



# SANTA CLARITA VALLEYWIDE GENERAL PLAN

## **ONE VALLEY ONE VISION**

### **VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

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The following Vision and Guiding Principles have been formulated to serve as the framework for the preparation of a unified General Plan for the Santa Clarita Valley by the City of Santa Clarita and County of Los Angeles. They have been written in consideration of the extensive public input received during the *One Valley, One Vision* process through surveys, stakeholder interviews, children's and youth activities, Visioning Workshops, and the Valley Congress. Previous drafts of the Guiding Principles have been modified to reflect the majority opinion and suggestions of the October 25, 2001 Valley Congress participants. Additional changes have been made in language to simplify language and improve the technical accuracy of the document.

The Vision and Guiding Principles will be submitted to the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission, the City of Santa Clarita Planning Commission, and the Santa Clarita City Council for concurrence. Once approved, these shall constitute the consensus City-County direction for the preparation of the Valleywide General Plan.

### **VISION**

Our vision for Santa Clarita Valley over the next two decades is of a young but maturing network of communities, balancing rural and suburban neighborhoods, with areas that offer urban lifestyles. The Valley is a mosaic of family-oriented communities, each with individual identities, yet unified by a common environmental setting, a vibrant economy, a rich history, and a high quality of life. The Valley provides residents varied housing opportunities and offers economic development strategies that result in a dynamic economy and appropriate job-housing balance.

The Valley upholds the importance of partnerships in working together to address community issues and needs. Our communities embrace the cultural and ethnic diversity of residents and are enriched by the contribution of new customs and traditions. Santa Clarita Valley balances environmental protection of its abundant open space, ridgelines, hillsides, rivers, and woodland resources with an expanding economic base that offers its residents a broad range of quality employment opportunities. The Valley is a region with excellent public schools and public services, all of which support a high quality of life.



## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

Development in the Santa Clarita Valley shall be consistent with these guiding principles as agreed upon by the City of Santa Clarita and the County of Los Angeles. The principles will be carried out with the application of common standards for land use development, infrastructure and resource management, as appropriate or applicable. The principles implement the vision for the Santa Clarita Valley, which is intended to sustain and enhance environmental resources, economic vitality, and the social well being of its residents.

### ***Management of Growth***

1. Growth in the Santa Clarita Valley shall account for the visions and objectives for each community and must be consistent with principles, as subsequently defined in this document, for the protection of the Valley's significant environmental resources. It must also be based on the availability of or ability to provide adequate infrastructure, schools, and public services, and must be carefully planned to benefit the community's economy, lifestyles and needs.
2. Growth shall occur within and on the periphery of previously developed areas, rather than as "leapfrog" development or in areas of critical environmental habitat or natural hazards, and taking into consideration accessibility to infrastructure and public services.
3. Development shall be prioritized in areas for infill and redevelopment sites within currently developed areas consistent with community character objectives and those for which the City and County have approved entitlements. Commitments for new development outside of these areas shall be made in accordance with the other principles defined in this document.
4. Higher density development, including multi-family housing and mixed use projects that integrate housing with commercial uses, shall be targeted in areas adjacent to existing and planned transit corridors, stations and key activity centers, such as the Valencia Town Center and portions of Newhall and Soledad Canyon Road.



### ***Environmental Resources***

5. The natural buffer area surrounding the entire Valley, which includes the Angeles National Forest, Santa Susanna San Gabriel, Sierra Pelona, and Del Sur mountains, shall be preserved as a regional recreational, ecological, and aesthetic resource.
6. The Santa Clara River corridor and its major tributaries shall be preserved as open space to accommodate storm water flows and protect critical plant and animal species (riparian vegetation, fish, etc.).
  - a. Uses and improvements within the corridor shall be limited to those that benefit the community's use of the river in its natural state.
  - b. Development on properties adjacent to, but outside of the defined primary river corridor, shall be:
    - located and designed to protect the river's water quality, plants, and animal habitats , controlling the type and density of uses, drainage runoff (water treatment), and other relevant elements; and
    - designed to maximize the full range of river amenities, including views and recreational access, while minimizing adverse impacts to the River.
7. The Santa Clarita Valley's prominent ridgelines shall be preserved and hillside development shall be limited to protect their valuable aesthetic and visual qualities intrinsic to the Valley landscape.
8. Development shall be located and designed to minimize the impact on the Valley topography, emphasizing the use of grading techniques for development pads that mimic the natural topography in lieu of repetitive flat pads to the extent feasible and consistent with a community's open space objectives.
9. Development shall be located and designed to protect oak, sycamore, and other significant indigenous woodlands.



10. Biological resources in the designated Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) shall be protected through the siting and design of development to account for and be highly compatible with their resources. Specific development standards shall be identified to control the types of land use, density, building location and size, roadways and other infrastructure, landscape, drainage, and other elements to assure the protection of the critical and important plant and animal habitats of each SEA. In general, the principle shall be to minimize the intrusion and impacts of development in these areas with sufficient setbacks, or buffers, to adequately protect the resources.
11. New development shall be designed to improve energy efficiency, reducing energy and natural resource consumption by such techniques as the use of solar generators, recycling of treated wastewater, capture of storm runoff on-site, and use of recycled materials in building construction, native and drought-tolerant landscape, and energy and water efficient appliances and systems.

