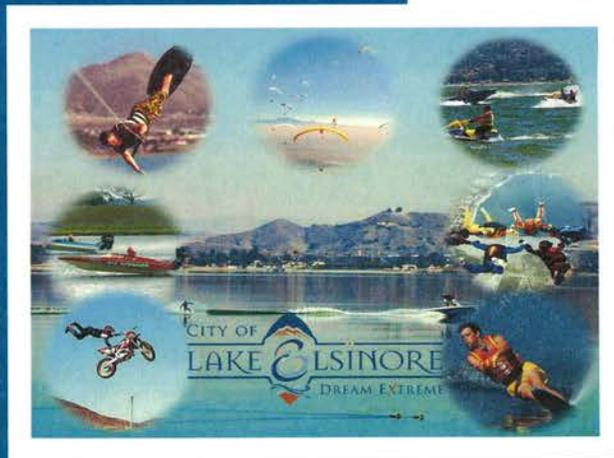
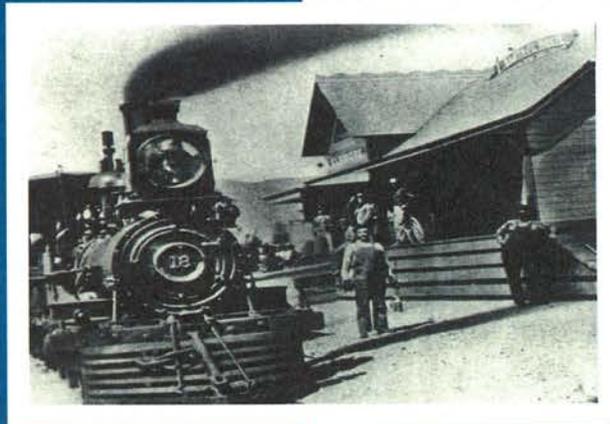




## SECTION 1.0 INTRODUCTION



CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE GENERAL PLAN - ADOPTED DECEMBER 13, 2011

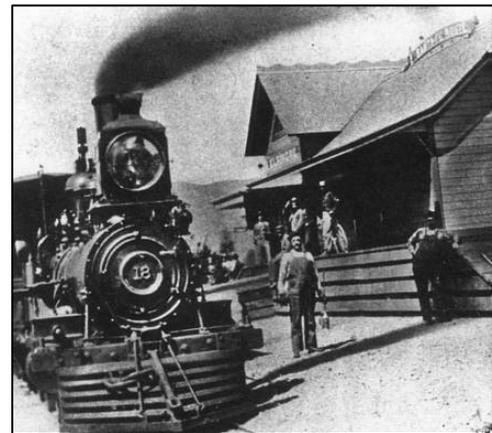
# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Setting and Vision

Nestled at the foot of the Cleveland National Forest, within the southwest portion of Riverside County, lies the City of Lake Elsinore. The City boasts that Lake Elsinore is the largest natural lake in Southern California, a true recreational paradise for boating, wakeboarding, parasailing, fishing, water skiing, jet skiing, windsurfing, camping at local campgrounds and RV resorts, sunbathing, picnicking, or playing on the beaches. The Lake is bound by wetlands, ancient petroglyphs, sacred burial grounds, and the Diamond Stadium which is home to the Lake Elsinore Storm Professional Baseball Team, an affiliate of the San Diego Padres. Its world famous thermal winds create ideal conditions for skydiving, hang-gliding, sailplaning, and hot-air ballooning. Lake Elsinore is rapidly becoming the ideal place to live, work, and play in the Inland Empire. The duality of quality of life and prosperity for all residents is the common vision and goal for the City. As such, this community recognizes its rich history, appreciates its setting amid the rolling hills, and values its resources, while reaching for the future and realizing that its future is today.

### 1.1.1 Historic Overview

The prehistory of the Lake Elsinore area extends back thousands of years. Some of the earliest inhabitants settled near the Lake as long as 6,000 years ago. More recently, around the 12<sup>th</sup> century, a group of tribesmen called the Pai-ah-che (related to the Shoshone and Pai Utes) inhabited the area around the Lake and called it Etengvo Wumoma (loosely translated as “Hot Springs by the Little Sea”). The contemporary identification of these peoples is the Luiseño Indians. (The term Luiseño is used to refer to Takic speaking people.)



