary change proposals, LAFCO must evaluate the proposed special district according to several criteria before approving or denying the request.

Each special district proposal must demonstrate that:

- the district will be fiscally capable of providing the proposed services;
- there is a demonstrable need for the service;
- the service proposed will not unnecessarily duplicate or overlap services provided by existing governmental entities; and
- the uses served by the district are in conformance with the policies of applicable plans, including the County’s General Plan.

In Santa Clara County, there are currently 33 special districts. School districts are not subject to regulation by the LAFCO and follow separate procedures for formation.

■ New City Incorporations

Incorporation is the formal term used to describe the creation of a new city. Although in the 1990s and beyond there are few if any unincorporated communities which have potential to incorporate as new cities, the same basic criteria apply as those which govern special district formation. The most critical factor involved for approval of incorporation is the ability to generate tax revenues sufficient to provide the full complement of needed urban services and facilities. In addition, new cities should not be created on lands that would not generally be deemed suitable for urban development at any urban density. The cities' Urban Service Areas have already been established to generally exclude natural hazard and resource areas. Potential new city incorporations should also avoid such areas for urban development.



Policies and Implementation

C-GD 23

Annexation to cities should take precedence over annexation to or formation of a special district. Proposals for the formation of a new special district must demonstrate that the need for services cannot be better met through annexation to a city or an existing special district.

C-GD 24

Any proposal to provide urban services by means of a special district should be evaluated to ensure:

- a. that the area has been designated for development compatible with the types and intensity of the proposed urban service or facility, and
- b. that the service plan is consistent with the applicable general plans of the County and affected city(s).

C-GD 25

Proposals for the formation of a special district or new city incorporation should not be approved unless proponents can demonstrate that there is a sufficient revenue base to support the new services without diminishing the tax base of existing governmental entities.

C-GD 26

The formation and activities of special districts should be consistent with adopted urban development policies of the Local Agency Formation Commission, the cities, and the County.

C-GD 27

Consolidation of special districts should be encouraged in order to assure cost-effective public service provision and eliminate unnecessary duplication of governmental entities.

C-GD 28

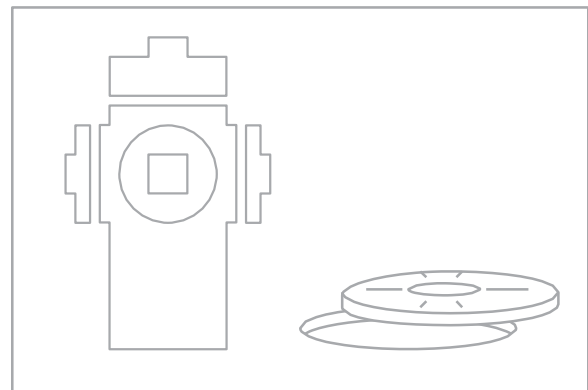
Proposals for incorporation must demonstrate that:

- a. the need for municipal services or control cannot be better satisfied by an existing city or the County;
- b. the proposed new city will be able to raise sufficient revenues to fund required services at the desired level; and
- c. areas deemed generally unsuitable for urban development, such as those with natural hazards or critical resources, are not planned for development.

Implementation Recommendations

C-GD(i) 6

Undertake periodic review of the effectiveness of locally adopted LAFCO guidelines and policies. Amend LAFCO guidelines and policies for improved consistency with County policies regarding special districts, if necessary.





**Sub-Strategy B:
Make More Efficient Use of Existing
Urban Areas**

ABAG projections indicate that from 1990-2000, Santa Clara County will grow in population by 200,000, from approximately 1.5 to 1.7 million. That total is roughly the combined 1990 population of the cities of Sunnyvale (117,000), Milpitas (50,000), and Campbell (36,000). (Total population growth from 1980-1990 was just over 202,500).

During the 1990s and beyond, Santa Clara County will continue to evolve from a collection of suburban, low density cities into a more densely populated and developed metropolitan area. If most of our future urban growth is to be accommodated efficiently within existing urban areas, we must not only proactively manage urban expansion, but also make more efficient use of available lands within the urban areas. Compact and mixed-use development, in conjunction with urban service area and growth boundary policies, will help maximize development potential, as well as contribute to a number of other vital community goals, such as transit feasibility and air quality.

