

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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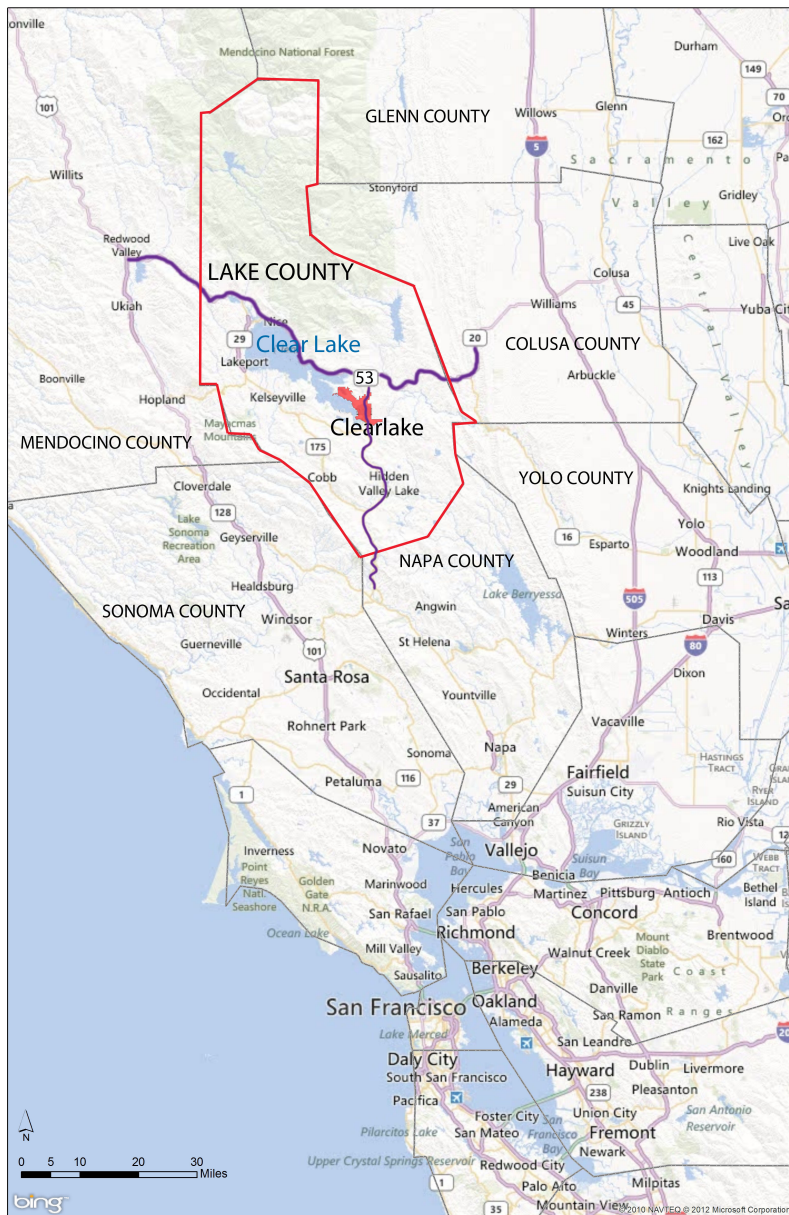
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# A. THE CITY AND PLANNING AREA

## Setting

The City of Clearlake is located in Northern California, approximately 80 miles north of San Francisco. It is situated in rural Lake County, bordered by Mendocino, Sonoma, Napa, Yolo, Colusa and Glenn Counties. The City is 10.8 square miles and sits on the southern shore of Clear Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake located entirely within the State. Clearlake is bisected by State Route 53, a major connector between State Routes 20 and 29, as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Locator Map



Cal Poly Planning Team, 2013

Tectonic activity in the form of the collision of the Pacific and North American plates over one million years ago formed Mount Konocti, a dormant volcano rising 4,300 feet above sea level. Clearlake is located at the base of Mount Konocti, within the Clear Lake watershed. At the center of the watershed lies Clear Lake, measuring 63 square miles in area. Clear Lake is estimated to have formed approximately 2.5 million years ago.

