

# Draft Contra Costa County 2045 General Plan & Climate Action Plan 2024 Update



## OVERVIEW



## Our Vision for Contra Costa County in 2045:

- Communities are inclusive, close-knit, thriving, and engaged.
- All residents feel safe and secure in their homes and neighborhoods.
- Housing is affordable for everyone and no one is left without a home.
- All communities benefit equitably from a growing economy that is sustainable and just.
- All residents live in communities where they breathe clean air, are not burdened with toxic exposures, and have an opportunity to pursue healthy and fulfilling lives.
- Everyone enjoys safe, affordable, and reliable public transportation that takes them where they want and need to go: to good-paying sustainable jobs, quality schools, affordable grocery stores and essential services, recreation, and health care facilities.
- There are parks, community centers and gardens, small businesses, and faith spaces available to serve everyone in the diverse population.
- The county's scenic landscapes and unique natural features are preserved.
- Focused and ambitious actions are taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve community resilience, and adapt equitably to a changing climate.



What is the General Plan?

The Contra Costa County 2045 General Plan is the County's primary policy tool to guide physical changes in the unincorporated areas of the county over the next 20 years. It serves as the basis for planning- and infrastructure-related decisions made by County staff and decision-makers. It is built around the themes of environmental justice, community health, economic development, and sustainability, and organized into topic-specific “elements” or chapters. Each element contains a set of goals related to the topic; to help achieve each goal, the General Plan includes policies to guide decision-making, along with specific actions that the County will undertake. California law requires every county and city in the state to adopt a general plan to guide development in the area, normally over a timeframe of approximately 20 years. The Contra Costa County 2045 General Plan replaces the previous General Plan, which was adopted in January 1991.

Envision Contra Costa Timeline

2018	<b>Project Start-Up</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Background Research</li><li>• Greenhouse Gas Inventory</li><li>• Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment</li><li>• Online Briefing Book</li></ul>
2019-2020	<b>Community Conversations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community-Specific Meetings</li><li>• Draft Community Profiles</li><li>• Open House Series on Countywide Issues</li><li>• Environmental Justice Policy Discussions</li></ul>
2021-2022	<b>Policy Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Countywide Policy Development</li><li>• Draft Land Use Map</li><li>• Draft Climate Action Plan (CAP) Strategies</li></ul>
2023	<b>Draft Plans</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Draft General Plan</li><li>• Draft CAP</li><li>• Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)</li></ul>
2024	<b>Final Plans</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Final EIR</li><li>• Adoption Hearings</li><li>• Final General Plan and CAP</li></ul>

What are the major themes of the Draft General Plan?



Environmental Justice

Environmental justice policies intend to improve the quality of life and health outcomes in Impacted Communities – those that experience the highest levels of historic discrimination, pollution, and social and economic disadvantages.



Community Health

Community health policies guide decisions to promote healthy lifestyles and reduce exposure to pollutants that can adversely affect people’s health.



Economic Development

Economic development policies aim to develop the county’s workforce and attract and support sustainable businesses and industries that provide living-wage jobs, hire from the local workforce, and engage with communities.



Sustainability

Sustainability policies and strategies in the General Plan and CAP conserve natural resources, improve resiliency, protect the environment, reduce pollution, and enhance quality of life.



Element Name	Important topics
Stronger Communities	Environmental justice, community health, healthy homes, arts and culture, workforce development, business and innovation, community engagement.
Land Use	Land use designations and map (see pages 6-7), Urban Limit Line, 65/35 Land Preservation Standard, sustainable growth, quality design, land use and infrastructure coordination, intergovernmental coordination.
Transportation	Transportation safety and sustainability, coordination with other agencies, roadway definitions, connectivity, biking and walking, goods movement, airports.
Conservation, Open Space, and Working Lands	Open space, agricultural resources and economy, ecological resources, water resources, Delta and shoreline resources, historic and cultural resources, tribal communities, scenic resources, mineral resources, energy resources.
Public Facilities and Services	Water and wastewater service, drainage and flood risk, public safety and emergency services, solid waste management, parks and recreation, schools, libraries.
Health and Safety	Air quality, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, climate change resilience and adaptation, flooding, sea level rise, wildfire, extreme heat, hazardous materials and waste, seismic and geologic hazards, emergency preparedness, evacuation, noise.
Growth Management	Growth impacts on facilities and services, cooperative planning with regional agencies, efficient land use patterns, infill and redevelopment.