The jointly adopted, countywide urban development policies acknowledge that a certain amount of outward expansion will undoubtedly be needed (See Growth Projections). Efforts to promote higher density urban development will not preclude continued single-family housing development. However, infill of vacant lands and redevelopment of underutilized areas should receive priority over urban expansion.

With more than 80% of future growth anticipated to occur in the 13 "North County" cities where the majority of the population now resides, it will become even more imperative to rely on compact development to efficiently accommodate population increases. In many instances, geographic and jurisdictional boundary constraints to expansion make it impossible to accommodate new population and economic growth through expansion.

COMPACT AND MIXED USE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

■ **Definitions of Compact and Mixed Use Development**

"Compact development" is a term generally used to refer to urban development at higher densities, applied in selected areas and coupled with increased emphasis on innovative urban design to enhance the livability of these areas. "Mixed use developments" are those which combine in varying proportions residential, commercial, retail, services, office, or even institutional land uses in a single development project. "Compact development" then, is but one of several means of achieving compact urban form for the metropolitan area as a whole, in addition to such means as policies that encourage infill development, channeling growth into existing urban areas rather than by means of continuous outward expansion.

Mixed use developments promote accessibility to work, goods and services without automobile transport by placing a variety of uses in close proximity. The scale on which mixed use developments are planned may range from small projects that blend in with existing urban landscapes to very large scale "urban activity centers," or transit "nodes," so called because such centers can provide a land use focus for the development of mass transit, particularly light rail.

■ **Benefits of Compact and Mixed Use Development**

The principles of compact and mixed use urban development are being increasingly emphasized in many cities' plans for growth and redevelopment. Examples include several Specific Plans developed by San Jose for areas including Communications Hill, the Jackson-Taylor area, and a portion of the Lincoln-Auzerais area now referred to as "Midtown." The cities of Mountain View and Sunnyvale have also incorporated these principles into planning for the redevelopment of central city areas. Other examples could be noted, as well. These beginnings of an urban renaissance promise many advantages over traditional low density, highly segregated land use patterns.

In brief, the benefits of these alternative patterns of urban development include:

- Densities sufficient to support transit services and investments;
- Improved access to goods, services and employment locations;
- Efficient use of utilities and other basic infrastructure;
- Enhanced community identity, amenities, and sense of place through better design;
- Increased variety of housing types; and
- Improved viability of downtowns.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Increased urban densities demand greater emphasis on adequate, innovative urban design and adequate urban services and amenities. In addition to promoting access to and use of transit services, compact and mixed use developments must also maintain the livability of our urban communities with:

- accessible urban open space, commons, and recreational areas;
- adequate safety and security of neighborhoods, both in terms of design and security services; and
- adequate levels of urban service and facilities, including school facilities.

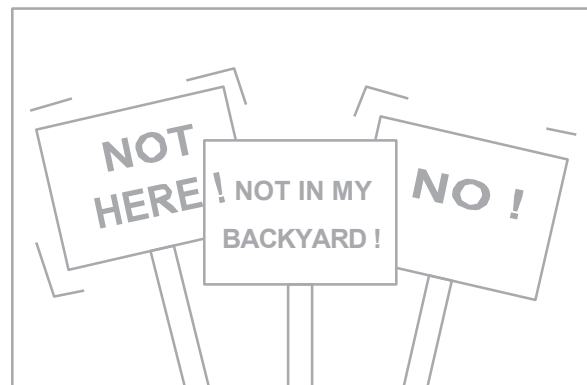
Blending compact and mixed use developments into the existing low density urban landscape may also present certain challenges in terms of urban design and infrastructure capacity. Increased market acceptance of compact and mixed use developments will also depend upon higher quality, innovative designs for compact and mixed use projects. For example, open space, safety, and adequate urban services and facilities are particularly important for families with young children.

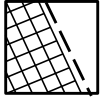
An additional obstacle to higher densities and mixed land use is the increasing “NIMBY” phenomenon, or “not in my back yard” response frequently raised by opponents of proposals for higher density housing or other perceived threats to established neighborhoods. NIMBY factions have challenged proposals for senior housing, multi-family housing for low and moderate income households, and other

special needs housing, among other developments, on grounds ranging from property values and community character to traffic and noise issues. The concerns of such groups are real and often well-founded. Much of the public’s impression of higher density, compact and mixed use development has been formed in reaction to older developments which exhibited poor design, such as lack of open space and amenities, insufficient circulation and parking, and other inadequacies that impacted existing neighborhoods.

