

Oxnard - 2000

The General Plan for The City Of Oxnard, California

GRUEN ASSOCIATES

THE GENERAL PLAN A CONCEPT FOR CHANGE

That change will occur in Oxnard is not disputed; already the forces which cause change are apparent. The question is not whether it will occur, but what the quantities and qualities of the pressure for change will be and how the City should respond – if at all – to those pressures.

The possibilities for change in the Oxnard area were measured statistically in an economic base study; the physical factors which will influence the quantity and quality of change were also identified.

This Plan is based on the conviction that Oxnard citizens do have the responsibility to respond to the pressures for change – a response of accommodation rather than restriction, of aggressive promotion rather than passive acceptance. Most important, the Plan stresses capitalization on the opportunity to build a truly great City.

Such a City will provide systems for its own house-keeping needs, communications, protection and other services typical in urban areas. Although relatively little policy guidance is needed to assure the provision of these services, it is necessary to assure their efficiency and coordination. Hence, the Plan identifies the leverage – the proper timing and location planning – to be gained by carefully relating various parts of the system.

As an example of leverage, the community may be in need of a new library. The provision of the library is a service which the community renders itself, but if the library were built in a marginal or deteriorated area, it could be the leverage or catalyst for upgrading and reinvestment in the area. To a great extent, this philosophy has been used as a basis for deciding many of the land use locations expressed by the Plan.

The following policies are essential to the development of the Oxnard area to its full urban potential:

1. **Compaction** – a concentration of public and private investment near the center of the City to create and stimulate interaction between various activities (shopping, employment, recreation, etc.).
2. **Reinvestment** – continual replacement of facilities in areas where economic viability or usefulness has decreased due to age and deterioration.

It is important to note that these policies do not typify areas of **urban sprawl**. Because sprawl results in loss of open space, inefficiency of public services, and monotonous use, the Plan encourages **concentration** and **reinvestment**.

There are also other subtle, but equally important factors which should be avoided, since they encourage urban sprawl:

1. The creation of many small and usually poor municipalities, each duplicating the next.
2. The loss of opportunity to build facilities which rely on unified support of many persons, such as a music center, a zoo, a community college or a sports arena.
3. The lack of housing variety which forces people who change living habits to move out of the area.
4. Transiency – the loss of opportunity to build a concerned citizenry whose support is essential to the creation of a responsive community.

Oxnard's General Plan not only designates various types and locations of land use, it also specifies the time sequence for making such changes, including when replacements of inefficient uses should be constructed. In addition, the Plan sets forth the technical, legal and financial programs which can be used to assure the feasibility and timing of the proposed changes.

THE METROPOLITAN CHARACTER SUGGESTED FOR OXNARD'S GROWTH

Oxnard can become another suburban area looking much like all other suburban areas – or it can become a vital metropolitan center serving the entire County. The Plan recommends that the City take the following action to promote growth as a metropolitan center:

1. Concentrate the public and private investments already important in the Central Area, including major shopping, office, employment, and civic/governmental facilities, as well as cultural, sports, education and convention centers.
2. Crystalize the role of the Ventura County Airport as a general aviation airport and promote the construction of a regional airport near Point Mugu.
3. Encourage construction of the West Bypass Freeway as close to the urban center as possible.
4. Program expansion of high density residential development in the urban center near the employment concentration and transportation network.
5. Develop a heavy industrial complex south of Hueneme Road; a light industrial area near the Central Area; and with limited industry at the Ventura County Airport, near the Oxnard Air Force Base, south of the Central Industrial Area and in the Del Norte Area.
6. Annex that portion of the study area where city services can be provided.
7. Construct an open space and recreational system

using existing natural open areas and highly developed lineal corridors to tie together residential areas and urban activity centers.

8. Take advantage of the natural assets of the area particularly the seashore and the small craft harbor, including their relationship to the off-shore island, to maximize the potential for recreation including the convention and tourist oriented activities.

GOAL AND POLICIES

At the outset of the planning process, it became clear that the City of Oxnard had the opportunity to **become the major urban center of Ventura County. This is the singular goal of the entire General Plan updating program.** The form and content of the Plan are predicated on illustrating the space utilization demands, the circulation network, and the needed community facilities for good living and efficient servicing of a metropolitan city of over one-half million people. To implement the goal, the following policies constitute a checklist, or a broad outline upon which the details of the Plan are oriented.

POLICY 1

The City of Oxnard should seek to accommodate and encourage quality growth projected for the study area:

By adopting those quality controls which will:

- Assure an adequate quality of new construction,
- Encourage reinvestment in marginal areas,
- Protect existing substantial investments;

By cooperative action with Ventura County, other cities and districts, and

By zoning in close coordination with economic demand.

POLICY 2

The City should encourage private industrial development to play the major role in the orderly growth of the area; City government should also be prepared to play a strong role in the development process:

By aggressive City support of:

- Economic development associations,
- Residential activity,
- Housing construction,
- Promotional planning/development services,
- Central Area investment programs,
- Major airport and harbor construction.

