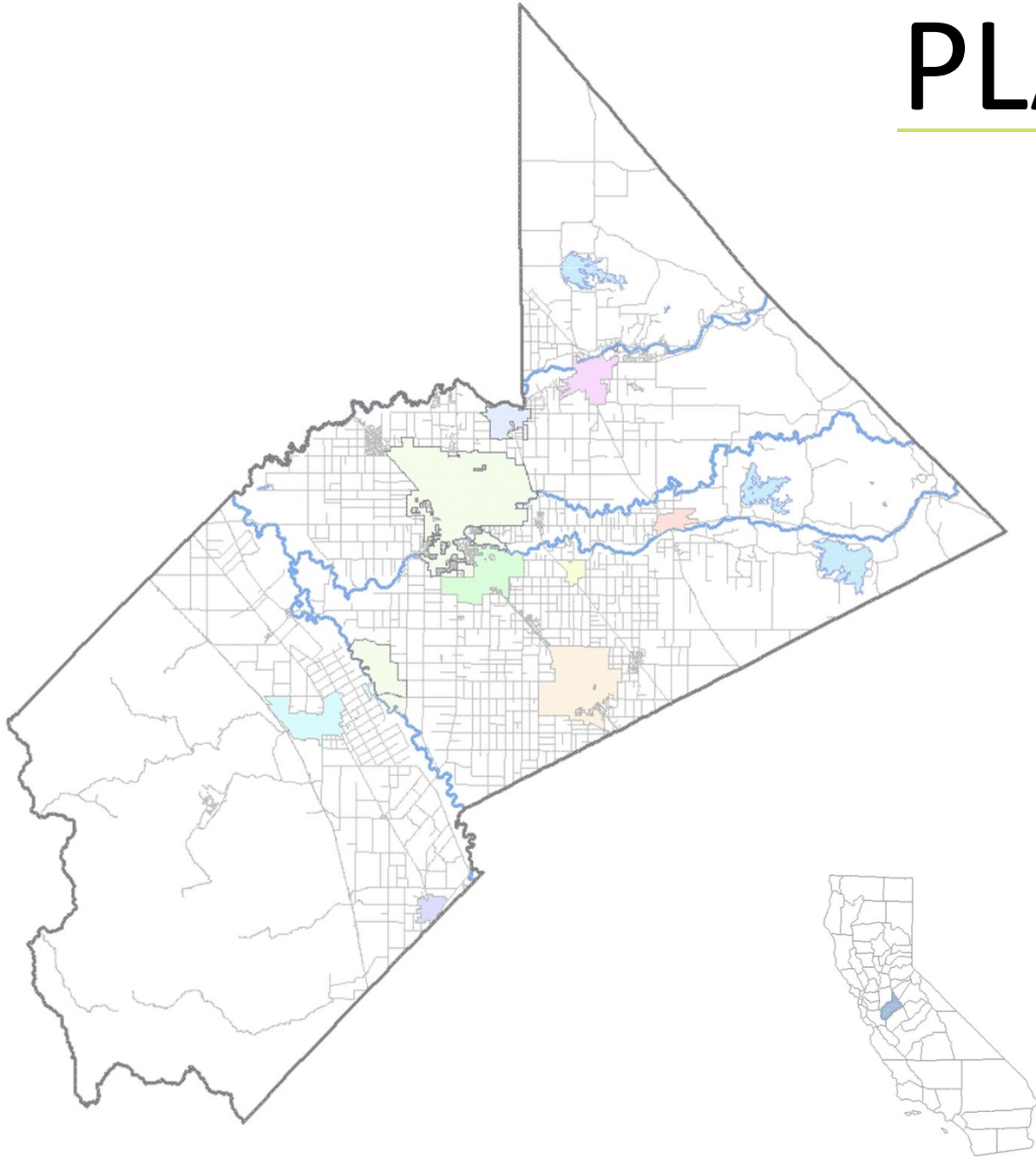


STANISLAUS COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

2015



ADOPTED ON AUGUST 23, 2016, BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
HOUSING ELEMENT PREVIOUSLY ADOPTED ON APRIL 5, 2016.

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Stanislaus County General Plan

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INTRODUCTION

Stanislaus County is located in the San Joaquin Valley, in the heart of California's Central Valley. The County is bordered on the north by San Joaquin County, the east by Mariposa, Tuolumne, and Calaveras Counties, the south by Merced County, and the west by Alameda and Santa Clara Counties. The County's total area is 1,521 square miles, approximately 973,440 acres. Two of California's major north-south routes, Interstate 5 and Highway 99, intersect the county. There are three major rivers in Stanislaus County: the Stanislaus and Tuolumne Rivers, running east to west, and the San Joaquin River running north to south.

