

PLANNING WORKSHOP

TOWN OF LOOMIS

MARCH 23, 2021

OUTLINE

- ▶ Land Use Regulation
- ▶ General Plan
- ▶ Zoning Code
- ▶ California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- ▶ Role of the Planning Commission

Land Use Regulation

- ▶ Arose from “good government” movements as a response to unsanitary urban conditions
- ▶ Embodied desire to rein in private market excesses through government regulation
- ▶ Based on local government’s Police Power:
 - ▶ health,
 - ▶ safety, and
 - ▶ welfare

Key Milestones in Planning Regulation

- ▶ 1909 Los Angeles imposes first zoning ordinance limiting industrial uses (not comprehensive)
- ▶ 1916 New York imposes first comprehensive zoning ordinance
- ▶ 1922 Standard State Zoning Enabling Act (SZEA)
- ▶ 1926 Euclid v. Ambler – upholds constitutionality of zoning

California Planning

- ▶ California Planning Milestones
 - ▶ 1927 California passes law requiring that cities and counties have a Master Plan
 - ▶ 1928 Standard City Planning Enabling Act (SPEA)
- ▶ California law
 - ▶ **General Plans** lay out a jurisdiction's future development plans through a series of policy statements in text and land use diagram
 - ▶ **Specific Plans** are a special set of development standards that apply to a particular geographical area
 - ▶ Other planning documents include Master Plans, Area Plans, Vision Plans, etc., but these are not defined in the law.
 - ▶ **Zoning** provides detailed land use and design regulation consistent with the General Plan.

Relationship of Planning Documents



Mandatory Consistency



General Plan

- ▶ The “constitution” for planning and development
- ▶ Provides long-range vision for the Town (20+ year horizon)
- ▶ Identifies important community issues and solutions
- ▶ Basis for land use decisions
- ▶ Promotes community participation
- ▶ Sets the ground rules
- ▶ Sets timelines for implementation

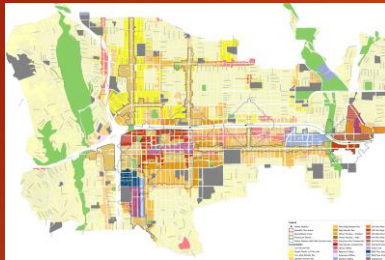
General Plan Timeframes

- California General Plan Guidelines
 - Twenty-year planning horizon
 - Five-year updates
 - Annual updates (Maximum 4 per year)
 - Annual Progress Reporting

Required General Plan Elements

<http://www.opr.ca.gov/planning/general-plan/guidelines.html>

LAND USE



HOUSING



CIRCULATION



CONSERVATION



OPEN SPACE



NOISE



SAFETY



AIR QUALITY



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



Optional General Plan Elements

- ▶ Loomis
 - ▶ Public Services, Facilities, and Finance
- ▶ Community Character / Design
- ▶ Public Health
- ▶ Economic Development
- ▶ Community – Specific Topics

Element Contents

- ▶ Setting (existing conditions)
- ▶ Narrative/Vision/Expectations
- ▶ Goals
- ▶ Objectives
- ▶ Policies
- ▶ Implementation Measures
 - ▶ Quantified
 - ▶ Scheduled

General Plan Hierarchy

» **Vision**

- Aspirational statements describing the desired, positive future for the community.
- An image of the future that the community wishes to create.
- Succinct description of community values.

» **Goals**

- Ideal future end that is an expression of community values. May be abstract.
- Not quantifiable or time-dependent.

» **Objectives**

- Intermediate or achievable steps to achieve goals
- Generally quantifiable, with achievement desired in a set period of time.

General Plan Hierarchy

» Policies

- Specific statement that guides decision-making.
- Rule or measure establishing a required level of quality or quantity to be fulfilled by others.

