



General Plan

City of Fremont General Plan

Adopted December 2011



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Foreword

In September 2006 the City of Fremont marked the 50th anniversary of its incorporation with a weekend-long celebration in Central Park. Tens of thousands of community members representing Fremont’s astounding ethnic diversity came to enjoy the mild weather, the entertainment, the displays, the food, and the music.

Coincidentally, around that time the City’s Planning Division was about to embark on updating the City’s guiding land use document, the General Plan. Planners knew that the weekend-long event—dubbed “Celebrate Fremont”—was an unusual opportunity to advertise the Plan update and to try to glean ideas from residents who normally don’t have the time or inclination to get involved. So the staff came up with a few fun activities for the event: a giant map of the City on foam board where visitors could mark their homes and workplaces with color-coded pins; an art table where kids were invited to draw the future Fremont they envisioned; a computer loaded with the popular “Sim City” software program that allows players to create their own city; and a multi-colored wall-length poster where the community was invited to say what they loved about Fremont, and what they’d like to see change in the future.

Nobody knew exactly what to expect, but for the staff and volunteers who worked in the General Plan tent that weekend, it turned out to be an extraordinary experience. Many thousands of Fremont residents—some whose families had lived in the area since the 1800’s, others who had come to the community as recently as a few weeks prior—stopped to add their pins to the map and their suggestions to the colorful wall poster. Some people stayed only long enough to weigh in, but others lingered to converse with staff members, volunteers or other residents. People talked, people joked, people argued. But what was most obvious: people cared.

This deep appreciation for their community, and this abundance of ideas and energy about Fremont’s future, has continued throughout the General Plan update process. Community involvement is inherently a bit chaotic, even more so in a city as large and as ethnically mixed as Fremont. But through an array of venues that began with Celebrate Fremont—community workshops, on-line surveys, design exercises, meetings with City Commissions and the City Council—a vision has gradually emerged. Fremont residents, business people, and policy makers all stated in various ways that while they embrace Fremont’s urban evolution, they also want



Celebrate Fremont



General Plan Tent Activities



Fremont Residents Sharing Ideas

the City to retain many of the attributes that they treasure. While they envision a thriving urban downtown and vibrant commercial districts in Fremont's historic town centers; more alternatives to driving; more interesting architecture and streetscapes; and a City that is "green," community members also want to maintain their world class parks and open space system, their high quality schools, and the City's many attractive neighborhoods. In essence, residents said, "Fremont is a great place to live; but it can be greater!"

The Fremont General Plan is a roadmap to this "even greater" future.

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Introduction

What is a General Plan?

The General Plan can be referred to as a city's "Constitution" for growth and development and the policy foundation upon which all development and land use decisions are based. Each general law city and county in the State of California is required to have a General Plan that addresses specific elements as identified by the State. It contains long term goals for the City's development and conservation, and the implementation actions that will move the City towards achievement of those goals. It is the official adopted policy regarding the future location, character and quality of physical development, and conservation of the natural environment.

A General Plan is also a guide to decision making. It provides the City a vehicle for balancing social, economic and environmental benefits with the costs associated with development. Most other City policies and regulations regarding development are derived from the General Plan. All ordinances and regulations adopted to guide private and public development must be consistent with and implement the goals of the General Plan. The zoning ordinance, development standards, design guidelines, public capital improvements and other City development actions and policies must all be consistent with the General Plan.

Table i-1 City of Fremont General Plan Organization to Fulfill State Requirements

State Element Requirement:	<i>City of Fremont General Plan Chapter</i>
1. Land Use Element:	<i>Land Use Chapter</i>
2. Circulation Element:	<i>Mobility Chapter</i>
3. Housing Element:	<i>Housing Chapter</i>
4. Conservation Element:	<i>Conservation Chapter</i>
5. Open Space Element:	<i>Land Use Chapter</i>
6. Noise Element:	<i>Safety Chapter</i>
7. Safety Element:	<i>Safety Chapter</i>



Irvington Forum



Envision Fremont Boulevard Workshop

Fremont General Plan

The Fremont General Plan establishes a new twenty-five year vision for the community based on technical and legal requirements, extensive discussions with the community and policymaker input:

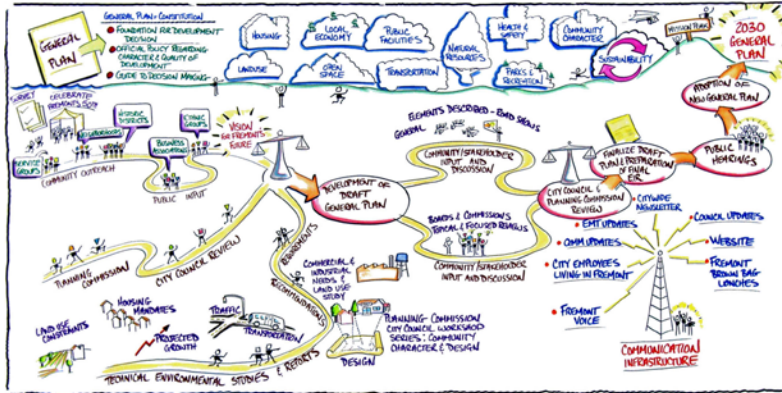
"Fremont will serve as a national model of how an auto-oriented suburb can evolve into a sustainable, strategically urban, modern city."

