

# 4 GROWTH MANAGEMENT

The purpose of the Growth Management Element (GME) is to establish policies that will lead to sustainable growth and promote more efficient coordination of land use, transportation, and infrastructure development. This Element balances the demands for public facilities generated by new development with plans, capital improvement programs, and a development mitigation program. The GME is consistent with the current requirements of the Contra Costa Transportation Improvement and Growth Management Program (Measure J) passed by Contra Costa County voters in 2004 and administered by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority. Measure J extended Measure C, which established requirements for the Growth Management Element in the prior General Plan.

## **4.1 Background**

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### **MEASURE C**

In 1988, the voters of Contra Costa County approved the Contra Costa Transportation Improvement and Growth Management Ordinance (Measure C), which provided for a half-cent sales tax to fund transportation project and programs in the County. The goal of the measure was to improve the quality of life in Contra Costa County by reducing congestion on major streets and highways, and by keeping new growth in balance with the capacity of public facilities. It required cities such as San Pablo to:

- Adopt a GME in their General Plans, including Level of Service standards for non-regional routes and performance standards for public facilities;

- Implement a range of programs to ensure new development pays its fair share of the costs of additional facilities needed to support it;
- Participate in joint planning with other jurisdictions in Contra Costa County on matters concerning growth;
- Develop a five-year capital improvement program to meet or maintain traffic service and performance standards;
- Adopt a transportation demand management resolution or ordinance; and
- Address the balance of jobs and housing within the jurisdiction.

Since going into effect in 1989, Measure C funding has provided for several capital improvement projects in or close to San Pablo, including the improvement of the North Richmond/I-80 bypass and realignment of Camino Pablo/San Pablo Dam Road. The original Measure C had a sunset date of March 30, 2009.

## **MEASURE J**

In 2004, Contra Costa County voters authorized an extension of Measure C with modifications to the growth management program set up by Measure C. This new measure, named Measure J, came into effect on April 1, 2009. The basic requirements of Measure J are similar to those in Measure C, except the requirements for the GME have been simplified and the GME no longer requires traffic Level of Service standards and performance standards. Additionally, Measure J imposes two new requirements: 1) local jurisdictions must demonstrate reasonable progress in providing housing options for people of all income levels in a periodic report to the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, and 2) they must adopt a voter-approved Urban Limit Line (ULL) that complies with the "Principles of Agreement" as established by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority.

Besides the changes mentioned above, the overall objectives of the Growth Management Program are to:

- Assure that new residential, business and commercial growth pays for the facilities required to meet the demands resulting from that growth;

- Require cooperative transportation and land use planning among local jurisdictions in the County;
- Support land use patterns within Contra Costa County that make more efficient use of the transportation system, consistent with the General Plans of local jurisdictions; and
- Support infill and redevelopment in existing urban areas.

As with Measure C, local jurisdictions are required to adopt and maintain a GME. By adopting this GME San Pablo is eligible to receive its share of the Local Transportation Maintenance and Improvement funds generated by the Measure J Sales Tax and is also eligible for Contra Costa Transportation for Livable Communities (CCTLC) Funds. Under Measure J, the new growth management program will remain in effect through year 2034. The City provides an update on its Growth Management progress to the Contra Costa Transportation Authority every two years in order to remain eligible for transportation funds that flow through the agency.



Growth Management Element policies ensure that new developments contribute to the establishment of parks, fire, police, sewer, and other services.

## **4.2 The Growth Management Element**

### **AUTHORITY**

The Growth Management Element is adopted pursuant to the authority granted to local jurisdictions by Section 65303 of the Government Code of the State of California, which states:

*"The general plan may include any other elements or address any other subjects which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county or city."*

### **RELATION TO OTHER PLAN ELEMENTS**

The GME is one of several elements of the General Plan. The role of the GME within the context of the General Plan is to provide policy direction on managing growth and funding improvements needed to mitigate the impacts of development. The policies in the GME complement and inform policies of other General Plan elements.

