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INTRODUCTION



A. WHAT IS A GENERAL PLAN?

A General Plan presents a vision for a community's future and the policies necessary to make that vision a reality. The plan guides future decisions on development, resource management, and public safety. It is the official adopted statement of how and where growth will be managed and how the defining qualities of the community will be protected and enhanced in the coming years. General plans also typically contain background information, maps, and diagrams. A key component of the plan is a map indicating the land uses and densities that will be permitted in different parts of the community in the future, including areas to be preserved as open space.

All California cities and counties are required by the State of California to have a General Plan (California Government Code Section 65300 et seq.). State law requires the General Plan to address seven specific topics (or "elements"), including Land Use, housing, circulation, safety, open space, conservation, and noise (Sections 65302 and 65303). General plans may include a variety of other elements, if so desired.

State law requires the General Plan to be long-range. Most communities use a 15 to 25 year

horizon, allowing the plan to be forward-thinking and providing enough time to achieve long-term objectives. Danville has used 2030 as the horizon year for this plan. The plan's goals express Danville's priorities for the next 17 years and outline the ways the Town will respond to change during that time. Since the future is inherently unpredictable, the plan may be amended or updated before the horizon year arrives.

B. THE PLAN'S VISION

The Danville 2030 General Plan seeks to preserve the fundamental qualities that make Danville an exceptional place today. These qualities include the Town's high-quality residential neighborhoods, its historic downtown, excellent schools and parks, convenient local shopping, attractive and well-maintained streets, wooded hillsides and scenic vistas, abundant open spaces, high level of public safety, and small town ambiance. Danville's 42,000 residents enjoy an outstanding quality of life today in large part due to a commitment to sustain these qualities since incorporation in 1982.

Preserving Danville's quality of life does not mean the Town will not change in the next 17 years. In fact, the 2005 General Plan (adopted in 1987) and the 2010 General Plan (adopted



Mt. Diablo vista from Tao House, Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site. Photo courtesy of Candice Rana.

in 1999) expressed the same overarching vision, while still accommodating carefully managed growth. Danville has changed a great deal since 1987, increasing its population by over 40 percent. Despite the addition of more than 3,600 new homes in the 1990s and slower growth that added just over 300 residents between 2000 and 2010, Danville has retained its reputation as being one of the Bay Area's most desirable communities. Danville still is—and in 17 years still will be—a great place to call home.

New challenges have emerged since the late 1990s when the last General Plan was updated. Cities and towns across California are being asked to grow more sustainably. The housing market has grown more volatile and unpredictable, at the same time the need for affordable housing continues to increase. Technology continues to reshape the way we live and work. A prolonged recession has strained the resources of state and local governments, and led to high unemployment and a sluggish local economy. Yet the Bay Area continues to grow—and issues such as traffic congestion, air and water quality, and urban sprawl continue to require our attention.

California's population is also being transformed. The three components of population change—

births, deaths, and migration—will result in major demographic shifts at the state and regional levels. The number of Californians over 65 will almost double in the next 20 years and the percentage of foreign-born residents will continue to rise. These changes will affect the demand for community services, as well as the demand for housing and land. Cities across the state must respond to change by planning ahead.

The 2030 General Plan balances the desire to retain Danville's small town character with the realities of life in the Bay Area and the state of California in the next 17 years. The General Plan anticipates approximately 1,050 new households in the Town of Danville between 2010 and 2030, or about 50 households a year. This is much lower than the 1990-2010 growth rate, but is still a substantial increase. The Plan also anticipates about 1,900 new jobs in Danville between 2010 and 2030, bringing the Town's total employment to almost 17,000.

Future development will need to be carefully managed to maintain and enhance the qualities that make Danville a special place. The objective is to make Downtown Danville a more vibrant center. New development will be accommodated on vacant and underutilized sites while respecting

and preserving the character of historic Old Town. Through design guidelines, zoning regulations, and other tools, the Town will ensure that new development is consistent with the ambiance of Danville today.

Sustainability is part of the Town’s vision for the coming decades. Sustainability is defined as the ability to meet the needs of current residents without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Sustainable methods include a shift toward “greener” building, including the use of recycled materials, solar energy, bay-friendly landscaping, and reclaimed water. Danville can also be a more sustainable place by preserving and expanding its tree canopy, managing stormwater runoff, encouraging energy conservation in existing structures, and supporting recycling. Chapter 6 of the General Plan provides more detail on sustainability policies and programs.