Lake County has a Mediterranean climate typical of coastal California regions. Mediterranean climates are characterized by warm and dry summers along with moist winters. Winters are the rainy months with average temperatures between 30 and 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Summer highs can exceed 90 degrees Fahrenheit, but summer temperatures can drop to 50 degrees Fahrenheit by nightfall. Located adjacent to Clear Lake, the City temperature rarely falls below freezing. Year round winds blow generally from west and northwest. Precipitation varies annually, with average rainfall of 25 to 30 inches per year for areas along the lake, with higher rates of precipitation and minor amounts of snowfall for higher elevations.

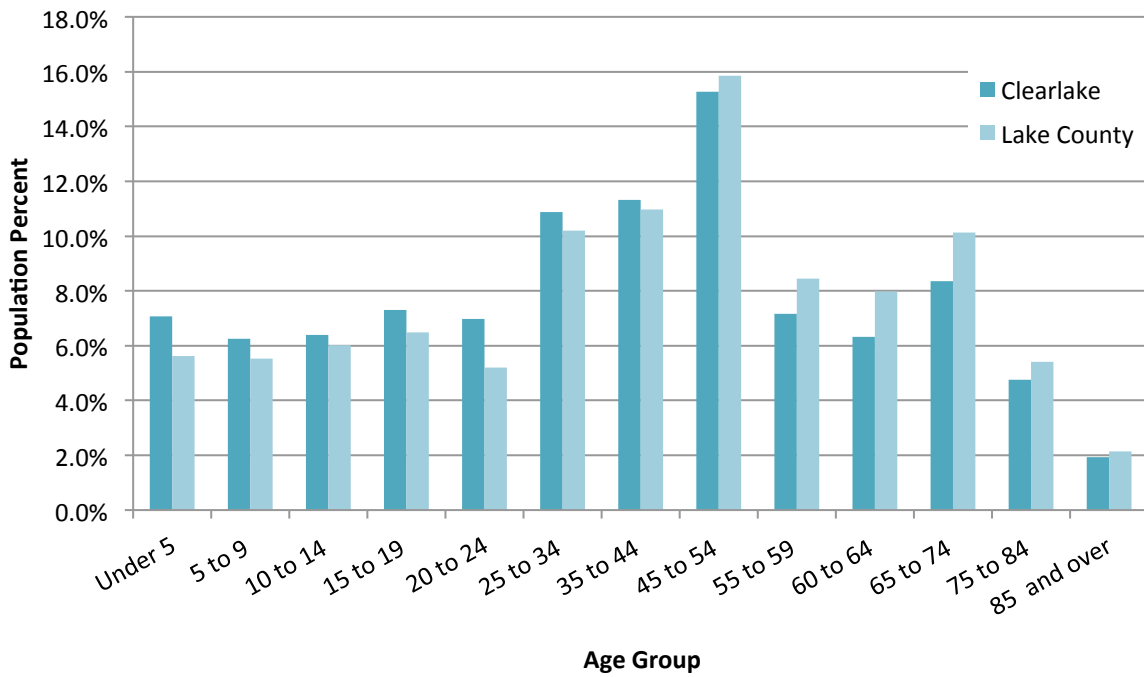
## Demographics

In 2010, Clearlake had 15,250 residents, a 16 percent increase from 2000. Figure 1.2 shows the population percent by age for both Clearlake and Lake County. With a median age of 39.9 years, the population in Clearlake is, on average, younger than other communities in Lake County. The largest percent of the population in Clearlake was within the 45 to 54 year cohort, yet approximately 67 percent of the entire population is under the age of 45, as illustrated in Figure 1.3. Figure 1.4 shows that racial and ethnic diversity is limited in Clearlake. While 21 percent of the population identifies as Latino by ethnicity, 73 percent of the population is within the racial category 'white', with the second largest single racial group, African American, comprising just 4 percent of the total population. In 2010, the median income for Clearlake was \$26,382, considerably lower than the Lake County and California averages. Table 1.1 shows the increase in median income for Clearlake, Lake County, and California between 2000 and 2010. Although the City has a lower median income than Lake County and California, between 2000 and 2010, the City's median income grew at a higher rate than California and at a similar rate to Lake County.