The Spanish colonization that began in the late 18th century was short-lived. By 1820, Mexico was independent of Spain and by 1830 the “Mission period” had ended. Large land grants had been issued as rewards to those friendly to the Mexican cause. However, with the Guadalupe-Hidalgo Treaty in 1848, much of the land was ceded to the United States, including all the lands around La Laguna, the City’s historic name. In 1858, Augustin Machado acquired La Laguna, renamed it Rancho La Laguna, and became the first landowner to call the lakeshore his family home since the Luiseño Indians. The Butterfield Stagecoach Line used the Machado residence as a rest stop.

Hispanic influence rapidly waned in the area, and Franklin Heald purchased Rancho La Laguna and founded the town of Elsinore in 1883. Elsinore was named after the famed lakeside village

of Helsingnor in Denmark from Shakespeare’s play, *Hamlet*. With the construction of the Atchison, Topeka, & Santa Fe Railroad and the discovery of a variety of mineral ores in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on what is now known as Pacific Clay Products, immigration began to increase significantly to the lake and mining area, creating support services for these emerging land uses. In 1888 the City incorporated. Many people visited the newly created City of Elsinore looking for recreational opportunities, and stimulating its tourist industry. Elsinore became a popular destination in the 1920’s, for boat races and Olympic swim team training. In the 1930’s, the Hollywood rich and famous came to Elsinore to enjoy grand parties and resort-style living at the Laguna Vista Club and Mount Elsinore Country Club, and the City enjoyed a reputation as a favorite retreat. In 1972, by popular vote, the City changed its name and officially became known as the City of Lake Elsinore.

### 1.1.2 Demographic Overview

The methods for determining population and ethnic make up have changed since the first state census in 1850. The following discussion is a synopsis of the various census reports. The census reports before 1900 grouped the larger Elsinore area together as a precinct or township.

In 1890 the Elsinore precinct had a population of 475 persons, about the same as other rural Southern California communities including the precincts of Fallbrook, Julian, Oceanside, and Murrieta. In 1900 the census was more specific and showed a population of 279 persons for the City of Lake Elsinore; the 1910 census marked a substantial increase with a population of 488, reflecting a general growth spurt that occurred in most of Southern California. That growth continued with an increase to 633 persons in 1920 and a population in the Elsinore township of 1,496. By 1930 Elsinore had doubled to a population of 1,350 and the township population stood at 2,955. The post-World War II years saw the population of Elsinore expand as a reflection of the overall building and population boom in Southern California, with 2,068 residents in 1950, 2,432 residents in 1960, and 3,530 residents in 1970.

The 1980 census, which was the first to list Lake Elsinore as a city, shows a population of 5,982, a quadrupling of the population in the 40 years since 1940. In 1980 the median household income was \$8,925 placing Lake Elsinore in the lower quarter of California communities. The African-American population had risen to 489 or 8 percent, with American Indians comprising almost 3 percent of the population. The decade between 1980 and 1990 represented a trebling of Lake Elsinore’s population. Clearly reflecting the rapid population growth in the Inland Empire and throughout Southern California, the 1990 census listed a population of 18,285 for the City, which was comprised of 4,414 families. Almost 77 percent (14,053) of the population was white (which included 4,757 persons of Hispanic origin or 26 percent of the overall population). The African-American population fell to approximately 3.9 percent. When the Hispanic population is removed from the overall white category, the white population was actually 51 percent.

The 2000 federal census listed a total population for Lake Elsinore of 28,928 with a median age of 28.7, a relatively young population for California as a whole and for Southern California as

well. The African-American population was 5.2 percent; the Hispanic/Latino population was 38 percent; and the white population (with Hispanic/Latino excluded) was approximately 31 percent.

The California Department of Finance determined that the January 2011 population of the City of Lake Elsinore reached 52,503 people. Housing in the City remains more affordable when compared to the affordability of housing in other regions. Clearly, based on its history of growth and the attractiveness of the housing market, the City is poised for considerable increases in population in both its near and distant future.

The State of California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is mandated to determine the state-wide housing need. In cooperation with HCD, local governments and councils of government (COGs) are charged with making a determination of their city or region's existing and projected housing need as a share of the state-wide figure. This determination is referred to as the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) and is made by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) for the County of Riverside including the City of Lake Elsinore. As approved on July 12, 2007, the RHNA allocation for Lake Elsinore is 5,590 units to accommodate its housing needs in the 2008-2014 period.

