



CHAPTER

1

INTRODUCTION



As a recently incorporated City entering its second decade, Citrus Heights is in the position to define and pursue a locally-defined vision for the community. The General Plan establishes the planning and policy framework that articulates the community's vision and guides development for the next 15 - 20 years. It presents the community's social, economic and environmental goals to guide decisions about private and public development projects and the City's use of resources.

Incorporation on January 1, 1997, brought a new sense of community pride to Citrus Heights and set the stage for locally-responsive public services. The General Plan defines the qualities that make Citrus Heights a special place and establishes policies and actions to preserve and enhance the quality of life for the City's residents, workers, merchants and visitors.

This General Plan also addresses State general plan requirements. California law requires that every city and county adopt a long-term General Plan that addresses seven specific topics or "elements," organized in any format or structure preferred by the community. The general plan may also address other topics the community feels are relevant. Regardless of the format or issues addressed, the plan must be internally consistent. This Plan is organized into three elements that meet the State requirements, as shown in *Table 1: General Plan Content*.

Residents played a major role in creating the initial Citrus Heights General Plan in 2000 and the focused update in 2010. Carrying out the plan requires many individual actions and ongoing programs involving virtually every City department and many other public agencies and private organizations. This Plan is designed to be practical and flexible to ensure that it can be effectively implemented.

The goals, policies and actions in each element of the Plan embody the City's approach for achieving the community's vision for its future. Goals identify physical, economic, environmental and/or social ends that the community desires. Goals should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they continue to reflect the preferred direction of the community.

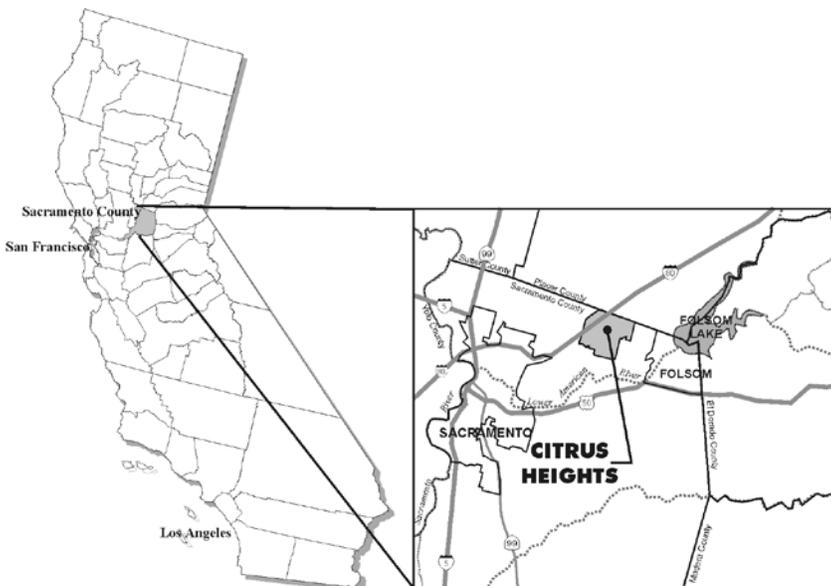
**Table 1
General Plan Content**

Citrus Heights Plan Elements	Required Plan Topics	Issues Covered
Community Development	Land Use Circulation Housing	Community character, neighborhoods, corridors, economic development, gateways, public spaces, housing, transportation and mobility, regional coordination
Resource Conservation	Conservation Open Space	Biological resources, open space, energy conservation, cultural resources
Community Health	Noise Safety	Flooding, seismic activity, hazardous materials, noise, air quality, climate change, services, parks and recreation, education, utilities

Each goal is followed by policies that establish basic statements guiding action to pursue community goals. Policies are used directly to guide the responses of City decision makers and staff to development proposals and related community actions. Actions are necessary to carry out the policies (see *Table 10: Implementation Schedule for Actions*).

SETTING

Citrus Heights is located in northeast Sacramento County, just south of the Placer County line. With a 2010 population of approximately 88,115, Citrus Heights is the third largest city in Sacramento County (see *Table 2: Population Trends*). Citrus Heights lies 12 miles northeast of downtown Sacramento on Interstate 80. Citrus Heights is surrounded by unincorporated industrial and agricultural areas, as well as the unincorporated communities of Fair Oaks, Carmichael, Gold River, Orangevale, Antelope, Foothill Farms, and North Highlands. The city of Folsom and Folsom Lake reservoir are located approximately six miles to the east, and the city of Roseville, in Placer County, lies immediately to the north. The map below shows the location of Citrus Heights.