POLICY 3

The City should encourage balanced and diversified development:

By encouraging the widest variety of investment in Oxnard;

By a planned investment attraction program intended to diversify:

- Employment types,
- Residential accommodations,
- Tourist/recreation activities;

By allocating zoning categories designed to encourage variety.

POLICY 4

The City should seek in every way to stabilize and improve on its existing assets:

By a major commitment to expand and intensify the existing central area to accommodate the widest variety of urban activities and employment opportunities:

- Commercial facilities,
- Offices,
- Community facilities:
 - Governmental,
 - Educational,
 - Cultural,
- Residential redevelopment,
- Light industry
- Parking
- Circulation and transportation, including airport, and harbor;

By an aggressive effort to investigate the retention of agriculture — with property owners (State legislation);

By phased uses (petroleum/residential, etc.);

By aggressive action to capitalize on airport, harbor and freeway links with other urban areas;

By conservation and rehabilitation programs in appropriate residential areas.

POLICY 5

The City should seek opportunities to offer a better physical and economic environment:

By implementing aggressive community design programs:

- Optimum shopping distribution
- Diversified industrial/employment locations for minimum commuting, maximum street efficiency.
- Residential design for maximum privacy;

By encouraging the creation of the widest variety of employment opportunities in Oxnard;

By researching new environmental trends and demands so that the City is leading, rather than following or obstructing change;

By expanding recreational opportunities;

By eliminating visual blight and encouraging beautification;

By working with property owners on design/development of inefficient parcels.



The preparation of this report was financially aided through a federal grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, under the Urban Planning Assistance Program authorized by Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954, as amended.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Plan proposes three general types of industrial classifications:

Limited Industry will provide industrial parks with high performance standards and attractive appearance to assure environmental quality and permit locations of these uses abutting a variety of non-industrial land uses.

Light Industry will include a wide range of industrial types and a variety of development standards which will not produce any obnoxious effects.

Heavy Industry will be for those types of industry requiring a protected environment and locations to alleviate possible undesirable impact on abutting land uses. This industrial area is expected to feature low employee densities of highly automated industrial processes with heavy orientation to rail and with the possibility of connection by pipeline to the Port Hueneme Harbor.

An interim industrial designation is shown on the Santa Clara River for sand and gravel related activities to be replaced eventually by recreational uses.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Public land for major parks and open space is defined on the General Plan, and detailed text explanations of their specific functions are included in the technical report. Shown on the Plan are:

1. Santa Clara Bay, a suggested water-oriented recreational/residential area in the northwest part of the study area.
2. Santa Clara River Park.
3. Petit Park
4. Beardsley Park
5. Airport Park
6. Seashore recreation areas

In addition, the Parks and Recreation element of the Plan outlines a "linear" system of pedestrian-oriented open space which can be built in small increments, connecting various activity areas and providing more open space in residential neighborhoods.

A possible extension corridor for the inland waterway is indicated on the Land Use Plan by a dashed line paralleling the coast.

FREEWAYS

Most of the freeways shown on the General Plan are set forth generally on the California freeway master plan. However, the Plan makes two significant proposals:

1. The alignment of the proposed West Bypass Freeway is shown just south of and parallel to Wooley Road. This location would provide maximum service and exposure to the Central Area and the airport. Other alignment options under study by the State, however, are more remote from the urban activity areas and, in some cases, would seriously damage existing residential neighborhoods.
2. Hueneme Road should be extended westerly from Wood Road area as a high caliber expressway. This will be the most important route from the deep-water harbor to major metropolitan and Southern California markets and shipping points. An early improvement of the north-south arterials on the General Plan will connect the Port and the Naval Reservation to the freeway system.

IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

A variety of implementation tools are available to the City of Oxnard, including zoning, subdivision requirements, and development controls.

An equally significant, but less apparent, implementation factor is the element of political jurisdiction. Oxnard has not incorporated the entire study area. The City of Port Hueneme occupies a portion of the area and there are several urbanized but unincorporated pockets which are now the political responsibility of Ventura County.

The Plan does not propose that Oxnard annex the unincorporated study area nor does it advise against it. The Plan is drawn so that all concerned will understand the depth of responsibility that must be assumed to assure adequate services in a good environment. The Plan is also drawn so that the City of Oxnard can measure the implications if it does choose a course of study area annexation.

The important point is that responsibilities should be clearly identified so that action is taken in an anticipatory manner. Existing corporate entities should combine forces if the scope of a particular responsibility goes beyond the boundaries of any one of them. Admirable communication exists between Ventura County and its cities, but cooperative action is needed immediately to capitalize on opportunities inherent in projects such as the deep-water harbor, the airports, resource conservation, agricultural preservation, regional recreation, regional sewerage and storm drainage and the development policies.

The task of the Plan is to identify the responsibilities. The task of the City of Oxnard is to select those areas in which it can take effective action to assume its role as the major Ventura County urban center.

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