### 1.1.3 Dream Extreme: A Vision for the Future

This General Plan is based on a vibrant vision for Lake Elsinore for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The plan envisions, and plans for, a city that has remembered, retained, and recreated the important qualities of its rich culture and history. An integral part of this vision is that the City serves as both a getaway for those seeking an escape from the adjacent heavily urbanized areas and as a place where thrill seekers visit to take advantage of the wide variety of extreme sport opportunities offered in the City and the surrounding area. In this sense, the City strives to be far more than a bedroom community for Los Angeles and San Diego and more of a balanced multi-land use area capitalizing on its valuable and unique natural resources and the Lake as a tourist destination.



The City's logo and branding slogan, "Dream Extreme" represents this vision. The concept of "Dream Extreme" builds on the efforts of the early pioneers who founded and developed the City for its proximate location to rail, minerals, and lake resources based on their dreams and hopes for the future of the City. The "Dream Extreme" concept fully positions the City for the future, has deep roots in the history and culture of the unique past of Lake Elsinore, and continues to build on those attributes that make Lake Elsinore a viable City.

The City of Lake Elsinore carries this vision even further with a desire to develop a sustainable city that will be able to meet the needs of its current residents without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future citizens. Implementation of the vision must ensure that the residents and visitors of the City enjoy a quality of life that meets or exceeds their expectations.

With this vision, there is a strong desire to re-emphasize the importance of the Lake by providing increased opportunities for lakeside interaction, from a visual, economic, and recreational standpoint. The uniqueness of the Lake, the only natural lake still in existence in Southern California, serves as a symbol for the City and for its citizens. Ensuring that the Lake is clean, aesthetically pleasing, open to recreation, and truly symbolic of the City is of paramount importance.

Consistent with modern urban planning, there is increased interest in mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development, which incorporates urban design components to improve the livability of the community. Those components include the paramount need for appropriate public service levels and economic infrastructure, along with regulations and design criteria that address the urban constraints of a live-work environment. Additional components include appropriately scaled landscaping, user-friendly lighting, and public art that reflect the vibrancy of the City. As the City continues to develop, sustainable green building practices are both viable and desirable, with an emphasis on reducing the long-term energy needs of the City, and designing developments with the environment in mind.

## 1.2 Purpose and Nature of a General Plan

Each city and county in California must prepare a comprehensive, long-term General Plan to guide its future. The General Plan is a city’s constitution for future development. The general and specific policies of the General Plan serve as the basis for the City’s land use decisions and should provide to both the interested public and the decision-makers a practical and implementable policy vision for the future.



This General Plan includes text describing the City’s Goals and Policies associated with each General Plan Element and illustrations mapping the generalized locations of future land uses. State Law mandates that seven elements be addressed in the General Plan: land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, noise and safety. Although mandated, these elements do not have to be presented in individual chapters. Since each element is interrelated in some way with another topic, it makes sense to combine them into a smaller number of integrated chapters.

Consistent with the requirements of State law, the General Plan Program implementation status is evaluated annually, usually by April 1, by the Community Development Department, which will present their Annual Report to the Planning Commission and City Council. This report is then transmitted to the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development for their records. This report shall also be forwarded to Housing and Community Development and the Office of Planning and Research (OPR).

### 1.3 Overall Planning Approach

Natural and cultural diversity is one of Lake Elsinore’s greatest attributes and also one of its greatest challenges. With a land area spanning 35 square miles, a lake encompassing 4.7 square miles, and a history of over 120 years as a city, Lake Elsinore is unique among Southern California cities. Essentially, distinct communities and settings make up the City, ranging from the historic downtown commercial district at the City’s core, to a scenic lake shore, clay and other mineral extracting areas, and new tract home developments on the periphery of the City.



The previous General Plan was largely based on future specific planning areas. Approximately 67% of the City was designated as future or approved specific plans in the 1990 General Plan. This approach was motivated by the desire to encourage creative land planning.

This Plan recognizes the adopted specific plan land uses as well as other existing neighborhoods in the City in a series of District Plans. As the specific plans are built-out, there is a need to recognize these areas as Lake Elsinore neighborhoods with common characteristics, design guidelines, and geographical similarities.