**Table 2
Population Trends**

Year	Population	Change	Percent Change	Annual Percentage Change
Citrus Heights				
1970	31,015			
1980	63,848	32,833	105.9%	10.6%
1990	82,045	18,197	28.5%	2.9%
2000 ¹	85,071	3,026	3.7%	0.4%
2010 ¹	88,115	3,044	3.6%	0.4%
Sacramento County				
1970	631,498			
1980	783,381	151,883	24.1%	2.4%
1990	1,041,219	257,838	32.9%	3.3%
2000 ¹	1,223,499	182,280	17.5%	1.8%
2010 ¹	1,455,327	231,828	18.9%	1.9%
Source: ¹ State of California, Department of Finance, E-5 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State, 2001–2009, with 2000 Benchmark. Sacramento, California, May 2009				

VALUES

The values of the community – safe neighborhoods, mobility for all users of the transportation system, rural setting and economic opportunity – were reinforced by City residents throughout the process leading up to creation and adoption of this General Plan.

Citrus Heights is a city of neighborhoods. Neighborhoods form the basic building block of local government, providing important input for City decisions. Citrus Heights is also a great place to do business. Residents value the variety of shopping opportunities, and people from outside the City frequently travel to Citrus Heights to shop. Additional economic opportunities can be realized by improving access to businesses, revitalizing shopping centers, filling vacant spaces, and creating new office and industrial centers.

With its central location in a growing and diverse region, Citrus Heights can play an important role in helping to address a wide range of regional issues. Growth in Placer and El Dorado Counties presents new challenges to addressing regional issues that affect the quality of life for Citrus Heights’ residents and businesses.

Mobility for all users of the transportation network – including not just autos but also transit users, bicyclists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities – is an important issue for City residents. While the high volume of regional traffic passing through Citrus Heights benefits residents by increasing business activity, decisions for roadway improvements must give equal consideration to non-auto users of the roadways.

THE GENERAL PLAN PROCESS

Vision

The vision embodied in this General Plan began with the drive for local control that resulted in the City's incorporation on January 1, 1997. During 1999 and 2000, there was an intensive general planning process that combined efforts of the City and the community to shape the future direction of Citrus Heights. Key steps in this process included identifying issues at community workshops, refining those ideas through a General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), and verifying the results of that work with a community survey. The high degree of consistency between the workshop conclusions, GPAC recommendations and survey responses was summarized in the following vision for the future of Citrus Heights:

Citrus Heights is a highly livable place that:

- Is safe because of excellent public services and controlled traffic;
- Has a strong sense of identity, character and pride;
- Offers ample business and job opportunities in attractive commercial areas; and
- Is supported by a strong and fiscally responsible City government.



Citizen involvement was extensive and vital throughout the inaugural General Plan process. The City's first General Plan was adopted in November 2000.

During the first decade of the 21st century, the General Plan served the City well. Only a few minor amendments were made to the General Plan during this decade, primarily state-mandated housing element updates. During 2009, the City Council reflected on the General Plan and determined that most of the goals and policies still accurately represent the City's vision. The City Council directed that a focused update to the General Plan should occur, focusing on three primary areas: sustainability, mobility/complete streets, and water quality/flooding.

Planning Principles

The community's values can be further explained using the following planning principles. These principles were originally devised by residents during the workshops to help create the goals of the City's first General Plan. The principles were later modified to incorporate the mobility and sustainability themes of the 2011 update to the General Plan.

Land Use - Neighborhoods with high vacancies, poor maintenance and potential for crime should be targeted for improvements under a variety of programs and strategies. Future planning should continue to provide for a range of housing opportunities, without higher-density projects dominating any neighborhood.

Economic Development - Citrus Heights does not have the property tax base common in other cities and relies heavily on sales tax revenues. The City should pursue a strong economic development program that supports existing businesses and attracts new ones. Economic development and redevelopment strategies should target commercial corridors with vacant buildings and lots, inappropriate signage and poor property maintenance. The City should consider expanding its boundaries to include land suitable for job-creating uses such as offices and light industry.

Mobility - Increasing traffic, much of it from outside the City, will exacerbate congestion on the City's major roadways and also result in cut-through travel through residential neighborhoods, higher vehicle speeds and increased noise levels. Solutions could include street improvements, fixed-route transit (i.e., connecting key commercial districts), and improved bicycle and pedestrian routes. Where appropriate, streets should be completed and connected. In the past, roadways were viewed primarily for automobile travel. This viewpoint has evolved to one where roads are seen within a complete streets context, where the needs of all travel modes, users, and ability levels are equally important.

Natural Resources - Creek corridors provide opportunities for new biking and walking trails for recreation and transportation, provided that private property rights are respected and safety and maintenance concerns are addressed. Natural habitat areas should be preserved, including creek corridors and oak woodlands. The City should plant and preserve trees where possible, and require trees and landscaping in new development. The City should promote a low-impact development approach to land development that uses natural or naturalized landscaping to filter and manage stormwater flows and urban runoff.