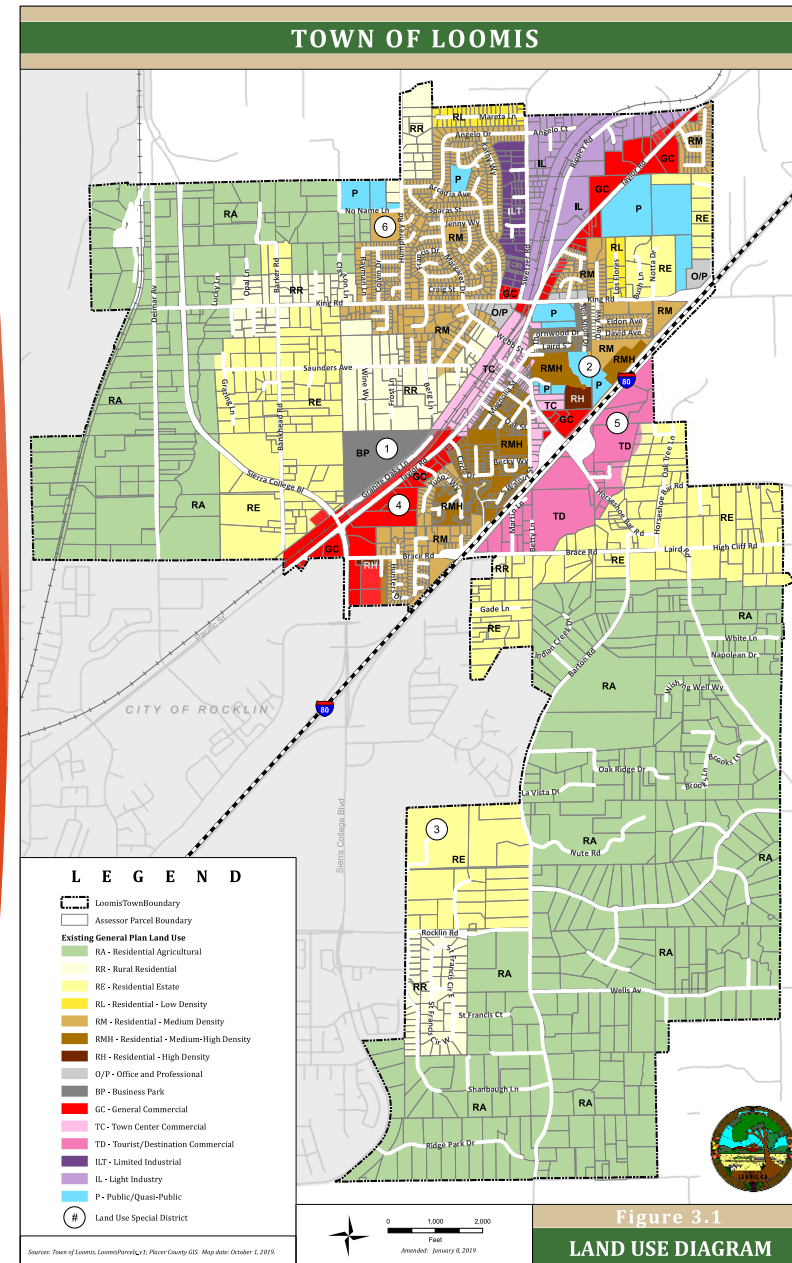
» Actions (Implementation Measures)

- Action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out a general plan policy
- Source of funding
- Timeframe for implementation
 - On-going
 - short term (1 to 5 years)
 - Medium term (6 to 15 years)
 - Long term (16+ years)

» Indicators

- Measures that show whether the community is achieving its goals and objectives.