“The 2030 General Plan seeks to balance the desire to retain Danville’s small town character, in light of continued growth and change occurring in the Bay Area and state of California.”



HISTORY OF THE DANVILLE GENERAL PLAN

Prior to incorporation, land use decisions in Danville were governed by Contra Costa County. In 1977, the County Board of Supervisors adopted the San Ramon Valley Area Plan, which included parts of Danville, San Ramon, and Alamo. When Danville incorporated in 1982, relevant portions of the County Plan were adopted by the new Town Council.

In 1987, Danville adopted its first General Plan, intended to guide growth through 2005. A major update of this plan took place in the late 1990s and the horizon year was moved to 2010. On August 3, 1999, the Danville Town Council adopted the 2010 Plan. A major amendment to the Plan took place in 2000 when Danville voters approved Measure S. The 2010 Plan was also amended through the adoption of new Housing Elements in 2003 and 2009.

As the horizon year of the 2010 Plan approached, Town leaders initiated work on the 2030 Plan. This document is the product of that effort.



Sycamore Valley looking west. Photo courtesy of Karl Nielsen.

C. CONTENTS OF THE DANVILLE GENERAL PLAN

The 2030 Plan integrates technical studies, General Plan Amendments, implementing ordinances, and design guidelines prepared by the Town since the 2010 Plan was adopted. It maintains many of the goals and policies from the 2010 Plan. New goals and policies have been added in response to the issues of the past 13 years and the emerging challenges the Town will face in the decades ahead. The 2030 Plan also includes minor revisions to the Town's Land Use map. The new goals, policies, and Land Use map designations will not result in significant changes to the amount or rate of development in Danville.

While the General Plan elements mandated by the state are incorporated into the 2030 Plan, the Plan is not organized into traditional "elements" as defined by state law. Rather, it is organized into four major policy areas: Planning and Development, Mobility, Public Facilities, and Resources and Hazards. The Planning and Development Chapter includes the Town's Growth Management Element, a mandated element for Contra Costa County jurisdictions in light of obligations established by the voter approved Measure J (2005).

The core of the General Plan consists of goals and policies associated with each major topic. Each policy is accompanied by a bulleted list of implementation strategies. The goals and policies are preceded by related background information and forecasts. They are followed by further information on the implementation strategies, including the specific actions to be taken after the General Plan is adopted.

Danville has also adopted a Housing Element as part of its General Plan, consistent with Government Code Section 65580, et seq. The Element was adopted by the Town in December, 2009 and was certified by the State Department of Housing and Community Development in 2010. It provides policy and program direction through 2014. Due to its length and technical nature, which is mandated by state law, the Housing Element stands on its own as a separate document. The Danville Housing Element is incorporated into the 2030 Plan by reference and is scheduled to be updated again in 2014. The goals and policies in the Housing Element are fully consistent with those in this volume of the General Plan, and vice versa.

Figure 1 indicates where the mandated General Plan elements are addressed in the 2030 Plan.



Museum of the San Ramon Valley. Photo courtesy of Paige Green.

FIGURE 1
STATE-MANDATED AND PERMITTED GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS
TOWN OF DANVILLE

GENERAL PLAN ELEMENT	GENERAL PLAN CHAPTER AND PAGE NUMBERS			
MANDATED ELEMENTS	PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	MOBILITY	PUBLIC FACILITIES	RESOURCES AND HAZARDS
LAND USE	3 (3-1 to 3-63)			
HOUSING ⁽¹⁾				
CIRCULATION		4 (4-1 to 4-48)		
SAFETY				6 (6-13 to 6-37)
OPEN SPACE			5 (5-7 to 5-25)	
CONSERVATION				6 (6-1 to 6-12)
NOISE				6 (19 to 25, 32-34)
GROWTH MANAGEMENT ⁽²⁾	3 (3-64 to 3-73)			
OPTIONAL ELEMENTS				
COMMUNITY DESIGN	3 (3-19, 3-26 to 3-27)			
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	3 (3-80 to 3-87)			
HISTORIC PRESERVATION	3 (3-74 to 3-79)			
PUBLIC FACILITIES			5 (5-1 to 5-42)	
RECREATION			5 (5-7 to 5-25)	
SUSTAINABILITY & GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION				6 (6-38 to 6-53)

Footnotes: (1) The Danville 2007-2014 Housing Element is incorporated by reference and is available as a separate document.

