

# Introduction

## OVERVIEW

The City of Carpinteria (City) is a distinctive coastal community located on the south coast of Santa Barbara County, adjacent to Ventura County. The City is located on a coastal terrace between the Santa Ynez Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, which provides beaches, bluffs, offshore tidelands, and subtidal reefs along its southern edge. The Carpinteria Bluffs line the southeast coast of the City and provide panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and Channel Islands. The City is bordered to the west and south by the Carpinteria Salt Marsh, an important estuarine habitat that supports sensitive plant and wildlife species. To the north, the City is bounded by agricultural lands in unincorporated Santa Barbara County (Figure I-1).



*Carpinteria is small beach town characterized by its rich history, diverse economy, and unique coastal resources, including the City and State Beaches, Carpinteria Bluffs, and the Carpinteria Salt Marsh.*

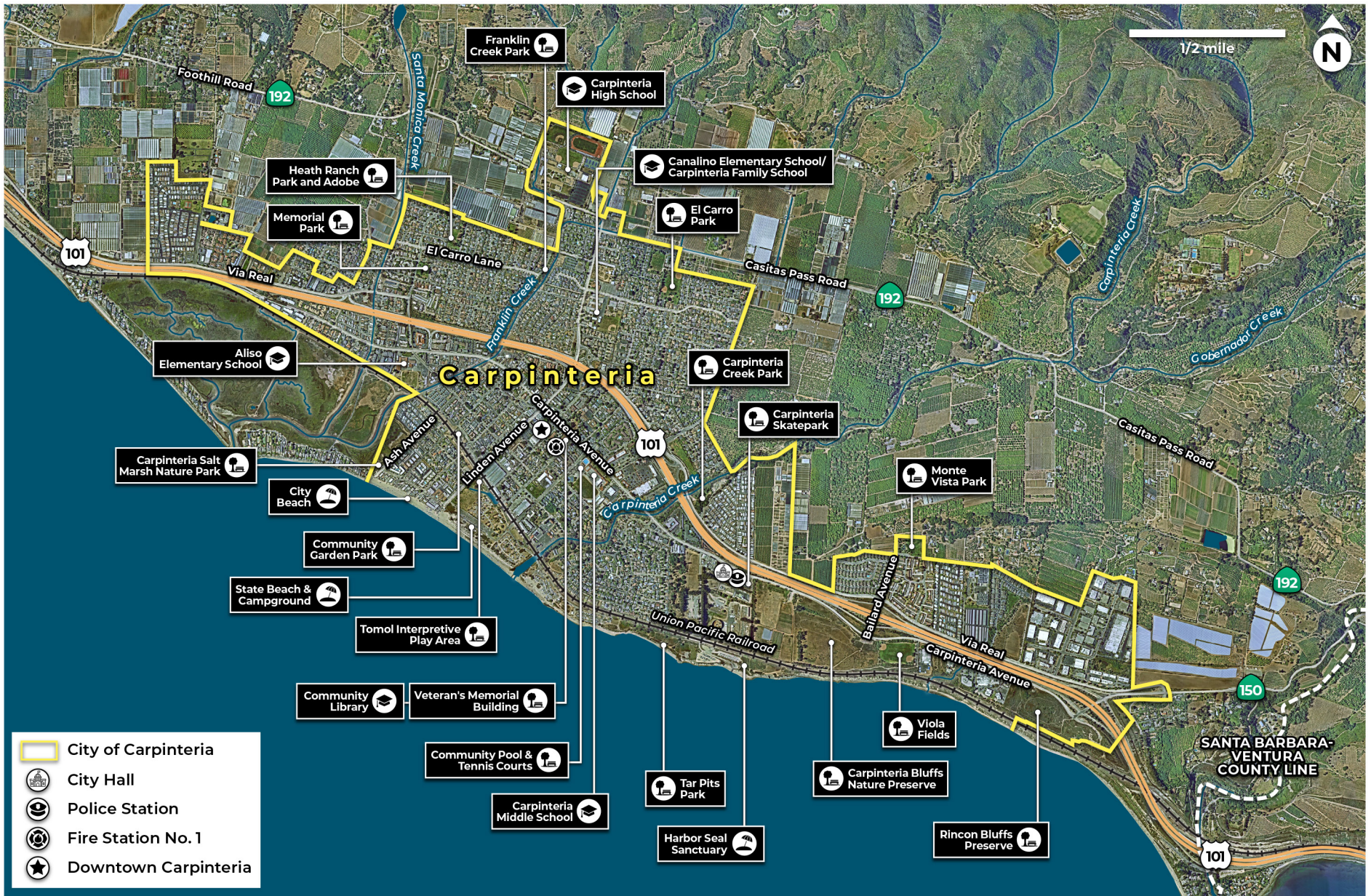
The City encompasses approximately 2.6 square miles of generally level land at the base of the Santa Ynez Mountains. The City comprises suburban residential neighborhoods, small- to medium-scale commercial and light industrial development, developed public parks and natural open space, and some limited agricultural uses. The City is now home to a diverse population of approximately 13,187 people, which has remained relatively stable since 1990 (U.S. Census Bureau 2022). During the summer, however, the daily population within the City can increase with an influx of tourists and out-of-town visitors. The City’s economy is predominantly based on tourism, retail, light industry, and research and development, supporting approximately 6,780 local jobs.