The General Plan begins where the previous General Plan left off. The community envisioned in the previous General Plan (adopted in 1991 and intended to guide development through the year 2010) is now largely built. The new Plan aims for an “even greater” Fremont including a flourishing downtown, increased jobs to match an increasing resident workforce, a variety of housing types, and thriving, pedestrian-oriented commercial districts. This plan also addresses the overarching vision of Fremont as a “green” city through goals and policies to meet climate change objectives, reduce solid waste, and enhance the pedestrian and cycling network.

Preparation of the General Plan

The General Plan was created over a five year process that emphasized community input and participation. The Update process kicked off in September 2006 at the City of Fremont 50-year anniversary celebration, where thousands of residents visited the City’s General Plan tent and weighed in on the future of the community through a variety of exercises and activities. Subsequently, a team of volunteers helped the City to develop a comprehensive multi-faceted outreach strategy to engage all segments of the community. After staff and volunteers presented the strategy to the City Council in May, 2007, numerous neighborhood workshops were held between June and October 2007 throughout Fremont, including Centerville, Irvington, Niles, Mission San Jose, Warm Springs, Ardenwood and the Fremont Family Resource Center. At the workshops, attendees interviewed one another regarding planning issues and recorded the results for use by City staff.

In addition to the neighborhood workshops, City staff held various focus group meetings with non-profit organizations, environmental groups, utility agencies, transit agencies and other regional agencies and organizations. Staff developed an on-line survey that generated several hundred responses and provided valuable information. In addition, staff publicized the General Plan update through the local print and television media, ar-



General Plan Roadmap

ticles in the City’s newsletter, postings on the City’s website, and an email list of almost 1,000 interested community members.

In 2008, staff organized a number of “Targeted Issue Forums” that invited the community to delve more deeply into a particular General Plan issue. These included an extensive community design exercise entitled “Envision Fremont Boulevard”; a Climate Change Workshop; and a Housing Workshop. All were well-attended and generated a variety of ideas and input.

Also in 2008 and 2009, staff held numerous work sessions with the Planning Commission and City Council to seek comment and direction on various topical issues related to the Plan. These included presentations and discussions on transit oriented development (TOD), housing and residential development, parks and open space, industrial land use, transportation, commercial/retail land use, and community design. The comments and feedback gained from the community, the Planning Commission, and the City Council all helped to frame the General Plan vision as well as many of the goals, policies and actions.

Aside from community outreach and agency interaction, project work consisted of data collection, research and analysis and mapping. This effort led to the creation of numerous Background Reports to frame the existing conditions and current state of development planning in Fremont. These reports set the framework for the Plan itself. After the topical background reports were complete, staff updated each element with new and revised goals and policies and issued a draft General Plan.

After issuance of the draft General Plan, the City held a series of community meetings to present the Plan and receive community input. The draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) was also completed and released for public review. Staff then incorporated City Council, staff and commu-

GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

Under State law, General Plans must include seven topical “elements.” Cities have the option of adding additional elements.

Cities are not required to organize their General Plan by these “elements” so long as each topical area is covered in some manner.

The City of Fremont has chosen to organize its plan by Chapters, roughly corresponding to the State mandated elements.

In addition to the mandated elements, Fremont’s General Plan also includes six optional topical elements:

- a “Sustainability” Chapter that summarizes the City’s vision for a more environmentally sustainable future,
- an “Economic Development” Chapter describing the City’s retail, commercial and industrial economic strategy;

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nity comments into the Plan where appropriate. The culmination of the EIR and revision process resulted in the Final Draft General Plan and Final EIR (FEIR). The Final Draft was considered for adoption by the Planning Commission and City Council in late 2011.

Content and Organization

The General Plan functions simultaneously as a high-level statement of the community’s vision as well as an on-the-ground tool used by the City to make development decisions. The Plan organization reflects this dichotomy. This introduction paints the “big picture” and describes the driving forces—demographic, economic, environmental, and others—that influenced the Plan and will shape Fremont over the next 20-25 years.

This section also presents and discusses all of the Guiding Principles that emerged from the extensive outreach and discussion that were a key component of the General Plan Update process. The Guiding Principles are the building blocks of the General Plan—all goals, policies and actions are a manifestation of these principles.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the General Plan theme of sustainability. This issue emerged during the General Plan Update process as a major emphasis that cuts across many topical areas. Fremont as a community envisions a future where its “greenness” is intertwined and inseparable from its economic vitality and its built environment. Because of the importance accorded to environmental sustainability by the community, and because goals, policies and actions related to sustainability are found throughout the General Plan, the Sustainability Element is the first topical element of the Plan and serves as a kind of executive summary of the “sustainable urbanism” embodied in the rest of the document.

