



## Planning Commission Staff Report

---

To: Planning Commission  
From: Greg Smith, Associate Planner  
Date: April 6, 2011(Continued from March 23, 2011)  
Subject: Comprehensive General Plan Update and Environmental Impact Report:  
Second Hearing

---

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Discuss and comment on the Draft General Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report, take public testimony, and continue the hearing to April 27, 2011.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Application Type: General Plan Amendment (GPA-2009-2841)

Applicant: City of Murrieta

Location: The City of Murrieta is located in southeastern Riverside County, and is comprised of 26,852 acres (41.96 square miles) of which 21,511 acres (33.61 square miles) is located within the City Limits and 5,341 acres (8.34 square miles) is located within the City's Sphere of Influence. Surrounding cities include Menifee to the north, Temecula to the south and east, Wildomar to the west, and unincorporated Riverside County to the north, south, and east.

Description: The General Plan 2035 is a comprehensive update of the 1994 General Plan, which includes an update of existing elements, as well as the addition of two elements. The General Plan 2035 comprises the following State mandated and optional elements: Land Use; Economic Development; Circulation; Healthy Community; Conservation; Recreation and Open Space; Air Quality; Noise; and Safety. The Housing Element is being updated in a separate process. In addition, a Climate Action Plan (CAP) is being prepared. The CAP is an implementing action of the General Plan 2035 that describes measures intended to reduce greenhouse emissions within City operations and the community at-large.

## **BACKGROUND**

The first Planning Commission hearing on March 9, 2011 focused on providing the background for how the General Plan update has reached this point and a general overview of the draft documents. The second hearing on March 23, 2011 discussed the Circulation, Safety, Infrastructure and Conservation Elements. In addition, the structure and content of the Environmental Impact Report was also reviewed. The Planning Commission continued the hearing on the draft General Plan 2035 and the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) to April 6, 2011. The last Planning Commission hearing, which is scheduled for April 27, 2011, is intended to wrap-up the discussion by the Planning Commission. The Commission will need to make recommendations to the City Council, based on the information presented by staff and the public testimony from the hearings.

## **ANALYSIS**

This third Planning Commission hearing will focus on the remaining General Plan Elements:

- Economic Development
- Air Quality
- Healthy Community
- Recreation and Open Space
- Noise

In addition, the discussion will include the French Valley Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan and Climate Action Plan (CAP). The CAP, which is an implementation tool, is included in the appendix. The CAP was written to comply with Assembly Bill 32 and other legislation that was recently passed, which requires a reduction of greenhouse gases.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT**

Economic development has been identified by City leaders as the key priority of the City and the focus for the General Plan 2035. The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to identify current economic development conditions and to demonstrate how the General Plan will promote business activity and employment growth within the City; consistent with the priorities identified by City leaders and the community. The Economic Development Element establishes goals and policies to promote fiscal stability, expand the City's employment base, and enhance the City's revenues in order to provide quality services to the community. These goals and policies provide for the implementation of the vision of Murrieta as a regional economic job center and premier commercial hub. The Economic Trends and Conditions Background Report (January 2010) and Retail Market and Fiscal Impact Analyses (January 2011) prepared by Stanley R. Hoffman Associates serve as the basis for direction in this Element and can be found in the Appendices for General Plan 2035 and the DEIR.

The Economic Development Element is not a mandatory element required by State Planning Law. However, a General Plan may also include other topics of local interest, as chosen by the local jurisdiction. Murrieta has chosen to include an Economic Development Element to address the economic health of the City and to establish goals and policies that encourage economic growth while also maintaining and improving the quality of life in the community.