Historic Resources - Though many historic landmarks are gone, the community can retain its sense of place by using historic names, installing plaques, preserving trees and other natural features, restoring and reusing noteworthy buildings, and creating a museum or other historic resource center. Development should respect and consider historic and archaeological resources, as well as the creeks and oak woodlands that originally attracted native peoples to the area.

Cultural Resources - The City should support school district efforts to provide quality teaching, facilities and activities, and recreation and park district efforts to provide opportunities for residents to enjoy parks and participate in a wide range of sports, education and recreation programs. The community needs more and prominent social and civic gathering places. The City should promote activities such as farmers' markets, outdoor fairs, concerts, organized public art displays and private art and performance venues. The City should improve community gateways with landscaping, signage, trees and art.

Public Services - The City should forge strong partnerships to provide high quality services to Citrus Heights residents. The City also should require new developments or annexations to pay their fair share toward maintaining current levels of service. Residents should be afforded all opportunities to participate in governance.

Sustainability - The City should promote efforts to improve communitywide sustainability for both the existing built environment and new development. Building and site design and construction practices should include energy, water, and other conservation techniques that reduce the consumption of natural resources. In addition, the City should support a transition to cleaner, more renewable energy sources. The City should implement measures to improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

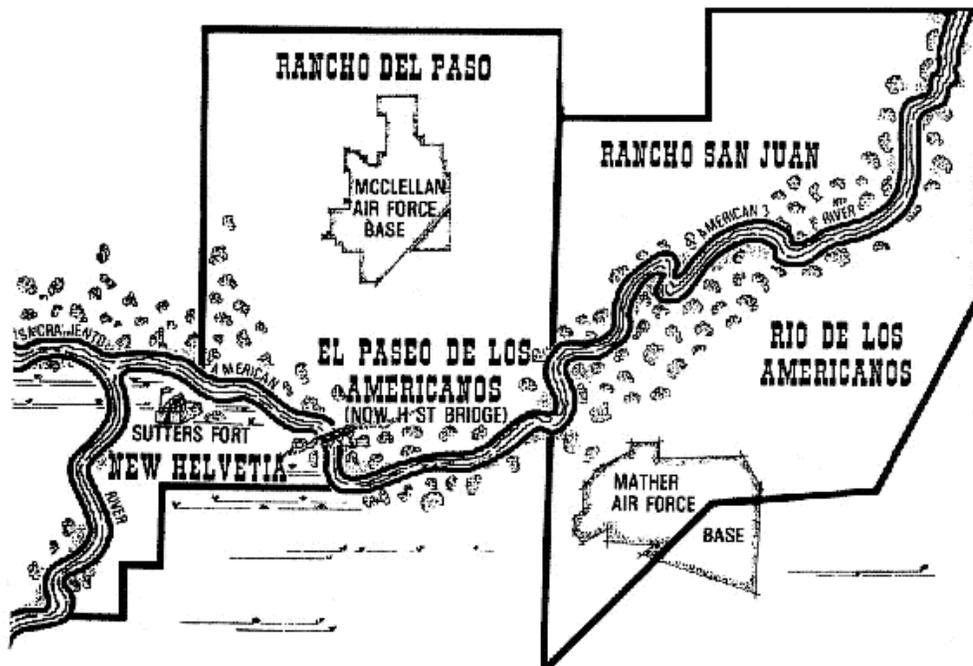
The earliest inhabitants of the Sacramento region were the Plains Miwok and Valley Nisenan (Maidu) Indians. The Native Americans established communities, satellite villages and seasonal camps along local streams. The 1800s brought forced colonization and exposure to previously unknown diseases, decimating the Indian population. When California was still under Mexican rule, German-Swiss immigrant John Augustus Sutter obtained an 11-square league grant from Mexico in 1840 for the rich farmland of the area. A condition of the grant was that he settle 12 other families in the area. One of these sub-grants was the 20,000-acre Rancho San Juan, or the San Juan Grant, that included the area of present-day Citrus Heights.

Following the 1849 Gold Rush and California statehood in 1850, land grant parcels were divided under the township system, with the area of present-day Citrus Heights becoming a part of Sacramento County's Central Township. In 1850, Auburn Road was cut diagonally through the township to connect Auburn and Sacramento. Miners, traders, teamsters, and other members of the traveling public made their way from Sacramento to the gold-mining country of Auburn and beyond, using this new and shorter road. The freight traffic along this thoroughfare gave rise to a number of way stations.

