

Ventura GPU: Draft Vision

March 3, 2022



Vision Statement

The residents of Ventura will implement a shared vision to achieve a sustainable, equitable, and resilient future. We will work together to protect the characteristics we cherish the most: the California beach town character; the welcoming, close-knit community feel; views of and access to the ocean and hills; our rich history; the diversity of cultures, races, and ethnicities. We understand that there are significant challenges facing our community including climate change, wildfires, gentrification, environmental pollution, and housing affordability. We will confront these challenges and grow in a way that improves the quality of life for existing and future residents.

Over time, the physical form of the city will evolve as we accommodate clean industries, retail, tourism, the arts, housing, and transit. The Downtown, commercial corridors, and employment districts will be vibrant and walkable. There will be a wide diversity of housing options so existing and future residents can enjoy the benefits of living in Ventura regardless of income, race, age, or disability. The streets will be safe for pedestrians and cyclists. An expanded transit system and bike network will make living without a car easy and affordable. Views of and access to parks, the hills, open spaces, and the ocean will be enhanced. There will be a diversity of well-paying jobs that support residents and uplift small and locally owned businesses. And finally, Ventura will implement solutions that address the impacts of climate change and protect the vitality of our community.

We 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. Together, we will make Ventura a healthy, safe, and enjoyable place to live, work and visit.

Core Values

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

1. Community

Community is at the core of who we are as a city. We are a strong and close-knit community 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.

2. 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.

3. Quality of Life

Residents of all ages, income levels, and abilities should be able to comfortably live in a variety of housing options with easy access to 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 support 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 and identities, 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 for households of all ages, abilities, and income levels. We will also invest in services that help to facilitate permanent housing for the members of our community who are currently unhoused.

7. Safety and Health

We value protecting the health, welfare, and safety of all residents and visitors. We are committed to providing high quality police and fire services; implementing strategies that

protect residents from wildfire, flooding, earthquakes, and other natural events; reducing environmental pollution; improving transportation safety; encouraging healthy lifestyles and addressing community challenges including homelessness and drug addiction.

8. 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 restore and protect these areas for future generations.

9. 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 incentivizing businesses that advance new technologies to locate in the city.

10. Accessible Government and Robust Civic Engagement

We will maintain a local government that is responsive, transparent, and accountable to the needs of Ventura residents and businesses and continually engages and empowers 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.

11. 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 sectors 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, the visioning survey, meetings with Neighborhood Community Councils, and 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 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 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 tree-lined, 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.
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 grocery stores, and employment uses.
7. **Eastside.** Identify opportunities to add retail, services, and a wider range of housing types on the Eastside in order to create complete neighborhoods and minimize the need to drive long distances to meet daily needs.
8. **Arts and Culture.** Enhance the City’s role as a vibrant center for the arts and culture by expanding cultural opportunities and supporting artists and designating places for community gathering and sharing.

Environment

9. **Climate action.** Take proactive steps to achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions by investing in renewable energy sources, decarbonizing buildings, making appropriate land use decisions, prioritizing clean mobility, and reducing resource consumption.
10. **Environmental Pollution.** Continue to pro-actively protect the health of residents from environmental pollution from industry, agriculture, and transportation.
11. **Adaptation and Resilience.** Proactively manage the impacts of climate change and natural hazards including wildfires, earthquakes, sea-level rise, extreme heat, water shortages, pollution, and coastal erosion. This includes implementing managed shoreline retreat projects.
12. **“Green” the City.** Continue to plant trees and landscaping and naturalize and beautify the Ventura and Santa Clara Rivers.
13. **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.
14. **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

15. **Employment Uses.** Strengthen Ventura’s flourishing and balanced economy by supporting and expanding existing employment areas, encouraging a broad range employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, supporting small and local businesses, and encouraging local-hiring and living-wage jobs.
16. **“Green” Jobs.** Diversify the economy by encouraging and attracting clean and environmentally-friendly businesses.
17. **Innovative Technologies.** Embrace the use of innovative technologies, now and in the future, to help improve the quality of life for residents and adapt to changing economic conditions.

Access and Mobility

18. **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.
19. **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.
20. **Connectivity to Ocean.** Improve the physical and psychological connections to the Pacific Ocean, including enhancing existing connections, and creating new connections where feasible. Explore “capping” the freeway to better connect Downtown with the beach.

21. **Connection to Nature.** Improve bicycle and pedestrian connections from residential areas to open space resources (beaches, rivers, parks, open space, etc.)

Equity and Engagement

22. **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.
23. **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.
24. **Capacity-building.** Proactively reach and engage with the community in civic processes, prioritizing youth, minority community members, 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.