Chapters 2 through 10 consist of the more specific topical elements. The Land Use Element, along with a new Land Use Map, is found in Chapter 2. With its analysis and discussion of open space as one important land use in Fremont, this chapter also fulfills the State requirements for the Open Space Element. Chapter 3, Mobility, lays out goals, policies and actions for community mobility and fulfills the State’s requirements for a Circulation Element. Another optional element, Community Character, is included for the first time in Fremont’s General Plan as Chapter 4. This element highlights the importance of urban design, streetscapes, and historical context in the community.

Because State Housing Element Law sets out specific requirements and a mandated schedule for updates, the Housing Element was adopted by the City Council separately from the rest of the updated General Plan in June 2009. Chapter 5 provides an executive summary of the adopted Element.

Chapter 6 updates the optional Economic Development Element and provides an overview, goals and policies of the City’s commercial and industrial economy. Chapter 7, Conservation, presents measures to preserve and enhance Fremont’s natural resources, and serves as the required Conservation Element. Chapter 8 updates the optional Parks and Recreation Element, highlighting the extraordinary value that Fremont residents place on parks. Chapter 9 updates the optional Public Facilities Element. Chapter 10, Safety, includes discussions of a variety of geologic and seismic hazards, and fulfills the State requirement for a Noise Element and a Safety Element. Chapter 11 contains the Community Plans for the City. Finally, Chapter 12 lays out a roadmap for implementing the various goals, policies and actions in the Plan.

Each Chapter is organized by topical area and each contains a background narrative and goals, policies and implementation actions necessary to achieve the goals. Goals are broad statements of aspirations held by the community; they are ideal end-states which are not always achievable. Policies provide clear direction for decision making; they indicate how the City intends to head toward the goal. Implementation actions are those specific measures and programs the City intends to undertake in the near, mid or long term, consistent with the goal and policy.

Using the General Plan

The Fremont General Plan is a sustainable, comprehensive, long term plan. It is an internally consistent program for the official development policy of the City of Fremont. It includes a land use diagram, and a variety of maps, tables, figures and text which set forth the principles, goals and policies to guide public and private development decisions. It meets the requirements and intent of the California Government Code (Section 65300). It is organized to meet the varying needs of the members of the community. A General Plan must serve several purposes depending on the needs and purposes of the user.

1. A Vision of the Future –The General Plan is an expression of what the community wants. Residents and businesses who desire more information about Fremont as a community and its plans for the future

GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

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a “Parks and Recreation” Chapter describing the City’s goals for its park lands;

a “Community Character” Chapter describing the urban design, historic preservation and character defining features of the City;

a “Public Facilities” Chapter that describes public services and buildings found in the City;

and;

a “Community Plans” Chapter that provides more specific policies for the II Community Plan Areas within the City. The Community Plan Chapter also provides a means of incorporating existing areas plans, specific plans and other place-based policies into the general Plan.

1797 leaving behind buildings, sites and an historic past that has shaped Fremont into what it is today. In the last 50+ years of incorporation, much of the city envisioned by the city's founders has been built. The five original historic towns have grown, and new community areas have filled in between.

Over the past six decades, Fremont has evolved from an agricultural community to a diverse city and large employment center with many land uses including housing, open space, industry and commerce. Fremont's industrial areas are located primarily in the south and southwestern portion of the City and support a wide range of activities including high technology, biotechnology, vehicle assembly, manufacturing, warehousing and distribution. The City's central business district and community and neighborhood commercial areas contain a variety of businesses that reflect the diversity of the City. Central Park and a network of smaller neighborhood and community parks have become symbols of Fremont's commitment to open space and high quality life for its residents. Despite rapid change and development, Fremont has managed to maintain a significant portion of its heritage by preserving its open spaces and many early buildings and structures.

Today (2011), Fremont is the fourth most populous city in the nine-county Bay Area and one of the 100 largest cities in the United States with a population of approximately 215,000 people. The City is largely defined by its open space frame, including the Fremont hills to the east, the Baylands to the west and open space to the northwest. Its overall position within the urban context of the Bay Area is defined by its topography and adjacent communities; Union City to the north, Milpitas to the south, and the City of Newark to the west.

Trends Driving Change in Fremont Today

Demographic Trends

Fremont's 2011 population of 215,000 is projected to increase to about 256,000 by 2035. This projection anticipates a growing local economy, with employment gains leading to population increases. Fremont grew rapidly as a young city – by almost 600% between 1956 and 1990.

Growth has since slowed substantially. Fremont's population increased by about 17% between 1990 to 2000, and since 2000 it has grown by about 5%. This growth rate is expected to continue through 2035. The average



Pacific Commons

number of persons per household has also increased as more extended families share households.

Fremont has become a much more ethnically diverse community over the last twenty years. In 1990, the percentage of Asian population was approximately 19%, and the percentage of White population was about 71%. By 2010, the Asian population had increased to about 51% while the White population decreased to 33%. Fremont's population is also getting older. In 1990 26% of Fremont's population was over the age of 44. In 2010, that number has grown to about 35%. As Fremont's population grows, becomes more diverse and gets older, the City's facilities and services will need to continue to evolve to meet the community's needs.

