

SAN JUAN BAUTISTA
GENERAL PLAN

City of
San Juan Bautista, California

Adopted September 29, 1998

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General Plan
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INTRODUCTION

PLACE HOLDER
for Introduction title
page

What is the General Plan?

The San Juan Bautista General Plan contains the City's official policies on land use, transportation, housing, open space and conservation, safety, public services, community design, and historic preservation. Its policies apply to both public and private properties. Its focus is on the physical form of the City.

At its most basic level, the Plan is the primary tool for guiding San Juan Bautista's future development. Its preparation is explicitly required by the State, as it is in all cities and counties in California. Yet even if it were not required, having a plan for San Juan Bautista's future makes sense. The City is faced with tough choices about growth, transportation, water, schools, and neighborhood improvement on a daily basis. A General Plan provides a guide for making these choices by describing long-term goals for the City's future and setting policies for day-to-day decisions.

The Plan is used by the Planning Commission and City Council to evaluate land use changes and to make funding and budget decisions. It is used by City Staff to regulate building and development and to make recommendations on projects. It is used by private citizens to understand the City's long-range plans for different areas. The Plan provides the basis for the City's zoning regulations.

The General Plan is a legal document and must meet specific State requirements for content. Seven mandatory topics, or "elements," must be included. Cities can organize their elements as they please, develop their own formats, and add optional elements to address subjects of local concern. In addition to the mandatory elements, San Juan Bautista's General Plan contains optional elements addressing Public Services, Community Design, and Historic Preservation.

The State of California requires that the General Plan must be comprehensive, long-range, and internally consistent. The "comprehensive" requirement applies to the Plan's geographic area as well as the topics it covers. This Plan's policies apply to a 3,000 acre "planning area" that includes the City and surrounding rural lands and open space (see the box on the next page for a description of the different geographic areas referenced by the Plan). The "long-range" requirement usually means the plan must look 10 or 20 years into the future. This Plan looks towards a horizon year of 2015. The "consistency" requirement means that the Plan must not contain contradictory statements or policies. The maps must be consistent with the text, and the Elements must support one another.

San Juan Bautista is a community of diverse character, a place where history lives against the backdrop of the hills and farms of San Benito County. All of us, from those who were born here to the newest arrivals, share a common belief that the best qualities of this town are its small size, its quiet streets and safe neighborhoods, its attractive historic buildings, and the abundant agriculture and open space that surround it. This General Plan strives to protect these qualities for ourselves, our children, and future generations.



Geographic areas referenced in the General Plan

☐ City of San Juan Bautista refers to the area within the existing (1998) city limits. The City encompasses about 450 acres. About 300 acres of that area are developed.

☐ The Sphere of Influence is intended to include all land that will eventually be annexed to the City. It is used by the San Benito County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to evaluate the City's annexation requests. San Juan Bautista's sphere encompasses about 2,000 acres of land.

☐ The Planning Area is the area covered by the General Plan. It includes all land within the City limits as well as any land outside the City limits that bears relation to the City's planning. The Planning Area includes the City, the entire Sphere of Influence, and another 1,000 acres of farmland, for a total of 3,000 acres. This area extends to Lucy Brown Road on the east, San Justo Road on the north, the mouth of San Juan Canyon on the south, and the Nyland Ranch on the west.

☐ The Plan also identifies an Urban Growth Boundary, or UGB. This is the area planned for urban uses during the lifetime of this General Plan. It encompasses about 325 acres within the City limits and another 145 acres to be annexed and provided with urban services by the year 2015.

These boundaries are shown in Figure 1 -1. San Juan Bautista's location in the region is shown in Figure 1 -2.

How to Use The General Plan

San Juan Bautista's General Plan is intended for use by all members of the community. It is intended to be an overall vision for the future and can be consulted for information about a particular geographic area in or near the City, or a particular topic of interest.

The Plan is intended to guide private development. If you own land in or around San Juan Bautista or are interested in purchasing land, you can use the Plan to review the City's development policies. The Plan's Land Use Diagram shows the different uses permitted in each part of town. Although the Diagram is a useful starting point, it is important to review maps and policies throughout the document to get the full perspective on how and where development may take place.

The Plan is to be used as a tool for making local government decisions. It is used by the Planning Commission and City Council to evaluate development proposals, prioritize capital improvements, and initiate annexations. It is also intended to guide San Benito County as it makes land use decisions in the San Juan Valley, and to assist State agencies like Caltrans in planning and funding

transportation improvements. Just as the Plan provides guidance in how to spend local funds, it is also intended to provide the documentation necessary for obtaining certain state and federal grants.

The Plan is also a tool for making change happen. It identifies more than 200 actions the City can take during the next few years to help achieve its goals. Some of these actions are simple, like reprinting a walking tour brochure or installing a new sign. Others, like updating the zoning ordinance or replacing water lines, are more expensive and will take longer to implement.