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Clearlake	\$19,863	\$26,382	32.80%
Lake County	\$26,627	\$41,182	39.00%
California	\$47,493	\$60,883	28.20%

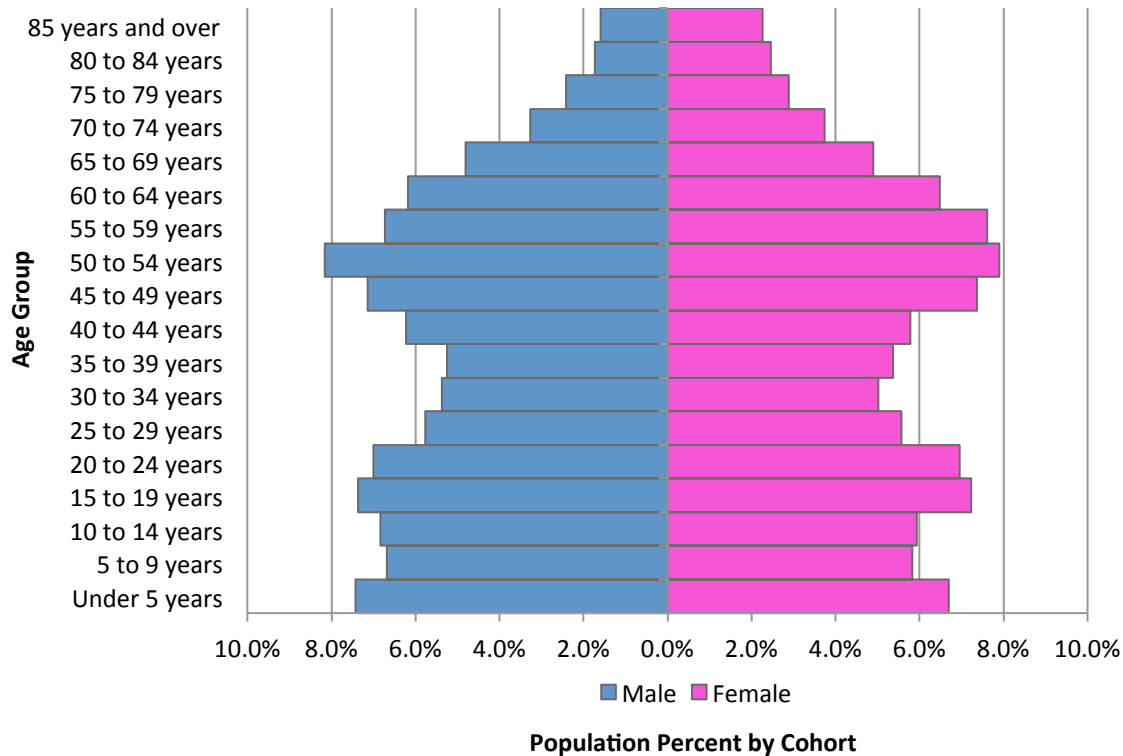
*U.S. Census, ACS 2006-2010 5-year estimates, Table DP03*

