

I. INTRODUCTION

I. Overview of General Plan

Why a General Plan Update?

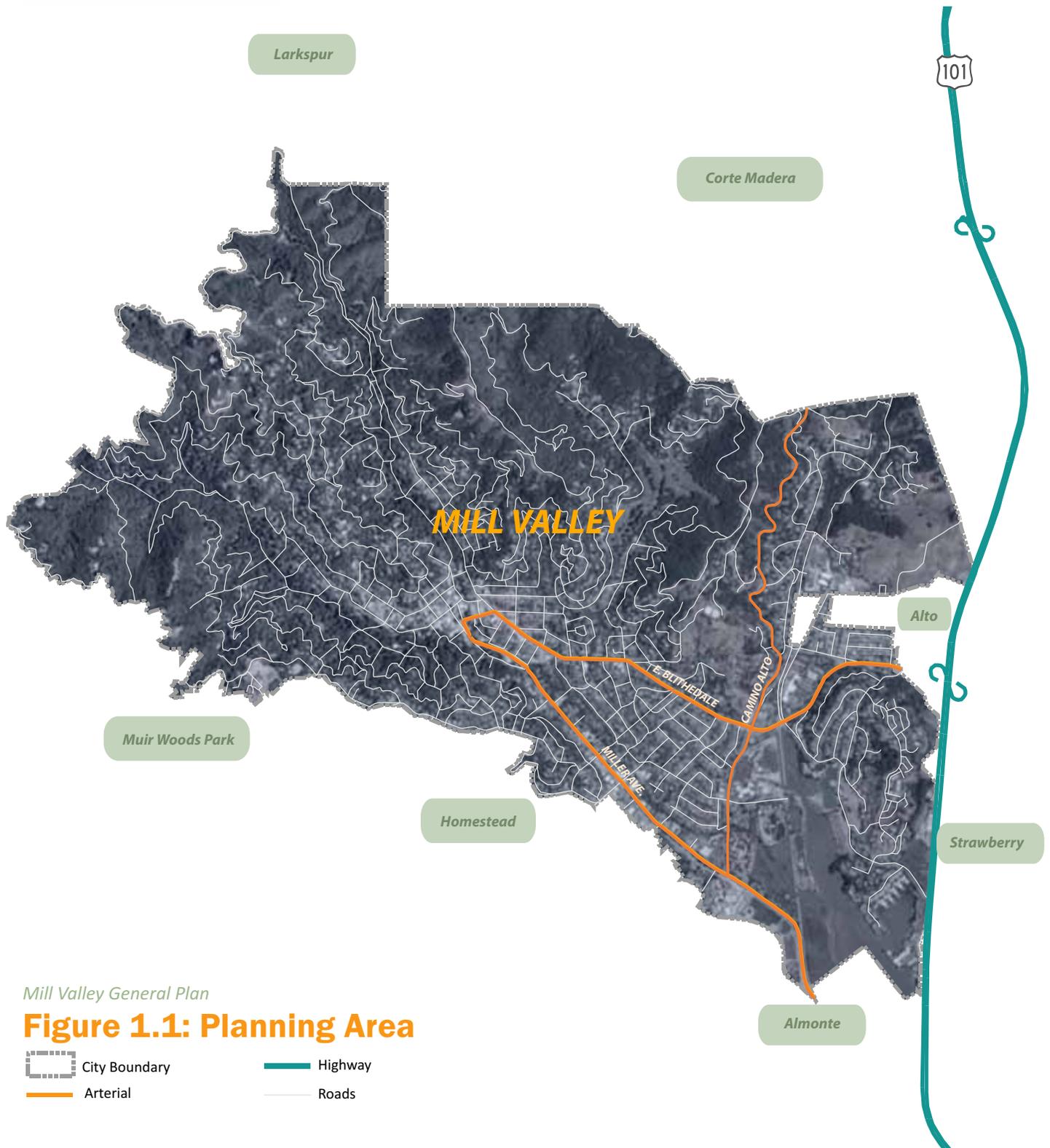
The City of Mill Valley prepared its first General Plan in 1975, which was subsequently updated in 1989. In the 23 years that have passed since the last update, the City is now revisiting the General Plan to ensure that the policy direction for the next thirty years is responsive to the community's values today, as they were in the past, and respond to the inevitable challenges of the future. In the State of California, the General Plan serves as an opportunity to update and establish:

- **A Community Vision** - The General Plan preparation and adoption process offers the opportunity to bring the community together to express (or confirm) its collective values and shape a common vision for the future.
- **Public Policy Coordination** – The General Plan is not just a land use document that governs future growth and development. It is where all of a community's major policy initiatives are identified, assessed and expressed in a comprehensive and consistent form.
- **Budget and Capital Investment Coordination** - The General Plan can be used to strategically identify budget and capital investment and implementation priorities based on the vision, and subsequently as a management tool to unite City departments and decision-makers.
- **Legal Basis for Implementation** - State statutes and established case law require that local government decisions affecting a community's growth and development must be consistent with the General Plan.