The County's 2023-2031 Housing Element was adopted separately on June 13, 2023. It is the County's blueprint for all housing-related decisions and sets an action plan to meet State required housing allocations and other statutory requirements, and to ensure that housing can be provided for all residents and community members.



## Community Profiles

Each community in unincorporated Contra Costa County is unique with its own set of needs and characteristics. Community members treasure certain amenities and features and want to see them preserved and enhanced. They also want to see specific issues addressed in their community. Therefore, the Stronger Communities Element contains a set of Community Profiles that establish a vision and provide policy guidance for each community, shaped by conversations with community members.

## 97 community & stakeholder meetings



Over **1,270** people attended  
and they submitted over **4,600**  
comments

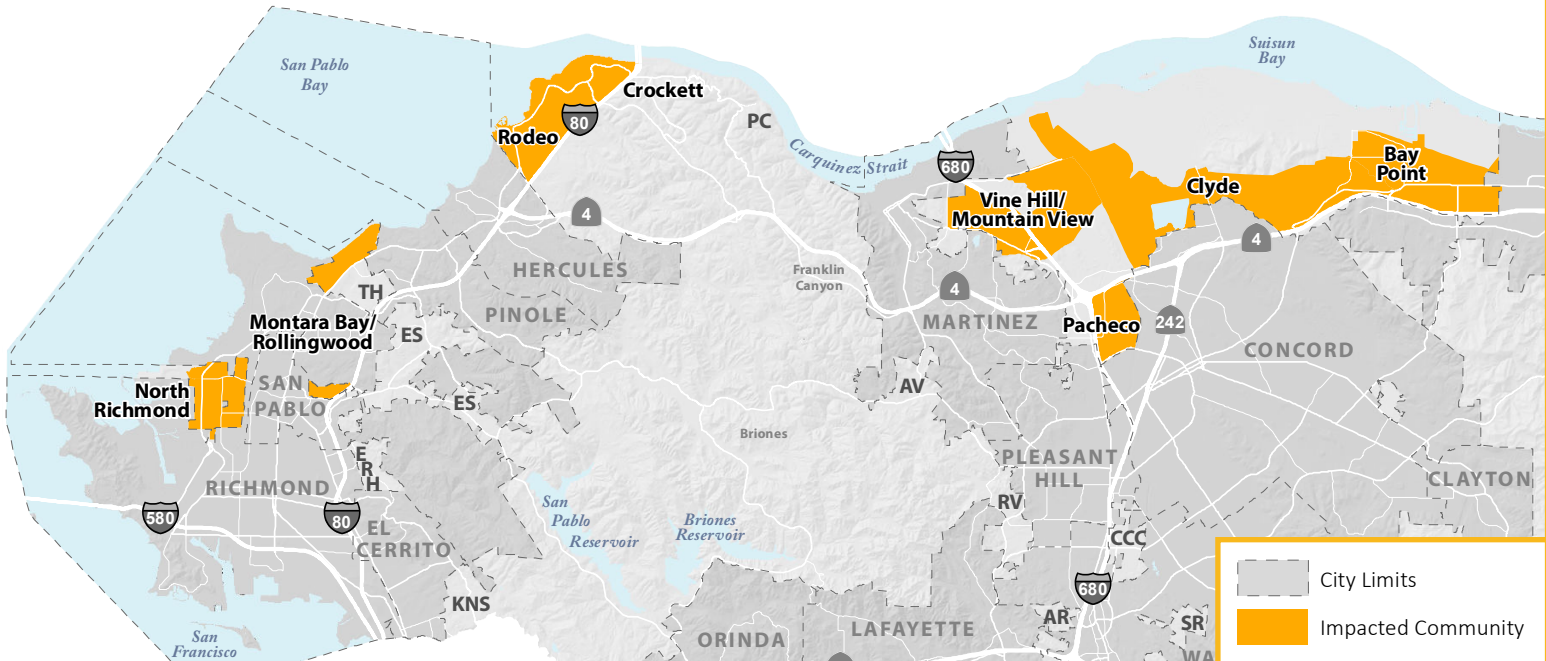


We also  
held over **35**  
workshops with  
policy makers  
and advisors





Throughout California, low-income communities and communities of color have experienced a combination of historical discrimination, neglect, and political and economic disempowerment. The result is that today they are impacted with higher pollution burdens and associated health conditions than other communities, as well as social and economic disadvantages like poverty or housing instability. Many low-income households and communities of color in unincorporated Contra Costa County are concentrated in neighborhoods where they continue to face significant threats to their health and livelihood. The General Plan includes a map of these “Impacted Communities” and many of its policies and actions prioritize improving conditions in these communities.



## Clean Industry & Jobs

Many of the policies and actions in the 2045 General Plan focus on reducing pollution from new or expanded industry while increasing job opportunities in Impacted Communities. Policies and actions in the Stronger Communities Element support and plan for a transition from highly polluting industries to a net-zero emission economy based on renewable and sustainable industries that provide living-wage jobs and healthy working conditions. The Health and Safety Element includes policies and actions to improve air quality in Impacted Communities by requiring new or expanded industries to mitigate pollutants at the source and locate sources of pollution far from vulnerable populations.







Promoting public health and achieving healthy communities through the built environment is a fundamental goal of the 2045 General Plan. The layout of our communities, the designs of buildings and public spaces, and the effectiveness of our transportation networks affect whether residents can make healthy food choices, walk or bike to a destination, play outside, and breathe clean air. The 2045 General Plan also emphasizes access to safe, sanitary, and affordable housing as a fundamental part of strong, healthy, and just communities. There is a recognized relationship between strong communities, physical and mental health, and well-designed spaces. The most livable communities have high-quality public spaces that enhance community character, offer opportunities for formal and informal social interaction, and promote active recreation.

