

XI. GROWTH MANAGEMENT ELEMENT



CA/KB

OVERVIEW

The Growth Management (GM) Element, one of the nine elements of the General Plan, contains County policies on the planning and provision of traffic improvements and public facilities that are necessary for orderly growth and development. The GM Element presents policies and programs for traffic improvement phasing, facility and development phasing plans, and provides guidance for future facility implementation plans for the County.

The GM Element is divided into six sections. The first section provides an overview of the

scope and purpose of the Element. The remaining sections are arranged as follows:

- Purpose of the Element
- Terms and Definitions
- Goals, Objectives and Policies
- Implementation Programs

PURPOSE OF THE ELEMENT

The purpose and intent of this Element is to mandate that growth and development be based upon the County's ability to provide

an adequate circulation system; adequate sheriff, fire, paramedic and library services and other necessary facilities; and through all of the processes established in this Element, natural resources and the natural environment shall be protected.

Consistency with Other General Plan Elements

A major goal of the Growth Management Element is to ensure that the planning, management, and implementation of traffic improvements are adequate to meet the current and projected needs of Orange County.

While this goal is a high priority, it must be achieved while maintaining internal consistency among the other elements of the General Plan as required by state law. Therefore, the GM Element does not replace or supersede any of the other General Plan elements; instead the GM Element addresses, amplifies and supports traffic improvement and public facility and development phasing concerns identified in the other General Plan elements.

The Growth Management Element is implemented through various integrated programs developed to support and carry out its goals, objectives, and policies.

The GM Element is the most current expression of County growth management policies. Consequently, although there is a certain amount of overlap among the General Plan elements, the GM Element is

the key resource document for growth management concerns.

The GM Element achieves internal consistency with the other General Plan elements through the pursuit of common major goals such as balanced land use and public facilities development. Consistency with specific elements is described below:

- The Public Services and Facilities Element provides policies and programs for the ongoing planning of public facilities by the County and Special Districts. The figures contained in the Land Use, Transportation, Recreation, and Resources (Open Space) Elements shall provide General Plan policy guidance for implementing public facilities planning.
- Major County public facilities shall conform to the adopted Noise and Safety Elements.
- Innovative financing, funding, and implementation programs which could serve to minimize infrastructure costs and thus, housing costs are included in the GM Element consistent with Housing Element direction.
- Regional transportation facilities are mapped in the Transportation Element.
- Regional public facilities (excluding transportation) are mapped, to the extent feasible, as Land Use Category 4 (Public Facilities) on the Land Use Designations figure.

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- The Public Services and Facilities Element provides specific implementation and financing policies and programs for all types of transportation facilities. The Transportation Element (i.e., Circulation Plan) is the County master plan for transportation facilities within the unincorporated area and is consistent with the master plan of Arterial Highways (MPAH) administered by OCTA. It provides general policy and program guidance for facility planning and siting.
- The Land Use Element contains the Growth Management Program that implements the Phased Development and Land Use/Transportation Integration policies of the Land Use Element. The Growth Management Program requires proponents of major land use projects to submit annual monitoring reports which project future development activity, identify public service/infrastructure deficiencies, and provide mitigation measures. An analysis of the annual monitoring reports is submitted to the Board of Supervisors as part of each update to the County's Development Monitoring Program. Projects which result in deterioration of service levels may be modified or deferred by the Board of Supervisors until adequate service levels can be provided.

Implementation Process

While this GM Element provides a significant resource document for future growth management efforts, it is not the final action necessary to establish a comprehensive public facilities and growth management plan for the County of Orange. Rather, the intent of the GM Element is to establish the basic policy framework for future implementing actions, plans, and programs. In addition, future amendments to the GM Element may be required to reflect the results of the implementation process.

The GM Element contains specific programs that serve as the primary vehicle for implementation of its policies. Privately initiated Land Use Element amendments and zone changes will be specifically reviewed for consistency with the GM Element policies.

Relationship to the State and Federal Highway System

While the GM Element addresses the need for the phasing of arterial highway improvements, it is recognized that the State and Federal highway system is a significant component of Orange County's overall transportation system.

Existing Freeway Conditions

In recent years, the Orange County Freeway system has undergone significant changes.



