

## I. THE GENERAL PLAN

### A. AUTHORITY

Government Code Section 65302 requires a general plan statement as follows:

"The general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies and shall include a diagram or diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards and plan proposals."

### B. BACKGROUND

#### 1. Historical Sketch

The City was incorporated as the Town of Hercules in 1900 and is a general law city of the State of California. The City is governed by a council of five members elected at large.

The "Hercules Site" of the California Powder Works was established in 1879. Originally occupying a site in what is now Golden Gate Park in San Francisco, the company decided to find another location and selected a tract of land in San Pablo Bay which was a part of the former Spanish land grant called Rancho El Pinole. In about 1903, the DuPont company acquired the California Powder Works and thereafter the plant comprised part of the E. I. DuPont de Nemours organization. In 1912, the Hercules Powder Company was incorporated (now know as Hercules Incorporated) and purchased the Hercules, California plant from the DuPont company together with other explosive plants operated by the DuPont company in other states. The Hercules, California plant was the largest producer of TNT in World War I supplying explosives to Great Britain, France and Russia before the United States entered the war.

Several of the houses in the historic district were built prior to 1900, with the majority erected during World War I. In 1902, the Hercules Water Company was formed to supply water to the area between San Pablo and Rodeo. This company operated until 1953 when it became a part of East Bay Municipal Utility District. In 1975, construction of new housing began east of I-80. This marked the beginning of new Hercules. In 1978, Hercules, Inc. sold the plant and ended almost a hundred years of activity in the City.

Development of housing in Hercules, coupled with growth in the unincorporated area of Rodeo and the City of Pinole, made West Contra Costa County one of the fastest growing areas in the 1970's and 1980's.

## 2. Regional Considerations

### a. The Bay Area

The City is located in the western portion of Contra Costa County, one of the nine counties comprising the San Francisco Bay Area. See Figure 1.

The City is in the path of growth in the Bay Area - accessible by freeway to employment areas in West Contra Costa County, Northern Alameda County and the Benicia area. There is a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station in Richmond, nine miles south of Hercules, which provides West Contra Costa County with mass transit service to destinations along the industrial corridor between the cities of Richmond and Fremont and the City of San Francisco. The Union Pacific Railroad runs along the bayfront. The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway runs through the center of Hercules.

The City of Hercules is a planned community which is an extension of an urbanized area already served by major transportation and utility systems. See Figure 2. The plan incorporates open space and conservation areas and provides for improved environmental design. The City has the governmental framework to provide its future citizens with needed urban services.

### b. Spheres of Influence

There are 1,365 acres of land outside of the City that has been deemed within the City's sphere of influence by the Local Agency Formation Commission. These areas are indicated in the Land Use Diagram within the Land Use Element.

## C. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

### 1. General Plan Objectives

- a. Provide a functional and compatible arrangement of residential, commercial, industrial, public uses and open spaces.
- b. Provide for an economic base capable of supporting adequate community services in future years.
- c. Provide for the movement of people and commodities in the City.
- d. Plan for the preservation and enhancement of visual qualities as viewed from scenic routes.

- e. Provide for both human and environmental needs in creating a natural environment compatible with urban development by the wise use and enhancement of natural resources within the City.
- f. Reduce loss of life, injuries, damage to properties and economic and social dislocations resulting from future seismic, geologic and fire hazards.
- g. Protect the future citizens of Hercules from excessive noise levels which are annoying to the senses and can be detrimental to health.

2. General Plan Policies

- a. The City will be developed as an extension of an urbanizing area with a balance of residential, commercial, industrial and public uses.
- b. Specific plans will be prepared for a neighborhood prior to development within that neighborhood.
- c. Densities shown on the General Plan are flexible and may be modified as neighborhood plans are formulated.
- d. The City will encourage innovation in site planning and design of housing developments to improve livability and effect cost savings.
- e. A major criteria for the design of residential streets will be the number of housing units to be served by that street.
- f. The City will actively participate in cooperative efforts to provide effective public transit to the City and adjacent communities.
- g. The City will promote the establishment of riding and hiking trails throughout the community and coordinate with other agencies in the planning of trail systems in the area and region.
- h. The City will establish a management program for the conservation and enhancement of the natural amenities in the City.
- i. Neighborhood planning will consider potential seismic, geologic and fire hazards and introduce adequate safety measures in development plans and proposals.
- j. The City will consider noise intrusion from major streets and freeways in reviewing plans for new housing developments.

3. The Plan

The General Plan represents a balance of residential, commercial, industrial and public uses as shown in the Land Use Diagram of the Land Use Element.

**D. IMPLEMENTATION**

1. Preparation and review of neighborhood plans, specific plans, functional plans and other special studies leading to short and intermediate range implementation programs.
2. Review community development ordinances and policies in terms of compatibility with the objectives, standards and policies contained in the General Plan.
3. Review of the capital improvement program in terms of General Plan proposals staging and priorities.
4. Review of development plans in terms of conformity to the General Plan.
5. Enforcement of community development and safety codes to implement the objectives of the General Plan.
6. Coordination with local, State and Federal agencies on General Plan policies and programs of Regional or area-wide interest.
7. Utilization of special assessment districts and other available means of financing capital improvements.