However, the challenge for the future must be to accommodate needed housing and a variety of other locally unwanted land uses by means of innovative, high quality urban design and careful land use planning. When viewed from a strictly localized, neighborhood perspective, each neighborhood may seem to be an inappropriate location for the project. However, local decision-makers must view the need for the proposed facility or project from a communitywide perspective, in which case there inevitably will be some locations that are more suitable and appropriate than others. In fact, more and more of the general public now recognize the limitations imposed by the NIMBY perspective.

For example, for the first time ever, a majority of respondents to the annual Bay Area Poll (51% to 38%) supported infill over urban expansion to accommodate future growth, even if that means higher densities (1991 poll). To bolster this trend, there is an increasing need for coalition-building, exemplary developments that demonstrate effective solutions, and public education to balance local and community-wide perspectives.





Much of the land within our cities is built out, and not all of our urban landscape presents opportunities for compact or mixed use developments. However, opportunities do exist, whether through infill of vacant lands, redevelopment near downtowns, or in conjunction with transit corridors and stations.

→ Policies and Implementation

C-GD 29

Land use and development patterns that enhance the cost effectiveness of transportation and other urban infrastructure investments should be encouraged.

C-GD 30

Cities should make maximum use of vacant or underutilized lands within the existing urban area for application of compact and mixed use development principles. Wherever possible, expansion of the urbanized area should also incorporate such principles.

C-GD 31

Mixed land use and compact developments should be encouraged in urban areas wherever appropriate and compatible with city applicable land use plans and existing development for the purposes of enhancing community identity, creating more affordable housing, affirmatively furthering fair housing, reduced auto dependency, trip reduction, and improved environmental quality.

C-GD 32

Mixed land use and compact development should be encouraged which clusters employment, residential, and the types of land uses, goods, and services customarily needed on a daily basis around transit stations, along transit corridors, and in other appropriate urban locations.

C-GD 33

Cities' and County's land use plans should be coordinated and consistent with long range master plans for light rail and other transit services.

C-GD 34

Planning must ensure that adequate services and amenities are available to urban areas proposed for compact development and/or mixed use centers, including but not limited to adequate:

- a. urban open space, commons, and recreational spaces;
- b. public safety and security;
- c. urban services and infrastructure, including dependent care and school facilities; and
- d. transportation system capacity, both streets and transit services.

C-GD 35

Employment area densities should be increased wherever practical to support efficient public transit service.

C-GD 36

Ensure adequate citizen involvement in proposals for alternative urban land use patterns.

Implementation Recommendations

C-GD(i) 7

Implement compact and mixed use development through modifications to cities' general plans, zoning, and development ordinances.

C-GD(i) 8

Encourage local urban design and architectural professions to promote concepts of compact and mixed used development and design excellence through a variety of means, including:

- a. design exercises and competitions for candidate project sites;
- b. seminars within professional and civic organizations; and
- c. presentations to local legislative bodies and advisory commissions on land use, housing, and transportation.

C-GD(i) 9

Develop on an interjurisdictional basis a countywide ("sub-regional") plan for land use and infrastructure capacity which incorporates recommendations and policies regarding alternative land use and development patterns from the Congestion Management Plan, T-2010, and city and County general plans.

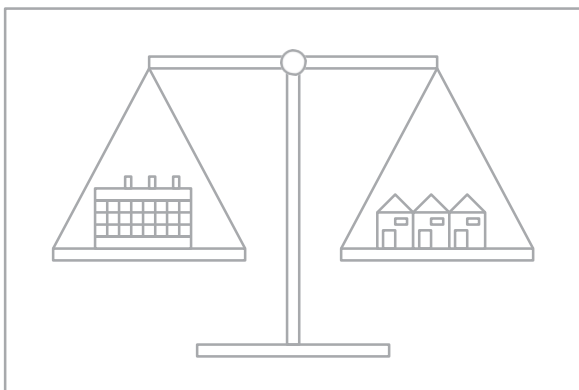


**Strategy #2:
Achieve More Balanced Growth
and Development**

PAST AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

For much of its recent past, Santa Clara County’s economy has centered upon its agricultural base. The name “Valley of Heart’s Delight” was a testament to the relatively unproblematic nature of urban life in a predominantly rural setting. The county’s transformation over the last two decades into an economy of manufacturing, high technology, and related activities known as “Silicon Valley” ushered in an era of unprecedented prosperity. Unfortunately, employment growth and rapid urban decentralization have also spawned a cluster of interrelated urban problems with which the region must now contend, including traffic congestion, housing unaffordability, and fiscal instability.