**Figure 1.2 Population Percent by Age, 2010**



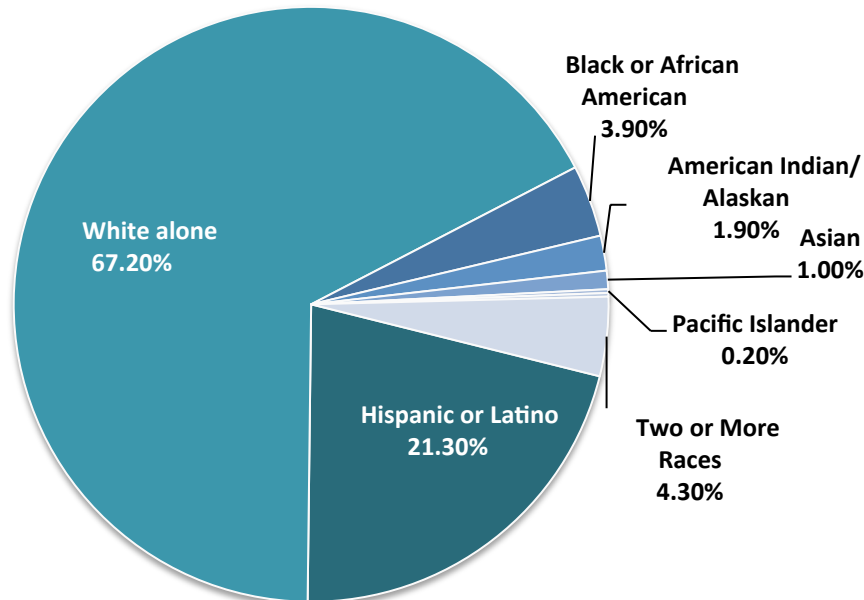
U.S. Census, Table DP-1 General Population and Housing Characteristics, 2010

**Figure 1.3 Population Pyramid Clearlake 2010**



U.S. Census, Table DP-1 General Population and Housing Characteristics, 2010

**Figure 1.4 Ethnicity Clearlake 2012**



*U.S. Census, Table DP-1 General Population and Housing Characteristics, 2010*

## History

The area that is now the City of Clearlake was historically home to one of the largest groups of people in prehistoric California, the Southeastern Pomo Indians. Anderson Marsh State Historic Park, located just southeast of the City, protects 10,000 year old archeological sites and rich habitats that supported the Pomo people.

In the 19th century, American pioneers and European families began to settle in the area and take over the land for agricultural and mining purposes. Towards the end of the 19th century, luxury resorts and hot springs around the Lake became a destination for wealthy vacationers. The City of Clearlake grew slowly outward from the first resorts established on the shores of Clear Lake during this era.

In 1980, Clearlake was incorporated as an independent city within Lake County with a total population of less than 10,000 people. Over the last thirty years, Clearlake has experienced slow but steady growth. With just over 15,000 residents, Clearlake still depicts a rural character and a small town atmosphere.

## Planning Area and Sphere of Influence

The boundary of a city's planning area boundary encompasses incorporated and unincorporated territory bearing a relation to the city's borders. The planning area may extend beyond the Sphere of Influence (OPR, 2003). In Clearlake's case, the Lake plays a significant role in planning for the City; therefore, it is included in the planning area as illustrated in Figure 1.4.

A city's Sphere of Influence (SOI) is determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), and includes both incorporated and unincorporated territory for which the city can

adequately provide services and potentially annex in the near future. (OPR, 2003). In 1987, Lake LAFCO adopted an SOI for Clearlake to include approximately 7,310 acres of unincorporated land (Lake LAFCO, 1987). In 1989, this area was amended to include properties owned by the Clearlake Hotel and Resort Co. located within the Clearlake Oaks Fire Protection District.

Clearlake's SOI, shown in Figure 1.5, follows logical divisions between communities and centers of growth extending eastward (Lake LAFCO, 1987). Land uses within the unincorporated area of the SOI are predominately undeveloped, vacant and open space lands (Lake LAFCO, 1987). Public facilities including police, fire, street, water, sewer, and administrative services are required to accommodate the area within the City of Clearlake's Sphere of Influence.