Economic Trends

Fremont has a diverse economy. Fremont has become a technology hub feeding off its location near Silicon Valley and has a variety of businesses related to computer hardware, software, manufacturing, research and development, and more recently, biotechnology, life sciences and "green" technology. In 2008, Fremont had approximately 54,000 professional and manufacturing jobs. Even taking into account the 2008-2009 economic downturn, this number is expected to increase to about 75,000 over the next 20-25 years. These jobs are located primarily in the City's industrial area and business parks, including Bayside Business Park and the Ardenwood Technology Park.

Fremont also includes a large number of service and retail jobs. In 2008, Fremont had about 18,000 retail, service and related jobs with this number expected to increase to about 28,000 in the next 20-25 years. The greatest concentration of retail and service jobs can be found in the City's retail areas, such as Pacific Commons, the Auto Mall Corridor, the Fremont Hub and the Warm Springs Town Center.

Health care and education are also leading industries in Fremont. Fremont has approximately 22,000 health care and educational related jobs, with this number expected to grow to about 36,000 over the next 20-25 years. The majority of health care jobs can be found at Washington Hospital, Palo Alto Medical Clinic, Kaiser Permanente and Fremont Hospital. Fremont Unified School District and Ohlone College provide the majority of educational related jobs in the City.

As employment grows, Fremont will be challenged to provide adequate housing and services to these workers. In fact, over time job growth has outpaced housing growth resulting in increases in housing costs and an

imbalance between housing and jobs. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) projects this trend to continue and Fremont will need sound land use and housing policies to ensure adequate housing is provided near jobs, services and transit.

Development Trends

Fremont is a large city that encompasses approximately 90 square miles. However, over half of this area is located in the Hills, Baylands, and Bay itself. These parts of the City are designated as open space and have little, if any, development potential. The remaining portion of the City is located in the flatlands (the area of Fremont located between the Hills and the Baylands), and is largely developed. Very few large parcels of vacant land exist in this area. Development activity in Fremont over the next 20-25 years will largely consist of infill projects on smaller vacant and under-utilized parcels (see discussion of “Land Supply and Development Potential” in the “Projections” section below). Infill development can be more challenging than vacant land due to pre-existing site constraints, but it has many benefits and is a sustainable form of development. It preserves open space, focuses growth near existing infrastructure, and helps generate a more varied and interesting urban landscape. As Fremont plans for the future— to provide housing, jobs and the necessary support services consistent with the City’s “green” vision, the City will place more emphasis on infill development near transit. The General Plan provides the policy framework to direct this growth and achieve this reality.

Transportation Trends

Over the last twenty years, traffic congestion on roadways in Fremont and throughout the region has steadily increased. A significant portion of the congestion during peak commute hours is the result of a growing economy, high housing costs and increased commute distances. However, commuting from home to work, or vice versa is only part of the story. Most automobile trips made by Bay Area residents are not to or from work, but rather for meeting daily needs. Most daily trips are less than five miles and include trips to the grocery store, gym, daycare center, or a child’s soccer practice. Despite an anticipated rise in fuel costs in the future, the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MTC) is projecting significant increases in regional trips and traffic congestion over the next 20-25 years.



Bicycle Parking



BART Train

The location and design of our communities, particularly modern subdivisions, have created situations that rely on the automobile for transportation. Long distances between home and other activity centers often necessitate a car. This poses a significant problem for the more than two million Bay Area residents who can't drive, many of whom are seniors, disabled, low-income or children. It is not economical to provide mass transit to low-density single-family neighborhoods, which constitute the majority of housing built over the last twenty years.

One way to reduce the growth in car trips is to direct a larger share of future growth toward vacant and underutilized land near Fremont's transit stations. Housing constructed in these areas will offer an alternative to those living on the region's periphery, far from mass transit and employment centers. The more Fremont residents can choose to walk, bicycle, or use public transit, the less congested roads will be, the cleaner air and water will be, the longer open space will remain undeveloped, and the less money will be needed for road maintenance, highway expansion, and related infrastructure.

Housing Trends

Over the next 20-25 years Fremont will continue to provide housing to meet its fair share of the regional demand. It is expected that housing units will get smaller and product type will be more varied. Fremont is predominantly a single-family community with approximately 60% of its housing stock being single-family detached units. As Fremont's housing stock has grown from approximately 62,000 to about 72,000 units from 1990 to 2008, the percentage of single-family units has remained relatively stable. However, the percentage of multi-family and apartment housing is expected to increase over the next 20-25 years as infill development comprises a growing share of new projects.

Environmental Trends


A central theme of this General Plan is the concept of sustainability and sustainable development. The basic concept of sustainability is meeting the needs of current generations without compromising that ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development includes decreasing urban sprawl, protecting sensitive landscapes, promoting resource efficiency, creating a strong local/regional economy and promoting equitable development.