As we enter the 1990s, the challenge of the future is no longer one of coping with the impacts of rapid employment growth on housing supply, infrastructure, and environmental quality. The economy of Santa Clara County now faces many challenges, including mounting international competition, as well as job losses due to recession, industry maturation, and other structural economic changes. What once seemed a secure economic future is now a question mark.



The challenge for the future will be how to maintain moderate, sustainable levels of economic growth on which a growing population will depend for jobs and on which governments depend for revenues to fund essential services. For that to happen, we must be more successful in meeting our housing, open space, air quality, and human service needs, among other issues that form the very foundation of sustainable economic growth. That “balancing of objectives” is the essence of the second major strategy of this General Plan for managing and accommodating future urban growth—achieving more balanced urban growth and development.

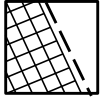
IMPACTS OF UNBALANCED GROWTH

From the 1960s until the early 1980s, two major growth trends predominated. First, employment and economic growth generally outpaced housing supply, infrastructure, and urban services capacity.

Secondly, the vast majority of housing development occurred at ever-growing distances from major employment centers. The first trend resulted in large numerical “imbalances” between the various “components” of urban growth. The second trend resulted in large-scale geographic separation of residential development from major employment areas, or a kind of “spatial imbalance,” as it has been referred to. These two trends, and the various adverse impacts described below became known as the problem of “jobs-housing imbalance.”

The principal impacts of these numerical and spatial imbalances have been clear for some time:

- increased travel and commute distances, which have overburdened the county’s roads and highways;
- increased automobile dependency;
- increased housing affordability problems, especially in “job-rich” cities;
- increased amounts of automobile emissions affecting air quality;
- overburdened urban services and facilities; and
- financial strains upon those cities which have a preponderance of housing in relation to employment land uses.



These impacts or problems are not solely the result of the “jobs-housing” growth imbalances described generally above; however, each has been adversely affected in some way by growth imbalances. Another aspect of the overall problem which should not be overlooked has to do with “fiscalization of land use.”

Local governments must rely largely upon locally- derived sales and property tax revenues as sources of funding. As a result, cities have tended to favor commercial, retail and industrial land uses over residential, which generally demands more in government services than it provides in property tax revenues. Proposition 13 exacerbated this problem significantly, increasing the tendency to give preference to revenue-generating land uses in long range land use planning, hence the term “fiscalization of land use.”

Part of any solution to the problems of growth imbalances must address the fundamental way local governments are financed or the distribution of local government revenues. Otherwise, the disincentives to balanced growth inherent in our existing finance system will continue to work against other efforts to alleviate housing shortages and affordability problems. Fiscal stability of “job-poor” cities will also continue to suffer, compounding the difficulties of maintaining service levels to existing urban development.

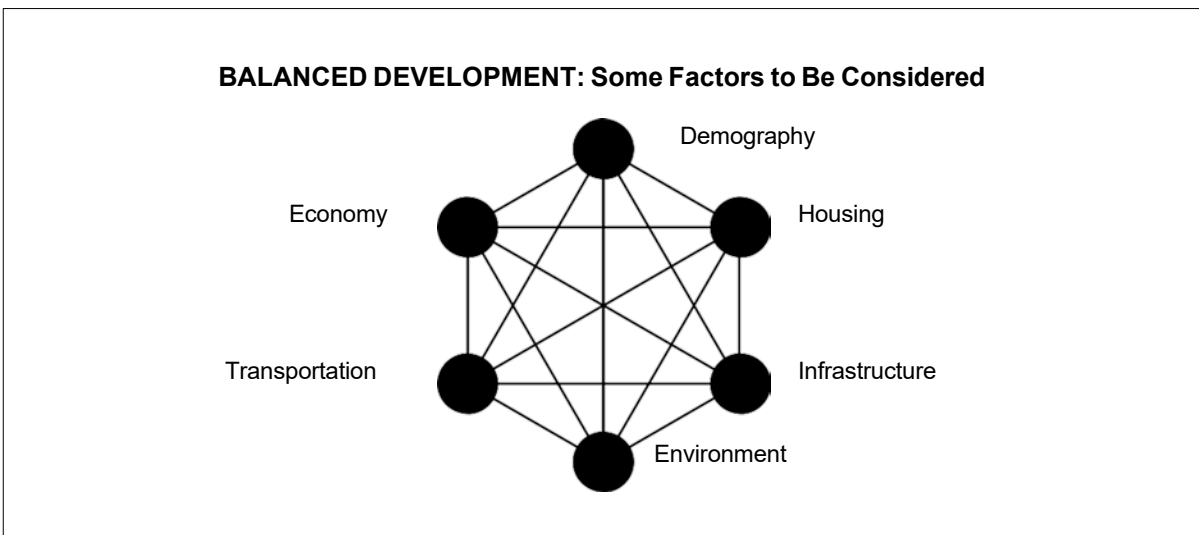
REFINING THE CONCEPT OF A “JOBS HOUSING BALANCE”

