

INTRODUCTION

1



The City of Dixon, situated in California’s fertile Central Valley between the major population centers of Sacramento and the Bay Area, has a rich agricultural heritage and a distinctive small-town feel. The city is home to the Dixon May Fair, the oldest district fair and fairgrounds in the state of California, and Downtown Dixon boasts numerous historic resources dating back to its past as a 19th Century railroad town. The community has experienced higher than average residential growth since 2000, and today, it features an existing core of established neighborhoods, surrounded by newer residential subdivisions and clusters of highway-oriented commercial businesses at the freeway interchanges.

With its ready access to Interstate 80 (I-80) and land available for development, Dixon is poised to leverage its location for job creation and economic growth that can improve the quality of life for local residents. Critical for achieving that objective will be ensuring a measured pace of growth, concentrating development within the City limit to maintain the green belt of open space and agricultural land

that rings the community, and providing a range of housing suited to people of all ages so that Dixon remains a community where you can grow up, raise a family in, and then retire. The General Plan outlines a strategy for achieving these objectives incrementally over the coming years and for preserving and enhancing the small-town character that residents value so highly.

This document is a comprehensive update of the City of Dixon’s General Plan, the policy document that guides the growth and development of the city. The General Plan is required by law in the state of California, and it identifies current and future needs regarding land use, transportation, housing, open space, conservation, safety, noise, and environmental justice. The Dixon General Plan is a dynamic document that sets forth conditions to guide development and conservation in the city for years to come. It reflects community aspirations to cultivate a family-friendly city with a small-town feel that grows wisely, remains true to its agricultural roots, and provides good jobs and housing for local residents.





1.1 PLANNING CONTEXT

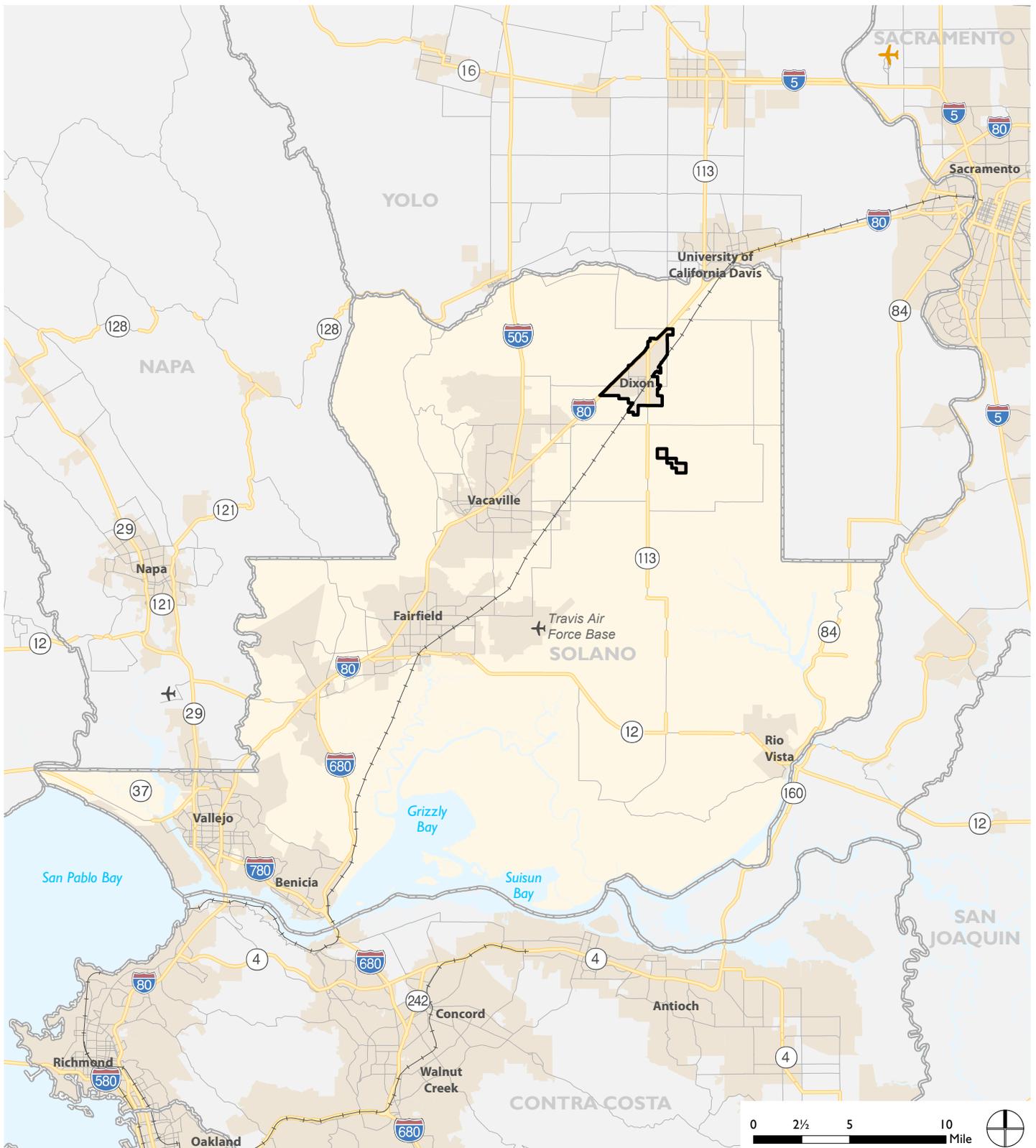
The City of Dixon is located along Interstate 80 in northeast Solano County, close to the border with Yolo County. Dixon is located about 65 miles east of San Francisco, 11 miles northeast of Vacaville, 10 miles southwest of Davis, and 23 miles southwest of Sacramento. The Union Pacific Railroad runs southwest to northeast through the city, through Downtown Dixon. State Route 113 runs north-south through the center of the city. The Dixon Planning Area has an area of approximately 8.6 square miles and is surrounded by unincorporated Solano County area. The regional setting is shown in Figure I-1.

