

I INTRODUCTION

The Town of Hillsborough is a community that is proud of its low density, residential character and long history of providing a relaxing escape from the surrounding urban stresses found in the San Francisco Bay Area. The Town has adopted this General Plan to provide the control and regulation necessary to ensure that this quality of life continues into the future. Some change is recognized as necessary, and even desired, but overall, this General Plan was created with the philosophy that the existing character and design of Hillsborough is to be protected and enhanced.

A. Purpose of this General Plan

The General Plan provides the fundamental basis for the Town's land use and development policy, allowing the community to control the manner in which change will occur through 2025.

California Government Code Section 65300 requires that the General Plan must be comprehensive, internally consistent and long-term. Although required to address the issues specified by State law, the General Plan may be ultimately organized in a way that best suits Hillsborough. The Plan should be clearly written, available to all those concerned with the community's development and easy to administer.

The Hillsborough General Plan meets these requirements while also providing a unique vision for the Town's long-term physical form and development. It serves as a basis for future decision-making by municipal officials, including the City Council, the Architectural Design Review Board and Town staff.

This document supersedes the previous General Plan, adopted in 1994, except for the Housing Element, which was revised and adopted in 2002 to comply with State requirements. However, this document includes much of the policy language from the 1994 General Plan, except where policy initiatives have been accomplished or have been redefined through the General Plan update process. Its implementation will include actions to update other planning

documents to ensure consistency with the vision outlined in the Hillsborough General Plan. As a result of the Housing Element’s recent adoption, it is not being updated at this time; however, it was reviewed for consistency with the other General Plan elements as required by State law.

B. History of Hillsborough

The history of present-day Hillsborough began in 1846, when William Davis Merry Howard purchased “Rancho San Mateo,” which included most of what is today Hillsborough, Burlingame and part of San Mateo, from the Mexican government. Prior to the arrival of the first Europeans, Hillsborough was part of the traditional range of the Ohlone tribe of Native Americans. The number of Native Americans within the Hillsborough area quickly decreased as the European presence increased on the San Francisco Peninsula, first with the Spanish from Mexico and then with the expansion of the United States.

Once Mr. Howard died, his ranch was subdivided between his family members. As the years passed, the land in Hillsborough was slowly subdivided in response to increased interest from San Francisco businessmen who wanted rural homes affording a relaxed lifestyle located near the city. In the early years, subdivision resulted in larger estate properties, such as Uplands, Home Place and La Dolphine, some of which still exist today.

The Town was incorporated in 1910, in response to the threat of annexation by the adjacent cities of Burlingame and San Mateo. To preserve the quality of life that the original residents of Hillsborough treasured, the new town adopted regulations such as banning sidewalks and roadways laid out in a grid-system, as well as commercial and business land uses.

The Town’s zoning laws changed throughout the early years, but there was always an underlying desire to preserve the character of Hillsborough. This aspiration continues today and can be seen in the goals and policies contained in this General Plan.

Today, Hillsborough still preserves the same high quality of life that caused its founding members to incorporate. Although it has increased in population over the years and only two large estate properties remain, the Town has preserved its low density character by setting the minimum lot size at ½ acre.

Development has slowed down since the majority of land in Hillsborough has been subdivided over the years. According to the 2000 Census, there were 10,825 residents in 2000, which is an increase of about 1.5 percent from the 1990 Census.

C. The Town and its Planning Area

The Town of Hillsborough is located on the San Francisco Peninsula, in San Mateo County, and contains approximately 6.1 square miles of land. The Town is surrounded by the cities of Burlingame and San Mateo, as well as unincorporated portions of San Mateo County. Figure I-1 depicts the Town's regional location.

Often, a city includes land within its Sphere of Influence into its General Plan Planning Area. A Sphere of Influence is the area which is anticipated to eventually be annexed into the city. Hillsborough's current Sphere of Influence boundary does not extend outside the Town limits. As a result, the Town would need to complete a Sphere of Influence Update before it would be able to annex additional land. The most recent annexation was associated with the Stonebridge subdivision in Hillsborough's southern portion. The Town does not propose to expand the Sphere of Influence at this time; however, annexation proposals will be reviewed by the City Council if proposed by private property owners.