Crucial relationships exist between the GME and other General Plan elements. How much growth is desirable and whether development provides opportunities for affordable housing, promotes walkability, or grows the local employment, are all issues that tie the elements together. For instance, Circulation Element policies must consider routes of regional significance designated under the Measure J growth management program and the need to participate in regional planning efforts as specified in the GME. The Land Use Element is also closely tied to the GME. The adoption of an Urban Limit Line, for example, impacts the design of land use patterns and limits urban expansion in San Pablo. Safety policies, especially policies limiting further growth based on a threat to public health, safety or welfare, must also be consistent with the GME.

Because many General Plan elements are interrelated, there is some overlap in policies and actions from element to element. Where this overlap occurs, cross references between elements are provided.

### **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK AND DEFINITIONS**

**Contra Costa Transportation Authority.** The Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) was created in 1988 to manage the funds generated by the voter-approved, half-cent

transportation sales tax, Measure C and its extension Measure J. CCTA oversees planning and construction of capital projects included in the Measure C and Measure J Expenditure Plans and implements the County's Growth Management Program. CCTA also serves as Contra Costa's Congestion Management Agency (CMA).

**West Contra Costa County Transportation Commission.** The West Contra Costa County Transportation Commission (WCCTC, formerly known as the West Contra Costa County Transportation Advisory Committee or WCCTAC) is one of four sub-regional transportation planning committees created in 1988 to advise the CCTA on Measure C expenditures and transportation concerns specifically related to the cities of San Pablo, Richmond, El Cerrito, Hercules, and Pinole as well as the transit agencies serving these cities including AC Transit, WestCAT, and BART. The WCCTC also assists in designing and implementing improvement projects and programs related to transportation services that are not specifically linked to Measure J funding, such as air quality improvement and congestion management.

**Urban Limit Line (ULL).** The Urban Limit Line or ULL is a planning boundary, defined by voters, beyond which no urban land uses can be designated during the term of the General Plan. Properties that are located outside the ULL may not obtain General Plan Amendments that would re-designate them for an urban land use. Land inside the ULL is governed by the land use designations contained in the General Plan. However, the fact that a property is located inside the ULL provides no guarantee or implication that it may be developed during the lifetime of the General Plan.

**Routes of Regional Significance.** Routes of Regional Significance are designated by CCTA based on recommendations from the regional transportation planning committees (RTPCs) such as WCCTC. In evaluating the appropriateness of the designation, the following criteria are used: (1) connection of two or more "regions" of the County; (2) connection across County boundaries; (3) significant amount of through traffic; and (4) provision of access to a regional highway or transit facility (e.g., a BART station or freeway interchange). The designation of regional routes was essentially completed in the 1990s and consists of Interstate-80, San Pablo Avenue, 23rd Street, El Portal Drive, and San Pablo Dam Road. Other roads may be proposed in the future for designation by WCCTC, subject to approval of CCTA.

**Action Plan.** A document prepared by WCCTC for adoption by CCTA that includes: (1) a specific program for each designated Route of Regional Significance, consisting of traffic service objectives and actions and responsibilities for implementing them; (2) regional actions for reducing congestion such as land use policy changes and demand management strategies; and (3) a process for monitoring and review of activities that might affect the performance of the regional transportation system. The latest WCCTC Action Plan Update was completed in February 2023.

**Transportation Demand Management (TDM).** A program to increase the efficiency of the transportation systems, reduce demand for road capacity during the peak hour, and otherwise affect travel behavior to minimize the need for capacity increasing capital projects. An adopted TDM program is a requirement for compliance with Measure J.

### 4.3 Urban Limit Line

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The City of San Pablo is bordered on all sides by developed areas of the City of Richmond and El Sobrante Township. Because of the urbanized nature of its location, the City has little geographic space in which to expand and its incorporated boundary has remained largely unchanged since the 1980s. The unincorporated Rollingwood neighborhood, which is in the City's Planning Area, is within the County's Urban Limit Line (ULL).

