
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Background Report

The purpose of this Background Report is to support the Town's update to the General Plan. This Background Report presents background information (data, facts and information on the existing conditions of the Town and its environs) collected as part of the General Plan update process. It will serve as a resource for the General Plan and the associated Program Environmental Impact Report that will be prepared pursuant to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act. This document will also be used as resource for future planning studies, environmental impact reports or other documents.

1.2 Purpose of the General Plan Update

The Background Report effectively serves as a foundation on which the General Plan update process proceeds. Mandated by State law, each city and county must adopt a general plan that addresses physical development in the community. The General Plan is perhaps the single most important document a local government can adopt, serving as the guiding policy document. The General Plan is often referred to as a "constitution" for decision-making by a local government. The General Plan is comprehensive in its scope, identifying land use, circulation, environmental, economic and even social goals and policies as they relate to local land use and development. The General Plan is also central to the effective management of a community's physical and natural resources and provides a basis for local decision-making.

The Town of Corte Madera General Plan will be used to inform citizens, developers, agencies, interest groups and others of the ground rules that will guide development-related decisions in the community. The General Plan will provide the long-term vision for the community, and, through its implementation policies, how that vision may be achieved over time (up to 20 years).

In order for a General Plan to be effective, it must remain current. While State law does not specify rigid requirements or timing for updating a General Plan (other than for the Housing Element), it does establish that the responsibility for determining whether a General Plan is up to date and accurate rests with each jurisdiction. The Town Council adopted the Corte Madera General Plan in December 1989. Since that time, the Town has experienced population growth, economic development, residential development and other changes that should be addressed in the updated General Plan. Community interests and attitudes may also have changed since 1989. Additionally, planning, development and environmental laws have changed since the General Plan was last adopted. The General Plan update will therefore address pertinent guiding planning, development and environmental statutes as part of the Town's General Plan.

1.3 Format and Scope of the Background Report

The Background Report provides background data and information specific to certain elements of the General Plan. **Table 1.3.1**, below, presents the proposed Town of Corte

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Madera General Plan elements and corresponding Background Report chapters with information relevant to each element.

Table 1.3.1: General Plan Elements and Corresponding Background Report Chapters

General Plan Element	Corresponding Background Report Chapter
Land Use	2.0 Land Use
Circulation	5.0 Transportation and Circulation
Housing	3.0 Socioeconomic Conditions
Noise	7.5 Noise Environment
Open Space/Conservation	6.0 Open Space and Recreation 7.0 Physical and Environmental Conditions
Safety	4.0 Public Facilities and Services 8.0 Hazards
Parks and Recreation	6.0 Open Space and Recreation
Flood Control	4.9 Stormwater Drainage and Flooding 8.2 Flooding Hazards
Economic Development	3.0 Socioeconomic Conditions

All references cited or used and persons consulted in the preparation of this document are listed in Chapter 9.0 of this Background Report. References to documents in the text are by author and date.

Although the Background Report is intended to be a comprehensive resource, it does have limitations. Research conducted during General Plan preparation was limited in scope to that necessary to support the update the process. For example, detailed technical analyses of flood control issues was not conducted nor part of the scope of work for this document. The data in this document may not prove suitable to support future development projects, necessitating the need for more specific analyses. Additional and more authoritative information for a particular subject may be available. Before using this information in this document in the future, readers are cautioned to consult the Town and other agencies. They may have, or be in the process of developing, more current and relevant information. Data included in this Background Report is time-specific, and may decline in value over time. The Town should consider the need to update pertinent information during any subsequent update of the General Plan or in conjunction with environmental review of major development projects.