---

## HEALTHY COMMUNITY ELEMENT

The purpose of this Healthy Community Element is to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of Murrieta's residents, workers, and visitors. It highlights the connections between health and the physical, social, and economic environment, and provides an overarching strategy for achieving and maintaining a healthy community. The Element begins by describing the legal and logical basis for creating a Healthy Community Element; is followed by key health conditions and determinants in Murrieta; and continues with the Vision and Key Concepts for health in Murrieta. The centerpiece of the Element is a set of explicit goals and policies to promote a healthy community. The goals and policies – as well as the summary of key health conditions and determinants – are organized according to the following key topics:

- Citywide Health
- Land Use and Urban Design for Health
- Environmental Health
- Safe, Sustainable, and Active Transportation
- Public Spaces for Physical Activity and Social Cohesion
- Healthy Economy
- Healthy Goods and Services

Health and city planning have been closely connected for a very long time. The health crises created by rapid industrialization and urbanization during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were the impetus for much of modern planning and zoning. Faced with the rampant spread of diseases and with the health effects of locating industrial pollution sources in close proximity to high-density residential urban areas, city planners began requiring basic infrastructure to protect public health. The result was the Federal Zoning Enabling Act, which enabled modern zoning and is still the legal rationale for land use regulation and planning across the country.

Since the goal of the General Plan is to create a long-term vision for the City's physical form and character, it provides a fundamental opportunity to promote community health for the long-term. The Healthy Community Element is consistent with *Government Code* Section 65303, which authorizes local jurisdictions to adopt additional elements to those required by state law when they relate to the physical development of the jurisdiction.

## RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

Surrounded by natural beauty, with hills and creeks within its borders, Murrieta is well positioned to provide opportunities for recreation, outdoor activities, and enjoyment of nature. Parks, recreation facilities, and trails promote health, and community members value them highly. Recreation programs such as classes and events offer a variety of benefits including health, education, and social interaction. Besides promoting aesthetic values, open space management and conservation can provide habitat, contribute positively to air and water quality, and protect residents from hazards such as fires and floods.

The Recreation and Open Space Element provides the goals and policies, which are implemented through the Parks Master Plan. California *Government Code* Section 65560(b)(3) stipulates that the General Plan address:

*“...Open space for outdoor recreation, including but not limited to, areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lakeshores, beaches, and rivers and streams; and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open-space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors...”*

## **NOISE ELEMENT**

The Noise Element examines noise sources in the City to identify and assess the potential for noise conflicts and problems, and to identify ways to reduce existing and potential noise impacts. This Element addresses noise that affects the larger community, rather than noise associated with site-specific conditions. Existing and future noise from mobile and stationary sources are considered, as well as the compatibility of land uses and sensitive receptors. The Element identifies projected noise levels and contains goals and policies to maintain noise levels that are compatible with various types of land uses, as well as prevent high noise levels in sensitive areas. The regulatory framework, background information, and existing and future conditions can be found in the General Plan EIR.

Government Code Section 65302(f) requires that a General Plan include:

*“... a noise element which shall identify and appraise noise problems in the community. The Noise Element shall recognize the guidelines established by the Office of Noise Control in the State Department of Health Services and shall analyze and quantify...current and projected noise levels for all of the following sources: (1) highways and freeways; (2) primary arterials and major local streets; (3) passenger and freight on-line railroad operations and ground rapid transit systems; (4) commercial, general aviation, heliport, and military airport operations, aircraft overflights, jet engine test stands, and all other ground facilities and maintenance functions related to airport operation; (5) local industrial plants, including but not limited to, railroad classification yards; (6) other ground stationary noise sources identified by local agencies as contributing to the community noise environment.”*

## **AIR QUALITY ELEMENT**

Recognizing the importance of air quality associated with the public's health and welfare and that air quality is a regional issue that extends beyond the jurisdictional boundaries of a city, Murrieta has chosen to include Air Quality as an optional Element within its General Plan. The Air Quality Element is intended to establish policy direction and implementation measures that allow the South Coast Air Basin to attain Federal and State air quality standards, as well as to protect Murrieta residents and businesses from the harmful effects of poor air quality. The Element includes a number of policies to reduce current pollution emissions and to require new development to include measures to comply with air quality standards. This Element also contains provisions to address new air quality regulations and requirements. A Climate Action Plan (CAP), which addresses global climate change issues and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, was also prepared.

The City of Murrieta is located in the South Coast Air Basin (Basin), a 10,743-square mile area bounded by the Pacific Ocean to the west and the San Gabriel, San Bernardino, and San Jacinto

Mountains to the north and east. Regulatory oversight for air quality in the Basin rests with South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) at the regional level, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) at the State level and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) at the Federal level. The SCAQMD monitors air quality at 37 monitoring stations throughout the Basin. Each monitoring station is located within a Source Receptor Area (SRA). The communities within an SRA are expected to have similar climatology and ambient air pollutant concentrations. The City of Murrieta is located in SRA 26 (Temecula Valley).