The City of Dixon began as Silveyville, founded in 1852 by Elijah S. Silvey, who opened an inn and saloon along a well-traveled stagecoach route between San Francisco and Sacramento. Frequented by hopeful new goldminers, Silveyville grew to a town of 150 residents by 1865, with a general store, post office, and

blacksmith. But in 1868, when the Vaca Valley Railroad's track route was laid five miles away from Silveyville, town residents decided to move the entire town to be along the new railroad line. Thomas Dickson donated 10 acres of land for the relocated town. The City of Dixon was incorporated by a special act of the Legislature during the 1877-1878 session; by 1877, Dixon had become a thriving community with a population of 1,200.

From its inception, the principal livelihood of Dixon was farming. Historically, agrarian pursuits consisted of subsistence farming and cattle-raising. By the early 1900s, Dixon was known as "The Dairy City;" by 1920, Dixon had around thirty dairy farmers. Karl A. Hess's "Milk Farm" opened in 1919, and relocated to the site along the Lincoln Highway, (today's I-80) in 1939, achieving national attention for Dixon when it was featured in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1940.

Figure I-1 Regional Context



Data Source: City of Dixon, 2019; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020

 Railroad
  Dixon City Limit
  Solano County

Dixon grew considerably in the second half of the 20th Century. The 1950 population is estimated at 1,714, very similar to the estimated population in 1877, but by 1960, Dixon’s population had begun to expand: 2,970 people in 1960, 4,432 people in 1970, and 7,541 people in 1980. Between 1980 and 1990, the population of Dixon grew by approximately 38 percent, to 10,401 residents. That was the decade that Dixon residents passed the Measure B growth cap, limiting new residential development to three percent per year. The city continued to grow quickly between 1990 and 2000, to a population of 16,020. In 2018, Dixon had an estimated 20,100 residents, reflecting the more modest growth around the recession of the 2010s.

Today, Dixon has desirable housing and a small-town feel that make it an attractive place to raise a family or establish a business. Its enviable location between the major centers of the Bay Area and Sacramento, which brought early stagecoaches and prosperity during the Gold Rush, remains an asset today, and Dixon residents value the fact that they can live in a family-friendly setting and easily commute to major job centers. Dixon has safe, friendly neighborhoods, well-used local parks, and close-knit communities contributing to its appeal. Many of the buildings downtown are historic and contribute the cherished local character. And beautiful views of productive agricultural fields, orchards, and pastures are never far away.