(2) Mandated by Contra Costa County Measure J (2005) - the Contra Costa Transportation Improvement and Growth Management Program.

Sources: Town of Danville, 2012.

D. DEVELOPMENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN

Danville’s 2030 General Plan was developed through a cooperative effort among citizens, the Town Council, the Planning Commission, the Parks and Leisure Services Commission, the Heritage Resource Commission, the Arts Commission, Town staff and consultants, and representatives of other government agencies.

Early in the General Plan Update process, stakeholders chose to retain the basic direction provided by the Town’s original General Plan. This direction was initially articulated in the mid-1980s by a 17-member General Plan Task Force utilized for the formation of the 2005 Plan.

The Town Council and Planning Commission conducted study sessions during the first half of 2010 to review a “factual update” of the existing Plan. The factual update moved the planning period forward from 1998-2010 to 2013-2030, and made technical corrections and edits to the document first drafted in 1998-99. The study sessions continued into Winter 2010-11 and Spring 2011, shifting the focus to the Land Use map and the development of new policies in response to emerging issues. Through this process, the Town solicited community input on Danville’s future as well as focused review of “Opportunity Sites” and “Special Concern Areas.” A limited number of Land Use map changes and a variety of new policies and implementation programs were developed.

A Draft General Plan and the associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR) required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) were circulated for public review during October, 2012. Public hearings on the Draft General Plan and the Plan EIR were conducted from November, 2012 through March, 2013.

E. USING THE DANVILLE GENERAL PLAN

The Danville 2030 General Plan reflects the vision and goals of Danville’s residents and their elected and appointed representatives. The Plan will be used by the Town Council, the Planning Commission, and other Town Commissions in

considering land use and development related decisions. Town staff will use the Plan on a day-to-day basis in administering and regulating land use and development activity. Citizens can use the Plan to understand Danville’s approach to regulating development and protecting resources and community values.

Policy Framework

The 2030 Danville General Plan uses a “vocabulary” of planning terms common to most long-range planning documents. These terms are defined below:

- **Goals** are broad statements of direction leading to a desired end state or vision. Because goals are general in nature they tend to have broad community support, and are typically not controversial.
- **Policies** are more precise expressions regarding how a particular goal will be interpreted and/or implemented. Policies guide the day to day decisions of staff, elected officials, commissioners, and others with decision-making authority.
- **Standards** are policy statements that include a specific, quantified measure of performance.
- **Objectives** are policy statements where very specific results, dates, or products are included.

Some of the goals and policies in the General Plan are followed by text in italicized font. This text is not part of the policy, but is included to provide context, clarify the policy’s intent, and/ or explain how the policy should be applied.

A General Plan must balance the views of many constituents and cover thousands of properties. For example, the Town seeks to preserve its small town character at the same time it must meet the housing production targets set by state and regional agencies. One goal suggests preserving things “as is” while the other implies growth and development. Policies in the Danville 2030 Plan have been carefully worded to indicate the degree of discretion that may be used as each policy is applied. In some cases, policies must be interpreted quite literally; other policies are

more subjective. One of the important roles of the Planning Commission and Town Council is to reconcile competing objectives as the General Plan is used.

Policies typically begin with an action-oriented verb expressing a directive for future decisions. The verb indicates whether a policy is mandatory or advisory. For example, policies beginning with “require,” “ensure,” “protect,” “mandate,” and similar verbs indicate binding directives. The use of “shall” or “will” in a sentence likewise indicates a binding directive. Conformity with such policies is necessary for proposals or actions to be determined consistent with the General Plan. On the other hand, policies beginning with “encourage,” “support,” “avoid,” and similar verbs indicate more aspirational directives.

Maps and Diagrams

Maps and diagrams are graphic expressions of policy, typically showing geographic base data and thematic information. The General Plan contains the following three maps that are policy expressions:

- Land Use map
- Circulation Map
- Open Space, Parks and Recreation Map

The Land Use map is the major graphic expression of goals and policies contained in the Danville General Plan. It shows the geographic extent of each land use category. The land use categories are a set of official definitions for the land use types and intensities found in Danville. Each category defines the specific uses permitted, the intensity of the use, and other policy considerations.