The approach taken by this current Plan is multi-tiered:

- A Strategic Framework Plan that guides the overall development of the City and presents a set of City-wide Goals and Policies by which to analyze future development and redevelopment;
- A set of District Plans that address the unique neighborhoods and planning areas in the City;
- A Public Safety and Welfare chapter in which noise and safety concerns are addressed;

- A Resource Protection and Preservation chapter which addresses the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) and balances open space, conservation, and economic development interests; and
- A Policy Implementation Plan.

### 1.4 Citizen Input

An extensive citizen input program is an integral part of the General Plan Update process. At the outset of the project, a General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) was formed, comprised of local residents and business owners, to provide needed citizen input for the plan formation. The GPAC met a total of 14 times between March 2005 and October 2006 and also participated in the public workshops, Joint City Council/Planning Commission/GPAC study sessions and public hearings. Their input was critical to the successful adoption of this Plan. The GPAC meetings were open to the public and a number of residents regularly participated.

A community-wide visioning session was held at the Lake Elsinore Diamond Stadium in June 2005 to explain the General Plan process to participants and to gather input as to what the citizens of Lake Elsinore would like to see their City be in the next 25 years. This community-wide session was followed-up by three (3) neighborhood workshops held in different parts of the City, designed to make it convenient for residents to attend and participate.

As another means of polling the residents of the City, a survey was prepared to affirm the direction from the workshops and GPAC, and to solicit any additional ideas for the preparation of the General Plan. The survey was made available at each of the workshops and participants were asked to either fill out the survey there, or take it and mail it to the City. The questions in the survey focused on land use, quality of life, transportation, economic development, and public services and facilities.

The result of the citizen input process is a General Plan that reflects the vision of those with the most at stake - the residents who live, work and play in the City of Lake Elsinore.

### 1.5 Organization of the General Plan

The Lake Elsinore General Plan contains an update of the environmental baseline conditions necessary to serve as part of the foundation for the formation of the Goals and Policies contained in this Plan, and also the existing conditions for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) associated with this effort. The Citizen Input portion of the project serves as the most important component for the establishment of Goals and Policies.

This General Plan contains three (3) major Plan Chapters: Community Form, Public Safety and Welfare, and Resource Protection and Preservation. The required seven (7) elements are covered in these chapters as shown in Table 1-1.

**Table 1-1. General Plan Content**

Lake Elsinore Plan Chapters	Elements Covered	Issues Covered
Community Form (Chapter 2.0)	Land Use Circulation Housing	Neighborhoods, housing, circulation, urban design, parks and recreation, special treatment areas.
Public Safety and Welfare (Chapter 3.0)	Public Safety Noise	Flooding, seismic activity, wildfires, hazards and hazardous materials, community facilities and services, fire and police, utilities, schools, libraries, air quality, noise, and telecommunications.
Resource Protection and Preservation (Chapter 4.0)	Conservation Open Space	Biological resources, MSHCP, open space, water resources, mineral resources, cultural and paleontological resources, historic preservation, aesthetics, greenhouse gas emissions/sustainable environment, and energy conservation.

## 1.6 Relationship to Other Plans and Ordinances

Long-range comprehensive planning in the General Plan must be linked to the on-going actions of the City, since the State of California requires consistency of certain local actions with the General Plan. An action, program, or project is considered consistent with the General Plan if it furthers the goals and policies of the General Plan and does not obstruct the attainment of these goals and policies.

Following is a list of provisions in State law that requires local actions and documents to be consistent with the General Plan.

### 1. Zoning

Government Code Section 65860 requires that the zoning ordinances of general law cities be consistent with the General Plan. The City of Lake Elsinore is a general law city.

### 2. Subdivisions

Government Code Sections 66473.5 and 66474 require that subdivision and parcel map approvals in a jurisdiction be consistent with its General Plan.

### 3. Reservations of Land with Subdivisions

Government Code Section 66479 permits the reservations of land for parks, recreational facilities, fire stations, libraries, and other public uses within a subdivision so long as the reservation conforms to the General Plan.

### 4. Open Space

Government Code Section 65566 requires that acquisition, disposal, restriction, or regulation of open space land by a city or county be consistent with the Open Space Element of the General Plan.

Government Code Section 65567 prohibits the issuance of building permits, approval of subdivision maps, and adoption of open space zoning ordinances that are inconsistent with the Open Space Element of the General Plan.