## Healthy Lifestyles

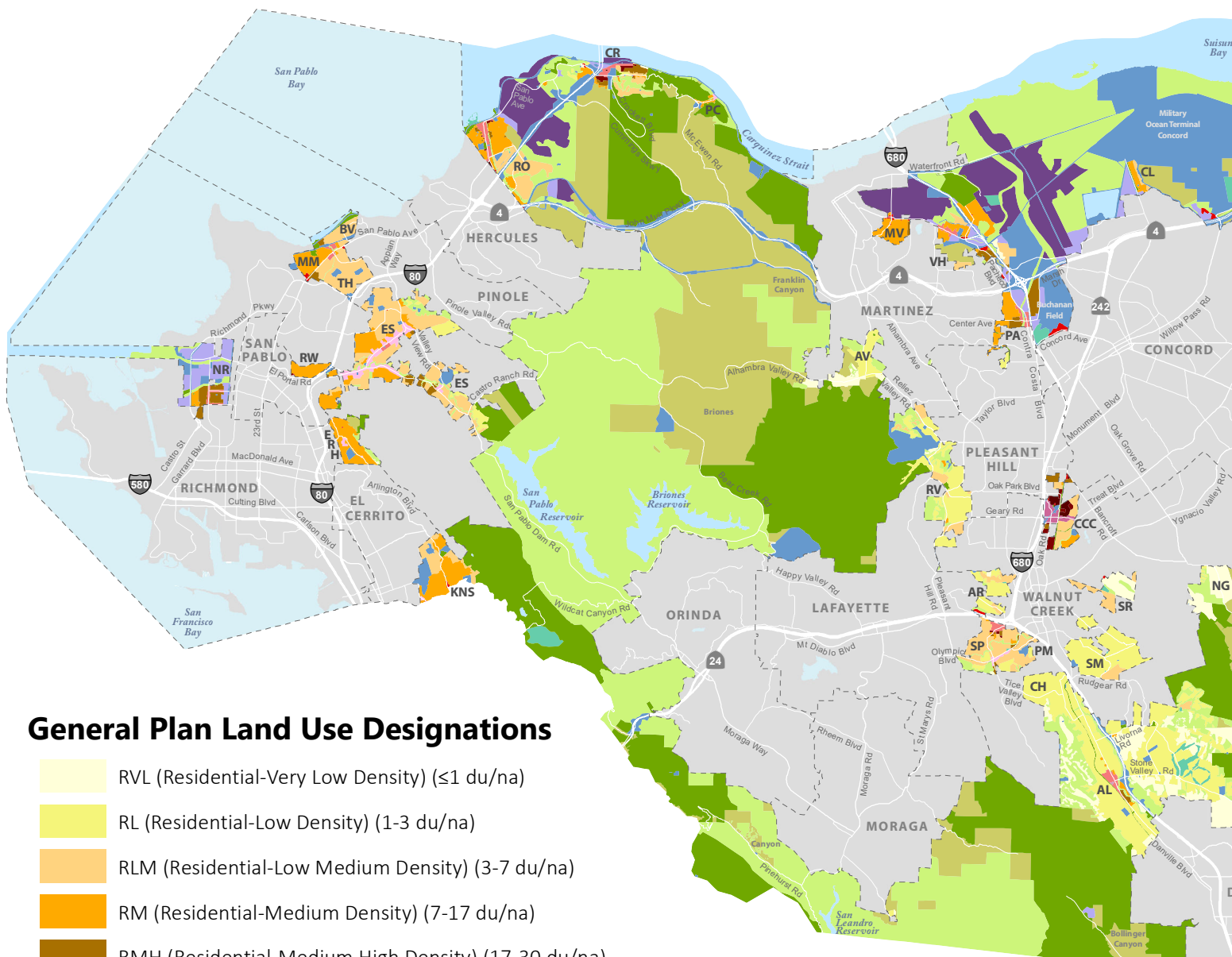
The 2045 General Plan supports the opportunity for everyone to lead healthy lifestyles. The Stronger Communities Element includes policies to increase access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food, especially in Impacted Communities, by encouraging grocery stores, urban agriculture, and farmers' markets on vacant or underutilized land. The Public Facilities and Services Element addresses inequitable access to parks and recreational spaces through policies and actions to assess park and open space needs in individual communities, prioritizing the assessment and investment of resources in Impacted Communities.



## Vibrant Neighborhoods

Policies throughout the 2045 General Plan support vibrant and diverse neighborhoods that promote social connections, neighborhood identity, and artistic and cultural expression. In particular, the Stronger Communities Element and Public Facilities and Services Element contain policies that promote cultural, community-driven, and beautification events, such as art festivals, farmers' markets, and community service days. Other policies and actions support the incorporation of public art and beautification into new development projects and the establishment of cultural facilities and programs that are accessible to all residents. The Land Use Element promotes a variety of housing types and infill development of existing urban areas, activating spaces that had been previously vacant or underutilized.