Context

The City of Mill Valley, is bounded on the east by Strawberry, Alto Sutton Manor, and Highway 101, on the north by the towns of Corte Madera and Larkspur, on the west by Mount Tamalpais, and to the south by the unincorporated communities of Homestead and Almonte, and Richardson Bay. The City and its relationship to surrounding cities and communities is illustrated in Figure 1.1. Unlike the City's 1989 General Plan, which was done in conjunction with the County of Marin and addressed a "Planning Area" that included the unincorporated communities Homestead, Tam Valley and Almonte, the MV2040 General Plan only addresses those areas within the city limits of Mill Valley. In a few minor instances, the General Plan addresses the City's Sphere of Influence, which extends beyond the Mill Valley city limits to include those unincorporated areas served by the Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin (SASM) wastewater treatment plant. This area is shown on figures when necessary.

As the General Plan began to explore the direction the community wanted to take over the next 30 years, it was important to understand the existing context and character. Who are we as a community now in 2013? How has Mill Valley changed over the past 23 years, since



Mill Valley General Plan

Figure 1.1: Planning Area

- City Boundary
- Arterial
- Highway
- Roads

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Source: Marin Map, US Census TIGER, 2012

the last General Plan update? What are we observing that might influence our decisions about the future of Mill Valley? The MV2040 General Plan attempts to answer these and other major questions based on the considerable public input and discussion that occurred over the course of preparing this General Plan and the collective vision and aspirations of the community as expressed in the following pages.

Goals and Community Values

The General Plan Goals and Community Values are intended to guide the overall framework and decision making for the General Plan and its subsequent implementation. MV2040 Community Values represent the key overarching principles that guided the formation of General Plan Goals and Policies and will guide future actions and decisions based on the General Plan.

MV2040 Goals and Community Values are similar to those represented in the 1989 General Plan, exemplifying the City's interest in maintaining and preserving the great qualities that make Mill Valley a special place to live, learn, work and play. The goals and community values cited below are intended to be a statement of how the citizens of Mill Valley view their community today and in the future, and, most importantly, how they intend to guide decision-making on important issues the City may encounter along the way.

MV2040 Goals and Community Values provide the overall framework of the General Plan and were used to form the subsequent goals and policies contained in each chapter or "element" of the General Plan. These overarching principles are also intended to guide future actions and decision as programs and policies contained in the General Plan are implemented.

The two primary goals of the General Plan remain the same as established in the 1989 General Plan, and are:

1. To protect and enhance the natural beauty and small--town character of Mill Valley; and
2. To encourage continued diversity of housing, income levels and lifestyles in the community.

Through the development of this Plan, community members consistently expressed their believe that:

Mill Valley values...

- Preserving the quality, diversity and historic resources of the community's residential neighborhoods;
- Maintaining a strong, healthy economy that supports locally--owned and local--serving businesses;

- Prudent municipal fiscal policies and practices and operational excellence by city officials and employees;
- Managing and restoring the scenic quality and physical character of the bayfront, ridgelines and hillsides for open space, resource protection and outdoor recreation;
- Preserving and enhancing creeks, marshes, woodlands and other natural resources for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations;
- Fostering sustainable policies and practices that enhance climate protection and adapt to climate change;
- Minimizing traffic congestion and encouraging safe and convenient mobility alternatives;
- Planning, preparing, adapting and responding to natural and human-made disasters;
- Accommodating more housing choice for all income levels and community needs than may be possible under conditions in the private housing market;
- Promoting the arts, the artistic community and its ongoing and lasting contribution to the culture, heritage, character, economy and quality of life of the community;
- Cultivating community participation, volunteerism, mutual respect, civil discourse and Civic responsibility;
- Furthering excellence in public education and an open, effective and mutually supportive relationship among the community, public schools and City.

