



## Existing Conditions Report Key Findings Summary, Part 2

The Existing Conditions, Opportunities, and Challenges Report (ECR) represents the first major technical step in the process of updating the City of Fairfield's General Plan. The ECR provides comprehensive information on existing conditions in Fairfield across all topic areas covered in the General Plan, and it also provides an analysis of opportunities. The focus of the ECR is on resources, trends, and concerns that will frame choices for the long-term development of Fairfield. The ECR is divided into 13 chapters (one of which provides the introduction) as well as a separate Market Analysis. Each chapter includes a list of Key Findings and Planning Considerations. Below is a summarized version of the Key Findings for six of the twelve ECR content chapters and the Market Analysis.

### MARKET ANALYSIS

1. **Factors point to a continued strong demand for family housing at a range of price levels.**

Fairfield's population growth of 11.5% from 2010 to 2020 has far outpaced that of the Bay Area region and the state, which indicates strong housing demand. The COVID-19 pandemic may reinforce this trend. Families also make up a much higher proportion of Fairfield's population than they do in the region overall. The population is also younger and more diverse than the region and the state. The city's median household income, however, is lower than that of the Bay Area region but higher than that of the state overall. These factors indicate a likely continued strong demand for family housing.

2. **While options for single-family homebuyers have increased over the past decade, there has not been a similar increase in the number of multifamily units available.**

The relative affordability of single-family homes compared to the inner Bay Area is one of Fairfield's fundamental appeals. However, multifamily housing production in Fairfield has not kept up with that of single-family housing production. The vacancy rate among multifamily housing units in Fairfield is only 2.9% (typically 5% vacancy rate is considered healthy), which has contributed to increasing monthly rents. The General Plan should consider undersupply in multifamily units, particularly larger multifamily units.

3. **Demand for retail and industrial space is strong, though the COVID-19 pandemic has already diminished demand for office space.**

Fairfield has a reputation as a retail center and has shopping centers conveniently located along I-80 that are frequented by customers from Fairfield, the region, and those travelling through. The prospects for local retail real estate will ultimately depend on the growth in residential development, but opportunities exist to promote development along the highway and enhance the attraction of local and regional shoppers in the downtown area. COVID-19 has had marginal effects on demand for retail space, but rents



and occupancy rates ultimately remained fairly stable. In contrast, the impact of the pandemic was most pronounced in its effect on office demand, which was diminished in general as a result of the pandemic.

- 4. To keep up with population growth, Fairfield will need to expand its housing stock by roughly between 7,500 and 10,000 new housing units.**

By 2050, this would lead to a total citywide housing stock of approximately 47,580 to 50,070 housing units. This is the range the City may wish to consider as it evaluates the future need for housing in terms of available land to develop, redevelop, or annex. With a disproportionately low number of multifamily units in Fairfield compared to the region, and given increasing demand in the region for multifamily units, it may be prudent to target higher density residential development in areas where there is good access to public amenities, which can be enhanced by investing in new public improvements.

## CIRCULATION

- 1. For future transportation planning, the General Plan should consider both morning and evening peak hour traffic levels of service. The current General Plan policy, as written, only applies to the evening peak hours.**

The morning and evening peak hours refer to the hours of the day at which traffic volumes are at their highest—typically when the greatest number of people are commuting to and from work. Level of service is a measure how many cars are able to travel through a designated area in a given timeframe. Intersections that do not meet the current General Plan’s standard level of service for both the morning and evening peak hours are noted in this chapter. Should level of service be maintained as a measurement for policies in the future, both morning and evening peak-hour conditions should be considered.

- 2. The level of service throughout the Planning Area generally operates at an acceptable level, with deficiencies occurring at intersections closer to freeway and expressways.**

While the level of service within the City generally meets standards, locations near freeways and expressways experience more delay during the morning and evening peak travel hours. The General Plan may look at ways to reduce congestion in these areas. Strategies to help reduce congestion must include a shift from vehicle travel to other active transportation modes (or “types”) such a transit, rideshare, bicycling, and walking. A shift is achievable through roadway design changes.