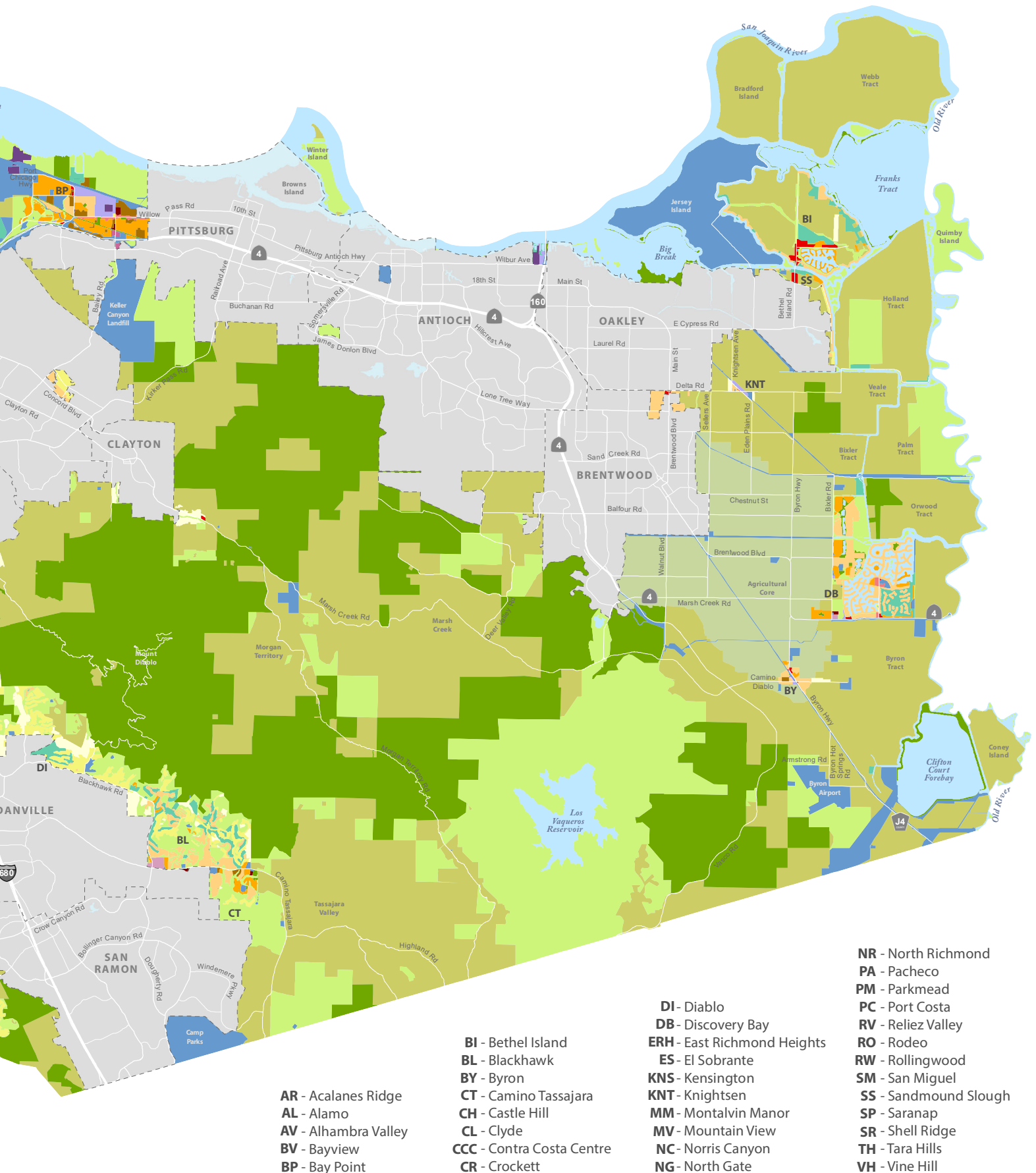




General Plan Land Use Designations

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| RVL (Residential-Very Low Density) ( $\leq 1$ du/na) | LI (Light Industrial)      |
| RL (Residential-Low Density) (1-3 du/na)             | HI (Heavy Industrial)      |
| RLM (Residential-Low Medium Density) (3-7 du/na)     | PS (Public / Semi Public)  |
| RM (Residential-Medium Density) (7-17 du/na)         | CR (Commercial Recreation) |
| RMH (Residential-Medium High Density) (17-30 du/na)  | PR (Park and Recreation)   |
| RH (Residential-High Density) (30-60 du/na)          | RC (Resource Conservation) |
| RVH (Residential-Very High Density) (60-125 du/na)   | AC (Agricultural Core)     |
| RX (Residential-Maximum Density) ( $126 \leq$ du/na) | AL (Agricultural Lands)    |
| MUL (Mixed Use Low) (0-30 du/na)                     | WA (Water)                 |
| MUM (Mixed Use Medium) (30-75 du/na)                 | City Limits                |
| MUH (Mixed Use High) (75-125 du/na)                  |                            |
| MUC (Mixed Use Community Specific) (Variable du/na)  |                            |
| CO (Commercial and Office)                           |                            |