## **B. PURPOSE, INTENT & LEGAL AUTHORITY**

### **Long Range Planning**

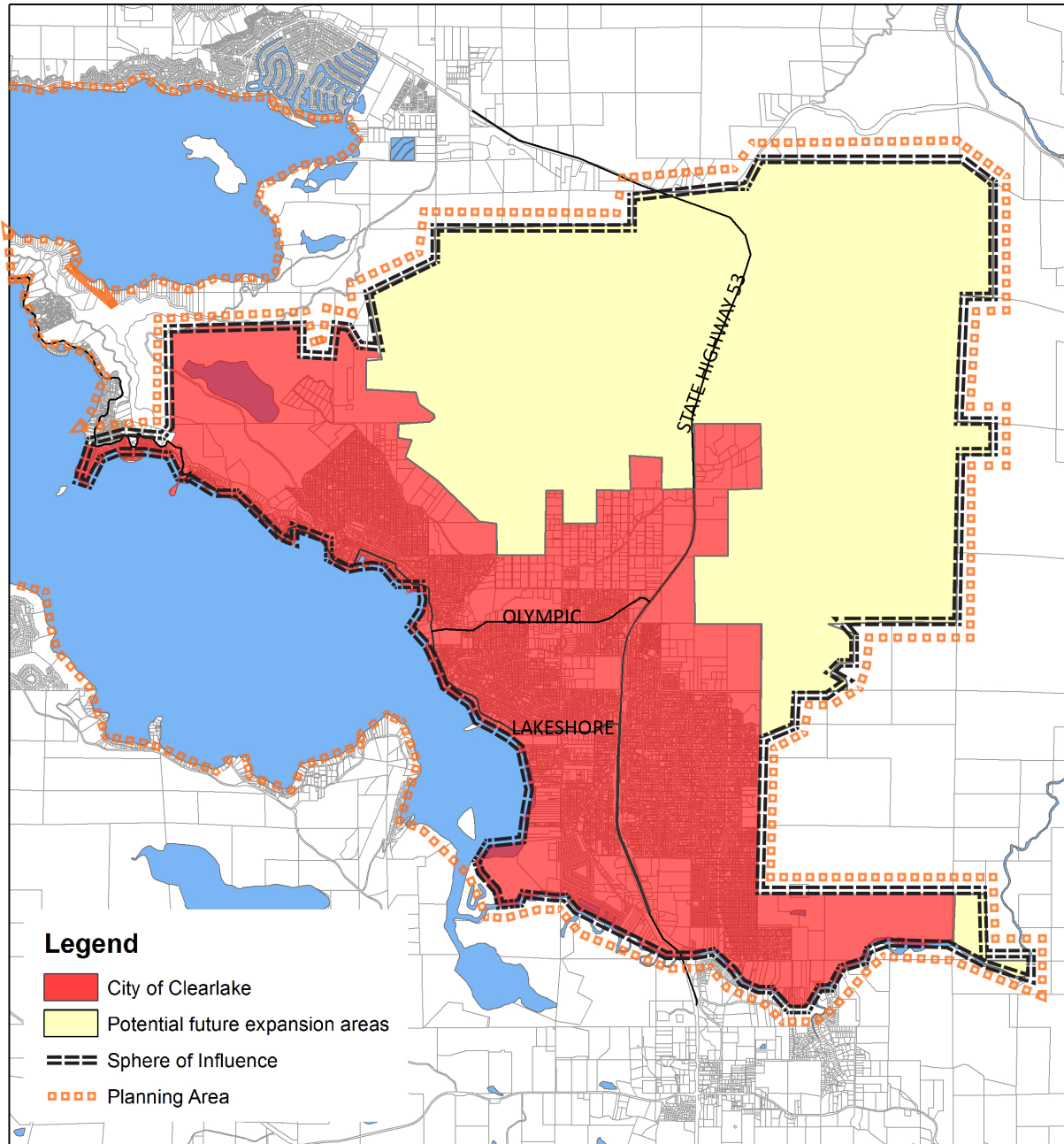
California law requires both cities and counties to adopt a General Plan to guide future development (Government Code Sections 65300 et seq.). The General Plan outlines goals and policies to guide long-range planning within a city or county, and it is to "act as a 'constitution' for development, the foundation upon which all land use decisions are to be based" (California Governor's Office of Planning and Research [OPR], 2003). According to the OPR guidelines, the General Plan "expresses community development goals and embodies public policy relative to the distribution of future land use, both public and private" (OPR, 2003).

Clearlake's most current General Plan was completed in 1983 after the City was first incorporated. This is an enhancement of the nearly 30-year-old document intended to replace the current General Plan. In collaboration with the City of Clearlake, this policy document is the work of the planning team of second-year graduate students and a faculty supervisor in the City and Regional Planning Program at the California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo.