- 3. The City of Fairfield has institutions and industries within the City that generate particular trips.**

The City of Fairfield hosts a variety of businesses and institutions that create job opportunities for those throughout the region, including Jelly Belly Factory, Budweiser Brewery, wineries, olive oil businesses, and Travis Air Force Base. These special jobs generators in the City create additional impacts to levels of service and vehicle miles travelled, which will need to be discussed further in the General Plan update. Vehicle miles travelled refers to the total number of miles travelled by cars and is a measure of the transportation system’s impact on the climate, environment, and human health.



4. **When measured at a regional scale, vehicle miles travelled per worker in Fairfield is higher than when measured using the City's standard model because the regional model captures trips travelling beyond the City's model's boundaries.**

The City of Fairfield's model for measuring vehicle miles travelled indicates an average of 20.8 daily vehicle miles travelled commuting. However, The Solano Transportation Authority's model for measuring VMT captures a more regional scale of the impacts of Fairfield's workers, and thus captures trips of greater length. This model estimates an average of 28.7 daily vehicle miles travelled commuting per worker. About 88% of Fairfield workers and residents travel outside of Fairfield to work. The General Plan will have to consider regional commuting patterns as part of future transportation planning efforts.

5. **Most Fairfield workers come from the northeast of Fairfield, and most Fairfield residents work southwest of Fairfield.**

The top three destinations for workers coming to Fairfield are Central Fairfield (39%), Train Station (12%), and Cordelia (11%). The top three destinations outside of Fairfield are Vacaville (47%), Vallejo (16%), and Contra Costa (9%). The major Fairfield gateways are at I-80 north of Fairfield (39%), I-80 southwest of Fairfield (20%), I-680 south of Fairfield (13%), and Peabody Road north of Fairfield (12%).

6. **The General Plan update process is an opportunity for the City to identify long-term improvements to its roadway network to improve or maintain existing capacity.**

The City has completed feasibility studies for various roadway capacity improvements throughout the Planning Area. Costs continue to limit the number of improvements that can be made in the short-term, until additional funding sources can be secured. Roadways to be considered include:

- Suisun Valley Parkway and Pittman Road Overcrossing widening
- Air Base Parkway and Heath Drive westbound left turn movements
- I-80 and Manuel Campos Parkway eastbound right turn on to Manuel Campos Parkway queues at the off-ramp
- Manuel Campos Parkway westbound left turn queues to turn on to Hilborn Road
- Air Base Parkway between North Texas Street and I-80 roadway widening

7. **Improving safety for all modes of travel along with reducing the speed of cars can be achieved through reconfiguring and making enhancements to streets.**

The Solano Transportation Authority's Active Transportation Plan provides recommendations for various bicycle and pedestrian improvements in Fairfield. The City has also studied the feasibility of safety improvements at various intersections and roadways and will continue to identify key locations to enhance safety. Street redesign could include bicycle infrastructure such as bicycle lanes, the removal of slip lanes (lanes at intersections that allow cars to turn without actually entering an intersection) to



shorten crossing distances for pedestrians, and pedestrian crossing improvements provide safer facilities for active transportation modes.

8. **Connectivity (the ability to safely and conveniently reach everyday destinations) of various modes of travel through the City is essential for the movement of people, freight, and goods. It is a key piece of smart city infrastructure in managing traffic control, public transport, parking, and fleet tracking.**

Providing roadway infrastructure and connections throughout the City is vital in creating a cohesive transportation network. Locations to consider for improved connectivity include:

- Mangels Boulevard from Suisun Valley Parkway to Vintage Valley Drive road redesign, connecting bicyclists to adjacent cities and areas within the City. This location would tie into the future Business Center Drive grade separation over SR 12.
- The residential areas in the northern part of the City off Mankas Corner Road and Hilborn Road need connections across I-80 for direct access to the City's core central business district.
- Based on the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC)'s Plan Bay Area, the northeast corner of the City is included as a Community of Concern based on socioeconomic factors including race and income. Ensuring these communities have the infrastructure for bicycle lanes, pedestrian facilities, and transit routes to the City's Central Business District will help promote equitable access across the Planning Area
- I-80 carries regional traffic. With metering and traffic, freeway congestion prompts people to use local streets. Roadways that see cut-through traffic and added congestion due to on-ramp metering include Rockville Road, Auto Mall Parkway/Cadenasso Drive, and Hilborn Road/Waterman Boulevard.