When planning for land uses and economic opportunities in Contra Costa County, the jobs-to-housing balance is an important consideration, as the ratio of jobs to employed residents directly affects peoples' ability to work and live in the same area. The county currently has a jobs-housing imbalance, with only about 0.9 jobs for every home, causing many residents to commute out of county to the Bay Area and beyond. Ideally, there would be 1.4 jobs for every home in the county since there are about 1.4 employed residents per home. Contra Costa County is home to companies and organizations across a broad spectrum of industries, but less than 10 percent of the jobs are in the unincorporated areas. To attract new and retain existing businesses and jobs, the county must offer a workforce that possesses the education and skills employers need.



## Northern Waterfront

The 2045 General Plan contains policies to support a resilient and diversified economy through endeavors like the Northern Waterfront Economic Development Initiative, a regional strategy to create 18,000 new jobs along the Northern Waterfront by 2035. The General Plan also includes policy guidance to promote expansion of clean manufacturing and development of Priority Production Areas in Bay Point and the North Concord/Pacheco/Vine Hill area, which are areas that the County and regional agencies will prioritize for investments and protection from competing land uses.

## Local Workers and Businesses

The 2045 General Plan contains policies that support schools, training programs, the Workforce Development Board, and other institutions to develop and enhance local workforce skills. It also directs the County to establish a First Source Hiring Program that requires good-faith efforts toward employing the local construction workforce. To encourage economic growth, the General Plan directs the County to adopt an Economic Development Strategy to define a vision for the county's economy, identify and target suitable growth industries, and facilitate economic development and employment growth.







Sustainability means ensuring that Contra Costa County can meet its current resource needs in a way that isn't detrimental to future generations. This includes using resources that are renewable (meaning that they don't run out), minimizing waste, and improving resilience, which is the ability to withstand, recover, adapt, and learn from disasters and extreme events. Another important aspect of sustainability is conserving natural and working lands, which provide climate benefits by storing carbon, as well as ecological, recreational, and scenic benefits. To manage and guide growth in Contra Costa County, voters adopted the 65/35 Land Preservation Standard and Urban Limit Line (ULL). The 65/35 Standard limits urban development to no more than 35 percent of the land area of the county, while the ULL defines where such uses can be applied. Communities that plan for sustainability, including how to make themselves more resilient, are in a better position to improve their economy, public health and well-being, and overall quality of life.