### City Overview

- ▶ **Land Area:** 2.6 square miles (mi<sup>2</sup>)
- ▶ **Ocean Area:** 4.7 mi<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ **Households<sup>1</sup>:** 5,079
- ▶ **Population<sup>1</sup>:** ~13,187
- ▶ **Jobs<sup>1</sup>:** 6,780

<sup>1</sup> Source: (U.S. Census Bureau 2022)



City of Carpinteria

**FIGURE I-1**

## Historical Context for the CLUP/General Plan

The Carpinteria Valley was first inhabited by the Chumash Native Americans who established villages and relied on the area's abundant coastal resources for hunting, fishing, and trading. The village located in the modern-day City of Carpinteria was a center for trade and construction of canoes called "tomols," which were built using wooden planks and sealed with naturally occurring tar from oil seeps in the Santa Barbara Channel. The name "Carpinteria" was first used by soldiers of the Gaspar de Portola Expedition in 1769 during their exploration of the California coast. They observed members of the indigenous Chumash community building wooden plank canoes, and as a result, called the area La Carpintería, or "The Carpenter Shop."



*The City is located on a coastal terrace between the Santa Ynez Mountains and the Santa Barbara Channel. The City lies proximate to valuable natural coastal resources, including the Carpinteria Salt Marsh to the west and south of the City's developed neighborhoods.*

The City was incorporated in 1965 and adopted its first General Plan in 1969. In 1980, the City adopted the Local Coastal Plan, which included land use policies and regulations in response to State adoption of the California Coastal Act. Comprehensive updates to the General Plan were completed in 1986 to implement Coastal Act regulations. In 2003, the City updated and merged the General Plan and Local Coastal Plan into one consolidated document to form the City's Local Coastal Program. The City updated the Local Coastal Program **in 202X** to form the Coastal Land Use Plan (CLUP) and General Plan, hereafter referred to as the CLUP/General Plan.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the CLUP/General Plan is to guide decision-makers, City staff, residents, and businesses in the City toward a community goal. The goal of the community is the heart of the CLUP/General Plan. The community desires to maintain its small beach-town character and role in the area while supporting economic vibrancy and natural resource protection, as stated below.

## Community Goal

*"...to preserve the essential character of our small beach town, its culturally diverse residential neighborhoods, its unique visual and natural resources, and its open, rural surroundings while enhancing recreational, cultural, economic, and housing opportunities for our community."*

## CONTENTS AND ORGANIZATION

The content of the CLUP/General Plan is arranged to achieve the community's goal. The CLUP/General Plan provides a vision, policies, and proposed implementation actions to guide decision-making and actions in the City for the next 25 years or more. City staff and officials will use the CLUP/General Plan to evaluate projects and guide the development of new City programs, ordinances, and other initiatives. The CLUP/General Plan also informs community members of the guiding principles for development in the City as a place to live, work, recreate, and invest, and sets forth the priorities for managing the City's physical and social resources.

### Elements

The Carpinteria CLUP/General Plan is organized into ten Elements that address mandatory and optional Elements consistent with California law. Each Element includes a general discussion of relevant issue areas and provides goals, objectives, and policies to address these issues. Implementation actions are identified to provide direction for carrying out each Element's objectives and policies. Required regulations from the California Government Code and the Coastal Act are referenced in the sidebars of each Element. The Elements in the CLUP/General Plan are summarized as follows:

- **Land Use.** The Land Use Element designates allowable land uses in the City, identifies the recommended population density for each land use category, and provides policies for land uses to guide planning and decision-making. The Land Use Element also provides an analysis of the community's population carrying capacity and estimated buildout.
- **Community Design.** The Community Design Element identifies important design characteristics of the community and establishes policies to ensure that proposed development incorporates those characteristics.