Although Air Quality is not a required element, California *Government Code* Section 65303 authorizes cities and counties to adopt “any other elements or address any other subjects, which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county or city.” Once adopted, an optional element carries the same legal weight as any of the seven mandatory elements and must be consistent with all other elements. *Government Code* Section 65302(d), which provides the statutory requirements for the Conservation Element, also serves as the applicable *Government Code* section for the Air Quality Element. Further guidance is provided in the Office of Planning and Research’s 2003 *General Plan Guidelines* regarding the assessment of air quality impacts in General Plans.

## **CLIMATE ACTION PLAN**

The City of Murrieta, as part of the proposed General Plan 2035, has prepared a Climate Action Plan (CAP). The purpose of the CAP is to address the main sources of emissions that contribute to global climate change. The CAP consists of the following:

- A city-wide existing GHG emissions inventory;
- Quantification of General Plan horizon year emissions;
- Development of measures aimed at reducing GHG emissions generated within the City;
- Development of thresholds of significance and a methodology for CEQA review of GHG and climate change impacts for subsequent projects within the City;
- A mechanism for monitoring and reporting of the GHG compliance program; and
- An implementation plan for future action.

As part of the CAP, the City has joined the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)-Local Governments for Sustainability. ICLEI is an association of over 1,100 local governments from 67 countries who are committed to sustainable development. ICLEI provides technical consulting, training, and information services to build capacity, share knowledge, and support local governments in the implementation of sustainable development at the local level. Future GHG analyses for projects proposed in the City will be tiered off of the CAP.

Policies addressing GHG emission are included in many of the General Plan Elements including Air Quality, Land Use and the Healthy Community Element. The regulatory framework for the reduction of GHG emissions is outlined in Section 5.6 of the DEIR.

## **AIRPORT LAND USE**

The General Plan discusses Airport land use under regional issues in the Land Use Element. Per the California State Aeronautics Act (*Public Utility Code* Sections 21670 et. seq.), the Riverside County



Airport Land Use Commission (RCALUC) has two primary functions: 1) prepare and adopt and airport land use compatibility plan, and 2) review the plans, regulations, and other actions of local agencies and airport operations with the land use compatibility plan.

Section 5.1, the Land Use Section of the Environmental Impact Report discusses the history of the most recent Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans.

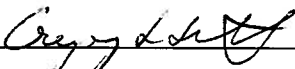


**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION**

The City of Murrieta is the Lead Agency under *CEQA* and is responsible for preparing the Program EIR for the Murrieta General Plan 2035 (State Clearinghouse No. 20100111084). This Program EIR has been prepared in conformance with *CEQA* (*California Public Resources Code* [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.); *CEQA Guidelines* (*California Code of Regulations* [CCR], Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.); and the rules, regulations, and procedures for implementation of *CEQA*, as adopted by the City of Murrieta. The principal *CEQA Guidelines* sections governing content of this document are Sections 15120 through 15132 (Contents of Environmental Impact Reports), and Section 15168 (Program EIR).

A Notice of Availability (NOA)/Notice of Completion (NOC) were issued on February 7, 2011, and the 45-day review period ended on March 24, 2011. The comments and responses to those comments received during the 45-day review period will be incorporated into the document for the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR).

**NOTICING**

The project was noticed in accordance with Section 16.76 of the Development Code with a display notice in *The Californian* newspaper for a minimum of 10 days prior to the hearing, and the posting of notices at City Hall as well as the main Fire Station. Notices were also mailed to property owners and the surrounding property owners for parcels included in the focus areas where land use changes are proposed.

<p>Prepared by:</p>  <hr/> <p>Greg Smith Associate Planner</p>	<p>Reviewed by:</p>  <hr/> <p>Cynthia Kinser City Planner</p>
<p>Approved by:</p>  <hr/> <p>Mary E. Lanier Community Development Director</p>	



**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Draft General Plan (previously transmitted)
2. Draft Environmental Impact Report (previously transmitted)