In 1862, a schoolhouse was built on five acres at Sylvan Corners, where the new Auburn Road crossed Sylvan Road. Sylvan School and Sylvan Corners became the educational, civic, social, and religious center of the small, rural community. The Sylvan area was given its name because of the pristine oak-dotted countryside. In 1864, the County Board of Supervisors approved a petition by local farmers to build Greenback Lane to connect Auburn Road to the eastern part of the Sylvan district. That same year, extension of the Central Pacific Railroad brought in new settlers and increased export of local crops.



The original Sylvan School.



Map of Rancho San Juan Grant

Among the newcomers of the 1860s and '70s was Cornelius Donahue. Donahue established a ranch in 1863, which he later expanded in 1872 to include the area now home to the Sunrise MarketPlace. Another early settler, Peter Van Maren, amassed an almost 1,000-acre estate by 1875 located between today's Greenback Lane and Dewey Drive. The historic Rusch Home in Rusch Park dates back to 1885 when Fred and Julia Volle built the original sod-roofed house, which was replaced with the existing structure after a 1914 fire. Much of their 480-acre ranch is occupied by Rusch Park.

The original San Juan School was built in 1880, making it one of the oldest remaining in the region and establishing the basis for the area's strong emphasis on education. In 1913, San Juan High School was built on Greenback Lane, where it remains in operation.

During the latter part of the 19th century, Sylvan Corners continued to provide lodging for teamsters, food for local markets, and a pastoral life for its primarily farming residents.

By 1900, Sylvan was still largely a sparsely settled farming community consisting of a relatively small number of large landowners.

In 1910, quiet Sylvan underwent a marked change when the real estate firm Trainor & Desmond bought large tracts of idle land and subdivided them into 10-acre lots. To attract buyers, the firm replaced the name Sylvan with the catchier "Citrus Heights," although little citrus production ever developed. The Citrus Heights Water Takers Association provided irrigation water in 1911, initiating the transformation of the rural grain farming area into the present residential community.

The suburbanization of Citrus Heights began in 1912 with the construction of Highway 40, connecting San Francisco with Sacramento and Roseville, and the introduction of irrigation water in 1911 by the Citrus Heights Water Takers Association (later, Citrus Heights Irrigation District). The increase in both resident and visitor travel on the new state highway led to increased business opportunities, and a number of service stations, auto camps (motels), restaurants, and small general stores sprang up along Auburn Boulevard. The community built a library at Sylvan Corners in 1930.



During the Great Depression, attempts at fruit farming ended in Citrus Heights. A freeze in 1932 destroyed most of the remaining working orchards. A volunteer fire-fighting group was organized in 1934, and the Citrus Heights Fire District followed in 1935.

After World War II, families moved into new subdivisions with lots as small as one acre, straining an already limited water supply and escalating the need for new public facilities. In 1947, Citrus Heights opened its own post office in Wood's Variety Store. New businesses continued to accommodate the growing population along Auburn Boulevard, Mariposa Avenue, and Greenback Lane. By 1950, the San Juan Unified School District had grown to include eight elementary schools and one high school.

Postwar activity at the Southern Pacific Roseville railyards and McClellan Air Force Base, a supply center for forces around the Pacific Rim, attracted new residents to the area. By 1960, the population in Citrus Heights reached 22,600. Auburn Boulevard continued to serve as the community's main street, spurred by the 1960 construction of the Grand Oaks Plaza, one of the first enclosed malls in

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the country. Business at the Aerojet General rocket motor manufacturing plant boomed; the company employed more than 19,000 people locally at its peak in the early 1960s.

The groundbreaking for Sunrise Mall was in 1970, stimulating significant new growth in the Sunrise Boulevard-Greenback Lane area. In 1976, across Sunrise Boulevard from Sunrise Mall, rose Birdcage Town Centre, a collection of shops and businesses laid out along a park-like walkway. The two shopping centers spurred the construction of hundreds of additional businesses in the surrounding area. Radiating outward from this area, now known as Sunrise MarketPlace, came large office buildings, new apartment complexes and housing tracts, the bulk of which were built during the 1970s and 1980s. Sunrise Boulevard replaced Auburn Boulevard as the principal business and commercial center of Citrus Heights.



Beginning in 1974, Citrus Heights residents began to seriously pursue incorporation as means of achieving orderly and efficient development, circulation, and public facilities, rather than annexation into the City of Sacramento. The incorporation movement experienced a number of defeats during the 1970s and 1980s, attributable primarily to opposition by the County Board of Supervisors. The Citrus Heights Community Council, an advisory body to the Board of Supervisors, fought for increased land use controls and improved public services. The community's population continued to grow, as most of the last rural properties developed. The County seemed unable to address increased service needs resulting from the rapid growth, particularly in providing enough law enforcement officers to combat car thefts, residential burglaries, and vandalism. Finally on November 5, 1996, voters approved incorporation, and on January 1, 1997, the community became the City of Citrus Heights.