The problem with a two-dimensional term like “jobs-housing balance” is that it obscures the other major elements or variables in the growth management equation, such as environment, infrastructure, and public services. It is also overly-simplistic in another sense. “Jobs-housing balance” implies that all that is needed to solve the problem is to achieve some sort of numerical balance or parity between employment and housing, irrespective of issues such as housing location, housing costs, public service levels, transportation system impacts, and environmental impacts.

The broader concept of “balanced urban growth and development” more accurately reflects the scope of issues involved and the need to solve for multiple objectives, or “variables” in the growth management equation. This concept of balancing multiple objectives is illustrated in the graphic below.

In a nutshell, the strategy describes a general approach to urban problem-solving which promotes the following:

- consistent rates of future urban growth;
- rectifying past growth imbalances and ensuring consistency between employment, housing, infrastructure and services at “build-out” as described by cities’ general plans; and



- solutions which reflect the multi-dimensional nature of our urban problems.

Economic growth and diversification have created unprecedented prosperity for many of the residents of Santa Clara County. Choosing not to accommodate further growth is not really a solution to our urban problems at all. Solutions which work against other important objectives are equally undesirable, such as urban development which increases automobile dependence. Achieving more balanced urban growth and development countywide and among individual cities will be critical if we are to (a) prevent economic gains and overall quality of life from being further eroded, and (b) extend the promise of a better future to those who have not equally benefited from that general prosperity.

PRINCIPAL ASPECTS OF A BALANCED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The feasibility of achieving more balanced urban growth and development is complicated by numerous factors. These factors include:

- high percentage of households with two or more workers, which complicates commuting patterns and residential location choices;
- widely dispersed instead of geographically concentrated employment land uses; and
- limited infrastructure capacity or development potential in some areas to accommodate higher density, infill development.

Those difficulties should not obscure the need to increase our efforts as described below. These issue areas represent the principal aspects of a multi-dimensional approach to balanced urban growth and development. Each is further elaborated upon in the chapters which more specifically address these issues.

■ Housing-Related Principles

- Supply should be available that is adequate to overall demand based on employment, household diversity, and the number of households which contain no employed person(s).

- Increase the proximity of employment and housing to the greatest extent possible.
- Affordability of housing should be commensurate with household income distribution.
- Housing policies should be fair for all residents and aim to address any unfair practices and policies of the past.

■ Transportation/ Urban Infrastructure Aspects

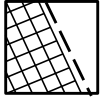
- Increase multi-modal system capacity to meet current needs.
- Place greater emphasis on transportation demand management, higher density land use close to transit, and improved transit systems to meet future needs.
- Efforts to reduce spatial imbalances should not have effect of merely shifting congestion from freeways and expressways onto local street systems.
- Levels of government services and facilities in general should be equal to the demand created by population and employment.

■ Environmental Aspects

- Accommodate employment and population growth such that environmental quality is maintained and enhanced.
- Place emphasis on resource conservation and restoration, open space preservation, recreational opportunities, and habitat conservation that increases as employment and population increase.

■ Other Critical Aspects

- Balance growth and development for North Valley and for South Valley (south of Coyote Valley) as separate sub-regions.
- Address “fiscalization of land use” as an underlying cause of unbalanced growth.
- Planning for higher land use densities, including employment areas, capable of supporting cost-effective transit service over the long term.
- Impacts of imbalanced growth on neighboring counties in terms of development pressures, traffic congestion, and housing affordability.



