

Ventura GPU:

Vision, Core Values, and Strategies

Draft, January 13, 2022



Overview

The following is the long-term vision for the City of Ventura's General Plan, which will guide the City's policy and planning development and implementation until 2050. The vision is comprised of three parts: a **vision statement**, **10 core values**, and **strategies** to move the ideas in this plan forward.

Vision Statement

We, the residents of Ventura, will implement a bold, new, shared vision for the city that will guide us to a more environmentally sustainable, equitable, and resilient future. This vision will maintain the city's quintessential California beach town character, close-knit community feel, and diverse neighborhoods. We will work collectively to develop innovative solutions to address challenges facing our community including climate change, wildfires, inequities, housing affordability, and a stagnant regional economy.

While Ventura is "almost perfect," we recognize that change is inevitable, and should be embraced and molded to enhance the city's identity. Over time, the physical form of the city will evolve to accommodate new jobs, retail, tourism, entertainment, and housing that together complement the city's strong neighborhoods and diverse housing stock and pave the way to a more sustainable jobs-housing balance. The Downtown, commercial corridors, and employment districts will be vibrant, and the city will have a wide diversity of housing options so that everyone, regardless of income, race, or physical ability, can enjoy the benefits of living in Ventura. Likewise, the transportation system will evolve to take advantage of new mobility solutions and to allow everyone to safely and efficiently walk, bike, or take transit around the City.

As this evolution occurs, we will always protect the characteristics that we cherish the most: our strong and vibrant Downtown; our views of and access to the hills, open spaces, and natural areas from public spaces; the diverse neighborhoods; the history of our community; the diversity of our cultures, races, and ethnicities; the commitment to arts, creativity, and innovation; and, most importantly, the desire to remain a community where neighbors look out for each other and feel a sense of belonging because they are compassionate, connected, active, and engaged.

We, the residents of Ventura, believe that the future is bright. We are committed to working together as a community to preserve what is unique and special about our city and to change and adapt what is needed to address existing and future challenges.

Core Values

The following values will form the basis for the goal, policies, and programs included in the General Plan.

1. Unique Character

We value Ventura's unique character, including diverse and eclectic neighborhoods, a thriving Downtown, a diversity of shopping and employment districts, and beautiful public spaces. We will protect our history and natural open spaces, evolve our districts and corridors with new uses, enhance our neighborhoods, and grow in a sustainable and resilient manner that supports economic vitality, environmental protection, and social equity all while maintaining what we love most about Ventura.

2. Community

Community is at the core of who we are as a city. We are a strong and close-knit community of residents, businesses, and engaged stakeholders who are committed to helping one another, take pride in the well-being of our city and its residents, and are active and engaged in the civic process.

3. Quality of Life

Residents of all ages, income levels, and abilities should be able to comfortably live in a variety of housing options and can easily access quality parks, recreational facilities, libraries, and community services. We will foster safe neighborhoods through good community and environmental design that promotes a mix of uses and active streets that supports healthy lifestyles. We value creating a safe and reliable multi-modal transportation system, including walking, biking, public transit, and new mobility options.

4. Diversity and Equity

We celebrate our diversity and strive to proactively promote equity and inclusion for all races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, abilities, ages, religions, and cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. We are committed to supporting all residents with the resources and opportunities needed to achieve a healthy living environment and a high quality of life.

5. Balanced Growth

We recognize that cities are not static and must evolve to confront challenges and adapt to new ideas and new ways of living. We are committed to harnessing the evolution of Ventura in a way that confronts issues and challenges while preserving Ventura's unique and special character.

6. Housing for All People

We believe that safe and healthy housing is a basic human right. We will work to provide an adequate supply of housing affordable to households of all ages, abilities, and income levels.

7. Nature and Open Spaces

Ventura's unique location nestled between the hills, two rivers, and the ocean help make the city a special place and physically separate Ventura from adjacent cities. We value the preservation

of these natural areas and open spaces for their environmental, social, and health benefits and we will strive to protect these areas for future generations.

8. Innovation and Creativity

We value innovation and creative thinking to enhance our quality of life and solve challenging issues confronting Ventura today and in the future. We will support innovation across all disciplines including solutions to the climate crisis, new transportation technologies, forging new partnerships, supporting arts and culture, and encouraging businesses that advance new technologies to locate in the city.

9. Accessible Government and Robust Civic Engagement

We will maintain a local government is responsive, transparent, and accountable to the needs of Ventura residents and businesses and continue to engage and empower all Ventura residents to participate in the civic process. By doing so, we foster a stronger and more inclusive community where everyone's voice is heard and accounted for in the decision-making process.