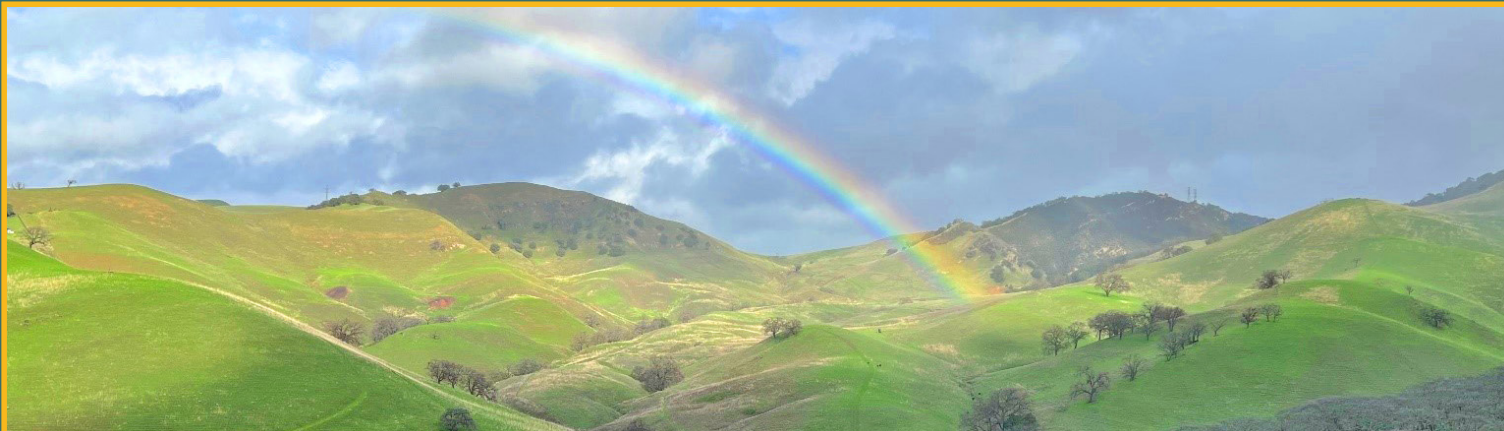


## Sustainable Land Use and Transportation

The Land Use Element includes policies and actions that support sustainable development patterns by focusing on infill development, directing housing and jobs in close proximity, and encouraging high-density, mixed-use development near transit centers. In addition, the Transportation Element includes policy guidance to increase access to zero-emission vehicles, as well as to reduce dependence on personal vehicles by prioritizing investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and supporting the expansion of transit.

## Natural & Working Lands

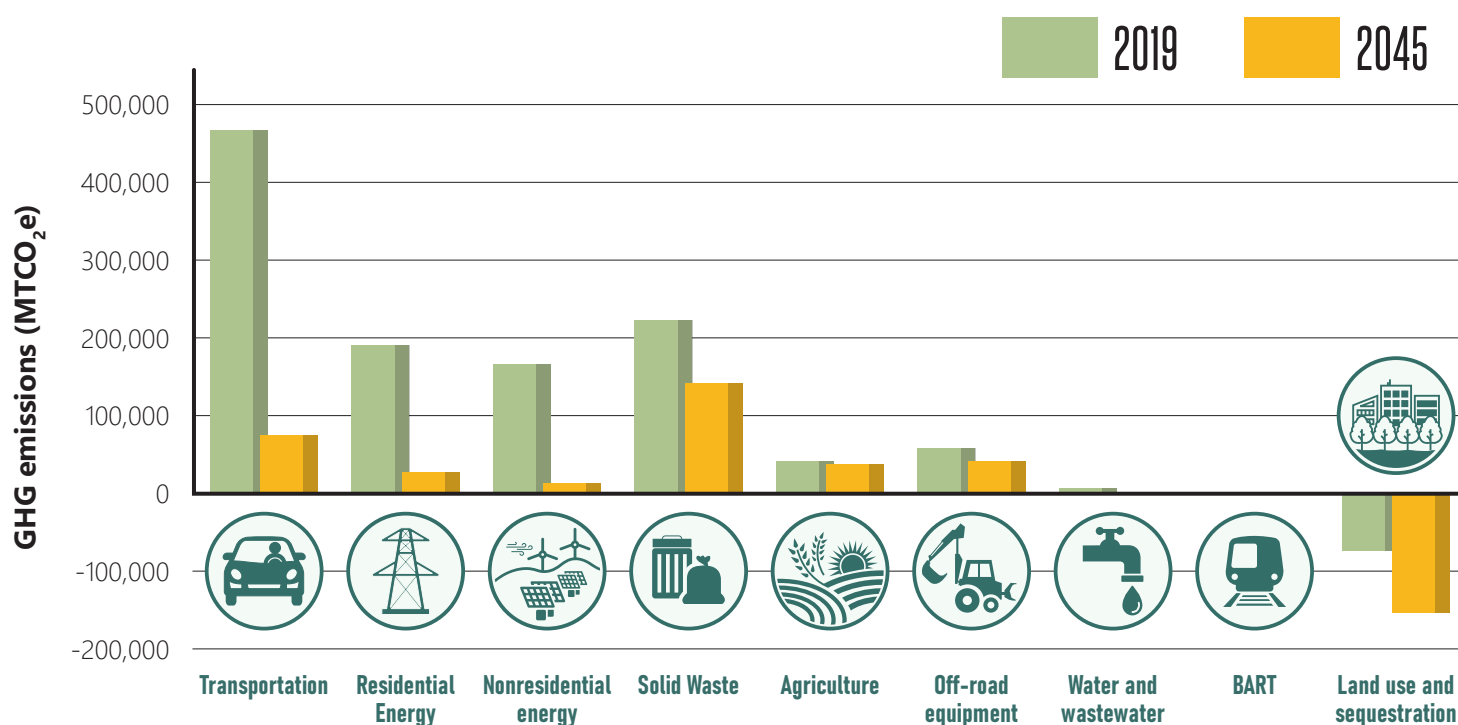
The Conservation, Open Space, and Working Lands Element contains policies and actions to preserve open spaces and agricultural lands and ensure the health and viability of natural and working lands is prioritized when there are potential conflicts with urban uses. The Land Use Element also includes policies that support the 65/35 Land Preservation Standard and ULL.



