

1 INTRODUCTION

What does the future hold for Calistoga? Although the City's government can neither predict the future nor dictate how it will evolve, the General Plan Update process provides an opportunity to ask a major question: How does Calistoga want to develop? Change is inevitable, but through the goals, objectives, policies and actions established in the General Plan, the local community can steer that change in a desired direction.

A. Vision Statement

The Vision Statement below is a description of what Calistoga wants to become through the implementation of its General Plan. The Vision Statement provides a sense of the purpose and mission for the General Plan and sets the tone for the goals, objectives, policies and actions of the rest of the General Plan.

Calistoga will remain a walkable, small town, made up of a vibrant, eclectic main street set within pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods of modestly-sized homes and surrounded by wineries, vineyards and other agricultural lands. The temperate climate, the Palisades, Napa River and its creeks frame our physical identity.

Visitors will continue to be attracted to Calistoga because of its unique small-town character, shops, restaurants, health spas and the surrounding natural beauty. Calistogans know that the town also provides a strong sense of belonging for its residents. It contains a broad array of 19th and early 20th century buildings that form a multi-faceted streetscape and support an economically-diverse community.

Calistoga will retain its qualities for future generations by providing a vibrant economy linked to a viable community social structure, and by conserving the ecosystem that supports it. Calistoga is, and will remain, a community in which its residents can take pride.

B. Purpose of this General Plan

The General Plan is the City of Calistoga's fundamental land use and development policy document, which shows how the city will grow and conserve its resources. The purpose of this General Plan is to guide development and conservation in the city through 2020.

California Government Code Section 65300 requires that the General Plan must be comprehensive, internally consistent and long-term. Although required to address the issues specified in State law, the General Plan may be organized in a way that best suits the City. The plan should be clearly written, available to all those concerned with the community's development, and easy to administer.

The Calistoga General Plan meets these requirements while also articulating a vision for the city's long term physical form and development. It serves as a basis for future decision-making by municipal officials, including City staff, the Planning Commission and City Council.

This document supersedes the previous General Plan, adopted in 1990. It draws from other current City documents, such as the Water Facilities Plan. Its implementation will include actions to update these other planning documents so that they can be adjusted to development projections contained in the 2003 General Plan.

C. The City and Its Planning Area

As shown in Figure INTRO-1, Calistoga is located in the northern-most part of the Napa Valley and is part of the nine-county Bay Area region. Calistoga is at the junction of State highways 29 and 128, 27 miles north of Napa (the County seat) and 76 miles northeast of San Francisco. Calistoga has a total area of 2.5 square miles.

The State encourages cities to look beyond their borders when undertaking the sort of comprehensive planning required of a General Plan. For this reason, the General Plan assesses an area known as the Planning Area, which is larger than the city limits. The Planning Area is mapped in Figure INTRO-2. It encompasses most of the upper Napa Valley, as well as the hillsides that surround Calistoga on three sides.

While the Planning Area does not give the City any regulatory power, it signals to the County and to other nearby local and regional authorities that Calistoga recognizes that development within this area has an impact on the future of the city. Under State law, the City is invited to comment on development within the Planning Area that is subject to review by the County. However, the unincorporated portion of the Calistoga Planning Area will remain under the jurisdiction of the County of Napa.

Besides its city limits and Planning Area, every city in California has a Sphere of Influence determined by the City and the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). The Sphere of Influence is an area outside of the city limits that the City and LAFCO anticipate will be annexed in future years. Calistoga's Sphere of Influence is the same as its city limits.

D. Plan Contents

This General Plan includes this introduction and a brief overview of Calistoga, as well as twelve separate "elements" that set goals, objectives, policies and actions for a given subject. Six of these elements cover the seven topics required by Government Code Section 65302, while the remaining six elements have been prepared by the City to meet local needs and concerns. A brief explanation of the arrangement of the 2003 General Plan is provided here.

Land Use Element

The Land Use Element designates all lands within the city for a specific use such as housing, business, industry, open space, recreation, or institutional use. The Land Use Element provides development regulations for each land use category, and also provides overall land use policies for the city. The Land Use Element is one of the seven State-required General Plan elements.