Factors Affecting Implementation of a Balanced Growth Strategy

Balanced urban growth and development is a strategy for achieving:

- a. consistent rates of current growth;
- b. consistent amounts of future development at “build-out,” indicated by long-range land use plans for
 - employment land uses,
 - housing supply,
 - transportation capacity,
 - public services and facilities (“infrastructure”), and
- c. development that is consistent with environmental goals and standards.

Many jurisdictions and regions of the country attempting to define balanced growth and development objectives have chosen only to address the employment and housing dimensions of the strategy, or “jobs-housing balance.” Even with this limited approach, defining what “balance” means in terms of ratios requires taking into account a variety of characteristics and statistical information which varies by city and sub-area, including total job estimates and incomes, the number of workers per household, the number of housing units, the number of households, vacancy rates, and housing cost factors. Determining the appropriate area in which to achieve a certain ratio of housing to employment creates an additional layer of complexity.

Whether balance is sought on a regional, sub-regional or countywide, city, neighborhood or project level, there can be many limitations to the feasibility and the potential effectiveness of implementing a balanced urban growth and development strategy. The most important to note are the following:

Factor 1: Employment centers in Santa Clara County are highly dispersed over an immense North Valley metropolitan area, and less than 50% of peak hour traffic is strictly “commuter” traffic.

Effect: Efforts to increase housing supply and proximity of housing to employment may not significantly reduce congestion without system-

wide measures to reduce travel demand and single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) use, improve traffic flows, increase transit service and ridership. (see Transportation Chapter)

Factor 2: There may be limited land supply and infrastructure capacity in many portions of the urban area.

Effect: There is a need to more equitably distribute local government revenues in order to offset costs to jurisdictions which accommodate the housing needs of other cities’ workforces, and the need to review local land use plans in order to promote mixed use and compact developments along planned transit corridors.

Factor 3: There are large numbers of households with two or more workers, which complicates the choice of residential location for many whose jobs are not in close proximity.

Effect: Even if perfectly balanced urban growth and development conditions existed in Santa Clara County, not all households would choose to or be able to reside in close proximity to workplaces, for reasons of commute distances, housing costs, need for dependent care services, or other personal preferences.

Factor 4: Increasing the overall housing supply relative to employment alone does not obviate the need to ensure that more of those units are affordable, in desired and appropriate locations, and of an adequate variety of housing types.

Effect: Improved planning and coordination are needed to provide housing of the type, location, and cost characteristics needed within each jurisdiction.



Policies and Implementation

C-GD 37

Within the urban areas of Santa Clara County, a balance should be achieved and maintained between employment levels, housing supply, infrastructure capacity, and environmental quality.

C-GD 38

Increases in employment should be consistent with the following:

- a. the rate of housing supply increase;
- b. the ability of cities and districts to provide needed urban services and infrastructure without lessening levels of service to existing neighborhoods; and
- c. the attainment of environmental quality standards.

C-GD 39

Geographic separation of housing and employment should be reduced to the maximum extent possible through a variety of means, including:

- a. increased housing opportunity in job-rich cities where feasible;
- b. mixed use and compact development patterns, including on-site housing for employment centers; and
- c. increased housing densities along transit corridors, or “transportation-efficient land use,” combined with mixed use “urban activity centers” at transit stations.

C-GD 40

Improved balance between employment and housing opportunities should include the need for:

- a. increased overall supply and more varied types of housing;
- b. housing costs commensurate with household income distribution;
- c. housing to accommodate populations with special needs, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, households of five or more people, female-headed households, extremely low-income households, farmworkers, and people experiencing homelessness; and
- d. increased proximity of housing to employment centers.

C-GD 41

Cities should take maximum advantage of the development potential of their vacant land supply and underutilized industrial/commercial lands to achieve more balanced growth and development.

C-GD 42

Disincentives to achieving more balanced urban growth and development inherent in the current system of local government finance should be reduced or eliminated.

Implementation Recommendations

C-GD(i) 10

Monitor the effects of efforts to achieve more balanced urban growth and development. Indicators of improvements in balanced development include:

- a. rates of housing development;
- b. congestion levels on major roads and intersections;
- c. rates of employment increase and housing development;
- d. air quality improvements;
- e. no. of trips by single-occupancy vehicles; and
- f. public attitudes.