## **AIR QUALITY, GREENHOUSE GASES, & ENERGY**

1. **The City can play a role in improving regional air quality.**

Air quality in the Planning Area is generally good. Air pollutant emissions in and surrounding the Planning Area are generated primarily by mobile sources, particularly, highways and high-volume roadways. Mobile source air pollution includes any air pollution emitted by motor vehicles, airplanes, and other engines and equipment that can be moved. While Bay Area Air Quality Management District bears responsibility for ensuring that the standards are met, the City can help by promoting sustainable living patterns. Implementation of the City's newly adopted VMT policy will help meet these objectives as well.

2. **Land use planning should take into consideration the need for protecting the community from sources of air pollutants.**

Both mobile and stationary sources are present in the Planning Area and result in emissions of toxic air contaminants (TACs). Stationary air pollution sources include point sources that do not move such as factories, refineries, power plants, etc. While the City



cannot directly control emissions of TACs, land use planning can consider the locations of potential new residential and other sensitive land uses and try to reduce the amount of exposure. The installation of indoor air quality equipment such as high-efficiency particulate filters should be considered if recommended distances cannot be met.

Indoor sources of air pollution are another major concern in the community, particularly in older and lower-income homes. The General Plan will explore strategies to promote high-quality housing as part of the Housing Element Update, which could include programs related to indoor air quality in existing homes.

**3. The Climate Action Plan presents an opportunity for Fairfield to focus on reducing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.**

Fairfield's Climate Action Plan and the General Plan Environmental Impact Report should consider how future development can help the State meet its goal of achieving carbon neutrality as soon as possible, and no later than 2045. Carbon neutrality refers to achieving net-zero carbon dioxide emissions. This can be done by balancing emissions of carbon dioxide with its removal, and by eliminating emissions by transitioning to renewable energy sources. Because the General Plan will be prepared at the same time as the Climate Action Plan, land use, transportation, and economic development strategies can be coordinated with the CAP's GHG mitigation programs.

**4. Despite local efforts to minimize pollutants, Fairfield will inevitably face the effects of climate change and must plan for adaptation.**

Potential climate change impacts in the Bay Area include, but are not limited to, sea-level rise, extreme heat events, increased water and energy consumption, and changes to plant and animal species levels and habitat. The location of new development in the Planning Area should consider a wide range of potential climate and infrastructure scenarios. The General Plan Safety element will also include strategies to keep residents and property safe and maintain function of critical services in the event of natural disasters.

## HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

**1. Hazardous materials pose a threat in certain areas of the Planning Area and Fairfield should plan to protect community members from these materials.**

Disposal or leakage of hazardous materials into soil or groundwater is a potential threat to the health and safety of Fairfield and Travis Air Force Base residents. Reuse of former industrial or commercial sites may be affected by hazardous materials. Construction near identified leaking underground storage tanks must be informed by monitoring conducted in these areas and may require special cleanup or construction techniques.

## AIRPORT HAZARDS

**1. Land use compatibility with Travis Air Force Base (AFB) will need to be considered throughout the Planning Area, but in particular near the Base.**

Because of Travis AFB's presence in the eastern portion of the Planning Area, much of the Planning Area is governed by development restrictions laid out in the 2015 Travis AFB Land Use Compatibility Plan (LUCP). The closer any proposed development is to the AFB's runways and flight paths, the more stringent the restrictions are to protect people from noise impacts and potential accidents.



The base is vitally important to Fairfield's and Solano County's overall economic health, and the City is committed to ensuring the continued operation of Travis AFB. The General Plan update must review the Travis Reserve area designated in current General Plan and other existing policies to ensure they are appropriate for the needs of Fairfield and Travis AFB now and into the future.