Stanislaus County continues to be an agricultural county in transition. Prior to 1960 most of the County's population lived on farms; at the time of the 2010 Census the population of the nine incorporated cities was just over 3 times that of the unincorporated area of the County. While its economic base remains predominantly agricultural, the County's economy continues to diversify. The rapid population growth of the 1990's and early 2000's increased pressure to convert productive agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses. As a response to this rapid growth, voters passed a Thirty (30) Year Land Use Restriction Initiative (Measure E) in 2008. This requires that any redesignation or rezoning of land, in the unincorporated area, from agricultural or open space use to a residential use be approved by a majority vote of the County voters at a general or special local election. Despite the increasing pressures of development, agricultural economic output in the County continues to rise, as reflected in the County's annual Crop Reports.

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POPULATION ESTIMATES AND PROJECTIONS

According to 2000 and 2010 Census data, the population of the County as a whole grew by 15.1%, while the population of unincorporated Stanislaus County increased by only 3.2%. As indicated by Table One, most of Stanislaus County's population increase in the 2000's occurred within the nine incorporated cities, rather than the unincorporated area of the County. The county-wide trend toward growth slowed to 4.4%, between 2010 and 2015 with a county-wide population estimate in 2015 of 538,388 (Annual Estimates of the Resident Population: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2015, U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division).

**TABLE 1: POPULATION GROWTH AND DISTRIBUTION FOR STANISLAUS COUNTY,
2000 TO 2010**

City	2000	2010	Change
Modesto	188,856	201,165	6.5%
Turlock	55,810	68,549	22.8%
Ceres	34,609	45,417	31.2%
Riverbank	15,826	22,678	43.3%
Oakdale	15,503	20,675	33.4%
Patterson	11,606	20,413	75.9%
Newman	7,093	10,224	44.1%
Waterford	6,924	8,456	22.1%
Hughson	3,980	6,640	66.8%
Unincorporated	106,790	110,236	3.2%
Stanislaus County Total	446,997	514,453	15.1%
San Joaquin County	563,598	685,306	21.6%
Merced County	210,554	255,793	21.5%
California	33,871,648	37,253,956	10.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, California Department of Finance.

While population growth has slowed, continued urban development and increased population growth is anticipated. The Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG) projects that by the year 2035 the population of Stanislaus County will reach 721,582, with a projected 21.3% change in population from 2010 to 2035 in the unincorporated area (See Table 2).

TABLE 2: REGIONAL POPULATION FORECAST (BY LOCAL JURISDICTION)

City	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	Change
Ceres	45,417	50,069	55,379	60,689	65,999	70,127	54.4%
Hughson	6,640	7,012	7,437	7,862	8,287	8,805	32.6%
Modesto	201,165	211,813	223,966	236,119	248,272	263,802	31.1%
Newman	10,224	11,648	13,274	14,900	16,525	17,559	71.7%
Oakdale	20,675	22,908	25,457	28,005	30,555	32,466	57.0%
Patterson	20,413	25,065	30,375	35,685	40,995	43,559	113.4%
Riverbank	22,678	24,989	27,627	30,265	32,903	34,961	54.2%
Turlock	68,549	74,983	82,328	89,673	97,017	103,086	50.4%
Waterford	8,456	9,409	10,496	11,584	12,671	13,464	59.2%
Unincorporated	110,236	113,772	117,807	121,843	125,879	133,753	21.3%
Stanislaus County Total	514,453	551,668	594,146	636,625	679,103	721,582	40.3%
San Joaquin County	685,000	743,000	807,000	872,000	938,000	1,004,000	46.6%
Merced County	256,000	277,000	303,000	330,000	356,000	383,000	49.6%

Source: StanCOG 2014 Regional Growth Forecast

Increasing population requires new jobs and housing to support it. State legislation increasingly encourages, and in many cases requires, jurisdictions to weave together issues of jobs, housing, infrastructure, public services, transportation, natural resource management, and health into unified strategies. This type of comprehensive and coordinated planning requires a regional approach and increased cooperation between the cities and counties in efforts to find solutions to regional problems.

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2015 COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

ADOPTED AUGUST 23, 2016

As a requirement of California Government Code Section 65300, every jurisdiction throughout California must develop and adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan to guide development within that jurisdiction. The general plan elements should be comprised of “integrated, internally consistent, and compatible” policy objectives.

The general plan must include seven mandatory elements including: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Open Space, Conservation, Safety, and Noise. Each jurisdiction may opt to include additional elements as needed. Stanislaus County has combined the required Open Space and Conservation Elements due to their interrelated content. The County has also adopted one optional element, the Agricultural Element.

The 2015 comprehensive update to the Stanislaus County General Plan has a 20-year planning horizon (to 2035) and utilizes the population projections adopted by the Stanislaus Council of Governments’ (StanCOG) 2014 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy. The update did not include any changes to the Land Use Diagram, but rather was a ‘clean up’ of the General Plan to incorporate changes that had occurred in terms of legislation, code, and local standards. The update also included revisions to General Plan language and some new goals/policies/implementation measures designed to enhance and support existing goals/policies/implementation measures.