Many freeway to freeway connection improvements have been completed. Additional general purpose and HOV lanes have also been added. Collectively, when fully implemented these changes will significantly reduce congestion on Orange County's freeway system.

Impact of Freeway System on County Arterial Highway System

The Orange County Master Plan of Arterial Highways, which is administered by the Orange County Transportation Authority, defines an arterial highway system intended to support and serve existing and adopted land uses in both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County. The arterial system is designed to serve as part of a balanced transportation system (autos, trucks, buses, bicycles, pedestrians).

The arterial system provides for both through movement and a collector function. Major and Primary Arterial Highways are intended to handle the bulk of intra-regional traffic and complement both the freeway system and the local street network.

Secondary arterials and Commuter arterials serve mainly as collectors which funnel traffic from local streets to the Major and Primary arterial system.

As congestion continues to increase on the freeway system, more drivers are utilizing the arterial system, particularly those parallel to freeways or those arterials serving the same trip destination as the freeways. Consequently, some of these parallel arterials, particularly the north/south ones, are becoming increasingly congested. This situation is of special concern on those arterials which provide access to the freeway system.

Programs to Correlate County General Plan with Freeway System

While it is acknowledged that deficiencies do exist and will continue to exist on the freeway system for reasons beyond the control of County government, the County will promote the correlation of its General Plan programs, including the GM Element, with the freeway system through the following programs:

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1. *Support Countywide Implementation of the Measure M Countywide Growth Management Program (GMP)*

One of the key implementation programs of the GM Element is the action plan for countywide implementation of the Measure M GMP.

Given the fact that much of the traffic on the County's freeway system results from areas outside the unincorporated area where the County has no land use jurisdiction, the most effective method of improving the freeway system is on a regional basis. The Inter-Jurisdictional Planning Forums, convened pursuant to the Measure M Countywide Growth Management Program, provide an opportunity for the County to participate with local jurisdictions in addressing cumulative traffic impacts and coordinating improvements to transportation and other facilities. The Inter-Jurisdictional Planning Forums also provide the opportunity to meet with local jurisdictions to discuss proposed development projects with multi-jurisdictional impacts. In addition, the concept of implementing new arterial highway links commensurate with new development, including links parallel to the freeway system, is required by the GM Element and will serve to mitigate impacts on the freeway system.

2. *Orange County Congestion*

Management Program

With the passage of the gas tax increase (Proposition 111) in June 1990 came a requirement that urbanized areas in the State adopt a Congestion Management Program (CMP). The goals of the CMP are to reduce traffic congestion and provide a mechanism for coordinating land use development and transportation improvement decisions. In order for a jurisdiction to be eligible for Proposition 111 funds, no intersection on an adopted CMP Highway System may be allowed to deteriorate to a Level of Service (LOS) worse than LOS E or the existing (1991) LOS if worse than LOS E without mitigations being prescribed in an adopted deficiency plan.

The Orange County CMP, adopted in 1991, established the freeway system and major arterial highways as the Orange County CMP Highway System. The Orange County CMP established a process for use by each jurisdiction to analyze the impacts of proposed development projects on the CMP Highway System. Each jurisdiction is required to analyze development projects to determine whether project-generated traffic will cause CMP intersections/links to exceed their LOS standards and to assess feasible mitigation measures to maintain the adopted LOS Standard. In addition, the Orange County CMP includes mechanisms for inter-jurisdictional

coordination where a proposed development is determined to generate an increase in traffic on CMP links/intersections beyond the jurisdiction's boundaries.

3. *Improvements to the Existing Freeway System*

The County Multi-Modal Transportation Study (MMTS), which is the "blueprint" for countywide transportation improvement, recognized that much of the existing freeway system will need additional capacity. While the County of Orange is not responsible for these improvements, the County has provided and will continue to provide local support for these improvements through various programs. These include: 1) County assistance on the design and construction process for necessary freeway improvements in order to meet project schedules; 2) County support of the programs undertaken by the Orange County Transportation Authority for the planning and financing of needed freeway improvements; and 3) Ongoing coordination between the County and CalTrans through the environmental review process whereby CalTrans reviews development projects for impacts on the freeway system.