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Figure I-1: Regional Location

One parcel that has been identified as an area that may make sense to eventually annex into the Town for recreational uses is the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) parcel located along Hillsborough's western boundary, between Interstate 280 and Black Mountain Road. To date, the SFPUC has declined the Town's suggestions for recreational use of the property. The Town continues to be interested in working with the SFPUC in the future to explore potential recreational uses on this parcel.

As allowed by State law, the Town has identified a General Plan Planning Area that extends outside the Town limit. The Planning Area includes all unincorporated land that is located east of I-280 between the Town limit of Hillsborough and the adjacent cities of Burlingame and San Mateo. While the Town does not have any authority over land within the Planning Area, designating a Planning Area recognizes that development within this area may directly impact the community and makes a statement that the Town would like to be involved when development is proposed in the Planning Area. The Hillsborough Planning Area is the area within which any annexation requests would occur. Figure I-2 depicts the Planning Area and Town limit of Hillsborough.

D. General Plan Contents

This General Plan includes this introduction, as well as six separate "elements" that set goals, policies and actions for each given subject. These six elements cover the seven topics required by California State Government Code Section 65302. Some State-required topics have been combined or included into other elements, as allowed by State law. The Housing Element, one of the required six elements, was updated in 2002 to comply with State law and is available as a separate document. A brief explanation of the topics included in the Hillsborough General Plan is provided here.

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Figure I-2
Planning Area and Town Limit

Land Use Element. The Land Use Element designates all lands within the Town for specific uses such as housing, open space and recreational uses, private schools, and public facilities and services. The Land Use Element provides overall policies for each land use category. The Land Use Element is one of the State-required General Plan elements. A discussion of public services and facilities, as they relate to proposed land uses, is also included in this Element. The discussion of public utilities and facilities in particular, is a requirement of the State-required Circulation Element.

Circulation Element. State law requires that a Circulation Element specify the general location and extent of existing and proposed major streets and other transportation facilities. As required by law, all facilities in the Circulation Element are correlated with the land uses foreseen in the Land Use Element.

Open Space and Conservation Element. This Element combines two elements required under State law; the Open Space Element and the Conservation Element. It addresses the preservation of open space and the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources. The discussion of air quality, as required by State law, is included in the Public Safety Element.

Public Safety Element. State law requires the development of a Public Safety Element to protect the community from risks associated with the effects of seismic hazards, other geologic hazards, flooding, and wildland and urban fires. The Town has also included air quality in this Element, instead of addressing it in the Open Space and Conservation Element.

Noise Element. Another State-required element is the Noise Element. This Element addresses noise problems in the community and analyzes and quantifies current and projected noise levels from a variety of sources.

Housing Element. As previously stated, the Town's Housing Element was updated in 2002. Government Code Section 65588 requires that Housing Elements be updated every five years and include specific components such as

analysis of existing housing stock, analysis of existing and projected housing needs, and quantification of the number of housing units that will be developed, preserved and improved through its policies and actions. The Housing Element is available as a separate document.

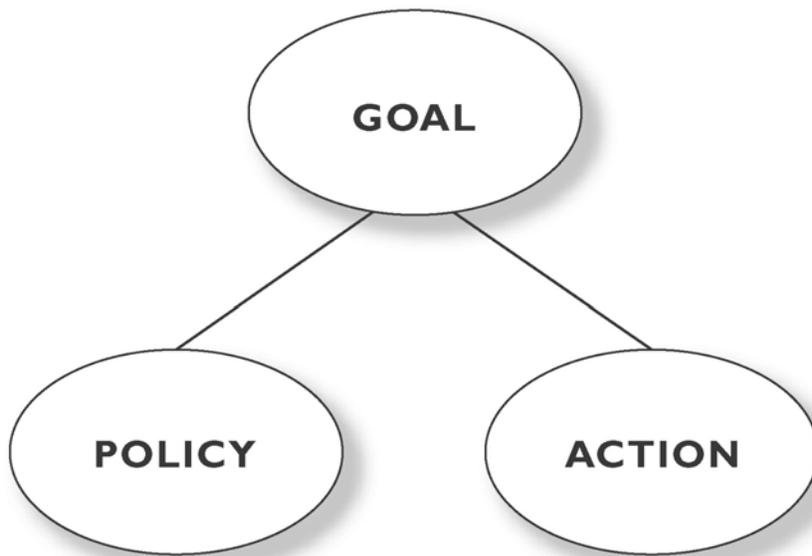
E. Organization of the General Plan Elements

