

# Preamble

## Purpose of the General Plan

The General Plan for the City and County of Honolulu, a requirement of the City Charter, is a written commitment by the City and County government to a future for the Island of Oahu which it considers desirable and attainable. The Plan is a two-fold document: First, it is a statement of the long-range social, economic, environmental, and design objectives for the general welfare and prosperity of the people of Oahu. These objectives contain both statements of desirable conditions to be sought over the long run and statements of desirable conditions which can be achieved within an approximate 20-year time horizon. Second, the General Plan is a statement of broad policies which facilitate the attainment of the objectives of the Plan.

The General Plan is a guide for all levels of government, private enterprise, neighborhood and citizen groups, organizations, and individual citizens in eleven areas of concern:

- (1) population;
- (2) economic activity;
- (3) the natural environment;
- (4) housing,
- (5) transportation and utilities;
- (6) energy;
- (7) physical development and urban design;
- (8) public safety;
- (9) health and education;
- (10) culture and recreation; and
- (11) government operations and fiscal management.

## Content of the General Plan

The eleven subject areas provide the framework for the City's expression of public policy concerning the needs of the people and the functions of government. The objectives and policies reflect the comprehensive planning process of the City and County which addresses all aspects of the health, safety, and welfare of the people of Oahu.

In preparing the statement of objectives and policies, the fair distribution of social benefits was held to be of paramount importance. It shall continue to be of paramount importance in the pursuit and implementation of these objectives and policies.

- **Population**

The population objectives and policies encompass three distinct thrusts: First, to control population growth to the extent possible to avoid social, economic, and environmental disruptions. Second, to plan for anticipated future population growth. And, finally, to maintain a pattern of population distribution that will allow people to live and work in harmony.

- **Economic Activity**

The objectives and policies for economic activity attempt to address the needs for an adequate standard of living for residents and future generations. Issues of employment opportunities, viability of major industries, diversification of the economic base, and the location of jobs are addressed in terms of what government can do to provide, encourage, and promote economic opportunities for our people.

- **Natural Environment**

The natural environment of our island, next to our people, is our greatest asset. The pleasures of a year-round mild and amiable climate, beautiful mountains, attractive beaches, scenic vistas, and natural drinking water are enjoyed by those of us who reside in the community as well as those who visit here. The City's policies seek to protect and enhance our natural attributes by increasing public awareness and appreciation of them and by mitigating against the degradation of these assets.

- **Housing**

Obtaining decent, reasonably priced homes in safe and attractive neighborhoods has been a perennial problem for the residents of Oahu, and is a primary concern of the General Plan.

The objectives and policies for housing seek to provide a choice of living environments, affordable housing, and a reduction of inflationary speculation.

- **Transportation and Utilities**

An efficient transportation system is essential to the life and economic productivity of a community. The cost of building and maintaining the system is a major public investment. Coordinated planning of accessibility and circulation requirements and the transportation system is important in the management of urban growth. The transportation objectives and policies address the need for a balanced system for the pedestrian, bikeway, public transportation, and the automobile. Population growth results in increased demands for water, sewerage, and solid waste disposal services provided by government, as well as the communication, electricity, and gas systems provided by the private sector. Not only must such needs be met, but the social, economic, and environmental consequences of meeting these needs must be carefully considered.

- **Energy**

There is no more salient example of the impact of world events on our island community than in the provision of energy. Energy development, utilization, and conservation are addressed with the stress on the reduction in dependence on outside sources.

- **Physical Development and Urban Design**

Physical development and urban design is concerned with the quality of growth that occurs within the various parts of the Island. The objectives and policies in this area of concern deal with the coordination of public facilities and land development, compatibility of land uses, and specification of certain land uses at particular locations. Urban design emphasis is contained in objectives to create and maintain attractive, meaningful, and stimulating

environments and to promote and enhance the social and physical character of Oahu's older towns and neighborhoods.