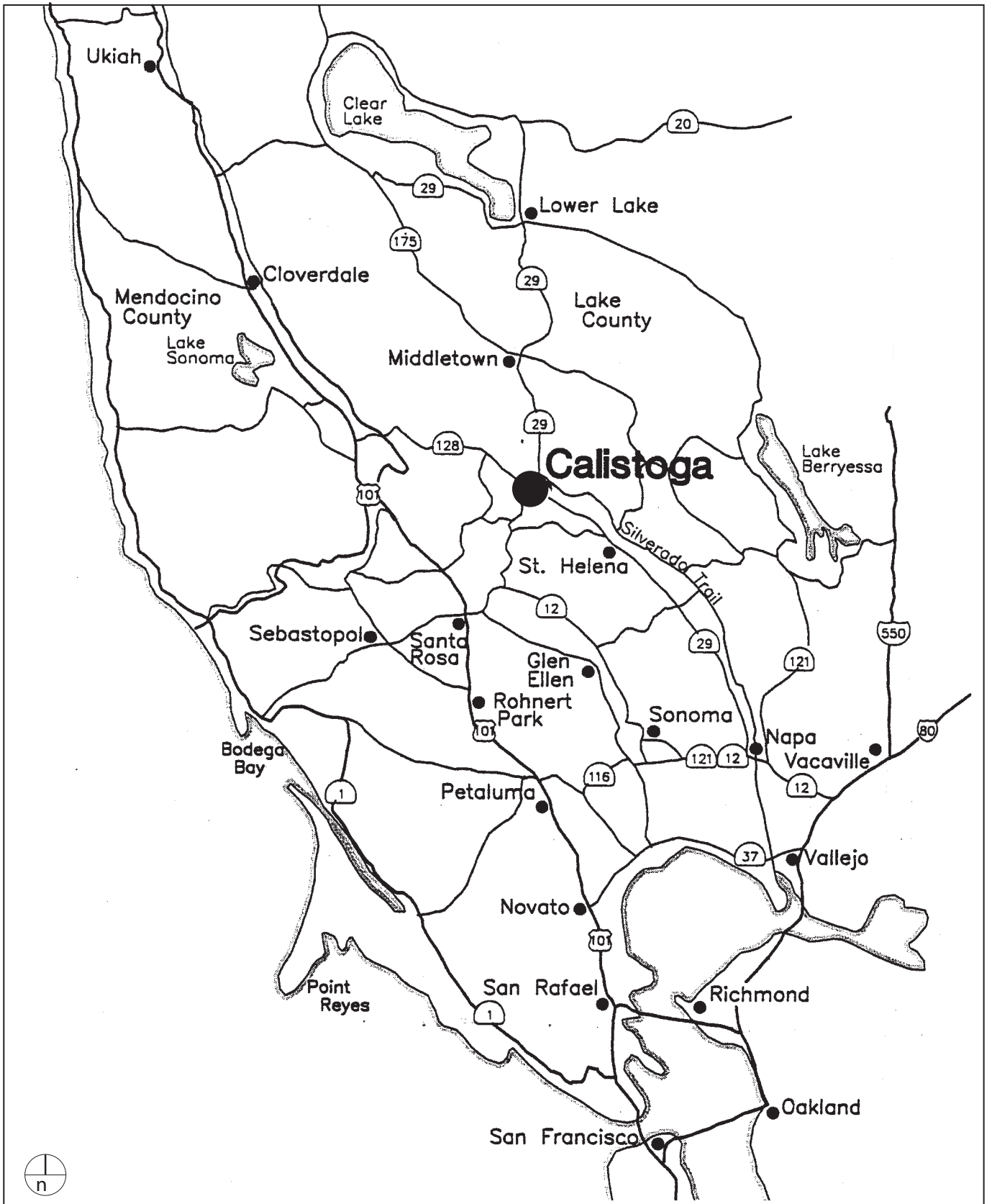


FIGURE INTRO-1

REGIONAL LOCATION

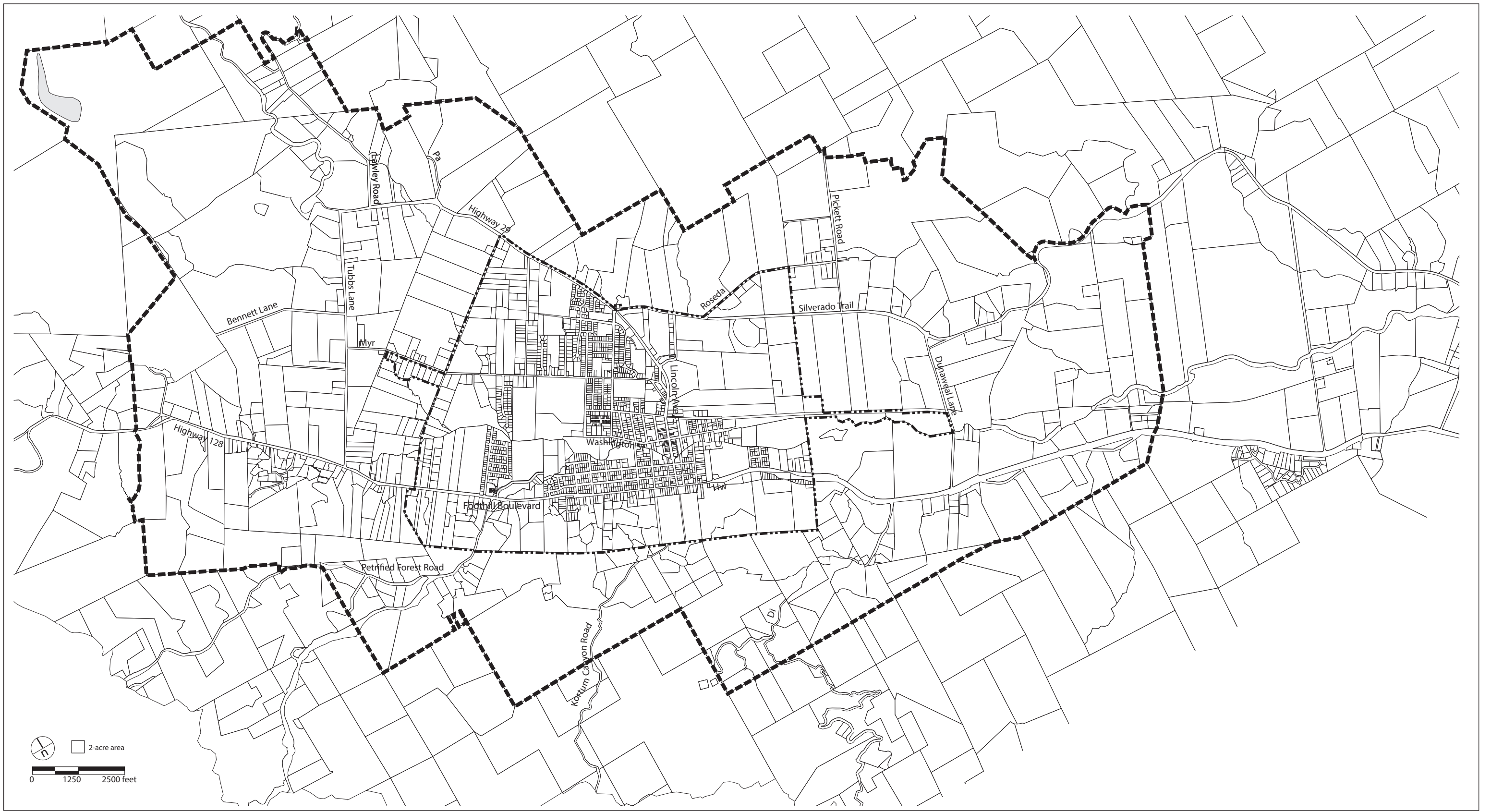


FIGURE INTRO-2

CITY LIMITS AND PLANNING AREA

- Planning Area Boundary
- City Limits

Community Identity Element

The Community Identity Element is not required by State law. However, due to the importance of Calistoga's unique physical and visual resources, the community has decided to include a Community Identity Element to identify, protect and enhance these features. The Community Identity Element provides information on visual and urban design resources, historic buildings, and archaeological and cultural resources.

Circulation Element

State law provides for a Circulation Element that specifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major streets and other transportation facilities. As required by law, all facilities in the Circulation Element are to be correlated with the land uses foreseen in the Land Use Element.

Housing Element

Of all the State-mandated General Plan Elements, the requirements surrounding the Housing Element are most particular. Government Code Section 65588 requires Housing Elements to be updated every five years and to include specific components such as analysis of the existing housing stock, analysis of existing and projected housing needs, and quantification of the number of housing units that will be developed, preserved and improved through the policies and actions.

Infrastructure Element

The Infrastructure Element covers existing conditions, issues and goals, objectives, policies and actions related to water facilities and service, wastewater collection and treatment, water reclamation and stormwater collection facilities. This element is not required by State law, but has been developed by the City due to the importance of these facilities.

Public Services Element

The Public Services Element is devoted to fire protection, law enforcement, solid waste collection, schools and libraries. As with the Infrastructure Element, this element is not required by State law, but has been included by the City due to the importance of these services.

Open Space and Conservation Element

This element combines two elements required under State law: the Open Space Element and the Conservation Element. It addresses the preservation of open space and the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources.

Noise Element

State law requires a General Plan to include a Noise Element that addresses noise problems in the community and analyzes and quantifies current and projected noise levels from a variety of sources. The Noise Element includes goals, objectives, policies and actions to address current and foreseeable noise problems.

Public Safety Element

State law requires the development of a Public Safety Element to protect the community from risks associated with the effects of seismic hazards, other geologic hazards, flooding, and wildland and urban fires.

Geothermal Resources Element

Calistoga's character and economy are, to a certain degree, based on the presence of geothermal water and steam resources. Therefore, the General Plan contains an element related to the conservation and use of these resources.