General Plan Land Use Diagram

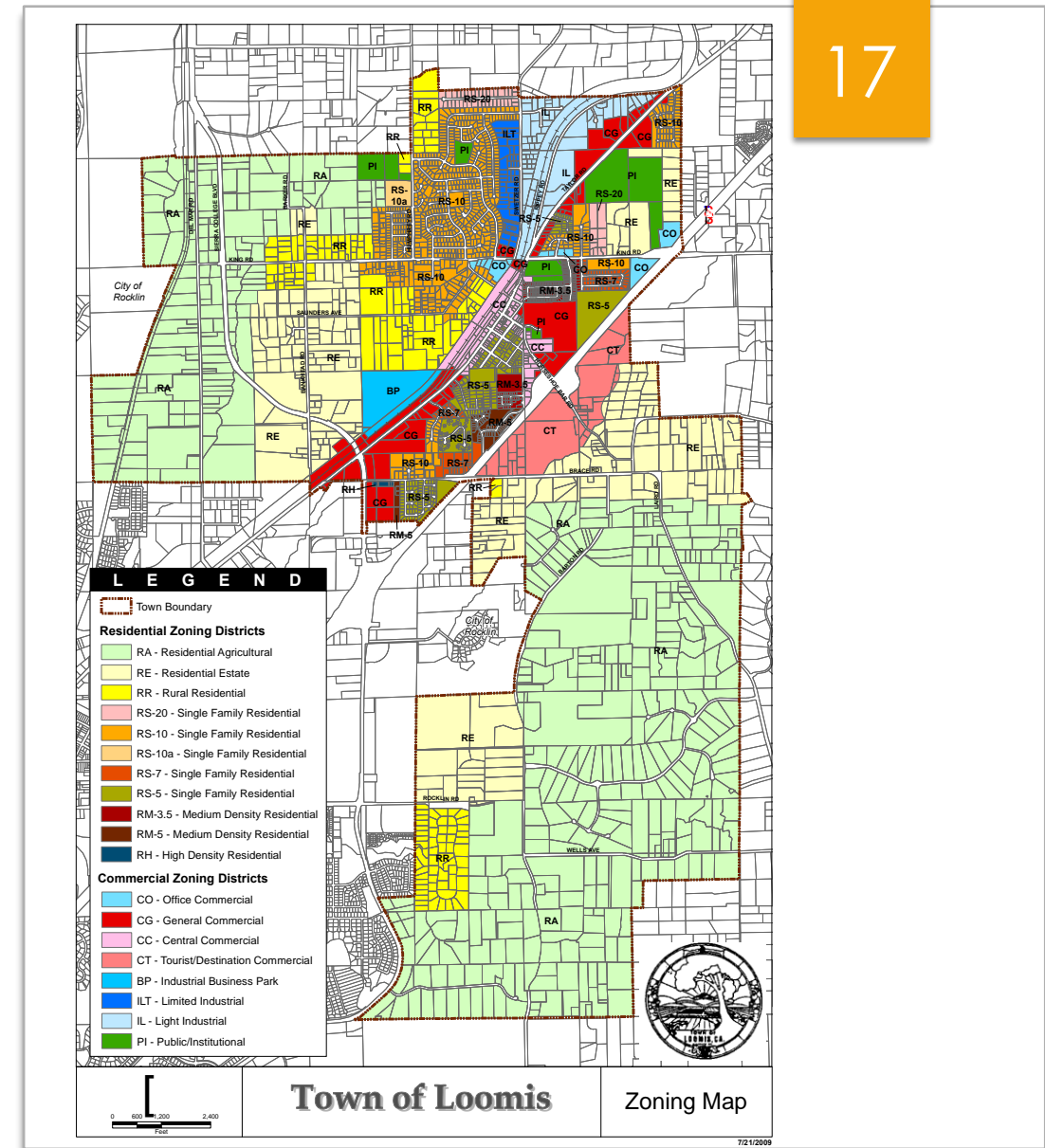


Implementing Documents

- ▶ Specific Plans
- ▶ Specialty Plans
 - ▶ Town Center Master Plan
 - ▶ Drainage Master Plan
- ▶ Zoning Code with Zoning Map
- ▶ Standards
 - ▶ Construction Improvement Standards
 - ▶ Land Development Manual
- ▶ Guidelines
- ▶ California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Zoning Code

- ▶ Ordinance that implements the General Plan policies
- ▶ Prescribes allowable land uses and development standards including:
 - ▶ Building uses
 - ▶ Building size (height, lot coverage and setbacks)
 - ▶ Parking requirements
 - ▶ Other performance standards



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

- ▶ Informational and disclosure document that analyzes potential effects, tradeoffs and mitigation when considering a project.
- ▶ Identifies potential impacts, and where possible, mitigation measures the City can apply to prevent or eliminate an impact.
- ▶ Disclosure document vs. legislative document.
- ▶ Does not prohibit a jurisdiction from adopting a project when findings and a statement of overriding conditions are made.

CEQA Content and Function

- ▶ Describes the proposed project
- ▶ Discloses the project purpose and need
- ▶ Describes the existing conditions (Settings)
- ▶ Identifies environmental impacts
- ▶ Identifies ways to avoid environmental impacts
- ▶ Identifies ways to reduce (mitigate) environmental impacts
- ▶ Identifies environmental impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated
- ▶ Fosters intergovernmental cooperation
- ▶ Enhances public participation in decision-making

CEQA Documents

- ▶ Categorical Exemption
 - ▶ Minor changes that do not trigger environmental review
- ▶ Initial Study (IS)
 - ▶ Determines whether the project may have a significant effect on the environment (also known as “the checklist”)
- ▶ Negative Declaration (ND)
 - ▶ If the Initial Study indicates the project would have no significant effect on the environment
- ▶ Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)
 - ▶ If the Initial Study shows an effect, a MND may be prepared as long as revisions to project plans (mitigation measures) can avoid or mitigate effects.
- ▶ Environmental Impact Report (EIR)
 - ▶ If the Initial Study identifies potential significant effects that cannot be avoided or mitigated.