The 2015 comprehensive update did not include the Housing Element, which was adopted on a separate schedule identified by the California Department of Housing and Community Development, in compliance with State housing element law adoption requirements.

The goals of the Stanislaus County General Plan, as outlined below, support the Board of Supervisors Priorities of A Safe Community, A Healthy Community, A Strong Local Economy, Effective Partnerships, A Strong Agricultural Economy/Heritage, A Well Planned Infrastructure System, and Efficient Delivery of Public Services by providing a land-use framework responsive to the needs and conditions of the unincorporated area of Stanislaus County in compliance with State General Plan laws.

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GOALS

Land Use Element

- ONE: Provide for diverse land use needs by designating patterns which are responsive to the physical characteristics of the land as well as to environmental, economic, and social concerns of the residents of Stanislaus County.
- TWO: Ensure compatibility between land uses.
- THREE: Foster stable economic growth through appropriate land use policies.
- FOUR: Ensure that an effective level of public service is provided in unincorporated areas.
- FIVE: Complement the general plans of cities within the County.
- SIX: Promote and protect healthy living environments.
- SEVEN: Provide for direct citizen participation in land-use decisions involving the expansion of residential uses into agricultural and open-space areas in order to encourage compact urban form and to preserve agricultural land.

Circulation Element

- ONE: Provide and maintain a transportation system throughout the County for the movement of people and goods that also meets land use and safety needs for all modes of transportation.
- TWO: Maintain a safe, balanced, and efficient transportation system that facilitates inter-city and interregional travel and goods movement.
- THREE: Provide and manage parking to accommodate vehicle usage while minimizing the impacts of excessive parking supply.

Conservation/Open Space Element

- ONE: Encourage the protection and preservation of natural and scenic areas throughout the County.
- TWO: Conserve water resources and protect water quality in the County.
- THREE: Provide for the long-term conservation and use of agricultural lands.
- FOUR: Provide for the open-space recreational needs of the residents of the County.
- FIVE: Reserve, as open space, lands subject to natural disaster in order to minimize loss of life and property of residents of Stanislaus County.
- SIX: Improve air quality.
- SEVEN: Support efforts to minimize the disposal of solid waste through source reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, and transformation activities.
- EIGHT: Preserve areas of national, state, regional, and local historical importance.

NINE: Manage extractive natural resources to ensure an adequate supply without degradation of the environment.

TEN: Protect fish and wildlife species of the County.

ELEVEN: Conserve resources through promotion of waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, ride-share programs, and alternative energy sources such as mini-hydroelectric plants, gas and oil exploration, and transformational facilities such as waste-to-energy plants.

Noise Element

ONE: Prevent the encroachment of incompatible land uses near known noise producing industries, railroads, airports, and other sources to protect the economic base of the County.

TWO: Protect the citizens of Stanislaus County from the harmful effects of exposure to excessive noise.

Safety Element

ONE: Prevent loss of life and reduce property damage as a result of natural disasters.

TWO: Minimize the effects of hazardous conditions that might cause loss of life and property.

Housing Element

ONE: Encourage the provision of adequate, affordable housing including units for rent and for ownership for residents of all income groups, including extremely low-, very low-, low- and moderate-income households.

TWO: Maximize housing choices and opportunities throughout Stanislaus County.

THREE: Conserve and improve Stanislaus County's existing housing stock.

FOUR: Designate sufficient sites for all types of residential development required to meet projected housing needs.

FIVE: Minimize governmental constraints to affordable housing in Stanislaus County.

Agricultural Element

ONE: Strengthen the agricultural sector of our economy.

TWO: Conserve our agricultural lands for agricultural uses.

THREE: Protect the natural resources that sustain our agricultural industry.

AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL PLAN

As allowed by California Government Code Section 65358, the General Plan may be amended up to four times per year. In accordance with Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 85-1673, adopted October 29, 1985, General Plan amendments may be considered by the Board of Supervisors in the months of April, August, and December, and up to one additional time during the calendar year to be set by the Board of Supervisors.

General Plan amendments affect the entire County and any evaluation must give primary concern to the County as a whole; therefore, a fundamental question must be asked in each case: "Will this amendment, if adopted, generally improve the economic, physical and social well-being of the County in general?" Additionally, the County in reviewing General Plan amendments shall consider how the levels of public and private service might be affected. In each case, in order to take affirmative action regarding a General Plan amendment application, it must be found that:

- a. The General Plan amendment will maintain a logical land use pattern without detriment to existing and planned land uses.
- b. The County and other affected government agencies will be able to maintain levels of service consistent with the ability of the government agencies to provide a reasonable level of service.

In the case of a proposed amendment to the Land Use diagrams of the Land Use Element, an additional finding must be established.

- c. The amendment is consistent with the goals and policies.

In such a case, the Land Use diagrams of the Land Use Element will be updated by the Planning Department in response to approved amendments.