PLANNING AREA

The Planning Area is defined as the land area addressed by the General Plan, including land within city limits and outside city limits that bears a relation to the City’s planning. The boundary of the Planning Area was determined in response to State law requiring each city to include in its General Plan all territory within the

boundaries of the incorporated area as well as “any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency’s judgment bears relation to its planning” (California Government Code Section 65300). The proposed Planning Area comprises a total of 5,522 acres (8.6 square miles) of incorporated and unincorporated land.



CITY LIMITS

The City of Dixon's existing city limits encompasses approximately 4,635 acres (7.2 square miles) of incorporated land, or 84 percent of the Planning Area. The existing city limits include residential, commercial, and industrial developments as well as public facilities, including parks and schools. The city limits include a wastewater treatment plant that is about three miles south of Dixon; while shown on Figure I-2, most of the maps in this General Plan do not show this area.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

The Sphere of Influence (SOI) is a planning boundary outside of an agency's legal boundary (such as the city limit line) that designates the agency's probable future boundary and service area. The Solano County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) has jurisdiction over defining Dixon's SOI and acts on annexations and approval of service contracts outside City limits. The purpose of the SOI is to ensure the provision of efficient services while discouraging urban sprawl and the premature conversion of agricultural and open space lands by preventing overlapping jurisdictions and duplication of services. While the LAFCO cannot tell agencies what their planning goals should be, on a regional level, LAFCOs help coordinate the orderly development of a community so that the most efficient urban service arrangements are created for the benefit of area residents and property owners. The city's SOI boundary incorporates a total of 887 acres outside of the city limits (1.4 square miles) or 16 percent of the total land located in the Planning Area.