II. Components of the General Plan

The MV2040 General Plan is organized to reflect the most relevant issues facing Mill Valley now and into the future. The General Plan is organized as listed below. The organization of the MV2040 General Plan includes all seven General Plan elements mandated by the State (Land Use, Housing, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Safety and Noise).

- Land Use
- Mobility
- Community Vitality
- Natural Environment
- Climate Action
- Hazards and Public Safety
- Noise
- General Plan Administration

- Housing (a separate document)

Each element begins with a purpose statement and a summary of existing conditions. Several of the elements also contain a section called “Trends to Watch” which are a series of important data points that tell a story about Mill Valley and the forces at work in the community can be easily updated in a timely manner so that the Plan is always current. Each of the elements concludes with goals, policies, and programs for action.

The goals, policies, and programs for the General Plan were created by three General Plan Working groups focusing on Land Use and Mobility, Natural Environment and Community Vitality. Many goals and policies were developed to further the City’s focus on sustainability, which is woven throughout the Plan. In each element, Greenhouse Gas emission-reduction polices are indicated with a "leaf" symbol (🍃), which serves as part of the City’s Climate Action Plan for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 within the the Community as part of municipal operations. The working groups recommended General Plan goals, policies and programs to the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), which helped to review and refine the goals, policies, and programs before their incorporation into the Draft MV2040 General Plan.

Implementation

The relationship of the Goals, Policies and Programs as well as the process for their formation is illustrated in Figure 1.2. The “Implementation Plan” referenced in Figure 1.2 can be found in Appendix A and will be regularly updated as the City is able to redefine, prioritize and allocate resources for specific programs.

Additional information that was used to analyze existing conditions or provide additional explanation and context are contained in appendices. Appendices are listed in the Table of Contents.

Figure 1.2: Relationship of Goals, Policies and Programs

	Goal	Policies	Programs	Implementation Plan
Definition	Gets a general direction; an ideal future; long-range and comprehensive in nature; and used to describe a desired result or outcome	A specific statement that guides decision-makers; a commitment to a particular course of action; describe context and rationale of desired outcome, and are more specific than goals. ("shall" v. "should" is important to consider when formulating policies).	Actions or procedures that carry out a policy. Specific step to actually achieve the goals and policies identified in the general plan.	A sequence of steps that must be taken or activities that must be performed in order to successfully implement goals, policies and programs
Informed By	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Conditions and trends Community Values; Opportunities and Constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing conditions & trends Existing City policies and documents Opportunities and Constraints Goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing conditions & trends Existing City and community programs Opportunities and constraints Goals Policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Goals Policies Programs
Categories/Types	<p>Types of Goals for Mobility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-Modal/Complete Streets Safety 	<p>Types of Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternative fuel – Vehicles and infrastructure School traffic Bicycle network and facilities Transit Pedestrian facilities Traffic operations Roadway design Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Public Parking 	<p>Types of Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding sources or support Staff support and/or coordination Infrastructure needs: improvements, changes, or modifications Data Collection/monitoring Implementation of recommendations based on associated studies or reports such as Master Plans 	<p>Major components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific tasks What will be done by whom (e.g. City, local interests and local organizations) Time horizon-when it will be done Resource allocation (staff time and funding)
Example: Mobility/Transportation	Create a safe and efficient transportation system that balances the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit (Complete Streets)	<p>Example (safety): The City shall give the highest consideration to the safety of users when planning and designing system improvements to maximize efficient use of the street network.</p> <p>Example (efficiency/multi-modal): The City shall encourage sustainable transportation practices, such as demand management, to modify and promote the use of non-automotive modes wherever possible.</p>	<p>Example (safety): The City shall promote local school-related transportation safety efforts by providing support to the Safe Routes to School program and implementing safety improvements, as appropriate.</p> <p>Example (efficiency/multi-modal): The City shall implement the proposed projects and improvements identified in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan, as funding is available.</p>	<p>Example (safety): Public works director to be liaison to Safe Routes to School/ ongoing, and provide assistance in constructing improvements/ongoing, as projects funded.</p> <p>Example (efficiency/multi-modal): Update Bike & Ped Plan on a regular basis, at least every 5 years/Department of Public Works; Pursue grant funding for non-motorized projects/Department of Public Works, ongoing; Update capital improvement program to prioritize bike & ped projects/ongoing;</p>