## What is the Climate Action Plan?

Responding to climate change requires a two-pronged approach of mitigation and adaptation. Cities and counties must reduce the amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs) that are emitted into the atmosphere from sources under their jurisdiction, while also adapting to the various hazards associated with climate change, such as wildfires, floods, droughts, and sea level rise. The Contra Costa County Climate Action Plan 2024 Update (2024 CAP) is the County's strategic plan to reduce GHG emissions and to improve resilience to changing climate conditions in the unincorporated areas of the county. The 2024 CAP implements the 2045 General Plan's policy guidance and addresses behaviors, regulations, and investment decisions that directly reduce GHG emissions or promote climate resilience. This approach supports a holistic view of climate action planning and sustainability—it works to reduce Contra Costa County's contribution to climate change by mitigating GHGs while simultaneously preparing for the changes that cannot be avoided through adaptation strategies. (Photo Credit: Jennifer Groth.)

## Emissions by Sector with Climate Action Plan (2019 vs 2045)







## Climate Action Plan Goals and Strategies

The 2024 CAP presents climate action strategies that will allow the County to attain its GHG emissions reduction goals while improving community resilience and supporting its goals for growth, economic development, and environmental justice. These climate action strategies include those that directly reduce GHG emissions and those that help lower emissions but are not as easy to directly track, as well as strategies to help improve community resilience to climate hazards through adaptation. In total, there are 29 comprehensive strategies that are organized into the following categories and goals. For each strategy, the 2024 CAP also presents recommended actions necessary for implementation.



### Clean and Efficient Built Environment (BE)

Homes, workplaces, and businesses in unincorporated Contra Costa County run efficiently on clean energy.



### No Waste Contra Costa (NW)

Contra Costa County disposes of no more solid waste than 2.2 pounds per person per day (PPD).



### Reduce Water Use and Increase Drought Resilience (DR)

Contra Costa County uses less water and communities are prepared for drought.



### Clean Transportation Network (TR)

Contra Costa County's transportation network provides safe and accessible options for walking, biking, and transit. If residents and workers are driving, they are in zero-emission vehicles.



### Resilient Communities and Natural Infrastructure (NI)

Contra Costa County will increase resilience to climate hazards and foster community health.



### Climate Equity (CE)

Contra Costa County will address environmental factors leading to health disparities, promote safe and livable communities, and promote investments that improve neighborhood accessibility.



### Leadership (L)

Contra Costa County is a model for how local government can take action on climate issues.



### Implementation (IS)

Contra Costa County will ensure it follows through to achieve the goals and actions in this Climate Action Plan.



The Draft Contra Costa County 2045 General Plan and 2024 CAP are ready for your review. Community input and direction gathered since 2019, when the Envision Contra Costa process began, have formed the foundation of each plan. Now is the time to check our work and make sure we got it right! Visit [Envisioncontracosta2040.org](https://Envisioncontracosta2040.org) or scan the QR code to the right to view each document and share your feedback. You can also attend an upcoming meeting about the plans to tell us what you think; more information about upcoming meetings is available on the website. (Photo Credit: Hao Li.)



## What's Next?

### October 2023

- Publish Draft General Plan & CAP

### December 2023

- Publish Draft EIR

### June-August 2024

- Publish Final EIR
- Planning Commission Adoption Hearings
- Board of Supervisors Adoption Hearings