The County Master Plan of Arterial Highways also proposes the development of major new travel corridors which would be needed to carry future traffic from South County

and North County to the central portion of the County. These include the San Joaquin Hills and Foothill Transportation Corridors (intended to provide relief to Pacific Coast Highway and the Santa Ana and San Diego Freeways) as well as the Eastern Transportation Corridor (intended to provide relief to the Costa Mesa-Newport Freeway) and the proposed extension of the Orange Freeway to the San Diego Freeway.

By undertaking the three programs outlined above, the County will be supporting, through local action, enhanced coordination of the County General Plan and the County freeway system.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Element, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

- **Comprehensive Phasing Plan (CPP)** shall mean a road and infrastructure improvement and financing plan which meets the established level of service requirements in this Element and covers the impacted Community Analysis Areas (CAAs) within significant unincorporated areas of the County. With regard to road improvements, a CPP may be similar to the Foothill Circulation Phasing Plan (FCPP) and must include level of service requirements and take into account measurable traffic impacts on the

From the beginning of 1997 through mid-2003, California will need 1.1 to 1.2 million additional housing units.

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circulation system.

- **Critical Movement** shall mean any of the conflicting through or turning movements at an intersection that determine the allocation of green signal time.
- **Development Phasing Plan** shall mean a plan which establishes the requirement that building and grading permits shall be approved or issued in a manner which assures implementation of required improvements of arterials, public facilities, and services in conjunction therewith. The County shall specify the order of improvements and the number of dwelling units based, at a minimum, on mitigation measures adopted in conjunction with environmental documentation and other relevant factors.
- **Deficient Intersection Fund** shall mean a trust fund established to implement necessary improvements to existing intersections that do not meet the Traffic Level of Service. ~~Policy.~~
- **Deficient Intersection List** shall mean a list of intersections which do not meet the Traffic Level of Service Policy for reasons which are beyond the control of the County (e.g., ramp metering effects, traffic generated outside the County's jurisdiction, etc.). Additional intersections may be added by the County to the deficient intersection list only as a result of conditions that are

beyond the control of the County and after a public hearing.

- **Foothill Circulation Phasing Plan (FCPP)** shall mean the comprehensive road improvement and financing plan for the Foothill area adopted by the Board of Supervisors on September 15, 1987 and as may be amended.
- **Growth Management Areas (GMAs)** shall mean those Countywide GMAs, established for planning purposes as required by Measure M: The Revised Traffic Improvement and Growth Management Ordinance. The boundaries of said GMAs shall be the same as those for the Countywide GMAs approved by the Regional Advisory and Planning Council (as required by Measure M), and as may be subsequently amended.
- **Growth Management Element** shall mean the Growth Management Element of the Orange County General Plan, a permissive element of the General Plan adopted in accordance with Government Code Section 65303, et seq.
- **Measurable Traffic** shall mean a traffic volume resulting in a 1% increase in the volume/capacity ratio of the sum of all critical movements.
- All other terms shall be as defined in the Orange County Zoning Code as of the date of adoption of this Element.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Goals

This section presents the existing and future goals of the Growth Management Element. The goals of the GM Element are as follows:

1. *Reduce traffic congestion;*
2. *Ensure that adequate transportation facilities, public facilities, equipment, and services are provided for existing and future residents; and*
3. *Protect the natural environment of Orange County.*
4. *Balance the needs of congestion management with statewide goals related to infill development, promotion of public health through active transportation, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.*

These goals shall be accomplished through implementation of the policies and programs set forth in this Element.

- ***Objectives***

Achievement of these goals shall be measured by the following objectives.

1. ***Development Phasing:***

Development shall be phased in a manner consistent with applicable Comprehensive Phasing Plan.

2. ***Transportation:***

The circulation system shall be implemented in a manner which achieves the established Traffic Level of Service Policy. On July 1, 2020, Senate Bill (SB) SB 743 provisions applied statewide, and the County of Orange is utilizing the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) metrics in County guidelines to assist with our evaluation of projects within unincorporated Orange County. The County will continue to apply the Level of

Service (LOS) analysis or other traditional metrics to determine traffic impacts for operational level assessment as appropriate.