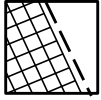
C-GD(i) 11

Utilize the development of a countywide plan for land use and infrastructure to achieve more balanced urban growth and development:

1. Coordinate cities’ long-range land use plans with long-range master plans for light rail and other transit service investments.
2. Calculate potential employment, housing, and infrastructure capacity at build-out levels as indicated by each cities’ long-range plans for land use, housing, and transportation/ circulation.
3. Evaluate alternative scenarios for countywide land use and development for growth impacts upon infrastructure investments, schools, as well as others.

C-GD(i) 12

On a multi-jurisdictional level, promote coalitions of cities to cooperatively plan for mutual areas of concern to mitigate past growth imbalances.



C-GD(i) 13

On a municipal level, particularly for “job-rich cities,” reduce discrepancies between employment and housing supply as much as is feasible through various means, including:

- a. land use and rezoning studies to promote balanced growth and development; and
- b. initiate “linkage” policies or other means that ensure more consistent rates of new employment, housing and infrastructure capacity (e.g.: below-market rate inclusionary housing policies).

C-GD(i) 14

On the site-specific or project level, encourage mixed-use development and increased densities to promote accessibility to work and other daily trip-generating destinations, such as dependent care, retail, and recreational uses.

C-GD(i) 15

Initiate studies of mechanisms of reforming local government finance to reduce disincentives to achieving more balanced urban growth and development (also known as: “fiscalization of land use”). Coordinate with state legislative committees to develop proposals.



**Strategy #3:
Improve Coordinated, Countywide Planning**

The third major component of the countywide strategy for managing and accommodating future urban growth is improved countywide coordination and planning. This section will address:

- the rationale for improved coordination and countywide planning;
- sources and components of a countywide plan; and
- means of implementing the plan.

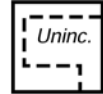
[Note: The subject of regional and sub-regional governance is further addressed in the Governance chapter].

RATIONALE FOR A COUNTYWIDE PLAN

■ Fragmentation of Planning Authority

Rapid population and economic growth, coupled with haphazard expansion of urban development over the last several decades has left a legacy of highly fragmented local planning and land use authority. With 15 cities, over 30 special districts, the County government, and a multitude of public agencies conducting their own planning for their own needs, planning for the future of the county as a whole has been lacking. No unified vision of the county’s future physical development played a part in the various planning activities conducted by this collection of local governments. This, unfortunately, is just as true in 1994 as it was in 1980, despite a general increase in the level of coordination between jurisdictions for particular purposes.

Cities and districts can and often do have very different needs and problems facing them; however, as we approach the 21st century, numerous problems affecting all or nearly all jurisdiction call for collective, or countywide approaches.



→ Policies and Implementation

U-LM 6

County land use and development regulations within a city Urban Service Area shall be generally compatible with the applicable city's general plan designations and accompanying policies, except for designated housing opportunity sites, the development of multi-family housing, mixed-use housing projects, and other types of projects intended to comply with state law or address significant public policy priorities (e.g., agricultural worker housing).

U-LM 7

Subdivisions, use permits and zone changes for unincorporated property within a city Urban Service Area shall conform with the applicable land use and density criteria of the city's general plan with the exception of housing opportunity sites, multi-family housing, mixed use housing projects, and other types of projects intended to comply with state law or address significant public policy priorities (e.g., agricultural worker housing).

U-LM 8

To the extent feasible in light of often competing policy objectives, County zoning, land development, and building regulations should be designed and administered to:

- a. preserve and enhance the quality of existing urban unincorporated areas;
~~and~~
- b. maintain community identity, through heritage resource preservation, conservation of historic structures and places, and other similar measures;
~~and~~
- c. facilitate the production of much needed housing units, affordable to all residents of the County.



U-LM 9

In cases where significant differences exist between County and city development standards (i.e. setbacks, height, bulk regulations), resulting in potentially inappropriate development or conflicts, the County should consider adjusting or modifying its ordinances and standards to minimize problems and achieve greater conformance with city standards, except for projects involving multi-family and mixed-use housing.

U-LM 10

With the exception of housing opportunity sites, multi-family housing, mixed use housing projects, and other types of projects intended to comply with state law or address significant public policy priorities (e.g., agricultural worker housing), No applications for subdivisions, use permits or zone changes for property within any city's Urban Service Area may be accepted by the County for processing unless it is accompanied by a statement from the applicable city affirming city general plan conformance.