The boundaries of land use designations on the Land Use map are based on a variety of factors, including existing land use patterns, and natural and man-made features. While the boundaries typically appear to coincide with property lines, the land use designations are not meant to be precise, legal boundaries. By definition, Land Use map boundaries are subject to interpretation based on area specific conditions and uses.

The Danville Zoning Ordinance, which

implements the Land Use map, provides precise legal boundaries of zoning districts consistent with the underlying land use designations. At times, when referring to or interpreting the Land Use map, it may be necessary to review the more detailed maps upon which a given boundary is based.

Figure 2 shows the geographic area covered by the General Plan. This is referred to as the “Planning Area.” It includes all land within the Town limits, adjacent land within the Danville sphere of influence, and unincorporated land beyond the sphere of influence where land use decisions could potentially impact Danville. The Map indicates a proposed expansion of the Town’s existing sphere of influence to include a number of already-developed properties on the east side of Danville, and a proposed contraction of the sphere to eliminate a permanent open space area on the west side.

Monitoring and Implementation

The goals and policies contained in the General Plan are directly associated with specific implementation measures. These implementation measures include existing Town ordinances and operating procedures, as well as recommended amendments to existing ordinances and procedures, and recommendations for entirely new measures. An overall implementation strategy for the goals and policies in each policy area is provided in each Chapter, citing both existing and recommended measures.

Implementation measures related to specific policies include a variety of monitoring efforts. This monitoring activity will help the Town measure the success of the General Plan and its implementation. An Annual General Plan Progress Report, as required by Government Code Section 65400 (b), will be prepared by the Town indicating its progress towards achieving its General Plan goals and policies.

Revision of the General Plan

A General Plan should not attempt to create a static end state for a community. Rather, it should focus upon a specific time horizon, and, during the period prior to this time horizon, be

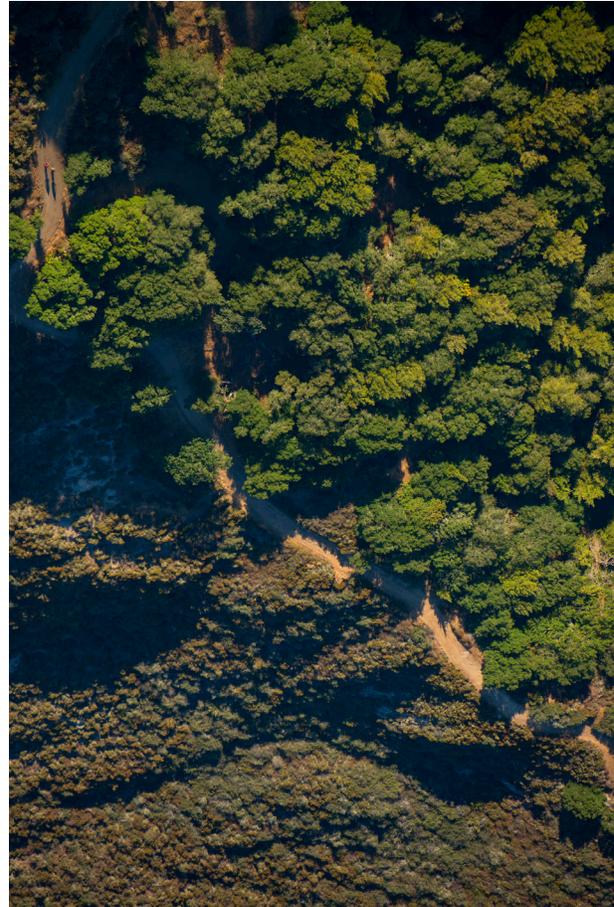
capable of responding to the changing needs of the community.

The Danville 2030 General Plan establishes goals, policies, and an implementation program which must be followed over time. As noted earlier, the Plan utilizes a 17-year planning horizon, selected because of its correspondence with available forecasts and projections used in formulating the Plan. To make the Plan responsive to changes that occur over the next 17 years, amendments in accordance with state law may be made before the planning horizon.