## WILDFIRE

### 1. **Address fire hazard zones.**

The City is ringed by Wildland-Urban Interface (where development and infrastructure are interlaced with areas prone to wildfire) and some lands owned, and/or not yet incorporated into the City's boundary (e.g., Rockville Hill Park) need sustainable funding and fuels management implementation. Fuels refers to plant material, such as grasses or other brush, that can burn. Some areas that may be incorporated into the City's boundary (e.g., the Rancho Solano North Planning Area) are fire prone and have poor access and evacuation routes that may need retrofits.

### 2. **There is a need for inter-agency coordination in wildfire management.**

The current General Plan highlights a number of measures relevant to managing wildfire hazards and reducing their risks. Fairfield has adopted several best management practices intended to mitigate wildfire hazards, based on State regulations. However, there are several fire response gaps between the jurisdictions of local and State departments, volunteer Fire Departments lack resources, and there isn't a Countywide fire services entity to coordinate policies, programs or practices.

### 3. **Opportunities to incorporate fire prevention strategies.**

To improve community resiliency in the face of the existing wildfire hazards and climate change trends while serving urban development needs, the General Plan should address land use patterns, vegetation management, home hardening (addressing aspects of homes that make them vulnerable to wildfires), alert and warning systems, evacuations and access routes, as well as local to regional scale coordination and communication regarding on fire prevention, preparedness and response.

## PUBLIC HEALTH & EQUITY

### 1. **While no Census tracts meet the State definition of a Disadvantaged Community, there are still several tracts that experience high burdens from certain pollutants and possess numerous population characteristics that place residents at higher health and exposure risk. The City should take care to minimize exposure among groups vulnerable to environmental health hazards and avoid locating additional hazards in already burdened areas.**

The State defines a disadvantaged community as a Census tract that scores above the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile among all Census tracts statewide on the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen). CalEnviroScreen uses environmental, health, and socioeconomic information to produce scores for every Census tract in the state, thereby identifying communities that are most vulnerable to negative environmental health concerns. Tracts with a higher score or percentile rank have a higher burden and susceptibility. Tracts located in Central Fairfield bounded by Air



Base Parkway, Highway 12, I-80, and Dover Avenue tend to have the highest scores for environmental burden and socioeconomic susceptibility factors.

The City should take care to avoid locating future uses that could produce a further environmental burden in these areas and coordinate closely with other agencies and community groups to prevent negative effects on health, especially on those who are unemployed, have poor health outcomes, live in poverty, and other factors.

- 2. As land and housing values continue to increase, the General Plan must consider how the City of Fairfield can maintain its diversity, prevent displacement of lower-income populations, and contribute to solving the homelessness crisis.**

In Fairfield, 54% of renters are burdened by the cost of rent. That is, they are putting more than 30% of their household income towards covering the cost of rent. Among all California tracts, there are nine tracts within the Planning Area that rank above the 70<sup>th</sup> percentile for housing burden. Thus, affordable rental and owner-occupied housing for all types of lower-income families and individuals should be a high priority in the General Plan update and Housing Element.

- 3. In certain areas, Fairfield has the opportunity to create an urban environment that that promotes multiple modes such as walk, bike, and public transit, and has convenient access to healthy food.**

Currently, most of Fairfield is not highly walkable (easy to get around on foot) in areas more than a few blocks from its major corridors of West Texas and North Texas streets. As development and population increases, walkability and transit improvements will be important. Planning for expanded accessibility must also consider differing abilities. Improving the walk/rollability of Fairfield's neighborhoods will ensure that older residents and those with disabilities will have access to all of their daily needs.

In addition, access to grocery stores is uneven throughout the Planning Area. Attracting grocery stores, neighborhood markets, and other types of neighborhood-serving retail to the Cordelia and Northeast Fairfield neighborhoods in particular can increase walkability and accessibility.

- 4. Improving access to high-speed Internet.**

Fifteen percent of households in central Fairfield have a computer but not access to the Internet. Another 5% do not have a computer at all. This means that one-fifth of households in central Fairfield lack access to the Internet from their homes. Because these neighborhoods are fairly compact and dense, the City may want to consider measures such as public Wi-Fi in Downtown and central Fairfield to improve the community's Internet access.