



TITLE

Mapping Sustainable Policies in the General Plan

RECOMMENDATION

Receive and file the General Plan Sustainable Policy Discussion

CONTACT

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BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

What is a General Plan

The General Plan is the City's blueprint for achieving a shared vision of a Healthy, Equitable, Resilient, and Economically Vibrant community through 2040 and beyond. Since 1990, the California Supreme Court has affirmed that the General Plan is the pre-eminent statement of local planning, calling it "the constitution for all future development." It establishes broad goals, policies, and actions that guide all government decisions on growth and development.

The City Council adopted the General Plan on May 20, 2025. It is organized into topic-specific Elements:

- Land Use
- Housing
- Mobility
- Utilities
- Culture, Environment & Sustainability
- Parks, Recreation & Open Space
- Environmental Justice
- Safety

The Plan also includes the Bicycle Master Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, and Napa County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan as appendices. ([see Attachment 1](#)).

Implementation Tools

With a new General Plan, the City Council can implement this vision systematically, with input from

residents, commissions, the business community, regional and local stakeholder organizations, and staff, using tools such as:

- Specific Plans
- Municipal Code Ordinances
- Land Use Policies
- Design Guidelines
- Immediate-term projects like:
 - Land Subdivisions
 - Design Permits
 - Conditional Use Permits
 - Public Works Capital Improvement Programs.

Important Sustainable policy efforts currently underway include:

- Napa County Regional Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (RCAAP)
- Napa Valley Transportation Authority (NVTa) Active Transportation Plan
- The Napa River Ecological Center and Wetlands Outdoor Education Center
- Subregional Shoreline Adaptation Plan
- Highway 29 Project Initiation Document

OSATS Commission Work Plan

On June 17, 2025, the City Council adopted the Open Space, Active Transportation, and Sustainability (OSATS) Fiscal Year Work Plan, which lists issues and projects aligned with Council priorities. Item #5 of the FY 25/26 Work Plan calls for mapping sustainability initiatives within the General Plan by identifying and compiling all related policies and actions. This will help the Commission understand existing commitments and track progress. ([See Attachment 2](#)).

Why Sustainability is a Cornerstone

Sustainability policies appear throughout all General Plan Elements for these reasons:

1. State Mandates and Legal Framework

- California law requires climate integration: SB 375 and SB 32 mandate cities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and plan for climate adaptation.
- General Plan Elements: The Environmental Justice and Safety elements must address climate risks like wildfire, flooding, and heat.

2. Climate Vulnerability

- California faces wildfires, droughts, sea-level rise, and extreme heat. American Canyon is near sensitive ecosystems and transportation corridors, making resilience planning essential.

3. Resource Efficiency and Economic Stability

- Sustainability policies promote efficient land use, water conservation, and renewable energy, reducing long-term costs for infrastructure and utilities.
- They help attract green businesses and grants, supporting economic development.

4. Community Health and Quality of Life

- Sustainable planning improves air quality, access to parks, and active transportation, which enhances public health.
- It supports environmental justice, ensuring vulnerable populations are protected from climate impacts.

5. Regional Coordination

- Aligning with the Napa County RCAAP and state climate goals ensures consistency and eligibility for funding.
- Regional collaboration strengthens resilience strategies across jurisdictions.

6. Future-Proofing Growth

- Sustainability ensures smart growth, balancing housing, jobs, and environmental protection.
- It provides a long-term vision that reduces risk and uncertainty for residents and businesses.

To assist the Commission, staff identified sustainable policies in the General Plan ([Attachment 3](#)) and reorganized them by topic to show integration across elements. ([Attachment 4](#)).

Tracking Sustainability Progress

California law requires planning agencies to submit an annual report to both the City Council and the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research (OPR) on the status of the General Plan and its implementation. This report provides critical information on:

- How the General Plan has been implemented,
- Potential policy changes, and
- How land use decisions reflect the Plan’s goals, policies, and implementation measures.

Next year’s report could highlight sustainability accomplishments and link them directly to the corresponding General Plan policies and implementation actions. A copy of the 2024 Annual Report is included as [Attachment 5](#).

Conclusion

Moving forward, the General Plan provides a sustainability framework for concrete actions and measurable outcomes. This framework is balanced with other General Plan policies within the City's broader responsibilities, including fiscal constraints and essential services.

This means prioritizing projects that advance climate resilience, resource efficiency, and community health, while aligning with regional initiatives like the RCAAP and NVTa Active Transportation Plan. By leveraging regional cooperation and local tools such as Specific Plans, ordinances, and capital improvement programs, the City can turn vision into reality.

COUNCIL PRIORITY PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

Organizational Effectiveness: "Deliver exemplary government services."

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

N/A

COMMUNICATION

Level 0: No Further Public Communication Needed

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [American Canyon 2040 General Plan](#)
2. [OSATS Work Plan FY25-26](#)
3. [Sustainable Policies by Element Matrix](#)
4. [Sustainable Policies by Element Matrix with Categories](#)
5. [General Plan Annual Progress Report 2024](#)