One major goal of sustainable development is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to promote energy efficiency and alternative energy

sources. Scientific consensus has emerged that carbon dioxide emissions are contributing to a warming climate. Some of the consequences include rising sea levels, increased intensity of hurricanes and other storms, increased acidity of ocean waters which has negative impacts on marine biodiversity, and reduced agricultural productivity.



Sustainability Icon

During the General Plan Update process, the community and the policy makers emphasized the importance of the City's role in confronting climate change. Actions to contend with increased greenhouse gas emissions and effects of climate change start at the local level. In this General Plan, the City establishes goals and policies that will reduce the carbon footprint from new development. These goals and policies promote transit oriented and infill development, maintain a jobs/housing balance, protect and conserve open space, encourage development of linear parks that can be used for cycling and walking as an alternative to vehicle trips, and implement air and water quality standards. The issue of sustainability is not confined to one element of the General Plan, but rather cuts across all elements and topical areas. In order to highlight its multi-disciplinary nature, goals, policies and actions relating to environmental sustainability are highlighted throughout the document with a "sustainability icon." 

Technology Trends

Trends in technology seem to continually evolve, especially in the technology rich Bay Area, and even closer to Fremont, Silicon Valley. Technological advances in energy efficiency are expected to increase over time which could lead to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality. Examples include cleaner fuels and vehicles; integrated urban road pricing which discourages driving and limits the number of vehicles on the road; Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) which improves desirability and efficiency of public transportation; and, Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) which uses communication and electronic technologies to monitor and enhance roads and freeways to help reduce congestion. Some of these technologies are being investigated by MTC for implementation including transport pricing and ITS. However, these advances in technology take time to implement and also include a learning curve for the unfamiliar. Again, at the local level, the best approach for the City is to include relevant policies and actions into the General Plan that support such technological advances.

Projections For The Future

Population, Housing and Jobs

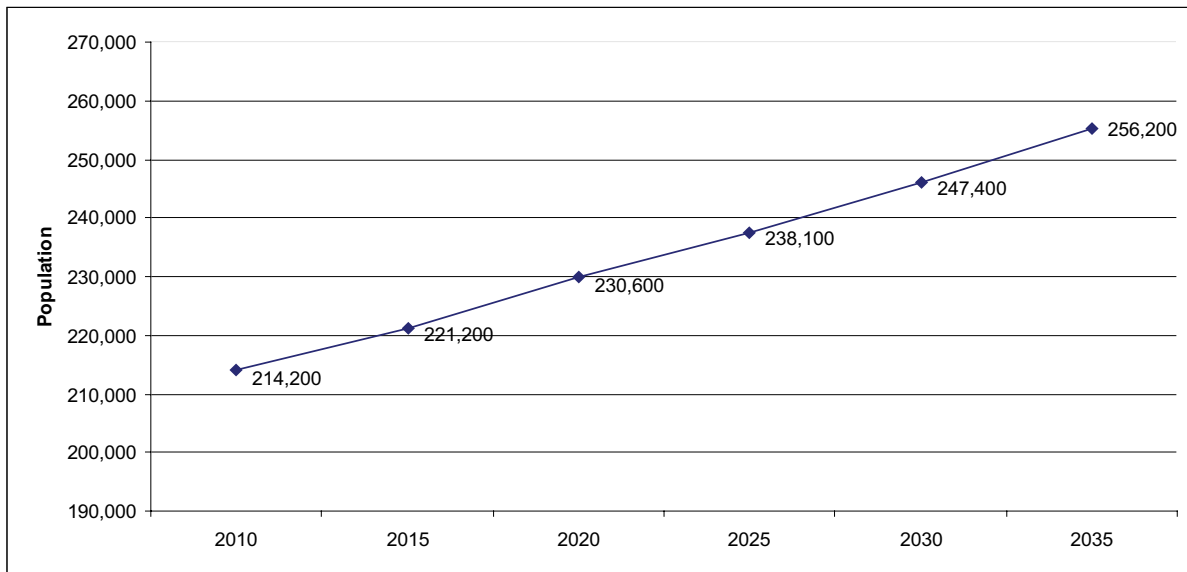
Based on demographic trends, local policy, land availability, and regional economic forecasts, Fremont is expected to continue growing through 2035. However, the rate of growth will slow significantly. Whereas Fremont grew by 625% between 1956 and 2010, its rate of growth for the next 30 years is expected to be about five percent each decade. According to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), by 2035 Fremont will be home to about 256,000 people (See Figure i-1). ABAG attributes the majority of this growth to births and increased life expectancies, rather than significant migration to the area.

One factor affecting population growth is the local economy. Fremont provides housing not only to persons working in the city, but also for persons who are employed outside the City. In fact, much of Fremont's growth between 1970 and 2000 was fueled by job growth in Santa Clara County. By 2000, Fremont had become an employment center in its own right, with residents commuting from as far away as the Central Valley.