Finally, the General Plan is an informational and educational tool. It is a resource document for San Juan Bautista residents and businesses and contains useful data on the City and the Planning Area.

Format and Organization of the Plan

Each of the elements of the General Plan shares a common format and organization. Every element includes the following sections:

- An “**Introduction**” which summarizes the purpose of the element and its contents.
- “**At This Point In Time**” describes conditions as they are in 1998. This section provides background data to make the Plan more useful as a reference document and to provide the technical basis for its policies and programs.
- “**Looking Towards 2015**” describes the major concepts and changes envisioned during the future for each element topic.
- “**Goals, Policies, and Programs**” are included in each element. The **goals** are broad statements that describe ideal future conditions for a particular topic like air quality or traffic. **Policies** provide more guidance on decisions relating to the goals and indicate a general direction that the City will follow in the future. **Programs** have been developed for some of the policies. Each program is an action, activity, or strategy to be carried out in the future.

The document contains nine chapters, including this Introduction and eight elements. Following this chapter, the Land Use Element describes existing land uses in the City and presents concepts for the City’s future development. The Transportation Element addresses roads, pedestrians, bicycles, trucks, transit, and parking. The Housing Element explores demographic and housing conditions in the City and develops policies and programs to meet current and future housing needs. The format of the Housing Element is different from the other Elements since it must respond to specific State requirements for content. It is longer than the other Elements and contains more background data. Within the body of the Element, a funding source, responsible agency, and timeline is included for each program.

This General Plan contains the following eight elements:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Housing
- Open Space and Conservation
- Safety
- Public Services
- Community Design
- Historic Preservation



The **Open Space and Conservation Element** addresses soil, water, vegetation, wildlife, air, and recreational resources. The **Safety Element** focuses on natural hazards, like earthquakes and flooding, and incorporates the state-mandated Noise Element. The **Public Services Element** profiles water, sewer, drainage, solid waste, police, fire, school, and library services and identifies how these services will be provided in the future. The **Community Design Element** addresses urban design issues, including provisions to enhance existing neighborhoods as well as provisions to ensure that new development areas are attractively designed. A **Historic Preservation Element** provides a policy framework for protecting the City's historic and archaeological resources.

A General Plan **Implementation Program** is presented as an appendix to the document. The appendix includes a series of tables identifying a responsible agency, timeline, and prospective funding source for each action item in the Plan. An **Environmental Impact Report (EIR)** for the Plan also has been prepared and is available for review under separate cover. The EIR includes mitigation measures for Plan impacts, as well as an analysis of Plan alternatives.

How the Plan was Developed

The General Plan is the product of a three-year collaboration by City staff, consultants, and a 15-member Citizens Advisory Committee. The process began in mid-1995, when the City Council and Planning Commission held a joint meeting to discuss their priorities for the new Plan. A work program for the Plan was approved, and an advisory committee was appointed. During Fall 1995, a survey on local issues was mailed to every household in the City. About 16 percent of the surveys were returned.

During late 1995 and early 1996, information about existing conditions in San Juan Bautista was collected and mapped. This information provided a basis for evaluating the City's options for the future, and also ensured that the Plan would be based on accurate information. An Existing Conditions Report summarizing this information was published in August 1996. The Advisory Committee met monthly during this time period, each time addressing a different issue. At each of seven meetings, the policies and actions in the 1983 Plan were reviewed and possible revisions and new policies were discussed.

During mid-1996, an Alternatives Workbook was prepared, laying out choices and directions for the City's future growth. The Citizens Advisory Committee met three times during the Fall to review and evaluate alternatives. By the time the process was complete, more than 10 separate land use plans had been evaluated, ranging from a "maximum growth" scenario which envisioned 5,000 residents to an "infill" scenario which envisioned only a few hundred new residents. The alternative that was selected included a business park on the former cement plant site at the mouth of San Juan Canyon, a number of new commercial sites, and enough land for about 600 new dwelling units. Because

of current residential growth control measures, only a portion of this development will occur by 2015.

During late 1996 and early 1997, the Advisory Committee met five more times to discuss the specific policies to be included in the new Plan. The City Council and Planning Commission were briefed on the Committee's progress. A first draft of the Plan was written during Spring 1997, with an Administrative Draft published in June 1997. This document was revised to consolidate policies and programs, eliminate potential inconsistencies, and respond to CAC and Staff concerns.

A Public Review Draft was published in March 1998. The document was made available to the general public and was circulated to government agencies, including the School District and the County. The City Planning Commission held public hearings on the Plan and EIR in April, May, and June 1998. Both written comments and oral testimony were considered and a number of changes were recommended by the Commission. The Planning Commission forwarded the Plan to the City Council on July 15, 1998. The Council held two additional public hearings and adopted the Plan on September 29, 1998.