- Circulation.** The Circulation Element describes the existing transportation network and how future transportation needs can be accommodated. Future needs are identified by assessing uses proposed in the Land Use Element. Multi-modal transportation, including bicycle and pedestrian circulation and transit, are addressed within this Element. Specific metrics for using total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) are identified.



*The Circulation Element describes the City's multi-modal transportation system and provides a strategy to increase active transportation, such as walking, biking, and transit.*

- Open Space & Conservation.** This combined Open Space & Conservation Element describes community open space and natural resources that the City manages or aspires to protect through policies and programs. These resources include open space areas, water resources (groundwater and water courses), habitats, agricultural land, visual resources, and cultural and tribal cultural resources. The Open Space & Conservation Element, along with other related Elements, serves as the City's open-space plan, pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 1425.

- Safety.** The Safety Element identifies known public safety hazards, including fluvial flood and debris flow hazards, seismic and geologic hazards, coastal storms and erosion, slope stability, and soil and fire hazards. Policies in this element include emergency response and other forms of hazard mitigation management. The City's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) is directly incorporated into the Safety Element.



*The Public Facilities & Services Element ensures appropriate access and distribution of public services, utilities, and community amenities, including police and fire protection, libraries (pictured) and community centers, and active and passive recreation.*

- Noise.** The Noise Element describes existing and projected noise environments for the City and establishes noise level standards and policies to protect residents and other sensitive receptors from exposure to excessive noise.
- Public Facilities & Services.** The Public Facilities & Services Element identifies the facilities and services currently available to the community such as parks, recreation, trails, emergency response services, and libraries, and provides policies to guide response to changes in demand for these resources.

## INTRODUCTION

- **Coastal Resiliency.** The Coastal Resiliency Element identifies potential health and safety hazards induced by sea level rise, including erosion of beaches and bluffs, loss of public and private property, and damage to natural and cultural resources within the City. Policies within this Element address the adaptation of development within the community to increase coastal resiliency and reduce risks relating to coastal hazards exacerbated by projected sea level rise.
- **Healthy Community.** The Healthy Community Element identifies programs and resources that support healthy living and provides policies to improve health and quality of life throughout the City. Topics include recreation and coastal access, active transportation, healthy food systems, healthcare services, community connection, and air quality.



*The Healthy Community Element incorporates health considerations into the CLUP/General Plan to frame the importance of health issues.*

The CLUP/General Plan also contains the City's **Housing Element**, which is available under a separate cover because it is subject to additional regulations under State law. The Housing Element identifies community housing needs and describes how the City plans for and maintains safe, affordable housing consistent with State law. The Housing Element requires State review and must be updated every eight years.

### Integration of the CLUP & General Plan

Policies identified with the GP symbol below indicate OPR-mandated requirements that do not address Coastal Act requirements and are not components of the CLUP.

**GP**

The Carpinteria CLUP/General Plan serves as the primary planning policy document for the City and is designed to be consistent with the requirements of the California Coastal Act and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), as further discussed below. The CLUP/General Plan includes related measures for implementation programs, including the City's Zoning Ordinance. Objectives, policies, implementation policies, and maps identified within this document are intended to address Coastal Act issues unless identified with the "GP" symbol shown at left. Objectives, policies, implementation actions, and map language identified with the "GP" symbol are not components of the CLUP but are included in the General Plan.

Table I-1 summarizes how Coastal Act requirements correspond to OPR regulations described further below, and how each is addressed within the CLUP/General Plan Elements.

CLUP/General Plan Elements									
LCP Requirement	Land Use <sup>1</sup>	Community Design <sup>2</sup>	Circulation <sup>1</sup>	Open Space and Conservation <sup>1</sup>	Safety <sup>1</sup>	Noise <sup>1,3</sup>	Public Facilities <sup>2</sup>	Healthy Community <sup>2</sup>	Coastal Resiliency <sup>2</sup>
Public Access	◆	◆	◆	◆				◆	◆
Recreation and Visitor Serving Facilities	◆		◆				◆	◆	◆
Water Quality Protection				◆					
ESHA and Natural Resources	◆			◆					
Agricultural Resources	◆			◆					
Planning and Cultural Resources	◆			◆			◆		
Scenic and Visual Resources		◆		◆					
Coastal Hazards					◆				◆
Shoreline Erosion and Protective Devices					◆				◆
Energy and Industrial Development	◆			◆			◆		