Economic Development Element

Although not mandated by State law, this element is included to work toward and maintain a balanced mix of economic activity for residents and visitors alike and to encourage the development of particular economic sectors in Calistoga. The Economic Development Element contains goals, objectives, policies and actions to encourage the development of desired economic activities throughout the city.

Implementation Matrix

In order to ensure the General Plan is a functional document that will be used by Calistoga's staff and decision-makers, an Implementation Matrix consisting of a summary of the actions contained in the eleven plan elements has been prepared. The Implementation Matrix sets out the ways that objectives and policies of the other elements are to be put into practice.

E. The General Plan Update Process

This General Plan has been prepared over a period of several years by City staff and a consultant team under the direction of a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) appointed by the City Council. The CAC held a total of 42 meetings to prepare this Plan.

The process began with the preparation of a series of the following five studies on existing conditions in Calistoga and the Planning Area:

- Land Use and Housing Conditions
- Environmental Conditions
- Traffic and Infrastructure
- Economic Conditions
- Assessment of the 1990 General Plan

To prepare these studies, the consultant team conducted field observations, interviews and database and archival research. Planning documents, government laws and regulations and City codes and ordinances were also reviewed.



A General Plan Workshop

Once drafted, the five existing conditions studies were submitted to the CAC for review. Based on their direct knowledge of Calistoga and the Planning Area, Committee members commented on the studies and generated a list of topics that they determined were significant and merited particular attention during policy development. A community workshop was also held in July 2000 to acquaint all Calistoga residents with current conditions and to gather further insight on residents' concerns about issues facing Calistoga.

Once a list of key issues was identified through the existing conditions work, City staff, consultants and the CAC worked together to draft goals, objectives, policies and actions that would address these issues. The consultant team prepared a series of three workbooks that outlined each issue and proposed alternative means to address it. The CAC reviewed these workbooks and gave direction on the types of policy approaches that it wanted to take to address each issue. A second community workshop was held in June 2001 to review policy alternatives with Calistoga residents.

After the CAC provided policy guidance regarding each issue, staff and consultants drafted this General Plan. This General Plan was then subjected to significant review by the CAC before it was released as a draft for public review.

In considering this General Plan, the City's Planning Commission and City Council reviewed this document and its accompanying Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Following certification of the EIR, the City Council adopted this General Plan to guide development in Calistoga.

F. The Contents of Each Element

Each element of this General Plan consists of the three sections described below, which in most elements are Sections A, B and C respectively.

- The **background information** section describes current conditions in the Planning Area relative to the subject of the element. This background information is taken from the existing conditions analysis conducted for this General Plan Update in 2000 and from other sources such as the previous General Plan and the 2000 Census. Additional background information can be found in the five existing conditions reports.
- The **key findings** section contains a summary of key findings that need to be addressed in the element. These findings provide the basis for goals, objectives, policies and actions presented in each element.
- Each element contains a section that presents a series of **goals, objectives, policies and actions** to address the identified key issues. Some of these goals, objectives, policies and actions are related to the review of new development; others are directed to the City's own activities. The goals, objectives, policies and actions in each element are based on the background information and key findings, the goals, objectives, policies and actions in the previous General Plan, input from the Citizen's Advisory Committee, State law and the technical expertise of the consultant team.

Goals, objectives, policies and actions, as articulated in this General Plan, are defined as follows:

- **Goal.** A goal is a description of the general desired result that the City seeks to create through the implementation of its General Plan. One or more goals are provided in each General Plan element.
- **Objective.** An objective is a specific condition or end that serves as a concrete step toward attaining a goal. Objectives are intended to be clearly achievable and, when possible, measurable. There are one or more objectives for each General Plan goal.
- **Policy.** A policy is a specific statement that guides decision-making in working to achieve an objective. Such policies, once adopted, represent statements of City regulation and require no further implementation. This General Plan's policies set out the standards that will be used by City staff, the Planning Commission and City Council in their review of land development projects and in decision-making about City actions.
- **Action.** An action is a program, implementation measure, procedure, or technique intended to help to achieve a specified objective.

As noted above and shown in Figure INTRO-3, policies and actions rest at the same level; both policies and actions are intended to implement objectives. In most cases, all objectives have both implementing policies and actions. However, it is also possible for an objective to be implemented exclusively through either policies or actions.



FIGURE INTRO-3 GENERAL PLAN COMPONENTS

Some elements also have additional sections other than the three described above that are specific to them. For example, the Land Use Element contains a series of Land Use Designations that guide overall development in the city. The Housing Element contains a number of additional analysis sections, as required by State law.

Some elements contain specific sections that each contain Sections A through C above. For example, the Public Services Element contains five sections on individual services, such as schools and solid waste, that each have subsections on background information, key findings and goals, objectives, policies and actions.