In response to Measure J, the City has adopted the County's voter-approved ULL as the City's ULL to identify the City's planned urban area. Policies related to the Urban Limit Line are listed below.

#### GUIDING POLICIES

*GME-G-1 Manage the City's growth and protect open space by establishing an Urban Limit Line (ULL).*

#### IMPLEMENTING POLICIES

**GME-I-1** Adopt and maintain a voter-approved ULL in the General Plan Land Use Diagram, consistent with the requirements of Measure J, to promote compact, infill development and protect open space.

*For purposes of this policy, an “Urban Limit Line” is defined as a boundary beyond which urban development may not occur. “Urban development” refers to development requiring one or more municipal services such as water service, sewer service, storm drainage, and other public facilities and services.*

GME-I-2 Allow the ULL to be amended by a vote of San Pablo’s residents or by the City Council by a majority vote after holding a public hearing and making one or more of the following findings based on substantial evidence in the record:

- A natural or human-caused disaster or public emergency has occurred that warrants the provision of housing and/or other community needs on land located outside the ULL;
- An objective study has determined that the ULL is preventing the City from providing its fair share of affordable housing, or regional housing; as required by State law, and the City Council finds that a change to the ULL is necessary and the only feasible means to enable the City to meet these requirements;
- The change is minor, affecting no more than five acres in a given calendar year or 30 acres of land in total through January 1, 2035; the land subject to the change is immediately adjacent to developed land and water and sewer connections are available; there is no vacant land available within the ULL to accommodate the proposed development; and it is not reasonably feasible to accommodate the proposed development by re-designating land within the ULL; or
- The change is required to conform to applicable California or Federal law.

## 4.4 Development Review and Mitigation

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Under Measure J, each jurisdiction in the County must consider, evaluate, and develop programs to mitigate the impacts of new development on automobile, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities, both locally and regionally. Additionally, Measure J directs jurisdictions to establish and

adopt programs to ensure that new growth pays its share of the costs associated with that growth.

For projects that are anticipated to generate in excess of 100 net new peak hour vehicle trips, traffic studies are required to identify the project-specific transportation impacts on the local and regional street network. The City may set a different threshold for requirements of these studies. In addition to identifying project-related impacts and an estimate of vehicle miles travelled (VMT), traffic studies should provide a means for identifying mitigation measures, such as construction of roadway improvements or payment of a pro rata share of the cost to construct those improvements. General Plan programs that promote the use of transportation alternatives to the automobile may be incorporated by reference into the traffic study.

Regardless of whether a traffic study is prepared for a project, project developers are still required to pay mitigation fees to help fund planned improvements to the local or regional roadway system as part of broader mitigation programs. These programs include both a local portion to mitigate impacts on local streets and facilities, and a regional portion to fund regional and subregional transportation projects. Some examples of local transportation projects that may be funded in part by development mitigation fees are new bicycle routes and parking facilities. Where mitigation programs require payment of fees for purposes of mitigating the specific impacts of proposed development, the programs must preclude the possibility for Measure J monies to be used to offset or replace any development-related mitigation fees that would otherwise be collected from developers.

Following the passage of Measure C, to standardize the mitigation fees and collection programs in the CCTA area, the West County Subregional Transportation Mitigation Program (STMP) was developed with the participation and concurrence of local jurisdictions in determining the most feasible methods of mitigating regional traffic impacts.

In late 2016, WCCTC began the process of updating the STMP and its nexus study. The consultant team developed a series of technical memos program, reviewed West County existing conditions and growth projections, developed criteria for a project list and identified projects and determined the nexus between the projects and the maximum potential fee that could be charged.

During the first quarter of 2019, the City of San Pablo, as well as El Cerrito, Hercules, Pinole, Richmond, and the County of Contra Costa each adopted a new ordinance implementing the 2019 STMP update. These jurisdictions share a desire to assure that new development in West County pays its fair share toward regional circulation and transit improvements that are proportional to the traffic impact the new development will generate. The local fees collected in West County provide congestion relief to mitigate traffic on regional routes and through improved transit service.