In 2000, there were 104,830 jobs within the City. This represented close to 14 percent of Alameda County's total job base for that year. Manufacturing, services and retail were the three largest industry sectors in Fremont, with the manufacturing sector servicing Silicon Valley-type tech businesses. However, the downturn in technology sectors in 2001-02 had a significant effect on Fremont's job market. In 2005, there were only 93,950 jobs in the City, representing a 10 percent decrease from five years prior.

According to ABAG projections, Fremont will regain these lost jobs and ultimately will add an additional 35,610 new jobs by 2035. By 2035, Fremont is expected to be the sixth-largest job center in Bay Area. ABAG also estimates significant employment growth in nearby cities, including Milpitas and the Tri-Valley area of Dublin, Pleasanton and San Ramon.

Figure i-1 Fremont Population Growth Projections, 2010-2035



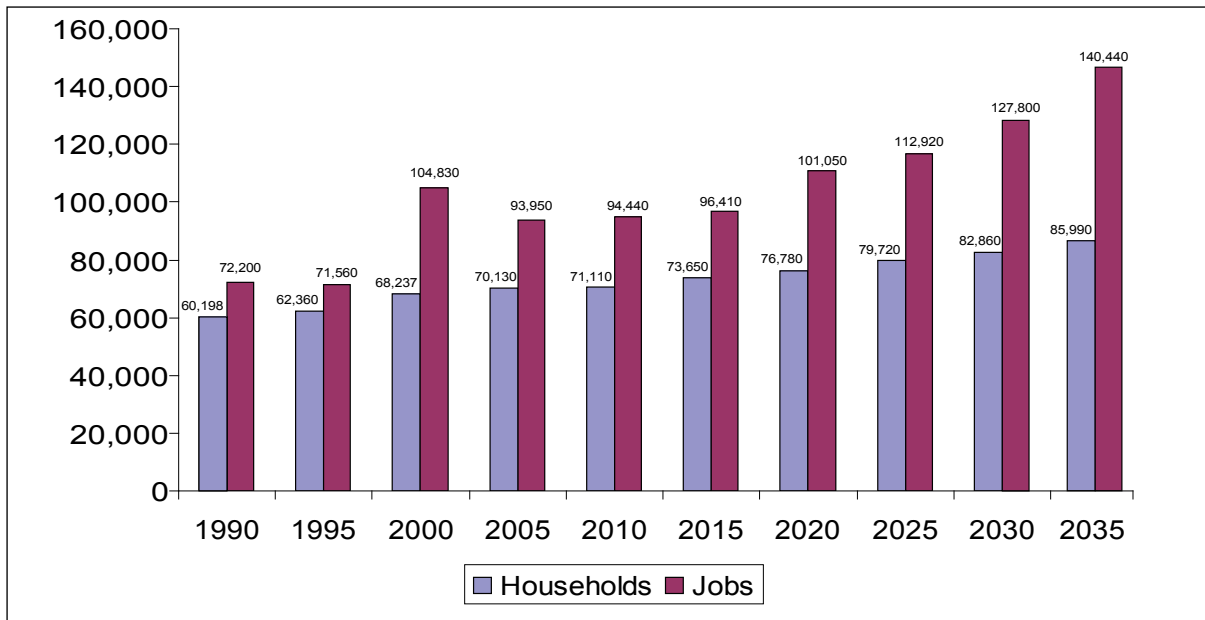
Source: ABAG Projections 2009

ABAG projects that the rate of job growth in Fremont will actually exceed the rate of housing growth during the next several decades. While total jobs are expected to increase by 33 percent between 2010 and 2035, the number of households is expected to increase by 26 percent for the same time period. The increased number of new jobs relative to household growth could exert significant pressure on the City's housing market.

If ABAG is correct, the amount of housing that needs to be produced in Fremont may be greater than what the population projections imply. Rectifying the jobs-housing imbalance is a major goal of ABAG and was the driving factor behind the Regional Housing Needs Allocation. However, the job increase projected by ABAG for the next 20 years is only an estimate, as are the projected housing needs. The actual state of the regional and local economies will drive the demand for new housing.

Figure i-2 below illustrates how the relationship between jobs and housing in Fremont has changed over time, and is projected to change in the future. Historically, the city was a bedroom community and had a jobs-housing ratio that was below the regional average. As Fremont matured, the number of jobs began increasing faster than the number of households. In 1990, there were 1.19 jobs per household in the city, compared to a regional average of 1.43. By 2000, there were 1.54 jobs per household in the city, compared to the regional average of 1.52. Despite a decline in jobs during the 2008–2009 recession, ABAG expects the longer term trend to continue in the future, with Fremont holding 1.66 jobs per household in 2030.

Figure i-2 Fremont Housing Versus Jobs, 1990-2030



Source: Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Projections 2009.

Land Supply and Development Potential

Future development in Fremont will help reshape the City by filling in gaps in the urban fabric and replacing obsolete or marginal uses. The City still has vacant land but much of that land is pending development. An increasing proportion of future growth will occur as redevelopment.