3. *Sheriff/Fire/Paramedic:*

Adequate facilities and equipment, as determined through GMA Facility Implementation Plans developed in consultation with the Fire Authority and Sheriff Department, shall be financed and implemented in a manner that ensures that the costs of necessary facilities and equipment for new development are borne by new development. The service levels established in the GMA Facility Implementation Plans shall be, at a minimum, equivalent to those service levels specified in the General Plan.

4. *Library Facilities:*

Adequate facilities and equipment, as determined through GMA Facility Implementation Plans, shall be financed and implemented consistent with a general service standard of one 10,000 square-foot branch library facility per 50,000 residents, or if appropriate, one 15,000 square-foot regional library per 75,000 residents.

Policies

1. *DEVELOPMENT PHASING*

Development shall be phased in accordance with any applicable Comprehensive Phasing Plan (CPP) adopted by the County. It is the intent that such CPPs shall include development phasing plans which establish both a phasing allocation of development commensurate with roadway and public facility capacities and an overall build-out development plan which can be supported by implementation of the planned infrastructure system.

2. *BALANCED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT*

Balanced community development shall be established which encourages employment of local residents and provides for both employment and employee housing opportunities within the County or Growth Management Area except in “Transition Areas for Rural Communities” which may be established pursuant to this Element or where a Specific Plan or Feature Plan dictates otherwise. In particular, SB 743 updates the way transportation impacts are measured in California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review for new development projects. This change will help us achieve our climate commitments, preserve our environment, improve our health and safety, particularly for our most

The County maintains over 1,060 lane-miles of unincorporated roadways.

vulnerable residents, and boost our economy by prioritizing co-located jobs, services, and housing.

3. *TRAFFIC LEVEL OF SERVICE POLICY*

It is the policy of the County that within three years of the issuance of the first use and occupancy permit for a development project or within five years of the issuance of a finished grading permit or building permit for said development project, whichever occurs first, that the necessary improvements to arterial highway facilities, to which the project contributes measurable traffic, are constructed and completed to attain Level of Service (LOS) "D" at the intersections under the sole control of the County. LOS "C" shall also be maintained on Santiago Canyon Road links until such time as uninterrupted segments of the roadway (i.e., no major intersections) are reduced to less than three miles.

Intersections exempt from the above paragraph include facilities under the jurisdiction of a city or the State or those included on the Deficient Intersection List established pursuant to this Element. However, it is the policy of the County that all development contributing measurable traffic to intersections on the Deficient Intersection List shall only be approved if the development project contributes on a pro-rata basis to a Deficient Intersection Fund.

The "County of Orange Growth Management Element Transportation Implementation Manual" which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in June 1989 and, as may subsequently be amended, establishes the procedures and local parameters for the implementation of this policy. Amendments to the manual shall be approved by the Board of Supervisors only after a public hearing. Since then, the Transportation Implementation Manual was deleted from the County of Orange General Plan Transportation Element and serves as a stand-alone "2020 Updated Transportation Implemental Manual".

4. *VECHILE MILES TRAVELED POLICY*

Statewide implementation for SB 743 began July 1, 2020. SB 743 changed the way transportation studies are conducted in CEQA documents. Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) replaces motorist delay and level of service (LOS) as the metric for impact determination. For land development projects, VMT is the product of the daily trips generated by a new development and the distance those trips travel to their destinations. For capital projects, impacts are identified as the new VMT attributable to the new capital project, both from the installation of the facility and the induced growth generated as a result of induced land use.

The "2020 Updated Transportation Implementation Manual", which was

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adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2020, may subsequently be amended, establishes the procedures and local parameters for the implementation of this policy.

5. TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

Comprehensive traffic improvement programs shall be established to ensure that all new development provides necessary transportation facilities and intersection improvements as a condition of development approval. Participation in such programs shall be on a pro-rata basis and shall be required of all development projects except where an increased level of participation exceeding these requirements is established through negotiated legal mechanisms, such as a public facilities development agreement.

6. PUBLIC FACILITY PLANS

Comprehensive public facility plans shall be established for fire, sheriff/police and library facilities. All development projects shall participate in such plans on a pro-rata basis and as a condition of development approval except where an increased level of participation exceeding these requirements is established in negotiated legal mechanisms, such as a public facilities development agreement.