The updated 2019 STMP program began on July 1, 2019. Fees are adjusted each year based on the Engineering News Record's February Construction Cost Index for the San Francisco Bay Area.

#### GUIDING POLICIES

- GME-G-2** *Provide adequate infrastructure and facilities to meet the demands of new development and population growth.*
- GME-G-3** *Provide new and improved pedestrian, bicycle, parking, transit and multi-modal facilities, as envisioned in the Circulation Element.*
- The General Plan Circulation Element provides policy direction on pedestrian, bicycle, and transit-related issues. (See Chapter 5).*

#### IMPLEMENTING POLICIES

- GME-I-3** Continue to require new development to pay its fair share of needed transportation improvements through impact fees, community benefit agreements, and other mechanisms, through use of the STMP fee developed by CCTA.
- Under the development mitigation programs, the City collects fees to mitigate transportation impacts to both local and regional transportation facilities. This ensures new development contributes a fair amount to maintain or improve transportation facilities and services in proportion to the demand generated by project occupants and users.*

## IMPLEMENTING POLICIES

**GME-I-4** Continue to require new development to pay its fair share of needed transportation improvements through impact fees, community benefit agreements, and other mechanisms, through use of the STMP fee developed by CCTA.

*Under the development mitigation programs, the City collects fees to mitigate transportation impacts to both local and regional transportation facilities. This ensures new development contributes a fair amount to maintain or improve transportation facilities and services in proportion to the demand generated by project occupants and users.*

**GME-I-5** Approve a development project only after making findings that one or more of the following conditions are met:

- No revenue from Measure J will be used to replace or provide developer funding that has or would have been committed to any mitigation project;
- The development project will fully fund public facilities and infrastructure as necessary to mitigate any incremental impacts arising from the new development; and
- The development project will pay mitigation fees for public facilities and infrastructure improvements in proportion to the development's impacts.

**GME-I-6** Prepare and adopt a five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that describes City-sponsored capital projects. The CIP shall include funding sources covering the complete cost of the project as well as intended phasing, and be reviewed every five years so that it accurately reflects the City's priorities and community needs.

- GME-I-7 Continue to support a regional development mitigation program consistent with the Countywide Comprehensive Transportation Plan that funds regional and sub-regional projects. Regional mitigation measures may include fees, assessments, exactions or other contributions that provide community facilities and infrastructure for planned and proposed development.

Policies specifically related to improving bicycle and pedestrian networks are included in Chapter 5: Circulation.

## **4.5 Transportation Planning**

The City recognizes the important role played by transportation planning and supports cooperative transportation planning efforts with surrounding jurisdictions to manage growth. At the local level, San Pablo seeks to improve land use and transportation planning through policies that improve transit ridership, promote mixed use development along transit corridors (additional information is in Chapter 3 of the General Plan, the Land Use Element), encourage walkability and bikeability with an interconnected system of walkways and bicycle routes (additional information is in Chapter 5, Circulation Element). At the regional level, San Pablo participates in regional transportation planning in consultation with Contra Costa Transportation Authority, AC Transit, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART), and other transportation agencies as well as nearby cities.

Goals and policies in this section will help to address transportation planning, particularly in relation to regional growth. Policies on circulation, road improvements, traffic standards, and transit related issues, are contained in the General Plan Circulation Element.



The City pursues funding from the Contra Costa Transportation Authority for roadway projects to maintain level of service standards.

