



The City of Irwindale is creating a General Plan Update of specific chapters, or elements, per state law requirements (Government Code Section 65302). The General Plan Update will include a new Environmental Justice Element and updates to the Safety and Housing Elements. A General Plan guides the policies and actions of the City. Environmental justice is the belief that all people have the basic right to live, work, go to school, play, and pray in a healthy and clean environment.

Below are some Frequently Asked Questions regarding the City's General Plan Update.

## General FAQs

[What is required to be included in a general plan?](#)

California law requires that the General Plan include a minimum of nine state-mandated elements: Land Use, Open Space, Conservation, Housing, Environmental Justice, Circulation, Noise, Air Quality and Safety. Beyond the mandatory elements of the General Plan, there is a great deal of flexibility to address local conditions and circumstances through additional elements.

The General Plan may include additional elements related to land-use development, including economic development, military readiness, cultural resources, sustainability, and implementation. There is also a great deal of flexibility in creating the format of the General Plan so that certain topics can be better integrated.

[How often should the general plan be updated?](#)

The State Office of Planning and Research (OPR) recommends that General Plans be comprehensively updated every 10-15 years to reflect changes in community values, economic conditions, and emerging issues and challenges. However, with the exception of the Housing Element, Safety Element and Environmental Justice Element (where required), there is no legal requirement from the State to regularly update the General Plan.

[How long will the general plan update take?](#)

The General Plan process will be ongoing and take approximately two years to complete.

[Are there any requirements for how the general plan is organized?](#)

No. Each jurisdiction may decide on the overall structure of the General Plan (i.e., how the "elements" are organized) so long as all requirements are included. Communities are encouraged to organize the General Plan in any way that reflects the values of the community and is usable by the jurisdiction.

## GENERAL PLAN UPDATE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### Is any topic more important than another?

No. While some believe that land use and circulation are the most important topics, all elements (and individual goals, objectives, policies and actions) carry equal weight. Once added to the General Plan, each element, regardless of whether it is optional or required, assumes the same legal standing.

### Does the state review and approve the general plan?

The only Element that is reviewed and approved by the State is the Housing Element. Other elements are subject to review and comment by State agencies but there is no ability to approve or deny the General Plan in its entirety.

### Are there consequences from the state for not maintaining an up-to-date general plan?

Except for the Housing Element, which is required to be updated every 8 years, there are no legal consequences if the City does not update its General Plan on a regular basis. However, having an up-to-date General Plan allows for the City to stay current with the evolving needs of the community, reflect current community values, vision for land use and development, and update technical information. A current General Plan also allows the City to gain access to funding for activities such as affordable housing.

### What recent state legislation must be addressed in the general plan?

The State legislature regularly modifies or creates new General Plan requirements. The requirements must be included at the next update of the General Plan. Government Code Section 65302(g) provides a comprehensive list of all required content in a General Plan. The following is a list of some, but not all, of the recent State legislation that must be included:

- **Environmental Justice Element (SB 1000)**. Requires local governments to explore “environmental justice” issues and prepare an Environmental Justice Element if certain conditions are present in the community.
- **Safety Element (SB 99)**. Requires the City, upon the next revision of the housing element on or after January 1, 2020, to review and update the Safety Element to include information identifying residential developments in hazard areas that do not have at least two emergency evacuation routes.
- **Evacuation Route Planning (AB 747 and AB 1409)**. Requires that the City identify evacuation routes and their capacity, safety, and viability under a range of emergency scenarios.
- **Complete Streets (AB 1358)**. Requires the jurisdictions include “complete streets” concepts into the General Plan, which necessitates an update to the City’s Circulation Element.
- **Climate Change and Resilience (SB 379)**. Requires that the General Plan address climate adaptation and resilience strategies in the Safety Element.
- **Tribal Consultation (AB 52 and SB 18)**. Requires consultation with local Native American tribes in and around the City.
- **Housing Density Bonuses (AB 2501)**. Requires local governments to adopt procedures and timelines for process a density bonus application and requires that local governments provide concessions and incentives (including increased height and modified development standards) for affordable housing projects.

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- **Fire Hazards (SB 1241)**. Requires that the Safety Element include the most recent version of the State’s “Fire Hazard Planning” document.
- **Flooding (AB 162)**. Requires that the General Plan identify areas subject to flooding.

### Is the General Plan Update subject to CEQA?

Yes. Like other discretionary actions in a community, the General Plan is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and a full program Environmental Impact Assessment (EIR) is usually required for adoption of a comprehensive or major update to a General Plan.

### What is an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)?

Public agencies must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a statute that requires state and local agencies to identify potential environmental impacts, and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible. A City certifies an EIR as part of a General Plan Update process in order to ensure compliance with CEQA.

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) identifies and analyzes the environmental impacts that can result from the implementation of the General Plan. It serves to inform governmental agencies and the public of the potential environmental impacts to existing or proposed changes to the built environment. The EIR also proposes mitigation measures to avoid or offset any negative environmental impacts.

### Who can get involved in the update and how?

The General Plan Update is an opportunity for community members and other major stakeholders to discuss how the City will grow through 2045. There will be many opportunities to participate, including community workshops, pop-up events, online engagement, and public hearings. You can join the email list to receive updates on upcoming events.

## GENERAL PLAN UPDATE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### Stay Involved!

Stay up to date with the General Plan Update by visiting the webpage at the following link:

<https://www.irwindaleca.gov/570/Housing-Element-General-Plan-Update>

Sign up for email updates to be notified of upcoming engagement opportunities. Please email Marilyn Simpson at <mailto:msimpson@IrwindaleCA.gov> with any questions.

### Your Voice Matters!

We would like your input about your neighborhood: access to groceries and healthy food, safety concerns, streets conditions, parks, housing, and any other issues that improve or decrease your quality of life in Irwindale. We want to ensure equal protection and meaningful involvement from all members of the community. All individual responses will be kept confidential and survey results will only be reported in aggregate to ensure the anonymity of respondents.

**To complete the community survey online, scan the resident or employee QR code below or go to the website linked below:**

<https://bit.ly/IrwindaleResidentSurvey>

<https://bit.ly/IrwindaleEmployeeSurvey>