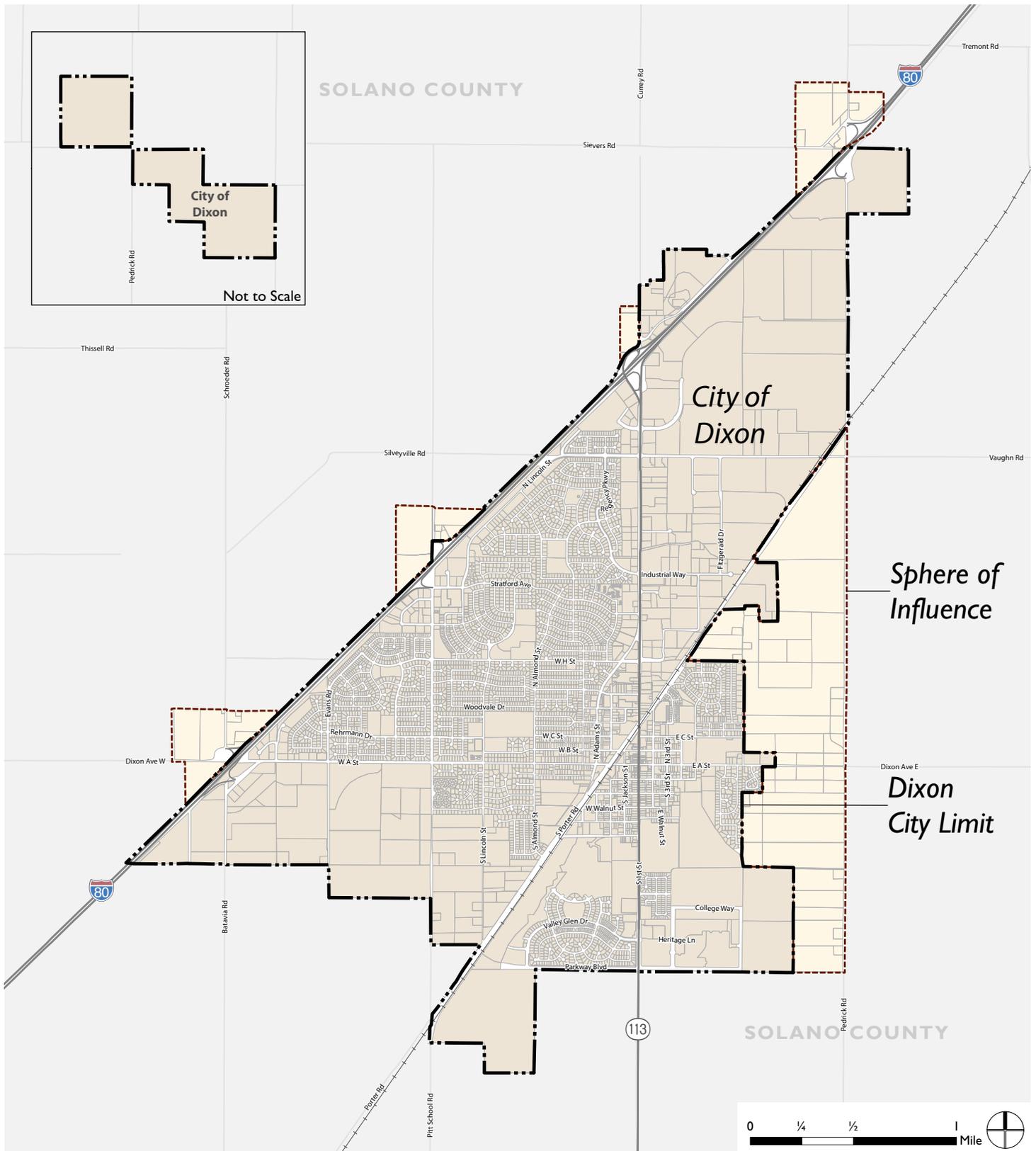
PRIOR PLANNING EFFORT

Following adoption of the 1993 General Plan, the City undertook several important planning efforts that focused on strategic sites within the community. In 1995, the Northeast Quadrant Specific Plan was prepared to transition a 643-acre agricultural area into a mixed use employment district featuring a range of commercial, professional and administrative office, and light industrial uses, projected to result in approximately 11,200 new jobs. To date, the area has seen development of a Wal-Mart Superstore and the establishment of some logistics and light industrial businesses, although significant opportunity remains. In 2020, a portion of the area was designated a Priority Production Area under a Metropolitan Transportation Commission pilot program intended to strengthen regional industrial clusters.

In 2005, the City adopted the Southwest Dixon Specific Plan, envisioning a new residential subdivision with some commercial and employment uses on 477 acres of primarily agricultural land in adjacent to I-80. An initial phase of development is currently underway that will see construction of 1,168 new single-family homes together with neighborhood-serving retail, a fire station and parks, open space, and trails. Implementation of the 2015-2023 Housing Element has also resulted in several residential projects in the south of the city.

In this context, the Dixon General Plan has been prepared to reset the community wide vision and guide development and conservation in the planning area through 2040.

Figure I-2 Planning Area Boundaries



Data Source: City of Dixon, 2019; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020

1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

California Government Code Section 65300 requires each city and county in California to adopt a General Plan “for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which...bears relation to its planning.” The Dixon General Plan can be considered the city’s development constitution, containing both a statement of the community’s vision of its long-term development as well as the policies to support that vision by guiding the physical growth of the city. The Dixon General Plan serves to:

- Establish a long-range vision that reflects the aspirations of the community and outlines steps to achieve this vision;
- Guide decision-making related to development, housing, transportation, environmental quality, public services, parks, open space, and agricultural conservation;

GENERAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS

California grants local authorities power over land use decisions. As a result, cities have considerable flexibility in preparing their general plans as long as State requirements are met. The California Government Code establishes both the content of general plans and rules for their adoption and subsequent amendment. Together, State law and judicial decisions establish three overall guidelines for general plans; they should be:

- **Comprehensive.** The general plan must be geographically comprehensive, applying throughout the entire incorporated area and the Sphere of Influence. The general plan

- Help Dixon achieve compliance with applicable State and regional policies, including around housing production and environmental regulations;
- Allow City departments, other public agencies, and private developers to design projects that will enhance the character of the community, preserve environmental resources, and minimize hazards; and
- Provide the basis for establishing and setting priorities for detailed plans and implementing programs, such as the Zoning Ordinance and future specific plans.

