

# INTRODUCTION



## INTRODUCTION

The City of Ione General Plan lays out the framework for all future growth and development within the City. The community, the City's elected leaders, and city staff created the General Plan to guide all future land use and growth decisions for the City. Any actions, projects, and decisions must be consistent with the goals, policies, and land use map contained in this document. The General Plan serves as the primary planning and regulatory tool of the City. The General Plan is the expression of resident values, what Ione will become, and how it will get there.

Please turn to Page 1-2 for a complete listing of contents covered in this Element, with page number references.

Located at the base of the Sierra Nevada foothills in the Ione Valley, the City of Ione has a rich past steeped in agriculture, railway transport and general goods. Throughout the years, the City has made a name for itself as a quaint, harmonious town that thrives on tradition and community togetherness. Incorporated in 1953, Ione is a social and economic hub in Amador County. The community remains focused on preserving its high quality of life while facilitating the City's future growth and development.



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## PURPOSE

### THE PLANNING DOCUMENT – IONE’S FUTURE DEFINED

The General Plan is a long-range planning document that provides the City a policy framework for land-use planning based on the City’s long-term vision for growth. The General Plan contains the community’s desires and visions of Ione through 2030. The General Plan achieves the community’s vision by setting Goals, Policies, and Actions to preserve Ione’s history and create a viable and flourishing community that current and future generations will be glad to call home.

The General Plan is the City’s constitution for future development. Its policies and goals guide both government and private development of land, and informs residents of the City’s intentions for how the community will look and feel in the future. It establishes a vision for the City to work towards, and delineates key policies and actions to implement that vision. All cities and counties in the State of California are required to adopt a General Plan.

Through a long visioning and public outreach process, the community has chosen the following priority and focus areas for this General Plan, including:

- Managing Growth
- Business Viability in the Historic Sections of Ione
- Maintaining a Small Town Character
- Family Focused Activities
- Education
- Recreation
- Open Space
- Farmland
- Economic Development
- Housing
- Historical Downtown and Restored Preston Castle
- Infrastructure
- Mining Industry

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## GENERAL PLAN LAW

California law requires each city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan to guide the physical development of the incorporated city and land outside city boundaries that bears a relationship to its planning activities. As such, the plan contains policies and programs designed to provide decision makers with a solid foundation for land use and development decisions. The General Plan organizes the desires of Ione residents with respect to the physical, social, economic, and environmental character of the City.

The City may adopt a general plan in the format that best fits its unique circumstances in an integrated, internally consistent, and compatible statement of development policies. In accordance with California Government Code Section 65302, this General Plan addresses the issues of land use, circulation, housing, noise, safety, conservation, and open space. Together, the seven mandated elements of a general plan form a comprehensive set of planning policies.

- The Land Use Element designates the general distribution and intensity of land uses within the planning area.
- The Circulation Element identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed transportation facilities.
- The Housing Element is a comprehensive assessment of current and future housing needs for all segments of the City population, as well as a program for meeting those needs.
- The Open-Space Element describes measures for the preservation of open space for the protection of natural resources, the managed production of resources, and for public health and safety.
- The Conservation Element addresses the conservation, development, and use of natural resources.
- The Safety Element establishes policies to protect the community from risks associated with natural and man-made hazards such as seismic, geologic, flooding, wildfire hazards, and air quality.
- The Noise Element identifies major noise sources and contains policies intended to protect the community from exposure to excessive noise levels.

The General Plan also addresses additional topics of special and unique interest, including community character, economic development, historic and cultural resources, and municipal services. These topics reflect additional issues that are important to the community. The City of Ione has chosen to adopt a General Plan that consolidates some of the mandatory elements and includes two optional elements (Economic Development and Public Facilities). While optional elements are not required by State law, once they are adopted by a City, optional elements are as legally binding and valid as the required elements.



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By law, the General Plan is the primary document the City utilizes to regulate land use. It provides the City with a consistent framework for land use decision-making. Once a general plan is adopted, its maps, diagrams, and development policies form the basis for City zoning, subdivision, and public works actions. Therefore, the Zoning Ordinance, Specific Plans, Planned Development Master Plans, and individual public and private development proposals must be consistent with the General Plan goals, policies, and standards. Under California law, no specific plan, area plan, zoning, subdivision map, nor public works project may be approved unless the City finds that it is consistent with the adopted General Plan.