- **Public Safety**

Many of the City's services derive from the concern for the safety of the people. The prevention and control of crime and maintenance of public order are one aspect of public safety. The City's policies reflect the roles of the citizen, Honolulu Police Department, and City Prosecutor in providing for the safety of residents and visitors to our island. Another aspect deals with the protection of people and property from natural disasters and other emergencies, traffic and fire hazards, and other unsafe conditions.

- **Health and Education**

The provision of health care services for the individual on Oahu is largely a function of the private sector. The City's concern concentrates on the accessibility of health facilities through planning and land use controls, and on the protection of environmental health through health codes and other regulations which mitigate against disease and pollution.

Objectives and policies for education call for a wide range of educational opportunities, development of employable skills, efficient use of facilities, appropriate location, and the promotion of Honolulu as a center for higher education in the Pacific.

- **Culture and Recreation**

Preservation and enhancement of Hawaii's multi-ethnic culture will be achieved through policies directed toward people, our most important resource, and cultural, historic and archaeological sites, buildings, and artifacts.

The use of leisure time is addressed through objectives and policies encouraging visual and performing arts and the provision of a wide range of recreational facilities and services that are readily available to all our residents.

- **Government Operations and Fiscal Management**

The objectives and policies in the above ten areas of concern represent an ambitious agenda which will stretch the resources of City government to the limit. Increased efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, and fiscal integrity in carrying out the functions of City government will be crucial to whatever degree of success is achieved.

## **The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands**

According to the Hawaii Revised Statutes, those islands extending northwest from Nihoa to Kure Atoll, except the Midway Islands, are part of the City and County of Honolulu. This latter chain of islands and reefs is commonly referred to as the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. Effective jurisdiction of these islands is currently in the hands of the federal and state governments.

The federal government exercises jurisdiction pursuant to numerous laws and regulations, as well as through its administration of the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge which encompasses most of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. All of the subject islands and

archipelagic waters within the State of Hawaii are included in the State Land Use Conservation District and, thus, are subject to State regulation and management in the absence of federal jurisdiction.

In the event that any jurisdictional responsibilities relating to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands are transferred to the City and County of Honolulu, the City will need to review and, if necessary, amend the objectives and policies of the General Plan, as well as other pertinent plans and programs, in terms of their adequacy in addressing these responsibilities.

### **Other Offshore Islands and Marine Waters**

All offshore islands and marine waters within three miles of the Oahu coastline are considered part of Oahu in terms of the applicability of the objectives and policies in this General Plan. Although most of these islands, as well as Oahu's coastal marine waters, are included in the State Land Use Conservation District and, thus, are beyond the effective jurisdiction of the City and County of Honolulu, they may be included in Development Plans as may be appropriate.

### **Role of the City and County Government**

The City and County government will implement the policies contained in the General Plan through ordinances and resolutions as well as through rules and regulations. Also essential to policy implementation are the City's annual budget and six-year capital-improvement program, both of which should be consistent with the objectives and policies of the Plan, especially with regard to long-term commitments of money. It is necessary to remember, however, that the City and County government is not alone in determining the general welfare of the people of Oahu: The State and Federal governments, too, have an important influence on the life of the community. The City and County recognizes the need for close cooperation among the various levels of government and, in striving to meet the objectives of the General Plan, pledges not to lose sight of this very great need.

### **Citizen Participation**

Individual citizens and citizens' groups should participate freely to help bring about the success of the General Plan. Indeed, in a democratic society they have a responsibility to express their concerns to the City and County government and to work constantly for more effective government action. To provide the residents of the City and County of Honolulu with the opportunity to democratically and meaningfully participate in the determination of the direction and quality of future growth on Oahu, a citizen participation process which focuses on citizen advisory boards as called for in the City Charter has been established.