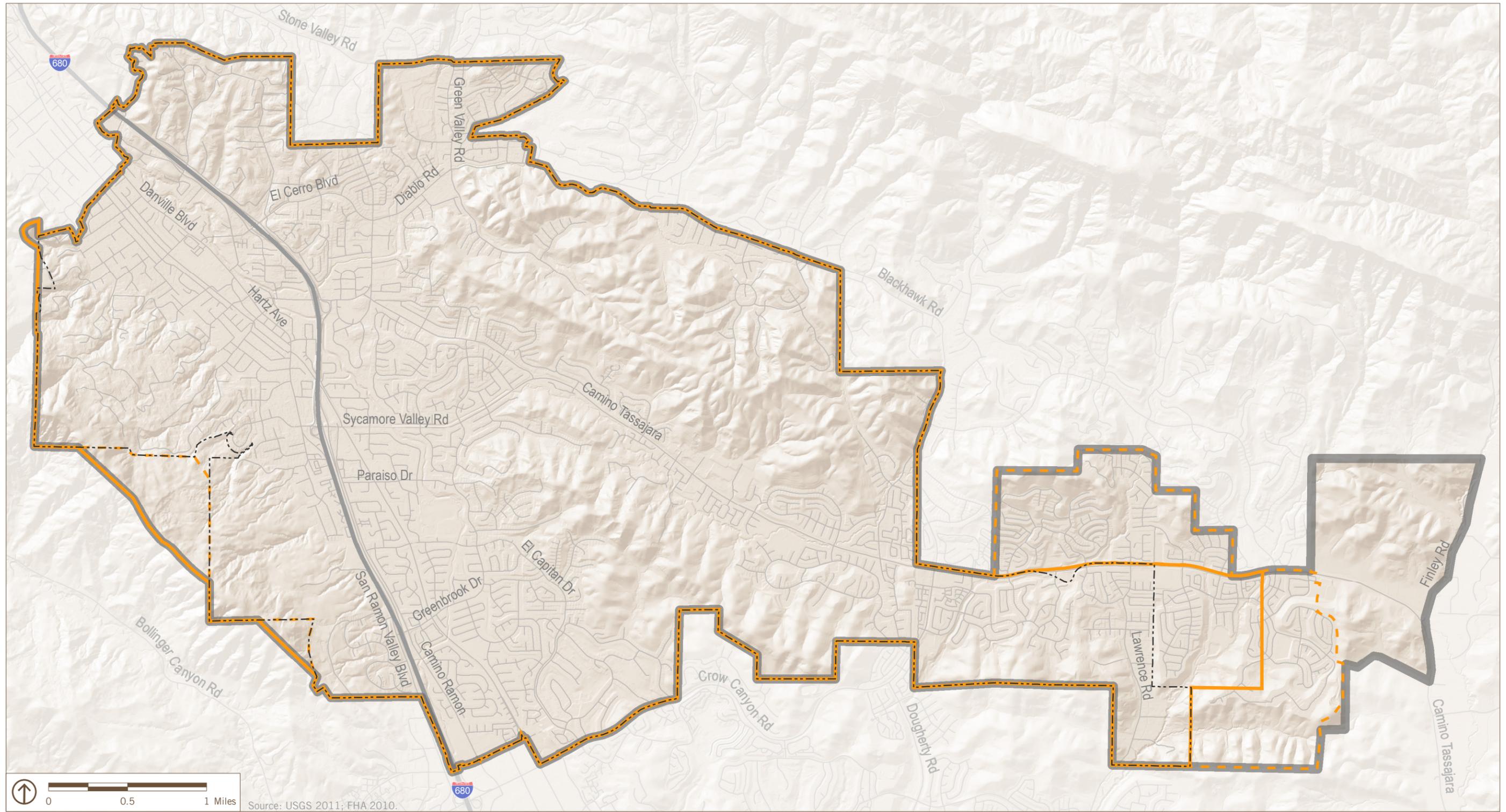
General Plan amendments can be initiated by the Town or by private individuals. State law (Government Code Section 65358 (a)) limits the number of times amendments can be made to four times a year. Amendments may be major revisions, additions, or small adjustments to the Land Use map, to other policy maps, or to the text of the Plan. Amendments may be grouped together for simultaneous action so a change in the land use designation of multiple sites may be made at the same time and still constitute just one of the four General Plan amendments allowed in one year.

Complete updates of the General Plan are not required on a state-established schedule; however, review of the Housing Element is required according to a cycle established by the state. The next cycle begins in 2014 and extends to 2022. If it is deemed necessary, a review of the entire General Plan can be initiated at any time prior to the full horizon period elapsing. Such review would allow the Town to amend the Plan to meet unforeseen changes in internal or external conditions, to utilize better information as it becomes available, and to respond to changes in community values.