◆ Local Coastal Program Requirement    <sup>1</sup> OPR Mandatory Element    <sup>2</sup> OPR Optional Element    <sup>3</sup> Noise Element does not contain any Local Coastal Plan requirements

Coastal Land Use Plan and General Plan Integration

**TABLE  
I-1**

### Definitions and Purpose of Land Use Regulation Categories

The following defines the purpose and intent of goals, objectives, policies, and actions/programs of the CLUP/General Plan. Discretionary development proposals and land use decisions are reviewed for consistency with the goals, objectives, and policies.

**Goal** – A goal is a general direction-setter. It is an ideal future end related to the public health, safety, or general welfare. A goal is a general expression of community values and, therefore, may be abstract in nature. Consequently, a goal is generally not quantifiable or time-dependent. A goal typically consists of many objectives.

**Objective** – An objective is a specified end, condition, or state that is an intermediate step toward attaining a goal. An objective may pertain to one particular aspect of a goal or it may be one of several successive steps toward goal achievement. An objective provides the context and intent for the implementing policies, but alone, is not effectively implementable.

**Policy** – A policy is a specific statement that guides decision-making. It indicates a commitment of the City to a particular course of action, response, or decision. A policy is based on and helps implement a general plan’s vision.

**Implementation Action** – An implementation action refers to a one-time action or an ongoing program that carries out General Plan policy. Implementation actions are activities that are primarily administrative functions for the City to implement to address a goal, such as the development of an ordinance or the creation of a planning program.

The CLUP/General Plan’s goals, objectives, policies, and actions/programs contain various directives that appear in the form of either “shall,” “should, or “may.” The meaning of these terms is as follows:

- **“Shall”** indicates an unequivocal directive, a strong commitment to action by the City or other applicable parties (e.g., permit applicants).
- **“Should”** signifies a less rigid directive, to be honored in the absence of compelling or contravening considerations, and indicates a need to balance the policy with other complementary or countervailing policies. “Should” may indicate a situation which requires cooperative action on the part of several governmental or private agencies where the City is not fully in control of the outcome.
- **“May”** indicates a permissive suggestion or guideline.

## CLUP/GENERAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS

### California Coastal Act

The California Coastal Act, adopted by the State Legislature in 1976, established a statewide program that gave local governments an essential role in coastal management and stewardship. The Coastal Act requires local governments located within the Coastal Zone to prepare a Local Coastal Program to carry out the policies of the Coastal Act at the local level. This program creates a shared responsibility between the state, local governments, and partner agencies to enhance public coastal access, protect coastal resources, and regulate future development within the Coastal Zone.



The City is located entirely within the Coastal Zone and, therefore, is required to prepare a Local Coastal Program that includes a CLUP and Coastal Zoning Ordinance, land use designation and zoning district maps, and other programs necessary to implement the provisions of the Coastal Act. Upon certification of the Local Coastal Program by the Coastal Commission, the City has the authority to issue coastal development permits for development within the Coastal Zone. Given that the entire land area of the City is located within

This CLUP, together with the Coastal Zoning Ordinance and land use maps, comprise the City’s Local Coastal Program (Public Resources Code § [30108.6, 30500](#)).

the Coastal Zone, the CLUP applies to all land within City limits. Furthermore, the Coastal Commission retains original permitting jurisdiction over certain specified lands, such as tidelands and public trust lands.

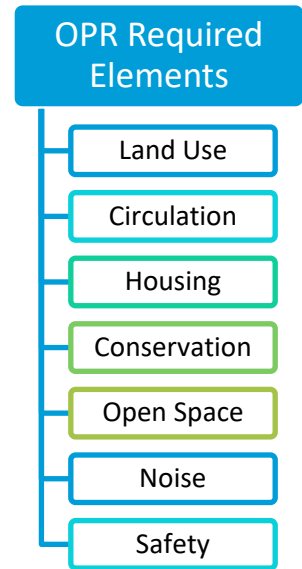
As required by the Coastal Act, the Local Coastal Program must contain policies addressing the following issue areas:

- **Public Access.** Provide maximum public access to and along the coast.
- **Recreation & Visitor Serving Facilities.** Protect and maximize recreation and visitor-serving land uses, including lower-cost facilities.
- **Water Quality Protection.** Protect and enhance marine and coastal water quality.
- **Environmentally Sensitive Habitats & Other Natural Resources.** Protect Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA), including various types of wetlands, riparian areas, and other natural resources in the coastal zone.
- **Agricultural Resources.** Protect agricultural lands and maintain prime agricultural lands in production.
- **Planning & Cultural Resources.** Ensure that the designation, location, and intensity of land uses reflect priority uses under the Coastal Act and minimize adverse impacts to archaeological, cultural, or paleontological resources.
- **Scenic & Visual Resources.** Protect scenic and visual qualities of the coast, including significant public views and scenic landscapes.
- **Coastal Hazards.** Manage development to respond to coastal hazards and reduce risk to life and property.
- **Shoreline Erosion & Protective Devices.** Minimize armoring and protect or restore shoreline areas and sand supplies, considering projected sea level rise.
- **Energy & Industrial Development.** Address changing demands for energy and coastal-dependent industry.

## Office of Planning and Research (OPR) Guidelines

California state law requires each city to adopt a comprehensive long-term general plan to help decision-makers guide and influence the physical development of a city and any land outside its boundaries that bears relation to its planning (referred to as the Planning Area Boundary). In addition to the 7.3 square miles of land and water incorporated within the City, approximately five square miles are within the City’s Planning Area Boundary.

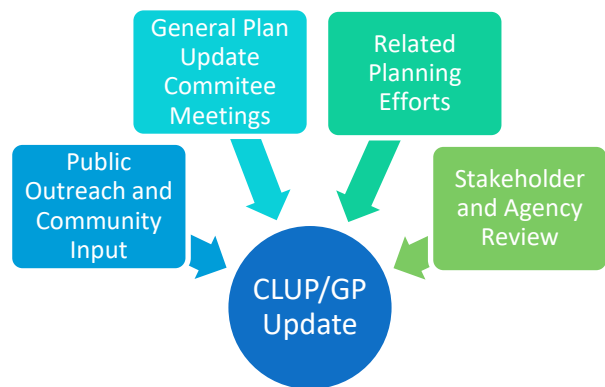
California Gov. Code, [§65302](#) requires that General Plans contain the following seven required Elements: **Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety**. In addition, cities that have disadvantaged communities must also address environmental justice in the General Plan, as included in this General Plan’s **Healthy Community Element**. Elements may also be combined within the General Plan, as is the case with the City’s **Open Space & Conservation Element**.



Cities may also include optional Elements that are desired by the community, as is the case with the City’s **Community Design Element, Public Facilities & Services Element, Healthy Community Element, and Coastal Resiliency Element**. Once optional Elements are adopted by the City, optional Elements carry the same legal weight as required Elements. All adopted Elements must maintain internal consistency with other Elements of the General Plan, as well as with other planning documents (e.g., specific plans, zoning ordinance).