### **Land Uses**

12. The Santa Clarita Valley shall contain a diversity of land uses that support the needs of current and future residents including housing, schools, libraries, parks, retail, business and industry, civic institutions, medical and social services, cultural, entertainment, open spaces, and comparable uses.
13. The type and density of land uses in the Santa Clarita Valley shall be varied to reflect the special characteristics, life styles, and opportunities that differentiate its communities. A choice of urban, suburban, and rural environments will be provided.
14. Valley communities shall contain a mix of uses that support the basic needs of residents -- places to live, shop, recreate, meet/socialize, and enjoy the environmental setting - that are appropriate and consistent with their community character. Regionally oriented uses that serve residents of the entire Valley or export goods and services may be concentrated in key business centers rather than uniformly dispersed throughout the Valley communities.
15. Development in the Valley shall be guided by a common set of land use designations and standards for comparable uses in comparable locations. These standards, however, may be varied to reflect the unique intentions for the quality and character of the distinct communities that comprise the Valley.



### **Residential Neighborhoods**

16. The Valley shall contain a mix of housing types that meet the diverse needs of residents, and offer choices for the Valley's population and lifestyles (ages, education, income, etc.) that are appropriate and consistent with their community character. This shall include a combination of single- and multi-family, owner occupied and rental units within *each* community, and mixed-use (i.e., integrated housing with commercial or office uses) development in key activity centers.
17. The Valley is committed to providing affordable work force housing to meet the needs of individuals employed in the Santa Clarita Valley.
18. Multi-family housing developments shall contain adequate recreational and open space amenities on-site and be designed to ensure a high quality living environment. Their architectural treatment and building massing shall complement the characteristics of surrounding single-family residential neighborhoods.
19. Neighborhood scale development shall be encouraged by promoting mixed density of housing units consistent with community character objectives and limiting the number and acreage of multi-family units that can be developed in any single location.
20. Housing developments located in the more urbanized communities of the Valley shall be designed to create a sense of neighborhood by:
  - a. promoting walkability and containing places that serve as centers of activity and identity (schools, multi-purpose facilities, parks, convenience services, neighborhood commercial centers, etc.);
  - b. containing a mix of housing types, densities, and parcel sizes, avoiding large areas and an over-concentration of homogeneous density units;
  - c. minimizing the dependence on, prominence, and area dedicated to the automobile;
  - d. featuring architectural design treatments along all frontages of new housing to promote continuity of architectural scale and rhythm and avoid "blank walls"; and
  - e. including pedestrian linkages, landscaped parkways and green corridors, and separated trails (pedestrian, bicycle or equestrian) where appropriate and feasible.



### ***Vital Economy***

21. Commercial and retail uses will be expanded and new centers developed to meet the needs of the Valley's residents, as supportable by the market, minimize the need to travel outside of the Valley, complement (and do not adversely compete with) existing uses, and contribute to a balanced Valley economy.
22. New "clean" industries and businesses that provide job opportunities for local residents and enhance the economy shall be encouraged within and adjacent to existing and planned business centers/parks, and adjacent to transportation corridors.
23. Older commercial areas and corridors that are economically and/or physically obsolete or deteriorated, such as portions of Castaic, Val Verde, Newhall, Lyons Avenue, Sierra Highway, San Fernando Road, and Soledad Canyon Road, shall be redeveloped for commercial, mixed use, residential or other appropriate uses that complement and serve adjoining land uses and can be adequately supported by the market. Where appropriate, redeveloped uses and buildings shall reflect the area's important architectural and cultural history.

### ***Mobility***

24. A unified and well-maintained network of highways, streets, truck routes, bikeways, and pedestrian paths will provide access among Valley communities and to regional centers outside of the Valley.
25. Santa Clarita Valley's streets and highways shall be developed and maintained according to common standards for right-of-way, paving and other improvements, landscape, signage, lighting, and curb cuts for "like" street categories. These standards shall take into consideration of objectives for the character of the Valley's communities consistent with public health and safety.
26. A continuous bikeway network shall provide circulation within each community, connect the various Santa Clarita Valley communities, and provide access to surrounding open spaces.
27. An integrated transit system shall serve the Valley (rail, bus, shuttle, other) offering convenient alternatives to the automobile, minimizing congestion and providing access to regional transportation systems, such as Metrolink.



### ***Infrastructure***

28. The location and timing of development shall be coordinated with the provision of adequate water, wastewater treatment, storm drainage, telecommunications, energy, roads and other infrastructure.
29. Public infrastructure shall be improved, maintained and expanded as needed to meet the needs of projected population and employment growth and contribute to the Valley's quality of life.
30. Common standards for providing utility infrastructure (flood control channels, energy transmission, telecommunications, and so on) shall be developed and applied throughout the Valley, in consideration of the character of each community.

### ***Schools and Public Services***

31. The City and County shall work in partnership with the Santa Clarita Valley school districts and the State of California to ensure the development of adequate facilities and programs to serve the needs and achieve a high level of academic excellence for local students.
32. While the City and County do not have direct authority over the development of public schools, they shall continue to coordinate with the school districts on issues of mutual interest such as transportation services, shared facilities, and long range planning for Valley schools.
33. Public services (police, fire, health care, youth, seniors, homeless, and other) shall be expanded to support community needs and population growth.

### ***Recreation***



34. The City and County shall recognize that trails are an important recreational asset that, when integrated with transportation systems, contribute to mobility throughout the Santa Clarita Valley.
35. A continuous and unified hiking and equestrian trail network for a variety of users and developed according to common standards shall connect and unify Santa Clarita Valley communities and be interconnected with the regional and statewide system (e.g., Pacific Crest Trail).
36. New parklands will be developed throughout the Santa Clarita Valley, with priority on locations that are not now adequately served. These shall encompass a diversity of park types and functions, including passive and active areas, in consideration of the recreational needs of the residents to be served.
  - a. Common park standards shall be developed and applied throughout the Valley, consistent with community character objectives.
  - b. A range of parkland types, sizes and uses shall be provided to accommodate recreational and leisure activities.