Vacant Land

Vacant land is defined as those parcels that the Alameda County Assessor's Office has determined to have zero assessed value for structure and/or those parcels that have been independently researched and concluded to be vacant. However, not all vacant land has been included in this inventory because in some cases the land use designation does not allow development. This includes land in the hill area and near the Bay that is constrained by slopes, wetlands or other reasons. For this reason the vacant land acreage totals between the Alameda County Assessor and City's Inventory do not correlate as shown on Table 2-1. Vacant parcels designated as Institutional Open Space, Public Land, Agricultural Easements, and all vacant land in Fremont's Hillside Area was excluded.

Table i-2 Vacant Land Inventory

Land Use Designation	Square Feet	Acreage
City Center	447,580	10.28
Regional Commercial	167,114	3.84
Town Center	748,424	17.18
General Commercial	595,864	13.68
Total Vacant Commercial	1,958,982	44.97
General Industrial	2,666,593	61.22
Service Industrial	382,589	8.78
Tech Industrial	21,969,429	504.35
Total Vacant Industrial	25,018,610	574.35
Residential- Hillside	2,119,194	48.65
Residential- Low	3,201,660	73.50
Residential- Low-Medium & Medium	1,280,664	29.40
Residential- Urban	912,582	20.95
Total Vacant Residential	7,514,100	172.50
Open Space	3,355	0.08
Private Open Space	3,914,727	89.87
Total Vacant Open Space	3,918,082	89.95
Mixed Use	95,203	2.19
Total Vacant Mixed Use	95,203	2.19
Total Vacant Land	38,504,978	883.95

Source: City of Fremont GIS Data, 2008

As of 2008, the City had approximately 884 acres of vacant land. The majority of this land is located in the industrial area of the City. The three industrial designations in the City, Service Industrial, Tech Industrial and General Industrial, contain 574 acres, or 81%, of the vacant total. The next largest percentage of vacant land is located in the residential designations with almost 173 acres. This area is spread through different density ranges. Private Open Space has the most vacant land, approximately 90 acres or 13%. Although land designated “Open Space” is not ordinarily considered “vacant” and not intended for development, this area is included in the inventory because some development is permitted on these lands. The City has about 45 acres of vacant land designated for commercial use. These parcels are located throughout the various commercial designations of the City. About 10 acres are located in the City Center and 17 acres are in the Town Centers. The City has two acres of vacant Mixed-Use designated land.

As shown, Fremont has some remaining development potential for growth on vacant lands. However, some of these properties have pending development projects that would ultimately lower these totals. The City will look to incorporate land use policies that take advantage of these opportunities to maximize the highest and best use for these lands. Since development costs associated with vacant land are typically less than land with improvements the City might expect these lands to be developed in the short term. Redevelopment of improved property typically incurs demolition costs and other hard costs associated with utilities and infrastructure replacement and, in some cases, environmental cleanup and remediation. Nonetheless, the City recognizes the opportunities available and can take advantage through appropriate land use policies that direct compatible development in these areas.

General Plan Vision and Guiding Principles

Using information from the community input process and technical background reports, the City Council developed a General Plan Vision Statement and a set of Guiding Principles that provide a framework for the goals and policies laid out in the Plan. In addition, the Council chose to incorporate a set of planning tenets known as "The Ahwahnee Principles for Resource-Efficient Communities" into the General Plan.

Vision Statement

"Fremont will serve as a national model of how an auto-oriented suburb can evolve into a sustainable, strategically urban, modern city."

Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles are intended to supplement the Vision Statement by expressing the major themes and topics of the General Plan. They also provide a broad framework for consistent interpretation and application of the Plan's individual goals and policies. There is no hierarchy of importance intended by the order in which they are presented.

A Sustainable Community

Sustainability—the ability to meet the needs of the current generation without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to do the same—is an overarching theme of the General Plan. By focusing future development near transit, reducing solid waste, promoting green building, encouraging energy and water conservation, preserving habitat, and a variety of other strategies, the City will reduce its environmental footprint while continuing to offer a high quality of life. The City's business sector will also be an important part of Silicon Valley's burgeoning "green economy," offering technological solutions to environmental challenges.

Becoming Strategically More Urban

As the City's vacant land supply dwindles, the ability to house our population becomes a challenge. For many reasons—preservation of open space, reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions, supporting retail in the City's core districts—the City will focus its future housing growth near transit hubs and corridors, becoming more urban in strategic locations.

Mobility – It’s Not Just About Cars

Fremont will offer a high quality and efficient circulation system that balances the needs of automobile drivers with those of public transit, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The City’s circulation system will encompass attractively-designed complete streets, transit, trails, paths and sidewalks that link multiple destinations.

Enhancing Fremont’s Parks and Open Space

Fremont offers a unique “Open Space Frame” comprised of the hill area to the east and the baylands to the west. These features help to provide a physical sense of openness that the community values. Fremont also boasts a parks system that provides a myriad of recreational opportunities and attractions, including both City and Regional Parks. Fremont will retain and enhance its Open Space Frame and will continue to supplement its outstanding parks system.