These boards represent a valuable means of encouraging and formally maintaining strong citizen participation in all parts of the Island. It is hoped that their members, along with members of the Island's many community organizations, will actively participate in the City planning process. Members of the advisory boards can provide valuable assistance by soliciting the input of other neighborhood groups and residents and identifying the concerns of the areas they represent. By

monitoring conditions, they can also help to make sure that the policies of the General Plan are implemented.

Most planning issues have impacts which extend beyond the boundaries of neighborhoods. Regular planning forums for the discussion of regional and islandwide issues are an important part of the citizen participation process.

## **Implementation**

By itself, the General Plan cannot bring about all of the changes and improvements which the City and County government considers to be desirable and attainable. It is, by design, a very general document, and one of its purposes is to establish a coherent set of broad guidelines which can be used in developing plans, programs, and legislation for guiding Oahu's future.

Development Plans, according to the City Charter, are relatively detailed guidelines for the physical development of the Island. They are intermediate means of implementing the objectives and policies of the General Plan in the various parts of the Island. The Development Plans provide for land use and public facilities planning as well as indicate the sequence in which development will occur. They must implement and accomplish the objectives and policies of the General Plan.

Development Plans contain 'statements of standards and principles' with respect to land uses and 'statements of urban design principles and controls.' The City Council adopts Development Plans and amendments thereto by ordinance. These Plans should not, however, be confused with zoning ordinances. Zoning ordinances will continue to regulate the use of land within clearly demarcated zones and set detailed standards for the height, bulk, and location of buildings.

In addition to zoning ordinances, the functional plans and programs of the City and County agencies must conform to the General Plan and implement the Development Plans. This will ensure that the provision of City services is in accord with the General Plan's objectives and policies and provisions contained in the Development Plans.

Implementation of the General Plan also occurs through the budgetary responsibilities of government. The budget process or function is closely intertwined with the planning process of the City. It involves developing the yearly operating budget and the projected capital improvement program budget. Both documents represent the final step in the comprehensive planning process relating the long-range objectives and policies of the City's General Plan to the specific uses of public revenues. To ensure the implementation of the General Plan, the City budget and programs must comply with the purposes of the General Plan and implement applicable provisions of the Development Plans.

## **Amendments**

For the General Plan to fulfill its purpose of providing overall guidance to the actions of government, private enterprise, and individual citizens across a broad spectrum of concerns, it must become neither a rigid nor an obsolete document. To keep the Plan flexible and up-to-date, its objectives and policies must be subject to change over time in response to changes in the

concerns of the people of Oahu, new approaches and opportunities for addressing those concerns, and changes in the basic assumptions underlying the objectives and policies. One means of accomplishing this is provided by the City Charter which directs the Chief Planning Officer to prepare revisions to the General Plan at least every five years for Council consideration. More importantly, however, the City Council may amend or revise the General Plan whenever it deems necessary.

Emphasis should be placed on reevaluating and amending selected General Plan objectives and policies as problems and issues arise. The City and County government should develop means for identifying emerging problems and issues and evaluating their effect on the concerns of the people of Oahu as expressed in the General Plan. Such an ongoing process would provide a basis for the Chief Planning Officer to initiate timely proposals to amend the General Plan in response to changing public concerns.

One of the key assumptions underlying many of the General Plan objectives and policies is anticipated future population growth for the Island of Oahu as projected by the State Department of Business and Economic Development (DBED). Consequently, whenever DBED revises its population projections for Oahu, the objectives and policies of the Plan will be reevaluated in light of the new projections, and amendments will be proposed as may be appropriate. Also, whenever revised population projections include an extended time horizon, the General Plan will be amended to maintain a planning horizon of approximately 20 years.

### **Interpretation**

Conflicts which may arise regarding the interpretation or prioritization of any of the objectives and policies of the General Plan will be resolved by the City Council. All policy statements and the "% of total" figures in the population distribution table contained in this Plan are intended to serve as policy guidelines, as opposed to rigid requirements, in the preparation and amendment of Development Plans and agency plans, programs, and projects.