## GUIDING POLICIES

- GME-G-4 Promote mixed-use, high density infill development and support land use patterns that make more efficient use of the transportation system.*
- GME-G-5 Continue to support a cooperative inter-jurisdictional growth monitoring and decision-making process and coordinated planning between San Pablo and its neighboring cities, the County, and other public and regional agencies.*
- GME-G-6 Continue to support efforts to establish a regional approach to transportation and land use planning.*
- GME-G-7 Coordinate circulation system plans with other jurisdictions' and agencies' plans, including but not limited to Richmond, Pinole, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, and Caltrans.*

## IMPLEMENTING POLICIES

- GME-I-8 Continue to participate in on-going, regional transportation planning efforts in cooperation with other jurisdictions and agencies to reduce cumulative regional traffic impacts.
- The City will collaborate with neighboring cities and regional transportation agencies to create an efficient and balanced transportation system and support regional growth management efforts. Additionally, City staff will participate in Contra Costa Transportation Authority's conflict resolution process as needed to resolve disputes related to the development and implementation of Action Plans and other programs described in this Element.*
- GME-I-9 Continue to work with West Contra Costa Transportation Commission (WCCTC), the Contra Costa Transportation Authority and surrounding jurisdictions to help develop General Plans, Specific Plans, and other programs, and study the effect of large developments on the regional transportation system.
- GME-I-10 Continue to implement local actions specified in the adopted WCCTC Action Plan in a timely manner, consistent with the adopted action plan.
- GME-I-11 Pursue funding from the Contra Costa Transportation Authority for roadway projects intended to implement Action Plans for Regional Routes or provide for local improvements.
- In no case will revenue from the CCTA Local Street Improvement and Maintenance Fund replace private developer funding for transportation projects needed to mitigate adverse impacts as a result of new development in new growth areas.*
- GME-I-12 Assist Contra Costa Transportation Authority in maintaining the travel demand modeling system by providing the Authority with information on planned, proposed, and approved developments within the City.

GME-I-13 Adopt and implement a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policy or ordinance.

GME-I-14 As part of development review, require preparation of a traffic impact study for all development projects expected to generate more than 100 net new peak hour vehicle trips. Ensure that traffic impact studies, include an analysis of the impacts of project-related traffic and roadway improvements on pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users, and are prepared by professional transportation consultants selected and hired by the City. Require that project proponents pay all fees associated with development of such studies.

*The traffic impact studies managed by City staff should be prepared according to CCTA's Technical Procedures, and the Institute of Transportation Engineers' Traffic Access and Impact Studies for Site Development, Proposed Recommended Practice or similar resources. When the traffic study identifies significant impacts to pedestrian, bicycle and transit users as a result of a project, the study should identify appropriate mitigation measures to reduce impacts and /or make compensatory adjustments.*

GME-I-15 Apply the Contra Costa Transportation Authority's travel demand model and technical procedures to the analysis of General Plan amendments and developments exceeding 100 net new peak-hour vehicle trips for their impact on Regional Routes of Significance and Action Plan objectives.

## **4.6 Housing Options**

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Improving existing housing stock and increasing access to high quality, affordable housing is critical in ensuring the safety, economic stability, and health of San Pablo residents. Keeping in line with the General Plan Housing Element, the City should continue to progress in providing housing opportunities for all income levels through policies that assist in tracking existing housing stock and meeting projected housing needs.

## GUIDING POLICIES

*GME-G-8 Periodically demonstrate reasonable progress in providing housing opportunities for all income levels.*

## IMPLEMENTING POLICIES

*GME-I-16 Prepare an annual report summarizing San Pablo's progress in implementing the General Plan Housing Element, and submit copies of the report to CCTA biennially.*

*Measure J requires that the annual report on the implementation of the Housing Element be submitted to CCTA every other year. The report must describe how the City intends to meet projected housing needs. Specifically, the report must include the following:*

- A table of the number of housing units approved, constructed or occupied in the City since the beginning of the reporting period, compared to the average number of units needed annually to meet the fair share regional housing need; or*
- A description of how the City has adequately planned to meet the existing and projected housing needs through the adoption of land use plans and regulatory systems which provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development; or*
- A description of how the plans and policies of the General Plan and the land use regulations of the Zoning Ordinance facilitate the improvement and development of the City's fair share regional housing need.*

*Additionally, the report must provide an analysis of transportation impacts of the City's housing development projects on local and regional transit systems, and report on the City's progress in incorporating measures supporting bicycle, pedestrian and transit access into its development approval process.*

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