Due to the general and long-range nature of the General Plan, there will be instances where more detailed studies will be necessary in order to implement the General Plan’s policies.

must also address the full range of issues that affect the city’s physical development.

- **Internally Consistent.** The general plan must fully integrate its separate parts and relate them to each other without conflict. “Horizontal” consistency applies as much to figures and diagrams as to the general plan text. It also applies to data and analysis as well as policies. All adopted portions of the general plan, whether required by State law or not, have equal legal weight. None may supersede another, so the general

plan must resolve conflicts among the provisions of each element.

- **Long-Range.** Because anticipated development will affect the city and the people who live or work there for years to come, State law requires every general plan to take a long-term perspective. This General Plan uses the year 2040 as its planning horizon.

Additionally, State law requires all general plans to include eight mandatory elements: land use, circulation, conservation, open space, safety, noise, housing, and environmental justice. Table I-1 shows the Elements included in this General Plan and how they satisfy

State requirements. Housing Elements are required by State law to be updated more frequently than the General Plan, and to facilitate that, the City publishes its Housing Element under a separate cover. The City of Dixon Housing Element, published under separate cover, was most recently completed in 2015 and will be next updated in 2023, consistent with the State-defined cycle. State law also requires that implementation of the General Plan be vertically consistent: all actions relating to zoning, subdivision approval, housing allocations, and capital improvements must be consistent with the General Plan.

1.3 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

The City of Dixon last updated its General Plan in 1993. There have been significant changes in the city and the region since then, and new opportunities, challenges, and approaches have emerged to necessitate an update. This General Plan

update is a comprehensive reexamination of Dixon’s planning context and the community’s vision, and involved close collaboration with Dixon residents in a variety of forums to ensure that the Plan closely reflects the community’s goals

Table I-1: Correspondence Between Required and Optional General Plan Elements

General Plan Element	Required Elements	Optional Elements
Chapter 2: Natural Environment	Conservation, Open Space, Safety, Noise, Environmental Justice, Climate Adaptation	Air Quality, Agriculture, Climate Change
Chapter 3: Land Use and Community Character	Land Use, Conservation	Agriculture, Community Design, Historic Resources
Chapter 4: Economic Development		Economic Development
Chapter 5: Mobility	Circulation	
Chapter 6: Public Services and Facilities	Open Space, Safety	
Housing (under separate cover)	Housing	

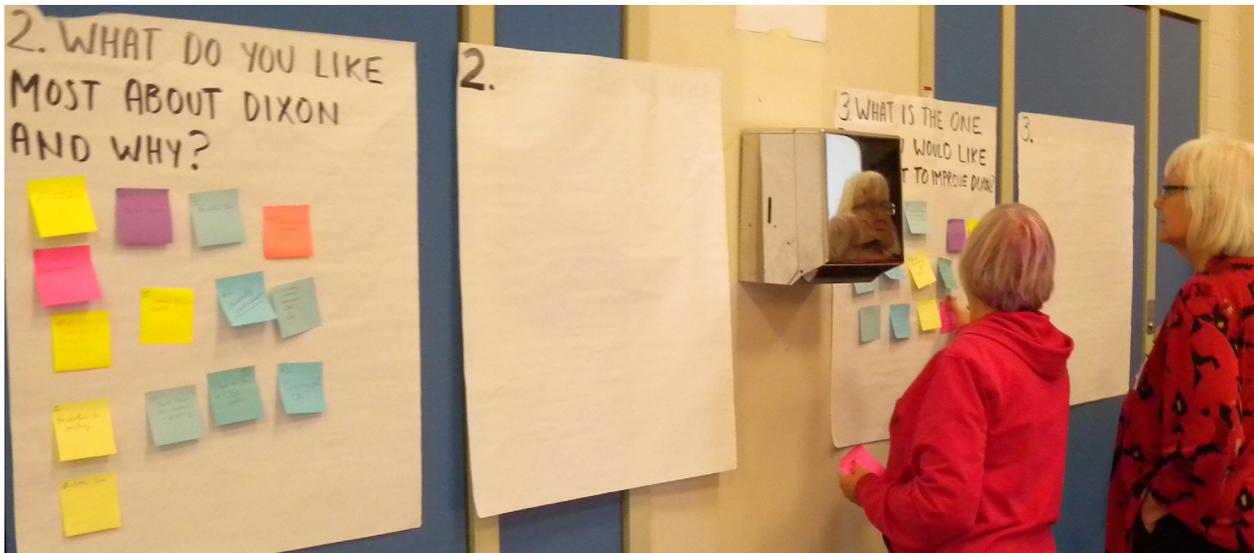
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND PLANNING