7. TRANSITION AREAS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

New development within the Silverado-Modjeska Specific Plan planning area (Adopted by the Orange County Board of Supervisors August 31, 1977, Resolution No. 77-1436) and Foothill Trabuco Specific Plan (Adopted December 19, 1991, Ordinance 91-698513) shall be rural in character and shall comply with the policies of that plan in order to maintain a buffer between urban development and the Cleveland National Forest.

It is recognized that additional plans may be established which provide a transition area between urban development and major open space areas.

8. BUFFER ZONES

There shall be buffer zones established through Feature Plans, Specific Plans, and/or Scenic Corridor Plans which provide for the physical separation of major communities by means of open space areas/corridors. Said open space area/corridors will be based upon natural features such as creeks or prominent topographic or aesthetic features.

It is recognized that the buffer zones established pursuant to this policy will not necessarily link Regional Parks or serve a recreational function.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

1. PARTICIPATION IN INTER-JURISDICTIONAL PLANNING FORUMS

As required by Measure M, the County shall participate in the Inter-Jurisdictional Planning Forums (IJPFS) at the GMA level to examine regional improvements needed within the GMA. Each IJPF annually develops a prioritized list of transportation improvement projects, which is approved by the IJPF's elected officials and submitted to the Orange County Transportation Authority for funding consideration. The County will participate in development of the annual GMA Transportation Improvement Project List for each GMA.

2. COMPREHENSIVE FACILITIES IMPLEMENTATION PLANS

The County shall maintain Comprehensive Facility Implementation Plans, incorporating both Traffic Improvement Programs and Public Facilities Plans, for the financing of transportation, police/sheriff, fire, and library facilities for each GMA which includes major unincorporated areas in accordance with the goals, objectives, and policies of this Element. The adopted Foothill Circulation Phasing Plan (FCPP) shall be utilized as a model for these plans. The FIPs shall serve to implement the development phasing

plan allocations set forth in the Development Phasing Policy of the Goals, Objectives and Policies section.

The Comprehensive Facilities Implementation Plans will include a flood control component. Said component will either provide a drainage master plan for the GMA or incorporate the provisions of a drainage master plan for a larger area.

The flood control component shall be consistent with guidelines developed by Public Facilities and Resources Department. These guidelines will ensure that the flood control components each include common elements, specifically:

- 1) Plans for each drainage area or sub-unit;
- 2) An assessment of drainage design constraints early in the planning process;
- 3) An assessment of drainage design constraints or opportunities caused as a result of watershed area being under one owner or multiple owners;
- 4) Utilization of the Orange County Hydrology Manual; and
- 5) A plan for financing necessary improvements.

In addition, the FIPs shall include a community design concept and

The County's Growth Management Element was used as a model for Measure M local requirements.

implementing timeline for establishing design standards for commercial and industrial development in the planning area.

3. MEASURE M COUNTYWIDE GROWTH MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The County shall take all actions possible to ensure that the implementation of this Element is consistent with the provisions of the Measure M Countywide Growth Management Program in order to bring about improved regional coordination in the areas of growth management, traffic improvement, and public service delivery.

4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING PROGRAM

The Performance Monitoring Program shall continue to provide an annual evaluation of compliance with development phasing allocations established pursuant to Development Phasing as described in the Goals, Objectives and Policies section. This program shall also ensure that necessary road and other public facilities improvements or funding are actually provided in order for development to continue. If the necessary improvements/funding are not provided, development shall be deferred until compliance with the provisions of this

program is achieved.

In addition, the Performance Monitoring Program will provide an annual evaluation of the maintenance of service levels. The traffic reports provided under this program shall utilize data collected within three (3) months of preparation of the report, unless otherwise directed by the County Traffic Engineer. In the event that the Performance Monitoring Program identified one or more service level deficiencies, corrective measures shall be implemented by the County to address the identified deficiencies.

5. TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT/ PUBLIC FACILITY DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS

In the event the financing and implementation provisions of this Element are implemented through subsequent, legally valid Traffic Improvement/ Public Facility Development Agreements, said agreements shall be consistent with the County's Growth Management Program and its implementing ordinances, plans, and programs.

6. ADDITIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Other implementing measures, as deemed necessary by the County to further the goals of this Element, may be established.