## CLUP/GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS

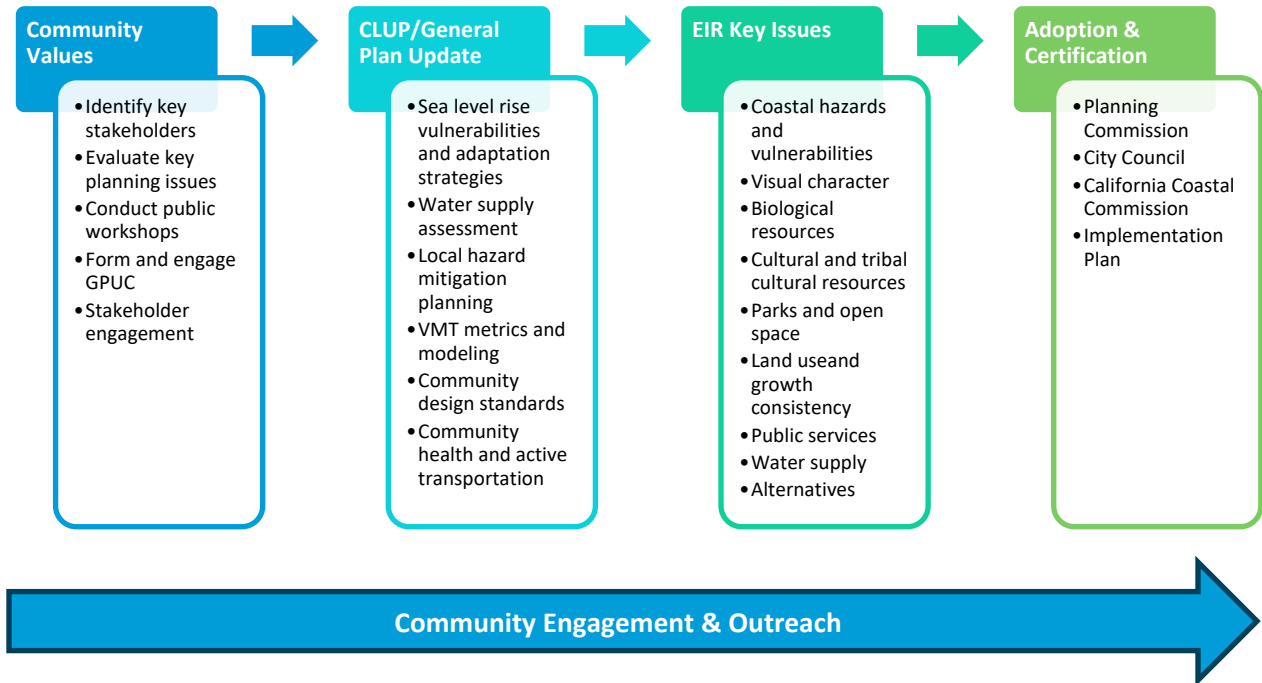
The CLUP/General Plan reflects a shared vision for the City’s future derived from public engagement and participation in the update process. The City worked to identify and incorporate the values of all segments of the Carpinteria community and incorporate various perspectives throughout the planning process. Community engagement event booths, public workshops, and a community survey were presented in both English and Spanish and engaged residents from a diverse range of backgrounds. Workshops were hosted with the support of various community organizations, including Peoples’ Self-Help Housing, the Children’s Project of Carpinteria, and the Rotary Club. Additionally, the City formed the CLUP/General Plan Update Committee (GPUC), comprising Carpinteria Planning Commissioners and City Council members who provided direction and guidance on individual CLUP/General Plan Elements. Public comment was received during formal public meetings of the GPUC, Planning Commission, and City Council. A summary



of the update process was presented to the City Council for their review and approval. The City Council approved the CLUP/General Plan Update on October 12, 2021.

of public workshops and meetings that contributed to the formation of the CLUP/General Plan is provided in Appendix A.

Planning staff from the City Community Development Department worked with consultants to finalize updates to the CLUP/General Plan. This process incorporated feedback from the public and GPUC, as well as input from agencies and stakeholders, including the California Coastal Commission, California Department of Transportation, and special districts such as the Carpinteria Valley Water District and the Carpinteria Sanitary District.



**Figure I-2. CLUP/General Plan Update Process Summary**



## California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

A general plan is a “Project” under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and therefore requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to examine the potential environmental impacts of its implementation. An EIR was prepared for the CLUP/General Plan to provide the public and members of the Planning Commission and the City Council with an understanding of the environmental implications of adopting the revised CLUP/General Plan. Unlike project-by-project permitting, the CEQA review for the CLUP/General Plan Update evaluates the City’s long-term vision and its alignment with important objectives, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions and ensuring new development avoids and minimizes impacts on sensitive species and natural communities. The EIR includes analysis and special studies related to priority planning issues such as coastal hazards, visual character, biological resources, parks and open space, land use, and public services. Key resources identified and discussed in the EIR include biological resources and ESHA impacts, hydrology and water resources, geology and soil-related hazards (e.g., debris flows), greenhouse gas emissions, land use, and noise [updated upon completion of EIR – placeholder for a summary of EIR findings]. Following the finalization of the EIR and additional public hearings, the Planning Commission and City Council voted to adopt the updated CLUP/General Plan on XXXX, 202X. The EIR is a separate document and can be found on the City’s website at [Placeholder].

## Implementation

The CLUP/General Plan goals, policies, and implementation actions are carried out through City ordinances, programs, annual budgets, capital improvement programming, and through the participation of residents and community groups. The CLUP/General Plan’s planning horizon is 2050, and it is subject to review and updates to respond to changing conditions or community values. The timeframes identified for the various implementation actions described in each Element are not absolute but are intended to assist in scheduling future work items. State law requires an annual review and report to the City Council and OPR describing proposed amendments, if applicable. All proposed amendments require a public hearing by the Planning Commission and by the City Council and must receive a majority vote of the members to be approved. Proposed amendments that affect the CLUP policies will also require a public hearing by the California Coastal Commission and must be certified by that body before taking effect.