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

The Planning for Healthy Communities Act (2016) requires that cities and counties prepare an Environmental Justice Element or integrate related policies into other elements when one or more disadvantaged communities within its jurisdiction. Disadvantaged communities are areas in California that are impacted by a combination of economic, health, and environmental burdens. These burdens include population characteristics like poverty and high unemployment; health conditions like asthma and heart disease; and environmental exposures to air and water pollution, hazardous wastes, and other factors. Based on a place-based cumulative impact screening methodology created by the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) at the California Environmental

Protection Agency (CalEPA), there are no Disadvantaged communities in Dixon. However, CalEPA screening data indicates that some census tracts in Dixon are among the most impacted in the state for drinking water contaminants, threats to groundwater, exposure to pesticides, traffic density, hazardous waste exposure, impaired water bodies, and solid waste exposure. Accordingly, the policy framework of the Natural Environment Element addresses these topics. Additionally, policies and actions related to outreach and public involvement in the Public Services and Facilities Element will help ensure that more vulnerable residents will also be involved in decision-making, consistent with the Planning for Healthy Communities Act.





and priorities through the Plan’s 2040 planning horizon.

A community visioning workshop held at Anderson Elementary School helped to establish early direction for this General Plan. A community survey elicited input from about five percent of Dixon households, and was available online and in paper format, and in both English and Spanish. A General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) was formed to serve in an advisory role to the Planning Department and City Council on matters related to the General Plan update process; the GPAC met regularly throughout the course

of the project to help define community input into a shared vision, brainstorm issues and ideas, and review the policy content of the General Plan to ensure that it met the needs and desires of the community. Other community members also attended the GPAC meetings and provided input. And City Council and Planning Commission workshops and hearings were held throughout the General Plan Update process.

The ideas and feedback gathered through the community outreach process deeply informed and are embedded within this General Plan.

1.4 RELATED DOCUMENTS

MAP ATLAS REPORT

As part of the General Plan update process, a Map Atlas was produced to provide background information and technical analysis to inform the planning process. The report describes Dixon’s planning context and delves

into the topics of land use, the transportation network., public services and facilities, environmental resources, hazards, noise, and planning issues and options.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

The General Plan is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared according to the California Environmental

Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR is a detailed analysis of the potential environmental effects of the General Plan, and the EIR

evaluates alternatives to the proposed project and presents ways to reduce or avoid environmental damage. The EIR ensures environmental opportunities and constraints are identified and incorporated into the planning process,

and informs policies that can mitigate any adverse environmental effects of the Plan. This General Plan is “self-mitigating” in that it includes policies and programs designed to mitigate adverse impacts of growth.

1.5 GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The General Plan is implemented by the decisions of the Planning Commission and City Council and by the Zoning Ordinance and specific plans. The Zoning Ordinance includes detailed use classifications and standards. The zoning map must be consistent with the General Plan map, but it will not be identical to it. Existing specific plans will need to be updated for consistency with the General Plan and future specific plans also must be consistent with the General Plan.

The General Plan is a living document. As such, it should be updated periodically as site-specific circumstances change from the

time of writing, to respond to new State or federal law, or to modify policies that may become obsolete or unrealistic over time.

Changes in policy as well as the development of unforeseen opportunities or needs will require amendment of the General Plan. Per California Government Code Section 65358, no mandatory element of this General Plan may be amended more frequently than four times during any calendar year. Within this limitation, amendments may be made at any time as determined by the Dixon City Council, and each amendment may include more than one change to the Plan.