Each element of this General Plan contains background information and a series of goals, policies and actions. Some elements also have additional sections that are specific to them. For example, the Land Use Element contains descriptions of a number of land use designations that guide overall development in the Town.

The background information section of each element describes current conditions in Hillsborough relative to the subject of the element. The goals, policies and actions provide guidance to the Town on how to direct change and manage its resources over the next 20 years. The following provides a description of each and explains the relationship between each:

- ◆ A goal is a description of the general desired result that the Town seeks to create through the implementation of its General Plan.
- ◆ A policy is a specific statement that guides decision-making in working to achieve a goal. Such policies, once adopted, represent statements of Town regulation and require no further implementation. The General Plan's policies set out the standards that will be used by Town staff and City Council in their review of land development projects and in decision-making about Town actions.
- ◆ An action is a program, implementation measure, procedure or technique intended to help to achieve a specified goal.

FIGURE I-3 GENERAL PLAN COMPONENTS



As noted in Figure I-3, policies and actions are at the same level; both policies and actions are intended to implement goals. In most cases, goals have both implementing policies and actions. However, it is also possible for a goal to be implemented exclusively through either policies or actions.

F. General Plan Update Process

The General Plan was updated over a one-year period from 2004 to 2005. During this time, a range of public input opportunities occurred to ensure that the updated General Plan reflected the community's vision for Hillsborough. The following describes the various public outreach efforts that were undertaken.

1. Interviews

As part of the initial background data collection and issues identification, a series of interviews was completed. All of the City Council members were consulted, as well as representatives from the Hillsborough City School District, Hillsborough Beautification Foundation, Financial Advisory Committee and Citizens' Communications Advisory Committee. Key Town staff were also interviewed.

2. Steering Committee

A General Plan Steering Committee was appointed by the Mayor to assist in formulating the Draft General Plan. The role of the Committee was to provide input and guidance, as representatives of the community, to the consulting team and Town staff during the creation of the Draft Plan. The Committee was advisory.

The Town first advertised for volunteers for the Steering Committee in the Town Newsletter. From all those who applied, the Mayor selected those who he believed were best qualified and who could best represent the various aspects and characteristics of the community. On the committee were representatives from various recognized groups and organizations in the Town: people active in the schools (public and private), residents of various neighborhoods and people from diverse backgrounds and with multiple interests.

The Steering Committee members attended three meetings. The first meeting, held on June 16, 2004, allowed the Committee members to review background data about Hillsborough and provide input on goals and policies for inclusion in the General Plan. At the second meeting, on August 4, 2004, the Steering Committee reviewed and commented on various General Plan alternatives, addressing issues such as land use and policies direction. The final Committee meeting, on November 9, 2004, was devoted to review of the Preliminary Draft General Plan. All of the meetings were open to the public.

3. Public Workshop

Once the Public Review Draft General Plan was completed, a public workshop was held on January 26, 2005 to allow members of the public to review and provide comments before the official, State-mandated review period ended and the City Council reviewed the document at a public hearing.

4. Public Review Period and Adoption

As required by State law, the General Plan was circulated for a 45-day period along with the associated environmental review during the months of December 2004 and January 2005. During this time, the public was allowed to submit additional comments, in addition to providing verbal comments at the public workshop, and all of the comments received were taken into consideration at the public hearing held in front of the City Council on February 14, 2005. The City Council adopted the General Plan on March 14, 2005.

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