### **Regional Coordination**

The City of Clearlake is part of Lake County and a member of the Lake County/City Area Planning Council (APC). The APC is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for the Lake County region. Primarily, the RTPA ensures that appropriate local transportation planning is administered in accordance with the Transportation Development Act (TDA), the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and the Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) program. The City of Clearlake works with Lake County and the APC to develop policies and plans to address land use, economic development, infrastructure systems, and natural resource quality to meet the needs of current and future residents of the City.

Figure 1.5 Planning Area and Sphere of Influence, Clearlake



Cal Poly Planning Team, 2012

## **C. GENERAL PLAN OVERVIEW**

### **Elements of the General Plan**

Government Code Section 65302 mandates seven elements to be addressed in a city's general plan: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. The City of Clearlake's General Plan document includes these required elements and four additional elements: economic development, public facilities, community design, and health. These elements are briefly summarized below.

#### **Land Use**

The Land Use Element designates the type, intensity, and distribution of public and private land uses. Housing, commercial, industrial, and open space are some of the land uses considered under this element. A land use map illustrates planned location and density of these uses in the City.

#### **Circulation**

The Circulation Element is interconnected with the Land Use Element to address future transportation needs of proposed land uses and users. Major thoroughfares, transportation routes, hubs, and other infrastructural utilities and facilities, existing and proposed, are identified and planned under this element.

#### **Housing**

The Housing Element is a comprehensive assessment of current and projected housing needs. It includes policies and programs for providing adequate housing for all economic segments of the community. Every seven years the housing element must be updated by state mandate.

#### **Conservation**

The Conservation Element addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources. The condition and future of air, water, soils, minerals, and biological resources are assessed under this element.

#### **Open Space**

The Open Space Element provides plans and guidelines for the long-term preservation of open-space lands. The intent of this element is to ensure public health and safety through the conservation of natural resources, management of resource production (including agricultural lands), and maintenance of outdoor recreational facilities.

#### **Noise**

The Noise Element sets goals to minimize community exposure to excessive noise by identifying existing and future noise quantities and sources through data gathering or modeling.



## **Safety**

The Safety Element includes strategies to prepare the community from risks associated with fire, flood, seismicity, geologic activity, hazardous materials, and crime.

## **Economic Development**

The Economic Development Element guides the economic character of the community while providing for a stable annual budget. A stable economy is achieved through the development of policies and strategies related to retaining existing businesses, attracting new businesses and industries, creating jobs, and expanding the City's tax base.

## **Public Facilities**

The Public Facilities Element addresses existing capacity and future demand of water, power, waste management, telecommunications, health, educational, and emergency protection facilities in the City.

## **Community Design**

The Community Design Element guides public and private development to create a city that is functional and aesthetically appealing. The element brings several elements together to enhance the natural and built environment.

## **Health**

The Health Element provides policies to address community health issues and needs and promote healthy living solutions.

## **Contents of Each Element**

Beginning in September 2012, the Cal Poly Planning Team conducted a comprehensive assessment of existing conditions within in the City of Clearlake and compiled a formal background report. The information was collected from community members, field research, planning documents, and other sources, including the U.S. Census and relevant state and federal laws. Based on this diverse set of informational resources, a series of goals, objectives, policies, and programs was identified for each element. Following the OPR General Plan Guidelines, the format for the goals, objectives, policies, and programs is as follows:

## **GOAL**

A goal is a general direction-setter. It is an ideal future end related to the public health, safety, or general welfare. A goal is a general expression of community values and, therefore, may be abstract in nature. Consequently, a goal is generally not quantifiable or time-dependent.

## **Objective**

An objective is a specified end, condition, or state that is an intermediate step toward attaining a goal. It should be achievable and, when possible, measurable and time- specific.

An objective may pertain to one particular aspect of a goal or it may be one of several successive steps toward goal achievement.

### Policy

A policy is a specific statement that guides decision-making. It indicates a commitment of the local legislative body to a particular course of action. A policy is based on and helps implement a General Plan's objectives.

### Program

A program implements a general plan policy. Jurisdictions draft programs to be specific in order to carry out policies, meet objectives, and work towards goals.