Government Code Section 65910 requires that every city and county adopt open space provisions in their zoning ordinances consistent with the Open Space Element of the General Plan.

### 5. Capital Improvements

Government Code Sections 65401 and 65402 require a review and report on the consistency of proposed city, county and special district capital projects, including land acquisition and disposal, with the General Plan.

### 6. Development Agreements

Government Code Section 65867.5 requires that the terms and provisions of development agreements be consistent with the General Plan.

### 7. Special Housing Programs

Health and Safety Code Section 50689.5 requires that housing and housing programs developed under Health and Safety Code Sections 50680 et seq. for the developmentally disabled, mentally disordered, and physically disabled be consistent with the Housing Element of the General Plan.

### 8. Project Review Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Title 14, California Code of Regulations Section 15080 requires that, "to the extent possible the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) process be combined with the existing planning, review, and project approval process used by each public agency."

### 9. Mineral Resources

Public Resources Code Section 2763 requires that city and county land use decisions affecting areas with minerals of regional or statewide significance be consistent with mineral resource management policies in the General Plan.

10. Transmission Lines

Public Utilities Code Section 12808.5 requires cities and counties approving electrical transmission and distribution lines of municipal utility districts to make a finding concerning the consistency of the lines with the General Plan.

11. Hazardous Waste Management

AB 2948 (Chapter 1504, of the Statutes of 1986), commonly known as the Tanner Bill, requires each county to prepare a countywide hazardous waste management plan. Each county plan is then to be incorporated into the general plans of all cities within the county's jurisdiction.

12. Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP)

The RCIP, completed in 2003, included three components:

- a. A Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Program (MSHCP), which forms the nucleus of an open-space plan for the western part of the County (see below). The MSHCP was adopted by the City in 2004 and included a Master EIR/EIS covering a broad range of biological analysis. The MSHCP provided important approvals for "Covered Activities" such as important transportation corridors and intersections throughout the City.
- b. An updated General Plan for the unincorporated portion of the County; the General Plan addresses land use, circulation, housing and open space, conservation, and other mandatory elements in conformance with state statute. The General Plan includes several innovative programs, such as incentive programs, that will be utilized in implementing the MSHCP, programs to enhance transit alternatives, and programs that will encourage the development of mixed-use centers.
- c. The Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) identifies future transportation corridors in the western part of the County and provides the appropriate environmental documentation to allow early preservation of the necessary rights-of-way for future corridor development. These corridors will be designed to meet future mobility needs, for autos, buses, and trucks, as well as for goods and information. The corridors will allow room to implement transit plans well into the next century. CETAP forms an essential component of the County's circulation element and its arterial highway plan, both associated with the General Plan.

The RCIP is important in that it governs land uses in the unincorporated portion of the County. The areas within the Sphere of Influence in Lake Elsinore lie in these areas.

13. Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP)

The MSHCP is a multi-jurisdictional Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 10(a) and State ESA habitat conservation plan focusing on the conservation of both endangered and sensitive species and their associated habitat to address biological and ecological diversity conservation needs in western Riverside County. The general goal of the plan is to provide an easier multi-agency permit process for the “take” of threatened and endangered species while balancing the setting aside of significant areas of undisturbed land for the conservation of these threatened, endangered, and sensitive species and their habitats while preserving open space, recreational, and economic land use opportunities. The MSHCP is designed to give the City of Lake Elsinore the ability



to control local land use decisions and maintain economic development flexibility, provide streamlined State and Federal “take” authorization, and reduce the City’s reliance on separate, overlapping local, State, and Federal permitting schemes (and associated biological studies) while providing, through a Regional Conservation Authority (RCA), a coordinated reserve system and reserve implementation programs that will facilitate the preservation of biological diversity, as well as enhancing the region’s quality of life through economic development. MSHCP conservation planning is an effective tool in protecting the region’s biodiversity while reducing conflicts between protection of wildlife and plants and the reasonable use of private and public land for economic development. The MSHCP addresses the potential impacts of urban growth, natural habitat loss, and species endangerment, and creates a process to mitigate for the potential loss of MSHCP-covered or designated plant and animal species and their habitats due to the direct and indirect impacts of future development of both private and public lands within the MSHCP Plan Area. Ultimately, the MSHCP is one of the largest multi-species conservation plans in the nation created with the express goal of expediting infrastructure improvements.