Implementation Recommendation

U-LM(i) 9

Review all present County zoning districts applied within Urban Service Areas and compare with applicable city general plan designations. Identify significant inconsistencies and, where appropriate if needed, rezone inappropriately zoned areas to zoning districts that conform with city general plans.

U-LM(i) 10

Inform cities of County general plan conformance policies so that policies and authority are fully understood by city staff and officials.

U-LM(i) 11

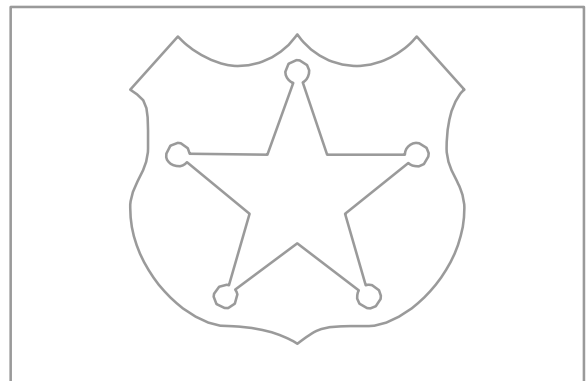
Evaluate County and city development standards and regulations for possible inconsistencies of significance and modify County regulations where appropriate necessary to rectify or minimize the impacts of inconsistencies. {relates to policy 6}

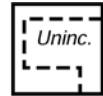


**Strategy #3:
Provide Services as Efficiently and Equitably as Possible**

Although joint County, city, and LAFCO policies promote the annexation of urban "pockets," partly on the basis that urban services are most efficiently provided by cities, in reality many developed urban unincorporated areas may not be annexed in the immediately foreseeable future. In the interim, the County should ensure that necessary urban services and facilities are provided as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible to these areas. Not only does the County have a responsibility to provide basic levels of urban services to urban unincorporated area residents, but by maintaining and upgrading existing services and facilities, the County and the cities facilitate the ultimate annexation of these areas.

Nevertheless, it remains difficult for local governments to pay for basic urban services, much less improve upon them, in light of outcomes of Prop 13. Since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, new funding sources have become virtually non-existent, due to the 2/3 voter approval requirement for new taxes and reduced growth in property tax revenues overall. Because it is recognized that cities should not be expected to provide services without compensation, the financial burden falls to the County. Therefore, cooperation among jurisdictions to explore creative, cost effective measures becomes the only option to costly provision of services in the unincorporated urban areas.





➔ Policies and Implementation

U-LM 11

Urban services shall be provided to residents and businesses of unincorporated urban areas in the most efficient, cost effective and equitable manner possible, using cooperative efforts by all jurisdictions involved.

U-LM 12

Increased levels of service within the urban unincorporated areas should be provided on a cost recovery basis whenever possible.

U-LM 13

Cities should not be expected to provide urban services, either directly or indirectly, to urban unincorporated areas unless through contractual arrangements or as part of improvements to area services or infrastructure that are of recognized benefit to both unincorporated and incorporated areas.

U-LM 14

In order to anticipate long term service and infrastructure needs and to facilitate the eventual annexation of urban unincorporated areas, the County, LAFCO, cities, and urban unincorporated area residents should cooperatively explore and develop long term plans for urban service provision, integration of services, and infrastructure maintenance and replacement, where appropriate.

Implementation Recommendations

U-LM(i) 12

Contracts with the cities should be arranged whenever practical, to provide service to islands or pockets which are inefficient for the sheriff or fire protection districts to serve. (Implementor: County, Cities)

U-LM(i) 13

Consult with individual cities and sanitation/sanitary districts towards the long term integration of small-scale sewer systems into larger systems, where appropriate, to improve delivery of sewer services.

U-LM(i) 14

Develop street master plans and development standards and policies that are compatible with those of the surrounding cities in the unincorporated islands and pockets. (Implementor: County)

U-LM(i) 15

Develop storm drain master plans and standards that are compatible with those of the cities for any storm drainage system which must connect to a city system. (Implementor: County)

U-LM(i) 16

The County should require dedicated easements for roads, sewers and utilities that are compatible with city pre-zoning and master plans.

U-LM(i) 17

Explore the use of Community Development Block Grant funds (CDBG) and other Federal or State funds to finance needed improvements in major unincorporated islands and pockets.