### THE PLANNING AREA

The General Plan for the City of Ione addresses all land both within the City limits and an area beyond the City that bears relation to the City's planning efforts. This area is referred to as the General Plan Planning Area and is illustrated in Figure 1-1. Roughly speaking, the General Plan Planning Area is defined as the City plus the area south of the City just beyond Highway 88, west to the Amador County/San Joaquin County/Sacramento County boundaries, and roughly two miles north and east of the City.

The portion of the Planning Area outside of the current City limits represents lands whose uses and character affect the City of Ione. Currently, Amador County has jurisdiction and land use authority over land outside of the City limits that is within the General Plan Planning Area. Through policy direction and implementation of this General Plan, it is the City's intent to cooperatively set goals for land use and circulation planning for areas outside of the City's jurisdiction which impact the City of Ione.

The City's boundaries also include a large portion of State-owned lands, including the Mule Creek State Prison, Preston Youth Correctional Facility, and the CalFire training facility. The State has jurisdiction and land use authority over these State-owned lands. It is the City's intent to cooperatively work with the State to conduct proper land use planning with relation to these facilities.

### SPHERE OF INFLUENCE AND ANNEXATIONS

This General Plan addresses all land both within the City limits and an area beyond the City that bears relation to the City's planning efforts - the General Plan Planning Area. It is intended to be an area that the City has an interest in guiding land use decisions by the County of Amador and is envisioned as the area that remains part of the community's identity.

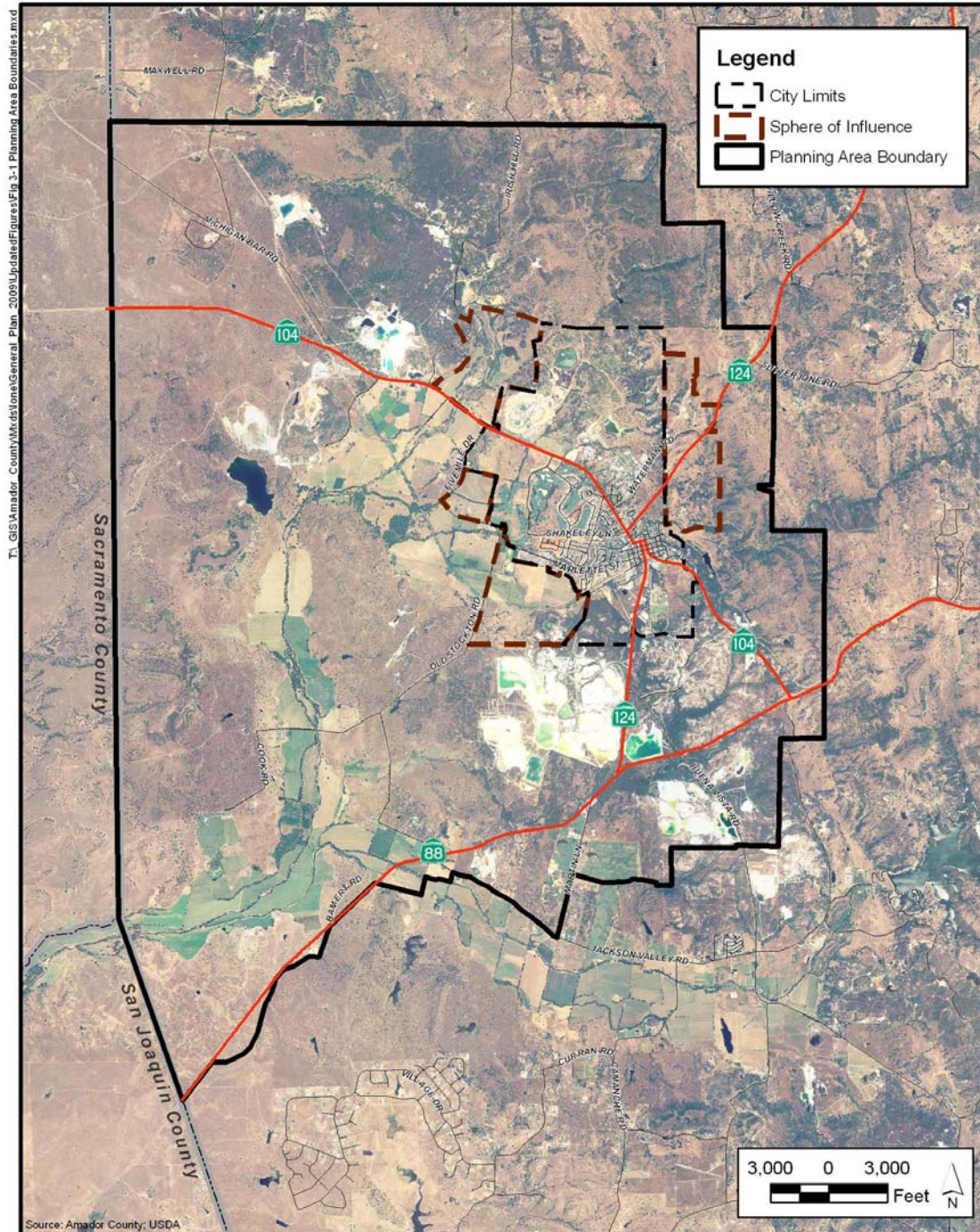
Included within the Planning Area, but outside the City limits, is the City's Sphere of Influence. The Sphere of Influence is the probable physical boundaries and service area for the City, as determined by a separate government agency, the Amador Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo). The Sphere of Influence boundary includes all City lands and unincorporated lands that may be annexed as part of the ultimate development of the City. Figure 1-1 shows the boundaries of the Planning Area, the City Limits, and the Sphere of Influence.



