



DATE: October 28, 2026

TO: Orange County Planning Commission

FROM: OC Development Services/Planning

SUBJECT: Study Session for Comprehensive General Plan Update (GPA 24-01)

PROPOSAL: Staff will present information on the updates to the Comprehensive General Plan Update (GPA 24-01)

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: N/A

ZONING DISTRICT: N/A

LOCATION: Unincorporated Areas of Orange County

APPLICANT: OC Development Services/Planning

STAFF CONTACT: Kylie Sanchez, Land Use Manager
(714) 667-8895
Kylie.Sanchez@pw.oc.gov

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

OC Development Services/Planning recommends the Planning Commission:

1. Receive staff report and public testimony; and
2. Provide feedback to staff as appropriate on the Draft Comprehensive General Plan Update.

BACKGROUND

The County's existing General Plan was last comprehensively updated in 2005. Updates to individual elements have occurred since; however, there has not been a comprehensive update to modernize the rest of the document. Therefore, the County is undergoing a Comprehensive General Plan (GP) update, which formally began with the authorization from Planning Commission to initiate the Comprehensive GP Update (GPA 24-01) on February 14, 2024. Staff provided an update to the Planning Commission on September 25, 2024. In 2024, the County focused on collecting and analyzing existing conditions, evaluating its current General Plan document, and reviewing public input from the public outreach efforts. Throughout 2025, the County prepared the Public Review Draft General Plan policy document. The Public Review Draft was subsequently circulated for public review and comment in January 2026, with the public review period concluding on February 27, 2026. Staff brought the Public Review Draft to the Planning Commission for a study session during the public review period on January 28, 2026. The County received approximately 60 comment letters during the public review period. Since then, the County has reviewed and considered all comments received and updated the document accordingly. The Draft General Plan is included as Attachment 1.

DISCUSSION

The Comprehensive GP Update is divided into two primary documents: 1) the Existing Conditions Report and 2) the General Plan Policy Document. The Existing Conditions Report provides a background summary of the County's existing (as of 2025) physical, environmental, economic, and demographic setting. The General Plan Policy Document contains the State-mandated and optional Elements. It contains the goals and policies that will guide future decisions within the unincorporated areas and identifies action items to ensure the vision and goals of the General Plan are carried out. The revisions do not propose any land use changes (no changes in General Plan designation for any area) and no changes are being proposed in the recently adopted Housing Element.

Updates required by State law

The Comprehensive GP Update will address the updated requirements of State law and the relevant items included in Government Code Section 65300 et seq. Examples of recent State legislation that have been addressed through this General Plan Update include:

- Senate Bill (SB) 1425, which requires updating the open space plans to address equitable access to open space, climate resilience and rewilding opportunities;
- Assembly Bill (AB) 1889, which requires the conservation element of general plans to consider the impact of development on wildlife movement and habitat connectivity; and
- SB 1000, which added to the required elements of the General Plan an environmental justice element that identifies disadvantaged communities within the area covered by the general plan and requires the general plan to identify objectives and policies to reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities, promote civil engagement in the public decision-making process, and prioritize improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities.

User Friendly

As part of the Comprehensive GP Update, the elements are renamed and reorganized, or replaced, including combining topical areas and updating the goals, policies, and actions in each General Plan Element for readability and modern relevancy, with the exception of the Housing Element. No updates to the adopted Housing Element are included as part of the comprehensive update.

In addition, the Comprehensive GP Update proposes revisions to the land use designations and overlays to provide organizational consistency with the existing Zoning Map and better reflect existing on-the-ground conditions. Specifically, a new Mixed Use (MX) land use designation, consistent with the Zoning Code update completed for the Housing Element, and a new Specific Plan/Planned Community (SP/PC) land use designation are proposed to be added to the land use map for parcels zoned Mixed Use, Specific Plan, and Planned Community. Additionally, a Housing (H) Overlay has been added to identify parcels within the Housing Opportunities Overlay zone, consistent with the Zoning Map. The revisions do not propose any changes to the allowed land uses. Likewise, there are no proposed changes to allowed land use densities.

Updates to Draft General Plan in Response to Comments

The Public Review Draft proposed to introduce Community Area classifications, which were intended to be an organizational tool to group unincorporated areas into similar typologies that would be reflective of the area's community and planning identity and would have no bearing on land use, and the proposed classifications did not propose any land use changes. Based on comments received from members of the public, the Community Area classifications caused confusion and were interpreted as new land use designations. In response to the comments, the Community Area classifications have been removed from the Draft General Plan to avoid confusion and future misinterpretation.

Many public comments requested an additional policy regarding wildlife crossings, which has been added to the Resource Management Element.

The remaining edits that were incorporated into the Draft General Plan are limited to minor technical revisions suggested in public comment letters. Policies throughout the Draft General Plan have been reworded for clarity and specificity; additional agencies were added to policies regarding regional coordination; policies regarding Airport Planning Areas have been revised to be consistent with the applicable Airport Environs Land Use Plan; and the figures in the Mobility Element were revised to reflect the Orange County Transportation Authority's (OCTA) Master Plan of Arterial Highways and Bikeway Map Guide.

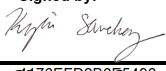
Comments received that were unable to be incorporated into the Draft General Plan include comments regarding areas outside the jurisdiction of the County of Orange, comments requesting changes that would be inconsistent with state law, comments requesting additional information be added that was already included in the Existing Conditions Report, comments requesting changes to land use designations that would change the allowed land use densities on the subject parcels, and comments requesting changes to the Zoning Code.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA

This action is not a project within the meaning of CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 and is therefore not subject to CEQA, since it does not have the potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. The approval of this item does not commit the County to a definite course of action regarding a project since the action is a status update of the Comprehensive GP Update. This proposed activity is therefore not subject to CEQA. Any future action connected to this approval that constitutes a project will be reviewed in compliance with CEQA.

Submitted by:

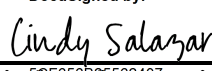
Signed by:



Kylie Sanchez, Land Use Manager
OC Development Services/Planning

Concurred by:

DocuSigned by:



Cindy Salazar, Division Manager
OC Development Services/Planning

ATTACHMENT:

1. Comprehensive General Plan (October 2026 Draft)
<https://planoc.generalplan.org/documents-maps>