An Inclusive Community

Fremont’s residents are diverse in ethnicity, income, and age. This diversity makes Fremont a more cosmopolitan and exciting place. Fremont will cultivate this diversity by ensuring that housing is available for people across the economic spectrum and by implementing policies and programs that support both youth and older adults.

Vibrant Centers

Each of the city’s districts are unique and important to Fremont’s character as a city. Preserving and enhancing the unique identities of each of the city’s town centers will contribute to the city’s overall character, while a successful and distinctive mixed-use city center will serve as a unifying identity for the entire community.

A Diversified and Successful Local Economy

In order to provide employment for local residents and to generate tax revenues for public services, a healthy business sector is critical. Fremont’s industrial and commercial sectors will continue to include a broad array of successful businesses, large and small. The City will also boast a broad range of retail stores, including higher end retailers and restaurants that meet the needs of the community and generate tax revenues that support City services.

A Well-Designed Urban Landscape

As Fremont continues to evolve, the city's built environment will evolve with it. New development will provide interesting and attractive architecture and relate well to existing buildings. The City will continue to improve its buildings and road network in ways that support good urban design. Attractive furniture, lighting, and public art will enhance pedestrian-oriented districts. Building design will celebrate and be sensitive to Fremont's historical roots.

Preservation and Enhancement of Single Family Neighborhoods

The City's residential neighborhoods primarily consist of single-family homes. The preservation of these neighborhoods helps emphasize the value of Fremont as a strong location for families and children. Many residents of Fremont chose to live here because of the wide variety and supply of single family homes and neighborhoods. The preservation and enhancement of these areas is an important principle for the City to maintain its character as a desirable location for family life.

Community Life

Fremont will continue to be a safe community. The City will provide high-quality, equitable and fiscally responsible public safety services. Other public facilities and services, including utilities, parks, libraries, and especially schools that are of high quality and readily available, whether provided by the City or other entities. Residents will enjoy good health thanks in part to a variety of recreational opportunities, availability of fresh and healthy food, and access to high quality health care.

Ahwahnee Principles for Resource-Efficient Communities

In 1991 some of the leading professionals in the field of urban design - including Peter Katz, Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Michael Corbett, Stafanos Polyzoides, Elizabeth Moule and Peter Calthorpe - developed a set of community principles based on new and emerging ideas in community design and planning. The City Council elected to include these principles in the General Plan as another framework for achieving the General Plan vision. The principles are included verbatim

for reference only. They are not intended to be implemented as adopted policy, but rather as guidance for sound planning.

Preamble

Existing patterns of urban and suburban development seriously impair our quality of life. The symptoms are: more congestion and air pollution resulting from our increased dependence on automobiles, the loss of precious open space, the need for costly improvements to roads and public services, the inequitable distribution of economic resources, and the loss of a sense of community. By drawing upon the best from the past and the present, we can plan communities that will more successfully serve the needs of those who live and work within them. Such planning should adhere to certain fundamental principles.

Community Development

1. All planning should be in the form of complete and integrated communities containing housing, shops, work places, schools, parks and civic facilities essential to the daily life of the residents.
2. Community size should be designed so that housing, jobs, daily needs and other activities are within easy walking distance of each other.
3. As many activities as possible should be located within easy walking distance of transit stops.
4. A community should contain a diversity of housing types to enable citizens from a wide range of economic levels and age groups to live within its boundaries.
5. Businesses within the community should provide a range of job types for the community's residents.
6. The location and character of the community should be consistent with a larger transit network.
7. The community should have a center focus that combines commercial, civic, cultural and recreational uses.
8. The community should contain an ample supply of specialized open space in the form of squares, greens and parks whose frequent use is encouraged through placement and design.
9. Public spaces should be designed to encourage the attention and presence of people at all hours of the day and night.

10. Each community or cluster of communities should have a well-defined edge, such as agricultural greenbelts or wildlife corridors, permanently protected from development.
11. Streets, pedestrian paths and bike paths should contribute to a system of fully connected and interesting routes to all destinations. Their design should encourage pedestrian and bicycle use by being small and spatially defined by buildings, trees and lighting; and by discouraging high speed traffic.
12. Wherever possible, the natural terrain, drainage and vegetation of the community should be preserved with superior examples contained within parks or greenbelts.
13. The community design should help conserve resources and minimize waste.
14. Communities should provide for the efficient use of water through the use of natural drainage, drought tolerant landscaping and recycling.
15. The street orientation, the placement of buildings and the use of shading should contribute to the energy efficiency of the community.

Implementation Principles

1. The general plan should be updated to incorporate the above principles.
2. Rather than allowing developer-initiated, piecemeal development, local governments should take charge of the planning process. General plans should designate where new growth, infill or redevelopment will be allowed to occur.
3. Prior to any development, a specific plan should be prepared based on these planning principles.
4. Plans should be developed through an open process and participants in the process should be provided visual models of all planning proposals.)

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