When considering amendments and revisions, the Town recognizes that the General Plan is a policy document for the entire community and that it may only be amended “in the public interest” (Government Code Section 65358). Additionally, map amendments must be found consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan, and will be subject to environmental review as required by the California Environmental Quality Act.



Las Trampas Regional Wilderness. Photo courtesy of Karl Nielsen.



- Danville Town Limits
- Existing Sphere of Influence (SOI) per 2010 General Plan
- Planning Area Boundary
- Proposed SOI Expansion/Contraction per 2030 General Plan

FIGURE 2
DANVILLE 2030 PLANNING AREA

F. LINKS TO OTHER LOCAL PLANNING EFFORTS

The Danville 2030 General Plan reflects planning activity conducted by Danville over the last decade, including special planning studies, General Plan amendments, adoption of ordinances, and preparation of design guidelines.

There are 11 areas that are identified as Special Concern Areas. The Special Concern Areas are listed to the right. They are unique for a variety of reasons and are the focus of special planning considerations in the 2030 Plan. Special Concern Areas are discussed on the pages list at right.

Because of the special nature of these areas, more detailed planning analysis has been undertaken as part of the Plan’s update or will be necessary when subsequent planning entitlements are submitted for consideration. This may result in site-specific land use designations and/or site-specific development policies. The planning reviews that have been prepared for these sites are incorporated by reference and are intended to augment and clarify the General Plan.

G. CONSISTENCY WITH IMPLEMENTING ORDINANCES AND PROCEDURES

State law provides cities with a variety of techniques for implementing General Plans. The implementation strategies and programs included in this document encompass many of these techniques. State law requires that implementation techniques be consistent with the General Plan. The relationship between these techniques and the General Plan is discussed below.

Zoning Ordinance

The zoning ordinance and zoning map are parcel specific statements of how land may be used, and the specific conditions of use that the Town will impose, consistent with the overall policy framework of the General Plan and the Land Use map. As such, zoning should not be confused with the General Plan or the Land Use map. The latter are not parcel specific and therefore may not show

detailed land use distinctions, nor in all cases, reflect existing use of the land.

Government Code Section 65860 requires that the zoning ordinance be consistent with the General Plan. Consistency means that the various land uses authorized by the zoning ordinance, and the distribution of these uses, must serve to implement the goals and policies of the General Plan. Specific zoning districts must correspond with Land Use map designations and the geographic extent of these designations on the Land Use map, even if they vary from actual existing conditions.

Special Concern Area	Page
Diablo/Green Valley/Stone Valley Corridor	3-51
Magee Ranch	3-51
Historic Wood Family Ranch Headquarters	3-52
Tassajara Lane/Sherburne Hills Road	3-53
Elworthy East/Bolero	3-54
Elworthy West/Podva	3-55
Borel Property	3-57
Fostoria East	3-58
Upper Tassajara Valley	3-58
Downtown Danville(*)	3-59
GMMR LLC/ West El Pintado	3-63

(*) includes North Hartz, Diablo Gateway, and San Ramon Valley Boulevard Gateway subareas.

Subdivision Ordinance

Government Code Section 66410 et seq. requires that local jurisdictions regulate and control subdivision activity through adoption and use of a subdivision ordinance. Section 66473.5 requires that local governments approve a proposed subdivision map only after determining that the subdivision, including its design and proposed land uses, are consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan. The subdivision consistency requirement applies to all subdivisions for which parcel maps are filed, including tentative and final maps.

Section 66474 specifically requires that a jurisdiction shall deny approval of tentative and final maps if it finds that the proposed map,



Tassajara Ranch Drive median construction

its design, or the proposed improvements are inconsistent with the General Plan.

Capital Improvement Program

The California Government Code requires that local governments obtain lists of all public works projects recommended for study, design, or construction during each ensuing year from municipal officials and departments, and from special districts operating within their corporate limits. The list of public works projects must be organized into a coordinated capital improvement program. The program and its component projects must be reviewed by the jurisdiction to assure that any projects deemed inconsistent with the General Plan are either deleted or modified to conform to the General Plan.