10. Thriving Economy

We recognize that a thriving economy is critical to achieving our values as a community. We will strive to make decisions that support long-term economic and fiscal stability to improve the high quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Strategies

To achieve the vision and core values, the General Plan includes a series of strategies to be implemented by the public and private sector over the next 20 to 30 years. These strategies build off the Vision in the 2005 General Plan and reflect input from the public at the April 29, 2021, community workshop, pop-up workshops, visioning survey, meetings with Neighborhood Community Councils, multiple conversations with the GPAC including the July and October 2021 meetings.

Note that these strategies will remain a draft document and are expected to evolve and become more specific as the General Plan is developed over the next year.

The strategies are divided into five categories: Community Character and Design; Environment; Economy; Access and Mobility; and Equity and Engagement.

Community Character and Design

1. **Downtown.** Strengthen the Downtown as the "heart" of the city that serves as a thriving mixed-use district with new housing, jobs, retail, entertainment, and public gathering spaces while preserving its unique identity, including historic buildings, diverse architecture, and a walkable environment.
2. **Neighborhoods.** Enhance the diversity of Ventura's unique residential neighborhoods with appropriate infill development opportunities.

3. **Corridors.** Transform the major commercial corridors (E Main Street, E Thompson Blvd, Telegraph Rd, Telephone Rd, S Victoria Ave, Johnson Dr, and Ventura Ave) into vibrant, walkable, mixed-use environments.
4. **Housing.** Address and identify inclusive solutions to the housing shortage and homelessness by expanding the number of housing units, the diversity of housing types, and the range of affordability. Strive to obtain a pro-housing designation.
5. **Westside.** Create an interconnected and revitalized Westside community while preserving its Latinx heritage. Achieve this vision by phasing out polluting industrial uses, making the streets safer and more pedestrian-friendly, enhancing Ventura Avenue with plazas and public art, and providing housing for people of all incomes, ages, and abilities.
6. **East Ventura Transit-Oriented Development.** Evolve the area around the East Ventura Metrolink Station into a 21st Century transit-oriented district with high-density housing, parks and plazas, walkable streets, neighborhood-serving retail, and employment uses.
7. **Arts and Culture.** Enhance the City's role as a vibrant center for the arts and culture by expanding cultural opportunities and supporting artists.

Environment

8. **Climate action.** Take proactive steps to achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions in line with State targets by investing in renewable energy sources, decarbonizing buildings, making appropriate land use decisions, prioritizing active, clean mobility, and reducing resource consumption and solid waste.
9. **Environmental Pollution.** Continue to pro-actively protect the health of residents from environmental pollution from industry, agriculture, and transportation.
10. **Adaptation and Resilience.** Adapt to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards including wildfires, earthquakes, sea-level rise, extreme heat, water shortages, pollution, and coastal erosion.
11. **"Green" the City.** Continue to plant trees and landscaping and naturalize and beautify the Ventura and Santa Clara Rivers.
12. **Open Space.** Protect and enhance the character of Ventura's beaches, coastline, hillsides, barrancas, rivers and other natural areas for their environmental function and as a connection to nature for Ventura residents.
13. **Parks and Recreation.** Expand local park capacity, improve maintenance, and increase access for all residents. Offer a diverse range of active and passive recreation for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

Economy

14. **Employment Uses.** Strengthen Ventura's flourishing and balanced economy by expanding existing employment areas, encouraging a broad range of high-quality, well-paying employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, including small and local businesses and the regional agriculture and aquaculture sector.

15. **“Green” Jobs.** Diversify the economy by attracting environmentally friendly businesses and business practices.

Access and Mobility

16. **Bike/Ped Mobility.** Prioritize the expansion of the pedestrian and bicycle network to support multimodal transportation options, and to improve street safety and accessibility for residents of all ages.
17. **Transit.** Improve public transportation service and access to accommodate local, cross-town, and regional travel and to connect people directly from their homes to services and job opportunities.
18. **Connectivity to Ocean.** Improve the physical and psychological connections to the Pacific Ocean, including enhancing existing connections, and create new connections where feasible. Explore “capping” the freeway to better connect Downtown with the beach.
19. **Connection to Nature.** Improve bicycle and pedestrian connections from residential areas to open space resources (beaches, rivers, parks, and open space, etc.)

Equity and Engagement

20. **Environmental Justice and Social Equity.** Continue to recognize and mitigate environmental justice, social equity and disparate health impacts through policy development, physical changes, and funding.
21. **Digital Access.** Proactively take steps to ensure that all residents have affordable access to broadband infrastructure. Improve digital literacy and inclusivity to ensure equal access to information and participation.
22. **Capacity-building.** Proactively reach and engage with the community in civic processes, prioritizing youth, the Hispanic/Latinx community, and other disadvantaged groups with the goal of creating an active and engaged citizenry that is reflective of the City’s diversity. Expand partnerships with schools, advocacy organizations and businesses. Expand volunteer opportunities for residents to support each other and our community.