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**FIGURE 1-1: PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES**



City of Ione  
Planning Department

Planning Area Boundaries



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Any annexation of land into the City of Ione would need to be consistent with the policies of this General Plan and approved by LAFCo. As part of the process of annexation the land in question will be pre-zoned. Any pre-zoning applied to an annexation area needs to be consistent with this General Plan.

## ORGANIZATION AND USE

State law requires that certain topics and elements be covered in the General Plan. These include land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, safety, and noise. Additional topics may be covered at the discretion of the City, provided that all topics are elements are consistent with one another. Ione has elected to include additional elements and topics in the General Plan. Table I-1 lists these elements and shows how they relate to the State requirements.

Each of the City's Elements includes the following components:

- **Introduction.** This section briefly explains what the Element is intended to do and the reason for the particular Element.
- **Vision.** The Vision statement reflects the community's desires for the City's future relative to each individual element.
- **Related Plans and Programs.** This section highlights significant plans and programs related to a particular element and explains their relationship to the City's General Plan.
- **Issues and Considerations.** This section briefly explains the local conditions relevant to the element and outlines those real and perceived problems and concerns identified by the community, as well as opportunities for change or growth.
- **Goals, Policies, and Actions.** Goals are overall statements of community desires and are comprised of broad statements of purpose or direction. Policies serve as guides to the decision makers in reviewing development proposals and making other decisions that affect the future growth and development of the City. Actions are the implementation steps necessary to ensure the goals and policies are carried out.

The General Plan also includes several maps and tables that help to express and describe the vision, objectives, or key components of the plan. The Glossary provides a set of definitions for technical terms used in the General Plan. The organization of the General Plan allows users to easily locate issues of interest and quickly obtain a perspective on the City's policies on the subject.

In addition, the General Plan includes a summary of background information to provide a wide variety of information to provide a context of when the General Plan was being prepared. The background information includes population and housing, cultural resources, economic and fiscal conditions, and other information relating to and affecting the City. This information is found in a separate document, entitled the *General Plan Background Report*.

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The City uses the General Plan as part of its decision making process. Every decision must be consistent with the General Plan policies. This affects decisions such as reviewing requests for new development during the planning and entitlement process. Examples include the land use map, which designates which types of land uses are allowed in a certain area. The City may also use the General Plan to protect open space and agricultural lands, set emergency response service standards, encourage and support economic development, and define the community's character.

The General Plan also indirectly affects the City's various decisions by requiring other policies and standards to be consistent with the General Plan. The City must use the General Plan as the policy guide during the development of new or updating of existing regulations in the Municipal Code, Improvement Standards, and other documents. This way, these other regulations are how the General Plan's policies are actually implemented and provide more specific detail.