Environmental Review Process

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (California Administrative Code Section 14100 et seq.) contains several references to the relationship between environmental review and General

Plans. Section 15080 of CEQA requires that the environmental review process be combined with the existing planning, review, and project approval process used by the jurisdiction. Section 15125(b) requires environmental review to discuss any inconsistencies between a proposed project and the General Plan. Projects may be found to have a significant adverse effect on the environment if they conflict with adopted environmental plans and goals of the community set forth in the General Plan.

A discussion of the environmental review process for the Danville 2030 General Plan is contained in the next section of this Chapter.

Former Redevelopment Project Area

In 1986, the Town of Danville established a Redevelopment Project Area for the Downtown Area and prepared a Downtown Redevelopment Plan. The Plan discussed streets, buildings, and open space, contained a description of the major public facilities planned, and explained how these facilities would be financed. In 2011-

12, the Governor’s Office dissolved California’s redevelopment agencies. New mechanisms will be needed to finance capital improvements and carry out the objectives expressed in the Redevelopment Plan.

Other Consistency Requirements

State housing law (Health and Safety Code Sections 17910 et seq.) requires that local jurisdictions adopt regulations imposing substantially the same standards as those contained in the various uniform industry codes (e.g., for building, plumbing, etc.). State law also imposes special standards which may be more stringent than the uniform industry codes to protect against certain types of hazards (e.g., fire, noise, earthquakes, unstable soils, etc.) and to conserve energy and achieve other resource management goals. Danville may adopt regulations and standards that vary from those mandated by state law, if justified by local conditions. If Town-specific regulations and standards are appropriate, the General Plan can serve as the vehicle for documenting local conditions that specify regulatory responses beyond those mandated by state law.

H. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Adoption of a General Plan, a General Plan element, or a General Plan amendment constitutes a “project” under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). If any aspect of the General Plan or amendment, either individually or cumulatively, leads to a significant effect on the environment, the community must prepare an Environmental Impact Report (Title 14, California Administrative Code, Section 15080). If impacts are potentially significant but can be mitigated

to less than significant levels by modifying the project, then a Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Significance may be prepared (California Administrative Code, Section 15070). The public has the opportunity to review and comment on the environmental document.

In accordance with these requirements, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the 2030 Plan Update. The EIR explored the impacts of changes to Land Use map designations as well as the impacts of new and edited plan policies. Potential impacts were assessed not only in the context of the Town of Danville, but also in a regional context which considered the cumulative impacts of development in the East Bay over the next 17 years. Specific mitigation measures were identified through the environmental evaluation. As appropriate, these measures have been incorporated into this Plan as policies, enabling the Plan to be largely “self-mitigating.”

More detailed environmental review will be required as individual projects are proposed, even if these projects are consistent with the General Plan. However, the required extent and level of detail of environmental review may be lessened as a result of the General Plan EIR. Future projects that are consistent with the Land Use map and other aspects of the Plan can “tier off” the Plan’s EIR—their environmental review can focus on specific project-level impacts such as traffic and noise.

The General Plan EIR includes descriptions of the environmental setting, potential impacts, and mitigation measures for each topic area. Pursuant to state law, the Draft EIR was circulated to various state, regional, and local agencies, as well as the community at large. Following public review, responses were prepared for comments received and the EIR was edited accordingly. The environmental document was considered and approved prior to adoption of the 2030 Plan.

KEY CHANGES BETWEEN THE 2030 PLAN AND THE 2010 PLAN

The 2030 Plan carries forward much of the content of the 2010 Plan, and embodies the same essential values and goals for Danville’s future. The following list summarizes the key differences between this plan and the one that preceded it:

- The planning period has shifted forward from 1999-2010 to 2013-2030. Factual information and projections have been updated accordingly.
- A section on sustainability and greenhouse gas reduction has been added.
- A section on economic development has been added.
- The Circulation section of the Plan, which was formerly covered under “Public Facilities,” has been moved to a new Chapter called “Mobility.” The Chapter has been revised to address multiple modes of transportation rather than focusing on cars.
- The Planning Area has been expanded to include unincorporated lands along Camino Tassajara on the far east side of Danville. Expansion of the Danville sphere of influence is proposed to include some of this area.
- The residential land use categories have changed, with a new category added to accommodate development up to 30 units per acre.
- The designation of two properties on the Land Use map have changed in order to meet the Town’s regional housing needs.



Mt. Diablo from Las Trampas. Photo courtesy of Karl Nielsen.