Role of the Planning Commission

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▶ Creation Process

- ▶ Participate in the development of the General Plan, Housing Element, and/or Zoning Code
- ▶ Facilitate community engagement
- ▶ Conduct study sessions and other forums

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Role of the Planning Commission

- ▶ Appointed by the Town Council
- ▶ Not a policy maker – That is the Council
- ▶ Make recommendations to the Council
 - ▶ Policy
 - ▶ General Plan Elements
 - ▶ Specific Plans and other specialized plans
 - ▶ Zoning Code
 - ▶ Implementation measures

Role of the Planning Commission

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- ▶ Project Approval (Quasi-Judicial Action)
 - ▶ Individual development project review
 - ▶ Site and Architectural Review
 - ▶ Conditional Use Permits
 - ▶ Other
- ▶ Assure Consistency with the General Plan
- ▶ Conduct Public Hearings

Planning Commissioner Traits

- ▶ Know your community
- ▶ You provide personal expertise
- ▶ An open mind to listen to new ideas
- ▶ An ability to see the strengths and weaknesses of proposals
- ▶ Critical thinking skills leading toward finding solutions when working with others
- ▶ Willingness to spend the time required to study materials and attend regularly
- ▶ Commitment to making the process fair to all
- ▶ Faith in the future and the ability of the community to shape that future
- ▶ Articulate reasons for your decisions

How a Commissioner deals with the information received:

- ▶ Read the staff report
- ▶ Read the environmental documentation
- ▶ Read the mitigation monitoring program
- ▶ View project site on-line
- ▶ Visit the site
- ▶ Read the comments
- ▶ Research prior projects
- ▶ Understand the findings
- ▶ Have meetings (as appropriate)
 - ▶ Staff
 - ▶ Applicant
 - ▶ Stakeholders
 - ▶ Community
- ▶ Listen attentively at meetings

Questions a Commissioner Asks

- ▶ Is the proposal in compliance and consistent with the General Plan?
- ▶ Is the proposal in compliance with the Code?
- ▶ Does the environmental documentation disclose the impacts?
- ▶ Is the analysis objective, thorough and correct?
- ▶ Do the Mitigation Measures work?
- ▶ Are there Mitigation Measures that work better?
- ▶ Are the Mitigation Measures flexible enough to adjust to changing conditions?
- ▶ How will the Mitigation Measures be enforced?
- ▶ What is best for the community?

A Commissioner's Perspective

- ▶ You have local knowledge
- ▶ You have knowledge of prior decisions
 - ▶ Make consistent decisions
 - ▶ Use approaches that work
- ▶ Identify when a policy or approach needs to change
 - ▶ Changes in technology, economics, politics, culture
- ▶ Have confidence in your decision

Working with Staff

- ▶ Resource of knowledge (technical, policy, process, history)
- ▶ Resource to identify solutions
- ▶ Resource to understand options and consequences
- ▶ Alert staff of changes and concerns ahead of time
- ▶ Make requests to staff to include information in staff report & presentation
- ▶ Request staff to consider modifications to the General Plan & Code when appropriate
- ▶ Provide staff with clear and concise requests and direction

Working with the Community

- ▶ Resource of knowledge
 - ▶ Undocumented local knowledge and history
 - ▶ Ideas for practical implementation
 - ▶ Understanding of the practical issues
- ▶ Commissioners are educators
 - ▶ On how the process works
 - ▶ On how to comment effectively
 - ▶ On what points are important in the decision process
- ▶ Information gathering
 - ▶ Listen and observe to identify the real issues
 - ▶ Explore options that work

Commissioner Working with

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- ▶ Commissioners
 - ▶ Resource for past decisions
 - ▶ Resource for the history of policy direction
 - ▶ Test ideas while mindful of the Brown Act

- ▶ Elected Officials (Council Member, Board Member, Supervisor)
 - ▶ Understand their policy and what are the drivers to their decisions
 - ▶ Discuss ideas and options that will work in the community
 - ▶ Communicate on how decisions were made on major issues
 - ▶ Have staff keep you apprised on the decisions by Council

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