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Over a four-year period, the General Plan Team has engaged the community and its decision makers in multiple workshops, stakeholder meetings, study sessions, and public hearings to understand the vision and desires for Ione and to develop the blueprint to build that future City. Hundreds of residents, employees, business owners, and other stakeholders have spent countless hours sharing ideas, expressing views, debating policies, and making hard decisions with the intent of creating a General Plan that is right for Ione. For additional details, see the Vision Chapter for a full explanation of public outreach and processes involved in the creation of this General Plan.

## ELEMENTS INCLUDED IN THE IONE GENERAL PLAN

Ione's General Plan contains seven elements. The following table displays the name, chapter number, and a brief discussion on the focus of the element, and a brief listing of the important topic areas that the City considered.

Chapter	Element	Description
Chapter 3	Land Use (LU)	This element focuses on the distribution of land uses within the City and the larger General Plan Planning Area, including residential, commercial, industrial, public services, agricultural, and open space. Topics addressed include the density, minimum lot sizes, and location of each type of development allowed.
Chapter 4	Circulation (CIR)	This element focuses on all transportation improvements and related infrastructure needed to support the distribution of land uses in the Land Use Element. Topics include roadway service standards, adequacy of the roadway system, and future roadway improvement strategies, as well as infrastructure issues.





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Chapter	Element	Description
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>Conservation and Open Space (CO)</b>	This element addresses the conservation and protection of natural resources and open space, including parklands and recreational areas, agriculture, endangered species, water, and air quality. Topics addressed include mitigation requirements, protection methods, development requirements, and priority areas for the City to focus its efforts.
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Noise and Safety (NS)</b>	This element addresses natural hazards and noise problems the City is vulnerable to and establishes ways to reduce their negative impact on the community. Topic issues include wildfire hazards, roadway issues, adjacent industrial and mining operations, and the adjacent state facilities.
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>Economic Development (ED)</b>	This element addresses economic development opportunities within and around the City. Topic issues include the downtown revitalization and expansion, significant business potential, retail shopping opportunities, and professional office space and industrial growth.
<b>Chapter 8</b>	<b>Public Facilities (PF)</b>	This element identifies the existing publicly owned and operated facilities in Ione and includes potential upgrades and expansions to serve the community. Topic issues include water, wastewater, fire, police, prisons, parks, and schools.
<b>Chapter 9</b>	<b>Housing (H)</b>	This element identifies the existing housing stock, housing needs, and provides a strategy for providing housing stock for all income levels. Topics include affordable housing, growth standards, housing needs, and the adequacy of housing provided.

The following table illustrates how the elements of the Ione General Plan relate to the seven mandatory elements set forth in the state law. In addition it also identifies the optional topic elements the City has chose to use. “X” represent topics directly related to that specific topic. “O” represents related information that is contained in that topic.



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		Topics Required by State Law						
		Land Use	Cir-culation	Housing	Con-servation	Open Space	Noise	Safety
Elements of the Ione General Plan	Land Use	X	O	O	O	O		
	Circulation	O	X	O				
	Conservation & Open Space	O			X	X		
	Noise & Safety			O			X	X
	Economic Development							
	Public Facilities		O		O			
	Housing	O	O	X			O	O

Notes:

X - Indicates that this element directly addresses the State required topic

O - Indicates that information in this element is related to the State required topic

## CEQA COMPLIANCE

The City has prepared an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) to provide information about the potential environmental effects of implementing the City's General Plan. The EIR is a public informational document that assesses potential environmental effects of the General Plan, as well as identifies mitigation measures and alternatives to the proposed project that could reduce or avoid its adverse environmental impacts. The City is charged with the duty to consider and, where feasible, minimize environmental impacts of proposed development, and an obligation to balance a variety of public objectives, including economic, environmental, and social factors.

The EIR analysis focuses on potential environmental impacts that could arise from implementation of the General Plan through development of the land uses within the Planning Area, as regulated and guided by General Plan policies and action items.

The EIR has been prepared on a program-level analysis, which considers the broad environmental effects of the overall proposed General Plan. The EIR will be used to evaluate subsequent projects and activities under the proposed General Plan. Additional environmental review under CEQA will be required and would be generally based on the subsequent project's consistency with the General Plan and the analysis in this EIR, as required under CEQA. When individual projects or activities under the General Plan are proposed, the City would be required to examine the projects or activities to determine whether their effects were adequately analyzed in the program EIR. The EIR should be used as the primary environmental document to evaluate all subsequent planning and permitting actions associated with projects in the City.