The City did not start this process from scratch. In fact, San Juan Bautista's first General Plan was prepared in 1965. A major update of that Plan took place from 1978 to 1983, with dozens of meetings and hundreds of residents participating. By 1995, it became apparent that a new Plan was needed to guide the City into the 21st century. This document is the product of that effort.

Implementing and Amending the Plan

State law requires that local governments implement their General Plans after they are adopted. Each Element of the Plan includes specific implementation programs. These are summarized in the appendix at the end of the document. Some of the more critical programs are revision of the zoning ordinance, updating of the City's subdivision standards, preparation of a Specific Plan for the area south of San Juan-Hollister Road, application for grants, and development of a capital improvement program. The General Plan is also implemented on a day to day basis, through the decisions of Staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council. Their decisions and actions must be consistent with the Plan.

Once adopted, the General Plan does not remain static. State General Plan guidelines recommend regular one-year and five-year reviews of all General Plan Elements and include provisions for amending the Plan. State law permits up to four amendments each year, but any number of changes can be included in each of the four amendments. Both the Plan diagrams and the Plan text may be



amended, provided that the change is in the public interest and is not detrimental to public health, safety, and welfare. In either case, care must be taken to ensure that the Plan remains internally consistent as it is changed. Environmental review is required for all Plan amendments.

Major Themes of the General Plan

The San Juan Bautista General Plan builds on several major themes. These are summarized below.

Preserving Small Town Character

One of San Juan Bautista's most cherished qualities is that it looks and feels like a small town. While other communities in the region have grown into large cities and suburbs, San Juan Bautista has remained a quiet community with strong ties to agriculture and history. Preserving this quality is a major theme of the General Plan and is reflected in the policies in all of the Plan's Elements.

Maintaining Agricultural Land Uses Around the City

The Plan establishes an Urban Growth Boundary which marks the ultimate boundary of urban development in San Juan Bautista during the lifetime of this Plan. Land outside this boundary will remain in agriculture and open space uses. The Plan emphasizes the importance of preserving farmland and open space throughout the San Juan Valley, not just in and around San Juan Bautista.

Improving Local Infrastructure

Although the Plan identifies new development areas, the City's priority will be on improving services to existing development areas first. One of the Plan's recurring goals is to improve road conditions, upgrade aging water and sewer lines, correct storm drainage deficiencies, seek long-range solutions to sewage treatment needs, and improve provisions for parking, pedestrians, and bicycles. Existing infrastructure must be improved before San Juan Bautista can sustain new growth.

Allow Managed Growth Within the Former "Development Reserve"

The 1983 General Plan designated a 368-acre "development reserve" for the City's eventual expansion into the area south of Highway 156. The 1998 Plan designates a portion of that reserve for urban uses, including a new residential neighborhood, several commercial sites, and a 65-acre opportunity site which may support a future business and / or commercial recreation use. This development will be carefully managed and phased. The Plan also endorses the continuation of the City's Residential Development Control Ordinance.

Diversifying the Economic Base

The General Plan emphasizes the importance of tourism to the local economy and includes policies and programs to enhance the City’s appeal to visitors. It also includes policies to attract new business and industry to the City, particularly those which are agriculturally-related. The Plan strives to create jobs for San Juan Bautista residents, tax revenues to improve local services, and an increased customer base for local businesses.

Providing New Housing Opportunities

The shortage of housing, particularly rental housing, is known to everyone in San Juan Bautista. The Plan’s Housing Element includes measures to increase the supply of affordable housing and provide new housing opportunities for San Juan’s young families and senior citizens. It emphasizes the development of “mixed use” projects which incorporate housing over retail or office uses, and provides opportunities for “live-work” studios or cottages where local artisans and craftspeople can earn their living from home.

Protecting Historic Resources

The Plan renews the City’s commitment to protecting the historic buildings, sites, and places that make San Juan Bautista unique. The Historic Preservation Element establishes policies and programs to achieve this goal. The Plan also includes a Community Design Element, which recommends that new development areas incorporate some of the traditional qualities of San Juan’s older neighborhoods.

Plan Authority Outside the City Limits

The box at the top of Page 1-2 describes the different geographic areas covered by the General Plan, including the *City*, the *Sphere of Influence*, the *Planning Area*, and the *Urban Growth Boundary*. Only about 15 percent of the area covered by the Plan lies within the current City limits. The balance of the area is in unincorporated San Benito County. **The County will retain planning and building authority over these areas until and unless they are annexed by San Juan Bautista.** The policies in this document and the designations on the Land Use Diagram are intended to assist the County as it considers development applications in the unincorporated parts of the Planning Area, and to identify which areas will eventually be annexed by the City. This General Plan has been structured to be consistent with the County Plan to avoid future conflicts between County actions and the City’s policies for these areas.

